



In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think and to follow his own convictions.

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:12, 5.

In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule and exact homage but as messengers of mercy to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity.

—Ellen White, Desire of Ages, page 550

Safe Places

Newsletter

<http://www.buildingsafeplaces.org/>

March/April 2015

We just finished our first Building Safe Places—for Everyone meeting in the United States. We appreciated the thoughtful discussions and the two new workshops that were developed in response to requests during our time together. You can find a description of them in the **Resource Section** as well as on our website under Training and Consultations.

As I write this, we are about to head for Germany for our fourth year of meetings there. We're looking forward to discussions with both our Safe Places Team support group and the largest First Conversations group we've ever had. Two Seventh-day Adventist divisions and four unions will be represented.

In this issue, Gerard Frenk, former ministerial secretary for the Dutch Union Conference, shared some thoughts about the ways “borders” affect our spirituality and the way we interact with each other.

We're continuing our series by Dr. Gilbert Valentine on the 1888 Meetings and the ways Adventism has dealt with the possibility of theological change.

Because of our continuing concern about the levels of self-harm and suicidality among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex adolescents from evangelical backgrounds, we're including in our Resource section a video link for parents to help them deal with depression and suicidal thoughts experienced by their children. You can find other information on this topic at our website.

We've included some **Research** on discrimination and harassment by law enforcement officials in the LGBT community. We're also continuing to share responses to our qualitative research project on why Seventh-day Adventist LGBTI people and their allies leave or stay in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As always, we include the voices of LGBTI Adventists because we believe it is important to get to know each other.

Please feel most welcome to use the immediate response links at the bottom of each article to let us know what you are thinking or would like to recommend.

Please feel most welcome to share this newsletter with anyone you think would enjoy or benefit from it. If you would like to discontinue receiving *Safe Places*, you can contact us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org.

We wish you gentle blessings,

Catherine Taylor and the Building Safe Places Team:

Frieder Schmid, Ingrid Schmid, Dave Ferguson, Floyd Poenitz, and Ruud Kieboom.



Borders

There were times when the profane and the sacred were clearly separated. To cross the threshold of a church meant moving from one domain into the other. Adventists cross such a line at the end of the week. We move into the sacred Sabbath as the sun sets on Friday. A border in time.

[Read more on page 4](#)

1888 –

The Unending Story of Seventh-day Adventist Reformation

The first installment of this paper described the focus of the meetings as discussing three topics: Daniel 7, Galatians 3:19-25, and religious liberty. Why were these topics so “remarkable” for Seventh-day Adventists at the time? Several factors were involved that elevated the topics to a high degree of importance in the minds of the Minneapolis conference participants so that they were viewed with a deeper and wider significance.

[Read more on page 6](#)

Resources

[page 12](#)

Recent Research

- The Adventist project
- Discrimination and harassment by law enforcement

Discrimination and harassment by law enforcement based on sexual orientation and gender identity is an ongoing and pervasive problem in LGBT communities.

[Read more on page 13](#)

Stories of the Heart

I would like people to see the image of Jesus Christ reflected in my behavior and my words. That means I would like to show patience, kindness, slowness to anger, willingness to be helpful, and be a pleasant person to be around. This is what Christ modeled for us.

[Read more on page 15](#)



Borders



By Gerard Frenk



I have crossed the borders within the European Union so often that I now barely notice them. There's no custom control and no immediate radical change in the landscape. The hills of Maastricht in Holland calmly continue to accompany me to Aken in Germany. The flat country of eastern Austria merges unobtrusively into the pusta of Hungary. The Alps in France are, especially in the white of winter, indistinguishable from those in Italy.

How different it is when travelling to the United States. That border is there to be noticed. In the sudden confrontation with radical suspicion it becomes very clear what borders represent—the artificial divide between people.

On the brain

Borders. It seems that most westerners need a personal space of approximately a 75-centimeter radius to feel safe and comfortable in the presence of others. That space may temporarily be invaded by family, friends, or when required by social etiquette. Usually retreat sounds when the social ritual has been completed. A safety border.

Borders. There were times when the profane and the sacred were clearly separated. To cross the threshold of a church meant moving from one domain into the other. Adventists cross such a line at the end of the week. We move into the sacred Sabbath as the sun sets on Friday. A border in time.

The problem

... Comes when we experience boundaries as so ancient, natural, and self-evident that we find it difficult to question them. We may at times have an inkling that they could be impermanent and transitory, but there's no guarantee that our feelings will kneel before that surmise. In fact our fleeting thought may even make us feel queasy. We want to feel safe within our well-known borders and therefore seek to maintain them as long

The thing about borders is that we hardly know where they came from. We experience them in early childhood. They form a major part of our socialisation and education. After a while we know only that they are “just there.” We almost “instinctively” know what is permitted and allowable and what is forbidden and taboo. We know the difference between clean and dirty, safety and danger, acceptable and unacceptable. The result of this inculcation is that we can barely understand someone who doesn't share the distinctions we live by. Borders seem to be etched into our brains with indelible ink.

as possible. When questioned we may buttress them with appeals to nature or religion. When under attack we may even resort to violence. And when we experience them as being undermined from within our own circle we may well become intransigent.

Such mechanisms are not foreign to faith communities. Take the apostle Paul. In his youth he treasured sharp and clear distinctions. He knew

the difference between clean and unclean, in both food and people. He ensconced himself behind the insurmountable barriers that separated Jew and heathen. He knew the fine distinctions between Pharisee and Sadducee.

It is in later life that Paul wrote the surprising words: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* The walls that marked his youth were somehow pulled down.

Paul is not a fool. He is not naive. He knows that his experience is not universal. There are Christians in Jerusalem who still swear by circumcision. And though Paul flatly refuses to impose that ritual on his Greek congregations, he does not interfere when his close colleague and pupil, Timo-

A most troubling vision

We find it extremely difficult to let Paul's vision steer our lives, particularly our Christian lives. We continue to draw lines. We allow culture and language to come between us. We control passports at the border for (Adventist) stamps, comparing them to the norms and values that we have been taught and consider normal. And if we do grant entry it is on condition that the other leaves his travel documents and identity behind.

However, part of the art of Christian living is the willingness to look across no-man's land. If we do so, we will see Christ standing on the other side of the border. He is not bound by language, culture, or religious mores. His Spirit is not lashed to the theologies and dogmas we use to draw our boundaries.

Theoretically we know this. We realise that the Spirit is free. In the light of that knowledge we have stated that:

*Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute **the church's understanding and expression** of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word (my emphasis).*

In practice we allow the Spirit of Christ little room. We tend to forget that so-called fundamental beliefs are only the sediment of communal

thy, allows himself to be circumcised in Jerusalem as a gesture of goodwill and understanding. Paul recognises that tradition and identity are almost impossible to disentangle. He knows all about borders. As few others he has experienced their separating power, how they make another human being into an enemy to be resisted, an object to be forcibly removed and, if necessary, killed.

These are the reasons why Paul pleads for respect on both sides of the border. This is the heart of his statement in Galatians. Christ is not only present on your side of the barrier. There is no Jew or Greek. All your traditions need to be questioned if they cause a divide. You may cherish your heritage, but not at the expense of excluding the other, who is your brother.

thinking. While nowhere is it stated that God speaks directly or immediately through these formulations, they are often equated with the teaching of Scripture and therefore sharing in its authority. We forget about the rider *that changes may be made*. We need to hear the intent of that reservation. There's a clear boundary being drawn. There is only one indisputable and justifiable boundary, namely the one between God and man. It is there to remind us that whenever we cannot resist the temptation to claim absolute knowledge, we cross the border separating faith and trust from idolatry.

Still, it is not beyond imagination that a church, or sections of a church, may elevate a fundamental belief into absolute truth. Whenever that threatens to occur, voices need to be raised. Such a boundary cannot be tolerated in a church claiming to be Christian. The only way to keep idolatry at bay is continuing conversation within the faith community. I deliberately avoid the word dialogue, because the conversation is not between two camps, but between all members of the community. No one can claim Christ exclusively. He does not recognise our borders.

If conversation is mandatory in order to avoid idolatry, it follows that all voices need to be heard equally. No voice is to be marginalised. No culture allowed to claim priority. No theology unassailable. If in the past voices have been gagged or strangled, it is time to listen to what they have to say. Their story needs to be heard.

The first installment of this paper described the focus of the meetings as discussing three topics: Daniel 7, Galatians 3:19-25, and religious liberty.

1888 – The Unending Story of Seventh-day Adventist Reformation (2)



By Gilbert Valentine PhD

Why was the 1888 General Conference Session so remarkable in Seventh-day Adventist history? The 1888 Minneapolis Conference was remarkable in the way it both tested and re-shaped 19th century Adventism. At a time when Adventists felt vulnerable in society, many leaders attacked each other theologically. Would Adventists retain or revise their understandings of prophecy? Salvation? The Law? The Sabbath? And what role would Ellen White play in such conflicts? This presentation explores how the church would emerge from this crucible experience with a greater focus on Christ and the Gospel.



III. Why Were these Topics so “Remarkable” for Seventh-day Adventists at the Time?

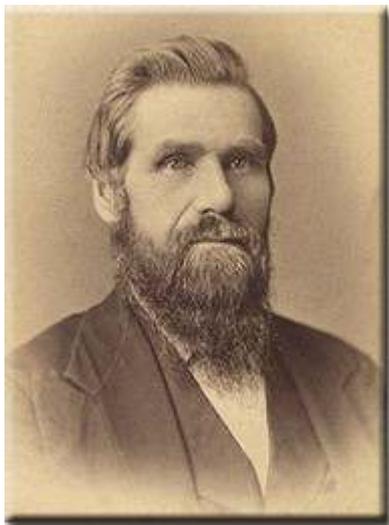
Several factors were involved that elevated the topics to a high degree of importance in the minds of the Minneapolis conference participants so that they were viewed with a deeper and wider significance.

a) End-time Imminence

The first major issue that provides an insight into the question of why the 1888 episode was so remarkable was the acutely heightened sense of the imminence of the end-times that constituted the context for the meetings. As Knight has observed, “It is impossible to understand the high emotional pitch of the participants ... without

grasping the fact that Adventists felt, because of the Sunday [law] crisis, that they already faced the end of time. ... All they had taught for 40 years regarding prophecy pointed to their day.”¹ This is illustrated well by observations made by

^[1] *Ibid* p 33.



Stephen N. Haskell

respected pioneer Stephen N. Haskell in the issue of the *Review and Herald* published the day before the Institute ended and the General Conference session commenced. Reflecting on the legislation that had been proposed to Congress by Senator Blair in May, and the troubles in the south, Haskell warned delegates and church members that their liberty as Sabbath keepers was about to be taken away and they would soon be before the courts and incarcerated in prisons. Invoking images of the Inquisition, he suggested that they would quite possibly have to give their witness “by the instruments of torture.” If the Blair bill was to pass and the law be enforced, warned Haskell, “we should in a very short time find ourselves in difficulties far greater than any of us have imagined.” The sense of imminence of the end of all things was acute.

Earlier during the 1880s at state government level there had been a number of Sunday laws enacted and this had been followed by several imprisonments of Adventists over Sunday-Sabbath issues in California (1882), Arkansas (1885), and in Tennessee (1886). When in 1887 the Prohibition Party, the third party of American politics, supported by the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement, decided to incorporate into its platform the idea of “Lord’s Day Observance” which was the goal of the National Reform Association, Adventists cried foul. The objective of the temperance movement, of course, was that in closing saloons at least one day a week they could make a severe dent in the problem of the endemic abuse of alcohol and its tragic social consequences. Adventists who in large measure supported the Prohibition Party were perplexed. Then in 1888 Cardinal Games Gibbons, the leading Roman Catholic

Archbishop, endorsed the Protestant-initiated National Reform Association and Adventists saw this as a direct fulfillment of their prophetic anticipations of Catholics reaching across the aisle to join hands with Protestants. All this produced a kind of hothouse fever of the imminent end of time.

In the wider community, while these religious liberty issues were also being debated they were not at all high on the agenda in the grand scale of things. The major issue of the presidential campaign that preoccupied the newspapers and the electorate at this very time was trade tariff reform and taxation which did not interest Adventists at all. The three weeks of the Minneapolis meetings coincided with the last three weeks of the U.S. presidential election campaign being fought that year between Democrat Grover Cleveland and Republican Benjamin Harrison of Ohio. And according to a local newspaper reporter attending the Minneapolis meeting, while it had previously been the custom that Adventists took “no part in the politics of the day,” suddenly in 1888 it was different. Adventists were bitterly opposed to the intermingling of affairs of church and state and the “Third Party people” (prohibitionists) had “stirred up a hornet’s nest when they put a plank in their party platform advocating an enforced observance of Sunday.” Adventists felt as if they had been struck “under the fifth rib” and according to the reporter “the whole sect has made a political change of front” and would “work heart and soul against the third party.” Catching the tone of the discussions at Minneapolis the reporter noted that the session “urges the faithful to knife the Prohibition Party to a man.” The reporter calculated that the disillusionment with the Prohibition Party would benefit the Republican Party which would be the winner as a result of the affair.

Polling day occurred two days after the close of the General Conference session and the incumbent Democrat Cleveland lost the race on the basis of Electoral College votes in spite of having won the popular vote. Battle Creek was republican territory and most citizens voted for republican candidate Harrison. For most ordinary Americans however, basic economics was the interest of the day not end-time persecution and doomsday scenarios.

In the months and years immediately following the Minneapolis meetings the sense of imminence became even more intense until by 1893 it had reached fever pitch in the church. The National

Reform Association continued its agitation for “Lord’s Day Observance” legislation and several attempts were made to secure its passage through Congress. In response to the threat, Adventists became highly energized and vocal in opposition. On August 5, 1893, the U.S. president signed a bill that would permit federal funding to be granted to the Chicago World Fair Exhibition only if the managers of the event agreed that it should be closed on Sunday. There was also agitation for including the study of the Bible in government schools in the interests of providing moral education for students. From the time of the adoption of the United States Constitution, Americans were hypersensitive to issues of the separation of church and state. Adventists, if possible, were even more sensitive. For Adventist interpreters like Jones these developments represented the forming of the image to the beast of Revelation 13. Now it only needed life being breathed into it, i.e., through its enactment. This was the very fulfillment of the key prophecy of the end time. As Julius Nam observes, the anomaly of their position did not appear to occur to them. Adventists, while keenly aware of the possibility of an oppressive majority depriving them of their right to worship, were quite prepared to join hands with the temperance movement but did not see their promotion of prohibition as a similar “oppressive majoritarian impulse,” depriving another minority of a freedom.

Ellen White also saw these religious liberty issues as harbingers of the end time and she contributed to the heightened sense of imminence in a series of highly significant statements. In November 1892, in the *Review*, she announced that the “Loud Cry of the third angel” had already commenced in the preaching of the 1888 themes of Righteousness by Faith and the Third Angel’s Message. A month later, in December 1892, she asserted that “The most momentous struggle of all the ages is just before us. Events which for more than forty years we have, upon the authority of

the prophetic word, declared to be impending are now taking place.” The tone of commentary in the *Review* had become rather shrill. A month later just prior to the 1893 General Conference session she wrote that “the Time of Peril is now upon us. It can no longer be spoken of as in the future.” As George Knight notes, the “Loud Cry” theme became the dominating “text” of the General Conference session that convened in March 1893. The heightened, intense sense of imminence in the hot house that was Battle Creek soon led to revivals some forms of which veered off into excessive religious experience with much emotion and fervor. Aspects of the revivals when reported in local newspapers led to some embarrassment for Ellen White even in far-away Australia. Some meetings involved the receiving of huge offerings with expensive jewelry and fur coats being donated, healings took place, mass exit plans from the city to the country developed, and prophetic voices from elsewhere emerged. The 1888 episode occurred as Knight has noted, in “a time of unprecedented and unrepeated end-time anticipation.” This heightened sense of imminence conditioned the responses that came from the General Conference leadership in opposition to the new interpretations and understandings advocated by the young Californian editors.



George Knight

b) Prophetic Interpretation

The reaction of Uriah Smith to the attempts of A. T. Jones to revise the standard interpretation of Daniel 2 and 7, as already noted, was conditioned by the sense of the imminent eschaton. In reaction to the suggestion that the Alemanni should replace the Huns as the tenth horn power

of Daniel 7, Smith’s argument had apologetics in mind. He imagined that such a change would be turned upon the church by Adventist critics as “Oh! Now you find that you are mistaken on what you have considered one of your clearest points; and if we give you enough time, you will probably

come to acknowledge finally that you are mistaken on everything.” Adventist interpretation of the religious liberty and Sunday law issues was based on a prophetic understanding. Any change in their approach to interpreting prophecy now would instantly diminish their credibility. It would be most unwise, advised Butler, to bring up and change an interpretation “contrary to the long-established faith of our people taken forty years

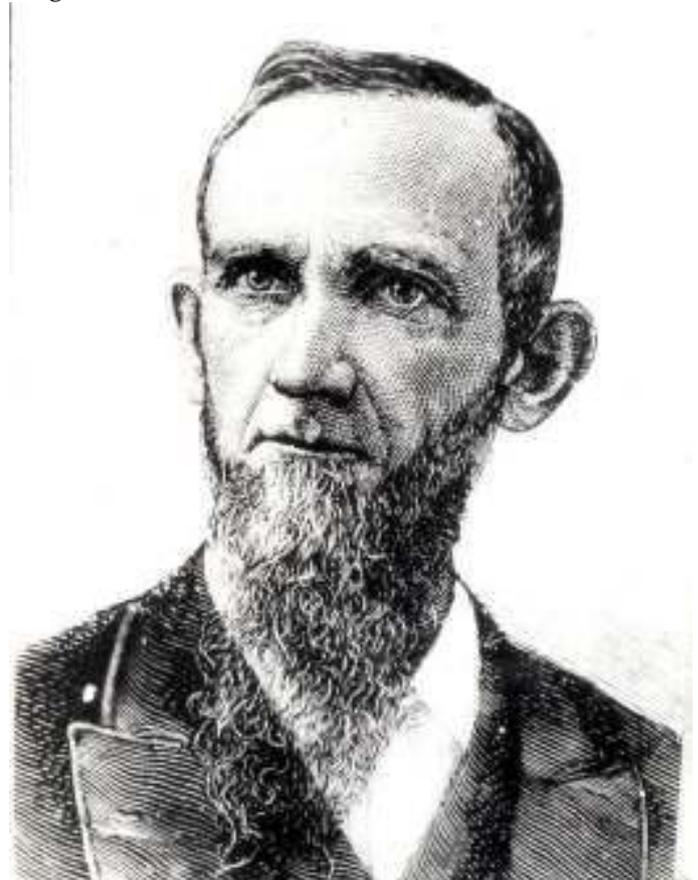
c) The Law in Galatians

The arguments against any reinterpretation of the law in Galatians 3:19-25 was also motivated by an apologetic concern. The idea of the two laws, moral and ceremonial, as already noted, was central to the Adventist defense of the ongoing obligation of Christians to continue to keep the Ten Commandments, in particular the seventh-day Sabbath. It lay at the foundation of the Adventist approach to answering the difficult anti-law texts that other Christian groups confronted them with. The new view being advocated by E.J. Waggoner, that it was the moral law that Galatians had in mind, had already led the denomination’s leading evangelist, Dudley M. Canright, to question the possibility of being able to defend Adventism against its critics on the issue of the continuing obligation of the Sabbath commandment. Canright had become closely involved in investigating the question in the context of law and gospel when it came up at the earlier 1886 General Conference session. He withdrew from the church because he felt he could no longer defend the Sabbath and realized that Adventists were confused on the question of the covenants, alleging that they had placed the law above the gospel. If Waggoner was right about the moral law in Galatians, which Canright had come to accept, his law-based view of Adventism no longer held together. According to Butler’s account in the *Review*, Canright believed “that we were exalting the law above Christ.” While there were other issues that bothered Canright, the issue of law and gospel was the crucial theological issue that persuaded him to request that he be dismissed from the church in 1887. He subsequently became a vocal critic.

Smith had argued earlier that if the distinction between the two laws did not exist, “Sabbath-keeping at once disappears from the list of Christian duties.” He was certain there was no issue

ago.” W.C. White, on the other hand, was much more sanguine about such a threat and, with Jones, felt that while it was important to be “united in our positions” it was more vital to be “correct” in such matters. He reported that this was also the view of those who were at that time involved in the translation of Uriah Smith’s book into German.

“more vital to the interests of Sabbath-keepers.”² The defection of Canright was a clear-cut example. Thus with this recent experience vividly in their minds, Butler, Smith, and others holding to the traditional position (the ceremonial law being the law in Galatians) resisted Waggoner’s presentations on Galatians fiercely. It was for this reason that Smith and Butler saw the ten-commandment view of the law in Galatians as an attack on the very “pillars” of the faith. Butler saw it as “a moving of the landmarks,” and urged his colleagues to hold fast and defend them.



Dudley M. Canright

²[xv] U. Smith, *Synopsis of Present Truth*, (Battle Creek, 1884) 258.

d) Role of “The Testimonies” and the Issue of Authority

Just prior to the Conference, William Healey, a pastor in California, had attended a Bible study group with W. C. White, the young editors and others to study the Galatians problem. For some reason Healey viewed this meeting in a sinister way and later claimed that it was part of a conspiracy based in California and blessed by Ellen White to change the church’s position on Galatians. He wrote to George Butler about it. The rumor confirmed the worst fears of the General Conference administrators and their colleagues and led to highly emotional telegraphed appeals to delegates at the conference to “stand by the old landmarks.” The conspiracy rumor badly poisoned the atmosphere at the conference, complicated relationships with Ellen White, and undercut the authority of her charisma. No one spoke of the rumor during the conference; but, nevertheless, it colored the traditionalists’ perceptions of events. W.C. White, hearing about the conspiracy theory much later, claimed that he was as “innocent as a goose” about it and was distressed to find that his “old friends” at Battle Creek were saying “the bitterest things” against him behind his back.³

What complicated the issue of the role and authority of Ellen White in theological discussions and in determining doctrine, however, was the debate over the law in Galatians. Ellen White had intervened in a discussion on the same issue in 1856; and, as a result of her intervention, the denomination had adopted the ceremonial law view. Both Smith and Butler claimed that the intervention had been of the nature of a ruling on the theology and on the exegesis of the passage in Galatians; and, as they recalled, it had been based on a specific vision.⁴ For her part, Ellen White could not find the relevant letter and could not recall whether her intervention had been to rule on the theology or simply to serve as a referee to stop the disruptive quarreling. In replying to the lectures by E.J. Waggoner during the conference, J.H. Morrison, speaking for George Butler, also quoted from three places in Ellen White’s 1883 book *Sketches from the Life of Paul* where Ellen White

clearly assumed and developed her narrative on the understanding that the law in Galatians was the ceremonial law.⁵ For Butler and Smith and the others who recalled the 1856 incident, Ellen White’s refusal to intervene prior to the 1888 conference to silence the younger Waggoner was inconsistent with her former stance and with their expectations. For them it invalidated her claim to authority and created a serious crisis of faith. In what way was the charisma of Ellen White authoritative?



Ellen G. White

Ellen White, on the other hand, regarded it as providential that she could not find her 1856 letter. Furthermore her refusal to allow her writings on the subject under discussion as cited by Morrison to influence or determine the outcome of the debate set an important precedent for the church and highlighted the need of the denomination to adhere to the vital Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* in determining doctrinal understandings. This stance alone marked the conference as remarkable, for the people of her own time had largely assumed that Ellen White’s charisma had a determinative role in such matters. She made it clear that this was not her role in relationship to scripture; and she took opportunity to address the issue before the conference, at the conference and later. Perhaps her clearest statements on this point are found in her 1892 article “Search the Scriptures.”⁶

What then was her distinctive role in the church? What role did she play at the conference? In many respects Ellen White played the role of a

³[xvi] W. C. White to D. T. Jones, April 8, 1890.

⁴[xvii] J. H. Waggoner’s 1856 book which had advocated the ten-commandment view was subsequently taken off the market by James White. This information seemed to support the explanation of Smith and Butler.

⁵[xviii] *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, (Battle Creek, 1983) 68, 188, 193. See also W. C. White Notebook 1: 63, 67.

⁶[xix] Ellen G. White, Circular Letter to Conference Delegates, August 5, 1888; “Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald* July 26, 1892, 1.

spiritual referee. For example, she insisted on fairness in the planning and lead-up to the conference ensuring opportunity for each side to present their perspectives.⁷ She insisted on right attitudes in the participants, cautioning against inappropriate, inflammatory language. She allied herself with those in the debate who did not enjoy power parity. And she endorsed the overall focus of the message of the preachers from California. Thus, she sought to establish unity and harmony around the central larger idea of a more Christo-centric focus for Adventist doctrinal understanding and mission.



Another major contribution during this important episode in denominational history which helped make the episode such a remarkable one was the stance that Ellen White took on the role of church administrative authority and the func-

⁷[xx] She was assisted in this by her son W. C. White. For example, fairness and honesty in reporting the discussions in the *Review* afterwards was a major concern. After Uriah Smith had written up the debate on the 10 horns of Daniel as if he had won the debate, (the sentiment of the delegates appeared to be overwhelmingly on the side of the established principles of interpretation—the old view”) W. C. White reported that he had intervened in the interest of truthfulness. “I told our people in the presence of Elder Smith that while it was right to demand of the editors of the *Signs* that they be cautious,... it was also demanded of the editors of the *Review* that they be honest; and I showed them how this report [in the *Review*] was calculated to mislead the people.” W. C. White to J. H. Waggoner, February 27, 1889, *Review and Herald*, October 23, 1888.

tion of creedal-like statements as a way to resolve theological conflict. She was hostile to both of these approaches. It was clear that Uriah Smith and George Butler understood that their views on what theological and doctrinal positions were appropriate for the denomination should have more weight and count for more because they were administrators, had longer experience in the cause, and supposedly had a wiser and more global view of things. Their advocacy of traditional perspectives should be respected, they argued. Ellen White staunchly resisted this idea and a month after the conference declared in highly confrontational mode, “we should not consider that either Elder Butler or Elder Smith are the guardians of the doctrines for Seventh-day Adventists... My cry has been: Investigate the Scriptures for yourselves.”⁸ The idea that, because some doctrine had long been held as truth, was no guarantee it was truth. “We are certainly in great danger, if we are not constantly guarded, of considering our ideas, because long-cherished, to be Bible doctrines and on every point infallible, and measuring everyone by the rule of our interpretation of Bible truth. This is our danger, and this would be the greatest evil that could ever come to us as a people.”⁹ Later in a direct challenge to this kind of thinking she asserted that in matters of doctrine and understanding of scripture there were many things that still had to be learned and “many, many things to unlearn.”¹⁰ The process of “unlearning” is a difficult one and warrants further study.

Ellen White was adamantly opposed to the strategy of resolving theological disputes by adopting creedal-like statements voted by delegates. And according to W. C. White, the 1888 conference was “remarkable” precisely because there was almost a “craze for orthodoxy.” Several attempts had been made both at the 1886 session and at the 1888 session to draw a line under debate by voting a particular position. On October 17, 1888, for example, G. B. Starr proposed a vote on the ten horns as presented by Smith “so it would not come up for argument again,” and there were many cries of “amen” from the delegates. If such a resolution passed, W. C. White declared in a gentle but defiant tone to the delegates, he

⁸[xxi] Ellen G. White to William M Healey, December 9, 1888.

⁹[xxii] Ellen G. White MS 37c 1890.

¹⁰[xxiii] “Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald* July 26, 1892, 2.

Building Safe Places—for Everyone Workshops:

1. Hot Topic in Safe Places

This new three-component offering, with Dr. Arlene Taylor as primary presenter, is designed to be presented in a one-day meeting and can be used for a special Sabbath at your church. For many years Dr. Taylor (arlenetaylor.org) has been presenting brain research in interesting ways to the Seventh-day Adventist community all over the world. This church-focused workshop includes: Spirituality and the Brain (suitable for the worship service); Sex, Gender, Orientation and the Brain; and Communication and the Brain – how to use our understanding of brain differences to communicate about difficult issues. For more information on this workshop, you can contact us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org.

2. Building Safe Places – Local Wisdom

This meeting is designed for people who have some experience working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people in evangelical contexts and who would like to have a facilitated opportunity to talk with each other about specific issues that have arisen. Our next scheduled two-day Local Wisdom meeting will be in the Southern California area in October. If you are interested in attending that meeting or would like us to offer it in your area, you are most welcome to contact us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org.



Dealing with Depression and Suicidal thoughts
—a video for parents of gay and lesbian children.



<https://youtu.be/gNq3xzee7k4>

would feel compelled to preach what he believed, whatever the conference decided on the question.¹¹ And the Smith-Butler faction tried hard to get a resolution through that would formally approve the “obey and live” understanding of the covenants and prevent any variant teaching on the Law and Galatians until the General Conference had formally approved. W. C. White reported of this latter resolution that his mother and he “after a hard fight” had “killed it dead.”¹² Ellen White reported that she had “had to watch at every point lest there should be moves made, resolutions passed” that would close down debate and “prove detrimental to the future work.” She was of the view that “the church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions” but that this would not root out disagreement and the mind could not be forced in this way. This was a hugely significant contribution by Ellen White that qualified the conference for being “remarkable.”

¹¹[xxiv] W. C. White to Mary White, November 3, 1888. *Minneapolis Journal*, October 18, 1888, 2.

¹²[xxv] A. T. Jones, *God’s Everlasting Covenant* (n.p. [1907], 31; W. C. White to Mary White, November 3, 1888; Ellen G. White to Mary White, November 4, 1888.

The Adventist Project

1. Gender – male
Age – 42
Ethnicity – Serbian
Country of Origin/Childhood – USA
Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) – non-Adventist
In what Union are you currently living/working? – Lake Union US

What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

My upbringing. It is what I know. My culture. I like the no drinking, no smoking. I like Sabbath and Sabbath observance. I believe in most of the Adventist message. I find the Adventist church is one of the most Bible-based belief systems. It is the most true to me of what I have seen. If I went to a church that is more agreeing on the LGBTI things there would be others that I don't agree with. If I got excommunicated I would still consider myself an Adventist; I would just quit paying tithes. I will consider going to church as long as I have friends there.

2. Gender – female
Age – 44
Ethnicity – Dutch
Country of Origin/Childhood – The Netherlands
Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) –
In what Union are you currently living/working? – Dutch Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Habit and my friends are there.

3. Gender – male
Age – 33
Ethnicity –
Country of Origin/Childhood –
Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) –
In what Union are you currently living/working? – Germany/Austria area.

What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

It is the church from my childhood. I believe there is a special mission God has given the church. The church is like a worldwide family. It is the only Christian church that combines Sabbath and the Jewish way of living with a Christian background.

4. Gender – female
Age – 21
Ethnicity – Black/Jamaican/Native American
Country of Origin/Childhood – Jamaica, England, US
Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) – student
In what Union are you currently living/working? – Southern USA

What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

- a. Finding a church that is considered safe place; open-minded community,
- b. Being in a church that still challenges me spiritually.
- c. Older adults with whom I have come in contact who are positive in their reaction to my sexuality.
- d. God. Making the decision to re-explore my spirituality with God and not take other people's word for it.

5. Gender – female
 Age – 51
 Ethnicity – white
 Country of Origin/Childhood – USA
 Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) – no
 In what Union are you currently living/working? –

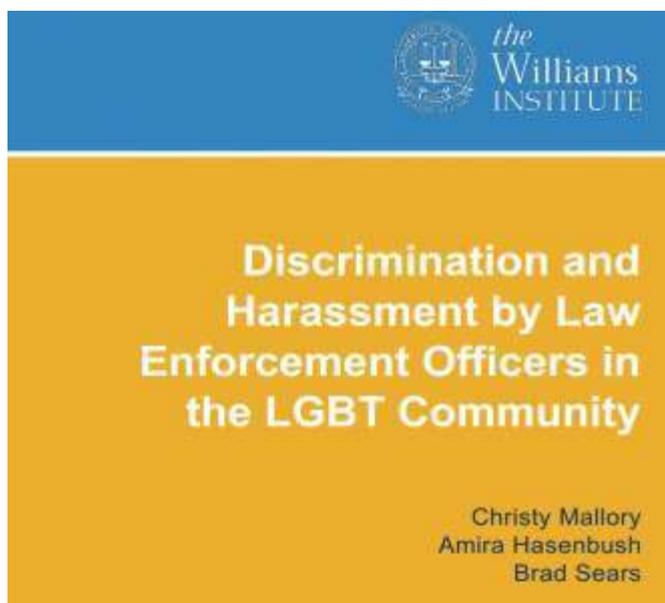
What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

I still get something out of the worship service and Sabbath school study. It helps my growth. It helps my relationship with God. I still have friends in the church with whom I like to socialize. I sort of feel like I am being a missionary to the church. I am hoping that if they see I am really no different than they are in my faith, my walk, and my dedication to God that hopefully they will come to more acceptance of alphabet people. The church will see that we are wanting to worship God as much as they do and get rid of the false stereotypes of who gay people are.

6. Gender – female
 Age – 33
 Ethnicity – Caucasian
 Country of Origin/Childhood – USA, Ethiopia
 Employment (Adventist/Non-Adventist) – no
 In what Union are you currently living/working? –

What are some of the factors that went into your discontinued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

I don't feel comfortable attending. It started with just not feeling welcomed in Adventist churches. As I have gone out into the world and been exposed to all kinds of beliefs and views of scripture my perspective has changed. Now I would not feel comfortable in the church theologically. If asked I would go back because I love Sabbath so much. Sabbath now means righteousness by faith. That is not the way I was raised. I cannot think in the "us and them" mentality. I just cannot believe that the Sabbath is the mark of the beast. I just don't. It's hard for me to go into churches because of the emotional damage that they do.



By Christy Mallory, Amira Hasenbush, and Brad Sears

[March 2015]
 Discrimination and harassment by law enforcement based on sexual orientation and gender identity is an ongoing and pervasive problem in LGBT communities. Such discrimination impedes effective policing in these communities by breaking down trust, inhibiting communication, and preventing officers from effectively protecting and serving the communities they police. While a patchwork of state, local, and federal laws provides some protection against certain forms of discrimination, there is no nationwide federal statute that comprehensively and consistently prohibits discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.

For the press release,
<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/press-releases/new-study-documents-ongoing-and-pervasive-discrimination-law-enforcement-lgbt-community/>

Five Things (I would like people to know about me...)

By Pam Neal

I would like people to see the image of Jesus Christ reflected in my behavior and my words. That means I would like to show patience, kindness, slowness to anger, willingness to be helpful, and be a pleasant person to be around. This is what Christ modeled for us.

I love cowboys/cowgirls and horses and my cowboy boots. I really like my cowboy boots. As a little girl I had the strongest desire for a horse. I built a treehouse in the crook of the tree and I would go up there every day and pray to God for a horse. Then I would go to the barn and see if the horse had arrived. It was never there but I saved my money to feed it upon arrival. Eventually, I got that horse when I was grown and married.

The love of my life was an American saddle-bred by the name of Bourbon Indiana. She and I spent a lot of time riding. She carried me uphill and downhill and across rivers. I could put her into a full gallop and I knew that as soon as I touched the reins she would slow down. My fondest memories are the many rides and escapades I had with this horse.

I read a lot of books about the west. I wanted to be a Native American. I thought the notion of war paint was wonderful. I got walnut hulls and rubbed them on my hands. I got mulberries and made face paint. Those walnut hulls don't wash off; they have to wear off.

In my friends I look for loyalty. I got married when I was 21. I followed all the rules. My husband was an Adventist from an Adventist family. I was a trusting, loyal, and naïve person. He had many affairs. The pain that I felt as a result of his infidelity was so strong I made a decision to never violate someone else's trust. I can still hear my mother say, "Your word is your bond. You keep your word, even if it hurts."

I am fun to be around. I like to laugh. I like to be around people who laugh. I like people who find silver linings at the edges of black clouds.

I appreciate the people who look for the good in life. We were a poor family with an alcoholic father. We had few resources, including food. My mom taught us how to have fun. We would go out in the winter and sniff the air to see "if spring was

coming around the corner." We had simple things with which to play. I want to surround myself with people who have my same values as well.

My relationship with my partner Teresa is one of the better things I have experienced. I believe God designed for our paths to cross. Teresa lived way out in the hills of West Virginia. She knew nothing about computers, much less social media. I lived in Illinois. There was no way I could have possibly heard of her, much less gotten to know her.

Here is the journey of how we met. I was on a list serve for women horse riders. I happened to mention that I was going to the Paso Fino grand nationals in Georgia. Another woman on the list said, "I am going too! Why don't we meet there?" We enjoyed talking to each other and she invited me to her place on the Eastern shore of Virginia for the following Thanksgiving. During the holiday, she suggested we go visit a friend of hers who lived in West Virginia. That visit was how I met Teresa.

At the time, I was in the process of a divorce based on my husband's infidelity. I was having financial issues with both my husband and my business partner. I needed a job and a place to live. I had been a counselor for victims of domestic violence. Teresa helped me get a local job working with oppositional boys ages 9-18. Most of her work was out of town and she told me I could stay at her cabin because it would give me lots of peace and quiet.

Teresa provided a place of refuge for me when I was going through some of the worst trials in my life. I didn't have a spare cent and Teresa carried me during that time. My ex-husband died two years later. Surprisingly, I was still the beneficiary of his life insurance policy. My former business partner was forced to pay me for my part of our company. I was able to sell my farm in Ohio. All

this unexpected income help me to pay off the mortgage on Teresa's cabin and become a co-owner. God looked out for me.

Teresa and I had planned to remain platonic friends. Some how, through all the stresses and opportunities to learn to trust each other, we became romantically involved.

As a result of our relationship, Teresa went from being church avoidant to being baptized as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We share our religious convictions and study the Bible together. We support each other in our work to live up to our beliefs. I know there are many in the Adventist church who would reject us and our relationship. I know that God does not.

My forty-year marriage to my husband was filled with turmoil. My relationship with Teresa is filled with peace and contentment.

I believe the message of the Adventist church about the soon coming of the Lord, the judgment, the Sabbath, and the state of the dead. With all my heart I believe in the third angel's message. That said, I wish the church would make women equal. I wish that the church would at least hear the stories and the agony experienced by young gay men and women. I wish church leaders would listen before they condemn. I wish women could be ministers on equal standing, not superior and not less. It is hard on those who are not accepted.

I look back and see the leading of God in my life. I have a good life now. I love the Lord and I am really looking forward to seeing Him face-to-face.



We Are Seventh-day Adventists: Every Story Matters

Brett's Story

<http://wearesdas.com/index.php/86-stories/113-brett-s-story.html>

