

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

Edited by Scott Shifferd Jr.

History:

- **The Handbook of Denominations reports that the Seventh-Day Adventist church had a population of 861,860 among 4,421 churches in 1999. There are few other Adventist groups, which none of these number more than 26,000** (Mead, Frank S; Hill, Samuel S.; and Atwood, Craig D. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States. 11th ed.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001. P.34).
- **“Adventism is based on the conviction that the Second Advent of Christ is the sole hope of the world. The present age is evil and irredeemable, except through the direct action of God.** Adventism holds that humanity's nature is fallen because of sin and that those who rebel against the government of God will be ultimately destroyed, while believers, by God's grace, will be saved. **After the cataclysmic event, Jesus Christ will reign in triumph through the thousand-year period, or millennium, of Revelation 20:1-6”** (Mead, P.27-28).
- The Handbook also states, **“Today the largest Adventist church is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It arose in the aftermath of the Great Disappointment, the failure of the Millerites' prediction that Christ would return on October 22, 1844.** The Seventh-day group came from one of the smaller Adventist groups who advocated a radical reinterpretation of William Miller's predictions. They concluded that a significant event had, indeed, occurred in October 1844, but not quite in the way Miller had foreseen. It was not an earthly event that took place on that prophesied day, but but an event in heaven itself. **Christ's ministry in heaven moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place, which they understood as the Third Angel's Message (Revelation 14), the group focused on the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, seeking to show the interrelationship of the Old Testament law and the New Testament gospel. The faithful, they taught, must observe the Ten Commandments literally and faithfully, including the fourth commandment to honor the seventh day as a sabbath.**

As early as 1844, a small group of Adventists near Washington, New Hampshire, had begun to observe the sabbath on the seventh day. A pamphlet written by Joseph Bates in 1846 gave the question wide publicity and created great interest. [...] **The observation of the sabbath was to be a way to await the Advent of the Lord ; hence the name, Seventh-day Adventist.** [...]

Ellen Harmon White (1827-1915) was the key figure in this rejuvenation of Adventism. When she was only in her teens, she began having visions and receiving messages from heaven. It was her visions that gave shape to the new Seventh-day Adventist Church, doctrinally and structurally. White's followers believed that she was granted insight into the workings of heaven, where the apocalyptic struggle was being played out before it would occur on earth, and that she understood the secret teachings of typology whereby heavenly events are reflected in earthly affairs. **She and her husband were also instrumental in connecting the teaching of the Second Advent with new theories about health being promulgated by figures such as the vegetarian John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943).** They consider the human body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit; in consequence, they rigidly abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and drugs. They advocate sound principles of healthful living through diet, exercise, and philanthropic outlook” (Mead, P.34-35).
- The Branch Davidians were Adventists. The Handbook states that, **“This group of radical sectarians is a subset of one offshoot of the Adventist movement.** They trace their lineage to 1930, when Victor T. Houteff, a Seventh-day Adventist church member in Los Angeles, expounded his new and, he claimed, divinely inspired message in a book, *The Shepherd's Rod*. Houteff found that his prophecies were not acceptable to the Seventh-day Adventist leadership, and **in 1935 he took his followers to**

central Texas. [...] **Living in Texas under theocratic rule, they would await the Second Coming of Christ**, who would assume the leadership of the Davidic kingdom on earth.

Houteff and his group broke completely with the Seventh-day Adventists in 1942, and Houteff named his group the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists. [...]

David Koresh assumed the mantle of leadership over the Waco group in 1986 and the community became ever more isolated and defensive. [...] Influenced by the 'survivalist' literature that proliferated during the cold war era and that fueled militia movements, Koresh and his followers began stockpiling food and arms as they prepared to fight for the 'Lamb of God' (Koresh). Reports of the acquisition of a large cache of weapons and of the sexual abuse of children sparked the interest of the U.S. Attorney General. [...]

Two other Davidian Adventist groups remain, one near Exeter, Missouri, the other near Salem, South Carolina. They, too, stand in the heritage of Houteff and his vision of the restoration of the King David-like theocracy in anticipation of Christ's return" (Mead, P.29-31).

God, Christ, and the Spirit:

- The Seventh-day Adventists confess, **"There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.** God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>).
- Concerning **creation**, the SDA state, "God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. **In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week.** Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was 'very good,' declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>).
- About **evolution**, the SDA church confesses, **"The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms its belief in the biblical account of creation in contrast to an evolutionary explanation for the origin of living organisms and the relationship of humans to other life forms. Seventh-day Adventists note with great interest the increasing discussion of intelligent design in nature and the evidence that supports this view.** In the light of considerable public interest in this topic the Church takes this opportunity to express its confidence in the biblical record.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is the Creator of all life and that the Bible reveals a reliable account of His creative activity. Further, we believe that the biblical events recorded in Genesis 1-11, including the special creation of human beings, are historical and recent, that **the seven days of creation were literal 24 hour days forming a literal week, and that the Flood was global in nature.**

Belief in creation is foundational for Seventh-day Adventist understanding concerning much more than the question of origins. The purposes and mission of God described in the Bible, human responsibility for stewardship of the environment, the institution of marriage and **the sacred meaning of the Sabbath all find their meaning in the doctrine of creation**" ("Statement on Creation: The bible's Worldview." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/statements/bible-worldview.html>).

Scriptures: *God:* Gen. 1:1-2, Psa. 110:1, Isa. 9:6, 48:16, 61:1, Mic 5:2, Matt 12:46-47; 13:55-56; 28:19; Luke 3:22; John 1:1, 14; Acts 7:55; 10:38; Rom 8:9; 9:5; 15:30; 2 Cor 3:17; 13:14; Phil 2:5-8; Col 1:15-20; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:2; 3:18; 1 John 4:2; *Creation:* Gen 1:26-27, Exod 20:11; Matt 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8; Luke 11:50-51; Rom 1:20.

Christ's Words and the Scriptures:

- The Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) confess that, **“Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.** These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. **Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.**

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. **The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will** (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012.

adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html).

- The SDA follow their *Church Manual* stating, “The standards and practices of the Church are based upon the principles of the Holy Scriptures. **These principles, underscored by the Spirit of Prophecy, are set forth in this *Church Manual*. They are to be followed in all matters pertaining to the administration and operation of local churches. The *Church Manual* also defines the relationship that exists between the local congregation and the conference or other entities of Seventh-day Adventist denominational organization. No attempt should be made to set up standards of membership or to make, or attempt to enforce, rules or regulations for local church operations that are contrary to these decisions adopted by the General Conference in session and that are set forth in this *Church Manual*” (“Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. adventist.org/ChurchManual_2010.pdf).**
- About the Law, the SDA state, **“The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age”** (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html).
- Concerning spiritual gifts and prophecy, the SDA believe, **“God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity.** Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. **According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries** as faith, healing, **prophecy**, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people” (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html).
- Regarding other prophecies, **“One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen. G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested”** (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html).

Scriptures: Luke 1:1-3; 1 Cor 1:1-2, 10; 12:13; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 2:20; 3:3-5; Col 4:16; 2 Thess 2:15; **2 Tim 3:16-17** (cf. 1 Tim 5:18); 2 Pet 1:16-21; 3:15-16; 1 John 1:1-4; **Jude 3.**

Way of Salvation:

- Speaking of an **“Experience of Salvation”**, the SDA state,, **“Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example.** This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. **Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life.”** (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>).
- Regarding **baptism**, the SDA state, “To help us understand how God can transform us into His children, Jesus modeled the process of baptism for us. **Baptism symbolized dying to self and coming alive in Jesus. Seventh-day Adventists practice full immersion baptism because by being fully buried beneath the water we symbolize that God's grace fully fills us with His new life for the future. Through baptism we are truly born again in Jesus”** (“What Adventists Believe.” SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/index.html>).
- Concerning the SDA's **“Baptismal Vow”** of 13 questions, the Church Manual states, “The pastor or elder should address the following questions to the candidate(s), whose reply may be by verbal assent, raising the hand, or other culturally appropriate method. [...]
 11. **Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with these principles? [...]**
 13. **Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world Church?”** (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>). **Note that there is an alternative vow with 3 questions of which 2 and 3 are near exact to these questions 11 and 13.**
- Add to this that the SDA Church requires a **“Baptismal Covenant”**. The SDA “Church Manual” states, “The Church has adopted its 28 fundamental beliefs, **together with the baptismal vow and Certificate of Baptism and Commitment, as a baptismal covenant. A printed copy of this covenant, with the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment properly completed, should be given to all accepted into membership by baptism. An appropriate certificate also should be given** those accepted on profession of faith.

The Certificate of Baptism and Commitment contains a space for the new member to sign as an affirmation of commitment. Following the baptism, the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment should be presented to the candidate as a covenant document” (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- Concerning **voting to be able to be baptized**, the SDA Church Manuel states, **“After the candidates have, in the presence of the church membership or other properly appointed body, answered the questions of the vow in the affirmative, or assurance has been given to the church that they have already done so, the church should vote on their acceptance into membership subject to baptism, which should not be unduly delayed”** (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

Scriptures: Matt 28:19–20; Mark 16:16; John 6:53–56; 16:7–13; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:38; 22:16; Rom 6:3–7; 10:9–10; Gal 5:4; Col 2:11–12; 1 Tim 2:4; Heb 6:4–6; **1 Pet 3:21**; 2 Pet 1:10; 3:9; 1 John 1:5–2:6.

The Church & Church Government:

- The Seventh-day Adventists state regarding **“the Remnant”**, the SDA believe, “The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, **a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This**

remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. **Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness** (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>).

- The “Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual” state, “God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption. **Consequently, order belongs to the essence of His church. Order is achieved through principles and regulations that guide the Church in its internal operations and in the fulfillment of its mission to the world. In order for it to be a successful ecclesiastical organization at the service of the Lord and humanity, it needs order, rule, and discipline.** Scripture affirms that 'all things be done decently and in order' (1 Cor. 14:40)” (“Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/church-manual/index.html#>).
- Concerning their **hierarchy**, the SDA Church states, “**Local Conference—A group of local churches, within a defined geographical area**, that has been granted, by action of a division executive committee at midyear, year-end, or division council meeting, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist local conference/mission/field and subsequently accepted, at a union constituency meeting, into the sisterhood of conferences/missions. [...]

General Conference and Its Divisions—The General Conference represents the worldwide expression of the Church. Its constituent membership is defined in its Constitution. To facilitate its worldwide activity, the General Conference has established regional offices, known as divisions of the General Conference, which have been assigned, by action of the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Councils, general administrative oversight for designated groups of unions and other Church units within specific geographical areas. [...]

In the Church today the General Conference in session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between sessions, is the highest ecclesiastical authority in the administration of the Church. The General Conference Executive Committee is authorized by its Constitution to create subordinate organizations with authority to carry out their roles. Therefore all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the Church will recognize the General Conference in session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between sessions, as the highest ecclesiastical authority, under God, among Seventh-day Adventists (“Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org/ChurchManual_2010.pdf>).

- Concerning “**Conference Presidents**”, the SDA state, “**The conference president should be an ordained pastor of experience and good report. He stands at the head of the gospel ministry in the conference and is the chief elder, or overseer, of all the churches.** He works for their spiritual welfare and counsels them regarding their activities and plans. He has access to all the churches and their services, business meetings, and boards, without vote unless granted by the church, or unless he is a member of that congregation. **He may, by virtue of his office, preside over any meeting of any church when necessary.** He has access to all church records” (“Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org/ChurchManual_2010.pdf>).
- Regarding “**pastors**”, the SDA “Church Manuel states, “**Ordained pastors appointed by the conference committee to act as pastors or district leaders do not take the place of the president in their respective fields. They are not charged with administrative powers as is the president, but they cooperate with him in carrying out the plans and policies of the conference.**

On assignment to a local church, the ordained pastor is assisted by the local elders. By virtue of ordination, the pastor is qualified to function in all rites and ceremonies. The pastor should be the congregation’s spiritual leader and adviser. **Pastors should instruct the officers [elders, etc.] in their duties and plan with them for all lines of church work and activity.**

The pastor is a member of the church board and serves as its chairperson. If the pastor desires to be relieved of the responsibility of acting as chairperson of the board, an elder serves as chairperson in cooperation with the pastor. [...]

Pastors or assistant pastors are not nominated or elected to such positions by the church. Their connection with the church is by appointment of the conference committee, and such appointments may be changed at any time (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

- About **church elders**, the SDA church states, “Elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community. **In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience.**”

Elders may be reelected, but it is not advisable for them to serve indefinitely. The church is under no obligation to reelect and may choose others whenever changes seem advisable. Upon the election of new elders, the former elders no longer function as elders but may be elected to other church offices. [...]

If the conference committee assigns a pastor or pastors to the congregation, the pastor, or senior pastor if more than one, should be considered the ranking officer and the local elders as assistants. Since their work is closely related, they should work together harmoniously. The pastor should not assume all lines of responsibility, but should share these with the elders and other officers. [...]

The Ministerial Association, in cooperation with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of elders. However, **the pastor has the primary responsibility for training elders.** [...]

It may be advisable, because of church size, to choose more than one elder because the burdens of the office are too great for one person. **If the church elects more than one elder, one should be designated 'first elder.'** The work should be divided among the elders in harmony with their experience and ability.” (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

- Concerning **tracking tithes**, the SDA Church Manual says, “All officers shall set an example in the matter of returning a faithful tithe to the Church. Anyone who fails to set such an example shall not be elected to church office” (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- About **funds from tithing**, the SDA Church Manual states, “**Conference funds, which include tithe, all regular mission funds, and all funds for special conference projects and institutions, are trust funds. At the close of each month, or more often if requested by the conference, the treasurer shall send to the conference treasurer the entire amount of conference funds received during that period of time. The church may not borrow, use, or withhold such conference funds for any purpose.** [...]

Tithe is held sacred for the work of the ministry, for Bible teaching, and for the support of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field outreach (missionary) endeavors. Tithe shall not be spent on other work, on paying church or institutional debts, or on building programs, except as approved under General Conference *Working Policy* (“Church Manual.” SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

Scriptures: Acts 14:26; 20:28; Eph 1:22; 4:11–12; Phil 1:1; Col 1:18; 2:19; 1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–4.

Worship and Assembly:

- Regarding **the Sabbath**, the SDA believe, “**The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and 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. [...] Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

- About **tithing**, the SDA assert, "We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and **by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church**" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- Concerning **the Lord's Supper**, the SDA state, "Remember, Jesus has already won the war. He is victorious! We celebrate His victory in our lives when we participate in the Lord's Supper. **This meal includes three symbols:**
 - Foot washing** (which symbolizes our commitment to love others as Jesus loves us),
 - bread** ('This bread is my flesh,' Jesus said, 'which I will give for the life of the world,' John 6:51, NIV), and
 - wine or grape juice** ('Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.' John 6:54, NIV)" ("What Adventists Believe." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/index.html>).
- Regarding **the elements of the Lord's Supper**, the SDA Church commands, "Neither the wine nor the bread contained elements of fermentation because on the evening of the first day of the Hebrew Passover all leaven, or fermentation, had been removed from their dwellings (Ex. 12:15, 19; 13:7). **Therefore, only unfermented grape juice and unleavened bread are appropriate for use in the communion service, and great care must be exercised in providing these elements**" ("Church Manual." SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- About **church music**, the SDA Church Manual notes, "**Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church must exercise care in selecting choir members and other musicians who will rightly represent Church principles. [...]**
 Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. **Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering**" ("Church Manual." SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

Scriptures: Matt 6:1–18; 15:1–9, 23; John 4:21–24; **Acts 20:7**; 1 Cor 4:17; 11:2, 17–34; 14; 16:1–3; Eph 5:19; Col 2:18–23; 3:16; 1 Tim 2:11–12; **Heb 2:12; 4:4, 9**; 10:24–25; 13:15–16.

Morality:

- Concerning **health and diet**, the SDA teach, "It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. **Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well**" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- About **abortion**, the SDA church state, "**Women, at times however, may face exceptional circumstances that present serious moral or medical dilemmas, such as significant threats to the pregnant woman's life, serious jeopardy to her health, severe congenital defects carefully diagnosed in the fetus, and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. The final decision whether to terminate the pregnancy or not should be made by the pregnant woman after appropriate consultation. [...]**
Therefore, any attempts to coerce women either to remain pregnant or to terminate pregnancy should be rejected as infringements of personal freedom" ("Guidelines on Abortion." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/guidelines/main-guide1.html>).
- Regarding **homosexuality**, the SDA church says, "**Seventh-day Adventists believe that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman. This was the design**

established by God at creation. The Scriptures declare: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh' (Gen. 2:24, NIV). **Throughout Scripture this heterosexual pattern is affirmed. The Bible makes no accommodation for homosexual activity or relationships. Sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden** (Lev. 20:7-21; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)" ("Seventh-day Adventist Position Statement on Homosexuality." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main-stat46.html>).

- Regarding **dancing and rock music**, the SDA Church Manual admonishes, "**We must avoid anything that dramatizes, graphically presents, or suggests** the sins and crimes of humanity—murder, adultery, robbery, and similar evils, which to a large degree are responsible for the breakdown of morality. Instead, we should find delight in God's great world of nature and in the romance of human agencies and divine workings. **Social dancing is another form of amusement with an evil influence. 'The amusement of dancing ... is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society.'** [...]

We should exercise great care in the choice of music in our homes, social gatherings, schools, and churches. Any melody partaking of the nature of jazz, rock, or related hybrid forms, or any language expressing foolish or trivial sentiments, will be shunned" ("Church Manual." SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

Scriptures: Matt 15:19; Mark 7:20-23; Rom 1:24–32; 12:9–15:13; 1 Cor 6:9–11; Gal 5:16–6:10; Eph 4:17–6:18; **Col 2:20-23**; 3–4:6; **1 Tim 4:1–3**.

Marriage and Divorce:

- The SDA church believes, "**Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith.** Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. **Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery**" ("Fundamental Beliefs." SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- About **remarriage**, the SDA instruct, "**A spouse who has violated the marriage vow and who is divorced does not have the moral right to marry another while the spouse who has been faithful to the marriage vow still lives and remains unmarried and chaste.** The person who does so shall be removed from membership. The person whom he/she marries, if a member, also shall be removed from membership" ("Church Manual." SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- **A spouse who has violated the marriage vow and has been divorced** and removed from membership and who has remarried, or a person who has been divorced on other than the grounds set forth in sections 1 and 2 above **and has remarried, and who has been removed from membership, shall be** considered ineligible for membership except as provided below.

The marriage contract is not only sacred but also possibly more complex when, for example, it involves children. Hence, in a request for readmittance to membership, the options available to the repentant may be severely limited. Before final action is taken by the church, the request for readmittance shall be brought by the church through **the pastor or district leader to the conference committee for counsel and recommendation of steps the repentant one, or ones, may take to secure readmittance.**

Readmittance to membership of those who have been removed for reasons given in the foregoing sections shall normally be on the basis of rebaptism" ("Church Manual." SDA. 29 May 2012. <adventist.org>).

Scriptures: Matt 5:31–32; **19:9**; Mark 10:5–12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor 6:16–18; 7:10–15; Heb 13:4.

The End Times & Afterlife:

- The Seventh-day Adventists state, **“The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent.** The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. [...] **The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels.** At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend 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 forever.**
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, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever” (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
 - The SDA church believes, “There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. **In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry.** It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. **The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom**” (“Fundamental Beliefs.” SDA. 23 May 2012. <adventist.org>).
- Scriptures:** Matt 24:29–51; 25:31–46; Mark 9:1; 13:24–37; Luke 21:25–36; John 14:1–4; 18:36; Acts 1:9–11; 1 Cor 15:23–28, 50–53; Col 1:13; **1 Thess. 4:13–5:11**; 2 Thess 2:1–12; Heb 12:28; **2 Pet 3:1–13**; Rev 19–22:5.