

Seventh-day Adventist statement on the UK government proposal to recognise same-sex marriage

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes in the following values:

1. The right of every person to be respected and valued. We believe everyone is created in the 'image of God' no matter what his or her race, religion, gender or orientation.
2. That Jesus and the Scriptures demand genuine love for all.
3. The importance of demarcation between Church and state.
4. Submission to the authority of the written Word of God.

We applaud the government's role over the last decades to outlaw homophobic action and general discrimination on the base of sexual orientation. All have the right to a peaceful life without fear of abuse.

We value freedom of speech as long as it does not incite hatred.

We appreciate the government's proposal that it will not 'force' religious groups to perform a marriage ceremony for non-heterosexual couples.

We believe the Scriptures offer clear teaching on the definition of marriage as a lifelong union of a man and woman. 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 flesh"' (Matt 19:4-6, NIV). For this reason Adventists believe that homosexual practices and relationships are not part of the ideal will of God and therefore will not be able to bless or solemnise a relationship between homosexual couples.

We strongly ask the government not to change the legal definition of 'marriage' as a lifelong union between a man and woman. Civil partnerships offer the legal privileges of marriage to gay couples without compromising the traditional and Biblical understanding of marriage.

Furthermore we would express a concern that while we understand that the government will ensure that religious organisations and celebrants will not have to register same-sex marriages against their will, that this can nevertheless be the start of a process that may in the future be further changed thereby causing a potential clash between genuinely held religious belief and the dictates of legislation.

APPENDIX:

Seventh-day Adventist 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 flesh"' (Matt. 19:4-6, NIV). For these reasons Adventists are opposed to homosexual practices and relationships.

Seventh-day Adventists endeavour to follow the instruction and example 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.

[This statement was voted during the Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee on Sunday, 3 October, 1999]
