



**This questioning, criticizing, denouncing,
passing judgement on others,
is not an evidence of the grace of Christ in the heart.**

*Ellen G. White
Second Selected Messages
pg. 79*

Safe Places

Newsletter

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

May-June 2015

In an age of sound bites I find myself editing, even electronic newsletters, with an eye to the shortened attention span of readers. I may be doing you a disservice. This issue is an exception to my editorial trend.

Reinder Bruinsma gave us permission to break his **devotional**, *Serving God with all Your Heart*, into segments. We didn't.

In our **Research** section we are giving you the link to PewResearchCenter's 210-page report on why people are leaving traditional churches in America. We included a review, by a writer for the University of Southern California's *Religion Dispatches*, of the aspects of the study that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex people. In a spirit of teaching us all to fish instead of handing them out on a dinner plate, we are giving you the link to a data blog, (LGBT Stats) facilitated by the Williams Institute of the University of California at Los Angeles. We understand that many of our readers are interested in the ongoing brain function/genetics research regarding LGBTI people. We have that research along with studies on other topics on our site: www.buildingsafeplaces.org. If there are specific issues about which you are concerned please feel most welcome to contact us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org.

Voices of the Heart has three contributions. We are beginning a serialized story of Jerry McKay's journey. Jerry's Adventism has been a core of his existence. When he recognized his same-sex orientation, he took part in Colin Cook's "change program" through Quest in Redding, Pennsylvania. We have included a poem from a Jamaican Adventist and our video link from the We are SDAs project.

As our regular readers know, we continue to add to our list of **Resources** on our website. You might find the articles and research Arlene Taylor has listed on her site interesting, for many of the issues you and your congregations address. In this month's *Safe Places* issue, we focus on a grass roots movement by students at Seventh-day Adventist universities to make their campuses and their community more safe for the LGBTI people who are part of those communities.

We end with part three of Gilbert Valentine's story of how the Adventist church dealt with the theological crisis of 1888. These lessons have the opportunity of helping us with the issues we are addressing now. We found that this section "coincidentally" tied in with Dr. Bruinsma's devotional.

As always, you can forward this newsletter to anyone you think would enjoy or benefit from it. If you no longer want to receive it yourself, just write to us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org. If you have suggestions or requests for articles we can share here, let us know. We base this entire project on the requests of you who participate in it. If you are interested in participating in our Building Safe Places: First Conversations or joining us in the Hot Topics in Safe Places meetings that will be happening in the US this fall and winter please feel most welcome to contact us. Descriptions of these events can be found on our website. If your church would like to host a *Hot Topics in Safe Places* let us know.

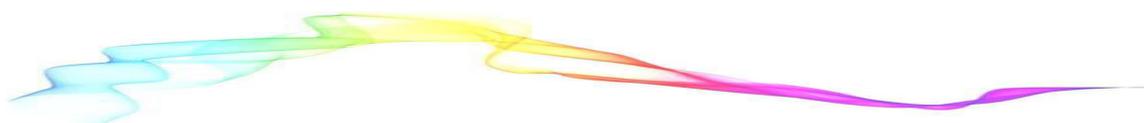
Most importantly, we know that you face many stressors. Take good care of yourself.

We wish you gentle blessings,

Catherine Taylor and the Building Safe Places Team:

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

☞ Send your comments about the May issue to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ☞



Serving God: With all your mind

We all know the famous words of Christ, “Let the children come to me” (Luke 18:16). And we realize that this text has often been used and abused. Many preachers have taken this text as the basis for a sermon about the simplicity of the gospel and have told their church members, “You must believe the gospel message and accept it as a child. You do not need to understand it. Too much thinking will only lead you into trouble and make you doubt.”

[Read more on page 4](#)

Pew Confirms LGBT Rejection of Religion: Why That's a Good Thing

When a book such as Matthew Vines' *God and the Gay Christian* becomes a smash hit it might lead you to think that there is a large contingent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians out there clamoring for acceptance. But a new report from the Pew Research Center suggests that this is not the case. As it turns out Vines' book (and others that seek to reconcile LGBT lives with fundamentalist Christian teaching) is only a big deal to insiders—or to a voyeuristic public that doesn't have any real skin in the game.

[Read more on page 8](#)



Journey of Jerry McKay

Most of what characterizes my life today—work, family, and faith—looks little like what I thought it would when I graduated from college in 1980. Because of my sexual orientation, nothing is as I expected. I still identify as Seventh-day Adventist, but I do not have the same relationship with my church as I once had. I am open about my orientation to most people, and I have been in a relationship for nearly twenty-five years. Don't let that fact, however, lead you to make assumptions about my theology. That I am a professing Christian is applauded by some and questioned by others. LGBT acquaintances and some heterosexual friends often ask me why I continue to associate with a faith community that has had a checkered relationship with its LGBT members. Others wonder how I can consider myself a Christian while in a relationship. In addition to the why-do-I-continue and the how-can-I-consider-myself questions are a multitude of other questions that people have asked me over the years.

[Read more on page 10](#)

Life, the Jamaican Context, 2008

[Page 17](#)

1888 – The Unending Story of Seventh-day Adventist Reformation (3)

A new understanding of the Gospel. The most remarkable thing about the 1888 episode for the people of the time was the paradigm shift the new insights slowly wrought in Adventist understanding of the gospel and its relationship to law and the implications this had for Adventist identity. When Ellen White endorsed the “message” of the 1888 episode it was this broad new Christo-centric focus that she had in mind.

[Read more on page 18](#)

Resources

[Page 21, 22](#)

Serving God: With all your mind



By Reinder Bruinsma

We all know the famous words of Christ, “Let the children come to me” (Luke 18:16). And we realize that this text has often been used and abused. Many preachers have taken this text as the basis for a sermon about the simplicity of the gospel and have told their church members, “You must *believe* the gospel message and accept it as a child. You do not need to *understand* it. Too much thinking will only lead you into trouble and make you doubt.”

Yes, many Christians have been suspicious of intellectual endeavors and of the findings of modern science. Many have tried to separate faith from science and have said, “If what I believe conflicts with what I learn from science, I must choose my faith and abandon science.” Most Adventists, fortunately, have not gone to that extreme. In fact, we have had a tradition of emphasizing education.

The Adventist Church worldwide operates one of the largest Protestant educational networks. Adventists believe in education. We tend to enjoy

A love relationship with God has different components. It involves the heart and the soul. It has to do with feelings and emotions, with total commitment, perseverance, and will power. But it also has to do with our mind. *With all your mind*. When we speak of discipleship, we must include *discipleship of the mind*. There should not be any gap between the heart and the mind, as if a believer cannot be a thinker!

Here many Christians face a major challenge. The famous British philosopher Bertrand Russell once remarked, “Most Christians would rather die than think. In fact they do.” This has been especially true in evangelical circles. The issue may

our upward mobility. The Adventist bookkeeper dreams that his son/daughter will become a medical doctor or dentist. The Adventist school-teacher hopes her daughter will be a university professor.

The profile of the church has changed. I remember that in my childhood in The Netherlands there were very few professional people in the Adventist Church. We had two or three medical doctors, one lawyer, and a handful of teachers. Today there are hundreds of people with university training of some kind. The same is even truer for the church in many other countries.

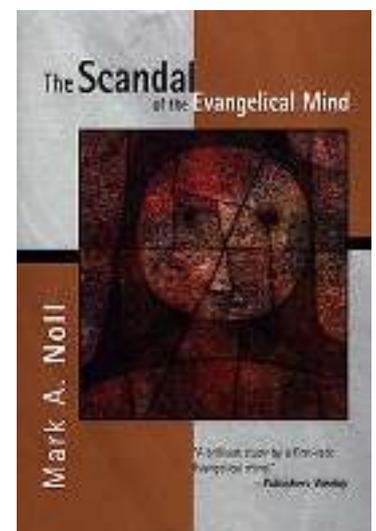
This is certainly an enormous enrichment for the church, yet often also a source of tensions. Many who have gone to university have met elements in their study that they found difficult to fit into their Christian/Adventist perspective. Many find some facts about life that are supported by science difficult to reconcile with their Adventist faith. Some facts about homosexuality and related issues fall in this category.

All of it

be best summed up in the title of a book that created quite a stir: *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, by Mark Knoll (Eerdmans Publishers, 1994).

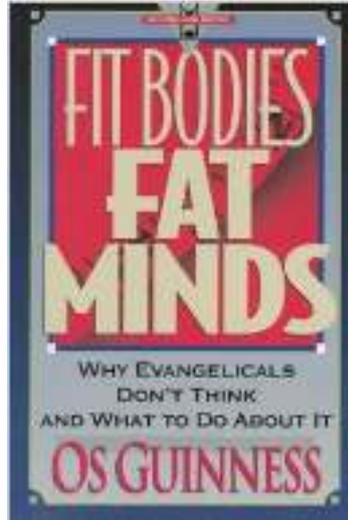
Many evangelical Christians have argued that too much knowledge is risky.

Did not Paul say that knowledge puffs up (1 Corinthians. 8:1, 2) and that it tends to lead to



arrogance and loss of faith? I believe Paul certainly did not mean that all thinking is negative and ill-advised. He did not oppose good thinking, but *inaccurate* thinking, or a thinking that cannot detach itself from tradition and prejudice. Paul wanted us to be intentional in our thinking. *Think about things that are excellent and praiseworthy*, he said (Philippians 4:8). And, *whatever you do, do it to the glory of God*. So, use your mind to the glory of God.

I came across another challenging book about the lack of thought among many evangelical Christians: *Fit Bodies Fat Minds*



(Baker Books, 1994). Many modern Christians, Os Guinness argues in this book, have toned up their bodies, but dumbed down their minds. This may well be a relevant message for many Adventists. We emphasize health, good care for our body, and good food. We are continuously reminded that we are stewards of our body, which we should regard as a temple of God. We hear sermons about this theme and read about it in our journals. But when did you last hear a sermon or read an article in one of our journals on the need to also have a sound mind? And about thinking in a consistently Christian way?

A Christian mind

A Christian mind is no luxury. It is part of the abundant life that Christ promised us. We need a new heart and a new spirit if we want to be disciples of Christ. But Paul also spoke of the need for the *renewal of our minds* as part of our Christian growth.

Let us explore this concept of a Christian mind a bit further. I would like to share some principles about serving God with all of our mind and I invite you to share these with other people.

1. The first aspect we should underline is the need for *humility*. We should tell ourselves and other people: When you have a decent education (especially just after receiving your diploma or degree), there may be a sense of elation, of superiority: You now know so much more than many other people do. But let us not forget that the early stages of the process of acquiring knowledge are full of pitfalls. It is so easy to jump to conclusions. We must recognize that we do not know everything. In fact, we will often be overwhelmed by how much more there is to know, and how little we in fact do know, even in our own discipline. When we meet truly great minds we sense our own deficiencies and our need to grow. Each discovery opens up new fields where we are total strangers. So remain humble and avoid any arrogance.

2. We tell ourselves and the people we associate with: you must always *keep on learning*. Not only from books but also from experiences, from life, from all sorts of people—colleagues, peers, and also from common folks. Appreciate their wisdom and insights. Adventist thought leaders, in particular, must learn a lot from the “simple” people in the church, who have not had the privilege of attending a university. After all, Christ, the greatest Teacher of all times, never attended a formal university. They must realize they often learn most by talking to “ordinary” people and by mingling with them. This certainly applies to acquiring more knowledge and insights regarding homosexuality, same-sex relationships, etc.

This was my experience. Some years ago I was invited to a Kinship meeting to present a number of worships. It was the first time I spent quality time with people with a “different” sexual orientation. I had the opportunity to talk with them and to hear their stories. It was an extremely valuable experience. I left with many questions. I still have some. But I learned much and realized: I will have to think this through further and will probably have to change my mind. (And in recent years I did change my mind in many respects!)

Keep asking questions

3. We must tell ourselves and other people: If you want to develop further as a thinking Adventist

and want to serve God with all your mind, you must *dare to ask questions*. Your mind will develop

no further if you think you already have all the answers.

This was the genius of early Adventism—going beyond accepted opinion, being prepared to think outside the box, to ask new questions—to go on new paths, uncertain where they would lead.

Serving God with our whole mind is a lifelong adventure, and we cannot be sure where it leads. This idea is worrisome to many people. Truth, they are convinced, is absolute. It is something you inherit, and something that has been long- and well-established. What is right or wrong has been settled a long time ago.

However, we must challenge ourselves and other people: Be inventive and innovative and open. We must realize: *Our view* of the truth is never the final *truth*. There is always more to discover. And you will only discover by asking questions.

We must realize: We cannot be a theologian or social scientist or any kind of thinking intellectual if we refuse to ask questions—even troubling questions:

- about the nature of the Bible;
- about the origin of the world and man;
- about the origin and nature of evil;
- about matters of life and death;
- yes, and also about issues like homosexuality, same-sex relationships, etc.

4. We must also tell ourselves and others: Dare to *live with unanswered questions*! You will never get answers to all your questions. Do not let this worry you unduly or lead you to despair. You are just a creature, while He is the Creator. Only God knows all the answers. You will always know only in part.

I have at times felt overwhelmed by questions, even by serious doubt. But I have found it a good practice to tackle one problem one at a time. I try to concentrate my thinking and reading on some particular issue and try to shelve other issues until later. I will not ignore them but will postpone dealing with them, and will only deal with them one by one. That has worked well for me. But when everything is said and done, we must stand ready to confess and dare to say: Lord, it is okay. I do not know. And I must not feel ashamed if I have to tell others: I simply do not know.

5. We must tell ourselves and others that we must be *prepared to change our mind*. A Christian mind grows over time but realizes it will never be perfect or inerrant. Someone once said: When one



is right in fifty percent of all cases, that's very good. When one is right sixty percent of the time, that is wonderful. When someone says he/she is 100 percent right, he (or she) is almost certainly a fanatic.

We must challenge ourselves and others to honestly accept that we may have been wrong in holding certain views, and we must be willing to change our mind when the evidence demands it.

6. There is a further challenge: It sounds somewhat contradictory, but those who are leaders and have influence, may not be perfect in their thinking, but must nonetheless be a thought *leader*.

Serving God with all our mind means that we want to be open to the great Source of wisdom. As we drink from that Source we develop ideas, we generate vision, we are able to share and give direction. We must, however, remind ourselves and others: Always be responsible and gentle with others, who may need more time before they are able to change their minds. Be a leader, but do not run so far ahead that people no longer see you.

7. As we serve God with all our mind, we must be ready to often live in a *creative tension* with others. We must understand that, as we ask the people to allow for the space to question things and debate issues, some tensions may arise; try to deal with those with patience, tolerance, and love.

8. There is another, vital, aspect I want to stress. We must tell ourselves and others, *As you serve God with all your mind, pray that you will never sacrifice your intellectual integrity. Never sell your soul. Never change your convictions in order to get a position or to be popular. Never succumb to the temptation to believe one thing in church and another thing at work.*

Love is all-important

9. Finally: We must challenge ourselves and others: Never separate the life of the mind from *genuine spirituality*. We may know a lot about the Christian religion, without having a living relationship with Christ. We may know a lot about the way human beings interact and society operates, without having a real love for people. We must seek to convince ourselves and our brothers and sisters: in all our discussions, study, debate, arguments—make sure it happens in an atmosphere of love for one another. And make sure that the conclusions you arrive at are conditioned by genuine love.

I picked up an important message from the movie *Seventh-Gay Adventists*. People may need time to think through how the Bible and the core of Adventist teachings relate to the issue of homosexuality. They may be in doubt what to do in the actual praxis of church life, especially when they must make decisions that affect their personal life and that of their family and friends. If I am going to err—a pastor said in that movie,

when asked to be involved in the blessing of a relationship between two men—I will err on the side of compassion. Serving God with all our mind is *loving* God. Love must always be the dominating factor.

Serving God with our minds is an essential part of our *discipleship*. But it does not operate in a vacuum. There must always be a close relationship between knowing and doing, believing and obeying. Certainly, we are asked to love the Lord with our minds, but *not only* with our minds. We must serve him with all we have and are: with our minds, but also with our hearts and soul.

Do I dare to end with a quote from a Catholic author? I will risk it. Cardinal Newman once wrote: “Your whole nature must be reborn, your passions and your affections, and your aims, and your conscience, and your will, must all be bathed in a new element, and re-consecrated to your Maker, and last, but not the least, your intellect.” (*Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 191).

⌘ Send your comments about this article to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ⌘



When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken or cease to be honest.

— Abraham Lincoln

Pew Confirms LGBT Rejection of Religion: Why That's a Good Thing



By Candace Chellew-Hodge

University of Southern California Religion
Dispatches—May 2015

When a book such as Matthew Vines' *God and the Gay Christian* becomes a smash hit it might lead you to think that there is a large contingent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians out there clamoring for acceptance.

But a new report from the Pew Research Center suggests that this is not the case.

As it turns out Vines' book (and others that seek to reconcile LGBT lives with fundamentalist Christian teaching) is only a big deal to insiders—or to a voyeuristic public that doesn't have any real skin in the game.

As for the LGBT community, Pew researchers found that at least 41% couldn't give a rip if the evangelical church welcomes them in their pews, because they've given up on religion anyway—at least *that* type of religion.

Given the media's attention to LGBT people and religion, it might come as a shock that such a large bloc of the LGBT community does not identify as religious. But within the community it's simply confirmation that Christianity has already fouled its nest when it comes to trying attract LGBT people back to church.

The reason so many LGBT people have fled the church tracks closely with why millennials in

general have abandoned sanctuaries across the country—a perception that churches are filled with judgmental and hypocritical people.

A survey last year by Pew found that 73% of LGBT people perceived evangelical churches to be unfriendly and 79% said they felt unwelcome in Catholic churches. As for non-evangelical mainstream churches, the survey found that only 10% of LGBT folk viewed such churches as friendly while 44% perceived them as unfriendly.

However, according to last year's data, one-third of LGBT people who are religious said there was a conflict between their religious beliefs and their sexual orientation or gender identity. This, I believe, shows that many LGBT people continue to go to unwelcoming churches simply because they *do* find religion important—or they remain conflicted about their own sexuality or gender identity because of the mixed signals coming from the pulpit every Sunday.

This year's survey found that among the 24% who say they believe nothing in particular, 10% say religion is still somewhat or very important to them. This opens a huge opportunity for LGBT religious communities to offer alternative forms of spirituality to this community in particular. Those whose beliefs have slipped, as well as those who are still searching for something—*anything*—are in desperate need of communities of faith to serve them.

*It's not the churches that LGBT people are leaving,
it's Christianity in its current form that repels them.*

Sadly, what they find too often in the LGBT religious landscape is what I call “evangelical lite” churches that offer the same theology, liturgy, and worship styles as most non-welcoming

evangelical churches, minus the judgment. Having been involved in many of these evangelical lite churches over the years, though, I can affirm that there are still many who remain conflicted about

their faith and sexuality or gender identity even in a more welcoming environment.

I believe that's so because while evangelical lite churches may be missing the judgment they still perpetuate the overall sexual shame that is inherent in much of traditional Christian theology. Even though it may not be overt, that shame is still being taught even in predominantly LGBT churches—so it's not really the churches that LGBT people are leaving, it's Christianity in its current form that repels them.

Much of this style of worship and theology continues even in the predominantly gay Metropolitan Community Churches—which makes sense, I would argue, because founder Troy Perry was raised in a fundamentalist tradition. His influence remains strong in the MCC and other gay-friendly evangelical churches that still exist (and continue to thrive in some places such as the south) today.

This, however, is where I see a ray of hope for LGBT people of faith. There is an opportunity here, for any faith community up to the task, to truly reform the Christian church into what it was meant to be in the first place—a community that accepts people where they are and offers them genuine love and support.

There are many independent churches that are already doing this. And even some mainline churches are flying under the denominational

radar to give LGBT people of faith the connection and community they crave. My own small congregation, *Jubilee! Circle*, in Columbia, South Carolina, is offering an alternative theology centered in the Creation Spirituality of Matthew Fox, which attracts both LGBT and straight people who may otherwise describe themselves as “nones.”

I think the key is to begin our theology in a different place—not in the dark place of original sin (a doctrine cooked up by Augustine to rid himself of the guilt of his own sexual dysfunctions)—but with what Matthew Fox calls *original blessing*, in which our bodies are “dwelling places of the Divine.”

How revolutionary it would be for the LGBT community, which has already led massive social reforms around marriage, to become the new reformers of Christianity—turning it from a religion of shame and guilt into the living embodiment of God's beauty and unconditional love.

As Mark D. Jordan has powerfully offered, in these pages: “There is no gay church, there is only church—which is never reformed, only reforming.”

Much respect to Vines and his supporters, but why must we in the LGBT faith community beg for acceptance in an already theologically bankrupt institution when the time for reformation is ripe?

Statistical Blog – William's Research Institute

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/datablog/welcome-to-lgbtstats/>

LGBTstats

Williams Institute Data Blog

Currently, Dr. Gary J. Gates is the Blachford-Cooper Distinguished Scholar and Research Director at the Williams Institute. He is a recognized expert on the demography of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population. He has also championed the effort to add sexual orientation and gender identity questions to major national surveys in order to better understand the LGBT community.



Read the blog post at the link above.

⌘ Send your comments about this section to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ⌘



Journey (1)



By Jerry McKay

Most of what characterizes my life today—work, family, and faith—looks little like what I thought it would when I graduated from college in 1980. Because of my sexual orientation, nothing is as I expected. I still identify as Seventh-day Adventist, but I do not have the same relationship with my church as I once had. I am open about my orientation to most people, and I have been in a relationship for nearly twenty-five years. Don't let that fact, however, lead you to make assumptions about my theology. That I am a professing Christian is applauded by some and questioned by others. LGBT acquaintances and some heterosexual friends often ask me why I continue to associate with a faith community that has had a checkered relationship with its LGBT members. Others wonder how I can consider myself a Christian while in a relationship.

In addition to the why-do-I-continue and the how-can-I-consider-myself questions are a multitude of other questions that people have asked me over the years.

Naturally, people want to know when and how I first became aware of my orientation. Others are interested in my spiritual experience and how my faith and my orientation intersect and perhaps collide. Many questions revolve around my reparative therapy journey and how that impacted my belief in God and my relationship to the church. I am often asked about the pivotal moment I decided to stop trying to change my orientation and the events that led up to that moment. Related to that decision is the question of short- and long-term consequences. I've been asked about where I see God in the whole journey—before counseling, during counseling, and since accepting my orientation. And, finally, others want to know about my relationship, how it has evolved over the years, and the impact it has had on my life.

There are so many questions, and the best way to answer them is with a story.

To let you into my experience as deeply as possible, I'm going to tell my story in themes.

While life is usually lived on a timeline moving from A to B to C, there are themes that overlap and benchmark events that change the course of our lives. This has definitely been my experience.

The themes are more significant during the first half of my life, but they do spill over into the present. They loosely follow along these lines: family dynamics, my religious world, school experiences, and my awareness of my orientation. Later I will describe my journey into the world of reparative therapy as I tried to fix myself and become heterosexual. Finally, I will look at my life since that experience. As I move through each period, I cannot help but add experience-in-retrospect comments that explain why I felt the way I did and why I made certain choices.

When you are finished, I want you to be able to say that you now know at least one person who is attracted to the same sex and what that experience is like. By letting you into some very private moments, I want you to come as close as possible to walking in my shoes.



The First Fifteen Years

I begin with the first fifteen years of my life. Most of the things I share from childhood tie into my experience in later years as I tried to make sense of my orientation. As I begin, indulge me in sharing some of the quirky bits of my life in general as a child.

I was born in the summer of 1956 four years after my parents' marriage. I'm the first of two children. My sister was a mid-winter baby, born in February three and half years later. At the time of my birth my father, who had only eight years of formal education, was self-employed. He operated a small saw mill where he cut cedar logs into lumber and sold it to local dealers or individuals. Mom, having finished high school and then a certificate at a local secretarial college, worked part-time at a lawyer's office in a nearby town. Home was in a tiny village in rural Ontario fifty kilometers west of Canada's capital.

Our century-old house sat on the southeast corner of the only intersection in our village. If it had not been for a telephone pole sitting three feet from the corner of the house, the traffic would have eventually whittled away that last bit of lawn until we could have touched them from the living room window as they turned the corner. My bedroom overlooked that intersection. I always heard the passing traffic, and the one street light illuminated my bedroom every night.

For the first few years, we had no running water or indoor plumbing of any kind. When we finally got running water, it was only cold water. All bath water had to be heated on the electric

stove in large boilers. I cannot imagine now, as an adult, existing only on a sponge bath every other day!

A wood furnace that blasted heat up through a single two-foot circular vent in the living room floor kept us warm during the winter. The iron grate in that vent could get hot enough to burn your skin, and I am told I stepped onto it once as an infant and blistered the bottom of my feet. It was a significant move upward when dad converted the wood furnace to a thermostat controlled oil furnace. I was already in elementary school when Bell Canada upgraded our operator managed party line to a "dial" phone. While my environment was rustic, there was always plenty of food on the table; and, unlike some of the neighbors, our car always started.

My free time was filled with self-made entertainment. During the summer, friends and I spent hours making up games, building tree forts in the woods around the village, and swimming in the nearby river—all unsupervised in those days. I was barefoot half of the time and would arrive home in the evening with the soles of my feet blackened from walking on gravel roads that had been soaked in used motor oil to keep the dust down. In the winter, we traded forts in the forest for tunnels in snow drifts, and the pond we played around during the summer became a skating rink.

As I got older, I added a few mischievous activities to my entertainment list. In addition to knocking on neighbor's doors and running away to hide, another favorite winter pastime was playing

“bumpers.” Under the cloak of very dark winter evenings, we would sneak out behind cars that had stopped at that one intersection below my bedroom window and grab onto the back bumper. Then, unknown to the driver, of course, we let the car pull us down the snow-packed street. As we slid along trying to stay upright while crouching behind the car, our only fear was of hitting an unexpected patch of sand on the road. If grabbing bumpers felt too risky, we opted for throwing snowballs at cars as they pulled away from that same stop sign.

Whether it was summer or winter, the highlight of my childhood was staying at my father’s family farm. I share the name Alexander with at least four in a line of six decedents who arrived in Canada from Dornoch, Scotland, to settle in this area in 1832.

My father’s father died in 1964, so I have only vague memories of him. I know, however, that he was an excellent fiddle player and often spent Saturday nights playing up a storm at a barn dance somewhere in the county. My grandmother occasionally accompanied him on the piano.

After my grandfather’s death, my father’s brother took over the farm and lived there with his mother until she died. For years my father’s saw mill was located at the farm. Dad would often spend the night at the farm instead of driving back home only to return the next day. I went with him every opportunity I could get. During the summer, at my request, dad would leave me at the farm for days on end. It was my second home, and my uncle was my second father.

My uncle taught me to drive the horses to help bring in the hay. The farm animals were my summer friends. It was a thrill to become so familiar with the cattle, sheep, and horses that they would recognize me when I approached them in the open fields and let me pet them. Some animals presented more of a challenge—the barn cats!

There were “wild” cats that hung out in the barns. I was fascinated at how my grandmother could get close to them, but no one else could. One day, after much observation, I was sure I could trick them. I put on grandmother’s straw hat, one of her sweaters, and an apron. Walking slowly and hunched over as she was, I approached the barn. Sure enough, the cats came up to me expecting the table scraps they would have received from grandma. I was elated to have gotten so close to

those skittish cats. That day, I learned why wolves use sheep’s clothing.

I also went to the farm during the school break at Christmas. There was something magical about accompanying my uncle to feed the cattle in the evening or to milk them—by hand—in the morning. In December, both chores were done in the blackness of a December night. I remember being fascinated at how much heat twenty cows could generate. In the early morning, even if it were -30° C. outside, the barn was warmer than the house. Of course, the farm house was heated by one wood stove, and when the last flames went out in the middle of the night it meant you could see your breath by morning. In mid-January, the bedpan under the bed was a welcome indignity compared to a trip outside in the dark to the frigid outhouse.

During the winter months, my father and uncle used to cut the cedar trees my father would later saw into lumber. I spent the day running around gathering dead wood to keep a fire going. By contrast, if I was not outside in the bush, I might just as easily have been indoors helping my grandmother prepare dinner on the woodstove or sitting with her as she darned my uncle’s woolen socks.



*Jerry
and his father*

During the school break in March, I headed to the farm again. This time it was to help drive the horse-drawn sleigh to collect the sap from the maple trees so that it could be boiled down to maple syrup.

Being around a farm, I was well aware of some harsher realities. I knew where the meat on our table came from. I saw dead deer suspended in the shed to cure during hunting season. I watched a pig being shot and then hoisted up so it would bleed out thoroughly. On one occasion, I helped my uncle’s neighbor castrate a batch of piglets—don’t ask!

My description of childhood may sound like something from the 1830s, but it was my reality in the 1960s. These aspects of my childhood were fundamental in creating my respect for animals, my comfort with the solitude of the night and the forest, and being able to find pleasure in simple things. My life is richer because of them.

There was one event from my childhood, however, that haunts me to this day.

With the pellet gun my father had given me one Christmas, I used to shoot at bottles or targets on trees. Then one day, without any forethought, I aimed at a sparrow on a distant telephone pole. I don't think I believed I would hit it, but I did.

When it fell to the ground, I felt sick to my stomach. It was such a powerful moment because I did know what it said in Mathew 10:29: "...not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it."

Of course, this sparrow had fallen because of my actions. Holding that lifeless little bird in my hand, I vowed to do my best to never again needlessly or thoughtlessly harm anything. Of all the questionable things I have done in life, this one still stings my conscious. That painful experience gave me some idea of what God might feel should I be hurt or fall to the ground.



Family Dynamics

Running through all the positives of my childhood was the strained dynamics unfolding in my family. There was the ever-widening rift in my parents' relationship. It was well underway before I was born. My parents' marriage was never strong. In fact, it was probably doomed from the beginning because of significant personality differences and the fact that my father drank regularly.

Drinking was a part of my father's culture before my parents were married. Next to fishing, it remained a popular pastime for him and his friends. My mother never liked to drink, and being rather shy and introverted found the weekend parties tedious. Soon she stopped going with him to those events, which significantly changed their social life and further strained their relationship.

Three and a half years after I was born and

some seven years into my parents' marriage, Marilyn entered the world. Although she was a very welcome addition to the family, health concerns complicated everything. By my sister's first birthday, she was diagnosed with a severe congenital heart defect. In 1962, Marilyn had to be rushed to Toronto for emergency heart surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children. It was a stopgap procedure, but it gave her body the needed time to develop before a more permanent solution could be found. For the next seven years her heart struggled like an engine running on half its cylinders. Because of the malfunctioning valve, she constantly lacked oxygen; and you could see it in the purple hue of her lips and finger tips.

As mystery would have it, eight years later on Valentine's Day, Marilyn had a second very successful surgery. Because of a string of complica-

tions, however, she ended up spending three months in the hospital 400 kilometers from home. Naturally, the whole event put stress on her and the family. My parents made numerous trips to Toronto together and separately. It was a costly time emotionally and financially. At that time, we had neither private health insurance nor did Canada's early public health plan cover all the costs. Each month, mom sent a small check toward paying off the bill. Understandably, this stressed my parents and prompted my father to drink even more than he may have otherwise.

Unfortunately, alcohol brought all of dad's fears, hurts, and disappointments to the surface. When drinking, dad could get rather ugly. He argued, criticized, and was often demeaning. There were numerous sleepless nights as he drank heavily into the early morning hours before passing out on the sofa. Christmas, with all the social drinking, was often chaotic; and the occasional Christmas tree came crashing to the floor.



My Religious World

Religion was always part of my upbringing. Sometimes it was in the background and at other times it was up close and personal. On my father's side of the family Baptists, Anglicans, United Church of Canada, and Jehovah's Witnesses were represented. My mother's background was Anglican, although she did not attend. There were plenty of Catholics in the county, but none "in the family;" but I knew from overhearing conversations that they were "good people."

I quickly learned that doctrinal differences were fodder for squabbles and that religious belief did not guarantee civility. One time, my mother and my dad's sister's husband left the house and sat in the car while dad and his sister went at it in the house over some point of theology. Despite these religious squabbles between family members,

This had a profound negative impact on all of us. It created a triangle of intimacy between my mother, sister, and me that unintentionally isolated my father. I could sense my parents' stress, of course, and this affected my relationship with my father and my mother. At the same time, dad never lost a day's work because of drinking and never had a traffic accident. Back then, drinking and driving was never questioned.

Not surprisingly, I developed a hypersensitivity to what was going on around me. When dad arrived home late at night, I could tell by the sound that the tires made on the gravel below my bedroom window how heavily he had been drinking. I could tell from subtle changes in my mother's behavior that she was sad or distressed. I could see how arguments affected my sister. As a result, I grew up fast, taking on a sense of responsibility very early—too early. I learned to bury my feelings and do without emotional support because there wasn't always enough to go around.

I never heard hell fire and brimstone messages from my parents. Religion may be suspect, but God could be trusted.

My father had read the Bible regularly over the years and had strong opinions about what he believed it said rather than what people thought it said or wanted it to say. While he knew plenty of good Christian folk, he had no qualms about pointing out that too much religion made people "crazy in the head." My dad's faith was best expressed by the sayings he often repeated. "We are all under the curse of the earth," he would often say, "and you just have to make the best of it." Dad also believed just as strongly that God's mercy outweighed his wrath. My father wanted to be baptized, but because baptism was often synonymous with joining a particular church he

never was. He was uncomfortable with the idea that any one group could be “all right,” as most claim to be. It saddens, and perhaps angers, me that no minister simply baptized dad into the Christian faith and then let God work out what denomination he joined or what lifestyle choices he might make.

Around the time I started school, I was sent to the United Church in our village, but only during the summer. Summer attendance was small, but attendance was so small during the cold winter months that it didn't warrant heating the old wooden church. It sat vacant all winter waiting for the return of spring. I don't have many memories of attending that church, although I did have a collection of lapel pins indicating I had completed several levels of Sunday school. Most memories are of the wooden pews and the smell of a building that been closed up for the winter.

My earliest memories of religious instruction are of my mother reading my sister and me the odd Bible story and patiently encouraging us to memorize The Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. I remember her occasionally singing *Jesus Loves Me and Away in a Manger*.

Like most people, I can only repeat the first verse of *Jesus Loves Me*, yet the words, “Little ones to Him belong; they are weak but He is strong” still move me to tears faster than any sermon. Those simple words were the seeds of my faith and the message they taught would sustain me in the future when things became profoundly confusing. Even today, when theological discussion and debate become too abstract or I become overwhelmed with trying to “do all the right things,” my spiritual default is to rest in the belief that we all belong to God and that God wants everyone to know that there is room in His house for every “little one.”

In addition to all the other denominations circling about, there was one that I was not yet aware of. While no one in my family was Seventh-day Adventist, Adventism was closer to home than I realized. In fact, every Sunday morning, my father would listen to *The Voice of Prophecy*, an Adventist radio broadcast coming from far-away California. When I hear the chorus used to open the broadcast, “Lift up the trumpet and loud let it ring, Jesus is coming again,” I can still see my father sitting in his chair listening to the radio preacher *H.M.S. Richards, Sr.* as the smell of bacon cooking filled our home. Eventually, I

would learn that dad liked many of the things he heard on those programs, that my parents knew people in the community who were Adventist, and that there were Adventist books in the house that had been given to my parents. I later learned that my mother's father had also been reading Adventist literature for years.

For years, however, Adventism was just in the background. Then, when I was eight, in a move that seemed out of the blue, my mother took my sister and me to the nearest Adventist church on Easter of 1964. It was a small congregation founded, in fact, after a series of evangelistic meetings in 1920 by the same radio preacher my father listened to each Sunday morning. I had no idea that on that morning this faithful little group would become my permanent spiritual home. We went to church every Saturday morning after that. This was a pivotal moment in my life.

My sporadic Sunday school attendance was replaced with regular Sabbath school attendance. Saturday morning became the highlight of my week. My children's class with its songs and felt-board Bible stories became a weekly sanctuary from all that was chaotic and stressful at home.

In the next few years, on my own initiative, I embraced the key theological and lifestyle markers of the Adventist church. That meant I was seen as a bit of an odd-ball among relatives. Going to church on Saturday was odd enough, but becoming a vegetarian, in the mid-60s in meat-eating rural Ontario, was viewed with suspicion. I know folk, even my father, thought I would soon fade away to nothing or drop dead at any moment. That a Christian did not drink was not that unusual, but dropping tea and coffee from my diet was a bit fanatical for most.

My opposition to drinking often annoyed my father and created a lot of tension between us as I grew older. When Dad reminded me that the statement “a little wine for thy stomach's sake” was from the Bible, I reminded him that the Bible also said “wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging.” There were plenty of heated arguments about the definition of what “a little wine for thy stomach's sake” meant. These arguments got us nowhere. There was always more heat than light, and I regret any element of those arguments that implied I was a better person than he.

On a humorous note, Dad used to irritate visiting pastors who encouraged him to “give up the drinking.” Once they had counseled him, he would

ask them to tell him what faithful Noah did shortly after coming out of the ark. I know it galled them to admit that one of the Bible's greats planted a vineyard and made wine and then drank it. There was no winning the wine argument. And of course, dad knew what Jesus had done with the water!

Becoming involved with any church opens doors and opportunities one might never have otherwise. One of the early highlights for me was going off to summer camp.

Going to a Christian camp was a high for me. It seemed so perfect—everyone working together to do and be like Jesus. I threw myself into every activity and when each week came to an end, I did not want to go home. When I got home, I slept for days out of exhaustion.

One example illustrates my attitude during those summer camp days. While most kids enjoy camp just for the fun of it, and a few spend their time looking for opportunities to make trouble, I set my sights on becoming King of Camp! That honor required a week of exemplary conduct, but I was up for the challenge. Perhaps I was trying to please others out of a need for praise and attention. Maybe the order and conformity it required gave me a sense of control in my life. Whatever the reason, I was able to meet the challenge and was crowned King of Camp one summer. I was sure I was doing just as Jesus would have wanted.

Although regular church attendance provided a social outlet, I did not see much of my friends outside of church because everyone was spread out over the county. Most friendships were from the village where I lived; I saw them only at school.

Whether it was at home or at school, most aspects of my life were becoming compartmentalized. That included my faith experience. Although it dominated my thinking, it was becoming a very private and solitary matter. I would shut myself away in my room or hide up in a large Manitoba Maple tree beside the house to read my Bible, talk to Jesus, or complete the Bible studies I received by mail from that Adventist radio broadcast in California. I did read the odd Hardy Boys mystery book, but I spent more time methodically working my way through *The Desire of Ages*, a 600-page devotional by Ellen G. White on the life of Jesus.



The high point of my spiritual journey was the day I was baptized in 1969. Since the Adventist church practices baptism by immersion, we had to go into Ottawa where there was a functional baptismal tank. Walking down into the water and being totally immersed by my pastor was a profound bodily experience.

My interest in all things religious did have its positives and negatives.

On the positive side, lifelong attitudes were being shaped by my meditation on the example and teachings of Jesus. I was drawn to the way He related to people, and I wanted to be like Him. On the negative side, my adolescent enthusiasm lacked experience and I tended toward Pollyanna-like expectations. While I did not intend to be judgmental or legalistic, I struggled with the fact that others did not always do what God wanted, as I understood it. In my 12-year-old mind, I knew that if everyone did what God wanted, parents would not argue, everyone would be a vegetarian, relatives would go to church on Sabbath, and everything would be right in the world. I was left puzzled when God did not answer every earnest prayer. Had God done so, my sister's worldly nail polish would have curdled in its bottle, the TV would have stopped working Friday evening as the sun set, and Jesus would have turned my father's wine back into water.

All of this was in contrast to what other friends were up to. While most of my male friends were out playing sports, experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol, and learning about the female anatomy from their father's magazines, I read my Bible and thought about how to give Bible studies to the neighbors.

To be Continued...

✂ Send your comments about this article to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ✂



Life, the Jamaican Context, 2008

Mocking smiles,
Invading our world with lies and promises of miracles,
Imitation *gods* bringing oppression and death through things which already were.
Financial apartheid,
Sucking from us the common, life itself.
Bringing drought, famine, disasters that tongue or pen fall short to express;
Shutting us out of the ark with an authority they acquired through bribery and trickery.
And we like crabs in a barrel refuse to be martyred for the freedom of our brothers,
sisters, or children.
All because they deem the forefathers' plight inadequate,
Must we relive the horrid fairytale; "peace battle" they say.
Gun butts, smoke, fire, all in the name of peace;
Shaking their heads in pity and sympathy, but crossed fingers out of sight.
The law "For the people" has been abolished, now—
Institution of a new law "To the people."
So we suffer hopelessly through it, though it didn't have to be so.
Fate is unkind to us and all our generations
Our story is one of oppression.
However, today the whites stand blameless,
Only accounting for changing our perception of ourselves.
Their influence seen even in our flag where hardships are the half
The land is the other but it is no refuge,
When our own overtake us—
We could not hide in our own land
It existed almost as a betrayal giving us up to the bloodthirsty hounds.
Soon 'twill be stained red with the blood of the common.
There is no sunshine,
And the black clouds, menacing, stretch out their hands, to entrap us forever in the
"hardships of the people."
We form a line for our food, for grain like those in the mother land.
"A great depression" "Universal starvation"
So our children with pot bellies and sunken eyes stand by our side feeble and frail,
With ambitions existing only as dreams in their mind.
Sad,
History professed that the days of genocide were over; well,
History lied. They are here again.
So I hear my mother saying, "The more things change, the more they remain the same."
And we look on through dark eyes, our souls in hiding.
Only waiting for the Savior to arm us for the rebellion,
—or for the death to free us.
—C. Stephens

☚•Send your comments about this article to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ☚



Jesus: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).

1888 – The Unending Story of Seventh-day Adventist Reformation (3)



By Gilbert Valentine PhD

e) A New Understanding of the Gospel

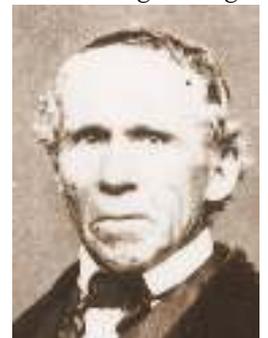
The most remarkable thing about the 1888 episode for the people of the time was the paradigm shift the new insights slowly wrought in Adventist understanding of the gospel and its relationship to law and the implications this had for Adventist identity. When Ellen White endorsed the “message” of the 1888 episode it was this broad new Christo-centric focus that she had in mind.

As Knight has documented, the gospel emphasis came about not because it was actually listed on any agenda for discussion but as a result of a strategic decision Waggoner had himself made over how to present his series of studies on the Law in Galatians. He decided to use the first five or six of his nine-meeting series to talk about the biblical meaning of righteousness by faith and the experience of forgiveness; and only after that had been established as the context did he deal with the issue of which law the Galatian letter had in mind. It was these groundwork studies and the realization of “the good news” of forgiveness that

so resonated with Ellen White and with others and led to a reorientation of the law and gospel. Showing how the gospel function of the law was to bring believers to Christ that they might be “justified by faith” was the central thrust of his presentations. It propelled to front stage the simple but profound question of how the believer was saved. And, in truth, the new understanding directly challenged the traditional understanding of the question as it had been held in Adventism which was a deeply rooted legalistic understanding.

As George Knight has also recently documented in his biography of Joseph Bates, the legalistic understanding of salvation was early ingrained into the fabric of Adventism. For Bates, rooted in the Millerite experience of the first and second angels’ messages, salvation was achieved by faith in Jesus plus works. He took Jesus’ instruction to

George Knight



the rich young ruler, “This do and thou shalt live,” as foundational for his understanding. Keeping the Sabbath commandment was essential for salvation and great care had to be exercised to keep it correctly. Even as late as 1867 his preaching was sharply focused on behavior with a perfectionist requirement.¹ The understanding that Adventists were living in the time of judgment underscored this works-oriented legalistic strand in their theology. Later Adventist writers and speakers extended the emphasis using the King James Version’s mistaken rendering of Romans 3.25. This translation spoke of “forgiveness of sins that are past” and was applied to mean that, for the future, the commandments needed to be kept perfectly in order to ensure salvation. Reinforcing this theme, the interpretation of the Investigative Judgment that described the idea of having to live “without a mediator” after the close of probation reinforced this legalistic understanding.² The inherent legalistic bent to Adventist apologetics had robbed the movement almost entirely of any sense of Christian assurance prior to 1888. Many, including Ellen White, thus found the gospel emphasis highly refreshing. Others, on the other hand, felt seriously threatened that the new emphasis would undercut any motivation for their unique Sabbath-keeping message.

Ellen White herself may not have understood or appreciated the theological connectedness of the basis for the legalism that intertwined itself through pre-1888 Adventist soteriology, but she certainly appreciated the realignment suggested by Waggoner and felt that it was absolutely what the denomination needed. W.W. Prescott, president of Battle Creek College, also understood the basic thrust of the new emphasis and undertook as his personal project the task of recasting all Adventist teachings from the gospel, Christo-centric perspective. In this way, the 1888 Conference might be seen as a graveyard for legalism. It laid the foundation for a major paradigm shift—for many of the people who participated in it and experienced it.³

¹ George R Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Adventism*, (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 2004) 41, 83-88, 154-156.

² *Great Controversy* 625.

³ See Valentine, *Ibid*, for an extensive discussion of Prescott’s role in the realignment. 86, 113 – 122.



W.W. Prescott

For other interpreters who took Ellen White’s endorsement of Jones and Waggoner to be an endorsement of their later fusion and confounding of justification and sanctification, their pathway led to an unbiblical perfectionism. The denomination is indebted to George Knight whose research demonstrates forcefully that this is a misinterpretation and that the heart of the message of 1888 is the centrality of Christ and the importance of a living faith relationship.

From another profoundly important perspective the reorientation achieved in the highly conflicted 1888 episode also involved the establishing of a new sense of self-identity for the denomination and led to a reinterpretation of the core text of Adventist self-understanding. Prior to this time Adventists had seen their mission and *raison d’etre* expressed in Revelation 14:12, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (KJV). This verse outlined in a prophetic end-time context Adventists’ role in calling attention in a distinctive way to the Sabbath truth and holding fast to the teachings of Jesus. The expression “faith of Jesus” as Knight points out was understood throughout Adventism as referring to the body of teachings of Jesus. It was the system of belief that comprised the message of the Christian church. James White, J. N. Andrews, and R.F. Cottrell had all interpreted the text in this way and it had become the standard approach. Ellen White herself had earlier understood and written about the text in this way. The “faith of Jesus” was “the truth” which was to be defended in the final struggles in the combat with the beast and his image as the prophecy

forecast in Revelation 13.⁴

Following the 1888 conference, however, Ellen White began to see in this verse the meaning of “faith in Jesus” as faith in the sin-pardoning savior. “Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.”⁵ For Ellen White this insight linked the new understanding of the law and gospel, (Sabbath and gospel) to the distinctive contribution of Seventh-day Adventists to Christianity and gave it a prophetic rationale. Faith “in” Jesus meant being justified by faith and this was the third angel’s message “in verity” she said. It was by no means an undermining of the foundations or an attack on the pillars of the faith. Rather it was the very core of Adventist mission. Thus George Knight would observe, “Out of Minneapolis would flow a new significance to the most important Adventist text in the Bible. That proved to be an earthshaking event for the denomination and it led to a meaning for Revelation 14:12 that Adventism has yet to understand.”⁶

Conclusion

The 1888 Minneapolis conference was indeed a most “remarkable” happening in the development of Adventism. The conference itself functioned as a crucible. Feeding into it were a set of volatile ideas and developments that gave rise to serious clashes and debates. Flowing out of the crucible were a series of developments that over time had a revolutionary impact and gave new shape to the life and thought of the denomination. The meeting and its aftermath shaped the denomination’s understanding of its mission, impacted its view of authority in resolving theological controversies, and corrected a serious flaw in its understanding of law and gospel. 1888 as truly a moment of Adventist reformation

✂ Send your comments about this article to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ✂

⁴ “Are we prepared to stand in firm defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy* 593, *Early Writings*, 117.

⁵ Ellen G. White, MS 24, 1888. See also Knight, *A User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message*, 107.

⁶ See also Knight, *A User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message*, 106.



Ellen G. White

*We turn to God for help
when our foundations
are shaking, only to
learn that it is God who
is shaking them.*

—Charles C. West

We Are Seventh-day Adventists: Every Story Matters

Who are we? Hear our stories.

Chasity's Story

<http://wearesdas.com/index.php/home-3/86-stories/114-chasity-s-story.html>



The Intercollegiate Adventist GSA Coalition

(IAGC) is a group of student leaders focused on creating safe spaces on their university campuses for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) community and allies. We are committed to creating warm, healthy, and spiritual environments for students. These spaces allow young people to come together and have open conversations about sexual orientation and gender identity, self-expression, and spirituality.

Our Mission:

In the spirit of Jesus' ministry of love and Paul's directive in 2 Corinthians 5:20, members of the IAGC are to be ambassadors of reconciliation. Therefore the IAGC is a student-run organization that seeks to bridge the LGBTQ community and the Seventh-day Adventist community within the academic setting. The IAGC seeks to promote understanding, compassion, education, awareness, and community for those who wish to integrate their faith with their sexual and gender identities. The members of the IAGC strive to create a community of fellowship that affirms diversity while sowing seeds of love.



Our Vision:

The IAGC envisions Adventist campuses in which faith and the LGBTQ community are unified through conversation, mutual respect, and understanding.

Since 2011, IAGC has had an annual summit meeting for our LGBT and ally student leaders nationwide. We have convened in San Francisco and Los Angeles; and, in 2015, we will be meeting in sunny California!

The summit is composed of three days. The first day is full day of business meetings and planning for the next academic year; the second day includes speakers (past speakers have included

Justin Lee of the Gay Christian Network and Andrew Marin of the Marin Foundation); and the third day is a day for our students to bond.

We will be posting information about this coming summit closer to the date!

The Intercollegiate Adventist GSA Coalition (IAGC) is proud to announce its brand new leaders for Equality Scholarship. The scholarship was created to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) student leaders who work toward constructive dialogue and equality on Seventh-day Adventist college and university campuses across North America.

IAGC recognizes the strength, dedication, and commitment required to face the challenges of advocating for LGBTQ equality while sowing seeds of love. By creating the Leaders for Equality Scholarship IAGC seeks to honor the bold few who have dedicated their time and energy toward a more unified, inclusive and loving Seventh-day Adventist community.

For application details, deadlines, and requirements please feel free to send inquiries to IAGC.Southern@gmail.com.

⌘ Send your comments about this section to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org ⌘

