

God's Plan for True Social Justice

In 2012, I was in a conversation with one of my colleagues at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, debriefing about our recent annual young adult conference, called Onething, when he asked, "Hey, have you heard about what happened at Passion 2012?"

I have always had great respect for the Passion leadership team and its worship and messaging, and I knew that year the conference had gathered more than 40,000 young adults in Atlanta, so I was eager to hear what my colleague was going to say next.

He told me an offering of \$3 million was taken at the Passion conference that year, all given toward the goal of ending human trafficking. As I thought about the money those young conference attendees spent on travel, lodging, registration and materials, I found myself pondering what was happening in the heart of this generation that they would give with such generosity toward a central issue of social justice.

Yet such an altruistic move on the part of this generation did not come as a complete surprise to me—and it may not to you either. There is a growing awareness of justice in our nation, especially among young adults on college and university campuses, with an increased concern for the physical well-being of humans all over the world. There's concern for world hunger, for those forced into refugee camps, for those enslaved through human trafficking, for children of war in Africa, for the oppression of women, for abortion and for so many other forms of human rights.

I believe this increasing awareness of justice in the world is an indication the Lord is about to do something in the nations

through His end-time church—His unified, praying, pure and spotless bride. Jesus shows us in Luke 18 that the call to persistent night-and-day prayer will release God’s spiritual and social justice that accompanies His return to the earth.

But is this emerging global movement toward justice all good? Is it pure and spotless, as God’s bride is meant to be? The answer, unfortunately, is not what you’d expect or hope—and we need to prepare our response.

A Widespread Concern

Justice organizations are being birthed all over the earth. While it would be nearly impossible to gauge the number of justice-related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide, their count has been estimated to be in the millions. The United States alone boasts approximately 1.5 million NGOs, and India hosts 2 million.

Countless websites address issues of social injustice that pervade our modern society, from child laborers to child soldiers, human trafficking to blood diamonds, world hunger to environmental concerns, and racism to genocide. In 2006, an Internet search for the term *social justice* yielded 1.5 million hits. Six years later, that number skyrocketed to 26.3 million.

This increasing concern for social justice includes the church. Throughout history, the church has ebbed and flowed in her witness in this area. However, the last several years have seen a resurgence of activity. In October, *Christianity Today* reported a 14 percent increase in serving the poor among church members in their communities over a period of three years. Additionally, 43 percent of pastors say they speak on the topic of poverty several times per year—some even once per month.

A Necessary Pause

This growing trend is encouraging and exciting—yet at the same time it unsettles me. Why? After all, justice is a good cause. The cry of the poor and the oppressed now touch the hearts of many. It is good we rally and mobilize to serve those who are in need among us, right?

The truth is, there's a real danger here we need to recognize, and it begins with an understanding of two distinct justice movements at work at the same time. One is a false movement that's been growing over the course of the last century. It's rooted in humanism and undermines the biblical understanding of Jesus, and it will fully manifest itself in the religion of the harlot of Babylon—a counterfeit forerunner movement for the Antichrist.

Yet the Holy Spirit also has His justice movement, which is the end-time church. Justice is fundamental to the way God governs His kingdom and the nations of the earth (Ps. 97:2), and the Godhead has devised an action plan for establishing justice among the nations. It is a governmental plan that is deeply rooted in the Father's pleasure, kindness and wisdom toward His own darling Son and the people who would be in the Son's embrace.

The unfolding of this plan is clearly laid out in the New Testament. It necessitated the second Person of the Trinity becoming a man, paying the price for sin, raising from the dead and then being seated back at the right hand of God the Father.

God then gave the mystery—the gospel—to the apostles, who recorded it in the written Word of God, and it was further passed down through generations (Eph. 3:5). The culmination of the action plan of the gospel is seen in the book of Revelation, in which the main theme is the return of Jesus to the earth to establish His justice (Rev. 1:7). As Jesus' throne is established on the earth, the poor and oppressed are delivered and freed from every injustice that plagues them.

Christ-centered justice that aligns with God's governmental plan is something the church—even now—can participate in, and I'm gratified to see that it is doing so. But we must see the emerging false justice movement also at work among us that parallels but ultimately undermines the true justice God desires.

A Holy Call

For the poor, the power of the Holy Spirit is absolutely vital. The poor and oppressed need a message in this hour that will raise them out of the ash heaps of their personal depravity and their individual and corporate oppression according to the gospel of Jesus Christ as proclaimed by the apostles and prophets of old.

The justice movement as it exists right now has many seductive trappings, as much of it is devoid of the preaching of the true gospel that is rooted in the apostolic and eschatological paradigm of Christ. This results in social activism with a different gospel and a different Jesus that was not declared to us by the apostles.

The global consciousness of the nations is increasingly awakening to humanitarian needs because there have been real lessons learned throughout history about the oppression of the poor, about racism, about totalitarian governments, about anti-Semitism, about religious fundamentalism and more, and there is an emerging movement seeking to address these issues.

However, the face of evil is wearing the mask of good so that the issues are being addressed while we ignore the apostolic requirement of faith in Christ (Hab. 2:4). This false justice movement will mature into a harlot religion, which will have the appearance of good on the outside (Matt. 7:15), but its leaders and followers will find their inner man raging against Christ and His ways (Ps. 2:1-3).

The primary need in the church today is a biblical

understanding of Jesus Christ as understood by the apostles. In this hour, we must give ourselves to the revealing of who Jesus is in His personality, in His power and in the plan of God in His just government.

The gospel of the kingdom is good news to the poor. The gospel declares that all of humanity is guilty of injustice before God, whether rich or poor, male or female, Jew or Gentile. The good news of the gospel is that we can have right standing with God through faith in Christ.

Those who live in dynamic agreement with Jesus on the inside are those who will do dynamic social justice, which arises like a sweet aroma before the throne. Social action is only pleasing to the Lord inasmuch as it is done with a dynamic agreement with who God is.

An Intent Focus

So how do we keep ourselves in the true justice movement? How do we guard against the deception of false justice? How do we answer the cries of the poor and oppressed in accordance with the eternal plan of God, rather than relying on the methods of man?

The answer is found in Isaiah 42:1: Behold Jesus, the servant. Through prayer, God will give us insight into His method. The end-time justice movement is a prayer movement, where we are called to lift our voice and cry out in the place of prayer first, coming into agreement with His ways.

As followers of Jesus, we do not simply want to engage in justice because it is popular and trendy. This leaves us vulnerable to subtle deception. Rather, we want to follow Jesus, who is in the business of establishing justice for truth (Is. 42:3).

Jesus is the Just One (Acts 22:14), and our endeavors for justice are essential to faith (James 1:27). However, unless

we anchor these endeavors in clear biblical theology—not just the moralistic trend of the culture—many will fall as casualties to the growing tide of deception emerging in our time.

What is necessary for the church as it relates to the subject of justice is the ministry of intercession, or night-and-day prayer (Luke 18; Rev. 5:8; 8:1-3; Mal. 1:11). True justice goes forth through the full biblical understanding of Christ (Is. 42:1; Col. 1:28). Justice advances in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, which is confirmed by a spirit of conviction and signs and wonders (Luke 4:18; John 14:12). This powerful message of true justice flows out of a lifestyle of holiness and righteousness (Matt. 5-7; Hab. 2:4).

The need is not a new humanitarian method or program but rather the gospel of Jesus with power through prayer and proclamation. Gaining insight into His plan to bring forth justice to the earth will bind our hearts to Jesus in a deep way, causing us to grow in love toward Him and stand with Him in prayer, proclamation and lifestyle when He begins to more openly and fully execute His end-time plan for justice. The understanding of God's plan for justice produces confidence in the hearts of the church and gives endurance to stay the course until that day.

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What's the difference between social justice and social transformation? Dream Center's Matthew Barnett explains at [a](#).