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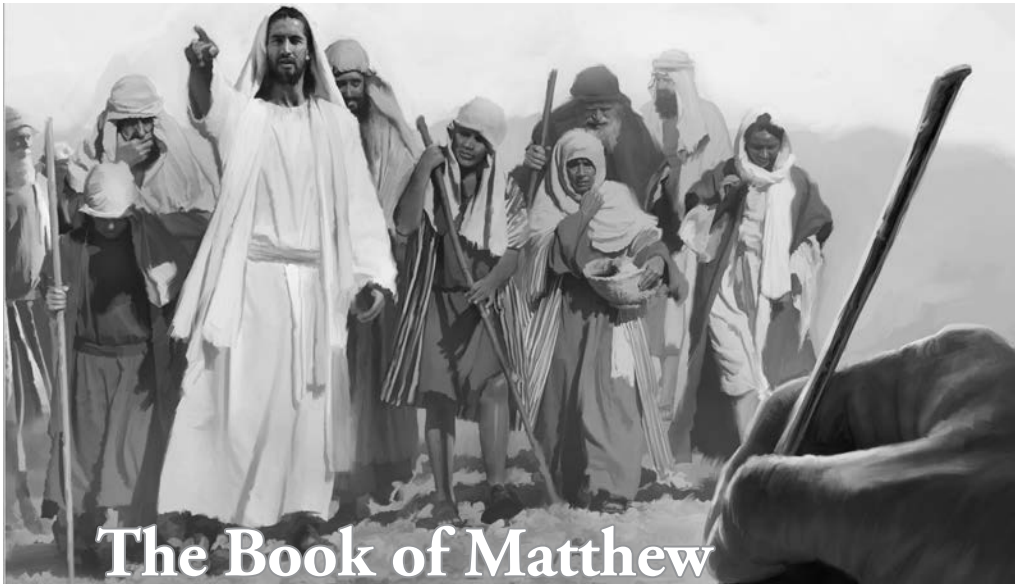
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**D**uring his birth in Winchester, Massachusetts, Rick Hoyt was strangled by the umbilical cord, leaving him brain damaged and unable to control his limbs. Months later, doctors told the Hoyt family that Rick would live in a vegetative state the rest of his life and should be put in an institution.

“But the Hoyts weren’t buying it,” wrote Rick Reilly in a profile of the Hoyts for *Sports Illustrated* magazine (June 20, 2005). “They noticed the way Rick’s eyes followed them around the room. When Rick was 11, they took him to the engineering department at Tufts University and asked if there was anything that could be done to help the boy communicate.

“‘No way,’ Dick Hoyt says he was told. ‘There’s nothing going on in his brain.’

“‘Tell him a joke,’ Dick countered. They did. Rick laughed. Turns out a lot was going on in his brain.”

Then, hooked to “a computer that allowed him to control the cursor by touching a switch with the side of his head, Rick was finally able to communicate” with others. This technology enabled him to begin a new life. That new life included, among other things, his father pushing him in a wheelchair in a marathon. After the race, Rick typed out, “‘Dad, when we were running, it felt like I wasn’t disabled anymore!’ ”

Dick determined to give Rick that feeling as often as he could. Four years later, they ran the Boston Marathon together. Then someone suggested a triathlon, and since then the two have done hundreds of athletic events, with his father pushing or pulling him along.

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“ ‘No question about it,’ ” Rick has typed out. “ ‘My dad is the Father of the Century.’ ”

We’ve got a lot in common with Rick Hoyt because we have a Father who, even more than Dick Hoyt loves Rick, loves us, cares for us, and was willing to sacrifice His only Son for us.

Like Rick, the tragedy and debilitating effects of sin have paralyzed us all. By our own strength, the life we live isn’t anywhere close to the life we were meant to live. As hard as we might try, we will never improve ourselves enough to be saved. “Our condition through sin is unnatural, and the power that restores us must be supernatural, else it has no value.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 428. We must be saved from outside ourselves because it should be obvious by now that we cannot save ourselves.

It was for this reason that people, at times, have looked up into the night sky for help outside of themselves: a Deliverer. Our spiritual ancestors, the Israelites, had a name for this hoped-for Deliverer: the Son of David, whom we know as Jesus of Nazareth.

And an inspired version of Jesus’ story is given in the Gospel of Matthew, our topic for this quarter. Matthew, a Jewish believer in Jesus and one of the original disciples of Jesus, recounts the story of Jesus from his own Spirit-inspired perspective. Though in common with Mark, Luke, and John, Matthew’s theme is the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Matthew focuses strongly on the fact that Jesus is the Promised Messiah. He wanted his readers to know that the redemption of Israel was to be found in Jesus, the One of whom the prophets spoke and to whom all the Old Testament types pointed.

Although his audience was primarily Jewish, his message of hope and Redemption speaks to us as well; a people who, like Rick Hoyt, need Someone to do for us what we never can do for ourselves.

And Matthew tells the story of Him, Jesus, doing just that.

*Andy Nash, PhD, is a professor and pastor at Southern Adventist University, in Collegedale, Tennessee. He is the author of several books, including The Haystacks Church and The Book of Matthew: “Save Us Now, Son of David.”*

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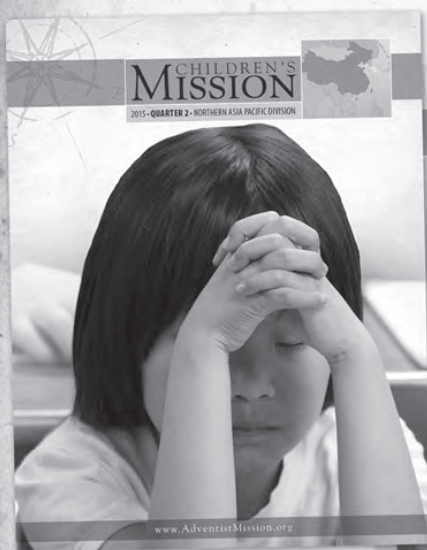
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