

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

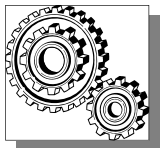
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Inside

Socialism, the Pope, and the U.S. Constitution

By
Kay Trudell

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website (see back page)



In the Works

Enter things being worked on

2010 Election cycle and Candidate Scorecard

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

On May 15, 1931, during the early years of Germany's re-emergence as a military and economic power prior to World War II, the Catholic pope, Pope Pius XI, cast a wary eye on emerging trends in Europe, and published a Papal Encyclical called *Quadragesimo Anno*, which explored the plight of workers within various systems of economic organization in the world. For the non-Catholics who read this newsletter, an encyclical is a papal "letter" written by a pope to his bishops to address a critical issue or need. Catholic lay persons are supposed to take encyclicals seriously. They are read and discussed by non-Catholics as well. Pope Pius XI had plenty of criticism for all: Communism, Socialism, Liberalism, Modernism, and even Capitalism in its unrestrained, unethical form, much as we have seen in some areas of the private and public sectors today (Enron, Fannie and Freddie, banks, etc.). Unbridled greed and shabby ethics

among some top executives certainly has led to excesses in the private sector which need to be corrected. Some of these unethical private sector behaviors, it should be noted, were contributed to by various members of Congress. At the same time, the Pope praised the concept of the individual's right to own private property and pass it to his or her heirs. According to the Pope, the



answer was not to be found in moving from capitalism to socialism, liberalism, or communism, all of which he condemned, but in reawakening morality and ethics, and shaping economic structures around morality and the inherent dignity and worth of the individual human person as a creation of God.

As a lifelong resident of Vermont, I note we have elected a self-proclaimed socialist to the U.S. Senate. In addition, our President has appointed thirty "czars" to his administration, including two self-proclaimed communists (Van Jones and Gary Samore) and a number of socialists. These individuals (the czars) never went through the Congressional confirmation process, so their backgrounds remain largely unknown to the majority of U.S. citizens. Yet these unelected czars have attained massive power over our lives. As a U.S. citizen, I am a proud supporter of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, the concept of separation of powers in government as set forth by our Founding Fathers, the Constitution of the State of Vermont, and capitalism (of the moral and ethical kind). What excesses may have reared their ugly heads in this system need to be corrected by a return to morality in government and in the private sector, not by a



"No one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true Socialist."

Pope Pius XI, from his encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, May 1931

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change from capitalism to socialism or any other form of government. I thought it might be instructive to see what the U.S. Constitution itself has to say about that. Article Four, Section Four of the U.S. Constitution states that the federal government must guarantee to each State in the U.S. the Constitutional Republican form of government. Look it up for yourselves for the exact wording. That means the U.S. cannot have as a form of government socialism, democratic socialism, communism, monarchy, pure Athenian democracy, oligarchy, anarchy, etc. etc. America was founded as and must remain a Constitutional Republic. To do otherwise would be a gross violation of the U.S. Constitution *and result in its overthrow.*

As a lay person and evangelical Protestant, I thought it would be instructive to see what the Catholic encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* had to say about socialism, a type of government we seem to be drifting toward in Vermont and even nationwide. It was a real eye-opener. One of the most telling lines the Pope penned to Catholics should apply to all born-again, Bible-believing Protestants of whatever stripe as well. The Pope said, “No

one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true Socialist.”

The following are some excerpts from the encyclical dealing with socialism. Catholics and Protestants who see no harm in this form of government which is hostile to classical Christianity should read and heed:

“Socialism . . . has split chiefly into two sections, often opposing each other and even bitterly hostile, without either one however abandoning a position fundamentally contrary to Christian truth that was characteristic of Socialism.

“One section of Socialism has . . . sunk into Communism. Communism teaches and seeks two objectives: Unrelenting class warfare and absolute extermination of private ownership. Not secretly or by hidden methods does it do this, but publicly, openly, and by employing every and all means, even the most violent. To achieve these objectives there is nothing which it does not dare, nothing for which it has respect or reverence; and when it has come to power, it is incredible . . . in its cruelty and inhumanity. The horrible slaughter and destruction through which it has laid waste

vast regions of eastern Europe and Asia are the evidence; how much an enemy and how openly hostile it is to Holy Church and to God Himself is, alas, too well proved by facts and fully known to all. Although We, therefore, deem it superfluous to warn upright and faithful children of the Church regarding the impious and iniquitous character of Communism, yet We cannot without deep sorrow contemplate the heedlessness of those who apparently make light of these impending dangers, and with sluggish inertia allow the widespread propagation of doctrine which seeks by violence and slaughter to destroy society altogether. All the more gravely to be condemned is the folly of those who neglect to remove or change the conditions that inflame the minds of peoples, and pave the way for the overthrow and destruction of society.

“The other section, which has kept the name Socialism, is surely more moderate. It not only professes the rejection of violence but modifies and tempers to some degree, if it does not reject entirely, the class struggle and the abolition of private ownership . . .

“Yet let no one think that all the socialist groups or fac-

tions that are not communist have, without exception, recovered their senses to this extent either in fact or in name. For the most part they do not reject the class struggle or the abolition of ownership, but only in some degree modify them. Now if these false principles are modified and to some extent erased from the program, the question arises, or rather is raised without warrant by some, whether the principles of Christian truth cannot perhaps be also modified to some degree and be tempered so as to meet Socialism half-way and, as it were, by a middle course, come to agreement with it. There are some allured by the foolish hope that socialists in this way will be drawn to us. A vain hope! Those who want to be apostles among socialists ought to profess Christian truth whole and entire, openly and sincerely, and not connive at error in any way . . .

“But what if Socialism has really been so tempered and modified as to the class struggle and private ownership that there is in it no longer anything to be censured on these points? Has it thereby renounced its contradictory nature to the Christian religion? This is the question that holds many minds in suspense. And numerous are the Catholics who, al-

“When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers ‘just men who will rule in fear of God.’ The preservation of [our] government depends on the faithful discharge of this Duty; if the citizens neglect their Duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made, not for the public good so much as for selfish and local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the Laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizen will be violated or disregarded. If [our] government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine Commandments, and elect bad men to make and administer the Laws.” - Noah Webster (1758—1843)

though they clearly understand that Christian principles can never be abandoned or diminished seem to turn their eyes to the Holy See and earnestly beseech Us to decide whether this form of Socialism has so far recovered from false doctrines that it can be accepted without the sacrifice of any Christian principle . . . We make this pronouncement: Whether considered as a doctrine, or an historical fact, or a movement, Socialism, if it remains truly Socialism, even after it has yielded to truth and justice on the points which we have mentioned, cannot be reconciled with the teachings of the Catholic Church because its concept of society itself is utterly foreign to Christian truth . . .

“According to Christian teaching, man, endowed with a social nature, is placed on this earth so that by leading a life in society and under an authority ordained of God . . . he may fully cultivate and develop all his faculties unto the praise and glory of his Creator; and that by faithfully fulfilling the duties of his craft or other calling he may obtain for himself temporal and at the same time eternal happiness. Socialism, on

the other hand, wholly ignoring and indifferent to this sublime end of both man and society, affirms that human association has been instituted for the sake of material advantage alone.

“Society, therefore, as Socialism conceives it, can on the one hand neither exist nor be thought of without an obviously excessive use of force; on the other hand, it fosters a liberty no less false, since there is no place in it for true social authority, which rests not on temporal and material advantages but descends from God alone, the Creator and last end of all things.

“If Socialism, like all errors, contains some truth . . . it is based nevertheless on a theory of human society peculiar to itself and irreconcilable with true Christianity. Religious socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms; no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist.

“All these admonitions which have been renewed and confirmed by Our solemn authority must likewise be applied to a certain new kind of socialist activity, hitherto little known but now carried on among many socialist groups.

It devotes itself above all to the training of the mind and character. Under the guise of affection it tries in particular to attract children of tender age and win them to itself, although it also embraces the whole population in its scope in order finally to produce true socialists who would shape human society to the tenets of Socialism.

“It belongs to Our Pastoral Office to warn these persons of the grave and imminent evil: let all remember that Liberalism is the father of this Socialism that is pervading morality and culture and that Bolshevism will be its heir.

“Accordingly . . . you can well understand with what great sorrow We observe that not a few of Our sons . . . have deserted the camp of the Church and gone over to the ranks of Socialism, some to glory openly in the name of socialist and to profess socialist doctrines . . . and to join associations which are socialist by profession or in fact.”

Personally, I am not a supporter of socialism. Why? I believe it has evil roots. The Nazis were socialists. Nazi is a nickname for “National Ger-

man Workers Socialist Party”. Nazis were often referred to as National Socialists. Nazism was another form of socialism, and it ended up embracing virulent hatred of the Jews. Russia’s former name was the USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Under socialism, the State seeks to take the place of God, often organized around a man with a charismatic personality. God is driven from the public arena. Christian teachings and belief systems are mocked. Practices such as abortion on demand, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, healthcare rationing, the deconstruction of marriage, government takeover of private business, etc. thrive under socialism, which bows to no God but itself. There is a revolution, with or without guns, in which the old traditions are swept away so the usurper socialism can take their place. The U.S. Constitution would wither under socialism. U.S. citizens would be draped in subtle chains. Christian believers know Who their Lord is, and it is not socialism. Caesar is not God.

Kay Trudell is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Community Bible Church in So. Burlington

"You cannot legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the wealthy out of freedom. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving. The government cannot give to anybody anything that the government does not first take from somebody else. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that my dear friend is about the end of any nation. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it."

Dr. Adrian Rogers (1931 - 2005)
Senior Pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church and head of *Love Worth Finding* Ministries

Note: This quote was incorrectly attributed to Thomas Jefferson in our July/August issue

What can I do?



*Faith without works is dead
James 2:17*

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The Christian Action Ministry wishes you a happy and prosperous New Year. This time of year is traditionally devoted to making resolutions to improve our lives or return to what we know is the way to live. We should extend this thought process in our culture as well, and resolve to take those actions that will return our country to the moral positions acceptable to God.

As both our local and federal governments appear to be moving closer to socialism, it makes sense to review what was thought about socialism at the time of World War II. Our lead article discusses the topic from the point of view of Pope Pius XI.

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Next Meetings
*January 12, 7:00 pm
Community Bible Church
So. Burlington, Vt.
October 2, 7:00 pm
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.*

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in
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