When it comes to the family name, continuity counts



What is in a name? A friend-was driving

PERSPECTIVES

What is in a anamo? A friend was driving was driving home on an ice overling. She discovered that she had hit her husband's car. He was also on his way home. When the police arrived, he asked for their driver sleeness. They told the officer that they were husband and wife. What the officer observed was two different last names. The wife had to explain that when they were married and had kept her own family name.

name.
Today married people may have different last names and wives may not wear a wedding band. It is a matter of life style and a personal choice women are making to keep their family name after they are married. For some women professional identity is important. For other women taking on the busband's surrame feels like a loss of their own identity.

I believe in the importance of

I believe in the importance of the continuity of generations. What is in a name? My mother still does not know much about her grandmother's family. Her grandmother went to live with an-other family when her mother

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died. Grandmother took on the family name of the family with whom she lived, it still is confusing as to who my great-grandmother's family had been.

Family and community are important values. We are connected in ways that are at times mysterious. Life does not work if we always choose individually and ignore community needs. Genealogy is important because the young will one day ask about their roots.

Tracing family connections becomes even more difficult because of the mobility of people. Today there may not be baptism, church or temple records. There may not even be cometary plots.

The confusion of family connection can be difficult when children have last names different from their parents. Divorce is often the reason for this. In addition men and women choose to have names that are different

from their children.

Women rightfully feel a loss when they remove their family name and take on the surname of their husband. Despite this we must plead for continuity and connection for our children. For those married people who plan not to have children there is no issue at stake. I feel sorry for children whose names are hyphenated. When they become parents how will they name their child?

The major issue regarding aurnames is the need to support community and family connections for the next generations. The couples who marry this spring need to think through this issue carefully. There is no perfect answer, Yet we must be sensitive to the fact that the next generations have a stake in naming decisions.

Family name continuity is only one way that we may strengthen

the family and the community. Many factors are destroying family and community cohesiveness. We need to examine and strengthen every element that supports these values.

The Rev. David Strong is pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Detroit. If you have a question or comment, call him at 953-2047, mailbox number 1878, an a touch-tone phone.



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