

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 luster 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.