



**First Bible Church**

DECATUR ♦ MADISON

# Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

GLORIFYING GOD BY  
HELPING PEOPLE  
KNOW, LOVE, OBEY  
AND EXALT  
JESUS CHRIST



# **STATEMENT ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

Approved by the Board of Elders  
First Bible Church of Decatur  
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## **Our Burden for the Marriages in First Bible Church**

Our hearts are grieved over the realities that have led us to publish this position paper. Our church, like all others in America, is not untouched by the tragedy of divorce. The information contained here does not represent any significant change in our position over the last decade. These statements have been expounded in greater detail by Pastor Steve in various sermons over the years. This position paper is intended to gather all of our statements on the subject in one place.

We recognize within the body of Christ that there is disagreement on this subject among good people who have a high regard for Scripture. Even in our own church, members will disagree on some of the particulars expressed here. It is only fair to you, our current members and potential members, for you to be aware that the Elders are in one accord on this issue. Here we attempt to explain what kind of counsel you, or a fellow-church member, can expect to receive from us on this issue.

### **God's Standard for Marriage**

From the beginning, God's ideal for marriage has been clearly stated:

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. "... The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:18-24*

*You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not [the LORD] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a mans. covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. Malachi 2:14-16*

*"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. "(Matthew 19:4-6)*

*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery --but Jam talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:31-33*

God's intent for marriage is permanence since it demonstrates His relationship with his people. God's purpose in marriage is three-fold. First, it is in the committed relationship of one man and one woman for life, that he has ordained godly children be born and raised. This security and

stability is the best situation for children to grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Second, there is a complementary relationship between male and female in which each meet the needs and strengthen the weaknesses of the other. In this partnership, the two are able to serve more effectively in the "garden" work God has given them than they would apart from one another. Third, marriage is a picture of the mystical union between God and his people. He has entered into a covenant of grace with them and will keep his loving promises even when they are defiant and ungrateful. In marriage, we show the world what God's covenant love looks like.

The rupture of a Christian's marriage opposes God's purposes at every level. Children suffer immeasurably, the ministry partnership is destroyed as hurting spouses focus more on their personal pain than their God-given ministry to others, and the picture of covenant love is shattered.

By being joined to First Bible Church, the quality of your marriage is a reflection on your church and your Lord. A divorce in our midst has a negative impact on our credibility in the community for the gospel. For these and other reasons; God, while loving divorced people, hates divorce.

## **Biblical Grounds for Divorce That Are Clear To Us**

Yet, throughout church history, the church has acknowledged that there are some situations in which believers can remain in line with Scripture and in fellowship with the church should they pursue a divorce. The classical protestant view, codified in the Westminster Confession in 1647, asserts that the bonds of marriage may be dissolved by not more than three things: 1) the death of a spouse; 2) the adultery of a spouse; 3) the desertion of an unbelieving spouse. Thus it recognizes two Biblical grounds for divorce:

*In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in the case. (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 24:5,6: Of Marriage and Divorce)*

The Confession rests its statement about marriage and divorce on several pertinent passages.

### **1. Death (1 Corinthians 7:13)**

1 Corinthians' 7 directly supports the classical protestant view that death dissolves the bonds of marriage (v.39). The vows of the wedding covenant clearly state the terms: *Until death do us part*. This clearly leaves the surviving spouse with the freedom to remarry (See also Romans 7:2,3).

## 2. Adultery (Matthew 5 and 19)

*"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31,32)*

*Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard, But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." (Matthew 19:3-10)*

In these two passages, Jesus sets forth the exception clause, "except for marital unfaithfulness". "Marital unfaithfulness" translates the single Greek word, *porneia*. This word is an umbrella term that includes adultery, fornication, bestiality, incest, and homosexuality. The marriage covenant, in which both parties swore their sexual fidelity, is broken by the sexual impurity of one spouse. Since this provides the grounds for a legitimate divorce and dissolution of the covenant, the offended party is free to remarry.

In the Old Testament theocracy, adultery was to be met with capital punishment. This makes the debate over the legitimacy of remarriage moot and explains the silence in the Old Testament. No doubt, this is what led the Westminster divines to add the clause "as if the offending party were dead".

## 3. Abandonment (1 Corinthians 7)

*But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)*

This instruction directly supports the classical protestant view that desertion by an unbelieving spouse dissolves the bonds of marriage (v.15) and that the unbound believer is now free to remarry (vv.27,28). However, if the believer divorces his or her spouse for any other reason than adultery or abandonment, the freedom to remarry does not appear to exist.

*To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord); A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. 1 Corinthians 7:10,11*

"Unmarried" (*agamoi*) probably refers to the divorced persons in the church since v.34 distinguishes them from the "never married" virgin and v.8 distinguishes them from the

widows. Paul seems to deny in v.10 what he affirms in v.9: that the unmarried, divorced persons, in the church are free to remarry if they want. Why is this?

In v. 10, Paul is speaking of someone who divorces a spouse without the biblical grounds of adultery or abandonment. Paul here affirms the Lord Jesus' teachings on divorce found in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19. "Separate" (*chorizo*) means to divide or divorce. We have addressed the soundness of the exception clause in Matthew 19, and we take Paul to be referring here in 1 Corinthians 7:10,11 to a divorce that is not grounded on the sexual immorality (*porneia*) of a wayward partner. Without biblical grounds for the divorce, these unmarried in 1 Cor.7:10, 11 are not free to remarry and should either remain unmarried or be reconciled.

But is there also support in 1 Corinthians 7 for the assertion that divorce grounded on sexual immorality dissolves the bonds of marriage?

Verse 39 may provide additional support. Paul is referring to God's Law, which binds husband and wife together (Romans 7:2). God's Law in the Old Testament also prescribed the death penalty for anyone guilty of adultery. Death of the guilty partner would clearly release the faithful partner to remarry. Since enforcement of the Law was rare in Jesus' day (though not completely extinct; Jn. 8:7) and would be non-existent later, Jesus explains in Matthew 19 that divorce grounded on adultery may be permitted, although not commanded.

## **How We Will Counsel Our Members When the Divorce Has Clear Biblical Grounds**

1. If a church member abandons his or her spouse, by physically leaving, by refusing to provide financial support, or by pursuing an unbiblical divorce, the Elders will lead the church in the Biblically prescribed process of church discipline. The one who deserts his or her own family discredits the Christian faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8). We will advise and admonish the erring member to repent. If he repents, he shall be restored to the church and his family. If he is not repentant, his membership at First Bible Church will be revoked and he or she will be excluded from the Lord's Supper.
2. If a church member is discovered to be in an adulterous relationship, the Elders will lead the church in the Biblically prescribed process of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Cor.5:1-13), as set forth in our policy manual, in an effort to restore a fallen brother or sister to a right relationship with God and the church. It is imperative that the initial meeting be private and confidential. The number of people involved in the early stages should be minimal. The aim of this effort is restoration and the manner in which we do it will be with firmness but gentleness (Galatians 6:1). If the member remains unrepentant his or her membership will be revoked and he will be excluded from the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 5:11). We will continue to reach out to the errant member and pray for reconciliation.

3. If a church member discovers a spouse to be in an adulterous relationship, the Elders will guide the offended spouse through a difficult and complicated process. Every case is unique and must be judged individually. We do not believe that the Scripture commands the offended spouse to pursue a divorce. If the offending spouse, upon confrontation, is remorseful and repentant, the offended spouse is faced with the opportunity to love as the Lord loves (unconditionally) and forgive as the Lord forgives (Eph. 4:32). Dozens of members in our own congregation can testify that a marriage can survive adultery. We will counsel our offended church members to forgive their unfaithful spouse.
4. If the offending spouse is not repentant or if the unfaithfulness has been frequent and habitual, hope for reconciliation is greatly diminished. Furthermore, if the show of repentance is discovered to be disingenuous and attended by a pattern of deceit, lying, denial, and cover-up, the possibility of rebuilding trust within the relationship is severely limited and the potential for success in our attempts to restore the marriage is all but destroyed. In this case, should the offended partner pursue divorce, the Elders will stand in support of this decision.
5. If the offending spouse is repentant, the Elders will gently restore him to the church family. Whether or not he or she remains in our fellowship will be determined largely by the decision of the offended partner. If the offended partner is unable or unwilling to be reconciled and decides to pursue divorce, the peace and harmony of our church is threatened by the presence of both partners. In this case, we will counsel the offending spouse to seek membership and fellowship in another church of kindred spirit. In this case, we can commend this repentant brother to a sister church with a good conscience.
6. If the offending spouse is repentant, and the offended spouse forgives and seeks reconciliation, the Elders will fully support this decision and bring all available resources to bear on the success of this God-glorifying pursuit. However, given the scandalous nature of the sin and the threat to the church's credibility and the gospel, we proceed with caution. Considering the spiritual and emotional damage that has been sustained by both spouses and their children, we are agreed that it is the better part of wisdom to permit the offending spouse to remain in our fellowship on the following conditions:
  - a. First, the offending member will voluntarily resign from all responsibilities, teaching, or leadership positions at the church in order to attend to the needs of his or her family. This does not preclude active participation in Adult Bible Fellowships, Bible Studies, and other means of grace that he or she especially needs at this time. This voluntary withdrawal shows an appropriate humility and great respect for the sacredness of the marriage covenant that has been violated.

This time of healing will normally be at least two years. Since it frequently requires at least two years to rebuild the trust and respect that was destroyed in the act of sexual unfaithfulness, the offending member must direct all energy and attention to the healing of the marriage and family. In time he or she will discover the truth about our church: that divorced members of our church are forgiven members and they are both valued and valuable here.

- b. Second, the member will not criticize or undermine the position of the Elder Board on this action in an unbiblical and divisive manner. He or she shall redress their grievances against the Elders according to Biblical mandate (1 Timothy 5:19-25). We recognize that these are complicated issues and other believers will disagree with us. We have labored over this decision and do not take it lightly. If the member cannot abide by these conditions, the time to leave the church is when he or she is removed from teaching and leadership positions by the Elders.

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17*

*Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13*

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers --not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:1-5)*

## **Difficult and Doubtful Cases**

The most obvious form of abandonment that Paul mentions in I Corinthians 7 is the physical abandonment by the unbeliever. This often leaves the believer in a serious financial bind. But a marriage partner may be able to physically remain within the home and yet achieve the same effect as abandonment. In this tragic scenario, the married couple lives under the same roof, but one of the spouses is so derelict in the marriage partnership that the situation becomes unbearable or even dangerous.

For example, when a husband refuses to work and provide for his family, he is committing the sin of gluttony and laziness. An alcoholic partner sins in his or her drunkenness and normally becomes an enormous threat to the financial and emotional stability of all family members. Furthermore, in his or her addiction, this spouse is unable meet the needs of other family members or fulfill the wedding vows. A spouse that is engaged in criminal activity such as the use or distribution of illegal substances, creates an intolerably dangerous environment for other family members. Also, some partners can be so abusive in their speech or physical violence that they represent a serious and harmful threat to their spouse and children.

In cases such as these, the offended spouse, being a member of the church, should seek help from the church. Church members who are closest to the couple should be involved first, to intervene,

confront, admonish, and restore. This is one of the responsibilities of membership at First Bible Church. If this loving admonition does not result in repentance, the Elders should be brought in to intervene and do the shepherding work of church discipline as prescribed in Scripture and our policy manual. If these Biblically mandated steps do not result in repentance and real change, the offending member will be put out of the church and treated like an unbeliever (Matthew 18:15-20). Yet, the church should never give up efforts to pray and work for his restoration.

In some of these cases, when the discipline of the church is not effective, it may be necessary for the offended spouse to seek legal protection for himself or herself, and also for the children, against the offending spouse (now treated as an unbeliever by the church, Matthew 18:17). This legal protection may require a restraining order or even a divorce decree that allows the offended party to seek relief from financial and emotional ruin, and sometimes from physical harm. In this case, since the grounds for the divorce are not clearly Biblical, the divorce may be seen as such in the eyes of man, but not in the eyes of God. That is, even though they are divorced in the eyes of men, we are not certain if they are divorced in the eyes of God. In this case, we may abide by the offended spouse's decision to pursue a divorce that is used as a last-resort disciplinary measure to bring the erring partner to repentance. We are not advocating here a third ground for divorce (in addition to adultery and abandonment). Rather we are considering some hurtful and habitual conduct to be a form of abandonment, and therefore a possible justification for suing out a legal divorce.

In this case, the divorce would have reconciliation as its goal. Divorce can be used as a disciplinary action with restoration as its intent. Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:6-11, and Hosea 2:2 indicate that God divorced Israel because of their waywardness but He did so with the desire that the divorce would encourage their repentance and a restoration of intimacy.

## **How We Will Counsel Our Members In When The Divorce Has Unclear, or Doubtful, Biblical Grounds**

In the scenarios described above (divorce that seeks protection from hurtful and damaging behavior besides adultery and physical abandonment), it is unclear to us what this offended partner's marital standing is before God. Therefore, we have concluded that the offended member who pursues divorce in this case should retain membership in the church and, along with their children, find safe harbor in their church family. However, we will normally advise that given the trauma of these events this newly divorced member should agree to the following conditions of maintaining church membership in good standing.

1. The member will voluntarily resign from all responsibilities, teaching, or leadership positions in the church in order to attend to the needs of his or her family, as well as mourn for the tragic death of the marriage. This shows humility and great respect for the sacredness of the marriage covenant. This time of healing will normally be at least one year. In time they will discover the truth about our church: that divorced persons are both valued and valuable here.

2. The member will not pursue a dating relationship or seek remarriage for at least two years following the divorce, and will remain celibate. In this way, we give room for the Lord to work in the hearts of everyone concerned and especially that of the offending spouse. There remains great hope for restoration of the marriage during this period, and we, the Elder Board, will pray to that end.
3. The member will not subpoena or depose any pastoral staff member or officer of First Bible Church against his will in a court of law. In the past, this has been attempted in an effort to use confidential conversations and counseling sessions to gain an advantage in divorce proceedings and custody cases. In the interest of the church's reputation in our community, these elected representatives of the church should not be brought before this secular tribunal (1 Corinthians 6:1-11).
4. The member will understand that there is no guarantee from any of the pastors of First Bible Church that they would conduct a wedding should the member desire to be remarried after the two-year period. Each case will be examined individually and each pastor is free to follow his own conscience in the matter. In short, because of the uncertainty that exists with regard to whether the divorce had biblical grounds (not adultery or physical abandonment), there exists a corresponding uncertainty with regard to the church member's freedom to remarry.
4. The member will not criticize or undermine the position of the Elder Board in an unbiblical and divisive manner. He or she shall redress his grievances with the Elders according to Biblical mandate (1 Timothy 5:19-25). We recognize that these are complicated issues and other believers will disagree with us. We have labored over this decision and do not take it lightly. If the member cannot or will not abide by these conditions, the time to leave the church is when he or she files for the divorce.

## **Common Objections**

1. Objections from those who consider our position too lenient:

Objection 41: The 'Exception Clause' refers only to the betrothal period because it is found in a gospel that was written primarily for the use of Jews (Matthew). Also, it is not mentioned in the gospels that were directed to a Gentile audience (Mark and Luke). Furthermore, this view explains the disciple's astonishment at Jesus' statement in Mt. 19:10. They are surprised that the only way to nullify a betrothal is through a sexual offense. "Immorality" refers to illegitimate and unfaithful sexual activity during the betrothal period, not during marriage. Therefore, this is not grounds for divorce, but it is a grounds for breaking the engagement or betrothal. Any who divorce on this ground are not free to remarry.

Our Response to Objection 41: There are other ways to explain these problems. Mark and Luke typically have less detailed summary accounts and choose to emphasize Jesus'

main point: that marriage is designed for permanence. Jesus' main point here is not the fact that immorality can destroy a marriage as is pointed out in Deut. 22:22. The disciple's shock can be explained in that they had probably adopted either the School of Hillel which said you could divorce your wife over trivialities such as burning the dinner, or the stricter School of Shammai which limited grounds of divorce to more serious offenses such as public disrespect of the husband and including immorality. Jesus' position was simply stricter than the popular positions; thus the disciples were surprised.

**Objection #2:** God never gives up hope for reconciliation. Thus, no matter what the offense in a marriage, the highest good is to choose to refuse the 'easy way out' in divorce and stay married even if our mate is sexually unfaithful.

**Our Response to Objection #2:** We agree that this would be the highest love but we hesitate to use this as an absolute prohibition of divorce. It is true that divorce is never commanded, but it is also true that it is allowed for this exception. Furthermore, God does use divorce as a method of discipline with unfaithful Israel. Divorce should not always mean giving up on reconciliation. Divorce, in some cases, might be a useful tool in the pursuit of reconciliation.

**Objection #3:** Even if divorce must be used as a disciplinary measure, remarriage to another is not an option for a believer.

**Our Response to Objection #3:** This assertion is usually supported by a questionable appeal to a one time Greek construction in Matthew 19:9 which insists that it is not the divorce but the remarriage that becomes adulterous. However, more likely Jesus is saying that remarriage after an *illegitimate* divorce is what becomes adulterous. Since neither Jesus nor Paul specifically forbid remarriage after a legitimate divorce, it seems that remarriage is not prohibited in this case, We cannot unequivocally say that remarriage is recommended in Scripture, but we can say it is not specifically excluded as an option. If the marriage union can be dissolved, it stands to reason that remarriage after divorce under certain conditions is allowed.

Although we wish the issue of remarriage had been articulated more clearly in Scripture, it is helpful to remember that remarriage, especially in the Old Testament, was a non-issue. The penalty for adultery was death (Deut. 22:22). Clearly this would free the offended spouse to remarry as a widow/widower. As adultery became amore tolerable offense in the mind of God's people, the issue of remarriage became more complex. This is probably why Jesus added the exception clause. Adulterers simply were no longer being put to death. We take this as further evidence that remarriage is allowed after a legitimate divorce.

## 2. **Objection of those who consider our position too strict:**

**Objection #1:** A one-time act of adultery is always grounds for divorce.

Our Response: If this was the case, it would seem that Jesus would have used the specific word for "adultery" rather than the word for "immorality". *Porneia*, which is also used for prostitution, refers to a pattern of immorality. Although it may be technically correct to divorce on the grounds of one adulterous act, we will normally be hesitant to counsel someone to do so, especially if the guilty party is remorseful and penitent. Even within our own church membership, there are dozens of marriages that have survived adultery. There is hope for reconciliation even after this tragic betrayal.

**Objection #2:** If the marriage is unhappy, it is best to divorce for the sake of the kids and our personal happiness.

**Our Response:** This position states that another ground for divorce, in addition to adultery and abandonment, is incompatibility. This argument is devoid of scriptural basis and reflects the philosophy of our age rather than the teaching of God's Word. The pursuit of holiness takes precedence over the pursuit of happiness, and in the end, the highest happiness is found in holiness. Furthermore, it represents a fallacy in logic known as false dilemma. The choices are not always limited to either "get divorced" or "ruin the kids."

A third option is obedience to Scripture: for the husband to love his wife and for the wife to respect her husband's loving leadership (Ephesians 5:33). We stand on the conviction that there is no problem in a marriage that cannot be corrected by the cheerful obedience of each spouse to the Word of God. All parents should take note that a growing body of evidence supports the proposition that divorce has an overall negative impact on children for the rest of their lives.

## **Prospective Members With Past Divorces**

If you are considering membership in our church, you are entitled to know where we stand on divorce. We are not interested in dredging up your distant past. Rather, we want to accept you right where you are and help you know, love, obey, and exalt Christ even more.

However, if your divorce is recent (within the last two years or so) this experience is having present consequences in your life and thus it is relevant as we discuss church membership. We encourage you to carefully examine your words and actions in recent days. In the course of trials and custody disputes, there is much opportunity to dishonor the Lord. Have you confessed to God and others any wrongdoing on your part? Have you made proper restitution where called for? Are you timely in your child support payments? Are you under the discipline of your former church? Are there issues you need to resolve with that fellowship before joining here? We know these are hard questions, but for your long term good, we encourage you to address them.

## **Existing Members with Past Divorces**

Many of our brothers and sisters in this church have experienced the wrenching pain of divorce. The issuance of this statement is not intended to bring to the surface those painful memories. You were received into the membership of this church and are in good standing. Whether you were the offender or offended, whatever has happened in the past has happened and divorce is not the unpardonable sin.

We assume that as you grow in Christ, you will reflect on your part in the failure of your marriage, seek God's forgiveness, and by God's grace, change any destructive behaviors that he shows you. It is vital to deal with these now, as they will tend to corrode your present or future marriage, as well as other significant relationships. Though you have been wounded by divorce, it is our prayer that First Bible Church be a safe and healing place for you.

## **The Diversity of Opinion In the Body of Christ**

Even within our own church, there will be a diversity of opinion on how these passages of Scripture are to be applied today. Yet we are comforted that our opinion is consistent with the Historic Protestant Position and that it is not an innovation. We recognize we will not be able to prevent all divorces in our church. However, we will attempt to resist them and slow this scourge that is sweeping our culture and the church.

We recognize we will not always be warmly received when we protest an unbiblical divorce in our midst and some will consider our involvement to be unwarranted interference. We also recognize that there will be others among us who feel as if we have not done enough and are too tolerant of divorce. We request your prayer support as we lead this body. In matters such as these, we are much in need of God's wisdom.