

# Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement  
For The Real World

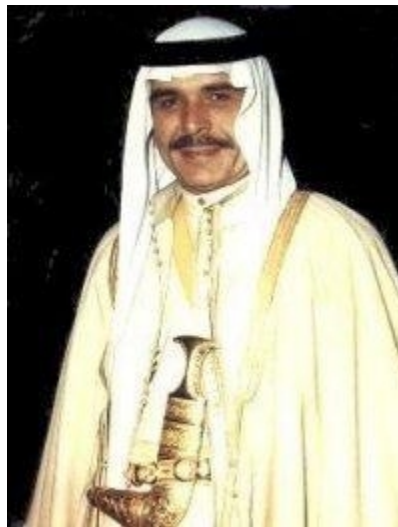
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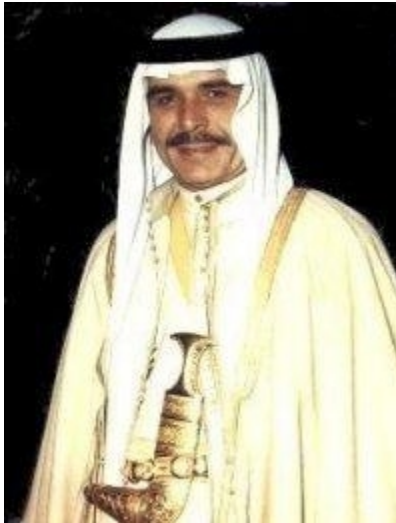
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## King Hussein, a Man for His Time?

By Aaron K. Dean

*The Arab world is one which connotes danger, turmoil and death. One man, however, had the courage to spread to this region a visionary antidote to such evils.*



**T**HIS WEEK A FRIEND of mine died. He wasn't an ordinary friend; he was a world fixture. Even people who could not place Jordan on a map would recognize King Hussein. If ever a man ruled under the sword of Damocles, it was this king. Such was his role in the affairs of the Middle East.

I first met King Hussein when I was 21 years old. I had just graduated from Ambassador College and had been asked by Herbert W. Armstrong to work on his Gulfstream II jet airplane. I accepted, and in June of 1974 I found myself in Palestine, traveling between Jerusalem, Israel and Amman, Jordan. I talked for some time with the king's younger brother, Crown Prince Hassan as he flew on our aircraft from Amman to Aquaba, the king's southern palace on the Red Sea where the king was staying.

The king was not a large man, yet his presence was larger than life. I only spent a few minutes with him as he greeted our group before going off to a private meeting with my boss. Yet in these few minutes I could sense that he seemed to be acting out some kind of destiny. Peace hung on a narrow thread.

Over the next 20 years my work with the Ambassador Foundation took me to Jordan many times to check on several projects we supported. These trips led to many more meetings with the king, his queen, and other members of the royal family, all of whom were involved in the projects for the betterment of the Jordanian people. Oil poor, but problem rich, the Jordanians needed the support of others. The king capably guided his country through the political ramifications of accepting the "right" help and avoiding political and economic suicide.

King Hussein had been installed as king at age 17 after the assassination of the former king.

He himself had taken a bullet as a teenager, saved by a medallion he was wearing which deflected the impact of the bullet. It obviously was not his time to go.

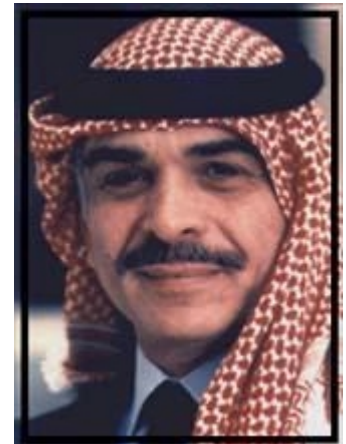
He faced a world largely shaped by western powers as land was divided between the Jews and the Arabs after World War II. Palestinians fled to the closest border as the war for Israel's independence commenced. Emotions, with just cause, were high. How can a foreign power take land from one and give it to another without strong emotions? The young king was to rule over not only his people, but also these displaced Palestinians who wanted nothing less than a war to seize what they felt was theirs.

As King Hussein began to realize the solution was peace, he was faced with an environment that was not prepared for it. In a private meeting with King Hussein in 1981, Mr. Armstrong asked King Hussein, "Would you meet with Prime Minister Begin of Israel?" I watched his eyes as he answered, "Yes, if...."

The "if" was hinged upon the preparation of King Hussein's people and the Arab world for peace. They were not ready at that time. I was happy as I watched conditions change to where King Hussein would be able to make those meetings toward peace. I am sure it was a time of personal satisfaction for him.

Though King Hussein never achieved peace in his lifetime, he certainly did his utmost in striving for this noble goal. I respect him for that. He truly was a man for his time. He helped his own people while delicately balancing the concerns of the rest of the region. Without his positive influence I am convinced the world would be quite different today.

It makes one wonder if God put King Hussein in his position for a specific purpose. For those that believe in prophecy, much of which centers around this small portion of the globe, was it God that had this man there at this time for His purpose? If so, does his death set the stage for a fulfillment of those Biblical prophecies, some of which are scary as they describe the end of man's civilization? Will this time be followed, as the Book says, by the return of Jesus Christ and finally true millennial peace?



Hopefully King Hussein's son, King Abdullah will be able to continue in his father's footsteps by continuing the peace process. If he doesn't, we may face a new millennium with even more terrorism than has marked the end of this one. With virtually all of the middle eastern monarchs, sultans and sheiks in ill health or approaching old age, young King Abdullah may be the first of many to be in the position to pursue peace.

With the coming change in leadership in the Middle East, the economic, political and probable military union of Europe, the resurgence of the Catholic church under its long-reigning yet aging pope, the economic turbulence of most of the world, and the nearing of 6,000 years of man, it certainly seems the stage is set for what God intends for the world at this time. Are you ready for a new millennium?

## For Those Who Honor Me I Will Honor

By Elaine Jacobs

*Have you ever become weary while doing good? Have you ever felt that your efforts are bringing no rewards? Take a look at what April did when such feelings threatened her.*



**A**PRIL (not her real name) was near the end of four years at a liberal arts college before she knew "what she wanted to be when she grew up." She had been interested in nursing, and a medical experience of her own led her to decide for sure that she wanted to become a nurse.

Upon graduation she moved back home. Dreading more years of schooling, April immediately began to take prerequisite classes for nursing school. After two years, she was accepted to an accelerated nursing program at a private university.

The fact that it was an accelerated program was very important to April. She could finish an RN program in two years and have a BS degree. After eight years of college work she would finally be finished with school. Not only was she tired of going to school, she felt like life was passing her by. Many of her friends were married and having families, or already had their careers well under way. She was still living with and dependent on her mom and dad; though they were very supportive, she was past ready to be on her own.

As April entered her last year of nursing school, she let her instructors know that she would be missing some clinical days (days the student nurses do actual hospital work as part of their training). April would miss these days because she would be attending the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Holy Days all fell on clinical days. (For more information regarding the Feast of Tabernacles and the other Holy Days, request a free copy of the booklet entitled [God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind](#).) The instructors were not happy with this news and said they could not allow her to miss clinicals unless the provost gave his approval.

April and her parents prayed about the matter. Then she went to see the provost. On the first visit, April's Dad went with her for moral support. The provost listened and was very kind. He told her he would let her know his decision after he discussed it with her instructors.

On the second visit, April went alone and this time the provost was very unfriendly. He refused to make an exception for her, though he admitted to making exceptions for others for events such as weddings. He told April that because her religion was not mainstream, he would not make an exception for her.

April chose to resolve the problem by taking a semester's leave of absence, and graduating a semester behind her class. This was a crushing blow for someone anxious to be done with school. Still, April wanted to obey God. She saw in I Samuel 2:30 God's promise to honor those who honor him. She didn't know how God would fulfill his promise. Life looked pretty grim at that moment. Many tears were shed, but she acted on faith.

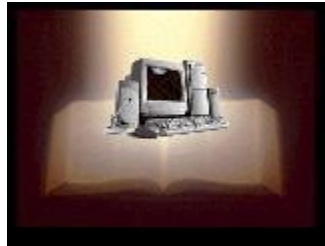
Since April had an open semester on her hands, she decided to seek work as a nurse's aide in a local children's hospital. She was hired and began to put into practice some of the things she had learned in nursing school. This experience gave her confidence, and when she went back to school the next semester she was a better student. Upon graduation the following December, she was immediately hired as an RN by the children's hospital that she had worked for. She didn't have to go through the ordeal of looking for a job in a city where the nursing staff in most hospitals was being cut. As it worked out, others in April's class, for various reasons, also graduated a semester late, so she was not alone. She wouldn't have been alone anyway. God was always with her!

There are many times in our lives when God gives us the opportunity to prove whether we will honor Him. When the choice is difficult, it helps to remember I Samuel 2:30.

## Is the Bible Relevant in the Computer Age?

By Larry J. Walker

*We will all come in contact with someone who has lost someone close to them. What's the best thing to say and do? Probably the same things you'd like to hear.*



**C**AN A BOOK that speaks of swords, spears and pruning hooks have any relevance in the age of nuclear weapons, computers and the Internet? This apparent technological gap is widened by the archaic language of thee's and thou's in the widely popular King James version of the Bible.

The Bible claims divine inspiration by the Creator and Designer of human life (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:20-21). God inspired the prophet Isaiah to challenge others who would make such a claim, "Let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them, or declare to us the things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know you are gods" (Isaiah 40:22-23).

Prophecy is like history written in advance. Many Bible prophecies accurately describe events and conditions of our current civilization. What better description of our frantic, frenzied pace of life in "The Information Age" than, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4)? The "times of stress" described in II Timothy 3:1-9 can be documented by simply reading today's newspaper.

Jesus' disciples asked Him to describe the end of the age. His answer, recorded in Matthew 24, is a prophetic blueprint of world events and trends from that time forward to the end of the age. Jesus spoke of an unprecedented time of trouble when all human life could be destroyed, were it not for God's intervention (Matthew 24:21-22).

The ninth chapter of the book of Revelation graphically portrays weapons of mass destruction capable of killing a third of mankind. The apostle John saw these weapons in a vision and described them in first century terms as fire and brimstone (sulfur) and the sound of many chariots running to battle (Revelation 9:1-19).

The impressive technological advances which have made life more comfortable have also brought us to the brink of universal disaster. Peace and happiness seem to elude us, because many of our problems are deeply rooted in the nature of man. Technology is ever changing, but human nature doesn't change.

The Bible is an instruction book for life--now and forever. It contains timeless values which bring positive results when applied. It tells us how to treat others, even those who mistreat us.

It also tells us how all nations can, and some day will, get along with each other. All this wisdom is based on the simple but profound principle of love--an outgoing concern for others. This includes treating others as we would like them to treat us. In the words of a current country song, "Even in this modern age, it works."

Bible prophecy indicates that mankind will continue to reap the self-centered fruits of human nature. However, the Bible also speaks of a better time ahead after Jesus Christ returns to bring peace and happiness in the kingdom of God (see Daniel 2 and 7). In fact the legendary prophecy about turning swords into pruning hooks speaks of that very time (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Until that prophesied time takes place, however, what can we do? We can make life more meaningful for ourselves and those whose lives we touch by striving to live by the eternal truths of the word of God. The personal testimony of changed lives is the greatest, most inspiring proof that the Bible is not only relevant for today, it is the most relevant book for these troubled times.



## Hasty Judgments

By John and Joanne Rutis

*Judging others based upon what they look like is a common human nature trait. It's also an erroneous one. What does God base His judgements upon?*



**M**Y FAMILY AND I WERE GATHERED around my mother's bedside when a young man who worked for the convalescent center entered the room. My wife tells the story far better than I could; here's what she wrote:

*As soon as he stepped into the room I formed an opinion of him. The young man had long hair pulled back in a ponytail. A large metal ring protruded from one ear. His body, though covered with a white lab coat, seemed to me thin and weakly.*

*I imagine you've formed an opinion of him just from this description.*

*Without looking in my direction he approached my mother-in-law's bedside.*

*"How are you today, Thelma?" he asked in a pleasant, cheerful voice that somehow didn't go with the perception I had formed of him.*

*Of course Thelma wasn't at all well. She had come to the convalescent center with the knowledge that her days were numbered. Her kidneys had failed and she was slowly dying. It was small wonder, then, that she had complaints. As I watched the young man listening patiently to her list of woes and trying as best he could to alleviate them my perception of him changed.*

*Here was a young man who genuinely cared about people. He did not have a prestigious job. In fact, he probably got paid little for his labor. Yet he was putting his whole heart into what he did, trying his best to ease the discomfort of those whose lives were drawing to an end.*

I had much the same first impression of this young man. My wife and I didn't realize that when we judged this young worker because of his appearance we were failing to follow God's instruction found in John 7:24 "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." We made a mistake. Yet it's a mistake we've all been guilty of at one time or another. Judging others based on what they look like is a human trait that's hard to rid ourselves of. Of course, part of the reason we make hasty judgments is because sometimes they work; sometimes a person does reflect their character in how they look. In this particular case, however, we were able to see our mistake and changed our opinion of the young worker.

How often, though, do we make lasting mistakes because of outward appearance? Such mistakes can harm relationships, and if we voice or act on our judgment, it can negatively effect how others view the person we've judged.

The Bible tells us repeatedly that God is not a respecter of persons. He shows no partiality. Yet it's so easy for us, as physical human beings, to look on the outward appearance and decide what a person is like inside. Showing partiality to some while disdaining others.

There are six direct statements in the Bible that say that God is no respecter of persons, and I'm sure there are many more indirect statements. If we are to reflect God's character doesn't it follow that we too should show no partiality?

Let's look at James 2:9 and see just how serious God views this matter, "but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors." That's pretty serious.

In 1 Peter 1:17 we can see how God judges a person. "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear." This scripture shows us how we should be behaving in our dealings with others.

God has one set of rules for everyone. He judges without partiality. You'll find in Colossians 3:24-25 that slaves and masters receive the same reward and the same punishment. God doesn't look at human status. God judges us according to what we do, with what we have. God looks on the heart and our willingness to serve others (1 Samuel 16:7).

If you read Galatians 3:28 you will find that, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

We know that in the world things don't usually work that way. Studies show that teachers, even female teachers, show partiality to the boys in their classes, calling on them more often than they do the girls. An attractive young woman gets faster and better service at the store than does an older person. We've come to expect that sort of treatment in the world today.

It is sad to say, but there are those who claim the name of Christ who fall into the same trap. James addressed such a problem in James 2:1-4, "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'you sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,' or, 'Sit here at my footstool,' have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"

Along a similar vein, I recall sitting in a youth oriented meeting, several years back, where a woman rose and gave an opinion on a particular subject. Little attention was paid to the idea. A few moments later a man rose and said almost the same thing word for word, and the idea was jumped on as though it were something new and wonderful. The gentleman in charge didn't realize that he had shown partiality just as surely as had the people who had respect for the richly clothed individual over the poorly dressed one.

Of course, it could have just as easily been a young person who was slighted or an old person, or a person in out of style clothing, or a short person, or a person with a physical handicap. The list of people who are judged by outward appearance is extensive.

Instead of judging others by their outward body, we need to be busy taking on the mind of Christ. It's a mind that holds no partiality and that looks on each individual as a potential member of the Family of God.

Does that mean that we can't make any judgments where others are concerned? Certainly not. We are instructed to make righteous judgment. That judgment is based on what a person does, not their outward appearance.

We find in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 that the saints will judge the world. Let's take a closer look at what it says. "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"

God expects us to make judgments. But they must be righteous judgments. Our judgments aren't based on whether a person is Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. That's not how God judges a person. For we know that the Bible tells us we're all one in Christ Jesus and that God doesn't show partiality.

Righteous judgments are judgments based on God's law and whether or not a person is following God's teaching. God doesn't really care if you have a Ph.D. behind your name, or what your body looks like or how young or old you are. He doesn't care if you're male or female. God looks on the heart and that is what we need to be doing.

Let's stop forming hasty judgments based on outward appearance. Let's make sure that all our judgments are righteous judgments. Remember also that judgment should begin with ourselves. If we're busy removing the beam out of our own eye we'll be far less concerned about the speck in our brother's eye.

Sometimes, of course, we need to judge by outward appearance. If I were approached by a burly fellow dressed in leather, with a three day growth of beard, a swastika tattooed on his forehead and a bicycle chain wrapped around his knuckles, I wouldn't immediately assume he wanted to give me free tickets to the ballet. But that's not what we've been talking about.

Remember that God is no respecter of persons. He can use us all no matter what our outward appearance or state. We need to be using the talents God has given each one of us, working together as a team and be busy doing His work.

## The Foster Child

By Joseph P. Camerata

*Tony, like many other foster children, spent a lifetime looking for love and belonging. Where do you suppose he finally found it?*



**T**ODAY THERE ARE OVER 500,000 foster children who are unwanted or cast off. Each one has his or her own story to tell--stories of loneliness and abandonment. Foster children, like all children, desire to be loved and cared for. When this love isn't present, feelings of insecurity, anxiety and anger result. Thankfully, no matter what one's circumstances may be, there is hope. The following is a true story of hope from one of these foster children--a little boy named Tony. (The name and some locations have been changed to maintain confidentiality.)

Tony was a foster child--just a number--just a small story. He was born between two monumental world events of the 20th Century--the Battle of Britain in August 1940 and the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

The little boy stands about ten feet away on the walkway leading from the house to the sidewalk. He stands there wide-eyed looking at the woman of 5 feet, towering over him like a giant. He is told that the woman is his mother. She looks at him with a wide smile and plaintive eyes and asks, "Tony would you like to come home with me?" Stunned, Tony's thoughts flash back to Anne, whom he has always thought of as his mother. He takes three steps back. He shakes his head slowly from side to side. With a furrowed brow, staring at the woman almost fearfully, Tony utters in a low almost inaudible tone, "Nooo!"

This is one of Tony's earliest recollections. Most of his memories have faded into the far distant past.

Years later, after the boy had grown up, he asks Anne, "How old was I when I came to your home?" The memory is too distant and Tony was too young to remember. Anne tells him that he was about 1 1/2 years old. She had gone to the New York Foundling Home to look for

another foster child. She had previously taken in other foster children and about three years prior had given birth to her only son, Brian.

At the Foundling Home she saw a scruffy little boy, whose nose was dripping and whose head was swollen from rickets. When the boy saw Anne, he ran to her and cried, "Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!" Anne's heart melted. How could she turn down the plaintive cries of this little child? At this moment, Anne and Tony departed for a new life in Franklin Square, Long Island.

For Tony life now seemed normal. He had a father, a mother and a brother who cared. He now had a stable family background which included friends, relatives, special toys and a puppy, named Jeep. There were birthday parties and holiday treats. At one party there was a watermelon-eating contest and Tony won first place. In addition to the fun of the contest, there were lessons to be learned. Learn to treat the neighborhood kids well. Don't take what others have and think you can get away with it. Your sister's costume jewelry is "not yours". Then came punishment for misguided deeds. Someone cared to teach Tony the right way to live. Those were good days--but those good days didn't last.

All too often things don't work out the way we would like. Anne had another foster child by the name of Stephanie. Stephanie was older and had experienced a very troubled past. Anne could no longer handle her and sent her back to the foster home. Within months, in 1948, Social Services insisted that since Anne could not take care of Stephanie, Tony had to move to another home also.

A strange young woman called a "social worker" took Tony from Anne, the woman he knew and loved as his mother. Tony and the social worker traveled to another small town, Babylon, L.I. There Tony was introduced to his new family--his new "mother and father".

The social worker said, "If you need anything write and let me know." Then she walked out the door.

Moments later Tony asked a foster sister, "Do you have a pencil?" "Yes! Here is one!" "Do you have a piece of paper?" She responded, "Yes! Why?" With sadness Tony cried, "I want to write her a letter and tell her I don't want to be here." She replied, "Oh, you'll like it here!"

But Tony didn't like it there. He wanted to go home. However, did not receive his wish. A year later he moved to another home and then another and another and another. The moves seemed endless.

Tony was derided by his peers because of his divorced parents. "No!" he proclaimed, "They are just separated". Divorce was taboo in those days. Tony was so hurt by the things the other children said. It seemed that all the other kids had a mom and dad at home. Tony grew up lacking confidence, always sickly and afraid of developing relationships. He feared someone else would again walk out of his life.

In the instability of the 1960s' racial riots, anti-war demonstrations, and the God is dead philosophy, Tony looked for firmer foundations and understanding of events going on in the country he loved. He even began to search the pages of the Bible and begin seeking God's help. Had a merciful God now begun to set in motion events that would make Tony receptive

to God's Word?

Tearfully, choked with emotion Tony read of a cast off rejected child in the Book of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 16:4-10, the prophet speaks symbolically of Jerusalem as a cast off child rejected by all. Tony often felt like this child--cast off, rejected and unwanted. But the God of mercies reached down and lifted this child and loved it and nurtured it.

Tony knew then that someone cared, just as Anne had cared, but even more. In reading further, he began to understand that in the eyes of God he didn't have to be big or important, for God cares about all people. In 1 Cor 1:26-27 God even calls the weak in spirit and the downtrodden, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty."

Tony was now a part of something bigger--something that could not be taken away by any man. There is a Father, and He has a family that cares. God promises that this family will be everlasting in Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'."

Thoughts of what Christ says about friends brought this promise to a very personal level for Tony, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:13-14). Tony now had a Friend who would never leave nor forsake him. He had found a home, and in that home, Tony found hope!

*Virtual Christian Magazine Editorial*

## What is Hope?

By Dr. Donald Ward

**W**E ARE CONTINUALLY BOMBARDED with the social, political and spiritual problems of the world. Network newscasts bring the ugly realities of the human condition before our eyes twenty four hours a day. New conflicts arise between nations of the world on a daily basis. The threat of terrorism haunts our every move. Crime and disease stalks the streets of the world's cities causing all of us to wonder who will be the next victim. There are an estimated 100 million street children around the world who have no parents or place to rest their weary minds and bodies. Disease, starvation and brutal civil war are ravaging thousands on the continent of Africa. War seems to be just a step away for the Middle East as the United States and Great Britain continues an exchange of hostile fire with Iraq. The Balkan states are in a state of chaos. The inner cities of America are crumbling because of crime and drugs. Pollution is contaminating the air we breathe and the water we drink. The nations have enough weapons to destroy mankind many times over.

In addition to all of this, the themes of books, television programs, movies, magazines and music communicate an aggressive message of hopelessness and despair. Youth are led to believe that the world is about to be destroyed and there is nothing they can do about it. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people under thirty years of age.

Young and old alike do not believe they can make a difference in this world. So they have turned to various forms of escapism as they live their lives vicariously through various forms of media. Their heroes are the heroes of consumption. These heroes of consumption continue to lead our people down the paths of licentiousness and irresponsibility, all of which leads to boredom and frustration. They search for meaning in their lives--something to believe in--something to give their lives for, but all that is offered is empty entertainment. The media is continually challenged to find new ways to thrill and shock their audiences.

History reveals that people will eventually go in the direction of their heroes. If leaders do not provide strong moral and spiritual leadership their followers are doomed to fall into the pits of hopelessness and despair. Leaders need to articulate a vision of hope and courage. They need to define transcendental goals that challenge each one of us to reach for the stars--to become more than passive recipients in the great arena of life. In short they need to challenge us to be active participants in creating a better world for our posterity.

Christians know that a better world is coming. The Apostle Paul wrote "If in this life only we have hope we are of all men most miserable (I Corinthians 15:19). Our hope and affection should be set on the eternal things of God, but God wants us to offer hope to the world now. If we are not providing a vision of hope-and reflecting hope in our lives--we cannot expect our family, friends and neighbors to be filled with hope.

So what is hope? Hope is the earnest expectation of seeing things change for the better. The Apostle Paul admonishes us to put on as a helmet the hope of salvation (I Thessalonians 5:8). But what does this mean in practical terms? A helmet covers the entire head. Just as helmets cover our heads, the hope of salvation should permeate our minds and hearts. Hope allows us to keep the picture of what lies ahead for each one of God's faithful servants, burning brightly

in our minds and hearts.

We can readily see that there is an intimate relationship between our thoughts and hope.

Hope cannot be nourished in an environment that reeks with the stench of negativism.

Hope is based on faith. Faith and hope are quenched in an atmosphere of unbelief. Why do I have hope? I have hope because I have faith in the one who has promised to give us all good things. "...Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Hope is nurtured by faith in the word of God. Jesus said "...the words I speak they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). Feasting on the word of God provides essential spiritual food. This nourishment provides the mind with food for thought-for hope at all times and in all circumstances.

Could you be filled with hope if you knew that no matter how you lived your life it would end in martyrdom? Could you be filled with hope if you were very zealous and quick to defend Jesus Christ, if you were the instrument used by God to explain how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, if you were the vessel God used to show that the Gentiles could also receive the Holy Spirit, if God performed great miracles through you, if a deceitful man and woman fell dead at your feet as a witness to the church to show through whom God was working, if you were the apostle to the circumcision, or if you were one of the leading apostles and spokesmen. Could you be filled with hope if you had done all these things and you knew your life would end through crucifixion?

The apostle Peter lived his life of faith and hope with this knowledge. He is undoubtedly the apostle of hope. No wonder he admonishes us to, "...gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:13). The life of the apostle Peter dramatically demonstrates that God has called us to eternal life and not just physical deliverance. Peter the apostle of HOPE--knowing how he was going to die -- dramatically shows us that his hope was not set on the things of this world. Yet he made a difference in this life. He became a living sacrifice and dedicated his life to feeding God's sheep.

Are you filled with hope? Does the big picture burn brightly in your mind? Are you committed to fighting the good fight of faith and hope despite the conditions of this present evil age?

Do you think you could turn around the whole direction, attitude, and atmosphere of a drug-infested, crime-ridden, poverty stricken inner city school? Could anyone? Jaime Escalante did. Garfield High in Los Angeles had never had a math student to receive advanced placement credit. Under the tutelage of Mr. Escalante, scores of students have received advanced placement credit. "Kemo," as he is affectionately called by his students, achieved this and much more. He gave them hope, when there was no hope. He was opposed at every turn by school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. But he calmly insisted and persisted with the idea that students will rise to the level of expectation.

He was able to convince students that the expectation was worth the price. You can do the same thing, whoever you are, and wherever you live. You can offer hope. You too, can stand and deliver.



Faith and hope are the handmaidens of victory and overcoming. "...For this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith, ... for we are saved by hope" (I John 5:4; Romans 8:24). Faith and hope center on believing God and doing what he says and keeping your eyes on the goal. Hope requires single mindedness. You cannot be filled with hope and be double minded. Hope requires whole heartedness. God has promised to strengthen our minds and hearts if we place our hope in him with our whole heart. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).

Hope is kindled by tribulation, nourished through patience and confirmed through experience. So let's gird up the loins of our minds and hope, for our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The Father of all mercies and our anchor of faith and hope will see us through.

## Letters to the Editor

### Does Unfaithfulness Disqualify Leaders?



Of course all that was said in the article about Clinton had validity. This is truly an adulterous generation. I'm basing this statement on God's principles, which some professing Christians do not adhere to. Author Ayn Rand once stated that economics have to be free of Christianity and other religious restraints to succeed. It seems that her statement has become a reality. It is a shame. We have a godless group of people determining economics, and a stage of real actors who have free reign to commit adultery--adultery that God condemned in Ezekiel, Isaiah and many other places in the Bible. It seems that we have people who take on the name of Christ while ignoring the commands and concerns of God. I wonder about that. Does this alarm anyone else?

### What Disability Can't Do to You



Thank you for an inspiring article for those of us with disabilities. I had a stroke 22 years ago, when I was just 29, which left me paralyzed on the left side. Being the mother of a toddler and also pregnant with our second child, this of course changed my life a great deal. The main reason I'm writing though, is that the thought occurred to me as I read the article that many of the conclusions Mr. Maranville drew concerning disabled people can also be applied to the elderly. My folks, who have been very active all their lives, are now ages 79 and 84 and face challenges daily that they never had in their younger years. I think this article could be very helpful for those who have friends or loved ones in this older age group, as well as the physically or mentally disabled.

### Rekindle the Flames of Fellowship



After seven years of self imposed (I think--yet, maybe it was of God) exile from the Church, I probably have an extraordinary appreciation for the privilege of fellowship with God's people. Fellowship must have been a major factor in God's calling the Sabbath a "holy convocation," and commanding His people to attend services. We need to take this part of observance of the Sabbath more seriously. While we can get sermons on tape, record hymnal music and read the Bible and literature at home, the meeting hall is where brethren come together on the seventh day. Congratulations on not only this article, but on the online magazine. I'm already looking forward to the next issue.

-- Butch Blake



The article by Dan Taylor was excellent and certainly needed. Thank you. I think that *VCM* will be a useful tool.

**Thanks for *VCM***



I relish receiving the *Good News* and read it from cover to cover. Now with the *Virtual Christian Magazine*, I can also read and study, no matter where I go, as long as there is Internet capability there. I treasure the educational experiences I have received from the Worldwide Church of God, and now the United Church of God, an International Association. I am probably somewhat unique. I consider myself a believer in UCG theology, but I "mission" the UCG theology to my fellow Christians within the Lutheran Church. Some of the Lutheran pastors are coming to me and thanking me for bringing them common sense explanations to the mysteries of their brand of Christianity. Keep up the good work.

-- DRT



Thank you for the very valuable and well-written articles which I have read in *VCM*. I believe this is a very good, new and interesting service for the scattered brethren.

-- Elva Sedliacik