

DYNAMIC Steward

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July-September, 2013

Stewards of Hope

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Jesus Is Our Hope!

DYNAMIC Steward



My all in response to God's all!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The articles in this publication have been revised slightly or updated to conform to the intended audience and nature of the *Dynamic Steward*.

inside ds

At times the gnawing at our hearts is relentless. We may feel as though we are lost at sea with no hope of being found. Something is missing. Yet somehow we know we are part of something much bigger than we can fully grasp. King Solomon must have experienced this same feeling when in awe he wrote, “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Ecc. 3:11, NIV). It is this realization, that we are part of a bigger plan, from which a reservoir of hope emerges. Solomon sees God as the One who places “eternity in the hearts of men.” That gift, however, can be easily threatened. By living in a world filled with calamities and disappointments, that hope can easily ebb away leaving us in abject despair. It is for this reason we felt a full issue of the *Dynamic Steward* should be devoted to our call to be “Stewards of Hope.”



Larry R. Evans
Associate Director,
GC Stewardship Ministries

It wasn't only Solomon who recognized this sense of expectancy. The Apostle Paul did too. He, however, anchors hope to something that will last throughout eternity. Hope can survive as we walk through the darkest valleys. Note how he does it. “And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). If there were ever a time when the world needed a solid foundation on which to build lasting hope, that time is now! The Apostle reminds us of the one centerpiece of hope. Nothing, absolutely nothing, will shake or remove God's love. It is He who is the source of love. His love does not change. What can change, however, is our own perception of that love. How we experience that love is up to us. That is why entwined within the love of God is the active wooing of the Holy Spirit.

Being a steward of such hope is not only a privilege. It is a responsibility. Years ago following a burst of rebelliousness, it wasn't the pointing fingers that changed my ways. It was the unveiling of the “eternity” that God had already placed within my heart (Rom. 5:8). Such was what Paul proclaimed when he wrote, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Eternity has been set within our hearts. Hope, lasting hope, is there. Stewards of hope help uncover it in others. Their faith exudes hope! God's love isn't only for us. It is for our world too—a world made-up of those feeling lost and for whom hope has become illusive. Like a magnet our hope is drawn to those who do not know where to look. What a difference we can make in the little corner where we live! Our host of writers in this issue of the *Dynamic Steward* will inspire and challenge you to pick up the compass of good stewardship and guide others to Christ, our Hope!



Larry R. Evans

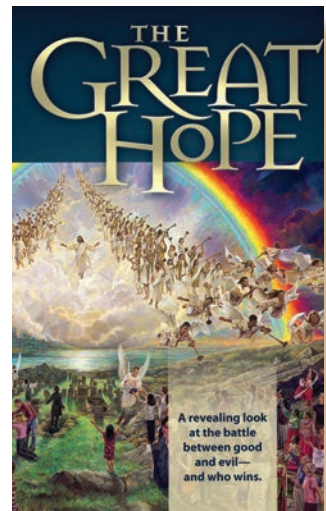
Editor

resources

As you go through life, you may sense that the world is gripped in a conflict between good and evil. From what you see in the news, it may look as if evil is winning. Headlines describe famine, wars, unemployment, pollution and disease. The media can tell you what is happening, but this book reveals why. *The Great Hope* also tells you what will happen next. This glimpse into the future is based on a source that has never failed in its prophecies—the Bible. The conflict between good and evil is coming to a dramatic climax that will affect every family on the planet. But there's hope. You can choose to be on the winning side!

The Great Hope is an Ellen G. White publication adapted from the longer *The Great Controversy* as an ideal outreach tool. Millions of copies of this inexpensive, light-weight book in many languages have already been handed out world-wide in church outreach initiatives and personal ministries. Order copies for your next outreach project, or guide people to the informative website where the book can be read online or downloaded for free in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

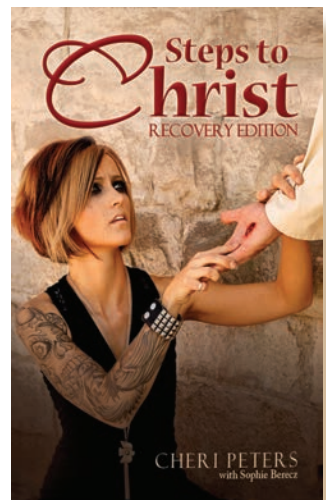
*The Great Hope, E.G. White (an adaptation of *The Great Controversy*).* Available at www.thegreathope.org.



God is crazy about you! Not only that, He delights in your recovery. This is what Cheri Peters, founder of True Step Ministries maintains! She has produced a modern adaptation of the classic work by Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, which is designed to show you how to truly celebrate life in recovery. Learn how gently God works with you to help you see your need, to lead you to repentance and to heal your heart. Discover how He wants to help you stand up in your recovery and reach out to others who are still struggling. *Steps to Christ, Recovery Edition* includes discussion questions to each chapter for convenient use in your small group.

Cheri Peters hosts the popular television show, *Celebrating Life in Recovery*, aired on Three Angels Broadcastion Network (www.3ABN.org). Cheri has dedicated her life to helping those struggling with any type of abuse, dysfunction—chemical or non-chemical, to step into recovery. Her 14-week *Celebrating Life in Recovery* programs have changed lives all around the world.

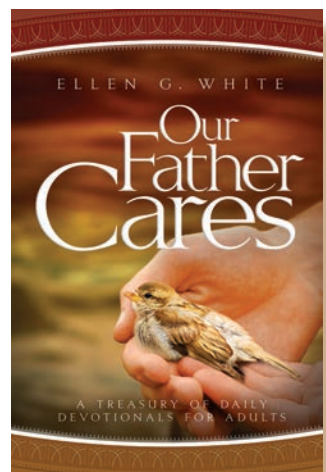
Steps to Christ, Recovery Edition, adapted by Cheri Peters with Sophie Berez. 3ABN Books: www.3ABN.org, or True Step Ministries: www.truestep.org.



Testimonies to the Church, by Ellen G. White, volume 6, page 55 tells Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. *Our Father Cares* is a treasury of daily devotional readings for adults which have been selected for their focus on God's great love for us. It portrays God's deep interest in every aspect of our daily lives. Readers are invited to read each day's devotional with His great love for us in mind, trusting that as we meditate on each passage, we will come to appreciate more than ever how much God cares for us!

Use this book as a personal devotional resource or in the office environment. Devotionals also make thoughtful gifts for any occasion.

Our Father Cares by E.G. White (a compilation for daily devotions). Review & Herald Publishing Association. <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com>.



The content or opinions expressed, implied or included in or with these resources are solely those of the authors and not those of the publishers of the Dynamic Steward. The publishers do however, advocate these resources on the basis of their rich contributions to the area of stewardship ministry, and assume that readers will apply their own critical evaluations as they make use of them.

Jesus Our Hope



Erika F. Puni
Director,
GC Stewardship Ministries

I was returning home to the United States from Bangkok, Thailand, in May this year, after a successful stewardship convention for the Southern Asia Pacific Division. Yet on this long flight back to Washington DC, my heart was aching. I had just lost my first sibling, my brother, Enesi, to cancer. He lived in New Zealand and I was away when he died. But somehow in my tired and heart-broken state, these words of Edward Mote (1797-1874) in song came to me as a revelation of God's grace: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; When darkness seems to veil His face, I rest on His unchanging grace; When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay; On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand." In my Christian context, hope cannot be isolated from Jesus Christ, and it cannot exist without His presence. Let me illustrate this thought by reflecting on the experience of Jesus' disciples on that Thursday night, the night just prior to His death on the dark and gloomy Friday afternoon.

Hope in the Midst of Hopelessness

Hopelessness is living life without the presence of Jesus Christ. After He had washed and dried their feet, and after they had shared bread together, Jesus spoke words of assurance to His disciples. These words cut like a razor into the very core of their being. "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come" (John 13:33, *NIV*). For this group of young men, this was a set back. For three years they had waited with anticipation that He, their leader, would establish a new world order that would rescue them from Roman domination. This was an overwhelming disappointment.

How could He do this to them? Where would they go now? To these and other questions spinning around in their heads, Jesus responded, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:3, *NIV*). Jesus' answer to His disciples' sense of hopelessness and loss brought them assurance of His eternal presence. In our world today, where we're constantly faced with all kinds of trials, challenges, human disappointments, emptiness and hopelessness, Jesus is the answer. Jesus's presence brings encouragement, meaning, value, contentment, certainty, security and hope. It is this Jesus who has the capacity to calm any of life's storms, bring comfort to the bereaved and hope to the forsaken and despised of society.

Christ Is Present through His Spirit

Recognizing His human limitations to be physically present everywhere, Jesus introduced His disciples to the concept of His omnipresence through the Holy Spirit. "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18, *NIV*). To the twelve disciples, these words of their Master lifted their spirits from the depths of hopelessness to new heights riding on His promise and personal assurance. So while He would not be physically available for them, through His Spirit they could experience His presence as a present reality. Today, God's Spirit still fills the void in his disciple's empty and lonely hearts. God's Spirit can turn the nights of darkness into mornings of joy. This presence of Christ in us—through His Spirit—gives us hope both in the here and now and also in the future.

God's Peace in the Present

Whether they recognize it or not, the disciples needed something permanent to satisfy their yearning for companionship and community. And again, Jesus came to them with these comforting words. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:26,27, *NIV*).

As Christian stewards, we know that only Jesus can satisfy the desires of our hearts and breathe hope into our own questionings. More importantly, He expects us, as His followers, to consistently live out this hope by sharing our hope in Him, with everyone we meet.

From the Director's Desk...

Every year, Stewardship Ministries is an active participant in the global evangelistic efforts of the Adventist Church. From the General Conference to the local churches, our stewardship ministries directors and educators are involved in the preaching of God's good news that Jesus is coming again. He is our blessed hope.

In Brisbane, Australia, this year, Erika Puni conducted a public campaign which resulted in the baptism of 36 new disciples to the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Sabbath of June 22, 2013.



Larry Evans conducted an evangelistic series of meetings on the island of Biak in Papua, Indonesia. He was accompanied by Dr. Jim Anderson, a physician from the United States, who presented practical health insights each evening. Carolyn Evans and Barbara Anderson assisted with the meetings for the children. On Sabbath, April 20, 36 people were baptized.



interview

Hope is a Person!



Derek Morris, above, (DM), Editor of Ministry Magazine, is interviewed by DS Editor, Larry Evans (LRE).

Dr. Morris serves as an associate secretary in the General Conference Ministerial Association, editor of Ministry, an international journal for pastors, and teacher for Hope Sabbath School, an international interactive Bible study on the Hope Channel. His greatest joy is found in helping people to experience a life-changing encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University in Practical Theology and a Doctor of Ministry degree in Preaching from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



LRE: *How would you describe hope?*

DM: As I think about hope, I immediately think about a scripture song from the book of Lamentations which is a book of lament. It was written during the time of the exile when Jeremiah was left behind. Things looked hopeless. Speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he says, “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22, *NKJV*). But note what follows in verses 24 and 26: “The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore, I hope in Him. . . . It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” I think what Jeremiah is saying is that hope sees beyond the present situation. Hope can look at a hopeless situation and still see that something good is coming. I think it’s really important for our readers to realize that that kind of hope is not found in ourselves. If we feel helpless or even hopeless it does not mean that there is no hope but that our hope is found in God.

LRE: *So in times of stress, hope still hangs on?*

DM: Hope in such situations can seem absurd to the unbeliever. Take for example the poetry at the end of chapter three in Habakkuk. If we put it in a modern setting it might sound like this: “When my car breaks down and I’ve just been fired from my job, and the pathology report comes back that I’ve got some disease”—things that might concern us today—Habakkuk says, “I am going to hope in the Lord.”

LRE: *What brought Habakkuk to have that kind of hope?*

DM: He was challenged by the fact that it seemed like the wicked were doing better—they were prospering when others were not. Regardless, he chose to believe that “the just shall live by faith.” This kind of faithfulness is like Job’s which says, “No matter what happens, I’m going to hold onto God. I really believe that my Redeemer lives, and that He will stand on the earth in the last days.” So I think hope is really more of a way of looking at life—one that is centered in a relationship with God.

LRE: *If that’s the case, how does one prepare to have hope?*

DM: Jesus says, “Come to Me when you are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Scriptures are not just ancient records. They are present truth. So as I read the words of Jesus, He says, “Learn from Me, and you’ll find rest for your souls.” That hope is found in a relationship with God. When I was younger, Titus 2:13 was often quoted: “Looking for the blessed hope. . . .” I thought the blessed hope was the event of the coming of Jesus. In fact people sang about it that way. However, if I read the text correctly, the blessed hope is a Person. It’s Jesus. The text concludes with, “the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”



Jesus is our Blessed Hope today as well as our Blessed Hope when He returns in glory. To me this means that seeking Him and having a living connection with Him, is where hope is found, even in the most apparently hopeless situations.

LRE: *How can a family have hope or even think about being faithful with tithes and offerings when jobs are lost or when an expensive illness hits them hard?*

DM: When I was a young pastor, someone came to me and said, “I just want to tell you that there was a time when I decided I was not going to return tithe, that I needed all of the resources.” Then he said, “I discovered that I was worse off with 100 percent than I was when I put God first!

I began my ministry in northeastern Pennsylvania, and it was not a particularly affluent area. And I would have been embarrassed to speak to them about faithful stewardship if I did not believe that God is faithful to all of His promises. Some of the promises that come to mind immediately, of course, are “Prove me now, says the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven” (Mal. 3:8-10). You know, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,” “Will a man rob God?” Some people read that only as a legal obligation but I don’t. These words come as a wonderful, gracious invitation from a loving God who says, “Prove Me if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” Again, it comes back to the relationship. If I have a relationship with God then it doesn’t feel like an obligation but a privilege. If I’m ministering to a family going through an economic turmoil and upheaval, I would say, “We need to trust the promises of God even more now and rejoice in the promises of God.”

LRE: *What kind of counsel would you give a pastor who is reluctant to speak to others about being faithful with returning their tithes and offerings?*

DM: During my last pastorate we spoke very little about tithe yet it more than doubled. It was clearly taught and understood. Our approach was to present a clear vision of what God wants to do, to present clearly the Blessed Hope, to present Jesus and the hope of His soon return and the mission to share that message with the world. When God has our hearts, He has our resources. He has our time, He has our energies, and He has our finances.

LRE: *As faithful stewards, are we only recipients of hope or are we also ambassadors of hope?*

DM: A steward of hope is a bearer of glad tidings. I love the text quoted by Paul in Romans 10:15, where he says, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings.” And in the same context he says, “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” So he’s coming as a bearer of glad tidings—as an ambassador or steward of hope. He comes as someone with good news! In the same passage in Romans 10, Paul says, “How can people believe if they haven’t heard?” So if I know that life has hope, and that hope is centered in a Person and not in possessions and I do not share that hope, I think I’ll be held accountable for that.

LRE: *In Romans 5:5, Paul says, “Hope does not disappoint.” How does hope not disappoint us when I’m broke or when a disaster hits my family?*

DM: Exactly! The context in Romans 5 is speaking about tribulation, which produces perseverance. It’s not talking about easy times. Paul had reminded us in chapter one that, “The just shall live by faith.” Now he reminds us that hope does not disappoint. What is that hope? Or should I ask, “Who is that hope?” In Romans 5:6, the very next verse, Paul says that

God’s love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Clearly, God’s love will not disappoint us. “And these abide—faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). Hope perseveres because God’s love has been poured into my heart by the Holy Spirit. It is a miracle. Regardless of the circumstances, hope is not taken away! My hope is grounded in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Holy Spirit is the One who effects that miracle, as Romans 5 says, “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Like the old hymn says, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” Faith enables me to see beyond my present situation. Hope is a result because my faith is anchored in God and His promises.

LRE: *From your own pastoral experience what have you learned with regards to encouraging others to be faithful stewards of God’s grace?*

DM: I have seen that the most powerful teaching is personal example. We’re not Jesus, but Paul said, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” Peter said, “Be an example to the flock.” My challenge to pastors or lay leaders in the local congregation is for all of us to experience the miracle of being a faithful steward. If others see that this woman or man of God truly believes the promises of God and that they can stand as a rock-solid hope no matter what’s happening, they will too. It will become believable! So I would say, “By the grace of God, let it begin in the heart of the leader. And that joy will not be contained, but it will be a blessing to those around them.”



Hope for Every Day



Line Nielsen

Line Nielsen is a consultant working in support of the operation of the city council in Odense, Denmark. She loves being an everyday Christian, and the Lord is providing her with many opportunities for witnessing. She is married to Jan. They have no children but she is very involved with the church family.

She had missed the point. Now she was ostracized; she knew it and acted as such. Inside she felt rather empty. Broken relationships had crushed her sense of belonging and her picture of love was quite fractured.

His success in life had been enormous, but was torn down by a number of catastrophes over an extremely short time. Here he was. His so called ‘friends’ asked him what his hidden sins were, and his wife told him to curse God and die.

What hope would you give her if you met her? What hope would you bring him? Maybe you have experienced something like it. Or maybe you know some who have. These stories are from real life, written in the Bible. They are outstanding in their hopelessness, but these themes are also repeated again and again throughout history. Many lead lives of hopelessness.

These stories are deep because they also bring hope. The woman at the well, in John chapter 4, met Jesus and that changed her life into a life filled with meaning and hope. Job met God at a deeper level and that changed his life.

It is, however, not enough for a steward of hope to visit these texts and share the stories. We need to internalize them and in turn, share our own story. Then we will be sharing real hope—a hope that changes us and others as well—a hope that will bring new life. Without even thinking about it, we will be a steward of hope. Hope will have become a part of who we are. Hope is not something reserved for times of crisis. As can be seen in the stories of Job and the woman at the well, hope can fill every day.

The Story of Job

In the book of Job we are allowed to look behind the scenes, There we can clearly see that Satan has set out to harass Job. The supporters of Job, however, reason that Job’s misfortune has come because there is sin in his life. With this perspective it is only natural to believe that God is required to punish him. To make matters worse, his wife sees no point in serving a God who treats him like that. Job himself says, however, that sin in his life is not the cause for his calamities. He claims that he still has a relationship with his merciful redeemer, but he still asks God why this is happening (Job 1:6-12; 4:7-8; 2:9; 19:3-4.25-27; 23:3-5).

I find the spiritual highlight in chapter 38-42, where God talks to Job and Job gives his response: “. . . now my eyes see you (Job 42:5),” and this is said by a man who already knows God. The Lord’s speech has touched something very deep inside Job. He now sees God in a way he had never seen Him before, and with a feeling of connection to the Lord he had never felt before. Job also confirms his understanding of God: “I know that you can do everything” (Job 42:2).

What is it precisely that the Lord told Job? In Job 38:1, we find: “Then the Lord answered Job,” but God didn’t tell him about Satan’s part in the drama. He didn’t answer Job’s ‘why’ question. No, the Lord answered Job in a completely different way.

God Reveals Himself to Job

God answered Job by revealing Himself to Job. Through descriptions of scenes in nature, God reveals to Job His might, His creative power, His wisdom, and how He is in control and able to set the boundaries in this world. Job’s confidence in God is renewed. His trust is deepened—deeper than it has ever been. All Job can do is exclaim: “But now my eye sees you.”

The Woman at the Well

The woman from Sychar came to Jacobs’s well in the middle of the day, a time when nobody else went. She could go unnoticed at the hottest time of the day and avoid meeting the judgemental glances and questions that no doubt would greet her. Because of her lifestyle she might not have liked herself but meeting Jesus changed all of that. In one short conversation, she was taken from slavery to freedom from feeling condemned to being a new person. This was a wonderful transition process and we can learn much from the account in John 4:4-42.

First of all, Jesus showed her respect. As a Jew, He might not have liked her for being a Samaritan, and as a man, He might not have had much consideration

for her as a woman, but He regarded her as something of value, by asking a favor of her: “Give Me a drink,” He said. Secondly, He broadened her perspective by offering her a remedy, she was really in need of—“living water”, and He leads her to “thirst” for it. Thirdly, when she asks for the remedy, he goes straight to her point of slavery: Men, too many men in her life. Maybe this was not her first issue, but it does point to her chain of unhealthy life-patterns which are keeping her enslaved. Finally, when she turns religious, Jesus corrects her prejudice and tells her where she needs to change: “Salvation comes from the Jews,” He says, revealing Himself to her as the Messiah, the Savior, the One coming to fulfill all the promises she knew, and the only One able to supply that Living Water.

Divine Revelation

Again we find that God answers human questions by revealing Himself to us: Who He is, and what He is like. He also reveals what is in us, and what we need to change.

My Testimony

The perspectives found in these stories have changed my way of thinking about God, and this has increased my sense of hope in everyday life. I have more confidence in Jesus. I trust Him more. It is easier for me to allow Him to be God. I no longer need to know everything. It is more important for me to know Him.

In my spiritual life, my desire is first and foremost for God to reveal Himself to me. I can set at rest my eagerness for His answers, His guidance, His solving my issues because of this one thing: When He reveals Himself, I know that He is there. I know that He is in control. I know my other issues will be sorted out in His perfect way. That is where I find hope for every day. It is then that I am filled with hope. My trust is now in Him!

Secondly, I know that behind all that He does is His purpose to show me that He loves me. I pray for a recognition of His love. When I sense this reality, I'm filled by His loving presence. With that realization I can handle anything. Nothing,

then, is too big for me for I am filled by God's love and all that it represents.

Thirdly, I surrender my bruises to Him. I allow Him to touch the sore parts of my life, so that I will be healed. Doing so can be painful. Like the woman at the well, I often like to hide my hurts rather than placing them where He can heal them. When He does I am set free—really free.

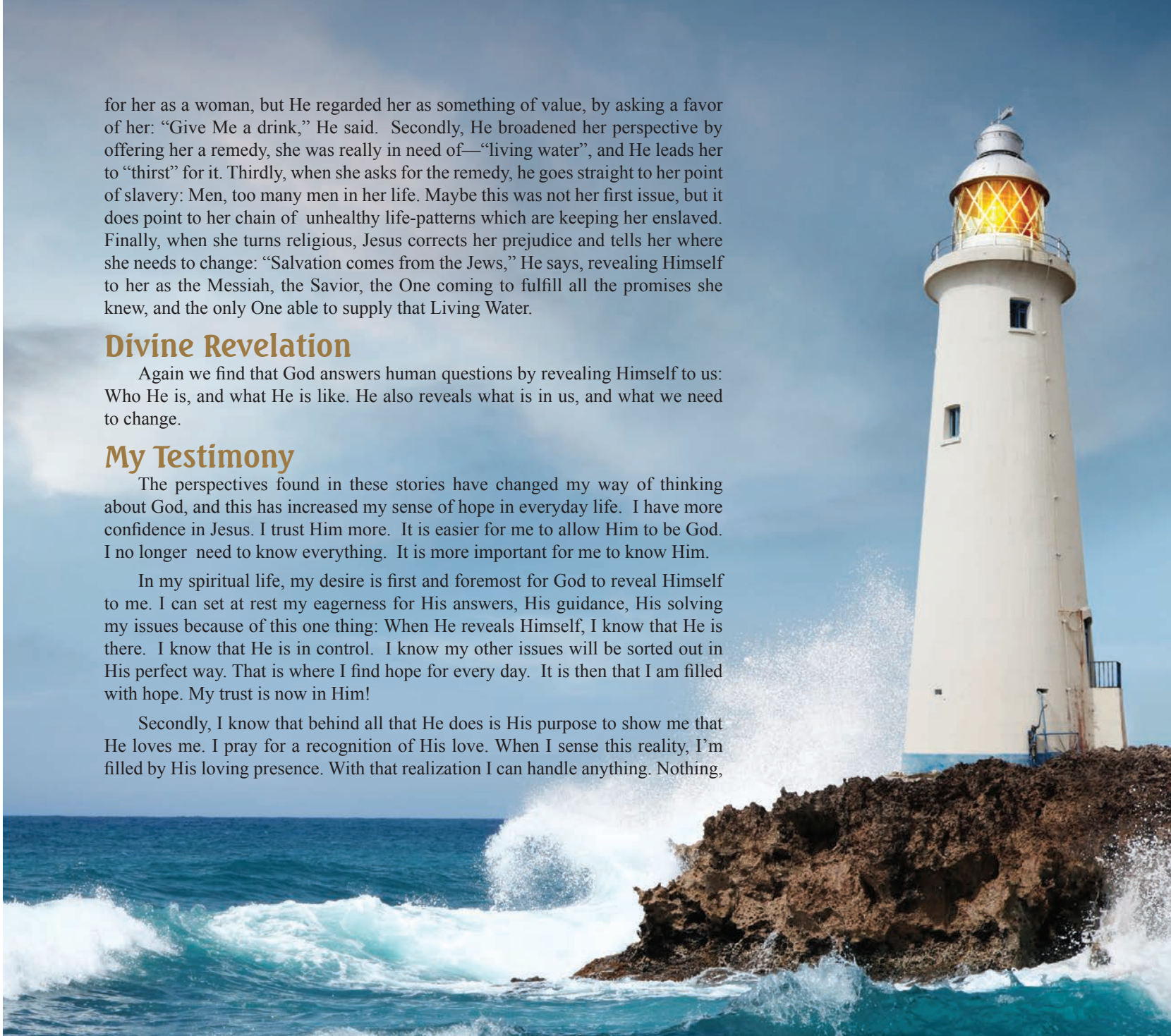
Lastly, I open my mind so I can listen to His explanations, His theology and His ways. I want the Jesus He is, not the 'Jesus' I create.

Practicing Hope

By applying this biblical pattern of searching for answers and then finding more of the fullness of God as did Job and the woman at the well, then hope, love, peace and satisfaction fill my heart. It seems He has plenty to share because He continues to fill me more and more with revelations of His love.

I have learned that one way of incorporating these principles into my life is

by prayerfully writing down on paper my reflections about these stories and by addressing them directly to Jesus. I ask Jesus to unfold His Word to me in the process. I reflect over a single sentence or a few sentences at a time. This allows Him to fill me with hope and love as I go through each text. I am confident you will find the blessings I have found. His love will shine through you. You will carry the hope He inspires in your own life. It will be a blessing to others as you share this hope.



Give Hope—Restore a Child



Norma Nashed

Norma Nashed is the founder and president of Restore a Child, a non-profit organization that serves more than 4,000 children in 15 countries. She runs the organization from her home.

She was diagnosed with cancer 15 years ago, while working at the General Conference. At that time she felt called by God to leave her job and dedicate her life to disadvantaged and orphaned children.

Learn more about Restore a Child, its mission and projects at: www.restoreachild.org/

Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.”

Have you ever felt completely alone—that no one cares for you and no one shares your plight? That you are betrayed, disappointed and without any hope of overcoming your circumstances? Have you ever hoped for something but could see no way for your hope to be realized or come true? The feeling of hopelessness is debilitating; it makes one’s heart sick: the spirit is broken, one cannot think clearly, the brain cannot function effectively, and soon the body is overtaken by the absence of the will to try, to survive. And then we open God’s Word in search of hope and comfort and we read: “You number my wanderings, put my tears into your bottles; are they not in your book?” (Ps. 56:8).

So what does hope mean to a Christian—to a child of God? A desire for something with the possibility that it will happen? Does it mean to have an expectation for future good? God’s word is the only thing that gives us the assurance of hope. This is an enormous advantage over those who don’t know God.

God has chosen us and entrusted us to be His stewards and ambassadors of the hope we have in Jesus. Wherever people cherish hope and long for its fulfillment, men and women called by God to serve His people and provide help, are expected to lead people to a realization of their hopes.

Some of us have never had an encounter with poverty because we grew up in homes where our parents took care of our needs. Jesus’ last words were: “I will not leave you orphans...” But in this world there is a segment of humanity that is losing hope. These are innocent and vulnerable orphan children, 200 million of them, world-wide, who have lost their parents. To them, all that is left is hope. Six million children die every year due to hunger. Jesus said: “I was hungry...” These children represent Jesus Himself. There is not much for them out there except for their own determination to survive. Hope becomes tangible only when we provide for their needs. An encounter with real poverty and a deeper understanding of the needs of those less fortunate is truly transforming.

“We are counseled that orphans are lent to Christians in trust for God.” They are a “sacred trust.” (*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 281). “The Lord did tell Peter: **“Feed My lambs.” By opening our homes and hearts to the orphans we share in the literal, material fulfillment of the words of Jesus** (*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 284).

For this reason I gave up my secure job and life of comfort 15 years ago while battling cancer and committed my life to serving thousands of orphaned children. I comforted myself with the words of Jesus when He said, “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” (Matt. 25:40, *NKJV*).

I know there is One who has promised these orphans hope. He is “Father of the fatherless.... But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish” (Ps. 9:18) God’s promises can be fulfilled only if we, as faithful stewards, will use the resources and talents He has entrusted to us, to be stewards of His hope “...Christ in you, the Hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). Only then will hope have meaning in the lives of the despairing.

“Hope is the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...” (Heb. 6:18-19, *KJV*). Let’s share that kind of hope and throw a life-line for the 200 million hungry orphans in this world today. Give hope and restore a child today!



Got a Story?

From the Grecian orator to the mother reading her children a bedtime story, from the TV anchor describing a news event to the African chief narrating tribal history to his young warriors, from the preacher illustrating his theological argument with an allegory to the novelist writing his romantic tale—all these individuals have one thing in common: they are conveying a message through a story.

Throughout history it seems that the best way to get one's point across has been to illustrate one's thoughts enfolded in a story. During His three years of ministry on earth, Jesus did not spend His time debating the finer points of the Scriptures with the leading theologians of His day. He simply conveyed His message of God's love and grace through everyday life stories or parables. These simple, easy-to-understand narratives became our Lord's trademark, particularly among the unassuming farmer and down-to-earth fishermen families. They thronged to the mountainside and the shores of Galilee to hear profound truths through stories about everyday things they witnessed. They could picture a man mugged and left for dead by common robbers; a persistent widow who eventually wore down the patience of a local judge; an unattached woman who lost one penny and acted as though she had lost her entire fortune; or a heartsick father scanning the horizon every day looking for a glimpse of his wayward son. Now two thousand years later, we still read, speak about, and reflect on these same stories.

If we (as administrative or local church stewardship leaders) are ever to effectively relate the importance of stewardship, **we need to tell more stories. Not just any narratives, but ones that are personal—based on real-life experiences.** When someone presents his or her personal stewardship testimony in church, it becomes an effective, educational tool that 'grabs' the members' attention, helping them to incorporate the 'bottom line' of the story into their own daily lives.

To get us started here is a story from my own family. My father, Ernie, was a faithful member of a small local church on the South Island of New Zealand. He worked as a salesman for a major brush company, and his only 'claim to fame' was that for many years, at the annual national conference of brush salespeople, he was named the number one salesperson for the whole country. The other salesmen and women could not understand how he was so successful because he only sold his brushes and brooms door to door from Monday to Thursday. The other salespeople often made most of their sales—up to 50 percent of their weekly totals—on Saturday, because that was when women who worked during the week were home, and they also had the money to purchase the brushes, brooms, and sweepers. The other salespeople probably never imagined that when we are faithful to our Heavenly Father with our observance of the Sabbath, He affirms our loyal respect of His time with such abundant blessings.

One of the best ways we can make stories last a lifetime is to include a stewardship story each quarter about great men and women from the past during the children's story time at church. An example would be the life of William Colgate, and how a ship captain encouraged him to tithe 10 percent of his income. Later when he became an entrepreneur, he gave 40 to 50 percent of his income to the Lord's work. The storyteller could distribute small toothpaste containers to each child, and ask them all to remember—as they brush their teeth—the significance of giving to the church and world missions.

This next Sabbath, let us begin a new chapter in the stewardship program at our local churches. Let's highlight our stewardship emphasis with stories!



Gordon Botting

Gordon Botting, DrPH, CHES, CFC, originally from Australia, is the financial educator and stewardship director for the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In this capacity, for the last twenty years he has developed money management materials and regularly conducts financial workshops and seminars both statewide and nationally. He also publishes The Stewpot which is distributed world-wide.



commitment

Stewards of Hope



Peter Bath

Peter Bath, D.Min., M.B.A. presently serves as Vice President for Mission and Human Resources with the 478 bed Florida Hospital in Tampa. Dr. Bath has more than 33 years experience working in a variety of roles for Seventh-day Adventist health care, educational institutions and church congregations.

Previously he was the Vice President for Spiritual Wellness and Human Development at the 454 bed Shawnee Mission Medical Center. Dr. Bath's broad experience includes serving as Senior Pastor of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church; President of Kettering College of Medical Arts and Senior Pastor of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Dr. Bath earned his Doctor of Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary, his Master of Divinity at Andrews University, a Masters of Business Administration and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. Bath is involved with the National Conference on Community and Justice, Hillsborough County School Partnership and Rotary International. His interests include sailing, skiing, scuba diving, music, camping and bee-keeping. He resides with Catherine, his wife of 36 years. Their family includes three daughters, a son-in-law, and a grandson.

Fear, hope, love, hate. Each short word is able to evoke a personal response; each is present in life...sometimes concurrently.

It would be so much neater if the good words and bad words were more easily distinguished. However, such is not the case in the current western world, nor is it so in much of the rest of the world.

Instead, much of current-culture talk centers on the "good news" of fear and the disparaging naiveté of hope. The call to arms echoes as humanity's lack of preparedness for the coming "crisis"—whatever it may be—destines it to be handled with lead, not love.

There is worry in the land. Not just here but everywhere, because every thinking person realizes that what others are struggling with could easily become their own experience.

How then shall we live as a steward of hope in a world that is fascinated and motivated by fear? How shall we live as a steward of love in a world that so quickly alienates and isolates the "stranger that is within thy gates"?

Stewards of hope in a culture of fear.... What is it that gives us the ability to look at fear and have hope? What is it that allows that "peace that passes understanding," that calm that makes no sense, to be present in my countenance when others despair?

How do you find peace when the phone rings and disrupts your world? That unexpected phone call resulting in bewilderment, as in, "Is this really real?"

How does one respond to bad news? This is where faith helps us transform surprise and sorrow into hope and confidence.

Listen to what the apostle Paul tells the bewildered people of his day: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

It is only in the context of a faith-view of this world that we can find perspective and peace. The wells from which the waters of peace and hope flow are: believing that God is good and desires our best; knowing that He is our shepherd who leads us by still waters; and knowing that we can trust Him.

How then shall a commissioned steward of hope live?

Is hope something one distributes, like food or water, in time of need? Is it something one can donate to be laid up for times of need? Is hope something that one can gain outside of a relationship?

Living with confidence in these times of uncertainty is the hallmark of a "steward of hope," of one for whom the "peace that passes understanding" is a present experience, not simply a desired future state. "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Living with hope in the present requires that we frankly acknowledge and address those things that cause fear in ourselves and in others. To merely dismiss fear is to make hope simplistic.

There are **three levels of hope and I would suggest three levels of fear** as

their corollary.

Superficial: I hope/fear that I will/won't have a good day! I hope/fear it doesn't rain on the picnic. This kind of hope/fear is most common, but means little as the consequences of it being a bad or rainy day are not very significant.

Relational: I hope/fear s/he likes me! I hope/fear that s/he will/won't go out with me again. I hope/fear s/he will/won't work on our marriage. There is a much more significant consequence for that which is relational, personal and typically painful. But with time you rise, work through it and live another day. Both hope and fear have significantly more at stake at this level.

Existential: I hope/fear that I will/won't recover from this cancer. Hope/fear expressed in life threatening situations. This level is about the very ability to continue to live.

It is at the second and third levels where most people are seeking, knowingly or unknowingly, for some form of hope. They are more than likely going to turn to those they know and trust in their time of need for help and hope.

To be stewards of hope, we must be integrated into the community. We must be there with them "incarnationally" and not just show up with the "van" during a crisis, as important as that can be.

To be with people, mingling among them, seeking to fulfill their needs. This is the Master's way (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

Fear and hope are both agents of grace as portrayed so well in the song, Amazing Grace: "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved."

Grace, unmerited favor with God, first taught us that our place in the heavenly scheme of things is that we are truly a people in need of restoration and forgiveness—a people who are under the death penalty, and subject to the attacks of evil. But the same grace that shows us our destitute state, also takes those fears away through our relationship with Christ, and our hope in His salvation and His soon return. Grace relieves our fears through the hope we have in Christ allowing us to face our reality and find assurance.

Hope does that. It is the power to face our fears and through Christ, overcome them, and live as a people redeemed not only from sin, but from fear, anxiety, doubt and isolation as well.

Hope empowers us to rise above fear and live a life of confidence in these uncertain times.

My youngest sister is a remarkable woman. She lived with the Haida Indians off the coast of Alaska working to help provide education and learn to understand their native spirituality. She also lived for two years with the Inuit people above the Arctic Circle. She has been chased by polar bears, attacked by a shark and yet lives a quiet life.

On one occasion, while living in the Arctic, she and her dog, Chico, went camping. They hiked 12 miles from the village and set up a tent on a flat plateau the size of half a football field. Chico, normally a calm yet strong dog, became increasingly worried and restless. Judy looked to where he was casting anxious glances and saw at the plateau's edge, 100 feet away, 18 big ears—peaked and pointed her way. Eighteen ears that belonged to nine big wolves!

Judy did not carry a gun, only her snow knife. What was she to do? Fear looked her straight in the eyes. What could she do? Deny the wolves existence? Wish them a way as we did as kids? Sing happy songs to feel better? Jump in the tent and close the zipper?

With what she describes as a deep sense of calm she clipped Chico on his leash, picked up her snow knife and not knowing what might happen, she walked towards her fear. Step by step as she moved closer the wolves came up the rise,

massive paws resting on the edge of the ridge.

She talked to the wolves, quietly telling them that she wouldn't taste very good! With her arms raised she walked peacefully and boldly towards them, facing the greatest fear she had encountered.

When she got within 50 feet they broke rank and ran away, looking back at this being who confronted them. Judy watched in silence. She slept well that night; she knew that the wolves would not be back. Hope had risen in her heart and she had faced her fear.

Where is our hope when fear comes knocking at our door? Where is our community's hope when fear comes knocking at their door?

Above all, the hope of true faith and love should embody the quiet transforming confidence that allows the reality of fear, present danger, even hatred, to be transformed into, and triumphed by, the confidence of hope.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom. 15:13).



young adult

Surviving vs Living

Random thought...

...Do we really believe that hope lies outside ourselves, or are we trying to create our own heaven here on earth?



Suzanna Maywald

Suzanna Maywald is a twelfth grade student (in the Indian national education system) from Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India. She is a pastor's kid with three siblings. She has been to Lebanon as an MK (missionary kid). Her hobbies are reading, writing, travelling, singing and working with children.

What is hope? Is it a three-year-old hoping he would get a lot of toys for Christmas? Is it a mother hoping that her children would be good citizens? Is it a beggar hoping to get a day's bread? Is it a couple hoping they'd be together as long as they live? Or is it hoping that the Lord would come to take His children home real soon?

What is hope...?

The more I thought about it, the harder it got to find the right words. What I finally got to is that hope is this burning desire which lets us expect the impossible despite our helpless situation. It inspires us to keep trying, learning, loving and living.

We live in a world that is ever-changing, uncertain, and sometimes, scary. Freak weather, wars, financial crises, broken relationships, starvation, drought, diseases, you name it! We hear of these things and might even have experienced some of them firsthand. Yet, among all these,

“We have this hope that burns within our hearts, Hope in the coming of the Lord.”

We know this beautiful truth and it has set us free. It has given us the desire to hope despite our overwhelming circumstances. At some point in time we have all experienced Jesus personally. When I was younger, I used to wonder if I'd ever have an experience like the ones I used to hear in the mission stories told every Sabbath. And then, one morning, I did.

My parents and I were considering my options for schooling the coming year since they were moving...again! I knew that I would have to go to a boarding school and I wasn't excited about that. As I prayed, it struck me that hope and trust seemed to go hand in hand. If I don't trust God's promises, then I'm not waiting around with hopes that He will come through for me. I couldn't see my situation ever changing for the better, but I chose to trust God to take care of me believing that He knows what's best for me. He could turn things around for the good and He did. **It was the best decision I've ever made.**

What I love the most about having a relationship with God is that I know for sure that I'm never on my own. Knowing He's with me every step of the way allows me to hope with full confidence, that one day, this world—made new—will be perfect!

For those who haven't been born into this church and even for those who have, somewhere, someone has shared this hope with us or reignited it in our hearts. We will never forget those people, because we know for sure that it was God who sent them to us at just the right time as ambassadors of hope.

Every day we meet many people, but we often fail to see their needs. Somewhere around you, there is someone who's frustrated, confused and who's trying to find purpose in life. **All you may have to offer are a few words of hope, a hug, a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear.**

“The most persuasive eloquence is the word that is spoken in love and sympathy. Such words will bring light to confused minds and hope to the discouraged, brightening the prospect before them. The time in which we live calls for vital, sanctified energy, for earnestness, zeal and the tenderest sympathy and love; for words that will not increase misery, but will inspire faith and hope” (*Our High Calling*, p. 295).

We've all been recipients of hope at some point in time. **Now, it's our turn to point someone else to that hope!**



Financing the Church Medical Work

Do you remember being taught as a child to include the missionaries, colporteurs, doctors and nurses and still others in your prayers? Many of the mission stories that we heard were about missionary doctors and nurses confronting horrible diseases in their patients or performing surgery under very primitive conditions. Given the general improvement of basic medical conditions around the world, does the Adventist Church still have a role in healthcare? If so, how does the church finance it?

Status of the Healthcare Work

According to the “Annual Statistical Report 2013” (reporting statistics as of the end of 2011), Adventist hospitals and sanitariums around the world had an average daily inpatient census of 15,672 and a total of more than 14,196,000 outpatient visits for that year. This represents a large number of people (especially when considering the entire family of the patient) that have the potential to be exposed to Jesus’ message of healing for body, mind and spirit! In addition, the total number of employees at Adventist healthcare-related facilities was more than 107,000 people worldwide. The growth in number of institutions can be seen in the chart.

Financing

Adventist hospitals and clinics are typically considered to be either self-funded or mission-funded. Of the latter type of institution, many were established in locations based on the level of need in the local population rather than places where the local community could afford to pay appropriate fees for their healthcare. Therefore, these institutions rely on varying types of support for their continued operation.

Some of these mission-funded institutions receive outright subsidies from their local mission or union organization in order to carry on their service to humanity in the name of Jesus. Another important type of care may come in the form of medical and dental personnel classified as interdivision missionaries if personnel with the necessary skills are not available locally.

The General Conference and division-secretariat personnel recruit and send these church employees to their various assignments around the world. Currently, there are 101 healthcare personnel serving in this capacity. While 38 of these are paid completely from the patient revenue of their institution, 63 are funded primarily from world mission offerings collected by the General Conference (*GC Interdivision Personnel Resources & Services*, Sept. 22, 2013).

Comprehensive Health Evangelism

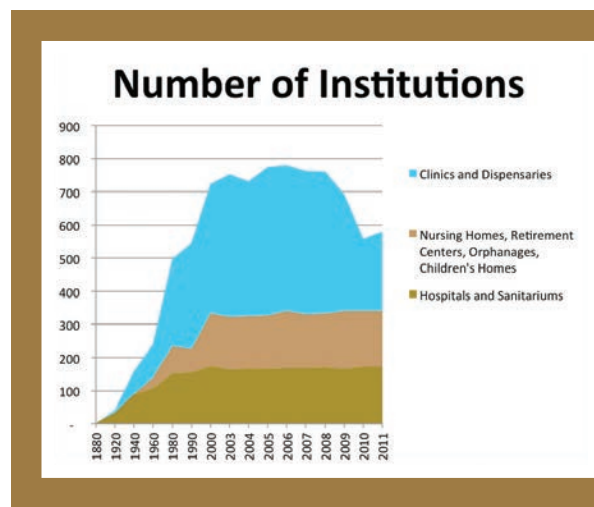
From our early days as a Church, we embraced the health message as an important part of our mission. Later on, in 1909 Ellen G. White presented an urgent reminder to the General Conference: “If ever the Lord has spoken by me, He speaks when I say that the workers engaged in educational lines, in ministerial lines, and in medical-missionary lines must stand as a unit, all laboring under the supervision of God, one helping the other, each blessing each” (*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol.9, p. 169).

Although that message was presented more than one hundred years ago, today the General Conference is once again issuing a plea for comprehensive health evangelism in the ministry of the Church as we seek to bring healing to our communities both physically and spiritually. While traditional mission-funded healthcare structures will continue to play a role in the outreach of the church, the call for comprehensive health evangelism will provide new avenues for church members to demonstrate holistic stewardship principles by contributing their time and God-given abilities to less-institutionalized methods.



Ray Wahlen

Ray followed in the missionary footsteps of his grandparents (China) and parents (Korea) when he and his wife served the Church in Singapore and Guam for eight years. He currently serves missionaries as a co-director of International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS) and an associate treasurer at the General Conference.



We Have This Hope . . .

by Wayne Hooper

**. . . that burns within our hearts,
Hope in the coming of the Lord.
We have this faith that Christ alone imparts,
Faith in the promise of His Word.
We believe the time is here,
When the nations far and near
Shall awake, and shout, and sing ~
Hallelujah! Christ is King!
We have this hope that burns within our hearts,
Hope in the coming of the Lord.**