People of Hope
the Seventh-day Adventists

Special Issue
Hope is a candle. It burns brightest when the night is darkest and the storm rages all around.

Our world needs hope as never before. Millions struggle to eke out an existence; children grow up malnourished, unwanted, unloved. And others in affluent societies fight the ravages of cancer in their lives or the lives of dear ones. They live in fear—of crime, job loss, marital collapse, tragedy.

This special issue of the Adventist Review centers in hope. It introduces you to a people of hope, a people who have found the secret of quality life in the midst of a desperate world. That secret isn't some new information or a set of behaviors; no, it's a Person—Jesus Christ.

I hope that this issue will give you hope. No matter how desperate, how storm-tossed your situation may appear right now, may you find a candle that will give you strength to carry on and light your way. And that candle is Jesus.

William G. Johnsson, native of Australia, Editor, Adventist Review
Someone abandoned her just the day before we arrived at the orphanage in the Ukraine,” explained Patty Suelze, a retired nurse from Glendale, California, who was traveling with others from the Carter Report (a Seventh-day Adventist independent ministry).

It can be a stark existence to live as a child in some parts of the former Soviet Union. Orphans live in railway stations, wander the streets, or find refuge in state-operated orphanages. Thousands of children have been abandoned by their parents, and their reality is a hungry, cold, and comfortless existence.

Two tons of clothing, food, and medicines, and 135,000 Bibles, were distributed, bringing hope to the seemingly hopeless. Local people came from miles away because this was their one chance to have a Bible, returning home with what they considered a prized possession.

Besides the vitamins, warm boots, clothes, and angel cards given to the orphaned children by the group, Suelze purchased a sewing machine so the children could have clothing made for them. Team members also brought toys and stuffed animals as gifts of love to these children. “They didn’t have any medicines, not even Tylenol for people with severe injuries,” said Suelze. “I didn’t know I could be of so much help and bring so much hope to people by just being there.”
Children receive boots, toys, love.
To See Again

If that woman doesn’t see after this surgery,” the chief of the African village told ophthalmologists Edgard and Cristina de Oliveira, “pack up your things and leave. We won’t want you in Glei.”

Now, four years and nearly 1,000 surgeries later, the chiefs are happy to have the hospital they had previously shut down operating in their town.

The De Oliveiras have seen more than 13,800 patients with river blindness, glaucoma, and retinoblastoma (malignant tumor of the retina). Nearly 20 percent of their patients are children who have developed congenital cataracts by the time they reached puberty.

Nine-month-old Monique was one of them. She lay in the small hospital crib, happily moving her legs and arms, with her father standing close. She was healthy and strong, and the doctors knew her parents had taken good care of her. They had come from Lome, 60 miles away, because she was born with congenital cataracts.

There was hope for Monique. Right after surgery she saw for the first time. She’ll have to wear glasses and have a lens surgically implanted when she reaches puberty. But she will see.

So effective is the work of this husband-and-wife team that people come from all the countries around Togo to see them. The light of hope shines in Glei through the ministry of Edgard and Cristina.
The little boy was a patient . . .
I WAS BORN INTO A WEALTHY CHICAGO FAMILY,” SAYS JUSTIN DART from his wheelchair. “My hostile ‘super-winner’ parents divorced early on, and from this atmosphere of hostility I became a hostile ‘super-loser.’ I never met a person I couldn’t insult. I never met a rule or an object I couldn’t break. I didn’t like myself.”

At age 18 Dart contracted polio, and the doctor said he would die in a few days. “I was admitted to the White Memorial Hospital, operated by the Seventh-day Adventists, and discovered something new. I was with people who were passionately dedicated to expressing love for each other and for me. I thought, If I’m only going to live a few more days, why not try this love thing? and for the first time I knew the joy of life.”


With a miserable academic record and a disability that relegated him to a wheelchair, he soon found that no college would accept him. “Except yours,” says Dart. “La Sierra University, near Los Angeles, accepted me, and once again the power of love lifted me.” Later he earned B.S. and M.A. degrees with A averages at the University of Houston.

Now he travels worldwide to encourage and empower individuals in the disabled community. Recently he was awarded the Medal of Freedom by United States president Bill Clinton. “Let us greet intimidation with courage, hate with love, demagogy with simple truth,” he urges. “We’re going to win. We’re going to live the dream.”

Dart is not a Seventh-day Adventist, but he says, “I owe you so much. I love you so much. You have a record of loving empowerment.”

Hope for this courageous man came from people who shared the power of love. That’s the secret.
Justin Dart empowers disabled communities.
Soldiers for Jesus

The woman looks straight ahead as she takes the microphone. She is wearing a cream-colored blouse and a dark-green skirt with a thick leather belt around her waist.

“This is the second time I have come to these meetings,” she says firmly. “I have found great hope by becoming a ‘little soldier for Jesus.’” Captain Davila is a policewoman from Lima, Peru. Behind her is a row of men and women, most of them in uniform, all belonging to the police force. They all look and act like police. Until they begin to sing, that is. Then they all become children—little soldiers for Jesus.

General Ramiro Rojas, the second-highest-ranking officer in the Peruvian police force, and three other Adventist police officers began this gathering called Dinamus (meaning “power”) several months ago. Rojas describes his mission as “a ministry that motivates, exhorts, comforts, and inspires. If I don’t know my brother’s life, how am I going to help him?” Currently there are 49 members who are police, and their families.

“My life was a wreck,” said one. “I had problems with my wife, with my superiors, and with alcohol. Then General Rojas brought me to Dinamus and gave me hope. My life has changed. I met Jesus. I am a new man.”

Three times a week the group meets to sing loud songs with messages of hope, listen to the general and other speakers, and share with each other in testimony and prayer.

Colonel Juan Marinós, the next-ranking officer to Rojas in the police force, says, “We bring law and order. There is nothing that brings more hope to the heart of the citizen than to know that the police force has Jesus as their supreme commander.”
General Rojas (with microphone) motivates and inspires.
We had no hope of having children.

Our infertility made it impossible for us to conceive our own baby. Sometimes people don’t understand. They don’t know what it is like to be childless, infertile, without hope of hearing the sounds of baby lisps, padding feet, and sweet prayers.

The baby chase, it’s called. For some it’s in vitro fertilization, fertility-enhancing drugs, surgeries. High hopes. Dashed hopes.

For us the option was adoption. A child who needs the hope a family can bring. A family who needs a child. Malissa Olivia has expanded our family. Our daughter. We are her parents.

We met in a hospital in Los Angeles. It was instant love. Her fingers reached around ours. Her eyes found ours. We touched. It was instant family.

We carried our precious bundle home from the hospital in her pink ribbons and lacy socks. We sterilized her bottles, changed her diapers, mixed her formula. We prayed over her.

We adore her.

God is in the business of turning negatives into positives. He is in the business of surprises. He is the Master of creation.

He brought us Malissa.

He sent us hope.
OF ALL THE NAMES GIVEN children since the dawn of time, one stands alone, solitary, immovable. Although many men and women now take that name in oath or jest, one day every knee in heaven and earth will bow before Him who bears it and declare that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. That name is the sweetest sound to come from infant lips; it sustains us through life; and it will be our security when we embark on our final journey.

Jesus.

All our hopes—for this world and the next—center in Him. Our best joys, our highest aspirations, our cleanest motivations, spring from Him. Every other name will pass away; His, never.

The Scriptures, God’s Word, provide the source of all spiritual knowledge. But in the final analysis Jesus, not the Bible, is our anchor. He, the Eternal Word, called forth the Written Word; that Word, which testifies of Him (John 5:39), finds its meaning only in Him. At the center of Adventist faith stands a Person, not a creed or set of rules.

Jesus will be the theme of our praise throughout eternity. The whole world could not contain the books that might be written about Him (John 21:25); what then can we accomplish in one short article? We at least can address four issues of concern to all people everywhere: Who is He? What did He do? What does He mean to us? And wherein, if at all, do Adventists understand Jesus in ways different from those of other Christians?

Who Is Jesus?


The question has haunted millions across the centuries, just as it haunts men and women today. This Man of lowly birth, this Carpenter of Nazareth, this itinerant Preacher-H ealer whom the Romans crucified— who was He? Jesus won’t go away; His question won’t go away.

An amazing thing about this Jesus is that the plaudits we use to exalt others demean this Man. A good man? A great man? Prophet? Martyr? The best person who ever lived? Say any or all of these about Jesus and you do not honor Him—you sell Him short. For He claimed to be more. He saw Himself not as merely man, but as the Son of man. This, His preferred designation, suggests representative man and connects with the
visions related in Daniel 7:13, 14 and Ezekiel 2:1, 3, 6, 8, etc.

The apostle Paul, perhaps picking up on this idea, calls Jesus the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). Jesus stands at the head of a new line, a new race, a new humanity that reverses all that was lost in the first Adam.

Like Adam, Jesus of Nazareth was flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14). Fully and truly human, He suffered heat and cold, pain and hunger, sorrow and temptation, and at last, death itself.

But the biblical witness and the testimony of those who knew Jesus goes beyond—Jesus was more than a man. When Peter exclaimed “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus did not correct him. Instead He said: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven” (Matt. 16:16, 17).

Jesus had no human father. The Holy Spirit came upon the virgin Mary, so that the child of her womb was both God and man, Immanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:20-23). “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16, KJV).

Here, then, is the scandal of Christianity: that in the Carpenter of Nazareth the eternal God has come to earth, has entered into time, and has taken a body. He has pitched His tent in the midst, has entered into our lostness and brokenness, and has become one of us. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . . The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (John 1:1-14).

Jesus. The scandal of His name. The scandal of His claim. But to those who believe, He is precious, chosen by God, our cornerstone (1 Peter 2:4-7).

Reader, what about you? Who do you say He is?

What Did Jesus Do?

Never a person spoke like Jesus (John 7:46); never a person lived like Jesus. “He went around doing good” (Acts 10:38) — healing the sick, bringing good news to the poor, blessing the children, feeding the hungry, raising the dead.

What a life! A life of gentleness and kindness, of nobility and honesty. A life that flowed out to lift everyone within its orbit. A life that burned hopelessness, our guilt and despair, our deaths. By His dying, God entered, took it upon Himself, and delivered us (1 Peter 2:24, 25; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.” (The Desire of Ages, p. 25).

Our assurance is not in what we are, but in what He is; not in what we have...
Jesus made all the difference—He still does.

What Jesus Means Today
Jesus made all the difference when He was on earth; He still does, if we will let Him.

- He is alive! We may know Him, walk with Him, have Him as our friend. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8, 9).

- Jesus is the best friend we can ever know. He will never fail us, never turn us over, never leave us. We can trust Him. Those who take Jesus at His word find in their experience that what He said about Himself is true. He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He is the Saviour of the world, and my Saviour, too.

- Discovering who we are. By discovering Jesus, we discover ourselves.

Only through seeing Him do we see who we are and what we might be. Seeing Him, we see our rottenness, our smallness, our pettiness, our gross selfishness. We see how far we fall short of God’s ideal. But we also see His hand stretched out in love to receive us, to lift us out of the pit, to clothe us with the garments of salvation.

So we catch a vision of God’s plan for us. We discover that God loves us and has a plan for our lives, that He is concerned with the quality of human life, that He wants to spend quality time with us. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1, 2, KJV). “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached” (Education, p. 18).

- Life in the Jesus lane. Life in the Jesus lane is life transformed. It’s life with meaning and purpose, life with zest and energy. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). That promise still works. “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

How Adventists Understand Jesus
These affirmations about Jesus—His person and His work—place Adventists in the solid, biblical center of Christian tradition. Of course, not all who might be classified as “Christian” share them today—for instance, liberals who reject His deity or fringe groups that hold that He was created in long-distant time.

Do Adventists, then, have any understanding of Jesus that is unique?

None that is unique; but in two of our emphases we retain perspectives that have almost wholly dropped away from other denominations. First, we understand Jesus’ person and work in the context of His great controversy with Satan. The canvas for the plan of salvation is broad, extending from the time before Creation to the restoration of all things.

Second, we study Christ’s post-cross work, His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. This work does not add anything to the efficacy of His atoning death, but it shows that He is active on behalf of His people today as events rush on to their climax.

Adventists are a people of hope for many reasons, but most of all because of Jesus. He gives us strength for today and hope for tomorrow. “Our lives to the H and that was nailed to the cross for us. He is our security, our song, our bright hope. For “worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Rev. 5:12).

* Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references in this article come from the New International Version.

William G. Johnsson is executive publisher and editor of the Adventist Review.

ADVENTIST REVIEW (147) 19
Modern medicine can do only so much. Real healing comes when we welcome the influence of the divine Healer.

BY FAYE WHITING

ITH HER INTENSE blue eyes and prematurely white hair, Ms. Richards was a dramatic woman. She held a position of high responsibility and visible power at a neighboring hospital; an aura of authority surrounded her. She always called me by my first name with the attitude of a superior; and in spite of the fact that I was her doctor, I somehow felt slightly intimidated by her.

Now as she sat before me, poised and controlled, awaiting her biopsy report, I found myself searching for just the right words.

But how do you say cancer gently? The word itself is an explosion, leaving the ears ringing and the heart pounding.

I told her as gently as I could, carefully watching her face. At first there was a blank, uncomprehending stare, followed by a questioning expression, and then a rush of despair swept over her. I said cancer. She heard death. Nothing else I said—about the good prognosis or the therapeutic plan—registered. Her outer shell crumbled, and she dissolved into uncontrollable sobbing.

The next two weeks that October were busy for her as we planned for surgery. There were lab tests, X-rays, and diagnostic procedures. Then there were arrangements for coverage at work, for someone to pick up the mail and check in on her once she arrived home from the hospital. She told me that she purchased, wrapped, and mailed all of her Christmas presents, washed her car, cleaned her house, and wrote her will. She did all these things mechanically, as a soldier marching to certain death. There was a hollowness and a resignation that I could not get past. When she told me that she had made her own funeral arrangements, I began to worry about her attitude. To her there was no life after cancer; no hope for the future.

I tried to encourage Ms. Richards with statistical data that indicated she had a very good chance to live a long and fulfilling life. I reviewed again the plan for the surgery—what we would do and what she could expect—to no avail. Nothing I said seemed to make a difference. She had cancer, and it was over.

The night before her October 31 surgery I called her.

“How are you doing?” I asked.

“It’s really bad, Faye.” She was on the verge of tears. “I dreamed you came into surgery with a chain saw, and you looked just like Freddy Krueger on those Nightmare on Elm Street horror films. I’m afraid I’m not going to make it.”

I tried to comfort her, but my words sounded empty. Her
attitude greatly concerned me. I don’t like to take into the operating room people who believe they are going to die. The mind has a powerful influence over the body. If she really believed she would die, she just might do it—even though there was no medical reason for it. She desperately needed hope, hope for the future, hope for healing, hope in a Healer.

That night I pondered hope. I remembered hopeless times in my life, medical school being one of them. With a heavy study load and a never-ending lineup of exams, I thought I’d never finish.

Then came national medical boards part one. I failed them the first time I took them, then I failed them again. The board allows three attempts, and then you’re out. After two tries I felt like a failure. My life seemed hopeless, and I lacked the will to fight anymore.

In desperation I cried to the Lord and surrendered myself and my future to Him. Slowly peace and healing came. By the time the final board exam arrived, I was able to walk into the exam with peace and confidence—not because I knew I would pass, but because I had hope. My future as a doctor (or not) was in God’s hands. There was no more need to fear.
The Lord gave me victory that day, and I passed that final exam with a score better than I could have dreamed. I had to learn to surrender and depend on Jesus before I could soar on wings like an eagle.

Now, four more board exams later, with full certification, I still savored the joy of that experience. As an attending physician I needed even more to surrender and depend on Jesus as I faced the heavy responsibilities of each day.

In Christ I had peace, confidence, and hope for the future. I wanted to share this kind of peace with Ms. Richards.

Minutes before surgery I walked into the pre-op holding room to see her. She lay there pale, tense, and resigned—like a lamb being led to the slaughter. I took her icy hand. “Are you ready for this?” I asked.

“I’m scared, Faye,” her voice quivered.

“I need to do one more thing before surgery, if it’s O K with you,” I said softly. “I want to ask the Great Physician to assist me in your surgery.”

“I don’t know what good that will do,” she doubted, “but if you want to, I guess it’s O K.”

So I prayed. I asked the Great Physician to direct the surgery, to hold her in His loving arms while she slept, to heal her body as well as to calm her frightened soul. As I prayed, her hand relaxed, and afterward, when I looked into her eyes, I saw what I wanted to see—the spark of hope.

“Thank you,” she whispered. I knew she was going to make it.

From a medical perspective the surgery was a success. I was delighted to walk into Ms. Richards’ room the next morning and report that the cancer was localized, with no evidence of spreading. Her prognosis was excellent.

For her, however, the news was too good to be true. She hardly dared to believe it. She still had a long road ahead to healing. I had done only so much with the knife; the Great Physician would have to do the rest.

After her discharge from the hospital, Ms. Richards required frequent office visits for cancer surveillance. At first her anxiety level bordered on panic. Every ache, every bump, every bruise was interpreted as a cancer recurrence. So I saw her often, and we carefully investigated each new fear.

Then, as another October rolled around, I began to notice a subtle change. She told me that she had gone on a spiritual retreat as a celebration of her first year of being cancer-free. Our conversations began to evolve into discussions about life and God. Soon we hardly had time to mention cancer anymore.

As the second cancer-free year rolled around, it was evident that I had a new Ms. Richards. Her intense blue eyes sparkled with vitality, and we often laughed together. She carried with her an aura of peace and acceptance. Her icy fear was melting into the ointment of hope.

She had encountered the Great Physician, and He had brought her hope and healing.

Hope for Smokers

By Angela Rosich

After smoking for more than 30 years, Jim Malone had tried everything from chewing gum to hypnosis and acupuncture to kick his habit. After several dozen attempts that left him with jitters, anxiety, and irritability that were more than he could tolerate, Jim said he’d just given up.

“I figured I couldn’t beat this monster,” he says. But on December 4, 1997, Jim Malone celebrated one year of being smoke-free.

Jim, age 46, remembers being a patient at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, and, with his IV in place, getting out of bed to go outside so he could light up a cigarette. That’s when Jim’s doctor suggested that he talk with Dr. Linda Ferry.

The Wall Street Journal (May 5, 1997) quoted Linda Ferry, M.D., M.P.H., as an expert on why smokers don’t quit. Ferry is the chief of the section of preventative medicine at the Pettis Medical Center as well as in charge of the preventative medicine residency program at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda. Ferry has long believed in the connection between depression and nicotine addiction. She was responsible for developing and testing the antidepressant drug buproprion as a way to help smokers kick the habit.

Malone got in touch with Ferry and joined her program, which deals with three components: a patch, pills, and education.

“I’ve smoked almost three decades and never knew half the stuff Dr. Ferry taught me,” says Malone. “She taught me about nicotine and the way it controls the body’s whole system—from your brain to your toenails.”

Buproprion is the first FDA-approved, nonaddicting, nicotine-free medication successfully being used by the Center of Health Promotion in Loma Linda and other organizations to help smokers kick the habit.

This discovery has the potential to save the lives of many of the 450,000 who die from smoking-related diseases in the U.S. each year.

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Hope Through Adversity

In the midst of challenges, people are sharing with people.

BY MARK DRISKILL

"I'M A PLASTIC SURGEON, AND THAT'S the hospital where I work during the day." The taxi driver pointed to a 20-story building. The building stands across a wide boulevard from the seawall that holds back the waves of the Caribbean.

Sure, you're a doctor, I mused to myself. If you are a doctor, why are you driving this taxi? The summer evening was muggy, sticky, miserable actually; I didn't believe a word this man was saying.

"I make about 400 pesos a month working as a doctor, and operating my car as a taxi helps me take care of my family," he continued. Suddenly it hit me: 400 pesos is just about the average monthly wage in this country. And then it made sense to me that a plastic surgeon would be driving a taxi.

Few news stories produce more interest than those about Cuba. Whether it be a story involving President Fidel Castro, reports on Cuba's annual sugar crop, or facts about Cuban baseball, Americans have a fascination with the island nation that lies only 90 miles off the shores of Florida.

Perhaps it is because of the cold war standoff that occurred in Cuba between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1962. Or perhaps the fascination is with a country under the financial strain of embargo that prevents tourists from spending money in (and traveling to) a Caribbean nation that was once a playground of the rich and famous.

Whatever the reason for the fascination, it is easy to forget about the people of Cuba—11 million people with the same hopes and dreams as you and I have. People—parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters—all striving for the best out of life, all hoping their children will do better than they did.

But what kind of hope can there be, you ask, in a place where the economy is a constant challenge, where just getting enough food for a family means buying under four different purchasing systems—when that food is available? What kind of hope can there be in a place where people have been interrogated and sometimes imprisoned for expressing their religious faith?

The doctor/taxi driver reminded me of another doctor I had met just two days before. Dr. Ricardo Isaac is 28 years old, a young man raised in the country's system that elevates education and discourages religious activity. Ricardo told me a story about his life.

"It was during my first year of medical school. My friend Daniel invited me to join him in listening to some radio programs he had been enjoying. As it turned out, they were religious programs. One of our classmates laughed and made fun of us, because he thought religion was a waste of time."

PEOPLE OF

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARK DRISKILL
“But over time, as I continued to listen, I decided to become a Christian. Before this I knew nothing about Jesus or Christianity. Daniel and I began to look for a church. After trying several different churches, I finally found a Seventh-day Adventist church, which taught the things we had learned from the radio. One of those teachings was that we should keep Saturday as the Sabbath. I joined that church.

“Now it has been more than nine years, and I am an active member in a small ‘house church’ on the outskirts of Havana. I love the Lord; He has given me so many blessings. And guess what? Five of my medical school classmates, including Daniel, are active members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church too.

Ricardo continued, “My highest goal is to serve others as Christ did. Please tell my story to others. I hope it will encourage them.”

Because of the economic conditions in the country during the past several years, living in Cuba has become more difficult than ever. Salaries are low, many consumer goods are impossible for the average Cuban to find, and buying enough food for a family is a challenge.

But as the old saying goes, “Hope springs eternal,” and as Paul teaches, “Be joyful in hope.”

In the midst of difficulty in Cuba, or maybe as a result of it, more and more people are seeking spiritual answers to their questions. Even as the economy has become more challenging, the government has allowed more freedom of religious expression. And although there is not true freedom of religion, life for people in Cuba’s Christian community has eased somewhat in recent years.

Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than doubled in the past four years—now about 18,000 members. In addition to large and small churches in cities and suburbs, more than 600 house churches provide the light of Christ’s love in local communities throughout the country.

Largely through the efforts of an organization called Maranatha Volunteers International and a few major donors, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has built and now operates a higher education training school for pastors, giving the Cuban church an opportunity for well-trained local leadership.

Local religious radio programs are not available in Cuba. Church youth leaders use cassette tapes of Your Story Hour and small tape players in local churches to instruct neighborhood children about the Bible. Adventist World Radio broadcasts the gospel to all the people of Cuba by shortwave signal from a radio station in Costa Rica. Indeed, these Adventist World Radio broadcasts are how Ricardo and Daniel first heard the gospel.

In the midst of challenges—both personal and for the organized church—the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba is made up of people who have hope and are sharing it with friends, neighbors, relatives. “We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. . . . A nd hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts” (Rom. 5:2-5, NIV). Truly, Seventh-day Adventists in Cuba are a people of hope.

Mark Driskill, director of development, North America, for Adventist World Radio, writes from the AWR headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.
Uncovering Hope

In the puzzle of life, we get the picture only when we have all the pieces.

BY LARRY G. HERR

I didn’t remember him. Yes, a long time ago, almost once upon a time, I had read my Bible through and must have seen his name. But perhaps I had been so goal-oriented—you know, “Let’s hurry and finish this chapter”—that his small story didn’t affect me much. But he was no small-time person. He had been a king. And I didn’t know him. But that was soon to change.

I had just finished deciphering his name on a small inscription our Adventist archaeological team had uncovered from an ancient Ammonite town in modern Jordan. The object was a small cone made out of pottery. It had probably sealed a small juglet, perhaps filled with olive oil or something more valuable and exotic, such as balsam oil.

On the flat side of the cone, the part that showed when it sealed the juglet, was the impression of a seal with the name of a person who claimed to be a servant of the Ammonite king whose name I now knew was Baalyasha. The name was strange and spelled differently than it is in the Bible (Jer. 40:14), but when, after considerable research, we finally realized what we had found, it turned out to be a triumph for the Bible. But let’s go back to the beginning.

Just a Dirty Lump

Another archaeologist and I were supervising a group of almost 100 students and others, including trained archaeologists from around the world, as we excavated this ancient biblical site. One of the group found the dirt-covered object while he was sifting. This man had never excavated before, though he had taken many archaeology classes. Should he save it? It was just a dirty lump. But under the dirt was something that looked manmade.

Fortunately, he asked one of the experienced archaeologists about it who took the dirt-covered object and irreverently wiped it on his pants to see it better. There, staring up at them, was the faint outline of a bug-eyed insect known as a scarab beetle, an important symbol of royalty and the power of the sun in the ancient world. They looked a little closer and thought they saw traces of writing at the edges.

It was then that I arrived on the scene. They wondered if I would be interested. Was I? Only a momentary glance told me that indeed I was interested. Better, I was thrilled. I had been dreaming about making such a find for years, and here it was, the very first day of our new dig. Now, 13 years after that clod of dirt was almost thrown away, I can say without hesitation that that seal impression was the best find with which I have ever been associated.

Even before I could put the letters together into words, I could tell that they had been written by an Ammonite scribe during the early years of the sixth century B.C. Later, back in camp, where I could use a magnifying glass and a binocular-dissecting microscope, I was able to read the whole inscription. Ancient writing went from right to left. If you use your creativity, you can read it too, on the illustration, because the ancient alphabet is the origin of our own letters.

All Together Now

The first letter (upper line on the right) looks closest to our letter L, and that’s what it was in ancient Ammonite. It’s translated as a preposition meaning “belonging to.” Ancient texts had no vowels and no word dividers, so we
have to work a little harder than we do when we read a book today. On ancient seals the word that follows the L is always the name of the owner of the seal. The second letter has the jagged corners of an M, much like our modern version except with a long leg on the right. Then comes another L followed by a K (just turn it around backwards) and another M. These four letters spell the Ammonite deity Milkom (spelled Milkom in some Bible translations). Names of deities almost always made up parts of people’s names, as they did for Bible people too.

Bible names were usually sentences, and the Ammonite owner of our seal had a similar name. Following the deity’s name are three letters of the word meaning “light” and spelled ‘ur in Ammonite. So the owner of our seal was named Milkom’ur. It was a very typical ancient sentence name and meant “Milkom is light.” A biblical name is similar: ‘Uriah (the Hittite) means “light is Yahweh,” using the name of Israel’s God instead of Milkom (I have also spelled it the way the Hebrew language does, with the apostrophe at the beginning to show the similarity with the Ammonite name).
Underneath the owner's name is an artistic scene with the beetle pushing a small sun disk in front of him. Scarab beetles lay their eggs in small balls of dung and then roll them in front of them as they go. Ancient Egyptians saw this and connected it with the way the sun moves across the sky. On our seal the scarab is flying with its wings outstretched.

Flanking the beetle are two standards with crescent moons on top, supporting the first two letters of Milkom'ur's title (the third and final letter is the first letter of the bottom line). He proclaims his title in this ostentatious way because it's a title fit for a very high official in the government. To us it may not seem so lofty: it means "servant." But when used on seals, the word that follows "servant" is always the name of a king or simply the word "king" ("servant of the king"). It seems that only the highest officials in the land were allowed to use that title. Milkom'ur must have been a prime minister or something like it.

When I realized that the word "servant" was on the seal, it began to dawn on me that we had an important object indeed. The Bible is primarily a book about Israel, and it doesn't tell us much about the nations around it. It looked as though our seal would give us the name of an Ammonite king. I tensed. Would this be a new king, heretofore unknown to history? If not, could it be one mentioned in the Bible, connecting our work with Scripture?

King Who?

I began to read the name of the king (beginning with the second letter on the bottom line—reading right to left). It started with the letter B followed by a letter we don't have in English (it has almost no sound in English, so we don't even write it), and then another L. This makes up the consonants of the god Baal, so our king's name included that god in his sentence name. The next letter was hard to read because a scratch went through it, but under the microscope it was easy to see that it was a Y; then came a letter for the "sh" sound.

The king's name was Baalyasha, meaning "Baal saves." The Bible was right. A near people actually did believe in Baal. At least enough to name their children after him. A nother way of spelling the name is Baalisha (pronounce it Bay-LIE-sha) and corresponds with the Israelite name Elisha, meaning "God saves." Everyone on the dig was very excited about this discovery, of course. But we wanted to know if there was anything in history about King Baalisha.

![It's extremely rare in archaeological excavation to find a direct reference to a biblical story.](image)

One of our staff members, the late Robert Boling, of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, lived at an archaeological research center in Amman. I asked him to see if he could find out anything about this king, referring him to an article that discussed Ammonite kings.

The next day Boling made a stunning announcement. King Baalisha was not an unknown Ammonite king. There was a story about him in the Bible (Jer. 40:13-16). It was only four verses long, but we were thrilled nevertheless, because it's an interesting story describing international relations between Judah, Ammon, and Babylon. Moreover, our seal impression solved a vexing scholarly problem for students of Jeremiah. The Ammonite king's name is there spelled Baalis, completely without meaning except for the god Baal's name. But now we knew that the name was really Baalisha (with a well-understood meaning) and that Jeremiah had probably written down the way he heard the Ammonites say the name. They seem to have pronounced the "sh" sound more like a simple "s" (see the shibboleth/sibboleth story in Judges 12:5, 6, where these very same sounds were confused in speaking).

Salvation's Supporting Players

Baalisha was not a heroic king for Israel. After all, he was an Ammonite. I don't think we would like him much today, either, because he sponsored an international assassin. He conspired with a minor prince of Judah, named Ishmael, to assassinate the governor of Judah, appointed by Nebuchadnezzar after the Babylonians had taken most of the Jews into exile to Babylon. The story occurred in 582 B.C., four years after Jerusalem had been destroyed. The murder precipitated yet another invasion by the Babylonians to punish the Jews that were allied with Ishmael and Baalisha. It was at this time that Jeremiah was forced to flee to Egypt, where he later died.

Although our King Baalisha had been up to no good, it was still thrilling to have a part in finding evidence that confirmed a biblical story. In fact, this was the first time this king's name had been found outside the Bible. I had never before had a part in finding something that related so directly to the Bible. True, I had found plenty of stone walls and broken pieces of pottery (the Bible mentions both of these), but it's extremely seldom that one finds a direct reference to a biblical story.

For me, not only King Baalisha (or Baalis) came alive that day, but so did that other conspirator, Ishmael. The rest of the story of the assassination also became more real (Jer. 41; 42). But it didn't stop there, for the story ends with a prophecy by Jeremiah regarding...
the invasion of the Babylonians that Ishmael’s act would bring about (Jer. 43:8-13). Although the Bible doesn’t say whether this prophecy was fulfilled or not, we know from Babylonian records that it was indeed.

To this day this specific prophecy of Jeremiah, though very minor among all of his prophecies, is an important one for me, because I feel as if I were with him when he uttered it. That seal impression, which was owned by an official of Baalisha’s government, the same government that conspired to kill Gedaliah, opened a window in time for me and allowed me to feel the force of Jeremiah’s prophecy, the certainty of his word. Because that find remains vividly in my memory, that feeling of certainly does as well.

But more than that, this one experience helps me feel the force of other similar prophecies scattered throughout the Bible. These are the prophecies I base my faith upon, prophecies that apply today and are meaningful to my sense of hope.

Can hope come out of the ground? It did for me. Although Baalisha wasn’t someone I would want to emulate, out of his story comes a prophecy, and that prophecy is part of the prophetic story upon which my hope is built. It’s solid. It’s founded deep in the dirt.

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The Young & Restless

A group of young adults discover the secret to young adult involvement.

By T. Lynn Caldwell

Their success flows against the tide of statistics that say, at least in America, that young adults aren’t choosing active church membership or attendance. They meet in what was once a country club ballroom turned church fellowship hall. Their pastor is a trained medical professional turned minister. And by virtue of sheer numbers and consistency, they’re turning young adult ministry toward a new era of hope.

On any given Saturday morning you’ll find heavy traffic turning off Barton Road in Loma Linda, California, to make the brief ascent “up the hill” to the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church. There, at 11:15 a.m., 300 to 400 young adults meet for Young & Restless (Y&R) ministry. This Bible study time is a popular postlude to earlier-in-the-day worship services and corresponds to what Americans have for decades called “Sunday School.”

The success of this innovative ministry is rooted in serious
study of the Bible and a team approach that values and uses the talents of many who attend each week. Needless to say, the volunteerism is intense. A group of 10 coordinators, a director, and a pastor make up the Y&R leadership team, facilitating such services as hospitality, finance, audiovisual operations, music and special events. Y&R ministry even has its own Web page, managed by a volunteer team, which receives 100 hits a week and allows cybersurfers to listen to the weekly Bible study and contact Y&R leadership.

"There's a major misconception about young adults in today's churches," says Pastor Tami McGrew. "Many people perceive them as spoiled and affluent people who play too much and have no interest in faith or church. But what they really are and how they are perceived are two very different things.

"Young adults are looking for the same thing older adults are looking for, and that's a spiritual connection with Jesus Christ," she continues. A recent survey conducted by the ministry underscores McGrew's assertions: 71 percent of attendees at Y&R are under age 30, and an amazing 51 percent have attended Y&R for two to five years.

McGrew is quick to point out that nothing about the Seventh-day Adventist faith is compromised in order to gain this popularity. "I'm unabashedly Seventh-day Adventist," she says. "I don't hide my faith or make apologies for it. I'm proud of the Adventist Church . . . and I don't tone it down." In fact, the leadership team works hard to provide in-depth, quality Bible study at each week's session.

According to Gary Walter, director of Y&R, one of the most important messages to share with young adults and ministers is that they could start their own Y&R ministries in other places. "There are people in Kansas, Oregon, and New Jersey who would love to have a group like this in their church," he says. "It's a blessing for us to share our story so that other young people can find abundant life in Christ and their church through Bible study."

Pastor McGrew recently took an hour to answer questions about the nontraditional ministry she helps to lead.

Caldwell: What are the goals of the Young & Restless ministry?

McGrew: The first goal of Y&R is to lift up Jesus Christ to young adults. We want to feed people spiritual food and [smiling] literal food. [Refresh-
ments are served at every Y&R function. Other goals flow from this: sharing with young adults something that really matters and affects everyday life, making faith so simple and exciting that it’s easy to share. We want Y&R to be a safe place to discuss anything with the guidance of the Bible.

If young adults are attending church services, why develop and run a Bible study ministry?

Because the two experiences are completely different. A church service is a place where you go to be drawn into worship—to praise and pray together and hear the Word preached. A Bible study fellowship has entirely different goals. Y&R’s purposes include:

- Encouraging daily Bible study experiences during the week, not just on Saturday mornings.
- Providing a forum where young adults can tell others what God is doing in their lives.
- Creating opportunities for the fellowship of believers.

Our interactive Bible study helps us realize that God wants to make an impact on all our lives throughout each week.

Why would Y&R attendees believe this ministry is relevant to their lives?

Relating to a group like this means becoming vulnerable to 400 people. I try to open up a picture of my life and say to them, “This is where my spirituality has changed my life.” I’ve learned to share both good and bad life experiences to make Bible study relevant. I think that’s what makes our fellowship useful for people: all our teachers come with their real-life experiences—little things, big things—and show how God has worked in their lives.

How have you marketed this ministry to its specific audience?

There’s no marketing plan, except for prayer. The only thing we knew when we started was that we had a large young adult population in need of some specific attention. The approach that we used in women’s ministries and that we also used with Y&R is simple: lift up Jesus Christ through quality Bible study and let the Holy Spirit take over.

How does Y&R try to reach out to the individual who never comes to church?

Our members feel comfortable bringing colleagues, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. On any given Saturday morning we have visitors from other faith traditions as well as those with no real faith background. We keep the seeker very much in mind.

What’s your favorite aspect of this ministry?

Through Y&R I’ve connected with a group of spiritual individuals within
the Seventh-day Adventist Church who give me confidence for the church's future. I've not found a greater level of spirituality in any other group. I've found fresh Christian support and encouragement. These young people are wise. They’re smart. They’re the spiritual giants I lean on. They know the Lord.

Speaking of young leaders, what about the new speaker-coordinator just appointed for Y&R?

We’ve launched new speaker development to prepare Y&R members for a variety of speaking opportunities in Y&R as well as future responsibilities in their own churches. We mentor them in speaking skills and give them opportunities to teach Bible lessons.

How have you grown as a Christian as a result of your ministry with Y&R?

God has taught me so clearly that I’m not the one in charge. He decides what’s going to get done and how it will be done. If I want to be a part of His party, He’s more than happy to include me, but He really doesn’t need me. I don’t take a lot of credit for this program. I’ve just never had so much fun in my life!

How do you and the Y&R leadership team define success?

If Jesus Christ has been lifted up and accurately represented, then we have all the success we need. We count the ministry successful if someone says, “I didn’t know Jesus until I came here.”

What does the future hold for Y&R?

I wouldn’t even want to speculate. Whatever I’d set as a goal or think is the plan may be so different from God’s plan. That is what’s so fun—watching God unfold the future as we move along.

But let me tell you what I believe about this generation’s future. This generation is often cited as the generation that stands for nothing. Some say they have no big causes. But I believe they do!

I believe this group of young adults will finish the work of God. They have the biggest cause that has ever been given to any group of people. We’ve got a responsibility to train them and connect them to each other so that they can do the job they’re destined to do.

T. Lynn Caldwell is associate director of communication at the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.
I'm an inmate in a county jail in California.

The devil says I'm hopeless, that I don't matter, that I deserve everything I'm getting. Of course, he says lots of things like that. What else does he have to do? He doesn't create. He has nothing to look forward to except eternal damnation. He must hate his situation, especially when he thinks of what he left behind. Wasn't he the highest created being? The most he can hope for now is flame-retardant clothes.

I can't imagine where I would be without hope. I would be hopeless, right? Sure, I have been labeled hopeless before, but not by anyone who matters.
Sadly, some people live without any hope at all. When we think of one who has no hope, we might think of a person in a refugee camp, totally dependent on others for food, clothing, and shelter; or a homeless person rambling aimlessly down a back alley of any large city. In society today we seem to associate hopeless with homeless—seeing someone who has nothing in contrast to those who apparently have everything.

The devil has subtly changed our minds to think we need financial security to avoid being stereotyped as hopeless. But if we look to our Bibles, we will find throughout the entire book the exact opposite. For example, the story in Luke 21:1-4 about the woman who gave her last two copper coins for an offering. I imagine her without family, owning only the tattered clothes on her back, with a worn bag hanging from her arm. But what did she do? She gave all she had—everything. Why?

Why should she give everything to God? Did she have hope? I should say so! As a matter of fact, she had nothing but hope. Is that enough? Yes, it is! It was important enough that Jesus Christ Himself made a point of it. He said, “All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on” (verse 4, NIV).

Webster defines hope as an expectation that what is desired will come to pass. What do we desire? We’d be embarrassed to mention some of our desires. What was Jesus’ desire? His only desire was to do His Father’s work. His only desire was to save us.

In order to understand what God wants for us, we need look only as far as the cross. If we desire to be like Him, our lives will be changed. He didn’t have any material possessions, but yet He is hope. Our Lord died penniless, without even clothes on His bruised and bloodstained body, but He had hope—a hope that by dying for us we may have eternal life.

Let me tell you about my hopes. First of all, I hope someday I can walk into my church and acknowledge publicly Jesus as my Saviour. I think of all the times I went to church and wished I was anywhere else. The tie was too tight, the pants were too short, the sermon was way too long—my mind was a thousand miles away. The next time you are in church, think of me in jail, dreaming of the day, praying and hoping for the day, when I can worship with you in God’s house.

Second, I hope to participate in Communion in my church. I want to wash the feet of my earthly father, symbolizing the washing away and confession of my sins for the grief I have brought him and my heavenly Father. I want to eat the bread representing His body, and I want to drink the grape juice, a reminder of the blood of Jesus shed for me.

And I hope to be able to help the less fortunate. I want to fill Christmas baskets and hand them to those who have less than I do. I want to work in a mission field and help feed and clothe disaster victims. I want to do as much as the Lord will allow me to do.

Realizing what Jesus did makes me long for the day when I may thank Him face-to-face. But until that day our main purpose should be to seed our hope of salvation so those who come after us need only to harvest the willing. We must finish that for which Christ died, for only in His death is there freedom from hopelessness and despair. And only through His resurrection is there hope for life eternal.

Skip is an inmate at Orange County Jail in Santa Ana, California.
Finding My Voice

It had been a long, long time.

BY NANCY CARVER ABBOTT

W E HAVE A HOPE THAT IS LIVING. I sang the words in my head. The sermon was nearly over, and soon it would be us, the choir. I closed my eyes and took a few deep breaths.

It was Easter Sabbath, and I was about to sing my first solo in more than a decade. Jane, my alto singing buddy, elbowed me and whispered, “You ready?” I shrugged. My solo was only 16 bars long, but during practice it seemed to stretch into eternity. I didn’t know if I was ready. I didn’t even know why I was there.

I still remember the day I decided to stop attending church for good. One winter morning in 1984 I sat up with a start and looked at the clock—8:00. I wanted to pull the covers over my head and pass out, but my son was jiggling his crib slats, and I could hear my father puttering in the kitchen. Everyone needed breakfast, and I was going to be late for work again.

As I rushed from chore to chore that morning—trying to find clean bottles and a missing left shoe, stopping to answer an endless barrage of questions from my father regarding everything from proper microwave operation to the possibility of freezing weather—I thought back over most mornings the past three months.

My mother and I hadn’t been getting along very well. It’s not that we fought or anything; we just didn’t talk anymore. She and Dad dropped by on the first leg of a vacation trip. I watched her play with the baby and thought maybe it would give us a common bond. I tried to remember her name. Katherine Louise? Katherine Elizabeth?

After two years of off-and-on attendance, I know very few of the members. It’s been easier that way. I started coming because my father was too old to care for himself anymore and needed a ride. Now he can no longer attend,

The truth is, I just don’t know.

Everything after the car wreck was a blur. I couldn’t concentrate, couldn’t eat, couldn’t sleep. At 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, after lying awake for hours, I would finally doze off, only to waken a few hours later, already behind. Constantly exhausted and mildly nauseated, I didn’t realize I was pregnant again. I thought I was just lazy.
On the way to work that morning in 1984, I decided the nightmare had to stop no matter what it took. I told myself, “Your mommy’s not here to take care of you anymore, so stop being lazy and start getting things done.”

My method of cleaning up my life involved throwing things away. I started with major hobbies. Childish they were, and away they needed to go. I sold my guitar and music, and took the large file box full of everything I’d ever written to the nearest dumpster.

Stuck to the refrigerator with a magnet was a letter from my former church asking about a membership transfer. My husband and I had been debating this. We hadn’t been to church more than twice in the past three years. Should we switch both our memberships to a church in town? Would we ever attend again?

I thought maybe.
He thought not.

I fingered the letter for a moment, considering. No God in His right mind would make life this awful. I put the letter in the trash with the rest of the childish stuff and thought that was the end of religion for me—until I wandered into the Marietta church with Dad.

Since then my mind has been full of strongly conflicting thoughts, from “Why ever would I want to bother with religion again?” to “How come I never understood the meaning of grace before?”

Most of us who grew up in the church knew without a doubt that we were lost sinners. We learned it early; we heard it often. When I was a kid, no matter how hard I had tried, I never felt good enough to be saved. In the back of my mind was the constant fear, What if you’re just a pretender?

I don’t know if I’ve changed or the church has, but things seem different now. I first noticed it when a friend of mine said, “God loves us so much—we actually have to fight to get out of His grip.”

Pastor Jim walked back to the choir. This time the keyboard introduction started. I stepped up to the mike, watching Jim with one eye and the kicking baby with the other. The introduction wound to a close. I inhaled and plunged into my solo:

“We have a hope that is living.
A nd love that never will end.
W e have a God who’s forgiven us.
W hile we were yet in sin.”
As I sang, it hit me—this is why I keep coming back. Because if there really is a God, the God this church has shown me is one I can’t refuse.

Nancy Carver Abbott is a mother, computer analyst, and humorist who writes from Marietta, Georgia.
Believing,
Living,
Hoping...

A n illustrated triptych of hope
requiring one's imagination.

And there they stand, around a water well located just a few hundred yards from their village. Their dresses in full color, embroidery and all, are on full display. It is the women's task to carry the water back to the village. They take turns pulling up a four-gallon tin bucket and filling each other's containers. Seeing us approaching, several of them cover their heads and faces with scarves.

"Just like in the Bible," I hear myself remark. "It's like Jacob's well."

My thoughts quickly adjust to appreciate a scene at once so remarkable in its symbolism and imagery. The image of a water well will soon become soul-stirring in ways that only a trip to the Moidan desert can bring about. That Sunday morning I was to witness a heart-wrenching scene of what it takes to survive . . . without water.

Our jeep is making its way toward the Baboo village. The dwellings are typical of the area; the sun's heat is equally typical! The simplicity of the dwellings, where life seems untouched by technological civilization, speaks volumes about the people who have been there forever, it seems, with extended families continuing into generations. The village belongs to Mr. Baboo. He owns everything here, I am told—the goats, the huts, and the women.

The women are there to serve. They are the ones who look after the daily happenings of their village life.

The younger ones, in their teens, are dressed in the most beautiful cotton dresses, with intricate embroidery around pieces of mirror glittering in the scorching midday sun. They are the water women. Their task is to carry goatskins full of water from a nearby mountain spring. The cooking and the washing wouldn't happen if it weren't for their sweat and tears.

They trek back and forth, several kilometers each way, and carry 20, 30, 50 pounds of water on their heads. The scorching sun is not helping any. When they arrive at the village, they collapse with exhaustion, only to return for another round in the afternoon.

Day in and day out. The water women of Baboo.
Naomi is first to jump out of the jeep. It is then that I encounter a scene that makes a lasting impression on me.

Soon we are surrounded by dozens of women and children. They are running from everywhere. The scene turns out to become a welcome reception for a woman whose presence is symbolic of what Adventism embodies best—a presence of hope.

“You came, you came,” says an elderly woman squeezing the nurse’s arm. “You must come to see my boy.” She is pointing to her stomach. Soon the nurse is bending over a child and asking questions that would determine what the baby boy was eating or drinking. A few minutes later the boy stops crying, and Naomi has added to her reputation as a miracle maker.

“All that we are doing here is bringing hope to these people. Yes, the situation is obvious—lack of water, poor nutrition, and the effects are as you see them. But there is hope on the horizon,” she remarks.

The scenes in Baboo’s village allow me to encounter Seventh-day Adventists at their best—a people of hope, whose Christian mission is lived through acts of service.

And the hospital team is no exception. When I meet them, I see a group of people whose responsibility is to implement the daily operations of the Karachi Adventist Hospital Child Survival Project. But soon I am privileged to meet and observe a group of people who are responding to the needs of the poorest of the poor. Yes, they call them the Baboo angels, but all they really do is to share their vocation with those who need help most.

The Child Survival Project in Moidan covers 400,000 people, I am told. The project coordinators consider water supply as the main problem causing lack of hygiene and dehydration among the inhabitants. Once the water well is drilled, thousands of people will improve their situation, they explain. It is obvious that the well will provide a healthy service to dozens of villagers, mostly children. And to it the immunization and child-care awareness, and you will have created a base for a healthier community.

Today the dwellings enjoy a nearby water well drilled by funding from Canada and through a joint effort of the Karachi Adventist Hospital, the health authorities of the municipality of Karachi, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

But the story does not end there. The story is amplified when one visits the numerous adult literacy classes, simply conducted under an open sky. These are our roofless classrooms, I am told. No shade is cast over the future they create.

I take pride in the fact that this story belongs to my church.

FACELESS MOTHERS. The story of the “miracle makers” from Karachi does not stop there. My second trip to the area presents me with other encounters, dotted with surprises. We next visit a refugee camp.

Similar to the scenes from Bosnia or Rwanda, which are to come later, the war in Afghanistan has left the world with the TV-screen images of people on the run. Tightly clutching their belongings, they walk and walk in hope.
But the scenes change. Now their lives take a temporary stage in a refugee camp. The change is accompanied by the ever-present desire to see an end to this wandering and this exile.

For the inhabitants of the numerous refugee camps near Karachi, the glimpses of hope arrive in a jeep from the “seven-day hospital,” as the Karachi Adventist Hospital is often referred to. We park just outside a camp clinic. Within minutes the scene overwhms with poignant imagery. This is where I meet the “faceless mothers.”

The queue displays pastel-colored dresses of mothers holding children in their arms. They are bringing their babies to be inoculated. The babies will also be weighed and checked over. The mothers will be instructed in child care. These are routine tasks performed by the hospital team.

All seems routine, including the sight—the absence of the mothers’ faces. Their faces are covered, a customary fashion for Muslim women. Their faces are not to be seen by strangers like you, I am instructed.

The symbolism of it all overwhms. Faceless or not, the need is there, and the cure is there. The younger children, surrounded by the equally inquisitive fathers, peek through the glassless clinic window. All are summoned to watch the “hope makers,” as one ventures to describe the medical team in action.

The babies cry, the older kids giggle, and the fathers acquiesce. The camera records acts of hope. The babies will also be weighed and checked over. The faces are not to be seen by strangers like you, I am instructed.

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A SHrine TO HOPE. The bloodstains are still visible on the building walls. They will be there as a memorial, I am told. They need to be there, because they symbolize hope. It’s the hope that goes beyond the grave.

On March 16 it will be 10 years since the murder of Peter Knopper, an Australian missionary to Papua New Guinea. The murderers are unknown, but the memory of Peter is still present in Homu, the school for Adventist laypeople where he was working. He was attacked by unknown assailants nearly on the doorstep of his home.

The images drawn for me as I observed the scene continue to bring forth dual feelings. Both hit me at once. The feeling of anger comes first. Not just the obvious “Why?” that

strong. There is something sacred about the whole matter to these people, I am told.

The next stop is at the church. In its lobby I pause to reflect on a simple commemorative plaque and a display case. In it, I study the Knopper family picture and his Bible. It’s the one he preached from. The Bible is open to the passage of Scripture Peter used during his last sermon at the church.

The words of Pastor Stephen Kamae, who is now responsible for the school and the district of Homu, continue to speak loud and clear to my own Christian experience.

“A fter Peter Knopper was murdered,” he says, “I was asked to come and lead out in our laymembers’ school here. At first I thought to myself, T his is a dangerous place. It would be scary to accept the position. Then I reflected, IF Peter was not afraid to come to help us here in a foreign land, how can I be afraid? And I accepted the challenge.”

As I walk through the school compound, my attention quickly shifts to the laughter of children. There, that’s the legacy of Peter, I think. The children carry the hope that Peter dedicated his life for. The school’s classroom is full of boys and girls from the nearby villages. Theirs is a testimony that hope never dies.

Such is my encounter with what my church does well—it provides quality Christian education around the world. No need to be bashful about my feelings—yes, I am proud that my church practices what it believes.

Acts of compassion. Acts of hope. Too numerous to recall. All are strong. There is something sacred about the whole matter to these people, I am told.

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Acts of compassion. Acts of hope. Too numerous to recall. All are strong. There is something sacred about the whole matter to these people, I am told.
I'm sitting next to this guy on the plane. Already I'm wondering if he thinks I'm weird, since I'm not taking the free wine with my meal. Which is, of course, a special meal anyway, so he's noticed that. He starts probing for reasons.

Not that I'm paranoid, you understand. Nor is it my traditional English reserve, I hope. But I'm ready for the question when it eventually comes.

“So what are you?” A sin “what kind of strange religion do you belong to?”

Am I ready for an interrogation? I ask myself. I start thinking of answers. I'm ready to explain that I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, and that I don't drink or smoke or eat meat, with the backup line that I'm not a member of some other religious organizations he might have confused Adventists with. (It does happen!)

But then (thankfully) I'm hit with a reality check. He asked me what I am, not what I am not. He wants to know what I do, not what I don't.

I start with the health line. I explain why Adventists are strong on healthy living. But he just nods his head and says, “Makes sense.”

So I try the future angle. How Adventists have hope in God's wonderful future for this world. “That would be good,” he comments flatly.

Now I'm concerned. What does it take to get him interested? Then he turns to me and asks, “You're a Seventh-day Adventist then. So what's all this about the Sabbath? What about worshipping on a Saturday? Isn't that a real problem?”

Now I'm intrigued. “Why should the seventh-day Sabbath be a problem?” I ask him.

“Well, to start with, what about missing all those ball games? Wouldn't that be difficult?” he asks.

I don't want to admit that the delights of American football, baseball, and basketball have left this English traditionalist totally unaffected. But I see his point— at least if it meant missing a cricket match or a soccer game!

“Yes, but it's a question of priorities. Spending time with God is more important than a ball game, surely?”

He nods. “Maybe. But then there's all the shopping you need to do, and fixing cars, and mowing lawns—if you can't do that on Saturdays, then that's a real pain.” He looks me in the eye, showing definite interest.

I decide this is not the time to relate the many hours my mother dragged me around all the department stores in town, effectively vaccinating me for life against shopping as a pleasure. As for fixing cars and mowing lawns . . .

“Of course, Adventists have to find time to do all those . . .
“things,” I say with a smile. “We just choose to keep Sabbath special.”

“So it's a rule then? No work—that's what the church demands. Or is it because it's a commandment and if you don't do it, you won't be saved?” he asks firmly and directly.

“No, it's not like that,” I reply, hopefully with some grace. “Keeping the Sabbath for me is not a question of rules and regulations, but what I choose. That does mean there are some things I do and some I don't. It's not a question of being legalistic; instead, I'm being true to myself and what I want from my relationship with God. I choose to agree with God when He tells me to keep the Sabbath holy, because God has my best interests at heart. For me Sabbath is the best day of the week.”

“You just take a rest then. I wouldn't mind that, I guess.” For a moment he sounds wistful.

“More than a rest—a total recharge! And sometimes that means Sabbath is the busiest day. Spending time with God doesn't necessarily mean being inactive. It's my quality time with the God who made me and is remaking me. I wouldn't miss that for the world.”

He pauses before replying softly, “I can see that. I get so busy that I just don't have time to stop and think. Sometimes I think I'm going nuts. What with the pressure of work, my family problems, and everything else, I often feel it's just not worth it. What is the point of all the money and power and prestige if you don't have any time to take off? I really wish I had something like that, which would make me ease up once in a while. You're really sensible.”

Sensible? Maybe. But I can't leave the Sabbath there as a convenient rest stop on life's busy highway. For though the “Sabbath was made for man,” who made it, and why?

So I start explaining about God as Creator and the Sabbath as His last act in the Creation drama. That He blessed the day and made it special right there in the very beginning. That to make time holy was a truly inspired and brilliant idea—for any place or object, or anything tangible and physical, would soon have become the focus of worship instead of God Himself. But it's really hard to worship a day, a period of time!

I explain that the Sabbath is the sign, the emblem, of my relationship with the God, who is not the distant governor of the universe, but the One who walks with me in the cool of the day. That on His Sabbath I can really
come close to Him, and share all my concerns and worries, all my praise and my joy, without worrying about all the other things I “need” to do.

That the Sabbath is the promise of God’s continued interest and care week by week by week and into eternity. That the Sabbath gives me—poor, deficient, feeble, little old me—my regular reassurance of hope. Hope that I need so badly because there is so much in this world that can lead to hopelessness and despair. Hope that conquers the terrifying prospect of time running out, of there being nothing left. Hope that says there is time, that there will always be time, if I hug God close to me.

“Hope?” he asks.

Yes, hope. For while in Genesis the Sabbath reminds us of God as Creator, and in Exodus as commandment giver, God as the source of hope is the essential future-in-the-present aspect of Sabbath. God’s future promises become real in the Sabbath of the present.

Jesus died on a Friday afternoon. He rested in the grave that awesome Crucifixion Sabbath, dead yet ready with intense anticipation of rising again. And with His glorious resurrection came the total assurance of victory—over death, over evil, over the inevitable passing of time that slowly kills us every week.

For we are all dying, and every week takes us closer to our graves. But the Sabbath each week points us to that hope beyond death, the amazing truth that time cannot kill us or our relationship with God.

Sabbath is the reminder of the world made new, when all will still meet to spend that wonderful time together with God. That time when God shall share together with those who will live forever, to wipe away the tears from their eyes, and they shall be His people, and He shall be their God . . .

I’ve almost forgotten my seatmate. Talking to myself, it all seems so clear and so real. The Sabbath hope reminds me of the God I love, the God who is forever true and right. The God I love and admire right now, and the God I wish to spend all eternity with, day by day, week by week, year by eternal year.

“So this Sabbath stuff is about God, really. Not about commands or requirements or rituals. Not about doing this or not doing that. It’s about God—and hope.” He seems satisfied, and yet positively ready to hear more.

I nod, and wonder why I didn’t say it as simply as that.

“It’s about God—and hope.”

Jonathan Gallagher, a native of England, is news director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Through the Spokes of Grandma's Wheelchair

What a way to learn about the Advent!

BY WALTER L. PEARSON, JR.

T WAS A FAMILIAR ROUTINE BY NOW. Without a word my brother and I would take up our customary stations on the floor at either side of our grandmother's wheelchair. We would stare silently at each other through the spokes and listen to her fervent prayer, which concluded in the words that end the Scriptures: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

The fear and anguish that had overshadowed our faces when we first heard Grandmother's prayer mellowed over time into vague, worried expressions. But for a long time we remained apprehensive that those prayers might be enough to trigger that awesome event.

Grandmother began her days by laboriously maneuvering her large, cumbersome wheelchair to a place in the apartment bathed in the morning sun pouring through an eastern window. Suffering, as she did, from a chronic arthritic condition, she often faced mornings of particular intensity, overwhelmed by pain. But often we'd watch quietly as her tears of torment turned into tears of joy, an instant change she always attributed to prayer and not just to the warming effects of the morning sun. But recognizing that each morning began with the same distress, she would plead daily for the return of Christ. Only that event, she felt, would banish pain completely and wipe away her tears once and for all.

Much as we understood Grandmother’s reasons, however—and good as the Second Coming idea was for her or for the other folks at church who, like her, loved to dwell upon the theme—that kind of talk was not welcome with us kids. Our yearning, rather, was to reach the age of majority and slip beyond parental control before Jesus comes. In other words, we wanted to “experience life.” And while Grandmother seemed convinced that the coming of Christ was the answer to all problems, we weren’t so sure.

Grandmother’s faith gave her words impressive authority. She spoke about the coming of Jesus as if it could happen immediately. Her belief was so infectious that I sometimes peered out the window, searching the sky for the signs we’d been taught would herald Christ’s appearing. Others talked about this momentous phenomenon. Grandmother made it real!

As I grew older, I became disabused of the notion that a preponderance of years automatically brought self-determination. I also discovered that parental control was not necessarily a curse, that what most people meant by the expression “experiencing life” was highly overrated, and that Grandmother’s prayer was neither presumptuous nor preemptive. Moreover, I learned that those mental snapshots from my childhood suggest important reasons Christ must return soon.

Take a look again at my grandmother's pain. And consider my family's plight. Arguably representing modern society in microcosm, such realities constitute strong reasons for the return of Jesus. The human condition cries out for a better place.

Relief From Pain

Physical and psychological pain is a reality of contemporary life. Stereotypically, we usually think that such pain affects only those whose socioeconomic status prevents them from receiving the best medical treatment, for example; or...
from enjoying the most favorable standard of living. In truth, however, pain and suffering impact everyone. Nobody is exempt. Regardless of sophisticated security measures, there is no community that can guarantee absolute protection and relief from earthly troubles. Notwithstanding the relative advantages that disposable wealth affords, money cannot buy freedom from heartache. In one form or another, problems visit penthouses and gated communities as frequently as they do low-income housing developments. Stress pierces tinted limousine windows.
as effectively as it does the smeared glass in econoboxes.

But none can deny that our joys are mitigated by an increasing burden of anguish as we near the end of this millennium. When He came as a babe in Bethlehem’s manger, Christ offered the more abundant life (John 10:10). But until He comes again, the only peace that Christians can really claim is which comes in spite of pain.

The second coming of Jesus will bring an end to pain and suffering, and God will wipe away all tears (Rev. 21:4; 7:17). That is the promise of God. Those who sow in tears will reap in joy (Ps. 126:5).

Genuine Equality

When I was a child, we considered ourselves blessed to live in a government housing project. But in all honesty, we realized that our demographic identities were distorted by our address. People are often treated differently based on factors that they cannot control. Inequities persist notwithstanding the many intrepid efforts to banish them. And many hardworking ordinary people must struggle to make a living under difficult circumstances every day.

This is not intended to refer only to situations of gender or racial inequality, for that approach would alienate a significant percentage of the population based simply on the heat that has historically been generated by such discourse. The fact is that even among the empowered there is rampant unfairness, and privileged people also suffer unfair treatment.

Still, it is true to say that in this world, power has been concentrated in the hands of the few, while the overwhelming majority are barely able to make ends meet. The unequal distribution of wealth fuels strife between the haves and the have-nots around the globe (see James 4:1). A nd we are forced eventually to face the difficult conclusion that the inherent greed of humankind will probably never allow for the emergence of a truly egalitarian societal structure. Instead, all indicators suggest a widening of the gap between

Source of Hope

Conversation in the household where I grew up was sprinkled with references to “the blessed hope.” My grandmother and my mother had been infused with hope from the time they came in contact with Adventist preaching during an old-fashioned tent meeting. Determined to be part of these people of hope, they were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

So while many of our neighbors saw life as practically futile, we cherished a transcendent trust in the coming of Jesus, an attitude that affected every other aspect of our lives. Marxism holds that religion favors the powerful and prosperous while leaving the disenfranchised to patiently await their reward after death. But Christianity offers far more than pie in the sky by and by. For while it is true that those who from their own experience have come to love and trust Jesus cannot help but want to be with Him eternally, it is also true that a real relationship with Christ is so satisfying that for many Christians that in itself would be worthwhile even if heaven did not exist. So while as a family we never depended on optimism based solely on some future joy, we nevertheless saw the return of Christ as proof of the caring relationship that exists between Him and those who claim His name.

A Better Place

Christ prefaced His great promise with an appropriate consolation: “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1). The words suit our times perfectly. We are witnessing today the unraveling of structures that have served to anchor our society through the years—their implosion, however, testifies magnificently to their bankruptcy.

Increasingly, human society appears out of control. The pillars crumble, role models abdicate, and in response, a nervous monetary system teeters on the brink of disaster.

Superintendents of education fear principals. Principals fear parents. Teachers fear parents and students. And students seem to fear nobody. Judges berate lawyers. Lawyers distrust police officers. Police officers are outnumbered by criminals. A nd criminals care about nobody but themselves. This is a time of troubled hearts. As the Bible warned long ago, people’s hearts will fail for fear in the last days, “for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:26).

But the words of Christ shine even brighter against this bleak backdrop. Said Jesus, “I go to prepare a place for you.” That actually would have been quite ample for our present situation, but He makes the declaration even more personal: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there
ye may be also” (John 14:3).

Relief from pain is important. Just government is as well. But these pale in the light of the glory of the prospect of living in the presence of Jesus, who gave Himself for us.

A Fitting Conclusion

Those who seek to amass power have set themselves on a course that conflicts with the will of the Almighty. They have alienated Him from their processes and trampled the rights and welfare of others with arrogance and apparent impunity. This will not be allowed to continue.

David asks rhetorically: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed . . . ?” The response? “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh” (Ps. 2:1-4).

The plan has been laid, though God alone knows the timetable (Matt. 25:13). Having accepted the sacrifice of His only begotten Son on Calvary for humankind, the Father has promised the Son that the enemies of the kingdom shall be made His footstool (Ps. 110:1). I think we have begun to see those words coming to pass.

I came to realize long ago what it was that my parents had learned. I finally experienced enough of living to catch a gleam in my eye when the thought comes to mind of God’s wiping away all tears from our eyes. I finally understood that my fears while sitting beside Grandmother’s wheelchair as a boy were totally unfounded. And I can now sense the joyful vision she saw so clearly—the vision of the glorious coming of Jesus.

Walter L. Pearson, Jr., is director/speaker of the Breath of Life telecast.
Welcome to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Your Community.

Should you decide to accept this invitation to visit the Seventh-day Adventist church near you this week, you will join others who, like you, wish to celebrate love. Our amazing, awesome heavenly Father, whose love for you is matched only by His infinite wisdom and power, is eagerly waiting for all of us to spend a special time each week in fellowship with Him.

We’ll introduce you, if you haven’t met Him already, to our Older Brother, Jesus Christ, whose devotion to you was demonstrated centuries ago when He died in your place on a lonely, bloodstained cross.

For Seventh-day Adventists the weekly Saturday morning worship experience is central to the development of a wonderful life in Christ. Worldwide, every Adventist congregation meets on Sabbath morning for study, worship, and fellowship.

Members and visitors gather, first of all, for “Sabbath school,” which generally begins at about 9:30 a.m. After meeting together to sing, share, and hear reports of worldwide mission endeavors, Sabbath school members may divide into small groups for Bible study and discuss the weekly lesson contained in the Sabbath school quarterly. This study guide is produced in all major languages so that members around the world can study the same topic together each week.

About 11:00 a.m. the worship service begins, and typically includes congregational singing, prayers, the giving of tithes and offerings, a children’s story, musical selections, and a presentation from God’s Word. In some churches there is a fellowship dinner, and visitors are invited to stay and share the food prepared by members of the congregation.

The foundation of our fellowship—the “glue” of unity that holds us together—is love. We want to surround you with that divine love that imparts peace and contentment as we voice our love for God. We want you to feel that you are in a safe and caring haven.

The hosts at the church door will welcome you warmly. And so will Jesus.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .

As a people, we hold the Bible in supreme regard as the revealer of God's truth to guide us to salvation.* Our love and devotion is rooted supremely in Jesus Christ, whom we worship as our Saviour, Creator, Lord, and King.

We believe that forgiveness, healing, and eternal life are offered to all on the basis of what Jesus has already accomplished for us at the cross and continues to do as He ministers on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary above. God's mercy and grace are infinite, and are received by faith to prepare a people for Jesus' second coming.

The "New Covenant" provides not only forgiveness for sin but also God's promise to write His law on our hearts so that our greatest joy will be to do His will. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives we keep His commandments, not in order to be saved, but because He has already encircled us in His saving arms. His law includes also the fourth commandment, which invites us to spend a special time of fellowship with God on the seventh day.

We feel compelled as a people to share with a perishing world these messages of God's love in the context of His final judgment-hour message in Revelation 14. We believe that our world is now approaching the last stage of an age-long controversy between good and evil, and that men and women of every race, nation, and language are invited to respond to God's message of hope while there is yet time. We also believe that the biblical gift of prophecy will function in the worldwide fellowship of believers to encourage God's people and call attention to the timeless truths of Scripture.

Because of our devotion to Jesus, we look forward to His soon return, when we shall see our Saviour face-to-face and those of our loved ones who will be resurrected with Him.

* For additional information about the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, you are invited to write for a free copy of a pamphlet entitled "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists": Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, or visit the Web site at http://northamerica.adventist.org, or call 1-800-253-3000.

Facts About the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today

Worldwide:

- Membership 9,479,718
- Churches 42,220
- Countries with Adventist presence* 204
- Schools 5,478
- Enrollment 914,789
- Hospitals and sanitariums 161
- Clinics and dispensaries 313
- Nursing homes, retirement centers, orphanages, children's homes 113

* Countries and areas recognized by the United Nations—230.

Hands of Hope

Showcasing the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its people and mission, this just-off-the-press booklet answers frequently asked questions about Adventists, describes the principal features of the church from proclamation to discipling, and shares personal testimonies from those who have chosen to be Seventh-day Adventists.

Through highly artistic design, images, and words, this publication describes Adventists as a vibrant faith community. People of hope? Yes. Hands of hope? Certainly.

To purchase your copy, call 1-800-600-7197, or write to Hope, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 W. Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740.
Rainbows
by Rebecca Clendenon

Tears come like rain
Smiles like the sun
One day it's one
The next the other
And sometimes both.

Why do they come
So different, the same?
Why do they leave
So easily, so hard?

Tears and smiles
Together so sad
Together so beautiful
Like the sun and rain
Together, a rainbow.

Johnny Made Whole, painted by Nathan Green, hangs in the lobby of the Florida Hospital. This painting is part of the Hart Classic Editions Library of Outreach Art 1-800-487-4278.

Christ, the source of hope, is portrayed in the sculpture Welcome Home, by Victor Issa.
“One More Chance”—
A Song of Hope*

by John Stoddart

There’s Someone who loves you, thinking of you.
He knows all about you,
That somehow you would find a way to shine.

Just when I stopped believing,
You gave me hope that let me keep on dreaming.
Just when I thought I would never reach the end,
You gave me one more chance to begin
And fall in love again.

When your dreams are fading and your faith is wavering,
There’s a dream worth saving.
I’ll be waiting.
You’re crawling now; one day you’ll learn to fly.

Lord, You know it’s You that I adore.
Every day I learn to love You
Even more,
And more, and more (and more).

* Used with permission.