



Pentecostal

Renewal

Charismatic

May 9, 2018

## The Coalition of Spirit-filled Churches' Policy on Pastoral Care to LGBT People

As a new season of the three military services' chaplains schools begins, we are frequently asked to produce a letter/policy regarding ministry to LGBT service-members. While our policy and statements since 2011 have not changed, it is likely a good idea to restate and hopefully make them clearer. And we remind you to take a look at item 3 on page 8 of the application (<https://www.spirit-filled.org/documents/app.pdf>) that you completed and signed when you applied for endorsement.

RE: Pastoral care to LGBT people, we do not have a blanket policy, per se. We tell our chaplains that they need to follow the guidance and policies of their ordaining/sponsoring church. We have put that on letterhead for download at <https://spirit-filled.org/documents/66662396.pdf> from page <https://spirit-filled.org/dadt.html>. If a member church (i.e., your ordaining/sponsoring church) allows you to minister to LGBT folks, we are good with that. If the church says that you may not counsel or offer pastoral care to LGBT folks or they put other restrictions on you, please let us know. We will honor that within reason, as well.\* We are an endorsing agency that is here to represent quite a number of churches which have various polities, policies, and theological and political positions. So we do not tell our member churches what their chaplains can or cannot do when it comes to these matters. We also desire to respect your conscience when it comes to ministering – or not – to LGBT people. (And of course when it comes to marriage, all chaplains have always been given the authority to refuse to officiate a wedding, for any reason.) So really, we support what you sense the Lord leading you to do. Do you know what your church's guidance is on these topics?

This policy and these principles apply to our chaplains in all components of all chaplaincies of the military – Active, Guard, and Reserve – as they serve all of these service-members and their families.

\*Last, under NO CIRCUMSTANCES, are you to refuse to serve with another chaplain because of their or their endorsing agency's stance on any topic. If your sponsoring church asks you to do that, please immediately inform us. We are presently aware of several endorsing bodies with that stance. We consider that policy contrary to the very nature of chaplaincy, and ultimately unsustainable for the military. Also, on the off-chance that another chaplain refuses to allow you to participate in a Christian service, we need to know that as well -- as that is well beyond the authority of that chaplain and/or that chaplain's endorsing agency to dictate.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

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Endorsing Executive

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