

Ministering to the Gay,  
Lesbian, Bisexual,  
Transsexual, Intersexual  
& Queer Person

A Pastoral  
Perspective



June 24, 2015

2...Ministering to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersexual & Queer Person

## INTRODUCTION

Same-sex marriage is currently a major issue right around the world. Governments are being urged to provide legal recognition for same-sex unions. Representatives from all sides of government are speaking out on the topic. Some openly support gay-marriage while others strongly advocate that their particular country sustain the traditional definition of marriage as that between a 'man and a woman.' The debate over same-sex marriage, however, is not just confined to those who make rules for our countries. It is discussed in schools, universities, hotels, hospitals, private homes, and in our churches.

The Adventist Church has held a consistent stance in regard to marriage and sexuality and has published a number of official statements on marriage, same-sex unions, homosexuality and sexual practises that outline its understanding of Scripture's intentions for human relationships (see Appendix A for a copy of the Official Church Statements on these Issues). For example, on March 9, 2004, the Church published the following statement (based on an earlier publication from 1996):

We reaffirm, without hesitation, our long-standing position. As expressed in the Church's Fundamental Beliefs, "marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. . . . God instituted "marriage, a covenant-based union of two genders physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as 'one flesh.'" "The monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is . . . the only morally appropriate locus of genital or related intimate sexual expression." "Any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal" (*An Affirmation of Marriage*, 1996).

However, the Adventist Church has recognised the growing issues emerging over sexuality, and in the same 2004 document on same-sex unions, stated:

Over the past several decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church has felt it necessary to clearly state in various ways its position in regards to marriage, the family, and human sexuality. These subjects are at the heart of many pressing issues facing society. . . . An increasing number of nations are now debating the topic of "same-sex unions," thus making it a world issue. The public discussion has engendered strong emotions (GC Statement, March 2004).

Pastors and leaders of the Adventist Church are not exempt from these discussions about sexuality. Just as there are times when they need to provide and facilitate a ministry to those involved in a breakdown of a marriage or a family, including the extended family members and the church community, so they will be called to minister to the individuals in the congregation who may be dealing with issues regarding their sexuality, as well as to their families, friends, and the broader faith-community.

- How might the Church address issues concerning sexuality in the most appropriate manner?
- How can pastors minister effectively to the needs of those who face deep personal issues over their sexuality?
- How might administrators provide leadership to the local church in response to these growing concerns?

In the Church's official statements on these issues it has rightfully pointed to the need for a sensitive and caring approach. For example, in October 1999, the following formed part of a larger statement on homosexuality:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God, and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. . . . He affirmed the dignity of all human beings and reached out compassionately to persons and families suffering the consequences of sin. He offered caring ministry and words of solace to struggling people, while differentiating His love for sinners from His clear teaching about sinful practices (GC Statement, October, 1999).

In a statement published in 2004 on same-sex unions, the Church stated: We hold that all people, no matter what their sexual orientation, are children of God. We do not condone singling out any group for scorn and derision, let alone abuse (GC Statement, March 2004).

While the Church is committed to sustaining its Biblical footings for all theological and moral guidelines, it recognises and responds whenever as human beings we do not meet these ideals and guidelines. For example the Scripture says, "God hates divorce" (Mal 2:16), yet the church rightfully embraces and supports those who are dealing with separation and marital breakdown and allows them to participate in the life of the church—its worship, mission and ministry.

The Church is called to a grace-centred ministry in a world with a growing number of diverse relational unions that are bringing confusion and uncertainty. This means developing a sensitivity and openness to the loneliness, confusion, and intense feelings of isolation and rejection experienced by so many GLBTIQs who seek the fellowship and ministry of the church. It means eradicating the inferences that sustain the sense of shame felt by the GLBTIQ community and discourages a genuine relationship with God and the Church. It means living with the discomfort of not having all the answers. It calls for understanding and acceptance, remembering that understanding doesn't necessarily equal agreement, and acceptance doesn't necessarily equal approval.

Christians who identify as GLBTIQ, including Adventist Christians, have not always found their church to be a safe and accepting haven. Many GLBTIQ people experience confusion as they recognise that their feelings of emotional and sexual attraction are different to the expectations expressed by the church. Their desperate need is for someone to listen; someone who can sit with them, hear their story, and affirm them as children of God and recipients of His love and grace.

There may be times when a pastor may be confronted by the beliefs and behaviours of the GLBTIQ and react in a cold, aloof manner that leaves the GLBTIQ more confused and alienated. Or, pastors may be challenged by the various theories about GLBTIQs and are uncertain as to what to believe, say or do. Many simply feel extremely uncomfortable with this complex issue and their first instinct is to offer platitudes or a quick solution. But "platitudes can no longer guide a meaningful and relevant church policy. Much as it might like to, the church can no longer evade questions about homosexuality and same-sex marriage, for society is, with increasing stridency, forcing Christians to confront them" (*Homosexuality, Marriage and the Church: Biblical Counseling and Religious Liberty Issues*, Edited by Roy E Gane, Nicholas P Miller, and H. Peter Swanson. Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan 2012. page X).

## **MINISTERING TO THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSSEXUAL, INTERSEXUAL AND QUEER PERSON (GLBTIQ)**

### **PERSON-FOCUSED MINISTRY**

Having a basic understanding of the key concerns and potential difficulties for the GLBTIQ is imperative for being an effective pastor in this area of ministry. For example, the pastor will need to be aware of:

- the intense personal struggle of the GLBTIQ over sexual and individual identity
- the deep spiritual battle the GLBTIQ may experience over their orientation and their religious beliefs
- the questioning of God's involvement in their lives and how they stand in regard to God's love and acceptance
- the deep sense of loneliness and isolation the GLBTIQ may experience in the church and in the broader community
- the sense of grief and loss felt by the GLBTIQ in relation to their personal and family expectations for career, marriage and family, and friendships
- the number of GLBTIQ's who choose to suicide rather than sustain the struggle of living in a non-accepting community
- the desire of GLBTIQ's to seek a relationship with God and have an assurance of salvation
- the desire of GLBTIQ's to be a member of their church of choice
- the desire of the GLBTIQ to be accepted and included in the worship, mission and ministry of their church

Successful and effective ministry to the GLBTIQ will be greatly enhanced by the pastor being personally aware of their:

- beliefs and biases about sexual orientation and same-sex relationships
- past and current relational experiences and how these may influence their response to a GLBTIQ person
- personal experiences with dealing with the GLBTIQ community
- fears about the church's possible reactions to having a GLBTIQ in their congregation
- experience and acceptance of the broad range of human emotions, and the various expressions of grief and loss
- previous ministry to those who might be considered as 'outsiders' in the community
- willingness to accept and respect their own limitations, sexuality, and personal and professional boundaries

## **THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WILL ASSIST THE PASTOR IN MINISTERING APPROPRIATELY TO THE GLBTIQ**

As a matter of priority the Pastor will:

- be a 'non-anxious' presence and demonstrate acceptance, empathy, grace, understanding, respect and compassion
- openly listen to their story, and refrain from judgement or criticism
- recognise and empathise with the trauma and pain of the GLBTIQ
- help the GLBTIQ deal with any potential or real crisis, ensuring they are safe and protected from others who may wish them harm or from any thoughts of self-harm, and provide a safe environment for the individual if required
- observe confidentiality at all times and dialogue with family and friends and the church community strictly in harmony with the expressed desires or preferences of the GLBTIQ
- remain neutral, avoiding any expressions of distaste, abhorrence, or rejection, or assigning guilt and blame
- avoid promoting 'alternatives' such as suggesting "it is just a passing phase" or "why not just get married and have a family"
- avoid being protective of the church's image or standards to the neglect of ministering to the individual/s
- explore the GLBTIQ's spiritual connections, recognising that crises often challenge spiritual perceptions and values, creating questions, doubts and fears about a person's spiritual relationship. Provide encouragement and appropriate spiritual resources when requested
- discuss with them alternatives for professional help as appropriate and provide a referral if requested
- dialogue about the consequences of disclosure or non-disclosure of their orientation to their family, friends, and to the church
- share the information about the individual with the pastoral team or other church administrative bodies only after permission has been granted
- when revealing the individual's situation to others:
  - use positive and encouraging words about the individual
  - promote an accepting and supportive environment for the individual
  - don't make and communicate any assumptions about the reasons for the individual's situation or choices
  - do not imply, or take any hasty or inappropriate disciplinary action
  - do not participate in gossip and discourage others from gossiping
  - refrain from assigning blame or responsibility for the GLBTIQ's orientation or behaviours to their parents or other key people in the individual's immediate or extended family
  - refer inquisitive people to someone approved by the individual (e.g. Church Pastor or Elder)

## **MINISTERING TO THE PARTNER AND FAMILY OF THE GLBTIQ**

There may be occasions when the pastor will need to minister to a church member who is concerned or deeply stressed over a family member or spouse's revelations about their struggles over their sexuality, their growing awareness of a gay orientation, or their desire to be involved in a same-sex relationship. The member may have discovered evidence of their family member or partner accessing same-sex pornography or gay/lesbian-oriented websites. Perhaps there has been a confession of a past or ongoing gay or lesbian relationship. This new knowledge will cause severe disruption and/or trauma for the family and the marriage.

Some parents may be concerned over their apparent failure to raise their child correctly, and feel a deep sense of shame and guilt. They may feel it is their fault that their child is GLBTIQ. They may distance themselves from their child and/or abandon their Church, their faith, and their God.

The pastor will minister effectively to the church member when he/she:

- maintains a supportive pastoral role as the member journeys through the process of relating to these revelations
- refrains from exhibiting any personal anxiety or making any judgemental statements if the member expresses strong emotional reactions such as shock, denial, relief, confusion, sympathy, and self-blame, or deep grief, despair, anger or rage
- encourages the member to seek professional counselling to assist them work through their emotions and their possible sense of loss, betrayal and injury; establish appropriate boundaries with their family member/s or spouse and decide how the family or marriage relationships will function during the period of renegotiation; journey with them as they make decisions such as how and when to dialogue with their family member or partner with specific concerns, and if, how and when to inform the children, other family members, close friends and church and/or community groups
- encourages the member to seek medical support if there are any medical fears over possible STIs
- encourages the member to find support in two or three trustworthy friends who can offer encouragement and a safe environment to talk about the relational issues
- assists the member in choosing trustworthy and reliable members of the family who may offer support over the long-term and who will continue to maintain confidentiality and appropriate family-relationships whether or not the marriage survives
- encourages the member to sustain connections with established friends who can assist them in their personal, emotional and spiritual health
- supports the member in any decisions they make to rebuild trust in the family or marital relationship and endeavours to re-construct the marital relationship
- assists and supports the member in their processing of emotional pain, anger and resentment
- provides spiritual support to the member if they choose to end the marriage and commence a period of singleness

## ONGOING MINISTRY

The following are some suggestions for ministry to the broader church community in relation to GLBTIQ issues:

- Assist church members in understanding the complexity of same-sex orientation and sexuality
- Encourage members to avoid any statements that suggest a GLBTIQ person can change their orientation simply through prayer and faith, and that any failure to experience change demonstrates a failure in their spiritual relationship with God. (Research suggests genuine change is representative of a very small group).
- Support and guide the local church leaders in building a community characterised by a 'grace-based ministry' that fosters inclusiveness, acceptance, understanding and genuine love.
- Preach sermons that highlight the way Jesus ministered to those who were so often ostracised and separated from the spiritual community of His day
- Be intentional about fostering a culture of 'community' that welcomes all people into the fellowship of the church and God's kingdom
- Speak often of God's grace and forgiveness, recognising that the GLBTIQ often lives in a world of misunderstanding and rejection
- Find support from colleagues, supervisors, fellow-pastors, community personnel, church and community resources (legal, financial, psychological, medical)

The Church needs to demonstrate to the world how discussion on sexual orientation and same-sex relationships can be carried out in grace and compassion that brings glory to His name and takes care of His people.



# OFFICIAL STATEMENTS PUBLISHED BY THE CHURCH RELATING TO THE ISSUE OF MINISTRY TO THE GLBTIQ COMMUNITY

## STATEMENT ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE AND PASTORAL GUIDELINES

In some parts of the South Pacific Division there is considerable discussion around same sex relationships and marriage.

The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has made a number of statements on homosexuality and same sex marriage (see notes). These documents state the General Conference position and there are no plans to reconsider these. It was:

RECOMMENDED: That given the community discussion about same sex relationships and marriage, based on Scripture, we reaffirm:

1. The Church's position that marriage can only be between a man and a woman.
2. That acts of sexual intimacy should only be expressed within a marriage.
3. That sexual activity outside of marriage or between members of the same sex is not countenanced.
4. That Christian love and respect for all people does not negate the clear Biblical teaching that limits sexual behaviour to married heterosexual couples.

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### NOTES

1. Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality. Annual Council 1999.
2. Adventist Response to Same Sex Unions—a Reaffirmation of Christian Marriage. 2004 ADCOM.
3. Statement of Fundamental Beliefs that defines marriage as taught in the Bible as being between a man and a woman.
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Contains references about marriage and homosexuality based on the Bible. Latest revision at the General Conference Session 2010.

*Voted by the SDA Church (Pacific) Ltd Board, 28 August 2012*

## **AN AFFIRMATION OF MARRIAGE**

Issues related to marriage can be seen in their true light only as they are viewed against the background of the divine ideal for marriage. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus Christ to be both monogamous and heterosexual, a lifelong union of loving companionship between a man and a woman. In the culmination of His creative activity, God fashioned humankind as male and female in His own image; and He instituted marriage, a covenant-based union of the two genders physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as “one flesh.”

Arising from the diversity of the two human genders, the oneness of marriage images in a singular way the unity within diversity of the Godhead. Throughout Scripture, the heterosexual union in marriage is elevated as a symbol of the bond between deity and humanity. It is a human witness to God’s self-giving love and covenant with His people. The harmonious affiliation of a man and a woman in marriage provides a microcosm of social unity that is time-honoured as a core ingredient of stable societies. Further, the Creator intended married sexuality not only to serve a unitive purpose, but to provide for the propagation and perpetuation of the human family. In the divine purpose, procreation springs from and is entwined with the same process whereby husband and wife may find joy, pleasure and physical completeness. It is to a husband and wife whose love has enabled them to know each other in a deep sexual bond that a child may be entrusted. Their child is a living embodiment of their oneness. The growing child thrives in the atmosphere of married love and unity in which he or she was conceived and has the benefit of a relationship with each of the natural parents.

The monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is affirmed as the divinely ordained foundation of the family and social life and the only morally appropriate locus of genital or related intimate sexual expression. However, the estate of marriage is not God’s only plan for the meeting of human relational needs or for knowing the experience of family. Singleness and the friendship of singles are within the divine design as well. The companionship and support of friends looms in importance in both biblical testaments. The fellowship of the Church, the household of God, is available to all regardless of their married state. Scripture, however, places a solid demarcation socially and sexually between such friendship relations and marriage.

To this biblical view of marriage the Seventh-day Adventist Church adheres without reservation, believing that any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal. Because marriage has been corrupted by sin, the purity and beauty of marriage as it was designed by God needs to be restored. Through an appreciation of the redemptive work of Christ and the work of His Spirit in human hearts, the original purpose of marriage may be recovered and the delightful and wholesome experience of marriage realized by a man and a woman who join their lives in the marriage covenant.

*This statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) on April 23, 1996.*

## **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST POSITION STATEMENT ON HOMOSEXUALITY**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God, and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. We also believe that by God's grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God's Word.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, NIV). Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden (Lev. 20:7-21; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Jesus Christ reaffirmed the divine creation intent: "'Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator "made them male and female," and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?" So they are no longer two, but one"' (Matt. 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.

Jesus affirmed the dignity of all human beings and reached out compassionately to persons and families suffering the consequences of sin. He offered caring ministry and words of solace to struggling people, while differentiating His love for sinners from His clear teaching about sinful practices. As His disciples, Seventh-day Adventists endeavour to follow the Lord's instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness.

*This statement was voted during the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, October 17, 2012, Silver Spring, Maryland*

## **STATEMENT ON AIDS**

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and associated conditions are spreading rapidly around the world. On the basis of statistical studies it is estimated that in the near future, in many countries of the world, every church congregation numbering 100 or more will include at least one member who has a friend or relative with AIDS.

AIDS is transmitted through two major sources: sexual intimacy with an infected person, and introduction of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) contaminated blood into the body either through injections with unsterile needles and syringes or through contaminated blood products. AIDS can be prevented by avoiding sexual contact before marriage and maintaining a faithful monogamous relationship with an uninfected person in marriage, and by avoiding the use of unsterile needles for injections and assuring the safety of blood products.

Adventists are committed to education for prevention of AIDS. For many years Adventists have fought against the circulation, sale, and use of drugs, and continue to do so. Adventist support sex education that includes the concept that human sexuality is God's gift to humanity. Biblical sexuality clearly limits sexual relationships to one's spouse and excludes promiscuous and all other sexual relationships and the consequent increased exposure to HIV.

The Christlike response to AIDS must be personal -- compassionate, helpful, and redemptive. Just as Jesus cared about those with leprosy, the feared communicable disease of His day, His followers today will care for those with AIDS. James advised, "What good is there in your saying to them, 'God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!'--if you don't give them the necessities of life?" (James 2:16, TEV).

*This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on July 5, 1990, at the General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana*

## **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST RESPONSE TO SAME-SEX UNIONS A REAFFIRMATION OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

Over the past several decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church has felt it necessary to clearly state in various ways its position in regards to marriage, the family, and human sexuality. These subjects are at the heart of many pressing issues facing society. That which for centuries has been considered to be basic Christian morality in the marriage setting is now increasingly called into question, not only in secular society but within Christian churches themselves.

The institutions of marriage and family and under attack and facing growing centrifugal forces that are tearing them apart. An increasing number of nations are now debating the topic of “same-sex unions,” but some have already passed various pieces of legislation, thus making it a world issue. The public discussion has engendered strong emotions. In light of these developments, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is clearly restating its position.

We reaffirm, without hesitation, our long-standing position. As expressed in the Church’s Fundamental Beliefs, “Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.”<sup>1</sup> Though “sin has perverted God’s ideals for marriage and family;” “the family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred of any human relationship,” and thus “families need to experience renewal and reformation in their relationships” (An Affirmation of Family, 1990).<sup>2</sup> God instituted “marriage, a covenant-based union of two genders [male and female] physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as ‘one flesh.’” “The monogamous union in marriage of a man and a woman is . . . the only morally appropriate locus of genital or related intimate sexual expression.” “Any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal” (An Affirmation of Marriage, 1996).<sup>3</sup>

Homosexuality is a manifestation of the disorder and brokenness in human inclinations and relations caused by the entrance of sin into the world. While everyone is subject to fallen human nature, “we also believe that by God’s grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God’s Word” (Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality, 2012).<sup>4</sup>

We hold that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are loved by God. We do not condone singling out any group for scorn and derision, let alone abuse. Still, God’s Word that transcends time and culture does not permit a homosexual lifestyle. The Bible’s opposition to same-sex unions/marriage is anchored in God’s plan at creation for marriage (Gen 1:26-28; 2:20-24), in divine legislation (Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9-11), and in Jesus’ explicit confirmation of a permanent, monogamous, and heterosexual marriage relationships (Matt 19:4-6).

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<sup>1</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An exposition of the Fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Doctrine 23 on “Marriage and the Family.”

<sup>2</sup> Public Statement, An Affirmation of Family, released July 5, 1990, at the General Conference Session, Indianapolis, Indiana.

<sup>3</sup> Statement voted by the General Conference Administrative Committee on April 23, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Statement voted by the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, October 17, 2012.

*This document was approved and voted by the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, October 17, 2012.*

## **A STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

In His infinite love and wisdom God created mankind, both male and female, and in so doing based human society on the firm foundation of loving homes and families.

It is Satan's purpose, however, to pervert every good thing; and the perversion of the best inevitably leads to that which is worst. Under the influence of passion unrestrained by moral and religious principle, the association of the sexes has, to a deeply disturbing extent, degenerated into license and abuse which results in bondage. With the aid of many films, television, video, radio programs, and printed materials, the world is being steered on a course to new depths of shame and depravity. Not only is the basic structure of society being greatly damaged but also the breakdown of the family fosters other gross evils. The results in distorted lives of children and youth are distressing and evoke our pity, and the effects are not only disastrous but also cumulative.

These evils have become more open and constitute a serious and growing threat to the ideals and purposes of the Christian home. Sexual practices which are contrary to God's expressed will are adultery and premarital sex, as well as obsessive sexual behaviour. Sexual abuse of spouses, sexual abuse of children, incest, homosexual practices (gay and lesbian), and bestiality are among the obvious perversions of God's original plan. As the intent of clear passages of Scripture (see Ex 20:14; Lev 18:22,23,29 and 20:13; Matthew 5:27,28; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; Rom 1:20-32) is denied and as their warnings are rejected in exchange for human opinions, much uncertainty and confusion prevail. This is what Satan desires. He has always attempted to cause people to forget that when God as Creator made Adam, He also created Eve to be Adam's female companion ("male and female he created them" Gen 1:24 NEB). In spite of the clear moral standards set forth in God's Word for relationships between man and woman, the world today is witnessing a resurgence of the perversions and depravity that marked ancient civilizations.

The degrading results of the obsession of this age with sex and the pursuit of sensual pleasure are clearly described in the Word of God. But Christ came to destroy the works of the devil and re-establish the right relationship of human beings with each other and with their Creator. Thus, though fallen in Adam and captive to sin, those who turn to Christ in repentance receive full pardon and choose the better way, the way to complete restoration. By means of the cross, the power of the Holy Spirit in the "inner man," and the nurturing ministry of the Church, all may be freed from the grip of perversions and sinful practices.

An acceptance of God's free grace inevitably leads the individual believer to the kind of life and conduct that "will add lustre to the doctrine of our God and Saviour" (Titus 2:10 NEB). It will also lead the corporate church to firm and loving discipline of the member whose conduct misrepresents the Saviour and distorts and lowers the true standards of Christian life and behaviour.

The Church recognizes the penetrating truth and powerful motivations of Paul's words to Titus: "For the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all mankind; and by it we are disciplined to renounce godless ways and worldly desires, and to live a life of temperance, honesty, and godliness in the present age, looking forward to the happy fulfilment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus will appear. He it is who sacrificed himself for us, to set us free from all wickedness and to make us a pure people marked out for his own, eager to do good."—Titus 2:11-14, NEB (see also 2 Peter 3:11-14).

*This statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council session in Washington, D.C., October 12, 1987.*

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### Homosexual

Sexual desire or behaviour directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex. (The American Psychology Association defines sexual orientation in the following way: "Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectionate attraction toward others") (Dictionary.com)

Is romantic or sexual attraction or behaviour between members of the same sex or gender. As a sexual orientation, homosexuality refers to "an enduring pattern of or disposition to experience sexual, affectionate, or romantic attractions" primarily or exclusively to people of the same sex; "it also refers to an individual's sense of personal and social identity based on those attractions, behaviours expressing them, and membership in a community of others who share them" (Wikipedia).

### Gay

Of, indicating, or supporting homosexual interests or issues (Dictionary.com).

Primarily refers to a homosexual person; referring to the people, especially to men, and the practices and cultures associated with homosexuality (Wikipedia).

### Lesbian

Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of female homosexuality (Dictionary.com).

Sexual and romantic desire between females. The word may be used as a noun, to refer to women who identify themselves or who are characterized by others as having the primary attribute of female homosexuality, or as an adjective, to describe characteristics of an object or activity related to female same-sex desire (Wikipedia).

### Bisexual

Sexually responsive to both sexes; ambisexual (Sexually attracted to either sex indiscriminately.) (Dictionary.com)

Sexual behavior or an orientation involving physical or romantic attraction to males and females (Wikipedia)

### Transsexual (Transsexual)

An individual's identification with a gender inconsistent or not culturally associated with his or her assigned sex, i.e., a person whose assigned sex at birth conflicts with his or her psychological gender (Wikipedia).

### Intersexual (Hermaphroditism [older word])

An individual displaying sexual characteristics of both male and female (Dictionary.com).

Is the presence of intermediate or atypical combinations of physical features that usually distinguish female from male. This is usually understood to be congenital, involving chromosomal, morphologic, genital and/or gonadal anomalies, such as diversion from typical XX-female or XY-male presentations (Wikipedia).

### Queer

Queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual, or gender-binary (the classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine).

## NOTES



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