

General Topics :: question about the Wesminster confession

question about the Wesminster confession - posted by poet (), on: 2010/3/26 0:36

Is there an expert out there that can help me figure out what is up with the Wesminster confession. Here's my problem, if I look it up in ccel.org for instance and look at chapter 24 article 5 about divorce and remarriage. It says "

5. It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by the death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows so that marriage dies at the heart and the union become intolerable; yet only in cases of extreme, unrepented-of, and irremedial unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. Such separation or divorce is accepted as permissible only because of the failure of one or both of the partners, and does not lessen in any way the divine intention for indissoluble union.

At other websites it says this.

"V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead."

one excludes the if the offending party were dead statement.

Does anybody know the reason for this? im trying to put some information together and need some expertise on this one.

What does the original document actually say?

Are we getting someones opinion or interpretation of the document in abbreviated form?

Thanks

Re: question about the Wesminster confession, on: 2010/3/26 8:22

I have found ccel.org very willing to enter into email correspondence. I'm sure they can clarify for you if any abbreviations have been made, or if there is a fuller document to view online by a different name.

You might also like to look at the Council of Trent's declaration on Holy Matrimony, on which your article numbered '5.' above may be modelled.

The Council of Trent was a Roman Catholic event over three years, which introduced for the first time, the idea that marriage vows should be made to God 'in church'. Previously, they were made to each other in the sight of God and witnesses from both families at least.

When I looked at this document, I noticed there seems (in Genesis 2) to be confusion about where Adam stops speaking, which leads to the Roman Catholic teaching. But Jesus, in Matthew 19 redefines for us, which was spoken by Adam, and which had been spoken by Himself as Creator.

Further, in Romans 7, because we are not familiar with the usual terms of Hebrew polygamy, it took me ages to discover the obvious - that a man could have several wives, but a woman could not have several husbands. Therefore, the woman who breaks wedlock is an adulteress, unless she has already been put away by her husband with a 'writing of divorcement', which was her proof of the legal severance from her husband's contract of marriage with her; while a 'husband' could take another wife.

The level of provision which was expected of a husband choosing to divorce one of his wives, seems to have been set at the minimum God had set to be provided for any slave whom he had married. Exodus 21.

If you read back in Matt 19, you will, also, see how much emphasis Jesus puts on the man's part as faithful provider and protector. This is why to be 'put away' without a 'writing of divorcement', amounted to be thrown out on the street with no

legal permission to become another man's wife. It is this level of 'divorce' which God "hates".

**Re: question about the Wesminster confession - posted by openairboy, on: 2010/3/27 12:51**

Hi Poet,

The later is the original and the former, I believe, is one of the Presbyterian updated versions.

So, go with:

"V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead."

If you are looking to go with the original.

**Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2010/3/27 13:26**

Here is a link to the original (1646) Westminster confession:

(<http://www.apuritansmind.com/wcf/WestminsterConfessionMainPage.htm>) Westminster Confession of Faith ... This is the confession still confessed by quite a few conservative Presbyterians. In the article regarding the church, you'll see the Pope is called the Antichrist. This is a quick way to tell if you are looking at the original version.

There were a few updates to the confession throughout the years; however, as far as I'm aware, the conservative Presbyterian churches reject all revisions that were made by the more liberal branches after 1900, which may be where the wording you saw came from.

Here is a link to the changes that were made by American Presbyterians during the 18th century. These changes continue to be accepted by the majority of conservative American Presbyterians:

([http://www.opc.org/documents/WCF\\_orig.html](http://www.opc.org/documents/WCF_orig.html)) American Revisions to Westminster Confession.