

Faith, Hope and Love in Today's World: 'Hope'

In today's society the tangible symbols of hope for many are the scratch card and credit card. The lottery scratch card expresses peoples' aspirations for a better life and secure future. In a world where many have lost confidence in the future and the present is the only thing they can be sure about, the credit card expresses the all encompassing power of consumerism. It enables us to live for the present by 'taking the waiting out of wanting'.

To a large extent we have lost the 'big story' that makes sense of the world in which we live. Individual choice has replaced progress as a core value and belief in society. Christianity is viewed sceptically when it comes to offering a coherent 'grand narrative'. However, there is still a genuine desire to find hope in an uncertain world, as often seen in the response to high profile deaths, most notably that of Princess Diana.

In the light of this, how does the Christian Faith offer hope in our current culture? The challenge involves Christians living a lifestyle which can offer an alternative image of the 'good life', based in the hope of a future that is worth living for. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is the key, for God 'has anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come' (2 Cor. 1:22). Within the Christian community, we can encourage each other to live in the Spirit to express our future hope. This means looking together critically at our lifestyle, spending, habits, giving, ministry to the poor, response to God's call etc and asking:

to what extent are we witnessing to a hope in the future?

how can this impact on the people around us?

**The Rev Paul Hardingham considers faith, hope and love
in a mini-series**

Winter and Spring

**Lord, end my winter, and let my spring begin.
I cannot with all my longings raise my soul out of her death
and dullness, but all things are possible with thee.
I need celestial influences, the clear shinings of thy love,
the beams of thy grace, the light of thy countenance;
these are the Pleiades to me.
I suffer much from sin and temptation,
these are my wintry sings, my terrible Orion.
Lord, work wonders in me, and for me.**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon 1834 – 1892