



*"Free to Believe—
A Celebration of America"*

**July 4, 2009
Glendale City
Seventh-day Adventist Church**

Worship Service

10:45 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. (Please turn off all cell phones & pagers for the worship service)

GLENDALE CITY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

July 4, 2009

"Free to Believe— A Celebration of America"

Prelude	"Variations and Fugue on <i>America</i> "	<i>Max Reger</i>
Gathering Hymn	"God of Our Fathers"	No. 645
	1. God of our fathers, whose almighty hand Leads forth in beauty all the starry band Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies, Our grateful songs before Thy throne arise.	
	2. Thy love divine hath led us in the past, In this free land by Thee our lot is cast; Be Thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay, Thy word our law, Thy paths our chosen way.	
	3. From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, Be Thy strong arm our ever sure defense; Thy true religion in our hearts increase, Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.	
	4. Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way, Lead us from night to neverending day; Fill all our lives with love and grace divine, And glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.	
Call to Worship		Hugh Gardner
	God of our fathers, by whose almighty hand the founders of this country won freedom for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn; God of our fathers, by whose almighty hand the founders of this country defined a nation where we are free to believe; Help us and all Americans maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace; Through Jesus Christ our Savior, Amen.	
Greetings & Prayers of the Congregation		Cherise Gardner
Worship in Giving		Joshua Sofias
Offertory	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"	<i>Arr. K. L. Smeal</i>

Introduction:

Leif Lind

Today we continue the tradition we began last year, a celebration of American freedom. Freedom to believe. We hear readings from the Scripture and from history. We sing and hear music that celebrates our freedom as believers. Some may wonder why we do this in worship today: it is because we are citizens who believe that all are welcome and loved by God; because He created us free to obey, free to believe. As *Patriarchs and Prophets* puts it, “God made our first parents free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. God might have created us without the power to transgress; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced.” Today we celebrate again that freedom, freedom to believe.

Musical Response

“Free to Be”
David Ferguson

Marsha Stevens

A reading from Isaiah 56:

Geri Sofias

This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed...Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, ‘The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.’ And let not the eunuch complain, ‘I am only a dry tree.’ For this is what the Lord says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.” And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

A reading from Luke 4:

Matthew Nuñez

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Musical Response

“God Bless America”
Craig Mohr/Rich Ramsey, *trumpet duet*

arr. K. Christopher

The New World:

Glenda Mendizabal

The first two lasting English settlements in what is now the United States were at Jamestown, Virginia (1607) and Plymouth, Massachusetts (1620). Jamestown was established as a business venture by London investors.

The Plymouth Colony, however, was settled by people we call Puritans who were dissatisfied with the pace of Protestant reform in Europe. Many came to America to avoid being persecuted for their beliefs. Puritan ministers and

leaders, however, sought levels of political and religious conformity that proved unattainable. Many of the Europeans who first settled on this continent were looking for religious freedom for themselves—but not for others. In many ways, they established colonies that conformed to their respective versions of Christianity. Some made it illegal to engage in business on Sundays. Others used wooden stocks to humiliate and torture those they deemed wayward. Some executed women they called witches. Religious dissenters were put on trial and banished, or at least encouraged to depart.



“It was the desire for liberty of conscience that inspired the Pilgrims to brave the perils of the long journey across the sea, to endure the hardships and dangers of the wilderness, and with God’s blessing to lay, on the shores of America, the foundation of a mighty nation. Yet honest and God-fearing as they were, the Pilgrims did not comprehend the great principle of religious liberty. The freedom which they sacrificed so much to secure for themselves, they were not equally ready to grant to others.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 292)

One of the earliest demands for religious tolerance in American history came from the Quakers. This movement emphasized the importance of individual religious conscience and rejected the established Puritan and Anglican churches in the American colonies. Like the Puritans, Quakers found themselves persecuted in England and sought to practice their faith in the American colonies—only to be frequently harassed there as well.

Some who pioneered this nation believed that the new government should be religiously neutral. Others who wanted the nation to have no state religion were skeptics. Still others wanted the federal government to leave this matter in the hands of the various states. A number were Christian believers who realized that the only way to guarantee religious freedom for themselves was to grant it to others, too. There were many who agreed with the principle stated by Roger Williams, that “forced worship stinks in the nostrils of God.”

“Roger Williams was respected and beloved as a faithful minister, a man of rare gifts, of unbending integrity and true benevolence; yet his steadfast denial of the right of civil magistrates to authority over the church, and his demand for religious liberty, could not be tolerated. He was sentenced to banishment from the colonies, and finally, to avoid arrest, he was forced to flee, amid the cold and storms of winter, into the unbroken forest. After months of wandering, he laid the foundation of the first state of modern times that in the fullest sense recognized the right of religious freedom. The fundamental principle of Roger Williams’ colony was ‘that every man should have liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience.’ Rhode Island increased and prospered until its foundation principles—civil and religious liberty—became the cornerstones of the American Republic.” (*Ibid.*, 294)

Hymn**“Faith of Our Fathers”**

No. 304

1. Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword,
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene’er we hear that glorious word.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

2. Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free;
How sweet would be their children’s fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

3. Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife,
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

Creating a New Government:

233 years ago today, July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress announced that the thirteen American colonies were now independent states and thus no longer part of the British empire. A constitution was subsequently written, beginning in 1787. The United States Bill of Rights, consisting of the ten amendments, was later added to the Constitution in 1791.



The First Amendment to the United States Constitution is the part of the United States Bill of Rights that expressly prohibits the United States Congress from making laws “respecting an establishment of religion” or that prohibit the free exercise of religion. George Hay, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, wrote in 1799: “Happily for mankind, the word freedom begins now to be applied to religion also. Now the fool may not only say in his heart, there is no God, but he may announce if he pleases his atheism to the world. He may endeavor to corrupt mankind, not only by opinions that are erroneous, but by facts which are false. Still however he will be safe, because he lives in a country where religious freedom is established.”

The first 16 words of the First Amendment—“Congress shall make no law respecting any establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”—form the backbone of the American experiment. Together, they guaranteed religious liberty for Americans of every faith, as well as for those who affirm no faith at all. A profound belief in the free exercise of religion motivated the decision to disestablish religion in the new nation. The connecting link between the two clauses constituted freedom of conscience.

When our nation’s Founders separated religion and government, it was a revolutionary experiment, an experiment that has brought extraordinary success. It has made us the envy of the world, and it is the goal of *Americans United* to make sure that wise course of action continues.

Musical Response

“America the Beautiful”
Craig Mohr/Rich Ramsey, *trumpet duet*

arr. R. Landes

The Nineteenth Century:

Religion without governmental sanction or support: How would this actually work out in a rapidly expanding nation? It soon became necessary for the U.S. Supreme court to distinguish between the kinds of church controversies that civil courts should deal with and those they should not. The Supreme Court declared, “Whenever the questions of discipline or of faith, or ecclesiastical rule, custom or law have been decided” by the highest authorities in the church, all federal courts, must accept such decisions as final.” Other nations may act differently, Justice Samuel Miller admitted, but in the United States citizens have ‘the full and free right to entertain any religious belief, to practice any religious principle, and to teach any religious doctrine which does not infringe on personal rights.’ To emphasize its point, the Court pointed out that “the law knows no heresy, and is committed to the support of no dogma, the establishment of no sect.”

In the 19th century, then, federal attention to First Amendment religion cases was quite limited. In the 1840s and 1850s the most passionate controversy of all concerned slavery. This bitter issue divided families, churches, and entire denominations, and ultimately the country itself. The major implication of the Civil War and its aftermath for church-state matters is found in the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 1868. That amendment

Daisy Bolduc

reads as follows: “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.”

Hymn of Response

“Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory”

No. 647

1. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

Refrain:

Glory! glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

2. He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

3. In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free!
While God is marching on.

Persecution @ the Seventh-day Adventist Response:

Tom Chatt

Below the federal level, however, a whole universe of Sunday law cases opened up, to be heard by municipal and state courts and decided in a wide variety of ways. Actually, Sunday laws were universal in the colonies, waned after the American Revolution, then expanded in the early 19th century.

America’s last great surge of Sunday laws, which took place in the 1880s, was particularly hard on Seventh-day Adventists, many of whom were imprisoned for weeks or months, and sometimes assigned to chain gangs. The *SDA Encyclopedia* reports that many Adventists at that time served lengthy prison terms for disrupting the Sunday sacredness. Fears were high. Recent research suggest that several teachers and students at Southern University, including the principal, were imprisoned, but did not actually serve on chain gangs. But other Adventists in the area did.

Adventists, expecting Christ to return to earth well before the end of the 19th century, did not see these events as a *foretaste* of a final conflict generations later, but as the early stages of the final conflict itself. A national Sunday law seemed imminent, and the arrests and prison sentences seemed to be leading to a not-very-distant death penalty.

This prompted the denomination’s first religious liberty journals and organizations. Before the actual threat to Sabbath observance (as opposed to the theoretical danger that had been anticipated since the identification of the two-horned beast in the 1850s), Adventists had not been actively concerned with religious liberty. Once that threat had manifested itself, religious liberty became a major Adventist preoccupation.

Most of today’s multi-generation Adventists do not remember specific stories of our ancestors being persecuted by over-zealous and fearful Christians. What did those early Adventists think about while in prison, breaking rocks, or sitting idly on the farm when work needed to be done? We know they developed firm convictions that religious people who passed laws requiring others to conform to religious doctrines, were serving Satan, not God. The evil sprang not just from the fact that the religious people enforced rest on the wrong day, but that they were enforcing a religiously motivated law *at all*. They concluded that the combination of public fear, religious certainty, and civil law had proven repeatedly to be capable of the greatest evils in history, regardless of the particular beliefs enforced. This led our Church to assert that it will “defend the religious liberty of all people, *including those with whom we may disagree.*”



Adventists serving in U.S. prison gangs for failing to observe Sunday laws

Hymn**“God of Grace, and God of Glory”**No. 607 (Tune: *CWM RHONDDA*)

1. God of grace and God of glory, on Thy people pour Thy power;
Now fulfill Thy church’s story, bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour.
2. Lo, the hosts of evil round us scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways;
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour.
3. Cure Thy children’s warring madness, bend our pride to Thy control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in goods and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss Thy kingdom’s goal.
4. Set our feet on lofty places, gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ like graces in the fight to set all free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, that we fail not man nor Thee.

The Twentieth Century:

Jason Schlatter

While the U.S. Supreme Court heard relatively few church-state cases during the 19th century, this changed dramatically with the 20th century, due to several factors.

First, the court began during the 1940s to use the Fourteenth Amendment as a means of applying the First Amendment’s religion clauses to the states. Second, many new organizations began challenging traditional religious practices in the public arena, including *Americans United for Separation of Church and State*, which the Adventist Church worked with. Third, the growth of religious pluralism throughout the nation meant that religiously homogeneous communities were rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Fourth, the federal government became vastly larger and more intrusive than previously.

There is a long history of back-and-forth struggle for the rights of churches and religious people to be exempt from secular laws that conflict with their beliefs. Here are a few key events:

- 1878, *Reynolds v. United States*. The U.S. Supreme Court rules that Mormons may not practice polygamy contrary to law, saying this would “permit every citizen to become a law unto himself.”
- 1940, *Cantwell v. Connecticut*. The Supreme Court ruled that the Federal Bill of Rights trumps state laws that limit religious freedom. Specifically, a Jehovah’s Witness could not be prosecuted for making people angry by door-to-door witnessing.
- 1963, *Sherbert v. Verner*. The Supreme Court rules that states must protect rights of citizens to practice their religion unless it can show that it has a “compelling interest” for limiting that freedom. “Only the gravest abuses, endangering paramount interests, give occasion for ‘permissible limitation.’” So a Seventh-day Adventist could collect unemployment after being fired for not working on Saturday.
- 1965 and 1970. During the long Vietnam War, which grew increasingly unpopular, conscientious objection took some different turns that required Supreme Court involvement. For example, What is religion? What is the meaning of the term “conscientious”?
- 1990, *Oregon v. Smith (Peyote case)*. The Supreme Court ruled that “the right of free exercise does not relieve an individual of the obligation to comply with a valid and neutral law of general applicability.” So Oregon did not have to pay unemployment compensation to two men who were fired for using the religious drug peyote in a tribal ceremony.

It is clear that historic Adventists will usually stand on the side of a minority group when that group is faced with laws enforcing religious restrictions. And we can expect to be misunderstood by our evangelical colleagues, who will see us as betraying the cause of God. As we face current and future social issues, will standing with the unpopular minority still be our position?

Today Adventist attorneys are divided on the best way to protect the rights of religious groups and individuals. Some say we can best protect religious freedoms by promoting our own beliefs. Others say that will only invite retaliation in legislatures, government administrative offices, and courts, and will be misunderstood by the general public. Some maintain that the best strategy is still to support freedom of conscience for everyone, while others argue that will only result in appeasement, and will be misunderstood by other religious people.

Perhaps we should be less concerned with what position the church takes on a political issue than with whether or not we are known to offer grace and love and hope—hallmarks of Glendale City Church—things that are very difficult to communicate in the heat of a political battle. What matters most is that we all strive in every honorable way to foster “liberty and justice for all.” And “all” includes everybody.

Closing Hymn**“Amazing Grace”**

No. 108

1. Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
2. ’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
3. The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
4. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
5. When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’d first begun.

Benediction

Leif Lind

Go to proclaim the freedom of Jesus Christ!
Go to live the freedom of America!
Go to protect the freedom to believe!
May God bless us each! God bless America!
God bless the world we love!

Congregational Hymn of Response**“God Bless”**Tune: *GOD BLESS AMERICA*
Lyrics: Rev. Barbara Lundblad

God bless the world we love,
Strangers and friends,
Go before us, restore us
With a hope that despair cannot end.
Ev’ry people, ev’ry nation,
Mighty ocean, heaven’s dome,
God bless the world we love,
Our only home.

Postlude**“My Spirit Be Joyful”***J. S. Bach***4th of July luncheon after Church Service — everyone welcome!**

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