

Jim Wallis, CEO of Sojourners, often repeats the mantra that “an atonement only Gospel” is not enough. He doesn’t understand the necessity for heart transformation before there can be cultural transformation.

Theologian Dr. Anthony Bradley noted that the main problem with social justice as it is understood today is not the emphasis on improving social institutions and structures, but the reduction of the entire Gospel to this one area of service and disregarding personal sin and the importance of redemption.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Janice Shaw Crouse said, “It is also a problem to view sin only in terms of corporate guilt and structural blame rather than the individual tendency toward sin and the need for each person to repent and accept Christ’s redemption.

“Take any controversial human rights/social justice issue in history — child labor injustices, civil rights, health care for the poor, abolition of slavery — or any reform measures — prison reform, establishing hospitals and universities, caring for and feeding the homeless — and you will find Christians and Christian churches at the forefront, speaking out and leading efforts courageously and unselfishly.”



## Conclusion

The liberal vision of social justice says that the government is the solution for all societal ills. People of faith and local congregations have a major role to play in restoring the fabric of our social order and in tackling some of the major challenges that we too often turn to government to meet. But, we need to be well-informed and avoid approaches that end up doing more harm than good. Many efforts that begin with good intentions end up having a negative impact on those they are trying to help. As the cliché says, “A safety net should not be a trap.” History has shown us — over and over again — that the passion for social justice needs to be guided and directed toward programs and policies that are effective in bringing help to those in need. Public policy works best when it is both personal and Biblical.

## Quotable Quotes

“When you take work off the table, you take worth off the table. You’ve taken the dignity from the person’s life to contribute to their own well-being and to their community and society.”

-Star Parker (Coalition for Urban Renewal and Education – CURE)

“We’re drawn to the celebrity-sponsored campaigns to address problems around the world while we overlook the work of the ‘street saints’ serving just around the corner. ‘Street saints’ do not usually make sweeping claims about wiping out global poverty, but they care passionately about stamping it out

in individual lives, one person at a time.”

- Andy Crouch, Author, *Culture Making*

“Those pastors who preach economic and social justice ‘are trying to twist the Gospel to say the Gospel supported socialism.’ Jesus taught that we should give to the poor and support widows, but he never said that we should elect a government that would take money from our neighbor’s hand and give it to the poor.”

- Jerry Falwell, Jr. President, Liberty University

“Most issues of poverty are at least in part spiritual, moral and social problems, and poverty won’t be solved unless we deal with those underlying problems.”

- Dr. Jay Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Belnap Press, Harvard University Press, 2005.

<sup>2</sup>“Code of Ethics,” National Association of Social Workers, 1996 and 2008.

<sup>3</sup>“Social Justice,” Press Releases archive, Press Room, National Association of Social Workers, <http://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/features/issue/peace.asp>.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Albert Mohler, “Glenn Beck, Social Justice, and the Limits of Public Discourse,” March 15, 2010, AlbertMohler.com, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2010/03/15/glenn-beck-social-justice-and-the-limits-of-public-discourse/>.

<sup>6</sup>Ryan Messmore, et. al, “Seek Social Justice: Transforming Lives in Need,” The Heritage Foundation, 2009, p. 26.

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# The Corruption of “Social Justice”



History has shown us over and over again that the passion for social justice needs to be guided and directed toward programs and policies that are effective in bringing help to those in need. Public policy works best when it is both personal and Biblical.

**Concerned Women for America Resource**

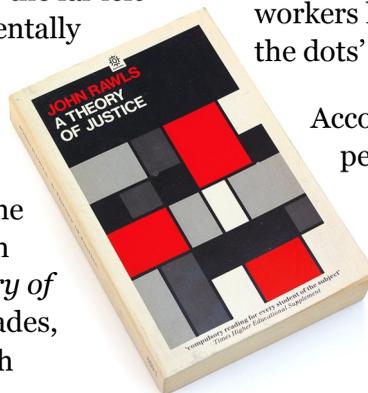
## Social Justice: What it Means and How it Works

Christians see real problems and care deeply, but often don't know where to start in "serving the poor" or "loving our neighbor" or how best to "take care of the widows and orphans." How can we best help those in financial need, broken families, violent neighborhoods, or situations that are unjust and inhumane?

In developing countries, poverty stems from corrupt governments, lack of rule of law, unstable financial systems, food shortages because of famine, lack of basic health facilities and medicines, lack of clean water and sanitation services. Obviously, problems in Western nations are different than in developing nations.

**Whether at home or abroad, the words "social justice" are no longer politically neutral; they have become leftist buzzwords in both the political and religious arenas.** The concept of "social justice" carries connotations and ramifications that are central to the far left political agenda that is fundamentally and comprehensively Marxist and socialist.

Growing out of the rebellious 1960s, justice was revealed as the central core of liberal thought in John Rawls' 1971 book, *A Theory of Justice*.<sup>1</sup> In the succeeding decades, social justice was combined with



economic justice and racial justice as interchangeable themes for rallying the masses around liberal ideology. **Gradually, social justice became the rhetorical device for communicating a palatable vision of Marxism with its emphasis on economic egalitarianism, income and property redistribution, progressive taxation and vast government expansion.**

Social justice, along with their "antidiscrimination values," became the underpinning of the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics,<sup>2</sup> incorporating the buzzwords in their mission statement: "Beneath this practicality [of the social work profession] lies a strong value system that can be summarized in two words: social justice. Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights." After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, NASW issued statements<sup>3</sup> suggesting that "terrorism is fueled in part by global practices that led to poverty and rage among millions of Middle Eastern citizens." They explained, "Indeed, from the beginning of their profession, social workers have been involved in 'connecting the dots' between peace and social justice.

According to social work philosophy, peace is not possible where there are gross inequalities of money and power, whether between workers and managers, nations and nations, or men and women."<sup>4</sup>

## Biblical Social Justice

Most issues of poverty are rooted in spiritual, moral, and social problems — most notably in the



breakdown of the family and the disintegration of marriage. **Christians promote "social justice" through transformed lives and the opportunities of capitalism that encourage entrepreneurs and create prosperity, thereby lifting people out of poverty.**

Professor Robert George, of Princeton University, said that social justice has a long and honorable history, referring to a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of common life, but that the concept has become corrupted and used to advance a socialist agenda. He reminds Christians that "when we are criticizing 'social justice,' we don't mean it in the honorable sense in which it has been used in our tradition. We mean it in the corrupted sense that some people, not all people, use it."

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Church is not to adapt a social reform platform as its message, but the faithful church, wherever it is found, is itself a social reform movement precisely because it is populated by redeemed sinners who are called to faithfulness in following Christ."<sup>5</sup>

## Political Left Social Justice

The political Left has hijacked the term "social justice" — which is code language for Marxism. **The political Left's socialist ideology divides prosperity, transferring wealth from the rich to the poor and moving assistance to the poor from the church to expanded government programs that develop dependency through handouts, rather than giving a hand up.**

Dr. Janice Shaw Crouse, Director and Senior Fellow of Concerned Women for America's Beverly LaHaye Institute, said, "Economic inequality is a reality that cannot be changed; it is impossible to legislate or to create by fiat situations where everyone has exactly the same economic rewards. There will always be inequalities of money and power. Fairness and justice produce different outcomes because each of us has different abilities, and some people work harder and are more diligent than others. "

## Religious Left Social Justice

The religious Left consists of preachers, theologians, and opinion **leaders who have exchanged the Gospel for "social justice" activism that focuses on political and economic solutions based in socialist ideology and Marxism** — a vast expansion of government programs and economic redistribution — instead of transformed hearts and lives.