Sunday, January 1

In Friends Meeting today, thought about seventh-day Sabbath and George Fox’s (and other early Quakers’) responses that Christ superseded the laws and ordinances of the Torah, including the fourth commandment. That each day is holy, none more than any other, and that to observe the Sabbath without observing each and every ordinance is to deny grace. (Galatians 4:10, “You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years.” Rom. 10:6 “For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” and Gal 5:4, “You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from Grace.” Hebrews 10:1 states that “the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities…” But what it means to me is a day of balance in a week of working. If we try to observe balance in each day, why not each week? An evening and a day of “fasting” – refraining from (or reducing) commercial endeavors, a day of rest and walking with God in nature, of studying the Bible. Not a day to be worried about how exactly I live the regulations of Jewish Sabbath or guidelines for Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath, but a day to rejoice in grace. And why Friday to Saturday, instead of Sunday? It just fits my natural rhythms—Friday is the night I am most careworn. If I need to do salaried work, it makes sense to give my brain a respite until Sunday afternoon, letting new thoughts stir and grow. What about recreation, like concerts, which cost money and require another person to do work? Each to his or her own conscience and relationship with God. It is neither the spending of money nor the gaining of wages which defiles.
Sunday, January 22

Václav Havel said that “Consciousness precedes Being” and I think yes, God precedes Being—so many people conceive of God as a (personal) Being, but I think God goes way beyond that....

I have “cast shadows” but I also have the capability of letting the Light shine through me.

I do take responsibility for and have been reflecting on my mistakes.

Saturday, January 28

Today, while driving, I felt/heard/thought, “Why do you deny me?” Slightly amused. Was this God speaking as a Being? Was it about my wanting an administrative position? It felt like a gentle nudge to stop spending my time and energy toward that end and to open up.

Read Bradford’s view on EGW as a prophet: he stated that her prophetic writings were of more value spiritually than for their historical and theological accuracy. The writings represent the voice of the Spirit in our hearts, instead of the teacher to our intellect (61). Well, the Bible was also written by prophets (or in their name), and is of more value to our spiritual selves than as a collection of documents to be taken as incontrovertibly historically accurate! Bradford also said that pastors and evangelists took ideas from their culture—some of those ideas were accepted in their time but we question them today (61). As knowledge changes, so does our understanding of prophecy and spirituality. We reinterpret. Bradford makes the argument (which other SDA writers challenge) that Spirit and study have to lead in our reading of the Bible, instead of a literal reading of the text as if it were accurate and unquestionable.
Saturday, February 4

Observed an altar call today—the speaker was the minister who will do the evangelistic meetings in September. I didn’t like his style, nor his stretched-wide smile which didn’t extend to his eyes and just seemed like a prop. I don’t think I will want to go to the September meetings.

Sunday, February 5

Paul and Peter said that Jesus came for everyone, not just Jews (or Christians). It is not the miracles Jesus did or did not perform that are meaningful to me, but his complete and total embodiment of prophet and mystic. He was connected deeply to God, all of the time, until the end, when he experienced the separation and distance from God that most people seem to live with their entire lives—and it is in those moments that he became totally human to me, in grief, overwhelming sorrow and loss.

About “Creation versus evolution” – I don’t believe that it is a case of “either or,” that believing in one denies the other. Bradford makes the case that prophets are given inspiration and understanding in the context of their culture and time, and that later knowledge can change our interpretation of the prophet’s vision. But I believe that God doesn’t give prophets visions so alien to the time that absolutely no one would be able to understand or accept them. Genesis was written a very long time ago, and our understanding of science has come a long way. The two creation stories in Genesis were products of the culture and knowledge. The theory of evolution doesn’t deny God at all, nor is the mechanism of evolution entirely understood yet. All of this is openly acknowledged by evolutionists, and scientists are willing to take in new evidence and revise their theories, which Creationists don’t seem to be able to do. Creationists
dismiss and deny evolution, trying to elevate their own beliefs to the level of “science,” yet they use bad logic which has nothing of the scientific method in it. I think we need to learn about both, from experts in both fields (theologians and scientists), and believe what we want to, but it is imperative not to impose beliefs on everyone. We have to live with some ambiguity—none of us were present at the beginning—so we cannot know for certain. (Even Adam wasn’t created until the sixth day, according to the Bible.)

Thursday, February 9

Theology is the study of our responses to God, and evolution is the study of our DNA’s responses to the environment. Faith is about hope, and science looks for evidence to support a theory. They are two halves of a whole—again, not an “either/or” but “both/and.”

Wednesday, February 15

Maintain your own heart’s peace in adverse circumstances. Can I do that? Be gracious?

Friday, February 17

“Come unto Me, ... and I will give you rest. Rest in the midst of work. Heart-rest in the knowledge of my keeping power. Feel that rest steal into your being. Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live. Grow in strength, not overwhelmed with cares” (Russell).
Saturday, February 18

Maybe God has been calling me to leave title and position as part of my identity and I’ve been ignoring this call—so here it is repeated—not gently but seriously. I feel like the man who would not give up his riches.

Am I leaving a kind of shadow behind? Give me strength, peace, and wisdom for whatever is ahead. I don’t have to prove myself (to God or anyone). Can I leave fear and anger, renounce action and be open as a vessel? Can I be a go-between, a voice? Remember that a prophet’s life is not a glorious one, but difficult. Am I able to let go of what I want to do—administrate—and give up that kind of power, yet still be efficient, helpful, patient, and full of goodwill (god-will)? Can I live by walking cheerfully over the earth, meeting that of God in everyone, being open and not being attached to whatever comes out of my mouth? Can I give up taking credit and seeking accolades? Can I live a balance of this solitary and community life?

Sometimes I hate this calling. It seems so strange and difficult, always stretching me beyond my comfort zone, not in directions I want to go in. What seems worst is feeling isolated—with whom can I talk? I don’t want this life, I want to be an administrator. But the Friends didn’t acknowledge my ministry of administration! They recorded me as a minister of ecumenism. I don’t attend Sabbath School to become a better leader. I go because I’m called into relationship between these denominations. Understanding leadership helps ministry; the two are intimately and intricately linked but my time and energy are to be spent in the one area and not in the other.
Talked with a friend about all of this—she understands deeply. Then she asked, “Why doesn’t everyone hear God talking?” I wish I knew—perhaps it has to do with the way our brains function. Is God trying to call my energy and attention into the spiritual realm?

**Sunday, February 19**

Hold to virtue and do the daily duties which come to me. Part of my recent anger is because I perceive comments relayed back to me to lack integrity and to impugn my honor and character. How not to let dishonest perceptions, envy, or spite influence me? I am who I am and have to trust my own virtue, knowing that others will see the truth eventually. I do not have to react to provocations (and yet I do, time and again).

**Monday, February 20**

A friend says to let the chaos come through and out—stop fighting it so hard; live in my body rather than in my head—paint and draw. Rest, refocus, and rebuild myself. It is time to shift focus, priorities, and my energy to leadership in other areas. Go hang gliding! Don’t force ministry or writing as substitutes but take a rest and let those come back in their own time and at their own pace. I feel like I’ve been going at a frantic pace, and it is time to slow down, be still and cool, quiet, solitary, the dreamer on the shoreless sea. Also time to let loose and have some adventures. I have to find my path, but it is not the one I had been following. A friend said that I am a leader, am respected, and that her heart would be broken too, if she were in my position. I must not let the views of a poisonous culture determine who I am. It seems as if recent events
were designed to break my spirit and shatter my motivation. It seems opposite of empowering and building up.

**Friday, February 24**

What am I called to do (versus what my head and heart wanted to do)? My heart broke right open—and I could hear, “Not this path.” (“At this time?” my head replies hopefully.) What are my spiritual gifts versus my “worldly” talents and skills?

Rest, be open, grieve, let go, listen. Be with God (“I am with you.” “Be still and know that I am God.”). Be the mystic, shaman, prophet. Be the Voice. Embody the soul. Stop competing with others. Their skills and talents are not mine, and I can admire and appreciate them without being envious. I have a different path. My gifts complement theirs. Refocus. I have to be willing to live out whatever journey God is calling me to.

**Saturday, February 25**

God crashes in on us mystics and prophets most distressingly and breaks us open. Maybe that is why we’re not meant to be “worldly” leaders—so that we have the energy and availability to do this other thing, to be present to this overwhelming Self, to lead in different ways. And to be separate in some ways—in solitude, apart from others. The difficulty is that this path is uncertain, murky, and often seems to be interrupted before it becomes clear.

Am I redefining my paradigm? I need to let the universe’s (or God’s) energy flow through me instead of trying to direct it. If I’m to write, the words will pour out. If I’m to speak or act, the same. Let the grief flow out, let the energy flow through—be connected, live God’s inward
presence outwardly. Mary Oliver wrote, “Neither does the tree hold back its leaves but lets them flow open or glide away when the time is right” (10). This earth is the living presence of God.

Reading Mary Oliver, I wonder when, where, and in which activities I feel and express “playfulness, grace, and humor, those inseparable spirits of vitality” (10). I am often earnest and serious, and could be more playful in most situations. On prayer, she wrote, “What some might call the restrictions of the daily office they find to be an opportunity to foster the inner life. The hours and appointed and named; they are the Lord’s. Life’s fretfulness is transcended” (11). This as in observing Sabbath, a pattern of solitary time and rest, both necessary and joyful for me. As I am back to the Sabbath question—I know that every day is sacred, so it doesn’t matter on which day we have corporate worship. But a seventh day of rest so closely fits my internal bio-rhythms that this is what makes sense to me.

“I want to sit down on the sand and look around and get dreamy; I want to see what spirits are peeking out of the faces of the roses” (Oliver 11). About her partner’s flying lessons, she wrote, “Week after week M. came home looking the way I feel when I’ve seen wild swans. It was terrifying, and wonderful” (12). I need more dreaming time and less frantic time, more creative time for poetry, adventures, and art, rather than time spent on work. “For me it was important to be alone; solitude was a prerequisite to being openly and joyfully susceptible and responsive to the world of leaves, light, birdsong, flowers, flowing water” (22).

(poem)

The dusking breezes

soften to will o’ the wisp

over snow-drenched earth
**Sunday, February 26**

Seek meaning in the uncertain path.

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**Monday, February 27**

I don’t feel like I am “enough” in and of myself. A friend responded, “That is an impossible statement—you are wonderful.”

Am I experiencing another type of shamanic death, a rite of passage, the “humiliation” so many mystics speak of? A friend’s response: It is not permanent and it is a passage. This type of pattern often moves us to something better. I should do the things I am uniquely able to do, design a place for myself where I most want to be. In the meanwhile, there are periods in our lives when it is good to cut down to doing just that which is expected, to give the minimum for a time.

My dreams speak of the confluence of my inner and outer lives, affirming the profound directions in which I am going. My spirit and inner self are “together” but my body isn’t in the right place—my environment is “out of whack” and it is worth the effort to look for possibilities around me which could help me align the parts of my life more closely. Because my spiritual life is alive and vibrant, the outer life will come to this state as well, not necessarily soon—I must stay focused, seeking and making opportunities. I have to do things to let the future get better.

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**Wednesday, March 1**

My fury has filled me, wakes me up and keeps me awake, and is exhausting. How is it that I generate so much pain and anger?
Why do I feel like I need Sabbath School more than Friends Meeting right now? Is it more comfortable in some way, less challenging? Or more challenging? Is it easier to talk intellectually than to seek inwardly? Friends Meeting has always been hard work, because it requires and demands openness. Sabbath School lets me come at things in small, manageable chunks, and the readings are so very relevant.

**Thursday, March 2**

Recalling the story of the friends of the paralyzed man who lowered him through the roof of a house to get him to Jesus—maybe that essential reconnection will occur for me with the spiritual. Perhaps this is a “break-in” from above.

**Friday, March 3**

I went to the beach to rant and rave about the damaging processes in my environment which seem to be part of an abusive culture rather than something more humane and functional. I feel shut out and shut down. How is that positive? How does it lead to connection, collaboration, enthusiasm, and new ideas?

**Saturday, March 4**

Kraybill wrote about the Amish belief that,

Salvation is linked to obedience and faithful practice rather than to belief and emotion.... The code words of the evangelical mind-set—personal salvation, personal evangelism, and personal devotions—accent the *individual* rather than
the *community* as the center of redemptive activity…. The Amish bring a much
more holistic, integrated view that does not separate the individual from
community or faith from action…. One is a communal language of patience,
humility, community, and practice; the other is an individualistic language of
beliefs, certainty, feelings, and experience. Whereas evangelistic Christians want
to know, control, plan, and act to guarantee their salvation, the Amish outlook is
a more modest and perhaps a more honest one (36-7).

I think that SDAs are a combination of the two models—personal salvation and evangelism, yet
entirely within the community and daily practice. Quakers seem to tend toward the community
model, yet we believe in individual interpretation of the Bible and grant that its cultural and
historical contexts do not make it inerrant.

*Sunday, March 5*

St. Francis, as quoted in Jan Karon: “Keep a clear eye toward life’s end. Do not forget your
purpose and destiny as God’s Creature. What you are in His sight is what you are and nothing
more. Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing you have received…but
only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.” I
think that for the past few months (years?), I’ve become obsessed, and now have to change my
thought patterns and habits, and embrace the whole of my life. A complete life, present to all
aspects and obsessed with none…. Prerequisite: to find balance between more deliberately
drawing apart from and living in the world. Somehow I have to trust the universe, to make this a
covenant with God.
What came to me during Friends’ Meeting: I’ve been feeling terrible disappointment and bitter anger, and I think it is necessary to mark our periods of darkness and chaos as a necessary antecedent to the renewal of hope, rejuvenation, springing into cheerfulness, balance, and joy. I am very grateful for the communities which help me through these times.

“Present Hope” (poem)

‘Present’
Shrieking stones cascade
under tumbled, root-torn trees,
chaotic threshold

‘Hope’
Singing stones tumble,
reflecting sky, clear streambed,
rejuvenation

**Thursday, March 9**

What are my dreams? To see and live in Spain and New Zealand, to see a glacier and the Canadian Rockies, to travel widely. To paint and draw; to go hang gliding once. To ride a scooter—even to test-drive one. I want to go kayaking again soon, and perhaps to have more boxing lessons. I also want to continue to work on the house.
**Friday, March 10**

Is my obsession with worldly titles and positions too deep to let me move forward? Can I change?

A friend asked me if I could trust. No, that is the problem. I don’t have any previous experience of trusting to draw upon, to give me confidence. I feel so shaken—to the core, to the bone—that I have not been able to believe or live my ideals. I have been lashing out, reacting with this terrible anger and bitterness. I feel so disconnected from my very self. Broken, wounded, needy, causing pain to others. I wish I could feel some renewal, some **lasting** renewal. I wish I could trust. I wish I were able to be cheerful and look for that of God in everyone and in every situation, that I were able to give thanks in everything. Instead, what I seem to be undergoing is more like Watts’ testimony that

It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.... By hanging on and protecting ourselves we avoid life.... We are scared stiff to awaken to the truth that we are being swept along by the life of God as in a mighty torrent, that it sweeps us away from our possessions and our very selves to carry us out to the oceans of God himself. Therefore we cling desperately to floating logs or swim with all our might against the stream, not seeing that this effects nothing but our own discomfort and exhaustion (57).

Watts wrote that, “The knowledge of God is God himself dwelling in the soul” (16).

Somehow, all of this is God acting within my soul? I have to accede that this makes sense, if, as he says, “It has been necessary...to go through this passion to the bitter depth of ‘my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,’ to the sense that his life is utterly meaningless” (59). This
process destroys symbols, barriers, and selves, so that we “may not rest content with anything less than...[the] divine essence” (59). Thus, “in fear of the loss of ourselves we cling to ourselves with all our might, strangling the breath out of our bodies in the effort” (69). I do feel choked with bitter feelings.

Another friend said that I have a gentleness about me—I wish I felt it right now. I saw a deer grazing in the park: they represent gentleness. I pray for strength to deal with my feelings, for eventual peace, for patience to endure until that peace stills my heart, for balance in thought and activity, and for God to draw close to those who support and challenge me. “Spiritual life demands a relaxation of the soul to God” (Watts 70), instead of tensing up the ego with pride and fear. What are the things I can do with love and care?

**Saturday, March 11**

My Sabbath Schoolmates reminded me that I don’t have to reinvent myself from the ground up. There is probably a smaller shift needed in my understanding in order to accept my state of being and for it not to seem like such a big muddle. The key is to not let my feelings become so overwhelming that I am unable to ask for help, but to ask before I get excessively frustrated. I do not have to try to close this hole in my paradigm quickly—it is an opportunity for healing and changing the paradigm itself. I can ask myself if the structure of my situation makes my tasks easier or more difficult to accomplish, and if I using my talents and skills. If the answers are “more difficult” and “no,” then I will need to look for other opportunities. If the answers are “easier” and “yes,” then stay with the current situation.
**Sunday, March 12**

Yesterday was an opportunity to “give back” to the Sabbath School by facilitating—as asking the questions to get the discussion going. I asked two of the others to open and close with prayer, so that we all pitched in and none of us carried the burden of responsibility alone. In two weeks, I’ll play music for Sabbath School, another way of giving back.

Today at Friends Meeting the message that came to me was that when Jesus said that he and the Father were one, we understand that not only to mean that he experienced immense union with God, but that each of us can too. I was reading Alan Watts’ book on mystical religion and he said that without that experience of direct connection with God, rites and rituals in religion are meaningless. We, as Quakers, are very qualified (not uniquely, but especially able) to bring this idea to other denominations throughout the world, because of our experience of union and the way we try to practice it in our daily lives.

**Thursday, March 16**

In earlier days, I would have been dismembershiped (read out of Meeting) for practicing a seventh-day Sabbath. I’m glad we don’t practice shunning now! Where will it lead? As I make decisions, where will my heart, mind, and body direct me? EGW, in *Early Writings*, says that, “The Lord is unchangeable, therefore His law is immutable” (65). But this contradicts what I believe—that God changes as we do.
Friday, March 17

I met with a friend today, who called me “resilient.” What do I think, how would I characterize myself lately? Confused.

I wondered if I left my situation, would I be able to process my grief and anger, or would I become stuck in my current feelings? As painful as all of this is, it does seem to be accomplishing something. Maybe I’ll learn to trust, without having to be at the center of decision-making in all matters.

Sunday, March 19

I feel like I have my life back. I need to examine my life from a higher perspective, from the standpoint of love, compassion, and gentleness, while being aware of and open to signals, while practicing discernment. I need to heal, to know that I am a universal being, whole. I am capable of releasing the outer skin of my present identity and finding a new rhythm in my life.

Tuesday, March 21

I’ve been living the seventh-day Sabbath without it being a “religious conviction.” But my body, mind, and spirit feel better for it. So, I’ve been reading early Quaker writings and re-read portions of Ellen White’s Early Writings. Early Quakers did all agree that the Sabbath fell on the seventh day, not first day, although they followed the laws of the time and the common practice of resting and holding corporate worship on first day. But they didn’t view one day as sufficient, so they held meetings for worship on 2 days each week. To my knowledge, and to the knowledge of others I’ve consulted, no other Quaker has written on the seventh-day Sabbath
since Elias Hicks addressed the question in 1842 (pre-EGW). Below are the Bible passages and the justifications Quakers wrote between 1650 and 1812 against the observance of Sabbath.

Matt. 11:28

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

[i.e., Christ is himself the Sabbath]

Rom. 14:5

Some judge (esteem) one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

Gal. 4:9-11

Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

Col. 2:16-17

Therefore do not let anyone (judge) condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Heb. 4:9-10

So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labors as God did from his.
Early Quaker thought seems to have been: that the Jewish Sabbath was a “sign and figure and shadow” (Fox) which became the substance of God with Christ; that Christ is the end and fulfillment of the Law for everyone that believes; and that Christ is the Sabbath and the Temple, the day of rest. If we accept Christ, then observing the Sabbath is a practice contrary to that acceptance. Accepting salvation means essentially that we cease from labor in some sense—George Fox said that, “our rest is in Christ, the body... the Saints’ rest is in the substance of Christ.... Here all men rest from their works, and every soul that believeth hath entered into his rest” (6). “Christ [is] the second Covenant, the perpetual and everlasting rest” (7). “Christ... sanctifies man and brings him to rest and peace with God before daies was” [i.e., as it was at the beginning of Creation] (10). “Christ made all things new, he ends the Law, ... he ends the [previous] Covenant...and ends the Sabbath” (11). “The devil will lurk in a shadow, or a type, or a sign, or figure, ...to keep people from the body [i.e., Christ]” (16). “Paul nor the Apostles no where commands the Saints to observe the Jews Sabbath day” (18).

The Sabbath was previously an outward day but with Christ became altogether spiritual, moral, and perpetual; all days are alike holy in the sight of God (Keith). A specific day or time of worship is not holy, because all days and times are holy (Barclay 349). Thus, we should feel our hearts brimming with thanksgiving and praise constantly, and we should rest continually in God.

My questions: When Paul used the words “sign/figure/shadow” in relation to the ordinances and the Sabbath, did he mean that they were “predictors” which were fulfilled and embodied in Christ (Fox)? When early Quaker writers used the word “superstition” what does that mean? Did the commandments and ordinances have significance only for the Jews from Moses to Christ (Israel needed the Commandments because they were disobedient?), and Christ
superseded those (he was the end of the law and gave us 2 commandments (love God, love our neighbors as ourselves—the other commandments Jesus mentioned in Matt 19:18: “Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness”) but no mention of keeping the Sabbath)? The Sabbath as “a sign between me and the children of Israel forever” (Exod. 31:17) was never said to any other people in the Bible (i.e., Christians in the New Testament).

Willis wrote that, as he was “Lord of the Sabbath,” Jesus would have reproved his disciples if he had meant to perpetuate the observance, instead of justifying the breach of it (24). Why didn’t he reprove people for breaking the Sabbath or any of the ordinances?

Yet we do need to set aside time to listen for God in community (“corporate worship”) and be freed from our “outward affairs” and rest. Fox said Apostles and early Christians meeting on First day did not call it or establish it as Sabbath, nor did they bid believers to keep Sabbath (9). Elias Hicks referred to the “emptiness” of rites and outward ordinances and called the observance of a seventh-day Sabbath “hurtful,” “irrational, non-essential, and contrary to truth” (353).

We don’t talk about God “changing his mind” but we do say that we get new pieces of information or new understanding—but it seems like the prophecies EGW received contradict Paul’s understanding and are “regressive” or “reactionary.” How do SDAs address this? Was not Jesus, as Christ, the fulfillment of the Law? Why then look to the commandments and ordinances? Why did EGW have those visions?

My thoughts regarding the Biblical texts above:
• Rom. 14:5-14:6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Paul seems to regard these principles, along with dietary ordinances and avoiding wine, as unnecessary. In Rom. 14:23 it says "But whatever is done against one’s conscience is sin," so if EGW’s prophecies have convinced the SDAs, then not to observe the Sabbath would be a sin for those who are persuaded.

• Col. 2:16-17 This also means not to let anyone condemn you if you DO observe these things.

• Heb. 4:9-10 [actually look at all of Heb. 3 & 4] Why couldn’t this also be used to justify observing the Sabbath? One Adventist stated that this passage looks to back to Genesis and also forward to rest as “salvation in God’s presence at the end of time.”

It seems to me that I need to keep living seventh-day Sabbath without trying to make intellectual sense of it right now. It’s an embodied way of living, not a theological issue per se – it is a relief, not an arguable discussion point. Yet it is spiritual. It is a kind of willingness, an assent rather than a creed or doctrine or tenet. So I don’t think I’m convinced in a rational way, yet my body and spirit are giving signs of a consent made flesh.

**Sunday, March 26**

For me, as with early Quakers (and many other denominations), one day for corporate worship isn’t enough. I also need time to study with a group. My primary day for corporate worship is first day (Sunday), with the Friends; my day of study and also secondary day of worship is seventh day (Saturday), with the SDAs. My primary day of rest and refraining from commerce or
salaried work is Saturday; my secondary rest day is Sunday. In this way I combine practices of both churches and follow my biorhythms. It means I don’t attend work-related events or work from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. It probably means I won’t attend work-related conferences or classes for which I pay on Sabbath either.

That I am also a contemplative means that I need long periods of quiet outdoor time, more than most people—withdrawing from the world and labor. This gives me joy: to see the creek and trees, to hear the Sandhill cranes purling in the sky.

I’d like to do a study of George Fox and EGW as prophets, and of Quakers and SDAs as new/emerging religious movements, set in their respective periods. If it were going to be academic, I’d need a co-author to ground it in a theoretical perspective (i.e., religion or anthropology).

**Thursday, March 30**

What I feel is not “convinced” or a “conviction” —which both include the idea of being changed by argument—but that I have consented to the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath—I feel/sense/am in accord with, have given assent to it, agree to the relevance and meaningfulness of it. The SDAs might say that the observation of a seventh-day Sabbath is justifiable or justified, or a conclusion correctly derived, and appropriate to the end in view, but those definitions aren’t meaningful to me. I would not impose this on anyone else, but it feels right to me. "In concord" means being in a state of agreement or harmony, or having made an agreement by covenant. I am in concord with the Sabbath—it is valid for me, a spiritual concordance. It is an embodied truth or harmony.
**Friday, March 31**

And yet, as I read the history and exegesis of Bible passages more fully, the explanations are persuading me.

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**Saturday, April 1**

In Sabbath School we discussed the trinity. I think that God, Holy Spirit, and Christ are names for different aspects of one whole—God the overall, encompassing idea; Holy Spirit the inward; and Christ the outward manifestation—the physical body in which the divine lives.

EGW (and Miller before her) emphasized that intercessors (clergy) weren’t to substitute for an individual reading of the Scriptures and coming to one’s own conclusion, so why is there so much emphasis on the one and only correct interpretation? For a church without creeds, the SDA doctrines are very explicit.

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**Thursday, April 6**

Regarding Sabbath, "signs, figures, shadows" meant that adherence to one day veiled the importance of observing each and every moment as holy. Sabbath is but a fragment of the immensity of the spirit-filled life.

I found out today that as most of the first Christians were Jews, they attended temple and observed Sabbath, and also held meetings for worship on Sunday as well, so they could participate in both. (A "both/and" situation!) They called it Eighth Day, the world made new, humankind reconnected to God via the resurrection (a summary of Porter).
Saturday, April 8

I feel like I can’t keep up with the changes happening in my thinking these days. Where am I?

What do I believe?

Wednesday, April 12

I thought of the comments in today’s lesson outlined in the Teacher’s version of the Sabbath School Quarterly—which asks us to question how we live and to examine our attitudes, so that we reflect Jesus’ teachings. I haven’t been able to do that in this wild grief I feel, in survival mode. At this level, there is no sense of values, beliefs, ethics, no sense of self as agent, no essential identity. There is no foundation at this level. I don’t have a sense of my place in the world, or a sense of basic security, which is completely antithetical to my Quaker mystical self.

Friday, April 14

When I went out into the sunshine at noon, I started to feel better, and at the park after work, felt restored. What makes the difference? Sunshine in and of itself? Having asked a friend for help? Who knows, but I’m grateful.

Having read a 45-page article on EGW and whether or not she had temporal lobe epilepsy (Couperus), it seems likely that she did, but does it matter? Could it be one of the ways God or the Holy Spirit talks to us, via brains which function differently? Mystics’ brains and the brains of Buddhist monks who are deep meditators also function differently, which scientists can see now by studying which areas of the brain are active when the subjects declare that they are
in the meditation condition being studied. So the bigger question is, did White’s visions come from God? Or were they hallucinations caused by a misfiring brain?

**Tuesday, April 18**

I remembered that some shamans live their lives backwards and upside-down, being humiliated (or humiliating themselves) to help others learn through humor. This also happens in the “dark night of the soul” in Christian terms. We are brought low, struck down, so that we can be rebirthed, can be made open anew, so we are emptied of ego and stop trying to control and direct things. If we ignore this calling, we get sick—physically, spiritually, whatever it takes—until we pay attention.

**Wednesday, April 19**

I feel as if my soul has gone “walkabout” and there is just a shell walking around which doesn’t know what it means to be human. Who am I as a human being? How do I construct a sense of self from the inside out?

I saw a bald eagle yesterday, and wondered if there was something to be learned. In Christian terms, Exod. 19:4, God says to Moses, "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." Sounds like a shamanic journey, representing the reconnection of the community with God. The eagle also is a symbol of the Great Spirit, the Holy Spirit, our connection to the divine, and our ability to live in the realm of the spirit while remaining balanced and rooted on this earth. It represents grace, trials, trust, heart and courage, soaring above the ordinary, recognizing that which needs to be worked on in one’s soul or psyche, and broadening one’s
sense of self beyond the immediately visible. Look for beauty, follow my heart, and love myself as I am loved by God! I am graceful, powerful, strong, whimsical, joyful, prayerful, sometimes fragile and regretful, complex, creative.

**Friday, April 21**

It seems to me that Christians celebrated First day as God’s (“the Lord’s Day”) for corporate worship, rest, etc., from the very beginning (Porter, 18), and that Paul’s letters reinforce the concept that to observe a seventh-day Sabbath (and ordinances) would be to go “backward” – i.e., would invalidate the new covenant. If Christianity began with the Resurrection, and so the “Eighth Day of Creation” began on that day, which is to say, First day, then why does the Adventist Sabbath make sense?

In Acts 15:20-21 and 29, James said that Gentiles only had to obey these Jewish laws: to abstain from eating food offered to idols (i.e., sacrificed), from blood (unkosher meat), and from fornication. But Paul didn’t forbid food offered to idols and rejected other food restrictions (Gal. 2:11-12, Col. 2: 21) and said sabbaths were only shadows (but did he mean weekly Sabbaths or the “ceremonial” sabbaths—feasts/offerings?). Gal. 4 says that if you are led by the spirit of loving your neighbor as yourself, you are not subject to the law. But does loving God (and Christ) mean following their example, of observing a day to rest and contemplate blessings, and letting our “neighbor” rest too? Porter wrote:

>[No] day of the week is better or worse than another day—after all every day belongs to Christ. Nor is it a question of which custom has greater authority. The point rather is that each observance has a totally different kind of authority, and
is carried out for a different purpose and in a different manner. The Sabbath is 
based on the Jewish ceremonial law. To observe it is to admit the claims of that 
law and all that it presupposes. The Lord’s Day is based instead on the fact that 
on this day the Lord Christ rose from the dead, bringing newness of life to all who 
accept his name. The one rests on legalism, justification by works, and salvation 
by the performance of ceremonial. The other rests on faith in the truth of the 
Gospel, and the experience of the new life communicated to those who do 
believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. In short it is that distinction 
between Law and Faith which is so fundamental to Christianity. By observing 
Sunday and disregarding Saturday, the Christian was confessing his faith in the 
Gospel, he was declaring the very nature of his religion (20).

Porter also states that the simplicity of the 10 Commandments came to be stressed as a 
way of helping illiterate people learn and remember in the Middle Ages, and that the fourth 
commandment was used as a reason to maintain a spiritual Sunday. During this time people 
began to read the Old Testament literally. “Canons came to be directly based on the Hebrew 
ceremonial code. Sabbath regulations were increasingly applied to Sunday. The performance of 
unnecessary work on Sunday came to be viewed as a sin in the same way, and for the same 
reasons, as Sabbath-breaking within Jewry. Here we see the Church definitely losing sight of the 
principles for which Paul...had contended” (23).

I read Paul as saying that observing Jewish laws meant a failure to understand what the 
Gospel meant. Rom. 2:12-29 says that the law of Moses was for the Jews, the law of conscience 
for Gentiles; Rom. 3:20 that the law makes people aware of their sin; Rom. 3:21-26 that it is not
obedience to the law but the faith of Jesus Christ which redeems and emancipates us; Rom. 4:14
that adherence to the law voids faith; Rom. 4:15 the law brings wrath, but where there is no law,
neither is there violation; and Rom. ch.7-8 say that now the law is spiritual, not the fleshly
commandments (the law is holy and good but sin uses the law to make people more sinful than
they would be otherwise). In 2 Cor. 3, Paul wrote that the letter of the law kills and was a
ministry of death; that in Christ the old covenant was set aside; and that we see clearly and are
transformed by God, not by the law. In Gal.2:16-21, people are not justified by carrying out the
law—if justification comes from the law, then Christ died for nothing. In Gal. 3, all who rely on
doing the works of the law are cursed (only belief saves and allows us to receive the Spirit), and
the law was a disciplinarian until Christ came, but now we are not subject to it. In Gal. 4, Christ
redeemed those who were under the law; those who want to be justified by the law cut
themselves off from Christ and grace; the whole law summed up is: love your neighbor as
yourself; and if you are led by the Spirit you are not subject to the law. Finally, Col. 2 says that
the record of legal demands (10 Commandments) were erased, set aside, and nailed to the
cross. The laws about food, drink, and sabbaths were only shadows.

If my conscience and spirit say to set a day aside, to rest body and mind from work, to
study and pray and remind myself how to live out “love your neighbor as yourself” and I don’t
condemn or judge anyone else for not doing the same, and I don’t rely on doing this so that I’ll
be saved (i.e., following the letter instead of the spirit of the law), then I see no reason not to
observe a seventh-day Sabbath. I don’t see it as forbidden. Neither do I see it as something that
will redeem me in and of itself. Is it something which brings me peace and helps me feel closer
to God? Yes. More so than first day? Yes and no—it fits my biorhythms, and in conjunction with
first day rest and study and corporate worship, and with finding balance, prayer, and rest each and every day, this works for me. Yet I still feel confused and uncertain....

A Quaker friend just called to tell me about the spiritual gifts she sees in me, of eldering in the best sense: that in a gentle, slightly persuasive, quiet, open way, I support people in developing their gifts. In doing so I am not overbearing and don’t hold anything over people; my gift of vocal ministry and even my presence changes the dynamic of Meeting for Worship. What a gift she has given me today!

_Saturday, April 22_

In Sabbath School we talked about the refining process—the more rooted the change that needs to happen is, i.e., the more endemic or systemic, the more painful it is. I felt as if God said: “Let’s rip away your identity, open you up, cut away all this dross, and see what happens....” Will I be more receptive to God/Spirit? More able to practice the spiritual gifts spoken of yesterday? I didn’t expect to be so uprooted. But, the fewer things in the way, the fewer distractions, the more able we are to conduct the spirit of God.

Again the question of seventh or eighth day for worship: SDAs rely on Paul for so much, but not on his interpretation of the old and new covenants. Where is the “right” of it for me? Jesus meant to reform Judaism, to bring a new understanding of and closeness to God and fellow human beings. The example he lived was to celebrate Sabbath without the legalistic (and to my mind somewhat ridiculous) restrictions: he restored joy to the practice of community prayer, study, thought, and rest; it was a restoration of Eden each week, as close as we can come to it now. Does it really matter which day one observes? And why couldn’t I practice this on First
day? Because it isn’t the Sabbath. Still, could I practice the same guidelines on Sunday, of not engaging in work or commerce, of dedicating a day to study and walking with God? I do to some extent, but not to the degree I observe Seventh day. What is it that is being asked of me?

I didn’t expect to have my self-image and self-esteem so radically affected by the events happening around me in the world. If uncertainty is an indication of openness, maybe certainty is an indicator of being closed.

What dost Thou wish of me?

Not to preach. But to observe and live out the questions, to be open, to let the healing Presence flow through, to seek the union of Spirit and human being and nature. To practice learning and applying, asking and answering, continuing to try. To ask different questions, new questions. To put ideas together in different ways, to interpret for others.

I feel emptied out.

**Sunday, April 23**

My head can’t figure out the contradictions between Old and New Testaments regarding Sabbath and the Christian First Day, but my heart and body say to practice a seventh-day Sabbath and continue corporate worship with Quakers on first day. The Ministry and Counsel Committee of Friends Meeting says this is fine, good, not to worry; the group continues to express its support and thinks it meaningful that I have studied and thought so much about this. One Quaker elder reminded me that all days are probably alike in God, that all time is one time (omnipresent means not only in all places, but also in all times). Instead of an either/or situation, maybe the way I practice is an example of “both/and?”
The SDA guidelines help me observe Sabbath more fully; it is hard not to get caught in legalistic observance but to remember that it was “made for man.” There will be times when I am away and using public transport will be necessary to do the things which bring me closer to God. But how to reconcile this with my family—how much do I need to explain? I’ve explained to those who need to know at work.

I do not agree with the SDAs that Sunday worship is the “mark of the Beast” (i.e., evil)! It is the mark of Christianity versus Judaism. How do the SDAs resolve what Paul has said, and the entire history of Christian practice with their theology? Isn’t Paul the guide in what it means to be Christian? Why are the SDAs Christian and not messianic Jews?

I met a Quaker fellow who teaches at an Adventist college, and he has been invited to give a presentation about Quakers. I wondered if part of why I’m called into the SDA church is to make clear the connections and differences, in addition to living in the “in-between spaces”, the “both/and?”

The things I see in common between George Fox and EGW are that they both experienced extreme spiritual turmoil and depression in their early years, that they understood that the Spirit which inspired those who wrote the Scriptures were still at work in the world (i.e., the Spirit of Prophecy), that our bodies are temples, that there is no intermediary required between us and God/Christ, that they both traveled far and wide preaching. Both experienced ecstatic and quieter visions, were ill-educated yet could speak authoritatively about the Bible, and were strong social and religious reformers. They lived in times of civil war and religious reform.
Thursday, April 27

When I asked what would constitute “Sabbath breaking” severe enough to cause a member to be disciplined by the church, I understood from the answers that the transgression must be observable and deliberately contrary to the church teaching, such as being employed for pay on Saturdays (in a field other than health care or the pastorate). Yet the church is compassionate in that every opportunity would be given to the member to discuss the situation, pursue other opportunities, and be restored to the community and God before any formal disciplinary action would be taken.

Thursday, May 4

I read Paul as meaning that we should not obey the commandments for their own sake—that would be legalism—or because of a fear of annihilation, but that we should live love and live by listening to the Spirit. So I have come to think that it isn’t important to obey the Sabbath because it is the fourth commandment, but by living the joyful celebration of my connection with God in a very conscious way each week, then God can live through me more clearly.

Do I think it is wrong not to observe the seventh-day Sabbath? No. Is it wrong for me not to observe it? No. Is it right for me in the sense that I feel called to it, and it gives me peace and a sense of balance? Yes.
Saturday, May 6

In the world, I do not feel accepted for who I am, let alone for my gifts and talents. I cannot see how to live graciously in this chaos. But what is God's gentle will? What does God's compassion mean and where does it lead me?

From If God Is Love: "to heal, to bring life, ... to love those around him. This was the kingdom of God" (Gulley and Mulholland 278). I don't feel capable of this right now. I feel too wounded, all of my grief and anger brought to the surface. It is I who needs to be healed and to be loved, to find new life.

Sunday, May 7

I heard a radio program in which parents hoped that their schizophrenic son would cease believing that he is God. I thought, what a loss that would be, for that sense of infinite connection with all beings and infinite graciousness to all people to die away. I've been living in fear, knowing suffering and pain intimately. Time to open up again, expand into my God-self, God-consciousness, to allow myself to Be, to be with and in God. Infinite compassion, infinite love, infinite reaching out and blessing. Both/and, part and parcel, all things in-between.

How do my spiritual gifts differ from or merge with my professional life? Do the gifts of listening and discernment, learning and teaching, connecting people, vocal and written ministry, openness and reaching out, contemplation, and healing match the qualities of any position I might take, or would performing certain duties diminish my energy and focus on spirituality? How do I find an appropriate match for a career in the world?
**Wednesday, May 10**

Apparently I need to become a blank slate, completely open, without any preconceptions, frameworks, or vision. Without any ego, sense of ownership or expertise, like a monk who does the tasks assigned without being attached to them, yet does them with complete love and attention, in the attitude of serving God and others, selfless. Without pride, yet honestly and carefully. Apparently I am called to this and am capable of achieving it—living out Jesus’ example. But I don’t want to. It is appallingly painful. What I most want is to have a sense of belonging, a belief that I matter and am valued, that I have worth as a human being. Yet all of that has to come from within, not from how others perceive me or treat me. Through all of this, I have to keep doing the daily duties as they come to me. Apparently I can’t just withdraw and retreat.

“For creativity and sanity man needs to have, or at least to feel, a meaningful relation to and union with life, with reality itself” (Watts 4). Being told that I do not need to have a framework for understand what is happening around me in the world is contradictory to the human need to make meaning.

**Saturday, May 15**

Went to visit some friends for the weekend, and we went birding Saturday morning. I felt uncomfortable about paying to use public transportation. Then we ate dinner out, and saw a movie. One friend actually did all of the monetary transactions for me, and was willing to do so without needing an explanation. Still, I was asking other people to work for me. Also, I felt strange spending the day differently, not focused on spiritual matters. So, it was not the
handling of money, and not even necessarily having other people working for me, it was the lack of focus, along with the extra activity, that made the day less restful, less centered. It became Saturday, not Sabbath. We talked about it the next day, and my friend named the feelings I've always had about Sundays—that when we spend Saturday doing errands and recreation, it disperses the energy from the week, and there isn't much left over for Sunday. Sunday then feels "blah" and becomes a day for worrying about Monday. If we spend Saturday as Sabbath, we use the energy from the week for spiritual matters and rest, and feel renewed on Sunday to do more secular projects and move back into the workweek. The conversation also helped me realize that having the handyman work on Saturday (his choice, not mine) would disrupt my balance, so I asked him to reschedule. The rhythm of Sabbath has become joyful, restorative, and essential.

Only time will tell if I remain steadfast, and I do think that this is between God and me. It is an expression of love, not a behavior based on fear and observed because it was a commandment.

*Thursday, May 18*

It is saying yes to the idea of Sabbath, but getting there by a different route. So what does it mean to pay attention to prophecy? Is getting to the underlying concept what is important, even if the approach or reasoning differs? EGW's prophecies were always in answer to a question from or issue of concern amongst the SDAs. If I arrive at observing the Sabbath, yet don't believe all people have to do the same, do not believe that Sunday observance is the "mark of the beast," is that important to my continuing relationship with the SDA church? Probably no more so than my different beliefs on other matters. Is this one of the fundamental
27 beliefs of the SDAs? Well, I don't believe totally in most of the others, either. On the other hand, there are parts of most of the fundamental beliefs that I do accept. Two years ago I wouldn't have claimed to believe even one-third of what I admit to now.

**Friday, May 19**

The practice of Sabbath has become elevated from obeying a rule to restoring tranquility and contentment, and I stumbled across the following entry about revelation which expresses it well: God "reveals the rules of conduct.... His Word takes the form of instruction and of Law.... The Law derives its value from this divine origin, and hence is elevated from a juridical reality to become the delight of the spiritual minded" (Léon-Dufour 500).

**Sunday, May 21**

I am called to make a fundamental change in my life and my attitudes. I can reflect deeply and learn how to lead with integrity....

Yesterday in Sabbath School we talked about evolution a little, and my feelings were that the others were making generalizations about those who believe in evolution, and were judging those who do. Since I am such a person, I felt as if the comments were directed at me personally. But I know that wasn't so. My understanding of evolution is that it is a fact that DNA mutates, but how, why, and when it does is unknown, which is why it is still referred to as the "theory" of evolution. Scientists are trying to find answers. Most evolutionists do not deny God, yet do keep science and faith separate—faith isn't part of the scientific method, nor is the scientific method applicable to faith. Just as there are other Biblical passages and time periods
that are read figuratively, i.e., are interpreted, so also many people read Genesis figuratively and symbolically instead of literally. For example, the prophecy in Daniel (8:14) about the sanctuary being restored within a specific time period—if one reads that literally, it did happen—but if one reads that as a symbol of the second Advent, even using the accepted substitution of one year for each day, the prophecy doesn’t work, so it had to be reinterpreted.... EGW’s prophecy said Daniel 8:14 represented the making ready of the heavenly sanctuary instead of the Advent. As for what I think about Creation, I wasn’t there, and it doesn’t really matter to me. In public schools, teachers teach what the geologists and anthropologists and other scientists are trying to grasp, not articles of Christian faith, especially not an evangelical subset of those beliefs.

**Wednesday, May 31**

I spent the evening with an Adventist couple. I wanted to discuss the issue of talking with family members about observing the seventh-day Sabbath with someone who had converted. We covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and of course I was quite happy to talk about Quakers.

One theme we touched on was shunning, and they pointed out that the SDA church does not practice shunning. Someone could be dismembershipped (or choose to drop membership), but would still be welcome in church and Sabbath School. This rectified an impression I had gotten a year and a half ago. Somehow it is very comforting...I feel that if I were to begin a romantic relationship, I wouldn't have to stop attending.
**Monday, June 5**

Last week the message during Meeting for Worship was that it takes courage to be a Quaker. The message in yesterday’s Meeting was that it takes courage to live with integrity, to be of good cheer, and to continue to try to meet that of God in everyone. I want to be more intentional in these three things.

**Wednesday, June 7**

I’ve been struggling with the Sabbath School lessons, wishing I felt connected to the words I read. Despite feeling hopeless, I keep reading each week, just as stubbornly persistent as ever despite depression and grief. I don’t see despair as a sin, or hope as a virtue. I do see doggedness as a necessity—despite all of my lack of understanding, I do survive. Maybe there will come a time of thriving.

Both faith communities are of help, and feeling heard by all of the people who listen to me makes a positive difference. Telling my story over and over again is somehow a relief, complementing the essential contemplative time. I wonder if being bored was an indicator that there is finally some relaxation internally, a shift into a different mode?

**Monday, June 12**

Do I have any hope for my sense of self in the world? No, but I still have to find some meaning in the larger scheme of things. So what hope can I find? I can practice giving up my will and letting God guide. I can bide my time and see if any good comes out of the situations in which I find myself. I can devote my energies to creative endeavors, to ministry, and to my
contemplative relationship with God. Can I re-find caring and enthusiasm without letting my life become unbalanced again?

In a sense, God has “slapped me upside the head” and told me to pay attention, made me aware of how important my integrity is. I must follow my own path, without letting ambition overwhelm kindness, gentleness, and honesty. I cannot let my passion overpower my daily relationships, or let my need for approval and recognition lead me to betrayal, “war-mongering,” or the creation of enemy-relationships. Mine is not the warrior path, but the way of the adventurer.

Tuesday, June 13

Can dispossession lead me back to gentleness?

Reading The Gospel of Judas, I think the idea that only those who have a spark of the divine within will go to the divine realm of the immortals when they die (Ehrman), may be similar to the SDA idea of a remnant, the saints whose souls will be resurrected and attain heaven. Adventists maintain that all others die completely, that both body and soul cease to exist forever (are burned up in a literal fire). Yet I think they would not be pleased to have this comparison made.

The idea that God is purely spiritual, not a Being, resonates with me!

Friday, June 16

I feel ambivalence and a lack of trust. Can I learn to act without ego? How does one create relationships without investing self and care? I used to like being a generalist, so why do I feel so
resistant to that role now? I am still grieving the loss of a vocation I created. I feel lost regarding my sense of self. I think I am also grieving for what I perceive to be a loss of integrity amongst my acquaintances. Yet I also feel almost open to hope and possibility.

Do I want to be happy? Yes. I can only be responsible for my own integrity.

Saturday, June 17

After talking to a friend, I feel riled up again. Can I ever get to a calm, peaceful place? Can I ever be satisfied?

Saturday, June 24

In Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada—camping in the Rockies—nothing seems to matter except nature. Out here it doesn’t matter who I am—I just am. And with these friends, I am my best self. (The adventurer self!)

Monday, June 26

A week away, a week of perspective and of being the best person I can be has allowed me to see how much I have hated and how destructive my thought patterns have been—how much vitality has gotten consumed. Hope, dreams, vision, and voice all have been destroyed systematically.

I don’t feel any attachment to Sabbath, yet I am attached to the idea of a true sabbatical for myself—rest and renewal. I don’t feel a sense of mission or passion. I have no faith, only frustration, resentment, and cynicism.
Tuesday, June 27

If things that happen will not affect my life, or the way I do my daily duties, then they are not worth my emotion. I need to shift my idea of “caring” to a different model, and not let anyone else determine my happiness. If I can learn to step back from my feelings, be more dispassionate, be kinder to myself in not taking things personally and to an extreme, I think I can manage better.

Just when I felt ready to walk away from the SDA church came a request to do special music for the next Sabbath, pulling me back in.

Saturday, July 1

On March 9, I asked myself, “What are my dreams? To see (live in) Spain and New Zealand, to see a glacier and the Canadian Rockies—to travel. To paint and draw; to go hang gliding once. To ride a scooter—even to test-drive one. I also want to go kayaking again soon, and perhaps to have more boxing lessons. I also want to continue to work on the house.”

I went to Alberta, to the Canadian Rockies, camping for a week with my Canadian friends, and saw glaciers at Glacier National Park in June. I am considering a tutor for art lessons; hang gliding is scheduled for July 14. I went for a ride on a scooter last week but couldn’t drive it myself since that requires a motorcycle endorsement on my license; I decided not to buy one this year but to spend some money for art lessons and continuing to fix up the house and commissioning a painting. So, I am trying to meet some of my dreams head-on!

I’m feeling better about myself, having embarked on some adventures and having had some affirmation of who I am.
Saturday, July 8

Played music for the worship service today, for the offertory and the special music (which falls between the Scripture reading and the sermon), and many people thanked me afterward. I remember not wanting to play music for the church, but now it feels fine.

One of the fellows keeps a couple of beehives, and a young Quaker wants to learn beekeeping, so I will try to connect them.

In Sabbath School, we’re at a place where I don’t understand Adventist thought and theology, and don’t care for what I do comprehend. I suppose more study is needed, although I don’t feel like it right now.

I have to laugh to myself when I hear people singing (or saying) that they want to hear the voice of the Lord, because for me it has meant accepting that my life will be turned upside down time and again. It demands complete self-honesty, courage, and strength. When I haven’t been totally honest with myself and have done things the way I wanted to, I have made mistakes that have hurt others badly. But sometimes my presence or example seems to act as a catalyst for people to begin to make changes in their own lives, or sometimes a wounded person can begin to heal him/herself because of the gentleness which flows through me. Sometimes I get so used to feeling upside-down that I don’t realize how uncomfortable and dreadful it can be for others. It also makes me sensitive to wrongness, when people around me turn their environment upside down to suit themselves, instead of being willing to suffer change themselves in order to help the community grow.

Maybe trying to administrate isn’t right for me; maybe the universe needs something different from me. I have to be true to myself and my calling(s), and not lose myself again.
In view of this, why am I journeying with the SDAs? Is it for one or a few people, a church, a denomination, for others to learn more, to connect the Friends and Adventists? I wish I could see clearly. Is it to prepare me for something else?

_Friday, July 14_

Emailed a colleague at an Adventist university and a couple of Jewish colleagues about work conferences and Sabbath: the Adventists attend workshops from Sunday mornings to Friday sunsets; the Jewish colleagues attend workshops on Saturdays but try to make time for Shabbat observance. For my professional development plan, I requested to attend a Canadian conference which meets on weekdays. This coming year it happens to be very near the place where my Canadian friends live, so I will be able to save money on housing, and stay with them over the weekend! It also will let me have a quiet Sabbath instead of trying to travel home on that day.

_Sunday, July 16_

When visiting my sister, I bought the kinds of foods her family likes to eat for brunch, so that instead of going out on Saturday, I could cook for us...and that went well. We ate out after church today (Sunday) instead. I played music for a small, Lutheran church at the request of the organist, who also serves as a SDA organist, and did it today because my sister and her family are Lutheran and said they would like to go. I felt good about playing, although I wished I could have stayed for cookies and punch with the congregation instead of rushing away because my nephews were hungry!
Earlier this month when my sister and nephews stayed with me for the weekend, we were returning from an afternoon at a park when my sister acknowledged that I don’t like to spend money on Saturdays, but asked if we could stop to eat at a restaurant so she could get the kids fed without having to go all of the way home and cook. I agreed and sat with them, though I didn’t eat. It was odd, but okay. She had gone with me to the Adventist church that morning…I really wanted to show off my family. I was a little disappointed, though, because as it was communion Sabbath, the service was solemn—very somber, with dark music instead of the bright music we usually have, and with weighty prayers and scriptures—when I had wanted my sister to see the joyful service which draws me to this church.

**Thursday, July 20**

I’ve been so depressed since January. How I wish I could be still and cool, peaceful, joyful, having fun with change. But change is being imposed on me and I’m not part of the discussions or decision-making process, and therein lies the difference. Gelassenheit (submission of one’s will) is needed. How can I find contentment in my heart and stillness of mind? How can I let the light shine through me? I felt so much better after the trip to the Canadian Rockies—how to recover my best self, and not lose it again?

Am I capable of treating those in positions of power as I would want to be treated if I were in their places?

I keep feeling pessimistic. I worry that my comrades will begin to hate me if I am not able to move beyond this distrustful cynicism.
Saturday, July 22

Two and a quarter hours walking in the park, restoring my soul. Thought about what my vocation means to me: to provide resources, to remove barriers, and to teach people how to better survive in the world. That’s all.

Why am I on the journey with the SDAs? To keep myself engaged in the faith questions like: Is God a being? (What does “Be still and know that I am” mean if not?!) What does it mean to try to discern and follow God’s will? How do I live my daily life? How do I try to engage Sabbath each day? I still don’t know what the SDA journey means for the Quakers.

I think I wanted to feel important, and I no longer do, and that is the unspoken loss I’ve been experiencing. Is that why I want to administrate, to feel important?

The Friends are seeking alternative meeting places, and a SDA church still seems like a good possibility, perhaps one of the smaller ones which would still be close to downtown.

Sunday, July 23

Can I forgive myself for hating? Can I forgive those whom I have hated? Be angry with God if I need to be angry.

The study of sanctuary and judgment in the Book of Daniel this quarter seems to be at the heart of SDA belief, and it is difficult to understand, since they interpret the passages and symbols differently than I do.

I’m scared of having Friends meeting for worship at the SDA church I’ve been attending, but I don’t understand why. It could foster a closer relationship between the two congregations.
George Fox wrote in his Journal, “Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts...” (346). Love God and neighbor as myself. If I can reconcile myself to the idea that I am where I’m supposed to be—and from that I can love God and find peace within myself, if I can accept the obligations God asks of me—writing, honoring the contemplative time required of me, and the community life, actively creating balance between them—then I’ll be doing my best to fulfill the two commandments from which all others spring. Choosing the best options for honoring my need for Sabbath right now. Being willing to admit my wish to feel important, and the resulting hatred when I do not experience a sense of being valuable, is part of being honest with myself. Acknowledging my fearful feelings regarding Friends worshipping at a SDA church, even though I don’t understand them, is part of living with integrity.

**Saturday, July 29**

Went hang gliding yesterday! I felt a little scared as we were ascending, but the view was interesting. Yet the motion/air sickness I felt made me glad to come back to earth, and I think this is one adventure I won’t repeat. But it is part of living my dreams, thus important.

**Wednesday, August 2**

Patricia Loring’s pamphlet on spiritual discernment points to many issues which have concerned me during the past two years. In discussing ways in which to test leadings, she defined one as, “Comparing them with the Bible or with the writings of spiritual leaders or saintly people from Quaker and other traditions” (8). When I sought to find similar journeys of the Quakers with
other faith groups, I came across John Woolman’s concern to live with and learn from the Indians. Another test is peace, which can manifest itself in a multitude of ways.

On a personal level, the reconciliation of disparate parts of one’s self or of one’s experience in a new, sometimes unexpected direction or action can issue in a deep interior sense of peace. Quaker experience has been that living close to the Spirit has the effect of such harmonizing and reconciling both within and between persons.

Feeling at peace with a decision or an outcome, even if it is not what one sought or hoped for, even if it calls for considerable hardship or change, has been a frequent indication of rightness.

Disturbance of a person’s peace is a common accompaniment of a new task or burden being laid upon them, often long before the nature of the task becomes clear. Faithfully discharging the task leads to restoration of inner peace (9).

This sums up what I have experienced in this ministry with the SDAs. I felt inexplicably called, again and again, into relationship with that church, despite its theology which in many ways is almost opposite of my own. This call very definitely disturbed my peace, yet has resulted in a sense of rightness over a period of time. I think it has also led to a closer relationship with some of the members in my own Meeting.

Loring continues,

Sometimes what is required is simple and obvious. At other times a prolonged period of living with the disquiet is necessary before the particular response
required of the particular individual becomes clear. The response may require a re-viewing of the person's entire life, direction, and background in an effort to see how it is being drawn toward or intersects with the source of the disquiet.

...It requires even more discernment to discover whether the ministry called for from a particular individual in a particular instance requires prophetic speech, humble and hidden activities, bold and dramatic action, professional service or some novel and previously unimagined course (10).

...In many instances discernment of our gifts lies very close to discernment of our leadings—but not always. In keeping with God's mystery and unpredictability, it can happen that we are led into areas of weakness or disability. This may assist us in learning humility; may help us be clear that credit for successes does not belong to us personally; may uncover and develop unsuspected abilities; may be an exercise in obedience, or function in ways that never become clear (12-13).

I have often wondered what this call means. I have reexamined my call to ministry, tried to discern whether or not formal education in seminary would be helpful, and have assessed what my spiritual gifts are and considered how to best use them in compliance with God's will. My situation has been disquieting, and I have tried to analyze my strengths and weaknesses objectively, living with my feelings, which said one thing, and the doors closing, which said another. I have come to think that this past half-year in particular has been an exercise in obedience and humility. Plunged into despair and shame, into the dark night, wondering if there
would ever be clarity or hope, yet linked with an underlying and deep-rooted willingness to be changed, to take emotional (and some physical) risks—all of this has left me believing that I have come out on another side of my spiritual life, extraordinarily transformed (not the goal of submission to the will of God, yet a welcome side-effect) and more quietly, that I have become more “attuned to authentic movements of the Spirit leading us into greater fullness of life” (Loring 15). This experience does seem to “reflect an experience of God which is more verb than noun, more relationship than knowledge....” And I seem to have groped my “way in search of reality, past easy definitions and conceptions of” myself, becoming “graciously freed from the distortions imposed by ‘the world’” (Loring 15).

**Sunday, August 27**

In the Sabbath School study of the Book of Daniel, I think the first item is to address the assumption of when Daniel was written. If we start with Daniel having been written in the second century B.C.E., as the introduction points to in my Bible, and then we interpret the symbols as representing short-term, literal events (futurecasting), the timing works. If we start with Daniel having been written in the sixth century B.C.E., as the text itself says, and take the symbols as representing events on a scale of larger magnitude (prophetic time), then the timing works this way too. So it is a matter of where we start and what we are looking for that guides our interpretation. I’m willing to read Daniel through the SDA perspective, but what I am disappointed by is that some of the Quarterly has illogical and contradictory arguments, which don’t “prove the point.”
When I asked for clarification, the answer I received was approximately that the 2300 day (or year) prophecy in Daniel 9 began in 457 BC when the decree was given by Persian King Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem. Going forward 2300 years from that date takes one to 1843 AD, but because there was no “0” year, it is actually 1844. The prophecy states that beginning then (1844), the sanctuary would be cleansed. Early Adventists believed that this was when Christ would return to purify the earth and take his people to Heaven. This did not happen, and the believers were devastated, hence the term “Great Disappointment”. Since there was no earthly sanctuary in 1844, the believers eventually realized that the terminology referred to the Day of Atonement of the Old Testament, which was a day of judgment and cleansing for the people of ancient Israel. On the Day of Atonement each year the people of Israel were judged by God, and the earthly sanctuary was cleansed through the sprinkling of sacrificial blood by the High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary. This pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ to take care of sin once and for all. Christ is now considered by SDAs to be the “Great High Priest,” and in 1844 he went into the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary in Heaven. He is now deciding the eternal destiny of all people, and through the merits of His own blood He is removing the condemnation of sin from His people. So, what really happened in 1844 was that a judgment began in Heaven. During the time between 1844 and the Second Coming, the names of all people who have ever lived will come up before God, and their eternal destinies will be decided (thus the term “pre-advent judgment”). If the judgment did not come before Christ’s return, on what basis would Christ determine who His people were? Revelation 22:12 says: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.” Thus,
Christ could not reward people according to their works if he had not already judged their works.

Sometimes the shorter explanations don’t work well; some SDA beliefs may never make sense in my theological view of the world.

Thursday, August 31

It takes a long time to build relationships and it is still not clear to me what might make sense or appeal to both church groups for a joint project or collaboration. I want to be persistent in the relationship, and maybe nothing observable will ever result. But I am a witness to them and they to me.

Wanting the Quarterly to be better than it is and wanting the church to be the best it can be is hopeful.

As a Quaker, I don’t want to engage in power games, but maybe knowing how they are being played out around me, and which ones I do use, even inadvertently, will probably help me survive better. How is it that I can best serve integrity, values, ethics, God and neighbor? Perhaps by better understanding the culture of power. Or perhaps by stepping out of the fray for awhile and concentrating on other things. I felt myself to have been drawn into an interesting case of manipulation this past week, and listened to someone with power trying to use an old weapon against me—that there are those who fear me and my anger, that my anger is out-of-control—but I no longer believe that. The issue we were discussing was not about me in any way, despite this person’s wish to make it my problem.
I found myself thinking that we all need comforting and love even when we may not
deserve it, and that if we want to help others grow to their full potential, we should offer sincere
praise and encouragement, warmth and tenderness. That some individuals have broken trust
with me is their trouble to mend. It is up to me to keep hold of my integrity, to be trustworthy,
to choose to trust, to respect and take care of myself. I need to look to my own skills, talents,
and gifts. My outlook and feelings are mine to own and direct. Though I will inevitably be
influenced by others, I can choose to focus on the positive rather than the negative. I can choose
to be cheerful, lighthearted and full of laughter, or quiet, and I can choose to consult with others
for a healthy dose of reality.

I wonder if I’ve been idealizing the SDA church and people. If so, what are the
implications? I want so much to believe in integrity, I want to see it, and perhaps I project it
where it doesn’t actually exist.

Friday, September 1
My job is to let the holy spirit live and express itself through me. I can step back, be less intense
and headlong, be kind, friendly, and courteous. I do not have to defend myself or anyone else. I
can act out of compassionate generosity.

Saturday, September 2
I’m having a difficult time with last week’s and this week’s Sabbath School lessons in the sense
that some of the arguments (regarding the timing of Daniel) contradict themselves or are simply
not well-constructed arguments. E.g., "In Daniel 10:2,3 the same word appears as in Daniel 9:24,
and it obviously doesn’t mean “weeks of years.” (Daniel fasted 3 weeks of years, or 21 years?)

Also, even if one accepted the error that the word in Daniel 9:24 means “weeks of years,” a week of years is still seven years, the same number of years as if you used the day-year principle.” So if they are the same, why try to make a case that they aren’t?

And, August 22, “The 70-week prophecy comes to 490 years. The 2,300 days, if literal, come to a little more than six years. Could 490 years be “cut off ” from a little more than six years? Of course not. From 2,300 years? Of course. Hence here’s more evidence that the day-year principle must be applied to the 2,300-day prophecy, as well. It makes no sense to apply the principle to the 70 weeks, which is only part of the 2,300 days, and not apply it to the 2,300 days, as well.” To be consistent, one would cut off 70 weeks from 2,300 days, not 490 years from 2,300 days—mixing and matching literal and prophetic times. These inconsistencies bother me, in the sense that they just aren’t stated or written well.

Then, some of the arguments are fine and make good sense, like the animal symbols being representative so the timeframes should be representative too. Sometimes it bothers me that the unidentified writer of this quarter’s study guide uses “obviously” far too often when it seems like he is stretching to make a point, instead of providing more solid evidence from the Scriptures. E.g., from August 27, ”Notice in Luke 2:1 that “all the world” should be taxed. Only a world power could tax all the world. How interesting, too, that Daniel 7:23 says that the fourth beast will “devour the whole earth”; that is, the fourth beast is obviously a world empire, such as Rome.” But my Bible says, “all the Roman empire” should be “registered” (i.e., counted for the census), so what seems obvious to the quarterly writer isn’t to me. Especially when it goes on to say, ”Though Daniel doesn’t name Rome, the New Testament does.” Well, ”the abomination of
“desolation” spoken of by Jesus, in reference to Daniel, isn’t actually clear and unambiguous. So, I just don’t get it. I am frustrated, trying to understand what most of SDAs already know. Is it the case that some quarterlies are simply better than others, and this is one that is less than stellar?

I talked briefly with a couple of Adventists about the Quarterly, and they agreed that some are better-written than others, that this particular one does assume a lot, especially for a heavy and complex area of study, even for SDAs who have been studying this material all of their lives. I feel reassured about my impressions and frustration. I feel buoyed by this couple and our conversations. It helps a lot to talk with someone who has converted and also with a person who, while being a “birthright” SDA, has understood what conversion means.

**Saturday, September 9**

One of my Adventist beginning-to-be-friends invited me to observe foot-washing. I had odd feelings about the rite, in addition to self-consciousness. It was overwhelming despite its simplicity and matter-of-factness, and I got out to the parking lot before I started crying.

My name was in the display case inside the church entrance, where they put folks who are new members, but a little to one side, not quite in the same place, and I don’t know what that means, and would have to ask the pastor to find out. And I was asked to play music for Sabbath School next week.

I went to Aman park for awhile, listening to/watching the creek. It’s a grey day, and I feel uncertain and alone. Am I going to be sucked under, into the Adventist tide? Are they all praying for me to join the church? What in the world does this “relationship” with the SDA church mean, anyway? Would I be contradicting my Quaker principles if I participated in communion? If I did
ever participate in footwashing and/or communion, I would cry. They’re not symbols—it would involve a giving of my heart. I feel split open again, conflicted. I just needed a simple invitation, and heard it both from the pulpit and from this “sister-in-Christ.” She and her husband have invited me into simple companionship, and I want so much to be in relationship....

Thursday, September 14

Met up with an Adventist friend from another area church today, who said that some of their church were either thinking about writing, or had actually written to the Conference about the poor quality of this quarter’s Adult Sabbath School study guide, saying that it made unsupported leaps and faulty arguments, and hoping that they wouldn’t see another substandard study guide like this one....

Saturday, September 16

This month’s Sabbath School Superintendent read an article about a book written by an anthropologist on the subject of the SDA church and culture. The article stated that the anthropologist had participated in every aspect of SDA life, yet had not joined the church, and asked why had she not? The Superintendent also read an assertion that Sabbath School is the heart of the church, and when a Sabbath School dies, the church ceases to progress. He then asked us what we found compelling in Sabbath School, and the answers reflected my own thoughts and feelings: connection and personal relationships with others in one’s individual Sabbath School classes, and the challenge of learning more through discussion than one would by simply reading and studying on one’s own. The Superintendent then asked again why would
this anthropologist not have joined the church, and I spoke up: “As a Quaker minister in your
midst, I agree with everything that’s been said about Sabbath School—these are the things I find
important, but as a Quaker, I am already a member of a church and of the “body of Christ,” so I
wouldn’t change my membership to join this church.” I heard the buzz around the church as
people reacted to my “coming out” statement, but it just seemed to be surprise, nothing
negative. The Superintendent admitted the possibility that the anthropologist was already a
Christian—the article didn’t say. He closed with a prayer, and I played a lullaby (“haunting,” one
person called it) to close the communal portion of Sabbath School before we separated for the
individual classes. Then I went to a different class than the one I usually attend, and found it to
be more formal while still allowing for questions and comments. I like the format and wide-
ranging discussion of my customary class better, but may go again to the other class from time
to time. I stayed for the worship service, and one woman took my hand and thanked me both
for the music and for all of my comments. Connection and relationship.

**Tuesday, September 19**

It seems to me that part of being a Friend is not participating in baptism with water, Eucharistic
communion, tithing, or other rites, which are but “symbols, shadows, signs, figures, or types.”
This quarter’s Sabbath School study guide often mentions the “antitypical” atonement and
cleansing of the sanctuary, i.e., Christ’s entry into the heavenly “holy of holies” to do the work of
pleading the case of each soul before God’s judgment and providing us with the “covering” of
his own merit in place of our sins. I didn’t understand “antitypical” until just now—if an earthly
rite is a “type” then the heavenly or spiritual reality would be the “antitype.” Thus, Quakers strive
to meet the “antitypical” reality as closely as is possible—acknowledging baptism by the holy
spirit, recording ministers’ spiritual gifts while acknowledging that only God can ordain,
understanding that every gathering, every act, and indeed every moment of being represents
communion, and so on.