



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 5, 2019

LDS Church Announces Policy Change Concerning Same-sex Marriage and Baptism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) — the Mormons — announced April 4 that it would no longer consider homosexual church members in same-sex “marriages” as apostate, and would allow for the baptism of the children of homosexual LDS Church members.

A statement on the LDS newsroom website explained that previous to the new ruling, “our handbook characterized same-gender marriage by a member as apostasy. While we still consider such a marriage to be a serious transgression, it will not be treated as apostasy for purposes of Church discipline. Instead, the immoral conduct in heterosexual or homosexual relationships will be treated in the same way.”



The statement noted that at the direction of LDS leadership, effective immediately “children of parents who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender may be baptized without First Presidency approval if the custodial parents give permission for the baptism and understand both the doctrine that a baptized child will be taught and the covenants he or she will be expected to make.”

The LDS statement referred to the new policy as “very positive,” and said the denomination desired “to reduce the hate and contention so common today. We are optimistic that a majority of people — whatever their beliefs and orientations — long for better understanding and less contentious communications. That is surely our desire, and we seek the help of our members and others to attain it.”

Religion News Service recalled that in 2015, “the LDS church announced that children of LGBT parents could not be blessed or baptized. Church President Russell Nelson reaffirmed the policy in 2016, calling it a ‘revelation from God,’ according to The Salt Lake Tribune.” No divine revelation was apparently claimed for the change in policy.

While LDS leadership emphasized that the church still considers active homosexuality a “serious transgression” and “immoral conduct,” many LGBT individuals and their sympathizers seemed to consider the policy shift an endorsement of the lifestyle.

Sam Brinton of the Trevor Project, a support group for young people claiming to be homosexual, called it “a move in the right direction that will make a real difference in the lives of LGBTQ Mormons. We hear from LGBTQ young people in crisis every day who struggle to reconcile being part of both the LGBTQ and faith communities, and decisions to end policies of exclusion can help LGBTQ youth feel seen, loved, and less alone.”

The *Salt Lake Tribune* quoted Tom Christofferson, the “gay brother of Latter-day Saint apostle D. Todd



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Christopher,” as applauding the move for “‘taking away some of the heartache for gay parents’ and dropping the ‘apostasy’ nomenclature.” Christofferson, author of the book *That We May Be One: A Gay Mormon’s Perspective on Faith & Family*, added, “My great hope and prayer is that congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will use this as encouragement to do more to love and welcome their LGBTQ brothers and sisters into their midst, to create a place of acceptance and appreciation for the gifts they bring.”

Utah’s [Deseret News](#) offered an extensive listing of favorable press over the move, along with tweets of tearful praise from joyful LDS members and their families and friends. “I’m sobbing,” tweeted one respondent. “These changes will save lives.”

“The implementation of these policies on November 5, 2015, was one of the hardest days in my life,” tweeted another, “so I’ll just say that I’m thrilled to see them rescinded.”

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