



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Our American home, 1954.



EXCERPT OF ADDRESS BEFORE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LIFE

October 9, 1954

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

Most of our thought in recent years has been centered overseas. We have been very much concerned, as a people, with world reconstruction, with world relief, and with saving the world from Communism. We have poured out billions of our resources in an effort to strengthen democracy abroad. We have sought ways of extending the blessings of American life to peoples in many parts of the world, some of whom are not at all eager for them. I believe that the time has come for the American people to take serious stock of conditions here at home. How really sound is the American way of life? How secure and stable is the American home? For it is the American home which, after all, is the foundation of our life as a people. If it is sound, America is sound. The success of our democracy as a way of life is ultimately reflected in our homes. The quality of our family life will, in the last analysis, determine the quality of our national life. From many directions there have come disturbing reports about the instability of the American home and the breaking up of family life which should give us much ground for serious concern and <sup>heart</sup> ~~hard~~ searching.

Juvenile delinquency, which is largely a by-product of the broken home, has been increasing at an appalling rate. There are, of course, many economic factors and many grave unsettlements of life today caused principally by war, which have contributed to the weakening of the American home. It is far more difficult to maintain a secure family life today than it was in olden days, and



therefore, greater demands must be made upon the individual, upon the inner spiritual strength of the individual - man and woman. Greater wisdom is demanded, greater courage, greater idealism, greater sportsmanship to preserve for themselves and for society the one indispensable institution for human happiness - the home. For what profits it a man if he be a success in business if he is a failure in the home; or for a woman if she is a success in whatever interests she may have, if she is a failure as a mother? One who fails as a husband and father or as a mother and wife fails in the most significant reaches of human life. And nothing atones for it; there is no substitute for it. And what profits it a nation, rich and powerful, if millions of its homes are torn by discord and become breeding places of twisted childhood personalities, of law-breakers and malefactors.

I am not exonerating these other institutions - the school, the church, governmental society - of their obligations; they too have obligations and tasks to perform in building a fine youth generation in this country. Society as such must do its share to protect the home. Society must evolve a system of greater economic stability so that business cycles and prolonged unemployment do not put an unnecessary strain upon the home - strains which often men and women and young children cannot bear because they are too great for them. Society must seek to avoid war because there is no more disruptive influence as far as the home is concerned, and family ties and family standards, as war. There is no use blinking that fact. Society should provide proper housing facilities and decent homes for families. Much of the help sent abroad and around the world to save democracy may well be spent in our country to build homes, to clear our slums and to give our children a chance to live in decent environments.



Society should provide adequate education in preparation for family life, and social agencies should help men and women solve the problems which come to confront them from time to time.

I have said all these agencies have their responsibilities and they must make their contribution, but when all is said and done, the problem is primarily a personal, spiritual one of individual men and women who are concerned in the business of building a home and a family and it cannot be unloaded on society or on government. The great effort must be made by men and women themselves, and they can make that effort only if they accept and acknowledge and live by a clear-cut moral philosophy of life. They must decide what things are of primary importance in their lives - what comes first. What needs to be sacrificed for. They must make grave decisions. And without such a voluntarily accepted code of conduct, binding upon themselves, they are lost and their children are lost. Even with proper housing and economic sufficiency and all of the protected safeguards and the undergirding agencies which exist in a community, such a home will crack. America needs the sanctions and the disciplines and the spirit of religion in the home. We have quite properly separated Church and State, but we are now in danger of separating Church and Home, and that will be, I am afraid, disastrous to our people.



54-4

Revised March 15, 1954

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

THE SECOND NATIONAL FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE  
October 8,9,10,1954  
Music Hall, Cleveland Public Auditorium

"THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY -- HOPE OF THE WORLD"

PROGRAM

Song Leader: Dr. Varner M. Chance, Professor of Music, Baldwin Wallace College

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8

GENERAL SESSION

Afternoon: Presiding: Bishop Hazen G. Werner

1:30 Communion Service

2:15 Opening of the Conference

2:25 Welcome by Governor Frank Lausche

2:30 Introductory Address: Bishop Hazen G. Werner

2:40 Keynote Address: Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam  
"The Christian Family -- Hope of the World"

3:15 Introduction of Work Group Leaders -- Dr. Edward D. Staples

3:30-5:00 WORK GROUPS

GENERAL SESSION

Evening: Presiding: Bishop Paul Martin

7:30 Hymn and Prayer - Baldwin Wallace Choir

7:45 Speakers: Dr. and Mrs. H. A. Overstreet  
"Achieving a Mature Life Within the Family"

8:30 Hymn

8:35 Introduction of delegates from National and World Missions  
and guests from other denominations. (They are requested to  
assemble back stage at 7:15 P.M.)

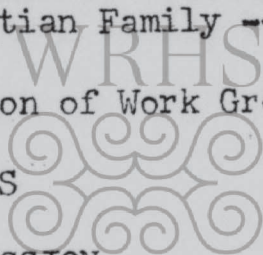
8:45 Presentation of Representative Methodist Family by Mr. Ralph  
Edwards. Script by Mrs. George Harper

9:30 Youth and the Family (Film)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9

Morning

9:00-10:30 WORK GROUPS





GENERAL SESSION

10:45 Song Service. Led by Dr. Varner Chance

11:00 Presiding: Bishop John W. Branscomb

Devotions - Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

11:30 Speaker: Mrs. Douglas Horton  
"The Family Living in the Community."

Afternoon

1:45 - 3:45 WORK GROUPS

4:00 Annual Conference Groups

GENERAL SESSION

Evening Presiding: Bishop Charles W. Brashares

7:30 Hymn and Prayer - Mount Union College Choir

7:45 Panel: "The Effect of TV on the Family and Child Life"  
Moderator: Charles R. Day, Station WGAR, Cleveland  
Dr. Robert Goodrich, Dr. Wilbur Blume  
Dr. Evelyn M. Duvall, Miss Judith Waller

8:45 Hymn and Introduction of Family Life Committee

8:50 Speaker: Norman Cousins  
"The Family and World Responsibility"

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10

Morning

9:00 Network Broadcast - Bishop Hazen G. Werner

GENERAL SESSION

10:00 Presiding: Bishop Matthew W. Clair

Reports and Recommendations

11:00 Morning Worship - Dr. George A. Warmer, Jr.  
"The Family and the Church Working Together"

GENERAL SESSION

Afternoon

2:30 Presiding: Bishop Hazen G. Werner

2:40 Hymn and Prayer - Ohio Wesleyan Choir

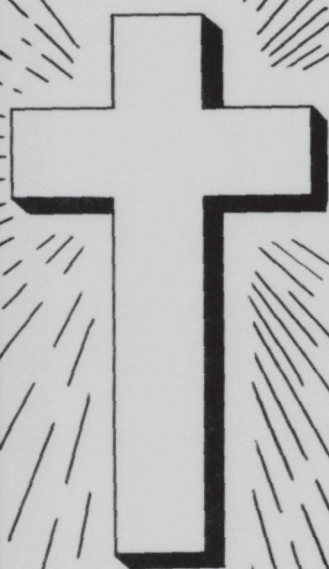
2:55 Address: Dr. Marshall Steel - "Family Developing Its Spiritual Life"

3:30 Commitment Service led by Bishop Hazen G. Werner

3:45 Adjournment



# METHODIST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LIFE



Downtown Cleveland, Ohio

CLEVELAND, OHIO

OCTOBER 8-10, 1954





## Second Methodist National Conference on Family Life

Theme: *"The Christian Family, the Hope of the World."*

"Family religion calls for spiritually dedicated and spiritually disciplined parents," said Bishop Hazen G. Werner, chairman of the first Methodist Conference on Family Life at Chicago in 1951. Churchmen are still conscious of this need. The General Conference of the Methodist Church has provided for a second National Conference on Family Life to be held in the Music Hall of the Public Auditorium in Cleveland, Ohio, October 8-10, 1954. Bishop Werner will again serve as chairman.

### WHO WILL BE THERE?

1. Parents of Pre-school Children
2. Parents of Elementary School Children
3. Parents of Youth
4. Young Couples Without Children
5. Grandparents and others concerned about the three generation home
6. Ministers and teachers concerned about home and church cooperation

### SPEAKERS

- 1 Dr. Norman Cousins  
Editor Saturday Review of Literature
- 2 Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam  
The Washington Area,  
The Methodist Church
- 3 Dr. George A. Warmer, Jr.  
Pastor First Methodist Church,  
Oakland, California
- 4 Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
Cleveland, Ohio
- 5 Mrs. Douglas Horton  
Former President, Wellesley College and  
former Director of Women's Reserves,  
U. S. Naval Reserve (WAVES)
- 6 Dr. Marshall Steel  
Pastor Highland Park Methodist Church,  
Dallas, Texas
- 7 Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Overstreet  
Authorities on family life



### SPECIAL FEATURES

Mr. Ralph Edwards, the master of ceremonies for the television show, "This Is Your Life," will introduce the parents selected by THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE as "the representative Methodist family."

A panel on "Television in the Home" has been planned with the following nationally known figures participating: Dr. Evelyn Millis Duvall, author of *Family Living*; Dr. Robert Goodrich, pastor First Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas; Professor Wilbur Blume, professor University of Southern California; Miss Judith Waller, National Broadcasting Corporation, Chicago. The moderator will be Charles R. Day of WGAR, Cleveland.

A dramatic presentation prepared especially for this conference by Mrs. George Harper will portray some of the problems of families.



BISHOP  
HAZEN G. WERNER  
Chairman



Music Hall, Cleveland Auditorium

### QUOTAS

Each annual conference is entitled to the following quota:

Four couples (eight persons) from each district  
One district superintendent and his wife designated by the cabinet  
One couple selected by each of the annual conference boards  
The Cleveland Auditorium Music Hall seats only 3000 persons so it will be necessary to hold to quotas. They will be redistributed on August 15 if not used.

### WHO PAYS EXPENSES?

Many local churches will help.  
Some adult classes will sponsor delegates and take care of their children while away.  
Annual Conference Boards may pay expenses of official delegates.  
Most delegates will pay their own expenses.

### WHEN TO ARRIVE

Delegates should plan to arrive in Cleveland Friday morning, October 8. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the Music Hall, and continue until the conference opens at 1:30 p.m.

### STUDY GROUPS

There will be discussion groups upon the five major themes of the conference:

- I. The Family Developing its Spiritual Life
- II. Achieving a Mature Life Within the Family
- III. The Family and Community Affecting Each Other
- IV. The Family Facing World Responsibility
- V. The Family and the Church Working Together
- VI. Planning a Church Family Life Program (for ministers)

These, except VI, will be sub-divided as follows:

- A. Young couples without children
- B. Parents of pre-school children
- C. Parents of grade school children
- D. Parents of youth
- E. Families with three generations

Ministers may attend a special group on planning the church program of family life or may join one of the groups with their laymen.

Annual conference study groups have been working on these areas since last fall and a summary of their findings will be sent to you in September if you have registered in advance.

### REGISTRATION

Send your registration to the Executive Secretary of your annual conference Board of Education (or Inter-board Council). Your pastor will know the address. Early registration is important to assure choice of work groups. A place in the work group of your choice can be guaranteed only if you register before August 15.

### RECOMMENDED HOTELS

- 1 *Hotel Cleveland*—Headquarters Hotel  
Single room with bath, \$5.00 to \$8.00  
Double room with bath, \$8.50 to \$10.00
- 2 *Hotel Hollenden*  
Single room with bath, \$4.50 to \$8.00  
Double room with bath, \$7.00 to \$10.00
- 3 *Hotel Auditorium*  
Single room with bath, \$4.50 to \$6.00  
Double room with bath, \$6.00 to \$8.00
- 4 *Hotel Olmsted*  
Single room with shower, \$4.25  
Single room with tub and shower, \$5 to \$8  
Double room with tub and shower, \$7 to \$10



**CLEVELAND, OHIO**  
**OCTOBER 8-10, 1954**



## REGISTRATION

National Conference on Family Life of the Methodist Church

Cleveland, Ohio, October 8, 9, 10, 1954

(Please type or print in ink)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Rev. \_\_\_\_\_  
Last name First Name Initial (Miss \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_\_\_)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL CONFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_ JURISDICTION \_\_\_\_\_

\$5.00 Registration Fee enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

(Husband and wife will each fill out a registration card.)

Most of the registration fee will be used as a travel pool to aid those coming from more than 500 miles of Cleveland. Check here if you wish to participate in the travel pool. ☐ Distance from home to Cleveland \_\_\_\_\_ miles. (one way)

WORK GROUP DESIRED: (CHECK ONE)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I. The Family Developing Its Spiritual Life
- \_\_\_\_\_ II. Achieving a Mature Life Within the Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ III. The Family and Community Affecting Each Other
- \_\_\_\_\_ IV. The Family Facing Its World Responsibility
- \_\_\_\_\_ V. The Family and the Church Working Together
- \_\_\_\_\_ VI. Planning a Church Family Life Program (for ministers)

EACH, EXCEPT VI, WILL BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS: (CHECK ONE)

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Young Couples Without Children
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Parents of Pre-school Children
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Parents of Grade School Children
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Parents of Youth
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Families with Three Generations

APPROVED BY \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Executive Secretary

Send both forms to the Executive Secretary of your annual Conference Board of Education. Hotel will confirm reservation.

## CLEVELAND HOTEL REGISTRATION

Gentlemen:

Please reserve hotel room for me as follows:

Hotel \_\_\_\_\_ First choice

Hotel \_\_\_\_\_ Second choice

Hotel \_\_\_\_\_ Third choice

\_\_\_\_\_ Double room with bath \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day

\_\_\_\_\_ Twin bed \_\_\_\_\_ double bed

\_\_\_\_\_ Single room with bath \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day

In addition to myself, the room will be occupied by \_\_\_\_\_

I will arrive on \_\_\_\_\_ at about \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.  
p.m.

I expect to leave \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Detach Registration Blank Here



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LIFE

P. O. Box 871

Nashville, Tennessee

Sec. 34.65 (e) P.L.&R.

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Nashville, Tenn.

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# Report

**THE CHRISTIAN HOME • THE HOPE OF THE WORLD**



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
CLEVELAND OHIO

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES



**ON FAMILY LIFE**  
OCTOBER 8-10 1954



**SECOND NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LIFE  
OF THE METHODIST CHURCH**



# Our American Homes

By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

Most of our thought in recent years has been centered overseas. We have been very much concerned, as a people, with world reconstruction, with world relief, and with saving the world from Communism. We have poured out billions of our resources in an effort to strengthen democracy abroad. We have sought ways of extending the blessings of American life to peoples in many parts of the world, some of whom are not at all eager for them. I believe that the time has come for the American people to take serious stock of conditions here at home. The success of our democracy as a way of life is ultimately reflected in our homes. The quality of our family life will, in the last analysis, determine the quality of our national life.

Juvenile delinquency, which is largely a by-product of the broken home, has been increasing at an appalling rate. There are, of course, many economic factors and many grave unsettlements of life today caused principally by war, which have contributed to the weakening of the American home. It is far more difficult to maintain a secure family life today than it was in olden days, and therefore, greater demands must be made upon the individual, upon the inner spiritual strength of the individual—man and woman. Greater wisdom is demanded, greater courage, greater idealism, greater sportsmanship to preserve for themselves and for society the one indispensable institution for human happiness—the home.

I am not exonerating these other institutions—the school, the church, governmental society—of their obligations; they too have obligations and tasks to

perform in building a fine youth generation in this country. Society as such must do its share to protect the home. Society must evolve a system of greater economic stability so that business cycles and prolonged unemployment do not put an unnecessary strain upon the home—strains which often men and women and young children cannot bear because they are too great for them. Society must seek to avoid war because there is no more disruptive influence as far as the home is concerned, and family ties and family standards, as war. There is no use blinking that fact.

Society should provide proper housing facilities and decent homes for the families. Much of the help sent abroad and around the world to save democracy may well be spent in our country to build homes, to clear our slums and to give our children a chance to live in decent environments. Society should provide adequate education in preparation for family life, and

social agencies should help men and women solve the problems which come to confront them from time to time.

"The problem of strengthening the home is primarily a personal, spiritual one of individual men and women who are concerned in the business of building a home and a family and it cannot be unloaded on society or on government. The great effort must be made by men and women themselves, and they can make that effort only if they accept and acknowledge and live by a clear-cut moral philosophy of life. They must decide what things are of primary importance in their lives—what comes first. America needs the sanctions and the disciplines and the spirit of religion in the home.

