

## Resolution 15. Divorce Due to Domestic Violence

1. WHEREAS, The General Council has determined that a married person with a living former
2. spouse may receive ministerial credentials with The General Council of the
3. Assemblies of God provided that his or her divorce occurred prior to his or her
4. conversion; or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness;
5. or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever; and
6. WHEREAS, Many individuals with a call to ministry have endured domestic violence and have
7. been advised by Assemblies of God pastors to abandon such a marriage; and
8. WHEREAS, Many individuals with a call to ministry have witnessed domestic violence to their
9. children by a spouse and have been advised by Assemblies of God pastors to
10. abandon the abusive marriage for the safety of their children; and
11. WHEREAS, Human views regarding domestic violence and spousal abuse vary greatly from
12. culture to culture ranging from rejection to actual acceptance; and
13. WHEREAS, God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) but also hates violence perpetrated on others
14. (Psalm 11:5, Proverbs 6:16-17); and
15. WHEREAS, Marriage is a relationship of mutually sacrificial love as referenced in Ephesians 5
16. ("Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church"). Therefore, a pattern
17. of domestic violence undermines the scriptural expectations of sacrificial love; and
18. WHEREAS, In the New Testament, God's Word instructs fellow believers to relate to one
19. another in humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another in love
20. (Ephesians 4:1-3). It exhorts believers to put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor,
21. slander and malice, to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
22. as God in Christ has forgiven them (Ephesians 4:31-32). These commands provide
23. an implicit foundation for marriage and reveal an antithesis to domestic violence
24. and abuse; and

25. WHEREAS, God's heart is toward those who are oppressed and against the oppressor (Psalm
26. 146:5–9; Isaiah 1:16–17); and
1. WHEREAS, Many spouses who leave a violent spouse (with or without children) are running
2. for their lives from someone who has literally become an oppressor and enemy.
3. David and others in Scripture fled for their lives and prayed for God to deliver them
4. from the hands of their enemies. That is justified when one's life or children's lives
5. are endangered; and
6. WHEREAS, This confluence of verses and overarching biblical themes validate this exception
7. for approving a divorce with The General Council of the Assemblies of God; and
8. WHEREAS, A confluence of several verses and overarching biblical themes validate the
9. exception of ecclesiastical annulment which the church has instituted by approving
10. the divorce of those who have been deceived or defrauded by their spouse; and
11. WHEREAS, The use of the ecclesiastical annulment has not lessened the need for the applicant
12. to have a divine call, solid integrity, sound doctrine, and fullness of the Spirit;
13. therefore, be it
14. RESOLVED, That General Council Bylaws, ARTICLE VII. MINISTRY, Section 2. Basic
15. Qualifications, paragraph j. Marriage status, pages 156–157, which reads:
16. **j. Marriage status.** We disapprove of any married persons holding
17. ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God if either marriage partner
18. has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her
19. conversion or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital
20. unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the
21. unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15), except as hereinafter provided.
22. Be amended to read:
23. **j. Marriage status.** We disapprove of any married persons holding
24. ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God if either marriage partner
25. has a former spouse living, unless the divorce occurred prior to his or her
26. conversion or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital
27. unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the

28. unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15), or in the case of domestic violence by a
29. spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5–9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16–
30. 17; Ephesians 4:1–3, 31–32; Ephesians 5), except as hereinafter provided.
31. And, be it further

1. RESOLVED, That General Council Bylaws, ARTICLE IX. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES

2. DISAPPROVED, Section 5. Divorce and Remarriage, paragraph c. Local church leadership, subparagraph (1) Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon,

4. page 169, which reads:

5. **c. Local church leadership**

6. *(1) Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon.* Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse’s marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9), or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15).

14. Be amended to read:

15. **c. Local church leadership**

16. *(1) Standard for offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon.* Since the New Testament restricts divorced and remarried believers from the church offices of bishop, or elder, and deacon, we recommend that this standard be upheld by all our assemblies (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:12), except when the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse’s marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9) or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10–15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5–9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16–17; Ephesians 4:1–3, 31–32; Ephesians 5).

26. And, be it further

27. RESOLVED, That General Council Bylaws, ARTICLE IX. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES

28. DISAPPROVED, Section 5. Divorce and Remarriage, paragraph e. Ministerial credentials, pages 169–170, which reads:

1. **e. Ministerial credentials.** We disapprove of any married minister of the
2. Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former
3. spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion or for the

4. scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9),
5. or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).
6. (See also Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, paragraphs j and k.)
7. Be amended to read:
8. e. Ministerial credentials. We disapprove of any married minister of the
9. Assemblies of God holding credentials if either minister or spouse has a former
10. spouse living unless the divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians
11. 5:17) or for the scriptural causes of a former spouse's marital unfaithfulness
12. (Matthew 19:9) or the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1
13. Corinthians 7:10-15) or in the case of domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse
14. or child (Psalms 11:5; 146:5-9; Proverbs 6:16; Isaiah 1:16-17; Ephesians 4:1-
15. 3, 31-32; Ephesians 5). (See also Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, paragraphs j
16. and k.)

Sponsor: Executive Presbytery General Presbytery