



Credidimus caritati
we have put our faith in love



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Extraordinary Synod of Bishops

Rome, October 2014

Joan Clements



As a Director of WOOMB International, I was proud and delighted to represent Billings Ovulation Method® teachers from around the world at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome last month. When I had the honour of meeting His Holiness, Pope Francis, I told him that I brought "greetings of loyalty and love" from all of you and asked him to pray for our work. He asked me to pray for him, as he always does to anyone he speaks to.

Attending the Synod was an extraordinary experience which took me some time to process - just being in the same room with people whose names I had known for years but never expected to meet. Let alone actually being in a small discussion group with Cardinals and Bishops who asked me to draft a paragraph on natural family planning for the final document. Not much of what I wrote actually made it into the Relatio Synodi which was a compilation of the deliberations of all ten discussion groups, but I did feel that what I had said was heard. It remains to be seen what impact it has for our work in the future, but at least the Synod Fathers did not leave Rome without hearing of the Billings Ovulation Method®.

The first four days of the Synod involved listening to the interventions of the 180+ Bishops who were present. This was facilitated by the amazing women who provided simultaneous translation of everything that was said. Translations were accessed via an ear-piece at each seat and available in Italian (the official language of the Synod), Spanish, French and English.

With some regional differences, most Bishops were saying very similar things about the challenges facing families in their dioceses. My greatest disappointment with this part of the Synod was that there was a lot of focus on the problems, and not much discussion of the good work being done and the exemplary lives of faithful families everywhere.

In addition to the Bishop's interventions on these first four days we also heard from several married couples - one each morning and afternoon - giving their own witness of living and loving and bringing up their children in today's world. They told some remarkable stories of challenges faced and overcome, including of marriages which hit "rock bottom" before being rescued. They were a delightful break from the gloom of some of the Bishop's stories.

On the Friday morning it was the turn of the lay Auditors to make their interventions. In order to do so, we had to have requested time to speak (4 minutes) and submitted what we intended to say so that the translators could have a copy. I had written what I wanted to say during the course of the week and submitted it on the Thursday morning. While preparing it I was very conscious of the prayers of all of you and felt that I was given the words to say. This sense of being carried on your prayers continued on the Friday morning when my name was called and I delivered the following:

Holy Father, Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters, I refer to Instrumentum Laboris #121-124.

I represent WOOMB International which teaches the Billings Ovulation Method around the world. As you know, there are other methods of natural family planning which are in accord with Church teaching, but my experience is with the Billings Method.

This Method works. It works at a human level, in assisting couples to achieve or avoid pregnancy as they choose - there is ample scientific evidence to verify its success. It also works at a relational and spiritual level - it is good for marriages. One example: Many years ago I taught a couple who wanted to avoid using chemical contraception but said they had no place for children in their lives. Within some few months of teaching them I noticed from the charting that they were breaking the Rules to avoid pregnancy. I asked then did they understand what they were doing as their stated intention was to not get pregnant? Their answer was: "We have decided to start our family."

When we open couples to living their marriage as God intended, even if they do not acknowledge Him, we enable the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. What better way to explain to them the meaning of the Natural Law? My husband wishes taxation laws were as easily explained!

If couples tell you that they have tried but the Method does not work for them, tell them to go back to their teacher, or if they did not learn from a teacher, they should do so now. In more than 30 years of teaching the Billings Ovulation Method I have never found anyone for whom it did not work if they applied themselves to learning and following the guidelines diligently. And do not imagine that married couples cannot make the necessary sacrifices. Marriage and parenthood involves much sacrifice - which we do willingly and lovingly.

The very wise priest who prepared my husband and I for marriage said to us, "Marriage is not a 50:50 relationship, it is 100% total giving. He also said, "Love is not a feeling, it is a decision."

In dioceses where the Bishops actively support the promulgation of natural family planning, good things happen in marriages - Buon Ma Thuot diocese in Vietnam is one such of which I have personal experience.

Too often in developed nations we get the response from priests that they do not want to upset people and so their people are denied this knowledge. WOOMB International stands ready to assist in meeting the challenge of evangelization of families by empowering women and couples with the knowledge of the great gift of their fertility. As Dr Evelyn Billings said: "This is knowledge of her body that every woman ought to have."

We have heard in these days a great deal about the problems of divorce and annulment. If just a fraction of that energy was spent on strengthening marriages with natural family planning, we would not have so many marriage breakdowns. Bishop Mafi spoke yesterday of priests on fire. We could ask for nothing more than that our priests be on fire in support of natural family planning.

During the break for morning tea, several of the Bishops came up to me, thanked me for my intervention and expressed their support for the work that you all do.

In the second week of the Synod, after the publication of the Relatio post disceptationem (mid-term report), which excited a great deal of comment in the secular media, we were all divided into our circulo minori (small discussion groups). The purpose of these groups was to discuss the Relatio post disceptationem, paragraph by paragraph, rewording as necessary, to make sure that it accorded with the views of the Synod Fathers in our particular group. There were ten such groups all engaged on the same task. It was at this point that I was asked to draft the paragraph on natural family planning and the conjugal relationship.

Following is the paragraph which I drafted and which was accepted unanimously by the Cardinals and Bishops in our group:

“God created man in his own image and likeness, calling him to existence through love, he called him at the same time for love.” (FC #11) The constant teaching of the Church is that the conjugal relationship of husband and wife is both unitive and procreative and that, “The only ‘place’ in which this self-giving in its whole truth is made possible is marriage, the covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God himself.” (GS #48). Faithful married couples give witness to the beauty and truth of an unconditional openness to life made possible in the practice of natural family planning which respects their right to plan the number and spacing of their children while co-operating with God in the wonder of co-creation. In this regard, we should return to the message of “Humanae Vitae” of Pope Paul VI, which highlights the need to respect the dignity of the person in the moral evaluation of the methods of regulating births.

The final days of the Synod involved writing of the Relatio Synodi (final report) and which had to be voted on, paragraph by paragraph, and needed a 2/3rds majority of the Synod Fathers present to be accepted.

This report will now be discussed in the local churches and their responses again sent to Rome and collated to form the Instrumentum Laboris for the next full Synod of Bishops, scheduled to take place in Rome in October 2015. Only after that will the Holy Father, if he chooses, publish a new Encyclical on the family.

In the meantime I have to return to Rome in the last week of this month to participate in a round-table seminar of the Pontifical Council for the Family to discuss the Relatio Synodi and make recommendations to the General Secretariat. Because I was a participant in the Extraordinary Synod, I have been privileged to be asked to write a paper for this Seminar which I have submitted and will share with you in the future if it is accepted.

Please accept my thanks for your messages of love and support and for all your prayers over recent weeks. There is still much to be done to keep the Billings Ovulation Method® at the forefront of the minds of Synod Fathers and to ensure that they support our work so that we can assist them with meeting the challenges of evangelization through the family.

Keep up the great work that you are doing!



Natural Family Planning praised for respecting women, nature

Adelaide Mena

Washington D.C., Jul 31, 2014 / 04:18 am (CNA/EWTN News).- Catholic teaching on sexuality and fertility is being hailed as a moral alternative to hormonal birth control that embraces nature and respects the fullness of women's lives and dignity.

Author Mary Rice Hasson, a fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based Ethics and Public Policy Center, noted that many women, both religious and secular, are seeing the “terrible side effects” of artificial contraception and searching for “a better way” to monitor fertility.

“There’s increasingly an openness to what’s good for women,” she told CNA July 24, explaining that there has been a disconnect in society when “we buy organic milk to avoid hormones, but yet we’re putting these same hormones into our bodies” through hormonal contraception.

As hormonal birth control is called into question, Hasson said, the Church’s teaching on the dignity of women, fertility and sexuality offers an alternative.

“From the Church’s position, women are equal in dignity to men, but our maternity, our motherhood is a part of who we are,” she explained, adding that whether or not a woman has children, “there’s something about that capacity that is to be valued.”

Rather than artificial contraception, Hasson said, Natural Family Planning respects a woman’s capacity for motherhood while giving couples tools to expand or limit family size.

The mindset behind this approach recognizes that “this woman is a whole person who needs to take into account what is God’s will, what are the goals for our family, but you work with that: you don’t have to segment off this part of you.”

Natural Family Planning is the name given to a range of methods that can be used by couples to identify fertile periods, and can be used as a tool to either achieve or postpone pregnancy. The various scientific methods measure a range of fertility signs, including a woman’s basal body temperature, changes in cervical fluid, and the detection of reproductive hormones with a monitor.

Unlike artificial contraception, Natural Family Planning does not disrupt any natural fertility cycles, nor does it require any hormonal or physical barriers between couples.

The U.S. bishops have released resources offering information about Natural Family Planning – known as

NFP – which is considered morally acceptable under Catholic Church teaching.

“NFP is unique because it enables its users to work with the body rather than against it,” they explained. “Fertility is viewed as a gift and reality to live, not a problem to be solved.”

When used according to their guidelines, these methods “achieve effectiveness rates of 97-99 percent,” the bishops said.

In addition, these methods can be used by women “during breastfeeding, just before menopause, and in other special circumstances,” as well to identify and treat special circumstances such as irregular menstrual cycles, reproductive illnesses, and risk of miscarriage.

A brochure posted online by the U.S. bishops’ conference underscored that the Catholic view of fertility values “responsible parenthood,” while respecting fertility. Natural Family Planning methods encourage spouses to “weigh their responsibilities to God, each other, the children they already have, and the world in which they live,” and prayerfully discern family size while untimely trusting God’s plan for their lives.

While the methods included under Natural Family Planning can be used to delay as well as achieve pregnancy, they are “different from and better than contraception,” the bishops’ resource explained.

Benefits of NFP include low cost, no harmful health or environmental side effects, and cooperation with fertility rather than suppressing it. In addition, the brochure highlighted that NFP is the responsibility of both spouses rather than just the wife or the husband, and how the mindset behind the practice works to “honor and safeguard the unitive and procreative meanings of married love.”

California writer Chrissy Wing recently wrote on Ethika Politika about what she sees as a disconnect between attitudes towards health and diet- particularly an emphasis on all natural and hormone-free products- and the promotion of artificial contraceptives.

She told CNA that while many people “scrutinize other products for possible toxins,” they often “seem to dismiss the much more blatant health risks” that accompany some artificial contraceptives, such as the formation of blood clots or contribution to early embryo death.

Wing suggested that Natural Family Planning “honors women’s and men’s ability to procreate and accepts the clear and natural link between sex and children,” while still helping families to plan their family expansion or limitation.

Hasson further critiqued society’s promotion of contraception, saying that the rejection of a couple’s

procreative capacity says to women that “your fertility is a risk” and views that part of womanhood as “a problem.”

“It says that ‘something about the way you’re made is not really a good thing,’” she said.

In contrast, fertility monitoring and abstinence when necessary, to limit or expand family size, treats fertility as “a factor in who you are, and it’s a factor in your relationship.”

These Natural Family Planning methods, Hasson said, encourage couples to work with – rather than against – their natural cycles, recognizing that fertility shouldn’t be “controlled, circumscribed, limited or on the back shelf.”

While “we have a responsibility towards responsible parenthood,” she acknowledged, the Church’s acceptance of the entirety of woman, including her capability for motherhood, shows that “you don’t have to alienate this part of you – your motherhood – in order to do other things.”

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/natural-family-planning-praised-for-respecting-women-nature-32344/>



Natural birth control - a man’s point of view

Gerard Migeon

Think of children in an inner-city context, growing up without knowing anything else. When they’re exposed to a country setting - or mountains, or the beach - it may be exciting, but it can also be uncomfortable and even scary for them. They’d rather retreat back to the confined, polluted and unsafe environment that they’re used to. We can all agree however that they miss out. In the same way, most men have been conditioned to women being on contraceptives. They can hardly imagine the world without them and they need help (hello women!); they need to be taken there the first time and shown that it’s actually a safer, better place to breathe.

That’s my story. I came to natural birth control by accident. Twice, and the second time it took. The first time was when my wife and I had been married about three years. We decided to conceive our second child. Since our first was a boy, Anna really wanted a girl. Her mother sent her a book about how to choose the sex of you baby. The science behind it was fertility charting.

You had to know the exact time of ovulation and time love-making accordingly. Without realizing it, we started using natural birth control. And it worked: we had our little girl. But after we did - guess what - we went back to what we were used to. Even though she knew exactly when she could get pregnant or not, it never crossed her mind to rely on that knowledge to avoid pregnancy the way she had to achieve it.

The second time was 15 years later. My wife and I discovered that people around the world were using these skills to avoid pregnancy with an effectiveness that was equal to contraceptives. As we learned more about the benefits of these natural methods, we decided to never return to the old ways.

Looking back, I wish someone would have told me when I was getting married: "Check this out!" So that's what I'm going to do here for you guys. Here are a few reasons for choosing natural birth control instead of contraceptives:

It's healthier for your spouse

Be wary of the pro-contraceptive propaganda you read about in the news, which always de-emphasizes the risks. Read carefully the labels of the contraceptive drugs she's taking. Google the risks associated with hormonal contraceptives or of foreign objects being inserted in your wife's body. Read about the law suits on products like Yaz® and Jasmin®, Mirena® or Nuvaring® - cancer and blood clots are on the top of the list of long-term health problems associated with them. Some forms of contraceptives have a risk of abortion as well, as they allow conception but then prevent implantation of the fertilized egg.

Cost effective

No pills to buy, no doctor's visit to change the prescription because of the undesirable side effects of a certain dosage, no IUD to insert or remove. Once you and your wife learn it, which would cost anywhere from \$30 to maximum \$500, it's a life skill and yours for life.

You become smarter about women

You learn how their fertility cycle works and how it influences them in their moods. You learn about some of the issues that can cause a woman to be sick or affect her fertility. You can better support her.

You get to know your spouse for who she really is

Hormonal contraceptives have this weird effect of putting women in an artificial state, as if they were pregnant all the time. It flattens the normal ebb and flow of hormones and thus of their energies and moods. They're not themselves. Imagine yourself on steroids all the time. If she's been on the pill ever since you've known her, you may have yet to meet your spouse.

You become partners in family planning

It's not just all up to her anymore - you are a part of the

decision to have children or not, and the two of you can have a real dialogue about it. Isn't it better to work as a team on these critical decisions? These methods are not your grandma's rhythm method; they work just as well as hormonal contraceptives to avoid pregnancy. They also help women conceive.

Better communication

With natural birth control, you have to talk about sex with one another. Sex is no longer completely disconnected from procreation, and you're in it together, so you talk, and it's a good thing. And if you can talk about sex, you can probably talk about anything. These regular conversations will break other barriers.

You deepen your love relationship

During the times you choose (key word here) not to have sex because both of you want to postpone pregnancy, you have an opportunity to show how much you love her: that it's not just about "having her tonight." You can be romantic and loving just for her sake - just like when you were dating. Believe me, she will notice and remember. Beyond sex, we all seek emotional intimacy and are fulfilled by it. With natural birth control you have a time window to create this intimacy every month.

She will feel more respected

Start here: ask her if she ever felt used when you've had sex on contraceptives. With natural birth control, by the mere fact you can hold off during the abstinence period, she will feel appreciated. And she will respect you for having enough self-control to do it.

Better sex

In part because hormonal contraceptives can negatively affect a woman's libido, but also because you have better communication, you're closer, and she feels more understood and respected for who she really is, you have an opportunity to connect at a deeper level. Sex is much more than mutual pleasure giving, it's an act of giving ourselves to each other totally. In simple terms you will discover that sex brings a much deeper sense of "communion," and she will too.

You decrease your chance of divorce by a ton

A study by Dr. Robert Lerner, a sociologist from the University of Chicago, shows that couples who practice Natural Family Planning had a divorce rate of 0.2%. More studies need to be done on this topic, but the difference with the general population's 50% rate is huge. And all the reasons mentioned above can explain it.

It preserves her fertility

An important feature of her body, especially if you are planning to have a baby together at some point. Contraceptives not only stop her fertility short-term, but can really alter it after you stop using them. It takes longer for women coming off the pill to achieve pregnancy.

It preserves your own fertility and health

Especially if you're considering a vasectomy. First, male sterilization is not without health risk and you can read here a well-documented article on what can go wrong with a vasectomy. Because of the high rate of divorce, many men who chose to have a vasectomy get married again and often have regrets.

I'm not in your shoes, and the information I presented above can easily be picked apart. I realize it's a quick overview of a complex topic. All I am suggesting is for you men to consider this option very seriously and don't be absentminded or passive about the topic. There is a better world out there, and it's worth checking out.

Gerard and Anna Migeon founded Natural Womanhood, a non-profit that promotes fertility charting so that women know their bodies, and enjoy good health, sexual intimacy, and effective family planning. They live in San Antonio, TX and have two adult children. This article first appeared on their website, www.naturalwomanhood.org.



Angela de Malherbe interview; by Elizabeth de Baudouin for Aleteia Health 22/6/2014

Angela de Malherbe is a member of WOOMB France and has been a friend of the Billings Ovulation Method® for decades having first met Drs John and Evelyn Billings many years ago.

A wife, mother, and grandmother, Angela de Malherbe was responsible for the organization of several international conferences on the family in Europe, including the one held in Paris in 1986.

In 1993, she introduced the Teen Star pedagogy in France for the affective and sexual education of young people. She also completed the French translation of books that Drs. Evelyn Billings and Ann Westmore wrote on the Billings method since 1980.

De Malherbe is also a consultant for the Pontifical Council for the Family, where, in a unique case in the Church, she sits with her son, Father Brice de Malherbe, a priest of the Archdiocese of Paris.

Is the Billings method reliable?

One often quips about "Billings babies" who are "accidentally" conceived by couples using this method (as we used to joke about "Ogino babies"). In fact, when properly taught and applied, the Billings method

is 99% accurate in the case of couples that want to avoid or delay pregnancy. It is also followed by 80% of people worldwide who opted for a natural birth control method. Its effectiveness is also proven for couples who are struggling to have a child. The results are far superior to those obtained by in vitro fertilization (70% compared to 20 to 25%). Many couples also use it for this purpose.

On what is its reliability based?

The Billings method is a scientific method designed by a couple of Australian doctors: John and Evelyn Billings. They were joined by internationally renowned researchers: the Swede Erik Odeblad, professor of biophysical medicine at Umea university, and Professor James B. Brown, an endocrinologist from New Zealand. They validated the Billings' work and continued the research with them. Professor Brown and his team studied more than 850,000 female cycles. The WHO recognized the method in 1978. It is based on the observation of women's cervical mucus, which allows us to accurately detect ovulation and periods of fertility and infertility. Since every woman has a pattern of clean mucus that can vary from one month to another, the Billings method is not a "standardized test." It follows each woman's unique profile. It is particularly valuable during lactation or peri-menopause.

What prompted the Billings couple to develop this method?

In 1953, a priest spoke insistently to John Billings (who was not a gynecologist but a neurologist). This priest was concerned about several couples who wanted to follow the way proposed by the Church, but who were disappointed by the Ogino rhythm method. John was overwhelmed. But at the priest's insistence, he finally said, "Fine, I will give it a few weeks." In fact, he and his wife, both devout Catholics, have since devoted their lives to it.

Then, in 1968 Paul VI wrote the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on birth control. It was a great encouragement to them.

Does this mean that the method is restricted to Catholics? Or to an elite?

Like mucus—which is not specifically Catholic—the Billings method is universal, especially since it is free and therefore accessible to the poorest. It is also available to the illiterate. It is open to all couples seeking a reliable method of natural regulation. Like many initiatives that the Church promotes, it is beyond the scope of states and religions.

One example, among the most convincing, is that of China, where many Billings centers were opened at the request of the Communist government in 1995. This

one-child policy nation found that where the method is practiced, abortions are seven times less likely. It promotes the method for its effectiveness. Moreover, in this country where people love natural methods, such as acupuncture, women are happy to no longer have to use IUDs. Elsewhere, by contrast, the method is the object of much willful disinformation, as it cannot be commercially beneficial, nor does it cater to anti-life ideologies.

Isn't the greatest obstacle abstinence during fertile periods for couples wanting to avoid pregnancy?

In societies of "I see you, I want you, I take you," abstinence may seem difficult to propose, and even more difficult to live. First, we note that the observation of the mucus allows the couple to unite frequently during the cycle, particularly in the second part, which is to say, after ovulation. Moreover, abstinence is beneficial for the couple. John Billings spoke of it as a "gentle discipline" that makes people grow by making them more accountable. Another result: dialogue is encouraged. The woman also feels loved for herself. A doctor priest told me that among couples who practice abstinence, the respect between the spouses is visible: that of the man with his wife and vice versa. When the husband respects his wife, she respects him.

And the pleasure?

When couples unite after a waiting period, the pleasure is more intense. Couples who follow the Billings method report having more rapport and more sexual fulfillment than those where the woman takes the pill, which reduces her libido. We also note that there is less divorce among the followers of the Billings method.

It's quite a rosy picture! What about those who say that their desire is stronger in the times when they cannot unite?

It is true that the moment of ovulation, which prepares the female body for a possible conception, leads to greater desire for union at that time. But experience shows that waiting makes the desire grow.

What about the couples where one is often on the move? Can't they use condoms?

A naval officer told me one day, "When I've been away for three months and it is not the time to have sex with my wife when I get home, I can wait five more days for her. There are a thousand ways to express my love otherwise: sweet words, caresses, dinners out..." As for the condom, according to published statistics (France and USA), it has a failure rate of 14%.

What are the ingredients to "make it work"?

It is necessary for the husband to love his wife for who she is, and not just for the pleasure she can give.

Beyond the required motivation and discipline, the success of the method relies on the dialogue between the spouses, and on asking the right questions: Do we really want to delay a birth? For what reasons? It is also better when the husband knows where his wife is in her cycle. In some countries, a woman tells her husband that she can have relations by putting a rose in a vase. Moreover, some husbands regularly consult the chart that their wives fill out. It is also good to get help from a counselor, for greater self-confidence. There are such counselors in many cities. They can also be reached through internet: www.woombinternational.org

On the eve of the Synod on the Family and the beatification of Paul VI, can we say that the Billings method is the future?

Yes, this is the future, because women are tired of being supposedly liberated by all sorts of people who impose a liberation on them that doesn't set them free at all. They are also less and less in favor of contraception, which appears like nonsense at a time when we want to promote ecology. No doubt this is why the method is having growing success.

When Paul VI wrote *Humanae Vitae*, whose 50th anniversary we celebrate in 2018, he was widely criticized. But time proved him right. It is not insignificant that he will be beatified on the last day of the next Synod on the Family (October 19, 2014), which deals with this sensitive topic, among others.

<http://www.aleteia.org/en/health/article/natural-family-planning-why-use-the-billings-method-5247689507733504?>



Strong Science, Simple Method

by Sue Ek, Executive Director

Billings Ovulation Method™ Association – USA

During a recent phone conversation, an American obstetrician/gynecologist who was trained in the Billings Ovulation Method™ described his appreciation for the method saying, "there is beauty in its simplicity. It's very elegant."

Another ob/gyn, Mary Martin, M.D. of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma describes the way her medical practice was transformed after she attended a Billings Ovulation Method™ Teacher Training. "Learning the Billings Ovulation Method™ changed how I practice gynecology. I had previously stopped prescribing the Birth Control

Pill for moral and ethical reasons, but had been brainwashed into believing that oral contraceptives are the mainstay of treating gynecological problems. The Billings Ovulation Method™ clarified not only the signs and symptoms of fertility in a way that my specialty training had not, but also gave me a simple window into the endocrinology of the menstrual cycle which correlates with over 50 years of research.”

Developed in the early 1950s by Australian physicians, Drs. John and Lyn Billings of Melbourne, the Billings Ovulation Method™ (BOM or said aloud as “B.O.M.”) is now in over 100 countries around the world. What separates the BOM from other natural and artificial methods is its solid research. Over 850,000 hormonal assays have been done in Australia that confirm the four simple rules of the Billings Method are correct.

Through their extensive research, the Drs. Billings concluded that there is a natural ebb and flow of fertility and infertility in each cycle. They likened it to patterns and said that an unchanging pattern is infertile while a changing pattern is fertile. Simple.

Women are taught to pay attention to the sensation at the vulva (opening of their body) throughout the day. No internal investigations are done and no temperature taking. Similar to when we know we have the start of a cold or when our allergies are beginning women will notice a change in sensation before anything is seen. Once that change occurs, women know intuitively yet definitely that fertility has begun. If their intent is to postpone pregnancy then the couple waits to have intercourse. As the time of ovulation approaches and the hormones rise, a woman will feel wetter and wetter. When ovulation is imminent, slipperiness will signal high fertility and therefore the optimal time in the cycle when pregnancy can occur.

While the orchestra of hormones is in full concert during the fertile phase, specific types of cervical mucus are being produced to play their role. Defined by Swedish physician, Dr. Erik Odeblad of Umea, cervical crypts produce their own unique mucus which aid or prevent conception.

Many women have a time of infertility after menstruation. Called “the Basic Infertile Pattern”, it is a time when the hormones are low and the cervix is quiet. During this time, the cervix is blocked by G mucus. Dr. Odeblad’s research shows the G mucus prevents sperm and bacteria from entering the cervix. It forms a plug and is frequently referred to as “the G mucus plug”. Women with short cycles do not have time for the G mucus plug to be formed so they often do not have a time of infertility immediately following menstruation. Just as the G mucus forms a plug for some women in the early part of the cycle it is formed again after ovulation takes place. And it is present for the same purpose; to prevent sperm and bacteria from entering.

As the hormones rise and the fertile phase begins, different types of cervical mucus are produced. P2 mucus causes the G mucus plug to dissolve which in turn allows sperm to enter. S mucus provides swimming channels that allow rapid transport of sperm while the L mucus traps poor quality sperm, allowing the healthiest, best sperm to quickly reach the ovum (or “egg”). P6 mucus helps create the slippery sensation near the time of ovulation and once ovulation occurs, G mucus is once again the main mucus type and a new plug is formed and thus another time of infertility.

While couples do not need to know the various mucus types and specific hormones, understanding the concept of “thinking in patterns” is essential for easily using the Billings Ovulation Method™. As Dr. Martin said, “I explain the method to all of my patients, whether discussing infertility, the transition into menopause or to diagnose a gynecologic problem, and find that five minutes spent explaining the Billings Ovulation Method™ pays big dividends in determining first whether the patient is ovulating or not”.

The very high effectiveness rate of the Billings Method for postponing pregnancy is perhaps best exemplified in China where it is a government-approved method. Chinese couples are only allowed to use one of three choices: The Billings Ovulation Method™, the Birth Control Pill or the IUD. With millions of Chinese couples using it and thousands of Billings teachers in China, the government-run health clinics report a 99.5+ percent effectiveness rate in postponing pregnancy.

One of the hallmarks of any natural method of family planning is its reversibility. Couples can decide from cycle to cycle whether to achieve or postpone pregnancy.

In a retrospective study on the Billings Ovulation Method™ and achieving pregnancy that was conducted in 17 Billings Ovulation Method™ clinics in Australia between January 1, 1999 and December 12, 2003, there was a desired pregnancy rate of 78.3 percent in the first couple of cycles of trying. On average, from the initial instruction to conception, it took 4.7 months to conceive. There were 449 participants.

“I helped a couple who had been trying for a whole year with a history of irregular cycles to achieve a pregnancy in their first attempt after a short instruction,” said Santiago Gutierrez, M.D., Ob/Gyn of Texas.

Dr. Gutierrez had attended a training several years ago and reported that “this course has enabled me to relate a woman’s physiological and endocrinological status to a simple vulvar sensation or a changing/unchanging mucus pattern. It is so understandable since only God could create such a complex creature with multiple intricate interconnections and yet allow us to understand them in such a simple and basic manner.”

Speaking of God, the Billings Ovulation Method™ is something that couples of all religious affiliations or none at all can use. As Dr. John Billings used to quip, "The ovaries aren't Catholic!" The Billings Method is acceptable to all cultures. While the Catholic faith asks couples to use only natural means to avoid or achieve pregnancy, it is with thankful, peaceful hearts that today's couples can easily and effectively cooperate with God's plan.

While the Billings Method is simple to understand and use whether a woman has average, long or short cycles, is breastfeeding or approaching menopause, it is most effective when a couple learns from an accredited teacher. To find a Billings Ovulation Method™ teacher and/or learn more about this simple effective method, please visit www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org.



The Passion of Blessed Paul VI

'Humanae vitae'

Wednesday 22 October 2014
Catholic News Agency

FATHER Francesco di Felice worked at the Secretariat of State during the pontificate of Blessed Paul VI, and recently recounted the story behind the blessed Pope's 1968 encyclical which was received with widespread dissent.

In drafting *Humanae vitae*, his encyclical on the regulation of birth, Bl. Paul VI studied the work began by St. John XXIII, who created a 'commission for the study of population problems, the family, and births' in order to have a better understanding of the effects of contraceptives, Fr. di Felice told CNA.

Hormonal contraceptives having been introduced in 1960, in March 1963 – three months before his death – St. John XXIII established a Pontifical Commission on Birth Control to, as Bl. Paul VI wrote in his encyclical, 'examine views and opinions concerning married life, and especially on the correct regulation of births' and 'to provide the teaching authority of the Church with such evidence as would enable it to give an apt reply in this matter.'

St. John XXIII had appointed six persons to the commission, which Bl. Paul VI soon increased to 12. Then, in 1965, he further increased it to 75 members, plus a president, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and two deputies, Cardinals Julius Döpfner and John Heenan.

During that time there was much lobbying, even among Churchmen, to accept artificial means of contraception.

Cardinal Leo Suenens asked on October 29, 1964 for an opening to artificial birth control, and his opinion was backed by many participants of the Second Vatican Council.

In April 1967, a document favourable toward the birth control pill was published simultaneously in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the English magazine *The Tablet*, and the American magazine *National Catholic Reporter*.

The leaked report stressed that 70 members of the Pontifical Commission were favourable to the pill; but the document was in fact 'just one of the 12 reports presented to the Holy Father,' Bernardo Colombo, a professor of demographics and a member of the commission, revealed in an article he wrote in *Teologia*, the journal of the theological faculty of Milan and Northern Italy.

The same report which had been leaked to the media was sent to Bl. Paul VI, and it was divided into two parts: the opinion of the majority, supporting artificial contraception, and the minority report, arguing for the maintenance of traditional Catholic teaching.

Fr. di Felice told CNA that 'Paul VI took these two documents, one from the majority and the other from the minority. He brought them to his private chapel, and spent the entire night in prayer asking what he should do for the good of souls.'

'Then, in the first light of dawn, a strong decision came to him like an illumination, as if the Holy Spirit was comforting him, and he said, "This is what I should choose!"'

'And it was a huge choice,' the priest recounted, 'because if we had allowed the use of pills that alter the mystery of life, we would have altered the natural course, and that would have been a disaster.'

Bl. Paul VI himself recounted in the encyclical that 'when the evidence of the experts had been received, as well as the opinions and advice of a considerable number of Our brethren in the episcopate ... We were in a position to weigh with more precision all the aspects of this complex subject.'

Acknowledging that he was departing from the majority opinion of the commission, the blessed Pope wrote that 'the conclusions arrived at by the commission could not be considered by Us as definitive and absolutely certain, dispensing Us from the duty of examining personally this serious question. This was all the more necessary because, within the commission itself, there was not complete agreement concerning the moral norms to be proposed, and especially because certain approaches and criteria for a solution to this question had emerged which were at variance with the

moral doctrine on marriage constantly taught by the magisterium of the Church.'

'Consequently, now that We have sifted carefully the evidence sent to Us and intently studied the whole matter, as well as prayed constantly to God, We, by virtue of the mandate entrusted to Us by Christ, intend to give Our reply to this series of grave questions,' he concluded the first chapter of *Humanae vitae*.

When Bl. Paul VI published these words, public opinion was already oriented against the Church's principles which he had reaffirmed, and bitter disputes arose against the Church.

In an interview with *Corriere della Serra* in March, Pope Francis applauded Bl. Paul VI's 'prophetic genius,' saying that 'he had the courage to take a stand against the majority, to defend moral discipline, to exercise a cultural restraint, to oppose present and future neo-Malthusianism.'

In his last address to the College of Cardinals, delivered June 23, 1978, Bl. Paul VI anticipated *Humanae vitae*'s 10th anniversary, saying it suffered from 'a certain climate of expectation that ... engendered the idea of supposed concessions, or facilities, or liberalization in the Church's teaching on morality and marriage.'

'It seems to us that a decade having passed since its promulgation, a sufficient period allows us to evaluate better – following the confirmations of serious science – the scope of the decisions made before the Lord, and it will be an occasion, also, to reiterate the important principle that, in the wake of the recently completed Council, we might enunciate with a more accurate formulation: the principle of respect for the laws of nature, which – in the words of Dante – "takes her course / from the divine intellect and his art"; the principle of a conscious and ethically responsible paternity.'

In fact, as a consequence of the contesting of the document worldwide, Bl. Paul VI never wrote another encyclical, though he remained Pope for another 10 years.

In the five years preceding *Humanae vitae*, he had written seven encyclicals.

Because of all this, Bl. Paul VI's Secretary of State, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, would later say, 'On the morning of July 25, 1968, Paul VI celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit, asked for light from on high and signed it. It was his most difficult signature, one of his most glorious signatures. He signed his own passion.'

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/the-passion-of-blessed-paul-vi-humanae-vitae-15253/>

Vale Professor Nicholas Tonti-Filippini

Professor Nicholas Tonti-Filippini MA
(Monash) PhD (Melb), FHERDSA, KSCG

Knight of Obedience, Sovereign Military Order
of St. John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta

Requiescat in Pace

Dear friends

The news of the entry into eternal life today of Professor Nicholas Tonti Filippini has not come as a surprise. With faith and fortitude, supported by his devoted wife Dr Mary Walsh and his loving family, he has battled with a series of grave illnesses over many years, giving all of his friends and colleagues an example of courage and determination to serve to the end of his mortal existence on earth.

As the Director of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne, I recognise with deep gratitude his brilliant contributions to the fields of bioethics, his faithful service of the Church nationally and internationally, his ecumenical witness and, through tireless work in many government bodies, a great service to the Australian community.

Nicholas was a fearless advocate in public discourse for he believed that the Christian voice should be heard in public debate.

In recognition of his service to the Church, Pope Benedict XVI made him a Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great in 2009. He was also a Knight in Obedience of the Sovereign Military Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta.

Nicholas has ensured that his legacy of teaching in our Institute will continue through the students he has taught and mentored as well as by publishing in these last years of his life a series of volumes on current issues in bioethics.

We mourn his passing, a loss to us all. We celebrate his life on earth and we entrust him to the merciful love of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

In Dno.

+ Peter J Elliott

Most Rev. Peter J. Elliott, MA Oxon, MA Melb, STD
Auxiliary Bishop
Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

7 November 2014



To all WOOMB International Affiliates and friends and to all Billings Ovulation Method® Teachers

Re: Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini



Dear All,

It is with very heavy hearts that we write to tell you of the death overnight of our dear friend and mentor, Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini. He had suffered from renal failure for more than thirty years, existing on frequent dialysis, and last night he lost the battle with his illness. His family and a priest were with him at his death and he was ready to go. But we were not ready to lose him.

Nick has been a friend of the Billings Ovulation Method® for many years. He established the St Vincent's Hospital Bioethics Centre in Melbourne where he worked with Dr John Billings. It was the first hospital bioethics centre in Australia and the model for many that have followed.

Nick's wife Dr Mary Walsh has been an accredited teacher of the Billings Ovulation Method® for thirty years and is the doctor who established the first Fertility Assessment Clinic in Australia working with Billings Ovulation Method® teachers to provide holistic, natural care to couples wishing to conceive.

Nick and Mary were joint presidents of the Ovulation Method Research & Reference Centre of Australia for some years and have maintained an informal specialist consultancy role to the Directors of WOOMB International and OMR&RCA Ltd. Nick also represented OMR&RCA for two terms on the Natural Family Planning Advisory Board which advised the Australian Bishops on the delivery and distribution of government funding for natural family planning.

Most recently, Nick was responsible for organising the National Fertility Conference, held at the JP II Institute in Melbourne, which brought together practitioners of the three NFP methods offered in Australia together with Catholic physicians interested in natural fertility

management for a weekend of intense discussion and collaboration.

He was a Permanent Fellow and Associate Dean of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Melbourne. He held a PhD in Philosophy from Monash University and in 2012 Pope Benedict XVI made him a Knight Commander of St Gregory the Great.

Nick could be an uncompromising friend. He was a man of enormous integrity. We thank God for his life and witness to the truth of the Gospel, but most of all for his love and friendship. Please pray for the repose of his soul and for his grieving family.

With love and prayers,

Kerry Bourke, Joan Clements, Marian Corkill, Marie Marshall

Directors

7 November 2014



Tributes

Following are some of the messages we have received from many of you since sending out the news of Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini's death.

*We will pray for Dr. Tonti-Filippini and his family.
Benjamín, WOOMB de Mexico*

It is such a shock to receive this news this morning. Although I knew he has been on dialysis for a few decades, he looked well when we met him in September at the National Fertility Conference and had a good few chit chats then, including the coffee evening at his (& Mary's) home.

My thoughts go back to the time when I first met Nick after he gave a talk at one of the OMR&RCA conferences when I first started attending about a decade ago.

Our condolences especially to Mary and children and immediate family but also to WOOMB Directors was we have lost a great colleague.

Kind regards,
Lek-Lim Chan, WOOMB Malaysia

*That was sad news to receive. He was a wonderful man. Our prayers are with all of you, most especially sweet Mary.
Sue Ek, BOMA-USA*

Sad news. So he resting in peace! My condolence to his family. Inese Mekša, BOM teacher, Latvia

It is very sad to know we have lost a great person, especially to the WOOMB International. May Trung and I send our condolences and prayers to Mary and her family and to you all.

*Kind regards,
Trung & On Lien*

Our prayers and condolences to his family and all his Billings family throughout the world.

Maria R. Garcia, Associate Director, WOOMB International

We join the prayers and condolences of his family. Peace to his soul.

Enrique y Lily, Billings Venezuela

Nuestras condolencias para su familia y nuestras oraciones por el eterno descanso de su alma.

Atte, Familia Billings Costa Rica

With sadness we received the news of the death of Dr. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini. We will pray to God for his soul and entrust his family to always feel guided and accompanied by the great Billings Family.

Rest in peace.

WOOMB España

We understand and share your deep sadness. We pray for Nicholas, his wife Mary and their family. We pray too for their friends in Australia and other parts of the world, specially BOM teachers.

Kind regards,

Gérard and Marie Renard, Drs François and Caroline Terrenoir and French BOM family

Big loss on earth, great joy in heaven, condolences to the Billings family in the world

Jorge Neira Miranda

Please extend our deepest sympathies to Dr Tonti-Filippini's family from WOOMB Canada

Ann Murray, WOOMB Canada President

Our condolences be extended to Mary and the children. May the Lord comfort them, and to the WOOMB Directors and WOOMB families.

WOOMB Hong Kong

Nicholas is now in eternal love. He was really a friend, getting people together and trying to make this world a place of peace and unity. In this moment I feel gratefulness for the gift of his life and the example he gave us daily; Nicholas lived in love.

John, Lynn and Nicholas: please continue to give us your strength so we can show the true meaning of love as you did.

Together to all the Billings family we pray for Mary and her family,

Dr. Pilar Vigil

Kindly accept our deepest condolences for the demise of our great Family member. May his soul rest in Peace

Pervez Roderick, WOOMB Pakistan

With deep sorrow we got the news of departure of dear Nicholas ,same time sure that he's enjoying what he deserves in Heaven ...together with our Dear Lyn & John.

Our condolences to Mary and the children. We are quite sure that our Holy Mary and our Savior the Lord comfort them, and more Providence to the WOOMB Directors and WOOMB families.

Prof. Dr Mounir Farag, WOOMB Egypt
Saint Joseph Institute for the Family, WOOMB , Bioethics Board Member Pontifical Academy for Life - Vatican,
WOOMB Board consultant

Please assure Mary of our prayers here in Ireland also. We have fond memories of their visit here.

*Mark Whitty
Billings Ireland*

How sad it was to receive the news of the death of Dr. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini. We would like to send our special prayers and condolences to Mary Walsh and his family, as well as WOOMB Directors and WOOMB Family.

We particularly pray for the soul of Dr. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini to be with our Loving God.

United in the Risen LOrd,

Sr. Theresa Phu Nguyen, WOOMB Vietnam

It's a painful news for all the team!

With such a great effort for him to organize the Fertility Conference! God will reward him for his generous work!

I'll pray for all of you and his family!

*Raffaella
Dr Raffaella Pingitore*

Love sympathy and prayers for you and Nick's beloved family on his passing. He was a man of enormous resourcefulness in achieving so much whilst coping with significant adversity. He carried his cross with huge dignity and love. May he rest in light eternal and may grace and peace surround you and his precious wife and children at this time.

Mass will be offered for the repose of his soul.

With love in our Lord

Cathy Black and the community of WOOMB New Zealand

The Italian BOM Team join the suffering of Mary Walsh and all Australian Billings Family, remembering Dr. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini with particular esteem and love.

We had the opportunity to meet him on some occasions and we're strongly aware of how great was his contribution to the building of a culture of life, fundament of all our job in natural fertility regulation.

We thank the Lord for Dr. Nicholas commitment and testimony and we entrust him to God's Love, praying with confidence for all his loved ones, particularly for the dear Mary.

Paola Pellicanò, Elena Giacchi, Aurora Saporosi, Paola Faraone

Please extend our condolences to Dr. Mary Walsh and the family of Dr Nicholas Tonti-Filippini. We will lift them up in prayer at this time of grief. May he rest in peace.

From all of us at BOMA-TT

Mrs. Pauline Phelps, Coordinator, Trinidad & Tobago

We from WOOMB Philippines would like to extend our condolences to the family and relatives of Dr. Nicholas Tonti-Filippini. We will pray to God for his soul and may God be with his family.

Rally Ganar

Over the past 100 years God has blessed Australia and the universal Church with gifted men and women who in their humility use their considerable talents as labourers in the Lord's vineyard, especially in the vitally important part of the vineyard, marriage and family.

Nick was one of those men with whom God blessed Australia and the universal Church and freely used his considerable talents as a labourer in the Lord's vineyard. May I offer you my condolences and prayers to help support you in this time of adjustment of no longer having him physically present with you, to having him as a member of the larger Billings family in Heaven.

With my love and continued prayers,

Fr. Joseph Hattie, OMI

Spiritual Advisor to WOOMB International

I cannot express the sadness I feel on hearing this news. I know he will be in God's hands and my heart goes out to Mary and the children as they grieve his loss. Please pass this on to Mary as I do not have her email address. Love and God's blessings, Michele Lando

We know Nicholas has been very ill for a long time and heading home for his eternal reward will be a blessing, but as you say in the letter, we will miss him, his good sense and all the wonderful work he undertook so capably, in spite of ill health.

Loving condolences to Mary and their family,

God bless,

Jane Munro, Victoria

What sad, sad news greeted us all this morning on email. Sincere condolences to Nick's wife Mary and family on his death. What a man of immense integrity and wisdom. He stood for all that is good and right and was a true witness for 'Life'.

What good and true intercessories our work has in heaven these days.

Board and Facilitation Team of Loving for Life WA.

My deepest sympathy to you all on the death of Nick, a very special person & gentleman of integrity. I met him several times over the years, in Melbourne & John & Lyn Billings held him in such high regard. I was very aware of his ongoing kidney problem & he was having home dialysis then. He will be resting with the Lord. I will keep you all, & Mary & her family in my thoughts & prayers.

With loving prayers from,

Shelley Sexton, Tasmania

There would have been a great welcome for Nick in Heaven – he has earned a great reward.

Pauline Feehan, Northern Territory



Honorary Doctorate to Dr Robert Walley MaterCare International

On Saturday, September 20, 2014, Dr. Robert Walley, founder of MaterCare International, was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from the John Paul II Institute of Marriage and Family in Melbourne, Australia. The doctorate was given to Dr. Walley during the 2014 National Fertility Conference, hosted by the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family and the Life, Marriage and Family Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Walley stated, "I am deeply honoured, and I thank the Melbourne Council and Section of the St John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family very much. Unfortunately, my wife Susan could not be present, as I always share such events with her as without her presence at home and her support and advice, I would have done nothing. Both of us have been challenged by the Lord in ways we had not dreamed of and we have responded as best we could with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Mother of God. I accepted this honorary degree on behalf of all the MaterCare International staff, generous benefactors, volunteers and supporters from around the world. Without their contributions of time and money, dedication and hard work, none of our projects would have become a reality."

Mothers continue to be chronically neglected, obstetricians and health care providers around the world continue to have their faith challenged by governing organizations, we pray for those women, men and children struggling to bring to light the urgency of maternal health care and upholding the dignity of life.



*Dr. Robert Walley
Executive Director, MaterCare International
Professor Emeritus of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
receives his Honorary Doctorate flanked by the late Dr
Nicholas Tonti-Filippini and Most Rev Peter Elliott*



Unmet Need for Contraception: Issues and Challenges

Studies in Family Planning 45(2) June 2014

John Cleland, Sarah Harbison, and Iqbal H. Shah*

INTRODUCTION

Unmet need for contraception has been a central indicator for monitoring the progress of family planning programs for 25 years. The purpose of this article is to provide a broad context for the more focused contributions that follow in this special issue. The validity and measurement of the concept of unmet need are discussed. We then present regional trends among married women since 1970. Major reductions in unmet need have been achieved, with the clear exception of sub-Saharan Africa. Less success can be claimed in addressing the needs of sexually active unmarried women, who contribute nearly 20 percent to overall unmet need in developing countries. Prominent reasons for unmet need in settings where contraceptive uptake is low include social resistance and insufficient information concerning methods. As contraceptive use increases, the importance of these reasons wanes, but concerns regarding side effects and health impact remain a barrier, and discontinued users now constitute a large proportion of those with unmet need. Drawing on these reasons, we outline measures to further reduce unmet need. (Studies in Family Planning 2014; 45[2]: 105–122)

Contraceptive services differ from nearly all other health interventions in one crucial regard. Whereas individuals can be presumed to value preventive or curative measures to protect against disease and premature death, no such assumption can be made in the case of pregnancy prevention, because most couples will wish to have children at some point. Partly for this reason, the potential impact on fertility of state-sponsored family planning programs has always attracted skepticism. Mere improved access to contraceptive methods, it is argued, will have only a trivial effect on childbearing, because the fundamental cause of fertility decline is socioeconomic change that reduces the need and desire for, or raises the costs of, large families.

In response, supporters of the international family planning movement were obliged to demonstrate the existence of a need, or potential demand, for averting pregnancy in the poor, high-fertility countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. As discussed by Bradley and Casterline in this issue, the initial indicator of this need was termed the "KAPGap," denoting the existence of women who stated in surveys that they wanted no more children but were doing nothing to realize this wish. This term was replaced in 1978 by "unmet need for contraception" and since then the concept of unmet need has played an important role in family planning research, evaluation, and advocacy (Westoff 1978). Unmet need has proved to be an invaluable bridge between a human rights and feminist approach to fertility control and a demographic-economic

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

rationale. Addressing unmet need is clearly consistent with human rights, and an influential study showed that the fertility reduction goals of most programs could be achieved by fulfilling the needs of women who stated a desire to avoid or postpone future births (Sinding, Ross, and Rosenfield 1994). At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, addressing unmet need replaced fertility reduction as the central justification for investment in family planning. Its legitimacy was further strengthened in 2007 when it was added as an indicator to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and again in 2012 at the London Summit on Family Planning.

In this article, we discuss the concept and measurement of unmet need, describe levels and trends, analyze lack of access and other reasons for unmet need, and outline actions to reduce it. We introduce the specialist articles that follow and place them in the context of existing knowledge.

* John Cleland is Emeritus Professor of Medical Demography, Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London WC1E 7HT, United Kingdom. Email: John.Cleland@lshtm.ac.uk. Sarah Harbison is Senior Adviser for Research and Evaluation, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of Population and Reproductive Health, Washington, DC. Iqbal H. Shah is Director of the Center for Research and Evaluation in Reproductive Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA.

This extract is published here to highlight attitudes we face in trying to advance the spread of the Billings Ovulation Method® especially in the African continent. The full article can be found in the Journal Studies in Family Planning 45(2) June 2014.

WOOMB International is proud that two of our Directors, Marie Marshall and Marian Corkill have very recently conducted a Teacher Training Program in Kenya for 60 participants from different countries of Africa. Please pray for these teachers as they return to their communities to spread this good news. A report of the Program will be included in the next edition of the Bulletin of WOOMB International.



Singapore - 3 year report

President: Dr Douglas Ong
Vice President: Pollen & Genevieve Soh
Secretary: Andy & Sheon Wee
Spiritual Director: Fr David Garcia, OP

The NFP Service was established in 1973 to provide a morally acceptable way of family planning in the light of the Church's teaching as stated by Pope Paul VI:

"In the task of transmitting life, therefore, they are not free to proceed completely at will, as if they could determine in a wholly autonomous way the honest path to follow; but they must conform their activity to the creative intention of God..." (Humanae Vitae, 1968).

A parish-based service for all persons, it is managed by a committee elected every two years with a group of about 30 trained and dedicated instructors and trainees.

The service is open to all who subscribe to the pro-life philosophy and gathers most of its clients through the Marriage Preparation Courses (MPC) and Catholic Engaged Encounter (CEE).

2011 REVIEW

2011 was a year of consolidation and renewal with a focus on training and updating.

Year	2010	2011
New Couples	337	322
Repeat Visits	614	568

STEERING GROUP MEETINGS AND CONTINUING NFP EDUCATION

Three Continuing Medical Education (CME) NFP sessions were conducted for Instructors viz.

- 26 March on a complicated chart with no ovulatory pattern
- 21 May on Mucus types, and the post contraceptive chart, surprise pregnancy chart
- 24 September on non-drug factors which affect mucus; complicated anovulatory chart

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Dr. Douglas Ong and Fr. David Garcia were the speakers at the Catholic Medical Guild (CMG) and Marriage Preparation Course (MPC) forum on 17 May 2011 at CAEC subfertility entitled, "Heart Issues, Hard Decisions; and Subfertility – Ethical Options for Catholic couples".

The forum examined why IVF is not an ethical option, and provided the scientific and ethical bases for the alternatives that are available to Catholic couples who find themselves in this dilemma.

2012 REVIEW

The overall number of couples seen at NFP's 14 centres

across Singapore in 2012 decreased compared to 2011. 195 couples were from MPC while 79 couples were from CEE.

Year	2011	2012
New Couples	322	299
Repeat Visits	568	489

OUTREACH

A new initiative to raise awareness of NFP at the Church of the Holy Cross took off with the support of parish priest, Fr Richards Ambrose. NFP classes for parishioners are organised on a quarterly basis. The response has been encouraging, with up to 10 couples enquiring about the class each time. Most of the couples were married couples hoping to achieve pregnancy. This arrangement has also created opportunities for couples to learn NFP if they had missed it during their marriage preparation.

MEETINGS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

The NFP Steering Committee met in January, March, April, June, August, September and November in 2012. Continuing Medical Education (CME) for instructors was held four times in 2012 at the Church of Christ the King. 6 of 8 new instructors received certificates upon completion of the course, centre attachments and a written test.

RETREAT AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY

NFP's yearly retreat was held on the eve of Passion Sunday at Christ the King Church. Fr David Garcia was the retreat master for the day sharing on "Not so much on prayer but on how we approach prayer as it should be". A total of 24 NFPians attended the day of recollection.

A family gathering at SAFRA Jurong was held on 13 November. It was a day filled with fun, games, food and fellowship by the pool.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

A Medical Advisory Team to the NFP Service was set up by the President, Dr Douglas Ong. Dr Cosmas Chen (General Surgery), Dr Gabriel Seow (Family Medicine) and Dr John Hui (Family Medicine) are part of the team who provides phone or email support to instructors on medical-related NFP questions so as to better advise couples when necessary.

Couples can now use an online NFP charting application on their smartphones for a nominal charge by the application developer.

2013 REVIEW

The overall number of couples seen at NFP's 14 centres in 2013 saw a marginal decrease. 70% of couples came from MPC and 25% of couples came from CEE.

Year	2012	2013
New Couples	299	291
Repeat Visits	489	445

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING WOOMB CONFERENCE

The Biennial International Conference was represented by a Singapore delegate of 17 teachers, spouses and families. Held outside of Melbourne for the first time, the East Malaysian city of Kuching, Sarawak played host to the event, held from 26 to 28 April 2013.

Following the conference, a five-day teacher's training programme was organised and three of NFP's instructors participated. The conference and training programme was an opportunity for the NFP teachers to meet fellow teachers of the Billings Ovulation Method™ from around the world, sharing their experiences and gathering new updates on the Method's development which has been used to instruct couples for over four decades.

AFFILIATE OF WOOMB INTERNATIONAL

Having promoted and imparted the Billings Ovulation Method™ since the early 1970s, the NFP service in Singapore was officially inducted into the international Billings family worldwide in August 2013.

With the affiliation, Singapore NFP services now have access to the materials and resources provided by Billings, and learners can be assured that the theory and instructions will be consistent with the information passed on by trained certified teachers.

MEETINGS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

The NFP steering committee met in January, March, April, July and October in 2013. The biannual general meeting, originally scheduled for end 2013 had been postponed to January 2014, seeing most of the key office holders retaining their post for a further two-year term.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) for instructors was held four times in 2013 at the Church of Christ the King; prior to the MPC weekend when the NFP session was to be delivered.

SOCIAL ACTIVITY

An annual family gathering at SAFRA Changi chalet was held on 2 November 2013. As with all past social gatherings, it was a day filled with fun, games, good food and fellowship.

Pakistan

Please find attached some pictures of our group of new Billings Ovulation Method® Teachers from the Ministry of Population Welfare, Government of Pakistan. We have been working with them for the last one year on a weekly basis. They are from different parts of Pakistan. Some come from deserts of Sindh, some are from snow capped mountains of Himalayas, Gilgit, Chitral and also from the Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa province near Afghanistan boarder.

All of them are Family Planning Service providers who provide their services in Government hospitals as well as door to door services in the far flung villages and towns. They are the most strategic group. They will now provide

the Billings Ovulation Method® as one of the alternative methods to those who do not want to take contraceptives for medical or religious reasons. They are so impressed with this Method that they vowed to use this for their personal life and are correctly making their own charts for the last many months.

Next month we will hold a graduation ceremony when we will give them their certificates as Teachers of Billings Ovulation Method®. We took these pictures yesterday, when we finally concluded our one year teachers training course.

Pervez Roderick



Philippines

Report of Billings Ovulation Method® Teacher Training Program held in the Diocese of Talibon, Bohol, over 3rd to 5th October 2014. Sixty participants attended representing the different parishes of the diocese. They will use this knowledge in their apostolic work, especially in pre-marriage seminars. Linda and Rally Ganar and their colleague Carol conducted the training program.



Time was devoted to how to use the slide Rule in teaching the Billings Ovulation Method® and how to chart. How to interpret the chart in order to understand the hormones and how to apply the rules correctly.

Many of the participants were husband and wife teams and all worked diligently to master the Method so they can share it in their local parishes.



Malaysia

Dear Colleagues

I thought it appropriate to share with you a great celebration we just had in our Archdiocese of Kuching over the weekend because it involves a man who has the BOM close at heart and who paved the way for BOM to reach its position in the Archdiocese today.

He is none other than Archbishop Emeritus Dato Seri Peter Chung who lead and guided our Archdiocese for 28 years from 1975 to 2003. I take liberty to share his autobiography taken from the souvenir booklet.

The celebration began on Friday 26 Sep with a Mass commemorating the 60th anniversary of his sacerdotal ordination. He was the first priest to be ordained on Sarawak soil, having fled from China shortly before that. Then yesterday we had a public dinner to celebrate his 86th birthday.

I suppose having been through difficult times and sad parting with his family in China, he became a very very pastoral person. He saw the need for a strong natural family planning team and in 1994 after he learnt that I had gone to Penang for BOM teacher training, he called me in to ask if I would lead a proper BOM team which I accepted. In 2003, when I informed him that the Golden jubilee conference as coming, within a few days he called me in and told me that he had decided to send 4 delegates without my asking for funding.

Kind regards,
Lek-Lim Chan
29 Sept 2014

Argentina

Billings Ovulation Method™ work in Argentina by CAF (BOM National Coordinating Centre, affiliated to WOOMB International) and related organizations.

It's with great pleasure that we inform to WOOMB International the main actions followed in this finished year to promote the BOM in our country and elsewhere.

1) Work in Argentina

a) Teacher Training Courses:

* One main intensive basic BOM TTP was given in Tucuman city (Tucumán province), in the north part of the country, from 20th to 23th June.

A very active and motivated group works there under the coordination of their leader, Mrs Susana Teran. She had been updated previously in 2006 and 2007 when WOOMB Directors came to Argentina. So it was her dream to be able to organize one TTP in her place, because their group is like a kind of reference in the northwestern region, having supported many groups who want to teach the BOM. The experience was wonderful, and a core group of BOM teachers with much clinical experience was refreshed and updated and "sent" again to continue giving the good news of the BOM. There were participants from other provinces: Jujuy, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Chaco, Corrientes y Santa Fe, besides the ones from Tucuman- see attached map. The local organization will coordinate the regional efforts from now on.

* The Santa Fe group organized again an annual course from April to November, with each full Saturday of classes. The content of the program was based on the BOM curriculum, but as it was directed to Catholic agents it included some theological and philosophical themes too. They continue doing a fantastic job in their region. Some of the new participants were young couples who have added much strength to the group. (Marie and Marian could meet some of them in april 2014 in Bs. As.!). They use the WOOMB Curriculum for training purposes.



b) Other initiatives:

* The national BOM website, www.billingsargentina.org was completed. The history of the BOM in Argentina was written and distributed for feedback. Finally a preliminary version was uploaded in the website (sent to you in 2013). It includes a facebook page where mainly national news

and initiatives are described (active since 29th may 2013).

* The BOM teachers from La Plata, Silvia and Erica began giving BOM talks to health personnel and then about fertility awareness to women who participate in CONIN La Plata centre, a non governmental effort to support very poor and malnourished communities living in the surroundings.

The challenge is huge because these women live in the worst of the worlds, with not only basic needs uncovered but generally in very irregular and difficult relationships (no marriage, no single couple, much abortion and contraception, etc.). The idea is to make a pilot experience gaining experience on which strategies could be useful to insert the BOM in these communities.

* Unfortunately the pilot trial about the accreditation process couldn't be completed, though some potential members of a future Education Committee prepared study cases for group discussion and revision. This task should be reinitiated and advanced so the accreditation could be officially offered.

2) Working with WOOMB Latinoamerica

- Electronic Bulletin

We could make and deliver two numbers, in August and December. Several good comments and feedback from readers tell us that the effort is worth. Slowly but steadily we are contributing to assure that the authentic BOM literature is known and appreciated in the spanish BOM community.

- Translations

This ongoing task is always on the diary. CAF together with Maria Garcia and the recent adding of Maria de las Nieves Freira advanced the translation of the new www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org website. Fortunately the main sections of the website are now active (august 2014). This is wonderful for the Spanish community and for us because we can link our own web page to some of them.

- Collaboration with the organization of the Second Woomb Latinoamerica Meeting in Brazil After the participation of Heloisa Pereira of CENPLAFAM Brazil in WOOMB Diamond Conference, and with the confirmation of the possibility to count on WOOMB Directors next year in South America, we began to organize this hoped meeting having regular skype meetings during all the rest of the year.

Challenges for the following years

- Give support to the already well trained BOM teachers acting in different parts of the country, assuring that they use the authentic BOM materials in the training and teaching;

- Advance the accreditation process, to be officially offered in the country in the future.

- Insert the BOM in the health sector through different initiatives.

In the name of the Argentinean BOM family, we appreciate and give thanks for your constant encouragement and ongoing communication through the OMR&RCA Electronic Bulletin, the new Woomb web page and the emails from headquarters.

Gustavo Machado
International Associate
Asociación CAF Nieves Senderos de la Naturaleza
Bs As, Argentina

Trinidad and Tobago

We at the Billings Ovulation Method Association of Trinidad and Tobago (BOMA-TT) are very happy to be affiliates of WOOMB International. In this our second year as affiliates, we continue to gain experience in teaching the Billings Ovulation Method® in our country.

We have been busy running Seminars mostly in the past year. The Seminar for young people was put as priority as the Auxiliary Bishop Robert Llanos has asked us to focus on informing our youth about Billings. Since the beginning of 2014, we have held twenty "Is Love Forever?" Seminars in Secondary Schools, where we discuss the value of the virtue of Chastity, following this we discuss the purpose of Marriage and then we introduce the Billings Ovulation Method®. We have held six "All About Natural Fertility Regulation: Highly Effective Family Planning for the 21st Century" Seminars across the country which has been open to Parishes and to the general public. At these Seminars we discuss the Method first and then the philosophy behind the Method. Some of the clients that are with us today came from these seminars for adults.



Susan Henry and Pauline Phelps spoke at a Diocesan Meeting for all the priests and deacons in the country. We presented to them about the two Seminars that we host and requested their support, this request has opened up many doors for us.

From the meeting with the Clergy, we were invited to offer the "Is Love Forever?" Seminar to all the Confirmation teachers so that they could either have us host it for their

groups or they be trained in teaching the material in the Seminar. We held two meetings with these Catechists and look forward to supporting the Archdiocese in their effort to promote the Church's teachings on Marriage at the Confirmation group level, instead of just before marriage at the Marriage Preparation courses.

Also from the meeting with Clergy, we were invited to have a monthly column in our local Catholic News weekly newspaper. We have put in three articles thus far on – The Natural Law, Marriage and Contraception versus NFP.

This year has also seen us represented on our local Catholic Channel, Trinity TV, which is now on every day. We have a little video advertising that is played on the channel. We have also been invited to speak about the Method on the Breakfast with the Deacons show, Trinity Update and Ask Why interviews.

We were also involved in spreading the message of the Theology of the Body for Teens, as this programme supports the virtue of Chastity and gives support to our message as it offers "fertile" ground for us. Susan Henry is currently running the programme with a team of volunteers at her Parish. Other Parishes are looking into setting up this programme also due to our advertising it.

Our fantastic Billings Teachers continue to volunteer their time to teach the Method at Marriage Preparation courses across the country on an ongoing basis.

Tanzania

Introduction

The family strengthening association (UFATA-Uimarishaji wa Familia Tanzania) is registered under Nr 9420 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tanzania in 1998. UFATA is non-profit organization and is affiliated to WOOMB international. UFATA was initiated by Sr Dr Birgitta. The association has now 62 branches in 21 dioceses of Tanzania, 3,506 persons have been trained to teach couples and to conduct the Family life seminars. Our goal is to teach Natural Family planning particularly Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) as well as teaching family life.

The headquarter of UFATA is at Ndanda. We also have BOM Office in St Benedict's Ndanda Hospital and is under Hospital managerial activities. Staffs in that office teach people about Natural Family planning particularly Billings Ovulation Method. People are being taught how to use BOM to postpone pregnancy or child spacing or achieving pregnancy or select a baby boy or a baby girl. BOM also teaches about Reproductive health and Family Life.

The Secretariat of UFATA National wide.

1. Mr Edger Nannyambe- UFATA Chairperson
2. Mr J.H Kihongwe- UFATA Deputy Chairperson
3. Mr Mathew Ng'onye- UFATA General Secretary
4. Miss Suzana Kambanga- UFATA Treasurer

Advisors.

1. Sr Dr Birgitta Schnell OSB
2. Rev Fr Dr Aidan G. Msafiri(PhD), Senior Lecturer, STE

MMUCO Mtwara, Coordinator for WOOMB Africa (World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings)

3. Msgr Julian Kangalawe (Mafinga Junior Seminary).

Staff who participated in conducting courses and seminars organized by headquarters' office in 2013.

1. Sr Dr Birgitta Schnell OSB
2. Miss Suzana Kambanga
3. Mr Augustine W. Madenge
4. Mr Faustin E. Mtenda
5. Mr Mathew Ng'onye
6. Sr Mariana Francis Sitta OSS
7. Sigfrid Millanzi.

BOM Teachers in BOM Office and out-reach

1. Sr Dr Birgitta OSB- In charge of BOM Office
2. Mrs Elizabeth Sapuli, BOM Teacher
3. Miss Suzana Kambanga, E.N
4. Mrs Neema Ng'onye, BOM Teacher

Activities:

We conducted 103 seminars, meetings and training courses for 4,420 adults on Billings Ovulation Method, Family Life, Education for Life, STI and AIDS.

During our activities we stressed chastity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage.

110 ladies and gentlemen passed their examination on Billings Method. They came from 15 Regions of Tanzania and from Kenya, Namibia and India. The total number of people, who have passed the examination on Billings Method in our Register book has reached 3,354 (on national level). 126 people got individual counselling on how to prevent Sexual Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV. The number of attendances in our BOM Office in the Hospital this year was as follows:

For achieving pregnancy

First attendance	408
Second attendance	99
Third attendance	49
Fourth attendance	22

For child spacing

First attendance	902
Second attendance	101
Third attendance	100
Fourth attendance	31

In addition 25 people got these instructions as marriage preparation.

Total attendances 567

Among these 260 attended as couple.

Reported achieved pregnancies were 5 couples succeeded to choose a baby boy, 1 couple succeeded to choose a baby girl. The number of our BOM acceptor's register

at Ndanda has reached 4,693. 40 BOM teachers attended a BOM TOT course of 3 weeks, 24 to our BOM Office at Shangani Dispensary Mtwara, 48 to Newala for the convenience of the clients to avoid another long distance to come from their home to us.

First attendance is the number of women, who have been offered and explained Billings Method privately and briefly. Many of them were pregnant mothers from the antenatal clinic.

Second attendance is the number of women, who came back with their own chartings.

They got more explanations according to their chartings.

Third and fourth attendance is the number of women, who are coming back with their chartings and questions.

INFERTILITY CLINIC

Previous use of contraception of clients who attended the Office for achieving pregnancy.

Type of contraceptive	Number of clients who used contraceptives	Percentage
Loop	4	1%
Pill	39	5%
Depot provera	56	7%
Implanon	21	3%
Condom	11	2%
Total of contraceptive users	131	16%
No use of contraceptives	693	84%
TOTAL	827	100%

Out of 827 clients who attended the office for infertility 408 – 50% had used contraceptives previously. The duration of using oral hormonal contraceptives was between 1 and 11 years.

Women who had implanon were suffering from irregular bleedings due to this drug, others from abdominal pain, swelling on the arm, vaginal discharge, numbness on the arm or leg, headache or blurred vision. One of these mothers had got implanon during a campaign while she was pregnant for 7 months.

BOM Attendance in Mobile Clinics and Shangani Dispensary

Mobile clinics + Dispensary1.

	Attendance	Re-attendance	Total
Nandanga	22	93	115
Mkang'u	21	75	96
Shangani Dispensary 6	16		22
TOTAL	49	184	233

On national level 29 BOM-Instructors of 6 dioceses have sent their report. The summary of their statistics shows that 644 have attended for achieving pregnancy and 767 for child spacing. 4,420 people got information about Billings Method through courses and seminars.

SPECIAL EVENT IN 2013. (DEATH OF SR DR BIRGITTA OSB). For more than 50 years Sr Dr Birgitta OSB worked as a medical doctor in Germany and Africa. She had been worked in Tanzania for more than 40 years. To sustain and protect life from its beginning, to enhance its quality and decrease suffering and pain was the aim of her life. She was struggling to find a proper way to rescue people from suffering they were getting from artificial Natural Family Planning. She managed to get knowledge concerning Billings Ovulation Method in Australia from the founder of BOM, Dr John Billings. She then engaged in conducting many seminars about it all over Tanzania eg Songea, Kigonsera, Dodoma, University of Dar es salaam, TTC Chang'ombe, Technical collage Dar es Salaam and many other places. She conducted a massive number of BOM courses here at Ndanda. She initiated UFATA in Tanzania in 1998. Our dear Sr Birgitta moved on to eternal life very quickly, within half an hour of agony between 3.00 and 3.30 a.m. of Sunday 27 October 2013 and was buried on 28.10.2013 at Ndanda Abbey graveyard. She passed away while we were still in need of her. After her Death Sr Therese (Mother Superior of Tut zing Sisters of Ndanda) took over some responsibilities of Sr Birgitta pertaining UFATA.

Hong Kong - China

In the reviewed period, Family Service, Caritas - Hong Kong continued to have BOM teachers training course held in China and Hong Kong as well as acting as a bridge with the Shanxi Centre being supported by WOOMB International. Program highlights in the past three years are as follows:

Teacher' Training Program in Hebei, China

In April 2012, Grace Chan and Vanessa Chung conducted a training of trainers' course on the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) and Family Life Education (FLE). It was a 5 days' training course lasting from 9 April to 13 April, with every morning session for FLE and afternoon session for BOM training.

Altogether 30 participants from different parishes of the Diocese in Hebei Province of Mainland China joined the training. In the course, the relationship between the B.O.M. and Catholic teaching was highlighted. The participants were also involved in doing a lot of charting to enhance their understanding and application of the rules on avoiding pregnancy and achieving pregnancy. They were attentive and with good participation in the charting.

On the last day, the participants took written examination of the Teachers' Training Course on Billings Ovulation Method.

Then in December, 2012, Grace Chan and Vanessa Chung conducted a follow up training programme on family life education and teachers' training programme on Billings Ovulation Method (B.O.M.) in Hebei, China.

There were altogether 30 participants joining the training course. Other than a few men, all the participants were fertile women, among which 6 had attended the B.O.M.

Teachers' Training Course being conducted in April 2012. They attended the teachers' training course on B.O.M. to attempt their accreditation. A Father, Fr. Tian who is responsible for family planning in the Diocese also sat through the whole training programme.

Oral examination was also conducted on the last day of the training. All of the participants got passed in the oral examination on B.O.M. As the six designated participants who had attended the B.O.M. Teachers' Training Course in April 2012 and already passed the written examination during that training, they were presented certificate and accredited to be teachers of B.O.M.

Teaching of BOM for Pre-marital couples in An Guo Diocese, Hebei Province, China

During the period from 28th September - 3rd October 2013, Grace Chan and Vanessa Chung together with a volunteer, Ms. Rosa Au had conducted a 4 days' pre-marital Course (PMC) course for the premarital couples in An Guo Diocese, Hebei Province. Altogether, 39 participants were joined the course. The training program was conducted in the format of experiential exercises being followed by debriefing, talk, group discussion, singing, etc. The participants were attentive and they participated actively in the training process.

On the last day of the PMC course, there was one full day program on teaching BOM. It was conducted by two accredited BOM teachers who had attended our BOM teachers' training course in Hebei in 2012. Our role was to observe and be supporter to those two teachers in their teaching, clarifying or supplementing information in case of need. It was appreciated that they had paid great effort to prepare for the teaching and their teaching was overall speaking clear. We encouraged them to continue teaching BOM and gave reassurance that we were ready to render them support in future training in case of need.

Teacher' Training Program in FuZhou, China

In the period from 30 April to 5 May 2014, Ms Grace Chan and Ms Doris Chan conducted a training of trainers' course on Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) and Family Life Education (FLE). It was a 4 days' training course lasting from 1- 4 May 2014.

During the 4 days' course, the morning session was on BOM training whereas the afternoon session on FLE. There were altogether 56 participants from Fuzhou Parish, Fu Jian Province of Mainland China. Among the participants, there were around 30 sisters and 26 church leaders who were either committee members of the Marriage Committee and leaders of the teams.

The participants were guided to understand the scientific background and the practical aspects of BOM. They were involved to do a lot of chartings which helped them to get hold of the Method. The participants were attentive and responsive. The male participants in the class, though comprised less than 20% among the total participants, were particularly enthusiastic throughout the learning process. A follow up visit will tentatively be held in October

2014 when there will be the written and oral examination for the participants.

Attending the WOOMB International Jubilee Conference in Ku Ching, Malaysia

In April 2013, Grace Chan and Vanessa Chung joined the BOM Jubilee Conference in Ku Ching, Malaysia. In the Conference, Grace presented "The Billings Ovulation Method and Avoiding Pregnancy" on behalf of Alice Wong who got sick and was advised by doctor not to join the Conference. Besides, Vanessa and her acted as the interpreter for the four participants from China.

Teachers' Training Course in Hong Kong

In Sept. 2013, a 4 sessions' teachers training course on the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) was organized. The course was conducted by Ms Alice Wong, Doris Chan and Kathy Dai. Totally 20 participants, mostly Catholic were recruited. The teaching curriculum of WOOMB International was followed. 18 participants completed the course with great enthusiasm and with written examination passed. They had reunion meeting in late October 2013 and got accredited.

An upskilling workshop which was a reunion of the BOM teachers was held on 17 January 2014. 13 BOM teachers joined it. The Ovarian Continuum was reviewed and with cases on charting of long cycles discussed.

Helping Infertile Couples with the Billings Ovulation Method

On 7th December 2013 (Saturday), a workshop on "Helping Infertile Couples with the Billings Ovulation Method" was organized. Its objectives included:

1. To enhance understanding on the usefulness of the BOM in assisting pregnancy
2. To equip BOM teachers with knowledge and skills in helping couples with fertility problems.

We were very honoured to have invited Dr Lek Lim CHAN, Associate Director of WOOMB International & President of Natural Fertility Awareness Service of Malaysia who is a doctor of complementary medicines to be the speaker.

The Seminar attracted 25 participants including 5 doctors and 12 BOM teachers. Dr Lek Lim shared how the BOM is useful in diagnosing ovarian dysfunction – even detecting disorders in women with regular bleeds. He also shared with the participants many of his case studies from throughout Malaysia where BOM have helped in diagnosing disorders which range from insulin resistance, prolactinoma, thyroid problems, other pituitary disorders affecting abnormal thyroid values, raised testosterone and low Vitamin D. The participants found the training inspiring.

BOM talks in Premarital Counseling Programs

In the covered period, BOM teachers of our Organization continued to give BOM talks on the pre-marital counseling programs. There were 18 talks on BOM offered in pre-marital counseling programs in the past three years, with over 1,560 pairs of pre-marital couples (3,120 participants) served.

Translation Work

In the covered period, we had helped in translating or proofreading the following materials:

- WOOMB International website
- ebooks
- fertility pinpoint
- the new book-The Billings Method



New Zealand

July 2012

One day teacher training program in Auckland "The Management of Infertility and the use of the Billings Ovulation Method". This was led by Dr Cathy Black. Pauline Loudon from the JP II Centre for Life in Auckland generously undertook the administration of the program. 8 trainee BOM teachers and 1 accredited teacher attended this course. A 112 minute DVD of the presentation was created and circulated to those unable to attend.

July 2013

Christchurch National 3 day full Billings Ovulation Method Teacher Training program taught and led by Marian Corkill from WOOMB International. With support of Joseph and Cushla Hassan, Alicia Reeves and Cathy Black. Clare Bell Director of the JP II Centre for Life Christchurch together with the Catholic Education Office undertook all the administration enabling 17 participants to upskill or to receive initial training in the Method. Clare wisely approached parish priests in the Diocese of Christchurch inviting them to sponsor couples using BOM to undergo the Teacher Training. This was a stroke of genius and these couples are now promoting the Method to newly engaged couples. This has been a spectacular triumph in allowing users of the Method to have the knowledge and confidence to give testimony to their successful practising of the BOM in their own marriages. Most of these couples have done the full supervised training of teaching the Method but are currently acting as ambassadors for the Method.

Monthly BOM teacher peer groups are arranged by video conference through the Bank of New Zealand. A major

breakthrough has been that these two hour meetings are now registered with the RNZCGP as peer groups. This enables doctors attending the meetings, currently five doctors in all, to use these meetings for their CME in order to maintain their vocational registration.

August 2012

Dr Cathy Black in her role as GP and Natural Fertility Educator at Oxford Women's Health presented three papers at the New Zealand Medical Association Annual Conference in Dunedin. 500-600 doctors were present. Papers included: The use of BOM in couples who did not qualify for IVF, the use of the BOM in preventing pregnancy in peri-menopausal women, and in addition a paper was given to practice nurses demonstrating how the BOM could be used in supporting sub-fertile couples to achieve pregnancy naturally.

BOM Expo. WOOMB NZ at some considerable expense also hosted an exhibition at the above conference. This show cased the science of BOM in spacing children and achieving pregnancy naturally. This display was amongst all the main line pharmaceutical companies that sponsor the conference. Interest from doctors and many medical students (Dunedin is home to one of the two medical schools in New Zealand) was notable. I acknowledge the tireless work of Joseph and Cushla Hassan who together with myself manned the exhibition for three days.

June 2014

Secondary school teacher and BOM teacher in training April Williams together with teacher Stephen Woodnutt secured the funding and intellectual property rights to Loving for Life program. This is a Billings based sexuality program for school age children. Tina Jack from Western Australia will guide the trialling of Loving for Life in Hastings, Nelson and Christchurch later this year. We acknowledge the generous support of a Charitable Trust once more in enabling the education of the emergent generation in a values based sexuality program which has the BOM as its scientific and validated knowledge base of Natural Fertility.

July 2014

Launch of WOOMB NZ website www.billingslife.org.nz went live. This involved considerable work by Alicia Reeve under careful guidance from WOOMB International. Thus far it has proved to be an invaluable asset. A formal launch of the site promoting the BOM nationally will be undertaken later this year.

Dr Cathy Black gave a presentation at Oxford Womens Health (OWH) on using the BOM to achieve pregnancy. This was to 25 GPs from the wider Canterbury region as part of the RNZCGP accreditation CME program. Dr Cathy is the liaison GP between OWH and the College.

August 2014

The John Paul II Centre for Life under the guidance of Director Clare Bell hosted an afternoon updating current users of the Method in the BOM. This was led by Dr Cathy Black and Carmel Malone. Four couples mutually

benefitted from this educational session. It is planned to hold these valuable updates regularly. Couples experiencing an unplanned pregnancy are encouraged to meet with their BOM teacher promptly to identify and audit how conception occurred. This is a valuable teaching situation and couples rarely abandon the method in planning subsequent pregnancies. If despite adequate tuition and comprehension of the method with the couple following the rules accurately, a child is conceived, a pregnancy investigation is mandatory and is referred to the newly formed Education Committee which consists of 4 accredited BOM teachers. This is in keeping with WOOMB International quality assurance standards of teaching and safeguarding the integrity and scientific basis of the BOM.

September 2014

Keribati Project. Alicia Reeves, Lisa Blackie, Pauline Loudon and Colleen Bayer have undertaken a three part program to bring the BOM to the Keribati community in Auckland. It is hoped that some of the community who start practising the Method successfully will become trained teachers in the Method in 2015.

Four people attended the Natural Fertility Conference in Melbourne hosted by the JP II Institute for Life. They included three of WOOMB NZ trustees and our National Co-ordinator Alicia Reeves. In addition to attending the conference, Alicia was able to spend two days with Marian Corkill at the Billings Life headquarters in Melbourne learning key features on how to better administer a National BOM in New Zealand. We thank Marian sincerely for hosting Alicia and for the generosity of herself, her husband and all the other Directors of WOOMB International who tirelessly support Alicia in promoting the work of WOOMB NZ.

With the rising rates of infertility the use of the BOM Chart is providing an increasingly valuable tool in diagnosing ovulatory problems and treating causes of infertility without resource to expensive invasive and potentially ethically unacceptable practices within the realm of Assisted Reproductive Technologies. This places BOM at the centre of the most important work currently.

Opening of Natural Fertility Clinic at OWH, Forte Health by Dr Cathy Black.

October 2014

The John Paul II Centre for Life, Christchurch, under the expertise of Clare Bell undertook the administration together with WOOMB NZ to host an exhibit at the Christchurch Womens Expo. This was a two day event attracting 20,000 – 30,000 women. Community midwives, practice nurses and sub fertile women met our BOM teachers and were educated as to how to access further information on the Method.



The Directors of WOOMB International wish you all a blessed Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. May God bless our work.

WOOMB International Ltd

Aims to promote the authentic Billings Ovulation Method™ in support of couples, the family and society, and to undertake and pursue all such other similar, related or compatible objects as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

To this end, and in furtherance of the vision and the Aims and Objects of the original WOOMB International Inc, and of the founders of the Billings Ovulation Method™, Drs John and Evelyn Billings:

a. WOOMB International Ltd, will actively seek to enrich the union between husband and wife for their mutual benefit by giving them knowledge of the Billings Ovulation Method™ that they can use to develop love and fidelity within the marriage.

b. Through teaching the Billings Ovulation Method™ to men, women and young persons WOOMB International Ltd will encourage parents and future parents to meet their mutual responsibilities to each other and their children by giving them insights which can be used to develop unselfish love.

c. Knowledge about fertility regulation, using the Billings Ovulation Method™, will be directed at:

i) helping couples who wish to have children;

ii) helping couples who wish to avoid pregnancy.

iii) helping women to understand their fertility and to monitor their reproductive health.

d. WOOMB International Ltd, through the Billings Ovulation Method™, aims to teach all who seek the information, how to make the observations and interpretations necessary for the identification of fertility, infertility and reproductive health.

e. WOOMB International Ltd aims to impart to men the knowledge necessary to exercise a supportive and collaborative role in the application of the Billings Ovulation Method™.

f. WOOMB International Ltd, through information and encouragement, will promote an acceptance of a pregnancy not deliberately planned, so that the child will be welcomed and loved.

g. WOOMB International Ltd believes that husband and wife have the sole right to determine in conscience the number of children of their marriage.

h. WOOMB International Ltd aims to encourage ongoing research into the Billings Ovulation Method™, human fertility and reproductive health.

The *Bulletin of WOOMB International Ltd* is produced 3 times each year. It is a medium for the publication of medical and scientific articles about natural fertility and related topics. It also publishes theological and philosophical articles pertaining to sexual morality and marriage which are in accord with traditional morality and with the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

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Your donation

will help us to continue to bring the good news of the Billings Ovulation Method™ to women and families throughout the world. Please send bank cheque in Australian dollars or credit card details (VISA or Mastercard) to the offices of WOOMB International Ltd or donate using *PayPal* at www.woombinternational.org



WOOMB
World Organisation/Ovulation Method/Billings

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