

SUGGESTED POLICIES FOR LOUISIANA BAPTIST CHURCHES CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND MEMBERSHIP

1. Statement of Faith:

This church affirms (or adopts or subscribes to) the doctrinal statement, *The Baptist Faith & Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000.

2. Marriage:

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith that no ceremony or action by any minister or representative of this church shall attempt to join in marriage any persons other than one man and one woman. Prior to every marriage ceremony performed at the church, the Bride and Groom shall present a valid Louisiana Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

OR

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, in order to better guard against any attempt by persons to be married in contradiction to our understanding of marriage, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith that no marriage ceremony shall be allowed on the church premises for any person other than a member of the church at the time of the marriage ceremony. Prior to every marriage ceremony performed at the church, the Bride and Groom shall present a valid Louisiana Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

OR

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith and irrespective of location that no ceremony or action by any minister or representative of this church shall attempt to join in marriage any persons other than one man and one woman. Prior to every marriage ceremony performed by a minister or representative of this church irrespective of the location of the marriage ceremony, the Bride and Groom shall present a valid Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

3. Membership

In addition to the other qualifications for membership in this church, it shall be required that each candidate for membership affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a practicing homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

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OR

In addition to the other qualifications for membership in this church, it shall be required that each candidate for membership affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she concurs with and will strive to live according to the biblical convictions expressed in the church's doctrinal statement (which includes the aforementioned position on marriage and sexual conduct).

4. Qualifications for positions of Leadership, Volunteers or Workers in the church

In addition to the other qualifications to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that

he/she is not a practicing homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

OR

In addition to the other qualifications to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

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In addition to the other qualifications to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she concurs with and will strive to live according to the biblical convictions expressed in the church's doctrinal statement (which includes the aforementioned position on marriage and sexual conduct).

5. As an added measure, a church and its minister(s) may elect to cease serving as state registered officiants for marriage ceremonies. Couples wanting to be married would be directed to the local civil officials to secure a state authorized wedding license and have a civil official conduct the civil marriage ceremony. The church and its minister(s) could conduct a religious wedding ceremony according to church policy.

Notes:

1. These are sample policies and are not guaranteed to meet each and every church's situation and needs and are not intended to be used verbatim as written. Each policy should be approved and modified with help of legal counsel to address each church's situation and needs.
2. There can be no future guarantee that the user of these policies will be immune from litigation and adverse rulings. Court decisions are dependent upon the facts presented in court, the judge and/or jury, the state of the law at the time of the litigation and factors which cannot be anticipated in advance.
3. Factors which may affect the enforceability of these policies include but are not limited to exceptions which may be made in marriage ceremonies or membership in the church. For example, will the church marry persons where one or both of the participants were previously divorced? Will the church allow membership for persons who have committed adultery? In other words, is homosexuality singled out for disparate treatment from other sexual acts which are overlooked? A

rationale should be considered and expressed for any disparate treatment of persons who violate sexual commandments forming the basis of the church's faith and message.

4. Each church which may adopt these or other similar policies is an independent entity which is in complete control of whatever policies, if any, it may adopt concerning these matters. The Louisiana Baptist Convention does not and cannot dictate to any church what policies and practices it should adopt. These suggested policies are merely offered as a guide and beginning point for each church to consider these current issues and formulate its own decisions concerning the content of its own individual policies and procedures.