

MORAVIAN MOMENT #40...
Marriage and Divorce in the Moravian Church

We live in a day and age when Marriages and Divorces are happening every day. Marriage was instituted by God and is sacred. When a man and a woman get married, it is intended as a life long commitment, between two equal partners. However, we live at a time when there is a terrible state of immorality that exists, in addition to the lack of seriousness and commitment on the part of some persons towards the marriage bond. God saw the need from the marriage bond in Genesis 2:18, ***“And the Lord God said, it is not good for man to be alone, I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs”***. This clearly indicates God’s desire for the institution of marriage. In the Moravian Church, we marry all who apply to us for the purpose of marriage, on the condition that they satisfy the legal requirements and appreciate the significance of Holy Matrimony.

As a Church, we encourage every earnest effort to bring about more Christian Marriages. We believe that weddings should be celebrated in the humblest, simplest and most God fearing way. It is the Church’s intention to call the attention of our members to the necessity of Christian home and family life, and to the reciprocal duties of husband and wife according to the mind of Christ, revealed in the Scripture. Marriage ought to be a life long experience, but the reality is, marriages break down and things fall apart, and sometimes what started out as a wonderful marriage ends up in separation or divorce. It is significant to note though, that Jesus gave one reason for divorce and that is FORNICATION. ***“And I tell you this, that anyone who divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery” (Matthew 19:9)***. The Pharisees in this text tried to trick Jesus with a question of Divorce. Jesus’ reply affirmed that marriage was created to be a permanent bond. Many in our day roll their eyes at such a view of marriage. Yet, God still sets this ideal before us and urges us to teach the next generation about commitment.

If divorced, should the individual remarry? The Bible clearly states that only one ground is permissible for divorce. **If one is living in the real world, he or she would recognize that some persons are imprisoned in their marriage and are abused mentally, emotionally, physically, psychologically, sexually and therefore opt out of the marriage to maintain their equilibrium and sanity, if they still have it.** When the married bond says, “For better, for worse”, it does not include “Abuse” in any form. The Moravian Church, EWI Province, has stated its position in the Book of Order (1996) paragraph 164, a-e with regard to remarriage: **a.** At least one of two persons desiring remarriage must be in pastoral connection with the Moravian Church; **b.** The two persons desiring remarriage should be carefully interviewed and counseled to ascertain that they have a proper understanding of the implications of Christian Marriage; **c.** The Board of Elders may be consulted; **d.** The Superintendent should be consulted before the marriage is contracted; **e.** In case the Superintendent is the Minister personally involved, he/she should consult the other ministerial staff in the Conference.

14th October, 2007