

Clint

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### NOT WHAT THEY THINK

Even after longtime criticism we have not changed. Our rules have remained the same for all this while. I, as an Adventist, have been misunderstood in many cases. I go to church on Saturdays instead of Sunday. I am strict in this because I follow the biblical interpretation which I believe in. Most people I have worked with and chanced not to be Adventists, criticized my church being loners because of worshipping on Saturday while all others do it on other days. This has been for a while, but we have not changed due to our strong believe in the biblical interpretation. I know most people do not know what happens in Adventist church. They do not understand what Adventist teaches or practices. They think Adventist are all vegetarians. They are holy rollers. Think alike, care about themselves. Are like Christian scientists. Though some of these stereotypes seem to be true from a distance but they are not realistic. We adventists follow most of the bible teaching exactly the way the bible states. This tends to make us to look a bit different from other christians.

I as an Adventist support health life, hence promoting a meatless lifestyle. We adventists do not eat a lot of meat especially pork. They say that we are vegetarians through this. This is because we prefer vegetables whenever pork or any meat is served. I experienced an incident at my friend's party where pork was served. It happens that my religion strongly forbids eating pork because we believe it is not healthy to do so. I don't take pork because it is forbidden in the Old Testament of the bible. My friends we curious to see if I could eat the pork since many of

adventists do not eat it. I did not attempt to eat it first because I never liked it even before and because my religion forbids it. So, some of my friends' friends mocked me for not eating that meat, instead choosing to eat vegetables. Most of them tried to convince me to try it. I knew how delicious it was, but I chose not to eat it because of my health. Some of them have this stereotype just because they only see most adventists not eating meat and going for vegetables hence conclude that all adventists are vegetarians. Most of us do not but some of us also eat it. So that disqualifies the stereotype that all adventists are vegetarians. As an adventist health comes first before delicacy and that is why we eat more vegetables than meat.

In contrast, I celebrate Christmas and Easter. Although they say that adventists do not celebrate Easter and Christmas. This is because they don't see us adventist go to churches during Christmas and Easter. I remember one time I was conversing with my friends after a football match; it was around christmas period. One of my friends come up with the question why adventists neither celebrate christmas nor easter. It was difficult to explain to them that we do celebrate christmas and easter. They really believed by directly celebrating christmas and easter is the only way to celebrate forgetting that we can celebrate in other ways. It is true that christmas and easter is not in our adventist church calendar but I personally as an adventist celebrate christmas and easter. Though I do so not directly but indirectly. I usually wish my friends well during the celebrations, sometimes sending gifts to them. I also join them in some cases in special meals. Through that way I believe I am celebrating christmas and easter with them as an adventist. Above all adventist institution such as schools, and even workplaces recognize easter and christmas in a way that we give off-days to workers who celebrate the two holidays. Furthermore, as the adventist community in times like of christmas distribute free foods stuff to those who lack to celebrate christmas. I strongly believe that through all these ways we celebrate christmas and easter. Before one considers that adventist do not celebrate

easter and christmas he/she should interact with some adventist maybe through doing so he/she will be able to know or understand that we celebrate christmas and easter.

In addition, they say adventists think they are better off than other religions; they are holy rollers. Yes, in some cases we may seem to be holy rollers this is because we practice dearly on the teaching of the bible. But saying that we are holy rollers is not true. Someday before one thinks of us as holy rollers he/she should have more information about us adventists. I have never even in one day felt like I as an adventist I am better than any person of any other religion. Although some of my friends believe so much in stereotypes. Most of the time this brings an endless debate. I remember this time when we almost fought the debate turned into heated furnaces. One of my friends who was not an adventist turned into an angered lion, he almost swallowed us alive. The reason being he felt that I was biased based on religion. In explaining a misunderstanding occurred, and he erupted like a volcano to defend his religion. I really had hard since some of my other friends joined him feeling that I was on the wrong. I really understood them since misunderstanding do occur and I believed that all religion is equal, and our God is the same. Maybe if I were in their shoes, I would have felt the same. But if they were in my position, I believe they could have understood me better. First, they are my friends why should I even in the first place think of being discriminative to them?

They say all adventists think alike. This is because we do almost all things the same. Although it is not true since everyone thinks differently. I and most of my friends who are adventists believe in doctrines of our church. I passionately follow the teachings and practices. As an adventist I have a firm stand on our faith and view of biblical interpretation. Some focus on the church prophet Ellen G white who authored most books about the adventist church and some on the cultural Adventist. Although people also think we think alike because of the firm stand we us adventists have on our faith, beliefs, and practices. If you go anyway, you will find

adventists with the same practices as mine; although they may not be exact as mine, but they will be closely alike with mine. I think instead of people thinking we think alike, they can refer to as unique people because we practice the same practices all over the world. Also, I remember the time when my colleagues at work asked a question about why adventists we prefer decent dressing separately and we answered the same way. They were shocked that the answers we gave were the same and we were not together at that moment.

In addition, many think Adventist are strict on the view of biblical interpretation, but it is true in some cases and sometimes we are flexible on biblical view that may be confusing. They view so because we follow the bible teaching strictly but we have different views of biblical interpretation in different circumstances we are in. I in some cases I follow my church's biblical interpretation but I am allowed to follow or not to follow. Some stereotypes may have some truth in it, but individuals need to take time and learn about adventists. Not all in stereotypes are not true, some things have some truth in them. We adventists are like any other Christian faith or denomination we are neither better nor worse; furthermore, we worship the same God with other religions. I challenge everyone to have more information about any religion before judging or stereotyping.