

People Are Confused About Socialism and Jesus

According to a new poll from the respected Barna Group, Americans think Jesus was a socialist who would vote for Bernie Sanders.

When asked whether capitalism or socialism best aligned with the teachings of Jesus, 24 percent said socialism and just 14 percent correctly answered capitalism. The rest answered “neither” or “not sure,” the latter category giving us hope that proper education may persuade the uninformed.

The poll was commissioned by the filmmaking team that created the movie *The Young Messiah*, based on a novel by Anne Rice imagining Jesus as a young boy.

When these Americans were asked which presidential candidate best represented the teachings of Jesus, 21 percent identified Bernie Sanders and just 11 percent identified Ted Cruz.

Unsurprisingly, millennials whose critical thinking faculties have yet to mature and college graduates who are the product of relentless secularist brainwashing were the leaders of the Jesus-is-a-socialist pack in the poll.

But even a cursory review of the parables of Jesus reveal that he was anything but a socialist. In his parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), for instance, the main character is an entrepreneur who recruits three employees to manage his property while he is gone on a trip. Note that the property was his own and not the state's; the story is predicated on the concept of private property.

And the entrepreneur entrusts his property to his employees based on merit, not on affirmative action, quotas or any other such thing. He gave “to each according to his ability.” Note

how socialism is upended right out of the chute. Socialism piously asserts "to each according to his need," while in Jesus' worldview it's just the reverse.

The owner expected them to work hard, invest and return a profit on what he had entrusted to them. And he held them accountable through performance reviews upon his return. The ones who proved dependable, trustworthy and capable were rewarded with praise and promotions: "You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much."

The employee who buried his talent in the backyard received no sympathy from the owner. Rather, he was rebuked as a "wicked and slothful" servant and summarily fired.

Socialism is predicated on systematic disobedience to two of God's Ten Commandments. It first of all violates the 10th commandment, which prohibits coveting of any kind. Socialism is rooted in the grasping, greedy, trembling hunger of progressives for other people's money.

And socialism violates the eighth commandment, which prohibits theft. For under socialism, the resources of some are taken from them against their will only to be transferred to the wallets of others.

Socialism is based on the involuntary transfer of wealth from some citizens to others, which is nothing but theft. Just because it is done under color of law, and done by the government rather than a guy with a gun in an alley, does not make it right.

Socialism is an approach to life that requires the intentional transgression of 20 percent of God's moral code. Such an approach to life cannot be right and cannot possibly work.

Venezuela is living proof of the abject and grotesque failure of socialism. If Sanders is right, Venezuela ought to be a paradise. Instead, Venezuelans are forced to cope with empty

supermarket shelves, an astonishing absence of toilet paper and systematic power outages. Under socialism, the poor stay poor and the powerful get rich.

Here's how Glenn Reynolds put it in *USA Today*:

It is a common misconception that socialism is about helping poor people. Actually, what socialism does is create poor people, and keep them poor. And that's not by accident.

Under capitalism, rich people become powerful. But under socialism, powerful people become rich.

The richest person in Venezuela is the daughter of the now deceased dictator, Hugo Chavez. Fidel Castro lives like a king in socialist Cuba, a country where toilet seats are a luxury for ordinary citizens, a fact to which I can personally testify based on my trip to Cuba two years ago. As Reynolds says, "Under socialism, you're either powerful, or you're poor."

This is not to say that Christianity does not teach the redistribution of wealth. Christians believe in the redistribution of wealth just as passionately as the most ardent socialists. We simply believe that the redistribution of wealth is to be voluntary, not involuntary. While liberals believe generosity is giving away other people's money, followers of Christ believe generosity is giving away our own money, motivated by compassion for the worthy poor.

The bulk of Americans obviously lack a robust and mature understanding of Christ's teaching and are similarly unlearned in basic economic theory. But fortunately for us all, ignorance is not an incurable disease.

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