

Statement on LGBTQ+ people from the Adventist Church in Denmark

Background

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that all people are precious in God's eyes. We believe that God reveals himself through the Bible and that Jesus brings hope, freedom and restoration. This is the basis for us as a church in Denmark wanting to be a blessing, i.e. to pass on the good life to all people. The history of the Adventist Church shows how we as a church have tried to understand and pass on the good news about who God is and does, and what God wants for people. We believe that God is love, and this is also reflected in the Adventist Church's understanding that we are created to live in community with God and other people, and where life is experienced as meaningful and good.

As a church, we want to contribute to the individual living with Christ as a foundation and according to God's wisdom. That it must educate itself and be inspired to live a good and healthy life with good and healthy relationships. The Adventist Church looks at man holistically and believes that man is a composite biological, psychological, social and spiritual whole.

God has created all people as sexual beings, and we also consider this sexuality holistically. We believe that a healthy sexuality is experienced and matures in a safe and equal relationship with another person in the framework of mutual commitment and faithfulness.

The Bible's account of creation in the Book of Genesis describes this healthy sexuality as the one that should characterize the cohabitation between the man and the woman, where they are naked and without shame. The book of Genesis also describes the entry of sin into the human world, and implies the distortion of all aspects of life and thus also the healthy sexuality of the individual as well as the relationship between the man and the woman. It is in this reality that we believe God in his love and wisdom wants to restore and produce a healthy understanding of sexuality for all people.

The Adventist Church in Denmark realizes that we as an organization, congregational communities and individuals have far from always hit the target, in terms of treating

LGBTQ+ people¹ with the love and respect they should experience and that Jesus calls us to show. We wish and work to ensure that this failure will not happen in the future. Pastoral conversations, anonymous questionnaires and larger population surveys show that LGBTQ+ people have all too often become victims of prejudice, discrimination and hate speech in both the Adventist Church and the surrounding society.

We have not always lived up to the ethical standard and human concern that the Adventist Church wants to uphold and that is expressed by Ellen White.²

The congregations in the Adventist Church have not always and everywhere been a safe and secure congregation community where LGBTQ+ people have been able to worship and expect to be met with the love, respect, grace and care that Jesus calls us to show.

Confirmations and wishes

We affirm that all people, regardless of sexuality and gender identity, are created valuable in God's image and are loved by God. As a congregation, we want to reflect this by taking the holistic human view seriously for all people.

We affirm that all human beings are created with God-given needs at various intimate levels. As a congregation, we want to create a community where the individual can develop and find a healthy, holistic and biblical understanding of sexuality and self.

We affirm that in the account of creation God instituted marriage as an ideal in which the man and the woman lived in a faithful, mutually committed and self-sacrificing love relationship. We believe that marriage should be seen as a

¹ In this statement, we have chosen to use LGBTQ+ persons as a collective term for homosexuals (m/f), bisexuals, transsexuals, intersexuals, queer and other sexual and gender identities. We refer to other literature to find in-depth information and nuances associated with gender, sexuality and identity. We use the term 'all people' inclusively, to avoid unnecessary repetitions of 'all people regardless of sexuality or gender identity.'

² "The Savior never suppressed the truth, but he always spoke it with love. When he spoke to others, he always showed the greatest tact, and he was always kind and considerate. He was never harsh, never spoke unnecessarily harshly, and never brought unnecessary pain to sensitive people. He never criticized people simply for their weakness; he fearlessly renounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and injustice, but delivered his sharp rebukes with tears in his eyes. He never made the truth brutal, but had deep empathy with his fellow men. He himself behaved with divine dignity; he bowed down to every member of God's family with deep compassion and respect. (Gospel Workers, p. 117).
"I wish we had much more of the Spirit of Christ and far less of self and human views. If we fail, let it be on the side of mercy and not by condemnation and harsh behavior." (Testimonies of Sexual Behaviour, Adultery, and Divorce, page 242.)

blessing and not an imposed norm.

We also affirm that humans experience their God-given humanity as a result of the entry of sin into the world distorted at all levels, including our sexuality and gender identity. We believe that God in His wisdom and in due time wants to deliver us from the destructive effects of sin. As a congregation, we want to reflect that by neither condemning, shaming nor imposing a guilt and a burden that is not theirs to bear.

We recognize that many people experience having a different understanding of sexuality and self than traditionally accepted.³ We want to be congregational communities where singles, married people, divorced people, widows and widowers, LGBTQ+ people, etc. will experience that they are seen, loved, and can find support and care in both ups and downs.

Maturing as a person, from childhood, through youth to adulthood, including one's sexuality and self-understanding, is a difficult process for many. We therefore want to create good and safe church communities where all people, including LGBTQ+ people, can mature and develop their sexuality and self-understanding. Communities in Christ where we support and help each other to discover what it means to be created in God's image as a whole person.

Like heterosexuals, some LGBTQ+ people will experience a calling to live as singles, where closeness, care and emotional and physical intimacy are fulfilled by good friends and family, without a sexual erotic relationship. Other LGBTQ+ people want to live in a monogamous, faithful relationship with someone of the same sex, possibly in a marriage. We want all LGBTQ+ people, regardless of marital status, to experience the congregation's community as good and safe. As a place where God can reveal himself to us, and where Jesus can bring hope, freedom and restoration to the individual person.

We support a separation of religion and law, church and state, and respect people's freedom to live as they wish, without it having to interfere with their civil rights. We therefore want a society with inclusiveness both towards LGBTQ+ people, as well as for people and religious communities that maintain a traditional understanding of gender, sexuality and marriage.

³ The Institute for Human Rights estimates that approximately 8% (a significant minority) are part of the collective term LGBTQ+. Of this, about 6.5% are homosexual (m/f), bisexual, asexual or other, while 0.5-1.4% are transgender or non-binary, and about 1.7% were born intersex, covering variations in innate gender characteristics.

<https://menneskeret.dk/lgbt-barometer/lgbt-hvad-hvor-mange>

Rounding off

We believe in and read in the Bible about God's great love for man, and how God undertakes to save us and create a new world free from sin and death. We want the congregation to be shaped in this image and sincerely reflect God's love by committing ourselves to faithfulness in charity and empathy, and by bear each other's burdens. We are motivated by God's love to seek God's will and to make room for more at the one and the same table that God has set for all people who believe in Jesus.

[Signed] The Union Board of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Denmark, April 2025