

# Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues

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Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission  
and  
Alliance Defending Freedom  
[erlc.com](http://erlc.com)

# Church Checklist

- Statement of Faith
- Religious Employment Criteria
- Facility Use Policy
- Formal Membership Policy
- Marriage Policy

# Statement of Faith

- Should already have one in place that covers: The Bible, God's Nature, Man's Nature, Salvation, Final Judgment, etc
- Additions: Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality
- Statement of Final Authority for Matters of Faith and Conduct
- Statement of the Sanctity of Human Life



# Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

- Creation in God's Image regarding distinct genders
- Definition of marriage
- Definition of sexual immorality
- Example of church members as a testimony
- Redemption, Restoration, and Compassion

# Statement of Final Authority

- Even though the Bible is the authority, we must make it clear that our pastoral leadership will be responsible for the interpretation of the Bible in areas where the Statement of Faith does not cover.
- Acts as a “catch all” for areas not found in the statement of faith.

# The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps 139).

# Religious Employment Criteria

- Signed Statement of Faith
- Religious Job Description



# Signed Statement of Faith

- Should be retained as part of employee's permanent record
- Should include in an employee handbook that violation of the church's Statement of Faith is grounds for the termination of employment.

# Religious Job Description

- It is important to have job descriptions for every employee and position.
- Every job description should include the way in which that job advances the mission of the church, no matter what job is being considered.
- This cannot be assumed. It must be in writing.

# Facility Use Policy

- Identify the religious use of the building
- Restrict the facility just to show acting consistent with your church's beliefs.
- Approval/Scheduling Policy
- Hours and Fees (below market value)

# Formal Membership Policy

- Procedures for Becoming a Member
- Procedures for Church Discipline
- Disassociating Membership
- Marriage Policy



# Sample Marriage Policy

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, [the Church] will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the [pastors/ministers] and staff of [the Church] shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of [the Church] shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.