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OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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**If Marriage Goes Sour--  
A Biblical Examination of Divorce**



Photo: Bert Tippet

# IF MARRIAGE GOES SOUR



## A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF DIVORCE

By Melvin Worthington

The divorce question is a very complex one. In recent years there has been an alarming increase in the divorce rate. In the light of this trend we need to come to an adequate understanding of the Biblical teaching concerning divorce. In our brief study we want to note the *Plan of Deity*, the *Provision for Divorce* and the *Practical Directives*.

### THE PLAN OF DEITY

#### Divine Institution

In Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-25, we observe God's ideal plan for marriage. Marriage is a *divine institution*. It is founded on the nature of man as constituted by God. God made them male and female and ordained marriage as the indispensable condition of the continuance of the human race. Since marriage was instituted before the existence of civil society, it is not in its essential nature a civil institution. Adam

and Eve were married by God. The institution of marriage is degraded when it is made a mere civil contract. In Genesis 1:27-28 God commanded marriage when He commanded them to increase, multiply and replenish the earth. The Bible sets forth the duties belonging to the marriage relation. God has made known His will as to the parties who may lawfully marry, determined the duration of the relationship and set forth the courses which alone justify its dissolution.

We must keep in mind that the vows of mutual fidelity made by husbands and wives are made to God as well as to each other. This is a voluntary, mutual compact in which each one promises to be faithful to the other. Yet they act in obedience to God and promise to Him that they will live together as man and wife according to His Word.

#### Designed Institution

Marriage is a *designed institution*. It is a compact between one man and one

woman to live together as husband and wife, until separated by death. Thus, we note that the marriage relation can subsist only between one man and one woman and this union is permanent. Only by death of one or both of the parties, except for reasons specified in the Word of God, can this union be dissolved. Since the death of one of these parties dissolves the union, it is therefore lawful for the survivor to marry again.

In I Corinthians 7:2,39; Matthew 19:6; II Corinthians 6:14; and Ephesians 5:31,32, we see that marriage is to be a monogamous, holy institution. The holiness of the marriage relationship is likened to that existing between Christ and His Church. Marriage is to be a holy relationship uniting one man and woman until death. Jesus believed profoundly in the sanctity of marriage. In Matthew 19:4-6 he indicated that it was ordained of Almighty God for a purpose and that it constituted a relationship so holy, so



sacred, that the obligations would take precedence over those of grown children to elderly parents. John 2:1-11 indicates that marriage was confirmed and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

### During Institution

Marriage is a *during institution*. The Bible treats the family from the view of the teacher of morals and religion rather than the view of the historian or the sociologist. The Biblical presentation is theological rather than sociological. Moses, the prophets, Christ and the apostles accepted marriage as an existing institution. Jesus and the apostles didn't give any new social content, custom or sanction to marriage. It was accepted by them as it existed in the conventionalized civilization of Jews of their day, and they used the customs connected with it for ethical or illustrative purposes. The one exception to this is found in Matthew 19. Jesus granted that exception because of the exigencies of the social development. Moses had modified marriage to the extent of permitting and regulating divorce, but Jesus indicated that He regarded such modification as out of harmony with the institution as first given to mankind. God's original purpose was for marriage to be a monogamous relationship and any form of polygamy and apparently divorce were excluded by the divine idea and purpose.

Three basic principles should guide the Christian in relation to marriage. (1) *The Word of God* — The general teaching of the Bible is that Christians should marry Christians. Believers should not marry unbelievers. There are no exceptions and no excuses for deviation from this clear Biblical principle. II Corinthians 6:14-18 and I Corinthians 7:39 establish this principle. (2) *The will of God* — Christians should not enter into marriage prematurely. Such matters of training, sphere of service and type of service should be given careful consideration when Christians are considering marriage. Believers must be certain that they are doing the will of God. In seeking a husband or wife the believer must not resort to any worldly method of securing a mate. The believer must earnestly seek the will of God. (3) *The way of God* — This involves a surrender to the will of God and a submissiveness to His leadership. Prayer

and patience must be exercised as one waits on the Lord for His direction and guidance.

Marriage appears on the horizon of life like an oasis to many, offering joy and satisfaction. It often turns out to be a mirage, bringing nothing but disappointment and frustration. For the Christian who uses the Word of God, will of God, and ways of God as his guide, marriage can become a highway to fulfillment and true happiness, rather than a dead end of bitterness and despair.

## PROVISION FOR DIVORCE

### The Concept of Divorce

Hebrew women occupied a subordinate position. Very often it was one of inferiority and subjection. The marriage relationship was often looked upon as a business affair, and the wife was viewed as the "most valued possession." The husband was unconditionally and unreservedly the head of the family in all domestic relations. This is clearly apparent in the matter of divorce. Under certain circumstances the husband might divorce his wife according to the law of Moses, but it was extremely difficult for the wife to put away her husband.

Deut. 24:1-4 sets forth the basic teaching on divorce in the Old Testament. No command is given by Moses, but there is a clear purpose to regulate and thus mitigate an evil which he could not extirpate. The wife is favored and protected against an unceremonious expulsion from her home and children. The advantage was always with the husband, but the wife could make herself intolerably burdensome and hateful in the home to the point that her husband would gladly avail himself of his prerogative and write her a bill of divorcement.

In the Jewish law the divorce was, from first to last, the husband's act. The common term in the Bible for divorce means "the sending away of a wife" (Deut. 22:19, 29). Divorce was made difficult for the husband. A wife could not be dismissed without a trial. When a man was dissatisfied with his wife he had to first write her a bill of divorcement. This was a legal form drawn up by some constituted legal authority. Secondly he had to put the bill of divorcement in the wife's hand. Lastly, he had to demand that the wife

leave the premises belonging to him.

Husbands who had falsely accused their wives of antenuptial infidelity (Deut. 22:13-19) and a person who had seduced a virgin (Deut. 22:28, 29) were not able to obtain divorces. The divorced person who had not contracted a second marriage or who had been guilty of adultery might be reunited to her husband; but if she had been married the second time, she was forever barred from returning to her first husband even if the second husband had divorced her or had died (Deut. 24:3, 4). This would serve as a safeguard against hasty divorces.

Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18 set forth the doctrine of divorce in the New Testament. Jesus taught that "whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:9). This statement put Christ in line with the ideal of the monogamic, indissoluble family which pervades the whole Old Testament.

According to the Old Testament and the New Testament, divorce is not a mere separation either temporary or permanent. Divorce annuls the relationship so that the parties are no longer man and wife. Separation leaves the parties in the relation of husband and wife, but relieves them from the obligation of their related duties. But divorce means that they stand henceforth to each other in the same relation as they were before marriage (Deut. 24:1,2; Matthew 5:31,32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). These passages indicate that marriage is a permanent compact, which cannot be dissolved at the will of either of the parties. One who arbitrarily puts away his wife and then marries another commits adultery. If he divorces her on just grounds and marries another, then he commits no offense. It seems here that Our Lord makes the guilt of marrying after divorce dependent on the grounds of the divorce. He says that if a man put away his wife for any cause save fornication and marries another, he commits adultery. Evidently the offense is not committed if the specified reason for divorce exists. This implies that divorce, when justifiable, dissolves the marriage tie.





## IF MARRIAGE GOES SOUR

(Cont. from page 3)

### The Criteria (Conditions) of Divorce

The Old Testament teaching is found in Deut. 24:1-4. Two schools of thought existed prior to the time of Christ among the Jewish rabbis Shammai and Hillel. Shammai maintained that "uncleanness" (Deut. 24:1) signified unchastity or adultery and argued that this crime and this alone justified a man divorcing his wife. Hillel maintained "if she find no favor in his eyes" preceding "uncleanness" (Deut. 24:1) was the key, and that divorce could be granted for such things as spoiling a dish either by burning or careless seasoning. Some Rabbis taught that a man could dismiss his wife if he found another woman he liked better or one who was more beautiful. It is quite evident that in the era before Christ divorces were granted for reasons other than adultery. The word adultery had a special significance under the Jewish law which recognized polygamy and concubinage as legitimate. A Hebrew might have two or more wives or concubines, even if married, without being guilty of the crime of adultery (Lev. 19:20). Adultery, according to Jewish law, was possible only when a man dishonored the "free wife" of a Hebrew (Lev. 20:10). Besides the penalty for adultery under the Mosaic law was death (Deut. 22:20, 21; Lev. 20:10).

The New Testament teaching is found in Matt. 19:1-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18. Divorces were common and permitted for the most trifling and frivolous causes during the time of our Lord. The practice by Moses was to prevent evils such as cruelty or murder. From the tenor of this passage, it is clear that the relationship of marriage ought to be highly revered among Christians. Nothing ought to terminate it but death.

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Mr. Worthington is pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Albany, Georgia. He is a graduate of Columbia Bible College, Columbia, South Carolina, and holds a Doctorate of Theology degree from Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Florida.

Marriage is an indissoluble compact between one man and one woman not to be dissolved by any voluntary act of repudiation on the part of the contracting parties. It may be dissolved by death, by adultery and possibly by willful desertion (Matt. 19; 1 Cor. 7; Rom. 7:1-2). Some might object to desertion, but the very nature of desertion is a dissolution of the marriage bond. Death dissolves marriage because it means final separation and so does desertion. As adultery is a crime, so is desertion. The Reformers, including Luther and Calvin, and almost without exception all the Protestant churches, hold that desertion is a legitimate ground for divorce.

We must keep in mind that Christ made only one exception in His rule to the indissolubility of marriage. Some have maintained that there is never a cause for divorce, but that position is a plain contradiction of Matt. 5 and Matt. 19. Jesus swept aside all pretenses for divorce in Matt. 19 as he answered the Pharisee's question. Adultery destroys monogamic family life. In adultery another has been taken into the family relation. If divorce is not allowed in such a case, the innocent party in this marriage will be forced to live in a polygamous state. Christ made fornication a ground for divorce from the bond of matrimony. In His teaching we have a statement from the righteousness, wisdom, insight and rationality of the all-wise God.

### The Casualties of Divorce

Marriage as an institution is greatly tarnished through the divorce courts. It seems as if we have lost respect for the *institution of marriage*. When an easy road is made out of marriage, proper caution will not be exercised before entering it. When there is an easy way out of the troubles of married life, we are inviting carelessness about entering it. Just as divorce seemingly opens a crevice for relief from some of the miseries of married life, by the same act the flood gates are opened for further complications in living. Society needs to be impressed with the fact that the door of marriage does not only swing outward but inward as well. When this is true, society will find more happiness and blessing in the institution.

Many of the problems *individuals* of this generation face are due to the breakdown in the family life in

American homes. Broken homes serve as seedbeds for young people who are not emotionally or spiritually prepared for life.

### PRACTICAL DIRECTIVES

Since marriage is a divine, designed and during institution, the Christian should make sure that in making his marriage plans he is guided by the Word of God, will of God and way of God. God's pattern for marriage is clearly set forth in Genesis 1:26-31 and 2:18-25. Christ commends the institution in Matthew 19:1-12, and Paul sets forth some basic principles regarding the institution in 1 Corinthians 7.

Marriage is a compact between one man and one woman to live together as husband and wife. It can only subsist between one man and one woman and this union is permanent. This union can only be dissolved by death of one of the parties except for reasons specified in the Word of God.

Divorce is not permanent or temporary separation but an annulling of the marriage relationship so that the parties are no longer man and wife.

Marriage is an indissoluble compact between one man and one woman. It must not be dissolved by a voluntary act of repudiation on the part of the contracting parties because it can be dissolved only by death (Rom. 7:1-2), willful desertion (1 Cor. 7) and adultery (Matt. 19:1-12).

We must, in the matter of divorce, be guided by the Word of God, will of God and the way of God. Christ made only one exception in His rule to the indissolubility of marriage (Matt. 19:1-12).

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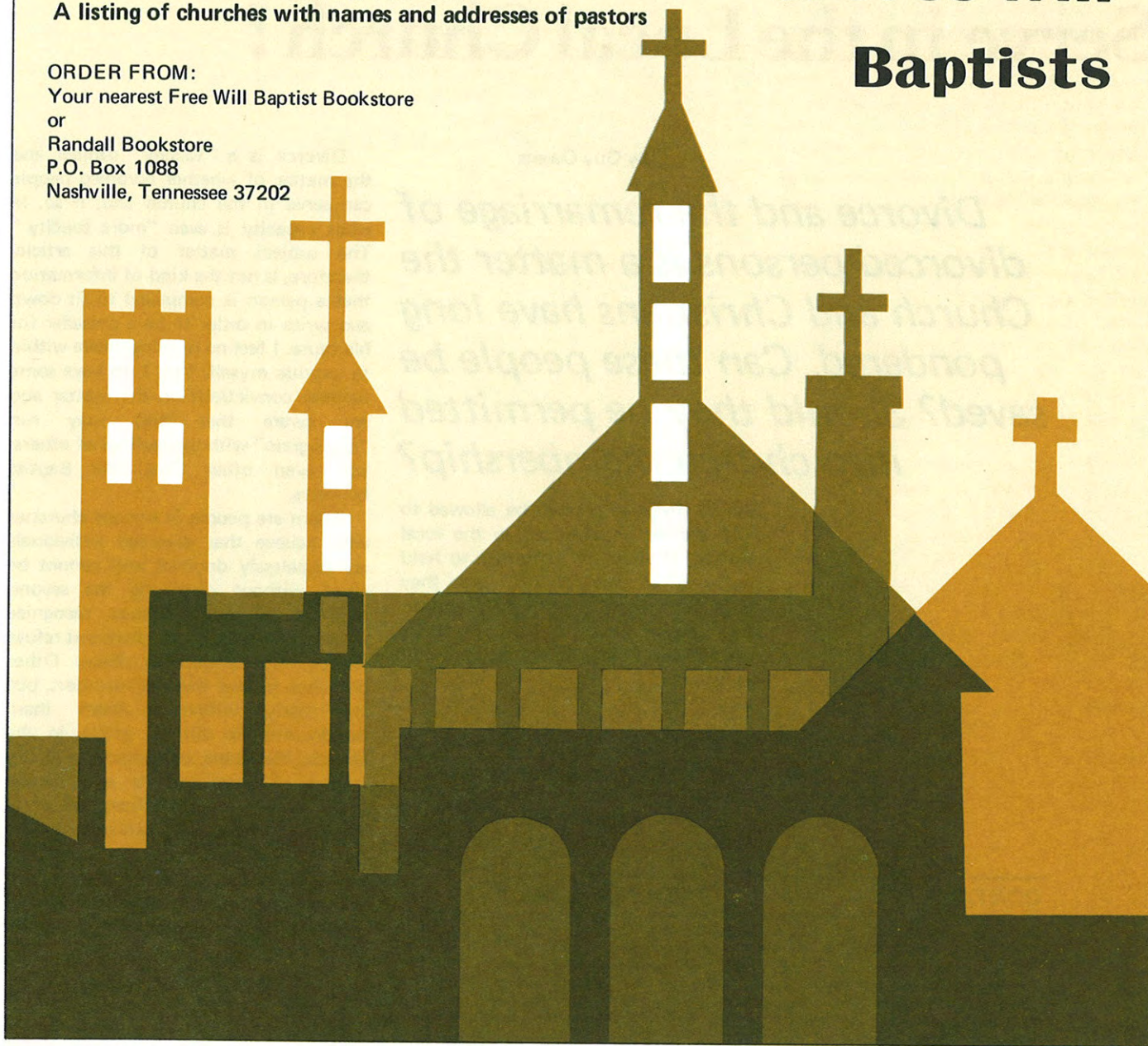
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# Can Divorced Persons Serve in the Local Church?

By Guy Owens

*Divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons is a matter the Church and Christians have long pondered. Can these people be saved? Should they be permitted into church membership?*

Should divorced persons be allowed to hold offices or positions in the local church? If they are permitted to hold positions in the church, are they permitted to hold any position, minister and deacon included, or are there limitations to their spheres of usefulness?

Divorce is a "touchy" subject and the matter of whether divorced people can serve in the church and, if so, in what capacity is even "more touchy." The subject matter of this article, therefore, is not the kind of information that a person is compelled to sit down and write in order to be a crusader for his cause. I feel no burning desire within to express myself. Yet, I do have some definite convictions on the matter and am aware that they may run "cross-grain" with the feelings of others, yes, even other Free Will Baptist believers.

There are people in various churches who believe that divorced individuals are hopelessly doomed and cannot be saved without dissolving the second marriage. Some churches recognize divorced persons as Christians but refuse church membership to them. Other churches receive them as members, but the body withholds from them opportunity to fill an office in the church. Yet other congregations gladly receive divorced people and permit them to hold limited offices but refuse to grant them the privilege to be ordained as deacons or preachers. However, in some areas churches receive divorced persons as members and permit them to hold any office, even deacon and pastor.

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## CONTACT

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As consideration is given to the place of the divorced person in the local church, one must be guided by the Scriptures and not sentiment.

Some insistently refuse anyone divorced a place of service in the local church because they believe (1) the divorcee, if remarried, has "two living wives;" (2) those divorced and remarried are "living in adultery;" (3) God will withhold His blessings from the church if divorced persons are given membership and hold office; (4) the church would be silently approving the sin of the divorced person.

While I realize divorce and remarriage is a serious matter, I do not believe any of the above objections warrant refusal of divorced persons from the fellowship of or service in the local church. First, the man who is legally divorced and legally remarried and is now living in a faithful marriage union with another partner does not have "two living wives." There are two women who have been his wife, but presently he has only one wife. The Scripture refers to the divorced woman as his "former wife" (Deut. 24:1-4). The term "two living wives" is non-Biblical jargon that has evolved from the particular interpretation given by some to I Timothy 3:2a, 12a and Titus 1:6a. I believe these verses are interpreted differently in that they apply only to those who desire the office of a minister or deacon. I will discuss this view later in the article.

Secondly, the Christian who is divorced and remarried and now lives faithfully with a second mate is not "living in continuous adultery." True, they may or may not have been guilty of adultery in entering the second marriage, but the cleansing blood has removed that sin and the trusting sinner is *washed* (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Finally, God does not withhold His blessings from a church because of the presence or service of a divorced person within its membership. This position is

**"Some of the finest soul-winning members of churches I have pastored have been those who in earlier, younger, and more foolish days made a marital mistake resulting in divorce and ultimately remarriage."**

no more scriptural or logical than to say that we approve anyone's past sins because we receive him into the fellowship of the local church. We would not apply the same logic or reasoning to a converted gambler, murderer, drunkard, dope addict, etc. No, we do not give approval to peoples' past sins by accepting them into the church and using their service in positions of responsibility.

Some of the finest soul-winning members of churches I have pastored have been those who in earlier, younger, more foolish days made a marital mistake resulting in divorce and ultimately remarriage. Can I ever forget the dear Tennessee lady who led so many teens and adults to Christ during the first 2 years I pastored. Nor can I forget the agony of the soul of a dear man in Detroit, Michigan, who felt he could not be saved because of past errors along this line. As I write, I have a vivid memory of the many tears he shed on the bottom of a chair in the choir room as he knelt and prayed to God for salvation, weeping in repentance over his sins. For 4 years I observed his faithfulness in the regular services and on visitation. I saw him shed many tears for sinners. No, God does not withhold His blessing from a church because of the presence or service of divorced people.

While I fully believe the church must admit to membership and service Christians with divorce in their past, I do not believe the Scriptures open the opportunity of service to the divorced to hold all offices. My reason is based on what I believe is sound scriptural interpretation. In I Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6 it is specifically stated that those who are to be set aside to the office of preachers (bishops, elders) and deacons are to be "the husband of one wife." I am aware that some interpret this to mean "one at a time" and means that a polygamous man (a man having

several wives at the same time) cannot qualify. Study of the original language leads me to believe that it would disqualify both the polygamist and a man who has been divorced and remarried. The man holding the office of a minister is to be a one-wife man. His wife should be the only woman he ever has been united to in marriage. The exception would be the minister who has lost his former mate by death (Romans 7:1-12).

While crimson sinners of every kind are invited to salvation and are to be received as members of the local church and, so far as I understand, are to be permitted to testify, sing, visit, teach, etc., they are disqualified for the deaconate and the ministry. I believe the majority of Free Will Baptist pastors and lay people share this interpretation and understanding.

I believe the convictions I hold are scriptural, but I am expressing myself with Christian love toward those who may differ with or be affected by my statements. Please realize that I am not a heartless crusader running roughshod over the feelings of others, but I am a Christian brother writing in love on a delicate subject.

Precious Christian friend who has suffered divorce — thank God your past is forgiven. I wish you might have come to Christ earlier and been spared the heartache and hurt you have known. Though I believe the Scripture teaches that you cannot serve as a minister or deacon, this ought not discourage you in your service to Christ. There are numerous places where opportunities abound. You can sing, testify, visit, work a bus route, or serve as an officer of the church or a related organization. There are so many areas of need that I am sure you can keep busy and happy serving the Lord until He returns. Nothing should keep you from endeavoring to be the best member of your church. △

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# SALVATION AND SECOND MARRIAGES:

By Fred Warner

Down through the years there have been church-related people who hold that persons who have been divorced and remarried are living in adultery and cannot become Christians except they dissolve the present marital unions and return to their former spouses. The purpose of this article is to explain why people who have been divorced and remarried can be saved from sin without dissolving second marriages.

## WHAT GOD INTENDED

God intended for marriage to be a "lifelong" contract. It can be dissolved only by Biblical directives. We read in Romans 7:2-3, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." This reading indicates God intended that only *death* would dissolve a marriage.

There is, however, *one exception* whereby a marriage can be dissolved on scriptural grounds outside of death. Jesus Himself taught such an exception, and there is no contradiction between what Jesus taught and what Paul said in Romans 7:2-3. Paul did not make the exception, but Jesus Himself did! (Note Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9.) Matthew 19:9 says, "And I (Jesus) say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication*, and

## CAN THE TWO EXIST

shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." One can see the importance of the phrase "except it be for fornication" better by reading the verse without the phrase and then with it. If one of the parties in the marriage has been unfaithful to the other and reconciliation and fidelity in the marriage is not possible, then the innocent party has the scriptural right to put the unfaithful party away thus dissolving the marriage.

The student of the Scriptures must remember that there is no contradiction between Scriptures. We cannot isolate any one Scripture by itself for a valid interpretation on any subject, but we must put all the Scriptures on a given subject together to arrive at the proper conclusion. Therefore, it is wrong to use one Scripture to contradict another.

Romans 7:2-3 and Matthew 19:9 cannot be taken separately if we are to arrive at the proper interpretation. Paul is talking about the ideal in Romans 7:2-3, and Jesus is stating the one exception to that ideal in Matthew 19:9 and Matthew 5:32.

## GROUND'S FOR REMARRIAGE

Remarriage without scriptural grounds for divorce (fornication) constitutes adultery. But what should be done when one has remarried without scriptural grounds for divorce? Can either or both parties be saved from their sins while they are still living in adultery?

## TOGETHER?

The problem is that most people do not understand what constitutes adultery. Even if a couple has been separated, divorced, and remarried without scriptural grounds, and are indeed living in adultery, they are no less living in adultery 15 years after they are married than they were the first night they were married. It only takes one act of sex to constitute adultery! When such people see their need of Christ and ask God to forgive them of their sins, then they are forgiven of the sin of adultery that was in effect committed the first night they were married. Therefore, they are no longer living in adultery.

## SALVATION NOT DETERMINED BY MARITAL STATUS

Nowhere in Scripture is one's salvation determined by his marital status. The terms of salvation are the same for everyone regardless of their circumstances: "... repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus

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Christ!" (See Acts 20:21). Regardless of what sins one is guilty, he is forgiven of those sins at conversion or when he is restored to a proper relationship with the Lord.

Adultery is not the unpardonable sin! The Samaritan woman had been married 5 times and was living with a man who was not her husband when Jesus met her. (See John 4:18.) She was saved and became a great soul winner!

If one is to believe that the matter of salvation for people who have been divorced and remarried hinges upon dissolving their present marriages and returning to their former spouses, then how does one explain the Bible's "silence" on the matter? If the point is so critical, why didn't Paul deal with it emphatically in his writings? To this pastor's knowledge, such a practice is never advocated in Scripture (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Neither is the practice of dissolving the present union to live alone required for salvation.

People who are divorced and remarried should make the best of their present situation. It is impossible to "unscramble scrambled eggs." Two wrongs never make a right!

#### BEWARE OF FALSE JUDGMENTS

Since there are scriptural grounds for divorce, as set forth above, then not everyone who has divorced and is remarried is living in adultery. The state of adultery is determined by what grounds the person had in divorcing the former spouse. It is dangerous for outsiders to "play god" and accuse a divorced person who has remarried of living in adultery when the circumstances of the former marital situation are not known firsthand.

I rejoice that I have personally seen God save people who have been divorced and remarried with and without scriptural grounds for divorce. To those who have faced such problems as covered in this article, I admonish you to be faithful to the Lord and to your present companion in marriage. Determine that you will make the best of your present situation and that you will stand before God with a clear conscience regarding your faithfulness in your present marriage. And whatever you do remember that the Bible says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). And whosoever means you! ▲

## Promise of Second Coming Brings Comfort

By Dr. Robert Picirilli

First Thessalonians 4:16,17 contain a promise so important to all believers that verse 18 says we should "comfort one another with these words." This promise of the second coming is worth examining in the original Greek.

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven": The *fact* comes first. Note that "the Lord" is almost always used by Paul in his writings to refer to the Lord *Jesus* specifically. That's who is meant here. We believe in the bodily return of Christ.

Now note the *manner* of his descent: "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The Greek word for "shout" is *keleusma*. This is not an ordinary shout, not a shout of triumph or joy. This means a "cry of *command*." The same root word is almost always translated "command" elsewhere in the New

Testament. For example, in Acts 23:10 Lysias "commanded" his soldiers to rescue Paul from the Sanhedrin chamber. What we are being told is probably this: Jesus will call out to the dead when He returns; He will command them to come forth, as He commanded Lazarus to come from the tomb. (Some believe this means He will descend in response to a cry of command from the Father; and if so, the "archangel's voice" may be the source of the shouted command.)

Now notice the *results* of His descent, and there are four: (1) the Christians dead shall arise; (2) the Christians alive shall be caught up with them; (3) they both will meet the Lord; (4) they both will be with the Lord forever. As to the first of these, note the word "first." Verse 15 had already promised us that the living believers would not "prevent" (Greek *pthano*, "precede, gain advantage of") the believing dead in Christ in any way.

The most interesting word here is *harpazo*, translated "caught up." The word means to seize or snatch, suggesting suddenness and force.

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from the  
Greek New Testament

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Reference was made above to Acts 23:10, where Lysias *commanded* his soldiers to get Paul; well, he commanded them to "take him by force" (says the King James), and this is the word *harpazo*. The soldiers seized Paul; they forcefully took him from the council members who would have killed him. Our Lord will forcefully and suddenly take us who are alive when He returns from the earth and from our activities. Then, joining the resurrected dead, we will meet the Lord Jesus in the air and be with Him always wherever He goes thereafter.

No wonder, then, we have verse 18. The word "comfort" is a continuing action verb form of *parakaleo*: "be encouraging" each other. "With" these words is literally "in" these words. We can use these very words (verses 16,17) often to give each other encouragement and hope. ▲



## OPERATION PARTNERSHIP REACHES TEN PERCENT OF CAMPAIGN GOAL

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Ten percent of Operation Partnership's \$150,000 goal has been reached in actual gifts as of June 10, according to Campaign Coordinator J. D. O'Donnell.

A flow of gifts nearing \$1,000 some weeks has greatly aided the progress of the campaign. However, the gift income will need to rise to a peak of around \$3,000 per week before the goal is met, Dr. O'Donnell stated. Income for May was \$3,524.60.

Campaign workers feel the results of the work of Gideon's Army are just beginning to materialize in actual gifts. Gideon's Army is a group of men and women in the various associations who are pledged to raise 10 pledges of \$50 from individuals, churches or other groups in the churches. One Gideonite, O. W. Ruble of West Virginia, has raised over \$1,000 in cash and pledges.

The total amount of gifts and pledges will be announced at the National Association in Dayton this July. At that time the campaign to raise funds to pay off the National Office Building will have 12 months to continue.

Individuals, churches and church groups who have not pledged or paid to Operation Partnership are urged to do so as soon as possible. Either send your gift or pledge to your local Gideon's Army representative or mail to Operation Partnership, P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

**newsfront**

## TEEN ACTION WINS AWARD IN EPA COMPETITION

OAK BROOK, ILL. — *Teen Action* magazine, the youth magazine of the Church Training Service Department of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, has been named the "most improved" publication in the youth division of the 1975 Evangelical Press Association "Awards of Excellence" competition. The 1975 competition saw 91 periodicals enter the categories, 87 entering the Awards of Excellence (formerly Periodical of the Year) and 72 the Higher Goals Contest. The winners were announced during the annual EPA convention May 12-14 at the Sheraton-Oak Brook Hotel.

This award is a result of the ingenuity and creativity of Managing Editor Jonathan Thigpen, according to Dr. Malcolm Fry, CTS General Director and Executive Editor of the magazine. Mr. Thigpen, who is assistant to the General Director, changed the basic format of the magazine with the fall quarter, 1974.

A quarterly magazine for Heralds,

Crusaders and Ambassadors for Christ, *Teen Action* should be made available to and read by all youth of the Free Will Baptist denomination. This is the next major goal. The new and more colorful format includes news from teens across the nation, special fiction stories, feature articles, Action Answer, Teen Re-Action, coming events for teens, as well as a hang-up poster in each issue. Weekly program material is also included in the new *Teen Action*.

EPA has 201 member periodicals, 18 individual members and 4 printing establishments with membership. Other Free Will Baptist publications affiliated with the group are the denomination's official organ, *CONTACT*, and *Heartbeat*, the Foreign Mission Department's periodical.

## BOARD OF RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE INITIATES PROGRAM FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Ministers' wives may now be insured for \$5,000 through a new program offered by the Board of Retirement and Insurance. Director Herman Hersey states the program is available in permanent insurance (whole life or life paid-up at age 65) or in a combination of \$2,000 permanent and \$3,000 term renewable each year up to age 65. The rates for the term portion increase slightly each year, while the permanent rates do not change.

The new program is underwritten by National Home Life Assurance Company.

For complete information including rates, a minister's wife may send her birthdate to the Board of Retirement, P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.

## PAST MINUTES BEING SOUGHT FOR HISTORICAL PURPOSES

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Executive Secretary Rufus Coffey is seeking copies of past minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists for the purpose of preparing extra bound copies to be stored in a vault for posterity. At the present time, the only copies accessible to the Executive Office are kept in the office for use periodically. These could be

lost should a fire or burglary occur.

Back copies needed are as follows: three (3) copies for each year 1935-1950; one (1) copy of the years 1952, 1959, 1960, and 1964. Copies for the other years have been secured.

Anyone who has the needed copies and would be willing to donate them to the National Association, please contact Mr. Coffey or send the copies to P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.



## ST. LOUIS PASTOR NAMED TO MISSOURI'S PROMOTIONAL POST

LEBANON, MO. — The Reverend Clarence Burton, pastor of the Berkley Free Will Baptist Church in St. Louis for the past 12 years, has been elected State Promotional Secretary for Missouri. His duties began July 1. He succeeds Harry Beatty who was elected as the first full-time promotional secretary in 1961. Mr. Beatty resigned the post at the 1974 state meeting last August to be effective June 30, 1975.



Burton

A 1955 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Mr. Burton has done graduate study at George Peabody College and Arkansas State University. His former pastorates include Ballew's Chapel, Grubbs, Arkansas, and First Church, Fredricktown, Missouri.

During the past 16 years Mr. Burton has been actively involved in various facets of denominational work at the district, state and national level. The former Missouri state moderator is

currently serving as a member of the National Sunday School Board.

In addition to his promotional duties, Mr. Burton will become editor of the *Missouri Gem* and coordinator of the Missouri Bible Institute.

The Burtons are parents of 2 sons, Steve and John. Steve is pastor of the Verdella Church at Iantha, Missouri.

The Burtons will reside in Lebanon where Missouri Free Will Baptists have their state office and a bookstore.

## BOOK INCLUDES FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSPAPERS IN SURVEY

JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN — Three Free Will Baptist churches contributed answers to a questionnaire and comments in a survey conducted by the author of a new publication, "How to Produce a Church Newspaper... and Other Ways Churches Communicate."

The Free Will Baptist churches represented are Capitol Hill Free Will Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.; First Free Will Baptist Church, Hazel Park, Mich.; and Fairmont Park Free Will Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.

In an effort to help pastors and laymen produce a newsy, well-balanced, attractive newspaper, Francis A. Bowen has combined his vocational training in journalism and graphic arts with his many years of editing a church newspaper and handling church publicity. This study is designed to prove helpful to the beginning reporter as well as to the experienced editor of a church newspaper.

Some of the chapter headings of the new book include: Planning Your Church Newspaper, The Mechanics of Producing a Church Newspaper, Writing for the Church Newspaper, News Photos, Public Relations.

Mr. Bowen is a member of First Baptist Church, Janesville, Wisconsin.

Originally priced at \$10, the manual "How to Produce a Church Newspaper... and Other Ways Churches Communicate" is being offered for a limited time at \$5 per copy with a moneyback guarantee by F. A. Bowen Reports, P. O. Box 213, Janesville, Wisconsin 53545.

## SAN BERNARDINO CHURCH NOTES FIRST YEAR PROGRESS

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIF. — Since there was not a Free Will Baptist church within 25 miles, the Reverend David Wallace and his family began services in their San Bernardino home on January 12, 1974, with 21 present. From this beginning, the Community Free Will Baptist Church was organized with 29 charter members.

Since commencing, the church has witnessed the conversion of 11 people including an 82-year-old lady. She was among the first 5 that Pastor Wallace baptized.

The group purchased property at 702 West 42nd Street in San Bernardino for a church site. Building plans are still being formulated. In addition to the regular services of the church, an outreach to children is being made through a weekly Bible club. An average of 24 children hear the Gospel each week through this means.

## CHURCH PERSONNEL CHANGES

These changes in Free Will Baptist pastoral and other church personnel are provided by CONTACT Magazine as a service to its readers. No personnel will be listed as having left a place of service until he is called officially to serve with another congregation.

### PASTORATES

#### CALIFORNIA

Ken Sluder to Princeton Church, Ontario from assistant pastorship of First Church, Tucson, Arizona

V. O. Johnson to Hawaiian Gardens Church, Hawaiian Gardens

Jim Isaak to Huntington Park Church, Huntington Park

Truman Huddleston to Corcoran Church, Corcoran from Chowchilla Church, Chowchilla

#### IOWA

Ken Rogers to Riverview Church, Bettendorf

#### MISSISSIPPI

W. H. Bostic to Richton Church, Richton from First Church, Jacksonville, Arkansas

#### MISSOURI

James Stovall to Free Will Baptist Mission, Sedalia from Myrtle Church, Myrtle

Russell Johnson to Myrtle Church, Myrtle from Hannon Church, Liberal

Joe Braddy to First Church, Fredericktown from Harmony Church, Waldron, Arkansas

Gene McCulley to Freedom Free Will Baptist Mission, St. Charles

#### OHIO

Frank Guinta to Miamisburg Church, Miamisburg from Sciotoville Church, Portsmouth

Michael Kidd to Pine Creek Church, Wheelersburg

#### OKLAHOMA

Louis Maxwell to Pensacola Church, Big Cabin from Smith Chapel Church, Rose

Steven Carver to Cincinnati Church, Tulsa

Larry Tuttle to Lewis Avenue Church, Tulsa from Hill Top Church, Wewoka

Don Davis to First Church, Blackwell from First Church, Neosho, Missouri

#### SOUTH CAROLINA

Ron Niebrugge to Florence Church, Florence from First Church, Tupelo, Mississippi

#### TENNESSEE

Steve Pryor to West Nashville Church, Nashville



# EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT: A REDUNDANT APPENDAGE

By Susan Burgess  
Staff Writer

"The Lord preserveth the simple . . ." according to Psalms 116:6.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt in commenting on the Constitution said, "Our Constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form. That is why our constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced."

When a simple Constitution has worked so well for almost 200 years, is it wise to clutter that competent document with a redundant and vague amendment? Such an amendment is the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which in its entirety reads as follows:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

The possibilities of the interpretations permitted under its broad scope make the ERA a potentially frightening appendage to our Constitution.

Article XIV, Sec. 1, of the Amendments to the Constitution states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States . . . are citizens of the United States . . . No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; . . . nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law." The 1964-Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in hiring, promotion, and all other conditions of employment because of sex as well as race, color, religion, or national origin. Equal pay for equal work has been guaranteed by the Equal Opportunities Act of 1972. These foregoing Constitutional articles and laws seem to cover sufficiently the equality sought by the Equal Rights Amendment. But the ERA proponents apparently do not agree.

If the ERA proponents feel these existing laws have not been interpreted and enforced to the fullest extent heretofore, do they have reason to believe the laws won't be thus enforced in the near future? Courts have often interpreted old laws in new ways or turned over earlier decisions because of current and popular thought streams. For instance, over 150 years after the First Amendment requiring separation

of church and state was written, the Supreme Court decided that in meaning and intent compulsory religious exercises in public schools were in violation of that amendment. If Congresswomen and legislators would concentrate on getting existing laws enforced, they could accomplish this purpose in less time than it would take for the ERA to be ratified and the two years allowed for revision of current statutes to expire.

There are several specific areas in which ERA supporters want changes, but apparently some don't know these changes have already taken place. In the February 2, 1975, issue of the *Goldsboro News-Argus*, Goldsboro, North Carolina, proponents of the ERA state, "The courts are very reluctant to interfere in an ongoing marriage, under these circumstances, a wife has only a right to what her husband is willing to give her. She may bring criminal action only if he refuses to support her at all." They should have worded the statement, "She may bring criminal action only if he refuses to support her to the full extent of his income." If her husband only has an income above the poverty level, she could only sue for food and minimal shelter. If he's a doctor, lawyer, or in such an income bracket that he has a certain social standing in the community, she can sue for a fur coat. If the ERA is ratified by a sufficient number of states, a woman might have to buy her husband a fur coat.

Statutes regarding alimony, child support, or child custody would probably not be changed too much as such. Many states now do not automatically award alimony to women but base alimony payments, or lack of them, on the ability of each spouse to



pay. Child support and custody are now based on the same principle in most cases and on the fitness of a parent to care for the child.

One of the big selling points for the ERA passage has been employment in wider fields and in better paying positions for women. Is there an area where a woman cannot be employed now? The lack of large numbers of women in previously all-male fields is probably entirely due to lack of preparation, qualifications, and initiative on the woman's part.

Not only is the ERA superfluous, it is also perilous. One sentence, if applied to the Constitution, has the power to bring about changes which may not be as welcome when they transpire as when they are visualized. The ERA might bring about regulations such as the quota system set up in the earlier part of the racial civil rights movement. A representative of the movement came to the owner of a chain of garages in the Southern United States demanding that he employ 18 Negroes in order to have a certain percentage of his employees who were black. The owner immediately picked up the phone to call one of his managers. "Chuck, you know those two Negroes you hired yesterday: fire them!" He had two employees over his quota. There are many fields such as clerical-secretarial, nursing, and teaching that are monopolized by women. If an equal number of men and women were to be employed in those fields, millions of women would be out of work who would not be qualified for other jobs.

Supporters of the ERA also state that "laws dealing with legitimate physical differences would also be unaffected by the ERA." Unfortunately, lawyers disagree. According to an excerpt from the Yale Law Journal, these laws would be affected. The Journal states in part, "seduction laws, statutory rape laws, laws prohibiting obscene language in the presence of women, and prostitution... these would be invalidated." A professor of the Harvard Law School while testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee said, "The ERA would require that there be no segregation of the sexes in prison, reform schools, public restrooms, and other public facilities."

Another area of concern in the passage of the ERA has been that women could be drafted. There is no

draft now but it could be reinstated. The most popular cure for inflation and recession, such as this country is experiencing now, has always been war, declared or undeclared. How would American life be affected if a woman with young children were drafted? Men with two dependents are drafted and must serve 6 to 8 weeks at "boot camp" alone. Draft boards are notorious for passing men with any type of physical problem in emergency situations. Why would women be excepted? After all, pregnancy is terminal — after 9 months.

At the present time a young woman can volunteer for any branch of the service, have as much choice as any young man about the rate and place of service, and receive the GI Bill and all other veteran's benefits when her enlistment is over. In the Navy her only limitation is that she cannot serve on a combat ship.

Sharing barracks and rooms with men of probable low moral standards would also face the drafted woman. Of course, if the wife wasn't drafted, the husband might be; and then he would have to share barracks and rooms with women of possible low moral standards.

Conceivably, the most serious challenge to the *status quo* that the ERA presents is to the church. If a

chaplain unless qualified women were also sponsored for these positions.

According to *Christianity Today*, April 13, 1973, "This could open the door wide to nullification of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion... and bring the government and the courts to a place where the historic doctrine of separation of church and state would no longer inhere." To Christians the First Amendment is also the most precious. To risk any further infringement upon our religious freedom by adding another amendment to the Constitution would be to put the future of denominations on precarious ground.

Other problems which might only be irritating and time consuming involve the 150 to 250 state laws that each state legislature would have to change in order to comply with the ERA. The courts would be jammed for years trying cases to test the applications and implications of the ambiguous wording of that amendment.

When one takes into consideration the rights, privileges, and opportunities which are provided for women under existent laws, one must reach the conclusion that women are liberated. Examining what the passage of the ERA could bring into effect (obligations to

**"... If the ERA becomes a reality, a church might not have the right to deny ordination to women. Bible colleges and seminaries could be deprived recognition for the GI Bill unless they recruited women or allowed them to enroll in pastoral-training concentrations . . . ."**

woman is determined to be a preacher now, it is possible, though perhaps inconvenient, for her to find a church or denomination where she can be ordained. However, if the ERA becomes a reality, a church might not have the right to deny ordination to women. Bible colleges and seminaries could be deprived recognition for the GI Bill unless they recruited women or allowed them to enroll in pastoral-training concentrations, etc. The branches of military service could also deny denominations the right to supply

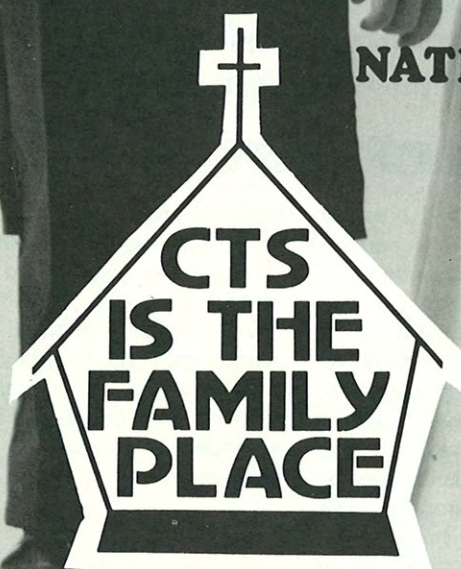
support one's husband, loss of jobs because of too many women employees in the field, changes to really *public* restrooms, eligibility for the draft and service under immoral or combat conditions, loss of religious freedom, etc.), one arrives at the conclusion that what the supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment are actually advocating is *oppression!* △



# Church Training is not just for kids...



**SEPTEMBER IS  
NATIONAL PROMOTIONAL MONTH**



FOR DETAILS AND ENTRY FORM, WRITE:  
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P.O. BOX 1088  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37202



# HEN SHOWER PROFITS LADIES AID

By Mary Ruth Wisheart

A hen shower? That's what the minutes said, and the records showed that \$5.35 came into the treasury from the hen shower. The records also state that 10 women were setting hens for Mrs. Fannie Polston, National Field Secretary. This plan plus pie suppers, box suppers and card sales were all devised to raise money for the various interests of the Ladies' Aid Society at Good Springs Church near Clarksville, Tennessee. Nine women once gave the price of a hen, amounting to \$8.75. Pie suppers usually brought in around \$6.

The minutes in this particular book go back to 1939. At that time there were 6 men and 21 women enrolled as members of the Ladies' Aid.

The meetings in those early years were quite frequently all day meetings. The group met in someone's home; had lunch together, a program, a business session; and usually worked on a project.

By 1939 the women were launched into studies that gave them an awareness of the need for stewardship, prayer, education, and witnessing. Since Mrs. Polston lived in nearby Nashville, they had her out to speak to them quite

often. Sometimes she taught a manual study; sometimes she taught a study course on stewardship.

Several things are historically significant in this record. One is the announcement at the August meeting in 1940 of the new manuals and yearbooks available for Woman's Auxiliary from the Gem Press at Monett, Missouri. The September minutes record disbursements of \$1 for 12 yearbooks, 90¢ for 6 books of methods, and a Standard of Achievement for 15¢, making a total of \$2.05 for the literature order. Dues in those days amounted to 30¢ a year per person: 10¢ to the national work, 10¢ to the state, and 10¢ to the district.

Another is the announcement of school property in Nashville, Tennessee, with a debt of \$10,000. The women were encouraged to help retire this debt. In February, 1941, the group learned that Brother L. R. Ennis would be in Nashville looking for a place to establish a Bible school. At the October, 1941, meeting, the women were told about the property and the debt. Each member of a Free Will Baptist church all over the United States was asked to give \$1 to help with the debt.

These women were quite creative or at least ingenious at finding their materials. In October, 1943, the group

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## HISTORY CORNER

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did not have yearbooks. Mrs. Arvela James was in charge of the program. The theme was "A Help in Trouble." The topics were "Jacob had business trouble, Joseph had rationing trouble, Samson had romantic trouble, Paul had multiple trouble, but the Lord delivered them out of them all."

It is impressive to note the number of stewardship studies, devotionals and programs these women conducted. This minutes book is a record from August, 1939, to June, 1945. By 1945, the offerings were up, but there is no mention of pie suppers or hen showers.

This early record is an example of what we need in the Woman's Auxiliary Historical Collection. Mrs. Lillie Kirby lent us the book. Her mother, Mrs. Arvela James, was an active member of the group and secretary for the year 1945.

## GOTHARD'S 'YOUTH CONFLICTS' SEEN RIGID, BUT RELEVANT

What's behind the tremendous success of evangelist Bill Gothard's "Basic Youth Conflicts"? The man's ability to put "handles on Christianity," decided Wilfred Bockelman, American Lutheran Church communications director, after a week-long seminar.

"Gothard has evidently tuned in on the questions that are bothering people the most," Bockelman wrote in a recent issue of *The Christian Century*. "He makes (Christianity) understandable. . . . He draws very simple illustrations to show how things fit together . . . and he had a Bible passage to prove it."

"You can sense the listeners' excitement. They have always been convinced that the Bible is a good book and have perhaps felt slightly guilty for not understanding it better. Now, lo and behold, here is a man who puts it all together for them. . . . Gothard assures us that there are still some absolutes. People urgently want that assurance."

Yet despite the benefits of Gothard's ministry, Bockelman is wary. "Gothard's fundamental orientation is toward law rather than gospel — emphasis on law is always more attractive than emphasis on the gospel. Law is much more tangible, and adherence to it more easily measured."

"The biggest weakness of Gothard's approach is that it leaves no room for ambiguity. There is a simple yes-or-no, black-or-white answer to every problem, readily obvious to anyone who reads Scripture."

"My fear is that, without intending to do so, Gothard will make people so rigid and assured of their own rightness that they will be unable to understand, much less to sympathize with, those of their fellow human beings who hold other views."



### IRS WOULD ASK PRIVATE SCHOOLS PROOF THEY DON'T DISCRIMINATE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Private schools (the large majority being religiously-operated) would be required to submit annual proof of racial nondiscrimination to qualify for federal income tax exemptions under an Internal Revenue Service proposal under consideration.

The Council for American Private Education in Washington notes that while the proposed procedures concentrate on admissions and treatment of students, "they also could affect the racial composition of faculty and staff of private elementary and secondary schools."

IRS rules would mandate an annual public statement by each private (including parochial) school desiring to obtain or keep its tax exemption concerning its open admissions policy. Annual reports and three-year retention of all applications, scholarships and employment files, with notations about the actions taken and reasons for each rejection would be required of each school.

# Corrupted Law Brings Corruption to Grace

## PART IX

By Leroy Forlines

In this series of articles, I have talked about the need of standing for law lest by our neglect to do so we unintentionally corrupt grace. The interests of the law are expressed in righteousness, justice, morality, etc. I am closing this series with some practical suggestions on how we can effectively stand for law.

In setting forth the true nature and importance of law, we must continually make it clear that because fallen man has broken God's law, God, as the Judge

of the Universe, has declared the whole world guilty before God (Romans 3:19) and deserving of eternal punishment (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8; and 20:10). We must make it clear that nothing less than suffering the full wrath of God for our sins by Jesus Christ could make it possible for us to be acceptable before a holy God (Romans 3:25-26).

While a declaration of the facts of judgment, hell and atonement are essentials in making known the nature and demands of the law, I am of the opinion that more is needed. There must be strong preaching on sin and holiness as they relate to practical issues, and Christians must take sin and holiness seriously in their living.

Sin and holiness are not simply ideas



## WORDS FOR WOMEN

### The Woman's Place in God's Service

By Patricia Mullins

What can women do to serve God? Does God expect us to work for Him or to stay out of the picture?

When a person is saved by the grace of God, that individual — man or woman — has a particular service to render in fulfilling the divine plan of God for his life. No one is saved just

to linger until Jesus comes again. There is much work that needs to be done.

Women are prominent all through the Bible. A wicked woman has caused the fall of many a righteous man. A virtuous woman has been the undergirding of more than one of God's choice servants.

Women, we must do the work the Lord has for us to do, but we must be certain we are in His Will and in line

with the guidance of the Holy Scriptures.

In I Timothy 2:12 we are told that a woman must not usurp authority over a man. In I Peter 3:1-5 we are told to be in subjection to our husbands and that we should adorn ourselves modestly. Then in Proverbs 31:10-31 King Solomon sings the praises of a virtuous woman.

It is indeed a privilege to be a prayer partner to a saved husband. Also, it is a blessing to teach our children and other children about salvation through Jesus Christ. The home duties of a woman should not be forsaken in the name of church work. At the same time neither should church work be neglected by the excuse of unimportant things to do at home.

There is so much women can do! A woman anointed the feet of Jesus and



to be used as logical data to develop a system of theology. They are experiences of the human personality. Sin manifests itself in the way people think, feel and act. Holiness manifests itself in the way people think, feel and act. Holiness is more than right living. It is concerned living.

Communication takes more than saying the right words. The words need an appropriate context to be properly understood. Effective communication on the matter of sin and holiness requires the right kind of preaching from the pulpit and the context of the right kind of living and concern among Christians.

It is hard to get sinners to think and feel more deeply about sin and the need for holiness than they think the people in the church feel. Regardless of what is said from the pulpit, the thinking of

under enough conviction about sin to produce conversion. When we have a revival of holiness among church members, there will be an atmosphere

where the message of law can pave the way for the message of grace. Then there will be more real conversions and fewer false professions. △

## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

sinners will be influenced in what they understand the preacher to say and by what they see in the lives of the members of the congregation. If the moral tone of the congregation is low, it will be very hard for a person to get

wiped them with her hair (John 12:3). A woman was the last to linger at the cross (Mark 15:47). A woman was the first to the tomb of Jesus (John 20:1). The Apostle Paul lists several women who were helpful to him in his missionary journeys.

No woman should fail to do the work God has planned for her. Each one must labor in the field where God has placed her and not try to shirk that duty because she is a woman. Rather each must perform that duty with all the love and strength that God gives her because she is a woman and do it to His honor and glory.

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Mrs. Mullins is the wife of Roger Mullins, pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church, Stephens City, Virginia. She is active in the work of the Woman's Auxiliary. △

## Thank You for Your Gifts to the . . .

### COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT

May 1975

#### RECEIPTS:

State	May '75		May '74	Yr. to Date
	Coop	Design.		
Alabama	\$ ...	\$ ...	\$ ...	\$ 1,215.94
Arizona	...	...	...	118.68
Arkansas	2,551.15	(200.00)	1,830.39	7,712.43
California	763.28	...	589.27	2,960.15
Florida	663.38	...	1,066.87	5,011.50
Georgia	101.70	...	81.00	720.03
Idaho	...	...	57.22	262.98
Illinois	1,099.57	...	1,041.33	6,730.75
Indiana	159.81	...	225.04	460.35
Kansas	240.06	...	280.59	807.70
Kentucky	44.40	...	...	88.80
Maryland	35.00	(5.00)	125.00	180.00
Michigan	...	...	...	86.85
Minnesota	...	...	62.65	...
Mississippi	43.67	...	42.02	467.50
Missouri	3,109.67	(3,109.67)	2,870.00	14,868.48
New Mexico	...	...	66.24	86.36
North Carolina	75.00	...	125.00	450.61
Northwest Assoc.	56.80	...	...	246.50
Ohio	796.96	...	10.00	4,398.31
Oklahoma	4,623.18	(4,516.34)	3,263.97	20,955.63
Tennessee	970.77	...	293.56	2,205.85
Texas	25.00	...	...	984.74
Virginia	24.60	...	30.22	189.40
Wyoming	...	...	50.00	...
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$15,384.00</b>		<b>\$12,110.37</b>	<b>\$71,209.54</b>

#### DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 5,796.57	\$ (981.64)	\$5,085.85	\$28,898.12
Foreign Missions	3,171.05	(2,473.36)	2,465.21	14,249.89
Bible College	2,071.69	(1,358.69)	1,551.86	9,199.02
Home Missions	1,810.30	(1,304.29)	1,342.52	8,070.84
Church Training Ser.	1,034.19	(678.26)	784.73	4,546.01
Retirement & Ins.	868.19	(512.26)	566.63	3,777.37
Layman's Board	340.15	(244.32)	246.88	1,490.17
Commission on Theo- logical Liberalism	77.70	(64.03)	66.69	348.96
Miscellaneous	214.16	(214.16)	...	629.16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$15,384.00</b>		<b>\$12,110.37</b>	<b>\$71,209.54</b>



## CRISWELL LASHES OUT AGAINST TONGUES, IS CHALLENGED

DALLAS (EP) — W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, has caused a furor among Pentecostal groups by lambasting glossalalia, the practice of speaking in tongues.

"Throughout Christian history, wherever this phenomenon has arisen, it has been looked on as an aberration and a heresy," declared the 65-year-old shepherd of the 18,000-member church, largest in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The remarks to an evangelism conference of Baptist pastors at First Baptist Church were challenged by United Pentecostal leaders who, in advertisements in the Dallas Morning News and Dallas Times Herald, have demanded a public apology or discussion.

The advertisement refers to Criswell's much publicized debate with atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair by noting: "Why will he have a public discussion with an atheist and refuse to have a public discussion with a Bible scholar?"

Criswell allegedly will neither apologize nor debate, but rather stands on his earlier statements which were mostly taken from his book, *The Holy Spirit in Today's Word*.

## E.R.A. PASSAGE OPPOSED

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The Evangelical Sisters of Mary, a Lutheran religious order in West Germany which maintains branch work in this country, says the Equal Rights Amendment would "undermine God's divine order" if it becomes law.

Divine order, according to a statement distributed by its American branch headquarters in Phoenix, Ariz., "has given uniqueness to male and female, and not identity. Man and woman are to complement each other, to complete each other, wonderfully and uniquely.

"An equality, enforced by law, which robs a person of his God-given identity is an outrageous rebellion and will have a most devastating effect upon God's order of Creation," it states. "For this reason, we are convinced that the E.R.A. is actually, even though subtly, rejecting God Himself. Whoever loves God cannot possibly be indifferent to the rejection of His order of Creation."

# THE DILEMMA OF DIVORCE

By Rufus Coffey  
Executive Secretary

The Bible deals not only with divine ideals for man and society but also with the stark realities of life which operate on a subideal level. While stressing the ideals and reinforcing them by commands and promises, the Scriptures also warn of the dangers in deviating from God's standards. Because of self-will and depravity, man often disrupts and shatters the divine ideal.

This is particularly true in the marriage relationship. Sin and wickedness destroy God's ideal marriage, and the tragic result is usually divorce and eventually remarriage.

God does not command nor endorse this practice. But He does tolerate and endure the miserable failures of those who disregard His plan for a harmonious marriage relationship.

## GROWING EVILS OF DIVORCE

Regardless of the reason or circumstances, the dissolving of a marriage usually sends the couple plummeting to a low C on the emotional scale.

God has revealed His standard through Jesus Christ: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). Even though the word "divorce" is not used in Scripture, it is implied by the terms "joined together" and "put asunder." The phrase "put asunder" literally means "not to be separated." Used 6 times in reference to the marriage union, it forms a clear antithesis of being joined or bound together. Thus this clear command of our Lord, along with Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 7:10,11, makes it unmistakably plain that divorce is a sin. Yet the world, with its humanistic reasoning, ignores

the divine law of God concerning marriage.

Consequently, divorce fever is raging! Staggering statistics reported in *U.S. News And World Report* (January 13, 1975) reveal an alarming increase in the number of marriages ending in discord and divorce. The soaring divorce rate in America is at an all-time high. An Evangelical Press release (March 22, 1975) estimated 970,000 divorces during 1974, or an increase of 6.2% over 1973. This total was 135% more than the number of divorces in 1962. It is estimated that more than a million couples will call it quits this year as 2 out of 5 marriages break up.

This epidemic of divorce is bringing about enormous social and economic changes — not to mention the emotional and psychological strains of this traumatic experience, or the spiritual and moral problems.

Divorce and remarriage are emerging as an acceptable way of life. Many marriages are entered into on an experimental basis with the attitude that the couple can go separate ways if complications develop. Other couples split up hastily without weighing the emotional, psychological and social consequences. Rarely does a marriage end without serious effects. In no way can the pain, bitterness, family disruptions, loneliness and frustrations experienced among a divorcing couple, children, relatives and friends be measured. Invariably, divorce compounds existing problems.

## WHY DIVORCE IS A SIN

Why do couples who appear so much in love in the beginning and vow to love each other "for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death us do part" wind up their marriage in misery, heartache and dissolution? The reasons include incompatibility, mental cruelty,





nonsupport, lack of communication, conflict over children, financial problems and unrealistic expectations. To these can be added sexual immorality, which is another major cause for the breakup of marriage.

But the root cause of divorce is failure to understand and believe that God ordains marriage as a lifelong commitment. Marriage is an exclusive and permanent union between one man and one woman who have pledged their mutual loyalty, trust, love and service to each other and have consummated this bodily and spiritual oneness in the intimate and physical union of sex. God instituted marriage for the honor and happiness of mankind. Marriage should be an unbroken covenant of fidelity, sympathy and forbearance as long as both are living.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *any cause* at all?" He answered frankly by affirming that God never intended that the marriage bond be broken. Jesus clarified the fact that Moses had worked out some limited arrangements of divorce because of the "hardness of heart." Divorce is totally contrary to the plan and purpose of God. God's ideal is a monogamous union between man and woman (see Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5).

"I hate divorce," declares God (Malachi 2:16 NASB). He denounces the warped, distorted views of a society that flaunts His laws. God's condemnation of infidelity is sounded in Jeremiah 5:7-9 (NASB):

When I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the harlot's house. They were well-fed lusty horses, each one neighing after his neighbor's wife. "Shall I not

punish these people," declares the Lord, "and on a nation such as this shall I not avenge myself?"

"Divorce violates the creation order of God (Mark 10:6-9)," states George W. Peters in his *Divorce and Remarriage*. "It constitutes a definite transgression of a basic law of God, disrupts a divine institution and shatters a divine ideal." Except for fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15), there is no basis for divorce and remarriage. To remarry is to compound one's wrong by committing the scarlet sin of adultery. Although other articles in this issue speak to this point, the magnitude of this sin cannot be overemphasized.

### BLIGHT OF DIVORCE

Divorce is not the solution to a couple's problems because it violates God's design for marriage. This sin is so severe that although God forgives and blots out one's iniquity, it mars and scars one's life and hinders one's service for the Lord.

While divorce is a bitter tragedy that causes shame, we must nevertheless avoid a judgmental attitude. Concern and compassion must be genuinely demonstrated if we are to win the offending party to the Lord. As in every other form of wrong doing, we can *love the offender while detesting the offense*. Patience, understanding and Christian sympathy should be extended to the Christian brother who is the innocent victim of a scandalous situation. However, great care and discretion must be exhibited in adhering to Biblical principles related to the extent a person who bears the stigma of divorce can serve. Scriptures do not clarify every specific situation. Yet, they do set forth adequate guidelines for believers who are being considered for places of leadership.

Because of the serious nature of divorce, the Lord laid down specific requirements for deacons and ministers, in particular, which enable them to have a good reputation among those they serve. For the sake of the church's witness and the individual's untainted influence, those who administer the affairs of the local church must meet unequivocally the qualifications spelled out in 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 4:12-13; Titus 1:5-9. The admonition that the minister

or deacon "be the husband of one wife" is not optional for the church because God established this restriction. In order to uphold the standards of God and avoid stumbling, reproach and endless controversy, a divorced or remarried person should not be considered for a leadership role. Granting credentials to a man when his spouse has a former companion living inevitably leads to divisiveness and handicaps the one attempting to serve. The New Testament regulations for the minister are in keeping with God's standards for priests in the Old Testament. (See Leviticus 21:6,7.) Therefore, I seriously question whether God calls someone to a place of service if He must violate His Word in calling the individual. But even if one does not consider his service to be unscriptural, it is still unwise and undesirable.

There is hardly a matter in the Christian Church today that is treated with more laxity than divorce and remarriage. As a result, it is always easy to get our standards from what other people do or say or from what we would like for the Bible to say. But, as people of the Book, we must not live below its standards. Perhaps you are thinking, "But how can I do that? For me, the standards are too high." Each believer, however, can have assurance that God will help him in whatever unfortunate circumstance of life he may find himself. Above all, we must not have a permissive attitude toward that which God condemns. The divorce situation is scandalous enough without closing our eyes to its fearful horrors.

The real solution to the divorce dilemma is to correct the hardness of the heart. Unserved husbands and wives must be pointed to the Saviour who is able to make them new creatures — people who can live together in harmony as God intended.

When a husband and wife are rightly related to God, they can more easily dissolve their marital conflicts. The church also has a serious responsibility to teach foundational principles which build Christian homes and prevent even the threat of divorce.

From the beginning of man's existence, God has intended that there should be but one woman for one man. He intended that these should be one, divisible only by death. △

# VIEWPOINT



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## OUR READERS COMMENT

### JERNIGAN'S ARTICLE GETS PASTOR'S PRAISE

[Wade Jernigan] . . . has done it again! . . . ["Why I Believe Every Free Will Baptist Should Observe the Ordinances"] is down to earth and easy to understand. His first article, "True Biblical Tongues," and now this article . . . are 2 of the best that have come from the pens of Free Will Baptists. I have been wanting some recognized writer in our denomination to write just such articles . . . We need more articles that are written by Free Will Baptists that will not cost us

an arm and a leg to give them [to] our people . . . I do believe one of the reasons we lose so many of our people to the independents and other Baptists, and to the tongues' movement, is because we do not have the literature to educate them in our faith.

Brother Workman, I believe that if this type of material could be placed in the hands of every new Free Will Baptist church member, and the old members also, we could salvage a lot of them; some may be too far down the road . . .

Thomas K. Johnson, pastor  
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Baptist Church  
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### MAY ARTICLE AROUSES PASTOR'S DISPLEASURE

. . . I was very dissatisfied with the articles in the May issue of CONTACT on the versions of the Bible, especially, the one written by Robert Bryan. Who is he trying to convince — Free Will Baptists

as a whole or himself? (I appreciate the article by Bro. Outlaw.) However, Robert seemed to be writing from a critical standpoint as far as I'm concerned concerning the King James Version. I was very disappointed with our national magazine printing such an article as his. He says in essence: "Change the wording of the King James Version to a more modern concept so men can understand it in their own language." What man or woman is there that cannot understand John 3:16 and multitudes of other verses that deal with the objective of reaching people? (KJV) Actually, in essence and in principle he is saying the same thing many others are saying: "Let's change our methods of reaching people. Let's become more modern so we can adopt to the thinking of the world." I believe this is a very poor philosophy . . .

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