

# *The Lakeview Lamp*

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

May 30, 2004

## **Methodist Doctrine on Divorce**

Jefferson D. Tant

Following is an interesting compilation of the Methodist Discipline teachings about divorce and remarriage from 1896 up through 1994. It would be useful in studying with Methodists, showing how the denomination has become more liberal through the years; and it also serves as a caution to us as to how drift occurs. As my grandfather, J. D. Tant, often said, “Brethren, we are drifting.” I obtained these statements from Wes Brown.

The changing doctrines of the Methodist Church on divorce reflect the loosening trends of society in general. Following are quotes taken from the Methodist Discipline over an 88-year period. CAPS are mine. – JDT

“No divorce, EXCEPT FOR ADULTERY, shall be regarded by the Church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery, nor to divorced parties seeking to be reunited in marriage.” (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church - 1896)

“The Ministers of our Church shall be prohibited from solemnizing the rites of matrimony between divorced persons, except in case of innocent parties who have been divorced for THE ONE SCRIPTURAL CAUSE.” (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South - 1914)

“No Minister shall solemnize the marriage of a divorced person whose wife or husband is living and unmarried; but this rule shall not apply (1) to the innocent person when it is clearly established by competent testimony that the true cause for divorce was adultery OR OTHER VICIOUS

CONDITIONS which through mental or physical cruelty or physical peril invalidated the marriage vow, nor (2) to the divorced persons seeking to be reunited in marriage.” (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church - 1940)

“In view of the seriousness with which the Scriptures and the Church regard divorce, a minister may solemnize the marriage of a divorced person only when he has satisfied himself by careful counseling that (a) the divorced person is sufficiently AWARE OF THE FACTORS LEADING TO THE FAILURE of the previous marriage, (b) the divorced person is SINCERELY SEEKING to make the proposed marriage truly Christian, and (c) SUFFICIENT TIME HAS ELAPSED for adequate preparation and counseling.” (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church - 1960)

“Where marriage partners, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, are estranged beyond reconciliation, we recognize divorce as regrettable, but RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF DIVORCED PERSONS TO REMARRY. We express our deep concern for the care and nurture of the children of divorced and/or remarried persons. We encourage that either or both of the divorced parents be considered for custody of the minor children of the marriage. We encourage an active, ACCEPTING, and enabling commitment of the church and our society to minister to the members of divorced families.” (Discipline of the United Methodist Church - 1984)

### God's Doctrine on Divorce

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:9).

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mark 10:11-12).

“For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another

man, she will be called an adulteress” (Romans 7:2-3a).

“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband...And a husband is not to divorce his wife” (1 Cor 7:10-11).

“Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.” - Psalm 68:20

Lakeview church of Christ  
132 New Shackle Island Road  
P.O. Box 514  
Hendersonville TN 37077

(615) 824-1376

[www.BibleSaints.com](http://www.BibleSaints.com)

Troy Nicholson  
[troyjenn@bigzoo.net](mailto:troyjenn@bigzoo.net)

"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"  
(Psalm 118:24).