

Would Socialism End Poverty in America?

Previously, I talked about the Sojourners-sponsored ad headlined “What Would Jesus Cut?” The ad, signed by **Jim Wallis** and more than two dozen leaders of the religious left, urged our leaders to ask themselves what Jesus would cut from the federal budget.

Called “the leader of the religious left” by the *New York Times*, Rev. **Jim Wallis** has a long history of denouncing his own country. In *Agenda for Biblical People* (1976), he refers to America as a “fallen nation.” In an article in *Mission Trends*, Wallis approvingly predicted that “more Christians will come to view the world through Marxist eyes” and that “so-called ‘young evangelicals’ ... [will] see the impossibility of making capitalism work for justice and peace.”

During the 1980s, Wallis defended the USSR and blamed the U.S. for Cold War tensions, claiming, “At every turn, U.S. policymakers have chosen to assume the very worst about their Soviet counterparts.” He denounced the U.S. government, which was trying to halt the spread of communism in Latin America in the 1980s, and supported Communist factions in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In a 2006 radio broadcast, an interviewer asked, “Are you then calling for the redistribution of wealth in society?” Wallis replied, “Absolutely, without any hesitation. That’s what the gospel is all about.” Actually, no, that’s what *The Communist Manifesto* is all about.

The organization Wallis heads, Sojourners, has received grants from the Open Society Institute (OSI) totaling nearly a third of a million dollars. OSI is the foundation created by far-left atheist billionaire George Soros to fund his socialist,

globalist agenda. Wallis first denied, then admitted that Sojourners took the Soros money, claiming the amounts were “so small that I hadn’t remembered them.”

Another signer of the “What Would Jesus Cut?” ad is sociologist Tony Campolo, quoted by John Oliver Mason in *The Progressive* (August 2005) as saying, “To be a Christian in today’s world is to be opposed to America. Why? ... America says, ‘Blessed are the rich.’ Jesus said, ‘Woe unto you who are rich; blessed are the poor.’”

As an Africa-born American, I worked my way to this country. I paid for my education and was glad to do so. Unlike many people who were born in America and take its blessings for granted, I know how rare those blessings are in this world.

I don’t see America as a “fallen nation.” To me, America is a lighthouse of liberty, a shining city on a hill. May God bless my adopted homeland and may He open the eyes of those who deplore and oppose what God has blessed.

What’s the best way to lift people out of poverty? America has spent trillions on anti-poverty programs—yet, as Jesus said, we still have the poor among us. These programs don’t end poverty. They just incentivize it.

The best way—in fact, the only way—to lift people out of poverty is by creating jobs. How do you do that? With stimulus spending? When Congress passed the \$787 billion stimulus bill in February 2009, unemployment stood at 8.2 percent. Before the end of the year, unemployment topped 10 percent. Today it’s at 9.1 percent. Clearly, stimulus spending doesn’t work.

The only way to create jobs is to set the private sector free by cutting taxes and cutting government red tape. (I don’t say that’s what Jesus would cut; it’s common sense.) The most effective anti-poverty program ever devised is a job, and most jobs in America are created by small businesses. When a businessman puts his capital at risk and hires employees, he’s

fighting poverty.

Writing in *The Huffington Post*, Wallis said, “I don’t believe, as the Republicans keep saying, that the best way to help everybody is to keep helping the super-rich.” Who are these so-called “super-rich”? Many are small business owners, the ones who create jobs, pay taxes and support charities that fight poverty. Wallis’ Marx-inspired policies would stifle opportunity, kill jobs, discourage donations and increase poverty.

Shallow Marxist thinking supposes the way to end poverty is through coercive income redistribution—confiscating wealth from the “haves” and handing it to the “have-nots.” But true compassion seeks to expand liberty and opportunity—not government.

I don’t claim those on the religious left aren’t true Christians. But we must be discerning about their message. The social gospel is *not* the gospel of Jesus Christ. The supporters of the “What would Jesus cut?” message are on the wrong side of the biblical mandate. Jesus did not say, “Go and tax your neighbor and transfer his wealth to the poor.” He said, “Go and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19).

One reason Christians should not mix the gospel and the government is that true compassion for the poor should always be motivated by the love of Jesus Christ. When the poor receive help, Jesus should get the credit. How is the Great Commission fulfilled and how is the gospel proclaimed by a government check from a Washington bureaucrat?

To use the name of Christ to advance a socialist ideology is to abuse His name. Jesus is Lord and Savior. His kingdom is not of this world. He left the glories of heaven to be crucified, to rise again, to conquer hell and the grave—not to become a mascot for a worldly political movement.

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