

## The stories that pictures tell

Something about the picture grabbed me. I was gazing at a photo of a beauty queen standing with her court. Believe it or not, it wasn't her face or her figure that transfixed me. Here's what got my attention. I had just seen this woman, and she didn't look like her picture.

Hollywood and New York photographers usually alter photos. They routinely remove warts and tattoos so that those models and actors we idolize appear unblemished. Zits and flaws don't sell movies and clothes.

But the former beauty queen's imperfections weren't what got my attention that day. It was the look in her eyes. In the photograph I saw hope—expectations of a great future.

I stood looking at the photo in the dingy apartment near downtown Los Angeles that she shared with her husband and three children. It was probably about a decade after the beauty contest.

The current look in her eyes made it seem eternity. She appeared unkempt. So did her husband and kids—and the apartment. Her eyes said it all. Hope was gone. Defeat reeked.

The problem wasn't the kids or her family's economic condition. Other parents with numerous children and little income remain hopeful and happy. Though aging, their eyes express increasing expectation. They have something the Bible promises to those who love God. Here it is, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you," (Romans 8:11). Fix your attention on Jesus. He'll make you leap, skip, and gallop like a kid. And reinstall hope in your eyes.