

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH FOR SINGLE-AGAIN FAMILIES
IN KOSCUISKO COUNTY

A White Paper for
"PROJECT PROUD"
Kosciusko Leadership Academy

By
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R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company

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INTRODUCTION

Nationally, 60% of marriages now end in divorce.¹ 75%-80% of divorced parents remarry in 3 to 5 years, and divorce rates in remarriage are even higher than in first marriages.² In Koscuisko County in 1989 and 1990 combined, there were 1,311 marriages and 1,138 divorces.³ That is an 87% ratio! More importantly, it means that 2,276 adult lives have been turned upside down. Easily an equal number of childrens' lives have been permanently scarred.

Each one of us has been affected in some way by the divorce of a friend, relative, coworker or acquaintance.

In the past four years since my divorce, I have been involved in Bible studies, divorce recovery workshops, Sunday school classes and support groups. These experiences have put me in touch with dozens of people who share at least one thing in common - divorce.

Their experiences with churches was varied. After divorce, some were made to feel unwelcome in their church, some were openly ostracized by church members, and some were even asked to leave the church. The majority did feel welcome in their church.

However, almost all were frustrated that the church they attended did not offer any type of ministry that dealt with their circumstance. In fact, most divorced people with whom I have had contact said they had a difficult time finding any type of ministry for single-again families.

This White Paper is "Step 1" towards filling that gap.

The overall goal of this White Paper is to make it easier for single-again people to be aware of, and involved with the existing Single-Again ministries, and to induce more churches to offer this type of ministry. I set out to accomplish this by meeting the following objectives:

1 _____ . Bottom Line. Boulder, Co. Vol. 11, No. 24, Dec. 30, 1990.

2 Ibid.

3 Koscuisko County Clerks Office.

- 1) Confirm the need for Christian Outreach in Koscuisko County for single-again families, and increase awareness in the Christian community of that need.
- 2) Identify and research existing programs and services that apply to single-again families.
- 3) Provide a listing of those programs/services to all Koscuisko County Churches and related organizations.
- 4) Motivate more churches to become involved in this ministry, by developing their own ministry and by participating in a mutually supportive network.

II

THE NEED

Statistics can be made to say whatever you want them to say. Statistics regarding divorce in this county, however, are very clear. In 1990, there were 545 divorces granted in Koscuisko County; in 1989 - 593.⁴ In the last 5 years there have been over 2,000 divorces granted in this county.⁵ That means over 4,000 people have divorced in that period (not including those who divorced twice.)

The rate of divorces per year has skyrocketed from 280 in 1984 to 545 in 1990, yet the number of marriages has remained relatively constant (651 in 1984, 656 in 1990).⁶ Therefore, the ratio of divorces to marriages has jumped from 43% in 1984 to 83% in 1990 - almost double! (Compare that to the 60% divorce rate in the United States.)

In 1988, 6.6% of the county population (then 63,800) were single parents.⁷ That is over 4,200 single parents (and don't forget the non-custodial parent) in the county the year before the divorce ratio nearly doubled.

Since no numbers are available, we can only estimate the total number of single-again adults there are in Koscuisko County. Based on the research I have done, and the statistice shown above, I estimate there are easily over 10,000 adults in this county who have been divorced for 13 years or less.

Admittedly, not all people who get a divorce are devastated, struggling or even saddened by their divorce. And many do not feel inclined to turn to God, the church or any type of "religion" for help. But every single person who divorces must go through a transition from their married life to the new life that awaits them. And this is a time when most consider and evaluate what is important to them. They are ready for change, and eventually for growth and rebuilding in their lives.

4 Koscuisko County Clerks Office.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 U.S. Census Bureau: County & City Data Book, pp. 845.

The lives of most divorced and their families are affected socially, financially, emotionally and spiritually at the very least. What better time for the church body to reach out to them and say, "God loves you. We love you. And we are here to help you and support you in any way we can."

"STEP 1"

A LISTING OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES, COUNSELLING AND SOCIAL
SERVICES FOR SINGLE-AGAIN FAMILIES IN KOSCUISKO COUNTY

From

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Please note that none of the organizations, services or ministries listed herein are exclusively for the divorced or widowed.

Also note that this listing may not include every organization, service or ministry existing in Kosciusko County. If you are aware of others that do exist, please call Jay Wolfe at 491-2312.

COUNTY AGENCIES FOR WIDOWED

MINISTRIES FOR SINGLE-AGAIN ADULTS

- 1) Kosciusko County Mental Health Association - 269-2102
"Widow to Widow"
 - Support group and social activities for widowed
 - Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Pete Thorn Center (800 N. Park Ave., Warsaw)
 - Contact Sandra Fresh at 267-2102
 - (Sponsored by United Way)
- 2) Kosciusko County Council on Aging and Aged - 267-2012
 - Not necessarily for widowed, however about 75% live alone.
 - Primary purpose is to determine the needs, develop and coordinate programs to meet those needs and problems of Kosciusko County's older Americans.
 - Four Senior Citizens clubs
 - Mobile Meals
 - Older American Nutrition sites
 - Home Health Care
 - Transportation system for the elderly & handicapped
 - Central office for coordinating programs
 - Supported legal services for the elderly
 - Handy/Chore person (for minor home repairs)
 - Senior Opportunity Center (educational, social, support activities every day)
 - Call Barb Dagnall (267-2012) for info. about K.C. Council on Aging.
 - Call Norma Roose (267-5707) for info. about Senior Opportunity Center.

- 1) 1st Baptist Church of Warsaw (Independent) - 267-8826
 - Bible Study
 - For Singles and Single-again
 - Meets on Tuesday evenings
 - Pastor Larry Overstreet
- 2) Warsaw Baptist Church - 269-9995
 - "Single-Again" Sunday School class
 - Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
 - Starts 4/13/91
 - Teacher - Gloria Moore
 - For more info., call 269-9995
- 3) Celebration United Methodist Church (WRSW) - 267-2568
 - "Divorce Recovery Workshop"
 - SIX week workshop/support group
 - Held twice a year
 - For more info., call Pastor Steve Conger
- 4) New Life Christian Church & World Outreach - 269-5851
 - "Force 1 Ministry"
 - For Singles and single-again 18 or older
 - Bible Study on the first Wednesday of each month
 - Social Activities twice a month
 - For more info., call Georgina Morehouse (eve.) at 658-4276

AID FOR SINGLE PARENTS (cont.)

B) SPECIAL AID:

"Project Independence" - 269-7641

- For single parents, living in Kosciusko County, 18 or older, on limited incomes and ready to help themselves.
- Individual, educational, counseling and referral services to single parents with limited support systems.
- Help clients set goals, and determine steps necessary to reach those goals
- Continued support and guidance through stages of independence
- No financial support
- Through a grant by CSBG Real Services
- Call Sue Gaylor or Drew McKibbin at 269-7641 (Warsaw Housing Authority) for more info.

MINISTRIES FOR SINGLE-AGAIN ADULTS (cont.)

- 9) United Pentecostal Church (Wrsu) - 269-1478
"Nehemiah Fellowship"
-Support group for Singles and Single-again
-Has various monthly activities
-For more info., call 269-1478. Ask for Minah Bryant or Mike Grubbs.
- 10) Warsaw Wesleyan Church - 267-7983
"Single-again" Sunday School class/support group
-For those rebuilding and helping others rebuild their lives after divorce
-Provides spiritual and emotional support
-Meets Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
-Social activities held 2-3 times each month
-To provide opportunities for peer counseling, support, family activities and alternative entertainment for single-again families
-For more info., call Dan or Tina Warren at 353-7342 or Jay Wolfe at 491-2312
- 11) Wawasee Community Church of the Nazarene - 457-2022
-Informal Bible Study for Singles and Single-again
-Meets Tuesday evenings
-For more info., call Associate Pastor Steve Greggs at 457-2022

MINISTRIES FOR SINGLE-AGAIN ADULTS (cont.)

AID FOR SINGLE PARENTS

- 12) "SPLASH" (Single People Living and Sharing)
- Non-denominational - Sponsored by Plymouth Wesleyan Church - 936-3637
- For Single and Single-again adults
- Social activities with devotional time
- Meets every Friday at 7:00 p.m. at 120 E. Garro St. Plymouth, IN.
- For more info., call Steve Linville at 935-5573

A) FINANCIAL AID:

- 1) Combined Community Services - 269-6019
- For single parents with limited incomes
- Financial assistance (e.g. prescriptions, utilities, rent, etc.)
- Medical transportation
- Food pantry
- Clothes
- Household items, furniture
- Some counseling
- Community kitchen (at 1st Presbyterian Church)
- Contact Jim Stafford (269-6019) for more info.

2) Kosciusko County Welfare Department - 267-8108

- For single parents with limited incomes
- ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) - monthly money grant
- Medicaid for children up 7 years of age
- Food stamps
- (Income requirements are quite specific.)
- Call 267-8108

NOTE: Many churches (too numerous to mention here) have their own funds to help needy people of all types.

COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCED PARENTS (OTHER) (cont.)

COUNSELING FOR DIVORCED

- 3) Charter Counseling Center - 269-1185
 - Satellite of Charter Beacon Hospital (Ft. Wayne)
 - Psychological testing/counseling
 - Costs (low - medium low) are adjustable depending on situation. (initial assessment is free.)
 - Leo Bellenger
- 4) OakLawn - 267-6646
 - Biblical counseling and therapy
 - Costs (high) can be covered by some insurance policies
 - Joyce Brown
 - Ray Keim
- 5) Selah Center, Inc. - 269-3008
 - Grief counseling and readjustment primarily for children
 - Scientific psychology within Judeo-Christian framework
 - Costs (low - medium low) are tax-deductable (not-for-profit organization)
 - Dr. Tallitha Fair
 - Peter Albertson
- 1) Biblical Counseling Association - 267-4357
 - Marriage or divorce counseling
 - Based on Biblical principals as opposed to psychology
 - No charge
 - Wendell Miller
- 2) Bowen Center - 267-7169
 - Marriage or divorce counseling
 - "Divorce Mediation" to help client work through the arrangements of divorce with less trauma
 - In process of starting a support group for divorced
 - Costs on a sliding fee scale (ability to pay)
- 2A) Imm. Edgington - 372-5277
 - Works 3 days a week at Bowen Center in general therapy programs (as shown above)
 - Works 2 days a week in Christian counseling
 - Deals with trauma resolution, sometimes in conjunction with support groups
- 3) Charter Counseling Center - 269-1185
 - Satellite of Charter Beacon Hospital
 - Psychological testing/counseling
 - Any phase before or after divorce
 - Some types of group therapy available through Beacon Hospital
 - Costs (low - medium low) are adjustable depending on situation. (initial assessment is free.)
 - Leo Bellenger

COUNSELING FOR DIVORCED (cont.)

COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCED PARENTS (CHURCHES)

- 4) Counseling Associates - 269-3030
 - Counseling before (reconciliation) or after divorce
 - Helping individual or family group work out divorce details and deal with trauma
 - Degrees and experience in Biblical counseling
 - Costs (average) can be covered by some insurance policies
 - Myrna Eisenbraun
 - Debbie Hambricht
 - Bill Hambricht
- 5) Oaklawn - 267-6646
 - Biblical counseling and therapy
 - Costs (high) can be covered by some insurance policies
 - Joyce Brown
 - Ray Keim

- 1) 1st Presbyterian Church of Warsaw - 267-7044
 - Ask for Mazie Kreicker
- 2) St. Andrews United Methodist Church (Syr.) - 457-4111
 - Ask for Mrs. Ken Overmyer
- 3) United Pentecostal Church (Mrs.) - 269-1478
 - Social Worker in church
 - Call Pastor Dan Cox for info.

SUPPORT GROUP OF SPECIAL NOTE

- "Emotions Anonymous" - 267-6933
 - Support group not specifically for divorced, but does include many
 - 12 step program like A.A.
 - Deal with emotional struggles
 - Safe place to go without criticism
 - Call 1st United Methodist Church (267-6933) for info.

COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCED PARENTS (OTHER)

- 1) Bowen Center - 267-7169
 - Helping children work through divorce issues
 - Costs on a sliding fee scale (ability to pay)
- 2) Counseling Associates - 269-3030
 - Helping children adjust to divorce (individually or with family group)
 - Degrees and experience in Biblical counseling
 - Costs (average) can be covered by some insurance policies
 - Myrna Eisenbraun
 - Debbie Hambricht
 - Bill Hambricht

III

THE RESEARCH

The survey (see Appendix A) was a vehicle in which I could identify existing church ministries, organizations and agencies that address the needs of single-again families. I also hoped to determine if local clergy were aware of the scope of this potential ministry, and whether they were aware of other ministries, organizations and services in the county.

I had intended to contact every church in the county. I called each church at least twice (at different times of the day and week). However, I was only able to complete the survey with representatives (98% of them ministers) of 47 of the 106 churches in the county. I do feel this provided an accurate cross section of the county churches with regard to size, location and denomination.

Due to the varied responses, specific results of the survey are too numerous to mention here. Below is a summary of the results.

- 1) Less than 1/4 had any type of ministry for single-again (this includes a single/single-again mix).
- 2) Most were aware that there is a "potentially large" ministry for single-again families. Most were encouraging. However, relatively few (that didn't already have a ministry) showed interest in developing anything within their church for single-again.
- 3) Few knew how many of those who attended their church were single-again. The responses (mostly guesses) indicated that about 8% of those who attended all of the churches surveyed were single-again. Also, only about 330 - 360 single-again attend a church that offers any type of ministry for their circumstance.
- 4) 100% offered counseling for individuals in the process or recently divorced - most by request. About 80% said they would council children of divorced parents - some reluctantly, but most had not been asked.

- 5) Less than half surveyed knew of any organization other than the church that offered financial aid.
- 6) About half knew of services available for emotional needs (25% of those said the church).
- 7) Only about 20% knew of any organization that offered social activities (alternative to "Joe's Bar & Grill") for single-agains.

Overall it does not seem that churches in this county are adequately addressing the issues that face single-again families. There are very few ministries for single-agains. Few ministers are aware of what does exist in the county for the spiritual, emotional, financial and social needs of the single-again family.

THE LISTING

The survey and subsequent research did provide some positive results. First, as I said before, many ministers were very encouraging. Some were interested in starting their own ministries, some wanted to get involved in other ministries, and a few were quite enthusiastic. I intend to follow up with them.

Secondly, through the survey and interviews, I learned of some ministries, services and activities for widowed. I decided to include that information in the listing.

Finally, there are a few hard working, dedicated, enthusiastic, self-sacrificing individuals who are providing support, guidance, financial aid and encouragement for those rebuilding their lives after divorce (or the death of a spouse). And there are many individuals providing peer counseling for personal friends. GOD BLESS THEM!

I will be sending this Listing to every church in the county, every organization mentioned within and any other organization that could use it as a resource.

I am sure the attached Listing does not include all of the ministries and services available in and around Koscuisko County. Should anyone know of anything that can be added when this Listing is updated, please call me at 491-2312.

IV

THE FUTURE

Upon sending the Listing to the churches and organizations mentioned before, "Step 1" will be complete. I call it "Step 1" because I hope this is not the last we hear of this issue.

I hope that more churches are motivated to start their own ministry for single-agains, or that they get involved with supporting one of the existing ministries.

I hope that a network is developed among the churches and agencies so that everyone knows where to send someone who has the need for any of the services that are available.

I hope that churches, support groups, organizations and agencies involved in helping single-agains work through, and grow beyond divorce can share their ideas and successes; and thereby become better at what they do.

Most importantly, I hope that more and more single-again families are able to realize that they don't have to go it alone. There are many of us who are here to help you.

Appendix A

Survey

1. Do you welcome single-again people to attend or be members of your church? (If 'yes', go to next question. If 'no', Who (or what church) do you refer them to?)
2. Approximately how many of those who attend your church are single-again?
3. Approximately how many (not necessarily members) attend?
4. Do you have a Sunday school class or Bible study for single-again people?
5. Do you offer fellowship or social activities specifically for single-again people and their children?
6. Do you actively offer counseling for individuals in the process of divorce, or recently divorced?
7. Do you offer any type of counseling or services for children of single-agains?
8. If you do not have any of the above 'services' for single-agains, do you refer them to other churches that do have those 'services'? If 'yes', what churches.
9. Approximately how many single-agains do you think we have in Kos. County?
10. What services do you know of in this county for people who are in the process, or recently divorced for:
 - a) Financial needs
 - b) Emotional needs
 - c) Social needs (alternative to bars)
11. Would your church like to be involved in activities (e.g. Bible studies, social activities, seminars, etc.) for single-agains with other churches?