

Social Justice Handbook

SMALL STEPS TO A BETTER WORLD



Mae Elise Cannon

FOREWORD BY John Perkins



IVP Books

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Foreword

Small steps to a better world . . . that is all that Christ calls us to do. Many believers who have come to know Christ live not in fear, but rather put their faith into action by expressing the love of Jesus, sharing the truth of the gospel, and pursuing the justice of God. The love of God is manifested in both his righteousness and his justice. When people stand up on the side of the oppressed and of justice, they decide to trade comfort for concern, apathy for action, violence for nonviolence, and hate for love. *Social Justice Handbook* is a call for all believers to move from apathy to advocacy for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

I first met Mae when I was the teacher in residence in 2004 for Willow Creek's Justice Journey experience that she was helping to lead. The mission of the trip was to "experience the past, understand the present, and embrace hope for the future." In many ways, *Social Justice Handbook* is just such an experience—looking at past history of injustices in the United States and around the world, attempting to understand what they mean for us today, and embracing hope for the future that comes because of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ through his people.

Our understanding of the gospel makes us ready for Christian social action. As we enter into the lives of our neighbors, in their hearts and into their homes, we come face to face with their needs and are compelled because of the love of Christ to respond. It is the responsibility of the body of Christ to live out his life on earth and to make the love of God visible in our time. That's why I highly recommend this book. This book is an attempt to give practical tools and valuable information to help individuals, churches and other groups take small steps toward making a difference in the lives of people in their surrounding communities and around the world.

This handbook will help you find your place in God's global work of social justice. The first half provides a biblical and historical overview of what the God of justice has been doing throughout Scripture and church history. The second part highlights dozens of specific topics in handy alphabetical order, explaining what you need to know and what you can do about them. The issues might be as personal as domestic abuse or as global as genocide. But in every case, we have hope for the oppressed and good news for the world, because God cares about justice and works through his people to make things right. I pray that this book will give you ideas for living out God's call on your life in ways that are surprising and unexpected.

I am encouraged that a new generation is joining God on this courageous adventure of transforming a fallen and hurting world. Many are joining Jesus in preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners and releasing the oppressed (Luke 4:18). May this book be a companion on your journey, and may you discover new frontiers of justice and service that previous generations have never imagined.

John Perkins