**Carson Takes Steps Toward a Campaign for U.S. President:** Surgeon Ben Carson has announced that he is intensifying exploratory steps as he evaluates the prospects of running for the presidency, on the Republican ticket.

**Three Adventist Children Killed by Philadelphia Car-jackers:** Two SDA brothers and an older sister perished this week when a car-jacker, driving at high speed, caused their deaths as they raised funds for their church.

**Go to Israel With the Editor of *Adventist Today***: Dr. David Newman has announced plans to lead a group from the United States to the Holy Land this Thanksgiving season.

**Lake Union Conference Opens a New Office Building:** A smaller, more energy-efficient office building near Andrews University will house union and some General Conference Auditing staff in Michigan, reflecting an era of administrative downsizing.

**Another (Very Strange) Argument in Support of a Six-day Creation:** Ervin Taylor tries to study through the logic of a writer who argues that the fact that the Genesis account of creation is very hard to understand literally, recommends it as literally inspired.

**Followers of Jesus & the Torah Including the Ten Commandments, Pt. 2:** In addition to walking closely and continuously with Jesus, what more must we do to obey the law perfectly? Dan Appel writes about the differences between the Torah and the Royal Law and how they affect our destinies today.

**A Lament from the Pit (devotional):** From Joseph's point of view, Debbonaire Kovacs writes in verse of his Lament from the Pit after his brothers strip him of his coat and cast him down to await his fate.
The Musical, Translating Chaplain (feature): A seemingly highly overqualified team of Renaissance-gifted pastors puts multiple languages and disciplines on the altar to amplify their spiritual influence as husband-and-wife chaplains....

To One Dying Young (poetry): Poet S M Chen examines the lives of two young Christian men whose experience on earth ended far too soon in circumstances beyond their control....

It Won't Be Long (poetry): Poet Corienne Montgomery Hay thinks back on the short life of a young man in high school whose devout existence was snuffed out as he went about doing good....
Carson Takes Steps Toward a Campaign for U.S. President

By AT News Team, August 6, 2014

Dr. Ben Carson, the well-known neurosurgeon who is an active member of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, has taken additional steps toward a campaign for President of the United States in 2016, according to a story in the *Washington Times* last Friday (August 1). Carson has become a favorite of many politically conservative Americans.

Carson stated in an interview that he met last week in Florida with supporters and that a decision has been made about a campaign chairman. Terry Giles, a businessman from Texas, is the designated leader for the campaign, if Carson definitely decides to launch it. “Basically if Dr. Carson decides to go forward, I’ve been asked to chair the campaign and make a full commitment during the period of time leading up to a decision and during the election cycle,” Giles told the Western Journalism Center, a right-wing media operation.

Carson also reportedly approved the formation of One Nation, his political action committee. Despite these early decisions, Carson cautioned his supporters that a final decision has not been made. “Now is the time to start all of the appropriate exploration and investigation and put down the structure that is necessary,” he admitted, acknowledging that his camp is “definitely a step or two closer than we were a year ago.”

As it stands, Carson said he is more interested in making sure the Republican Party and right-wing activists are able to make big gains in upcoming midterm races. He said his PAC will be active in supporting those hopefuls who share his core values. “Obviously we are very interested in what happens in November,” he told the *Times*. “And if the people also continue to show strong desire for me to run, obviously that would be an important factor.”

In an historical coincidence, within days of the *Times* story indicating that an Adventist may run for president, private papers of the United States president with the closest ties to the Adventist faith in the past were made public this week. President Warren G. Harding, who served in the 1920s, had siblings who were Adventists, including a sister who went with her husband as a missionary for the denomination to southern Asia and a brother who founded an Adventist hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

__________________________ Share your thoughts about this article:

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Three Adventist Children Killed by Philadelphia Car-jackers

By AT News Team, August 7, 2014

Terrance Moore, age 7; Joseph Reed, age 9; and Keiearra Williams, age 15, were all killed last week when two men took a car and raced off through the streets of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Keisha Williams, the mother of the three children, is in a medically induced coma at Temple University Hospital.

The family was selling fruit at a curbside stand for a church fund raising project when Corneilus Crawford and Jonathan Rosa sexually assaulted a real estate agent, stole her car and drove the Toyota 4Runner through the streets at a very high rate of speed, according to the Philadelphia Daily News. The two men have been charged with three counts of second degree murder, as well as several other crimes. The first court proceeding will be on August 13.

Yesterday (August 6) hundreds of mourners crowded into the North Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church where Pastor Keith Goodman, Sr., tried to bring a message of hope to the tragedy. The death of the three children had brought many people together, Goodman stated and that would likely result in good in the community despite the lives that had been ruined. The choir and the congregation sang spiritual songs and hymns of resurrection hope.

Pastor William Taliaferro, an associate pastor at the church and former director of faith-based and community programs for the mayor at city hall, prayed for the families and the neighborhood. "People have been known to say that time heals all wounds," he said. "But they don't know what they are talking about."

The Honorable Michael Nutter, mayor of Philadelphia, attend the funeral, as did District Attorney Seth Williams and a number of other civic leaders. The event was paid for by National Basketball Association Hall of Fame player Charles Barkley.

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Dr. J. David Newman, the editor-in-chief of Adventist Today, will be co-leading a Thanksgiving season tour of Israel. Readers are invited to join the tour; there will be plenty of opportunities to discuss the current situation and future of the Adventist faith and movement in private, off-the-record small groups.

The other co-leader is Andy Nash, author and former editor of Adventist Today, currently a journalism professor at Southern Adventist University. The two will present the rich history of the Bible lands and violinist Jaime Jorge will perform favorites like Via Dolorosa and I Walked Where Jesus Walked as well as others.

The tour will include stops in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Bethany, Nazareth, Cana, Joppa, Caesarea, Megiddo, Capernaum, the Dead Sea, the Jordan River and a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. It is scheduled for November 20 to 30 right at the beginning of the Christmas season.

Travel is at its lowest right now, making this not only the experience of a lifetime, but also affordable. For more information, send an Email to andynash5@gmail.com or phone (423) 298-2141. More information at facebook.com/Tabgha Tours.
Lake Union Conference Opens a New Office Building

By AT News Team, August 7, 2014

The Adventist denomination's Lake Union Conference has opened a new office building this week just a few blocks from the campus of Andrews University where it has been housed for many years. The new facility cost $4.6 million to construct and is smaller and more energy-efficient than the old building, which has been taken over by university departments and centers to house expanding programs.

The 26,000-square-foot building on 11 acres near the freeway interchange off U.S. 31 which leads to the main road in Berrien Springs, Michigan, will house 25 staff members plus a five-person auditing unit from the denomination's General Conference. "This is a smaller number of employees than the organization had when the old facility was built," a retired denominational administrator told Adventist Today. "The number of staff at the union conference level has been significantly reduced over the years."

The "union conference" is an intermediate judicatory in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, interfacing between the local conference, which is a group of cooperating congregations, and the international organization. There are eight union conferences in the United States and one in Canada, as well as one in most nations in Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In general, the union conference serves as the national denominational organization, except in a few of the largest countries such as the U.S., Brazil, India and the Philippines.

The Lake Union Conference includes five local conferences; state conferences in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin, as well as the Lake Region Conference, which includes the historically African American congregations in the same four states as well as Minnesota. It includes 573 churches with a total of more than 85,000 members and 90 schools with about 2,500 students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The lower floor of the new building is constructed into the side of a hill and this provides a more energy-efficient situation for heating and air conditioning. Along with LED lighting and other new technology, the savings in energy bills will pay for the new construction over the next decade or so.

Adventists in the U.S. often complain about "too many layers" in the denomination's structure and ask about "getting rid of" the union conferences, but this is a concept rarely heard in other parts of the world, such as Canada, where the function of the union conferences is clearly understood and appreciated. In Europe the common solution to the concern is to flatten the union conference and local conference into a single entity. For example, the union conference in Italy functions as both a union conference, dealing with the international denominational organization, and as a local conference, constituted as a group of collaborating congregations. This same solution is being discussed in some parts of the U.S.
Another (Very Strange) Argument in Support of a Six-day Creation

by Ervin Taylor, August 5, 2014

My good friend Cliff Goldstein has yet again in the pages of the Adventist Review (AR) addressed an aspect of one of his favorite topics: “Why ‘real’ Adventists can’t be evolutionists.” (An alternative way of expressing this would be: “Why we ‘real’ Adventists can tell other Adventists why they can’t be evolutionists.”) The title of his article is “Another (False) Argument against a Six-day Creation” published in the July 24, 2014, issue of the AR. In the spirit of his title, the title of this commentary on his article is: “Another (Very Strange) Argument in Support of a Six-day Creation.”

Cliff sets up his approach using four major assertions with several sub-parts:

First: “Unbelievers . . . [high]er critics or theistic evolutionists . . .” argue that “Genesis is not a reliable account of how creation happened” since the Genesis creation story “wasn’t meant to be understood literally.”

Second: “Unbelievers” call attention to the fact that the Genesis creation narrative is organized into “days” of “evenings and mornings.”

Third: Then “Unbelievers” ask a series of questions: (a) Are not “days” defined by the passage of a day and night? (b) Is not the existence of days and nights based on the rotation of the earth in relationship to the sun, i.e., to have a day and night on planet earth you have to have a sun? [Comment: Now, of course, the ancient Hebrews believed that the sun went around the earth and had no concept of the earth as a planet among other planets circling around the sun, but let’s not get technical here.] (c) Does not the text say that on the first day of creation, God said “Let there be light”? (d) However, does not the text say that God did not create the sun until the fourth day? 

Fourth: Thus “Unbelievers” ask: How can you have light on earth without the sun? And how can you have the passage of three “days” unless you have a sun? Don’t you have a problem here?

Cliff’s response to this problem is: “No problem.” Why, in the opinion of Cliff, is there no problem?

Here is how he explains it: (1) He begins with his own question: “If on the fourth day, God created the “greater light” (obviously the sun) to separate the “day from the night,” what was the light that God spoke into existence on “the first day” that “separated the light from the darkness”? (2) His amazing answer is “Who knows?” [Comment: I interpret this answer to mean that he doesn’t know and he thinks that no one else knows.] (3) This contrasting “light” on the first day and “sun” on the fourth actually gives “the Spirit-inspired reader more reasons to accept Genesis 1 and 2 as a literal account of the six-day creation of our world.” [Comment: Really? What, pray tell, is a “Spirit-inspired reader”? But we don’t want to quibble over details. Let’s see where this is going.] (4) Then Cliff asks another question: “Why would Moses write a creation story that went so blatantly against what was one of the most obvious features of the natural world as we humans experience it: the dominance of the sun in determining the arrival and departure of each day?”[Emphasis supplied] [Comment: Excellent question! By the way, let’s not get bogged down in arguing about the authorship of Genesis. Let’s just go, for the moment, with “Moses wrote it.”] (5) Cliff then asserts that “Scripture was written so that people would believe it; thus, why would the author write an account so counter to everyday experience unless God told it to him?” [Comment: Another excellent question.] (6) He continues, “Moses might have been as baffled as we are about the existence of day and night before the appearance of the sun on day four. That’s why one could argue that it was truth revealed to him; otherwise, who would concoct something so contrary to what
humans experience on a daily basis? (Emphasis supplied)" (7) Then he quotes an Ellen White statement that the "mysteries of the Bible . . . are among the strongest evidence of its divine inspiration. If it contained no account of God but that which . . . could be grasped by finite minds, then the Bible would not . . . bear the unmistakable evidence of divinity." (8) Cliff's conclusion?: " . . . [T]he existence of these first three days, before the appearance of the sun on the fourth, can be interpreted as more evidence for that divinity, not less." That's it. End of column.

I must say that, in my opinion, this is not one of Cliff's better essays. I say this not because I disagree with his views on this topic (which, of course, I do), but because Cliff can usually come up with better arguments that are, on the surface at least, a little more reasonable. While there have been exceptions, his arguments may not be necessarily convincing, but they are at least reasonable. Because I have respect for Cliff's intellect (and vocabulary), I feel that it is my duty to some up with some excuse for this essay being below even Cliff's usual standard. Perhaps it had to be written very rapidly, on a short deadline, or perhaps on an airplane coming back from a taxing speaking engagement in some remote part of the world. Whatever excuse might be advanced, it is difficult to understand how Cliff, who is not a deficient thinker, would have put his name on this piece.

Can Cliff really believe that God inspired a vision of the acts of a literal creation sequence, expecting that it would be believed to be a literal description of creation because the narrative stated something that directly contradicted human experience? Such a conclusion is so absurd that I must conclude that perhaps Cliff did not have enough time to read carefully through what he had written.

However it came to be, this essay vividly illustrates the degree to which some contemporary Adventist believers who must interpret the Genesis creation narrative literally are forced to use such ad hoc arguments. Cliff and others of a literal turn of mind might wish to talk to someone who has considered carefully the ancient Hebrew culture and the religions and cultures that surrounded them in the ancient Near East. I understand that Cliff has an M.A. degree from Johns Hopkins in Hebrew, so he can read the original text. But I wonder if he has taken advantage of his knowledge to look carefully at the world within which the ancient Hebrew culture operated. This writer has talked to a number of those who have, and it is a very enlightening exercise.

For example, both the ancient Hebrews and we moderns know that a successive passage of the sun through some fixed point in the sky defines an ordinary day. To have the passage of several days before you have a sun to mark the passage of these days does strike us moderns as a little odd. But the ancient Hebrews apparently did not think it was a problem. Why? To answer that question, modern readers must understand something about the beliefs of the group of people to which the story was originally addressed and the purpose of the writing/editing of this particular creation narrative.

First, I am told that the vast majority of non-fundamentalist biblical scholars do not believe that the Moses of the Hebrew Exodus narratives had anything to do with writing the Genesis Creation narratives. Although some bits and pieces of oral tradition may have been eventually incorporated into the narratives, the final version that we read (in translations, of course) is composed of several different strands which were written down during or after the Babylonian Captivity in the 6th Century BCE and then edited together into the single document that now exists. The majority of Old Testament scholars note that one of the major themes that by this time in the development of Hebrew thought had come to be dominant in some quarters was that it was Yahweh, the only Elohim ("god"), the principal Hebrew God, who was now considered to be the one and only deity that really existed (monotheism) and thus was the only deity responsible for the creation of all that is. The sun, moon, and stars were not deities; they were ordinary created entities like everything else. The use of six "days" to structure the process of creation was a convenient literary device which might be related to how rituals in the Jerusalem temple were structured. There are a number of conjectures as to why "seven" was originally chosen, perhaps there was an astronomical reason.

In the absence of any modern or Greek philosophical idea of the difference between "symbol" and "reality," the ordinary Hebrew reader probably never really was concerned about the "light" on the first day, and "sun" on the fourth day "problem." This would be a problem only if you were trying to make very concrete, specific and literal the particular meaning of words. Because ancient Hebrew had such a relatively small vocabulary, the same word had to
be used to communicate a number of different concepts. An accurate translation into other languages very much depends on context.

I assume that none of what is noted in the previous two paragraphs will be of any interest to Cliff, except to reject the conclusions of mainline scholars. It appears that his model of how to interpret the Bible, including the Genesis creation narratives, does not depend on contemporary Biblical scholarship. Simply stated, he is an apologist for classical Adventism. Apparently, he sees this as his first and foremost responsibility. The value of his apologetics is that they always can be counted upon to support the theological status quo of traditional Adventism. He does an excellent job if one holds the same assumptions he does. For those who do not, he is a case study in the apologetics of a highly sectarian theological system.
Followers of Jesus & the Torah Including the Ten Commandments, Pt. 2

by Dan Appel, August 1, 2014

In my last post we looked at the contrast between a life lived focused and guided by the Torah, including the Ten Commandments, and the Royal Law, the law by which Jesus lived his life. We discovered that it is this law which governed the universe from its inception and is the way of life to which God desires to return all who love and serve him. But are those two commands, to love God with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength, and to love others as we do ourselves, sufficient for those who desire to serve and worship God? Therein lies the crux of the question. Just how powerful and effective do we really believe God is? Is the God who created and sustains the universe powerful enough to live in me the life he wants me to live? With my permission, can God heal my sinful heart and restore my desires and impulse to live in ways contrary to his will? Or must I make certain he gets it right? Surrendering, “letting go, and letting God,” focusing on my relationship with him and giving him permission to live in me just sounds way too simple! There has to be more! Can a life focused on getting to know and love God, treating others as he would, really be enough? What are Jesus’ words? “Go to the whole world,” he tells his followers, “and make committed followers, disciples.” That is our mandate - to connect people with Jesus and to encourage them to follow him. He expanded on this mission in a number of places: “This is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent” (John 17:3). “If you have the Son, you have life; if don’t have the Son, you don’t have life” (1 John 5:12). So, God must think that it is enough! Part of the reason we struggle with this issue is that, in our desire to defend the Sabbath, we have settled for a very narrow definition of sin found in 1 John 3:4 - “Everyone who sins is breaking God’s law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.” Then we define the “law” in this passage as the Torah, and especially the ten commandments, rather than the Royal Law, which Jesus taught his disciples (including John, who wrote 1 John) to keep. Further, there are a number of other definitions of sin which we often choose to ignore - i.e., knowing something is right and not doing it (James 4:17); all wrongdoing (1 John 5:17); anything, even good things, even absolute obedience to the Torah, that is not of faith (Romans 14:23); anything that damages, deforms or destroys relationships (living contrary to the Royal Law). Some might object that connecting people with Jesus so that they follow him, and encouraging them to surrender their life and will to him would lead to some kind of moral licentiousness and spiritual anarchy. Boiled down to its essence, that argument says that Jesus isn’t enough and that we need some kind of human effort to supplement what he does in our lives. Can we really trust Jesus to always lead us to do what is right in his Father’s eyes? Can anyone possibly imagine that Jesus is really incapable of shepherding us in the right path, or that he ever would? If fact, the comparison between the Pharisees, who punctiliously kept all of Torah, and what Jesus taught about a life focused on following him, reveals that it is only in focusing on Jesus that we have any hope of living the life God wants us to live. The reality is that Jesus demands far more of us than the Ten Commandments and the rest of Torah do. Not only does he want us not to kill - he calls us not to hate or to remain angry. He not only calls on us not to adulterate our marriage; he challenges us not to lust. Following him we not only do not covet and steal; we rejoice with others who have things we might wish we had. Rather than doing away with Torah, following Jesus supersedes and expands and extends it exponentially. William Glasser, the American psychotherapist and teacher, in his book Choice Theory makes the case that there is really only one thing we all can do: We can choose. Our life is made up of constant choice. We choose to get up or stay in bed; we choose to eat Cheerios or scrambled eggs, we choose to sit in one chair or the other, or to stand; we choose to love this person or that one, to watch this or that, etc.

We Adventists spring from the Arminian tradition in Christianity, which contends that God created us as creatures of
free choice. Arminianism says that we lost that choice when Adam and Eve sold us into slavery to Satan in the Garden of Eden, and that Jesus came to earth to restore to us the possibility of free choice. Anything which negatively impacts our choices or our ability to choose is sin.

Jesus and Paul and the rest of the New Testament writers made the case that the Royal life is the life of learning more and more about Jesus and choosing to live our lives centered on him, and that that is enough. We do not need, Paul contended in his pastoral letters, to live our lives based on a detailed set of rules and commands found in the Torah - including the Ten Commandments. We need to get to know Jesus, intimately, and he will lead us into a life that far transcends anything written on paper or stone. He, in fact, promises that he will write all that is necessary on our hearts so that such living comes naturally for us (Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 3:3).^1

There are really only three basic sins or areas of sin described in the Bible, and they are all centered on us and our desire either to be in charge or to take God's place in our own lives or the lives of others.

The pride of thinking we are God, or wanting to be a god in our own lives or the lives of others. All of those were included in Lucifer’s sin in heaven, as well as Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden. In Eden, the issue was not an apple or some other kind of fruit. The issue was wanting to be like God - to be gods (Genesis 3:5). This sin gives us a distorted view of reality, making it appear to us that we can handle everything (or many things or anything) without God.

One consequence of our sinful nature is that we all, at one time or another, in one way or another, want to, in a sense, “kill” God, dismiss him, impersonate him, pretend to know more than he does, or seduce others into disobeying his Royal Law so that we can take control of them as a type of god in their lives.

A second basic sin, which affects our heart, our emotions, is “self-love.” This is a passionate attachment to the appetites and senses of the body which blanks out zeal for spiritual things and replaces it with lust for carnal satisfaction. When self-love takes over, the mind (in the pre-frontal cortex) abandons its executive function and relinquishes the reins of government to the desire itself, leaving the soul with no government.

The self-love of making the gratification of our own materialistic and sensory desires more important than what God wants or what is best for others is evidenced in things such as greed, lust, concern for oneself and indifference to others. The Bible makes it very clear that we are born with the predisposition to protect self and please and satisfy self at the other’s expense, or at the expense of ourselves, and that only God’s living in the surrendered life and will can change that.

The third sin is described by a word that appears in older translations of the Bible, “vainglory,” which literally means “empty glory.” (It is what is commonly called “people-pleasing” in the helping professions.)

People-pleasing involves a strong desire to impress other people rather than obeying God, so that they’ll approve of us. It is anything that focuses attention on us and admiration for us. It means being willing to say or do whatever it takes to impress or get acceptance and approval from others.

People-pleasers can’t easily tolerate being shunned. The thought that something about us may not be acceptable to others can make us feel very insecure, so we adjust our desire to theirs - wanting the praise of others more than the praise of God (John 12:43).

People-pleasing puts us on a personal stage, behaving as if we were professional actors, performing to win applause from those whose approval we crave and doing anything we can to avoid having them walk out. We are constantly checking on the responses we are getting from the audience.

(Ask a person who is captivated by people-pleasing, “How are you today?” and his/her first inner impulse is to say, “I
don’t know; what do you think? Or “I don’t know; what have you heard?”)

When we are captivated by people-pleasing, we become shut off from obeying and serving God. Instead of being shaped by God’s will, our impulses and desires become dictated by the desires of other people as we attempt to please them, impress them, attract their acceptance and praise and avoid losing their approval by displeasing them.

Every other type of “sin” described in the Bible is an extension of and grows out of one or all of these. They are the real sin that leads to actions or attitudes that are contrary to the Royal Law. By focusing just on the smaller picture of Torah, we often miss the larger picture of what sin really is and where the battle really lies.

Only when we allow Jesus to lead us beyond the basic kindergarten concepts of sin do we really begin to discover and experience the truth and victory of the life of a follower of Jesus! Only as we allow God to point out those areas of our life where we attempt to be a god in our own life and the lives of others, where we live our lives focused on satisfying the cravings of our carnal nature, and where we find the opinion of anyone more important than God, and then confess and repent of them and allow God to empower us to grow beyond them that we will become everything God dreams for us to be.

This understanding is what made the 1888 General Conference such a watershed, or tipping-point in Adventist history. This understanding is also what caused the leadership of the Adventist Church at the time, when Ellen White supported A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner in their presentation of this view, to banish Ellen White to Australia in the hope that by isolating her they could keep it from spreading.

But, this is the place where God has desired to lead us since Paul wrote the gospel in his landmark epistles. This understanding became the passion of Ellen White’s life and ministry after she really discovered in a new and delicious way the righteousness of Jesus, and proclaimed it to be the very essence of the Three Angels’ Messages. It is what God has been waiting and waiting and waiting for us to accept and live so that we can finish the work he gave us to do on this earth. It is also the place of spiritual maturity where people in the 5th and 6th stages of spiritual growth truly become what God intends for them to be!

1Enoch kept the Lord ever before him, and the inspired Word says that he “walked with God.” He made Christ his constant companion. He was in the world, and performed his duties to the world; but he was ever under the influence of Jesus. He reflected Christ’s character, exhibiting the same qualities in goodness, mercy, tender compassion, sympathy, forbearance, meekness, humility and love. His association with Christ day by day transformed him into the image of him with whom he was so intimately connected. Day by day he was growing away from his own way into Christ’s way, the heavenly, the divine, in his thoughts and feelings. He was constantly inquiring, “Is this the way of the Lord?” His was a constant growth, and he had fellowship with the Father and the Son. This is genuine sanctification.

The converting power of God must be upon our hearts. We must study the life of Christ, and imitate the divine Pattern. We must dwell upon the perfection of his character, and be changed into his image. ” E.G. White, Review and Herald, December 5, 1912

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At first I tried to be patient.  
It couldn't last.  
It wasn't meant to be.  
I would surely get out soon.

Then I started to shout.  
I shouted myself hoarse.  
When no one came...no one at all...  
I started to believe I was really trapped.  
Perhaps I was invisible.  
Perhaps no one cared at all.

Perhaps it was meant to be.

Finally, I started to weep.  
I wept for my lost childhood  
and for the strength that was rapidly draining from me.  
I wept for heat and discomfort and hunger.  
And the thirst.  
Oh, the thirst!

I wept for my brothers.  
I wept for my father.  
I wept for my lost mother.

I wept until I was a little baby.

I knew I would die here.

When I was rescued after all,  
I nearly choked with excitement and relief.

But
I have no idea where I'm headed now
The Musical, Translating Chaplain

http://www.atoday.org/article/2629/features/articles/the-musical-translating-chaplain

by Debonnaire Kovacs
submitted August 6, 2014

Imagine a hospital chaplain who has a pastoral assistance degree from a college in Spain, completed a theology degree at Walla Walla University, and then got a masters’ at Andrews. This would clearly be a well-qualified chaplain. Naturally, what matters even more than education in such a setting, so the fact that this chaplain is brimming with those qualities enriches the experience for all.

Now imagine that this chaplain is also a musician, having studied music along with theology at Walla Walla, and uses a guitar and some songs (and love and compassion) to work with patients whose illnesses are in the behavioral health arena. The chaplain’s qualifications have just gone up several notches.

Add to this the fact that our chaplain speaks English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French. Imagine the richness such a multi-gifted person would bring to a ministry team, particularly in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment like Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital, located in a suburb of Chicago. The hospital’s vice president of ministries and mission, John Rapp, says, “Her theological background is impressive, but Grys has so many talents that go beyond that…She is the perfect addition to our team!”

Christina Matos Grys might never have imagined such a future for herself. Born in Portugal and raised in Angola, Africa, she was in high school in Portugal when she began questioning her future. Her career testing suggested that she might like to be a civil engineer. Seventeen-year-old Christina said, not so much.

It’s strange, the medium God used to turn her in a new direction. She saw an environmental documentary that impressed her with the challenges the planet faces. If she had truly been meant for engineering, she might have turned her mind to something like sustainable energy. Matos’ reaction, however, was to immediately pray to God that what she did with her life would matter for eternity. “I wanted to help tell people about Jesus,” she says.

Soon after, she learned of the college in Spain where she could study theology, and we’ve seen the short form of the directions in which the next few years led her. When she arrived at Andrews, seeking her masters’ degree, she also found a new blessing. She met young John Grys, who was also studying for pastoral ministry, and they married.

In the years since then, their ministry has led them in still more far-flung directions: Miami, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; Chattanooga and Knoxville, Tennessee; Napa, California. In “apple and cherry country,” Wenatchee, Washington, John was assistant pastor and academy Bible teacher, while Christina was Spanish teacher, chaplain, and also Bible teacher. They even spent a year pastoring in Geneva, Switzerland.
In the summer of 2011, John completed his Doctor of Ministry in Leadership at Andrews, and launched a new journal, *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*. He specializes in organizational and human culture and the question of transformational leadership. He also studies and writes about church history (including Adventist), organizational culture, leadership, issues of human development, the formation of the canon, and the contextualization of the gospel.

Now, as of January, 2014, they have arrived in Chicago, where John grew up. While his wife exercises her skills and joys in hospital chaplaincy, he pastors two suburban churches. This is the kind of broad, wide-ranging, God-centered ministry that will help build up God’s work in a diverse world, and *Adventist Today* salutes the Grys family and wishes them God’s blessing in their work for him and for his people.
To One Dying Young

http://www.atoday.org/article/2632/poetry-the-arts/poetry-prose/to-one-dying-young

By S M Chen
Submitted August 6, 2014

The author submitted the following background along with the poem.

Over 5 decades ago, a teenage cousin from the Philippines came to live with our family in MA and attend school in the U.S. He worked part-time in the school laundry, which had commercial size machines, and had a horrible, fatal accident. His family (which, like ours, had 6 children), never fully recovered.

Fast forward to recent times.
One of my sisters and family, who live in WA state, accepted a Korean exchange student, a boy of 15.
Unfortunately, he drowned in a nearby lake.
Fortunately, he was not in their care (he had left to live with another family) at the time, but his death was still tragic and untimely.

I decided to write something, linking the two boys.
Their similarity was that they were both Asian, both of similar age, both far away from home.

The boy who died in the laundry accident was a strong swimmer and probably wouldn't have drowned.
The Korean boy might not have opened the door of a spinning laundry machine when he had been instructed not to.

To One Dying Young

You did not know; could not have known
Another boy, who came alone
Like you, from island in the sea
To be the most that he could be,
Attend school in a distant land;
And at many things try his hand.

Honey and milk were thought to flow,
In this fine place you both would go.
But little did he know that he
Would have to meet his destiny.
For death, so devious and sly,
On him had cast an evil eye.
I tell this with a little chill;
The incident stays with me still.

When he opened the laundry machine
He was sucked in, this Asian teen.
There was no one to succor him.
Survival hopes were none to slim.

*

When friends and you on that fateful day
(Was it near the dock or on the bay?)
Decided to frolic and have fun
Enjoying the water and the sun,
They had no idea it would end
With heavy heart in every friend.

Nature is strong, stronger than we.
You were drawn down and couldn’t get free.
You cried for help, hoping it’d come,
But friends away from you had swum.
Then they returned and looked for you
But you had disappeared from view.

Although the lives of all will end.
You died too young, my gentle friend.

*

If you were ready, I don’t know.
I dearly hope that it was so.

At the last, in the Judgment Day,
May God have mercy - this I pray.
It Won’t Be Long

http://www.atoday.org/article/2631/poetry-the-arts/poetry-prose/it-won-t-be-long

By Corienne Montgomery Hay
Submitted August 6, 2014

Steve Bradford was a student at Mount Vernon Academy, in Ohio, in the early 1970s. He was deeply religious (and sometimes misunderstood by other students for it) and it wasn’t uncommon for him to be speaking of spiritual things. One night, in the boys’ dorm, he was talking about the imminence of Christ’s coming to some other boys. Then he got on his bike to go home—very nearby—and was hit by a car and killed instantly. The impact on the academy students may be imagined. Corienne Montgomery Hay, mother of another student, wrote this poem for Steve’s family.

“It won’t be long,” Steve told his friend,
“Christ’s coming soon will be.
“We must be strong; must watch and pray.
“He’ll come for you and me.”
And then he bid his friend goodnight.
Into the dark he went.
It wasn’t long—for him, right then
his time on earth was spent.

They’ll miss him now, his friends at school,
his greetings and his face;
And sometimes turn and half expect
to see him in his place.
They’ll miss him when they catch a glimpse
of red against the sky,
Remembering the many times
Steve raised the flag on high.

The bells he tolled so oft before,
like funeral bells now sound,
Reminding all who hear their peals
that he’s no more around.
The speakers, too, the mikes and things
in use from day to day,
Will bring him back to many minds,
although he’s gone away.

His family, Lord, how hard for them—
his sisters, mom, and dad—
How doubly hard the loss for them,
the only boy they had.
Their own, now gone, no more to be
a joy about the home.
No more his voice, his hands, his face,
his presence in the room.

Ah, God, please brace his father now,
and help his mother, too.
So many things about the house—
a book, a rock, a shoe—
Will stab their hearts with sudden pain,
reminding them he’s gone.
Life will not be the same for them,
and yet life must go on.

How many times in days to come
will one girl or the other
Call out his name, and then recall.
 she cannot reach her brother.
Oh, help us all get through this time,
his family and his friends;
For Thy strength, Lord, does but begin
where human vigor ends.

So pour on us like soothing balm
across the grief and pain
The words he spoke: “It won’t be long.”
 We can see Steve again.
It won’t be long—oh, no, not long
Christ’s coming is so near.
We must be strong; must watch and pray.
 It won’t be long—take cheer.

October 2, 1971