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## **Response of the Inter-European Division to the Book "Queergedacht"**

The publication of "Adventisten Heute" in September 2023 and the recent release of the book "Queergedacht" have led to tensions and concerns among church members and leaders in Germany and beyond.

The negative reactions were mainly triggered by the fact that both publications present a one-sided position on a very complex topic and advocate for same-sex marriages.

The board of the Inter-European Division is convinced that more study, reflection, and prayer should be dedicated to the question of how we, as a church, treat LGBTQ+ individuals. In this way, any tensions that may have arisen in local congregations could be alleviated, and individuals, families, and communities could be assisted in seeking a solution characterized by understanding and compassion, while also upholding the ideal of God's creation: monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

As a church, we must listen attentively to those who identify as LGBTQ+ and promote interdisciplinary research to better understand the situation of those affected and to create an environment in our congregations where all people are welcome.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged from the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God and that its authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit; this belief is also the foundation for maintaining the unity of our church. The Bible is the highest authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and lifestyle. We must study it carefully, using an exegetical approach that focuses primarily on understanding the message of each author and comparing the various sections of different authors on a specific topic to grasp the full spectrum of the topic in the examined section and in the Bible as a whole.

Since the book "Queergedacht" was written in German and is primarily aimed at a German-speaking audience, the leadership of the Inter-European Division has asked various Adventist theologians who are native German speakers to write responses to the articles published in the book. The board of the Inter-European Division is very concerned about the hermeneutical approach used in the book "Queergedacht," which ultimately undermines the reliability of the Bible as our final authority for faith and practice.

Our goal is to convey an understanding of the topics and biblical passages analyzed in the book "Queergedacht" based on a hermeneutical approach that allows the Bible to interpret itself. In our belief, such an approach leaves no room for the approval of homosexual practices. At the same time, we follow God's command to love all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, and to support them in their desire to live according to God's will.