

The Creation 7th Day & Adventist Church

USA OFFICE: 1162 Old Highway 45 South
Guys, Tennessee 38339

OPEN LETTER TO TED N. C. WILSON

August 24, 2012

Ted N. C. Wilson, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600

Mr. Wilson,

An open letter from my desk was sent to you on November 19, 2010, detailing my dismay at Mr. Orville D. Parchment's apology to one senior lady, Ms. S. Hatch of Anza, California. The subject matter of my objections concerned the faulty grounds stated for pursuing the protection of your church's "good name" and corporate identity via the "strong arm of civil government." I received no acknowledgement of receipt, answer, or rebuttal from you or any of your staff.

The nature of this open letter, addressed to you, though applicable to your world constituency, is intimately related to my initial letter. Recently, I was inspired to write you a letter during my incarceration at the Central Detention Center in San Bernardino, California for the conscientious exercise of my faith – Creation 7th Day Adventism. The Spirit of grace did not move me to compose it until now, and that, providentially prompted by your fine article published in *Adventist World, NAD Edition*, August 2012, bearing the title "Freedom of Conscience." I highly appreciated your views which I intend to develop further in this letter.

You wrote the following on page 8:

Religious liberty and freedom of conscience are gifts from God –gifts centered in free choice. These gifts are important for everyone in the world, and they are integral to our sharing the good news of the ultimate gift of Jesus Himself.

This paragraph is powerful in its scope and could not have been said any better. Oh, that every professed Christian in the world would internalize and live by these simple and eternal concepts.

Continuing on page 8, you state: "Seventh-day Adventists have always embraced religious liberty as an integral part of their beliefs, history, and mission. Religious liberty is in the very DNA of our church." In declaring this, you bring the matter home and close to the heart of *Creation 7th Day Adventists* who find themselves persecuted in America for their conscientious exercise of "the faith of Jesus" and implicit trust in and obedience to God's divine mandates.

The next paragraph says, "Religious freedom is a fundamental freedom –a basic human right." You have emphasized this sentence with the following foot note:

See "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Even ostensibly secular organizations have recognized and enshrined this right.

Logically, if "religious liberty is in the very DNA of the church," and "even ostensibly secular organizations have recognized and enshrined this right," one would think the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders and legal experts would be extremely sensitive to the principles involved whenever the church employs the state to sustain her religious institutions and identity.

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Turning to page 9, you write, “History has shown the disastrous effects on religious freedom when church and state become united.” Of course, this truth has been repeated time and time again within the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism and inherited by Creation 7th Day Adventism. In fact, the “image of the beast” prophesied in Revelation 13 is formed by this unholy union of the world with the church. Just as the beast (or papacy) was formed by the marriage of Pagan Rome to the apostate Catholic Church, Seventh-day Adventists (and Creation 7th Day Adventists alike) have expected apostate Protestantism to marry the United States government to the degree that sabbath-keepers will have their liberty of conscience restricted. Religious persecution ultimately ensues as we have seen in our instant controversy over the SDA trademark name.

Under the section titled “A Fundamental Freedom,” you make your personal preference known. “My choice must always be for a state where religious freedom is described as a fundamental freedom and has the status of a protected human right.” I perceive that you must endorse the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993 which was an attempt by Congress to protect this fundamental human right in America. I recall the Seventh-day Adventist Church being one of the leading sponsors of this land-mark legislation. But, was the RFRA to be applied *only* when the *government* was a party to a lawsuit? Would this law not apply equally to lawsuits where a private-party plaintiff invokes federal law to restrict the liberty of conscience of a private-party defendant? We know from legal research that the appellate courts are split on this question. The General Conference legal team opted out when faced head on with that question in *General Conference, et al v. McGill, et al* while objecting to McGill’s *writ of certiorari* at the U. S. Supreme Court. It was an unfortunate self-serving counter strategy wrought out by your legal team, endeavoring to salvage a General Conference victory. You and your constituency should be embarrassed and ashamed at this cowardly and hypocritical legal maneuver.

I thoroughly agree with your relevant application of principle in the next paragraph.

A secular state can be supported by believers so long as it doesn’t oppose the values of their faith. Christians are called to obey authorities and to respect the state. But when there is a conflict between the faith of Jesus and the claims of the state, we have a higher mandate: “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29, KJV).

This is the standard I have applied consistently respecting my personal response to the civil sanctions imposed on me by your legal team via United States federal magistrates. I cannot alter my course of action in light of my conscientious convictions. I am bound by my conscience to obey “a higher mandate” from the Almighty God of the living and the dead. Why do you have difficulty understanding my motives? Why do you not support me in my convictions? Why are you taking the stand of an adversary to “Freedom of Conscience” in America?

These questions may be skirted and answered with purely legalistic jargon or worldly ideals of “corporate policy,” but I appeal to you—take a moment to consider my questions with a soft Christian “heart of flesh,” applying Scripture and Scripture alone.

Then, take another step that requires you to advocate for the immutable principles of Seventh-day Adventism under the advisement of the Spirit of Prophecy. “Some will be honest when it costs nothing; but when policy will pay best, honesty is forgotten. Honesty and policy will not work together in the same mind. In time, either policy will be expelled, and truth and honesty reign supreme, or, if policy is cherished, honesty will be forgotten. They are never in agreement; they have nothing in common. One is the prophet of Baal, the other is the true prophet of God.” (*Lift Him Up*, p. 287)

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On the last page of your article (page 10), under “Tension Brings Opportunities,” I quote your words, “If intolerant, ideological secularism attacks our religious faith, we must stand up for our faith with conviction. We should not be intimidated or give up. But we must face the challenge with the Christian weapons of hope, endurance, perseverance, kindness, and love.” Mr. Wilson, I have followed your counsel precisely when faced with the civil and “secular sanctions” decreed against me under color of trademark law, resulting in my incarceration at your hands.

In the very next paragraph we read these words of challenge:

Let’s be fully engaged in our strong commitment and personal actions to live lives that promote religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Let’s speak and advocate our positions in a winsome manner with grace, conviction, and passion. Let’s seek wisdom from heaven to accomplish the great task of championing religious freedom, enlisting support from government and civic leaders, as well as the general public.

I offer my resounding “Amen” to your appeal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church constituency. I further appeal to your legal counselors who make important decisions in connection with your perceived need to “protect [your] good name” and denominational identity in this secular world. Had the church not been “married to the world,” this appeal would not have been necessary. Had your church not chosen Caesar as her protector, this open letter would not have been written. If you had “fulfill[ed] the law of God” according to the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, *Creation 7th Day Adventists* would never have separated from your communion. You would not now be our “former brethren.”

The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis, under most discouraging, forbidding, circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld, must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith, and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren, and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 463)

Mr. Wilson, I have recently completed a 40-day fast for you and your SDA constituents. I make my formal appeal to you and those precious souls in covenant with you. Please allow *Creation 7th Day Adventists* in America and the world the blessing of “freedom of conscience” which is by your own words, “a fundamental freedom—a basic human right.”

In the work of “preparing a people to stand in the day of the LORD,” I remain

Your faithful servant in the voluntary bonds of Jesus Christ,



Walter “Chick” McGill, Pastor
The Creation 7th Day & Adventist Church