

The Growing Threat of Socialism

By Stephen McDowell

Socialism has been growing in the United States during the past century, often with leaps and at times with small steps. Intermittently, some people and leaders have pushed back this growing plague, seeing some success in re-establishing governmental and economic principles of liberty, but the overall trend has been toward statism. During the past five years we have witnessed a giant leap forward for socialism, with a corresponding decline of liberty.

Socialism is a great threat to liberty and prosperity. It is unbiblical and demonic.

Socialism is a form of statism. Statism is the belief that the civil government (or man via civil government) is the ultimate authority in the earth and as such is the source of law and morality. The state defines what is right and wrong, what is lawful and unlawful, what is moral and immoral. The state becomes the de facto god of the society, or in the words of Roscoe Pound, President of Harvard Law School in the 1920s, “the state takes the place of Jehovah.”

Socialism claims to own or govern all things, in particular your things: your land and your property, but also your children, your person, your liberty. Statists even claim to own your beliefs and your thoughts. One reason that socialism is unbiblical is because it seeks to control property and children, usurping the God-given responsibility of the family.

Socialism Is Demonic

Socialism has been one of the great enemies of liberty and of Christianity in the past. It will be one of the greatest threats to Christianity in the twenty-first century. Socialism is demonic since it is Satan’s attempt to control God’s earth.

Socialism can be defined as government control or ownership of property and/or the production of goods and services. Socialist governments claim authority over all property. This is bad enough, but such states’ claim of ownership goes much further — they also claim authority over the children in a nation. Thus, the state seeks to educate, provide for, direct and regulate their activities. The state seeks to be the parent.

God created individuals and three divine institutions: family, church, and state. He has given certain authority and responsibilities to each of these. No one institution has absolute authority over any other institution. Today, the state has come to be seen as the all-encompassing authority over men and other institutions. This is socialism. When government bureaucrats (elected or not) act under this belief they are like blind men, who will lead the blind into the ditch (Luke 6:39). To limit the all-powerful state, men must be self-governed under God and His law.

Only God is supreme and can exercise supreme power. No man or institution should ever exercise supreme power. This is especially true for matters of the economy; thus, there should not be a central planning agency over the entire economy (like in communist countries). The flow of authority should be

from the bottom up, not the top down. In building the communist party in Russia, Lenin rejected the bottom upwards attempts of the less revolutionary socialists for a top down approach. He said, "My idea . . . is 'bureaucratic' in the sense that the Party is built from the top downwards."

In recent decades, China's economy has been growing. One reason is that they have gradually been moving away from central control of the economy and embracing free market ideas. At the same time, most western nations' economies have been flat or growing slowly. This is partly due to turning aside from free market ideas and embracing socialist ideas, with more government control, regulations, higher taxes, etc. — i.e. more top down authority.

Socialism is a religion that assumes:

1. All property belongs to society, that is, the state.
2. There should be no private property.
3. Men will work as hard for society in general as they would for themselves and their family.

These ideas have been shown not to work every time they have been attempted throughout history, even among Christians. But socialist adherents still press on to impose this philosophy upon nations, even though it will bring stagnation and loss of liberty. Why? Because it is a religion to them.

Socialists have certain views about God, man, and law which are rooted in their faith, or fundamental presuppositions of life. They think the socialistic means of ownership and production will change the nature of man and will bring a utopia to earth. The people in communist U.S.S.R. were taught these ideas. They had not experienced a utopia yet, but they just needed more time to get rid of the left-over influence of free and private enterprise, and then it would come. These people were blinded by this false religion.

Productivity declines in a socialist state. Why? One reason is that there will be no individual incentive to produce, since individuals do not benefit directly from the fruit of their labor. Another reason is this: when men see that their property is easily confiscated by the state, which will then use it as they think best, then men are going to attempt to gain political power so they can control property. Gaining control of government then becomes more important than being productive in the marketplace. People will exert energy to gain control of government, using whatever means possible to do so, rather than using their energy to give to society needed goods and services. Economic productivity will decline.

Socialism hates a flat tax or small head tax. Graduated taxation is the means of redistribution of wealth. Karl Marx's second plank of his program to destroy capitalism was a highly graduated income tax. Socialist governments seek to control by many means, most especially via taxation. As socialist governments assume more and more authority, they need more and more money to fulfill their ever expanding role in life.

Christian scientist Michael Faraday invented the dynamo in 1831. This discovery was the foundation for the vast electrical industry of the modern world. In his day, Faraday could not see the immense effects his discovery would have for mankind, but he did understand the nature of socialistic man. When the

British Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel visited the Royal Institution and asked Faraday what was the use of his new electrical discovery, Faraday replied: "I know not, but I wager one day your government will tax it."

Socialism and communism are forms of humanism, in that they all adhere to the idea of man as the supreme ruler, where in socialism it is political man.

4. Socialism says the world is naturally productive, but that human laws and institutions stifle man and nature from this natural productivity.

If these laws and institutions could be removed or restructured, then this natural productivity could be released. Socialists think the central state planners must do this. They must either own the means of production (which is communism or socialism) or direct the means of production (fascism or corporate state). In both, there is a central elite body of planners who know what is best for everyone and plan for everyone's life.

These monopolistic central planners are acting like God, knowing what must be done in all areas of business, what the unique skills of each person are, what the wants and desires of each consumer are, etc. They are the agents to transform society; they are the agents of salvation. But they believe in salvation by force and by man-made laws.

Socialism claims authority over all property, including children. Thus, the socialist state seeks to educate children, provide for them, and direct and regulate their business and activities. The state seeks to be the parent. In order to provide all that God says the family is to provide (including education, retirement, and so on), the state must seek higher and higher taxes. Thus, socialist leaders implement graduated income taxes, inheritance taxes, all kinds of licenses and fees, and more. The state becomes the substitute parent, but also the substitute child, by providing for people when they get old.

A society that rejects God's order for family responsibility will find the state becoming the educator and provider, and thus requiring a "double portion" of the inheritance (like the first born), an ever-increasing tax burden, and an ever-increasing control, in order to fulfill its duties.

Socialism is ultimately demonic since it is Satan's attempt to control God's earth. At the Fall, Satan seized Adam's inheritance of the earth. Since Jesus has restored this to man, Satan continues to try to rob man of his inheritance in God. He uses the tool of the state to try to seize the capital of modern man, thus keeping man in bondage. Those who embrace the idea of the state as welfare agent are collaborating with the devil and delaying the advance of God's Kingdom in the earth. They are keeping man from the great blessing of his inheritance in God.

How do we conquer socialism?

1. First, the family must assume its responsibility for the health, education, and welfare of its own.

2. Next, the family and private sector must seek to provide the social and spiritual needs of fellow citizens. This can most effectively be done through various voluntary associations.

3. The family and church must educate the citizens in a Biblical philosophy of life so they will see the harm of setting up a socialistic society. (Biblical education includes Christian character as well as correct thinking. People must be self-governed to reject unbiblical action of the state.)

4. Individuals must elect Biblical men to govern. Such men will understand the limited nature of civil government, and hence will not attempt to have the government act like God. These rulers can gradually end unjust taxes, over-regulation, government welfare programs, state schools, etc.

Government leaders will not be able to implement number 4, until the first 3 steps have begun to be implemented. We can gradually remove the bad as we gradually substitute the good in its place.

America's future depends upon how we deal with the false religion of socialism. May God give us grace to live in the great liberty of the Gospel where we are not controlled by men, but are free to direct our own affairs under Christ.

(Much of this article was excerpted from *The Economy from a Biblical Perspective* by Stephen McDowell. This booklet can be ordered from providencefoundation.com)