

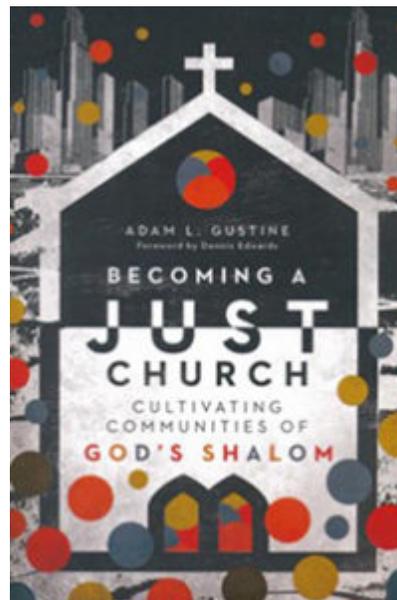
Review: Becoming a Just Church

May 28, 2019

Becoming a Just Church: Cultivating Communities of God's Shalom

By Adam L. Gustine (InterVarsity Press)

Much heated attention has been focused on the question as to whether or not “justice” is a category appropriate for Christians to engage in. The *Baptist Standard* has taken this question up [on numerous occasions](#), but the question still lingers: How do Christians connect their internal life of ministry with their external pursuit of the common good, without sacrificing either?



In this recent book, Adam L. Gustine offers a refreshing and clear proposal for churches who are suspicious that any talk of “justice” means leaving the work of the gospel behind.

Part One of *Becoming a Just Church* treats the question of justice as part of Christian discipleship, that as Christians embody what it means to live well before God and with our neighbors, we mirror this to the world in a way which demonstrates what creation is meant to be like. Far from enacting a

kind of agenda that seeks to dominate society, the pursuit of discipleship, Gustine describes, means living out the way of Christ among our neighbors without expecting they will return the favor.

Part Two of the book connects this external witness with the ways in which we live justly with one another as members of the body of Christ, exercising hospitality, discipling members in the way of God's reign, and worshipping together in a way which reflects God's kingdom.

By connecting these two dimensions of our lives in the world—church and society—in a single thread, Gustine provides pastors and church leaders with a vision which will help them broaden the concerns of their church. Justice for our neighbors is not somehow in competition with the just ways Christians are called to live with one another, for discipleship is not divided into one way on Sunday and a minimized form during the week. Rather, enacting the kingdom of God, as led by the Spirit, means connecting these parts, that we might demonstrate God's work in a way that is attractive to the world.

Myles Werntz

T.B. Maston Chair of Christian Ethics

Logsdon Seminary, Abilene