**Texas Conference Sued for Sexual Assault of 8th-Grade Girl:** Tragedy has struck an Adventist school in Texas, as a teacher is sentenced for sexual abuse and the Conference itself is sued for damages....

**Loma Linda University Alumni Fighting Ebola Outbreak in Africa:** The African Ebola epidemic is being fought on the front lines by persistent LLU graduates who are determined to keep treating patients, despite dangers of contagion....

**Thousands of Adventist Youth Gather in Oshkosh for Largest International Pathfinder Camporee:** The largest-ever Adventist youth camporee in North America is rolling toward its weekend climax, with youth and leaders from many countries, speaking many languages, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin....

**Adventist Leader Speaks Out Against Religious Violence in Iraq:** Ted Wilson has challenged the targeted violence against Christians in Iraq and Syria...

**Family Drama (Devotional):** The biblical Benjamin weighs in (with help from Debonnaire Kovacs' facile pen) with his personal view of the shocking events surrounding the disappearance of his brother Joseph, in "Family Drama."...

**Students Showcase Scientific Research at 14th Annual Health Disparities Research Symposium at Loma Linda University Health (Feature):** An amazing symposium at Loma Linda University recently showcased young people's scientific research on health disparities; in this feature a 16-year-old scientist looks at the effects of sugars on the metabolism of premature babies....

**Spencerville Pathfinders Stick Drama, "Arise, My Love" (News & Notes):** Through the worshipful use of drama and dance, Spencerville, Maryland, Pathfinders recently performed a compelling "stick drama" to the song, "Arise, My Love."...
Suffer the Little Children
(Poetry & The Arts): S M Chen writes some difficult free verse that helps us all understand the plight of suffering children...
Texas Conference Sued for Sexual Assault of 8th Grade Girl

By AT News Team, August 14, 2014

A teacher at Burton Adventist Academy in a suburb of Dallas, Texas, pled guilty in June to continued sexual abuse of a child under age 14 and was sentenced to 30 years in prison without parole. Last week the family of the girl who was 13 at the time of the abuse filed a lawsuit against the Texas Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination for failure to protect the child, reports the local daily paper, the Star-Telegram.

Carlos E. Rodriguez pled guilty in Tarrant County court and was sentenced in June. He had been employed as a teacher and basketball coach at the school operated by the conference. The family still lives in the area and has not been identified in order to protect the privacy of the child.

"This has been pretty traumatic and she has been in counseling and will continue to be in counseling," attorney Hal Browne was quoted by the newspaper and identified as representing the family. "She has the strong support of her family." Administrators at Burton Adventist Academy and the Texas Conference have declined to comment.

Burton Adventist Academy offers preschool through secondary education. A pastor at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church contacted authorities about the case, said Marissa Gonzales, a spokeswoman for Child Protective Services. At least one other faculty member knew that Gonzales had been taking the girl out of regular classes and "spending an inordinate amount of time" with her, according to court filings quoted by the newspaper.

The child was in Grade 8 and "repeatedly raped" the court filing states. Dale Smith, Tarrant County prosecutor has told the news media that the child's family agreed to the plea deal of 30 years in prison with no opportunity for parole. Under Texas law it could have been a life sentence.

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Loma Linda University Alumni Fighting Ebola Outbreak in Africa

By AT News Team, August 12, 2014

Graduates of the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University (LLU) are on the front lines of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, according to a news release from LLU. Dr. Gillian Seton, a 2008 graduate, has served since February at Cooper Adventist Hospital in Liberia. Dr. James Appel, a 2000 graduate, is arriving this week in Liberia to work with Seton. He has spent the last decade as a family medicine physician in Chad.

The Adventist denomination in collaboration with Adventist Health International, has decided to keep Cooper Adventist Hospital open in spite of the Ebola outbreak. The 45-bed hospital is located in the heart of Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, where nearly a third of the country’s four million people live.

Many hospitals in Liberia and neighboring countries have shut down or are refusing to take new patients, but the staff at Cooper made a decision to remain open for treatment of non-Ebola related illnesses. They are continuing to screen patients prior to entering the hospital grounds in order to remain free of the Ebola virus, so that they will be a source of help to their patients.

The photo with this story shows Dr. Gillian Seton (center) flanked by Dr. Roger Hadley (left), dean of LLU School of Medicine, and Dr. Carlos Garberoglio, professor and chair of surgery. Seton said she believes the need for medical treatment outweighs the dangers involved in staying. “The most dangerous place to be right now is in a hospital, but what are you to do when you have a patient with an OB emergency? Appendicitis? Severe Malaria with almost un-survivable anemia?” She said the staff decided not to close the hospital because they’ve seen how desperate people are to get help after they have been turned away from the other hospitals that have closed.

Dr. Richard H. Hart, president of both LLU and Adventist Health International, said the agency is continuing to support the operation of Cooper Hospital by subsidizing costs and providing supplies. “I am proud of our staff at Cooper, particularly Gillian and James, who have chosen duty over safety and have chosen to continue providing medical care,” Hart said. He said a special infectious disease unit has now been established at another hospital to care for suspected Ebola patients, providing a critical referral option for Cooper Hospital.

Another Adventist hospital, Waterloo Adventist Hospital in Sierra Leone, is also facing the Ebola crisis. Both Cooper and Waterloo are in need of outside help to pay for additional supplies, equipment, and medical staff. Adventist
Health International is raising funds, seeking donated supplies and equipment and volunteer professionals for Waterloo Hospital as well as Cooper Hospital.

Loma Linda University is located in southern California and includes eight professional schools and six hospitals with more than 800 faculty physicians. Established in 1905, it is sponsored by the Adventist denomination and widely recognized as a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers over 100 academic programs and provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year.

Adventist Health International is a multinational nonprofit corporation with headquarters in Loma Linda. It was established to provide coordination, consultation, management and technical assistance to hospitals and health services operated by Adventists, primarily in developing countries. It is not a funding agency and depends on various organizations, foundations, governments and individuals to provide funding.

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Nearly 47,000 Seventh-day Adventist young people, sponsors and family members are gathering in Oshkosh, WI, for the seventh International Pathfinder Camporee, August 11-16, 2014. More than 44,400 members of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (NAD) will be joined by 2,580 international guests from 43 countries—from Anguilla to Zimbabwe. Because the NAD has a significant international membership, event planners have announced that more than 100 countries will be represented at the Camporee.

Themed “Forever Faithful,” the four-day Camporee, held every five years, is sponsored by the NAD and its Center for Youth Evangelism, located in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Pathfinders is a ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, focusing on youth from ages 10 to 15. The General Conference of the Adventist Church (GC) reports there are nearly 2 million Pathfinder members world-wide. Pastor James Black, director of NAD youth ministries, shared the Pathfinder's purpose with Adventist Today: “First of all it's about building young people's relationship with God, making certain they have that personal relationship. The second thing is training young people for service. People look at camping out as just a fun activity, but all the honors and activities are training life skills, which strengthens possibilities for missions. Thirdly, Pathfinders is about community. You have the whole club experience like a family. Nowadays with the challenges of family, many Pathfinders find a place there.”

[Photo: The Oshkosh economy welcomes the Pathfinders. Credit: Ama Rogers, sponsor of the Cedar Chips in Cedar Lake, MI.]

Black also shared his focus for the Camporee. "We really want people to know that this is more than just the largest camporee in the world. If we focus on that we miss the whole point. I look at this as the largest evangelistic
campaign in the world." To that end, Pastor Ron Whitehead, who is the director for the Center for Youth Evangelism and executive director for the Camporee, has included a significant amount of outreach in the week's schedule. Pastor Bill Wood, off site director for the Camporee and the NAD camp ministries coordinator, has planned three categories of outreach for the Pathfinders—community service (5,000-6,000 participants), compassion ministries (1,800 participants) and literature distribution (800 participants).

Wood clarifies the differences between each type of outreach. Community service is task-oriented, with projects such as "cleaning up lake shores, picking up trash, working in parks and in preserves, and painting fire hydrants." "Compassion is more of a personal touch," Wood explains. "I thought it was important to do more that touches the lives of people in town, one-on-one—working in soup kitchens and food banks, going into a few nursing homes, and going into libraries and reading to the kids in libraries."

The literature distribution work, called Project ROAR (Reach Out And Roar), involves passing out Real magazine, which is similar to Guide but geared to the public. "We'll have Pathfinders going door-to-door, passing out 10,000 copies in the communities surrounding the campgrounds. We suggest that if they're comfortable that they also pray with the people," explains Wood.

Additionally, Adventist Community Services (ACS) will sponsor an Emergency Supply Bucket drive on the EAA Campgrounds. ACS organizers have a goal of filling 3,000 5-gallon buckets with cleaning supplies to be used by those affected by natural disasters. Once filled, the containers will be shipped to California, Dallas, and Pennsylvania, to be used as part of ACS's emergency response.

Further activities—both on the campgrounds and in the surrounding area—include trading pins, visiting vendor and exhibit booths, earning honors, swimming, canoeing, drum corp exhibitions, golf and soccer. Pat Spangler, communication team member and editorial manager at Andrews University, told Adventist Today that two full-sized airplane hangars are devoted to honors, allowing the youth to explore hundreds of different skill areas.

Night-time programming will focus on the biblical story of Daniel. The Camporee website reports there will be a 30 to 40-minute dramatic production "each evening covering the life span of Daniel that will be tied into the messages presented by Pastor Sam Leonor. The actual cast has twenty main characters...with an additional twenty supporting roles." Spangler believes "the drama is one of the high points for a lot of the Pathfinders because it's extremely well done. They have the world's largest portable stage with impressive props, other staging aspects, and lighting."

Because the meetings are in English, interpretation is important for many international clubs. "Evening meetings are translated officially into French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian," Glynis Bradfield explained to Adventist Today. Bradfield, the director of Student Services in the Andrews University School of Distance Education and the Camporee's international guest coordinator, also said that other small groups—such as attendees from Russia, Romania or Korea—sit together with their own interpreter. Furthermore, guest clubs from other world divisions have the option of partnering with a host club from within the NAD. This arrangement is intended to build relationships across cultures and to help clubs from abroad overcome linguistic and cultural challenges.
Although event planners attempt to keep costs low ($195 per person early bird rate), transportation costs and entrance fees remain a significant challenge for many clubs. Some clubs sold pizzas, washed cars, hosted yard sales/flea markets to raise money to attend the event. Pastor Denis and LeAnn Austin, who sponsor the Steel City Pathfinders at the Pittsburgh SDA Church told Adventist Today that “each year between camporees, we do one fundraiser specifically for the camporee, a bike-a-thon, for which the kids get sponsors.” This is the Austin's third international camporee, and Denis explained why the effort is important to him: “We do it to show our kids that they are not alone. We do not have a church school, so Pathfinders is what we do, along with great Sabbath School classes, to connect our kids to each other and God.”

Not only does it take years for the clubs to raise funds, it also takes a considerable amount of time to plan. Event coordinators report it takes approximately four years to plan and organize this Camporee. “We really care and value our young people,” Whitehead shared. “I've never been so physically exhausted but I've never been happier to be this tired.”

Adventist Today talked with a young person who appreciates the efforts of leaders like the Austins and Whitehead. Autumn Meis, now a student at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, attended the 2009 Camporee as a member of the Holly Heron Pathfinder Club in Holly, Michigan. Meis shared her experience at Oshkosh with Adventist Today via Facebook: “I loved just being around so many Christian youth!! Being able to meet new people from so many different areas of the world!! It was AMAZING!!! I also LOVED the plays at night! They really make the stories come alive and were tons of fun!! Trading pins with random people was super fun too!” When asked if Meis would encourage others to attend, she responded with great enthusiasm despite memories of problems with shower water pressure and drainage. “YES,” she declared. “Oshkosh is amazing! It's inspiring! It's fun! It's something you will never forget! You can see so many people there! Earn honors! Make friends! It's something every Adventist youth should go to at least once! I'll never forget the memories I made there!”

The Forever Faithful Camporee will conclude Saturday August 16 with a parade down Main Street featuring 1,500 pathfinders. The parade, open to the community, will finish at Leach Amphitheater with a rally featuring guest speaker, Cedric Ceballos, a NBA all-star who played with the Los Angeles Lakers and Phoenix Suns.

Those who cannot attend the Camporee can still follow the event on their computers, televisions and telephones. iPhone users may download the Camporee app, which features news and activities of the gathering.[1] Additionally, the Hope Channel will provide coverage through online streaming and standard broadcasts.[2]

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Adventist Leader Speaks Out Against Religious Violence in Iraq

By AT News Team, August 8, 2014

The top leader of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination released a statement late Friday, August 8, condemning the violence against Christians and other minority religions in areas where Muslim extremists have recently taken control. Pastor Ted Wilson, president of the denomination's General Conference, expressed "great sadness and deep concern [about] the tragic situation where tens of thousands ... have been subjected to persecution, coercion, killings, intimidation and lack of religious liberty in certain areas of Iraq and Syria."

Wilson "urgently" called church members around the world to "pray for the victims of this ... religious intolerance," particularly "religious minorities." He stated that "it is important that the international community act unitedly to stop the persecution of ... believers ... who have lived in relative peace with their Muslim neighbors in the Middle East for hundreds of years." He also pledged that the Adventist denomination "will do its best to assist victims of this new tragedy" and "pray for a positive resolution to this appalling situation."

The denomination's East Mediterranean Field includes Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Throughout this large area with very different political and religious conditions in the different nations, there are only ten Adventist churches with fewer than 700 members among a population of 67 million. The main office of the organization is in Metn, Lebanon. There are also offices in Baghdad, Iraq, and Amman, Jordan.

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Family Drama

by Debbonnaire Kovacs
Submitted August 13, 2014

I was just a kid when it happened, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was always pretty much Joseph and me against the others, and I have to admit, Joseph wasn't blameless. Did he have to be so cocky about his favored status, and all his dreams? Even Father was upset by the one about the sun, moon, and stars bowing to Joseph. Disrespectful though it might be to say it, Father, too, could have made a greater effort to love all of his children. Or perhaps, if we're laying blame, it should be at Uncle Laban's door, for pushing Leah off on father when it was my mother Rachel he wanted. (Yes, we all know the story. We've heard it often enough. It doesn't exactly lead to family unity. And then there are the slave wives! But let's not go there...)

And then Mother didn't have any children for years and years, so that when Joseph finally came, you'd have thought he was the first and best son ever born. I am also a son of the favored wife, but she died bearing me. I'm not sure Father ever quite forgave me.

Anyway, the great tragedy of our lives happened when Joseph was seventeen and, as I said, I was just a kid. The story is, Father sent him to check on the older ones, who had taken the flocks to find pasture, and somehow he was killed by a wild animal. They brought home that coat Joseph was so proud of, all torn and bloody. To my dying day I'll remember the fierce, tearing grief of my father.

But I've always wondered if we knew the whole story. My brothers' attitudes seemed so changed after that. Of course, it could be accounted for by their guilt at how they treated him while he lived, added to greater confirmation than ever that the rest of us count for little with father, compared to Joseph. But they've seemed...I don't know...haunted, somehow. They've never been the same. Now, I'm the favored one, but it feels sort of by default. Second best. I've always been second best.

It never would have occurred to me to even imagine what really happened. I'm still stunned.

We had a famine, and Father sent the rest to Egypt because we heard they had grain. It's a long story—they went and came back several times, always with odd stories of the man Pharaoh has running the show down there. Last time they came back without Simeon. They said the lord wouldn't see them again unless they brought me with them. Father refused point blank, but the famine continued and continued. He was pretty much prostrate when he finally gave in. Both Reuben and Judah swore to care for me. You'd think I was still a child, though I now have ten sons of my own. Father still calls me "the lad," and I suppose he always will.

Anyway, we went. And they were right—that guy was weird. First of all, I found out what it really means to be the favored one. Five times as much of everything! I couldn't figure out why the lord was giving us all this royal treatment to begin with, and especially why he seemed to have taken a fancy to me. He finally let us go, but then serious disaster struck. Egyptian soldiers came after us, shouting that the lord's precious silver cup had been stolen—and they found it in my sack! I felt my heart stop. I still don't have any idea how it got in there.
I was dumfounded at the way Judah defended me. In the end, we all went back, and that was when we learned—I can hardly say this—the lord of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself, in charge of the entire famine management program...is my brother!!

We all just stood there with our mouths hanging open. I don’t know who was more horrified, my brothers, at realizing that he was alive and had them totally in his power, or me, because for the first time I knew for certain that the story we were told was never the true one. I’ve learned since that selling him into slavery (to our own Ishmaelite relatives, no less!) was the least of their crimes. They were planning to murder him!

Well, I can still hardly think straight. Joseph cried all over me, and I over him. We’re on our way back home to get Father and the entire clan, and bring them here to live in comfort and luxury. The slow rhythms of the road are beginning to settle my mind. And the one thing that shines out above all else is what the lord—I mean, Joseph...Lord Joseph? Anyway, what he said. I can’t forget it.

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph has grown up indeed. What made him, the spoiled brat of the family, become like that? And whoever would have thought that I, for the first time since I was about five, would want to “grow up to be just like Joseph”?

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LOMA LINDA, CA – Aug. 4, 2014 – About 80 students from diverse backgrounds from high schools and universities in the Inland Empire and nationwide capped off their summer by presenting posters on diverse topics as human gene expression to treatment for spinal cord injury at a symposium on Wednesday (Aug. 6) at Loma Linda University Health.

The students’ work was showcased at the 14th annual Health Disparities Research Symposium, presented by Loma Linda University School of Medicine Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine. More than 300 researchers, students, community stakeholders, and university administrators attended the symposium.

The scientific posters represent the completion of the students’ work as participants in the center’s Disparities Research Program, which pairs participating high school, undergraduate, post-graduate, and medical students with researchers and scientists at Loma Linda University Health to conduct scientific research.

The symposium featured as keynote speaker Johns Hopkins University professor Thomas A. LaVeist, PhD, a globally recognized expert in health disparities, who also spoke about the problems and prospects faced by researchers studying health inequalities.

“Passion can come at any age,” said Yamiko “Jessica” Chanza, 16, an incoming junior at Redlands High School, who wants to become a pediatric surgeon someday.
Chanza, whose family came from Malawi, Africa, said she had no idea what to expect when she joined the summer program, but knew that she wanted to make a difference in people’s health in some way.

“This experience really opened my eyes about the health disparities that exist in society, because even infants experience them,” said Chanza, who participated in a project looking at the effect of sugars on the metabolism of premature babies.

The Loma Linda University Health Disparities Research Summer Program, now in its 14th year, targets promising students from disadvantaged communities by Loma Linda University School of Medicine Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine to encourage them to consider careers in medicine and biomedical research and increase diversity in the medical research field. The Loma Linda University School of Medicine Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine has been designated by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a Center of Excellence on Health Disparities and Minority Health.

Research trainees are paired with academic mentors and engage in biomedical research conducted in various science, health and clinical departments at Loma Linda University Health and the Jerry L. Pettis VA Medical Center.

“What has been accomplished here today is that the students are becoming active participants in the dialogue concerning health disparities,” said Marino De Leon, PhD, director of Loma Linda University School of Medicine Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine.

He said it’s important for young researchers to be aware of health disparities – often drawn along racial and socio-economic lines -- that exist among members of society, in order to come up with research and treatment models that are meaningful to people.

“Disease impact people in their own context, and these students can become an agent of change for their own communities,” he said.

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Spencerville Pathfinders Stick Drama, "Arise, My Love"

By Debbonnaire Kovacs
Submitted August 13, 2014

I am strongly of the opinion that God has made it very clear throughout the Bible that we are to worship Him with our whole selves, including our whole bodies. Worship in the Old Testament was a dramatic, whole body experience which did not include sermons at all. By New Testament times, homilies and Bible study discussions had been added to the mix, but it is only in modern times that we seem to think worship is a mental activity. Hence my request for all forms of art for this space, including drama and dance.

If you are one of those who have wondered what worshipful Christian dance might look like, the answers are varied. Here is one option. I will never forget the first time I saw what is often called “Stick Drama.” It was at an Ohio camp meeting some years ago, and brought tears to my eyes. I don’t remember the song, but here is an example of the same thing. This was uploaded in 2009 by the Spencerville Polar Bears Pathfinder Club’s TLTs at the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Spencerville, MD.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeDNDR5RLDE

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Suffer the Little Children

by S M Chen
Submitted August 13, 2014

“Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones... it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”
- Mark 9:42

Yesterday I read
of a clever man
knew what to do
when his child of four
spanked for something
bad she’d done
would not cry.
He held her down
and beat her
but she would not cry
so he beat her more
but still she wouldn’t cry.
So he beat her
till he was tired.
When he stopped
to rest, she said,
“I’m sorry, Daddy”
then breathed her last
without a tear.

Today I read
of a clever woman
left two kids in the back
of a car, windows shut
to keep them safe
as she shopped.
Smart lady, she
knew how to save
a sitter’s cost.
Some time later
- who knows how long - someone found the kids still in the car, only very very still.

Tomorrow I'll read of a childcare center where clever men and clever women by treats and threats abuse the children time and again and what they inflict lingers and festers and one in their care becomes yesterday’s dad. And today’s mother may be another.

And when I read wrath and sorrow blur the print but, like yesterday’s child, I do not weep.

*

Too much reading, like a little learning, can be a dangerous thing.

**Important note about the photo:** You may have seen this photo with different tragic stories. These are not true. Bahareh Bisheh, a photographer whose work you can see at https://www.flickr.com/photos/khatt-khatti/, was just being creative. Bisheh gives permission to use the photos with credit. We felt that the creativity was beautiful, and would suit this poem admirably. Thank you, Bahareh Bisheh!