



09 April 2021

Dear Claire

I appreciate you writing to me and being upfront about your questions and perceptions of Avondale University College from information that you have gathered. It has taken some time to dialogue with the people that you mention in the various emails that you have sent to me and copied others in. You raise some questions that I will answer.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's statement on same-sex unions is one that I, as Chair of the Avondale University College Council stand, for. In this statement it specifically says,

*"Jesus 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. As His disciples, Seventh-day Adventists endeavor to follow the Lord's instruction and example, living a life of Christ-like compassion and faithfulness."*

I personally wish that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was known for its compassion for those who are from the LGBTQI+ community, thus really showing the love of God to them.

Avondale, as a Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution, upholds the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice and affirms the fundamental beliefs of the church.

The Avondale Council governs the University College – it sets direction, strategy, systems and policy. The Council does not involve itself in management, which includes the management of staff. That is for the President/Vice Chancellor Professor Kevin Petrie and his team to do. I have talked extensively to Professor Petrie regarding the matters raised. I am satisfied that he has worked through the issues raised appropriately.

I have also read the sermon you mentioned and received feedback from others who were at the church on that Sabbath. From their report and my reading, the mention of pederasty was a passing comment and not the main intent of the message.

I was aware that Avondale is a sponsor of the "Burn the Haystack". This podcast was produced by two pastors of the North New Zealand Conference and was an attempt at reaching millennials. The topics they cover and the people they interview are on a broad number of subjects relevant to young people within the Church, including such matters as the Three Angels' Messages, reading and interpreting the Bible, being single, marriage, homosexuality, being a welcoming church, and how the Church responded to Covid-19. The podcast guest may sometimes give different viewpoints to that of the church and the presenters, but the presenters are church pastors who support the doctrines of the church.

My grandfather taught at Avondale. My parents, wife, our three children and I are all graduates of Avondale. I hope my grandchildren attend Avondale because all of us grew as believers and followers of Jesus Christ there. We all have served God and His church since.



Avondale is not a perfect place but the staff that I know are very committed to Jesus and Biblical faith and want to see all students transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, and live lives of service to the community, church and God. I want to see continual spiritual renewal at Avondale and will help champion that

Christian blessings

Glenn Townend  
SPD President and Chair Avondale University College Council