



Divine service with Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber

Wiesbaden, 12.03.2006

Position on the subject of marriage

1. Taking care of one's own marriage

Let us watch over our own marriage. Married life is not without temptation. Problems can arise for a variety of reasons. The wedding blessing can be a valuable help in this respect, but it is necessary to be mindful of this blessing and apply it conscientiously. Both partners must do this.

2. Relationships with others in the congregation

Naturally we want our relationships with one another to be loving and warm, however there are also limits to observe. Some are quite loose in their relationships with one another, for example, kissing one another on the right and left cheek. Let us please take care not to overstep any boundaries. At times the suspicion may arise that brothers would like to test how far they can go—this is not good.

3. Helping others take care of their marriage – in the context of pastoral care

Our counsel must always be geared toward preserving a marriage. We endeavour to build bridges and provide help, but we can also advise a couple to seek professional help. However, we must also take into consideration that a marriage can actually be at an end. If it becomes clear that this is the case, it is of no use to keep trying to convince a couple to preserve their marriage. This becomes especially difficult if one of the partners is no longer willing to keep up the marriage. In such cases we can spare ourselves any further words.

A divorce requires a great deal of the minister providing pastoral care:

- he must overcome his own disappointment,
- he must remain unbiased (to the appropriate degree),
- he must continue to provide pastoral care for both partners.

4. Divorce from the perspective of the doctrine of Jesus

Divorce is to be regarded as sin unless it has happened on account of adultery (in the sense of serious sexual transgression). The degree of guilt of both parties can vary considerably. Under certain circumstances, one of the two partners might not be guilty at all. Even divorce can be forgiven, however one should not make it too easy on oneself. It is necessary to honestly and conscientiously seek grace. A remorseful heart is always the prerequisite for forgiveness – one must regret not having been strong enough to preserve the marriage.