



The Exchange **30 August 2014 - "HOPE"**

1. What were some of your childhood 'hopes'? Do you still have these hopes? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever met someone (perhaps you) who had a lot of hope in spite of considerable suffering e.g. a debilitating long term illness, losing a loved one, financial hardship? What gave them (you) that hope?

What is Hope?

3. Hope seems to change how a person handles a tough time without actually changing the situation. Is it a type of positive thinking, optimism, or something more?
4. Does hope have to be realistic or is the point of hope that it is unrealistic?
5. Is hope the opposite of science?
6. Are cleverness and education constitutive of, or detrimental to, hope?
7. Is there such a thing as false hope? What does it look like? If someone gets hope from something that is untrue or untrustworthy would it be better to 'reveal the truth' to them but in so doing, take away their source of hope? Would it matter if what they are hoping in is mostly harmless?
8. Is there a tension between hope and acceptance?
9. If we believe a situation is hopeless, is it fraudulent of us to pretend that there is hope, even if we can't see it?
10. What's the difference between hope and faith? Do we treat hope and faith as equally important in the church?
11. Is hope a passive or an active virtue?

Where Is Hope?

12. Is hope an essentially religious idea?
16. Where does the human race look for hope outside of God? Can human beings have any ultimate sense of hope in life without belief in a personal God?
17. Ps 39:7 'and now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.' In what ways does Jesus fulfil those hopes that humanity has?
18. As Christians, we hope for a new earth and life for everyone. We have been waiting for a few millennia now. God knows that 'hope deferred makes the heart sick' (Prov 13:12), so why does He wait so long? How can we maintain that hope for the long haul?
19. Rom 5:3-5 talks about a progression that ends in hope. Does this progression make sense? Does it alter our understanding of what 'hope' is?

20. What does Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 13 when he says that hope remains? Why would you need hope when you are face to face with God?

Why Hope?

21. Is hope something we achieve or is it gifted to us?

22. Can you have peace in suffering even if you don't have hope?

23. Is despair sin? Did Job sin in wishing he hadn't been born?

24. What would you say to someone who told you they had no hope?

BONUS QUESTIONS:

“Christian hope does not promise successful days to the rich and the strong, but resurrection and life to those who must exist in the shadows of death. Success is no name of God. Righteousness is.”—Jurgen Moltmann. Discuss.

“Hope, on one hand, is an absurdity too embarrassing to speak about, for it flies in the face of all those claims we have been told are facts. Hope is the refusal to accept the reading of reality which is the majority opinion; and one does that only at great political and existential risk. On the other hand, hope is subversive, for it limits the grandiose pretension of the present, daring to announce that the present to which we have all made commitments is now called into question.”
— Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*. Discuss.

“The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure, but from hope to hope.” - Samuel Johnson. Do you think this statement is true?