



Κατανῶμεν *Let us consider...*



The Conversion of Cat Stevens

by Jim Bradley

If you grew up in the sixties, you will remember the name, Cat Stevens. An English folk rocker whose work was immensely popular on both sides of the Atlantic, Stevens had a string of hits, toured the world, and got filthy rich. He had the Rolls Royce and the trophy girlfriend and the best drugs money could buy.

One day, at the very height of his career, Stevens just disappeared. He just quit making records and dropped out of sight for about twenty years. There were rumors that he was dead or had come down with some horrible, wasting disease. The truth was that in those years when he was churning out the hits and making his millions, he had been quietly and somewhat sporadically undergoing a spiritual crisis. He had started asking the big questions: Why am I here? Is there a God? Where will I spend eternity?

Stevens had been born into a Christian family. So, when his unwanted quest for truth began, he naturally turned first to Christianity for answers. And here the story goes terribly wrong: no one took him seriously. His parents were on-again, off-again churchgoers: they had nothing for him. They thought their famous son was just suffering from a bit of leftover, post-adolescent angst. His relatives, many of whom were also nominally Christians, had no answers. The local Anglican community had no answers. Even Steven's local pastor had nothing meaningful to offer. Wherever he turned all he got was some variation on—"Well, you know,

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The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom and service.

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**“...but in your
hearts, honor
Christ the Lord as
holy, always being
prepared to make
a defense to
anyone who asks
you for a reason
for the hope that
is in you; yet do it
with gentleness
and respect...”**

(1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

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we all worry about these things from time to time. Just be still and know that God loves you.” Imagine: here is this young man—there’s a window of opportunity in his life—who wants to have a serious talk about God and eternity. He is genuinely distressed; he’s wounded in spirit, and his Church gives him clichés. He needed the Gospel; he got “I’m OK, you’re OK.”

And then someone gave Stevens a copy of the Koran. And he read it and was instantly full of questions. Being a young man of means, he got on a plane, flew to Jerusalem, went to a mosque and asked for help. He was welcomed and treated with kindness. The imams helped him. They had answers.

By our lights, those answers were and remain lies and heresy—that is what Islam is: the flawed, corrupt creed of a false and wicked prophet. But to the mind of a vulnerable young man, the answers seemed to make sense. He wanted to know how to live in this sometimes terrible and confusing world—they told him. He later said, “I had been shown how to live.”

This is a sad tale. A Christian community failed when a young man came looking for truth. First Peter tells us, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man who asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you.” That did not happen in this case. There was a family-level, neighborhood-level failure in that Christian community, forty years ago in East London, when a young man came seeking salvation. No one could seem to articulate the Truth to him. That would be bad enough in and of itself—to lose one soul to Islam is a dreadful thing—but we have to wonder what the domino effect of that failure is.

How many young men and women of that generation followed Stevens into the darkness of Islam? How many have followed him in later years? It would be surprising if the answer was “none.” Stevens calls himself Yusuf Islam these days. He is Islam’s most famous convert. He’s the poster boy for Islam as the religion of peace. No IEDs, no AK-47s, just acoustic guitars and peace and love. He is tremendously popular and influential in the Muslim community and beyond, particularly in Britain but also throughout Europe as a whole. The FBI has him on a no-fly list. I assume that is not without reason.

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If we are unready to answer for our faith, we fail not only the questioner (i.e. the unbeliever who might have believed) but also, potentially, we fail everyone whose life is subsequently touched by him. The consequences of that are incalculable; too many variables, too much math.

Only God knows the full story of who our students at GCA will become. There could be students sitting in our classes today whom people will someday follow. Stranger things have happened. The answers we give our students—or not—here in our time together will become a small, small part of some future reality. And remember, some of us on the staff here aren't all that young—the answers we give to the young people in our charge may be that which survives us. We must here be ever prayerful and lean oh-so-heavily upon the Holy Spirit and experience and personal witness when those Big Questions come our way.

If you can get past the “kids-these-days” intolerance we are all prone to, this new generation has some real possibilities. They seem utterly determined to keep things positive. Good for them. They are not traumatized by change—in fact, they like it. They are not afraid of technology. They are materialistic, but no more than we were, and their materialism tends to center largely around the acquisition of new technology. There are of course dangers in technology—it can be a little too fascinating and some of its doors lead to dark places, but let's be honest—those doors have always been there; they just required more effort to open in the past.

These children dislike confrontation. They avoid it—sometimes even when it is unavoidable in good conscience for a young man or woman of faith. They can be a little too open to compromise. We have to help them with this. We have to teach them; you cannot make deals with Scripture. You can't give away the prerogatives of God—they are not ours to give.

These young people are also a wee bit narcissistic. They like to take pictures of themselves shopping and eating sandwiches. Such eccentricities aside, we may reasonably have high hopes for them. We have to fear for them a little too. They lack wisdom—the very young usually do. They need guidance. We should provide that when and where we can. We should look for opportunities to guide them. We should make opportunities to guide them. They live in a world which is more wicked by several orders of magnitude than the one we knew as youngsters—and it will get worse before ever it gets better. The very least that we could do is stand ready to answer their questions about how we got here and where we're going. Those perennial big questions: Why am I here? Is there a God? Where will I spend eternity?

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32 ESV)

Spring Break Memories



Sleeping in!

Kassidy Moss



Riding in my boat.

Haven Humphreys

Visiting my
grandparent's farm

Libby Van Dyne



Amstutz Lawn Service
opens for business.

Lincoln Amstutz



Many of the students were asked: "What is your favorite Spring Break memory?" Here are some of their answers:



Basketball
Nationals.

Annie Adams



This spring break: I got my
driver's license.

Allie Vernon



Seeing teachers by surprise
during the break.

Garland Groves

Buying a dead
scorpion at the
Chateau on the Lake.

Chandler Hathcock

Snowboarding in
Colorado. I crashed,
and my Go Pro cam-
era recorded every-
thing.

Logan Wilson



Standing in the glass box at
the Sears Tower.

Linnea Babcock

Poetry Corner

~Truth~

The truth can be dished out
 In many different ways.
 Sometimes it may appear
 Much like a winding maze.
 The truth can be expressed
 In wishy-washy words,
 Or soberly be thrust
 On straight and narrow swords.
 Sometimes it's hidden well
 Among the appetizers,
 Or smothered by the frills
 Of ardent sermonizers,
 Although we may not like truth
 As served in forms above,
 It still is truth. . .but not absorbed
 Until it's served with love.
 ~Esther Vandiver~

~Double-Minded Hearts~

Our indecisive hearts do yearn for someone strong to lead us,
 as long as he allows us space to do what we desire.
 We crave concrete existence now of absolute, clear truth,
 but seethe indignantly when it's strength is applied to us.
 We rail against the modern lack of noble character,
 but ask those who possess it to act inoffensively.
 Our parched hearts thirst unceasingly for true, unwavering love
 as long as it will not deny us our destructive will.
 We cry aloud for wisdom, justice, fortitude, and love,
 but think the pain through which they come incredibly unfair.
 O, God! What we believe we want Your power to supply
 and our defensive, angry heart when You give what we ask
 Display our double-minded hearts for all the world to see—
 our hearts which beat defeat for us where we remain most blind.
 But You, Father, can open eyes to the beauty of wisdom and truth;
 help us know that You're sovereign and able to carry out Your design.
 Make our hearts single as we're walking beside you in the wild storms of life,
 So the wind and waves quicken our spirits to soar on wings of delight.
 ~Esther Vandiver~

Science Fair

Mark the afternoon of April 10th on your calendars for the Science Fair! Come by and view the hard work of the students of GCA. Parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts; all interested are welcome to attend!



Top Left: 8th Grade Science dissecting rotisserie chickens

Top Right: 7th Grade Science constructing the human skeleton

Bottom Left: 8th Grade Science studying air pressure

Staff Birthdays

March

March 1 - Lonnie Vandiver

March 1 - Larry Larsen

March 30 - Luke Shawhan



April

April 5 - Christine Gillis

April 5 - Julia Feters

April 7 - Gil Flores

April 9 - Terry Flores

April 14 - Cheryl Vandiver

April (cont.)

April 15 - James Bradley

May

May 7 - Claire Burrell

Around the School



Top Left: Paige Steelman and the new scarf she made in Home Economics

Top Right: Jackson Frazier, Lincoln Amstutz, and Matt Vandiver as their High School History Day characters



Bottom Right: Gretchen Ruffa and Makenzie Chastain with their infinity scarves, which they made in Home Economics

Bottom Left: Will Wynn on Hat Day





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March 2015

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | Last Day for Reenrollment Discount/Tuition Due |
| 6 | End of 3rd Quarter |
| 8 | Daylight Savings Time Begins |
| 9-13 | No School/
Teacher Work Week |
| 9-10 | Teacher Training. 9:00 AM |
| 10-11 | Optional P/T Conferences |
| 20 | Dots and Stripes Day
All-School Open House:
6:30 PM |
| 27 | Etiquette Banquet:
6:30 PM |

April 2015

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Tuition Due |
| 3 | Good Friday: No School |
| 5 | Easter Sunday |
| 6 | Easter Break:
No School |
| 10 | Science Fair |
| 16 | Spring Concert: 7:00 PM |
| 20-24 | SAT Testing:
1st Grade and Up. |
| 24 | K4 History Day: 11:00 AM |
| 24 | Kindergarten States
Celebration: 2:45 PM |

May 2015

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Tuition Due |
| 8 | Spelling Bee:
1st-6th Grade |
| 10 | Mother's Day |
| 12 | Senior Graduation:
7:00 PM |
| 14 | 8th Grade Graduation
2:30 PM. |
| 15 | Kindergarten Graduation:
10:00 AM.
Last Day of School:
11:30 AM Early Dismissal |
| 25 | Memorial Day |
| 25-29 | Office Closed |