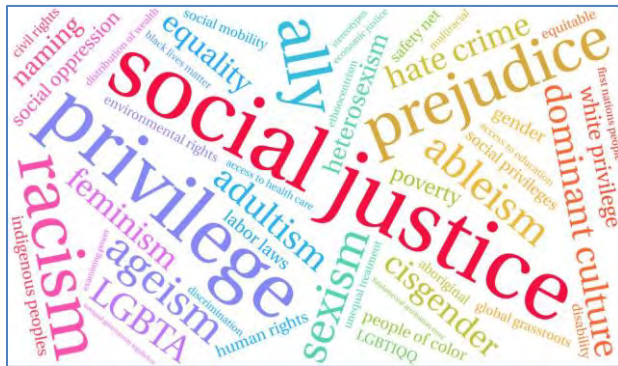


Social Justice and the Headwing Perspective

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September 18, 2020



Since George Floyd's tragic death in May at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, the United States has been experiencing societal convulsions not seen since the 1960s.

A spate of protests -- violent and nonviolent -- have caused great distress in many American cities. The crisis has brought issues that have long plagued the nation, such as racial inequality, police brutality, poverty, and family breakdown, to the forefront of our national discourse.

Social justice activists who take a "progressive" view of politics and culture have sought answers to remedy unequal and intolerant laws and social behaviors for more than a century.

But the question remains: How will our nation finally attain justice and peace?

'Social justice' has religious origins

An Italian priest, Father Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, coined the term "social justice" in the mid-1800s. He was of the opinion that "legal justice," as implemented by the State, was different from "social justice" by which people resolve conflicts and injustices without State intrusion.

Father Taparelli viewed families and churches as independent, buffering institutions that exist between the State and individuals. His distinction is important. Keeping state control at bay is vital to protect the autonomy of individuals and families and the spiritual authority of religions.

This is why the concept of "social justice" has long been part of the social creed of the Roman Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, Father Taparelli was highly suspect of philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others who believed that the State should be the primary arbiter of all aspects in seeking justice.

It should be noted that a well-functioning state prospers on foundations it cannot generate itself: healthy families.

'Christian socialism' and progressivism

In the early 1900s, Herbert Croly, considered the father of modern liberalism, economist Richard Ely and other [Progressive Era](#) intellectuals promoted a new paradigm for social well-being in America. Their vision was rooted in what became known as "Christian socialism." This vision said that a strong, central government could be a "great equalizer" by enacting laws and policies that would end the "sinful and cruel" aspects of a free-market economy as imagined by the American founders.

As Ely explained: "God works through the State in carrying out His purposes more universally than any other institution...it is religious in essence...a mighty force in furthering God's kingdom and establishing righteous relations."

For some, the progressives' emphasis on government control was a noble and necessary step for America to address various inequities. Others saw it as using the Almighty to invite and sanction government control and/or coercion over citizens with God-given freedoms.

Regrettably, many of the progressives' idealistic state-sponsored solutions embraced secular humanism and Marxism. As such, their pursuit of social justice threatened the guaranteed constitutional freedoms of religion, speech, and peaceful assembly. Modern progressives still seek to achieve "social justice" through State legislation and government agency. As before, they still face strong opposition from constitutionalists, libertarians and religious believers who fear the overreach of government into matters of faith and family.

The 'headwing' perspective

We are left with this question: What are the better ways to end social injustice, racial strife, and economic inequality?

It is said, and I agree, that politics, by way of government agency, cannot solve problems that are spiritual and cultural in nature.



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In his 2016 book, *The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism*, political analyst [Yuval Levin](#) asserts the basis for social justice begins in "loving family attachments." This family-based way of life believes in the equality of the entire human race and reinforces the idea that we are all God's children.

According to Levin, such a worldview can easily "spread outward" into neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, religious communities, and even local governments, businesses, and professional affiliations. When we relate to each other as if we are members of God's family, racism, greed, immorality, and family breakdown can be resolved.

Levin's idea about "loving family attachments" aligns with Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon's teaching that "ideal families" are the basis for a culture of peace.

People who are raised to be God-centered individuals, who then create families that embrace godly values, can apply these ideals in their communities and eventually the entire world can become

more fair and just. This forms the basis for a moral society. This is the so-called "headwing" perspective.

The spiritual dimension of human solutions

Another key aspect of "headwing" is its recognition of both the corporeal (physical) and incorporeal (spiritual) realms. No matter how well-intentioned social justice activists, politicians, law-enforcement agencies or the general public may be about solving social problems, they cannot succeed if they ignore the spiritual dimension of our social problems.

As we build our understanding of the physical and spiritual worlds we will learn how to identify and eradicate the manifestations of "sin" in human relations. Only then can we begin to arrive at effective remedies for our societal problems.

Bending the 'moral arc of justice'

Croly and other Progressive Era intellectuals were correct in their advocacy of a society comprised of moral and ethical people. They rationally turned to academics and government to build a fair and just nation.

Faithful people in Judeo-Christian cultures share the desire for a civilized, humanitarian society; however, they believe we must be co-creators with God in order to establish a world based on true love.

In Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s calls for nonviolent solutions for peace and justice, he often invoked the idea of "the moral arc of the universe bending towards justice." Dr. King also warned, "We must learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish together as fools."

As people with free agency we can't realistically expect that the "moral arc of the universe" will automatically bend toward justice. But when we unite with God, develop "loving family attachments," and practice godly virtues -- such as the "[Peace Starts With Me](#)" message Mrs. Moon is advocating -- we can arrive at a fair and just culture with true love as the primary virtue.

The Bible instructs that we should seek justice ([Micah 6:8](#)), thus justice is important. However, in order to be truly just we must "walk humbly with thy God." As Rev. and Mrs. Moon have emphasized, it is a belief in God-centered true love that is the path to justice and a culture of peace.

This article is abridged from "Reimagining Social Justice from a Headwing Perspective," which appeared in the September 2020 issue of True Peace. familyfedihq.org/2020/09/true-peace-magazine-september-2020-issue/