

## Treasure in a Silver Box for Christmas

By Dr Steve Stephens and Tom Dressel, Every Marriage Matters

CONGRATULATIONS! The numbers are in. Statistics gathered by the State of Oregon indicate the divorce rate in Clackamas County has dropped 37%, from 2001 through 2015! That means there are more couples that aren't dragging their children through the trauma of divorce. Thank God that fewer families are falling apart.

June 1, 2001 was a historic day! Pastors from across the county and across denominations signed the Clackamas County Marriage Policy. This Policy offered minimum standards for the nurture of marriage within each of their congregations. These standards included:

- Encourage a minimum of 4 months premarital preparation;
- Provide marriage enrichment opportunities;
- Restore troubled marriages.

The divorce rate across Oregon, and across the United States, is dropping. The reason for falling are complex, a couple of major factors are: 1) Couples who would normally divorce are avoiding divorce by avoiding marriage. When they break up they are not a part of the divorce statistics; and 2) More men and women are remaining single.

We compared Clackamas County to the remainder of Oregon believing we would be able to isolate the impact of pastors working together to build healthy Clackamas County marriages. If the Clackamas County rates were equal to that of the rest of Oregon (for the period 2001-2015):

- we would have 3530 fewer marriages,
- an additional 1870 divorces,
- 740 children that suffered through their parent's divorce!

Kudos to you pastors and staff!

You've worked diligently. Because of your support there are more couples enjoying this Christmas together and more children experiencing the joy of a stable family.

Pastor, appraise [The Community Marriage Policy® Is About Saving Marriages](#) and consider signing the [Greater Portland Community Marriage Policy](#). Review the [Marriage and Divorce Statistics](#) for Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties, and for the State of Oregon.