NEWS

Pope Asks Forgiveness of Waldensian Church
The Waldensian believers have played a key role in the Adventist understanding of prophecy and church history. Does this change anything?  Click here to read the story.

Influential Educator Passed Away at 86: Dr. Patricia Habada
She oversaw the production of textbooks for Adventist schools and the new Sabbath School curriculum for children, as well as educated adults about the history and issues related to the role of women in pastoral ministry.  Click here to read the story.

A Union Conference Apologizes for Church Failures on Race
Pastor Don Livesay, president of the Lake Union Conference in the United States, speaks honestly to black church leaders and apologizes for the denomination’s past failures.  Click here.

Brief Summary of Several More News Items Here.
This coming week, Adventist Today begins extensive coverage of the General Conference Session which convenes Thursday in San Antonio, Texas. We will have seven reporters at the meeting, including our editor, Dr. J. David Newman, and
managing editor, Jeff Boyd; contributing editor, Dr. Jim Walters; and four other journalists. Our team includes young adults and veteran writers, women and men. We will begin a series of background articles this weekend explaining the items on the agenda and the organizational processes involved in the top decision-making body in the Adventist denomination. We will be sending daily Updates by Email and you can get immediate bulletins as news breaks via our Facebook page or Twitter feed: @AdventistToday

**OPINION**

What is God saying to you about the upcoming GC Session? Columnist Jack Hoehn hears an angel speaking to the Adventist community as the delegates gather in San Antonio for an historic event. Read his meditation.

**FEATURE & THE ARTS**

**A Local Church Starts a Radio Station**
What does it take to make that happen? What is the potential impact on the local community? Is something a medium-size congregation can actually do? Answers to your questions.
**Both Creative Writing and Visual Art**
S. M. Chen has outdone himself with a letter from an extraterrestrial and an exquisite photo from astronomy. See it here.
**Del's Chapter 6:** A new marriage, for different reasons. Here.
**Devotional:** "Some Apocryphal Insights" here.
Pope Asks Forgiveness of Waldensian Church during Historic Visit in Turin

By AT News Team, June 23, 2015: Pope Francis asked forgiveness from the Waldensian Evangelical Church yesterday in a meeting with representatives of the Protestant group in Turin, Italy. It was “the first time a Pope had visited a Waldensian house of worship,” reported Vatican Radio.

The head of the Roman Catholic Church specifically mentioned “violence and disputes committed in the name of the faith itself.” This history “can only grieve us,” the Pope stated, and cause us “to recognize that we are all sinners. … He then asked for forgiveness for ‘the non-Christian attitudes and behavior’ of the Catholic Church against Waldensians,” according to Vatican Radio.

During Medieval times the Catholic Church persecuted the Waldensians because they refused to recognize the spiritual authority of the popes and insisted that the Bible teaches a number of different doctrines than those taught by the Catholic Church. It is one of the only non-Catholic Christian communities native to Italy.

Chapter 4 in The Great Controversy, an important book by Ellen G. White, one of the cofounders of the Adventist movement, describes the history of “The Waldenses” or “Vaudois churches” of what is today northern Italy and adjacent parts of Switzerland and France. “In their purity and simplicity,” White wrote, they “resembled the church of apostolic times. Rejecting the supremacy of the pope and prelate, they held the Bible as the only supreme, infallible authority.” The foundational doctrine of the Adventist denomination today is “sola scriptura,” to use the traditional Latin phrase for the Protestant theological principle of “the Bible alone.”

The Waldensian denomination today has about 30,000 adherents in Italy with its headquarters in Turin where Pope Francis met with the group of leaders. Relations between the Waldensians and Catholics is currently one based on “mutual respect and fraternal charity,” he said. The two faiths provide for joint celebration of mixed marriages among their members and collaborated in recent years in a translation of the Bible that both accept. They work together in humanitarian service projects.

The visit and the Pope’s apology could be reason “to add an element to our presenting church history in regards to the Waldensian church and the role of the Roman Catholic Church,” Pastor Herbert Bodenmann, director of the Adventist Press Service in Basel, Switzerland, told Adventist Today. “In the future we should at least mention this request of the Pope in 2015 for forgiveness for the persecution in the middle ages.” He pointed out that the Waldensian Church has accepted the Pope’s apology.
By AT News Team, June 24, 2015:  The educator who oversaw the production of many of the textbooks used in Adventist schools in North America and coordinated the development of the current children’s Sabbath School curriculum for the denomination died last week (June 18). Dr. Patricia A. B. Habada was 86.

Habada was a teacher and principal in Adventist elementary schools, and then earned a Ph.D. in elementary education, curriculum and supervision at the University of Pittsburgh. She was one of the first women in the later part of the 20th century to become a conference superintendent of education, serving in the denomination’s Pennsylvania Conference.

She directed the development of textbooks published for Adventist elementary schools in North America, negotiating with major textbook suppliers and eventually arranging for a number of books to be published by Adventist publishing houses. She was the author or primary editor of at least 27 books still in print and being used by schools. This number does not include translations into several other languages.

In the 1990s she joined the General Conference Sabbath School staff and was the primary coordinator and general editor for the GraceLink curriculum for children which is now used worldwide in many languages. It was the first complete refreshing of the materials for children’s Sabbath School in many decades, and a very complicated task involving large numbers of writers, illustrators and designers along with a wide range of considerations and concerns about the needs of children at various age levels, learning styles, theology and methods of instruction.

“The GraceLink curriculum was a monumental achievement,” a retired church administrator familiar with the project told Adventist Today. “She had the patience and the depth of understanding to bring it together and see it through. It has given the denomination a very high quality religious education framework.”

In 1988, Habada took on the issue of ordination for women serving in the Adventist clergy. She launched an independent educational organization named Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM) which has provided significant research in Adventist history and theology, as well as raised funds to assist many young women in pursuing ministerial training in Adventist colleges and universities around the globe.

In 1995, TEAM published *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, which included papers from 14 Adventist historians, Bible scholars and administrators. It was later translated into Spanish and distributed throughout Latin America. Habada was the coeditor of the volume along with Pastor Rebecca Brillhart.

Habada “modeled the humility, courage and personal sacrifice it takes to initiate and sustain systemic institutional change,” Brillhart said, reflecting on the many years they worked together. Brillhart has been a pastor at Sligo Church on the campus of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland, and at the campus church at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California. She is currently a consultant to nonprofit organizations and based in Sacramento, California.

Habada is survived by Paul, her husband of 66 years; two daughters, Shirley Harvey and husband Donald of Nashville (Tennessee) and Beverly Habada of Adelphi, Maryland; three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. She is mourned by many, many friends throughout the global Adventist community.

The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to TEAM. These are tax-deductible in the United States and can be mailed to Box 7816, Langley Park, Maryland 20787.
Lake Union Conference Apologizes for Church Failures Regarding Race

AT News Team, June 22, 2015: Don Livesay, president of the Lake Union Conference (LUC), apologized for the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s racial failures in a speech given at the Lake Region Conference camp meeting on June 20. At the end of the confession, Lake Region Conference president Clifford Jones accepted the apology and called for Adventists to “aggressively and vigorously and intentionally” work together to “to eliminate this scourge of racism that is so prevalent and pervasive in our land, yea even in our church.”

The Lake Union Conference is made up of five local conferences—Illinois Conference, Indiana Conference, Michigan Conference, Wisconsin Conference, and the Lake Region Conference, a historically Black conference that covers all of the territory of the other state conferences. The camp meeting was held at Camp Wagner in southwest Michigan.

Livesay’s apology, which was given in the context of a celebration of the Lake Region Conference’s 70 years of service, spoke to historical and present factors in the Adventist Church and in the broader U.S. society. He explained that in addition to effectiveness in ministry, a major factor leading to the formation of Regional conferences was racial injustice in the Church. “A simple, honest look at the segregated Church of the past—the segregated General Conference cafeteria; the Negro Department of the General Conference that was first directed by white men; the segregated hospitals that led to the death of Lucy Byard; the dismissive attitudes and actions. These and more issues were also major contributors to the establishment of Regional work,” he said.

Livesay continued, “Some might attempt to excuse the behavior of the Church through those years because of the culture of society of that specific time. One could say that the white church, the white members, the white leadership, merely reflected what was going on around us. But God has not called His church to reflect the evil of the world. God has called the church to reflect His character, to treat each other in love, with the Golden Rule, in respectful ways, and to honor each other as all of God’s children.”

Livesay honored the success of the Lake Region before making his formal apology. “As we celebrate 70 years of the Lake Region…I come to you with my fellow officers of the Lake Union with a heart that compels us to not only bring our joy and the success of the Lake Region, but also to bring a personal and an official apology to our brothers and our sisters of the Lake Region Conference on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Lake Union.”

The official apology included a number of general and specific elements. “We apologize with sorrow for the failures of the Church in regard to race, for individuals disrespected, for lack of time taken to understand, for the mistreated, for the leadership marginalized, and for students of our college who were only able to sit with black students in the cafeteria, for Lucy Byard, and for the slowness, reluctance, and the stubbornness to do the right thing. We are sorry that we as a Church did not rise above the sins of society that day, and we are sorry for the lack of progress our church has made in the last 70 years.”
The complete apology and response can be seen in a video posted by the Lake Union Conference. Currently, the video can only be viewed on the LUC’s Vimeo page (click here).
News Briefs June 26, 2015

Adventist Today regularly provides a summary of stories that we have decided do not require in-depth reporting, but our readers may want to be aware of.

A 35-year-old Adventist pastor in Accra (Ghana) was among 150 people killed by an accidental explosion, according to an announcement by the denomination yesterday. Pastor Elisha Obeng-Bobie was among a crowd at a gas station trying to get away from a rising flood when lightning struck and caused the explosion. He was traveling home from classes at Babcock University, the Adventist institution in Nigeria.

Will Green, a staff member at an Adventist summer camp in the Georgia was killed in an accident while being towed behind a boat on a nearby lake. The young adult was teaching "wakeboarding," a sport in which people do something like surfing as they ride a board while being pulled behind a speedboat. He was a wakeboard professional who recently won the 2015 USA Wakeboard Collegiate Nationals, according to a statement from the denomination's Georgia-Cumberland Conference. He is a graduate of Forest Lake Academy in Orlando, Florida, where his mother, Jennifer Green, is an English teacher. A memorial service will be held at 4 pm on Sabbath (June 27) at Calvary Assembly, 1199 Clay Street, Winter Park, Florida.

The first 1,312 graduates at the Techiman campus of Valley View University in Ghana were handed degrees in education, business administration, information technology and agribusiness last Sunday (June 21). Valley View is affiliated with the Adventist denomination and opened the new campus in 2009 in order to make Christian education accessible to central and northern Ghana. It is accredited by the ministry of education in Ghana and the campus should achieve independent status by October. The speaker for the event was Dr. Brempong O. Antwi, vice chancellor of the Adventist University of Africa in Kenya. (Source: GNA)

Reconstruction has begun on 53 local church buildings in Vanuatu that were destroyed by a cyclone in March. About two thirds of the funds needed have been raised so far, reports the South Pacific Record. Donors and ADRA volunteers from New Zealand, Australia and around the world made this possible. The first of these churches will reopen in October, reported Pastor Nos Terry, president of the denomination's Vanuatu Mission. For information on how you can help rebuild churches in Vanuatu, e-mail Peter Koolik at pete@koolik.com.au.

A conference on “This Gospel and the Final Generation,” has been announced for July 15 to 18 by the 1888 Message Study Committee, an Adventist independent ministry. Speakers will include Dr. John Markovic, history professor at Andrews University; Ron Duffield, a respiratory therapist from Walla Walla, Washington, who has served on the staff of Weimar Institute and wrote The Return of the Latter Rain; Dr. Fred Bischoff, a physician at Loma Linda University Medical Center; Dr. Lyndi Schwartz, an internal medicine specialist at Kettering Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio; Kelly Veilleux, prayer ministries coordinator for the Northern New England Conference; and Dr. Kelly Kinsley, a physician from Arcata, California. It will be held on the campus of Southern Adventist University in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

A Leadership Conference on “Leadership and Innovation” starts Sunday evening (June 28) at Andrews University (AU) and continues all day Monday. The keynote speaker will be Ram Charan, a world-renowned management consultant named by Fortune magazine as “the most influential consultant alive.” Dr. Niels-Erik Andreasen, president of AU, and faculty members Karen Tilstra, Stefan Herzberg and Erich Baumgartner will also make presentations. Registration is required.

Old Fashioned, the romantic movie produced by an Adventist to challenge Hollywood’s focus on sex, was
released last week on DVD. It is a drama and runs 115 minutes, directed by Rik Swartzwelder. Copies can be purchased at ChristianCinema.com on the Web (search for product 5138).

**The church school will open again after 19 years** in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, due to “an increased number of young families in the congregation,” according to a report in the *Herald-Review* local newspaper. It is sponsored by the Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist Church. Rachelle Nelson, a recent graduate of Union College in Lincoln (Nebraska) with a degree in elementary education and minors in music and Biblical languages, has been hired as the teacher. About 10 students in grades K-8 are expected for the 2015-2016 school year. (Why is this news? Because it is a relatively rare event among Adventists in North America where the “graying of Adventism” has contributed to the closing of many church schools.)

**An Adventist woman in Philadelphia has sued to get Sabbaths off.** Stacia Smith worked as a unit manager at Willow Terrace, a skilled care facility, according to the *Pennsylvania Record*, a legal journal. She filed a lawsuit in Federal court on June 1 alleging that she was fired because she asked to be off from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday each week. Smith is an immigrant to the U.S. from Jamaica and also told the court that she was discriminated against because of her race.

**Castle Rock Adventist Hospital offers Daddy Boot Camp** for soon-to-be fathers. The three-hour workshop features advice from experienced fathers, demonstrations of how to hold and feed an infant, as well as how to change diapers. It also includes open discussion time when prospective fathers can ask questions. The goal is to help first-time fathers find confidence and avoid mistakes; an idea that could be replicated elsewhere.
It’s An Angel Speaking

Adventists Listen Again
to the First Angel

by Jack Hoehn

And I saw another angel

Heaven has many messengers, Seventh-day Adventists are surely one of them and this is our charter, this is our mission.

Flying in the midst of heaven

We are to fly in the middle, not too high, not too low, not too right, not too left, in the middle with a ministry of reconciliation, or bringing together, of common ground.

Having the everlasting gospel

The good news we have is not to be dependent on Darwin or Newton or Einstein or Hubble. It is also not dependent Luther, Calvin, Dwight L. Moody or Ellen G. White.

To preach to those who dwell on the earth—

All creatures that on earth do dwell need to give Him praise.

To every Nation

This news is for Islamic nations, Buddhist nations, Confucian nations, Hindu nations, Catholic nations, Protestant nations, Communist nations, Socialist nations, Capitalist nations, big nations, little nations, every nation.

Tribe, Tongue, and People.

Our message must be global, universal, ecumenical, trans-cultural, trans-philosophical, trans-doctrinal, trans-theoretical.

Saying with a loud voice
This truth dare not be whispered, hidden, buffered, silenced by disputable detail, personal interpretations, and minority opinions. It needs to be a loud, bold, universal truth that can be heard on front pages everywhere.

**Fear God and Give Glory to Him—**

Withdraw glory from chance, randomness, and purposelessness. Withdraw fear of meaningless, hopeless insignificance and replace it with universal awe for the Creator.

**For the Hour of His Judgment has come**

There is now a tipping point, a pivot of history, everything depends on one broad, universal, trans-cultural, widely acceptable fact.

**And Worship Him**

(Please church, It does NOT say worship WHEN, it says Worship HIM.)

**Who made**

(The angel does not ask humans to worship HOW God made. It demands no vote on WHEN God made only WHO made.)

**Heaven and Earth, the Sea and Springs of Water.**

Heaven’s 1st Angel’s Message is a broad, not a narrow interpretation of Creation. It is a truth intended to bring together mankind’s diversity of opinion on one central fact: **God is your Creator.**

The angel mentions nothing about the days of creation, nothing about the method of creation, nothing about the chronology of creation, only the fact of creation.

If Adventist are to be bearers of the first angel’s message, we need to have something to say loudly to every university, every scientist, every political party, every nationality, every theory of creation: **God did it. Worship Him with us.**

Come from your Friday mosques, come from you Sunday cathedrals, and join on the universal Sabbath made for mankind, with Jewish sisters and brothers, united not in science, not on chronology, not over methods of Creation, or one interpretation of Scripture.

United in universal worship of the Creator, irrespective of science, excluded from this grand program of common worship only by unwillingness to agree—God did it.

The “fear of the Lord” is not the end of wisdom, it is the beginning of wisdom.

United in universal Creator worship, there remains much room for honest science, careful exegesis, thoughtful coordination of the facts of science with the truths of revelation.

Each theory of how and when God created will have to bend and learn from each other. But please Adventist church, don’t tie down the wings of the mighty angel, don’t muffle its voice of universal unity, by a narrowing or restriction.
of the grand truth of Creation
to one narrow
opinion on its
timing and
duration.
Re-open the doors to Adventism by keeping our fundamental belief on creation inclusive
and open to all willing to worship God as our Creator.

(Reprinted with permission of the editor from ADVENTIST TODAY print magazine, Summer
2015, page 52.)

Illustration from Edward Burne-Jones, Days of Creation (First), 1870-76, Original in the
Harvard University, Fogg Art Museum. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons
Attribution 2.0 Generic license..
New Radio Station to Join Adventist Media Family

By Debbonnaire Kovacs, submitted June 24, 2015

The Seventh-day Adventist church will soon have another radio station. It won’t be a very big one—its broadcasting reach will only be a ten-mile radius of its tower, which will be located near New Circle Road in Lexington, KY—but those who are helping to get it in operation have high hopes that it can be a blessing to many. And its creation is something of a miracle.

It all started when the Lexington, Kentucky, Seventh-day Adventist church, pastored by Pavel Goia, had a series of visioning meetings in 2013. One of the ideas that came up the most persistently and garnered a lot of interest was the idea of starting a Christian radio station. But Lexington SDA only has around 250 or so attending. How could they make this dream a reality?

In August, Pastor Goia went to the Adventist-laymens’ Services and Industries (ASI) convention, where he met an attorney who could guide the church through the complicated process of applying to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a license. He also learned something the church hadn’t known: One can only apply to create a new radio station during certain narrow time windows, at the FCC's discretion. These windows can be as far apart as ten years…and one was coming up right at that moment. Miracle, step one.

Goia came home from the convention with the name and number of the attorney and a packet of material, turned it over to Michael Hurter, a church member who is an attorney-mediator and used to dealing with “legalese,” and told him everything had to be done quickly.

They started trying to figure out what entity could apply. It had to be a corporation, which left the church out. The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference could have done it, but if they were to own a radio station, it should be in Goodlettsville, TN, where they are located. They realized they would have to incorporate a non-profit 501 (c) 3. Hurter wrote bylaws and did the easy form, rather than the more complex form. “That part wasn't too bad,” he said. They had an approval in the unheard-of time period of three weeks. Miracle, step two. They now had an entity called Lexington Christian Network, Inc.

“We were really tight in terms of getting our application in, and then the government shut down. That gave us the opportunity of proofing it,” Hurter said. It turns out, 75% of the members of the board of directors must be local. The board at that time consisted of Hurter, Goia, and member Glenn Hensley. Only two of them lived in Lexington, making the board only 66% local. They added another local member, Jim Lyons. Hurter says they might have been turned down if they had not had that unexpected chance to look things over more carefully. (Can you call a government shut-down “miracle, step three”?)

It turned out another local group had applied for the same frequency as the church had. Engineers offered that they could both get stations if one moved a little up the dial and one a little down the dial, but (for technical reasons neither Hurter nor I understand) if they did that, neither tower location would work. Neither was willing to move their tower. In the case of the church, another local Adventist, Volker Schmidt, member at Winchester, KY SDA, had donated space at his business, Eastlex Machine Corporation, as well as a room for a small studio. Moving was out of the question.

This, Hurter reported, was at the beginning of 2014, and they let their application lapse. For a while, it appeared that the church might not get a radio station after all.
Then attorneys told them there are usually amendment periods for just this kind of thing—coming up, they would get a chance, not to apply again, but to amend their original application and ask for a different frequency.

The church had paid approximately $2,000 for the original application and the fees associated with it. It would cost about $600 for an amendment, and the board wasn't willing to risk more money. But several people felt, as Hurter put it, “Shouldn’t we try every avenue? It's going to be years before another opportunity will arise. It is kind of a gamble, a risk, a shot in the dark, whatever you want to call it. But we felt it was worth the risk.” So they pooled their own money, made the application amendment, and the FCC signed on it. Miracle, step four.

They now needed to raise funds—at least $20-40,000. By June of this year, they had raised about $36,000, and the board had agreed to match up to $20,000. They were covered. Miracle, step five.

As of this writing, the main focus is buying equipment. They have purchased an FM transmitter and other equipment and are storing it in the room at Eastlex Machine that will be used for the broadcast studio. They are hoping to find a company that can not only sell them a 40’ tower, but will also deliver and set it up.

There will also be a media studio at the church, which will transmit prerecorded material to the broadcast studio by means not yet determined. They need to come up with a proposed method of staffing (the station will be run with volunteers, but much of it will be automated), and they are still raising more funds to keep the station going. The plan is to become an affiliate station, most likely with Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3BN), though there are other possibilities, so another necessity is to make that decision and sign a contract.

They are hoping that by August of this year, Lexington Christian Network, at 99.7, will be on the air, 24/7, spreading the news that God loves everyone. All the time.

And if they need a few more steps for their miracle, well, that's all right. Lexington SDA is used to miracles.
I write in English, because you are familiar with it. You do not know my language, but that is not necessary; I know yours.

Your planet has over 6000 languages. I suppose you have the tower of Babel to thank, in part.

I live in a place where no human has been. Some of your scientists have estimated that your galaxy, the Milky Way, contains 100 billion stars and planets, and that the universe contains 100 billion such galaxies. They have not overestimated.

Do you not think it possible, if not probable, that intelligent life exists somewhere in the universe other than on your sphere?

Regardless, that does not imply that your SETI (Search for ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence) project is necessarily destined for success. Distances in space are long; time is short.

You may wonder what I look like.

If you can imagine Adam and Eve, in their original state, you'll be close. For your people, in the beginning, and my people were similar. We were both created in the image of the Maker. Each of us possesses a God-shaped vacuum that something or someone will fill, if not God.

The difference is that your race has diminished in size, vitality and longevity as a result of alienation, particularly after your Great Deluge. Mine has not.

It may interest you to know that we had something akin to Eden. We also were tested, but did not succumb. As a consequence, we are immortal and the Evil One and his cadre are not permitted here anymore.

We are also witness to events in the universe in a way that you are not. Our representative was there when God and Satan debated Job and we watched with keen interest to see how he would react to personal misfortune and calamity. He may have been a figurative pawn in the chess game between the two, but he vindicated God, who won that round.

We were happy to see that a few of your people (Enoch, Elijah; is the fact their names begin with ‘E,’ as in ‘everlasting’ and ‘eternal,’ coincidence?) were chosen by God to be with Him without traversing death.

And then there have been a few who have died but been translated. Moses you know about. There have been others, such as those who left your planet at the time of the Resurrection, but they remain nameless for now.

Speaking of death, it is something we have difficulty comprehending. Nothing where I live dies. No one—not beings, nor animals, nor plants—experiences, or has experienced, the cycle we observe on your planet. We also have no disease, no accidents, no crime. No sadness or loss. No evil or sin.

With avidity we watched the miracle of the incarnation of Christ, his brief life and ministry, and undeserved death at the hands of your people. And it gave us pause to contemplate that, had we not passed the initial test, He might have sacrificed Himself for us, too.
We shuddered at the realization that His success on your planet was not a given. If He failed any of many trials, Satan would triumph and the Godhead would no longer be the Trinity.

Your history, so long to you—made longer by calamity, disaster, strife, wars, disease, many dying before their time—is but a blink in the eye of eternity. Time, as you understand it, has no meaning for us.

We are astonished at your egocentricity and preoccupation with matters of presumed importance: money, the pursuit of success and happiness, creature comforts, instant gratification. In the large scheme of things, these matter not at all.

What does matter may surprise some of you.

A gentle word, a kind act, generosity toward the ill, the poor, the less fortunate. These outweigh great achievement in athletics, academics or business. The widow's mites of which Jesus spoke are worth more than the billions some of you amass, often to the detriment of others.

You can carry nothing on to the next life but the character formed in this one. Your Egyptian pharaohs proved you can't take it with you.

The values of so many of you are warped and don't conform to reality. Your reality is limited. You live in a three dimensional world (although one of you to whom unusual insight was granted posited time as a fourth dimension), whereas, I can tell you, without revealing more than you should know or can understand, other dimensions do exist.

Some of your scientists have posited that the fastest speed achievable is the speed of light. Were that the case, space travel would be highly limited, particularly for denizens of your planet, whose lifespan is finite.

Speaking of the finite, and its opposite, the infinite, have you considered why the configuration of the infinitesimal (the atom, with its nucleus and circulating electrons) so closely resembles that of the infinite (the universe, with heavenly bodies rotating about a sun/star in elliptical orbit)?

God is one of order as well as of love and mercy. And power. Even though our understanding is greater than yours, we also cannot comprehend how He created ex nihilo, something out of nothing. Nor do we understand His eternal existence, ubiquity and ability to read thoughts and see the future.

We are perplexed by your many religions, great and not so. And how much mischief has been perpetrated in the name of religion throughout your centuries of history. Someday this will all cease, but before there is peace there will be turmoil.

We do not have 24-hour days, 30-day months, and 365-day years as you do, for our celestial bodies have different times of spin and orbit, and our timekeeping differs accordingly.

Because of events in the universe, both those described in your guidebook, the Bible, and elsewhere, we more fully understand the Almighty, and we worship out of gratitude, not fear. We are indeed fortunate that He personifies love. Did He not, you would have no hope.

Although, for us, time is an abstract concept, for you it is pressing. It will not be long before the 2nd Advent unfolds. While only the Father knows the precise time of that momentous event, it draws closer with the passing of each Earth day. I trust you will be ready.

I look forward to meeting you someday.

Know that, in the vast universe, you are not alone.

Your friend, an Extraterrestrial
Use pic Outer Space, with http://hdw.eWEB4.com/out/1059432.html
Nothing In My Hands, Chapter Six

By Del Starr, a pseudonym, all rights reserved, posted June 24, 2015

Seeking Mr. Right

Dianne had lost touch with Janetta’s father also. He had been transferred from California and she didn’t know where. She thought of calling his parents but didn’t want to tell them about the baby in case he had not told them. So, she decided, that was out.

She began to make a concentrated effort to “meet men.” She had now been attending church off and on with George and Ruth. The church family had changed and Dianne no longer really felt a part of it. She knew that she was now considered a “bad girl” and she had long suffered at the hands of Grace who re-enforced that thought almost daily when they had lived in the same house. Dianne began to look for men in the local scene.

Since Dianne had lived a quite cloistered life, attending church school and academy, and her friends and associates were among members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, she had no idea how to meet decent and responsible men now that she was not fit to look within the church structure. She began to look in all the wrong places and she found all the wrong men.. Though her fondest desire was to institute a home for Janetta, she found that she didn’t desire to institute it with the type of men she was meeting…and Janetta was getting older.

Dianne thought about Gary and wondered where he might be. She didn’t know a whole lot about the military but had learned that many of the men who returned from Viet Nam were sent to Fort Carson, Colorado. She wondered if it might be true about Gary.

She placed a call to the post locater at Fort Carson and was delighted to learn that indeed, Gary was stationed there. She then placed a call to his company, requesting that the duty officer request that Gary call her back.

That evening Gary called. They had a long conversation about what had taken place in their lives since they had last corresponded, and what they wanted out of life. They agreed that they both wanted to have a home and raise a family. Gary decided that he would take leave and come out to Oregon.

Ruth had been ill with congestive heart failure for many years, had been in the hospital on numerous occasions, and at this time had taken to her bed. Dianne would take Janetta to visit her every few days. Dianne loved Ruth and hoped that Janetta would also. Ruth loved Janetta and enjoyed seeing her and Dianne.

Gary was to arrive on September 17. On September 15, Dianne received a call from Ruth’s caregiver. Ruth had passed away.

Dianne went outside and looked around her. It seemed as if the whole world should stop. Dianne couldn’t understand that people were still going places. She sobbed as she looked at the mountains and the verse came to her, “I will look to the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord.” Dianne clung to those thoughts. She needed God in her life in the worst way. Her heart was broken.

On the evening of the day of Ruth’s funeral, Gary arrived and Dianne fell into his arms as she poured out the latest events. Gary just held her and listened to her. They had a bit to eat and Dianne fell into a fitful sleep. The next day Gary suggested to Dianne that they get married.
Dianne was too emotionally distraught to even think about it. She saw away out for herself and Janetta and Gary was a decent man, though perhaps he wasn't the greatest “looker.” She agreed.

She refused to be married locally. She knew that the announcements of their pending marriage and the marriage itself would be in the local papers and she felt that it would be disrespectful to Ruth to marry so soon after Ruth’s death. If she was going to marry Gary though, it must be now. She couldn't wait, so she suggested that they go to Reno to accomplish it. Gary agreed.

Leaving Janetta with a friend, Gary and Dianne arrived in Reno early one September morning. Both were trembling as they anticipated this marriage. Neither one claimed to be in love with the other. The marriage was taking place strictly on the grounds that they both wanted to have a home and raise a family. They wanted loyal mates and had promised that to each other. Dianne had shared with Gary her experience with Alex.

As they prepared to go to the chapel for the ceremony, Dianne and Gary realized that both of them were now suffering cold sores on their mouths. They giggled as they realized that the cold sores were a result of their being so very nervous. This was the first thing they had shared together.

After the marriage they returned to the valley in Oregon and retrieved Janetta. She now had a daddy and Dianne wouldn’t have to give her up. George liked Gary and was delighted to learn that Dianne and Gary were married. Dianne was thankful that he gave his blessings to them.

Then Dianne began once more to pack for a move. This time, Gary helped her.

They had been married for three days when Dianne’s caseworker arrived at the door. The newlyweds invited him in and asked him to have a seat. After the initial idle chitchat, Dianne asked him why he was there. He struggled for a moment and finally pointed to Gary. “This,” he said. He told Dianne that one of the neighbors had complained that she had a man staying with her in her house. Dianne smiled, got up, and walked out of the house to the car. She got the wedding certificate, brought it back and placed it in the caseworker’s lap. “Will this take care of it?”

A little red-faced but smiling, he got up, handed the certificate back to Dianne and said, “I think that does it, congratulations.” And he left.

Another two days and Gary and Dianne, with Janetta, were on their way to Colorado.

Dianne was twenty-two years old.
I read the Apocrypha last year. It was quite an interesting experience. I found quite a few things I saved; for example:

“The stroke of a whip makes a mark in the flesh, but the stroke of the tongue will break bones” Ecclesiasticus 28:17. I think this makes far more sense than our patently untrue “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!”

Or here’s one:

“As the lamp that shines upon the holy candlestick, so is the beauty of the face in ripe age” Ecc. 26:17. (I hope so!)

When I was young, what little I heard of the Apocrypha implied that it was lies. A false Bible, to deceive unbelievers. In fact, we often use the adjective “apocryphal” to mean false, when it simply means something that can’t be proven to be true.

The fact is, these are books which were considered for inclusion in the canon we now call the Holy Bible, so they couldn’t be that bad. In the end, they were considered in something of the light in which many would now consider Christian fiction, or even Christian nonfiction. In other words, they can contain good insights and teachings, but they must be compared with Scripture to determine their value, not the other way around.

When I read it, I found that there were some parts that I did find intensely inspiring, and others I thought were silly, and could see why they didn’t make the cut. So I thought you might be interested in this passage from an Apocryphal book called Wisdom of Solomon, which is included in this week’s readings from the Revised Common Lectionary:


God did not make death,

And he does not delight in the death of the living.

For he created all things so that they might exist;

the generative forces of the world are wholesome,

and there is no destructive poison in them,

and the dominion of Hades is not on earth.

For righteousness is immortal.

God created us for incorruption,

and made us in the image of his own eternity,
but through the devil’s envy death entered the world,
and those who belong to his company experience it.