



Social Justice and the Church

Here is a brief, non-academic look at social justice, natural law and biblical law. These deal with the social issues of our day, and who decides what is right and wrong. It is beneficial to have a working knowledge to answer questions concerning abortion, same sex marriage, etc., in the context of a biblical worldview.

We are so accustomed to government and its social justice that we do not realize what true justice is. Justice is that each man receives what is his, namely what the founders claimed as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Ten Commandments are seen as establishing and protecting these rights.

Biblical law upholds the rights of the individual equally, regardless of color or social status. I do not say religion because biblical law is based on God's law– the God of the Bible. Man is created in the image of God and by His decree has dominion. It is God's Word that gives men purpose, equal worth and meaning. It is also God's Word that identifies man's right to choose, his free-will. He has the right to make decisions rejecting God's law but must pay the consequences.

Natural law has generally agreed with the rights of equality. But the rule of law has become dependant on the democratic tradition of voting and in the process has become what man decides it is.

Social justice carries with it the idea of the common good. What this means is that someone decides what is good for all. This someone is usually a leader, and his values determine what is good. That leader, and dealer of justice, has become the government. What is good is influenced by the modern populace and its values. Briefly, the social justice movement removed natural law (based on biblical law) and established man as the source of good, mercy and justice.

Mercy and charity are not rights. In God's Word they are gifts. Christians, however, are commanded to be merciful and charitable. The ideas of mercy and charity originate with the God of the Bible. There are arguments made that social justice in its desire to provide mercy and equality has made people dependant on the government to establish government not justice. This is not the result that many good intentioned people were hoping for.

One problem is that many Christians interpret social justice through a Christian mindset and are confused by the conflicting messages in the issues of our day. As our nation moves away from Christian values, what is upheld as deserving of mercy and charity may not be according to the Bible.

In the content of organizing to give to the poor, send missionaries supplies, assist the underprivileged in various ways, one needs to understand it may or may not be a Christian activity. Providing the poor with abortions is not a Christian idea, for example. Organizations also may not espouse Christian values.

The question Christians need to answer is does this proposed law or activity agree with the Bible? If it does not, how can we act in love and mercy without surrendering the biblical standard?