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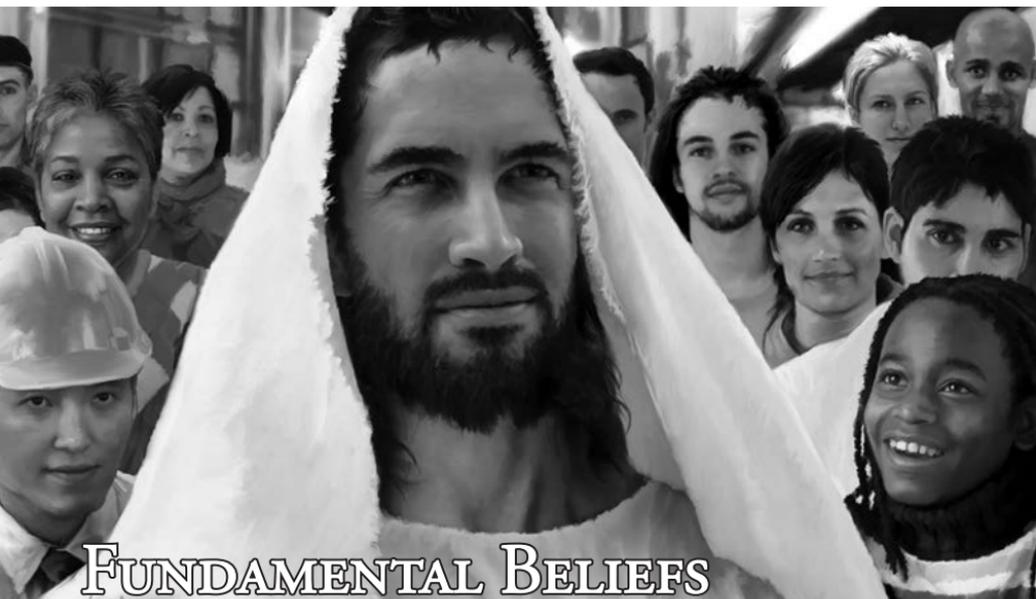
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**Sabbath  
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Ministries**

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of the Sabbath School Publications Board, a subcommittee of the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM), publisher of the Bible study guides. The published guide reflects the input of worldwide evaluation committees and the approval of the Sabbath School Publications Board and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).



## FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Everyone believes in something. Even those who claim to believe in nothing, or in nothing *absolute*, still believe in something (in this case, their relativism). Beliefs are important because they greatly impact how we live. For some Christians, however, more important than belief or behavior is belonging, a sense of community. Yet, community must be based on shared beliefs, shared goals, and common concerns.

For Seventh-day Adventists—people from almost every conceivable manifestation of humanity—what holds us together as a community are our “fundamental beliefs,” all 28, which are foundational for growing in Christ and living as a community of faith in the light of eternity.

Some argue that what matters is our love of Christ, not doctrine. This sounds nice, but the Bible never separates a love for Christ from a love for the truth. We are told that by “speaking the truth in love,” we may grow into Christ (*Eph. 4:15, 16*). Knowing doctrine is not merely accumulating correct data; rather, knowing doctrine results in love for God (*2 John 6–10*). Furthermore, the Bible is concerned about “sound doctrine” because, among other things, it affects the ethical life (*1 Tim. 1:9, 10; Titus 2:1–5*).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a statement of 28 fundamental beliefs. These are not a creed, in the sense that one could not expect any further development of the truths expressed in them (or that even more teachings could be added).

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And though we must always be open to more light, a firm consensus on these beliefs is crucial to the unity and mission of the church. What has brought together millions of people from all over the world into a unified movement other than our shared doctrines?

This quarter, then, we are going to focus on some of those teachings. Though we believe that all 28 are foundational and fundamental to our identity as Seventh-day Adventists, we cannot study them all in one quarter. But we do hope to present a systematic and coherent guide to some of these beliefs. Special attention will be given to belief Number 11, “Growing in Christ,” accepted by the General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2005 (see lessons 5–7). This belief, in and of itself, didn’t add new or previously unknown teaching; rather, in response to needs in certain parts of the world, it helped to clarify the church’s understanding of God’s power to give believers in Christ victory over the forces of evil. In fact, all the lessons this quarter will be framed within the context of the struggle between Christ and those forces of evil. It’s what we call “the great controversy.”

*Within the great-controversy motif, and directly related to it, salvation in Christ is the thread that runs through all our doctrines.*

Within the great-controversy motif, and directly related to it, salvation in Christ is the thread that runs through all our doctrines. The great controversy, and the issues it has generated, sets the stage for the plan of redemption, which underlies and permeates all 28 of our fundamental beliefs.

Doctrines, then, are not an end in and of themselves. They are a *means* to an end, and that end is Jesus, knowing Jesus for ourselves and growing in Him. Or, more subjectively, all 28 of our doctrines should lead us to a deeper understanding of what Jesus has done for us through the plan of salvation, which, in turn, should lead us to a deeper love of God and to a life more committed to revealing that love not only to the world but also to “principalities and powers in heavenly places” (*Eph 3:10*).

Yes, everyone believes in something. The goal of the quarter is to help us to not just believe in Truth (*John 14:6*), but to love Him even more and to grow in His grace.

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# Got Questions?

## Sabbath School University *has answers!*

*Sabbath School University* is a 28-minute discussion of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. SSU discusses the content and strategies to enrich your Sabbath School with fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and missions. Sabbath School leaders, don't miss this weekly broadcast on Hope Channel.



[www.hopetv.org](http://www.hopetv.org)

# SMALL GROUPS, RAPID GROWTH



Small groups are the power behind the Adventist Church's rapid growth in South America. Church members invite neighbors and friends to their homes to study the Bible and pray together. Even children have their own small groups.

But small groups outgrow their homes and need a place in which to worship. Their faith is rich, but their resources are meager.

This quarter our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help several struggling congregations in Brazil and Peru to build simple churches in which to worship. I'm glad I can help. For me, it's personal.

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