

Here is a page I had in one of my early attempts to join the Internet back in the 1980's. [My site was www.geocities/athens/1388] When the Geocities system closed down, somehow a few of my thoughts were captured by a site called www.oocities.org which could be contacted at [oocities@gmail.com] (an organisation I had never heard of). I couldn't find my page, but I have recently come across this article again. It is worth a read, for it offers a sensible solution to a problem so many of us have found ourselves in.

As it is written, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him [they left the church]. Then said Jesus to the twelve, *Will you also go away?* Then Simon Peter answered Him, *LORD, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we **believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God.***

They had a living connection with Him.

In the same manner, if you are sure of your connection with Him then He is in the church and you can meet with Him there, for He was in the church, but not a part of it.

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Questions on SDA's

The following questions were directed to a friend of mine recently and I thought you might like to read his answers.

Hi.

Hope you can help me. I was formerly a [church group stated] (bible based, conservative). When I moved to [an area in the US], I found that my denomination really doesn't exist here. I have been looking for a church ever since and its been a slow slog. I am trying to find some semblance of comfort with a church that embraces most of my values (no drinking, tobacco, gambling, equality for women, bible based). I realize this is a lot to ask.

After many false starts and nice churches that just didn't work for me, I stumbled on the SDA church. Had to dig quite a bit to find one. Around here, they are small and somewhat reclusive. Excellent bible study. I get the Adventist Review and have surfed some of the Adventist sites.

Here are my questions... I ask these after trying to assess the situation for myself and not understanding....

1. What is the status of women in the SDA church? Can they be pastors? I have seen so much conflicting info on this topic!

2. How does Ellen White fit into the picture? Now, I am not scared off by a prominent forebearer used as commentary... The [her church] use a lot of early writings for enlightenment and the Lutherans rely heavily on Luther's work. However, I am trying to avoid any church (like Christian Science) which has cast God-like characteristics around its founder.

3. Does the SDA church take well to converts? This is a general question prompted by some of my aborted efforts at other churches. Some denominations really aren't prepared to welcome someone in who wasn't born in that narthex!

4. How is the SDA church doing? Thriving? Maintaining? It seems a bit lean here in but it is tough to compete with Luther here!

5. My husband and I wear wedding rings, kept our own names and have no children by choice (we're both 45 and this isn't going to change). Are these insurmountable obstacles to membership?

Long questions... I appreciate your responses. God bless.

Answer –

Dear Mrs A,

These are very reasonable questions that need to be answered before you get too much involved with the mechanics of a church group. Many a Christian has lost their fire for the Lord by becoming either disillusioned with those whom they have become affiliated with or bedazzled by the dynamics of a denomination. Both options are hazardous to you, for you have "stumbled" upon the richest mine of biblical knowledge on the planet today, if looking only at sheer scope.

I suppose you chose me to ask these questions to since I was not born into the church. Good for you; you will get a candid viewpoint, since I have no need to prop up an organization or put any feathers in my hat. I had a real born-again experience that lead me ultra-naturally to the truths found in the Adventist message. But I was lead early on not to get bogged down in church-life.

The Advent message is similar to a huge and ancient research library. This is the same facility that God has placed on earth since the beginning of time. The chief researchers have been tapped by God throughout the ages to guide interested souls deeper and higher within the building, opening stacks and floors of wisdom that never seemed to have been there before. Nothing on the shelves here adds to or takes away from the Bible, BUT the old patrons (church members) and the sectional librarians (church leaders) in time have become comfy and satisfied with their place and rarely read their books anymore.

So, I warn you; READ the books for yourself. Look for the old books of the 1800's. Find the church library. The SDA message is a whole new wing that's been opened up, but the folks in it have generally become smug in their ways.

This is sad; it's like using a microwave to melt wax to make candles, and ignoring the light switches! Now on to your questions one at a time:

1. The status of women:

The following is generally ignored (I never heard it quoted) and is from the chief researcher herself, Ellen White:

"It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God. As they cherish the thought that Christ is their Companion, a holy awe, a sacred joy, will be felt by them amid all their trying experiences and all their tests. They will learn how to pray as they work.

“They will be educated in patience, kindness, affability, and helpfulness. They will practice true Christian courtesy, bearing in mind that Christ, their Companion, cannot approve of harsh, unkind words or feelings. Their words will be purified. The power of speech will be regarded as a precious talent, lent them to do a high and holy work.

“The human agent will learn how to represent the divine Companion with whom he is associated. To that unseen Holy One he [and she] will show respect and reverence because he [and she] is wearing His yoke and is learning His pure, holy ways. Those who have faith in this divine Attendant will develop. They will be gifted with power to clothe the message of truth with a sacred beauty.”—

Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 322. (1900)

The SDA organization never really owned up to this directive, although there are a few lady pastors and under pastors today. If we allow others, even if they

think they claim pure motives, to water-down clear, good heavenly instructions, then we get nowhere in our relationship with Christ.

2. **Ellen White and her position**; here's what she says:

"They say 'She is a prophetess', they say 'She is this and that and the other thing'-
-I claim to be no such thing. I will tell you what I want you all to know, that I
am a messenger that God has taken from a feeble, very feeble child, and in my
girlhood gave me a message... Now I want to tell you this, that Mrs. White
does not call herself a prophetess or a leader of this people. She calls herself
simply a messenger. . . ."

{5BIO 354.6}

I think she has several points here, which most ignore; A messenger's value is
in the message. Her's was God given, so that is what is to be sought after, not
any status or position, which she never demanded anyway. Adventists around
1858 lost this concept, so please ignore this label when they use it today.

Also, this quote was spoken in the hey-days of Mary Baker Eddy, Madame
Blavatsky and a host of other self-appointed and vocal lady "prophetesses" of
the late 1880's to early 1900's. It was not a term that folks understood in its
purity like they did in biblical times. In the Bible there is told of 7 prophetesses.
She was a straight-forward Christian lady that did her job well. A real pastor
must be appointed by God; a real messenger no less so.

3. **New converts.**

I have found Adventists glad to have new members and they are not sloppy
sweet about it nor paranoid of outsiders. Pastors have an individual approach to
studying with new candidates and these days use a study series from HQ that's
fairly tame.

Head count and numbers are unfortunately pushed on the local churches from
above, so once on the roster it might as well be in stone. I was on a church
board and was ashamed of the dead wood kept on for statistics.

I have to throw this [quote] in, Mrs A. simply because it's much more
important than church membership:

"It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the
religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the
name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and
yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough
to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in

Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. 'He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, the Spirit which He hath given us.'

'Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.'
1 John 3:24; 2:3.

"This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness [doing the correct thing at the correct time]." {COL 312.3}

4. How's SDA Inc. doing?

In a material sense, fine. Almost all American SDA churches are less than 150 members on paper, usually half that in semi-regular church attendance and tithe payment. It is very wealthy, bolsters huge hospitals world-wide, buzzing publishing houses, owns expensive colleges and ministerial schools and hosts one of the most sought after disaster relief agencies there is. In this sense "rich, and increased with goods". Revelation 3:17. This is part of her problem... she's forgotten where she's come from.

5. Your married life.

No sweat. Some of the more senior members may drop hints after you've been around awhile about ditching the wedding bands. The happy-go-lucky ones will never mention them, and will be the ones who blush around the oldsters ways most of the time. It took me 3 years to see the value of this; all jewelry is really a waste of money, really. I once was a jeweler's assistant and the public's attitude about certain rocks and metals is really sick and a blood drenched business in reality. Gems don't come from some backyard in Vermont, but from the hands of the poorest miners in S. Africa and the man-made mud hells of Thailand.

So this was a long answer, I know, but I hope it was eye-opening and not sleep engendering. And here is my advice if you really want a role in God's church that spans the universe;

1. Go to that SDA church if the Lord tells you to, but don't be eager to join! This is the only situation I know that by not joining you will get into the inner circle.

2. Read Ellen White. Go to the church library, blow the dust off and send up a prayer for selection choices. If you like history, try "The Great Controversy". If you like spiritual/devotional matters go to "The Desire of Ages" or a smaller read "Steps to Christ". If interested in health matters, "The Ministry of Healing" These are big books, but in small chapters. Her English a bit dated, but is similar to Sherlock Holmes style of English. She wrote more material than any lady authoress ever has in English, so you won't run out.

3. While at the library, if you see anything from this list of authors, grab it! Mrs. White is heavy, these folks are not so strong. Meade Maguire, Taylor Bunch, M. L. Andreasen, Ben Wilkinson.

4. Ask questions! Ask for biblical references!

5. Don't be eager to join; stay loose. You can do everything any SDA does at church without enrolling. There are no secret handshakes or insider sessions. If you read and understand and with your heart believe and incorporate Adventist truth into your day to day life, YOU AM ONE!!

6. Keep in touch with me, please. Any questions you ask will be dealt with, but maybe not so long windedly!!!

Whelp, there you go...

I'm eternally happy to be married to Christ and not any denomination, AND I am glad to be a non-conformist Seventh-day Adventist.

Keep shining.....

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