

2014 ICOC Singles Service Team Report

The Singles Service Team is excited to share with the delegates the current result of our efforts to serve the exciting singles ministries worldwide! As always, we appreciate your continued support and prayers.

There have been two important changes to our team. Jay and Carol Kelly of Seattle have graciously accepted our invitation to represent the Northwest US family of churches thus bringing our North American team to 31 members. We have discussed plans for how this team will branch into the always intended globally representative service team it needs to be and are laying the groundwork for that expansion now. We will be communicating those plans during the 2014 International Singles Conference and will be launching them in 2015.

Our Service Team now consists of:

Wade & Debbie Cook, chairs – Denver
Howard Martin – Canada
Wilner Cornely – Caribbean (honorary)
Sam & Diana Manning – Caribbean
Chad & Marilyn Winchell – No. Virginia
Matt & Deena Newburg – Florida/La.
Rob & LaShonda Milner – Heartland
Bill & Kristen Moulden – Midwest
Larry & Kim Reed – New England

Sheridan & Debbie Wright – New York
Jay & Carol Kelly – Northwest
Mark & Lin Ottenweller – Southeast
Ronnie & Shamarra Rose – Southeast
Floyd & Tamara Grossett – Southwest
Angela Williams – Southwest
Marshall & Shawn Mead – Southwest
Adam & Bethany Smith – Texas

We have put into motion a few service team sub-committees:

T.I.P. of the Spear! (Mark and Lin Ottenweller). It is noted that there is only one single person on the Singles Service Team. The committee was concerned that the singles themselves would not be adequately represented in discussions and decisions being made. Therefore it was suggested we create a Singles Sub-committee to operate as a "think-tank" of sorts to both identify and rectify current issues facing the singles ministry. That group is what we named the TIP group. Tip stands for :

T. – Think I. – Inspire P.- Propose

The SST thought it very important that we are hearing from singles in their own voice. If we are to authentically service the singles ministry worldwide, we need to be kept aware of the real time issues facing the singles ministries. We all understand that it is frightfully easy to become a ceiling over the singles and not remain a service agent to them.

Additionally the SST expressed a desire to raise up single leaders, especially amongst the brothers. To that end, this subcommittee would represent their regional families of churches and would be tasked to call, email or even visit their local church ministries asking singles what are the real time issues on their minds. This sub-committee would collect that info and then be asked to come up with solutions to the problems they encounter. The group would be hopefully a brother and sister from each of our geographic regions beginning in North America, but with intention of strategically connecting all the singles worldwide. They have been assembled and have had two conference calls to this point. A comprehensive report their discussions will be published following meetings during the 2014 ISC



Conference Planning Committee (Wade and Debbie Cook)

We are happy to announce that plans for the 2014 International Singles Conference are progressing well. We will convene in Denver, September 26-28, 2014 at the Downtown, Hyatt Convention Center. We are encouraged by registration numbers at this juncture (just over 1400 have registered well in advance of the registration deadline August 30, 2014). In terms of future sites

we will have a formal decision following our 2014 meetings in September. We remain on schedule for our future ISC's to be:

- 2016 - St. Louis
- 2018 - Jamaica

Communications Sub-Committee (Adam and Bethany Smith)

Communication has been this committee's greatest bogie and we have been going after this issue with vigor. Each of the Service Team members have assembled a list of single leaders in their US geographic regions and have had conference calls with them. As communicated above, we have begun the task of connecting worldwide to each of the international geographic regions. Adam and Bethany Smith are the Disciples Today Singles editors and are tasked with finding fresh and consistent material to put on the website. They are doing a great job! As you know, late last year we launched a fresh, ICOC Facebook page in which we currently have 1,291 likes! If you haven't done so yet, please like us!

Demographics Sub-Committee (Floyd and Tamara Grossett)

Another of our primary 20/20 goals was to gather and maintain accurate information on the size and scope of our ministry. We finished that data collection last week and are already making plans for our 2015 "qualitative" survey we discussed in our previous report.

2015 Regional Leadership Retreats (Chad and Mara Winchell)

In an effort to capitalize and extend the anticipated momentum of the conference, we are working to organize training weekends in each of the Geographic regions of North America. The overall goals of the weekend are for each person to leave:

1. **Inspired**, with vision for what God can do in their life and ministry.
2. With more **connections** formed with other leaders.
3. **Equipped** to lead more effectively.

Special effort will be made to have the worldwide singles partner fly in for that weekend to connect and build connections that will be the basis of future regional connection with that.

Finally, I am happy to report that we have had monthly conference calls since January. In lieu of meetings in Singapore where a significant number of our service team will be unable to attend, we had meetings in Denver April 10-12 which was incredibly fun, bonding and productive for our team. Some initiatives that came from those discussions are:

1. Intensified implementation of visionary and strategic programs related to reaching, converting and retaining more single men worldwide. This is a long and nuanced conversation, but it is a high priority for the Singles Service Team
 2. Increased collaboration with Disciples Today Heart and Soul. Our team considers DTSH a remarkable yet underutilized tool for connecting those who are looking for a vibrant, romantic relationship with another disciple. The SST is working collabora-
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tively with the fine team at Disciples Today to investigate ways in which the 2014 conference can help them achieve the critical mass of DTHS users we all have been praying for.

3. A Bridge program that can more formally and effectively transition young teen and college graduates into singles ministry. The idea of moving into the singles ministry is currently met with mixed reviews and our aim is to communicate what a wonderful chapter of life this next phase can bring. More will be communicated in our next Service Team Report.
4. HOPE Single Corps - HOPE *worldwide* Corps affords participants an unparalleled opportunity to better understand the world's current conditions while growing in their faith. HSC volunteers will return home with a heightened sense of purpose and a broader perspective of the world, but most importantly a better understanding of Jesus' character and qualities. The SST is fully behind the mission of HOPE Single Corps and seeks to be more engaged in marketing and inspiring participation in future service opportunities.

Grace and Peace,
Wade Cook
