



Statement of Purpose for The Blue Mountains Interfaith Group

We come together as members of the different religious and spiritual traditions in the Blue Mountains and we seek to work together on causes of common interest, such as the Care and Celebration of the Environment. Each of us loves our own faith while respecting others who equally love theirs.

Coming together from diverse cultures and faith expressions, we uphold the values we hold in common. We join in solidarity as seekers of the Truth, a deep transcendent reality common to all, coming to us by different historical, scientific and cultural paths. Affirming that the great Teachers of old each passed on their vital message, not just to their followers, but to the whole of humanity, we believe that we are spiritually enriched by our mutual sharing.

We are ready to share that richness more widely in the Mountains, catching a glimpse of sacred wonder in our Mountain surrounds.

In this August Edition of LOTM we have attracted three new contributors and the Topic has appealed to many of our current members.

Traditionally the colour 'green' is known to express 'hope' and it is found in the centre of the light spectrum and rainbow.

We have learnt that in the time of Noah God issued a warning but alongside that was a promise of hope for all who sought God's Kingdom of Love.

The Topic for this Issue is: HOPE

The sign of the rainbow in the sky was the covenant of permanence God made with humankind lasting for all time.

We welcome the new contributors to LOTM - Lloyd Fell from Faulconbridge, Naomi Wolfe from Melbourne and Lynette Westbury from the Central Coast. Enjoy all the contributions!



BLUE MOUNTAINS INTERFAITH GROUP

Representing world faiths and spiritual traditions locally,
Welcome all people with an open heart.
Monthly meetings, newsletters, Annual Events & new friends.

[Email: bmig3@outlook.com](mailto:bmig3@outlook.com)

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HOPE

by Lloyd Fell

To have hope we need to have faith. We need to believe in possibilities and trust in our supported beings just like a woman trusts when she finds she is pregnant, knowing there are uncertainties, but believing in the miracle of creation bestowed upon us. We need to aim for that which is not yet born, by adding to the streams of sustainable service and love that are still flowing all around us.

If we had no doubts and uncertainties we would also be deprived of all the most precious attributes of our human nature: our spirit, our wonder, our ability to love.

Spirit must have been given to us from our source – the source of one's creation. I believe spirit is the invisible force that connects us to one another, to Nature, and to God.

The biological science of our body, brain and being has been stuck in a 'machine age' of computers and artificial intelligence, but the latest books (like Faggin's *Irreducible*) bring

the new insights of quantum theory to expand our understanding of human consciousness so it embraces the immaterial as well as the material, the metaphysical as well as the scientific.

Wonder is a driving force that engages our minds fully. It has produced all the great advances in our knowledge that serve us today and, at a different level of existence, it compels us to check our smartphones frequently and never be without them. At its heart it is the childlike innocence and feelings of awe when something 'magical' happens in our lives.

(Lloyd is working on a book-length essay about 'The Spirit of Hope: Regaining the Feeling of Meaning' that is an expansion of his previous writing to include the phenomenon of Creative Evolution.

Lloyd Fell is a Blue Mountains resident, a past tutor of many U3A Courses, and he has written several books. As a biologist Lloyd was influenced by Humberto Maturana and the philosophy 'biology of love'. Lloyd corresponds regularly with Father Eugene Stockton.)

Transcript of Naomi Wolfe's Reflection on Hope

**from 2 Corinthians 4:16-28 for
Common Grace's 2024 Lent Series.**

Bible Verse - 2 Corinthians 4:16-28
"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Transcript: Hi, I'm Naomi Wolfe. I'm a trawlwoolway woman with Irish and Jewish German heritage and I live here in Naam, in Melbourne and I'm the proud kinship carer of a 14-year-old nephew and I have my eldest nephew who lives with us as well and he's making his way in Melbourne, coming across from Western Australia.

I'm a historian and a theologian. I work for Australian Catholic University and I have the great privilege of being the director of programs at NAIITS College which is an Indigenous postgraduate college and a

member of the Institution of the Sydney College of Divinity.

Hasn't it been a tough few years?

The global pandemic, COVID, certainly a worrying time for billions of people around the world. And as we entered into isolation, as we were locked up, we had to encourage ourselves, had to deal with new worries and new concerns. And in isolation, our footprints became smaller and smaller. As more conflicts develop across the world between nations and nations, the spectre of war is coming out of our history books into our television screens, onto our phones, and into our daily lives.

And this is a worrying concern.

In Australia, we recently had a referendum to change the Constitution. And I know that there is grief and angst and confusion and a 'what the heck are we going to do now?'

And it's caused that to good people, to you, to me, to others, regardless of whether you voted, regardless of whether you voted yes or no.

That confusion, that angst and that grief, is leaving us with questions. So what does this have to do with the Corinthians verse? Well, just like us, the Corinthians, we're a struggling community, and the attributed writers and Paul, were also struggling. There's a vulnerability in this letter that we can cling to, especially in times when we are struggling and the Lord knows we need hope.

We need hope sometimes on a daily basis. We need hope to encourage ourselves and each other. We're facing some huge challenges just like the Corinthians, albeit different ones. Although, are they? They are challenges that face us as individuals and as communities.

Today we are like the Corinthians.

We're struggling with problems, we're struggling with how to keep the vision of what is important, and we are struggling with how to deal with each other, especially when we are on opposite sides to the argument.

Connect with Naomi at:

<https://acuau.academia.edu/NaomiWolf>



Australia's Naomi Wolfe is an academic at the Australian Catholic University where she teaches Indigenous studies.

FROM A DISTANCE

by Bette Midler

From a distance there is harmony
And it echoes through the land
It's the voice of hope
It's the voice of peace
It's the voice of every one.

From a distance you look like my friend
Even though we are at war
From a distance, I just can't comprehend
What all this fighting is for.

From a distance there is harmony
And it echoes through the land
it is the hope of hopes
It is the love of loves
This is the song of every one.

God is watching us, God is watching
God is watching us from a distance.

(In the last two years 'From a Distance' became one of the most popular songs around the globe.)

HOPE

by Lynette Westbury

How we experience our life is greatly influenced by our perception of the world.

To understand how we develop our perception I would like to use a diagram to illustrate how it might impact on our approach to life and especially how we might work through grief.

In our brain we develop a view of the world for us – Our perception is our reality!

I would like you to read this story as an illustration and I hope you may relate to one or the other person in the story – “Two Ill Men”.

TWO ILL MEN

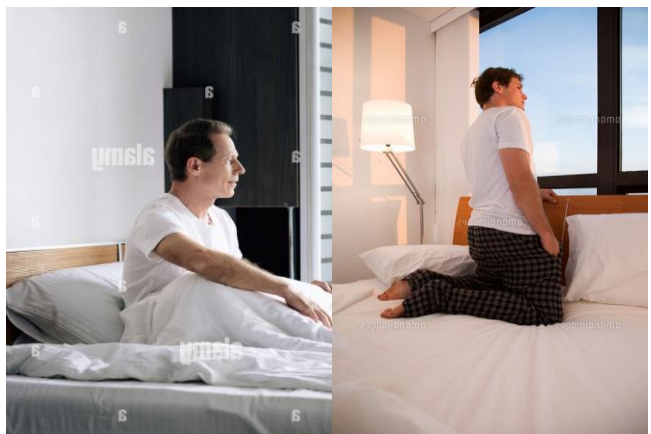
Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs.

His bed was next to the room's only window. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, where they had been on vacation.

Our perception of our world is influenced by :

- Our values
- Our Beliefs
- Our Expectations or the 'shoulds' we place on ourselves for how we live our life
- Our Cultural Norms that we are brought up with
- Our Environment is a big factor
- And our unique Personality Type

To mention but a few...



Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window.

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. For in truth it is life that gives unto life.”

Kahlil Gibran

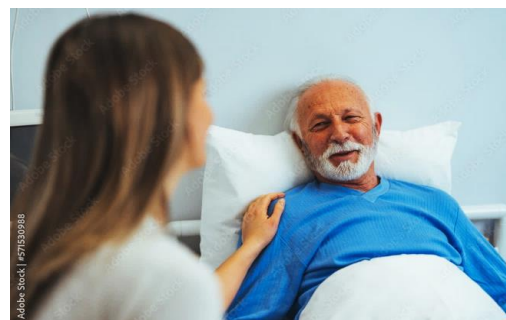
The nurse was very happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside his bed.

It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window.

The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, “Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you.”



Lynette Westbury lives on the Central Coast, She trained first as a family counsellor and then as a Uniting Church Pastoral Practitioner and Choir Leader.

THE JOYS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

"I cannot hope – but I can, and do, take it one day at a time. Being in the now opens me up to the small joys that every day life offers.



A toddler on the bus who smiles at me; a dog waiting patiently outside a supermarket; a sunny day.

I have no agency to change the big things, but I am in control of how I respond to them."

Lyn Dade, London.

A PRAYER FROM THE HEART by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenburg.

This Scottish-born Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue has initiated a project to create a Multi-faith secondary school. He has said 'prayer is a call from heart to heart, from the heart of the human being, any and every human being, to the heart of God, seeking only acceptance and love.

In asking God not to take the sacred spirit from us, the prayer affirms that the essence of being human is to know that our spirit, vitality, and creativity comes from God and that life is a brief but immense privilege."

"This prayer," says the Rabbi, "addresses God out of a deep awareness of our vulnerability."

"There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God.
Sometimes I am there, too....

Dear God, these are anxious times....

We must help You to help ourselves. And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves."

— Etty Hillesum, in *'An Interrupted Life'*



Photo: South Island, New Zealand.

A STATEMENT OF HOPE

‘We must start with our own hearts and minds.

Wars will stop only when each of us is convinced that war is never the way.

We must relinquish the desire to own other people, to have power over them, and to force our views on them.

We must resist the urge towards waste and the accumulation of possessions.

In speaking out, we acknowledge that we ourselves are limited and erring as everyone else.

When put to the test we may fall short.

Together let us all reject the clamour of fear, and listen to the whisperings of hope.’

(From the 1987 New Zealand Yearly Quaker’s Meeting).

REJECTING FEAR FOR HOPE

In NADOC Week this year we are reminded of how our Indigenous People had developed a “whole of life” way of teaching their young people how to care for their ancient land.

As Elders we would all like to be able to guide and foster good values and reflect better behaviour to our youth.

With the serious threats to our globe of the immediate impact of climate change and with the environmental damage still being done right now, we as Elders, need to help our youth in reducing their anxiety, fear and stress.

The continual talk of war, division, separation and distress around the world on our media is affecting the psyches of both old and young.

Looking at the “whole of life” way of thinking and the way it addresses one’s entire life health expectations, this concept may help us all to build better communities - and to build them with hope, love and peace.

Submitted by Col Jennings

BAHA'I WRITINGS ON HOPE

A prayer written by Abdu'l-Baha

" O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious.

Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look

He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, with a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, with a nod He layeth balm on every wound, with a glimpse every wound, with a glimpse He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we?

He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord."

From the Talks of Abdu'l-Baha Paris

Strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers. Turn towards God, and seek always to do that which is right and noble. Enrich the poor, raise the fallen, comfort the sorrowful, bring healing to the sick, reassure the fearful, rescue the oppressed, bring hope to the hopeless, shelter the destitute!"



The Lotus Temple in New Delhi.



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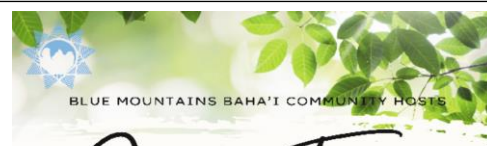
'Soul Food' nourishes souls with diverse writings, poems, prayers, and music, embracing all beliefs. It cultivates unity and a sense of community, exploring a range of spiritual themes to enrich our lives and celebrate the beauty of diversity.

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ALL
SOULS
WELCOME

KING CHARLES TALKS TO CANCER CARE PROFESSIONALS IN LONDON

“Your commitment to early diagnosis, ever more successful therapies and truly holistic care represents the very best our country can offer. This collective endeavour reminds us of what we can achieve when we are united with common purpose and uncommon determination.

While every patient’s journey may be different, together you are insuring that a cancer diagnosis need never mean facing the future without hope and support.

And to those who may be receiving such upsetting news today, tomorrow or at any point in the future, I can only echo the departing words of the late Dame Deborah James whose example stands as an inspiration to us all, in sickness and in health, “find a life worth enjoying; take risks; love deeply; have no regrets; and always, always have rebellious hope”.

(Reprinted from A Candle in the Window – May 2025 Edition).

**“Find a life worth enjoying;
take risks; love deeply;
have no regrets;
and always, always have
rebellious hope”.**

A POEM ON HOPE

By Alexis Valdas

In a recent book, *‘Let Us Dream – the Path to a Better Future’*, Pope Francis quotes a poem by a comedian and poet – Alexis Valdes.

Quoting from three of the verses on ‘Hope’, Valdes says:

“We’ll miss the old man
who asked for a buck in the
market whose name we never
knew who was always at your side.

And maybe the poor old man
was your God in disguise.
But you never asked his name
because you never had the time.



When the storm passes
I ask you Lord, in shame
that you return us better
as you once dreamed us.”

The book by Pope Francis, *‘Let Us Dream – the Path to a Better Future’*, is one of the late Pope’s more recent contributions to provide a way forward and better future.

HOPE IN BUDDHISM

“Hope is an important element of the human experience. For many, hope is as essential to the maintenance of our mental well-being as food and water are for our physical survival. The hope of a better tomorrow is what drives many of our thoughts and actions today. In Buddhism, hope is the antithesis of doubt.

Hope and doubt relate to many desires, but in Buddhism they primarily relate to our desire to transform suffering into happiness and awakening; in ourselves and others.”

(Buddhist Beliefs about Hope).

A POET’S VIEW OF HOPE

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast,” wrote English poet Alexander Pope, whose dictum in 1733 still rings true. Hope is that fervent aspiration we all hold during difficult circumstances that things can/will/should get better, enabling us to face and overcome major challenges.

STEPS TO FINDING HARMONY

*Religions for Peace Australia and Canberra Interfaith Forum hosted the annual United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week Lecture at Parliament House, Canberra in February 2024 with Guest Speaker **Dr. Pal Dhall**, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Philosophy, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in both UK and Australia. He currently advises Human Values organisations in Australia and India. Prof. Dhall has extensive experience in the teachings and ethics of the main religions of humanity and has experience integrating ethics and human values of mankind’s religions to create harmony and peace in society and culture.*

Dr. Pal Dhall’s talk...

“Steps leading towards harmony is the very central message of all the faiths. They all claim that the Supreme Consciousness is perpetually inviting us to step into the magical world of unconditional love, peace and harmony.

But it is a supreme irony that while we are totally and absolutely immersed in an infinite ocean of awesome wonder, beauty and

harmony of the natural world, the substrate of our human experience is angst and existential discontent.

Ordinarily we live our lives disconnected from the miracle of our own life. For example, each of us is an amazing and miraculous example of harmony. We are made up of trillions of cells in which millions of chemicals reactions and hormones are constantly working in amazing harmony. The human organs support us every millisecond of our life in mind-boggling harmony. The same may be said about the perfection in all life forms e.g., in the harmonious and silent germination of a seed that in turn transforms soil, water, sunshine and air into fragrant and sweet fruit.



We are part of a web of life in which we are supported harmoniously by plants and flowers, insects and animals,

oceans and rivers, sun and moon, rain and sunshine.



A Divine Consciousness gifts us silently and harmoniously with all we need for our life – oxygen, water, vital energy, and food.

We are as much a part of this web of Consciousness as we are a part of one family of humanity that supports us physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially but perhaps not as silently and as freely as nature supports us.

Religions and wisdom traditions at their very core declare that we are not just organic beings who are born for eating and drinking, living mindlessly, procreating, and then dying, but that we are a part of One Supreme Consciousness. Realising this and living in harmony is our very purpose in life.

- Submitted by Ramon U'Brien

A BOOK REVIEW ON HOPE

The death of Pope Francis early on Easter Monday left those of us who value freedom, peace, courage and universal love very saddened.

In the Autobiography 'Hope' Pope Francis shares his remarkable life story. It was written over six years and was originally intended to appear after his death. His book tells of his early childhood in Argentina, wars and all.

In the Introduction Pope Francis said: "We Christians must know that hope doesn't deceive and doesn't disappoint. All is born to blossom in an eternal springtime.

He reminded us all that "we must restore hope to young people, the old, be open to the future, spread love." He added: "Be poor amongst the poor" and "We need to include the excluded and preach peace."

This humble man who came from Argentina and chose to become a Jesuit said: "From my point of view God is the light that illuminates the darkness, even if it doesn't dissolve it, and a spark of divine light is within each of us."

Fellow past South American Archbishop of Olinda and Recife in Northern Brazil, Dom Helder Camara, once released a book – *"Hoping Against All Hope"* where he too spoke of 'A Spark of Hope' in this way:

"If only we would stop dividing ourselves.

If only humanity would stop producing and stockpiling the arms that someday will probably obliterate human life.

If only we could see that in place of all this fear and anxiety, in the most difficult of dark hours, in the darkest night, a star shines.

If only we as brothers and sisters in greatness and misery could find again a spark of hope."

Pope Francis said: "Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."

All these people hope that one day all nations will have the courage to 'tear down the wall of comfortable and silent complicity, to give more support to the poor and those struggling -to show them greater concern, compassion and devotion."

- Submitted by Col Jennings

HOPE

The Bridge Between Faith and Love

by Andris Heks

In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 13, the Hymn Of Love, Paul gives a master class on love. He concludes – ‘And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.’

Then he urges in the next line, the first of 1 Corinthians 14 –

‘Make love your aim...’

He provides the clue to how to fulfill this aim by seeming to present faith as the foundation for love, that leads to hope as a yearning for love that in turn results in love as the culmination arising from faith through hope.

The more I experience love in my worldly self, the more fully I feel deeply fulfilled.

The need for faith and hope- and in this order- is necessary, because right now we indeed tend to ‘see through the glass darkly’.

(New Testament, Paul 1 Corinthians 13:12).

To see through clearly we need the light; the light of love.

Knowing love is not just cerebral, rational knowledge.

Rather, it is a flesh and blood experience of the spirit’s personal love!

It requires the heart and the inner eye to fully open. In such seeing is the believing - (faith).

A tall task indeed!

FAITH

It is daytime but it is dark.

The sun is out of sight.

It is also out of mind and out of heart.

But will the darkness be replaced by light?

There is no sign of it.

In the darkness of the heart, the sun and the memory of it disappeared altogether, as if the sun never rose and never will.

Mentally, I know the sun will rise anew.

But emotionally, I don’t believe it.

Darkness rules supreme.

It banishes the sun, never to return. I know from experience that this is nonsense: the sun has to rise again.

But in my mind and heart I don't believe it will, so I am unable to trust what I know from the past.

Darkness blocks hope.

I am incapable to be philosophical about my experience of darkness.

I should say: 'It will lift when the sun reappears.'

But the present dark experience prevents me from thinking of, feeling and believing my past experience of light, hope and love and my faith in the future.

My worldly ego can no longer help me.

I desperately need faith to snap out of this distorted, gloomy perspective to find the hope that love will return.

But how do I regain faith?

Only by acknowledging my helpless, despairing faithlessness and by begging for help. I give up and surrender to a power higher than myself. 'Thy will be done!'

This is faith.

And as I beg, tears flood my eyes.

At last the static of melancholic gloom is counteracted by a flow of sadness.

The paralysis of being stuck in gloom is being challenged by a flow of feelings.

I am starting to defrost.

My faith in being saved from myself is leading to -

HOPE

The hope that after all, the sun will rise. It will shine on me and that the feeling of love will return.

I do not feel being loved and loving yet, but I am starting to hope that the clouds will part and love will return.

This hope lifts me up.

I feel grateful for being uplifted.

My gratitude gradually dissolves despair.

Now I catch sight of the sun.

Hope has led to sensing oneness: amazing grace!

LOVE

The love of not just feeling blessed, but also the radiating of this bliss outward.

I am home again; alive. Now let me love others as You love me.

'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Make love your aim...'

(Paul, 1 Corinth. 13:13 and 14:1

HOPE IN THE FACE OF EVIL

by Fr. Eugene Stockton

“Evil will ever be for us a dark mystery lurking in the shadows of our spiritual search.”

Eugen says: “Our Judeo-Christian tradition is firmly convinced that creation is wholly good as it came from the hand of God...

Evil was something that ‘came into’ the world by human agency. (Gen.2).

“We instinctively see as evil the natural disasters which threaten to harm us: hurricanes, floods, pandemics, earthquakes, etc. But, these are bad only in relation to ourselves.

In themselves they are part of on-going creation, the evolution of the earth and all it contains. Our material world is constantly being reshaped and renewed. Nature runs its course for good.

Fr. Eugene goes on to say: “When God created the world , He knew that His creatures, being finite, were bound to suffer hardships.

Living creatures would experience suffering from birth to death, and all growth in between.

Since most living beings are both prey and predator, they are caught

up in a cycle of perdition. Creation continuing through evolution incurs the cost of evolution as the old makes way for the new (e.g. extinction of species).

Further pain and sadness are incurred by wayward humans as they turn away from God. (e.g. sin).



Yet God loved His creatures with limitless love, especially humankind at the apex of creation and was deeply compassionate of all they had to suffer. God was not angry or offended at wrongs wrought by people (for that would detract from His perfection), but just felt sorry for the harm they did to themselves, for the fullness of life they missed in wilfully giving it away.

So, God chose to enter the finite world of His creation, to become man so as to share solidarity with poor humanity and all it had to suffer.”

(The Article has been shortened- Ed).

Light over the Mountains Hope.

By Tim Whiting

Never lose hope but never
surrender to hope alone.

Hope is a seed of potential,
a spark by which a light
can be lit. Hope is essential in
enabling one to move forward, the
vision that something beneficial
lies ahead is essential.

Somehow, hope seems to be
embedded in the human psyche:
that to entertain a positive vision
is a kind of blueprint that we carry.
At its best, hope is the unknown
blueprint waiting to be realized.

As I grew up, it was a
standard question and subsequent
expectation that we would hold
a vision of the future – ‘what do
you want to be when you grow up?’

‘We are shaped to hold a vision,
a hope for our future.

The 1993 movie, Groundhog Day
has become a cultural touchstone.
The movie features a hapless
weatherman played by Bill Murray
who is assigned to report on a
holiday festival, (Groundhog Day).

The protagonist finds himself
caught in a time loop, waking up
each day to find it is the same
day as the one before. He travels
through a range of emotions
and motivations; denial, anger,
indulgence, hopelessness and
finally resignation. Only when he
accepts his fate does he reach
the resolution that what he can
change is his own actions, does he
find himself released from the loop?

As a kind of modern-day Sisyphus,
hopelessness was a dead-end street,
as he had to face his fate and
move through it. Part of the appeal
of the story is that he is a kind of
‘every man’, someone to whom we
can all relate.

Each day we face the existential
dilemma of ‘how does this day call
for me to act?’ It was not hope
that liberates him from the time-
loop, but virtuous action that
brings resolution.



At its worst, hope can be reduced to something akin to clutching at a lottery ticket, hoping for one's ship to come in. Hope alone is not far away from just wishing.

Even in the most dire circumstances, hope requires action.

When hope is the wish that an external agent will save us from our fate, we deny ourselves the opportunity to be agents of change.

The simple principle is that every outcome requires an input, to effect the change that we hope to see, we need to take a step of courage.

There is an expression that for every step of courage that we take, God takes a hundred steps.

So, our actions effecting change and the help of external agencies, be it divine intervention or some other benevolent force, are not mutually exclusive – both are required. Kindling the spark of our hope is essential.

But the actions that fan the flame are equally needed.

If hope is reduced to the wish to escape our fate, it remains only as the spark of the potential.

Hope needs companions such as enthusiasm, vision, and action, which set a wheel turning whereby positive actions that we initiate can bring their return. As Margaret Mead once said:

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has'.

*(Tim Whiting, is a writer
and a resident of
Brahma Kumaris in Leura).*

(Groundhog Day we are told is a tradition which is celebrated on **February 2** in the United States and Canada. It is based on the superstition that if a **groundhog** emerges from its burrow and sees its shadow, it will retreat back, indicating six more weeks of winter; if it does not see its shadow, spring will arrive early.

The day symbolizes the transition from winter to spring and has a cultural significance

It can be seen as a situation in which a series of unwelcome or tedious events appear to be recurring in exactly the same way.)

- Ed.

Hope beyond all hope

Listening to young people in Taizé and elsewhere, many of whom are confronted with harsh realities in their everyday life, I ask myself how they find the strength to carry on. The question becomes even more pressing when they are living in war zones.

Mary sang in her cry of praise and hope: “With the strength of his arm, God scatters the proud. God casts down the mighty from their thrones and lifts up the lowly. God fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed.” (Luke 1:51-53) Yes, let us dare to sing with her and to pray for situations to change. Even when God seems silent, a path may suddenly open up.

At the same time, let us do what we can, even when it may not seem much, to express signs of solidarity with people in distress around us, or who are caught up in war or forced to leave their country. Is it not this that will enable us to hope beyond all hope?

Out of situations that seem hopeless, God can create something new. God can bring life out of death and even reconciliation out of conflict.

That new life helps us to stand up, it leads us to journey together with others. We become pilgrims of the hope that we carry within us. Is it not also a hope for peace?

For “Christ is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14). Will we hear him say to us: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27-28).

As pilgrims of peace, we understand that there is no true peace without justice. The peace we carry within us, which comes from the hope we live from, makes us inwardly free. It allows us to love life and resist injustice, as we persevere moved by the Holy Spirit.

(These are excerpts from the Taizé Community in France.)

- See www.taize.fr/pilgrims-of-peace



**The Topic for the February 2026
issue of Light over the Mountains
is:
THE STRANGER IN OUR MIDST**

Please note that the contents of this Newsletter are spiritual writings and care should be taken in how you dispose of your copy.

INVITATION FOR COMMENTS

If you would like to make any comments about the contents in this issue please send an email to: Col, Email: coljennings14@gmail.com

or to:

BMIG3@hotmail.com

Please note that any comment may appear in the next issue of LOTM.

BMIG CALENDAR FOR 2025

Thursday, 28th Aug. 'Journey of Faith',
celebrating the Baha'i Faith.
Springwood Uniting Church Hall
off Lewin Street, Springwood,
10 – 12 am

Sunday 21st September
International Day of Peace
Uniting Church, Leura.
Taize Prayer Session – 5 to 6 pm.

Thursday, 30th Oct. Planning Meeting
(Leura Uniting Church), 10 – 12 noon

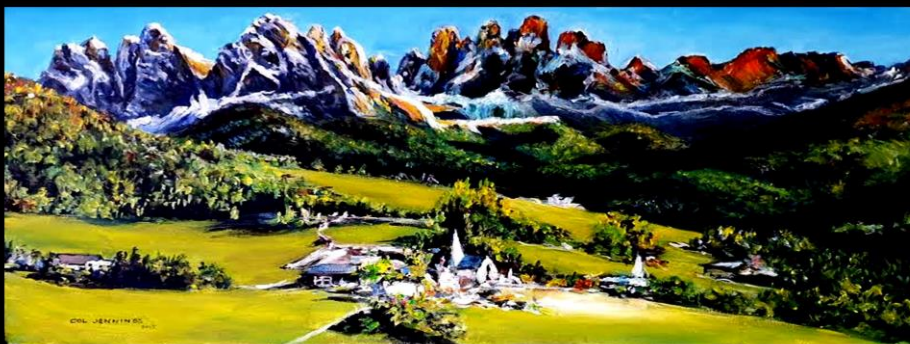
Details will be sent prior to each Meeting.

See page 9 for details of Soul Food
(Baha'i Meeting at Red Cross Hall in
Springwood. Next meeting on Sunday,
24th Aug. 2 -4 pm.

We invite contributions for our next issue. These may be inspiring or informative passages from your religious tradition, news items, upcoming events, book notices, etc.

Send to the BMIG email address: bmig3@hotmail.com or to
Col Jennings: coljennings14@gmail.com

The deadline is 1st. February 2026 Please keep your piece to around 600 words.



"Mary Magdalena Mountain Range" Tyrol in Austria.