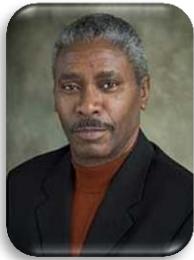




central conference of the evangelical covenant church

January 2015

From the Superintendent: HOPE



It is sad to say but, it is true, that the majority of the people in the world are living hopeless lives. Ephesians 2:12-13 tells us that they are living apart from Christ. They do not know the covenant promises of God, so they are living in this world without God and without hope. They are living anxious, unsatisfied, unfulfilled, desperate, confused, selfish, powerless, problem filled and uncontrolled lives. Living every day in the mode of self-preservation and/or self-enhancement. Should we be sharing our hope with them?

Hope is one of the three main elements of Christian character. 1 Corinthians 13:13 says, "Three things will last forever-faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love." Hope is joined in faith and love and it is opposed to seeing or possessing. Romans 8:24 says; "We were given hope when we were saved." (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.) Hope is an essential and fundamental element of the Christian life. So essential that like faith and love, it can itself designate the essences of Christianity. Hebrew 10:23 says, "Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise." In hope, the whole glory of the Christian life is centered. Ephesians 1:18 says, "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called-his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance." Christ is the actual object of our hope. Because it is in his second coming that the hope of glory will be fulfilled. Colossians 1:27 says, "For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. What the New Testament calls hope is an assurance that reaches two ways. It reaches back in faith to what Jesus Christ did on the cross and resurrection and it reaches forward in trust to the promises of the Christ event and its fulfillment in the future, as God brings all things to a glorious consummation in Christ. Hope is the work of God from first to last.

When genuine hope is at work in our lives, things happen. Positive and creative forces are released within us. Hope is different from optimism. Hope isn't based on what is going on at the moment or on the direction in which things are headed. Hope isn't based on how things are going. Hope is based on something from outside ourselves. Hope is based on a promise that something is going to break in from the outside and change the course of events. Hope is remembering the promises of God, remembering how he has broken into human events in the past and the promise that he will do it again.

The Apostle Paul tells us that we are not like those who have no hope, for we know death as the doorway to the Promised Land, a rest from our labors, and a reunion time with those we have loved. We can lay down the struggles of faith. Faith will have completed its work, we won't be assailed by doubts and questions any longer, and we will know the glories of God in ways we cannot even imagine.

An Unknown Author once said, "Hope is putting faith to work when doubting would be easier."

By: Rev. Jerome Nelson



central conference of the evangelical covenant church

January 2015



As your church has its Annual Meeting in January or February of 2015, please remember to select delegates for the 2015 Central Conference Annual Meeting.

Central Conference Annual Meeting:

April 24-25, 2015 at Batavia Covenant Church in Batavia, IL

The Central Conference Annual Meeting was designed to incorporate the business of the Annual Meeting and a celebration of the ministry of all that God has done in the through the churches of the Central Conference. Registration brochures for the 2015 Central Conference Annual Meeting will be mailed out to the churches at the end of February 2015. You will also be able to register online on the Central Conference website.

Who may send delegates to the Central Conference Annual Meeting and how many delegates may be sent?

Member congregations shall be entitled to representation as follows:

Up to 100 Members	101 to 200 Members	201 to 300 Members	301 or more Members
2 delegates	3 delegates	4 delegates	5 delegates

- Each association recognized by the Central Conference shall be entitled to 1 delegate.
- Each affiliated corporation and institution shall be entitled to 1 delegate
- A church plant within the Central Conference that is not yet a member congregation may send 2 advisors to the Annual Meeting.

More information will be coming soon!