

Classifications

The Religious Freedom World Report 2002 places the nations of the world in one of five categories, from most tolerant to least tolerant.

Category 1

Government and legislation provide religious freedom for all. Generally Adventists enjoy religious freedom.

Category 2

In spite of favorable legislation, Adventists have some problems in public schools and in the workplace.

Category 3

While legislation does not target Adventists, religious extremists, some government authorities, and/ or the media create difficulties for Seventh-day Adventists.

Category 4

The government has voted restrictive legislation. Seventh-day Adventists encounter problems practicing their faith and fulfilling their evangelistic mission.

Category 5

There is no religious freedom. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is banned from operating.

It is necessary to mention that the difference between Category 1 and Category 2 may be subject to interpretation. In most cases, we have accepted the classifications applied by our correspondents. An American, Canadian, or Brazilian Adventist, for example, is likely to be more critical of his or her nation than an Adventist living in a country with many restrictions to religious freedom.



Where religious freedom is part of the tradition and is accepted as a human right, minor restrictions, such as school and workplace accommodations for Sabbath observance, are identified as problems. Where religious freedom is only an elusive concept, such restrictions are simply accepted as the price to pay for being different regarding religion. The difference between religious freedom found in nations listed in Category 3 and Category 4, however, is significant and in some cases profound. Category 5 represents a total negation of religious freedom.