

Enlistment & Screening Policy for Teachers

Purpose: this policy has been developed to:

- protect our children and students
- protect our volunteers, teachers, and workers
- protect Lifegate Christian School

Scope: this policy will apply to all persons, volunteer or paid, who work with students in all areas of life and ministry of Lifegate Christian School.

Enlistment & Screening Policy:

- A. All persons teaching at Lifegate Christian School will be required to fill out an Application Form before becoming eligible to work with students. This policy shall include all paid/volunteer workers with children attending Lifegate Christian School.
- B. Screening procedure:
 1. No person with known prior incidences of sexual misconduct with minors will be eligible to serve in any capacity involving custody or supervision of minors.
 2. All paid workers will follow the personnel procedure of Lifegate Christian School as it applies to this policy.
- C. The Pastor and Principal will periodically revise the Application Form or request updated information from teachers, as needed.
- D. Any person denied a teaching position because of his/her refusal to complete an Application Form or due to a denial of a position as a result of the screening process, may appeal in the following manner:
 - Step 1: Meet with his/her supervisory staff member(s) and the Pastor to discuss eligibility as it relates to the screening process.
 - Step 2: The teacher can submit a written request to the supervisory staff member(s) and Pastor for a hearing or review of those personnel. The teacher shall also submit a release form, allowing those personnel to review the confidential file in the appeal process, but solely for the purpose of the appeal.
 - Step 3: The supervisory personnel shall then make a final, written determination of the teacher's eligibility to serve.
- E. Appropriate procedures and continuing education concerning child abuse will be regularly implemented by the Education supervisory staff members for all ministries for students attending school at Lifegate Christian School.

Lifegate Christian School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in hiring practices or the administration of educational policies, admissions procedures, athletic and other school administered programs. We, however, reserve the right to deny admission or employment to any individual whom we feel will not benefit from our educational program based on past academic achievement. We also reserve the right to deny admission or employment to a student or individual whose personal lifestyle is not in harmony with the stated philosophy and purpose of Lifegate Christian School.

This screening application form is to be completed by all teachers at Lifegate Christian School. Persons seeking a position in the school as paid employees will be required to complete an employment application in addition to this screening form. This is one of many steps we are taking to provide a safe and secure environment for the students, workers, and volunteers who participate in our programs and use our facilities.



395 Lifegate Lane
Seguin, TX 75188

www.lcsfalcons.org

www.facebook.com/lifegatechristianschool

Application for Employment

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
II Timothy 2:15 (ESV)

Important Salary Information: The children of full-time employees receive a scholarship for full tuition. LCS does not offer medical insurance or benefits. Teaching at LCS is considered a position of ministry and service within Lifegate Church, and teachers are held to a high standard of accountability both in their personal and professional lives.

Date Applying: _____ Social Security Number: ____ - ____ - ____ Birthday: __/__/__

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Marital Status: _____ Spouse's name _____

Driver's License #: _____ State: _____ Expiration Date: __/__/__

Do you have any health problems which might affect work performance or which should be considered in job placement? _____

List any of your children who will be applying to or are currently enrolled at Lifegate Christian School:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Current Grade: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Current Grade: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Current Grade: _____

Position Desired: _____ Date Available: __/__/__

If a teacher, list top three grade levels or subject areas of preference:

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____

Are you interested in an administrative position now or in the future?(specify): _____

Professional Background

Education Background: Please list most recent school first. If a degree was not earned, please list the number of credits completed.

Institution	City, State	Date Graduated	Degree Earned	Major	Minor

Teaching Licenses: Please include state and Christian school certifications.

Name of Licenses	Grade/Subject Area	Valid?	Expiration Date

Do you understand that you must pursue and maintain ACSI certification as an employee of Lifegate Christian School? _____ (initial)

Teaching Experience: Begin with your most recent teaching experience. Include home-school and church experience such as Sunday School for kindergarten and above.

Name of School/Organization	City, State	Grades/Subjects Taught	Dates Taught	Reason for Leaving

*Please include any additional teaching experience on an attached resume.

Other Professional/Work Experience: Begin with your most recent work experience.

Name of Organization	City, State	Position Held	Dates Held	Reason for Leaving

*Please include any additional professional experience on an attached resume.

Indicate the appropriate letter(s) if you have interest(i), training(t), or experience(e) in the following: Art _____
 Yearbook _____ Newspaper _____ Computer _____ Drama _____ Debate _____ Foreign
 Language(specify) _____ Choir _____
 Music (other) _____ P.E. _____ Sports(specify) _____

Please list any other special training, abilities, or awards you would like LCS to consider:

Briefly explain your stance on corporal correction: _____

References

Please list at least three references who can attest to your work performance and Christian character. LCS requires a reference from your pastor and at least one former employer or work associate.

Name	Position/ Relationship	Dates Known	Phone Number	Email Address
	Pastor			
	Principal/Employer			

Do we have permission to contact your current employer? _____ If no, please explain:

Christian Background

Church Memberships: Please list your church membership/attendance history for the last five years. Begin with your current church.

Name of Church	Senior Pastor	Dates Attended	Phone Number	Email Address

Please list any current leadership roles or other church involvement: _____

(i.e. Sunday school worker, committee member, camp counselor, missions volunteer, choir member)

How long have you been a Christian? _____ When were you baptized? (Date or age) _____

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____

Please give your definition of a Christian? _____

Do you believe the Bible to be the inspired and inerrant word of God? _____

Why do you want to teach in a Christian school? _____

Please write a brief account of your personal testimony, specifically describing how you came to Christ, and include any details which you consider important in your being example to your potential students. (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

LIFEGATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
395 LIFEGATE LANE ♦ SEGUIN, TX 78155 ♦ (830) 372-0850

Church Verification Form

Dear Pastor,

You have been asked by the person listed below to complete this reference form. They have applied for employment at Lifegate Christian School. LCS is an interdenominational, accredited Christian school serving Christian families in Seguin and surrounding communities. The mission of LCS is for our students to strive for excellence in all aspects of spiritual, academic, social and personal development. LCS's ministry is to serve Christian parents who desire a Christian education for their children and who have high academic and personal standards for their children in accordance to their faith. Thank you for your assistance in the process as we seek to learn more about this person's involvement in their church.

Name: _____

1. Please describe this person's membership status at your church (example: members for 2 years and in good standing):

2. Do you feel this person will uphold the school's Biblical philosophy and standards? _____

3. How would you describe this person's church attendance? Regular Occasional Rare
Additional notes on attendance?

4. Please briefly describe the involvement of this person in your church (i.e. attend church weekly, teach Sunday School, etc):

5. What evidence do you see that demonstrates this person's faith and obedience to Christ?

6. Please provide any additional information that may help us to ensure that LCS is a good placement for this person. You are welcome to attach an additional page or letter of recommendation:

7. Do you recommend this person for employment at Lifegate Christian School? _____

*If there is any additional information you would like to share, please call the school at 830-372-0850 and ask to speak to the principal.

Pastor Name: _____ Church Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this form to the Office of Lifegate Christian School by fax, mail, or email as soon as possible: Fax: 830-372-0895; Lifegate@lifegateschool.org

Personal Background

Because the school believes that ministering to and teaching children and students entails extraordinary responsibility, this part of the Teacher Application Form asks you to answer questions which are intended to reduce the potential risks of abuse to students and employees of the school and to ensure that your personal lifestyle is in accordance with the beliefs of Lifegate Church. If you are hired to work at Lifegate Christian School, you are under the authority of the Administrative Staff of Lifegate, and you must seek to build up the work, being supportive in every way. You are expected to be a good example to believers, seeking to point Lifegate students and parents to Jesus Christ whether you are working in the school or in the community setting. Since answers to these questions below are personal and sensitive, access to this part of the form will be limited to your supervisory staff member(s) and the Pastor.

None of your answers to these questions will automatically disqualify you from serving as an employee.

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life will truly transform that person to be God's instrument for good, and we are all truly thankful for God's applied mercy and grace in our own lives. If you prefer to discuss this part of your application in a verbal interview, please contact the supervisory staff member.

- Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any criminal act? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Have you ever been convicted of, involved in, accused of being involved in, pleaded guilty to, or are you currently charged with assault, abuse, neglect, or sexual molestation of a minor or any form of child abuse?
YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Do you drink alcoholic beverages? YES NO
(If yes, how much, how often and where? _____)
- Have you ever had a problem with alcohol abuse? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Do you or have you used illegal drugs? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Do you smoke? YES NO
(If yes, how much, how often? _____)
- Do you participate in any form of pornography? YES NO
- Have you ever been asked to leave a church? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Please read the church's position statement on abortion and homosexuality included in the school handbook. Are you in agreement with the church's position? YES NO
(If no, please explain: _____)
Do you identify as homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual? YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)
- Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would affect your ability to supervise, guide, or care for children/students?
YES NO
(If yes, please explain: _____)

- I have read the Lifegate Christian School Handbook and am in agreement and will uphold its contents.
YES NO
- I have read the Lifegate Ministries, Inc. Position Statement (see Handbook), and I support those positions.
YES NO
- I agree and will uphold the “Statement of Faith.” YES NO

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Victims of abuse need love, encouragement, and support. This extends not only to people who are currently being victimized, but also to the many in our society who are adult survivors of abuse. If you have a history as a victim of sexual or physical abuse, this church family wants to extend our love, acceptance and help to you. If you desire, you may discuss this with our Pastor at no cost. Please know that we are ready to assist you in dealing with these difficult and traumatic issues. Please contact that church office at 830-372-0850 to make an appointment.

Applicant's Statement

I understand that the information I have provided may be verified by contacting persons or organizations named in this application, or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides truthful and accurate information. I also agree to release and hold harmless actions taken in connection with the Enlistment and Screening Policy or any of its approved forms, Lifegate Christian School, the employees and volunteers thereof.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Enlistment and Screening Policy of Lifegate Christian School. I have read this policy and understand that this policy will apply to me in my role as a volunteer/paid worker with Lifegate Christian School

I _____:

_____ waive the right to inspect references, letter, or statements provided on my behalf.

_____ do not waive the right to inspect references, letter, or statements provided on my behalf.

I expressly reserve the right to examine the remainder of the information contained in my volunteer/paid worker application file.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Witness' Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Statement of Faith – Lifegate Ministries, Inc.

The Scriptures

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

God Is Triune

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

God the Father

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By his word and for his glory, he freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing. Through the same Word he daily sustains all his creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in his unfathomable grace gave his Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of his power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed his blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By his death in our place, he revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day he rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness, and for a period of 40 days appeared to more than 500 witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of his resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, he intercedes for his people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of his body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel he persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son, who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

Man

God made man—male and female—in his own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, his resurrection is the power of the gospel, and his ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases his holy wrath. It also demonstrates his mysterious love and reveals his amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what he has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

Man's Response to the Gospel

Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for his own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and, by God's grace, put saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become his disciple.

Man's Inheritance Through the Gospel

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and his substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes his child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and, via the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce his fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping his commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word, and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve his people until the end, which is most certain.

Empowered by the Spirit

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced.

The Church

God by his Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, he guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve him by faithfully doing his will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in all the world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God, and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. Women play a vital role in the life of the church, but in keeping with God's created design they are not permitted "to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12 ESV). Leadership in the church is male. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in his service in relation to one another and to the world.

Sacraments of the Church

Water baptism is intended only for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become his disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin. As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of

Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

The Consummation

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving him and giving him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

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POSITION STATEMENTS

Lifegate Christian School takes specific positions on many contemporary issues. These teachings are the result of the school's interpretation of scripture. We desire that you, as parents of students in our school, be aware of the position we take in the four areas mentioned below.

CREATION: Students in our school are taught that God created the earth. Scripture declares that "God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)," and that "it is He that has made us (Psalm 100:3)." Furthermore, it declares that men resist this truth because they choose to harden their hearts to God, refuse to give Him glory, and profess themselves to be wise, yet are foolish (Romans 1:19-25).

We do not believe this contradicts scientific evidence; however, it conflicts with contemporary scientific dogma. Without providing evidence to verify that any matter could originate *ex nihilo*, or any life could come into being *ex nihilo*, some evolutionists insist that their theory explains how all *genus* and *species* came into existence. We affirm that such claims, without evidence, are patently unscientific. In addition, the philosophical assumption of uniformity in a closed system, required to maintain these tenants, is philosophically and theologically absurd.

Although Christian scientists maintain differing opinions regarding the interpretation of the scientific evidence, some aligning themselves within the spectrum of evolutionary theorists, we affirm the superiority of the ancient, inspired wisdom of Scripture declaring God as the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of His creation.

Consequently, we reject any notion of evolution that would usurp the affirmation that the universe, with all its component parts, is the result of a direct act of God as Creator. Second, we reject any belief that would substitute evolutionary determinism for the Providence of God.

SANCTITY OF LIFE: We believe the Bible teaches the sanctity of life even in the womb. Exodus 21:22-23 teaches the death penalty for an accidental abortion that results in the death of the child; how much more severe would God's judgment be on one who practiced premeditated abortion! In Psalm 139 the psalmist declares "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows right well. My substance was not hid from you. When I was made in secret... Your eyes did see my substance, yet being unprotected; and in your book all my members were written...when as yet there was none of them." In addition to these verses there are several references to God's care over the child in the womb, even to the filling of the fetus with His Spirit (Judges 13:2; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15,44).

SEX & MARRIAGE: We interpret scripture to approve of sexual relationships only in a marriage between male and a female. Sexual activity outside of marriage is consistently denounced in scripture, whether it be after a person has been married (adultery, Exodus 20:14; Galatians 5:19) or before a person marries (Fornication: Galatians 5:19; I Corinthians 6:18). Homosexuality is likewise denounced and is called abomination to God

(Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:27). Practically, this means that we teach sexual abstinence until marriage and repudiate any homosexual lifestyle.

NEW AGE: We interpret scripture to be in opposition to that form of teaching that is presently called New Age. By New Age any teaching that instructs people to obtain special revelations, insights or knowledge through the use of spirits, séances, horoscopes, ouija boards, prisms, crystal balls, metaphysical techniques, imaging and other similar means. Most of these techniques are built upon the premise that one can release hidden innate powers, become one with the universe, and become like unto a god. The Bible, however, speaks strongly against seeking such special knowledge and practicing any form of divination (Lev. 19:31). Christians are warned to be aware of deceiving spirits and philosophies (Col. 2: 8, I John 4:1) and not to add to the teachings of scripture (Rev. 22:18). Seeking knowledge apart from God's grace and God's ordained means, is characteristic of false prophets and deceiving philosophies. The primary issue is not a new teaching, but whether we humble ourselves to God and obey His word or whether we decide that we can be like God, deciding for ourselves what is good and what is evil.

FREEDOM OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY: As a Christian school, we are devoted to truth wherever it may be found. We believe that the historic Christian faith will prevail against all challenges. We are not afraid of claims that contradict our perceptions of reality. We do not advocate arguing for argument sake. Yet, we do not forbid the exploration of theories contrary to the historic Christian faith. Indeed, we are enjoined by the Scripture to be prepared to confront them (I Pet. 3:15).

As adherents to the historic Protestant faith, *sola Scriptura*, we hold that there is no truth that is self-existent, to which both God and man stand mutually in the same relation. As such, all truth is dependent, and therefore to be regarded as subordinate to God's revelation. Consequently, we insist that all such theories be viewed with a critical eye through the lens of sound Scriptural interpretation.

Position Paper on Homosexuality

Adopted by Lifegate Ministries used by Permission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

In our society today, there are many issues which concern the people of God. One such issue is the rise in acceptance of and openness toward homosexual activity. We of Lifegate Ministries believe there is a need to state clearly our understanding of the Biblical teaching about homosexual activity. It is our desire to set forth our position regarding the appropriate response of Christians and the Church to this critical issue especially in light of the trend in some Christian bodies toward the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Let us consider the Biblical teachings on this subject.

Biblical Teachings

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible Word of God, the final authority in all issues of life. Therefore, contemporary sexual attitudes and behavior are to be judged in the light of the Bible, rather than the Bible being reinterpreted, modified, or overturned by current cultural trends in thought and behavior. We find our first problem with homosexuality in the first two chapters in the Bible. No reference to homosexuality is found here; but we do find, in the prototype family, Adam and Eve, God's perfect design for marriage and sexual expression. How beautifully simple and yet profoundly revealing is Adam's own description of Eve when God brought her into Adam's presence: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." (Genesis 2:23)

God's commentary, spelling out the sanctity and intimacy of marriage, the bonding of male and female in physical oneness follows, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This statement is reaffirmed by Jesus (Matthew 19:5) and by Paul (Ephesians 5:31), expanding the succinct utterance of Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them."

Here we find the very foundation of human sexuality and discover the distinctives that give man and woman their God-ordained sexual identities. In the benediction that follows, we see not only God's provision for male and female completeness, but also His plan for the propagation of the human race: "And God blessed them: and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it..."

When God saw that Adam was not complete alone but needed something beyond all the wonders of the beautiful animal creation, He observed, "It is not good for the man to be alone: I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). The result was woman, not another male companion. A woman with her likeness to man, but with all her beautiful distinctiveness.

Today we see the folly of modern man attempting to deal with human sexuality without knowing who he is. The result is often a confused and fragmented view of the nature of man and women. G.C. Berkouwer reminds us that a man's nature is not self-enclosed, but must be understood in terms of its relationship to God. This understanding is found at the very beginning of the human race as described to us in the opening chapters of the Bible. Berkouwer states, "Here we see in Genesis 1 and 2 man and woman as the crowning jewel of God's creation, His image and likeness." Homosexuality is a gross distortion of the "imago Dei" as still reflected in fallen man, and a mocking perversion and ignominious caricature of the sexual relationship as God intends it to be. Helmut Thielicke puts it more vividly: "He who no longer knows what man is, also cannot know what it is on which his peculiarity as a sexual being is based. He who disregards this anthropological motif of sexuality degrades it to a mere biological question."

God's judgment on this perversion of human sexuality emerges in the Law, i.e., Leviticus 20:13 "When a man is with a male as with a woman, both have committed something perverse, they will certainly be put to death; their blood guilt rests on them." Significantly, adultery and incest draw the same penalty. Genesis 19:4-18 tells the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities given over to homosexual, lust and murderous hostility. In recent years an attempt has been made to minimize the charges of homosexuality as relating to God's judgment on those cities. Writers such as J. McNeil, S.J., contend that the word "yadah" rendered "know" in Genesis 19:5 and 8, more frequently is used to mean "to be aware of". McNeil states that here we have a group of citizens who in a brash manner tried to "get acquainted with" Lot's guests. Such an interpretation is absurd in the face of Lot's pleas to the mob, begging them, "... do not act wickedly..." and his effort to protect his angelic guests by offering instead his virgin daughters, "who have not had relations with man ..." to do with as they pleased. Moreover, when the mob was smitten with blindness by the angels, they spent the rest of the night milling around Lot's house in flaming lust to gratify their homosexual desires. To confuse such activity with a desire to be "hospitable" is inexcusable nonsense for any serious commentator to indulge.

Letha Scanzoni's "explanation" that what Lot was seeking to avoid here was "gang rape" instead of private homosexual activity between consenting adults (which she seems to accept as legitimate) is unworthy of refutation. What must be acknowledged is that homosexuality is classified in the Levitical Law, or "Holiness Code", with other behavior such as incest, adultery, obeisance to Molech, bestiality, all of which are condemned. Moving to the New Testament, we find no record in the Gospels of Jesus referring directly to homosexuality. However, our Lord made clear that he came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. He not only fulfilled it, He strengthened it. For example, it was not enough to refrain from the act of adultery. He declared that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27, 28). He thus clarified the Mosaic Law, rather than dismissing it, as some exegetes contend.

Turning to the Pauline epistles, we find specific statements which speak directly to the issue: Romans 1:26ff, I Corinthians 6:9, and I Timothy 1:10. The Romans passage is the most detailed and the most devastating! Here Paul begins his attack with the phrase. "For this reason..." which refers back to the previous verses 24 and 25. These verses trace immorality and self destructive behavior which they describe to having exchanged God's truth for falsehood (shades of Satan in the Garden) and having turned to idolatry, which is the worshipping and serving of the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen. Because of this, "God gave them over to their degrading passions..." Women perverted natural relations into unnatural (Lesbianism), and men forsook their natural relationships with women and burned in their lust for one another (homosexuality),

committing shameless acts with men. They acquired in their persons the penalty that was coming to them because of their wrong behavior. (Romans 1:26, 27)

There are various ways by which professing Christians in the homosexual community have sought to bypass the clear meaning of Paul's words. For example, some people contend that for them the natural way can be homosexuality, and that God is pleased with this. With the same rationale, many heterosexual persons with strong sex drives could say, "It's natural for me to be promiscuous; therefore, I feel that in God's eyes promiscuity is approved for me." God will not accept this kind of casuistry. Romans 1:26 points back to the natural way God established at the dawn of human history.

In I Corinthians 6:9, Paul uses two different Greek words to refer to homosexuals: "malakoi" probably refers to the passive in homosexual liaison, while "arsenokoitai" appears to designate the active partner. Only the most irresponsible sophistry can avoid the conclusion that Paul knew exactly what he wanted to say when he warned: "...Do not be deceived: neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate homosexuals nor thieves nor the covetous nor drunkard, nor revilers nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." (I Corinthians 6:9-11) Paul reiterates in I Timothy 1:9, 10 the warning he has given in the previous passages. Here again he uses the term "arsenokoitai" with reference to the active homosexual partner. Significantly, he included them with the lawless rebellious ungodly, the unholy, and profane, those guilty of fratricide and other kinds of murder, kidnappers, liars, and perjurers. For these, Paul says, the law was made with its consequent penalties to lawbreakers (I Timothy 1:9).

Christian Response

The position regarding homosexuality taken by Lifegate Ministries goes beyond a written statement. We recognize Christ's loving gift of Himself on the cross as an act of God in human history excluding no one from the offer of its benefits.

We believe that: "The worship of God has, as its natural consequences, the response of commitment and service to Him. This finds expression as God's people gather to worship, then scatter into the world to serve Him. Such service includes witnessing to all peoples the marvelous deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. It includes, as a first duty, the proclamation of a grace that reaches out to forgive, to redeem and to give new spiritual power to live for Him, through Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit... it includes a witness to God's love and compassion ..." (*Book of Worship*, Section 1-3)

How can this witness to forgiveness, redemption, and new spiritual power to live for God be expressed towards those in the homosexual community and those in the church who struggle with their sexual identity?

A. EDUCATION

Through sermons, classes and study groups, the understanding of human sexuality as part of God's image in us from a biblical perspective helps to lay the groundwork of understanding for all. Those experiencing homophobia, or a fear of homosexuality, can be freed from this fear through understanding; those seeking answers to their sexual confusion can likewise begin the journey towards wholeness through reading, teaching and discussion.

B. THE FRIENDSHIP FACTOR

The Incarnation of God in Christ is our constant reminder of the absolute necessity of a genuine identification with those we try to reach. Homosexuals need to know an acceptance of their person beyond the sexual concerns they bring with them, and that the church views their sexuality as only a part of their total being. The basis for friendship must be recognition of our common need of the grace of God.

C. THERAPEUTIC RESOURCES

“Therapy” comes from a Greek New Testament word, “therapeuo” meaning “to heal”. Healing in the area of sexual identity and behavior comes through a number of channels which individual Christians and local churches can offer. These include worship, small group and one-on-one covenant relationship, pastoral counseling, prayer and the services of committed Christian psychologists. Local church programs can draw on the resources of such groups as Sexaholics Anonymous and Exodus International* as they seek to establish ministries to homosexual persons. As individuals seek to move away from homosexuality in thought and act, they sometimes need the regular availability of caring and supportive Christians who can be trained by the local church for such a ministry.

D. INTERCESSION

The value and place of prayer cannot be overstated. Combined with education, friendship and therapeutic resources, prayer says to all involved that the risen Lord has power to redirect individual lives and to heal personal images of sexual identity. Both prayer with individuals and private intercessory prayer for individuals function in the mystery of the working of God to free, redeem and heal.

Conclusion

While we acknowledge the reality of this problem, and do not take lightly the grip of homosexuality upon countless persons in our society, both within and without the church, we reach the following conclusions:

1. Biblical teaching makes it clear that the practice of homosexuality is a sin. We affirm that while God hates the sin, He loves the sinner.
2. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with a Christian life-style, and since officers of the church must be “examples to the flock” we cannot condone the ordination of practicing homosexuals as Deacons or Elders.
3. As Christians, who are ourselves sinners redeemed by the grace of God, we must reach out to those persons who are struggling with homosexuality, offering them education, friendship, therapy, and intercession, to the end that they may experience true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ. “If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

Position Paper on Abortion

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Lifegate Ministries is convinced that the Bible strongly affirms the dignity and value of every human life.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you: I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

“My frame was not hidden from Thee when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.” (Psalm 139:15)

“Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named me.” (Isaiah 49:1)

“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine of liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his Mother’s womb.” (Luke 1:15)

“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Luke: 1:41)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, a confessional statement shared by most Reformed churches, forbids the taking of life while demanding the preservation of life. “The Sixth Commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.” (Question 68) “The Sixth Commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.” (Question 69)

Scripture teaches that we are not merely to avoid involvement in injustice. God’s people are called upon to speak for the oppressed and defenseless. The Scripture passages cited above are evidence that God accords human value and dignity to the unborn child.

Lifegate Ministries affirms that the Bible does not distinguish between prenatal and postnatal life. It attributes human personhood to the unborn child. Because we hold these convictions concerning unborn children, we urge the promotion of legislation that brings our judicial and legal system into line with the Scriptural view on protecting the poor and weak. Christians are called to be good citizens by impacting the state in positive ways. All citizens, Christians and non-Christians alike, must have freedom of conscience on all private moral ethical issues, since God alone is Lord of the conscience. But the issue of equal protection of life under the laws of the state is not a private, but a public matter.

The Bible teaches that all persons and nations are responsible before God for their ethical decisions, including those which relate to the preservation of human life.

In addition to prayers and general assistance, the Church urges that the following steps be implemented by individuals, congregations and judicatories in an effort to provide substantial support for those impacted by problem pregnancies.

1. Women facing problem or unwanted pregnancies should receive support, love, acceptance, and counsel from pastors, counselors, physicians, and Christian friends both during and after the decisions they face. The Church must provide compassionate Biblical and spiritual guidance to these persons.
2. The men involved who respond with indifference must be confronted with their responsibilities and role in such crises.

3. The Church must support and nurture women who decide to carry an unwanted pregnancy to full term.
4. The Church must seek ways to support and care for all children who result from unwanted pregnancies.
5. The Church must serve as a therapeutic community to those who have experienced physical, emotional, or spiritual wounds from abortion or giving up a child for adoption.
6. Both individual Christians and the Church should oppose abortion and do everything in their power to provide supportive communications and alternatives to abortion.
7. The Church should declare to the world and teach its members that abortion must never be used as a convenience or a means of birth control.

The purpose of this statement is pastoral. It is best proclaimed by those who are profoundly aware of their own continuous need for the mercy and forgiveness of God. The Church must always follow the compassionate example of Christ, who said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."