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Sample's "A Christian justice for the common good" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Sample, T. (2016). *A Christian justice for the common good*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 137 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 9781501814273

In *A Christian justice for the common good*, Tex Sample argues the pursuit of justice as a human right improperly situates it in a consumerist and individualistic milieu. Instead, the concept of justice should proceed as a response to God's righteousness. He writes, "...in the same way that love is portrayed for us in God's revelation in Christ, so it must be with justice" (pp. 28-29). Moreover, though Christians should consider justice in light of their belief in Christ's embodiment of justice, Sample acknowledges that Christians are to work with others for the common good. Though not an indictment of what the Church is already doing to promote justice, Sample also believes there is still much that can be done, and not just among Christians; his message is one of interfaith cooperation, acknowledging the good work other faith traditions – including atheists – have done in the name of justice. Using stories of real people and situations to illustrate his points, Sample is no stranger to the fight for justice in the United States. Indeed, some of his stories are firsthand accounts of his work in the civil rights movement and in community organizing, including the effort to raise the minimum wage to \$15. Sample, for all his focus on action, also emphasizes the work that still needs to be done regarding language. He observes that admonitions about "walking the walk" are frequent, but one must not neglect "talking the talk." He astutely writes, "Language is also an area where the work of the powers is clearly displayed, and this work is to be resisted and challenged. For this reason, the pursuit of justice requires reinterpretation and change in the language of a people" (p. 60). One may notice the ways Sample uses language, particularly in talking about God: the entire work is virtually free of any personal pronouns regarding God, and while sometimes removing personal pronouns results in awkward syntax, this is not the case in Sample's work. He seems to have had many years of both "talking the talk" and "walking the walk." Highly recommended for all libraries focusing on the Church's role in justice.

Reviewer

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