

# The International Society for Women in Apologetics

*“Every interaction is a chance for action.”*

January 2010

ISWA Newsletter

Vol. 2

Life is full of endings and beginnings. January reminds us of the Roman god of gates, Janus, who lent his name to the first month of the year. Since doors were believed to look in two directions, Janus became known as the god of new beginnings and was thus depicted with two faces, one looking back and one looking forward. In a sense, that January received its name from Janus (that people have associated the first month with the god of beginnings) emphasizes the human tendency to see each New Year as a hopeful door to a new place. People tend to equate new with better or, at least, they hope for that to be true. Each new day or year or beginning seems to contain hope.

The Roman custom to exchange visits and good wishes on the first day of the year survived until today and illustrates the human longings for something better. No matter what the circumstances, there seems to be a yearning within the human soul for something more, and the yearly wishes and resolutions of people reveal the hopeful attitude of the human nature. At the same time many, if not all, can say that the same fears and disappointments and problems follow them in the New Year. When life offers no reason to expect anything better, one wonders at the origin of hope within the human soul. What is the source of better expectations and good wishes in a world that seems to be plagued with suffering?

If the atheistic argument that God and suffering cannot coexist is true, how can one provide a reasonable explanation for hope?

In other words, why do people see anything wrong with the world as it is and expect something better? While it has been recognized that hope can work as a catalyst in the treatment of many sick people, the question of its origin still remains. Even if it works many times, what is the metaphysical explanation for its existence? On what does hope base its reality? The Bible describes he who does not accept Christ as “without hope and without God in the world,” (Eph 2:12). If the Christian God exists (and there are many reasons to believe in His existence), then no other source of hope is justified. There seems to be a longing within the human soul for something much greater than just a better new year or better ten years. Without God, life does not have a meaning and hope cannot be explained. Without God, we would be like the two characters of Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot”, who carry trivial conversations waiting for a third person who never shows up. Are we, as Beckett portrays, killing time while waiting for something but we don’t really know what? Is Shakespeare correct in describing life as “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing (*Macbeth*)?”

The absurdity of life seems a logical conclusion for someone who does not believe in God. As a result, hope does not seem to have an adequate explanation for its existence in an atheistic world. The question remains: Why does hope seem so “natural”? Is it too far-fetched to believe that hope has been “built” within us by our Creator to help us cope with suffering because He has prepared a better place for every person that chooses that?

A worldview that ignores the existence of God does not have a coherent answer to the question of the existence of hope. However, in a Christian worldview that sees the world as being created by a God interested in the smallest details of each person’s life, hope is natural. It is the expected outcome. How does one, who believes in a Creator that works all things together for the good of those who love Him, lose hope? Found in the midst of many trials, Paul was able to affirm: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day, (2 Cor.4:16-17).”

Even to hope against all hope is not illogical when the hope is anchored in God because the believers have enough evidence that proves the worthiness of God as the object of hope. As everyone seems to have new hopes at the beginning of a new year, we should question on what we base our hopes. Wouldn’t it be a good topic in our conversations with our non-believing friends? Josh McDowell has said numerous times that, “Christianity offers the world a genuine hope.” Let’s transform our world with this hope. - Delia Ursulescu

*When Delia sent me this article to put in the newsletter, I could not help but be struck with how timely a message it is with everything that is going on in Haiti. When you read the news that is coming in from the island, you sit and wonder where this could possibly fit into the will of a benevolent Creator God but you also know it is not for us to ask. For me it served as a reminder that even in the midst of all the devastation in the world, there is hope available in Jesus Christ for those who are willing. Please remember the nation of Haiti in your prayers and as women in apologetics, let us always be ready to impart our hope with others.*

*Grace and Peace,*

*Sarah Ankenman  
ISWA President*