**Hope - Stories & Illustrations**

**Acronym: Christ in me is my Happy, Optimistic, Positive, Energetic source of Glory. *(J. Sig Paulson, in Unity magazine)***

**Though Africa has the globe's highest poverty rate and shortest life expectancy, Africans are the most optimistic people in the world, with 57 percent of those polled saying they expected this year to be better than last. “The only thing keeping people going," said Nigerian political scientist Kayode  Fayemi, “is hope." *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 17, 2006)***

**The ball that drops in Times Square every New Year’s Eve is named the Star of Hope. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 104)***

**The biblical text that proves to be not only hopeful but healing is Psalm 34. It reads, in part, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth ‘round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. . . The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (6, 7, 18). *(The Christian Science Monitor)***

**A citizen of the German Democratic Republic gave new meaning to the age-worn saying “better late than never” when, the day after The Wall was opened, he appeared with books in hand at the American Memorial Library in West Berlin. The man brought back volumes he had borrowed 28 years ago, shortly before The Wall was built, and kept in the hope of some day being able to return them. *(The Week in Germany)***

**How can you tell if you really want to do something? Toss a coin. Literally. It works -- not because it settles the question for you, but, as the Danish poet and mathematician Piet Hein said, while the coin is in the air, “You suddenly know what you're hoping." *(Madeline Lee in Ms.)***

**If you’re tired of jumping on and off the fad-diet bandwagon, check out a new philosophy on eating from Jane Goodall, the world-renowned scientist best known for her research with chimpanzees. In her book Harvest for Hope, she offers insights on how we can nix processed foods and make ourselves – and our world – healthier and happier. To get started: Switch to organic produce. You’ll avoid unnecessary chemicals. Install a water filter on your sink. If you don’t buy bottled water, you’ll be wasting less plastic. Steer clear of fast food. The lack of nutrients weighs down your mood, not to mention your bathroom scale. *(Woman’s Day magazine, September 12, 2006)***

**Staying upbeat and hoping for the best can boost not only your mood, but your immune system as well. In a four-year study of 100 HIV patients, researchers found that those who turned to spirituality and kept a positive attitude after their diagnosis had a much slower disease progression than those who didn’t. *(2006 University of Miami study, as it appeared in Woman’s Day magazine, September 12, 2006)***

**While I was living on Guam, it was necessary for me to phone Maryland occasionally. Because of the time difference, when I placed my call on Friday at 7 a.m. Guam time, it was still Thursday, 4 p.m. in Maryland. I was just starting what promised to be a very trying day at the office, but my mood was instantly changed for the better when I heard a cheerful voice on the other end exclaim, “I always like talking to someone on Guam. It lets me know that there will be a tomorrow.” *(J. Bock, in Reader's Digest)***

**The power of hope: Depressed people who believe that antidepressants will help them are more likely to get a lift from the medication, a new study has found. In fact, say researchers from the UCLA Laboratory of Brain, Behavior, and Pharmacology, the brain waves of people diagnosed with major depression start to change fort the better as soon as they’re told they will receive antidepressants – even though they’ve yet to begin treatment. The study, which measured the electrical activity in the brains of 51 patients diagnosed with major depression, found that optimism about treatment, or pleasant interactions with medical staff, positively altered brain waves. And patients who developed these changes responded better to antidepressants than those who didn’t. Scientists have long believed that while antidepressants can change brain chemistry, talk therapy cannot. But recent research has shown that cognitive-behavioral therapy creates physical changes in the brain, as does mere belief that one is on medication. “What’s so striking,” Steven Hollen, psychology professor at Vanderbilt University, tells The Wall Street Journal, “is there are clear biological changes as a consequence of psychological phenomena.” *(The Week magazine, August 18, 2006)***

**The word prosperity comes from the Latin root which literally translates: “according to hope" or “to go forward hopefully." Thus it is not so much a condition in life as it is an attitude toward life. *(Eric Butterworth, in Spiritual Economics, p. xiv)***

**I think it is difficult to say whether there is such a thing as hope or not. Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence. *(Lusin, in The Wisdom of China and India)***

**In 1897, with hope in her heart, a little girl wrote to the editor of The New York Sun to find out if there really was a Santa Claus. Here, in part, is the answer that she received: “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! ... There would be no childlike faith then ... The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished ... Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see." *(Unity School of Christianity, in The Promise of Christmas)***

**A Boston firefighter and the woman he rescued from a devastating blaze as a baby 40 years ago have been reunited. William Carroll, now 71, crawled through the flames on his stomach to rescue Evangeline Harper, then an infant. A photograph of the white firefighter emerging from the burning building, giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a black child, became a symbol of hope during an era of racial upheaval. Only when Harper tracked Carroll down, though, did they finally reconnect, in an emotional meeting last week. “Thank you so much,” she said. “Thank you for remembering me,” he responded. *(The Week magazine, February 27, 2009)***

**One of my most frequent destinations was a peaceful town only two blocks long in the farm lands of southern Minnesota. My spirits never failed to rise when I saw the highway sign: “Hope, 1 mile." As I was approaching Hope once I saw a monarch butterfly just ahead, flying toward me on a collision course. I watched helplessly as it disappeared into the front of the car. The butterfly was wedged into a crevice along the hood, its wings sticking up over the top, a flutter of orange and black at the lower edge of my vision. I stopped in Hope to remove the butterfly. As least I could lay its body on the grass, or in a bush. But as I lifted the hood the monarch beat its wings, rose up and flew off. I watched the lilting light dance of that born-again butterfly and searched for some explanation. Maybe I shouldn't have been quite so surprised. A monarch's graceful wings, made for annual migrations as far away as Mexico, aren't as fragile as they appear. And I suspect a few aerodynamic principles could adequately explain why it was spared. Still, when I saw the butterfly take to the air in winged testimony to life's resiliency. To my mind, that’s a miracle – and my mind needs all the miracles it can get. *(Carol Howard)***

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