

B.A.S.I.C.

Brothers And Sisters In Christ

The Noble Art of Music

Missionary Matthew Ude

In Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, India Pastor Victor Vemuri loves to sing. At the beginning of every class, after tea break, and before leaving Victor makes sure that the men are singing. Sometimes I get impatient. Because of the limited time I want to get started with the lesson. It is important, however, to remember that not only does singing give us a chance to praise and rejoice in God, but good hymns help men to learn and remember biblical truth. Five minutes singing about a Biblical doctrine could easily do more than thirty minutes of teaching.

The Benjamin family in India also knows very well the importance of songs. Rev. V S Benjamin has written many hymns that the congregations of the CLCI know well and sing regularly. His son Pastor Jyothi Benjamin has continued in his father's footsteps writing over 40 hymns of his own.

Using songs not only for the purpose of joy and praise but also for teaching sound Biblical doctrine is a good Lutheran tradition. Martin Luther loved to sing. The following article describes Martin Luther's attitude towards music.

So strong were his beliefs about music and worship that he wrote these fiery words: "Next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts,

minds and spirits. A person who does not regard music as a marvelous creation of God does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs!"

His passionate beliefs led Luther to write both words and music for several hymns, including "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Luther's first hymnal was published in 1524. It contained eight hymns, four written by himself. Later hymnals were also published for congregational use. He urged people to use the hymns at home and encouraged parochial schools to teach them to their students.

Working with skilled musicians, Luther also created new music for church choirs, organ, and other instruments during his life. And after his death in 1546, the first line of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was inscribed on his tomb.

(2014). *Martin Luther*. Available from: <http://songsandhymns.org/people/detail/martin-luther>. [Accessed: 24/5/2014].

The SDA Church – Part 5 – Alcohol, Tobacco, Unclean Foods, etc

Missionary Matthew Ude

**“Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”
(Matt. 15:9 NKJ)**

Concerning Christian living the SDA church says the following:

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel and act in harmony with the principles of heaven . . . 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. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

Living Christian Behavior. Available from: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/living/christian-behavior/>. [Accessed: 24/5/2014].

In the above article from the SDA website

the first three lines are very good. We want to do the best to care for our bodies both physically and spiritually because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit. But starting with the fourth line the SDA church goes too far promoting and even demanding of Christians laws that God did not give us. This may seem like a small thing but the Apostle John at the end of Revelation reminds us we must not add even one thing to the Word of God.

Concerning regulations

Many pastors and other well meaning Christians fall into the trap of confusing Christian wisdom, Christian liberty, and Biblical doctrine. Alcohol is a good example of this. Many Christians have seen how the abuse of alcohol can ruin lives. It can ruin not only the lives of those who abuse the alcohol but their family and friends as well. For this reason there are some Christians like the SDA who condemn all use of alcohol. In this however they make the mistake of “Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat 15:9 NKJ). God’s word does not condemn the drinking of alcohol, it only condemns the abuse of alcohol. In other words God’s word tells us it is sinful to be drunk. It does not tell us it is sinful to drink alcohol. In fact the wedding of Cana (John 2) and the Lord’s Supper (Matt 26:29) show Jesus making

use of wine and in fact giving it to his disciples to drink. Paul also counsels Timothy that he ought to drink a little wine when he is sick (1 Timothy 5:23).

God's word makes it clear that gluttonous eating is a sin, Proverbs 23:20. Should we therefore say that eating itself is a sin? Of course not it is the abuse that is the sin not the eating. Or we can take the example of money, greed is also a sin. Greed is the abuse of money, caring about it and wanting it more than Christ. But this does not mean that money of itself is evil or that having it is sinful. In this regard many Christians have misread 1 Timothy 6:10 thinking it says "money is the root of all evil," but this is not so. 1 Timothy 6:10 says "the **love** of money is the root of all **kinds** of evil," which is the same as saying greed. In all these examples the sin is not in the thing, money, food, or alcohol but in man when he abuses what God has created.

There are many reasons why with Christian wisdom we might realize it is best to avoid certain things such as wine and tobacco. However if we try to make rules for others saying doing this or that is a sin, then we are guilty of adding to God's word what God has not said. We must always remember that we are messengers. We are here to proclaim what God has already given to us. It does not matter how wise we think we are, we do not have the right to make laws, rules, regulations for all Christians that God has not spoken.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy

of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev 22:18-19 NKJ)

Concerning Unclean Foods

The SDA church seems to put forward two reasons for not eating what the Old Testament called "unclean foods." One of these reasons is because they imagine that this is a more healthy way of living. Another reason is because they claim it is commanded by God.

The Old Testament regulations that God gave to the Israelites, Christ has removed by His coming. This is clearly taught in Scripture in numerous places as indeed we have already seen in our discussion on the Sabbath. Mark 2:28; Colossians 2:16; Acts 10:15; Acts 15; Hebrews 9:9-11; Rom 14. This idea that some or all of the Old Testament ceremonial regulations, such as circumcision and eating only clean animals, must still be obeyed was the very first heresy that the church had to contend with. The council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 was called for the purpose of condemning those who taught that circumcision was necessary. Paul himself deals with these questions in detail in Romans, Corinthians and in Galatians. One would have wished that this false teaching would thus have been dealt with, but here we see Satan has brought it to life again in the teachings

It does not matter how wise we think we are, we do not have the right to make laws, rules, regulations for all Christians that God has not spoken .

of the SDA church.

Secondly the SDA church supposes that because eating only clean foods is supposedly healthier therefore we must do it. We have to remember the purpose of the Old Testament regulations was as to be a shadow of Christ, Colossians 2:17. The purpose of the Old Testament laws was not to make the Israelites healthier. It may well be that God designed some of the laws because He knew this or that was healthier for His people. But we don't know that. Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us anything of the sort. We do not know why God called pigs unclean but sheep he called clean. It is simply what He did and we cannot claim to know the mind of God apart from those things He has chosen to reveal. We can use the wisdom and scientific tools God has given to us to investigate what is better for our health. We can recognize the wisdom of eating and living in a healthy manner so that we are fully capable of doing God's will and honoring Him in our bodies, but we cannot, as the SDA church has done, say that all Christians must do this and must not eat that.

*We do not
know why
God called
pigs unclean
but sheep he
called clean.*

self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. (Col 2:20-23 NKJ)

20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using-- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in