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## "NOT FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES"

By Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

I recently had my attention directed toward a newspaper advertisement. The ad, promoting travel to the Caribbean islands, consisted mainly of a map of that area. The map, although a very good one and seemingly very accurate, was obviously hand drawn and had as its purpose only to give one a general idea of the layout of the islands. It was, therefore, rather amusing that at the bottom of this map in small letters appeared this warning: "NOT FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES". One would think that anyone with any intelligence at all could figure out for himself that this map was not intended to be a navigational map. It was obviously deemed necessary, however, to include such a warning.

Seeing such a warning as appeared in the ad that I mentioned got me to thinking. I suppose that there are some who would try to use such a map for navigational purposes. After all, true navigational maps are complicated and it takes time and effort to understand them and learn how to properly use them. One might reason that there must be an easier way and that a map such as the one appearing in this advertisement would give

a general idea of where one was going and that is all anyone needs. Of course that kind of thinking would get one hopelessly lost at sea.

I am afraid that too many apply the same kind of thinking when it comes to navigating the seas of life. We have been given the perfect navigational map - God's revealed word. Too many, though, are not satisfied with this. It takes too much time and effort to study the Bible and to learn what it says. Besides that, it is felt by many that no one can really understand the Bible. Instead, many want some kind of inferior map that will give them just a general idea of how they should live, whether it is accurate or not.

There are many things that people rely upon to guide them through life, failing to realize that they are "not for navigational purposes". Because they rely upon these rather than God's word they will find themselves hopelessly lost on the sea of life, never to reach the destination that they desire.

Many rely upon human creeds to get them to heaven. They think that if they follow and believe the things described in

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# THERE'S A HYPOCRITE IN THE CHURCH!

By David Thomley

For a time perhaps, the zeal of the new convert blinds him to any weakness or fallacy among his brethren. After all, "they" believe the same gospel and led him to salvation. The new convert did not initially question whether or not everyone was as dedicated and sincere as he was. He just naturally assumed they were all strong, fruitful soldiers of the cross.

But after a while, the new convert began to notice some things which were difficult to explain. He was dining at an area restaurant, and saw some members of the church sitting in the bar area drinking alcoholic beverages. In Bible class, he heard some young people endeavoring to justify drug abuse and immodest apparel. And there was this one member who constantly told him all the "garbage" about everybody in the congregation.

There are two reactions which are likely to follow such circumstances for the new convert, and both will cause him to lose his soul. First of all, such conduct coupled with superficial religion may be repulsive to the babe in Christ. As a result, he is likely to reason, "If that's what Christianity is all about, I don't want any part of it!" As a result, he leaves the Lord.

Or, he may be one who has a background of worldliness and immorality. As the temptations lure him to return to the pleasures of sin for a season, the new Christian may point to the hypocrite in order to justify his own sinful activities.

How can Christians cope with this crisis for new converts? First of all, congregations need to be committed to Paul's instructions to "purge out the old leaven"(I Cor. 5:6,7). Secondly, the new convert should be further educated in the doctrine of Christ. He was converted to Jesus Christ - not to a particular group of people. Jesus will not fail him, nor forsake him. If every member in the entire congregation apostatizes the new convert should be able to maintain his trust in Christ. Also, the new convert

needs to understand that no member of the church is perfect (I John 1:8-10). Just as the young Christian will stumble and fall on occasion, other Christians will have similar experiences. The answer is not to overlook the sin, but to maintain a proper attitude of loving brethren who are struggling to please the Lord (Gal. 6:1).

One of the best ways to help the new convert is to live a pure, godly life, and do not give him occasion to stumble. The problem of hypocrites in the church is not imaginary - it is all too real! Let's be sure we are not contributing to the problem, causing someone else to lose his salvation.

## NAVIGATIONAL . . . . FROM PAGE 1

some creed book of some church, they will not go wrong. But we need to realize that when men draw up their creeds, they are saying that they are not satisfied with the directions that God has left. They decide what part of the Scriptures it is important to follow and what part is better left out. One is then left with an incomplete, altered guide which is useless. We must be content to follow God's plan. It is detailed (II Tim. 3:16,17) and understandable (Eph. 3:3,4). Why should we seek something inferior?

There are also those who try to find their way using the philosophies and ideas of the world. As we pass through this life we are going to have to steer our way around many obstacles and difficulties. The solutions to these difficulties are found in God's word. I am afraid, however, that too many try to rely on inferior guidance. The Bible has much to say about overcoming the anxieties and fears of this life, but we would rather follow the advice of humanistic psychologists. We are instructed as to how we can have successful marriages, but we would rather

away. They must be dealt with in a scriptural way. We must know what the Bible says on this matter and have the courage and conviction of heart and love for the souls of others, to tell them the scriptural course to follow.

I'm afraid that too many members of the church have taken the course outlined by John Sullivan, "If they ask forgiveness for the sin of divorce, they are not living in adultery." But one cannot be forgiven of adultery until one repents of adultery. And one cannot repent and at the same time continue to live in adultery. If one is living with another that he has no lawful right to, he cannot just say that he is sorry and then go on living with the one he has no right to live with.

Understanding what Jesus said on divorce and remarriage is not the problem leading to the above delimma, but applying it to ourselves, our friends, and our loved ones is the thing that causes the dilemma.

Jesus is very plain on this subject. It involves those who did the "putting away and those who were "put away." A key question is this: Was fornication (adultery) involved in the "putting away"? Why that question, you ask? Jesus said in Luke 16:18 that one who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery. He then says that "whosoever marrieth her that

is put away from her husband committeth adultery." The only exception to this is when the "putting away" was for fornication (Matt: 19:9). Then, the one doing the putting away (the innocent party) can remarry, and the one who is put away (for fornication) cannot.

But brethren facing the delimma, will say that two people can divorce for reasons other than fornication and then later when one of the parties remarries, thus committing fornication, the other party can then put that one away (in his mind or in the eyes of God) and be free to remarry. I freely admit brethren, that I have never read that in the Bible. Will you please read it to me?

Jesus said when people divorce, where no fornication is involved, both the one who does the putting away and the one who is put away are living in adultery if they remarry.

In conclusion, all who love God and their fellow man should be willing to forgive another of any sin when the sin is repented of and forgiveness is sought in God's way. But to say that we as individuals, or the church as the church, should set aside God's laws on divorce and remarriage because it is difficult to apply in some situations is not tenable. Brethren, think on these things.

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#### REGULAR SERVICES

##### Sundays:

Bible Classes..... 9:45 am  
Worship Assembly ..... 10:45 am  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 pm

##### Wednesdays:

Bible Class ..... 10:00 am  
Bible Classes ..... 7:30 pm

rely upon humanistic counsellors who many times do nothing to encourage the successful resolution of conflicts within a relationship. We are instructed concerning the rearing of children and maintenance of the home, but would rather rely upon Dr. Spock or other such "experts". I'm not saying that the "experts" of this world don't sometimes have some worthwhile things to say, but they like the hand drawn map can at best just give us a general idea of some things and must not be used "for navigational purposes". We must rely upon God's word as our ultimate guide in all aspects of our lives. It

bothers me to hear preachers preach sermons in which they quote more from a psychology book than from God's book. It bothers me when some try to conduct their lives more from what "Dear Abby" has to say than from what His inspired writers have to say. Think about it.

Are you using God's word as your map to navigate the seas of life or will any old map do for you? It takes time, study and patience to take advantage of the guidance of God's word, but there is nothing else that will safely guide you through the difficulties of this life and bring you to your ultimate destination.

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE: IS IT A CHURCH DILEMMA?

By Dennis C. Abernathy

In the Baptist Standard appeared an article by Jim Lowry concerning a conference taught by John Sullivan who is 'pastor' of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, LA. The article is entitled: "Sullivan: Church Can Be Hospital, Firing Squad." In this article Sullivan said he tries to approach problems (Divorce and Remarriage) "on the basis of love, mercy and forgiveness rather than legality." He further said: "The church has to deal with the problems of the family. When dealing with persons who remarry, the church becomes either a hospital or a firing squad." Sullivan said: "It's interesting, we are willing to forgive everything but divorce." "In your church you have to answer if whether you are as ready as Jesus to forgive and reclaim the divorced and remarried persons." "People are going to marry, even within the church, so they can fit back into society. We need to learn to have a forgiveness that releases from the bondage of guilt and helps us to live in a forgiving community." Jim Lowry states that "Sullivan performs marriages between divorced individuals and holds the opinion, 'If they ask forgiveness for the sin of divorce, they are not living in adultery.'"

A "dilemma" is "a situation involving

choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives." It seems to me that not a few of our brethren, and a considerable number of churches, are in a dilemma on the matter of divorce and remarriage. A couple is divorced (not for fornication) and then one or both remarries and seeks to be a member of the local church. Here is the dilemma. The church must inform the couple that they are living in adultery and cannot be in fellowship as long as they remain in that condition and that they must repent of the sin (which means to cease the relationship they are in). Realize, too, that there may be children involved and if these people are turned away from the church, the children, more than likely, will grow up alienated from the church. Facing the reality that not many will cease from such a relationship, many of our brethren feel this choice and course of action is too harsh, being void of love and mercy, and is legalistic, therefore unacceptable. On the other hand, they realize what the Bible says concerning divorce and remarriage. To accept divorced and remarried people into fellowship (when the divorce was not for fornication) also seems unacceptable. Hence, the dilemma. Brethren, these situations just do not go