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*Seventh-day Adventists—The
Theological Implications of the Name*

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CONTENTS



A brief history
of Adventists in India.
(page 10)

An insight into
Adventists purpose of
living. (page 13)



- Seventh-day Adventists--Theological
Implication Of The Name 3
M E Cherian
- A Brief History Of Seventh-day Adventists
In India 10
Wesley James
- People With A Sense Of History,
Mission, And Destiny 13
John M Fowler
- Do Unto Others 20
G J Christo
- Salient Beliefs Of Seventh-day Adventists ... 24
- Jesus Christ Our Saviour And Lord 30

Seventh-day Adventists— Theological Implications

Of The Name

by M E Chorian

The Advent Movement

Seventh-day Adventists, an eight million strong Christian community working in about 204 countries of the world, are known for their educational and health-care institutions and community development programmes.

The name Seventh-day Adventists is a descriptive one

adopted by a group of Adventists in 1860, who in addition to being Adventists were also keeping the seventh day, Saturday, as Sabbath and a day of worship. These Adventists belonged to what is known as the Millerite Movement who had called themselves as Adventists.

The Millerites or Adventists was an inter-denominational movement that swept through certain parts of the United States between 1840 and 1844. They believed on the basis of a distinctive prophetic interpretation of certain prophecies found in the Book of Daniel that the second coming of Christ would take place in 1844.

Their leading exponent was William Miller, a Baptist preacher. "The principal doctrine on which

the Millerite Movement was considered to be based was not primarily the definite time of the second advent, but an interpretation of prophecy embodying 1) belief in 'the advent near' and 2) a distinctive

The Millerites considered their movement as the continuation as well as culmination of this awakening and proclamation.

view of the nature of kingdom of God" –SDA Encyclopedia, p 790.

In the early 1800s there was a worldwide awakening of interest in the second coming of Christ, or "advent" as it was termed and in many parts of the world this message was being proclaimed. The Millerites considered their movement as the continuation as well as culmination of this awakening and proclamation.

From 1840 onwards an increasing number of men and women from various Christian denominations joined William Miller in the movement.

It was the study of various prophecies found in the Bible that led the Millerites to take the position that the second coming of Jesus Christ was very imminent. In this the key prophetic period was that of the 2300 days found in

Daniel 8:14. It said, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Using the year-day principle as found in Numbers 14:34 and Ezra 4:6, they calculated it to be 2300 years. The

Millerites reckoned that this period of 2300 years began with "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

A study of Ezra 6 led to the conclusion that the beginning of the 2300 years would be the decree issued by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. Reckoning the 2300 years from this date, the end of the period came in 1844. The reference to "the sanctuary be cleansed" was interpreted the cleansing of the earth of sin as the earth was thought to be the court of the heavenly sanctuary. This could be accomplished only by the second coming of Christ when He will cleanse the earth of sin by His coming again. Thus the Millerites began to teach that Christ would come in 1844. In fact, they set the date as October 22, 1844.

When the date came and passed without the advent, this led to the Great Disappointment. A further study after 1844 led to the conclusion that the end of the 2300 days prophecy led to events in the heavenly sanctuary and not the second coming of Christ to this earth at that time.

Out of the many groups that emerged after the 1844 disappointment, rose the Seventh-day Adventists.

Jesus Christ is God Incarnate

As stated above, the name "Adventists" refers to the advent (second) of Christ. It is quite evident then, that the Seventh-day Adventists are strong believers in Jesus Christ and also in his soon return to this earth as Lord of Lords and King of Kings

Belief and faith in Jesus Christ as the incarnated God and Saviour of man is central to Seventh-day Adventists. As Jesus Christ is central to Christianity, so is He to Seventh-day Adventists. To them Jesus Christ is more than the founder of Christianity. To Adventists Jesus Christ is the basic object of their focus, the essential centre of their beliefs. He is the centre of their worship. Life is meaningful when it is Christ-centred and

Christ-controlled.

To Adventists Jesus is God incarnate, a member of the Godhead. Adventists accept Jesus as He is presented in the gospels--Christ crucified and risen and ascended to heaven and now mediating on behalf of man in the presence of the Father.

Jesus Christ is our Creator-God

Seventh-day Adventists also believe on the basis of the evidence the Scriptures provide that Jesus Christ is the Creator of the world--in fact of the universe and of man. Saint John affirmed: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

Add to this the testimony of St Paul. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

The author of Hebrews confessed speaking about Jesus, "by whom (Jesus) also he (God the Father) made the worlds." Further, He upholds "all the things by the

word of his power" (Hebrews 1: 2, 3).

Thus Jesus Christ is the God--the Creator of the universe and of man. He is our Creator--God. It was this God that led the children of Israel. Saint Paul makes this clear in his epistle to the Corinthians. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

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by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Saint Paul tells us "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28). Speaking of his death, he further points out, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

Jesus Christ is our Saviour--God

Adventists believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of man. For "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It was the vicarious death of Christ on the cross that brought salvation to man. He died that man might be saved from sin and death and might have eternal life. Saint Peter says: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteous-ness:

Jesus Christ is Coming Again

Having accepted Jesus Christ as the Creator--God and Saviour, Seventh--day Adventists affirm and proclaim that He is coming soon. They believe in the literal--real return--second coming of our God and Saviour. The name Adventists shows that Jesus Christ having created and saved us from our sins will soon return to receive us unto Himself to heaven and then will cleanse this earth of sin and sinners and make this earth a purified place for the redeemed man to dwell throughout eternity. They accept His clear promise and assurance, "Surely, I come quickly"

(Revelation 22:20). Adventists make this promise their faith affirmation through their name, Seventh-day Adventists.

Adventists and God's Commandments

The other dimension of the name Seventh-day Adventists is symbolized by the term Seventh-day. These Adventists are *Seventh-day* Adventists. That term identifies these Adventists.

Seventh-day has reference to the Seventh day of the week, Saturday. The scriptural basis for this is found in Exodus 20:8-11. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it."

This is the fourth of the Ten Commandments God gave man. Adventists hold that all the Ten Commandments are binding on man. In fact, all that God

commands is binding on us. Adventists firmly affirm that all of God's commandments are binding on mankind. If so, why Adventists call themselves *Seventh-day* Adventists? The following reasons may be submitted.

Sabbath and Christ as our Creator-God

With reference to the theological implications of the Sabbath and its relevance to Adventists, it may be recalled that Adventists believe that Jesus Christ is our Creator. Notice what the Bible says, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:1-3).

Christ, our Creator-God, completed His work of creating the world and man in six days and He rested on the seventh day and because of that He blessed and sanctified that day. And because He blessed that day and sanctified it, that day in a special sense became a blessed day as well as a

sanctified day. Because of that, He commanded man to keep that day as a day of rest and as a holy day.

Christ's claim to be our God is first based on His creatorship. We are His because He made us. And a memorial of that creatorship is the Sabbath and therefore when we keep the sabbath holy we are acknowledging and declaring His creatorship of us, His ownership over us, His Godship.

The creature's primary duty is to live in harmony with the will, command of the Creator. Christ, our Creator, has commanded us to keep the Sabbath holy as a memorial to His creatorship over us, His Godship over us. It is a sign that He is the God of creation.

Sabbath and the Salvation Christ Offers

It is very pertinent to note another dimension of this sabbath commandment. Prophet Ezekiel quotes God "And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezekiel 20:11, 12). God says it is a sign that He is the Lord that sanctifies man. It is a sign of God's sanctification.

Apostle Paul tells us that we are sanctified in Christ "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus . . ." (1 Corinthians 1:2).

In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians he tells the husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. And notice what he says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). It is clear that it is Christ that sanctifies the church.

It is the death of Christ on the cross that makes it possible for us to be sanctified. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). By His death, with His blood we are sanctified. If Sabbath is a sign of sanctification, it is a sign of that sanctification that Jesus Christ brings to us. Just like Sabbath is a sign that Christ is our Creator, Sabbath is a sign that Christ is our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, one who sanctifies us.

Christ's lordship over us rests

upon His Creatorship and upon his redemptive and sanctifying act by His death on the cross. And Sabbath is a sign of both of these. Therefore, Sabbath is in the centre or heart of Christianity and of the believer's Christian experience.

The Creature and the Will of the Creator

Sabbath is a part of the moral law God has given to man. It is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It is one of the commandments that deals with our relationship to God. Seventh-day Adventists in declaring their allegiance to the Fourth Commandment symbolically and in verity declare their total allegiance to all of the moral law of God. Their commitment is to the entire moral law of God, not just to the fourth. That is the clear and unequivocal position of the Seventh-day Adventists.

They chose to call themselves Seventh-day Adventists because this commandment which is a sign that Jesus Christ is our Creator and Sanctifier and therefore is binding on us, is also a symbol of our

commitment to be faithful to the total will of God for us, to the moral commandments of God that establishes our relation to our God and to our fellowmen. Yet much of Christendom has failed to honour and keep the Sabbath day holy. Therefore, these Adventists choose to call themselves Seventh-day Adventists.

Loyalty to Jesus Christ and Hope in His Advent

It may be readily seen that Seventh-day Adventists are very firm and steadfast in the loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. He is our Creator; He is our Redeemer and Sanctifier; He is coming back soon to receive His people to Himself and to purify the world of sin and to establish His kingdom of righteousness and glory, and of eternity where His saints will live with Him for ever and ever. Jesus Christ has promised, "Surely I come quickly," and the response of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:10).



Ordination Issue The church of England will decide the issue of ordaining women as priests in November, Despite a request by several members of Parliament to put off the decision. The "Church in Danger" group had asked Archbishop George Carey for a 10-year moratorium to give the church more time study the issue. But the archbishop says, "This issue cannot be side-lined," and a decision will be made on it this year.

A Brief History Of Seventh-day Adventists

In INDIA

by Wesley James

An insistent tradition has it that St Thomas, one of the original Twelve (disciples of Jesus), came to India with the Gospel about AD 52; and through his efforts, left a nucleus of Christians in South India. Later, Nestorian Christians, fleeing from the early Mohammedan persecutions in Syria, settled on the southwestern coast of India. The Roman Catholic Christians

came in the sixteenth century and their proselyting zeal, resulted in large accretion to their faith. The protestant Christians waited to begin until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church—a Protestant denomination—came to India in the late 1880's. In 1890 two Seventh-day Adventist leaders, S N Haskell and P T Magan, crossed the country from Calcutta to Bombay on a mission survey journey around the world. Then in 1893, William Lenker and A T Stroup landed in Madras and began selling Seventh-day Adventist books among the English-speaking populace of Madras as well as other cities.



Established in 1915 at Coimbatore, Spicer Memorial College was shifted first to Bangalore and then to Pune during World war II.

Two years later, on 23rd January 1895, a self-supporting missionary, Georgia Anna Burrus (who afterward became Mrs Burgess) reached the shores of Calcutta. Initially, Miss Burrus attracted people's attention to the Adventist lifestyle by her vegetarian diet. A year later, with the help of Mae Taylor, she opened a Seventh-day Adventist girls school in Calcutta. Afterwards, more and more overseas missionaries followed the Burgesses and names like Robinson, James, Spicer, Lowry, Mattison Carter, and

Hiscox became familiar because each had spent several decades serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church in India.

As the years rolled on, the Church began to grow in number and maturity. Though slow, yet signs of growth were evident.

Besides their churches which are all over the country, the Seventh-day Adventist presence is also felt through their network of educational and health-care institutions. Of the twelve Divisions around the world, the Southern Asia

Division operates 251 educational institutions with an enrollment of 92,379 students. Spicer Memorial College, Pune, offers a 4-year college degree programme and also postgraduate degrees in Religion, Education, and Business Administration (in affiliation with Andrews University, USA). There are ten hospitals and two Schools of Nursing. The major ones are in Nuzvid, Surat, Ottapalam and Ranchi.

Sale of literature and radio programmes are other avenues of Adventists work. The Oriental Watchman Publishing House, located at Salisbury Park, Pune, publishes health, educational, and religious books and magazines in 21 languages. The Adventist World Radio, formerly known

as Voice of Prophecy, prepares programmes at its studios in Salisbury Park, Pune, and broadcasts them from Guam. The programmes can be heard in several Indian languages.

When the Southern Asia Division was organized in 1920, there were 978 members and 96 workers. In 1980, there were 101,657 members and 4384 workers. In 1993, with much of the work confined to India, there are 1,79,700 members and 5,624 workers.

As we think of the future of the Seventh-day Adventists in India, the words of the prophet Samuel and the Lord Himself rings out loud and clear. Samuel said, "only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He had done for you." □

Nine out of 10 Christians, responding to a marriage survey by Christianity Today, who have ever considered divorce say that a belief in Christian teaching about marriage helped keep them together. Only one out of 10 respondents said intervention by family or friends was a factor.

People With A Sense Of History, Mission, And Destiny

by Dr John Fowler

What do you understand by "Seventh-day Adventist?"

I put this question to over a hundred people in all walks of life over the past several months. An analysis of the

answers received shows different pictures of Seventh-day Adventists.

"Seventh-day Adventists are a people who care," says a social worker from Andhra. A teacher by profession, he cultivates a farm. In his spare time he is involved in social and welfare work among underprivileged classes. He was particularly involved in relief work during the cyclonic tragedy that hit coastal Andhra. He says: "Anytime a tragedy strikes, Seventh-day Adventists rush to help the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked--do anything they can to show they care for the suffering."

"Seventh-day Adventists conduct first-class schools and hospitals," says a businessman in Gujarat. He is director of several companies. He has two school going children, both of them in a Seventh-day Adventist day school. Philanthropic by nature, he gives liberally to various charities including the Indian Medical Educational and Welfare Service a community service organization sponsored by Seventh-day Adventists.

"They are legalists," says a minister of the South India Union Church in Bangalore. "Seventh-day Adventists place all too much emphasis on the keeping of the ten commandments. What's more, they insist on keeping Saturday, the seventh day, as the Sabbath."

"They are a very strange people," adds a Christian layman from Thiruvanandapuram. "They insist on too many negatives: don't wear jewellery; don't drink; don't smoke; don't go to cinema. They are a people known for "don'ts".

All these descriptions of a

Seventh-day Adventists are like the proverbial tale of five blind men who tried to describe an elephant. Each description has some truth; even all of them put together do not make the whole truth.

What is central to Seventh-day Adventism?

Without hesitation, there can be only one answer: Jesus Christ. To walk in the footprint of Jesus, to accept His offer of salvation, to obey His commands, to do His bidding, and to await His coming is the central preoccupation of Seventh-day Adventism. Says one of the founders of Seventh-day Adventist Church: "Jesus Christ is everything to us,—the first, the last, the best in everything. Jesus Christ, His Spirit, His character, colours everything; it is the warp and woof, the very texture of our entire being." E G White, *Messages to Young People*, p. 161.

As the name "Adventist" implies, Seventh-day Adventists are Christians who look forward to the imminent, literal, visible return of Jesus Christ. The hope of the second

coming of Christ has been the cherished possession of the Christian church throughout the centuries. Jesus Himself declared: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God,

forward to the fulfillment of the eschaton—that is, the promise of Jesus to establish His kingdom in the last days. The conviction that Jesus would come again was particularly forceful in the

*Adventist Hospital
at Ottapalam, Kerala*



believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

This promise of Jesus to come again to this world was behind the spectacular success of the early Christian church. Since then each age has looked

early decades of the nineteenth century. Students of Bible prophecy and devout preachers around the world were preaching more earnestly than ever before that the coming of Jesus was near. Some like William Miller were convinced as a result of studying the Bible prophecies that Jesus would come in their own time. Their enthusiasm for the Bible truth and their zeal to proclaim the hope of the second coming led them to even fix a

date when Jesus would come. William Miller's study of some time prophecies such as in Daniel 8 led him to conclude that Jesus would come in 1844. Thousands of Christians in the United States and in Europe looked forward to the advent in 1844. But what these zealous Christians failed to note was that Jesus Himself warned against such time settings (Matthew 24:36, 44). When the anticipated event did not materialize in 1844, there was a great disappointment. Many were disillusioned; some left the faith; some became indifferent. But there was a small group of believers whose confidence in the prophecies of the Bible was not shaken by the massive onslaught on religious hope that was witnessed in mid 19th century. Continued study of God's Word assured them that the hope of the coming of Christ is warranted by God's promise. What was wrong was time setting. Prophecies indicate that the coming of Christ is near; is imminent and certain; but no prophecy predicts the exact time of His coming.

Out of this renewed commitment to the prophetic word of God, and out of this realignment of realistic hope arose the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bible study not only revealed the falsity of time setting for the second coming, but also several other key and vital truths. One such is the Seventh-day Sabbath, a long neglected truth in Christian history. The fourth of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) designates the seventh day (Saturday) as the holy Sabbath. Adventists realized that no where in the Bible is there sanction for keeping any other day as holy. In fact, they discovered that Jesus and the apostle kept the seventh-day Sabbath (Luke 4:16; 23:54; 24:1; Acts 13:27; 28:17; 13-42); and so they too began to keep the Sabbath.

The return to the Sabbath of the Bible and the steadfast belief in the second coming of Jesus marked this group of people together as a distinct Christian body, and they decided to form themselves into a movement of Bible-loving Christians whose

sole aim was to give to the world the whole truth that the Bible teaches. So in 1860 they founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Within one

worship and total obedience epitomized in the apocalyptic phrase, "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:6-12). The

A community hall built for the earthquake victims at Uttarkashi.



hundred years in 1960, the world membership of the Church stood at 1,245,125. Today with a membership of around three and half million in 204 countries, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is one of the fastest growing churches around the world with a mission that truly encompasses every language, nation, and people.

The message Seventh-day Adventists bear to the world may be summarized by the prophetic description "everlasting gospel"—the basic Christian message of salvation by faith in Christ, the call to true

"everlasting gospel" Seventh-day Adventists preach is an all-rounded gospel recognizing that the call of Jesus is a call to wholesome living. Seventh-day Adventists early in their history set out a holistic philosophy of life and mission—a philosophy that covered the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of life.

To them gospel is a liberating force; one that frees man from sin to live fully on a nobler, higher and purposive level.

In keeping with this, they began an educational system that plays a vital role in the Seventh-day Adventists way of

life. Today over 251 schools in India, are dedicated for the fuller development of the growing child.

In their early development, Seventh-day Adventists discovered that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit—a doctrine promulgated by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:19, but largely neglected by the Christian church in its historical preoccupation with philosophy, theology, and liturgy. The new-found denomination held that the gospel of Jesus Christ frees us not only from sin, but also from all factors that curtail the fuller development of the body. What affects the body affects the mind and the spirit, they stressed. And so began a series of revolutionary health emphasis in the church—obedience to the laws of health; abstinence from harmful drugs, liquor and tobacco; wholesome and temperate eating habits; reliance on natural powers of healing; and vegetarianism.

This call to total health is not just a theory among Seventh-day Adventists. They

carry this message through hospitals and sanitariums, clinics and mobile centres throughout the world. In India, the church has nearly 37 such centres, offering health and healing to thousands of people.

If love of God and obedience to His word is one side of the Seventh-day Adventist coin, the other side is their love for and commitment to man. The welfare programme of the Seventh-day Adventist church is one of the largest welfare organizations operated by any denomination in the world. The Indian Medical Educational Welfare Service, operated by Seventh-day Adventists, is among the foremost welfare organizations in the country. Whether it is a cyclone in Andhra, floods in the Gangetic delta, or a fire disaster in a neighbourhood, Seventh-day Adventists are there to serve. Their welfare policy is based on the principle of being a helpful neighbour as found in the parable of the good Samaritan.

Guided by this principle, the Indian Medical Educational Welfare Service renders each

year lakhs of rupees worth of service through their educational, medical, and welfare units.

For these and other reasons enumerated in this issue, Seventh-day Adventism is not just a system of beliefs. It is not just another church. It is a way of life that is rooted in history, mission, and destiny. Historically speaking, an Adventist finds his heritage in the Scriptures. The creation story for example, bids him come on the higher plane of divine-human fellowship that was intended in the blessings of the Sabbath day. The hope of the second coming finds an Adventist in fellowship with such Biblical stalwarts as

Enoch, Isaiah, Joel, David, Peter, Paul, John, Jude, etc.

The Adventist mission is ever related to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ now--to tell the world that through the grace of God a qualitative change in life can be brought about and people everywhere can have hope in the midst of despair, security in the face of crisis, and an anchor of safety amidst overwhelming danger.

And finally Seventh-day Adventists conceive their destiny in terms of the Biblical promise of the Kingdom of God. To belong to Christ, to walk in His footsteps, to obey His command--they believe--is to be certain of such a destiny.

A Christian Country

Newly elected Zambian President Frederick Chiluba has provoked controversy by declaring that his nation is officially Christian. "Zambia is a Christian country with a tolerance of other religions," Chiluba said at the State House in the Capital of Lusaka.

He later defended his position to the press and minority Islamic groups. "This does not mean that we deny other religions freedom of worship," he said.

Estimates vary, but about 65 per cent of Zambia's 8.5 million people are considered Christian. Less than half of one per cent are Muslim, and about 20 per cent are animists.

Do Unto Others...

by G J Christo

Seventh-day Adventists believe in people. Love for human beings, no matter where they live or what may be their station in life, motivates the Adventist concept of humanitarian service.

Midnapore is in the news again. The last time Midnapore was in the news, the Seventh-day Adventists church became a part of the news. Several bales of blankets and clothing were ferried by truck and boat to remote villages in the Midnapore area where no other relief teams had been able to enter. I can still see the faces of men and women who had lost everything in the ravaging

floods, gratefully accepting our gifts of love. Our journey back to Karmatar in the Santal Parganas was uneventful, but we were thankful, for the part we had played in alleviating suffering. Later thousands in parts of Bihar were starving; the monsoons had failed for three consecutive years and once again the Seventh-day Adventist church opened kitchens in several areas, and

later distributed seed and fertiliser for the cultivators to start life again. Then again when cholera ravaged the villages, teams of nurses and doctors from the Seventh-day Adventist Hospital vaccinated

partner ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) has given relief amounting to crores of rupees.

I spent four days with a team in the flood ravished areas of Andhra Pradesh. I saw the



A house built near Hosur for a lady whose house was destroyed in rains

thousands against this dreaded disease.

What compels Seventh-day Adventists to come to the rescue of those who are in trouble?

Around the World Seventh-day Adventists are among the first to respond when tragedy strikes. Whether the needy ones be victims of an earthquake in the Uttar Kashi, region of Uttar Pradesh or fire victims in Kerala, or of empty stomachs in Bihar, the Seventh-day Adventists in co-operation with their world

results of the angry cyclone, the stench of decaying flesh. Relief teams rebuilt homes, gave out ready money and kind in relief, and are even now rendering assistance in the form of vocational training.

Just a few weeks ago, on the morning when West Bengal was reeling under the floods, the church voted relief work to be undertaken by our representatives there.

I ask the question again, "Why do Adventists become involved in human suffering?" Do they receive any publicity?

Little, very little, if any! Do they get any returns? If returns are to be judged by smiles of appreciation, and genuine looks of gratitude, they do get ample returns, but the greatest returns they receive is the realization that they have followed the example of their Saviour, Jesus Christ, who also "went about doing good." The Biblical record tells us that entire villages were better off because He had visited them. He never sent a needy soul away empty handed. His soothing touch, and words of compassion were a healing balm to sick and weary travellers of life's pathway. He taught His followers that everyone who is in need, irrespective of his religion or birth was a neighbour whom they were obligated to help. None were too vile for him to associate with. He mingled freely with social outcasts and with those with communicable diseases. He loved people and He had tender concern for them. This feeling of concern is the principle that is planted in the heart of everyone who calls Him Master. Not only did he

leave us His example, but He also made it very clear that on the great day of judgment, His followers were to be judged, not by what they claimed to profess, but rather by how they dealt with fellow humans in need.

Note these words recorded by His disciple Matthew. "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungered and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee? And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you

did it to me" (Matthew 25:34-40, RSV).

In response to the example of selfless ministry of Jesus Christ, Seventh-day Adventists operate the largest school system of any Christian body today. Twelve thousand teachers are employed in the denominations 4,000 schools worldwide. One hundred and fifty hospitals and 250 clinics are run by the church. Of these the church in Southern Asia, making up the countries of Nepal and India operate 251 schools and 10 hospitals. Two of the hospitals have a nurses training programme connected with them, and two colleges offer a bachelor's degree in several fields of study.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Bible prophecies indicate that we are nearing the end of this present world order, and that as the world nears its end the frequencies of natural and man-made tragedies of natural disaster will increase. There will be serious shortages of food, earthquakes will devastate large areas of the earth's surface, calamities by flood and fire will take an

increasing toll of lives. Human suffering will reach an intensity not felt by earth's inhabitants before. Men will bring unnecessary suffering upon themselves by habits of living that will debase the finer sensibilities of man. The world has already witnessed the horrors of a society given over to drugs and alcohol, to licentiousness and over-indulgence. The Lord Jesus has a message of hope for everyone. A message which can heal the soul as well as the body, a message which can reach down to the lowest hell and help one to be a citizen of God's eternal kingdom. Seventh-day Adventists believe that they have this message, not only for those who are in unfortunate circumstances, but also for those who have everything but are still searching for that something which can bring peace and inner satisfaction. They believe that this message is best demonstrated in selfless deeds of love and service, for in the words of the Bible, "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."



Salient Beliefs Of Seventh-day Adventists

God. God is a personal, loving, all-powerful, eternally existent, and all knowing. He is the Creator of all things. There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons (Matthew 28:19; I Timothy 1:17; Revelation 14:7; Ephesians 3:9).

Evil. God is not to blame for the evil in this world. The devil is

responsible for this (Matthew 13:28). It was he who deceived Adam and Eve, man's first parents, to rebel and distrust God. This act, known as the Fall, introduced sin to the human race and its ugly effects upon the entire creation. In this way, too, the "image of God" in which man was created, was marred and distorted (Revelation 12:4-9; Genesis 3;



*Sunshine Orphanage
Bangalore.*

Romans 1:19-32). In the right time, however, God will destroy the devil and eradicate evil (Romans 16:20; 2 Peter 3:13).

Jesus Christ. God devised a plan to win back the human family. The plan involved the Second Person of the Deity, God the Son. It was He who incarnated Himself as man. This great event took place about 2000 years ago. When God the Holy Spirit, empowered Virgin Mary to conceive and give birth to Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26ff.), who is not only God but God-Man because He is fully God and fully man. Jesus Christ is the only means of atonement for human sin, so those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life. And we are

assured of this eternal life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, 20-22; Romans 1:4; Philippians 2:6-11).

Redemption. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives helps us to acknowledge our sinfulness and repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and as a gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are forgiven, adopted as God's children, and delivered from the dominion of sin. Through the Holy Spirit we are born again and sanctified. He renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts,

and we are given the power to live a holy life (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:5-10; Romans 8:14-17).

The law of God. The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and ex-amplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purpose concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. A person who has experienced the salvation of Christ through faith will yield the fruits of obedience to the commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:36-40; John 16:1-20; Ephesians 2:8-10).

The Sabbath. The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the Seventh day and thereby instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this Seventh-day

Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath. Because of this, Seventh-day Adventists observe the Seventh day of the week—Saturday—as the Sabbath. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 4:1-11; Mark 1:32).

The Church and its Remnant. The church is a community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Along with the people of the Old Testament times, we are also called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. Though the Universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, yet in the last days, in a time of wide-spread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to

keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ. The remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ and heralds the approach of His second coming. This proclama-

tion is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14. The Seventh-day Adventist Church identifies herself with this remnant. (Acts 7:38; Ephesians 3:8-11; 4:11-15; Matthew 28:19, 20; Colossians 1:17, 18; Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12)

Christ's Present Ministry. At His ascension, Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary as a high priest wherein he makes available to believers the benefits of his atoning sacrifice offered once and for all at the cross. This is the first phase of his priestly ministry. On the basis of Daniel 8 and 9, as well

*The second coming
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as the Old Testament sanctuary services, Christ entered the second phase of his priestly ministry at the end of the 2300 days / years (Daniel 8:14), or in 1844. This phase is called the investigative judgment. This judgment reveals to heavenly

intelligences who among the dead and the living are deemed worthy for eternal life to be given at the second coming of Christ. It is on that day that the "saints" will be ushered into the glorious kingdom of God (Hebrews 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; Revelation 14:6, 7; 22:12).

The Second Coming of Christ.

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected first, and then together with the righteous

living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicate that Christ's second coming is imminent. The actual time of that event has not been revealed, so we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28 John 14:1-3; Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

Death and Resurrection.

wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. This is the first resurrection. The second resurrection--the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Romans 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; John 5:28,29; Revelation 20:1-10).

The Millennium and the End of Sin. The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without any living human inhabitants, but occupied only by satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descent from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners for ever (Revelation 20; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Revelation 21:1-5; Malachi 4:1; Ezekiel 28:18, 19).

The New Earth. On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, for suffering

and death will have passed away. The great controversy between Christ and Satan or Good and Evil will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate,

will declare that God is love; and He shall reign for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 35: 65:17-25; Revelation 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5).



Seventh-day Adventists offer

3 FREE SERVICES FOR YOU

Bible correspondence courses

A Step-by-step plan to understand the major teachings of the Bible on: Great men and women of the Bible, The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ, Deeper Insight into the Bible Truths, Future - What does it Hold for You and How you can Build Confidence, Conquer fear and have Peace in your heart.

Health Correspondence Course

A free correspondence course on the basic problems we all face in maintaining an adequate health. These 10 lessons written by qualified doctors are: How to Postpone Your Funeral, What to Eat and Live Longer, Vitamins - Where to Find Them?, The Ideal Drink, Rheumatism & Arthritis, What's Good About Smoking & Drinking?, Sugar That Isn't Sweet, Drugs & You, AIDS and Live with a Good Heart.

Adventist World Radio

Five radio programmes in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam & Marathi broadcasted from Guam. Complete programme guides are available on request from: Director, Adventist World Radio studios, Post Box 17, Salisbury Park, Pune 411 001.

Jesus Christ Our Saviour And Lord

Gentleman, just what is the content of your faith?"

The question was put to us squarely by a serious scholar and churchman. One of a group of several who had been engaged in what they called "ecumenical conversations" with five or six Seventh-day Adventist pastors and theologians.

We met several times and presented our positions on various issues. They wanted to know all about Seventh-day Adventists. We talked about church structure, organization, mission, and Adventist lifestyle. Now came, I suppose, the moment of truth. It was nice to know about the extensive educational, medical, and outreach ministries that Seventh-day Adventists carry on in many countries, but finally it all came down to this—what do you Seventh-day Adventists believe, what is the essence and core of your faith? In common parlance: "What's the bottom line?"

Our friends wanted to get away from the peripheral, and

even the outwardly visible, and come to the heart of the matter. So to their question, I was happy to say the content of our faith is *Jesus Christ*. He is central, basic to all Seventh-day Adventist belief and practice.

Vibrant Centre

At the core of our beliefs you will not find a package of doctrines neatly tied and ready to be defended at the drop of a hat. The living, vibrant centre of our message is a person—Jesus Christ. He is Creator, Redeemer, Life-giver, Mediator, Judge, and King. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

All of the Old Testament titles that apply to God, which are really a marvellous job description for Deity, also apply to Christ. All that we need to know about God and all that we can know about God are already revealed in Him. His words to a man in New Testament times are just as meaningful to us as when He spoke them, "I am the way, the

truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He is truth, which someone has defined as "that which squares with reality." He is truth because ultimate reality is revealed in Him.

So whatever God wants to tell us, to teach us, to do for us. He accomplishes through Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is the complement and fulfillment of God's plans and purposes for the human family. Yes, He is the ultimate, God's last word, the father spelling Himself out to us in language we can understand.

We depend completely upon Jesus Christ, the Creator and Life-giver, the very source of life. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17).

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the ministry of Jesus Christ, to use a common

expression, "makes the world go round."

But He is not only Creator and Sustainer; He is Redeemer, Saviour. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (verses 13, 14). He is called "the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9).

The entrance of sin into the universe created a vast gulf, a barrier of hostility between heaven and earth, between the family of man and the government of God. In the plan of salvation Jesus Christ takes on our little lost world as a special project. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He becomes God's administrator and the active agent of this plan of salvation. No one else could get the job done. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Seventh-day Adventists

firmly believe that Jesus is the only Saviour, and it is only by faith in Him, and Him alone, that we can ever hope to escape from the penalty and power and presence of sin. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:10).

We also believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. He must be worshipped and obeyed, He is King of Kings, an awesome figure. Although He is the friend of sinners and full of compassion and mercy, He is not to be trifled with, or take for granted. He has claims upon every human being, claims that must be acknowledged. "Know ye not . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6;19, 20).

Jesus Is the Difference

Seventh-day Adventists believe that knowing Jesus as Saviour makes a difference. It presents a whole new situation, new lifestyle, and entirely new

Accepting Christs

great Salvation

makes us His friends.

orientation, new goals and objectives. This Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). Accepting His great salvation makes us His friends, and His friends take Him seriously. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Seventh-day Adventists like to quote Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

When we talk about the doctrines and teachings that Adventists proclaim, we're talking about "the faith of Jesus." The bottom line of Seventh-day Adventist theology, faith, belief, and practice can be stated briefly: Jesus Christ, His person, His

marvellous ministry. Jesus Christ--crucified, risen, and soon to come. Seventh-day Adventists know that they must maintain a dynamic relationship with Him or their religious experience becomes a sham--empty, hollow.

This intense focus on Jesus Christ--always lifting Him up as the Lamb of God, the Saviour, the Law-giver, the Creator--makes Seventh-day Adventists long to see Him face-to-face.

The second coming of Christ is not so much a cataclysmic event--the end of the world with all its accompanying horrors. It is the appearance of a Person, of Someone we want to see.

We rejoice that we can walk with Him day by day, talk with Him, and listen to Him through His Word. But to be in His presence physically, to see Him with the natural eye--this is mind-boggling.

Seventh-day Adventists fervently believe that the whole creation, all of history and prophecy, is moving us toward that day "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to

be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thessalonians 1:10). This is what keeps us going. He made a promise to come back again and take His followers to heaven (see John 14:1-3).

We're members of His family; we belong to Him. We can't forget what He said. We have found Him to be reliable and truthful. We've had a personal relationship with Him. We want more than anything else to see Him and be with Him. The experience that we have had with Him in this life simply whets our appetite. There is a thirst, an intense longing for something more. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

Seventh-day Adventists, then, to be true to our profession of faith must be altogether Christocentric, with our faith, our hope, and our desires all centered in Him who is the author and finisher of our

faith (see Hebrews 12:1, 2). Christ makes up the sum and substance of our belief system, the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Revelation 1:8). Our Lord and Saviour personally exercises all the functions of the government of heaven, the executive, the legislative, and the judicial.

Finally, we believe that Jesus has given us an assignment: to "shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:15, 16). We are to form a joyful caravan of people who know where they are going. We are to represent Him, to model the principles of His kingdom. This represents a big challenge.

We realize, all too well, our weakness and our humanity. But we want to live up this tremendous heritage. We don't want to let Him down. "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, NIV). And so we travel hopefully, knowing that He is faithful.



Their Commitment—Our Challenge

The Newspapers and magazines, for the past month, carried news of the earthquake in Latur, Maharashtra. Reconstruction of destroyed villages and houses have begun on a war-footing. Moved by the tragic death of over 10,000 people, people, agencies and countries have contributed towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the destroyed villages.

In an article that reviewed the work done by relief agencies in Uttar Kashi after the earthquake in 1991, the Adventists Development Relief Agency's work was prominently highlighted. In Latur, ADRA has been given the responsibility of constructing 15 schools.

To many, Seventh-day

Adventists are a people who run schools, hospitals and help in times of earthquakes, floods and famines. Very few know what we believe and practice.

To remove misconceptions of the Adventist Church, and give you an insight into its beliefs, practices and hopes, we are devoting this special issue of the *Our Times*.

We could not think of a better time than this to present an understanding of our basic Bible practices. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Southern Asia is celebrating One Hundred years of its existence in India and to mark this Centenary we are dedicating this issue of *Our Times*.

—Edwin Charles

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

*Medley of races trod for ages
Unheeding the guidance of ages
Smeared the way with human fight
Lost the vision of Divine light
Unable to behold the way -- the Christ.*

*In its desire for unity
Mankind divided for uniformity,
From cosmos to chaos to darkness
Goes human quest in blindness
Unable to perceive the Truth -- The Christ.*

*Sapped of its life, the feeble Earth
At loss to sustain life and mirth
The once-upon-a-time blessedness
Lay reduced to a vast wilderness
Waiting to receive the Life -- the Christ.*

*Listen to the Voice of the wind
Beckoning man his ways to rescind,
Gently blowing away, to man's great delight
Fog that blinds human sight,
And behold the Way -- the Christ.*

*Drawn are we then in brotherhood
When caught up by Divine Fatherhood,
Open to light that pierces gloom
And saves humanity from eternal doom,
Present again the Truth - the Christ.*

*Mother Earth with open arms
Sends from her bosom healing balms
And Father has soiled His hands again
For Man, the lost Paradise, to regain,
And forever have the Life -- the Christ.*

— Nishikant Borge