



APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY  
OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

# **ANNEXED DOCUMENT ON DIVORCE**

**2022 REVISION**

**Proposal-Initiative to modify  
the Annexed Document on Divorce**

October 11, 2018.

Presented by:

Bishop President John Fortino

Bishop Vice-president Ismael Martín del Campo

Bishop General Secretary Felipe Salazar

Bishop Armando Tamez

Bishop Marco Zacarías

## **DOCUMENT ON DIVORCE**

Approved by the Ministerial Convention of 1998

### **Original Commission**

Advisor: Baldemar Rodríguez

President: Ricardo Almaraz

Secretary: Samuel Valverde

Vocal: Esteban Ávila

Vocal: David Contreras

Vocal: Daniel Jauhall

### **New Commission for Revision**

February 6 - 8, 2018.

Bishop President John Fortino

Bishop Vice-president Ismael Martín del Campo

Bishop General Secretary Felipe Salazar

Bishop Armando Tamez

Bishop Marco Zacarías

**Document Approved by the General Board of Directors**

**February 22, 2018.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The task of the Commission that has reviewed this document was to examine new situations, questions and concerns that bishops and pastors have expressed concerning divorce. Our study sought to deepen the position of the Apostolic Assembly in relation to divorce in the ministerial body and members of the Church.

Our review will be presented to the General Board, which will present its conclusion to the Joint Meeting and then to the National Convention of Pastors.

Due to the delicate nature of this issue and because there are several opposing schools of thought, we proceeded, like the first commission, to investigate the corresponding biblical text, read several new documents on the subject and decided to emphasize new elements.

## **2. DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY**

2.1. “We believe that marriage is sacred, since it was instituted in the beginning, and honorable among all people (Genesis 2:21-24; Matthew 19:15; Hebrews 13:4)”.<sup>1</sup>

2.2. “We believe that when a couple unites in marriage, they should remain united as long as both live. When either one dies, the other is free to remarry and does not commit sin if he or she remarries in the Lord (Romans 7:13; 1 Corinthians 7:39)”.<sup>2</sup>

2.3. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex.<sup>3</sup>

## **3. BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

- 3.1. Genesis 1:27 y 2:24.
- 3.2. Leviticus 18:6; 20:10 y 21:7.
- 3.3. Deuteronomy 22:22-24 y 24:1-4.
- 3.4. Ezra 10.
- 3.5. Matthew 5:31 al 32 y 19:1-12.
- 3.6. Mark 10:1-12.
- 3.7. Luke 16:18.
- 3.8. 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 y 39.
- 3.9. Romans 7:1-3

## **4. SPECIFIC SITUATIONS FOR MEMBERS**

- 4.1. Divorce before baptism.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly, 2015 edition, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Constitution p. 114.

This commission reaffirms the conclusion of the first commission: when the divorced person repented and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, all their sins were forgiven: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Acts 2:38 and 1 John 1: 7. In cases when the divorce occurs before water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, such sin should also be considered forgiven, otherwise it would be the only sin that the baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ would not forgive. "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The new man in Christ begins his new life; and must be considered free with the freedom with which Christ has made us truly free (John 8:36). The new believer can remarry, provided he does so in the Lord.

However, it is recommended that pastors advise the following:

4.1.1. That if the new believer divorced his spouse, and neither of them has remarried, try, as far as possible, to reconcile and win his previous spouse to the Lord and then remarry.

4.1.2. That, if they had family, be faithful in their moral, family, economic and spiritual duties. And always try to bring their family closer to the Lord.

4.1.3. That they be duly counselled, so that they may be healed from bitterness, wounds and other negative emotions.

4.2. Divorce after being baptized.

4.2.1. The commission reaffirms that, according to the words of our Lord Jesus, the exception for which a believer can opt for a divorce is when his spouse has committed prohibited or immoral sexual relations: "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery". Mathew 19:9 (ESV).<sup>4</sup>

4.2.2. The word "fornication" in Matthew 19: 9, includes adultery and frees the person who did not commit adultery to divorce, unless he or she decides to follow the path of forgiveness and restoration.

4.2.3. The word "porneia" is used in the Holy Scriptures to define "prohibited sexual relations"<sup>5</sup>, 1 Corinthians 7: 2; "an illegal union"<sup>6</sup>, Matthew 19: 9; "Sexual immorality"<sup>7</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> "Y yo les digo que, si su esposa no ha cometido ningún pecado sexual, ustedes no deben divorciarse de ella ni casarse con otra mujer. Porque si lo hacen, serán castigados por ser infieles en el matrimonio". Mateo 19:9 (TLA).

Translation: "And I tell you that if your wife has not committed any sexual sin, you should not divorce her or marry another woman. Because if they do, they will be punished for being unfaithful in marriage."

<sup>5</sup> Translated to English from Versión TLA.

<sup>6</sup> Translated to English from Versión Dios Habla Hoy

<sup>7</sup> Translated to English from Versión Reina-Valera Actualizado 2015.

1 Corinthians 5: 1); "Prostitution"<sup>8</sup>, Jude 1:7; and by the biblical context of Matthew 5:32, as "adultery". When our Lord Jesus Christ used the word "porneia", His intention was to give us a sufficiently broad term to indicate all prohibited sexual relationships.

4.2.4. We reaffirm the conclusion of the first commission: the believer who opted for divorce, because his spouse committed sexual immorality, can remarry, provided he does so in the Lord.

#### 4.3. Incestuous marriage between close relatives.

4.3.1. The first letter to the Corinthians chapter 5 and Leviticus 18 prohibit incestuous marriage among close relatives. Pastors should not officiate marriage ceremonies between close relatives that are considered incestuous.

4.3.2. If the couple of close relations were married before being baptized, the pastor will have to weigh each case in particular, taking into account the time married, if there exists a family and the pressures, problems and circumstances that exist.

#### 4.4. Annulment cases.

We understand that governments can allow, in extraordinary cases, the annulment of a marriage. In these cases, the Church will ensure that no biblical principle is violated.

### 5. SPECIFIC SITUATIONS FOR THE MINISTERIAL BODY

#### 5.1. Ministry and divorce before being baptized.

This commission reaffirms the conclusion of the first commission: when the divorced person repented and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, all their sins were forgiven: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Acts 2:38 and 1 John 1: 7. In cases when the divorce occurs before water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, such sin should also be considered forgiven, otherwise it would be the only sin that the baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ would not forgive. "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The new man in Christ begins his new life; and must be considered free with the freedom with which Christ has made us truly free (John 8:36). The new believer can remarry, provided he does so in the Lord.

We recommend that pastors counsel as follows:

5.1.1. That, if the aspiring minister divorced his wife, before being baptized, and neither have remarried, try, as far as possible, to reconcile and win this previous spouse to the Lord and remarry her.

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<sup>8</sup> Translated to English from Versión Dios Habla Hoy

5.1.2. That, if they had family, be faithful in their moral, family, economic, spiritual and legal duties. And always try to bring the family closer to the Lord (1 Timothy 5:8).

5.1.3. That, the pastor see that these have healed of wounds, bitterness and other negative emotions.

5.1.4. The commission recommends that in these cases the pastor make sure that the aspirant to the ministry has a good testimony and fulfills his obligations, so that his past life neither affects his ministry nor the church.

5.1.5. “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:7).

## 5.2. Ministry and divorce after baptism.

### 5.2.1. The man who divorced after baptism and desires ministry.

The Apostolic Assembly teaches that a believer who passed through divorce after being baptized cannot be initiated into the ministry. Article 63 of the Constitution states the high commitment that he should have towards his marriage and family: *He should be active in and committed to his Christian duties. He should be proper, formal, honest, reliable, and trustworthy. He should manage church resources with honesty and rectitude so as not to bring reproach upon the ministerial body. He should lead his family in the way of the Lord, being loving and considerate to his wife and a good example for his children.*<sup>9</sup>

- a) The Word of God requires from deacons in 1 Timothy 3:12-13 that “Must have one wife and guide their children and entire family well”<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the Apostolic Assembly requires that candidates for ministry have a higher ethical standard of living.
- b) The Apostolic Assembly also teaches that, if the wife of a believer was divorced after her baptism, he cannot be initiated into the ministry.

### 5.2.2. The man who divorced being part of the Ministerial Body.

- a) The Apostolic Assembly believes and declares in Article 63, that the minister: *“The minister must always keep in mind that his is the highest vocation on earth because of his responsibility to impress upon the believers under his care the spiritual principles that will determine their eternal destiny (Acts 6:1-3, 20:18-20; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 1 Timothy 4:12-15, 5:21-22, 6:11-14; 2 Timothy 2:1-4, 22-26, 5:1-5; Titus 2:7-8, 15; 1 Peter 5:1-4)”*<sup>11</sup>.
- b) Also, the Apostolic Assembly believes and affirms in article 71, paragraph I, of its Constitution that: “Pastors have been vested with the authority to preach the Word of God, to instruct, admonish and discipline members of their churches (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Timothy 4:1-2).

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<sup>9</sup> Constitution, p. 93.

<sup>10</sup> Translated to English from Version TLA.

<sup>11</sup> Constitution, p. 93.

They shall require members to fulfill their Christian duties and observe the doctrine of the Lord<sup>12</sup>.”

We believe that the minister must be free from all ties that prevent or limit the instruction and correction in the apostolic doctrine.

- c) Adding to this, Article 80, Clause 5, point 2, says:  
“*We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the spiritual Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the Headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction.*”  
(*Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19: 18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mr. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Ef. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18- 21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Peter. 3:1-7*).<sup>13</sup>
- d) Due to what has already been presented, the Apostolic Assembly teaches that the members belonging to the Ministerial Body, who get divorced, will surrender their ministry to the corresponding authorities.  
Due to the dignity and honor that the ministry deserves, this process must be carried out with all due respect and care.

5.2.3. The Apostolic Assembly teaches that if a member of the Ministerial Body, being single or widowed, marries a sister who divorced after her baptism, he must surrender his ministry.

## **6. COMMISSION OF APPEALS FOR DIVORCE SITUATIONS**

6.1. This commission recognizes that there are extraordinary cases that merit a deeper examination. For these cases, we propose that a Commission of Appeals for Divorce Situations be appointed (CADS).

6.2. This Commission (CADS) will be elected by the Joint Meeting, at its first meeting, after each General Electoral Convention. It shall be integrated by a member of the General Board of Directors and two pastors, who will be elected by the General Board of Directors and four Bishops Supervisors or ex-bishops, who will be elected by the body of Bishops Supervisors. This Commission will function for four years.

6.3. Appeals from church members, deacons and ordained ministers will be presented by their pastors, when they consider that there are grounds to appeal.

6.4. Pastors and Bishops may appeal directly to the Commission (CADS), requesting a process from the General Secretary in writing. He will inform the General Board of Directors of each case that is received.

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<sup>12</sup> Constitution 2017, p 91-92.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 101.



6.5. This Commission (CADS) will listen to and have the authority to make final decisions on all appeals it receives from church members, deacons, ordained ministers, pastors and bishops.

6.6. Ministers appealing to the Committee on Appeals for Divorce Situations (CADS), will be automatically renouncing the appeals process according to Article 43 of the Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly.<sup>14</sup>

## **7. OFFICAL NOTIFICATION:**

**This new document will be presented for study and approval or amendments, to the Joint Meeting of March 2018. It will be presented as an Annexed Document by proposal-initiative in the General Convention of 2018. When its process is finished, if approved by the Ministerial Convention, will be the new document in force and will eliminate the previous document.**

**If approved, it will not have retroactive effect.**

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<sup>14</sup> Constitution 2017, pg. 57.

<sup>1</sup> Constitution 2017, pg. 57.

