

# Understanding Social Justice Through a Biblical Perspective

## Sharon Elander

### TERMS:

**Anti-racism:** There is no neutral ground; people are either racist or anti-racist. The anti-racist must speak the right words and take action to reinvent institutions, rethink religion, and remake systems that are built on white supremacy.<sup>1</sup>

**Biblical Worldview (BWV):** Seeing all aspects of the world (physical, relational, moral, psychological, political, financial, etc.) as God's handiwork and His divine creation. A BWV provides answers to the big questions, ultimate reality, human identity, purpose, problem of evil, etc.

**Biblical Justice:** Rendering impartially and proportionally everyone his due in conforming to the righteous standard of God's moral law.<sup>2</sup>

**Critical Theory:** Marxist-inspired movement in social and political philosophy developed in the 1920's by the Frankfurt school. Drawing from Marx and Sigmund Freud, the primary goal is to overcome social structures which are oppressive by dividing people into perceived groups.<sup>3</sup>

**Equity:** The provision of resources - proportional to the need - which are required to guarantee an equal economic, social, and educational outcome to every disadvantaged group.<sup>4</sup>

**Hegemony or Hegemonic Power:** The social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group in establishing what is considered normal.<sup>5</sup>

**Intersectionality:** A framework for determining the amount of oppression received or distributed by a person based on layering their social and political identities, such as race, class, gender, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, disability, physical appearance, etc.

**Liberation Theology:** A social and political movement within the church that attempts to interpret the gospel of Jesus Christ through the lived experiences of oppressed and oppressor people.

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<sup>1</sup> Monique Ducson, *Reconciled*, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Cal Beisner, *Social Justice Vs. Biblical Justice, How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and Gospel*, Cornwallalliance.org.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-theory>

<sup>4</sup> Ducson, 65

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hegemonic>

**Morals and Moral Law:** Principles used to determine what is right or wrong for human conduct which God lays on all people's hearts. Also called natural law.

**Mishpat:** Biblical justice in exercise of the process of government which conforms to the ethical and moral standards by the nature and will of God revealed in His law.

**Natural Law:** Principles used to determine what is right or wrong for human conduct which God lays on all people's hearts. Also called moral law or moral code.

**Oppressor Blindness:** A person who belongs to an oppressor group is unable to understand the truth of the oppressed's story.

**Social Gospel:** In the late 1800's to early 1900's, social gospel sought to apply Christian principles to social problems, with a focus on labor reform. Other issues, such as poverty, nutrition and health, education, alcoholism, crime, and warfare, were also addressed as part of the social gospel. However, as social needs were emphasized, the doctrines of sin, salvation, heaven and hell, and the future kingdom of God were downplayed.

**Social Justice (Ideological):** A socio-political theory that the West is marked by the imbalance of power between different groups of people based on the intersection of racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and gender identities. Social justice seeks equal outcome (fairness) between privileged and underprivileged groups which sometimes requires the suspension of individual needs, liberties, or rights.

**Tsedaqah:** Biblical justice as living right with God, including loving your neighbor, mercy, forgiveness, and charity.

**Woke:** An awareness of the ongoing need to remain vigilant for any signs of racism or other social inequity against LGBTQ+, immigrants, women, or marginalized peoples.<sup>6</sup>

**Worldview:** A worldview consists of the most general and basic assumptions about what is real and what is good - including our assumptions about who we are and what we should do."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ducson, 65*

<sup>7</sup> *Dallas Williard in forward to Nancy Pearcey, Total Truth.*