

CARITAS FELLOWSHIP
 Truth & Consequences 5: Justice
 24 February 2011

Worldview in Medicine:

How can I possibly believe in justice in this world? Is there hope for a future with justice and peace? If so, how or why?

MATTHEW 6.9,10

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

AMOS 5.10-15,21-24

They hate him who reproves in the gate,
 and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

11 Therefore because you trample on the poor
 and you exact taxes of grain from him,
 you have built houses of hewn stone,
 but you shall not dwell in them;
 you have planted pleasant vineyards,
 but you shall not drink their wine.

12 For I know how many are your transgressions
 and how great are your sins—
 you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
 and turn aside the needy in the gate.

13 Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time,
 for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil,
 that you may live;
 and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
 as you have said.

15 Hate evil, and love good,
 and establish justice in the gate;
 it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
 will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph...

21...I hate, I despise your feasts,
 and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

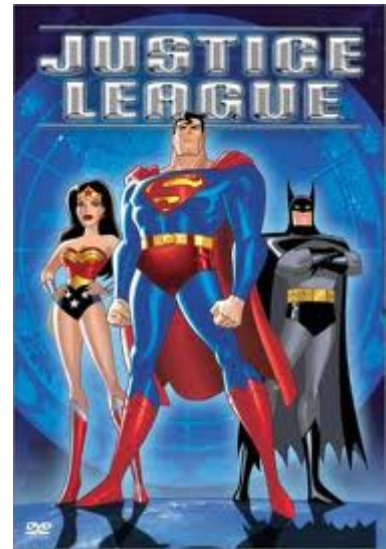
22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
 I will not accept them;
 and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,
 I will not look upon them.

23 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
 to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

24 But let justice roll down like waters,
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

MICAH 6.8

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and



to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

LUKE 1.46-55

And Mary said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

MARK 13.32-37

But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. 35 Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet*)

HAMLET: 'tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well

bestow'd? Do you hear? Let them be well used

POLONIUS: My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET: God's bodykins, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

ROBERT BURNS (“Childe Roland”)

'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

PAUL FARMER

“I have fought the long defeat and brought other people on to fight the long defeat, and I’m not going to stop because we keep losing. Now I actually think sometimes we may win. I don’t dislike victory. . . . You know, people from our background — like you, like most PIH-ers, like me — we’re used to being on a victory team, and actually what we’re really trying to do in PIH is to make common cause with the losers. Those are two very different things. We want to be on the winning team, but at the risk of turning our backs on the losers, no, it’s not worth it. So you fight the long defeat.”

JRR TOLKEIN (*LOTR*, Galadriel)

...for ere the fall of Norgothrond or Gondolin I passed over the mountains, and together through the ages

of the world we have fought the long defeat.

JRR TOLKEIN (*Letters*)

I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic, so that I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' – though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory.

ALAN JACOBS

It seems to me that this philosophy of history [of the long defeat], if we may call it that, is the ideal one for anyone who has exceptionally difficult, frustrating, even agonizing, but nevertheless vitally important work to do. For such people, the expectation of victory can be a terrible thing – it can raise hopes in (relatively) good times only to shatter them when the inevitable downturn comes. Conversely, the one who fights the long defeat can be all the more thankful for victories, even small ones, precisely because (as St. Augustine said about ecstatic religious experiences) he or she does not expect them and is prepared to live without them.

Paul Farmer's politics, in most senses of the term, are anything but conservative; but his devotion to the long defeat strikes me as a model of what a healthy conservatism ought to be, in every sphere of life. The failure to hold this sober, realistic, but curiously sustaining view of things has brought many well-formed and well-meaning plans to a dark end.

Paul Farmer and the people he has trained have seen children die, communities fail, exciting initiatives crumble in the dust; but they're still at work. They're not leaving the side of the poor. God bless them all.

PSA+

... Tolkien, well-formed Catholic Christian that he was, understood that the final victory of peace and love in this world must come from the outside – that is why it is called the Kingdom of God and not the Federated Republic of the Well-Intentioned. He understood that life "between the times" is marked (just as our Lord promised it would be) by "wars and rumors of wars."^[v] And here we understand "war" both literally and figuratively: there are terrorists gleefully firing into crowded Mumbai restaurants, and there are, just two blocks away from us, children dying of cancer; there are suicide bombers in Baghdad and, within spitting distance of this church, entire families crippled and ham-strung by addiction. Out there is violence, but in here – in this room, this pulpit, are ungrateful hearts.

But we are not surprised and we do not despair – neither of the fight outside nor the struggle inside. We stay in the fight. History is a long defeat. History needs – and has – a Savior, a Savior and King who has come among us once in "great humility," and will "come again in his glorious majesty."

And this is what Advent is for. It reminds us that we are a waiting people: anticipating, hoping, expecting, longing, watching. So that, when victories large and small do come – and they do come! occasionally peace does break out, in individual hearts and in families and in and between races and nations and cultures, and sometimes for generations at a time – when those victories do come, we are doubly grateful: first, because those victories are not expected, they are not ours by right; and second, because we see in them signs, glimpses, portents of the final victory of the Prince of Peace – for whom we Advent, Not Yet Christians watch and hope and long.

Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

BARAK OBAMA (*interview with David Brooks*)

I take away (from Reinhold Niebuhr) ... the compelling idea that there's serious evil in the world, and hardship and pain. And we should be humble and modest in our belief we can eliminate those things. But we shouldn't use that as an excuse for cynicism and inaction. I take away ... the sense we have to make these efforts knowing they are hard, and not swinging from naïve idealism to bitter realism.

REINHOLD NEIBUHR

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
 Courage to change the things I can change,
 And wisdom to know the difference.

ERIC VOEGELIN

The problem of an *eidos* in history, hence, arises only when a Christian transcendental fulfillment becomes immanentized. Such an immanentist hypostasis of the eschaton, however, is a theoretical fallacy.

MICHAEL NOVAK

The birth of the concept of social justice coincided with two other shifts in human consciousness: the “death of God” and the rise of the ideal of the command economy. When God “died,” people began to trust a conceit of reason and its inflated ambition to do what even God had not deigned to do: construct a just social order. The divinization of reason found its extension in the command economy; reason (that is, science) would command and humankind would collectively follow. The death of God, the rise of science, and the command economy yielded “scientific socialism.” Where reason would rule, the intellectuals would rule. (Or so some thought. Actually, the lovers of power would rule.)

...Hayek recognized that at the end of the nineteenth century, when the term “social justice” came to prominence, it was first used as an appeal to the ruling classes to attend to the needs of the new masses of uprooted peasants who had become urban workers. To this he had no objection. What he did object to was careless thinking. Careless thinkers forget that justice is by definition social. Such carelessness becomes positively destructive when the term “social” no longer describes the *product* of the virtuous actions of many individuals, but rather the *utopian goal* toward which all institutions and all individuals are “made in the utmost degree to converge” by coercion. In that case, the “social” in “social justice” refers to something that emerges not organically and spontaneously from the rule-abiding behavior of free individuals, but rather from an abstract ideal imposed from above.