

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE GOSPEL

Apparently, the idea that the Gospel has social implications is not some liberal or Marxist left-wing conspiracy in the Church:

Some argue that social change is not the realm of the community of God's people in the New Testament era, because the social order will deteriorate prior to the consummation of the kingdom with the return of Jesus. This aspect of ethics is often made analogous to "rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*," suggesting the futility and poor stewardship involved. The counterargument to this is that such a diagnosis can also be made of the church's role in evangelism. People will reject the gospel message as Jesus' return draws closer. But no one suggests that such a reality means that the mandate to proclaim the gospel be abandoned. In fact, quite the opposite is true. For the church's focus on social change, just because society may be moving in the morally wrong direction has little to do with whether there is a mandate for social change. In addition, the Bible calls God's people to be faithful to its mandates and leave the impact up to the work of God in the world.

Mandates for social change, in addition to proclamation of the gospel and making disciples, can all be envisioned under the general heading of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), since Jesus made it clear that his followers were to "make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything I commanded you." As you will see in the rest of this section, Jesus' teaching continues the mandate for justice and social impact that began with the Old Testament Law and Prophets."

Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices*, 40. A conservative textbook on ethics.

