

Amoz's son

Aren't we fools for believing Isaiah's vision of peace?

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Advent beckons. A new day dawns. Amoz's son (of course) is quoted.

Same old Bible, same old verses? Still, I will write, casting forth the feeblest of words for the boldest of dreams.

Though obviously not Amoz's son—also known as the prophet Isaiah—I have humbly and insignificantly sought to be a child of Amoz's son. I've tried to be another in the long line of those claiming and proclaiming and hoping for God's realm of love:

Then they will beat their swords into iron plows

And their spears into pruning tools . . .

Amoz's son envisioned a day when there would be peace.

On this first Sunday of Advent, I again read the plea of Isaiah and can't help but wonder: *When?*

Peace, other than in fleeting moments, never happened for Amoz or for any of his remembered or forgotten daughters and sons and granddaughters and grandsons and . . .

There was no peace later for Jesus in that ancient era of empires.

No religion has brought forth a lasting peace. Not the Buddhists. Not the Hindus. Not the Jews. Not the Muslims. Not the Christians.

No nation has created an enduring peace, though some have perpetuated wars without end.

Swords remain swords, though now there are armor-piercing bullets to spare.

Spears remain spears, though now there are ICBMs and RPGs ready to launch.

Why stand at a pulpit, or scrawl on a sliver of paper, or dabble across digital white space with any verbs or adjectives that will continue the hopes of Amoz's son?

Are we all so foolish?

Consumerism smirks and wins.

Empires still rage and rule.

Old politicians scheme while young soldiers die.

Widows and orphans continue to increase.

The rich trumpet their riches.

The poor grovel.

Immigrants tremble.

Walls are built (most of them internal).

Oil and pipelines are more important than soil and people.

Somewhere right now a Sikh wearing a dastar is sneered at because he's thought to be the enemy . . . hated . . . different.

Somewhere right now a white person fears a black person, simply for the color of their pigment. (Sorry, Martin, but we are still more into skin color than soul content.)

Somewhere right now . . .

We google and call it research. We only listen to talking head pundits that bolster our biases, but blissfully brand it news. We tweet insults and innuendoes and call it communication. We post cute cat pictures and hashtag our spiteful opinions and pretend we're engaged with others.

Welcome to the First Sunday of Advent.

We will speak the words of Amoz's son. Again.

And yet wasn't Isaiah such the fool? Wasn't Jesus also the fool? *Love your neighbors*, the Nazarene simply said. And yet his followers keep adding to the sentence. I love my neighbor except for _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ . (I provided four blank lines: an exception for each Advent Sunday.)

Aren't you, preachers and pretenders, the men and women who circle the pulpits to prepare parishioners for peace, also fools?

Am I not a fool?

Even though all the evidence of history, and all the personal experience of my unremarkable life, informs me otherwise, I choose the foolishness of a borderless, boundless, and blessed faith.

I choose this odd, fragile message of Advent hope. I choose to be among the offspring of Amoz's son, continuing to claim that God's peace will reign.

Originally posted at [Patten's blog](#)