

## **Amendment to the By-laws Concerning: Our Position on Marriage Ceremonies**

Being governed as we are by the Word of God contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, the summary of whose most precious and valuable doctrines for all of life and godliness are summed up in The London Baptist Confession of 1689, and holding to God's perfect design for men and women set forth in His Word and stated succinctly and clearly in the Confession and the Danvers Statement, we the leadership of Covenant Bible Churchs see fit to set forth some guidelines for our own body as pertains to her ceremonies and the ministers who serve therein.

*I. Membership of Covenant Bible Church requires a credible profession of faith and evidence of repentance and regeneration as deemed appropriate by the elders after a considerable amount of time of examination. (Matthew 3:8; 1 Corinthians 5:13; Ephesians 2:19, 5:7-8; 1 Peter 4:17)*

We must work diligently to make sure that the covenant body and those who are considered members of this body are indeed truly born again followers of Jesus Christ. We know that, on this side of eternity, there's no way of being absolutely certain and that many we know have fallen away, proving their professions to be false. However, the Word of God has not left us to wander blindly in matters of examining the fruit of a person who professes Christ.

*II. No persons will become members of Covenant Bible Church or remain members in good standing of this church while living in open and unrepentant sin as deemed disqualifying by the elders, searching as they must, the Word of God and applying it as needed. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Hebrews 13:17)*

At CBC, we firmly believe in the Biblical practice of church discipline and we believe this begins before a person is a member, in the examination of potential members and continues throughout the duration of one's membership through the same process. Judgement must begin with the household of God(1 Peter 4:17) to ensure the good reputation and purity of Christ's bride, the Church.

*III. Ministers ordained by and serving Covenant Bible Church will perform no marriage ceremonies for any individual who is not a member in good standing of this particular body of*

*believers. That is, both individuals must be members, in good standing, with CBC.*

Marriage is under attack. We want to ensure that marriage, the covenant union of a man and woman for life, is held to its highest standards. We also know that those who seek to profane marriage may target Bible-believing churches and their leaders in order to harass the church. In order to protect our elders personally and to keep them from performing a ceremony that would degrade the institution of marriage and bring shame on Christ and our church, these criteria for acceptable ceremonies will act to severely limit the ceremonies that are performed.

*IV. Ministers ordained by and serving Covenant Bible Church will perform no marriage ceremonies for any individual who has separated and/or divorced from a spouse in a previous covenant marriage except that ceremony wherein the original covenant is honored and the estranged are reconciled under the original vows. (Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11)*

CBC holds to the permanence view of marriage. That is, we believe that the Bible, properly understood, gives no warrant for a legal divorce and no warrant for remarriage after a divorce, except to be rejoined to the original spouse as long as there were no marriages following the divorce. Therefore, we will take part in no such ceremonies. We will refer such parties to the civil magistrate, honor their marriage, and do all we can to help strengthen and sustain their marriage, but we cannot, in good conscience officiate.

*V. Ministers ordained by and serving Covenant Bible Church will perform no ceremonies for any couple whose wedding vows are still holding true and remain in good standing with one another. (Matthew 19:6)*

The Word of God knows of no such need for the modern idea of “renewing” one’s vows, as a covenant made in the presence of God and many witnesses is binding as long as the two shall live.