

Heidi's Letter to Hope International

This is not a pleasant subject. When I hear of improper activities in other independent ministries, I try to avoid comment. However, there are very definite Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements about the urgent need to reprove open sin which is tolerated and continues on and on. Therefore, I am here reprinting Heidi Heiks' letter to the leaders of the Illinois-based organization, Hope International.

I have spoken with Heidi. I have also tried to reach Joe by phone, without success. But I will include information on how to contact both at the end of this report, so you can contact each of them.

As you read Heidi's letter, below, you will learn that defending what is happening at Hope stand Joe Olson, Georgine Olson, Clark Floyd, and Jim Watts. Opposed to those activities are Heidi Heiks, Robin Heiks, and Jean Handwerk. Heidi and his wife, Robin, put everything they had into the work at Hope, and it was a great grief to them to have to leave. Here is this letter. Brackets are mine. At Heidi's request, the names Karen and Jill are pseudonyms, because Heidi says those two are not the ones causing this problem—and able to solve it.

July 21, 2008

To: Hope International Executive Director, Joe Olson, and board members Georgine Olson, Clark Floyd, Jim Watts, Jean Handwerk and Robin Heiks.

In submitting my resignation to Hope International as its editor and board member, it will become apparent that I am doing so to preserve a clear conscience and to not betray the trust of our donors in allowing open sin into the camp. For clarity's sake, I will [most of the time] speak of Joe in the third person.

After arriving at Hope International just over two years ago to start employment, Robin and I shortly learned that one of the employees (Danny, Joe's brother) was allowed to smoke on the property of Hope International and live in one of the homes there. We were shocked, to say the least. In Danny's behalf, he is an excellent worker and has a big heart. We did and still do like Danny very much, and have no personal issues with him at all. We were not yet board members, and the board was at that time, as I recall, in the process of removing Ron Spear [a faithful worker and founder of Hope, who, after years of service building up the organization, they totally fired from the ministry.]

I did speak to Joe about this smoking issue, and Joe was very open in admitting how wrong it was. He even said that Ellen White uses some of

the strongest language against this sin [consider GC 474:3!]. Robin [Heidi's wife and former treasurer of Hope, prior to her resignation] and I recognize that all of us struggle with the sin problem in our lives, so we looked for the Biblical principles to address this matter in the most loving way. You even said yourself, Joe, that we were the most understanding people you have met in leaning on the side of mercy for Danny. Joe told us that Danny was working on quitting his smoking, and asked us to pray for him. We said it was wonderful and we would most definitely do so.

Still not board members, I said to Joe that in order to keep the frown of God away from Hope International, Danny could not be up front and behind the pulpit on Sabbaths while practicing open sin. The Bible and EGW are most clear that if we accept sin in our midst, we become as guilty for the tolerated sin. That is where we must draw the line, and Joe agreed.

Danny was pulled [from henceforth speaking to the congregation from the pulpit on Sabbath mornings], and we all were hoping this would help cure the problem, because no one wanted to fire him; but the problem did not go away. Joe told Danny again and again that if he did not stop smoking, Joe would have to let him go; and that was right. But Danny would smoke again and again after those numerous warnings, until it became a mockery. Even Danny's wife, Kaye, said that it was not right to be living on Hope property while Danny smoked. She said it was hypocritical and she wanted to leave.

When Danny said that he loves to smoke and is going to continue to smoke, then the time had come for leadership to stand up to the plate and make a moral and righteous judgment on behalf of the ministry, its donors and employees. That would have been right to do, but Joe did not do so. Danny was then made a subcontractor, but he still smokes and lives on Hope property; and the issue has been dropped.

After this time, Robin and I were voted on as board members and Karen was hired by Joe. [Not a relative of Joe's, Karen prepares the pictures for the magazine. She and her husband also moved onto the property.] Her unbelieving spouse was told by Joe that he could smoke on Hope property, but not in the houses. It was shortly after this that Joe's daughter Heather needed help, and Joe then brought on Karen's daughter Jill [to help with packaging and shipping]. Jill was going to be working and living

on Hope property with her mother.

Those board members who were then present in Joe's office listened as Joe went on and on about all the baggage that was coming in, along with Jill and her boyfriend. All knew that Jill and her boyfriend smoked, drank, had sex outside of marriage and partied. Danny witnessed them smoking dope outside the house they were staying in on Hope property.

Joe told us that Jill was starting work for Hope and was to be on probation. He said her full acceptance at Hope would be subject to a board vote. Robin e-mailed Joe and expressed her disapproval and concerns regarding Jill being here at Hope and helping Heather, but she got no reply. There was never a board meeting and Jill was fully accepted by Joe, who told Jill that if she would quit smoking for two weeks, she could live in one of the homes of Hope. Jill did stop for two weeks and moved onto Hope, but started smoking again. Jill missed a lot of work, and then had to go to the emergency room after coming home early to find her boyfriend in bed with another man. Such are the fruits we have to contend with when counsel is disregarded.

Jill rightfully complained because of the double standards when Joe's mother and father paid a visit and Joe's mother was allowed to smoke on Hope property, as witnessed by all present. Joe's mother would smoke on the front and back porches of the log cabin during work hours, and on Joe's deck at his home. [Moving onto the property and paid a salary as were the others, Joe's mother and father helped package DVDs in the shipping department. Both smoke and drink alcoholic beverages.]

I will not take the time to address all the known baggage that came along with the hiring of these non-Christian workers. That is already known to all. However, one example that is not known to all [on the board] is necessary to relate in order to illustrate the far-reaching results when we defiantly refuse the counsel of the Lord. In my move, I had to call for some outside help. In the local paper, I contacted an individual; and at the specified time the man arrived on my porch. His name was Richard Pruka. Little did I know that Richard was the owner of the apartments where Jill and her boyfriend previously rented [before moving onto Hope property]. Jill told Richard she worked for Hope International. He later asked me and Ronnie (a former employee of Hope) if this is the Hope International that Jill worked for, and I answered, "Yes." Richard then said he had to kick them out, for they were some of the worst renters and there was nothing Christian about them. I could say nothing.

I will let you guess how many times that has been

repeated and what kind of impact Hope International is making on the community.

Joe then declared to my wife that he never said it was to be a board decision [whether to keep Jill as a worker if, after a brief period of probation she continued smoking]. I e-mailed Joe and corrected him, as he did say this in his office before Robin, Georgine and myself. I got no reply.

Just three days before camp meeting, I picked up a cigarette butt that was in the driveway directly in front of the front doors of the church. Joe was concerned with what to do with Jill [during the time that Hope supporters would be present at the camp meeting]. Joe had said he would not allow her to come to work with her tattooed breasts hanging out, smelling like a cigarette and wearing her pierced earrings.

I had complained that it was not fair to those of us who supposedly hired into a Christian ministry, that Hope International was to be a place of employment for committed Christians, not for people who still willfully smoked, drank, did drugs and had sex outside of marriage. We all had to endure this because Joe's daughter Heather needed help, but in fact we all needed help in what we were doing.

Joe talked of not allowing Jill on campus for camp meeting because everyone would know she did not represent the ministry. Poor Jill. Joe wanted to hide her from our donors and supporters. But, if everything was done according to Biblical principles, would there be a need to hide anything?

This brings us to the present crisis. Joe has said of his own mother [before she became a salaried worker at Hope] that she smokes, drinks, cusses, gambles and sits at the bar with a cigarette hanging out of her mouth, telling her friends that Saturday is the Sabbath. Well, good for her, and we pray for her conversion.

But then he said he wanted to hire her and his father and move them onto Hope property. He put his idea and reasons in writing, and placed them before the board for their votes. Joe stated in his proposal that he had already told his mother she wouldn't be permitted to smoke inside the Hope property houses; but the Bible commands that open sin must be removed from the camp, not willingly brought in.

Robin and I voted "No," while Clark, Jim, and Georgine voted "Yes." Jean wanted more time to search for inspired counsel; but, after seeing how everyone else voted, e-mailed Joe to acknowledge that her vote would make no difference in the outcome. Her initial opinion was against the proposal. Even if she voted against it, it would make a tie and would require the vote of Joe to break the tie.

There was some discussion in e-mails and a timely Sabbath School quarterly that dealt with this very

1 issue. Robin and I sent e-mails showing how wrong
4 it was to bring open sin into the camp. However, no
5 board member addressed our concerns. Jean even
3 asked for us all [the entire board] to address Robin's
e-mailed concerns, but there was no response. I then
e-mailed Joe and asked if he was going to vote in
favor of bringing Joe's parents on [as fully salaried
workers, living on the property]. Joe replied to my
question by simply stating, "Yes."

Robin and I knew at that point that all the work
and support and money we [had] contributed to this
ministry was at an end, for to stay was to sanction
open sin. If leadership will sell out and not stand up
to no smoking, and will now allow alcohol on the
property to be consumed by forthcoming Hope em-
ployees, we knew that unless this downward course
is checked, leadership will sell out in the coming cri-
sis as well. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or
mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he
that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not wor-
thy of Me." *Matthew 10:37*.

Unfortunately, Joe Olson has turned this minist-
ry into the Olson Dynasty and Retirement Center.
He has sold his first love, for nothing is established
by principle at Hope. We felt the need to run, lest we
be consumed. See *1 Timothy 5:20* and *2 Testimo-
nies, 14-15*, for our explicit counsel in how we are to
deal with open sin in the camp, and to see how God
will deal with those who choose the company of sin
and willful sinners. We are told, "for the wrath of
God must have come upon us if these corrupt pre-
tenders had remained with us" (*1T 99*) because "the
principles of God's dealing with men are ever the
same" (*GC 343*). How dare we take money and tithe
from honest donors and paint ourselves as reform-
ers standing for principle and truth, when nothing
could be further from the truth. The world and the
General Conference SDAs do not allow their employ-
ees to smoke and drink on their property. In fact, the
GC has a policy that you cannot work for them if you
smoke and drink, but the so-called reformers say
with open arms, "bring it on!"

"It is a sad thing when a people claiming to be
reformers cease to reform." *4 Spirit of Prophecy, 185*.

"Every unconverted man is fascinated, bewil-
dered, by the bewitching power of the great deceiver.
Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'Who hath bewitched you,
that ye should not obey the truth?' Every person who
cherishes a known error, in faith or practice, is un-
der the power of sorcery, and is practicing sorcery
upon others. Satan employs him to mislead other
souls." *Signs of the Times, May 18, 1882*.

[Heidi then addresses Clark Floyd:]

Clark, you said "Joe's parents smoke and have a
beer once in a while, but not in the extreme." You

also excuse these sins and voted to bring them into
the camp. You probably see nothing wrong with Joe's
mother sitting on his deck (as described by Joe to
Robin) smoking on Hope property, and at the same
time offering Danny a smoke as well. We ask all to
read *Great Controversy, 508-509*, for it reveals ever
so clearly on which side of the issue we stand. I
quote in part: "In the unregenerate heart there is
love of sin and a disposition to cherish and excuse
it. In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin and
determined resistance against it." *Great Contro-
versy, 508*.

Your letters then tried to sidestep the issue. You
painted me as being proud and self-righteous as
you attacked my character, since you could not find
any tangible evidence to use against me. All your
criticisms of me came only from Joe, since you do
not know me nor did you ever approach me on these
issues. You base your opinion entirely on what one
person told you. We are not angry with you, Clark.
We just pity you, for you are nothing but a pawn in
Joe's hand.

It should be clear to all that there are two sepa-
rate and distinct classes. One that works from prin-
ciple and another that does just what it pleases,
regardless of the consequence and its effects upon
others—even against a "thus saith the Lord." From
such we are commanded to turn away.

"Christ's followers are required to come out
from the world, and be separate, and touch not the
unclean, and they have the promise of being the
sons and daughters of the Most High, members of
the royal family. But if the conditions are not com-
plied with on their part, they will not, cannot, real-
ize the fulfillment of the promise." *2 Testimonies, 441*.

"The line of demarcation between His people
and the world is ever to be kept unmistakably dis-
tinct. They refused to enter into alliance with those
who, though familiar with the requirements of God's
law, would not yield to its claims.

"The principles set forth in Deuteronomy for
the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God's
people to the end of time. True prosperity is de-
pendent on the continuance of our covenant rela-
tionship with God. Never can we afford to compro-
mise principle by entering into alliance with those
who do not fear Him." *Prophets and Kings, 570*.

Respectfully,

Heidi Heiks

That concludes Heidi's letter of resignation from
Hope International. Here is his wife's (Robin's) brief
letter of resignation:

July 21, 2008

To the Board of Hope International,

I am submitting my resignation from both treasurer and board member of Hope International, Inc.

I can no longer work here and have a clear conscience as to the ministry that our donors believe that they are supporting. When I first came to work for Hope, open sin was shunned; now the leadership of Hope has welcomed it with open arms, to not only those who come to work here but to those who live here in donor-supported housing as well. I simply cannot and will not be a part of this ministry when it has embraced these new views. We as the people of God have clear-cut direction in both the Old and New Testaments that open sin must be put out of the camp.

We can't help what the Word says to do; we just choose to do what it says—and yet we are made out [by others] to be self-righteous, plus like the Pharisees just for following the clear-cut directions of a “thus said the Lord.”

Heidi and I came to Hope to work for the Lord's ministry and to give it our all, and that's just what we did. We were dedicated workers as Joe commented himself. We invested all our money and time to Hope and truly expected to stay until the Lord returned. At that time it was still the Lord's ministry and now with the recent developments, it's Joe Olson's ministry doing business his way and not waiting upon the Lord to direct.

Words cannot express how sad my heart is, especially when others ask why we left; for, when I tell them, they too see the danger that lies ahead for any ministry that allows open sin. Truly I thought that, after the fiasco with Jill and her soap opera life, Joe would clearly see the results of hiring such a character (even though Jill was a baptized SDA) and learn a most valuable lesson; but what did happen is exactly what is prophesied: The sinfulness of sin gets more and more gray, and now smoking and drinking are okay.

I know for certain that the Lord led us to Hope and I am just as certain that He is leading us now. Hope International will always be in my prayers, that they soon realize the danger that they are in and repent and choose to get their helps the Lord's way and not their own.

Respectfully,
Robin Heiks.

That concludes Robin's letter of resignation to the Board of Hope. Since then, I have received a postscript from Heidi (dated August 28), also addressed to Hope, which discusses another very se-

rious situation which he had not mentioned in his letter of resignation. Unfortunately, it broadens the problem significantly. When you contact him, you can request a copy.

More recently, Jean has resigned her position as proofreader and board member—and quit. Deeply upset with the profession vs. the level of conduct, even Karen is going to quit also. News of the situation is spreading rather widely.

Here are the addresses of both Hope and Heidi, so you can contact both. I have been told by others that Joe either excuses the problem, saying that it is not serious, or that Danny and his parents are “working on it” and will eventually change.

When you contact Heidi, he can tell you how to obtain all of his study on Daniel 11, the first part of which was printed in *Firm Foundation*.

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The entire situation is a terrible tragedy. Ron Spear spent years building it up, before Joe arrived and ousted him. An increasing number have been contacting Joe; but he consistently evades the smoking, drinking issue. As for e-mails to him, he just does not answer them.

How earnestly we must plead with God for help! Satan is determined to destroy the Advent people. Those who appear to still be proclaiming the full message of the three angels are a special target. It is crucial that the faithful people of God in these last days draw together and avoid everything that will weaken them spiritually. —vf

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

“Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”—*Ezekiel 3:17-19*.

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.”—*Ezekiel 33:6*.