

waiting game is more wicked than the first type, because it is allegedly the wisdom of scholars. Of course that is what was said about Bales-ism in the 1970s. **Here are seven other erroneous doctrines that have been put forth since 1950:**

1. *Warren – Fuqua Debate*, 1955, Reprint 1985, Contact Bart Warren, 7158 Highway 57 West, Ramer, TN 38367. (*YMCBG – pp. 389 – 402; 538 - 548; 570). Brother E. C. Fuqua held that men out of the church are amenable to civil law; and specifically not to Christ’s law on marriage, divorce and remarriage (MDR).

2. *Divorce Dilemma*, James Woodroof, Christian family Books, 1114 Paris Ave., Nashville, TN 37204, 1973. (YMCBG – pp. 465 – 485; 486 - 497; 515 - 516). Brother Woodroof concluded that an unbeliever may continue in a marital union, which was forbidden by Christ (e.g., Luke 16:18) after baptism. He affirms that “Christianity” sanctifies such unions (p. 47); but Christ did not sanctify such for they are adulterous (See Mark 10:11-12; I Cor. 6:9-11). In 1980 Woodroof and I exchanged letters on the subject.

3. *Not Under Bondage*, J. D. Bales. (Contact Mark McWhorter, 420 Chula Vista Mt. Rd, Pell City, AL 35125, 1979. (YMCBG – pp. 361 – 368; 598 – 503). Brother Bales misused I Cor. 7:12-15 and other scriptures, in order to declare that the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 5:32, 19:6-9; Mark 10:3-12 and Luke 16:18) is only for members of the church of Christ married to members of the church of Christ. According to him it does not apply to Baptists, Buddhists or Brahmins. Yet, our Lord said, “from the beginning of the creation” (Mark 10:6), not from Pentecost. Bales and I corresponded about his doctrine in 1990.

4. *Divorce Debate*, Hicks – Waldron, P.O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327, 1977. Olan Hicks affirmed: “Unscriptural divorced and remarried people may continue in the remarriage without further sin.” Waldron denied. One of Brother Hicks ploys was to redefine the word adultery in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, saying it was the legal acts of divorcing and remarrying (Hicks-Waldron, p. 39).

5. Except *For Fornication*, 1974, Lewis

G. Hale, 2600 S. Agnew Ave. Oklahoma City, OK, 73108. (YMCBG – pp. 369 – 383). Hale affirms, “We also believe it has been shown that the guilty party is free to remarry” (p. 43). The guilty party, though free from the innocent party who put him away (Matt. 19:9), is still subject to the law of Christ (See Luke 16:18). The criminal handcuffed to the sheriff is locked in a cell when the handcuffs come off. I spoke with brother Hale by phone on April 10, 2004, to ascertain if he still held his view and he stated that he did.

6. *McClish – Billingsley Debate*, P.O. Box 219, Cibolo, TX 7808, 1986. Dan Billingsley denied that, “The New Testament teaches that all responsible men are under (amenable to) all of the New Testament.” In debate with Mac Deaver in April 2004, brother Billingsley affirmed that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are a part of the Old Testament in spite of such scriptures as Luke 16:16 and John 12:48. I phoned him on April 14, to determine if he continues to hold such a view. He does.

7. Rubel Shelly, “The Sermon On The Mount,” Tape, April 3, 1988.* Shelly in this lesson had the audacity to declare, adultery is not a sexual word. He used the foolish ploy as Hicks did of redefining the word adultery to avoid the well known fact that it means illicit sexual relations. This he did to get around the powerful message of Matthew 5:32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18. Yet, adultery as used in all four texts comes from the Greek, *moichao*, which is a verb form of “*moichos (which) denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another*” (W. E. Vine, New Testament Words, pp. 32-33). Shelly claims that “adultery means covenant breaking.” Yet, notice how the word is used concerning the woman brought before Jesus in John 8. There it is written, “this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act” (John 8:4). The act to which they referred was the act of unlawful sexual intercourse for her tormentors wanted Jesus to condemn her to stoning as commanded in the law (John 8:5; Lev. 20:10). The Spirit says, that “marriage is honorable among all and the bed (of marriage) is undefiled” (Heb. 13:4). In that verse He contrasts fornicators (*pornous*) and adulterers (*moichous*) with the holiness of the marriage bed.

*Several times (July 26-30) I phoned Woodmont Hills to speak with Brother Shelly to ascertain if he still holds the same view and if his “Sermon On The Mount” tapes were available. I could not reach him so I left a message for him to phone me, which he did while I was out on August 5, and said the tapes were not available. I was able, however, to purchase other tapes on which he magnifies his renovated definition of adultery. (Woodmont Hills, 3710 Franklin Pike, Nashville, TN 37204).

*YMCBG has reference to *Your Marriage Can Be Great*. This is an expose’ of various errors on MDR. It was edited by Thomas B. Warren, 1978, Order from Bart Warren, 7158 Highway 57 West, Ramer, TN 38367. Phone: 731– 645– 6718.

Closing note: In the debate with Olan Hicks in February 1977, I affirmed: “The Bible teaches *unscriptural divorce* renders *any* succeeding marriage invalid and adulterous in the sight of God, as long as the original parties live.” The elders of the Karns church, Knoxville stood behind me in that debate. Roy Deaver and Thomas Eaves were my helpers and compatriots in the battle. Both were vocal and very active in their support of the above proposition and in full opposition to Hicks’ doctrine. The eighty odd charts in English and Greek that the two of them worked with me in putting together are still with me. With confidence in God, the Lord Jesus and his Word, I shall be standing on that proposition when he returns. Remember Paul’s words: Phil 1:17.

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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

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WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE?

On the sixth day of creation God made man and woman, not like beasts, but spirit beings in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27), for God is Spirit (John 4:24). These new spirit creatures He clothed with flesh (See Genesis 2:7). Centuries later Jesus asked the Pharisees, “Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female and said for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh?” Jesus then affirmed, “They are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6). This was Jesus’ law based on the original law. God was the creator of man and woman, and “the creator” of marriage.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we understand the Biblical rules for marriage. This needs to be done in order to know what God sanctions as marriage. The Holy Spirit declared, “marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4, NKJ). Marriage is approved of God (cf., Gen. 2:24), and the bed of marriage is right, pure and holy among all people on this planet. Singles who simply live together are committing sexual immorality (fornication). An individual who goes away from his or her own spouse to the bed of another is also committing sexual immorality (adultery). Since God affirms that marriage among all is honorable we need to know what His rules are for a marriage to take place. He does not accept a marriage when it is in violation of His orders.

The Spirit by Malachi stated three simple requirements, which are necessary for a marriage to be acceptable to God any place on this globe. The occasion was God’s refusal to accept the worship of certain Jews (Mal. 2:13). Thus they asked the prophet, “for what reason” (does

God not accept our worship)?” The three requirements are found in the prophet’s answer, “Because (1) the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet is she your companion and your wife by (2) covenant. But did (3) He not make them one...?” (Mal. 2:14-15).

From this text we learn concerning marriage that the first point the Holy Spirit wants men to know is that **God is witness** to the joining of man and woman in marriage. He witnesses the fact that the two are coming together for marriage, not for fornication or adultery. The second requirement is that **a covenant be made**. In the States we get a license at the courthouse then have a preacher or other “official” perform the ceremony. In an African village a man may give three cows to the father-in-law and the couple jumps over a broom, but in both cases they covenant to marry. In India marriages are most often arranged by parents, an agreement is drawn up, a feast is held and the bride and groom sign the covenant. The third requirement is that **God makes the two one**. Witnessing that the two had the right to marry as a man has the right to take the wife of his youth (See Proverbs 5:18), God makes them one (See Ephesians 5:31-32). When God has made the two one, they *then* have the privilege of the bed of marriage.

Having laid this foundation, let us now consider some applications of these three requirements to some marriages that raise questions around the world. In a polygamous setting a woman may be married to a man as his second, third or later wife. In this case God witnesses the marriage, they make a covenant, but God does not make them one because He had previously joined the man to the wife of his youth. In the US a man may simply leave his wife, go to another state, meet another woman, and tell her nothing about having a living wife, then go with her before a justice of the peace to be married. God is witness to the marriage, they make a covenant, but He does not make them one, because the man has a living wife to whom God previously joined him. Not only so, but the covenant the man made with the woman was

fraudulent thus causing a rupture of the process at that point.

Another man puts away (divorces) his wife for a non-biblical reason (Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11-12, Matt. 19:9). He then meets another and they agree to marry. God is witness and the two make a covenant, but God does not join them together as one, because the man is marrying another, having unscripturally put away (divorced) the wife to whom God had joined him. It is an adulterous relationship.

A woman is put away (divorced) by her husband, but not because of fornication, thus he “causes her to commit adultery and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matt. 5:32). She meets another, and they agree to marry. God is witness to what they are doing, they make a covenant, but God does not join them. Therefore their co-habitation is adulterous, because her husband cast a stumbling block before her (Luke 17:2), which caused her to get into that situation.

EIGHT DIFFERENT DOCTRINES ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

By the goodness of God I was born on November 4, 1935. Twenty years later after having obeyed the gospel in 1953, I preached my first regular sermon in June 1955, at Old Charlotte Road near Nashville. During these almost 50 years I have lived to see at least eight different doctrines put forth among us to evade the truth of Matthew 5:32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18. One that has now become popular with some is a rendition of a fashionable “sport” among certain divorcing couples, called “the waiting game.” By rendition I mean a renovation of that particular scheme, in order that the shame of such conduct might be evaded. Those who believe the new version seek to avoid the stigma of the term “the waiting game” by defining it as being based on divorce where the husband and wife “*mutually agree*” to divorce and then seek to outwait the other until he or she is married.

The proponents of the revised edition say that if a man decides *arbitrarily* to put away (divorce) his wife (or vice versa, cf., Mark 10:12) and she opposes it, then when he does divorce her and later remarries, she can claim freedom to marry another without sin, since her spouse subsequent to the di-

vorce committed fornication. In other words, she claims in her mind freedom to remarry based on a divorce, which was *unto* adultery, *not because of*.

Yet, our Lord said divorce must be, *because of* adultery (Gk. *parektos logou porneias* – “except for the cause of”). He said, “And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt. 19:9).

When the Roman Catholic clergy in the dark ages realized that Matthew 19:9 was not to their liking they came up with the “declaration of nullity” by which they claim that a divorce by “whosoever” is not a divorce. This theory allows them, to grant “annulments” (Canon law 1671-1673). For example John Dietzen in 1981, affirmed the Roman Catholic Church’s right to grant annulments of marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics, saying “such a marriage may be dissolved by the church so that a later marriage may be true and valid” (*The Question Box*, John J. Dietzen, Imprimatur by Edward W. O’Rourke, Bishop of Peoria, IL Guildhall Publishers, Ltd., Box 325, Peoria, IL 61651, p. 182).

Among the churches of Christ in the twentieth century certain “scholars” came up with a mental divorce doctrine, by which *they* declared a divorce by “whosoever” for a non-scriptural reason is not a divorce *if* one of the partners rejects it and says he or she does not recognize such. They boldly proclaim that such a divorce, if done in a treacherous manner toward an innocent spouse against that individual’s will, being unscriptural, may be considered not to have taken place. Any consideration given to the civil divorce regards it as having been *unto adultery* when the offending party eventually marries another. The offended spouse, it is said, may claim in his or her mind freedom to remarry because of the former spouse’s *ex-post facto* adultery. The claim is, the offended spouse may proclaim a mental divorce retroactive to the actual divorce, so that (to use the Roman Catholic terminology) “a later marriage may be true and valid.”

Yet, if the objections of a person to being divorced can change the consequences stated in Christ’s law, then His words become redundant. Please consider: by the misuse of the word “*for*,” in

the phrase “*for* remission of sins” (Acts 2:38 KJV), the denominational clergy has for generations proclaimed that baptism is “*because of*” remission of sins. But we have correctly defended the truth on the point in countless debates saying, that “*for*” (Gk. *eis*) in the phrase means “*unto* the remission of your sins” (ASV).

The concept that an unscriptural divorce may be later regarded as having been unto adultery does violence to the words of our Lord as found in Matthew 19:9, and as He stated in the sermon of the mount. There He said, “But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matt. 5:32).

Jesus affirmed that whosoever (it is universal) uses a writing of divorcement (under tribal law or court house rule) to put away his wife, “*causes her to commit adultery*.” The Lord declared that the perpetrator of the divorce was the “culprit,” not the decree or divorce paper itself. Such simply becomes the tool of his unscriptural action; and like an instrument of death used by a murderer it brings horrible consequences even on the innocent. Again our Lord said, “Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marries her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke: 16: 18). To deny this is to deny the very words of our Lord and Master.

Jesus affirmed concerning conversion, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Do denominational preachers have the right to tell people, you can enter the kingdom of God and later be baptized in water? Such teaching is a perversion (cf., Gal. 1:6-9) of the truth, but no more so than when people are told they can reverse the order of the “except it be for fornication” phrase in Matthew 19:9. Such teaches a “neo-waiting game” for the put-away mate still has to wait – days, months or years – for the spouse to marry or otherwise commit adultery. **This renovated version of the**