

PHILOSOPHY & PUBLIC POLICY

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MAKING CONNECTIONS: INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES

A few weeks ago, the premiere issue of a magazine entitled *Family Life* appeared on the newsstands. One of its founders, Jann Wenner, is also the publisher of *Rolling Stone*. Not surprisingly, this fact has led some observers to describe the new magazine as part of a larger cultural shift, and it's clear that those involved in the project see it this way as well. "Now that family life is central to our own lives and to the country," writes Nancy Evans, the publication's editor-in-chief, "it seemed high time that there be an intelligent, sophisticated magazine that addresses the issues." But the point here is not just that the editor can take the centrality of her subject for granted. Ms. Evans believes that she and her readers are linked by a common experience, and when she refers to it, the tone of her writing is both resolute and unexpectedly elegiac. *Family Life*, she tells us, grew out of the need to "celebrate and nurture these few years called childhood." "Many of us," she adds, "have discovered that raising a family has not taken us off track (as we feared) but has put us right back on the track we may have lost." At such moments, she is not merely pointing to the demographic reality that the baby boomers now have children of their own. She is also testifying, at least provisionally, to a moral reorientation.

One goal of this *Report* is to expand the frame of reference within which our discussions of family life take place. Specifically, we wish to explore an evolving network of human connections, not only within families, but also between individuals, families, and their

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