

The Different Societies And Their Views on: ¹

Type of Society	Family	Marriage	Children	Father	Sexual Immorality
Trustee-Family Societies	Mystical Reality	Sacred Covenant	Blessing from the gods	Patriarch, a Priest-King Who Serves his Ancestors and Offspring	Criminal Act
Domestic-Family Societies	Moral Tradition	Contract	Indispensable Economic Agents	Authoritarian CEO of Society's Fundamental Economic Unit	Individual Sin
Atomistic-Family Societies	A Cocoon to Escape From	Convenient means of Companionship	Economic Liability; Expense; Obstacle to Personal Fulfillment	Pathetic Figure, Left Behind for Individual Growth.	Private Matter; Personal Choice; Alternate Lifestyle

¹ Carle C. Zimmerman of Harvard University, *Family and Civilization*, 1947; summarized in Scott Hahn's *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity*, Doubleday, 2002, pp. 21-23.

Models of Family²

The Trustee Family

“The Trustee family is so named because it more or less considers itself as immortal, existing in perpetuity, and never being extinguished. As a result, the living members are not the family, but merely “trustees” of its blood, rights, property name, and position for their lifetime.’ It’s not the nuclear family, or even the extended family, but *all the members of the family in the past and the future as well as in the present generation*. A sacred bond unites members in the present generation with the ancestors who gave them life; the same bond unites them with their future descendants, who will perpetuate the family name, honor, and worship. The trustee family envisions the family primarily in religious terms.”

The Domestic Family

“The domestic family describes a household based on the marital bond: husband, wife and their children. In such an arrangement, family members emphasize individual rights along with family duties.”

The Atomistic Family

² Carle C. Zimmerman of Harvard University, *Family and Civilization*, 1947; summarized in Scott Hahn’s *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity*, Doubleday, 2002, pp. 21-23.

“In atomistic families, however, individual rights are exalted far above family bonds, and the family itself exists for the sake of the individual’s pleasure.”

Families and Societies

Historical Development and Decline of Societies³

- “...Only societies based on the trustee family have been able to rise to the level of civilizations. Yet none of these societies were able to maintain the trustee arrangement forever. At some point in the history of every civilization, its people begin to live according to the domestic-family model.
- “The period of domestic-family dominance, though, is usually short-lived, a transitional phase before the atomistic family takes its place.
- “When the atomistic family becomes society’s dominant model, then the family duties are widely viewed as impediments to individual fulfillment. The atomistic family—marked by widespread divorce, unrestrained sexual activity, and population decline—usually signifies a civilization in its ultimate decline.”

“The future of humanity passes by way of the family.”⁴

³ Carle C. Zimmerman of Harvard University, *Family and Civilization*, 1947; summarized in Scott Hahn’s *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity*, Doubleday, 2002, pp. 21-23.

⁴ John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio*, 86.

Further Quotes and Sources

“There are many remarkable differences in these historical stages.” See Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization*, pp. 120-210. Zimmerman introduces his “new classification” in terms of the following questions: “Of the total power in the society, how much belongs to the family? Of the total amount of control of action in the society, how much is left for the family? What role does the family play in the total business of society? These are the real problems. If we want to marry or to break up a family, whom do we consult, the family, the church, or the state?” (p. 125). Zimmerman describes the essentially religious nature of the trustee family: “Among the early Romans, the religious conceptions were household and familistic. The people were bound together by a feeling of sacredness” (p. 146). “There were social restrictions—the religious convictions of the family and the people and the family council.... The same domestication of religion was prevalent among the early Greeks. As a matter of fact, it seems true of all early civilized groups is the thesis of the Vedic Hymns and other ancient Hindu documents. Confucianism itself is founded upon the development of the domestic religion of the early Chinese.... This was also true for the early

Romans.... However, race does not seem to be the factor, since all great civilized peoples have corresponding religions. This domestication of religion was the fact which makes the ordinary conception of the husband as the owner of wife and children, with the power to purchase and sell them, entirely erroneous. Religion creates a unity, something which has no market value. Husband and wife (as well as parent and child) were bound by ties a thousand times more meaningful than market price” (pp. 147-48). Zimmerman then illustrates this by tracing the periodic evolution of marriage from the trustee (as sacrament), through the domestic (as concubinage), to the atomistic (as mere “*copula carnalis* for pleasure”) (pp. 148-53). “Thus, in the trustee period, adultery, along with one or two other crimes, is the infamous act against the whole society (kinship group which connects the person with life)” (p. 153). This is reminiscent of the ancient Israelite laws against adultery (Ex 20:14), for which capital punishment was prescribed (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22).

Besides Zimmerman, I have greatly profited from other more recent family studies, including J. D. Schloen. *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and*

the Ancient Near East (Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press, 2001); P. Riley, *Civilizing Sex On Chastity and the Common Good* (Edinburgh: T. & T Clark, 2000); C. R. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); A. Burguiere et al., eds., *A History of Family*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1996); B. Gottlieb, *The Family in the Western World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986); P. Abbott, *The Family on Trial: Special Relationships in Modern Political Thought* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981); J.-L. Flandrin, *Families in Former Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); A. Moret and G. Davy, *From Tribe to Empire: Social Organization Among Primitives and in the Ancient East* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Cooper Square, 1970); W. J. Goode, *World revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963).