

Socialism is not Christian

Christians are not obligated to heed the papal call for ‘equitable distribution’

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Here is this weekend’s quiz: Who recently said the following? “Hundreds of millions of people throughout the world are immersed in extreme poverty. Yet disproportionate wealth remains in the hands of a few. It is an unjust scenario, in the face of which we cannot fail to question ourselves and commit to change things. There is no lack of resources at the root of disparities, but the need to address solvable problems related to more equitable distribution of wealth, to be achieved with moral sense and honesty.”

If you are thinking this must be a quote from liberal Sen. Bernard Sanders of Vermont or Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a former New York barmaid, or New York City’s new neo-Marxist Muslim Mayor Zohran Mamdani, you would be wrong.

Nope, this ode to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels does not hail from any of these in-vogue champions of the up-and-coming Democratic Socialists of America. The correct answer is — wait for it — Pope Leo XIV.

Yes, that’s right. The author of this overt homage to socialism is the Holy See’s current pontiff, who proudly posted these comments on X in April.

How should the faithful (and even those who are not) respond to what surely appears to be papal support for the soft communism of what is otherwise known as liberation theology and the communal control of all economic resources? Is Pope Leo’s affinity for the Marcusean redistribution of wealth what the church actually teaches?

Is this even what the pope’s own predecessors have advocated historically? Are Christians — or even socially sensitive non-Christians, for that matter — obligated to embrace this soft Marxism, or perhaps even the full Monty, over capitalism, free enterprise and constitutional liberty?

The answer is no. Any quick review of history shows that even Pope Leo’s namesake, Pope Leo XIII, acknowledged as much.

In 1891, this bishop of Rome flatly rejected socialism in his encyclical “Rerum Novarum,” and he did not mince words: “Hence, it is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom, it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal.”

Pope Pius XI was equally outspoken. In 1937, he issued his encyclical, “*Divini Redemptoris*,” which condemned Marxist socialism as incompatible with the Catholic faith, saying that such systems are based on a materialistic worldview that undermines human dignity and the rights of God.

He went further, rejecting the atheistic principles underlying all this, asserting that a socialistic worldview poses a significant threat to the Christian social order and human dignity.

In 1949, the Catholic Church, under the auspices of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office and approved by Pope Pius XII, issued a similar document that declared all Catholics who professed Marxist-socialist doctrine should be excommunicated as apostates from the Christian faith.

Finally, as we leave the past few decades of the 20th century and move further into the 21st, papal condemnations of socialism’s inhumanity continued. John Paul II and Benedict XVI (who each had firsthand experience with the evils of overreaching governments and totalitarian regimes) explicitly condemned economic collectivism, particularly in its current Marxist form. John Paul described socialism as a “simple and radical solution” that dehumanizes individuals by subordinating them to the economic machine, and Benedict warned against a leviathan state that controls everything. From the beginning, the church has condemned neo-Marxist socialism and rightly recognized it as the cause of extreme poverty, not the solution. Before the ink had even dried on “*Das Kapital*,” Christian leaders were sounding the alarm. Why? Because they understood that the very premise of this evil worldview was diametrically opposed to the basics of Christian morality, personal responsibility and the church’s concurrent respect for individual dignity and human rights.

At its core, socialism stands against these Christian basics, as it is rooted in at least three of the seven deadly sins and, at a minimum, two of the Ten Commandments. All the popes cited above, as well as thousands of other Christian scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, have understood that the foundational assumptions of neo-Marxist socialism stoke envy, reward sloth, encourage covetousness, fan the fires of tribal animus and enable the theft of private property.

So, once again, the answer is no. Christians are not obligated to heed Pope Leo’s call for the “equitable distribution” of someone else’s private wealth. Faithful adherents throughout the ages have understood that poverty is never solved by governments preying on the worst instincts of the people. Poverty is solved by people following God.

Everett Piper (dreverettpiper.com, @dreverettpiper), a columnist for The Washington Times, is a former university president and radio host. He is the author of “Not a Day Care: The Devastating Consequences of Abandoning Truth” (Regnery).