

JUSTICE DECLARATION

*Because the good news of **Jesus Christ** calls **the Church** to advocate (or “be a witness”) for biblical truth and to care for the vulnerable, we, **His followers**, call for a justice system that is fair and redemptive for all. **The Church** has both the unique ability and unparalleled capacity to confront the staggering crisis of crime and incarceration in America and to respond with restorative solutions for communities, victims, and individuals responsible for crime.*

Therefore, we make an urgent appeal to all who follow the Lord Jesus Christ to:

Affirm that the God of the Bible is a just God: justice flows from God’s very character, and the works of God’s hands are faithful and just;

Treat every human being as a person made in God’s own image, with a life worthy of respect, protection, and care;

Foster just relationships between God, fellow human beings, and property, which will lead to human flourishing;

Redouble our efforts to prevent crime by cultivating the “seedbeds of virtue,” including families, churches, neighborhoods, schools, and other sources of moral formation;

Care for the physical and emotional wounds of survivors of crime, ensure their safety, and support their meaningful participation in the justice system;

Take up the cause of the poor and vulnerable, ensuring fair access to education, economic opportunity, the social safety net, and, for those accused of crimes, the instruments of justice;

Advocate for proportional punishment, including alternatives to incarceration, that protects public safety, fosters accountability and provides opportunities to make amends;

Preach the good news of the gospel and proclaim that true freedom in Christ is available to all, including prisoners, recognizing that His atoning sacrifice covers all sin;

Invest in the discipleship of incarcerated men, women, and youth, protect their safety and human dignity, and minister to the needs of families and children with incarcerated loved ones;

Celebrate redemption in our congregations and communities by welcoming back those who have paid their debt to society, and by providing opportunities for all persons to reach their God-given potential.

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