

Social Justice and the Mission of the Church

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The Bible talks about justice in terms of relationships between human beings and other humans, God (Dt 16:17ff.), and even creation itself (Dt 20:19; 22:6; Rv 11:18). Justice is a clear sign of the kingdom of God both present and future, an ethical requirement that is as personal as it is social. Because of the injustices that occur in social relationships, God demands the fulfillment of justice particularly by his chosen people but also by all nations. The injustices are nearly always the abuse of either individual or structural power, or both. But those who maintain a neutral or indifferent posture in the face of the violation of the rights of others will also be charged with injustice.

The Old Testament uses two key words to define justice: *tsēdaqah/tsaddiyq* and *mishpat*. The first connotes uprightness, proper order, faithfulness, a coherence to life, and proper relations between people. It is the justice of interpersonal action (Ex 23:7;

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