

Carolina Conference
Of
Seventh-day Adventists

Divorce and Remarriage
Committee

Guidelines,
Process,
and
Application

Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Divorce and Remarriage Committee

The Issues:

In the church today the issues surrounding divorce and remarriage are often divisive. For individuals they cause great grief. For churches they cause division. For pastors they cause challenges for ministry. Since the reality is that as many Christians as non-Christians get divorced, the church cannot afford to avoid addressing these issues.

How can a pastor minister to both parties in a divorce? How can a pastor help a church address the responsibility to care for one another and restore one another gently? Who can get a divorce and remain a member of the church? Can a divorced member get remarried in the church? These and a host of other questions swirl in the congregation and have both short-term and long-term effects on the individuals, families, and entire congregations.

The Committee:

The Divorce and Remarriage Committee is a standing committee of the Carolina Conference and meets at least four times each year. It was established to help pastors, churches, and members deal with redemption regarding issues surrounding divorce and remarriage.

It provides pastors and churches a neutral resource to which to refer these matters, where the circumstances surrounding these issues can be addressed and an objective grace-oriented decision can be reached.

This committee is made up of the Southern Union Ministerial Director, Conference Family Ministries Director, Conference Ministerial Secretary, a minimum of three pastors, and a minimum of three lay members including women.

The Guidelines:

The committee uses the Biblical materials in the Old and New Testaments, the Church Manual, and the writings of Ellen G. White as the primary guideline for addressing issues brought before them. This committee exists to support the local church in making clear the sanctity of the marriage covenant. It also promotes the understanding of the Biblical teachings about divorce and remarriage. Finally, it decides issues of divorce and remarriage that members, pastors or churches bring before it.

The Process:

When issues or questions arise concerning divorce or remarriage, either the parties involved, the pastor, or the church board can apply to the committee to consider the matter. Pastors and

church boards should recommend that members facing these issues avail themselves of the services of this committee. Ideally, this should happen before a married member files for divorce or a divorced member begins planning for remarriage. (An application form that can be copied is available.)

An application needs to be filled out by the party asking for a clarification of whether or not the situation allows for divorce and/or remarriage. Along with an explanation of the situation, certain documentation requested on the application should be submitted. The applicant can also request to appear before the committee.

The application must include a cover letter from the pastor of the local church when submitted. This allows pastors to provide additional information and explain the situation as they understand it, as well as being able to state confidentially their opinion on the matter. They can also request to appear before the committee.

Once the committee has received the application and documentation they will meet and consider it. This may take some time, especially if the committee has to interview both parties involved or discovers it requires additional information.

After the committee has reached its decision, it will send a letter to the applicant and the pastor. It will clearly indicate the committee's decision and the reasons for it. These letters will be confidential. Church members who want to know what the committee decided must ask the applicant.

The committee will not make any recommendation regarding membership or discipline. The local church is the only body that has authority over membership or discipline.

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Date of marriage: _____ **Date of divorce:** _____

Church of current membership: _____

Church of membership at dissolution of marriage: _____

Do you plan to remarry? _____ **If yes, when?** _____

Children: **Name:** _____ **Age:** _____

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Name of Ex-spouse: _____ **Phone:** _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Church of current membership: _____

Current marital status: _____

Do they plan to remarry? _____ **If yes, when?** _____

Do you desire to appear before the committee?

Anyone else the committee should interview?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Summary of Situation:

Signature & Date: _____

*Submit completed form to: Carolina Conference Secretariat Department, Attn: Chairperson,
Divorce and Remarriage Committee, PO Box 44270, Charlotte, NC 28215. Please mark envelope
“confidential”.*