

Divorce avoided through Retrouvaille

By Blake Sittler

Divorce has changed the face of the family around the world and the effects are no different in Canada.

Statistics Canada, the federal body that surveys the country with the expressed purpose of helping Canadians better understand the culture they live in, reported that in 2006, 48.5 per cent of respondents were married. This is the first time in their research that less than half of the population was married; down from 60 per cent in the 1980's.

This dip under the 50 per cent mark is due in large part to divorce and its impact on the decisions that couples are making in regards to marriage.

Many Canadians accept that divorce simply has to be accepted as part of the future profile of Canadian families. Retrouvaille Saskatchewan is attempting to reverse the divorce trend.

Retrouvaille is a peer-to-peer ministry offered to married couples who are considering separation or divorce. Though it is offered in dozens of countries, its roots originate in Canada.

Mike and Celia Caswell, who sit on the provincial board of Retrouvaille Saskatchewan, point out to couples who are struggling with their married



Celia and Mike Caswell

relationship that there is hope. While statistics confirm the prevalence of divorce in society, divorce is not always the only option.

“If you are considering ending your marriage relationship or you think that there is more to life and love than your current experience, give Retrouvaille a chance,” encouraged Mike.

The Caswells describe their personal experience of attending the Retrouvaille weekend retreat like that of a plant being watered after a long period of drought.

“Our energy was spent, and we didn't know how we would make it through another day, [but] as we worked through the weekend and in the weeks following, life slowly started to come back to our marriage,” said Celia.

The couple notes that the goal of a Retrouvaille weekend is not to keep bad marriages together but to help couples in difficulty rediscover the love and trust they once felt for each other.

Celia stated that a Retrouvaille weekend reveals that “a healthier and more loving relationship with your spouse is possible [again]”.

Mike and Celia recognize that it takes a lot of courage to attend a Retrouvaille weekend. The biggest obstacle, in their opinion, is simply making the time.

“[Couples] need to be prepared to make the commitment to attend the [follow-up] sessions to get the full experience and maximum benefit and support,” said Mike.

The Caswells pointed out that while weekends are currently only offered in Saskatoon, it is hoped that Regina or Prince Albert would also host weekends in the future.

“As the Saskatchewan Retrouvaille community grows, and people from across the province express an interest in supporting the growth of Retrouvaille Saskatchewan, it is very likely that we will be in a better position to expand our weekend offerings to other locations,” said Mike.

Caswells said that there is no “typical” Retrouvaille couple. Some couples are young and have been married only a few years while some couples have been married over thirty years.

“The common denominator is that we all come from a position of hurt and a desire to renew the love that brought us together in the first place,” concluded Celia.

For confidential information about or to register for the next program in Saskatoon in April, call Ken and Rita Wolfe at 306-652-9653 or email retrovaille@sasktel.net or visit the website at www.helpourmarriage.com