

# the Cults - Part II

## IGLESIA NI CRISTO

### I. HISTORY OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO.

#### A. Setting

Spain had ruled the Philippines for over 300 years, saturating the country with Roman Catholicism. However, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898, Spain's sovereignty of the Philippines was transferred to the United States. The period that followed was characterized by admiration for things American, while at the same time Filipinos were seeking to establish their own identity. It was in this religious climate of the early 20th century that the Iglesia ni Cristo was founded.

#### B. Felix Manalo

Felix Manalo, who began the Iglesia ni Cristo, was born on May 10, 1886 in barrio Tipas, Taguig, on the southeast shore of Laguna de Bay Lake.

His parents were not wealthy, but made a living fishing and farming. As a boy, Felix displayed strong leadership potential. The Philippine Revolution of 1896 interrupted his school study at the second or third grade level and this was not resumed until he entered Bible School as an adult. Felix's mother was a devout Catholic and instilled in Felix a love of God. He was taught the catechism and doctrines of the Catholic church.

War conditions and family tragedies marked Felix's teenage years. His father died during the Revolution. Mat-making became Felix's trade.

#### C. Spiritual Quest

Felix became greatly interested in a Bible he found on a church pew in Manila. From then on he began a quest for the true church, having apparently rejected the Catholic church because of its rituals, mass, incense burning, etc. He turned to the mysterious secret, underground, "colorum" religions of Mt. Banahaw, but soon

became disillusioned. He went back to his mat making and opened a shop in Paranaque.

While still a teenager, Manalo heard a debate between a Methodist and a Catholic priest, whether images were permitted in Scripture. The Methodist convinced Manalo, who joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1904. He attended classes and became a lay preacher, giving his business to his partner. About this time his mother died and he took on her name of Manalo - "to win." It suited him. Afterwards he resumed studies with the Presbyterians at Ellinwood Bible Training School and stayed there until 1908.

Intense evangelistic meetings dominated the Philippines in those days, It may have been a meeting conducted by the Christian Mission (now Church of Christ) which convinced Manalo that he should be baptized by immersion, About 22 years of age, he joined the Christian Mission and attended classes at Manila College of the Bible, Manalo's association with this church influenced his later teachings, especially with respect to immersion and the idea of "restoring the New Testament church." Felix became a local evangelist in a band called the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel". During this time he married Tomasa Sereneo of Paco, Manila.

In 1912, Manalo challenged the leader of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission, Mr. L.V. Finster, to a debate. He claimed he would prove Finster wrong in teaching that Christians were under the law. But after aggressive debate, Manalo confessed that Finster was right. He joined the Seventh Day Adventist church along with his wife. However she soon died and in 1913 he eloped with a Seventh Day Adventist girl, Honorata de Gusman. They lived in Bulacan, Bulacan where Manalo was an evangelist. About the middle of the year he resigned; apparently because he was disciplined for his elopement and for moral indiscretion. Perhaps a more notable reason was this: he had ideas of starting a new church.

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## D. New Church

A strong conviction had been growing in Manalo that he must study the Bible for himself, find out what it said about the Church of Christ and act on it. He closed himself in a room for two days and three nights until his wife became worried. Nothing supernatural happened, but this experience climaxed Manalo's determination to begin a new church. He decided he must proceed in an "apostolic manner" and give away his money and business, believing that God would look after him.

## E. First Church Meetings

Felix and his wife went back to Sta. Ana, Manila where he had first been with the Christian Mission and the Seventh Day Adventists. He collected four or five of his Christian Mission friends and held his first meeting in a compound of the Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Company. Attendance grew at his nightly meetings, and early in 1914 twelve converts were baptized. Manalo preached against gambling and drinking. He attacked the doctrines of the Catholic church, and the sabbatarian doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventists. Other topics included, "Body, Soul and Spirit," "New Heavens and a New Earth" and "Where are the Dead?"

Leaving this church in care of two men he trusted, Manalo went to his hometown, Tipas, Taguig. There he met opposition, being accused of propagating an illegal religion since his church was not an incorporated society. Accordingly, Manalo filed the Articles of Incorporation. The society was to be known as "Iglesia ni Kristo" (now spelled with a "c"). The date of the filing, July 27, 1914, is important for the Iglesia ni Cristo, for they claim that this date coincides with the beginning of the First World War. They use this fact in their prophecy concerning Manalo (see teachings). Manalo was named as the official leader of the society and the sole administrator of its properties.

Manalo's church planting strategy was simply to move ahead from one town to the next, holding meetings in barrios which opened up to him. He trained ministers who would accompany him to his meetings, observe and learn his methods until they could copy him successfully.

## F. Church Growth and Opposition

By 1918 the Iglesia ni Cristo had about 12 local churches with a total membership of less than 1000, most still meeting in homes. In 1919, Manalo went to the States for a year's theological training, but the location is not certain. When he came back the church was in trouble over envy, dissatisfaction and an attack on Manalo for immorality. This was led by Teofilo Ora and became known as the "Ora Rebellion." In the church at Bulacan only 15 of the 80 members remained in the Iglesia ni Cristo.

## G. Sugo Doctrine Introduced

In 1922, perhaps because of the attack on his person and leadership, Manalo introduced the "Sugo" doctrine. This affirmed Manalo's position as "Sugo" or "God's Messenger," (the fifth angel, the angel from the east), in fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 7:1-3. (The reasoning was that if Manalo fulfilled a Biblical prophecy he must be a leader chosen by God. Also his church must be the true church.)

## H. Church Expansion 1923 - 1945

With Manalo's authority established, disloyalty purged and all property owned by him, the supreme head, the work accelerated in its expansion. During the 1920's and 30's, the work spread through all of Luzon and even into the central Visayas.

In 1938 Manalo went to the states on a fundraising expedition, but was unsuccessful because of sickness. He decided that the INC must become completely self-supporting.

The "Pasugo" (God's Message) magazine commenced publication in February 1939. This

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is the primary magazine of indoctrination and propagation of the INC.

The Second World War greatly affected the expansion of the INC, but by this time the membership had reached 40,000. Among the Protestants only the Methodist church was larger, However, the INC was frequently despised because of its aggressive, "ungentlemanly" methods of propagation and its "ridiculous" claims of being founded by the "fifth angel", Manalo. Politicians, however, were beginning to take note of this church, especially President Quezon, who befriended Manalo.

## I. National Church

The INC became a truly national church in the late 1940's as it entered every major area. After 1954 no new provinces were entered but by that time all the major provinces had been reached.

In 1948 INC membership was 60,000; in 1960 it had risen to 200,000. The years following the Second World War were times of great openness to the Protestant message, and the INC capitalized on this openness in its intense drive for growth. (They believed that only those who entered the INC church could be saved.) However, it experienced intense opposition from both Catholics and Protestants. The use of religious debate was a principal means of propagating the INC's faith in the postwar years.

As we look at their history we can find seven factors which have led to the great growth of the INC. Aggressive laymen, strong centralized leadership, receptive people, social change, a magnificent central fund, the Filipino "Pasugo" magazine, and Manalo's personal dynamic leadership, all contributed to the tremendous increase in growth.

## J. Building Program

The early makeshift chapels had been replaced with wooden and semi-concrete buildings before the war. The second building

reconstruction program began in the late 1940's when beautiful and spacious cathedral-like chapels were built. By 1973, 137 chapels had been built in Manila and others in the other major cities. Finances for these buildings has often been said to come from politicians who pay the INC to vote for them, but this has not been proven on any large scale. Prosperity can well have come from the small donations of many of its committed members, as well as from the large Pasasalamat (Thanksgiving) offering given at the end of each year, Before he died, Felix Manalo realized his dream of a central chapel and personal palace which was built in the late 1940's in San Juan, Rizal at a cost of \$2 million.

## K. Death of Felix Manalo

On April 12, 1963, Felix Manalo died at the age of 77. He was said to have been sincere in believing that he had a special mission to the Filipino people, though people found him hard, cold and aggressive.

## L. Leadership of Erano Manalo

Ten years before his death, Felix Manalo had prepared a successor for himself. On January 28, 1953, a meeting of ministers was held in which Erano Manalo was voted to succeed his father - a foregone conclusion. His first assistant was Teofilo Ramos, and his second assistant, Cipriano Sandoval. These three executive ministers rule the church up to the present time.

Erano Manalo ("Ka Erdy") was born January 12, 1925, fifth child of Felix and Honorata. He took up law, but left his studies to become a minister in the INC. He became general treasurer of the church and circulation manager of the Pasugo magazine. He wrote a 64 page booklet attacking the deity of Christ, *Christ - God: Investigated - False*.

On January 17, 1955 he married Christina Villanueva. They have 6 children and their eldest son, "Eddie Boy," is being trained in his father's work. Erano is said to have a warm,

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friendly personality, is a forceful and able administrator of the church and directs all matters concerning church life.

The INC has increased its expansion under Erano Manalo. By 1974 it had become the largest non-Catholic church in the Philippines.

Iglesia Foreign Mission Work began in the United States (Honolulu, Hawaii) on July 27, 1968. By 1974 it had 21 congregations and nine houses of worship owned by the church in the U.S. Ten of these churches are in California. The services are conducted in English but follow the style of those in the Philippines and hymns are sung in Tagalog. The movement has now spread to some other countries also.

## M. Church Administration and organization.

All aspects of INC life are under the control of the Executive Minister. He has a powerful and active cabinet to assist him, with different officers to oversee various departments. Under the cabinet are 64 division ministers who administer the work in the provinces. Under these are local ministers (2000) and Sunday School teachers and evangelists. The local congregation is divided into committees (300,000 nationwide) of 7 to 10 members. Thus every church member has a duty to fulfill in the work of the church. The committees are used for discipline, nurture and mission.

## II. TEACHINGS OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO.

### A. The Scriptures

The INC holds to the infallibility of the Scripture but says that the common Christian cannot understand Scripture unless it is interpreted for him by authorized ministers. They say this in order to preserve the unity of the church where everyone must believe the same thing. The *Isang Pagbubunyag sa Iglesia ni Cristo* is a 263 page book giving the exposition of their teaching.

### B. The Church

Christ's great purpose on earth was to establish His Church through which His people would be saved. The INC is that church. How does the INC explain that it alone is the true church? To answer that we have to first ask, what happened to the church that Christ founded in Jerusalem? The INC refers to the prophecy (Matt. 24:11) that "many false prophets would rise and lead many astray." These, say the Iglesia, are the Roman Catholic priests. Therefore the original church has been led astray.

Where, today, is the true church that Christ founded? The INC says it is in the Philippines. They base this claim on John 10:16; "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." These "other sheep" they interpret to be the ones mentioned by Peter in Acts 2:39, "For the promise is to you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The next question then is, what country is referred to as "far off" where "Christ's sheep" are? The INC refer to Isaiah 43:5,6. "I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." The words "far" and "east" are placed together in Moffatt's paraphrase of the Bible ("From the far east I will bring your offspring"), though they are not together in the original Hebrew (or even the Tagalog version). The INC bases its claim on Moffatt's paraphrase.

The final question, which country does the "far east" refer to, is helpfully supplied by the book, *World History* by Boak, Slosson, and Anderson which reads, "The Philippines were Spain's share of the first colonizing movement in the Far East." So there the INC finally have "proved" their claim that they are the true church. The Philippines is the far east in which Christ now has the sheep of the "other fold." They then go on to show that Felix Manalo was

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the messenger whom God used to introduce his true church into the Philippines.

## C. God's Messenger - "Sugo".

In 1922 when Manalo's leadership of the INC was being challenged he introduced a new doctrine to affirm his position of authority. He claimed that he fulfilled the prophecy in Rev. 7:2,3 concerning the "angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God." If he could prove that he was the angel fulfilling prophecy, then he must also have the authority and leadership of the true church.

How does the INC apply this prophecy to Manalo? First, they claim that the word "angel" in this context means a human messenger, and this refers to Manalo for three reasons (1) The angel's work is to seal the servants of God. They say the seal is the Holy Spirit and it is applied to men who believe the preaching of the Gospel (Eph, 4:30 and 1:13). Since angels do not preach the gospel, the messenger must refer to a man - Manalo, (2) The place from which he arose. The Iglesia use Isa. 46:11, "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country." They say that the Philippines is the Far East, not merely is in the Far East, therefore the angel of Revelation 7:2,3 must be a man who preaches the Gospel in the Philippines - Manalo. (3) The time of the angel's appearing in the Philippines. The INC quote Rev 7:1; "After these things ... "After what? After the war described in Rev. 6:12-15 when people hid in caves (air raid shelters). The INC is certain that the First World War is described in these verses in Rev. 6, so that the four angels (also men) which hold back the winds (war) are the Big Four. Since at this time when the men were holding back the war, Felix was already preaching the Gospel in the Philippines, Manalo must be the fifth angel who was to arise out of the east. The INC stresses the point that its Articles of Incorporation making it into a legal society were registered on July 27, 1914. They claim the First World War began on that day.

## REFUTATION

Two events in history contradict the claim that Felix Manalo was the "angel ascending from the east." First, the four angels in Rev, 7:1 could not have been the Big Four (supposedly Lloyd George of Great Britain, Clemenceau of France, Orlando of Italy and Wilson of the US) because the US had not yet entered into the war in 1914, in fact not until 1917. Therefore Manalo (supposedly) was shouting only to three angels; but the angel from the east calls to the four angels. Second, there is no evidence that Manalo ever communicated to the four angels; (the Big Four) while he was living.

The INC also tries to prove that Manalo was the messenger prophesied by Isaiah. The prophecies actually refer either to Israel (Isa. 41:8,9 for example) or to King Cyrus of Persia (Isa. 46:11; compare Isa. 44:28 and 45:1).

In chapter 46:11, "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, they say that Manalo is called a ravenous bird because at the time he arose in the Philippines he had to "snatch" those who were called by God into the INC out from the other religions or denominations.

For reasons such as these, the INC believe that they alone have a messenger especially commissioned by God. Because of this they claim to be the only true church

## D. Jesus Christ

The INC since 1940 has denied the pre-existence of Christ. According to one of their ministers, they teach (a) Christ is the only Saviour, the only Mediator, and the Head of the Church. (b) His existence began in Mary's womb. (c) Scriptures mentioning His pre-existence refer either to God's foretelling about Him (e.g., the predictions made about Him before He was born, such as Micah 5:2) or else refer to the glory God had planned to give Christ when He would be born. (e.g, John 17:5). In other words, before his conception and birth, He "existed" only in the mind and plan of God.

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They believe that Jesus Christ is a man, though in power and glory He is above all men. They refuse to accept the deity of Christ because of N T passages which speak of Christ's being subject to the Father. They do not balance this with those that speak of His Deity.

## E. Holy Spirit

They believe he is not a person in the Trinity but the power or force of God operating in the world.

## F. Salvation

As we have seen, only those who enter the true church will be saved. Through Christ's death, a way of salvation has been provided, but this is only for those who belong to Christ's body. By this they mean the INC - the "new man" of Eph. 2:15. A person can only belong to the body of Christ, (the INC) by being baptized.

## G. Christian Life

The first duty of Iglesia members is to attend the worship services regularly. The neglect of worship services is referred to as the "greatest sin possible."

Giving to the church is a command of God and to neglect it is a sin. They all must give something (no specified amount) every Sunday. The wealth of the church can be easily seen by the number of beautiful buildings they are constantly building.

They must vote in every election, and specifically for Iglesia approved candidates so that there will be unity among believers. They base this on 1 Cor. 1:10. Block voting may seem justified to the Iglesia leaders, but if the Iglesia were to control a large proportion of Filipino voters, elections would no longer have any meaning.

## H. Last Things

The Iglesia believe that the Bible teaches that God's covenant promises to Abraham and Israel were fulfilled in the coming of Christ, the "seed" (Gal. 3:16). God has now made a covenant with Christ which extends to his "seed" and to his "seed's seed" (Isa. 59:20,21). They say the first

"seed" refers to the early Church, and the "seed's seed" refers to the INC. Thus with the appearance of the INC almost all prophecies have been or are being fulfilled, except for the final consummation of all things. They believe in a day of judgment for the wicked and an eternal kingdom for the faithful. They do not teach a future millennial rule on earth.

## I. Soul-Sleep

They teach that when a person dies, his soul dies and has no consciousness whatsoever. But the spirit is separable from the soul and returns to God. They do not say whether or not the spirit has any consciousness.

(Acknowledgment. The information in this article has been taken from the book *Iglesia ni Cristo, A Study in Independent Church Dynamics*, by Arthur Leonard Tuggy. It is published by the Conservative Baptist Publishing, Inc., in Quezon City, Philippines.)

## III. REFUTING THE ERRORS OF IGLESIA NI CRISTO.

### DENYING CHRIST'S DEITY

#### A. The INC Teaching About Christ.

Carefully read the following quotations from INC writings: "To the Church of Christ, Jesus Christ is a Man." "As to Power, Honour, and Glory, Christ is above all men, He is highly exalted by the true God."

Their booklet *Christ - God: Investigated - False* has a section entitled "A Brief Contrast Between God and Jesus Christ," Here are a few examples from that section: "God not Man - (I am God and NOT MAN Hosea 11:9); Jesus Christ a man - (But now you seek to kill me, a MAN. John 8:40); God fainteth not, neither is weary, Isa, 40:28; Jesus Christ wearied in his journey, John 4:6; God slumbereth not, Psalm 121:3,4; Jesus Christ was asleep, Matthew 8:24." (see also D. Jesus Christ)

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## B. The Bible's Teaching About Christ.

### 1. Christ's Humanity

Read all the following verses which refer to Christ's humanity: John 8:40; 1 Tim. 2:5; Isa. 53:3; Acts 2:22; Acts 13:38.

The INC members especially love to repeat these verses, to prove Jesus was a man. But we fully agree with them on that point. Jesus was truly a man, and fully a man, but He was not merely a man, as they claim. They say "Tao lamang" (only a man), but the Bible says, He was a real man, "Made like his brethren in every respect," "He who in every respect has been tempted as we are" (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15), but also more than a man.

### 2. Christ's Divinity

There are many passages which show, directly or indirectly the deity of Christ. Here are the strongest: John 1:1-3,14; John 20:28,29 (accepted worship); Col. 2:9; Phil 2:5-11.

Here is a list of other strong passages for those who want to study this subject more thoroughly: Luke 5:20-25 (He forgives sins); John 5:17, 18, 22, 23; John 14:9; Col. 1:15-19; Heb, 1:2-4. The following verses, along with John 20:28 show that Jesus is to be worshipped (but to worship anyone besides God is idolatry and blasphemy): Matt, 14:33; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:8, 12-14.

### 3. A Diagram

The following diagram is helpful in discussing with Manalistas (INC) their views and evangelicals' views on the deity of Christ.

	The Father		Jesus Christ	
	Man?	God?	Man?	God?
INC	No	Yes	Yes	No
Evangelicals	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

As you can see from the above diagram the difference between the Manalistas and Evangelicals is in the fourth column only.

The INC keep quoting verses about Jesus' humanity, as though those verses prove that Jesus is not God. So we must stress that we agree with them about Jesus' humanity. There is no need to prove that fact, for there is no disagreement about it. Let us stick to the question: Is the man Jesus also God? Can they quote any clear Bible statements to show that Jesus was only a man - that He was not God? Of course they cannot. But we have seen many statements that show that Jesus the man is fully divine.

In other words use the diagram to make them stick to the point of Jesus' deity. They are only wasting time to mention passages that show that the Father is not man, or that He is God, or that Jesus is man. But can they mention any verses that say Jesus is not God? There are many verses that say He is God, fully divine, along with the Father.

### 4. Christ's Pre-existence

The INC deny not only the deity of Christ but also strongly deny His pre-existence.

They say, "When was the purpose of God in the beginning to create Christ fulfilled? When the fullness of time came and Christ was born of a woman. Who was the woman who gave birth to Christ? Mary his mother (Matt. 1:16). Only then did Christ come into existence."

A title of one of the chapters of their publication *Isang Pagbubunyag* is translated, "There was no Christ in Existence in the Beginning, but only a Word which was purposed." Good verses to prove the pre-existence of Christ are: John 8:56-58; 2 Cor. 8:9 (This verse says Jesus was once rich but then became poor for our sake. We know He was poor during His entire life on earth.

When, then, was He rich?); Phil, 2:5-7; Hebrews 10:5-9; Heb. 10:5a; John 17:5;

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compare John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:2; and Col. 1:16. He is creator of everything.

## 5. Passages indicating Christ's subordinate rank to the Father within the Godhead.

(By "subordinate" we mean: one who is placed in a lower position.) Indications of Christ's subordinate position are illustrated in the names "Father" and "Son". Note the position in which Christ places Himself in the following verses: John 4:34; 5:30; 12:49, 50; 14:28; John 20:17 (Notice how this sets Christ apart from other men - for He does not say "Our Father and God" - yet it also shows the Father's supremacy as Christ's God and Father, as is also mentioned in Eph. 1:3 and 1 Pet. 1:3). Acts 10:38, along with those verses from John's gospel quoted above, shows that Christ lived here on earth by faith in His Father, rather than by His innate powers of deity - of which He had voluntarily "emptied" Himself for a time. (Phil. 2:7).

The above verses relate to Christ during His incarnate life on earth. The following do not: 1 Cor. 11:3; 15:24-28. Do these verses raise any questions in your mind about Christ's deity? Do you see why members of INC and JW like these verses ?

## 6. How Can We Reconcile the passages about Christ's deity with those that teach Christ's subordination to His Father?

These seem to be contradictory. (Review these two sections if you need to.)

The writers of the Athanasian Creed said of Christ, "Equal to His Father, as touching His Godhead; less than the Father, as touching His manhood." "In this Trinity, nothing is before or after, nothing is greater or less: but all three Persons co-eternal, together and equal." (Underlining not in original.)

But can we maintain the underlined words in that quotation, in the light of the Scriptures mentioned in section 5, especially

those from 1 Corinthians? (Compare again 1 Cor. 11:3c and 1 Cor. 15:28).

When we say Christ is equal with the Father, JW and INC always quote such Scriptures and people are confused.

Can we not clarify the problem in this way? The Son is as fully God as the Father is. The Son is equally divine in being and nature with the Father (and the Holy Spirit). But within the triune Godhead, the Son is not equal with the Father, the Father ranks supreme. The Son is not inferior in nature, but is subordinate in rank or authority. (Within a company, the president and vice-president may be equally fine men in every respect; indeed the vice-president may be a better man than the president. However, in rank of office the president is superior. The next election could see the vice-president voted into the presidency. At that point in time, he would become superior in his office. The integrity of the two men would not have changed, however; only rank of office.)

Thus the Son and the Father are equally God, equally deity (see especially Col. 1 and 2). But that is not the same as saying that the Son is equal to the Father within the Trinity. Here is another helpful, but very inadequate comparison: two men may be equally Filipino (in race and citizenship) and yet not equal in authority. Making the above distinction might remove much of the cultists' ammunition in debates regarding the nature of Christ.

Some people become alarmed when they hear statements like those in the paragraphs above. They fear we are denying the full deity of Jesus. No, not at all. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead". But that is not the same as saying that the Son is equal to the Father within the Godhead.



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Here is a quotation from **James Packer**, a leading Evangelical theologian, which helps explain this point:

"Part of the revealed mystery of the Godhead is that the three persons stand in a fixed relation to each other. The Son appears in the gospels, not as an independent divine person, but as a dependent one, who thinks and acts only and wholly as the Father directs. . . (John 5:19,30; 6:38; 8:28 ff). It is the nature of the second person of the Trinity to acknowledge the authority and submit to the good pleasure of the first. That is why He declares Himself to be the Son, and the first person to be His Father. Though co-equal with the Father in eternity, power and glory, it is natural to Him to play the Son's part, and find all His joy in doing His Father's will ... The obedience of the God-man to the Father was the continuation in time of the eternal relationship between the Son and the Father in heaven." (*Knowing God*, Chap. 5).

## 7. Problem Passages Cultists Use to "Prove" Christ was Created by God.

(a) A favorite passage used by the cultists is Col. 1:15-18. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible or 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 (hold together). He is the head of the body, the church; which is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. that in all things He might have the preeminence."

The phrases the cults find significant are underlined. They say Christ had a beginning since He is called firstborn.

### REFUTATION

In the ancient world, "Firstborn" originally meant a father's eldest son. The eldest son

received a double share of the father's inheritance and became the family leader when the father died. Therefore, the word came to mean "preeminent in authority" without any necessary relation to age or time of beginning. (Note that God says of King David in Psa. 89:27, "I will make him the Firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." In the same way, the term "prime (first) minister" means "first in rank; supreme" rather than "First in time, or eldest." Therefore the New English Bible translates Col. 1:15, "His is the primacy over all created things." Verse 16 clearly shows He created all things; so does John 1:3.

(b) Revelation 3:14. Christ here calls Himself "the beginning of God's creation," which cultists interpret to mean He was the first being created by God.

### REFUTATION

The Greek word translated "beginning" here is ARCHE, which commonly means "chief, ruler" (like Archangel). This is also translated (Christ is) "the prime source of all God's creation."

(c) John 1:1 and 14 are the texts used by the INC to deny Christ's deity. They say that the "Word" refers to God's word or purpose that Christ would be created, which purpose was fulfilled when Christ was born in Bethlehem.

### REFUTATION

John says "the Word was God." obviously in this passage the Word is a person, the person who became a human person and lived among men (14).

## DENYING THE TRINITY

The INC affirms the unity of God so strongly that they leave no room for the doctrine of the Trinity. In actual fact its arguments are against tritheism (three gods) not trinitarianism (one God in three persons).

They write "Like Christ, the Father does not countenance the 'Holy Trinity' doctrine. Christ acknowledges and recognizes the Father to be the only

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one and true God, and the Father recognizes no other God other than Himself... on the contrary, God declares: 'I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me' (Isa. 46:9). As an answer to the Trinitarians, God says: 'Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any' (Isa. 44:8)." (Quoted from article in "Pasugo")

Besides the preceding verses, they also love to quote John 17:3, "that they may know thee, the only true God"; and 1 Cor. 8:6, "But to us, there is one God, the Father ..."

You may go back to the JW material in Cults I and review the study on the Trinity. Remember:

The Father is God (no one disputes this).

The Son is God (John 1:1; Col. 2:9, etc.).

The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3,4;

Matt, 12:31, 32. Only God can be blasphemed).

## **ADDING TO THE BIBLE: PROPHETS/PROPHECIES**

Manalo, "God's Messenger." You remember from a previous lesson that in 1922 Manalo introduced a new doctrine claiming that he was God's Messenger - "Sugo." From that lesson review how Manalo sought to prove he was a prophet. Under the Refutation, review how two events in history contradict his claims as God's Messenger.

## **TEACHING THAT WE MUST BE MEMBERS OF THE ONE TRUE CHURCH TO BE SAVED**

The INC claim to be the only true church. You may wish to review this teaching as found under II. B. The Church. If a person is to be saved, the INC believe he must enter their church.

The following could be the questions an INC member would ask you to show you his way of salvation. Possible answers are included.

INC Question: Did not our Lord Jesus command those who want to be saved to enter the Church of Christ in John 10:9? "I am the door; if any one enter by me, he shall be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

Your Answer: Yes, Jesus commanded what you say. But, it does not mean that to enter your church is to enter Jesus. Man enters Jesus by letting Jesus enter Him (Rev. 3:20): "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me."

INC Question: But in Eph. 2:16 it says: "And might reconcile both to God in ONE body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end." You must be reconciled by becoming a member of the Body of Christ which is the Church of Christ. How can faith be enough?

Your Answer: You have not read Eph, 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." Not by church membership or by a righteous life can you be saved, but only by trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. And when you are saved, then the Lord adds you to His people, the church. See Acts 2:47.

# Study Questions for the INC

1. The founder of the Iglesia ni Cristo was \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name the 5 religious groups that influenced him. 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain, briefly, the Sugo Doctrine: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the name of the magazine of the INC? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name 3 of the 7 factors that led to the great growth of the INC:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do the INC teach about the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Under Section II Refuting the errors of the INC there are four errors explained and refuted. List the 4 errors:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

8. (Fill in the blanks from your notes): The Son is as \_\_\_\_\_.

The Son is \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father (and the H .S. ). But within the triune Godhead, the Son is

not equal with the Father, the Father ranks \_\_\_\_\_ . The Son is not \_\_\_\_\_ ,

but is subordinate in \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you agree with the statement in question 8? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_.

Give the Scripture reference to prove your stand \_\_\_\_\_

# the Cults - Part II

## **SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS**

### **IV. HISTORY OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS**

#### **A. Two Main Emphases:**

The Seventh Day Adventists emphasize two doctrines: Prophecy (Christ's Second "Advent") and the Sabbath (keeping the seventh day holy). Their stress on Adventism is due to William Miller. Their emphasis on the Sabbath is due to Ellen G. White.

#### **B. William Miller:**

Seventh Day Adventism owes its beginning to William Miller, who was born in Massachusetts, USA in 1782. He was poorly educated, worked on a farm, and was a captain in the war of 1812. He was regarded as an outstanding citizen.

He was converted in 1816, at the age of 34, and joined a Baptist Church. In those days many people believed that the Lord's Second Coming was near. Miller yearned for the return of Christ, and devoted himself to an intense study of Bible prophecy to find out when this would be. Unfortunately he did not consult capable Bible scholars. In 1831 he announced he had discovered the time for Christ's Second Coming. He declared confidently this would take place in 1843. (Later he said 1844.) He based his prediction on Daniel 8:14 which reads, "unto two thousand three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Miller interpreted the 2,300 days until the cleansing of the sanctuary to be 2,300 years. Starting at 457 B.C. when Artaxerxes decreed the Israelites could rebuild Jerusalem, their ruined capital, the period ended in 1844.

Miller began preaching in 1831, but it was not till 1839 that he gained many adherents. During these years his followers were known as "Millerites." From 1840 the Millerites gained adherents rapidly and became a significant religious movement among the Protestant

churches. It was in this year that their periodical "The Signs of the Times" was first published. This served to spread the message of the Lord's imminent return. By 1843 the Millerites had become known as Adventists. Great camp meetings increased their influence among the people. Their number of followers in the year 1843-44 was estimated to be between 50,000 and 100,000.

The great year of expectation came and went, but Christ did not appear. This became known as the First Disappointment.

Before Miller died in 1849 he declared, "We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time; and now to contend that we were not mistaken is dishonest. We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors. I have no confidence in any of the theories that grew out of the movement." Miller was a sincere, godly Christian to the end of his life.

One of the theories that grew out of the movement was started by an Adventist named Hiram Edson. On October 23, 1844, the day after the scheduled return of Christ, "there suddenly burst upon his mind the thought that there were two phases to Christ's ministry in the heaven of heavens, just as in the earthly sanctuary of old . . . He (Christ) for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that heavenly sanctuary to perform in the Most Holy Place before coming to this earth." Edson believed Miller had been right as to time but wrong as to place.

#### **C. Ellen G. White:**

The chief expounder of this idea of a heavenly sanctuary was Mrs. Ellen G. White, who with her husband James, had helped Miller set his dates. She taught that in this heavenly sanctuary Christ went to do his "Investigative Judgment" before coming to earth. (See next lesson)

Mrs. White was a woman of poor education but she became the real founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement. She claimed to

# the Cults - Part II

receive visions and teachings by revelation. She was their acknowledged leader and prophetess.

In 1860 the name of the movement was officially adopted as Seventh Day Adventist, because they observed Saturday as the day of rest.

Mrs. White wrote many books, the chief of these being *The Great Controversy*, which contains an authoritative account of the SDA teachings. Adventists quote Mrs. White's writings as "inspired" but not equal to the Bible. However, it is obvious that much of her writing was copied from other books. Her *Inspired Life of St. Paul* was copied so much from the *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson, that her writing had to be withdrawn from circulation to avoid legal action for infringement of copyright. If her writings were "inspired" they should not need to be revised. Yet a comparison of later editions of some of her books with earlier editions shows many changes on page after page.

What sort of person was Mrs. White? Here are the verdicts of two doctors who worked in the SDA sanitarium at Battle Creek, Michigan. Dr. William Russell wrote in 1869 that Mrs. White's visions were a result of a diseased condition of the brain or nervous system, and Dr. Fairfield wrote in 1897 that her visions were "hysterical trances."

Mrs. White was the outstanding leader of the SDA movement until her death in 1915. She is still held in great esteem by most (though not all) members of the movement.

## D. Main Activities Now:

The SDA members in general exhibit zeal, sacrificial giving of finances, and organizational ability. The movement shows a good balance between evangelistic work and social action, especially in the field of health services. Their main activities are:

**1. They do evangelistic preaching in more than 800 languages and dialects.**

**2. They have publishing houses in most of the principal countries.**

They publish several magazines. Most deal with good health and/or family life, but include some Bible teaching also. Others deal mainly with prophecy. Trained salespeople sell the magazines plus books from door to door. They are reluctant, however, to identify themselves as part of the SDA movement.

**3. They maintain a chain of high quality medical institutions throughout the world (for example, Manila Sanitarium).**

**4. They run their own school system - primary, secondary, and college level in the U.S. and some other countries - and also graduate schools and a medical college.**

By 1960 world-wide membership was about 1,666,000 including about 390,000 in the U.S. and Canada. These figures reveal their emphasis on foreign missions.

## E. Work In The Philippines:

Adventist work began in the Philippines with the arrival of Mr. L.V. Finster. Work began slowly, but by 1911 the first SDA baptisms were held. The first Filipino Adventist ministers were ordained in 1916.

Today SDA have their headquarters in Manila and a publishing house in Caloocan City. They run hospitals in Pasay City, Cagayan (Isabela), Iligan, Bacolod and Cebu. They also have three colleges, two radio programs ("The Quiet Hour" and "Voice of Prophecy") and several magazines (including *Health and Home* and *Signs of the Times*).

## V. TEACHINGS OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

The Seventh Day Adventist movement is much closer to Biblical beliefs than are the other cults. There are differing views as to how Evangelical Christians should regard Seventh Day Adventists.

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Some Evangelicals believe that SDA members should be accepted as members of the body of Christ because they hold the doctrines of the Christian faith which are necessary to salvation and growth in the Christian life. Others disagree, and say they teach faith plus works for salvation. From this viewpoint they are legalistic like the Catholic Church, and should not be considered as Evangelicals.

The crucial question being asked concerning Seventh Day Adventism is, do they teach salvation by grace through faith alone or do they rely on some other work to complete salvation? In order to answer this question we have to look at their doctrine concerning Christ's Investigative Judgment which is central in their teaching on salvation.

## **A. Investigative Judgment:**

When Christ ascended from earth after his death, He entered the first apartment of the alleged heavenly sanctuary. (They say heaven must have two compartments, as the temple did.) Here He began pleading His shed blood before the Father as a substitute on behalf of believers. This secured the believers' pardon but their sins remained on record until 1844, the supposed end of the 2,300 years of Daniel. At this time Christ entered the second apartment to begin the work of cleansing the sanctuary, or his "Investigative Judgment." The books or record were opened and the lives of all who believed on Jesus came in review. When any had sins unrepented and unforgiven, their names were blotted out of the Book of Life.

Those who have repented of sin and whose lives and character are found in harmony with the Law of God, will be accounted worthy of eternal life. (Thus only after death will a person know whether or not he has eternal life.) This Investigative Judgment is still going on. When it is completed, Christ will return to earth to take the righteous to heaven, and the earth will be desolate. After a thousand years, the wicked will be annihilated with Satan and the saints will rule with Christ on earth.

Connected with this doctrine is the teaching of Satan as the sin-bearer. When the

investigative Judgment is complete, Christ will place the sins of men upon Satan, who will bear them as a scapegoat into oblivion. (This teaching is based on Leviticus 16, when the priest offered the scapegoat, Azazel, alive as an atonement for sin.) The SDA deny the accusation that Satan will finish the work of atonement by taking away the sins of men. They explain that Satan will be receiving his own punishment because he was the one in whose heart sin was first conceived.

As we have seen, included in their teaching of the Investigative Judgment is the need for keeping the law if one is to be judged worthy of eternal life. Now let us see what is their teaching on the Law and the Sabbath.

## **B. Law and Sabbath Keeping, and the Mark of the Beast:**

Most Seventh Day Adventists teach that the ceremonial law of Moses has been abolished (though others teach that unclean foods such as pork must not be eaten). But the Ten Commandments, the Law of God, are still in effect. They say that the Fourth Commandment to keep the Sabbath (Saturday) must be kept. The importance of this doctrine to their teaching is realized in their views on the "end times." They say that worship on Sunday rather than Saturday will be the "Mark of the Beast" during the Great Tribulation. Therefore no one who worships on Sunday during that period will be saved.

Their teachings on Sabbath-keeping are given more fully at the beginning of the next lesson. But from the above it would appear that faith in Christ's atonement plus Sabbath-keeping is necessary for salvation. Is this what they teach about salvation?

## **C. Salvation:**

Officially, they teach salvation by grace through faith alone, Mrs. White wrote in *Steps to Christ*: "It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy." A leading Adventist, Arthur Maxwell wrote, "There is

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only one way of Salvation. That is faith is the atoning death of Jesus Christ." When the SDA leaders who wrote *Questions on Doctrine* (a book which explains their faith and beliefs) were asked if Christ's atonement was completed on the cross, they affirmed this earnestly.

But, in contradiction to this, Mrs. White also wrote: "Acceptance of Christ at conversion does not seal a person's destiny." She teaches that justification awaits Christ's Investigative Judgment to see if a person has kept the law. Another leading Adventists has written, "We keep the law of God because we are saved, not because we can save ourselves by lawkeeping." But he also says, "Everywhere the Bible stresses the imperativeness of obedience if one would be saved."

To sum up, there seems to be a good deal of confused thinking as to whether they believe salvation is by grace and through faith alone, or whether it is dependent on lawkeeping as well. So the answer to the question, what do they really believe as a movement concerning salvation, awaits clarification.

## **D. Doctrine of the Bible:**

Seventh Day Adventists believe in the Bible as the Inspired Word of God, and that it is the sole rule of faith and practice. They also say of Mrs. White's writings, "We as a denomination accept them as inspired counsel from the Lord. But we have never equated them with Scripture." (*Questions on Doctrine*) Apparently the "inspiration: of Mrs. White is not the same as the inspiration of the Bible.

## **E. Doctrine of Christ:**

They believe in the Trinity, In Christ's deity, His incarnation, His human nature, His righteousness, His miracles and that He died for sins on the cross, was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father . But they also teach that Christ in his humanity took on the sinful nature of Adam, though he never sinned. They say He had to overcome as we have to overcome, or He would not be the complete and

perfect Savior that man needs in order to be saved.

## **F. Soul-Sleep:**

They teach that those who have died before the Lord's Second Coming do not and will not have conscious existence until the resurrection from death.

## **G. Annihilation:**

They say that a God of love would not commit the wicked to everlasting torment. The wicked will be punished with the devil for a thousand years on earth and then they will be annihilated. There could be no Hell or torment, for it would be a blot on God's creation. Eternal existence is only for the Christian.

## **H. How Should We Approach Members of the SDA Church?**

We have seen that SDA's agree with Evangelicals about the tri-unity of God, the deity of Christ, His redemptive death and literal resurrection. They believe in the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and His indwelling. They consider the Bible to be our supreme rule of faith and conduct. Officially they have stated many times that salvation is by God's grace through faith, not works.

Yet many of their statements seem inconsistent or even contradictory to salvation by grace alone. Their views about the Sabbath and the Investigative Judgment seem to imply that human works do play a part in getting or keeping salvation. Evangelical Christians would also have questions about their view of Christ's nature as a man, and about Satan's "sin-bearing" role. Also we disagree about soul-sleep, and the nature of hell; these, however are not fundamental matters. More alarming is the exceedingly high regard they give to Mrs. White's inspired counsels"; though they say her views are not equal to the Bible in authority, they never seem to dare to disagree with her in any way!

In conclusion we quote Gordon Lewis (*Confronting the Cults*) as he summarizes the

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various positions that Evangelicals take toward the SDA movement:

"If they are still considered non-Christian cultists we shall endeavor to win them to the Lord. If they are classed with Roman Catholics in their legalism we must approach them as Paul did the people of Galatia. If they are Evangelical we may fellowship and work together in the Evangelistic cause while engaging in intramural debates on issues not affecting salvation. Or it may be that no generalization can be made about the movement as a whole, and we must deal with each individual upon the basis of his own stated beliefs."

"In all fairness it seems overly harsh to classify Seventh-Day Adventism with Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and Christian Science."

## VI. REFUTING THE ERRORS OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

### A. Quotations From SDA Writings:

#### 1. "We believe that the seventh day is the Sabbath.

Both Old and New Testaments point to the sacredness of the seventh day, a memorial to God's creative power, a sign of His authority. Adventists observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, the seventh in the cycle of the days of creation. The Sabbath is the Lord's day of the N. T., Sunday observance having only the authority of human organizations, although the right of all men to follow their convictions on the matter is respected."

#### 2. "The Sabbath was instituted at creation, centuries before Abraham lived and 2,500 years before there was a Jewish nation.

So it cannot be called Jewish any more than marriage, which was instituted in Eden at the same time. It originated before sin was even known, and has no place among those ordinances given at Sinai which pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus. It was

these, and not the Sabbath, nor any other part of the Ten Commandment Law, which ceased to have significance after the death of Christ on the Cross of Calvary."

#### 3. "It is distinctly stated of Christ that it was His `custom' to attend the synagogue on `the Sabbath day' (Luke 4:16).

And after His crucifixion His closest disciples were so loyal to His teaching and example that they would not even embalm His body on the holy seventh day. Instead, `they rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment' (Luke 23:56). As SDA's have never been able to find a single text in the Bible suggesting that Christ authorized a change of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first, they say. `What else can a true Christian do but follow the clear teaching of the Word?"

#### 4. "When Satan comes as an angel of light in these last days, he will impersonate Christ, and the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 24:5, 23, 24).

How will we know that he is the counterfeit? . . . He will claim to have changed the Lord's Sabbath to Sunday . . . Those who receive this false outpouring of the Spirit will honor the Sabbath of the beast of Revelation 13. They will be Sunday-keepers, not Sabbath-keepers. They will help enforce this `mark' of the beast upon all the world."

#### 5. "Sunday keeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol Sabbath.

The time will come when this day will be the test, but that test has not come yet."

#### 6. "Do Adventists teach that people must obey the Ten Commandments in order to be saved?



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No. Salvation is by grace alone. There is only one way of salvation. That is faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. No one can work his way into the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, faith without works is dead. Keeping the commandments is the result, the evidence of salvation. It is a matter of love, not legal duty. John 14:15."

Note: The above quotation (6) shows that officially the SDA's teach that salvation is by grace through faith, and not by obedience to God's laws. However some of their literature seems inconsistent with this view, and give the definite impression that Saturday observance is necessary for salvation or eternal life. Notice the following quotes from a pamphlet distributed by them in the Philippines:

## 7. "What God says About His Sabbath: Which day is the Sabbath of the Lord?"

The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord' (Ex. 20:10). Did the Lord ever abolish the law containing the Sabbath command? `Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the law or the prophets, I have not come to do away with them, but to enforce them' (Matt. 5:17, *Goodspeed*). Was one command, the fourth, changed so that Christ's followers today can keep another day as holy? `I tell you, as long as heaven and earth endure, not one dotting of an i or the crossing of a t will be dropped from the law until it is all observed' (Matt. 5:18, *Goodspeed*). Is it absolutely necessary to keep the commandments to have eternal life? `If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matt. 19:17)."

## B. Answers to SDA Questions:

In this lesson we shall answer questions often asked by SDA's to prove that Christians should keep the Sabbath.

## 1. Was the Sabbath instituted at Creation?

Not only the Seventh Day Adventists and the Armstrong cultists, but also some Evangelical Christians answer "yes" because on it God rested from all his work." According to this interpretation, the Sabbath is therefore an eternal moral law of God which has always been in effect for all men, and not merely part of the Old Covenant made with Israel. But Nehemiah said that the Sabbath was revealed by God to Israel after the exodus from Egypt. "Thou didst come down upon Mount Sinai . . . and thou didst make known to them thy holy Sabbath and command them . . . a law by Moses." (Nehemiah 9:13,14). If God made the Sabbath known to them at that time, then obviously it had not been binding on them before. Thus we conclude it had not been instituted as a law previously.

Then why is the seventh day given special mention in Genesis 2? No doubt in anticipation. That is when Moses wrote about the creation he explained the reason (God's rest) why the seventh day was selected long afterwards to be Israel's day of rest. In the same way of anticipation or looking ahead, Eve was called "the mother of all living" before she had any children (Gen 3:20), and Judas was mentioned as Christ's betrayer long before the betrayal (Mark 3:19) - because the readers already knew about those events. Thus the mention of the seventh day in Genesis does not show the Sabbath was instituted then, but merely shows why it was instituted later. The first command in the Bible to keep the Sabbath is in Exodus 16:22-26, given to Israel at Mt. Sinai and repeated shortly afterwards in the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:8 ff.)

## 2. But Christians must obey the Ten Commandments, mustn't we?

We should do all that God commands us, of course. But the Ten Commandments are

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part of the Old Covenant made between God and Israel. Notice the introduction to them: "And God, spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 20:1,2).

"And Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes . . . which I speak in your hearing this day" (Deut. 5:1; the Ten Commandments begin at verse 6). It is misleading to quote the Ten Commandments but leave off the introduction which tells for whom they were intended. "Read in their context (Exodus 19-24), the Ten Commandments are seen to be inseparably connected with the Old Covenant, while we are now under the New Covenant of Grace" (J.O. Sanders).

On the other hand, we must recognize that the Ten Commandments and the Old Testament do contain many principles of behavior pleasing (or not pleasing) to God. These unchanging standards are repeated in the New Testament. Examples of these "moral laws" are found in Matt. 5, where Jesus quotes from the Ten Commandments, and then applies it to Christian behavior. Such laws are always in effect. But the Old Covenant itself, as a code or agreement, has passed away.

If Sabbath-keeping is one of God's eternal, moral commands, as some claim, then it was binding on all men at all times. But several facts show that this was not the case.

a. The Sabbath was not binding on the Gentiles in ancient times, but only on Israel. "The people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath . . . It is a sign for ever between God and His people, the sign had to be distinctive, not some general practice that the whole world observed. Obviously the sign was something that set them apart from the other nations. This makes it clear that no other nation but Israel was ever

commanded to keep the Sabbath" (R. Ramsey). Also, if the Gentiles had been obligated to keep it, then God's prophets would have rebuked them for breaking it. They often rebuked Israel for that sin, but never the Gentiles - though they pronounced judgment on them for idolatry, immorality, cruelty and other evils.

b. The Sabbath is not binding on the church. "In the New Testament each of the Ten Commandments is reiterated except the fourth relating to the Sabbath. Why this significant omission?" (J.O. Sanders). Sabbath-breaking is never condemned in the New Testament. Romans 1:29, 30 lists 21 sins and Galatians 5:19-21 lists 15, but Sabbath-breaking is not included among them - or in any other New Testament list of transgressions.

The Old Covenant was suited to a nation living in one land, all worshipping one God. But the New Covenant is suited to diverse peoples. For example, many of the early Christians were slaves whose masters were not Christians. Many of those masters would have killed any slave who refused to work one day out of seven!

Notice what the apostles decided at the Jerusalem council about Gentile Christians and the Old Covenant, called the "law of Moses." Acts 15 tells how some Jews who believed in Jesus urged that Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved (vss. 1, 5). The apostles and elders discussed the question thoroughly. Peter reminded the group that God had saved the Gentiles by grace (v. 11) through faith (v. 9). Therefore the yoke of the law should not be put on the disciples' neck (v. 10). The group concluded to notify the believing Gentiles to abstain from certain practices such as

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(vvs. 19, 20, 28, 29). Did they say

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anything at all about needing to keep the Sabbath? \_\_\_\_\_

Thus Gentile Christians were absolved forever from needing to keep the Law of Moses. (If you want to study this further, see Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 3:23-25; 2 Cor. 3:5-11; Heb. 8:6-13; 12:18-24).

SDA's answer "Yes, we agree that we are not under the law of Moses for that was only the ceremonial part of the Old Covenant. But we are under the law of God which is the moral part of the Old Covenant and is found in the Ten Commandments." But their distinctions between the "Law of Moses" and the "Law of God" in the O. T. is not valid. The terms are used interchangeably in Luke 2:22-24. The entire Old Covenant is now "obsolete" and has "vanished away" (Hebrews 8:13).

Of course the Christian is not lawless. He is "under the law of Christ", though not in order to gain salvation. (1 John 3:4; 1 Cor. 9:21; Galatians 6:2). The New Covenant has commands for us to obey and it is our joy to obey them. (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3; 4:5:3). But Sabbath keeping is not one of these commands, as we have seen very clearly!

### **3. But the Sabbath is called "perpetual" and said to last "forever".**

Why? God said, "The people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath ... throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel...." (Exodus 31:16;17). Therefore, how could it ever cease?

It could cease in the same way that several other practices related to Old Covenant worship ceased though they too were called perpetual and said to be forever: e.g. the burnt offerings (Exodus 29:42); incense (30:8); ceremonial washings (30:21);

and the Passover feast (12:14). These verses seem to mean that the practices were to be observed forever as long as the covenant endured for they were part of the covenant. But now the entire covenant has been replaced by something better, as the book of Hebrews makes it plain.

### **4. But Christ Himself kept the Sabbath as His regular custom. (Luke 4:16) Shouldn't we follow His example?**

He was born and lived "under the law" the Old Covenant. (Galatians 4:4) The Old Covenant did not end until His death and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So during His life it was still in effect and He observed all its requirements, not just the Sabbath.

### **5. But why did Paul regularly go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, after the New Covenant began?**

He went there in order to preach to the Jews who gathered there every Sabbath. That was a natural opportunity to have an audience to evangelize. Also, in the early decades of the church either Saturday or Sunday (or both) were observed as times of worship. That was because there was a period of overlapping of the two covenants, since it took time for the earliest Christians - most of whom were Jews - to realize the significance of God's plan. Thus the Jerusalem church continued worshipping in the temple. (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 21:26). Early Jewish disciples observed both baptism and circumcision. (Acts 16:1-3). This was allowed as long as they did not trust in circumcision and law observance for salvation. (Galatians 5:2-4). There were many Jews in Jerusalem who had received Jesus as Messiah but still were "zealous for the law" and the Jewish customs. (Acts 21:17-25). Years after the church began, the writer to the Hebrews said that the Old Covenant was "becoming obsolete

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and growing old" and was "ready to vanish away." (8:13) So, though the New Covenant began with the events at Calvary and Pentecost, God allowed the ceremonial practices of the law to continue for a period on a voluntary basis (Romans 14:3, 13). The disciples were warned, however, not to rely on them for eternal life. (Acts 15:10, 11 and many other passages).

Paul himself not only kept the Sabbath often, but also made a Jewish vow, sought to arrive at Jerusalem in time for the feast of Pentecost, and also ceremonially purified himself and assisted some men who were under a vow. (Acts 18:18; 20:16; 21:23-26). Why did he observe these Mosaic ordinances? He explains his reason in 1 Cor. 9:19-23. "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law - though not being myself under the law - that I might win those under the law ... I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Thus his keeping the Sabbath is not necessarily an example or precedent for us.

In fact, he wrote in Col. 2:14, 16, 17 that Christ "canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this He set aside, nailing it to the cross. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come." Paul clearly states here that because the Old Covenant with its legal demands, has ended (at the cross), we are not obligated to keep the Sabbath. The seventh day cults insist that "Sabbath" in this passage does not mean the weekly Sabbath but only the monthly and annual feasts which were also rest days or Sabbaths. But it is obvious the "festival" refers to the yearly feasts, "new moon" to monthly observances, and "Sabbath" to the

weekly rest day. Compare Numbers 28, which mentions various offerings - daily, weekly, monthly and annual. There is not one bit of evidence to indicate that "Sabbath" in Colossians 2:16 means anything different from what it means everywhere else in the New Testament - the rest day, kept on the seventh day. And Paul says here that it has been set aside.

## **6. But didn't Emperor Constantine or a pope begin the practice of Sunday observance?**

No. Sometimes Seventh Day Adventists say a pope changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday and the Church of Rome takes credit for the change. But which pope? When? Why? There is no evidence. It is true that Constantine in 321 A.D. passed laws restricting work on Sundays. But his official proclamations were merely a recognition of the practice of the church up to that time. His "Sunday-laws" do not prove that until then Sunday had not been observed, anymore than the Council of Nicaea's declaring the deity of Christ (325 A.D.) proves that until then the church did not believe that doctrine! That is, Constantine did not originate Sunday keeping, but merely acknowledged the fact that Sunday was the day Christians had observed all along.

Many early Christian writers prove that fact. For example, the Epistle of Barnabas (written before 100 A.D.) says, "We keep the Lord's Day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead." Around 110 A.D. Ignatius wrote a letter to the church of the Magnesians. Apparently speaking of converted Jews, he says they "were brought up in the ancient order of things" but now "have come to the possession of the Lord's Day".

These and other quotes show that "the Lord's Day" mentioned by the apostle John in Revelation 1:10 refers to Sunday. Around 150 A.D. Justin Martyr wrote: "On the day

# the Cults - Part II

called Sunday, all (Christians) who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place..." He then describes a typical worship service with prayers, reading from the Scriptures, preaching, the Lord's Supper and an offering to help the needy

The observance by the Christian Church of the Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath was not an innovation of Constantine or of the emerging Roman Catholic Church. Instead it was an ancient Christian practice as verified by the earliest existing documents.

## **7. But did the early Christians change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.**

They didn't change the Sabbath, which was a day of enforced rest. The Lord's Day is not the same as the Sabbath, merely changed to another day of the week. The Bible does not call it the Sabbath. Also "neither Ignatius nor the Epistle of Barnabas indicates that Sunday was regarded as in any way a substitute for the Jewish Sabbath, nor yet a continuation of it; rather, it was a new institution." (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*) Rest was the main purpose of the Sabbath while worship is the main emphasis of the Lord's Day. However, worship requires cessation of ordinary daily work; also, resting one day out of seven is a wise principle which we ignore at our own loss.

Let's change the question then: why did Sunday, not Saturday, become the Lord's Day, the day of worship? Because on the first day of the week Christ arose. On that day He first appeared to His disciples and then did not reappear to them until the following first day. (That was very odd if the seventh day was still so important.) He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which also was a Sunday. Therefore the early church met for worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). They made their offerings also on that day (1 Cor. 16:1,2).

## **8. But Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man! (Mark 2:27)**

Yes. He was telling the Jewish leaders that God gave the Sabbath (to Israel) as a blessing, not a burden. That is, man's welfare was more important than observing the Pharisee's very strict Sabbath rules. This does not prove that the Sabbath as given in the Old Covenant continues in effect now. Col. 2:16 shows it does not. Nevertheless, Jesus' statement does show that for, our own spiritual, mental and physical welfare we should, when at all possible, keep one day out of seven as a day distinct from other days. We can thus renew ourselves by rest from our usual work as well as worship God. When? On the first day is the New Testament example, as we saw above, though there is no command specifying either Sunday or Saturday. Christians should grant liberty to each other in this matter if they disagree: see Romans 14:4, 5, 10-12. Though some cultists feel we are lost because we don't observe Saturday, we do not say they are lost because they don't observe Sunday. "Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5b).

Returning to Christ's statement, we quote from R.A. Torrey: "Each of the Ten Commandments is an expression of an eternal principle, which stands under the new dispensation as well as old. The great underlying thought of the fourth command is man's need of physical rest and spiritual refreshment. The Sabbath was made for man, to meet his need. In the Lord's Day that need is met in a higher way, and it is not law now, but privilege ... But woe to the man who despises his privilege. He will suffer. Woe to the man who makes this day a day of secular activity, or work or hilarity or amusement, and forgets he has a soul to refresh by the study of the Word of God and prayer and work for Christ. He will suffer grievously in

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spirit, soul, and body. But the Christian will not keep the Lord's Day in the bondage of a servant under law, but in the joyous liberty of a child of God."

## 9. Why do Christians observe the Lord's Day?

The SDA's ask us, "Please give chapter and verse where the Christian Church is commanded to keep the first day of the week, or the Lord's Day." In honesty we must answer, "There is none." In turn we ask them. "Please cite chapter and verse where the Christian is commanded to observe the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath." In honesty they acknowledge, "There is none." We ask further, "Where in the New Testament is the Christian Church associated with the Sabbath?" The simple answer is, "Nowhere. And finally, "Where in the New Testament is the Christian Church associated with the first day, or the Lord's Day?" In many places, as follows.

On which day of the week did the Lord Jesus rise from the dead? Matthew 28:1 \_\_\_\_\_ The word "Sabbath" means literally "cessation". God ceased His work of creation and rested on the Sabbath. Christ finished His work of redemption ("It is finished") and rested on the Sabbath. Christ truly fulfilled the law in his perfect sacrifice, His finished work of redemption, and His Sabbath rest. For the Christian. Saturday or the Sabbath is the day of the dead Christ resting in the tomb, Sunday is the day of the living Christ, alive forevermore. The Sabbath commemorates the end of the old creation, the Lord's Day the beginning of the new creation.

Not only was the first of the week the day Jesus was resurrected.

In addition:

a. It was the day when Jesus first appeared to His disciples with a commission to evangelize (John 20:19-23).

- b. On Sunday the first gospel sermon was preached about Christ's death and resurrection (Acts 2:1; Pentecost was always on Sunday).
- c. On that day the first converts were baptized and gathered into a Christian church (Acts 2:41).
- d. On Sunday the disciples at Troas gathered together to break bread (take the Lord's Supper), and Paul preached to them (Acts 20:7).
- e. On the first day of the week the Corinthian believers were to lay aside their gifts for the Lord's work (1 Cor. 16:2).

For SDA's to claim that Sunday is a pagan day because pagans worshipped the sun on that day is as illogical as for us to claim that Saturday is a pagan day because pagans worshipped Saturn on that day!

## SUMMARY OF THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY

These past lessons have covered many details, for we have tried to consider the numerous questions raised by SDA'S. Now here is a summary of the most important points, to help you review and remember them.

- a. Sabbath observance was not an eternal moral law, but was made known only at Mt. Sinai, after the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt: Neh. 9: 13, 14.
- b. God's command about Sabbath observance was not given to all men, but only to Israel under the Old Covenant: Ex. 31:13-17; Deut. 5:1-20, especially vv. 1,2.
- c. God's New Covenant people, the Church, are not commanded or obliged to observe the Sabbath: Col. 2:14-17 (your most important passage); Gal. 4:10, 11; Romans 14:1-5.
- d. The early Church worshipped their risen Lord on His resurrection day, the first of the week: Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. "The Lord's Day" is mentioned in Rev. 1:10, and

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early Christian writers clearly show that this was the Christians' name for Sunday.

- e. The apostle Paul often attended the Jewish synagogue services on the Sabbath. But this does not prove that we should observe the Sabbath any more than it proves that we should attend Jewish synagogue services! His purpose was to evangelize the people assembled there at such times. Also he was willing to observe the Sabbath and other Old Covenant practices sometimes in order to overcome Jewish prejudices and win Jews to Christ Jesus: 1 Cor. 9:19-23, especially v. 20
- f. The New Testament and church history show that some Jewish Christians besides Paul continue to observe the Sabbath during the early years of the Church. They observed some other Old Covenant rituals, too (see Acts 21: 17-26). But after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., Sabbath observance among Christians died out almost altogether.
- g. The Bible commands us to meet together regularly with fellow Christians, to encourage one another and worship the Lord (Heb. 10:23-25; also see Acts 2:42). We saw that Sunday was their day for this. To do this usually requires resting from our ordinary daily work and in fact the principle (not law) of resting one day every week is wise and beneficial (Mark 2:27).

## **C. Denying We Are Saved Now, And Can Know It:**

Remember that though SDA's stress that salvation is by grace through faith, yet there is a great deal of controversy in Evangelical circles as to whether this is really what they practice. In this connection we have to consider their doctrine of the Investigative Judgment and how it affects their teaching on salvation by grace through faith alone.

"As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on

Jesus come in review before God. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the books of God's remembrance... All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven: as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life." (Ellen G. White.)

It would seem from this statement that nobody can know for sure in this life whether they will be judged worthy by Christ in His Investigative Judgment. How can a person be sure that he will die with all his sins repented of? And if he dies with unrepented sins will he then lose his salvation? Are Seventh Day Adventists sure that they will be saved by grace through faith alone? Will they have to wait till the next life to find out if they are among the saved? And if salvation is conditional upon having a character found in harmony with the law of God, then how can one know if he is saved in this life? In fact, he will not be saved if salvation requires faith plus works for salvation. (But see Eph. 2:8, 9).

## **D. Denying Salvation By Faith Apart From Works:**

The SDA state that they believe that a person is saved by grace through faith. In practice, however, they teach that a person must keep the law in order to be saved. (See SDA Teaching, Number 3)

The "faith-plus-works" doctrine was a major problem in Paul's time as it is today.

In Romans 3 and 4 Paul speaks out very clearly against it. Read now Chapter 3,

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verses 21-26. Notice what is the "righteousness of God" and how it is received.

Chapter 4 sets forth the great example of Abraham. Read verses 1-5. He was justified on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_. The book of Galatians was primarily written to oppose the works-righteousness principle being promoted in Paul's day. Read Galatians 3:10 and 5:4, verses which clearly oppose the SDA position.

## E. Exalting Ellen G. White As A Prophetess:

### 1. The Prophetess

- a. "Seventh Day Adventists hold that Ellen G. White performed the work of a true prophet ... as Jeremiah was a prophet ... as John the Baptist ..., so we believe that Mrs. White was a prophet to the church of Christ today." (*Advent Review and Herald*, 1928)
- b. "When I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God." (Ellen G. White in *Testimonies*)
- c. The writers of *Questions on Doctrine* (written in 1957) hold her writings in "highest esteem" because "The Holy Spirit opened to her mind important events and called her to give certain instructions for these last days." Consequently, "We as a denomination accept them as inspired counsels from the Lord. But we have never equated them with Scripture.
- d. "Brethren and sisters, God has demonstrated His love for the church by placing in its midst the prophetic gift (Mrs. White). If we prize the counsel given, we shall be protected against the wiles of the enemy ... Let us read these inspired writings, walk in the precious light revealed in them, and encourage others to rest their faith on a 'thus saith the Lord.'" (*Review and Herald*, 1961)

e. "If we neglect these books (Mrs. White's *Testimonies*), how can we be saved?" (*Review and Herald*, 1962)

### 2. Her Prophecies

Mrs. White is chiefly remembered for her explanations of the Investigative Judgment, Satan the sin-bearer, and her books. She also claimed to have visions. For example, "Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and she beheld the tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. She was amazed as she saw the Fourth Commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, with a soft halo of light encircling it."

## REFUTATION:

Two characteristics of her writings prove they were not "inspired counsels from the Lord." They are:

1. **Much of her writing was copied from other books.**
2. **If her writings were "inspired" they should not need be revised.**

Yet a comparison of later editions of some of her books with earlier editions shows many changes on page after page.

If an SDA tells you that he doesn't equate her writings with the Bible, then ask him if he and other SDA's ever dare to disagree with any of her teachings.

See Cults I under Mormons for a more complete refutation of adding to the Bible.



# Study Questions For The Seventh Day Adventists

1. The SDA emphasize 2 main doctrines. Their stress on is \_\_\_\_\_ is due to \_\_\_\_\_ . Their emphasis on the \_\_\_\_\_ is due to \_\_\_\_\_ (name).
2. Their radio programs are \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Their magazines include \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.
4. SDA say that during the "end times" the "Mark of the Beast" will be those who worship on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. There are 5 points under "Refuting the Errors of the SDA" . The first two concern the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. List the 7 points given under the Summary .
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The third point is \_\_\_\_\_
7. The fourth point is \_\_\_\_\_
8. The fifth point is exalting Ellen G. White as a prophetess. Give the 2 characteristics of her writings that prove they are not "inspired counsels from the Lord".
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_

# Exam for Cults - Part II

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: / /

1. Who was the founder of the INC? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What religious groups influenced his doctrine? 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_

3.. The INC magazine is called \_\_\_\_\_

4. Explain, briefly, the "Sugo" Doctrine. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do the INC teach about the Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. List the four main errors of the INC. 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

7. The SDA emphasize 2 main doctrines. their stress on \_\_\_\_\_ is due to \_\_\_\_\_

Their emphasis on the \_\_\_\_\_ is due to \_\_\_\_\_

8. The SDA say that during the "End times" the "Mark of the Beast" will be those who \_\_\_\_\_

9. List the 3 most important points (in your opinion) under the Summary on the Sabbath and the Lord' s Day.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Give the third point under Refuting the Errors of the SDA ( the first 2 are above in question 9). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. The forth point is \_\_\_\_\_

12. The fifth point is exalting Ellen G. White as a prophetess. Give the 2 characteristics of her writings that prove they are not "Inspired".

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

13. I have read all the printed material given under Cults II. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

14. I have looked up \_\_\_\_\_% of the Scripture references.

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### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS BLOCK:**

1. **Read all the material** for this block.
2. **Look up and read all the verses** in the material as you read through the material.
3. **Fill in the answers** to your **STUDY QUESTIONS** ahead of time so you will be better prepared for the EXAM during the final hour.
4. **T-H-I-N-K** as you read this material. **It will be a blessing to you.  
It will also change your life.**

# the Cults

## Part II

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