



Safe Places

Newsletter

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

January/February 2015

This month we begin a four- or five-month series by Gilbert Valentine Ph.D. on ways the Seventh-day Adventist Church has addressed shifts in theological foci. This particular topic covers our continuing reactions to the 1888 message. The concepts presented here might help us better understand how to deal with present day hot topic items such as sexual orientation, women's ordination, and varieties of creation. Dr. Valentine is chair of Administration and Leadership in the School of Education at La Sierra University. His interests include looking at processes of organizational change and development, development of the early Adventist educational system and leadership, patterns and issues in Adventist leadership, and leadership biography. The series was first published in *STUFEN. Periodical of AWA-Zeitschrift des AWA - Adventistischer Wissenschaftlicher Arbeitskreis e.V.* Nr. 103-106, 42, and is reprinted with permission.

Our *Building Safe Places—for Everyone* team is in the middle of a qualitative research project looking at why LGBTI Adventists and their allies remain members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or why they leave. Here, and for the next several months, we will be publishing some of the short responses to the research question.

With this issue we are introducing a new technology. At the end of each article, story or report we will have a link for you to be able to respond immediately to what you have read. Feel most welcome to share your questions, thoughts, critiques, wishes, requests etc. We will pass your responses along to the appropriate writers.

As always, you can forward Safe Places to anyone you think might find it useful or interesting. People can sign up to regularly receive this newsletter by accessing our website at <http://buildingsafeplaces.org/>. You can reach us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org. If you would like to attend one of our meetings, you can find them on the website under Events and Training & Consultations.

We're right in the middle of developing and adding a completely new training that will be described on the site within the next month or so. If you no longer want to receive this newsletter you can request the change by contacting us at the above address.

Meanwhile, take good care of yourselves. We wish you many blessings,

Catherine Taylor and the Building Safe Places Team:
Ingrid Schmid, Frieder Schmid, Floyd Poenitz, Dave Ferguson, Carrol Grady,
Jacquie Hegarty, and Linda Wright

☞ [Send your comments about the January/February issue to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org](mailto:editor@buildingsafeplaces.org) ☞



Dogs Who Modeled Empathy

The kingdom of Heaven turns our cultural assumptions of privilege upside down. The first will be last and the last first. In God's realm every resource is shared with all who need.

[Read more on page 4](#)

Churches now more accepting of gays and lesbians as members, less so as leaders

A report on a national survey of churches finds churches have grown more accepting of gays and lesbians. Just under half of local churches would welcome gays and lesbians as members. Only one in four churches would allow gays and lesbians to assume positions of leadership.

[Read more on page 6](#)

Why Do We Stay...Why Do We Leave: Seventh-day Adventist LGBTI people and their church

The questions being asked of LGBTI Adventists and their allies are: What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Or: What are some of the factors that went into your discontinued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

[Read more on page 7](#)

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

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 reshaped 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.

[Read more on page 10](#)

Five Things

I love Jesus. I stand amazed at His perfect love and patience. I am glad that every day is a new day filled with opportunities. Even when I fail to live up to the standards by which I aspire to build my life, Jesus has patience with me. He is willing to continue His walk with me. He gives me grace and mercy. Every moment of every day, Jesus is the center of my life. Every choice I make, every action I take is because I want to be closer to my God. His way is the best way. I want to be one with Christ.

[Read more on page 16](#)

Tribute

A tribute to the late Dr. Ruth Murdock of Andrew's University.

[Read more on page 19](#)



Dogs Who Modeled Empathy



By Andrew Dykstra

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them.’

‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead’” (Luke 16:19-31).

We won’t learn about the geography of Heaven from this parable. The flames are not a literal place and neither is Abraham’s bosom.



Jesus told this tale to privileged, complacent people whose pride was placed in their ancestral connection to Abraham. The parable preceding it describes the corrupt steward. In vs. 14 Luke says the Pharisees loved wealth. They had sneered at that previous parable; they are likely the focus of this one. Unlike many of us, Jesus used strong words and stories in a sincere hope to turn the Pharisees from a path of destruction.

The rich man represents the Pharisees. Despite their public good works they created a huge chasm between themselves and the poor of Judea. It was in caring for the poor and vulnerable that the true lessons of Heaven’s citizens were taught. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to Heaven.”

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave


them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands? And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him'" (Luke 10:30-36). But for the priest, the Levite, and the Pharisees, there seemed to be a great chasm, isolating them from need.

In these two stories Jesus draws a shocking parallel. A hated Samaritan saved the dying traveler; dogs, in compassion, licked the sores of a street person. The "unclean" showed more empathy than the Pharisaical leaders of God's people.

The kingdom of Heaven turns our cultural assumptions of privilege upside down. The first will be last and the last first. In God's realm every resource is shared with all who need. "Come, you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come; buy wine and milk without money and without cost" (Isaiah 55:1). "On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink'" (John 7:37).


Did Jesus get through to the Pharisees? Did Abraham get through to the rich man? Does God's truth get through to us today?

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



I have learned that diverse people have spoken in Jesus' name and people from different traditions have touched me in Jesus' name: whether Anglican or Adventist; Orthodox or atheist; black or white; male or female; straight or gay. We need more priests who can tame the social chaos of our world into a cosmic fellowship.

— Maury D. Jackson, DMin,
La Sierra University

 **KINSHIP** SEARCHING FOR ADVENTURE www.sdakinship.org

Churches now more accepting of gays and lesbians as members, less so as leaders



By Tobin Grant

January 9, 2015

A report on a national survey of churches finds churches have grown more accepting of gays and lesbians. Just under half of local churches would welcome gays and lesbians as members. Only one in four churches would allow gays and lesbians to assume positions of leadership.

The National Congregations Study is the most rigorous survey of local religious congregations in the United States. The NCS surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,300 local congregations. This is the third wave of the NCS. A report by Mark Chaves (Duke University) and Shawna Anderson (NORC) includes key findings from the 2012 NCS, including the changing place of gays and lesbians in American churches since the last wave in 2006.

In 2012, 48 percent of local congregations said they would “permit gays and lesbians to be full-fledged members.” This is up from 37 percent just six years earlier.

Being a “full-fledged member” does not mean that someone is qualified for leadership. Three-quarters of American churches do not allow LGBT persons to take a voluntary leadership position. This is higher than in 2006, when only 18 percent of churches reported that gays and lesbians could be leaders.

These changes are not the same across all religious traditions.

- The increases were largest among black Protestant and liberal Protestant (mainline) churches.
- Catholic parishes actually reported a decline in acceptance of gays and lesbians as “full-fledged members” (74% to 56%) and as leaders (39% to 26%).
- White conservative (evangelical) churches are more likely to accept gay and lesbian members (16% to 24%), but continued to deny LGBT members to be in leadership (only four percent)

See more at:

<http://tobingrant.religionnews.com/2015/01/09/churches-now-accepting-gays-lesbians-members-less-leaders/#sthash.OpUHue4P.dpuf>

⌘ [Send your comments about this article to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org](mailto:editor@buildingsafeplaces.org) ⌘



Why Do We Stay...Why Do We Leave: Seventh-day Adventist LGBTI people and their church

*The questions being asked of LGBTI Adventists and their allies are:
What are some of the factors that went into your continued membership
in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
Or
What are some of the factors that went into your discontinued
membership in the Seventh-day Adventist
Church?*



Female ally in the central Atlantic US, discontinued membership

Come to think of it...racism. I was not able to obey all the commands of Ellen White, even though I tried. I was not able to remain celibate. I always loved social sciences. I loved to study psychology, sociology, and anthropology. I found that it was very unhealthy that Adventists believed that emotions were unhealthy. To be angry was a sin. Of course I came to learn that anger is inevitable but often a healthy response to things. It's not the feeling angry that's a sin; it's what you do with it. I was crazy about Jim Londis. I just gobbled up every word he said. I would sometimes sit through his sermons twice. I would read everything he wrote. I thought he was great. One

day I went to church he preached a sermon that said the only moral options for a Christian were to oppress anger and deny it. I would expect to hear that from a hick preacher but not from Jim Londis. That knocked the wind out of me. I went home and cried and cried. I came to the conclusion that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was causing more harm than good with their unhealthy teachings about feelings. I decided I no longer want to support it. I called up the church and told them I wanted to be taken off the books.

At that point I became a lower case adventist. None of my beliefs changed it so it was just the church. For 1.5 years I was a lower case christian.

Jan Daffern called me and asked if I would come in and discuss why I left the church and I said sure. So I went to her office there and talked with her about why I wanted to leave. I told her I didn't have as much fear anymore and I couldn't be controlled by fear. I stopped attending and

***Male LGBTI, Canada,
continued membership, 40s***

Continued presence to be returned to after considerable absence. My initial contact is sense of community. Once I had come to terms with my orientation I determined to come back to what I most appreciate about Adventism: a sense of community, a love of Sabbath school, sharing of ideas, affecting someone else's thinking. I can question assumptions that others might be too fearful to deal with. I am free.



Male/40s/Southern US/continued membership

Some of the factors that went into my continued membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are: My upbringing; it is what I know. My culture. I like the no-drinking-or-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 were be other things that I don't like. If I got excommunicated I would still consider myself an Adventist; I would just quit paying tithe. I will consider going to church as long as I have friends there.

Male/60s/British/continued membership

I need to belong to a church, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been my home.

1. I can't give up Sabbath (even though I don't always "keep" it in the way traditional Adventists would do), and there are no other Sabbath-keeping churches in my locality that would be a significantly better spiritual home for me.
2. I have some good friends in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
3. I'm culturally Adventist.

4. I am theologically closer to Adventism than to most other denominations.
5. Various church members have been incredibly and unbelievably good to me over the years.
6. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't.
7. When the time comes to "come out of her my people" I hope I have the courage and faith to jump ship. (I think "Babylon" will eventually refer to all organised churches, but we are not there yet).

Thank you for asking.

Male/50s/German/continued membership

Tradition. Yes, a little bit. Mostly it is my just-in-time congregation in Breman, in Fendorf. I have worked for an ecumenical organization. There are problems in every church. I want to help the church change its view on homosexuals. You can either step out of the church and mourn, but to change a system you have to be part of the system. Friends, my husband is also why I stay.

⌘ [Send your comments about this section to editor@buildingsafeplaces.org](mailto:editor@buildingsafeplaces.org) ⌘



Resources

1. On our web site (<http://buildingsafeplaces.org/>) we have research articles about brain structure and orientation, videos about the Bible and orientation, books about biblical ethics and orientation, archived newsletters, trainings and consultations, quotes we find inspiring, stories, and a plethora of other resources that we hope will be helpful to you. If you have resources or if there is a specific topic that interests you and is not covered, please feel welcome to contact us at info@buildingsafeplaces.org.
2. The Williams Institute, a national think tank that is part of the UCLA School of Law, offers research and education about LGBTI issues.
3. The Center for Theology and Public Life at Mercer University (<https://ctpl.mercer.edu/>). The Center is led by Dr. David P. Gushee, the Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics.

The Mercer Center for Theology and Public Life (CTPL) promotes public dialogue, research, and constructive solutions related to important public issues to which theology and ethical reflection can make a significant contribution. The CTPL plans, hosts, and supports events that model civic, constructive, and substantive conversation about major issues in public life such as poverty and economic justice, human rights, crime and the death penalty, international peacemaking, biomedical ethics, family and sexuality, church-state relations, national identity, immigration, etc. The CTPL seeks whenever possible to encourage dialogue toward constructive solutions for the common good.

Invited participants and lecturers include theologians, ethicists, social scientists, policymakers, religious leaders, activists, and others. The CTPL hopes to host lecturers and participants known for their intellectual credibility, fair-mindedness, and capacity to engage in constructive, solution-oriented public dialogue.

1888 - The Unending Story of Seventh-day Adventist Reformation (1)



By Gilbert Valentine Ph.D.

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.



Church in the Crucible: The 1888 Conference That Changed Adventism

Introduction

The question I have been asked to address in this paper is why the 1888 General Conference Session at Minneapolis was so remarkable and what did it mean? It is helpful to reflect on whether Adventist historians have made too much of it. Has its significance been overrated?

First we offer a clarifying word about the date. “1888” is the shorthand we use to refer to the conflict-ridden General Conference session itself. But

it actually also embraces the cluster of developments leading up to and following it. But 1888 was much more than an event. Perhaps referring to it as an episode is the best way of embracing the complexity and ebb and flow of what happened. The beginnings of the episode are, in fact, to be traced to four years prior to 1888. Afterwards, developments that were linked to the people, ideas, and the attitudes at the conference were still

having a very direct and immediate impact on the church up until about 1897. As we will see in the second paper, however, in many ways the ideas, debates, and attitudes that distinguished the conference still continue to shape the church.

The actual formal meetings in 1888 comprised a ministerial institute that met for seven days from October 10 to 17 and the nineteen-day General

I A Remarkable Conference?

Was the 1888 General Conference session, however, really that remarkable? W. C. White thought so. In a one-page Sabbath afternoon letter to his wife, Ethel May, a day before the conference ended he noted that the Minneapolis meeting had indeed been “remarkable.” In his hurried note he told his wife that there had been many problematic resolutions and that he had made himself “very unpopular” because of some of the things he had done. He was also unpopular, he explained, because of things that other people thought he had done but which he knew for a fact, he had not done. Still, he jokingly informed his wife, “I will not cry.”¹

Was Willie White right? Was it remarkable? The short answer to our question is “yes.” It was a quite remarkable conference emotionally, intellectually, theologically, and spiritually. Altogether, the meeting itself was hugely traumatic—a wrenching experience for most of the participants.

There are three lines of evidence that support this assessment. The first indicator is the amount of time it took to be able to talk about it openly. Just how deeply traumatic the experience was is well illustrated by a conversation that Leroy E. Froom had with A. G. Daniells in 1930. This was forty-two years after the event. Froom, who in 1928 had been appointed the founding editor of *The Ministry* magazine, had developed a sound reputation as an able writer and editor. He related that Daniells, the former president of the General Conference, laid on him in a conversation in 1930, a responsibility for writing a thorough survey of “the developments of ‘1888’ and its sequel.” But it was a project that must be done later, not right then. According to Froom, Daniells advised him that there would be serious problems involved in such a project. “He knew that time would be required for certain theological wounds to heal and

Conference session itself that ran from October 17 to November 4. Delegates met for twenty-six days in all. While formal organizational decisions were reserved for the business sessions of the conference, the theological discussions flowed on through both events as if they were one continuous meeting. It certainly was an extended meeting compared to today’s standards.

for attitudes to modify on the part of some.” This was already generation later! Daniells even suggested that it might “be necessary to wait until certain individuals had dropped out of action,” by which euphemism he seems to have meant that

“We have had a remarkable Conference”

– W.C. White, November 3, 1888

certain funerals probably needed to be conducted first.² That kind of caution is indicative of some trauma. Daniells himself had not even attended the conference, since it took place while he was conducting a tent evangelistic program in Napier, New Zealand. But Daniells, in his administration, had had to live with and work through the fallout from the conference for decades afterwards.

Just after his conversation with Daniells in 1930, Froom surveyed surviving participants of the 1888 conference using a questionnaire. However, he respectfully followed Daniells’ advice and did not publish the results until 1970, another forty years later in his *Movement of Destiny*.³ By that time, however, not only had many individuals “dropped out of action,” but other assessments of the conference had emerged that had begun to claim the attention of the church and for serious scholarship it was a matter of having to catch up. Froom, in fact, was not the first to write on the subject. Seven years earlier Norval Pease discussed the topic in his book *By Faith Alone*.⁴ Four years later, Albert V. Olsen who, at the time, was the chair of the trustees of the Ellen G. White Es-

² Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 17. The pages that deal specifically with the 1888 conference are 188-374; See also 518-540 and 673-686.

³ *ibid*

⁴ Norval F. Pease, *By Faith Alone* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962).

¹ W. C. White to Mary White, November 3, 1888.

tate had published the first major denominational effort to give an extensive account of the 1888 conference and its aftermath in his volume *Through Crisis to Victory: 1888-1901*. Olsen linked the conference with the reorganization of the church in 1901.⁵ This volume was also a belated attempt to respond to a variety of other interpretations of the event and its meaning that were by now beginning to flourish in the church, fostered by an absence of documentation and serious scholarly assessment. The need for such chronological distance from the trauma is a clear indicator of its depth and significance.

A second way for us to develop an appreciation of the depths of the trauma of the episode and to understand why it was so remarkable is to hear how the various parties who participated in the conference assessed the event, the issues it discussed, or its aftermath. Most of the key participants expressed their reactions to what happened, and it is illuminating to notice the frequency of their use of superlatives and the dramatic tone of their rhetoric as they described their experience. The language conveys a high level of tension in their reaction to the various issues.

Ellen White wrote to her daughter-in-law Ethel May the same Sabbath afternoon her husband Willie wrote to her stating that the conference was “the most incomprehensible tug of war we have ever had among our people.”⁶ To an editorial acquaintance, some time later, she called it “one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth.”⁷ In response to General Conference President George Butler’s plan to republish Dudley M. Canright’s 1876 book *The Two Laws* as a corrective to Ellet J. Waggoner a year before the conference, White claimed that if she had her way on such a decision she would “burn every copy” of it “before one should be given to our people.”⁸

⁵ A. V. Olsen, *Through Crisis to Victory: 1888-1901* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966.) The book was published posthumously. The author died in 1963 after completing most of the text of twenty-two of the twenty-three chapters. Editors from the White Estate completed the chapters and added extensive appendices comprising sermons by Ellen White at the Conference and a note on A. T. Jones and J. H. Waggoner. The first 150 pages deal specifically with the 1888 Conference.

⁶ Ellen G. White to Mary White, November 4, 1888.

⁷ Ellen G. White to C. P. Bollman, November 19, 1902.

⁸ Ellen G. White to G. I. Butler, April 5, 1887. Dudley M. Canright’s book *The Two Laws as Set Forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1876) had already been

“My prayer is that I may be as far from your understanding and interpretation of scripture as it is possible for me to be,”⁹ Ellen White wrote about Butler and Smith concerning their attitudes and approach to interpreting Galatians. She felt so deeply about the issues that she even contemplated the possibility that perhaps there would need to be another “coming out,” an expression that referred to the inevitability of schism and the kind of traumatic experience she had lived through in 1844 when she and her family were expelled from the Methodist church in Portland, Maine. She looked back on the 1888 experience as being a time when she was under “a terrible siege.”¹⁰

Uriah Smith’s rhetoric was equally dramatic. “If the denomination ever changed its position on Galatians, they may count me out,” he wrote. It would be a “total disaster.” He, for one, would not “renounce” his previous convictions on the issues. The new ideas, he thought, “would break the faith of many of our leading workers.” Smith felt that E. J. Waggoner’s initiating of the Galatians controversy was the “greatest calamity that befell our cause,” other than the death of James White. No question was of more vital interest to protecting the doctrine of the Sabbath.¹¹ Smith felt so traumatized he resigned his position as treasurer of the General Conference in protest.

Absent from the conference because of illness, George Butler, also in protest, withdrew his name from nomination for the presidency. He felt he had been “slaughtered” in the house of his friends.¹² He was so disillusioned he retired from church work completely and later requested that his church membership be annulled and sometime later that his ministerial credentials be withdrawn. He did not preach another sermon for four years.¹³

W. C. White who under pressure had to temporarily fill the place of George Butler after the conference until O. A. Olsen, the newly appointed president arrived from Norway to take up the post, likened the experience to “about the bitter-

re-issued in 1882 but by April 1887, Canright had withdrawn from the denomination.

⁹ Ellen G. White, (1888 Materials 632.)

¹⁰ E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, May 25, 1896.

¹¹ U. Smith to Ellen G. White, February 17, 1890; U. Smith to A.T. Robinson, September 21, 1892. U. Smith to Leroy T. Nicola, February 11, 1892.

¹² G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White, October 1, 1888.

¹³ O. A. Olsen to G. I. Butler, March 31, 1893. The General Conference refused to grant his petition. See Knight, *Angry Saints*, 68.

est pill that I have had to take and it seems as though some of us have been taking pills ever since we set foot on Minneapolis soil.”¹⁴ To a colleague White related that some participants felt “that the evil effects of what had been done at the Conference could never be effaced.”¹⁵ Clearly, the participants in the conference felt very deeply over the issues and all parties described the event in the language of hyperbole.

A third measure of the significance of the 1888 General Conference session is the size of the body of literature that has since developed around the study of the event itself and the issues related to it. In his 1926 book *Christ Our Righteousness* it seems that A. G. Daniells was the first to address the issue in print with just the briefest of recitals of the conference and a discussion of the core issues. L. H. Christian included a twenty-four page chapter in his 1941 book entitled *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*. In 1945, Norval Pease made the conference the topic of his MA thesis and later included a fifty-nine page account in his book *By Faith Alone* (1962). Arthur W. Spalding gave twenty pages to the topic in his authorized denominational history *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventists*. Then in 1950 Robert Wieland and Donald Short began to ask important questions about 1888 with the wide circulation of an unpublished manuscript.¹⁶ M. L. Anderson and Robert Brinsmead entered into the discussion posed by the Wieland and Short manuscript, all tending to arrive at a broadly common theological interpretation of the event that focused on perfectionism. The theology of a final generation perfection survives to the present day and the idea of the lack of such perfection is used to explain the delay in the advent. But the major problem for these writers was a serious lack of primary documentation to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. The books by Olsen and Froom helped address the problem by making more documentation available.

As Arthur Patrick observes, however, it was not until the 1980s that a wealth of primary sources was mined by well-trained historians and other researchers and a more comprehensive

approach was able to be made in understanding the full range of complex issues. Three of many studies illustrate the kind of clearer understanding that was developed in the 1980s: Eric Webster, *Crosscurrents in Adventist Christology* (1984); George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: the Case of A. T. Jones* (1987); and a slim volume edited by Arthur J. Ferch, *Towards Righteousness by Faith: 1888 in Retrospect* (1989). In recent years, the body of scholarly literature exploring the significance and the meaning of the conference has mushroomed. Gary Shearers’ bibliography on 1888 now numbers more than eighty-five books and more than 100 periodical articles which address the subject.¹⁷ This literature would clearly seem to confirm the observation by George Knight that “Seventh-day Adventists continue to view the 1888 General Conference session as a crucial turning point in their theological development.”¹⁸ More than any other scholar, George Knight has worked at locating and researching the primary documentation and making it available as well as writing extensively on the subject. Not only has he written six specific books on the topic and innumerable articles but he reports that his later theological and exegetical bible commentary publications also grew out of the encounter he had with 1888.¹⁹ He notes that the study of the episode “changed his intellectual and scholarly life” and had a transforming impact on him spiritually. W. C. White’s initial assessment that 1888 was a “remarkable” conference seems well-substantiated.



W. C. White

¹⁷ See Bibliography by Gary Shearer, Adventist Studies Librarian, Pacific Union College Library. The Minneapolis General Conference of 1888. <http://library.puc.edu/heritage/bib-index.shtml>. Chronology of events: <http://www.scripturefirst.net/1888Timeline.htm>

¹⁸ George R Knight, *A User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message*, (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1998) 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid* p 14. Titles that Knight has authored on the meaning of the 1888 conference include the biographical study *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (1986) and several historical works: *Angry Saints* (1989), *My Gripe with God* (1990), *The Pharisees Guide to Perfect Holiness* (1992), *I Used to Be Perfect* (1994), and *A User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message* (1998)

¹⁴ W. C. White to Mary White, November 19 & 24, 1888.

¹⁵ W. C. White to J. N. Loughborough, November 20, 1888.

¹⁶ Robert Wieland, *The 1888 Message: An Introduction*, (Nashville TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1980). Wieland indicates that his study of the topic began in the 1930s and resulted in an unpublished manuscript privately circulated in the 1950s.

II. What Topics Made 1888 “Remarkable”?

The particular topics of discussion that were the focus of such animated attention, from our perspective today, do not seem all that remarkable. But they were certainly important to the conference participants. Topic one involved a conflict over the interpretation of Daniel 7 and the identity of the ten horns of the beast. In Uriah Smith’s standard work on the prophetic interpretation, *Thoughts on the Book of Daniel*, which had become the normative authority in the denomination and had been widely marketed, he had identified the Huns as the 10th horn/kingdom.²⁰ Alonzo T. Jones, the young editor from California, who in 1884 had been requested by the General Conference Committee to write a series of articles on history and prophecy had, as a result of his study, concluded on the other hand that the Alemanni made up the 10th horn/kingdom. There had been correspondence between the two men on the difference between them, and Jones asked Smith to review his arguments and his evidence before he went to press. But there was miscommunication and a lack of time, and in late 1886 Jones went ahead and published his articles in the *Signs of the Times* without the *Review* editor, Smith, having had adequate opportunity to critique them. This produced hard feelings. The topic was debated vigorously at the 1886 General Conference session, and it featured again in a more major way during the 1888 conference where it generated much heat and ill-feeling. That in itself was quite remarkable.

The second theological topic which was also a matter of dispute at the session concerned differences over the interpretation of Galatians 3:19-25. The standard denominational approach to interpreting the passage was to see it as referring to the “ceremonial law” that pointed forward to the salvific work of Christ. This approach reflected Adventism’s standard position on the two laws which understood the ceremonial law related to temple ritual as being done away with at the cross, and the moral law, the Ten Commandments, which were eternal. This approach to the two laws had become central to the system of apologetics that Adventists had developed for insisting on the perpetuity of the law and the Sabbath doctrine.

²⁰ Uriah Smith, *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Book of Daniel*, (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publishing Assoc. 1883) 160.



E.J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones in 1884, however, had begun to teach that the law that the author of Galatians had in mind was in fact the moral law, the Ten Commandments. They were teaching it in college classes at Healdsburg College in California and had published it in a series of articles on Galatians in the *Signs of the Times* in early 1886. This caused a major quarrel at the 1886 General Conference session and then led to a minor pamphlet war between the two Californian pastors and the General Conference administrators during 1887. The subject became a major topic of debate with an extended series of presentations being scheduled at the 1888 General Conference session.

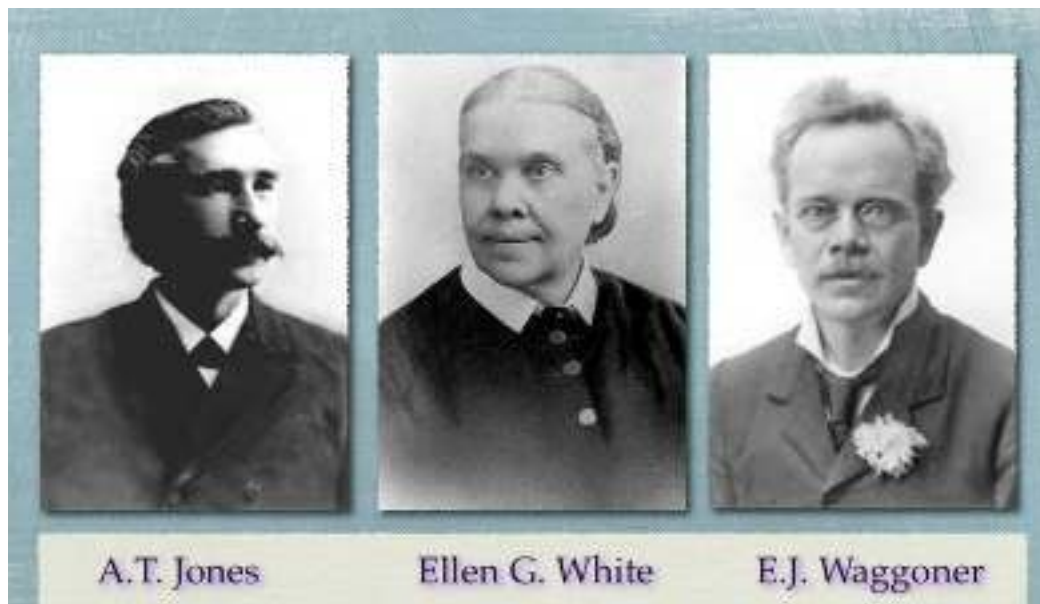
Religious liberty was the third topic that engaged delegates at the 1888 conference, but on this theme there was no conflict at the time. The issue was a highly relevant issue to delegates because of problems some Adventist believers had been having with Sunday laws in the southern states and because of the attention that a senator from Maine, Henry Blair, was getting with his submission of a proposal for legislation to the Senate on May 21 of 1888 to promote the observance “of the Lord’s day” as a day of worship. This was the first piece of legislation of its kind dealt with by Congress since the Adventist movement had become established and it alarmed Adventists.²¹

The discussion of these three topics was fitted into morning and evening devotional meetings and

²¹ George R. Knight, *A User-friendly Guide to the 1888 Message*, 32, 56.

Bible study hours and at other times that were found between the usual routine business meetings of the session. We do not have actual transcripts of the doctrinal presentations, although the sermons on religious liberty by Jones found their way the following year into a widely circulated pamphlet *Civil Government and Religion, or Christianity and the American Constitution* (1889). In addition to formal *General Conference Bulletin* reports and session minutes we now have the notebooks by W. C. White and a diary kept during the session by delegate William Hottel (both discovered during the 1980s) which help to give a clearer idea of the amount of time given to each of the topics. E. J .

Waggoner gave nine talks on the law in Galatians, and Iowa Conference President J. H. Morrison took seven meetings to reply and give the other perspective in the absence of George Butler. The discussion on the ten horns occupied the early part of the meetings and the religious liberty topics were scattered right through both parts of the meeting. It is interesting to note that the doctrine of Justification by Faith, for which the conference became celebrated, ~~for~~ was not listed on any formal agenda like the other three major topics. The discussion of this topic became central for other reasons.



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Five Things



By Karen Lee

I love Jesus. I stand amazed at His perfect love and patience. I am glad that every day is a new day filled with opportunities. Even when I fail to live up to the standards by which I aspire to build my life, Jesus has patience with me. He is willing to continue His walk with me. He gives me grace and mercy. Every moment of every day, Jesus is the center of my life. Every choice I make, every action I take is because I want to be closer to my God. His way is the best way. I want to be one with Christ.

I love getting to know people. I think everyone has something to offer. I like in-depth conversations rather than chit-chat. I like hearing what people are passionate about: relationships, traveling, and history. I like hearing, at the deeper levels, about almost any topic that interests the speaker. Everyone has a story to tell. We all come from different walks of life. God has created each of uniquely and we all have something special to offer. People are each a piece of the jigsaw puzzle. We need to have all the pieces to make a complete picture. The picture in the completed puzzle is a picture of Jesus.

I am approachable. I say this because I can get focused on my work and then it appears that I don't have time for others. People might not be able to read me. I want it known that people can come to me with questions, to talk, to talk pray. I think most of the time when I am in groups I am more quiet. One-on-one, you can see my excitement and my enthusiasm. I am a good listener.

I love to travel and explore new places. My favorite is the Narrows at Zion National Park. When I walk the trail and go between the tall, red stone walls on either side of me, I feel closest to God. I enjoy the national parks of the U.S. I have traveled to Europe and to Asia: Taiwan, China, Japan, Hong Kong, France, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Amsterdam (where I competed in the Gay Games, run-

ning the 1/2 marathon). I was a student missionary in Taiwan.

My fascination with traveling the globe began with jigsaw puzzles, postage stamps and coins—each showing a new place to dream of. Of course there were also those years of Sabbath school mission stories. I like meeting people wherever I go and learning about their lives and interests. I want to see Lake Havasu Falls in Arizona with its terraced pools of water. I want to visit Antelope Canyon and revel in the weather-formed rock walls rising high on either side of hikers. I feel closer to God when I am outside in these environments. I enjoy the way exercise kicks in my endorphins and leaves me feeling happy. Other favorite hiking places: Zion, Bryce, Arches, Escalante, the Grand Staircase, La Fayette Reservoir, Mt. Diablo, and Muir Woods. Oh, yes, and I want to see Australia and Greece.

I am Kinship's treasurer because I want to help people. Kinship has always been very dear to me as a gay Adventist Christian. This is the best way I can be of help because this is what I am good at. I enjoy the work, though it takes time to do it carefully. I do not see myself as the visionary. I am the one who does the details.

What would I like to say to the Adventist Church? I would like to be myself when I go to church. I don't want to have to hide who I am. I want to be loved and accepted and welcomed into the church and the homes of church members and not be judged. I would like to feel that is safe one day, when I have a partner, to bring that person to church. By safe I mean that we won't be told that our talents are not needed and that we should sit in the back row. This happened to me.

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We Are Seventh-day Adventists: Every Story Matters

Check out “Bartja's Story” by SDA Kinship International on Vimeo.

The video is available for your viewing pleasure at <http://vimeo.com/88826718>

If you like this video, make sure you share it, too!

Bartja's Story



Tribute

By Miles Thomas

I treasure many but I must pay tribute to the late Dr. Ruth Murdock of Andrew's University. As her student in graduate school, I found her to be a remarkably intelligent and caring woman. In my experience of the Adventist church, it has been difficult to find people who are both conservative and open-minded. I felt safe going to her when my denial about my gayness was crumbling and my marriage was in trouble. In our private counseling Dr. Murdock was accepting with no trace of condemnation.



As I negotiated my life, I decided to remain completely faithful to marriage vows until my four children were grown and educated. Then I could responsibly move out, get divorced and come out. Become a whole person and going into the gay world in my mid 50's was an eye opener!! Throughout this whole journey, I remain grateful to my compassionate professor.

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