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An Inquiry Into The Needs And Problems Of The Seventh-Day Adventist One-Parent Family

Elwood E. Staff
Andrews University

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ONE-PARENT FAMILY

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Elwood E. Staff
July 1974
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PREFACE

There has been much concern in recent years about the fate of the American family. This writer is focusing on the one-parent nuclear family. A further specification in the family under study is female-headed Seventh-day Adventist.

This project then, is a multiple case study of maternal one-parent families. The small sample was chosen on a non-random basis with the object of typifying what might be found in a Seventh-day Adventist pastorate.

The writer was successful in cooperation with the local pastor in obtaining a sample of thirteen Seventh-day Adventist maternal one-parent families where the parent has been widowed or divorced with at least one child living in the home.

The survey procedure will be to conduct in-depth structured interviews. (The instrument is found in the Appendix.) The writer is not basing this explorative project on statistical means and averages or with a sufficient number of subjects to merit calling it a scientific study. Because of these above reasons, the results should not be generalized to a larger population. This project therefore, is not designed to be a technically scientific study but a tool for ministry.

From these Seventh-day Adventist one-parent families the writer hoped to discover by means of these interviews their unique problems socially, emotionally, and physically; it was also the plan to have
group sessions following the completion of the interviews. The duration of the sessions and how successful they were would depend on the writer's expertise and the willingness of the participants in this project to cooperate. It was hoped that the women would be encouraged to form groups which in turn would bring support, help, and information. It was hoped that their bond with the church would be strengthened through the special interest shown in them, not only by the writer and the group but by the local pastor.

Specifically then, procedures in this project will be to research current literature on the subject of the one-parent family, to research what community services both on a local and national level might provide as resource assistance to this group, to discover what local pastors and/or their denominations are doing to meet their need, and finally, to explore pastoral possibilities in group sessions for these single parents.

It was believed that there would be certain values in carrying out this project apart from the local parish. Those interviewed would be less likely to see it as prying and meddling when carried out as a seminary research project. Delicate subjects such as sex could be discussed more freely apart from local church connections. Prior experience of this nature would appear to offer some advantages to the writer and his future congregation.

Specific personal objectives include: A greater knowledge of and competence in working for the Seventh-day Adventist one-parent
family including the possibility of the development of a local church project and putting the findings into operation on a continuous basis.

I have been a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for sixteen years. These years have been spent solely in the pastoral ministry. The size of the churches served has ranged from 103 members to 725 members, the latter being the San Diego North Park church in San Diego, California.

I will be returning to the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as pastor of the Redlands church in Redlands, California.

My observation has been that this segment of the church has been largely neglected in the structuring of our church programs. My pastoral experience has made me aware that the number of widows and divorcees is growing within the church and therefore presents a unique group that needs to be included in a variety of activities. I have found young divorcees and/or widows in every church that I have served thus far. In my recent and larger church, there were two widows with young children and at least eight divorcees with young children. The latter group presents an anomaly that church members are not often willing to face or deal with constructively.

ELWOOD E. STAFF
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for the leave necessary to research and complete this project. I express deep gratitude to Dr. Charles Wittschiebe, who has guided me through this project, giving of himself and his time. I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Arnold Kurtz, who acted as a stimulus in the formation of the project and to Dr. John Berecz for his counsel. I express appreciation to fellow Doctor of Ministry students who critically evaluated the original proposal and to Toni, my wife, for her inspiration and practical help. Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to the divorced and widowed Seventh-day Adventist women who made this project possible. They were extremely kind and I believe, forthright in interviews which took hours of their time.
JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

Justification for this project is claimed inasmuch as God through scripture repeatedly refers to His care for the widow and fatherless.

(Jer. 49:11) "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me."

(Psalm 68:5) "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation."

(James 1:27) "Pure religion . . . to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. . . ."


It is my belief that the divorcee and her children are also sheltered under the same umbrella of God's love and care.

To arrive at this conclusion, I asked, Why was God interested in the widow and the fatherless? I believe it was because God is interested in the cause of the oppressed. In the oriental culture, a woman was a thing to be used, but God sees each person as being of infinite value. God's people were a community in which Koinonia was the bonding element. This was only possible as each person was seen of great worth. The ideal, however, was often not realized, for many, then as now, overreached and oppressed those less fortunate, and the most unfortunate were often the widows and the
fatherless. James 1:27 portrays pure religion as visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.

Since God has already expressed His concern for those who have no one to plead their cause, certainly the divorcee as well as the widow would fall in this category.

Ellen Gould White comments concerning God's care for those who found themselves in this position. In Selected Messages, Volume 2, p. 342 she wrote:

I would say that the Lord understands the situation, and if M will seek Him with all his heart, He will be found of him. If he will do his best, God will pardon and receive him. Oh, how precious it is to know that we have One who does know and understand and will help the ones who are most helpless.

The Law of Moses permitted divorce for various reasons (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:3) but little is said how these people in this unique position were dealt with. In the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 8, p. 275, it is suggested that in the oriental setting an unattached woman represented disgrace and brought want. She was thrown into a society that was unsympathetic and hostile toward her. With a view to ameliorating the lot of the divorced woman, God mercifully ordained that a woman divorced be given a certificate identifying her as a divorced woman. She could then legally and properly become the wife of another man without any stigma being attached to her. The law of Deuteronomy 24:1-3 was given with a view to protecting a woman from a capricious husband.

If this is true, then God did care. It would seem that one must consider the character of God as depicted in the Bible as the
final word, where there is not a "thus saith the Lord," to a specific problem or situation.

God's character as described to Moses, the one through whom came the writing of divorcement, is depicted as follows:

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. . . ." Exodus 34:6, 7.

One must consider that words of comfort were spoken to the household of faith. God in a more general sense cares for all as is shown by the fact that all are blessed by the sun and the rain, but He has specific words for the household of faith: "... let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10). He wants to do the same for all but most men by their choices do not allow Him that joy. If the divorced person is of the household of faith--and this was the group in which I have done my explorative work--then they fall into the same category as the widow. It would be understood that this writer is referring to the innocent party (biblically speaking) in a divorce action, or to that person who has repented and is in unity with God, though perhaps not with the church in the sense of membership. The person of this household of faith has a right to claim these promises.

The problems and needs of this unique group demand a hearing by reason of the number involved. In his book, _The One-Parent Family_, Schlesinger states that each year in the U.S. an additional 100,000 women find themselves widowed. The _U.S. News and World Report_
of April 22, 1974, stated that last year 913,000 couples, or 1 for every 4 marriages, were divorced in U.S. Courts. Many of those became one-parent families. This is recognized by many of our denominational leaders as a significant and ever growing problem within the Seventh-day Adventist church.
INTRODUCTION

I approached the descriptive exploration of the one-parent family with enthusiasm and this has not been dimmed as I come to the writing of my findings. The project deals specifically with the widow and the divorced woman with at least one child living in the home. My conclusions have come from personal interviews, using a questionnaire, in the hands of the interviewer, as an instrument to assure that significant facets have been covered in ascertaining the problems and needs of the maternal one-parent family. Community resources, and my findings from books and periodicals are included.

I compiled a list of the major denominations available in the area where the study was being conducted to ascertain what if anything was being done by them for this unique group.

I am convinced after talking with many Seventh-day Adventist pastors and with numerous pastors of other denominations that the one-parent family is a neglected minority.

As a pastor, I have been constantly made aware during this project of my own failure to meet the special needs of this group.

Many similar problems are encountered by the divorced and widowed. PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS (PWP) described in Chapter V, deny that there are significant differences and so combine all one-parent families in the same programs. There are many similarities but there are also many differences.
The normal family is considered to be the immediate family group consisting of father, mother and children living together. The problems of the single parent are largely due to the fact that society is dominated by the idea of the nuclear family.

According to the 1970 census, the United States had 51.9 million families and 13.1 per cent were classified as one-parent. In defining the one-parent family the 1960 census according to Schlesinger, stated that it is a "parent child group" consisting of parent and one or more single sons or daughters under the age of 18 years living together. PWP defines it, as one parent who is caring for his or her children in his or her home and who is a single parent due to widowhood, divorce, separation, or from being unmarried. In community terms it might be single parent, parent without partner, only parent or broken home. Schlesinger states that about 10 million Americans are eligible for PWP membership as a result of being divorced, widowed or separated. One out of every ten families has a female head as a consequence of divorce, widowhood, or separation. In one-parent homes, 90 per cent are headed by the mother. There are approximately 10 million American children under the age of 18 who live in the one-parent home.¹

It has been noted with the widow and the divorcee alike that she--

1. Must make a complete reorientation of life.

2. Must make all major decisions virtually on her own.

3. Is often confronted with major financial problems.

4. Often finds the job of caring for children lonely and endless.

5. Often finds it necessary to take on outside jobs and then worry about providing a babysitter while away.

6. Often finds herself isolated from normal community life; feeling that she is a fifth wheel.

7. Finds that most of the time society is not set up to deal with single-parent families because it is a minority group.

8. Finds that the sexual drives are still present.

There are certain services which are beneficial and many times required by the one-parent family such as the following:

1. Day-care services

2. Counseling

3. Father substitutes such as found in BIG BROTHER organizations

4. Matrimonial bureau

5. After-school care for school-aged children

6. Counseling groups for parents who don't wish to join community groups because of social class, race, religion, etc.

7. Recreation especially for single-parent families

Some of these services will be covered in greater detail in the section on resources.
CHAPTER I

THE DIVORCEE

Introduction

Divorce, though very common in the United States still has great disruptive power. It disrupts the lives of those directly involved, including the children, and those close to them such as relatives and at times, even friends. Some divorcees have said that the death of the partner would have been easier, for it would seem that society is much more understanding and kind to the widow.

Her new role as bread-winner and double duty parent will exhaust her. She will resent having to sacrifice so much to have her freedom; she may not be able to accept the never ending, undeniable responsibility that comes with her freedom. The plethora of dull housekeeping chores, the constant needs and demands of her children, her desire to be socially and romantically active, her anxieties about money and her future will cause stress and tension such as she never imagined possible. She will be maligned, scorned, guilty, overworked, tired.¹

Initially the divorce may bring a feeling of helplessness along with the fear of loneliness for she faces a multitude of decisions. This may be intensified if the husband was one who kept her in a dependent role, for she now does not know what her capabilities are, not knowing if she can even balance a check book. The children are now primarily dependent on her.

A positive point for adjustment might be that there is usually adequate warning of a divorce and often preparation for this.

In dealing with the divorced one-parent family I have used the appended questionnaire\(^1\) as a tool for interviewing.

There were nine divorcees included in the project, between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four having children living in the home, ages ranging from five to eighteen.

**Living Accommodations**

The divorcees interviewed, with the exception of one, lived in a small town. There were five of the nine who lived in apartments. Living alone with the children were seven while two had their mother living with them. All but one had moved after getting the divorce. Most had moved almost immediately or within months after the divorce, one having moved five times in two years. Following were the reasons given for moving:

- To finish their education
- To move to the parents' home
- To lessen the emotional problems of being in the area
- To lessen the financial drain

Several mentioned that too much haste was exercised in their move. Some moved several times in a short period of time.

Most writers on this subject, speak of the necessity to weigh decisions carefully considering the children, the school

\(^1\)The Appendix contains the questionnaire.
and the distance from it. The housing needs may change in a couple of years, thus this aspect should be considered.

There are advantages and disadvantages wherever one moves, whether it be to the small town or suburb, or to the big city.

Block speaks of the big city as anonymous and impersonal. In the big city, one can, (a) come and go without gossip or criticism, (b) find many job opportunities, (c) find there is less of couples life, and (d) find many places to go and activities to do. Negative aspects of the city include its (a) dirtiness, (b) overcrowding, and (c) expensive rents. Here the divorcee may find it hard to make friends and may be afraid to go out alone at night. This makes it one of the worst kinds of loneliness.

In the small town or suburb, the environment is much more pleasant; you can get by with an old car, you see people you like fairly often and have a sense of belonging. The children are likely to fare better in a smaller place. The points against suburban living might include a lack of privacy, being in more of a couples' world, fewer job opportunities and few new people to meet. ¹

The divorcee is often caught in a bind, for some landlords do not want a woman with children unless there is a husband. She may not be able to remain where she has been living, due to financial status, the embarrassment over the broken home and the attention of the meddling and nagging neighbors.

Finances

Financial security was claimed by only three of the nine divorcees interviewed. Two of the three stated their security was a result of the settlement, which included child-support, while the third called her job, her security.

The six mothers who thought they needed additional money specified $150.00 to $300.00 monthly as necessary to have what they considered to be a comfortable living. Three of the nine divorcees seemed to be secure financially, either owning or being in the process of buying a home.

With the exception of two, each of these women, had someone to whom she could turn in an emergency. Only once was a community resource specified.

Money may be one of the greater problems she will face as she will get less than is needed, even though, the former husband may be paying her more than he can afford. Child-support is based on a man's income and continues till the child is 18 years of age. This is altered if the child becomes self-supporting through marriage, enters service in the armed forces, etc. If the former husband falls behind on his child-support payments, often court action will not be taken due to the woman's inability to pay the legal fees. She then has to assume the added financial responsibility.

Some women receive alimony, meaning "sustenance" or "nourishment." Currently, about 85 per cent of the women in divorce actions, do not receive it.¹

The divorced mother with her children may experience a relegation to the poverty level of existence. She carries the unequal and great financial burden which can produce an undercurrent of tension in the home between the mother and children. She finds that as a woman, particularly a nonprofessional, she cannot earn as much as a man. She sees herself as the breadwinner and in spite of uncertainty and insecurity must fill this position.

This project group tends to support the reports in current literature as to the financial plight of the divorcee.

Employment

"Working has been good for me," said one mother, "it has made me grow. I find I'm able to carry on an intelligent conversation about employment, wage scales, and taxes right along with the best of them."

Of the divorcees surveyed, seven were employed full or part time. They all claimed that employment was necessary due to the shortage of funds. The word most frequently used was, "survival." Of the two not employed, one was attending the university full time while the other described herself as a "woman with too much money." The majority of these women were far from happy about working, due to the tensions caused in the home. They found it extremely difficult to allocate time, to be with their children. This emotional aspect proved to be one of the difficulties in rearing the child while employed. They must face the question as to whether they can run the home while having outside employment, and will the work be tiring and a drain on their health?

61 per cent of full-time working women received less than $3,000 income. Only 4 per cent of the women received more than $7,000.1

Obtaining employment may be difficult for the woman who has not been continuously working. To enter the job market with no skills may be a matter of retraining, and can be discouraging to one already burdened. Part-time employment, an ideal situation, is not simple to find and, once found, offers little guarantee.

The retirement benefits of social security are desirable, but to be eligible may mean that she must return to work for a time.1 In planning to be part of the work force, she needs to consider, along with the added income, the additional expense. She will have clothes to purchase, meals away from home, help at home, higher marketing costs, social security, and tax deductions subtracted from her income if she is to be involved in work away from home.

With certain skills or good fortune the employment may provide inner satisfaction, as well as partial relief from loneliness and a feeling of worthlessness.

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Pressures

The divorced maternal one-parent family is confronted by pressures and problems that outweigh those of the nuclear family, and seven of the nine interviewed believed this to be a fact. Reasons given for the extra pressures were, (a) everything is the mother's responsibility (expenses, discipline of the children, decisions) (b) lack of emotional security, (c) working intelligently with the upset child. Additional pressures included overtures made to them which tie in with their own sexual need, and discrimination. Unpleasant moments with service men or repair men were experienced by two of the nine divorcees. A telephone repairman threw his arms around one woman when installing her phone. Three told of their neighbors, who, without embarrassment, offered themselves for sexual encounters. In two cases, the offer was made twice, but by different neighbors. The majority of those interviewed believed that such encounters were unlikely unless encouraged by the divorcee, attitudes being stressed as the important factor.

Does the divorcee find discrimination in daily life? Five gave an affirmative answer to this pressure point. Discrimination was observed in higher insurance rates and no loans being allowed without a co-signer. This group was not considered as stable as when married and therefore, were counted as a risk for charge accounts or credit. Upon the dissolution of this home, credit can be lost upon changing the account.

One woman stated that an additional pressure is present because, "Adventist men are pre-conditioned not to date a divorcee."
Thus she has very little male companionship. It would seem that many men believe that the woman who has been married must have sexual involvement.

There was the feeling that in courtship the divorcee must be extra careful, or the man would take advantage of her.¹

The above can be a significant pressure for the Adventist woman who is striving to live by the code of God and the church.

Some women mention "stigma" which is attached to them—a matter which is often written about. William Matzkin suggests,

Any society which treats the divorced and their children as second-class citizens or as psychically inferior will pay a price for it in the form of disruptive behavior of our youth.²

A Catholic divorcee states: The priests do not want to be bothered with the divorcee for they are a blight on the Catholic image. There is a stigma attached to us and other Catholics are warned against us.³

Pressures are every day occurrences when the mother has to raise children and earn a living simultaneously. Small disasters such as a late sitter or unsuspected overtime, can scramble an already tight schedule.⁴


³Rue and Shanahan, p. 88.

⁴N. M. Lobsenz, "How Divorced Young Mothers Learn to Stand Alone," Redbook, November, 1971, p. 141.
The relation with the ex-mate continues to be a pressure, for the relationship is often sensitive. It is sometimes continued sexually. The emotional bonds do not snap cleanly with the break of the marriage, for there is still her need for money and children to bring them together, at least emotionally. It often takes four or more years to divorce herself emotionally. She is constantly regarded as a threat by the second wife. It is not unusual for both parents to compete for the affection of the children. The mother may have some guilt on being forced to be apart from the child and in using the child as a buffer. She finds it very difficult to retain her femininity while being a full time disciplinarian, and under the pressures built up over the months may become careless about her person.

The pressures of loneliness, helplessness, isolation, and living alone will be dealt with separately in another section of this study.

Aloneness and Its Effects

The divorcees with one exception, agreed that there had been no significant effect on the relationship with their extended family, however a marked change was noted in regard to the former spouse's family.

Nearly half stated that their relationship to friends had changed. Some withdrew, while others in various behavioral ways displayed their discomfort.
Eight of the nine did not believe that they were feared by wives in general; however several mentioned that they try to be careful, for they could be resented.

One labeled the Seventh-day Adventist church as an organization that makes people more open-minded, therefore reducing this fear. Each one interviewed had someone she could trust and to confide in during a time of crisis. This confidant ranged from a minister to a relative, with a friend being most frequently mentioned.

Research shows that former in-laws may become hostile and blaming and so it seems that few have further contact with the husband's kin after the break.

Former friends can turn cool overnight and this can add to the difficulty of maintaining composure and self-confidence. Those whom she considered to be her best friends, in not wanting to choose sides, become distant. The casual friends are the truest and do not vanish during the upheaval. Bohannan noted the following concerning the divorcee's friends, derived from observations: (a) anxiety, (b) shame, (c) inordinate preoccupation with the divorce, (d) desire for a sexual relationship with one of the divorcees, (e) pleasure about the divorcees suffering, (f) feelings of superiority, (g) surprise and incredulity, (h) experience of emotional loss and grief, (i) conflict over allegiance, (j) disillusionment about friendship, (k) preoccupation and curiosity about the settlement.¹

The divorcee is a constant threat to many married adults. Schlesinger states that, wives fear her. The interviews with the nine divorcees did not reveal this; however most of the literature concerning this minority group makes this claim.

It could be hoped that the difference lies in these women interviewed along with the majority of their friends, being Christians and Seventh-day Adventists. It may be only a matter of being more polite and sophisticated with their fears.

Social Outlook

I discovered that six of the nine divorced women had a very meager social life. Invitations to parties were infrequent even though they endeavored to repay social obligations. The few who found entertaining difficult mentioned the emotional trauma and being a "fifth wheel" as barriers, and one found it almost impossible, due to the financial crunch. Seven declared that they were uncomfortable without an escort and this was revealed in the number who were not willing to go to a party alone, and those hesitant to go overseas without a companion. For several of the mothers, the social life centered mainly around the church. New acquaintances were made, almost solely, through friends.

The fact is very clear, that for most divorcees, getting back into the single social swim is not easy and most often restricted because of limited financial resources. Socializing is also

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1Schlesinger, p. 6.
restricted by having to hold full time employment and coming home too tired even to care for the children.

Continued contact with the ex-husband may be a major hurdle. The constant tension of dealings with him may drain her emotional strength, and prevent her from establishing a new relationship.

It is not easy to meet the right kind of men under the right circumstances. She also worries about making a second marital mistake.¹

The Seventh-day Adventist women living near Andrews University where this project was carried on, or in another Adventist center, probably would not have the social problems of those in outlying areas. This would, at least, seem to be the case as evidenced by the frequency of dating by those involved in this project. Many and varied activities are carried on around such a center that would not be found for the divorcee in other places.

Lonely and Helpless

All of the divorcees in this study declared themselves lonely, with two exceptions, those being women who when married had a difficult home life. One of the two had a husband whose employment necessitated that he be away from home much of the year. These see loneliness as normal. The reasons set forth for loneliness were quite typical in my research, (a) lack of companionship, (b) being an outsider, (c) arriving at decisions alone, and (d) the need to be

¹Lobsenz, p. 141.
loved and wanted. Most of those interviewed had discovered certain times to be more difficult than others. For some it was the evening; for others, weekends, Sabbath afternoons or evenings, holidays, with Christmas being most often mentioned.

Six spoke of feeling helpless, such as at times of decisions concerning, and discipline of, the children, breaking down of machines and appliances, and the breakdown of the automobile. Four felt competent to do minor repairs themselves while those who lived in apartments looked to the landlord, who in some cases, had not been of much assistance. This descriptive study points out that their reliance was upon self, children, and close relatives.

Feeling free to call a neighbor's husband to help with a repair elicited a response of "no" from six of the nine. This would agree with what former studies have concluded, that the hesitation on the part of the single-parent comes from viewing herself, through the other woman's eyes, as a threat to her security.

The results of the research have answered questions as to why the divorcee should experience feelings of helplessness. One quickly sees that this woman must face an endless series of problems and bring them to a solution every day. Hunt says that if she has to move into other quarters, she must pack, move and unpack all by herself. If she stays, what does she do about the faulty oil burner, the venetian blind with a broken cord, the banging radiator? What
about insurance, bank statements, and real estate assessments? If she has to work, when is she to shop, clean, and cook?¹

Loneliness is perhaps the most common and important of the negative feelings. (The mother cares for the children's needs, puts them to bed, and then there is a frightening silence.) She watches television but there is no one to laugh or cry with her. She goes to bed and tries to read but finally turns off the lights and lies awake listening to strange noises.

Loneliness means for the formerly married an amputation, a dismemberment, an incompleteness where once there was something whole.²

Many, when they feel themselves sinking, clutch at the telephone as if it were a life preserver; they seize it, and through it grasp at friends or relatives, talking about nothing, something, anything—only to be in touch with someone else.³

Lonely people often wonder how the next person copes with this problem and feel certain someone has the answer. They long to become whole, complete, and autonomous individuals again.

Aloneness, for the one-parent families at certain times can be very difficult. Sunday ranked high because of the family day connotation. A number of the Seventh-day Adventist divorcees suggested Sabbath as

²Ibid., p. 49.
³Ibid., p. 51.
a lonely time for it was then that they became a family unit. Sabbath services and the quiet afternoons recalled many of the fondest memories.

Failure-Isolation-Fear

The nine divorcees in this study expressed feeling a sense of failure. This was primarily centered in not being able to hold the home together, and on further inquiry, not being able to hold a husband. They expressed a self-condemnation; though they could not point specifically to where a different approach, on their part, would have changed the end result. Three of the nine expressed feeling a sense of isolation but one of the three found it too had disappeared after attending the church nearby, where she was warmly welcomed and accepted.

Living alone held no fear for eight of the nine, primarily because, (1) Living within an Adventist community; I noted that normal precautions were lacking in several cases. (2) God-Fear was mentioned by more than one, as present immediately following the break of the nuclear family but no longer present following a commitment of their lives to the Lord. One had considerable insomnia and tried to have her friends stay with her as often as possible.

The trend of thought followed by much of the current literature is that a sense of failure is common for the divorcee.

Schlesinger states, that they often feel a strong sense of failure and shame.¹

¹Schlesinger, p. 9.
The sense of failure is more acute in women because they have for long been conditioned to believe that their prime index of success is measured by pleasing a man.\textsuperscript{1}

This sense of failure for some women may bring out the martyr role. It can affect their relations socially in that they have too little self-esteem, and self-esteem in its positive aspect is needed for trust in oneself and a mature concept of God.

A sense of isolation often develops when one no longer has a partner with whom to share life.

Sprinkled throughout current literature are the fears that the mother in the one-parent family may sense when living alone. She may fear the sounds of the night as representatives of danger. She worries about answering the telephone, responding to the knock at the door, the voices outdoors, and the cars moving slowly down the street. She may fear to enter the empty house or go to the car, with no one waiting. Insomnia and an overactive social life might be ways in which the fear would be revealed.

Children in the One-Parent Family

The majority of the mothers reported their children having problems in their social relationships. The age span covered by the children was from the very young child through young adulthood. The mother of one child in nursery school was asked not to bring her child back because of the upsetting affect she was having on the

\textsuperscript{1}Norman Sheresky and Marya Mannes, \textit{Uncoupling} (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), p. 194.
other children. The child was described by the mother as "a trouble maker." One girl, a senior in high school, had a deep resentment for all male teachers. She had been asked to leave the academy at Andrews University due to her antagonism to the male teachers. Additional problems discussed by the mothers were: (1) a boy with asthma, (2) children with fewer friends than others, (3) a high school senior—a boy, withdrawn, no girl friends, and smoking, and (4) a boy sixteen years old, on drugs.

Of those interviewed with children in school, only one claimed excellent grades for them; most were described as average or below, with two dropping to the point of failure.

Some discrimination toward the children was felt by three of the divorcees. In no case did this appear to be serious, as the mothers were not able to readily give examples.

In most instances, antagonism toward the dating parent or the one dating her was not present. Some of these mothers had dated very little or not at all since the divorce and their answer to the question of the children objecting to their dating was based entirely on their feelings. All the mothers, with the exception of two were intending to personally give sex-education to the children. The two were looking to the school or a relative to fulfill this need. It was apparent to me that sex-education to several of the mothers meant no more than the explanation of the physical aspect.

Divorce is a tragedy in the home, not only as it relates to the parent but as it often affects the child. The world of the
child may be toppled with only the mother to turn to, and with the child sometimes used as a pawn. There are often two families involved and thus dual loyalties, a situation that a child is not up to handling in a mature way.

A child's reaction to the loss of a parent can be compared to what his reaction might be to the loss of an eye, or an arm. . . .1

These children of divorce may have significant social and emotional problems. Research findings in this study would seem to indicate that this is true in varying degrees. The upheaval may be revealed in resentment and anger, increasing conflicts with their peers, a change in their dietary habits--no appetite or eating too much, fitful sleep with nightmares, and begging the mother to bring dad back, as though they had been the cause of the separation.

Gardner states that children may react to the divorce with symptoms of depression, withdrawal, apathy, and insomnia. Endeavoring to draw more attention, some children regress to an infantile state, or they may run away from home. He mentions that they almost invariably suffer from inadequacy and some develop severe separation anxieties, feeling that the mother may leave as well.2 Reinhart found in his study of the one-parent family that one-half of the children became sadder, angrier, more possessive, noisier, restless and pushy,3 following the break-up of the home.


2Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

The behavior of the children often changes. They become more aggressive or withdrawn, stealing and using foul language, beginning to smoke, drink, or to use drugs. Their grades may take a turn for the worse while in some cases, evidently due to over-compensation, the average student will study for top grades.

The dating of the parent brings varying reactions from children, some resenting openly the taking away of the parent while others, though not objecting, are extremely upset. If the mother sees each new man as a potential husband, this is transmitted to the child and the child wonders, "will he be my new father?" There are some mothers who feel they cannot remarry because of the negative attitude displayed by the children.

Many mothers realize that great care must be taken when teaching the children about sex. If she is bitter about the failure of her home, she may not be conscious of negative attitudes displayed toward the male. A negative attitude will affect the child and his or her relationship to the male and ultimately create a difficult hurdle in his or her home when established.

Mindey, from her reading and personal experience, has the impression that there are a number of things relating mostly to teenage and beyond regarding the children of divorce. These children are more cautious and afraid concerning their marriage. They date later, with fewer persons, and less frequently. Friends are made more slowly. They go steady more and are more likely to be
promiscuous. It was noted they tend to go steady with, become engaged to, and marry others from divorced families.¹

The religious faith of some children is shaken on the break-up of their home, while for others it is strengthened. It would appear that the divorce is a severe test for many and the negative result would outweigh the positive in the majority of cases.

There is a recognized need for the male image. Big Brothers of America has done its best to fill this vacancy; however a Big Brother is not always available.

Faced with a long waiting list at the Los Angeles chapters of Big Brothers . . . is sending one child to a male psychotherapist, simply because he is a man.²

Studies in paternal deprivation have shown how critical the male image is, particularly for the boy.

Studies of paternal deprivation suggest that there is a critical period, lasting from the time of weaning until entering school, when the father is very important to every child. Since the major factor in a boy's psychosexual development as a male is in his identification with the father, paternal deprivation for boys "can be as serious as maternal deprivation." The adequacy of the father facilitates adjustment to the male population on the part of both sons and daughters. An absent or weak paternal figure is often revealed in the case histories of homosexuals and schizophrenics. The influence of the father's personality traits takes effect as he comes in contact with the child and is instrumental in caring for his needs.³

¹Mindey, pp. 94ff.
Following a divorce, the occasional presence of the father can pose an emotional problem to the children as well as the mother, for there is often a continuing relationship on an occasional basis. The bouncing of children from one home to the other during visitation may keep them upset and if they have been forced to make a decision as to the parent they wish to live with, this may result in guilt for the child. In a sense, it is a terrible decision to ask a child to make. Fortunately, there are attorneys working for the children today and all should be very concerned with the rights of children.

**Ex-Husband**

Problems with the former husband were described as significant by two of the nine women. Three specifically mentioned visitation as a problem. In one case, the ex-husband when coming to visit the children walks right in the house without knocking and does not let them know in advance, that he is coming. It might appear, that the reason there were no additional visitation problems, was that four of the ex-husbands were living out of state, and so did not have ready access to the children. Seven of the nine stated that readjustment had been made difficult by the ex-husband, primarily due to the manner in which the settlement was finalized, the unreasonable-ness, and the manipulation of the family by the ex-mate. One divorcee remarked that living in the same geographical area created adjustment problems for her, due to the contact with the
ex-husband who seemed upset every time she was happy. This upset her.

Many of the problems experienced by the woman with the ex-husband are related to the children; this may be due to a lack of necessary child support or a disagreement over the children. It has been noted, that many ex-spouses are not faithful about the support of the family, often sending too little, sending it too late, or maybe sending nothing at all. This may not be so much a holding of funds, as not having money above what their personal needs demand. The children visit his home and he may treat them in a royal way that the mother cannot, often taking them places, buying them things, and perhaps even giving items to them which can be used only at his home. The mother frequently finds herself with less financial security in bringing up a family than the father has for himself or for his new family.

Readjustment is not a simple process. The woman more often than the man has the complete spectrum of adjustment to cover. She must deal with feelings of some difference in nature, than those of the man. Society’s expectation of the woman can enclose her to the point where she cannot process her feelings, as the male is allowed to.

A rising anger or disgust or longing toward one’s former mate creeps in upon the ex-wife ... at unexpected points. There is no escape from having it out with one’s feelings about the absent partner.¹

If a woman feels this anger toward the former husband, it is a sure sign that she is still emotionally attached. As long as this holds true, she will find it difficult to adjust to the new life she must lead.

Changing Interests

The majority of the divorcees being studied stated that their interests had changed since the divorce, some of the changes being due to altered financial capability. One single-parent, being a horse enthusiast, found that she could no longer enjoy even the simple pleasure of horseback riding due to the expense. It was found that their interests were also affected by employment and schoolwork. There did not seem to be any specific reason linked to some of the changing interests. I believe that the upheaval of the life through divorce, so changed them as people—their hopes and goals—that a major shift took place in the interest category. I could see the center of interest being around the children, work, and church, with the church taking on more importance than ever before for the SDA. I found very little in the books and periodicals which aimed specifically at interest changes. The social life was the one area often mentioned. The divorcee must now think single, and yet, never for a moment forget her great responsibility. If interested in remarriage, as most are, she must often divide her interest in several parts—children, God, employment and men.
Sex, Marriage and Health

The maternal one-parent family in this study provided various answers to what they missed most about not being married. There was one recurring theme, though worded differently, and that was "companionship." To them, this meant vacations together, having someone to talk with, confide in, share in decisions, and take a measure of the blame for mistakes. They missed the financial security, and having a caring person to go to bed with.

Five of the divorcees interviewed admitted to some sexual problems, with one of the nine not wishing to pursue the subject in the interview. They found the most difficult experiences to be in the few months following the divorce but they had not adjusted satisfactorily to the emotional and physical break. The problems were both of a physical and emotional nature while spiritual problems for the most part, were denied. Those things most commonly talked of were dreams—some of them weird—and fantasies, and feeling "up tight" with no opportunity as a Christian to release the tension.

Decreasing health following the split of partners was experienced only by three—two of the three indicating its manifestation as a gain in bodily weight. One entered the hospital and found it imperative to frequently seek medical aid. It was found that frequent depression was the experience of five, and four of the same five had contemplated suicide at one time; though this was no longer a threat to them. The majority of those suffering depression at one time, were not experiencing this at the time of the interviews.
Periodic depression seems almost universal among those sampled. Faith in God was credited, by several of those interviewed, for the victory over depression.

In reading literature on the one-parent family I found that women miss companionship most in not being married. Lobsenz and Hunt\(^1\) are among those authors which make this claim. My findings agree with these authors on this point.

I did not find a great deal of material on the problem of sexuality with the exception of authors such as Morton and Schlesinger. Schlesinger wrote of the divorced woman as being an easy sexual prey.\(^2\) This is evidently believed by many wives, which would explain why they consider her to be a threat. It would seem that there may be some basis for this fear, for the drives having been once released and satisfied are still present. The main thing that would keep her chaste would be her system of morality or her concept of right and wrong. "Like other women who live a chaste post-divorce live, Ann believes it is only possible with the help of God."\(^3\)

There are quite a number of women who have an emotional breakdown following a divorce and so end up receiving hospital or psychiatric care. "On the average, the suicide rate among divorced

\(^1\)Lobsenz, p. 139; Hunt, p. 48.

\(^2\)Schlesinger, p. 6.

\(^3\)Rue, p. 251.
women is three times as high ... as those for married women.\textsuperscript{1}

The final breakdown may have been caused partially by the plethora of pills and medication that she took for every ailment, the least of which was not the tranquilizer. There is a distinct probability that her diet was less than nourishing, a breakfast grabbed on the run, drink and donuts between meals, sandwiches at noon, and emptying the refrigerator at night. The need for rest and exercise may be added to the list of things necessary for a person who is to accept reality. The mother is facing responsibilities that seem to militate against those things which promote health. The reader should refer to the sex, marriage, and health section under widows, for additional information.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Remarriage, Possibilities of}

With one exception, the divorcees stated that they would welcome the opportunity for remarriage. The negative response was expressed by a bitter woman who was bitter toward men and the world in general. The majority qualified their answers by stating that there would be certain requirements: those being, loving this man and being loved in return, and an enthusiastic acceptance of the children on his part.

There was only one who felt there could be no improvement of her chances for remarriage. They stated that to, (1) lose weight,

\textsuperscript{1}Schlesinger, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{2}For further discussion of this matter see pp. 50-52.
(2) have fewer or no children, (3) be younger, (4) have less family involvement, and (5) live on the west coast, would improve the chances. The idea was expressed that the single man in particular will shy away from the woman with children. Regardless of the status, some men get the idea that because she has children she may be on the prowl for a meal ticket. The majority believed that there were additional difficulties for the Adventist woman, the prominent one being, less eligible males in the church. The belief by two of those interviewed was, that by going to a different part of the United States, opportunities might be improved, due to a larger number of eligible Adventist men. One girl asserted that Adventist men were set against the divorcee by their training, and were this changed, the possibilities would be improved.

According to the literature I read, many look for remarriage because of the dire economic position in which they find themselves, or perhaps for sexual or psychological reasons. This can be readily understood in reviewing preceding sections on finances, pressures, aloneness and its effects, and sex, marriage and health.

**Resources, Community and Legal**

Knowledge of resources was claimed by the majority of the one-parent families; but the response indicated only a slight acquaintance. Those most commonly mentioned were Parents Without Partners, Social Security and Aid to Dependent Children, with only one having thought of the church as a resource. The service of a professional counselor was sought out by only one of these divorces.
Included in this descriptive exploration of the one-parent family is a chapter on resources. Some of the resources will meet the needs of the divorcees.

The majority of these women, while going through the divorce proceedings retained an attorney. It seems that only two have maintained any connection with the lawyer, due to continuing complications in regard to the children. Following the divorce, there are some excellent reasons to seek legal help as set forth by Block.

You have within the past few months seen and signed so many legal documents that you shudder at the sight of almost any printed form. You would rather not be involved but you have no choice. . . . The laws concerning property, marriages and divorce, and the relations of parents and children differ in each state. That is why you are always being told to consult your lawyer or check with your Legal Aid Society concerning the law of your state.¹

**Attitudes and Faith**

A changed attitude was claimed by the nine women. Several mentioned having bitterness toward men; while others now had a deeper feeling for the children and were more pliable than before the divorce. The majority felt the change to be in a positive way. One woman spoke of becoming increasingly broad-minded, where fewer things were black or white.

Two of the divorcees had no meaningful faith in God previous to the divorce. Strengthened faith was the end result for six.

¹Block, p. 163.
Reasons given for a strengthened faith were, (a) stronger under testing, (b) husband had not been a faithful Adventist, (c) pastor visited, (d) converted following the divorce, (e) understood righteousness by faith through Elder Coon's lectures, and (f) no one but the Lord to hang on to.

I was very pleased that the group of women in this project, according to what they said, had found a deeper faith, and this faith seemed to be tempering the bitterness they had originally experienced.

Shersky says that self-pity and bitterness are the most common fallouts from the fission of divorce.¹

In my judgment, based on what they said and how they said it, there was a minimal amount of self-pity in these women. Most of them seemed to recognize that they were part of the problem which led to the divorce. They took up new and necessary interests instead of allowing themselves to wallow in pity, and becoming generally useless to themselves and others.

Church, What About It?

A strained relationship with church members was experienced by six of the women upon obtaining the divorce. The one positive comment by one of the nine was that church people grouped around her to help. In comparing this with comments from the others, I wondered if the optimistic interpretation on her part was not partially due to her being an individual of positive thinking. The majority of the

¹Shersky, p. 193.
women saw negative connotations in the after-events; one spoke of the stigma of divorce and another of estrangement. There was a general feeling among the six that those about them were uneasy, not knowing quite what to say. These divorcees did not believe that it was a purposeful thing, just a behavior shaped by the background of the people over which the individual had little control. Interestingly enough, three mothers noted no change in their social relationships, having maintained their same church friends who they found responded as they always had—even before the divorce. The question of how the church family could be of greater help was asked. Two had no suggestions, feeling that the church had responded meaningfully.

The following are suggestions which were given:

1. The pastor should be a listener. One divorcee declared that she would not go to her pastor if he were the last one, for though she respected him, he seldom listened when talked to.

2. The pastor should be a visitor. A divorcee stated that no pastor came to her home either prior to or following the break.

3. The pastor should manifest interest. She wished that he would make periodic contacts inviting to special meetings and spiritual affairs.

4. The church should take active steps to alleviate prejudice toward the divorcee and be more sympathetic toward the single-parent.
5. The church should offer to help a person, either financially or spiritually. This was not expanded upon.

6. The children should be befriended through the laity of the church. It was her desire, that the children be invited to go places with individual church families on occasion, as well as with the collective church family.

7. The denominational pay scale should be adjusted so that the single woman is not discriminated against. She stated that when her children reach twenty-one, her pay decreases. This was mentioned by the one divorcee in denominational employ.

8. One divorcee recently in the church, expressed the longing for additional fellowship, for activities aimed at reaching out for the lonely people. Her conviction was that the church should provide an avenue for physical activity, which would relieve some of the daily stress and strain.
CHAPTER II

THE WIDOW

Introduction

There are according to Schlesinger approximately 9 million widows in the United States with an annual increase of about 100,000. One in every 8 American women 14 years or older is a widow. One in every 12 is a widow between the ages of 45 and 54. One-fifth of all women at ages 55-64 are widowed and over two-fifths at ages 64-74, and seven-tenths past 75. Three-quarters of all widows under the age of 45 have at least one young child, under the age of 18 in their care. Altogether 1 million widows face this responsibility today.¹

Over half of all widows under 35 were either employed or seeking work. At ages 35-54, this proportion rises to nearly two-thirds.²

Many of the widows say that they disagree with those people who say that death is better than divorce, for divorce is a human failing while death is irrevocable.

In contrast to the divorcee, the widow is relatively secure in her environment. One widow stated, "When you say you are a

¹Schlesinger, p. 119.
²Ibid., p. 31.
widow, a sympathetic trend comes toward you. I know several divorced women who, because of this, say they are widowed."

The widow has often been totally unprepared for the sudden death of her partner and because her husband left his affairs a jumble she may find the economic and social changes frightening. It may take the widow a year or more to come to grips with the future. A number of psychologists advise that she put off all but the most pressing decisions until she is able to do this.

Catherine Marshall, widow of Peter Marshall, has written: "No one flies over the valley of the shadow, you walk its rocky paths step by step."¹

The same questionnaires² used to interview divorced women were used as a tool to discover the problems and needs of widows.

The four widows who were interviewed ranged in ages between twenty-seven and thirty-six. They had children in the home between three and seventeen years of age.

Living Accommodations

All four of the widows, in this descriptive exploration of the one-parent family, lived in a small town. There were two who lived in their own homes while the remaining two were apartment dwellers. All were living alone with their children and two had remained in


²The Appendix contains the questionnaire.
their own home. One who had moved stated that she "could not bear to be close to the place of her husband's accident," while the other felt the need for the companionship of her parents. The two widows who remained in their homes owned them. They expressed gratefulness for the planning and foresight of their husbands. It would seem that in many instances, the ownership of the dwelling would be the difference between an extremely difficult situation and that of comfortable living for the family.

The widow does not have the same pressures to move that the divorcee has, but may have the impulse to get away and shut off from her vision the place where she and her deceased husband had lived together. On moving she can find herself worse off in many ways and instead of forgetting the grief, discover that she has carried the sorrow with her.

Catherine Marshall stated that a swift move would have left her the same person instead of acting as a healing process. Living in the same place gave her a good opportunity to overcome her fears and face the loneliness. The widow would be wise to wait a number of months before making a major decision concerning a change in housing.

Finances

All of the widows questioned were financially secure by means of insurance, Social Security, ownership of property and bank accounts. One felt the need of an additional income while attending

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1Marshall, p. 51.
the university. Two of the four owned their homes, ownership provided by husband's home insurance policy issued before his death. They all had a source of income to which they could turn in an emergency. Being secure, this answer concerning an emergency source, had not the forethought, as given by the divorcee who was financially insecure.

The widows though financially secure were not rich. It would seem that the rich widow is an exception. Langer, (not a statistician) states that statisticians report that the majority of widows spend their lump-sum insurance money within a year after receipt.\(^1\) Using the above statement, one would recognize the wisdom of the husband who does not provide for a lump-payment.

The widow must face the questions of (a) how to manage, (b) how are the choices about life limited or extended by the resources, and (c) the true financial situation which will include a study of her assets, liabilities, Social Security, and community resources.

Immediately following the death of the spouse, a widow may find herself with insufficient cash to pay immediate bills or to purchase groceries and simple necessities. This situation may arise where funds cannot be drawn from the account and the safe-deposit box is impounded by state law.

It is not unusual for the mother to make a false alliance between money and love. She knows the children are sharing in the emotional deprivation and so struggles to make up this lack in a monetary way.

Generally speaking, the widow appears to be more secure financially than the divorcée. She has retained everything owned and shared while having the additional security of any insurance, death benefit, and Social Security.

**Employment**

Employment was not needed by three of the four widows as they were financially secure and happy being at home with the children. Remunerative work was necessary for one because of financial need. Of the widows not gainfully employed, two had done some volunteer work at a hospital, thus relieving them from a certain measure of loneliness following the death of the helpmeet.

Langer and Mindey among others, state that work may be instrumental at times in restoring a lost status, renewing social life, and providing satisfaction needed by every social being. The companion section concerning the divorcée gives additional points that might be mutually helpful. The adjustment to being part of the work force after years of not working, except as a homemaker, may be quite difficult. She will find many changes and should

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1 Langer, p. 92; Mindey, p. 151.

2 For further discussion of this matter see pp. 8-9 above.
be prepared to adjust. There will be forms to complete and she may resent some of the questions but rather than bristling, and stalking off, it would be better to relax and reflect that these are changing times.\textsuperscript{1}

\textbf{Pressures}

Without exception, the widows interviewed stated that the pressures and problems were greater for the woman alone. Reasons set forth were, (a) no sympathetic ear, (b) forced independence, (c) raising the child alone, and (d) making decisions without consultation. None had unpleasant experiences with servicemen or repairmen; however, one was propositioned by three men during the first month of widowhood. Both the widows and divorcees believe that men see them as an easy target, sexually. Two of the four were convinced they had been discriminated against, and were hesitant to speak of being a widow in applying for credit. It was noted that car insurance was charged at the rate for single women. I made an appointment with the manager of a local bank and queried him about discrimination. He categorically denied discrimination by banks against either the divorcee or widow, and stated that if they had steady employment, they were judged to be the same risk as a normal family.

They also face the pressures of loneliness, isolation, and helplessness.

The widow does not have the stigma of the divorcee but widowhood may present an identity crisis; for where the relationship had been centered in one man, now she is alone, with the whole purpose of living washed away.¹

Grief becomes an over-burdening pressure, especially in the early stages. Sometimes there is a large scale outburst of sorrow that comes several months after the death of the husband.

Langer states that after the time of sympathy has run out, the body is full of pain. There is tightness in the throat, exhaustion with no appetite, restlessness, inconsistency, and fear of being alone. Everything is distorted and out of proportion. She wonders if she is losing her mind because the moods are so uncertain.²

Under these pressures the widow learns that there are two kinds of people: those who listen when there is sorrow to share, and those who will not.

Aloneness and Its Effects

The effect of aloneness as it relates to human relationships is investigated in this section.

Two of the widows answering the questions stated that their relationship with the relatives had changed. The changes differed in that one suffered from a lack of understanding and over

¹Langer, p. 16.
²Ibid., pp. 16, 17.
simplification of her problems, while the other received the benefit of greater empathy and helpfulness. Staying away from his relatives following his death involved no change for one widow.

The majority found a change in their friends' attitudes, now with there being little in common, they received very few invitations. The widow was made to feel like a "fifth wheel." Now the friends did not come around anymore.

These young women had the impression that wives view them as intruders looking for husbands. Two of the four stated that they were feared by wives.

All of the widows had some person to turn to in a time of crisis. One deeply religious girl found great comfort in "the Lord, handling the major problems of her life."

In contrast to the divorcee, the widow does not lose her in-law relatives upon becoming a one-parent family. Langer writes:

If you want your in-laws to continue as meaningful people in your and your childrens life, you will need to decide what you will want from them and what you are prepared to give them.¹

A widow might become resentful because of unrealistic expectations on the part of the relatives. One told of the mother-in-law becoming upset about the purchase of an inexpensive casket. Later on, his family wanted her and the children to come 1200 miles to California for a visit. This widow stated that the relatives never seem to think of the fact that it is difficult to travel

¹Ibid., p. 159.
1200 miles with three children, or that it costs money. She spoke of herself as being "still resentful."\(^1\)

Some friends leave, as they seem to be unable to face any kind of unpleasantness and seeing the widow will be a reminder of death. Block recommends that a widow do all she can to keep the old friends because they tend to maximize her opportunity to meet people and eligible males.\(^2\)

Start expresses the fear of wives, telling how the attractive widow will be constantly asking the husband to put a washer in a faucet or fix the screen, and then shower him with profuse expressions of gratitude. The wives speak of this as "poaching on their preserves."\(^3\)

The widow probably has an easier time finding a sympathetic ear in a crisis than a divorcee. Her plight of widowhood, regardless as to the compatibility while living together, before his death, draws the tenderness and concern from many friends and neighbors alike.

Social Outlook

Only one widow, of those interviewed, had considerable social life, which was centered in a gentleman friend. Two women felt that they were not invited to parties and only one of the four

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\(^2\) Block, p. 248.

\(^3\) Start, p. 73.
reciprocated with any social obligations. Three of the four widows felt no need to return favors inasmuch as they are not invited out. Entertaining was not difficult for three of these widows, for it included mainly close friends. The majority were comfortable without an escort and also answered they would attend a party alone or even go overseas alone. The widows in the sample could be contrasted with the divorcees on this point. These women made new friends, largely through their old friends. The church, children, and classes were also noted as avenues of possible new friendships.

It is difficult to define the status of a widow, for definitely, there is a loss of position in her social relationships.

"People don't want you around when you're a widow. You are a 'fifth wheel'."¹

Friends care, but are embarrassed about what to say. Former friends of the widow and her deceased husband can no longer be depended on. Now as a widow, she discovers that the children can create problems socially, requiring plans and activities to be different. Langer states that entertaining can be more than a little difficult for the widow and the divorcee.²

A member of a church I had pastored, wrote a letter, saying, "Fellowship is one of the biggest needs for a single-parent, whether it's participating in a potluck, physical fitness class or rap session, it's really needed."

¹Ibid., p. 96.
²Langer, p. 92.
Lonely and Helpless

The widows, in this project, without exception were lonely. Reasons given were, (a) the lack of companionship, (b) too much time alone, and (c) not being loved and cared for. Like the divorcees, the widow found the holidays to be particularly difficult with Christmas ranking first. Loneliness took hold on weekends and evenings, especially after the children were in bed.

Everyone admitted to feeling helpless at times; such as when disciplining the children, when repairs are needed around the home, and when the automobile breaks down. Each of these widows had someone who took special interest in the repair problem. Two of them said they felt free to call a neighbor or friend's husband. The greater freedom of widows who felt comfortable in doing this when compared to the divorcee might have some relation to the sympathy often elicited toward the widow in contrast to a measure of hostility sometimes directed toward the divorcee.

When the marriage is over . . . and you are alone, on your own, physically, emotionally, and literally, only the echo of your own voice in the house, only the sound of your own footsteps on the stairs, only your own face in the mirror, only your own body in the bed, then the deepest and the most complete kind of loneliness possesses you.¹

Often mentioned by widows are the lonely nights, the recollections, and the wistfulness for which there is no medication. Time heals, but some find that after several years, they still are lonesome. They can be lonely while busy and even in a crowd of

¹Block, p. 82.
friends. Some hold to routines, feeling this helps to preserve the relationship. Widows, as was true for the divorcees, discovered that certain times, perhaps a special time of day, was often more difficult for them than other times.

It would be unusual if the widow did not at times, feel helpless. In many cases she is forced to earn her living and do things she has never done before. She has to handle money, property, and be everything to the children. She often finds herself resented by men who work with her. She is forced to be competitive and this in itself may change her relationships.

Catherine Marshall stated that before the death of her husband, she had never figured out an income tax form, had the car inspected, consulted an attorney, or tried to read an insurance policy. The checking account was rarely balanced, she had never invested money and had driven a car for only three months. She was not trained to earn a living.\(^1\)

**Isolation-Fear**

A contrast in feeling isolated was shown by the result of the questionnaire, as responded to by the widow and divorcee. All of the widows saw themselves as being isolated, feeling apart from the main stream of life. One held that the fault was within herself, for she was not, in fact, isolated. The time of greatest isolation was keenly felt at church on Sabbath by another widow. I had the

\(^1\)Marshall, p. 25.
impression that this lady was confusing isolation with loneliness but this was stated not to be so.

The widows were asked if they were fearful of living alone. This elicited a response of no, from all of the respondents, though one said she had some fear immediately following the death of her husband. The reasons indicated for the lack of fear, were very similar to those given by the divorcees. (These are found in the comparable section concerning the divorcee.) These widows took the normal precautions which would include locking the house securely at night, being careful in answering a caller at the door, and having a watch-dog.

Children in the One-Parent Family

The widows interviewed for this project denied either social or emotional problems in their children. The children were doing average or better than average scholastically and the parent observed no discrimination directed against them.

It was interesting to note that two of the four widow's children would and did object openly to the dating of their mother.

These mothers felt adequate in supplying sex-education personally to their children.

There are a number of similarities between the child of the widow and the divorcees child, one of which is being deprived of a 

\[1\text{For further discussion of this matter see pp. 19-24 above.}\]
father. Studies suggest that there is a critical period between the weaning and the entering of school. An absent father figure is many times revealed in the case histories of homosexuals and schizophrenics.\(^1\) It may be that there are fewer social and emotional problems for the widow's children than those of the divorcee, due to the lack of stigma and the fact that many of these homes were happy before the death.

Marsden states that children are cushioned from the immediate impact of fatherlessness, by their youthfulness, inability to understand and by the willingness and ability of the mother to help the child come to terms with the situation.\(^2\)

Steinzor mentions a significant aspect of the problem as the child's tending to form distorted ideas about the father from the biased stories that he hears. It would have been much better had he been able to make his own evaluation through experience with the real person.\(^3\)

Langer points to additional problems experienced by the child of the widow.\(^4\) The father's death may create anxiety and feelings of helplessness and abandonment to the child. This can be partially alleviated by including the child in what is happening so that instead of feeling alone and separated, he will feel close to the other members.

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\(^1\)Marsden, p. 134.

\(^2\)Pikunas, p. 58.

\(^3\)Steinzor, p. 58.

\(^4\)Langer, pp. 125, 163.
One other Beck mentions, spoke of her son, Keith, who developed a speech blockage. Though she had known it for a long time and that it probably had an emotional basis, she had been unable to face it.¹

One of the difficult things for the mother of a fatherless boy is to feel his loneliness and not to have a man who asks the son to go for an outing. A family could be a real help if it would include such a lonely boy in some of its activities.

It seems evident that the one-parent family through death has more emotional, social, and varied school problems than the nuclear family.

Changing Interests

The widows were evenly divided on a change in their interest following the death of their husband. The explanation given by two widows was that it was a natural thing that had to be done; their major interest died with the tragic death of the husband since he was their major interest. It seems that one of these two drew closer, with the help of friends, to her church while the other fell further away.

In my research of books and periodicals, as found in the selected bibliography, I found very little information on changed interest, although, the subject of new social needs frequently appeared. The single-parent, in most cases, is looking for definite fulfillment which often means remarriage. In order for remarriage

¹Beck, p. 89.
to take place, she must become involved in the single way of life. The responsibilities and liabilities of the nuclear family are always with her and yet in many cases, the interests have not so much changed as been added to.

Sex, Marriage and Health

What did the widow miss most about not being married? The answer most often given, as was also given by the divorcee, was that of "companionship." Family togetherness and particularly the fellowship on Sabbath were mentioned.

Two of the widows interviewed recognized a sexual problem, this problem affecting them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. One of the two with problems was not comfortable in talking about this and so it was not pursued further. The other widow talked of uncontrolled thoughts, a body craving, and spiritual problems related to the emotional and physical aspect of sexuality. Admission by one widow following her husband's death was that she often found herself sexually involved with married men as well as single men. She recognized this as a spiritual problem.

A noted decrease in health was experienced by three of the four widows. This was manifested in loss of weight, extreme nervousness, and the need for surgery. Depression was a stranger to only one while two of the four had contemplated suicide. Marsden has stated that many widows have breakdowns at this time and discovered in the study that he conducted that one-fourth of the widows complained of tiredness and one-half of depression
following the death of the husband. The women may be extremely fatigued and yet have insomnia. Schlesinger and Beck, among others, point to the divorcee and the widow, as being a better than average subject for mental and physical problems. Suicide rates a higher place in the one-parent family. "There is less resistance to suicide because of not being adapted to situation in which she finds herself."

She is more likely to have physical problems that demand the physician's attention. This would fit in with current findings that the mental outlook can lead to much sickness and disease. Block, for instance, notes that:

You may fall ill. Your low level of emotional resistance carries over to the physical side. It is not at all uncommon for the loss of a close loved one to trigger the onset of a serious illness. You can expect headaches, a bad cold, poor sleep, a general feeling of malaise.

On the sexual side, it would seem that quite a number of women in this liberated age are asking why any woman, divorced or widowed should do without the physical pleasures of marriage. The view of the conservative Christian, that it is morally wrong and so a sin, is seldom propounded. One author states that she has found that the feelings of those to whom physical loneliness is a problem follow a pattern, though it varies in timing. The widow may think

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1Marsden, p. 119.
2Schlesinger, p. 35; Beck, p. 86; Block, p. 29.
3Schlesinger, p. 36.
4Block, p. 29.
the physical adjustment is easy after three months, but that at
about five months she begins to feel differently. The battle is in
earnest after six months; the happier she had been in marriage and
the more thoroughly adapted to married life, the greater will be her
physical loneliness and need. Widows confided to her that this
deep need for love emerged in many ways and under devious disguises
that caused them to be difficult to recognize.¹

Orgasms in my sleep have been my release. I didn't know
my sex was pent-up but it must have been a time or two. I'd
awaken and realize I had been dreaming, but my orgasm
would continue; my body seemed to insist upon its movement.
Sleep would come; my body had its release.²

Remarriage, Possibilities of

All of the widows answered yes to accepting the opportunity
for remarriage with the same qualifications as given by the
divorcees. Those qualifications were, loving the man and being
loved, and an enthusiastic acceptance of the children, on his part.

It appeared that two of the widows in this study had little
idea of how their chances could be improved, while the remaining
two took opposite sides in their response. One mother felt the
only solution would be an increase of Seventh-day Adventist men.
It may be that the positive response in SDA chances for remarriage
was affected by the fact that two of them were young, attractive, and
dating steadily from the time they chose to re-enter the social
world.

¹Marshall, pp. 119, 120.
²Beck, p. 98.
An affirmative response to remarriage is not always elicited; this may be due to grief or unhappiness in the home prior to widowhood. Start states that probably if most widows were completely truthful, they would express a desire for a second husband.¹

Resources, Community and Legal

In contrast to the divorcee, there was only one widow who claimed awareness of resources, and only becoming aware through her banker. This awareness was mainly in the area of the Family Service Agency and the Life Insurance Agency Management Association. This banker took considerable time to counsel and help her get the papers in order.

Two of the four widows had consulted and retained an attorney, who proved to be a source of help.

The widow, Catherine Marshall, spoke of her husband, unintentionally leaving her a great deal of work to do. Mrs. Marshall stated that 70 per cent of American property owners die without a will having been drawn up. She speaks personally, of the strong box in the bank being sealed and the checking account being frozen. Everywhere she turned, legal proof of her husband's death was required which brought her to making a whole sheaf of photostats of the death certificate. This was emotionally upsetting at the time.²

¹Start, p. 116.
²Marshall, pp. 82, 83.
When I discovered the amazing amount of red tape involved even with such a small estate, I almost ran to a lawyer to get help in making a will of my own.¹

Probably every widow would be wise to have an attorney in whom she has confidence. There are a number of times during her life and that of the children that she may find it helpful, to avail herself of his professional service.

Attitudes and Faith

Like the divorcees, the attitudes of all the widows in this descriptive exploration had been affected by their loss. These widows harbored no bitterness but spoke of themselves as now more conservative and sympathetic, less judgmental, and having stronger feelings for the children. One widow discovered that her attitude toward what constitutes traditional morality is increasingly liberal.

One declared herself to have less than a meaningful faith and this did not change following the death of her husband; others had a faith that increased in meaning following the tragedy. Probing for reasons for the strengthened faith produced a list of three: (1) faced a lot of traumas with prayer and faith, (2) deeper understanding, and (3) closer relationship to God by having to make important decisions with His help. Start has said:

One of the greatest needs for the widow is the need for hope—hope beyond the grave. Even the person who has been rather casual about the thinking of life after death for herself becomes almost obsessed with the insistence on such

¹Ibid., p. 84.
a life eternal for a husband . . . who had died. Permanent parting, nothingness for a life that was precious and meaningful seems unthinkable.¹

This, the Adventist woman has. But with many widows there is no assurance of a future.

One tells of a loss in faith and the psychological value of prayer forms to her. She saw it as nothing more than a release.

Occasionally I have uttered a short prayer either in despair or in thanksgiving, but with no thought of an answer or help, except as it helps me to utter that prayer. It is a release and I expect no return.²

To a Christian woman this would be a futile procedure. Others tell of their life tumbling in and their questions of ultimates that cry out to God in their silence. A growing faith means that these widows must trust God and come out of their sorrow to become involved in helping others.

These bereaved women, sometimes, believe that their attitudes have changed more than they really have. If grief is still being worked through and the time element varies widely, they may believe their attitudes are ones of bitterness, when this is not so.

Church, What About It?

Being a widow, did affect relations with the church members according to three of the four interviewed. Comments by one were, "the members now stay away, and the few who do come meddle." Another widow sees some of the members as believing that she now has

¹Start, p. 91.

²Beck, p. 100.
more time. She appeared to resent the suggestion, in the light of heavier responsibilities in the home and being forced to accept gainful employment. The change was for the better in one case, where she saw the members as more aware of her needs as an individual and found them helpful. The majority believed that the church could be of greater help to the one-parent family. Ways in which they suggested this could be done, some of which are similar to those given by the divorcee, follow.

1. The church should show additional interest in the children of the one-parent home. These children need a man to talk with and this could be partially alleviated by a family or families in the church taking special notice of them, which would mean inclusion in some of their activities.

2. The church should be more friendly, and not drop the widow in their interest and contacts after three months, as may sometimes be the case. A telephone call would be of great help, but often there are no calls. An invitation for a ride would be joyfully welcomed, but it is seldom offered.

3. The church should dispense encouragement. One widow stated that the church was more important to the mother in the one-parent family for she has no husband to communicate with. The sanctuary can be one of the loneliest places because of family memories. The single-parent needs to depart with a lift for the week, but often the encouragement is not implanted, and the messages have not spoken to the heart.
CHAPTER III

APPROACH OF VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS TO

THE ONE-PARENT FAMILY

This descriptive exploration of the one-parent family was conducted in the Berrien County area of Michigan where contact was made with the pastors of a number of the area churches representing the major denominations. Where the pastor was not sure about his organization's activity for the one-parent family, I wrote to the church headquarters requesting information, and received it in each case.

It is the exception when a denomination or a church within that denomination, is working specifically with or for this minority group. A number of the churches claim to be reaching this unique group in a special way; but I found on probing deeper that the minister was saying, Sunday schools, youth clubs, fellowship groups etc. were geared to reach all people and all were welcome. It was not in any way a special program for this group. There were a few pastors to whom I had a difficult time communicating what I meant by the one-parent family and programs being directed particularly toward it. There are thrusts within several of the denominations directed to some degree toward this group, as there are within the Adventist denomination. These programs however are not sponsored or even actively encouraged by the denominations; they are independent
groups which in some cases have many chapters as in the Seventh-day Adventist Friends (PHILOSDA). This S.D.A. organization will be dealt with later, in the chapter on resources.

Following are the results of inquiries made of the denominations by way of a pastor or correspondence with the headquarters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church/Denomination</th>
<th>One-Parent Family Activity</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Assembly of God</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The pastor remarked that &quot;the stiff stand&quot; of the denomination on divorce complicates a movement in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. American Baptist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. National Baptist Convention</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. North American Baptist Convention</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The headquarters wrote that though they recognize the need, at this time they have no special program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Southern Baptist Convention</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>They publish a magazine aimed at the one-parent family and are doing some work in this field of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Brethren</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Catholic</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There will be a resource listed which is specifically for the divorced Catholic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Church of Christ</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Church of Christ-Christian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>These are independent churches so the denominational label does not apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/Denomination</td>
<td>One-Parent Family Activity</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. United Church of Christ Missouri</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>They conducted an experimental retreat at Camp Mo-Val for the recently bereaved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Churches of God-Anderson Indiana</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>They have a women's task force that is concerned, but I found nothing more definite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Congregational</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>They have a Christian Social Relations Department that gives special attention to singles in the church which includes the one-parent family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Episcopal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The bishop sent me materials. They do work for this group specifically. This is done in groups and through church sponsored activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Zion Evangelical Reformed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Full Gospel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Greek Orthodox</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Latter-day Saints Reorganized</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Lutheran, LCA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Lutheran - Missouri Synod</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Lutheran - Wisconsin Synod</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Free Methodist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. United Methodist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Nazarene</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/Denomination</td>
<td>One-Parent Family Activity</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Pentecostal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There are so many branches of the Pentecostal that it would be difficult to know what is being done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Salvation Army</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This group has no program directed toward this single-parent but ministers to these people on an emergency financial basis and treats all alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Seventh-day Adventist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is some information in the resource chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The minister says that the reason they have no program for the single-parent is because they accept divorce. He had little to say about the widow except that because of the church's liberal viewpoint, all feel accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. United Presbyterian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

ATTENTIVENESS OF THE LOCAL PASTORS
TO THE ONE-PARENT FAMILY

I found in contacting some of the Berrien County pastors that very little was attempted for the one-parent family. A number were acquainted with some resources that could be of help to the family. There had been little thought given to the special needs and problems of this group but some had assumed that the local church programs were sufficient for the one-parent family. Out of a total of 35 pastors who were contacted 5 did not seem concerned in the least, about the needs of this group. It seemed to this researcher that these pastors overlooked the widow and had some antagonism toward even accepting the divorced person as one who should be loved by the church.

I talked with the pastors of a number of the local churches to find out what was being done for the one-parent family within that specific congregation. The results follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>One-Parent Family Activity</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fairplain Assembly of God</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. First Baptist Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mt. Zion Baptist Church National Baptist Convention</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>One-Parent Family Activity</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lakeshore Baptist Church - North American Baptist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There is a Home Life program which he equated with these needs. He also mentioned Sunday school and church training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Niles Ave. So. Baptist</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The pastor mentioned that they had adult fellowships which would include this group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Grace Brethren Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. St. Joseph Catholic Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Church of Christ</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lakeshore Church of Christ Christian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Crystal Springs Churches of God, Anderson, Indiana</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>They have a department in the church to deal with the one-parent family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Congregational Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The pastor mentioned PWP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. St. Augustine Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Zion Evangelical Reformed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>There are mutual interest programs held weekly to meet the needs of all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Full Gospel Tabernacle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Greek Orthodox Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>One-Parent Family Activity</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Saron Lutheran Church, LCA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PWP was mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. St. Marks Lutheran Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Christ Lutheran Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The pastor said his church had &quot;social consciousness.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Grace Lutheran Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This church has a friendship organization which includes singles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Free Methodist Church</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. United Methodist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Apostolic Tabernacle Pentecostal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Salvation Army Citadel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Their programs are aimed for all, including this unique group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Seventh-day Adventist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eau Claire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Memorial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton Harbor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Niles</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This pastor mentioned PWP. He said that his church was not opposed to divorce and so not under the usual stigma, these people found the whole program helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. United Presbyterian</td>
<td>No</td>
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CHAPTER V

RESOURCES

Much has been done within the last 10 years to help the one-parent family. There are many resources available to them because of an increased understanding of their needs by the service organizations and to some extent the populace as a whole. It would seem far more needs to be directed specifically to this unique group, as many of the resources are not slanted to meet their needs in particular.

There are specific resources within some churches and denominations; however it seems that the ones serving the church members are not often sponsored by the churches themselves, but by individuals or groups of Christians in that particular church or denomination. They have concern for these widows and divorcees and do something constructive to help them.

There are a number of pastors well aware of the problems of this group, and feel like the Rev. Bill Jolly, pastor of the First Church of Christ of San Bernadino, California:

The church has much to offer the single parent in the way of self-help and social activities. But, the person searching for a singles club will find that none exists in my church. There's more to life than just problems. A person who already feels isolated shouldn't add to the problem by being part of a group of people with the same kind of problems he has . . . we try to keep to that idea.
by including the single person in groups of persons of all ages with differing interests.¹

There are many agencies that offer help in various areas, some of which are: (1) Family Service Agency, (2) Catholic Social Services, (3) mental health units, (4) jobs and vocational rehabilitation in some places and (5) Seventh-day Adventist Welfare offering help in food and clothing.

The Family Service Association of America has 355 agencies throughout the country and 3,100 counselors, social workers and psychiatric social workers trained to work with troubled individuals and families.²

Hosch writes in a San Bernardino, California newspaper about a Jim Curtis whose dream it is to create a series of tapes referring families to agencies delivering human services. The tapes would be provided through TEL-MED, a telephone service. They now have one tape, "The Single Parent Experience" that can be heard by telephoning 825-7000 and asking for tape number 1070. In addition, their goals for the near future include (a) parent resource file, (b) accumulation of data on the single-parent, (c) developing of a newsletter linking interested groups and individuals, and (d) co-ordination of existing sources relative to problems of the single-parent family. Information relative to this program may be obtained at the County Council of Community Services, 1700 North E. Street, San Bernardino, California.³


²Block, p. 69.

³Hosch, C-16.
Most states and nearly all large cities have a directory of social and health agencies which is usually published by their community council. The directory in New York contains 790 pages. These directories can be found in libraries where you can get a list of agencies to meet your needs. In making contact with the agency an appointment is necessary, usually followed by referrals to a number of places. Some will have repetitious interviews and tiresome forms to fill out; however this is their only business, that of helping, so one must stick by them and not become discouraged. Following are other directories that can usually be obtained at libraries:

1. The annual directory of United Way of America. This publication lists the community service councils and voluntary agencies within the state.


3. The annual directory of the Child Welfare League's member agencies.

There is an Information and Referral Phone Service in most larger communities.

In the Berrien County area of Michigan where this project was done, I contacted the Community Services by telephone. They sent me a forty-one page directory which I found to be helpful. This booklet entitled, Directory of Community Services can be obtained, at no cost through the Community Information and Referral Services, 305 Lake Boulevard, St. Joseph, Michigan 49085. The telephone number is 983-3511.
Parents Without Partners is the largest and best known of any organization working specifically for the one-parent family and thus I am writing about it in some detail because of the importance of the organization. Having visited with the president of this rather large local chapter, with some of the members, and attended a monthly board meeting, I compiled information regarding it. Mr. Reger Smith, a professor at Andrews University works with the local chapter and holds discussion groups on a regular basis. They offer varied "menus" of activities and educational opportunities and also available is the monthly calendar of events. A business meeting is held regularly on the third Wednesday of each month. Those in the Benton Harbor and surrounding area should contact PWP, Twin City Chapter #151, YWCA, 508 Pleasant Street, St. Joseph, Michigan 49085. The international PWP is a non-profit, non-sectarian, educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of single parents and their children. It was incorporated in New York in March, 1958, and has more than three hundred chapters at this time in nearly every state and in Canada. Their programs and activities are performed on a volunteer basis. Quoting their bylaws, the definition of a single parent is: "To be eligible for membership in PWP, a person must be a parent and single by reason of death, divorce or separation, or unmarried." The only other restriction to membership is that one be of good character. PWP is the only national and international organization that exists in studying the peculiar problems of bringing up...
children alone, contending for visitation rights and dealing with adjustments and emotional conflicts that arise out of post­widowhood or post­separation. Avenues of assistance are provided through programs of discussion, professional speakers, study groups, newsletters, and publications. PWP publishes a journal, bi­monthly, *The Single Parent*. Their headquarters are located at 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1000 (10th floor Landow Bldg.), Washington, D.C. 20014. These groups may differ enormously—some are focused almost solely on getting dates for the members while others are geared chiefly to parent­child relationship, and others, because of strong leadership, provide a whole spectrum of social, cultural and educational activities for both the parent and the child.

My reaction to this group, is that a Seventh­day Adventist must be extremely careful in attending or recommending it to others. It would be very easy for a person to lose his interest in God by linking himself with one not of the faith. There may be a solution in some locations. The associate pastor of the Sligo Church in Washington, D.C. informed me that there is a PWP chapter within that Adventist church consisting of approximately thirty members.

Rue, states that PWP has given birth to another group that is growing rapidly which is the S.O.S. program. It has been adopted by the PWP as an official community service project. There are more than sixty PWP chapters from coast to coast sponsoring S.O.S. programs. It is designed to help men and women who are undergoing or who have
undergone the traumatic experience of divorce or separation and those with marriage problems. SOS hopes to help them to better understand themselves and their problems. They have discussion groups led by professionals and is open to all interested adults.¹

For the singles, as mentioned previously, very little is being done under the auspices of the church, any church. Within the Seventh-day Adventist community, and so mainly serving the Seventh-day Adventist church, there are several organizations. There may be additional singles groups but I was not able to locate more. These two groups were not founded primarily as matrimonial groups, but for understanding fellowship; however sometimes both fellowship and matrimony are served.

The larger group is the PHILOSDA, meaning, Seventh-day Adventist Friends. This is for the single, widowed and divorced. I had the opportunity to meet and work with this group on several occasions and have found these singles to be both stimulating and dedicated. They have chapters throughout the United States but are probably the strongest numerically on the west coast and specifically in California. The Bulletin is the official monthly paper of the International Philosda Club and all inquiries should be addressed to the IPC president, P.O. Box 99001, Baltimore, Maryland 21224.

The second of the singles groups is THE MICHIGAN SINGLES FELLOWSHIP CLUB. This club has quite a number of chapters over

¹Rue, p. 205.
the state and like the PHILOSDA welcomes those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who are single by reason of widowhood, divorce, or non-marriage. They too, have many and varied activities. They have a monthly publication entitled **KINDRED SPIRIT** which is very readable, neatly printed, and in good taste. Information concerning this club or its publication may be obtained by writing: The Kindred Spirit, Box 56, Andrews Station, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104.

**For the Divorced**

There do not seem to be many organizations that are specifically for the divorced. The divorcee finds herself included in the majority of organizations and services directed to help the one-parent family. This chapter, sets forth some of these services.

Due to the position of the Catholic Church on divorce and its unique problems, organizations for divorced Catholics have begun to flourish in the United States.

Rue, in his book, *The Divorced Catholic*, tells of the JUDEAN SOCIETY which seems to be accepted by the church, as it is under the official approval of the Diocese of San Francisco. This organization attempts to reach out to all divorced Catholic women who have shut themselves off from the society of the world and bring them out to face life and find themselves as individuals. It is concerned with assistance to its members on both a spiritual and practical level. It includes an involvement program that helps women to re-orient their thinking.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Rue, pp. 188f.
There are two other organizations which specifically help the divorced or separated Catholic women, the RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA UNMARRIEDS (RESCU), and the FABIOLAS OF LOS ANGELES.

For the Widow

There are a number of organizations directed specifically to assist the widow. I received a forty page guide book entitled, *What Does She Do Now?* explaining the widow's situation in detail for the price of (forty cents). The book includes financial management charts, a guide to estate settlement and sample letters a widow can use to determine where her husband had benefits she is unaware of. Those wishing to receive a copy may write to LIFE INSURANCE AGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (LIAMA) 170 Sigourney Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06105.

A WIDOW TO WIDOW SERVICE was organized a few years ago in Boston. There is also a WIDOWS CONSULTATION CENTER located in New York, which helps to guide a widow through the maze of problems that confront her as she tries to live again on her own. The WCC is developing similar programs in other cities, with their main tool being consultation. There is a charge of $7.50 for personalized service which includes consultations. Group sessions and informed lecturers offering expert advice on specific problems are also given. The widow might get good advice by writing to WCC, 136 East 57th Street, New York, New York 10022.
The Missouri Conference of the United Church of Christ conducted an experimental retreat for the recently bereaved at Camp Mo-Val near Union Missouri.

THEY HELP EACH OTHER SPIRITUALLY (THEOS) was started by a young widow, Mrs. Bea Decker of Penn Hills, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is an ecumenical organization with its headquarters at Zion Lutheran Church, 11609 Frankstown Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235. Chapters of THEOS can be found throughout the United States.¹

A booklet entitled When You Lose a Loved One is available from Public Affairs Association 22 East 38th Street, New York, New York.

The children are sometimes forgotten when there is a death in the family. For a small charge there is a booklet, Helping Your Child to Understand Death, which is published by the Community Relations Department, Child Study Association of America, 132 East 74th Street, New York City, New York.

An awareness of BIG BROTHERS OF AMERICA could be beneficial to the single-parent because of the service it offers for the child. Their chapters are usually located in the larger cities.

I would conclude this section by referring to the church as a prime resource for both the divorced and widowed. Here they should be able to find support socially, materially, and spiritually. Through the agencies of the church they should be able to put their

¹Start, p. 43.
talents to use and feel that they are needed and wanted. In the church they should find a fellowship with sympathetic people that will help them in their loneliness. There should be content to the messages and programs as well as love. The pastor can often be of great help to the widow and the divorcée, and I would encourage her to ask him for help in general and in particular.
CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations

Because of the problems and needs of the one-parent family, I offer these suggestions to facilitate solutions and in a limited degree meet the needs.

1. Form groups within local churches for the one-parent family. These would be for the purpose of discussion, support, and the developing of skills that would be of continuing help.

2. Encourage greater attentiveness to the needs of this unique group by way of articles in church and secular publications, social activities to meet the needs of the one-parent family, and spiritual thrusts that help them know of God's special care for them.

3. Bring to the helping agencies of the church, particularly those of a financial nature, a fuller understanding of the needs of this group and encourage a willingness to lift in a practical way in a time of economic stress.

4. Have an educational program to make the one-parent family aware of community, national, and church resources.

5. Form a group in the church consisting of men who are willing to be big brothers, similar to the approach of Big Brothers of America.
6. Encourage pastors with their wives to visit these lonely people and to see that they receive telephone calls from church friends and frequent invitations to church and family gatherings.

Conclusions

The Student:

1. The student attained greater knowledge and competence.

My knowledge of the one-parent family has been broadened through the research of much current literature, the practical field inquiries, and integration of these in producing a report. My competence for aiding this unique group has been improved having now a fuller understanding of their needs and problems, through the practicality of my interviews and discussions with them. This first hand experience brings confidence in reaching out to assist.

2. The student has increased knowledge and competence with groups in the sociological sense.

This additional knowledge and competence has been received through encounters with this unique group of women. Having obtained this practical experience, I will have little fear of encouraging and becoming involved in a similar helpful relationship in the pastorate. Two important things which I learned through my work with the group of short duration were, (a) be certain that the perspective group member is well aware of what the group is trying to accomplish and how they go about achieving this end. I
allowed the group to be formed too much from the grass-roots, believing and depending on those promoting it to have and dispense accurately its purpose, and (b) obtain a commitment from the perspective member to faithfully attend the group for a specific number of sessions.

3. This student has become aware that there is an interest by certain of our church publications in articles well written, balanced, with a Christian approach to the needs and problems of this ever increasing number of divorcees and widows in our midst. The implication, is that those who are concerned and able should submit articles to the editors of the various publications for their approval.

The People:
1. Groups and activities have been an outgrowth of the single-parent need.

Discussing their special needs and problems during the interviews helped to generate an interest. A group was formed which included some of the project group as well as others who were interested. This interest arose from the grass-roots level and even though the group itself was not a continued activity, it generated an interest in having social functions for the single-parent family. The children are included and the organization is in some ways similar to PWP, though having a Seventh-day Adventist base. It will remain to be seen what the future will be for this broader approach—hopefully growth would be a great encouragement to those involved. The majority of the women in
desiring to dissolve the group claimed little need of support, 
catharsis, and education at this point. They felt that a 
satisfactory adjustment had already been realized. For the larger 
number of these women, the group had not been what they had 
expected. I do not believe they were anti-group but that the problem 
resided in this student's lack of experience as set forth in the 
conclusions of this paper--No. 2 under The Student.

2. The bond with the church has been strengthened.

I believe that some extra strength has been added to their 
bond with the church through believing that the church cares for them. 
They feel there is a visible basis for this, due to the project 
being carried on by an ordained minister and seminarian.

3. The single-parent achieves skills and receives aid through 
groups. This was shown particularly in my repeated group meetings 
with the "Michigan Singles Club."

Skills--They learned to perform functions with greater skill 
such as were beneficial to the group

(a) Directing some facet of its social, emotional, or 
religious activity.

(b) Participating in the group functions and thus learning 
to recognize their needs and cope realistically with problems.

Aid--

(a) Support--The group is a catharsis for the single-parent 
in grief. Held on a regular basis, it can bring emotional maturity, 
mental and spiritual growth.
(b) Fellowship—One of the greatest needs of the one-parent family is fellowship. This social aspect can be found in part, through a group of people similarly concerned and with corresponding interests.

4. The church has a vital role to play in the one-parent family. The one-parent family needs the full support of the church, in general and each member, in particular. The quality of support and understanding will be revealed in the actions and empathy of God's people.

It is the writer's opinion that there are benefits that could be derived from future studies made in related areas. These might include:

1. The paternal one-parent family who is either widowed or divorced with at least one child living in the home.

2. The one-parent family consisting of the unmarried mother and her child.

3. The unmarried parent with an adopted child.

4. The single girl.

5. The single man.

6. The spinster.

7. The bachelor.

8. The children of one-parent families. There could be a number of studies here by pinpointing specific areas.

9. The nuclear and extended families.¹

¹Dr. Crider is presently conducting a study on the home which might be of benefit to the reader.
10. Comparative studies of those listed above and including the subject of this paper could be of value.

**Writer's Projection for the Future**

This writer will be serving the Redlands church of approximately 700 members and intends to be of assistance to the Seventh-day Adventist one-parent family.

I would assume from past experience that there will be at least eight such family situations. My intention is to do extensive visiting on arriving in the parish and become acquainted with the members on a personal basis. After several months have elapsed in which I have an opportunity to discover who the one-parent families are and their personal and family situations along with their physical, emotional, and spiritual health, the next step is to be taken. I should by now, have built up a reservoir of acceptance. I will contact these parishioners on a one to one basis to discover their needs and interests, and listen for the response elicited by certain questions, suggestions or ideas relating to meeting with others who are in a similar situation. My experience suggests that an interest would be generated. On finding several who would like to share in a group experience, a time and place could be arranged. The meeting could be held in the church or in a home, according to where they would feel the more comfortable. The writer would make certain that each potential member knew in some detail the goals of the group and he would endeavor to have them commit themselves to attend a given number of times. It is an unknown at
this point, whether this would be a continuing activity in the church community, but it would be expected that after a few months had elapsed, the group would spontaneously develop into a study group.

I would hope to acquaint many in the church with the needs of the one-parent family in order that there might be empathy and concern developed for the mother and the children. I would hope that these children of the one-parent family might be frequently included in individual family functions of happy, well-balanced families. Some families, with pastoral encouragement might be willing to pay special attention to a child or children of one family for an extended time. This could be fruitful in the life of the parishioner who helps and of the one who is helped and in addition being a witness of the church.
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MATERNAL ONE-PARENT FAMILY

1. Preliminary Information
   
   Age of the one being interviewed. _______
   
   How many years was she married? _______
   
   Was this the first marriage? _______
   
   What happened to the husband? ______________________________
   
   If you are a divorcee, was it
       bitter contest? ______
       amicable? ______
   
   If a widow, was your husband lost
       by accident? ______
       by sickness? ______
   
   How long has it been? ______
   
   How many children are presently living in the home? ______
   
       Sex ________________________________
       Age ________________________________
       Grade in School ________________________________
   
   How old were the children at the time of their father's death
       or divorce? ________________________________

2. Living Accommodations
   
   Where? (City, Suburbs, Small Town) ________________________________
   
   House, Apt. etc. ________________________________
   
   Are you alone _____ With Relations _____ With Friends _____
   
   Did you move on becoming a single parent family? _____ How long
       ago? _____ Why? ________________________________

3. Finances
   
   Are you financially secure? _____ How? ________________________________

81
Do you need more than you have? ______

How much more per month? (in dollars) __________

Is there any person or community resource you can turn to in an emergency? ______ Who or what? _________________________________

Do you have adequate financial resources such as investments etc? _____

Do you own the place where you are living? ______

4. Do you have gainful employment? ______

Why? __________________________________________________________________

Do you enjoy it? ______

Are the pressures and problems worse for the woman alone? ______

Why? (passes, discrimination) _________________________________

5. Have you had unpleasant experiences with those who work for you?

(service or repairmen) ____________________________________________

Of what type? __________________________________________________________________

6. Are you discriminated against in daily life? (tradesmen, banks and loan companies, etc.) _________________________________

7. Do you feel that as an Adventist woman your possibilities for remarriage are better or worse than others in the community? ______

Has aloneness affected your relationship with the relatives? ______

Whose? __________________________________________________________________

If so, how? __________________________________________________________________

8. How has aloneness affected your relationship with your friends? __________________________________________________________________

Are you resented or feared by wives? _________________________________

9. In a crisis, do you have someone to confide in? _______________________________
10. Do you have much social life? _______
   With whom? (women alone) ______________________________
   Are you left out of parties? ______
   Do you return social obligations? ______
   Do you find it difficult to entertain in your home? ______

11. Do you feel lonely at times? ______
   Why? ______________________________
   When? (holidays, weekends, evenings) _________________________

12. Do you ever feel helpless? ______________________________
    When? ______________________________
    Who repairs the little things around the house? ________
    Do you feel free to call a neighbor or friend's husband? ______

13. Do you ever feel like you have been a failure? ______

14. Do you ever feel isolated? ______

15. Are you fearful of living alone? ______
   In what ways does this show itself? ______________________________
   Do you take precautions? ______________________________
   What? ______________________________

16. Do the children have problems in their social relations? ______
    How? ______________________________

17. How are the children doing with their school work? ______

18. Do you find there is discrimination against the children? ______
    By whom? ______________________________
    When or where? ______________________________
19. Does this discrimination seem to affect the children? ____________
   How? __________________________________________________________

20. If you are dating, do your children object to it? _________________

21. Do you feel you sacrifice too much for the children? _____________

22. Do you personally give sex-education to the children? ___________
   Does anyone? _____ Who? _________________________________________

23. Does child care present a major problem? ______
   Why? __________________________________________________________

24. Do you have problems with the former husband? _____
   Describe them briefly: ___________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   Does visitation by the father create problems? _____________________
   Does your ex-mate make readjustment harder? _____________________

25. What are your major interests? _________________________________
   Have they changed since being alone? ______
   In what way? __________________________________________________

26. Do you feel uncomfortable without a male escort? ______
   Would you go overseas alone? ______
   Would you go to a party alone? ______

27. How do you meet new friends? _________________________________

28. What do you miss most about not being married? _________________
   ______________________________________________________________

29. Do the changes in the patterns of sexual life cause problems? ______
   Emotionally? _____ How? _________________________________________
   Physically? _____ How? _________________________________________
   Spiritually? _____ How? _________________________________________
30. Has your measure of health stayed the same or decreased? 
   In what way? (Medical bills, etc.) 
   Do you have frequent depressions, etc.? 
   Have you ever considered suicide? 

31. If you had an opportunity to marry again, would you take it? 
   (If not) why? 

32. Could your chance for remarriage be improved? 
   How? (If people didn't know former husband) 

33. Are you aware of community resources? 
   Which ones? 

34. Have you found the need for a family attorney? 

35. Have you had a meaningful faith? 
   Has it become more so since being a one-parent family? 
   Why? 

36. Has the single-parent status brought a change in your attitudes? 
   Toward what or whom? 

37. Have your relations with church members been affected in any way? 
   How? 

38. Do you feel the church family could be of greater help? 
   Please discuss:
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