
By Mae Elise Cannon

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

This is written by a Willow Creek activist/pastor to help other concerned Christians express not just compassion but advocacy for more just systems. There are huge injustices in the world greater than we can often imagine. It can be daunting looking at the number of issues and their complexity of any one of them. These 304 pages are a Social Justice 101 textbook about “why” we can be involved and an action manual about “how to”.

The first section unveils the “why” – the character of God as a God of justice and love and what God has been doing in Scripture and history as an advocate for the poor and marginalised. The writer offers a theological foundation for social justice, shows how it complements but goes beyond mercy ministry, and discusses the history of how Christians have balanced word and deed. A highlight of the book is her teaching/She teaches from her experience how to move yourself and others from apathy to advocacy, including basic spiritual practices of discernment and prayer, journaling and blogging, and how to implement solutions to injustice.

The second section offers background on over eighty social justice issues – from AIDS, Bioethics, Consumerism and Domestic Abuse to Sex Trafficking, Tuberculosis, Urban Decay and Women’s Body Image. This is a comprehensive volume offering historical background, resources, heroes (from Bono to Wesley) and examples of steps we can take to tangibly make a difference. Shane Claiborne describes it as “a cookbook for plotting goodness and stirring up holy mischief ... a recipe for revolution ... interrupting injustice with grace, surprising the world with joy and whispering God’s love to a broken world.”

I applaud Mae Cannon’s approach in raising awareness, telling inspiring stories, offering achievable steps for action, and outlining spiritual exercises to empower and sustain us as agents of justice. This is an invaluable handbook to accompany any Christian, church, theology student or pastor seeking understanding and guidance about what small steps can be made to help bring the world more in line with God’s dream.

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