**NEWS**

**Washington-area Adventists Mourn the Death of Radio Station Manager:** John Konrad, general manager of one of the most successful Adventist-owned radio stations in North America, has passed away after a battle with bi-lateral pneumonia. Hundreds of thousands of listeners in the Washington, D.C. area mourn the young man's passing....

**Adventist Volunteers Help With Donation Organization in Newtown:** Newtown, Connecticut, where a lone gunman murdered 26 students and staff at a local elementary school, has been the recipient of an outpouring of donations, and Adventist volunteers have played a central role in processing and warehousing the assistance, subject to its distribution in the area....

**First Births of 2013 in Adventist Hospitals Across the United States:** The heralding of the first birth of the New Year gets short shrift in some communities, as local newspapers decline in importance. But hospital staffs continue to take pride in top honors throughout the nation, and Adventist hospitals often take the trophy....

**Social Justice and Individual Morality:** A Jamaican Adventist pastor believes that as one of the largest Protestant churches in the Caribbean, his Church has a God-given responsibility to be a "nation-builder" for the downtrodden and needy, and has challenged congregations of other denominations to join him in his quest....

**Car Crashes into the Culver City Adventist Church in Southern California:** The office of the pastor of the Culver City Adventist Church took the brunt of a non-fatal accident with a pre-New Year's Eve apparently "spirits-filled" motorist, leading to some holiday good humor among residents. No one is believed to have been injured by or in the upended vehicle, which was abandoned after the crash....

**OPINION**

**A Word For 2013:** Is life on the atoday.org site at times too confrontational? Columnist Kendra Perry believes it is and that we should consider doing more to humanize our viewpoints with our real-life experiences, as we employ logic and doctrine to underscore our rhetorical points....
### Epiphany/Theophany:
Devotional blogger Debbonnaire Kovacs ferrets out the relationship between "epiphany" and "theophany" and concludes that the two terms apply to both the first and second comings of Jesus. She appreciates the holiday season when she can meditate on both....

### The Importance of Grades:
Evaluation is necessary for growth, in schools and in the denomination. But how that evaluation is conducted, and the care and safeguards employed, will determine if fair conclusions are to be reached. "If it’s done in the right way, it might inspire a better way to commit resources, deal with a problem, or make a decision," writes columnist Andy Hanson....

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| **From Despair to Joy—A Woman Finds a Ministry God Tailor-made for Her:** For the downcast, forgotten, and nearly hopeless, the ministry of Adventist television can lead to a whole new way of life and the motivation to reassert themselves in the stream of life, writes Debbonnaire Kovacs.... *(available only to AT subscribers)*

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This message was sent to ahc@andrews.edu from Adventist Today, Post Office Box 1135, Sandy, OR 97055-1135. 
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John Konrad, general manager of WGTS, the Christian radio station licensed to Washington Adventist University, passed away early Wednesday morning (January 2) after a short illness. The FM station is very likely the most successful Adventist media ministry in North America today, with the second largest listening audience of any Christian radio station in the United States.

Konrad became manager of WGTS in 1996 and led it through a transition from classical music and educational programming to a contemporary Christian format, as well as raising funds and installing new technology which doubled the area in which it could be heard. It grew from 10,000 weekly listeners to over 600,000. The station ranks among the top 10 of all formats in the Washington D.C. market.

Only 43 years of age, Konrad had been battling bilateral pneumonia since mid-December. He died at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore surrounded by friends and family. J. David Newman, the editor of Adventist Today and the family's pastor for many years, was with Konrad in the hospital last night. "I have known John for about thirteen years," Newman said. "He was a very gracious man and a visionary who transformed this Christian radio station from an audience of less than 7,000 to the second largest Christian radio station in America. He loved the Lord and wanted this station to be an emphatic witness for Jesus. In previous days they could take a week to reach their fund raising goals. Today it only takes two days. He will be a very hard person to replace."

“We all hoped John would recover, so needless to say, his passing has left our entire community deeply shocked and saddened,” said Pastor Rob Vandeman, chairman of the board for WGTS and executive secretary of the Columbia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “We offer our sincerest condolences to his wife, Dawn, and ask that you keep her and our WGTS family in your prayers.”

As funeral plans become available, they will be posted on the station’s website: www.wgts919.com. The station will air a special tribute at 9 a.m. January 12.
Adventist Volunteers Help With Donation Organization in Newtown

Submitted: Dec 28, 2012
By Matthew Sturdevant
The Hartford Courant

Many of the 50 or so volunteers in Newtown helping to sort a warehouse full of donations sent in honor of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. With more than 50 churches in Connecticut, the denomination has a humanitarian arm called Adventist Community Services (ACS). Their Disaster Response program specializes in warehousing managing in-kind donations, which is a monumental task.

Once donations arrive at the warehouse on Simm Lane in Newtown, they are likely received by a person in a bright yellow shirt, identifying them as part of the ACS Disaster Response group. Lauren Trahan, a stay-at-home mother who lives in Plainfield, is a member of the Adventist leadership team. Volunteers asked her a flurry of questions Thursday as she walked back and forth through the warehouse. "They got overwhelmed, so they contacted us," Trahan said of town officials. "We sort, store and inventory."

The boxes come in. They're checked by a state police, bomb-sniffing dog. Then they're unloaded and re-boxed by category. Each category has a number. Stuffed animals are 484. Once a pallet of 484s is ready, it's stored with similar pallets.

ACS operates under formal agreements with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross and state emergency management agencies. They're also a member group of the inter-agency compact called the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). Essentially, lots of people want to volunteer after a disaster, and NVOAD has given each member organization a specialized task. For the Adventists, their specialty is receiving, organizing, inventorying and boxing donations for storage until a community can figure out what to do with all of it.

The Adventist volunteers came from as far away as Rhode Island and Massachusetts to help sort donations. "We encourage workers to be trained," said Nathel Warcholik of West Warwick (RI), who came with her husband, William. They are pastors for three churches in Rhode Island.

The Warcholiks are experienced in this work. They went to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to complete the closure of a warehouse, Nathel Warcholik said. The warehouse can only close after all of the sorted donations are allocated or given away.

Maxine Seabrooks, 64, a retired secretary who lives in Milford, said she was in Robbinsville, New Jersey, not long ago helping at a warehouse of goods for victims of Hurricane Sandy. Seabrooks said she worked three days a week for two-and-a-half weeks. "I got a call, 'We need you in Newtown,'" Seabrooks said.

"We're very compassionate people," she said. "The Lord didn't come to be served, but to serve ... it's not about me. It's doing the Lord's work."

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First Births of 2013 in Adventist Hospitals across the United States

Submitted: Jan 3, 2013
By AT News Team

In at least five places across the United States early Tuesday morning the first newborn of the year arrived in an Adventist hospital. The first birth in the entire state of Maryland in 2013 was at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in the suburbs of Washington at 2:43 a.m. The nurses in the labor and delivery unit had prepared for months a gift basket of handmade towels, blankets, hats, booties and many other essentials, reported television station WUSA, Channel 9 in Washington. The child was identified only as “Hana” because of station policies to protect the privacy of the family.

In the Portland (Oregon) metropolitan area the first new baby of the year was Jasmine Morozova at 12:40 a.m. at Adventist Medical Center. “Both the baby and her mother, Nina, are doing well” in the hospital’s Family Birth Place, said The Oregonian daily newspaper.

In the Orlando (Florida) metropolitan area the first newborn was Kebra Nahla Morris at 1:03 a.m. at Florida Hospital’s Altamonte Springs facility in the suburbs, according to Channel 13 television news. The Orlando Sentinel published a photo of mother and baby in its Wednesday morning edition.

In Boulder (Colorado) the first birth of the new year was at Avista Adventist Hospital for the first time in seven years. Typically it has been at Longmont United Hospital, reported the Boulder Daily Camera. Katya Solis-Hernandez emerged at 12:57 a.m. just six minutes before Mason Benbrook at Longmont United.

At Hinsdale Hospital in the suburbs of Chicago the first baby born in the local community this year was Isabella at 12:50 a.m. The Suburban Life newspaper published a picture of the baby girl with parents Snezhana and Igor Kalinin on Wednesday.

“The average church member really does not understand how involved in the lives of their neighbors our hospitals are,” reflected a retired Adventist chaplain. “It is a powerful thing to be able to celebrate a birth with new parents and pray with young adults who may not have been in church since they were children. Unfortunately we have people who consider that nothing.”
Adventist Pastor Prays for Social Justice and Individual Morality

Submitted: Jan 1, 2013
By AT News Team

“The nation is in serious problems as it relates to poverty and morality,” Pastor Merrick Walker of the Washington Gardens Seventh-day Adventist Church in St. Andrews, Jamaica, told The Gleaner, a leading newspaper in the Caribbean nation. “There is too much poverty, immorality and mental slavery in Jamaica. I would really like to do more for people in 2013.”

The pastor was elected president of the Ministerial Fraternity by his peers in the East Jamaica Conference. He expressed attitudes typical of Adventist clergy in the developing nations where nine out of ten of the denomination’s members live.

“I pray that God will grant our national and community leaders the will, the wisdom and the wherewithal to fix our nation,” Walker told a reporter. He described “shortfalls in … the quality of life and morality” that he observes in his country where the Adventist Church is the largest religious denomination. Radical changes are needed to bring prosperity, he said.

Walker sees a link between prayer and social action. “I believe that prayer will lead to action,” he stated, emphasizing “we must do more than pray.” Prayer “has been the architect of change throughout time,” he said, because “when the heart is open in prayer, it is more receptive for change.”

The model of ministry that Walker practices he attributes to the ministry of Jesus as described in Luke 4:18: “To heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives … to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Walker firmly believes that “it is God’s desire that people are liberated mentally, spiritually, financially and socially” and God’s people must focus on “alleviating suffering.”

“Too many people are blaming others without doing much to grow our nation,” Walker said. He would like to see “all church leaders and their organizations” get involved in nation-building. He told The Gleaner that he prays that people with diverse religious views will be more tolerant of those who hold views contrary to their own. “Each person is entitled to his or her views and must not be subjected to physical or verbal abuse” or other pressure “because of their views.”
Car Crashes into the Culver City Adventist Church in Southern California

Submitted: Jan 1, 2013
By AT News Team

It was the early morning of the day before New Year’s Day, not New Year’s Eve which is notorious for alcohol-related auto accidents, but someone crashed a car into the Culver City Seventh-day Adventist Church at 11828 West Washington Boulevard in the community near Los Angeles. Nonetheless, police did not want to say it without evidence, but hinted that perhaps a drunk driver was at fault.

A silver sedan was “heavily damaged” reported the Daily Breeze, the local newspaper in the coastal area south and west of downtown Los Angeles. “The car struck a tree before crashing into the” church, reported Channel 4, the NBC television station in Los Angeles, ending up “on its side.” The vehicle was heavily damaged, stated the Daily Breeze, while the building sustained only moderate damage.

“We did an exhaustive search,” Chief Chris Syverson of the Culver City Fire Department told Channel 4. “We haven’t found any victims.” The driver and possibly other occupants evidently fled.

According to the local church web site, the building is being renovated. The damage from the crash was confined to the pastor’s office, according to Channel 4.

“I am tempted to say that the Culver City Church began the new year with a bang,” a source told Adventist Today. “But I guess it was not the new year yet. And that would be a bad joke.”
A Word For 2013

Submitted: Jan 1, 2013
By Kendra Perry

May I be a little personal? It’s risky here, in this space where we’re known for our ideas and where even personal stories have the blistering tendency to become platforms for discussion of capital I Issues. But I think I’d like to share a bit of my journey here, invite you into a space that isn’t all pulpit or classroom or forum but rather something more like living room or dining room. So here’s my welcome mat; please respect the space in the same way you would my home.

2012 was a good year for our family in many ways. We moved across the country to a wonderful new home and began a new life there. We began new jobs, renewed our connections with each other, and enjoyed the natural beauty surrounding us.

2012 was also a harrowing year in many ways. Extended disability, joblessness, and the aftermath of caregiving for a family member who died of cancer in our home in the waning hours of 2011 all took their financial and emotional toll. Plus, a cross-country move, no matter how wonderful and needed, is not the easiest undertaking.

For me, 2012 included a look at the depths of my soul. Of course, predictably, what I found there was not pretty. Frightening, in fact. Terrifying. Very much like looking at the cross and finding myself as one of the crucifiers (which of course we say and sing blithely all the time but rarely experience in any visceral way) and completely unable to stop myself.

And whether the bad brain chemistry of depression came first or the post-concussion syndrome, they both combined with the horrifying revelation of my worst self to send me to the hospital for several days. So little (yet so much, such important things) stood in the way of me being, quite literally, Judas: betrayer of my Lord, my brethren, and myself.

Here is what I have learned through the ups and downs of my 2012: too often, it is in the collisions of our fears and our accusations that we hurt one another. Satan truly is The Accuser (Revelation 12:10), and he is eager to help us accuse one another of what we most fear. He is eager to use our fears to drive us away from Christ and into the arms of... well, anything else, really. It doesn’t particularly matter what.

The destinations are likely as varied as the people reading. If you are brutally honest with yourself, you know where you head when anxiety starts to gnaw at your heart. It might be to the gossipy conversation, the snarky superior comment, the refrigerator, the bottle of alcohol, the soothing interaction with that attractive person, the angry outburst, even work, or the activity at church that keeps you feeling more holy than the person next to you.

Here is another thing I learned in 2012 (am still learning): that “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). I don’t need to search in those too-familiar haunts for the things that will squelch my fear -- as if they ever really did, anyway. What I need is contact with Perfect Love.
And Who is Perfect Love? "The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness’" (Jeremiah 31:3). If we can get this piece right, we’ll be able to truly love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind (Matthew 22:37). "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Here’s how Brennan Manning puts it in his book Abba’s Child:
Living in awareness of our belovedness is the axis around which the Christian life revolves. Being the beloved is our identity, the core of our existence. It is not merely a lofty thought, an inspiring idea, or one name among many. It is the name by which God knows us and the way He relates to us. (ch. 3)

Then, and only then, can we really fulfill all the commandments by loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). If we skip this step, the love we give our brothers and sisters is, too often, impoverished. Our version of love instead of His. Easy love, instead of deep. Love shot through with the jagged edges of our fears and accusations, on which we wound each other again.

But firmly rooted in our true identity, we will be able to reach out to others with love that is patient and kind, does not envy or boast, is not self-seeking, does not delight in evil but rejoices (such rejoicing!) with the truth. Love that always, always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-6). We will be able to love with His heart.

Because of what I learned in 2012, and what I want to remind myself to keep learning daily, I have a word for 2013. It’s my first ever Word of the Year! My word is Beloved. I invite you to consider joining me in making it your word (or one of your words) for the year...... as in

I am beloved
You are beloved
He is beloved
She is beloved
We are beloved
They are beloved

And may His Perfect Love cast out those fears that separate us from each other and from Him.

In Jesus’ Name.

[1] I say all this not to gain pity, but merely to point out how serious the situation was. And, yes, I do hope that you will be gentle in your comments, whatever they may be.
I learned something today. (Any day is a good day if you learn something new!) I learned that Epiphany and Theophany mean the same thing. Almost. That is to say, Theophany, which I learned years ago in college Bible classes, means the miraculous appearance specifically of a deity--Theos. In the Old Testament, the places where someone is visited not just by "an angel," but by "the angel of the Lord" are traditionally referred to as "Theophanies," or visitations of the pre-incarnate Christ. The word Epiphany doesn't have "Theos" in it, denoting a deity, but does mean a miraculous or sudden appearing.

I tend to think of Epiphany in relation to the visit of the magi from the east, though of course, we have no idea when they appeared, except that Jesus was probably at least a year old at the time. But here's what I find so fascinating--In 2 Timothy 1:9, 10, Paul says that God "has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (Italics supplied.) That word "appearing"? That's "epiphany." Five more times, it's used in the New Testament to refer to the Second Coming.

I love this because of the way Paul points out that this has always been true--"granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity," but now it's appeared. It's here! And I love it even more because just as the people of God in that day were looking anxiously for the appearing of the Messiah--and he came!--so we, today, are looking anxiously for his appearing again--and he will come! I have to admit, I sometimes wonder. But he did it before, and he said he would do it again.

I believe him. I just hate waiting, that's all. But in the meantime, I celebrate the fact that he came the first time, "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light."

One more cool thing about the Epiphany--traditionally in lots of places, it especially celebrates the Messiah's appearing to the Gentiles. Thank goodness!

I've said it before and I'll say it again--EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!!
The Importance of Grades

Submitted: Jan 3, 2013
By Andy Hanson

I can clearly remember how I, as a teacher, felt on the last day of school when a student returned my copy of the high school yearbook. I hadn't seen it in a week. It had been passed around from student to student in a large high school. Where it had been, who had written in it, and what they had written were still a mystery as I drove home on Thursday afternoon. I was apprehensive. What had they said? Their grades had been turned in, and the seniors, at least, could really tell me what they thought of me as a person and as a teacher without fear of retribution. And there was always the possibility that unflattering anonymous messages might be scrawled across prominent signature pages.

A group of my students looked after the book and made sure that it circulated around the school during the last week of the school for the five years I taught at Wm. S. Hart High School. Through some mysterious process, they always managed to get hundreds of my present and former students' signatures and comments. What I allowed my students to do was what I had done to them every nine weeks for every year they had been my English and sociology students—grade me.

It was only at home, after the children had been put to bed, and after fortifying myself with a shower and cup of hot chocolate, that I could work up the courage to open the school annual and discover what my students said about me. It was often gratifying, only infrequently traumatizing, and always edifying. (The following is one unflattering remark that remains in my memory after thirty-five years. "Cooler heads than yours fall off fish trucks every day!")

Being graded is almost always a traumatic experience, and it is often as stressful for the person doing the grading as it is for the person being graded. If grades are to serve constructive ends, parents and guardians must believe that teachers, principal, and school board are working in the best interest of students. No matter how hard teachers try to be objective in their assessment of student achievement, grading is fundamentally subjective.

Consequently, grades are relatively easy to dispute by anyone who subjects a teacher to careful and detailed cross-examination. A teacher's ability, methods, biases, fairness, and consistency can all be grounds for dispute, as any teacher can attest who has ever been taken to task by a student, parent, or guardian. So if the process is stressful and subjective, why promote it? Because it is necessary.

Responsible teachers must encourage criticism if their performance is to be improved. The Book of Proverbs emphasizes that fact. (1) Critics and criticism should also be evaluated in terms of their objectivity, sagacity, and intent. Proverbs also makes that clear. (2)

Critics of the Adventist Church “grade” the ideas and sometimes the behavior of their fellow members. Someone in the community should always take that “second look.” The credibility of the community is at stake. (3) Publicly reporting that “look” is fulfilling when praise is deserved and stressful when it isn’t. (4) But if it’s done in the right way, it might inspire a better way to commit resources, deal with a problem, or make a decision. (5)
(1) Proverbs 9:9 Teach a wise man, and he will be the wiser, teach a good man, and he will learn more.

(2) Proverbs 10:13 Men with commonsense are admired as counselors; those without it are beaten as servants.

(3) Proverbs 11:11 The good influence of godly citizens causes a city to prosper, but the moral decay of the wicked drives it downhill.

(4) Proverbs 17:12 It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool caught in his folly.

(5) Proverbs 10:17 Anyone willing to be corrected is on the pathway to life. Anyone refusing has lost his chance.
Jill Mathis has wanted to be a Christian almost as long as she can remember. Even though she was not raised in a Christian home, she asked her mother to take her to Sunday School and her mother agreed, though she did not go with Jill. At home, Jill had a sense that she was “never good enough,” and that her mother always wanted her to be someone she wasn’t. She reports being a happy child who “loved everybody,” but no matter how she reached out, she did not find the love or the satisfaction in relationships which she sought. So she “let the world take over.” Mathis describes her lifestyle during those years as “a partying mentality, drinking and doing whatever the world thought was ‘fun’.” She was also married for a short time.

During these years, she says she always felt that “Jesus was right there behind me, and that He cared.” Yet she still did not find the joy she sought, but kept looking for love and acceptance by trying to please the people around her.

Then one day, as Mathis was leaving work, her back unexpectedly gave out. Unable even to walk, she cried out for help to co-workers, but everyone ignored her. There is still bewilderment audible in her voice as she describes how shocked she was that “people would be so cruel.” Finally, someone brought her a shopping cart, and she leaned on that to get herself home.

For a long time, her life was difficult and painful. She needed help with the simplest of everyday needs, and one friend did take care of her. But Mathis had given up alcohol, and the friend accused her of being “no fun anymore.” In a drunken rage, the friend one day beat her up, while Mathis huddled on the floor, trying to protect herself. The friend left, and Mathis hit bottom. In deep depression, she who had been so sociable hid away from human society, keeping her curtains closed and hiding if she heard a car coming.

In desperation one day, Mathis fell to the floor and begged, “Please, Lord, help me.” She says people tend not to believe her when she tells what happened next. “I was surrounded and filled by the most amazing sense of peace. I had never felt anything like that. I can’t put it into words. I felt like somebody had scooped the insides of me out and refilled me with a completely new person. That’s where my journey started.”

Awestruck and wanting to know more, Mathis began surfing TV channels looking for more about God. She found the Seventh-day Adventist Hope Channel. For months, she studied along with the programs she found there, learning more about how to have a relationship with God, and learning more about health, which had always been one of her passions. She had taught, years before, in health care, and despite the drinking and what she calls “too much meat,” she had maintained fairly good health practices. The idea of a church that cared about physical health was very attractive to her.

One day, calling for a free book that had been offered, Mathis told the phone attendant that she wanted to be baptized. He put her in touch with local pastor Greg Daniel, of the Richmond, Kentucky church. She began attending at the beginning of November, 2011, was baptized November 19, and has been an active member ever since, overflowing with love and
understanding for the people she meets.

Since her life had been so totally changed, more than anything Mathis wanted a way to share what she had learned with others who might be as hopeless as she had been. She prayed and prayed for a ministry that would have three components: She wanted to help people in their homes, she wanted to teach good health practices, and she wanted to use her musical ability, which she says had grown amazingly since she gave her heart to God.

In the spring of 2012, she heard a Literature Evangelist speak, and over the next several months, with much prayer and study, she became convinced that this was what God was calling her to do. She was even more excited when she learned that some of the books were on health. She began working with John Williford, and felt blessed to be able to visit with people, listen to their stories, and pray with them. One day, she met a young girl who had just received a guitar as a present. The guitar was very out of tune, so Mathis showed her how to tune it and they played and sang together for a while. It was a high point for the family and for Mathis as well. She has sung in other homes, and has decided to carry her own guitar with her, too. Meeting people where they are, teaching health, using music—Mathis believes this is the mission God has hand-crafted just for her.

There have been amazing miracles this article does not have space to tell, but one can’t be left out. In the fall of 2012, a representative of the Hope Channel called Mathis and asked if they could record her testimony for possible airing. Amazed, Mathis agreed. She doesn’t know how they knew she had a surprising testimony, since she had often thought of sending them a letter, but never had done so. But they taped her on October 25, one year to the day after her first contact with her pastor, Greg Daniel, and the testimony was aired on “Give Thanks, Give Hope” on Sabbath, November 17, one year by Sabbaths, though not by date exactly, from the day of her baptism.

“Just ask God for something to do, and listen to Him,” says Mathis. “He’ll tell you what to do. And you’ll love it.”

Mathis also encourages people to watch and partner with the Hope Channel. It really can change lives. [www.hopetv.org](http://www.hopetv.org)