

RE: The Divorce Epidemic in our land and in the church

Dear Pastor:

This letter is written to you by a fellow servant and laborer in the Lord. I pray that you will receive it in the same spirit of love and concern with which it is prayerfully sent. Although there are many common concerns that could be addressed, this letter focuses on the present state of divorce and remarriage in the church. The steady advance of sexual sin and deviation within the Christian community is fueled, one way or another, by disregard of God's Word concerning marriage. Consequently, I pray that you will carefully weigh the merits of this case presented to you.

As you have no doubt read, according to pollsters, the divorce epidemic among "born again Christians" is now at least as high or higher than those who do not claim Christ. The "State of Our Unions" report from Rutgers University declares that in the "Bible Belt" of the United States, where the greatest concentration of "Bible-Believing" Christians live, the divorce rate has climbed 50% higher than in the nation as a whole. Other reports indicate that the clergy now represent the second highest divorce rate of all the professions. If these statistics reflect anything even close to reality, it points to the unavoidable conclusion that we in the church are caught in a web of sin more contagious and virulent than anything we have previously suffered in our 2,000 year history.

The divorce and remarriage doctrines being commonly taught and practiced in the church today are neither supported by Scripture nor by the early leaders of the Christian faith. Approximately 50 years ago, liberal church leaders began disregarding Biblical prohibitions against remarriage, a process that has expanded to include most conservatives, thereby replacing the historic position with the "modern" one. After only a single generation, little trace or memory remains of the protective walls that once stood upon the sound original teachings. This authorized the divorce and remarriage culture to rapidly invade and infect the people of God with devastating results.

This contagion is not limited to any particular Church tradition, group or denomination. It is spreading like a plague in every Protestant group in the Western world. To compete, Roman Catholics have inflated their concept of annulment leading to remarriage into a modern day indulgence to sin, just like Protestants. No longer can any one group point at the other as the source of the problem. The root is the commonly shared theology that undercuts marriage, tolerates divorce and supports remarriage, contrary to Christ's specific teachings confirmed by the Apostle Paul. Fortified by a doctrine of confession without repentance, the epidemic is becoming uncontrollable as it gains equality, respectability and a cloak of spirituality within God's House. As a result, efforts to reach the watching world for Christ are returning unto us void as our lack of integrity empties us of the power of God's Word.

Wrong assumptions have provided ideal breeding conditions for the culture. For instance, it is widely assumed that a second marriage is valid in the eyes of God while a former spouse lives; that a second marriage invalidates the original. Little independent thought is given as to what our Lord actually did teach,

since most pastors are content to accept the consensus of the age. This theology brands those that hold obediently to the original understanding as legalists, and ostracizes them within their own church and families, especially if they have the courage to model and voice their convictions. It seems that most now believe, as an article of faith, that Jesus died to redeem their sin, instead of dying to redeem them *from* their sin. This subtle twist of Satan makes all the difference in the world.

Pastor, you must realize that something is fundamentally flawed when the conduct of believer's only matches or falls below that of unbelievers. It can not be explained as mere pressure exerted by the world, as we have suffered much worse without falling. The problem is not what is found in the world, but what is NOT found in the church – Righteousness. I therefore plead with you to earnestly seek God's face on this matter, research for yourself, study His Word, and when finding the truth, take a stand to boldly support it, come what may. Responsibility to take action falls upon you as a shepherd of the Lord's flock. I pray that you will come to understand that any authority the church may possess does not extend to being able to override God's Word.

The only remedy is to completely submit to Jesus Christ in total repentance and obedience, forsaking sin and thereby gaining His cleansing and healing power. Superficial therapeutic treatments simply spread the contamination further. If any of us have sinned against God and led our people astray, all we have to do is fall on our knees in godly sorrow and repent — repent and forsake our own sin, and of the part we have played in the near destruction of His church. As Jesus told those in Laodicea, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

Pastor, I plead with you to remember the old truths presented here. Please, do not be silent and permit others to be deceived by the church divorce culture any longer. Please do not follow the crowd, but look for the ancient paths, and walk in them, isolated and alone if necessary. I pray that the Lord will be with you and your people as we expectantly look forward to His return.

Your Servant in Christ,

Chuck Crismier

I welcome your comments and will do my best to answer any questions or address your concerns. You may reach me by sending your response to: crismier@saveus.org. I would suggest, however, that you first study the FACT SHEETS and SHORT OUTLINE, “MARRIAGE, DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE, A Summary of What the Bible REALLY Teaches,” before writing, since the information found may be helpful. A number of teachings by various pastors, authors and theologians on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage as well as other helpful materials may be found at www.marriagedivorce.com.

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