
George Battey

[address removed]
[address removed]
[phone number removed]
[email removed]

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Dear Brother Dwight,

Thank you for attending the Open Bible Study hosted by the Seminole congregation on March 14, 2015. If you are interested, the audio material and my own written material is available online by using the following web address:

[\(http://www.willofthelord.com/2015/03/20/battey-kniffen-discussion-on-divorce-remarriage-2015/\)](http://www.willofthelord.com/2015/03/20/battey-kniffen-discussion-on-divorce-remarriage-2015/).

As you yourself know, there were approximately 300 people present and the audience was evenly divided – half favoring the no-exception position and half favoring the exception position. Everyone with whom I spoke felt the study was good and profitable. I believe our study together proved two things: (a) people are interested and will attend an open study on the divorce question and (b) brethren can conduct themselves in honorable manner during such discussions. Those who commented felt that, although the study was good, the time allotted for the study was inadequate to fully cover the subject matter. Brother Clint DeFrance issued a challenge for a longer, four night debate to fully discuss the topic.

Enclosed please find propositions for a formal, four-night debate over the subject of divorce and remarriage. I am sending these same propositions to Brother Jerry Johnson, Brother Malcomb Kniffen, and Brother Raymond Stiner. I would ask that you brethren discuss this matter among yourselves and choose one to represent your case and lets agree upon a time and place for such a debate. If each of you would like to debate separately, that would be fine with me. If you are agreeable, please sign the propositions and return one copy to me. I hope to hear back from you soon.

Best wishes,

s/George Battey

George Battey

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

Resolved: *There is no exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age.*

Dwight Hendrickson – affirms

s/George Battey

George Battey – denies

Resolved: *There is an exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age (Mt 5:32; 19:9).*

s/George Battey

George Battey – affirms

Dwight Hendrickson – denies

Each side agrees to be governed by the following rules:

Rule 1: The terms in each proposition and the precise point at issue, should be so clearly defined that there can be no misunderstanding respecting them.

Rule 2: The parties should mutually consider each other as standing on a footing of equality in respect to the subject in debate, each should regard the other as possessing equal talents, knowledge, and desire for truth, with himself and that it is possible therefore that he may be in the wrong and his disputant in the right.

Rule 3: All expressions which are unmeaning, or without effect, in regard to the subject in debate, should be strictly avoided. All expressions may be considered as unmeaning which contribute nothing to the proof of the question, such as desultory remarks, and declamatory expressions, all technical ambiguities and equivocal expressions. These have a tendency to dazzle and bewilder the mind, and to hinder its clear perception of the truth.

Rule 4: Personal reflections on a disputant should in no instance be indulged in. Whatever his private character, his follies are not to be named, nor alluded to in controversy. Personal reflections are not only destitute of effect in respect to the question in discussion, but are productive of real evil.

Rule 5: The consequences of any doctrine are not to be charged on him who maintains it, unless he expressly avows them. If an absurd consequence were fairly deducible from any doctrine, it is rightly concluded that the doctrine itself is false; but it is not rightly concluded, that he who advances it, supports the absurd consequence.

Rule 6: As truth and not victory is the professed object of controversy, whatever proofs may be on either side should be examined with fairness and candor, and any attempt to ensnare one's disputant by arts of

sophistry, or to lessen the force of his reasoning by wit, caviling, or ridicule, is a violation of the rules of honorable controversy.

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Rule 8: In the final negative speech each evening the speaker may not bring up a new line of reasoning.

Rule 9: Each speaker is responsible for the conduct of the people at the debate whom are there in his support. As this is a Bible discussion and not a contest, each speaker should discourage his people from applauding or demonstrating from their seats in the audience.

Rule 10: Each participant may choose one or two moderators as is satisfactory. Each moderator may call order at once if he observes the opposite side trespassing any of these rules and regulations of discussion. The speaker who is speaking at that time of a call to order may stop speaking without any loss of time, until told to resume his speech.

Rule 11: The location of the debate will be at a place which is mutually agreeable to both sides of this controversy.

Rule 12: Each side may submit five written questions per proposition if they so desire. The written questions shall be submitted to the opposing side no later than thirty minutes before the debate begins. The speakers will answer these questions sometime during their speeches.

Rule 13: This debate will last four nights. The first two nights Dwight Hendrickson will be in the affirmative. The last two nights George Battey will be in the affirmative. The exact dates and location of the debate will be agreed upon later. The debate shall transpire this year (2015).

s/George Battey

George Battey

Dwight Hendrickson

George Battey

[address removed]
[address removed]
[phone number removed]
[email removed]

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Dear Brother Malcomb,

Thank you for participating in the Open Bible Study hosted by the Seminole congregation on March 14, 2015. If you are interested, the audio material and my own written material is available online by using the following web address:

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As you yourself know, there were approximately 300 people present and the audience was evenly divided – half favoring the no-exception position and half favoring the exception position. Everyone with whom I spoke felt the study was good and profitable. I believe our study together proved two things: (a) people are interested and will attend an open study on the divorce question and (b) brethren can conduct themselves in honorable manner during such discussions. Those who commented felt that, although the study was good, the time allotted for the study was inadequate to fully cover the subject matter. Brother Clint DeFrance issued a challenge for a longer, four night debate to fully discuss the topic.

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Best wishes,

s/George Battey

George Battey

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

Resolved: *There is no exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age.*

Malcomb Kniffen – affirms

s/George Battey

George Battey – denies

Resolved: *There is an exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age (Mt 5:32; 19:9).*

s/George Battey

George Battey – affirms

Malcomb Kniffen – denies

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sophistry, or to lessen the force of his reasoning by wit, caviling, or ridicule, is a violation of the rules of honorable controversy.

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Rule 13: This debate will last four nights. The first two nights Malcomb Kniffen will be in the affirmative. The last two nights George Battey will be in the affirmative. The exact dates and location of the debate will be agreed upon later. The debate shall transpire this year (2015).

s/George Battey

George Battey

Malcomb Kniffen

George Battey

[address removed]
[address removed]
[phone number removed]
[email removed]

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Dear Brother Jerry,

On March 14, 2015 the Seminole congregation hosted an Open Bible Study with Brother Malcomb Kniffen and myself each preaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage. A question and answer session followed. The audio material and my own written material is available online by using the following web address:

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Best wishes,

s/George Battey

George Battey

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

Resolved: *There is no exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age.*

Jerry Johnson – affirms

s/George Battey

George Battey – denies

Resolved: *There is an exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age (Mt 5:32; 19:9).*

s/George Battey

George Battey – affirms

Jerry Johnson – denies

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s/George Battey

George Battey

Jerry Johnson

March 31, 2015

Bro. Battey, I received your letter dated March 25, 2015. Thank you, but I have never had an interest in debates.

An aside of the divorce question is considerable controversy over the fellowship issue related to divorce. You seem to be conservative, so I am interested in your studies of this issue. If you have time brother, I would like very much to read your views on fellowship, particularly:

Does the New Testament teach we may scripturally fellowship a preacher or congregation that defends, supports, and/or promotes unlawful divorce and remarriage?

What do you think?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jerry Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "What do you think?".

George Battey

[address removed]
[address removed]
[phone number removed]
[email removed]

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Dear Brother Raymond,

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Best wishes,

s/George Battey

George Battey

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

Resolved: *There is no exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age.*

Raymond Stiner – affirms

s/George Battey

George Battey – denies

Resolved: *There is an exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age (Mt 5:32; 19:9).*

s/George Battey

George Battey – affirms

Raymond Stiner – denies

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s/George Battey

George Battey

Raymond Stiner

George Battey

[address removed]
[address removed]
[phone number removed]
[email removed]

Friday, April 10, 2015

Dear Brother Don,

I read with interest your review of the Open Bible Study in "*The Voice of the Turtle*," written in the April issue. I have a different view on certain points, but felt you were very fair and wrote in a friendly tone. I appreciate that very much.

I have written to Raymond Stiner, Malcomb Kniffen, Jerry Johnson, and Dwight Hendrickson asking that one of them (or all of them) step forward and let's have a four-night debate on the divorce question as suggested by Clint DeFrance during the closing announcements of the Open Bible Study. I sent my suggested propositions and letters certified mail, so I know that each received the letter and propositions, but only Jerry Johnson took the time to reply. He told me, in a nice way, that he was not interested in having a debate. None of the other men have responded as of this writing. (The mail has not run today, perhaps someone has written and I will receive a reply immediately after mailing this off to you, but as of this moment, I have not heard from any of the other brethren.)

I have taken notice of what you wrote in the Turtle:

I have no objection to oral discussions such as proposed; with one caveat. They must be conducted under the umbrella of brotherly love and remain in the best interest of our endless pursuit of objective truth. It must be devoid of bombast, egos, and personal attacks. The presence of such shall allow discussion to devolve into quarreling, which the scriptures condemn.

Brother Don, I believe you yourself would agree, the study at Seminole was "*devoid of bombast, egos, and personal attacks*." Further, I believe we did NOT "*devolve into quarreling, which the scriptures condemn*." I believe the large audience demonstrated our people, on both sides of this issue, are hungry for an opportunity to come and hear a discussion on the subject. Everyone behaved themselves – even the audience. I believe we can have an oral debate without the fears you expressed above.

Concerning your suggestion for a written debate:

Though having an attraction, they have limitations. Even if the time frame were extended, it is unlikely to address the issue adequately. Such discussion is colored greatly by the oratorical skills of the presenters. Oral arguments tend to become more personal and to a large degree, are

dependent on the quality of the orator. Much depends on the polemic skills of the speaker rather than maximum exposure of facts.

The written discussion is more deliberative and can remain more focused on factual presentation. Time constraints may cause speakers to choose an assertion or defense without adequate forethought. Written discussion allows side by side comparative study. Brothers, do we just want a contest or is objective truth to be paramount?

Brother Don, I do not believe you would be making the above remarks if a digressive preacher or a denominational preacher was challenging your brethren for a debate. Surely if a Baptist preacher wanted to debate on the necessity of baptism, you would NOT suggest the oral debate be bypassed in order to have a written debate. The suggestion that truth cannot be adequately presented and determined in an oral debate is simply not true. If we want to reach the most people, an oral debate is the single best way to do so. The Open Bible Study in March proves this. People will come. People will hear. Doesn't reaching the maximum number of listeners play into the equation at some point? Don't you want to reach all of our people possible with your position? I certainly want to reach as many of your brethren as possible.

The average American (and our brethren and sisters are average in this regard) does not read – and if they do read, it is very limited. The downloads and visits to my website and Shahe Gergian's website (ChristianLandmark.com) are inundated with visits for the audio (less) and video (more) files of the Open Bible Study. The downloads and visits for any written material pale in comparison. Yes, a few will read a written debate and even fewer will read ALL of a written debate. Our people respond to audio (less) and visual (more) much more than reading. (A sad, but true fact.) Furthermore, when we want to reach people in our communities with the gospel, we do not simply and only distribute written materials – we have gospel preaching! "It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor 1:21). "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14). Oral, gospel preaching cannot be totally replaced with print.

Here, then, is my proposal: You will represent your brethren in a four-night, oral debate and I will represent my brethren. After the oral debate, we will then have a written debate. Is this not a compromise which you can agree with? I hope so.

Enclosed please find propositions for a formal, four-night debate over the subject of divorce and remarriage. If you are agreeable, please sign the propositions and return one copy to me. I hope to hear back from you soon.

Best wishes,

s/George Battey

George Battey

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

Resolved: *There is no exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age.*

Don Bounds – affirms

s/George Battey

George Battey – denies

Resolved: *There is an exception for divorce and remarriage in the gospel age (Mt 5:32; 19:9).*

s/George Battey

George Battey – affirms

Don Bounds – denies

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s/George Battey

George Battey

Don Bounds