Association of Adventist Women

Statement on Clergy Sexual Abuse

November, 2018 Riverside, California

Whereas, the existence of sexual abuse directed toward women inside and outside the Adventist world church has been recognized in the Seventh-day Adventist church through the work of ADRA and the General Conference Women’s Ministries ENDITNOW campaign and program,

Whereas, in recognition of the existence of sexual abuse in the Seventh-day Adventist church, the North American Division recently held an online Summit on Abuse,

Whereas, as a result of the two-day summit, there was consensus that there should be shared accountability between victim and perpetrator when dealing with cases of sexual impropriety or abuse in church, school, or any institutional setting (<https://www.nadadventist.org/news/nad-summit-abuse-underscores-shared-accountability-when-facing-cases-adventist-churcheshttps://www.nadadventist.org/news/nad-summit-abuse-underscores-shared-accountability-when-facing-cases-adventist-churches>)

Whereas the purpose of this summit was to “equip pastors, teachers, volunteers, church staff, and members with the tools and knowledge to help end abuse within their sphere of influence,” (See above link),

Whereas the Seventh-day Adventist church “does not tolerate abuse of any form, whether physical, sexual, emotional, or mental” as an outgrowth of its belief that all humans are made in the image of God and to mistreat another person is a form of dishonoring God (See above link),

Whereas the North American Division is currently offering short on-line training seminars on sexual abuse, and has created a “silent whistle program” where people can file complaints relating to sexual misconduct, ( <https://www.silentwhistle.com> chose “file an ethics/compliance incident report, then enter “Adventist”)

Whereas, the Association of Adventist Women, in response to the rising awareness of sexual abuse in the church, recently held a conference titled “Unveiling: Women, Faith, and Sexual Abuse,”

THEREFORE

We, as women of the Seventh-day Adventist church, dedicated to the task of providing advocacy and training in areas that affect Adventist women do hereby:

COMMEND the North American Division and the General Conference Women’s Minstries Department and ADRA for their intentional efforts to address the pervasive problem of sexual abuse within the church in North America and around the globe through this most recent summit, online training courses to educate and equip church professionals, as well as policies and procedures that facilitate the equitable resolution of these types of abuse cases,

RECOMMEND that every effort be made to provide support, services, and hope to women, men, and children affected by the scourge of sexual abuse by clergy or other church leaders. Women’s and Men’s Ministries at the local, conference, union, and division levels can provide resources.