

Andrea and Mark Hotchkin

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

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Ten days ago, I was called to the hospital in the evening, I could tell it was serious before I arrived, parked outside the gates were about 30 pick-up trucks and people were streaming in and out. I took off my turban and jalabeer, changed my surgical mask, cleaned my hands, added a pair of gloves and went to the Emergency room. Four young boys had been playing with a rocket propelled grenade when it exploded, killing two, and the others were seriously injured, one with extensive burns and the other with a blast wave injury to the lung. Two hours later, along with my colleagues, we had stabilised the situation and made a plan for the next 24 critical hours and treated the boys, thankfully both made a good recovery. However, despite our best efforts, each boy had been visited in the small emergency room by 30 people or more. Perhaps one of them coughed, there's a lot of colds around, and none of the visitors wore a mask. After four days I started coughing, and that is how I think, as a doctor with access to all the high-quality PPE I could need, caught Covid. Compulsory mask wearing in public is clearly a part of the solution, but it's not only here in Chad that people can't see that.

Following our enforced stay in the UK, I am fortunate to be one of the three vaccinated people in Bardai and so I have a massive advantage and have had a mild disease. None of the hospital staff, the elderly, the infirm or the pregnant are yet vaccinated. Since we started confirming cases by PCR we have received a vehicle full of new equipment, oxygen concentrators, thermometers, oxygen saturation monitors, gloves masks, gowns etc. We even received a big new solar powered vaccine fridge for Covid, but no vaccines. Chad has received donations from China and the USA, but so far has vaccinated less than 2% of the population but even if they had the resources there are no vaccines for the Ministry of Health to buy. It would take $\frac{3}{4}$ of the headline 20 million vaccine doses from the UK government at the G20 at the end of October to take the small Chadian population up to the world average figure.

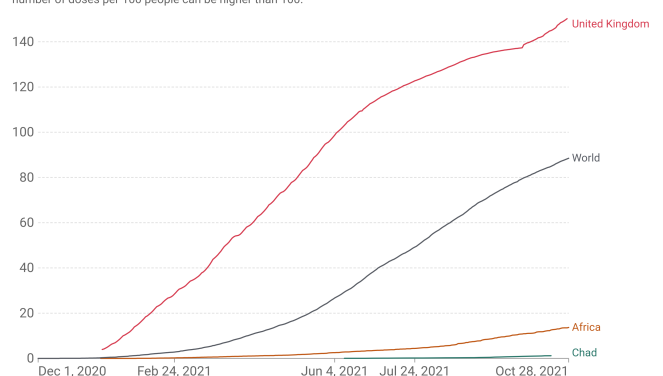
'Taking up the 5 loaves and 2 fish, he looked up to heaven.....' Mark 6 v 41

Springs to mind. In the well-known story of Jesus ministry to the hungry crowd, there are far too few loaves and fish to feed the people. An equitable distribution of a symbolic crumb would have been difficult, so logically they should have kept it for the 12+1 Disciples. Alternatively, they could have sold it at a vastly inflated price and given the money to the poor (or slipped it into the treasurer's pocket). They might even have blocked any attempt to pass the loaves and fish to Jesus in case he ruined their business. None of these far-fetched ideas happened, Jesus simply blessed the insignificant amount and used it to feed the whole crowd with more leftovers.

The richest nations have been keeping vaccines for themselves in large amounts, some western and non-western pharmaceutical companies have been profiteering charging over \$30 a dose, for products that cost a few dollars to make. A miraculous proposal, to share the patents and technology necessary to make the vaccine production worldwide, was tabled by India, South Africa and supported by the USA and the majority of the world's nations but it has been blocked for a year by the WTO by vested interests. The UK and German governments are particularly outspoken in protecting the pharmaceutical industry.

COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people

All doses, including boosters, are counted individually. As the same person may receive more than one dose, the number of doses per 100 people can be higher than 100.



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data - Last updated 29 October 2021, 11:30 (London time)
OurWorldinData.org/coronavirus · CC BY

And the πραῦς shall inherit the land - According to Kenneth Bailey, in *Jesus through Mediterranean Eyes*, the Greek word, πραῦς, is used by Aristotle to mean the 'one who becomes angry on the right grounds, against the right person, in the right manner, at the right moment, for the right length of time.' A revolutionary shade of meaning that has been lost? Jesus is at least partly quoting Psalm 37, a song about the oppressed, where, in the Hebrew, **אַנִי**, the humble poor will inherit the land. Interestingly this is rendered as *les misérables* in French translations. I wonder why the Authorised/ Establishment version started the tradition that chooses meek, that is quiet, gentle, easily imposed on, submissive, for both of these words? We need to continue to campaign for Covid -19 vaccine justice through miraculous means for the right length of time, until vaccines are produced and distributed free, at the point of delivery, to everyone.



Praise

The Covid-19 vaccines - and personally for the protection it has afforded us.

The generous supplies from BMS last year, and from the Ministry of Health

Prayer

All those grieving or suffering due to Covid -19 throughout the world

Education and simple public health measures to taken seriously throughout the world and to begin in Bardai.

A major change in the way that vaccines are produced and distributed, may it be massively increased and equitable.

We thank you for your prayers and support through this difficult period, and do appreciate that some of you will be grieving or simply exhausted, may God be close to you and bring you consolation; and for those who have the strength and energy, may you continue to be agents for change shining light in the dark corners of our world.

Mark and Andrea

If you would like to support Andrea and Mark Hotchkin by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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