

## Monthly Mod Musings

By John A. Bolt, Moderator, Presbytery of West Virginia, 2026

### An imagined conversation after Easter

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

*OK, so you say, but what does it matter? I mean I've heard lots of people saying that lately, even greeting each other that way, but WHAT DOES IT MATTER?*

Oh, it matters alright! It matters a lot. It's always mattered, but especially now, I think.

*Really? You really believe it? But why?*

Yes, I believe it and here's why: I've been hearing a lot about hope in the last several weeks. For me and many of the people I know and/or read, the subject of hope has been, as it were, "top of mind," largely because so much of what is swirling around us and the world seems to have sucked all hope out of life.

The resurrection is what I believe brings hope back to life and shows that hope is not misplaced nor is it a fantasy built on two millennia of wishful thinking.

I can go the churchy route, and point you to some (all?) of the confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Heidelberg Catechism, question 45:

First, by his resurrection he has overcome death, so that he might make us share in the righteousness he obtained for us by his death.

Second, by his power we too are already raised to a new life.

Third, Christ's resurrection is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.

And The Second Helvetic Confession:



“Even pansies have hope.”

Further by his passion and death and everything which he did and endured for our sake by his coming in the flesh, our Lord reconciled all the faithful to the heavenly Father, made expiation for sins, disarmed death, overcame damnation and hell, and by his resurrection from the dead brought again and restored life and immortality. For he is our righteousness, life and resurrection, in a word, the fulness and perfection of all the faithful, salvation and all sufficiency. For the apostle says: “In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,” and, “You have come to fulness of life in him.”

And The Confession of 1967:

The resurrection of Jesus is God’s sign that [God] will consummate [the] work of creation and reconciliation beyond death and bring to fulfillment the new life begun in Christ.

There’s lots more about resurrection in our PC(U.S.A.) Book of Confessions, which you can even read for free online ([The Book of Confessions | Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#))

Perhaps my favorite, though, comes from John Calvin’s commentary on Hebrews. He writes:

The word hope I take for faith; and indeed hope is nothing else but the constancy of faith.

*Yeah, yeah, yeah. Spare me all those words from dead white men decades and centuries ago. What does it mean to me, today, in 2026?*

It means, my friend, that regardless of what things look like today, we have faith that somehow, sometime, the wrongs and evil happening around us will cease. It’s what Martin Luther King Jr. meant when he said, reiterated actually, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

It's what the Rev. Jesse Jackson meant when he implored us to "Keep Hope Alive."

We have faith/hope because, "[u]njustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition [i.e. by sacred and secular establishments], Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. **God raised this Jesus from the dead**, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal." (*A Brief Statement of Faith*, PC(USA), emphasis added.)

I acknowledge that I can't tell you what "resurrection" will look like, but to my way of thinking that doesn't matter.

Will it be "bodily," as we say in The Apostles' Creed; will it be reincarnation, as some believe; will it be ephemeral and/or spiritual, as others suggest? There are, indeed, lots of ideas and concepts out there about what Jesus' resurrection looked like, some more scriptural than others, but there're out there among the Christian world.

I do not pretend to know the details, but I have FAITH that it *will be*.

As Lead Presbyter/Stated Clerk Maureen Wright wrote last week, "I believe that ... hope is a verb, it is action. God calls us to hope. Hope actively, hope with the belief that God will be with the people of God. Hope with your boots on."

And because I have faith, I have hope.

It may be Pollyannish, but I have felt rumblings of Resurrection taking place for a while now. I began sensing it when Phyllis Tickle gave voice to the idea that the church goes through a "rummage sale" every 500 years or so in *The Great Emergence*. (Do the math.)

Since then, we have seen various movements within U.S. Christianity preaching a faith that more resembles the teachings of Jesus, unsullied by the influence of empire, e.g. The Poor People's Campaign.

I feel Resurrection happening in the writings of Diana Butler Bass, e.g. Grounded; the Rev. Dr. Mark Sandlin, a PC(U.S.A.) pastor in North Carolina; and even James Talarico's the U.S. Senate campaign in Texas.

Look around you, and I think you'll feel it, too, if you'll be open to it.

As the hymn says:

May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.  
Praying, let us work for peace;  
singing, share our joy with all;  
working for a world that's new,  
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

*OK, OK, you've made your point. I'll give it a try.*

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