ADVENTIST TEACHINGS ON DIET AND NUTRITION

Introduction

1 Pet. 3:15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

A young man was writing a thesis for his master's degree in nutrition on Adventist teachings on diet and asked the General Conference what these teachings were.

Biblical Basis

Adventists believe 1 Cor. 10:31 that "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." We believe there is a theology of health in the Bible which includes our eating habits. We believe we should keep in the best health possible. Rom. 12:1. Our bodies are the temple of God and should not be defiled. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20 and 3:16, 17. We have the promise of Ex. 15:26 that if we do what the Lord tells us we will not get all these diseases that others get. And just to the extent Adventists have followed the counsels we have been given, our health as a group has been shown to be superior to other groups. However, living healthfully is not just for having good health but is primarily for the purpose of having clear minds to think on spiritual things and being able to help others; as a side benefit we live longer and are in a better state of health.

Principles for Church Membership

To be baptized and become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are some minimal dietary principles that must be believed and practiced.

1. There should be total abstinence from the use of alcohol. 1 Cor. 6:10; Prov. 20:1; Lev. 10:9, 10.
2. Unclean meat as described in Lev. 11 should not be consumed; this includes such items as pork. See 1 Pet. 1:16 and margin reference Lev. 11:44; see Isa. 66:17.
3. Although not a food, use of tobacco is forbidden.

However, if one is baptized and joins the church membership and believes in these principles but later reverts to his old habits he is not disfellowshiped but is prayed for and assisted in every way possible to overcome on these points.

Spirit of Prophecy on Smoking

"If the priests had entered the sanctuary with their mouths polluted with tobacco, they would have shared the fate of Nadab and Abihu. And yet professed Christians bow before God in their families to pray with their mouths defiled with the filth of tobacco. . . ." Temp 65.

"Were Peter upon the earth now he would exhort the professed followers of Christ to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. And Paul would call upon the churches in general to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And Christ would drive from the temple those who are defiled by the use of tobacco, polluting the sanctuary of God by their tobacconized breaths. He would say to these worshipers, as He did to the Jews, 'My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.' We would say to such, Your unholy offerings of ejected quids of tobacco defile the temple, and are abhorred of God. Your worship is not acceptable, for your bodies which should be the temple for the Holy Ghost are defiled. You also rob the treasury of God of thousands of dollars through the indulgence of unnatural appetite." Temp 64. God loves the sinner but hates the tobacco.

"Two thirds of the drunkards in our land created an appetite for liquor by the use of tobacco." Temp 72.

Summary on Alcohol Use

1.Scientifically some studies have shown those who drink a little have less deaths from heart attacks than non-drinkers. Alcohol Health and Research World, vol. 19, no. 4, 1995, p. 288. However, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia) states this is probably not true as these studies have not equalized well the drinkers vs. non-drinkers in all their habits and characteristics. Their studies "suggest that some or all of the apparent protective effect of moderate alcohol consumption on CVD may be due to residual or unmeasured confounding." Am J Prev Med 2006;23:369-73.

2.Even if those studies were true, no scientific body recommends use of alcohol to lower heart attack risk because the bad effects outweigh greatly such good effects. The W.H.O. (World Health Organization Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Disease 1990, p. 111. Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Disease 1990, p. 111) and N.A.S. (National Academy of Sciences Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Disease 1990, p. 111) do not recommend use of alcohol. The Report of Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans states: "Make clear that alcohol has no net benefits to health." Nutrition Today, July-August 1990, p. 45.

3."There is little justification to recommend alcohol as a cardioprotective strategy." Circulation 2001;103:402-5. The data do not justify advising non-drinkers to drink. JAMA 2001;265:2004-5. "No patient should be advised to start drinking or to increase alcohol consumption." Lancet 1999;353:1815-16.

4.Adventist vegetarians who do not drink have greater longevity and lower heart attack death rates than these groups in these studies who drank a little and supposedly had lower rates than those who did not drink. See Gary Fraser's book from Oxford Press Diet Life Expectancy and Chronic Disease, p. 51.

5.Jesus tells SDAs (through the testimony of Jesus in the Spirit of Prophecy) that nowhere in the Bible is alcohol recommended. Temperance 53, 97. The Bible is consistent in its recommendation not to drink alcohol. It is only a misunderstanding of some Bible texts which makes some think otherwise.

7.A drunkard will not be in heaven. 1 Cor. 6:10. Definition of "drunk" is "having the faculties impaired by alcohol." Webster. Scientifically this can be shown from use of just one drink. FAA regulations prohibit the use of alcohol by pilots for 24 hours prior to flight and by crew for 8 hours prior to flight.

Additional Teachings Based Initially on Spirit of Prophecy Counsels.

Once a person is a member of the Adventist Church he/she is educated (in our school system, our churches via Sabbath Schools, sermons, etc.) into the best lifestyle possible based on the teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy. The nutrition principles include the following:

1. Abstinence from tea, coffee, and other caffeinated beverages. Cereal coffees are often used as substitutes.
2. The vegetarian diet is the best diet possible.
   A. This means a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet. The original diet (meaning without flesh food) was the original diet (Gen. 1:29 & 3:18) and will also be the diet in heaven as there will be no death there.
   B. However, the Nutrition Council of the General Conference had in one of its proposed position papers recommended we learn to cook without the use of eggs, especially egg yolks, and that we learn to use only nonfat or low fat milk rather than whole milk or no milk at all in case disease in animals make these products unhealthful to use. The Nutrition Council does recommend that all insure an adequate supply of vitamin B-12 if one is a total vegetarian. This may be had by using fortified foods or taking it in supplement form.
   C. The Bible does teach that one should not eat any meat with the fat and the blood (Lev. 3:17 and restated in the New Testament in Acts 15:20).
   D. ". . . Avoid meat eating, not because it is regarded as sin, but because it is not healthful." 5MR 401. However James 4:17 is to be remembered in all our health habits "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Church policy is well described in Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 401.

Presumably in the United States approximately 41% of Adventists are vegetarians and another 21% or so will eat meat but do so less than once a month. From the scientific standpoint that would be about 62% who would be considered vegetarians. However, between 1960 and 1990 many more of the vegetarians have discontinued the use of eggs (6-7% in 1960 did not use eggs in

their homes but in 1990 it was 23%). In other countries around the world the majority of Adventists by far still use meat but in the past few years there has been a move towards the vegetarian diet.

Today scientifically, length of life alone is evidence of the advantage of the vegetarian diet. Studies show that in the United States only 19% of men and 39% of women in the general population live to the age of 85 or more but for Adventist vegetarian men it is 48% and women 60%.

Basis for Belief in the Spirit of Prophecy Writings

Because the Adventist Church believes it has the Spirit of prophecy in the writings of E. G. White much of this counsel is used in the Church's educational program on health. These writings are being confirmed more and more each day from scientific studies. Following the teachings of a true prophet is a biblical concept.

3 PIECES OF EVIDENCE GOD'S LAST CHURCH IS TO HAVE A PROPHET

1) Rev. 12:17.

Rev. 12 gives the history of the world. It tells about the war in heaven, the Devil trying to destroy the Church for 1260 years (538-1798 AD), and the Church is saved by America (when the Church flees into the wilderness). After this the Devil was angry because there arose a people who kept all the ten commandments and besides they also had the testimony of Jesus which John says is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

2) Rev. 10:9-11.

John was to eat the little book which would be sweet to the mouth but bitter to the stomach. This represented the sweetness of the thought that Jesus was coming in 1844 as Dan. 8:14 and the 2300 days when the sanctuary was to be cleansed was interpreted to mean. But it was bitter to them when Jesus didn't come because the sanctuary in heaven was to be cleansed and it was not the earth that was to be cleansed. After this it is said in verse 11 to "Prophesy again" which means there must be a prophet. So a prophet was to arise sometime shortly after the great disappointment of 1844.

3) All Time Prophecies Had A Prophet Who Gave The Prophecy But A Later (many years later) Prophet Arose When The Prophecy Was Fulfilled.

A. The Flood

Prophesied by Enoch Jude 14. Named his son Methuselah (Gen. 5:21) which means it will happen when he dies. The flood came when Methuselah

died. But Noah was raised up and preached for 120 years saying the flood is coming. Gen. 6:3, 13.

B. Under Egyptian Rule For 400 or 430 Years.

Abraham was told the people would be under foreign domination for 400 years (Gen. 15:13; Ex. 12:40), but Moses came and said it was time to leave and they left that selfsame day (Ex. 12:41).

C. 70 Years of Babylonian Captivity.

Jeremiah predicted the 70 years of Babylonian captivity (Jer. 25:11, 12) but it was Daniel who understood the prophecy and let the people know the end of the 70 years was about to occur (Dan. 9:2;10:1).
It was Cyrus who defeated the Babylonians and he was predicted to do it 150-160 years before he was born (Isa. 45:1).

D. The Time of Jesus First Coming Was Predicted.

Daniel predicted exactly when Jesus would come (Dan. 9:24-7) but it was John the Baptist who told the people when it happened (John 1:29).

E. The 2300-Day Prophecy As To When the Sanctuary Was to be Cleansed.

Daniel predicted the time of the beginning of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) but who was the prophet who stood up and said now is the time this prophecy is fulfilled? E. G. White.

Many other prophets (Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, etc.) arose about the same time but E. G. White was the only one who confirmed this prophecy of the 2300 days. This confirms the authenticity of E. G. White as God's true prophet.

4) IMPORTANCE OF A PROPHET

A.Rejection of prophet is equated with rejection of God. 1 Sam. 8:7.

B.Success in battle required acceptance of the prophet. 2 Chron. 20:20.

Our battle today is spiritual. Eph. 6:12.

C.Accept a prophet and get a prophet's reward. Mt. 10:41.

D.Herod wished to see a miracle but Jesus answered him not a word. Luke 23:8, 9. Why? Because he had rejected John the Baptist's counsel regarding his marital situation, there was nothing more Jesus could do for him.

Foods Categorized

Foods are categorized in the writings of E. G. White by three sets of descriptive term such as those that should be avoided because they are injurious to health, those that may be used moderately and those that can be used freely. Most would agree as to which category any food should be placed in.

Use Freely	Use Moderate Amounts	Injurious To Health
Wholesome	Do not eat largely of	Ruinous
Palatable	Some	Deleterious
Best	Less harmful	Injurious
Healthful	Not in large amounts	Fiery
Abundance of	Use a little	Irritate
Appetizing	Do not use too freely	Decay
Nourishing	Use in moderation	Putrefies
Preferable	Moderate amounts	Difficultofdigestion
Beneficial	Use more sparingly	Unwholesome
Inexpensive	Use in limited quantities	Free from
Nutritious	Not excessively	Never use
	Do not use freely	Doublyobjectionable
	Objectionable	Unfit; Hurtful
		Too strong
		Dangerous; Harmful
		Poisonous
		Unnatural
		Excite

The book, Counsels on Diet and Foods, which consists of excerpts from the writing of Ellen G. White, is a summary of the major principles of diet promoted by Seventh-day Adventists.

Things Not Discussed That Adventists Teach on Diet

1. Salt – We need some salt in the diet. Dr. Trall taught not to use salt. This resulted in Mrs. Loughborough's death. CDF 207, CDF 311; 5MR 401-2.
2. Water – Get adequate water not with the meals but between meals. Actual amount we were not told but we were told that a half quart more or less taken before breakfast was good. CDF 420, 303.
3. Don't have too much liquid foods. A lot of soups would not be good. CDF 105, 200, 314; FCE 226.
4. Don't have foods too hot or too cold. CDF 420; HL 91, 164.
5. Some foods or combinations of foods may not be good for some but are perfectly okay for others. One has to experiment for himself as to what is best for him. CH 154-5; MH 319
6. Should have a variety from meal to meal but not a large variety at any one meal (3-4 dishes are enough although with Dr. Kress he was told not more than 2-3 and two would be better as there would be less war in the stomach). CDF 107, 109.
7. Fasting 1-2 days a week is a good thing. CDF 189.
8. Not to use vinegar. DA 746; CDF 345, 485; 2MR 2.
9. Not to have too many nuts in a recipe. CDF 364-5.
10. Avoid apple cider. CDF 432-6.
11. Grape juice is a good drink. Fruit juice mingle with bread is a good dish. CDF 436-7.
12. Fried food is not good because there is grease (animal fat) used in the frying. CDF 323.
13. Not cooking on the Sabbath. Ex. 16:23; CG 528. Should the Israelites, or Adventists today, have non-believers do the cooking for us on the Sabbath by going to restaurants or hotels and thereby get around this command?
14. Breakfast should be the main meal of the day. CDF 173.
15. There should be 5-6 hours between meals. CDF 173.

"We are coming to the time when recipes for cooking will not be needed, for God's people will learn that the food God gave Adam in his sinless state is the best for keeping the body in a sinless state." 21MR 286.

THE TEMPERANCE PLEDGE

God's Pledge to Us

"The Creator of man has arranged the living machinery of our bodies. Every function is wonderfully and wisely made. And God pledged Himself to keep this human machinery in healthful action if the human agent will obey His laws and co-operate with God." CDF 17 (Te 11)

To Sign the Temperance Pledge

We are to "sign the pledge of total abstinence." 20 MR 106 "From the light God has given me, every member among us should sign the pledge and be connected with the temperance association." RH Oct. 21, 1844 (also Te 236 and 220) We should "call for signers to the temperance pledge." MH 171 "Sign every pledge presented." CH 441

Pledge Against Tobacco and Alcohol

"We were doing upon the point of temperance what no other class of people in the world were. We were as much in favor of a pledge against tobacco as liquor." 10 MR 69 ". . . . Liquor, tobacco, or like indulgences. . . " MH 211

"I dreamed that there was a large company assembled together in the open air, and a tall young man that I have often seen I my dreams, when important matters are under consideration, was sitting near the chairman of the meeting. This young man arose and passed to the men that seemed to be at the head of the company and said, 'Here is a paper I wish you to attach your names to, every one of you.' He presented it to Brother A first, He looked at it and read aloud, 'You here pledge yourselves to abstain from all fermented wines and spirituous liquors of any kind, and use your influence to induce all others that you can to follow your example.' I thought Brother A shook his head, saying it was not necessary for him to attach his name to the paper. He understood his duty and should advocate the cause of temperance all the same, but felt not called upon to bind himself, for there were exceptions in all these things. He handed the same paper to Brother B, who took the paper, looked it over

carefully and said, 'I am of the same mind of Brother A. Sometimes I feel the need of something to stimulate me when I am weak and nervous, and I don't want to pledge myself that under no circumstances will I use wine of liquors. There was a sad, grieved look expressed in the countenance. He passed on to others. There were about twenty or thirty who followed the example of Brethren A and B. He then returned to the first two and handed them the paper said in a firm, decided manner, yet a low tone, 'You, both of you, are in the greatest danger of being overcome upon the point of appetite. The work of reformation must commence at your tables and be carried out conscientiously in every place under all and every circumstance. Your eternal destiny depends upon the decision you now make. You both have strong points of character and are weak in some directions. See what your influence had done.' I saw the names of all who had refused to sign written upon the back of the pledge. Again he presented the paper and in an authoritative manner said, 'Sign this paper or resign your positions. Not only sign, but upon your honor carry out your decisions. Be true to your principles. As God's messenger I come to you and demand your names. Neither of you have seen the necessity of health reform, but when the plagues of God shall be all around you, you will then see the principles of health reform and strict temperance in all things, - that temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained. Refuse to sign this and you will never have another solicitation. You both need your spirits humbled, softened, and let mercy, tender compassion, and dutiful tenderness take the place of coarseness, harshness, set and determined will to carry out your ideas at any cost.'. . . I thought, with trembling hands the names were given and the entire thirty signed their names. Then one of the most solemn addresses was given upon temperance. The subject was taken up from the table. 'Here,' said the speaker, 'is the appetite created for love of strong liquor. Appetite and passion are the ruling sins of the age. Appetite, the way it is indulged, influences the stomach and excites the animal propensities. . . . The stomach becomes diseased, then the appetite is morbid and continually craving something to stimulate, something to 'hit the spot'! Some acquire the disgusting habit of tea and coffee, and go still further using tobacco, which benumb the tender organs

of the stomach and lead them to crave something stronger than tobacco. They go still further to the use of liquor.'" Te 200-2.

To Include Tea and Coffee

". . . Coffee or tea. . . " ". . . . We hope to carry our brethren and sisters up to a still higher standard to sign the pledge to abstain from Java coffee and the herb that comes from China." RH Apr. 19, 1887 "Some hesitated (in signing the pledge), thinking that the platform was too broad in including tea and coffee; but finally their names were given, pledging themselves to total abstinence." LLM 238 "And shall not the pledge embrace coffee and tea as hurtful stimulants?" CH 442 "There are some who will work with all their powers, not only upon the point of intemperance in the use of liquor, but in the matter of eating, and of drinking those things that are not intoxicants, but that work injury to the system. I refer to the tea and coffee that many place upon their tables." RH Jan. 14, 1909. "Who among our brethren will sign a pledge to dispense with FLESH MEATS, tea, coffee, and all injurious foods and become health reformers in the truest sense of the term?" PH128

To Include Flesh Meats

"Who among our brethren will sign a pledge to dispense with flesh meats, tea, and coffee and all injurious foods, and become health reformers in the fullest sense of the term?" SpM 427 "But I will not go on to describe these sickening sights (dead animals), I should now take the pledge to eat no more meat as long as fruits and vegetables can be obtained." 7MR 423

"There are many who feel that they can not get along without flesh meat. . . If you will begin at Washington to do this work of reform, in school, in the Printing Office and among all the working forces, the Lord will help you to present a pledge that will help the people to return from their backsliding on the question of health reform." PH 128.

To Include the Phrase "All injurious Foods" - 7MR 423, PH 128 as listed above.

Other Pledges

Novel Readers to Sign the Temperance Pledge

"Novel readers are mental inebriates; and they need to sign a pledge of total abstinence as verily as does the victim of any other form of intemperance." OHC 275.

On Dress

". . . I think it would also be well for them to present to every Christian women a pledge to abstain from all needless display and extravagance in dress, for the bondage of a woman to fashion is usually as great as is the bondage of a liquor inebriate to his appetite." 2MR 4 "We shall frame a pledge including dress here at this campmeeting." 21MR 248 "It would be well if a pledge of temperance in dress could be presented for our women to sign and to observe." HR Feb/ 1, i877

Against Speaking Too Long

"I have to pledge myself not to speak too long. . . " VSS 247

Against Working When Should Be Resting

"Will you not sign a pledge that you will no longer weaken or deface the Lord's temple by working when you ought to rest. . . " 2MCP 735

Temperance At Foundation of Good & Intemperance of Evil

"Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the evil in the world." SD 212

"Intemperance is at the foundation of the larger share of the ills of life. It annually destroys tens of thousands. We do not speak of intemperance as limited only to the use of intoxicating liquors, but give it a broader meaning, including the hurtful indulgences of any appetite or passion. . . . . 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' is a motto that should be carried farther than the mere use of spirituous liquors. True temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use judiciously only healthful articles of food." HR Apr. 1, 1877

". . . When the plagues shall be all around you, you will then see the principles of health reform and strict temperance in all things, --that temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained." Te 201-2

Therefore, using the broader meaning of temperance, a temperance pledge could include almost everything in Christian living.

E. G. White Signed A Pledge on Use of Meat

"Mrs. White went to the unusual expedient of drawing up and signing a 'pledge to my heavenly Father,' in which she 'discarded meat as an article of diet.' Said she, 'I will not eat flesh myself, or set it before any of my household. I gave orders that the fowls should be sold, and that the money which they brought in should be expended in buying fruit for the table." Roger Coon article Ellen White and Vegetarianism.

Vegetarianism is not a principle but a policy based on a principle. ". . . Mrs. White refused to go along with the idea of making vegetarianism a test of church 'fellowship' promoted by some of her brethren. On the contrary, while recognizing that 'swine's flesh was prohibited by Jesus Christ enshrouded in the billowy cloud' during the Exodus, Ellen White stated emphatically in 1889 that even the eating of pork 'is not a test question,'" Roger Coon's paper Ellen White and vegetarianism. He gives references.

Purported Ellen White Pledges Circulated

Many purported pledges written by Ellen White have been circulated listing many food items other than flesh meats, tea, coffee, and alcohol. The White Estates has no record of any such pledge she has written so if you see such you will know there is no good evidence of its authenticity.

Elder A. G. Daniels and the Pledge on Flesh Foods - EGW requested he promote this pledge against use of meat but he felt an educational program should precede this and she agreed with him.

MY PLEDGE

I PLEDGE TO MY HEAVENLY FATHER

TO ABSTAIN FROM

USE OF TOBACCO,

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES,

TEA, COFFEE, AND SIMILAR

DRINKS, AND ALL FLESH

MEATS INCLUDING FISH

AND POULTRY.

_____ _____

Signature **Date**