



WINDSOR BAPTIST CHURCH

Statement of Position and Practice

Since theological application in the local church can be very troublesome and divisive, this Statement of Position and Practice is given to affirm how Windsor Baptist Church believes Biblical truths apply to the Christian life.

Priesthood of All Believers

We affirm the priesthood of all believers. Laypersons have the same right as ordained ministers to communicate with God, interpret Scripture, and minister in Christ's name.

This doctrine is first and foremost a matter of responsibility and servanthood, not privilege and license.

It is of course, a perversion of this doctrine to say that all views are equally valid, that you can believe anything and still be a Baptist or that the pastor has no unique leadership role.

Soul Competency

We affirm soul competency, the accountability of each person before God. Your family cannot save you. Neither can your church. It comes down to you and God. Authorities can't force belief or unbelief. They shouldn't try.

Against this backdrop of religious freedom, it's important for us Baptists to set forth our convictions. By stating them in a forthright manner, we provide nonbelievers with a clear choice.

Creeds and Confessions

In some groups, statements of belief have the same authority as Scripture. We call this creedalism. Baptists also make statements of belief, but all of them are revisable in light of Scripture. The Bible is the final word.

Because of this distinction, we are generally more comfortable with the word "confession." Still, we are "creedal" in the sense that we believe certain things, express those beliefs and order our institutions accordingly. There have always been Baptist limits. And within these limits, there have always been Baptist preferences.

Women in Ministry

Women participate equally with men in the priesthood of all believers. Their role is crucial, their wisdom, grace and commitment exemplary. Women are an integral part of our Southern Baptist

boards, faculties, mission teams, writer pools and professional staffs. We affirm and celebrate their Great Commission impact.

While Scripture teaches that a woman's role is not identical to that of men in every respect, and that pastoral leadership is assigned to men, it also teaches that women are equal in value to men.

Church and State

We stand for a free church in a free state. Neither one should control the affairs of the other. We support the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, with its "establishment" and "free exercise" clauses.

We do, of course, acknowledge the legitimate interplay of these two spheres. For example, it is appropriate for the state to enact and enforce fire codes for the church buildings. It is also appropriate for ministers to offer prayer at civic functions. Neither the Constitution nor Baptist tradition would build a wall of separation against such practices as these.

Missions

We ask the people of the world to conform to Christ and His Word, and not to our merely human traditions. We seek to lift up national leadership in the countries where we serve, and to respect the cultural expressions of their faith – we honor the indigenous principle in missions. We cannot, however, compromise doctrine or give up who we are to win the favor of those we try to reach or those with whom we desire to work. This would rob our efforts of their integrity and life.

The priority is evangelism which results in churches. This priority is consistent with strong social ministries, such as medical care, emergency famine relief, water projects and agricultural assistance.

Autonomy

We affirm the autonomy of the local church. Each church is free to determine its own membership and to set its own course under the headship of Jesus. It may enter into alliance with other churches as it chooses.

The same is true for other Baptist bodies – local associations; state conventions; national conventions. They, too, may determine their membership and set their own course.

If, in its autonomy, a Baptist body expels a church from its fellowship, it does not negate that church's autonomy. The church is perfectly free to go on with its business – but not as a member of that larger Baptist body.

Cooperation

The Cooperative Program of missions is integral to the Southern Baptist genius. In the early days of our Convention, churches were bombarded with special appeals from various mission causes. The material resources of each ministry were dependent upon the persistence and eloquence of the spokesmen. This societal approach to missions was inequitable and inefficient.

In 1925, Southern Baptists chose to join the causes of state and national missions in a denominational plan of unified giving. This Cooperative Program laid the foundation for extraordinary growth and fruitfulness.

Marriage

We believe and affirm that marriage is a biblical institution established by God as clearly described in the scriptures. This church recognizes that marriage is the exclusive union of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime.

Divorce

We believe the divorce of two believers to be inconsistent with God's will for their marriage and with the lifelong vows that were taken before God. We recognize that due to the hardness of heart, the Bible allows for, but does not advocate, divorce under these circumstances: physical sexual infidelity on the part of a spouse, or desertion by a spouse who does not believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. However, even in these circumstances the reconciliation of marriages between believers in Christ is to be pursued aggressively. We believe that where the two biblical grounds for divorce exist there is a valid biblical allowance for remarriage.

Sexuality

We affirm God's plan that is for legitimate sexual relations to be exercised solely within marriage. The Church opposes all forms of sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, polygamy, pedophilia or any transgender activities. We believe these are contrary to the teachings of the Bible and the Church.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to these Statements on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

Weddings and Facility Use

Our Statement of Position and Practice and the Baptist Faith and Message express our fundamental Biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. As such, this local Church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more licensed or ordained ministers of the gospel. The Church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not Biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by (the pastor, Church council, the wedding committee, etc.), subject to the direction of the Church. No minister (or employee) of the Church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

Sanctity of Life

Procreation is a gift from God, a precious trust reserved for marriage. At the moment of conception, a new being enters the universe, a human being, a being created in God's image. This human being deserves our protection, whatever the circumstances of conception.

Christian Response to Sin

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The Church's command from God is and always has been to call people to repent of their sin and receive forgiveness and become a new creation in Christ. No sin is unforgivable.

The heart of the Church is to help every person find freedom from sin, and to have complete restoration and reconciliation with the Church family.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.