



into the Melting Pot

the question is more important than the answer

Sunday 10 December 2017

What About Hope? - Gary & Chris Knamiller

Written up from a few notes taken at the meeting, incorporating the five handouts.

This evening will be in five sections: what has caused you despair, what has caused you hope, what is hope, what are we hoping for, how do we get there?

1 What has caused you despair? Let down by friends; War – in Yemen; Chernobyl, North Korea, USA politics; Brexit; daily bombardment of bad news; homelessness, plastic & carbon emissions.

2 What has caused you hope? Dan's Den at Christchurch, meeting people and sharing, being alive, responses to disasters, basic human qualities.

There is a sense of community that springs out of disaster or despair. The default setting for humanity is compassion, integrity, generosity.

3 What is hope? Positivity, imagination, optimism, feeling uplifted, expectations, to do with the future, self-centred, faith, resurrection (new life).

Handout 1

Hope (dictionary): the feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it could happen: a feeling that something good will happen or be true: the chance that something good will happen.

Hope is an optimistic attitude of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: "expect with confidence" and "to cherish a desire with anticipation".

Hope: a Christian point of view (from Gotquestions.org).

This is a very "traditional" interpretation, and not at all progressive.

Paul could suffer so many hardships yet not despair, because his hope was not based on earthly circumstances. He held on to the knowledge that God was ultimately in control of it all (cf Isaiah 55:8-9). He knew that, whether he lived or died (Philippians 1:23-24), whether he had plenty or had nothing (Philippians 4:12-13) God was in control and his sufferings would have meaning for all eternity (2 Corinthians 4:11).

But, as children of God, we cannot despair because we have hope in God. Our hope rests on eternity and not the few days we live on this earth (James 4:14). Like Abraham, we are "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is".

The New Testament idea of hope is the recognition that in Christ is found the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises (Matthew 12:21, 1 Peter 1:3). Christian hope is rooted in faith in the divine salvation in Christ (Galatians 5:5). Hope of Christians is brought into being through the presence or the promised Holy Spirit (Romans 8:24-25). It is the future hope of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6), the promises given to Israel (Acts 26:6-7), the redemption of the body and of the whole creation (Romans 8:23-25), eternal glory (Colossian 1:27), eternal life and the inheritance of the saints (Titus 3:5-7), the return of Christ (Titus 2:11-14), transformation into the likeness of Christ (1 John 3:2-3), the salvation of God (1 Timothy 4:10) or simply Christ Himself (1 Timothy 1:1).

This is a traditional view taken from a broad first century context, without referring to the context and audience of the multiple original texts. This view was developed by the Church over centuries as a tool to maintain power. Stringing chosen verses together to make a 'whole' argument lacks credibility or academic integrity.

Rev Roger Smith (Bramhope Methodist Church): At the heart of the Christmas story is a vulnerable baby born in very difficult circumstances. That baby received some lavish gifts, was protected by love but faced real dangers. The Christmas story is not a cosy one but it does offer real hope for a troubled world.

Christian hope is based on 'kingdom values', ie 'love in action'. We need to bring Jesus into this.

Faith without works is dead (paraphrase from the book of James). Jesus was a 'do-er'. Hope requires rebellion.

Handout 2

Hope: a secular point of view (Rebecca Solnit from 'Hope in the Dark')

Hope is not like a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky (or simply praying). Hope is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency; because hope should shove you out the door, because it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures and the grinding down of the poor and marginal. Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope. At the beginning of his massive 1930's treatise on hope, the German philosopher Ernst Bloch wrote, "The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong". To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable.

Words matter: Christian hope quotes are nebulous, but Solnit's words are positive.

Old Testament is full of the call to live righteously, and for social justice.

Handout 3

Church / Faith / Hope summarised in the words of the song.

Christ, Be Our Light – Singing the Faith 706 – Bernadette Farrell (b1957)

*1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness,
Longing for truth, we turn to you,
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.*

*C Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine in the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*

*2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your world alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.*

*3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.*

*4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.*

5 *Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.*

4 What are you hoping for?

Creative solutions to the world's problems, peace, that diversity is appreciated, international co-operation.

Handout 4

*Paul Goodman famously wrote: "Suppose you had the revolution you are talking about and dreaming about. Suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society that you wanted. How would you live, you personally, in that society?"
He went on to say: "Start living that way now."*

Christian view of hope: that more people come to faith, salvation, love, hope for humanity, kingdom love in action.

5 How do we get there?

Get involved with PRAXIS – the newsletter of the Joint Public Issues Team (supported by Baptists Together, The Church of Scotland, The Methodist Church, The United Reformed Church).

Handout 5

Welcome to Praxis, edition 90 (December 2017)

The world of politics has been anything but quiet since our last edition of Praxis in October. Brexit negotiations have dominated the headlines, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has presented his Autumn Budget, and there has been yet another cabinet reshuffle, to name but a few. JPIT has also been busy, with the launch of our new #nuclearban video and our tickets for our 2018 conference going on sale. Below you'll find a summary of what we've been up to; our blogs, our new resources, and information you may find useful. As always, if you have questions or feedback, please do get in touch. Thank you for taking the time to read Praxis.

Many blessings,

Lucy Zwolinska

Policy and Engagement Officer, JPIT

Themes blogs and conferences from Praxis

- *Refugee Situation in Greece - Call to Action*
- *Blogs:*
 - 1 *"Should Donald Trump come to Britain on a state visit?"*
 - 2 *"Universal Credit: solving one problem and creating another?"*
 - 3 *"Bamboozled by Brexit?"*
- *Conferences:*
 - 1 *A Brave New World? Faithful living in a time of change, is an opportunity to discuss challenges, fears and hopes for the future communities, nations and world. 17 March 2018 in Manchester.*
 - 2 *Methodism and Politics - a conference in June 2018.*

We need to get active, get involved.

Action, not theology, is the way forward. Living the call of Jesus, not preaching it!

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