

Devotion ♦ *Standing in the Tragic Gap – He is Risen!*

Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross... Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things... Colossians 2:15, 3:1-2

Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here: He is Risen! Luke 24:5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... Revelation 21:1

Discouragement is a common enemy of people working for justice. It emerges when we come face to face with what Parker Palmer describes as the “tragic gap” between the realities of injustice in our world and the dream of God’s new heaven and earth. We can become paralyzed by the grim reality of this tragic gap.

As Christ-led communities, we find encouragement through cooperation, and realizing that none of us has to do everything. We can also be reminded of the “great cloud of witnesses,” past and present, who can inform and inspire our efforts. Mother Teresa, Gary Haugen, Oscar Romero, Tony Campolo, Dorothy Day, John Woolman, William Wilberforce and Jim Wallis are only a handful of examples who go before us to model Christ-like, justice-oriented ministry.

Yet as we establish our purposes and nurture our efforts, our hope needs to be fueled by a deeper source. Our ultimate hope is not found in the institutions and systems of this world, but emerges from the spiritual reality of a victory already won, though not yet fully realized on earth. There is another Kingdom coming, one where justice and righteousness will join hands to displace all the kingdoms of this world. Our certainty springs from the truth that God has already said YES to Jesus Christ, evidenced in the resurrection. This yes is accompanied by a resounding NO to the systems of injustice that executed him. Christ is risen!

So we do not look for inspiration from what is dead and dying. We set our eyes on things unseen, already visible in the imaginations and hearts of those who worship the risen Lord.

Which faithful Christians inspire you? Why? How and where do you allow the Spirit of God to nurture your dreams and fuel your hope?