

ALAN STORKEY

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## Lifelines: Justice

**In this final bibliographical essay, Alan Storkey provides a guide to resources for further study and action in relation to justice by offering a review of evangelical and other Christian literature surrounding the theme.**

Pursuing justice doesn't require reading a lot of books, and it would be a pity if this list became an academic retreat. Yet, because our corporate Christian approaches have often been partial or limited, having a fuller perspective is a requirement of our Christian calling. This essay is an aid to so doing. It includes a number of opinions which really need more debate and it misses a lot of material, but it may aid those who want to engage with the God of justice more deeply. Because of the ease of reference through the web and other resources, full bibliographic references are only provided for the most recent texts.

### Biblical Studies

Much earlier British evangelical work on the theme of justice in the Bible is a bit thin, for reasons suggested in the editorial. For example, the Kaye/Wenham symposium, *Law, Morality and the Bible* (1978) looked at law and morality, but excluded justice. There does not seem to be systematic work looking at law, justice and political order in biblical terms. One of the shibboleths of this period was the division of the Mosaic Law into a tri-partite moral, ceremonial and civil law, a division which ruled out other ways of examining law and undermined its sense of wholeness. The Shaftesbury Project, the Jubilee Centre, Care, the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship and the Movement for Christian Democracy (MCD) began to address the kind of issues involved in this area of biblical study. Chris Wright's *Living as the People of God* (1983) – recently revised and reissued as *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Apollos, 2004) – presented a good overall perspective which went beyond moral and ethical boundaries while Richard Bauckham signalled in *The Bible in Politics: How to read the Bible politically* (1989) that these wider readings of the biblical text were actually legitimate. Nevertheless, those interested in the area had to pick up influences from other countries where better biblical work was done.

Detailed treatment of law and justice has to come from abroad, as with Hans Boeker's study, *Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East* (1980) which locates the Mosaic Law in the culture of the times. Good, because it insisted on the fundamental distinction in the title, was Jacques Ellul's, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (1972) looking at Naaman, Joram, Hazael, Jehu, Ahaz,

Rabshakeh and Hezekiah in their dealings with God. Ellul opens up the dynamics of justice and injustice. In the States, the Reconstruction Movement undertook some detailed examination of issues like the 1975 Symposium on 'Biblical Law' in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*. In New Testament scholarship, Joachim Jeremias' *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (1969) presented an awareness of the political and economic groups with whom Jesus interacted in Jerusalem and beyond.

A problem with some biblical commentaries is that they remain content with pious comments and do not identify the thematic issues of justice, statehood and law present in different Old and New Testament books. Issues of family, clan and tribal justice abound in the books of Moses. Abraham is a great statesman. Moses confronts the Egyptian Empire, but the British Empire soft-peddled on that theme because it was too close to home. The Mosaic Code involves the formation of nationhood. Penal policy, judicial process and the formation of State law also appear there. The book of Judges deals with tribalism and potential anarchy. The history books show the failures of rule, the issue of slavery, the process of emancipation and the abuse of power. The Psalms give a supranational understanding of the rule of God. Daniel interacts with empire, and the prophets present God's word to the nation and the nations. Some of the better exegesis comes from those trained in political science, like Graham Maddox in the first part of *Religion and the Rise of Democracy* (Routledge, 1996), an important book for a wider perspective.

David McLroy's book, *A Biblical View of Law and Justice* (Paternoster, 2004) offers the opportunity of a new generation of scholarship which sees justice both in terms of God's self-revelation as a God of justice, mercy and life-giving law and engages with the areas of justice evident throughout the Scriptures. My own study of *Jesus and Politics* (Baker Book House, 2005) shows Jesus fully engaged as the Son of God with the establishment of a Kingdom of justice/righteousness which includes the political. As Messiah, King of the Jews, Son of David and Son of Man he claims authority of judgement and justice over all humankind. In detail and in overall vision our biblical study will reveal justice as a major part of the gospel. Tom Wright's volumes – especially *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996) – are full of the implications for justice of Christ's teaching and the gospel narrative and they once and for all eliminate the two kingdoms dualism of much evangelical thought.

## Theology

Two major fault-lines exist in the theology of law and justice. The first becomes evident around the time of Constantine when the authority of Christ over the state and as judge was partly compromised by an accommodation to the state, or a withdrawal from the state, in this case the Roman Empire. The accommodationist tradition accepted the political powers as being outside the purposes of God and operating according to their own rules, whether they were those of the Italian city states or of Henry VIII. The Church then gave its blessing to the State, however it operated, and received support in return. Meanwhile it focussed on the 'spiritual' or 'sacred' task, as though that were the only domain of God's authority. There is,

of course, a deep debate surrounding the place of Augustine's *City of God* in this great theological drama and many have reflected on it. Especially important is the work of the O'Donovans. Oliver and Joan have made a great corpus of political theology available in *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (1999) and Oliver's study *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (1996) shows the centrality of Christ in the complex political moves down the ages, revealing a theological history of which most evangelicals were unaware.

The Reformation introduced some more fault lines, not just between Catholic and Protestant political theology, but also between Lutheran, Anabaptist and Reformed theology. The Lutheran two kingdoms theology was really also espoused by Anglicans and finds expression in Hooker and others. Here the formulations settle down into discussions of the institutions of Church and State, on which there are many books, often with some kind of understanding of a Church-State establishment link and with an underlying failure to engage with the theology of politics. Many Christians, especially evangelicals, cannot think – if think is the correct word – outside this framework. The Anabaptist tradition more radically engaged with issues of justice – equality, poverty, representation, land – and we have a lot still to learn from them, their failures and their persecution. It has recently revived in England and Nigel Wright's *Disavowing Constantine* (2000), picking up Yoder and Moltmann's thought, is a valuable volume in this tradition. The Levellers, Ranters and Fifth Monarchists generated a crescendo of important and mixed up debate in political theology still best conveyed by Christopher Hill in *The Experience of Defeat* (1984) and other fine books and in Brailsford's *Levellers* (1961). The Cromwellian Revolution was the crucible of English justice for centuries. Many of its protagonists were Reformers. Behind them lay the doctrines of Calvin, Knox, Farel and others, recapturing a sense of the sovereignty of God and the rule of Christ's Kingdom. John Owen, like John Milton, saw through justification by success, but the defeat in 1660 was a great theological fact in English history. From then on, Reformers became Puritans retreating from political theology into personal pietism in response to persecution and ostracism in the political process. Indeed, John Owen's political theology is often edited out of his corpus as a Puritan. R.T. Kendall's study of *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1949* (1981) is apolitical, as is much recent English reformed theology. Lloyd-Jones in *The Puritans: their origins and successors* (1987) knows that God is bigger. Yet most so-called later reformed theologians remained cut off from Calvin and biblical politics by the retreat of 1660 and have really bifurcated the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20.

Later English theology on justice is lacking and we need to go abroad. Emil Brunner's *Justice and the Social Order* (1945) is a fine study in its sense of the subject. Although often cheaply dismissed by evangelicals, Liberation Theology in the writings of Gutierrez, Boff, Bonino and Segundo among others sees dimensions of the gospel that the West has not. Andrew Kirk's writings reflect a fine English perception of it.

Many look back, as I do, to Abraham Kuyper's recapturing of an understanding of the sovereignty of God and what that means for justice and politics. His *Stone*

*Lectures* and Peter Heslam's reflection on them – *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* (1998) – are crucial. Kuyper's *The Problem of Poverty* (1891) stands contra Marx as a Christian structural analysis. Wolterstorff's *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (1983) is a good reflection in this tradition with worldview awareness. Evan Runner's *Scriptural Religion and Political Task* (1974) is the most incisive understanding of the Kingdom of God in relation to contemporary culture and Richard Mouw's *The God who Commands* (1990) and his other writings add to this perspective.

Martin Luther King represented another theological tradition which evangelicals probably dismiss. Some evangelicals have an odd habit of dismissing everything that some people say when there are areas of disagreement. Fred might get the time wrong, but he could still know that it is Tuesday. John Perkins, *With Justice for All* (1982) has a deep black sense of justice as God's healing. An outstanding book is Christopher Marshall's *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment* (2001) which shows the limits of the solely retributive view of justice and punishment and opens up the biblical restorative principle for the penal system. The tradition of Catholic Social theology, reflected in the Encyclicals since *Rerum Novarum* (1891), is stronger and better than much else of the last hundred years. It is reflected in a lot of good volumes since then and discussed in this issue by Rob Saner-Haigh. The recent *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (2003) contains some useful resources.

### **Philosophy, culture and history.**

The impact of Christianity on the culture of politics, law and justice is far deeper than is usually acknowledged by secular scholars. It is interesting to see Skinner and other writers on the history of political thought trying to marginalise Christianity and failing. Harold Berman in *Faith and Order: The Reconciliation of Law and Religion* (1993) and other works sees it far more openly while Graham Maddox's *Religion and the Rise of Democracy* (1996) shows the Christian contribution to the opening up of the democratic tradition. Often the line is drawn from the Greeks to democracy but when the scholarship is more carefully done, and with a proper definition of 'democracy', it is more accurately drawn from Christianity to democracy. I enjoy Melvyn Bragg's novel *Credo* (1996) looking at the coming of Christianity to the pagan political culture of northern England in the dark ages. It conveys what radical cultural change is really like. A nice booklet is *The Influence of Religion on Law* by Lord Denning, but really there is a lot of work needed to uncover the contributions, and the failures, of Christianity in relation to the history of our formation of law and justice. Coke and other justices were significant in legal codification and the formation of jurisprudence, and Dicey and other great histories reflect in part Christian understanding and principles.

There are a range of Christian movements for justice that extend beyond the figures of Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Fry and Josephine Butler and it is time we understood the full weight of this tradition, both evangelical and wider Christian, to see its insights and where it has got lost. In the twentieth century, High Anglicans have often had a keener sense of justice than evangelicals, and Huddleston's *Naught*

*for your Comfort* (1956) exemplifies the address to a particular issue, keen in its ability to encourage the Church to be self-critical. The *Kairos Document* and the website and proceedings of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* repay study in relation to the peaceful transition that has taken place in South Africa. It is important, too, that the Christian sense of justice as dwelling in normal life, with acts of kindness and suffering, is upheld, and many Christian biographies convey this. There is much in the history of the missionary movements which acted against empire and exploitation, and this too needs uncovering. There is much experience here in doing justice and the next generation does not need to invent the wheel.

In the wider culture today Christianity faces western liberalism and Islam. Norman Anderson's *God's Law and God's Love* (1980) is a good cross-cultural study of Judaism and Islam. There is a need for cross-cultural study of Islamic law and justice. Abdur Rahman I Doi does some cross-cultural work in *Shariah: the Islamic Law* (1984) and we should repay the compliment. There is a lot of fine Jewish study of both the biblical period and later and we should study the shared and divergent attitudes to law and justice carefully.

The hegemony of contemporary liberal understandings of justice is quite powerful in the West. It really begins with Bentham at the latest, and the movement through from utilitarianism to post-Rawlsian theory is rarely fully critiqued in Christian terms. As a result, it has presided over an individualist and exploitative market economy. Dennis Hollinger's *Choosing the Good* (2002) surveys the field well in ethical terms, but what is missing is an overall view of the State and a philosophy of law to go with it. The most systematic Christian philosophical approach to this task is found in Herman Dooyeweerd's work in the *New Critique of Theoretical Thought, Essays in Legal, Social and Political Philosophy* and the projected five volume *Encyclopedia of the Science of Law* (1935-56). A crude summary of some of this material is in Stacey Hebdon Taylor's *Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State* (1966). The dominant Catholic political philosopher of this period was Jacques Maritain with some outstanding and influential volumes on Democracy, Fascism and a Christian version of human rights theory. Michael Fogarty's *Christian Democracy in Western Europe 1820-1953* (1957) is far and away the best history of the Christian Democratic Movement in Europe, looking at unions, plural institutions, confessional politics and much more. Christopher Marshall's *Crowned With Glory and Honour: Human Rights in the Biblical Tradition* (2001) obviously addresses rights theory, as does much of Jimmy Carter's work and writing and Paul Marshall's *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Report on Freedom and Persecution* (2000). The Christian Right in the States is hardly producing philosophy, but Jim Wallis' *God and Politics* (2004) looks to be opening up a debate that will need to take place.

## **Socio-economic**

In the nineteenth century, Christians addressed issues of justice, but often with an incomplete awareness of more structural issues. Chalmers was an economist who saw things slightly more clearly and the Christian Socialists were good in some areas. A tradition of critical thought and action within the Church of England

came down to Tawney and Temple in the mid-twentieth century. Tawney's books on *Equality* (1931) and the *Affluent Society* (1921) were the conscience of a generation, and *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926) provided the long-term reflection on the change from Christian-guided to laissez-faire economics that the formation of a perspective needs. Ronald Preston's *Church and Society in the Late Twentieth Century: The Economic and Political Task* (1983) is a useful summary of the pattern of engagement. The principle of national insurance had some good Christian foundations and the Nonconformist links with the Lloyd George Government were interesting. Yet the later critique of capitalism tended to be carried out partly in State Socialist terms rather than Christian and redistributionist terms, and the Christian analysis of economic injustice has tended to be weak, but it is now especially weak in much of the west.

The economic theory underlying contemporary neo-liberal economics has been prised open by Goudzwaard and de Lange in *Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Towards an Economy of Care* (1995). Tiemstra's *Reforming Economics* (1990) and my *Transforming Economics* (1986) set up an institutional framework which allows issues of economic justice to be addressed in each of the sectors of the economy, but the task of looking at the patterns of righteousness and unrighteousness in each of those sectors has not really been done. Bob Holman's *Towards Equality: a Christian Manifesto* (1997) retains a practical and integral sense of Christian justice and care. It is amazing that his normal understanding of equality should seem so tendentious in a society brainwashed to accept gross inequalities. A recent book in the States, edited by Ron Sider and Dianne Knippers, *Toward an Evangelical Public Policy* (Baker, 2005) sets out an ambitious agenda for coherent Christian economic and social policy. Nick Spencer's study of *Asylum and Immigration* (Paternoster, 2004) is one of a number of Jubilee Centre studies on particular policies. *Jubilee Manifesto* (IVP, 2005) is an important recent guide edited by Michael Schluter and John Ashcroft. Steve Chalke's Faithworks initiative betokens a new Christian engagement with social policy. SPEAK has a good campaign on corporate responsibility. There is thus some movement towards a coherent Christian economic response, but it is only partly formed and far from shaping policy.

Social policy is even worse. The injustices operating within family life have hardly been addressed as such though Care for the Family does good work and research. MCD has done work on some issues including *Media Addiction, Children and Education* (1999). Urban regeneration has been addressed by the Eden Project and Soul Survivor in a way which could be significant longer term. An interesting possibility for reform in marriage law is discussed in my *Marriage and its Modern Crisis* (1996).

A variety of Christian groups are working in areas where people are suffering from social ills, but as yet there is not much sense of addressing them through radical public policy. It might be that over the next few years there can be something more effective. Evangelicals used to be good at preventative reform.

## Political and legal

There have been some successful campaigns that are worth reflecting on. The first was debt forgiveness, which grew as a movement partly through *Jubilee 2000*, and

has been espoused in principle, though less in practice, worldwide. This principle of the Mosaic Law and the New Testament is partly a response to the injustice of western lending institutions receiving paybacks many times the original sum, but also has regard to the indebted nation. The bibliography on the subject is now vast. It has not yet been applied to the area of personal banking, where a more constructive pattern than the arbitrary writing off of personal debt could be implemented by banks (see MCD's *Escaping the Debt Trap* (1993)).

Another tremendous change is the emergence of restorative justice. Again, this is a biblical rediscovery, correcting the retributive model that dominated Christian penal understanding and the Statist focus of public policy. The emphasis is on repentance, apology to the victim of crime, attempting to pay back the damage or loss, and restoring the relationship. It has again become an international movement. At a national level, apology and reparations have become part of international relations. In penal policy, the relationship between offender and victim is being seen as a good way to end offending (see The Home Office website on the subject and the document *Restorative Justice – the Government's Strategy* (2003)). Chris Marshall's book noted earlier is the key resource on the underlying Christian perspective. There are other campaigns that are gathering weight, partly shaped by Christians, but we have hardly started in many areas.

There are larger issues of the political conception of justice that especially surround the role of the United States. Michael Northcott's book, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (2004) provides an investigation of current American neo-conservatism, showing that imperialism is linked with a sub-Christian apocalyptic vision of the United States' destiny 'at the end of history', a vision shared by millions of Americans, fundamentalist and others. Jim Skillen in *With or Against the World: America's Role among the Nations* (2005) similarly critiques American cultural Christianity while his earlier *In Pursuit of Justice* (2004) looks more systematically at the political understanding of justice. As Michael Northcott suggests, perhaps Americans urgently need to recover a critique of Empire of the kind espoused by the founder of Christianity – or else risk becoming idolaters of a new Roman Empire that leads others into servitude.

Finally, there is a vast literature surrounding the Christian Democratic Movement in Europe that we cannot cover here. The *Movement for Christian Democracy* and the *Christian People's Alliance* have been working at Christian policy for a decade. Actually, there are thousands of British Christians thinking, working and studying in these areas and it is time they had a stronger sense of the coherence of their shared Christian Vision.

**Alan Storkey** is author of a number of books on Christian faith, society and politics, most recently *Jesus and Politics*, and guest editor of this edition of *Anvil*.