

## **Injustice in the name of justice, is not justice.**

Recently, I taught a series of classes on one of our nation's "hot-buttons"; the matter of the church embracing (or not embracing) the stranger. Indeed, we in the church of Jesus Christ are admonished by the Word of God, to show love to the stranger among us. The more I thought about it, I realized that the majority of churches that are advocating "justice" for the stranger, are themselves involved in injustice against others, as they advocate justice for some. Let's explore this a little further, and you'll see what I mean. Before we get too far into the matter, let me say that the Bible is quite clear on several major points which come to bear on this issue.

First, we are to love the stranger among us, for we ourselves are "... *aliens and pilgrims...*" who are - without God's provision - "... *as a shadow and without hope.*". This is the way King David put it in his famous prayer at the end his reign, recorded 1Chronicles, chapter 29, verse 15. In the same way that God cares for us as aliens in this world, we are to care for aliens. But as always in all things, there are no real "blanket statements". We are never required by God, anywhere in Scripture, to care for each and every alien, in every situation no matter what. In fact, even God from whom we receive what we require, has some requirements of us. In the same way, the aliens whom we are required to assist, have themselves some requirements placed upon them. Are these requirements burdensome? Are we to make them "*pay good and well*" for what they receive from us? Far from it, loved ones.

The Bible is clear on the requirements on us, and on the stranger. Observe what is said in Exodus, even as God was first introducing the Jews' Passover.

*Exo 12:48 And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.49 One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you. [emphasis mine]*

And then again when the Children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness.

*Num 15:14 And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do.15 One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.16 One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you. [emphasis mine]*

Then again, just as the Children of Israel were about to actually go into their Promised Land, they were told in Deut 1:16b-17...

*'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.*

*You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'* [emphasis mine]

So it is clear to see that God, who provided for His Children as aliens and pilgrims in this world, also instructed His Children to provide for aliens and pilgrims in their land, just so long as the aliens were willing to abide by the same ordinances, civil and/or ceremonial, as the people of the land who were providing for them; no more, no less, the same judgment and the same laws.

And so it seems rather clear that justice demands the selfsame treatment between the native and the stranger. How does this work itself out in the real world? Which brings us to our next major point...

Regarding the laws of the land and adherence to said laws, are the natives required to keep the laws of the land? Yes of course they are. According to all we've seen from Scripture (above), so are the strangers. In fact, in the case of the Jewish people from whose history we are reading in Scripture, the strangers were required to keep not only the civil law in the same way as the native-born, but also the ceremonial/religious laws! Even if they didn't believe in the ceremonial laws and their significance, they were required to keep them. We have no such requirement on strangers to keep any ceremonial/religious requirements, just the same civil laws that govern our own citizenry.

But what about when we “justly” provide for the stranger among us? Who pays for that? According to Scripture's example and mandate, the costs are born by the native-born, and willingly so. But if the stranger decides that he does not want to adhere to the legislative mandates of the land, the civil laws if you will, Scripture demands that action be taken against the stranger, not the native-born. But in many parts of the world, the Bible is being appealed to in order to promote the exact opposite of this arrangement! And this brings us to our last major point...

In the case of strangers among us, whether or not the strangers abide by our laws has nothing to do with whether or not we are required to support them. As a people, our tax moneys are being used to provide for any manner of need of strangers, and the tax-payers in actuality, have very little to say about it. As a matter of fact, in so-called

“sanctuary cities” and “sanctuary churches” and “sanctuary campii”, needs are being met by tax-payers, or by donors, or by tuition payers with little or no input from many (indeed most) of those payers. In point of fact, the resources of those tax-payers, donors, tuition payers is being taken and used for various needs of strangers, in many, many cases, against their wills; sometimes an individual's will and sometimes a larger, collective will. This, regardless of whichever side one comes down on in the larger issue, must be seen as an injustice.

In Robert Fulghum's little book, *All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Fulghum cites such kindergarten gems as, “Play Fair”; “Don't take things that aren't yours”; “Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody”. I think we could add to Fulghum's gems, one that we all heard from our mothers and/or fathers, even before kindergarten; “Two wrongs don't make a right”.

As we asserted at the outset... Injustice in the name of justice, is not justice.

Pastor