

Hopeless or Hopeful?

In these times, living with a sense of hopelessness rather than a sense of hopefulness is all too likely. Hopefulness is hard to maintain when anger, frustration, selfishness, and prejudice dominate much of public conversation, and our current leadership. We hear a steady diet of news about mean spirited actions, toxic rhetoric, and stories that rouse division, inhumanity and fear. When people who strongly disagree cannot work together, and cannot talk to each other without, name calling, character assassination, and disrespectful behavior, it is difficult to remember that we are all children of a loving God who calls people to be better than that.

There was a day when people; public figures and politicians included, disagreed to the very core of their being and would use every argument, they could muster to make their point. Then, they would go to dinner with their opponents as friends; always treating each other with respect and as equals. Some days, it is impossible to believe that there was such a time.

These days, it feels like negativity and plain meanness have taken over. We have to look hard to find reasons to hope. Our morbid fascination with the negative keeps mostly the negative in the news. There are reasons for hope out there! "Look for the Beautiful, Look For the True!" (1952 red Brethren Hymnal, page 309)

- Remember the Disaster Childcare workers helping refugee children at the border (*Messenger online*. October 16, 2019).
- Remember congregations, like West Charleston, Ohio that welcome refugees from several cultures into their midst as brothers and sisters in Christ (see *Messenger* July/August 2019, p. 16-17).
- Remember the church in Nigeria, continuing to reach out and grow despite the violence they face.

This week in your prayer time:

- **Pray for refugees, those living with war**, those living with war and Ebola in the Congo, those facing natural disasters or economic upheaval.
- **Also pray** for the people who are trying to make life better for everyone as well as for themselves.
- **Look for** stories of hope; stories of people who have chosen to stand with their neighbors whoever they may be instead of against them.
- **Write** their stories down (you will remember them better!).
- **Make it these stories of hope that you share** around the family table, at the church fellowship hour, or the coffee break at work instead of the latest toxic political rhetoric or inuendo.
- **Try to go a week without** complaining about someone you disagree with, discussing politics, or making any negative comments about anyone.

See if you can bring the light of hope back into your days and see what a difference it can make!



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