

14 May 2010

Chaplain (COL) Gary Linsky
DoD Comprehensive Review Working Group
1600 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

SUBJECT: Seventh-day Adventist Stance on Issues Surrounding Potential Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Legislation

Dear Chaplain Linsky,

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have championed the teachings of Biblical Scripture on the nature of man, marriage and family relationships and moral uprightness. In the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, Fundamental Belief #23 upholds marriage and explains why homosexuality is a “deviation from God’s ideal.” The governing body of the Church adopted an official position statement on homosexuality, 3 October 1999 (attached).

Though the chaplain neither agrees nor condones many behaviors he or she encounters, their role is to provide healing for the hurting, hope for the suffering and grace for the fallen. Chaplains do not impose their own views on others; rather, they minister to the needs of those they serve. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are committed to these principles and ministering to all.

While there will be some additional discomfort and inconvenience with open homosexuality in the ranks, the greatest concern of the Seventh-day Adventist faith lies with the protection of chaplains to minister within the beliefs and practices of their endorsed faith without fear of condemnation, coercion or reprisal. We understand the religious pluralistic nature of the military community and send chaplains to minister to the spiritual needs of all people of any or no religious faith, but chaplains must be free to uphold the values and teachings of the faiths that endorse them and that they represent. Chaplains must have the freedom to preach and teach as they understand God’s Word within the context of their endorsed faith. Chaplains must also retain the freedom to administer and perform the ceremonies, rites and rituals of their faith consistent with that faith’s teachings. This freedom must be retained independent of cultural or political considerations.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the complexity of this issue and will continue to minister to all people regardless of their sexual orientation. Seventh-day Adventist chaplains have provided religious ministrations, counsel and assistance to homosexuals in the past, and will continue to minister to whatever human need arises within their circle of influence.

Sincerely,

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Committee
Gary R. Councill, Secretary

Attachment

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.

Seventh-day Adventists endeavor 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 Executive Committee on Sunday, October 3, 1999, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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