

Bishop's Post

When you speak to people in our country these days it does not take long for the sense of hopelessness that so many people have, to emerge. People seem to have lost hope. Loadshedding, uncertain politics, an economy in crisis, unemployment, and crime. These are the topics that occupy the minds of so many South Africans.



As Christians we live in a country where hopelessness abounds.

When everyday “normal” is constantly changing and uncertainty surrounds the future, we Christians can however deliver much-needed hope. Jesus said, “you are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5, 14-16) We have a purpose and a task.

In the first letter of Peter, chapter 1, the verse 3 and 4 we read the following:

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.

God has given us a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The word *hope* can be a noun or a verb.

The “verb- hope” means that we *want* something to happen, but that does not necessarily mean that it will happen. However, when we have “noun-hope,” we have the *assured expectation* that something *will* happen.

In the letter of Peter, we are told that believers in Christ are *given* a “new birth into a living hope” (v. 3). It is similar to Paul’s idea in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that when one trusts in Jesus, he or she becomes a “new creature.” We are given a new life and a new identity. The message of hope is more than just a want or a desire. We are assured that this living hope is a confident expectation.

In Psalm 31, verse 24, we are told: *“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD”* (Psalm 31:24) and in the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 40, verse 31, we are told: *“Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint”* (Isaiah 40:31).

Our world, our country, our church and each one of us needs hope. Hope that proclaims Jesus Christ. Hope that assures us that there is a future and that we can make a difference. We as Christians are called upon to proclaim this hope through word and deed.

I close with four quotes:

Martin Luther: Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.

Desmond Tutu: Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.

Norman Cousins: The capacity for hope is the most significant fact of life. It provides human beings with a sense of destination and the energy to get started.

Pope Francis: True Christians are not sad and angry, but convinced by the strength of the resurrection, that no evil is infinite, no night without end, no man is definitively in wrong, no hate is invincible from love.

Theo Jäckel

News from the NELCSA

Our theology student, Hermann Düvel, passed his first theological exam and is now doing his internship in the Strand Street congregation in Cape Town. We congratulate him and wish him all the best for this new phase in his life.

At present we have the following students studying at the Stellenbosch University: Bernard Schiele, Tristan Krüger, Hans-Christoph Lange, C.Fillipus, P.J. Hanekom and Rutendo Gora. Hermann Düvel, Ingrid Kassier and Anika Sanders are presently training as interns for the ministry.

Pastor Felix Meylahn has been employed as a tutor and director of studies of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. He will accompany the students throughout their studies. We thank the Evangelical Church in Germany for their financial support for this position and wish pastor Meylahn everything of the best.

Pastor Friedel Lisse, who is retired, has offered to assist in the vacancy in Vanderbijlpark. We thank him for his willingness to serve this congregation.

We continue to have vacant congregations in the NELCSA as well as in our sister churches of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, namely the Cape Church and Namibia. Let us continue to pray that the Lord may send out laborers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38)