

ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Advent Christian Church is an evangelical denomination that arose in the United States during the mid-1800s. The church was formally established as the Advent Christian Association in 1860 by a group of former Millerites—followers of WILLIAM MILLER who had predicted Christ’s literal return for October 22, 1844. Advent Christians were distinguished from most other adventist groups by their belief in conditional immortality, and from the conditionalist SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS by the Advent Christian’s Sunday observance and the decision not to recognize the prophetic ministry of ELLEN GOULD WHITE. Conditional immortality, the view that immortality is granted to the righteous only through the grace of God at the resurrection, is a belief the Advent Christian Church still holds and was originally advocated by George Storrs. Two related doctrines are that of “soul sleep,” the view that death is a state of unconsciousness lasting until the resurrection; and annihilationalism, the belief that the unrighteous are annihilated permanently rather than suffering eternally in hell.

The Advent Christian Church is congregational in nature, with regional conferences and institutions co-

ordinated, although not controlled, by the Advent Christian General Conference of America. Missionary activity was begun in 1891 and remains an important focus, with the Advent Christian Church active in more than 30 countries. According to 2003 figures the world membership of the Advent Christian Church is 61,000 with 26,000 members in the United States, 17,000 in India, and 5,000 in Nigeria. In 1964 the Life and Advent Union, another denomination with Millerite roots, merged with the Advent Christian Church.

See also Congregationalism; Millenarians and Millennialism; Miller, William; Missions; Seventh-day Adventists; White, Ellen Gould

References and Further Reading

- Hewitt, Clyde E. *Midnight and Morning*. Charlotte, N.C.: Venture Books, 1983.
- . *Devotion and Development*. Charlotte, N.C.: Venture Books, 1990.
- Knight, George R. *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*. Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1993.

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