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**Adventists in Ghana Urge Preachers to Stop Attacking Other Religions:** Once known for their denunciations of Sunday-keeping denominations, Adventist preachers are now taking the lead in urging restraint and reconciliation among fiercely contentious religious factions in Ghana....

**Pathfinder Camporee Sold Out: Largest Adventist Event in North America:** Not a ticket remains for sale, six months before the Pathfinder camporee opens with 40,000 participants expected....

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**FEATURES, POETRY, ART, & BOOK REVIEW**

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**Book Notice and Commentary:** Death Before the Fall: Ervin Taylor shares a review of the Ronald E. Osborn non-fiction title: *Death Before the Fall: Biblical Literalism and Problem of Animal Suffering*, just off the presses. A must-read for those interesting in updating their understanding of the latest thinking on suffering, death, and sin....

**“Partnering for Eternity” Pairs Youth and Age, to the Benefit of Both:** Nineteen Adventist schools, and counting, are "Partnering for Eternity," each pairing a student with an older church member in activities....
where students are enlightened, seniors' lives are brightened, and scholarships leave all delighted....

**Going Home:** Anelle Mashin's poem comes to us from the United Kingdom, where she writes poetry for programs in her church and reminds us this week that "Going Home" can weigh heavy on our minds in times like these....

**Serenity in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco:** Susan Duran's photograph reminds us that the seasons are changing, advancing as the seasons of our lives....
Memorial Service Announced for Adventist Doctor Missing in Ukraine

By AT News Team, February 25, 2014

The family of Dr. Jay Sloop has scheduled a memorial service near his home in the United States for April 26. He went missing about a year earlier in May 2013 while on a mission trip in the Ukraine to help start community health ministries with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that nation. The service will be held at 3 p.m. on Sabbath afternoon in the Yakima Adventist Church, 507 North 35th Avenue.

Adventist Today has reported that Sloop, a retired obstetrician age 77 and Health Ministries director for the denomination’s Upper Columbia Conference, was in Kiev to help establish a lifestyle center in the Ukrainian capital when he went missing during an early morning walk in Zamkova Gora Park on May 15, 2013. Security camera footage showed him entering the park, but not leaving. No substantial leads have since emerged in the case, despite extensive searches and an ongoing investigation by Ukrainian police and the U.S. embassy in Kiev.

“We know little more than we did within hours of Dad’s initial disappearance,” son Greg Sloop said in a blog he set up to keep friends and family informed of the search. While active searches ended in September, the family continues to follow up with contacts in Ukraine and maintains a hotline where people can report information, he said.

In a February 12 blog post, Sloop reiterated the ambiguity of the situation and said the service is not reason to further speculate on Dr. Sloop’s status. “No matter what you might believe, we are left without Dad in our lives right now. We’d like to take time to remember who he is and was, what things were important to him, and reminisce on the time he spent with us,” Sloop wrote. The April 26 service will “be a good time to create a small sense of closure for everyone involved,” another son, Richard Sloop, told the Yakima Herald.

“We would like to invite you to a celebration of Jay Sloop’s life,” a statement from the family said. “Some people we know, are quite certain that Dad must not still be alive. Others feel that he must still be alive, and that we’ll get some answer soon. ... We invite you to celebrate with us, the memory of Jay Sloop, as bittersweet as that may seem in the moment.”

This story is based in part on a bulletin from Adventist News Network (ANN), the official news services of the denomination.
Adventists in Ghana Urge Preachers to Stop Attacking Other Religions

By AT News Team, February 26, 2014

In a country where inter-religious strife has sometimes become violent, a spokesperson for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has urged religious leaders to check negative preaching about their peers in other faiths. Solace Asafo-Hlordzi, communication director for the denomination's Southern Ghana Union Conference, stated that it is not enough for pastors to criticize their peers who they believe are misleading people, but they must effectively communicate their messages.

She urged pastors to make themselves and their churches relevant to the communities in which they live and worship if they want to win them to join their congregations. Asafo-Hlordzi was conducting training for Adventist pastors in Koforidua and a reporter for the Ghana News Association (GNA), the primary wire service in the country, picked up the statement.

The Adventist leader "reminded participants that their church buildings, the environment around their church buildings, ... and their behavior in the community, [all] serve as a means of communication of the church to the community," GNA reported. She recommended "simply designed church buildings, using local materials with attractive environments that would attract more people in the community to join their congregation, than building huge cathedrals which are never completed for years."

Angela Mano, a regional director of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, called for concerted efforts by all religious and civic leaders to help fight the problems facing the country, according to GNA. The Adventist denomination has 1,272 local churches in Ghana with a total membership of 410,00 among the 25 million population. At least one church member, the Hon. Kwame Osei-Prempeh, has served as an elected member of parliament since 1997.
Pathfinder Camporee Sold Out: Largest Adventist Event in North America

By AT News Team, February 27, 2014

All of the tickets reserved for Pathfinder Club members and their adult leaders from North America has been sold as of last week, according to the Center for Youth Evangelism at Andrews University which manages the event. The event is scheduled for August 11 through 16 next summer in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Total attendance will be limited to 40,000 individuals, nearly four times the actual attendance at the first North American Camporee in 1994 and an increase of about seven percent over the last event in 2009. The camporee has become the largest single gathering of North American Adventists, nearly doubling to 22,000 in 1999 and again to 32,000 in 2004. In 2009 it grew another ten percent to 37,000.

The 40,000 slots approved for this year include 2,000 reserved for groups from outside North America, a thousand volunteers who help staff the event and a thousand children of those volunteers. About half of the volunteer passes are still unassigned as managers continue to recruit qualified people. There are also a few hundred "day passes" left for people who can come onto the camporee grounds during the day, but cannot camp there at night.

The number of participants permitted to attend every five years is voted by a planning committee that includes both youth directors and lay representatives from throughout the Pathfinder Club network across North America. The limit is set in order to plan a camporee budget and make sure that adequate space and logistics are in place.

There is a secondary market that operates now that the limits have been reached. Pathfinder groups that need to bring more individuals work through their conference youth director to purchase tickets from groups that have already paid for more slots than they discover can actually attend.

Ron Whitehead, director of CYE and an assistant professor of youth ministry at AU who serves as CEO of the camporee, told Adventist Today that on March 4 there will be a teleconference meeting of the camporee planning committee to consider the possibility of opening up additional slots and one more round of ticket sales. Adventist Today will carry news of the decision as soon as it becomes available.
Robertson Leaving Adventist Health Institutions for Large, Secular Provider Organization

By AT News Team, February 24, 2014

William G. "Bill" Robertson will leave his role as chief executive officer of Adventist HealthCare, the regional corporation that operates hospitals and other health agencies for the Columbia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in April and take on a new job as CEO of MultiCare Health System in Tacoma, Washington, according to a report today in the Montgomery County Gazette.

Robertson became leader of the Mid-Atlantic health ministry in 2000 during a crisis kicked up by reports in the Washington Post about the large retirement payments given to previous CEOs and criticism of Adventist hospitals by local physicians. The organization is one of five nonprofits that control all but one of the Adventist hospitals in the United States, holding them in trust on behalf of the denomination.

MultiCare Health is a larger organization with about 10,000 employees compared to 6,200 at Adventist HealthCare. The Adventist organization controls Washington Adventist Hospital, one of the original Adventist sanitariums, established as an inner city clinic in the nation's capital in 1904 and opening inpatient facilities in the suburb of Takoma Park in 1907. Robertson gave the newspaper a statement that the organization has a “very bright future and is well-positioned to be a leader in the state as more of an emphasis is placed on preventive health and wellness.”

Most of the operations of Adventist HealthCare are in Maryland. The one institution that it operates in New Jersey is due to be transferred to a local, secular organization in the state, as Adventist Today has reported. The transfer is waiting for approval from the state government. The only other Adventist hospital in the northeastern U.S., Parkview Adventist Hospital in Maine, which is controlled by the denomination's Northern New England Conference, is also in the process of being transferred to an outside organization.

Pastor Dave Weigley, president of the denomination's Columbia Union Conference and chairman of the board for Adventist HealthCare, told the Gazette through a spokesman that the board will be working on a formal selection process for a new CEO. With Robertson's leadership the agency has become the largest provider of medical services in Montgomery County, adding the Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, Adventist Behavioral Health, the Lorie Center for Infants and Young Children, Adventist Medical Group and the Aquilino Cancer Center. Its hospitals have been honored as top performers on key quality measures by The Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation.

In addition to leading the Adventist institutions, Robertson has been a leader at a number of community organizations, including board chairman of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board, and an executive committee member for the Maryland Hospital Association. Gigi Godwin, president of the Chamber told the newspaper that “Montgomery County and the chamber have benefited immensely from the visionary leadership of Bill Robertson. He will be sorely missed.”

Robertson is 54 and before he came to Maryland in 2000 he was CEO of Shawnee Mission Medical Center near Kansas City and executive vice president of Huguley Health System in Texas, both Adventist health ministries. He completed an MBA at Texas Christian University and an undergraduate degree at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.

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This week in a Bible study, a group of us were looking at the story of the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-9. The question was asked, “Who was this vision for? For Jesus? For the disciples? For everybody?” Let’s consider all three.

**For Jesus**

Speaking for myself, sometimes I need a new mountaintop experience to reassure and re-center me in my particular assignment in life. This can happen for two reasons—I can get off the track and be following some rabbit trail, or I can get discouraged. I don’t know that Jesus followed rabbit trails, but he was near Caesarea Philippi, 120 miles north of Jerusalem. I’d say that’s a good 4-5 days’ walk. And there had been a lot of recent controversy over who Jesus really was. Is it unrealistic to think he could have been disheartened? We do know certainly that he sometimes needed encouragement. Most notably, if the angel hadn’t come to him in Gethsemane (not that long after this event) he might have died right there in the garden. If he was tempted as we are, he has to have faced continual temptation to doubt his own call and his own path. Was he really the Messiah? (Also, I’ve always been curious about how much, if any, time passed between verses 6 and 7. What might Moses and Elijah have told Jesus??)

*What, then, would he get from this experience of being “overshadowed by the Most High,” being able to visit with some of his friends from heaven, and hearing the words repeated, “This is my beloved Son. I am delighted with him”? Can you imagine for yourself?*

**For the disciples**

(Or at least three of them.) I’ve always been fascinated by the fact that they were told not to share this experience until “after the Son of Man has risen from the dead.” How hard would it be to keep that experience to yourself?

What was going on with these men? Were they, too, caught up in the controversy over who Jesus really was? In the previous chapter we have the famous declaration of Peter, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” But if they still had any doubts, this would certainly dispel them. If they were still thinking he was just a good teacher or a good man, this transfiguration knocked that theory on its head.

*What might they have gotten from this? Can you imagine for yourself?*

**For everybody, which is to say, for you, and me**

The Son died, rose again, they shared the story, someone wrote it down, and here we are. It’s for us, too.

I find it valuable to imagine my way through this story from both points of view. Not as the Son of God, don’t misunderstand! But as the child of God, which I am, which you are, who can get a little or a lot sideways (since I do give into temptations sometimes), and needs to be reminded, reassured, re-called to my path. “You—yes, you—are My beloved child,” God says. “I am pleased with you!”

Then, as a disciple. As one of those bewildered ones who is trying hard to believe and internalize that this is, indeed, the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. This isn’t another Plato or Confucius or Siddhartha Gautama. This is the Son of the Living God.

**LISTEN TO HIM!!**

Please! You’ll be glad you did.

______________________ Share your thoughts about this article:
Book Notice and Commentary: Death Before the Fall

Reviewed by Ervin Taylor, February 28, 2014


This important volume is now available for purchase through your local book retailer or from various online sources such as Amazon.com. Two reviews of Death Before the Fall will appear in a future issue of Adventist Today, written by individuals with contrasting points of view concerning the positive contribution that this book will make in facilitating meaningful dialogue within the Adventist faith community with respect to this controversial and thus polarizing topic. To maximize the degree to which readers will be able to appreciate what lies at the center of the controversy that this book addresses, interested individuals may wish to purchase and read this book ahead of reading the reviews.

This volume considers the principal theological objections that Fundamentalist Adventists and individuals belonging to other Conservative and Fundamentalist Christian traditions most often cite as the basis for their opposition to what generally is referred to as Darwinian evolution. The centerpiece of the understandings of the English naturalist, Charles Darwin, of the natural forces that drive the development and extinction of species of plants and animals, i.e., biological evolution, is the concept of natural selection. Such a process assumed that physical death had always been a natural part of the world in which we live and that different rates of reproduction and death were a function of species better adapted to their environments, and this accounted for a significant part of the progressive changes in the physical characteristics in populations of plants and animals over long periods of "deep time" on earth.

The basis for natural selection was first stated in great detail and with many examples in the middle of the 19th century by Darwin. It was also described by a contemporary of Darwin's, the English biologist, Alfred Russell Wallace. As with any scientific concept since their time, as new discoveries (such as a more detailed understanding of the role of genetic mutations and the development of molecular genetics) have accumulated, a number of important aspects of some of the Darwin-Wallace original insights concerning natural selection and other processes involved in biological evolution have been continuously updated. As a result, Darwin and Wallace’s great contribution has become a central, unifying theme in contemporary life sciences.

However, the scientific basis of contemporary evolutionary biology is not the topic of this book. Its focus is on an examination of a series of theological concepts and assumptions about how different individuals and certain contemporary faith traditions view and evaluate biblical statements that currently lie at the heart of the theologically-based rejection of modern biological evolution.

As befitting the title, the volume is divided into two major parts, with the first and longer section considering topics addressing various aspects of the hermeneutic of biblical literalism and the second part addressing what the author terms "the central riddle" of his book, animal suffering. The author reviews the issues that are dividing many Christians, including Adventist scholars and laity, over what has been a contentious issue within many Christian faith communities ever since Darwin published his seminal work, Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection in 1859.

Commentary

With few exceptions, until the early 1960s, traditional Adventism generally followed a theological paradigm which required a reading of the Genesis creation narratives as describing a set of literal historical events which occurred only a few thousand years ago. This approach to biblical interpretation excluded any accommodation to the reality established by almost two centuries of research studies in a number of scientific fields which established that there had been a progression of life forms which had evolved over billions of years on our planet.
In addition to its largely Fundamentalist legacy, Adventism has had to deal with real historical issues arising from having a 19th century prophetic figure, Ellen G. White, who, in some quarters of Adventism has been accorded, for all practical purposes, canonical authority. Although there were constant official protestations that this was not the case, effectively her views on a number of issues, including her largely devotional commentaries on Genesis, have been traditionally viewed as imparting both theological and scientific knowledge. On the subject of Genesis, her statements were unequivocal: There was a creation in seven literal days of life forms about 6,000 years ago and a worldwide flood about 4,000 years ago.

However, within the last half century, and particularly within the last few decades, increasing numbers of Adventist scientists and theologians have been pointing out what serious theological and scientific problems are created when simplistic, literalistic interpretations of Genesis are imposed on the biblical texts. In the view of a number of these scholars, this rigid interpretative or hermeneutical framework results in the creation of both bad science and bad theology.

Hopefully, this volume will provide a stimulus for the beginning of a new strand of dialogue within Adventism on what currently is a highly polarizing topic.

There are no comments.

Anonymous

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“Partnering for Eternity” Pairs Youth and Age, to the Benefit of Both

http://www.atoday.org/article/2348/features/articles/partnering-for-eternity-pairs-youth-and-age-to-the-benefit-of-both

by Debbonnaire Kovacs
Submitted February 28, 2014

It all started with a good deed—a continuing, consistent good deed. A student in an Adventist academy began visiting and caring for a homebound woman for a community service assignment, but after the assignment was over, the student kept coming. A friendship had been built that was important to both. The family of the woman, particularly her son, was deeply appreciative. The woman’s son was reportedly “deeply impressed.”

This man, who wishes to remain anonymous, and Renee Drumm, Dean of the School of Social Work at Southern Adventist University, put their heads together. What was good for this student and this elder would surely be good for other students and other elders. What if there could be a means of encouraging more friendships like this, while also granting a very practical kind of Thank You?

“Partnering for Eternity” was born. Piloted at Madison Campus Elementary, it “is designed to enhance a relationship of service and friendship between the generations.” A student chooses a Scholarship Mentor, a non-related person who is no longer able to remain active and social. Accompanied by a parent, the student commits to spending at least one hour per week with that mentor, serving and helping in some capacity such as shopping, house or yard care, help with feeding, laundry, personal care such as hair care, pedicures, and even physical therapy activities. Some also bring treats or baked goods, but most importantly, they bring youth, life, and smiles.

Friendships for life and eternity are the result. In a story in the Kentucky/Tennessee Conferences “Connection” newsletter, 6th grade student Robin Forde-Whitefield reported that she now spends more time with her own grandparents, because she has realized “how important I am in my older family members’ lives.”

In return, the student can receive up to $1,000 per year of scholarship money, much of it donated by what is referred to vaguely as “the family foundation,” maintaining their anonymity. More than $39,000 of scholarship monies had been donated at the time of the article in the “Connection.” At that time, 15 other schools were enrolled in the program. However, in an interview with Adventist Today, Amanda Tortal, of the School of Social Work, reported that there were now 19 schools. They had done a training in New Jersey in January, and signed up some participants there. She said the schools are concentrated within Southern Union, but there are schools involved from Michigan to Florida and from Colorado to Georgia.

The PFE coordinator and parent volunteer at Madison Campus, Jacqueline Downs, who successfully formalized procedures last August to make the pilot program accessible to other schools, summed up the program by saying, “This program is a win-win for everyone. Students…can see that there is a world beyond their own…Through give and take they build self-esteem, and that self-esteem comes from being satisfied that you are achieving something
for the good.” (Quoted from KY/TN “Connection.”)

To learn more about the program and how you can help or donate, or how your school can become involved, visit http://prezi.com/hlgee8advusm/assist-and-partnering-for-eternity/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy. Schools which state an interest now will be contacted with application information during the summer, to prepare for being in the program next year.
I look in the horizon,
My destination remains barely visible.
It's been a long time since I started travelling,
So much time has gone by,
Life is no longer the same.
I look to the left; I look to the right,
Still, there’s no sign of my home.
One thing I know in my heart,
It will soon appear in the horizon.
I've only come this far by faith.

Oftentimes I wonder why,
This road is long, winding and narrow.
There are no beautiful landscapes,
No friends or travelling companions.
I also question why,
I seem to be the only one travelling here.
There isn't much time to stop and rest.
Trials here, sorrows there,
I’ve lost my loved ones here,
Yet I journey on, no matter what.

For me this journey is not a breeze,
I cannot travel at ease,
I cannot go back; my mind’s made up.
I am homeward bound with Christ as my guide.
When I fall he'll pick me up,
Cheering me on, every step of the way.
Looking ahead in anticipation,
I tread on, stepping out in faith,
Having come this far by faith,
I will eventually reach my destination.

Anelle Mashiri writes poetry for programs in her church, Leicester West SDA in the United Kingdom. This was written for a youth day program with the theme, “We’ve come this far by faith.”
Serenity in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco


Photo by Susan Duran
Submitted February 28, 2014

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven” Ecclesiastes 3:1.