

"America is becoming a socialist state," I commented in a church recently. One individual asked, "What's wrong with that?" It's a great question. Let's start with a definition.

## Definition of Socialism

### *What is Socialism?*

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language says:

1. "Any of various theories or systems of social organization in which the means of producing and distributing goods is owned collectively or by a centralized government that often plans and controls the economy.
2. The stage in Marxist-Leninist theory intermediate between capitalism and communism, in which collective ownership of the economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet been successfully achieved."<sup>1</sup>

Webster's definition is a little kinder: "**Socialism**, n. [Cf. F. socialisme.] A theory or system of social reform which contemplates a complete reconstruction of society, with a more just and equitable distribution of property and labor. In popular usage, the term is often employed to indicate any lawless, revolutionary social scheme. [Socialism] was first applied in England to Owens' theory of social reconstruction, and in France to those also of St. Simon and Fourier. . . The word, however, is used with a great variety of meaning. . . even by economists and learned critics. The general tendency is to regard as socialistic any interference undertaken by society on behalf of the poor. . . radical social reform which disturbs the present system of private property."<sup>2</sup>

Socialism is then a radical social reformation of a society, done in the name of the poor, and leads to communism.

## Dynamics of Socialism

### *How does it work?*

The American Heritage Dictionary of Cultural Literacy gives a definition that tells how the system works:

"An economic system in which the production and distribution of goods are controlled substantially by the government rather than private enterprise, and in which cooperation rather than competition guides economic activity. There are many varieties of socialism. Some socialists tolerate capitalism, as long as the government maintains the dominant influence over the economy; others insist on an abolition of private enterprise. All communists are socialists, but not all socialists are communist."<sup>3</sup>

Let us break that down into parts so that we can understand how the system works:

1. **Control:** "*An economic system in which the production and distribution of goods are controlled by the government rather than private enterprise.*" Both on a state and national level, we see the government taking more and more control over our lives, including the economy. During the past 6 months, the President has taken control over the finance and auto industries. In June 2009, Congress passed a massive environmental bill. Now the President has his sights on health care. On the state level, more and more regulations are being handed down (the state dictates the kind of light bulbs in your home, the size of your toilet, etc.).
2. **Cooperation:** "*...in which cooperation rather than competition guides economic activity.*" People are expected to do their jobs for the good of society, rather than for profit. To control this, the government

penalizes people who make too much money, such as New York's new "millionaire's tax."

3. **Class Warfare:** The only way this can be "sold" to a nation is to use "class warfare" – that is, to blame all economic problems on one class of people (the rich), and make another class of people the oppressed (the poor). This can even involve racial attitudes (such as white versus black).

## The Defects of Socialism

### *Does it Work?*

The simple answer is "NO!" Joseph Farah in *World News Daily* (October 27, 2008) states that when he is asked about socialism, he likes to ask a few questions:

- Do you believe in private property?
- How would you feel if someone took yours?
- Where has socialism ever succeeded?
- What does the government do well?
- What does the Bible have to say about economics?
- What did America's founders have to say about economics?
- Is socialism constitutional?

We do, of course believe in the right to own property, and would resent anyone taking something from us. Under socialism, instead of protecting private property, the government takes it (through excess taxation, eminent domain, etc.).

As Christians, we recognize ultimately God owns everything (Psalm 24:1). We are merely stewards, but the Lord was also recognizing private property rights when He said, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

**Where has socialism worked?** Socialism has worked nowhere. The system always collapses.

**What does the government do well?**

The Bible gives the state or government three responsibilities: to punish evil, to promote good, and to protect the innocent. Gary DeMar from American Vision notes:

“The Bible specifically outlines spheres of jurisdiction for the family, the church and the State. Limited and delegated power and authority are granted to each sphere. For example, the State is given specific power and authority to operate within its jurisdictional boundaries that are not given to the family or church (e.g. collect taxes, punish criminals, maintain just weights and measures, etc.). When the State enlarges its jurisdictional boundaries without any regard to limits, it gradually assumes what God alone possesses: unlimited power and authority. The State is a provider of justice, not a dispenser of sustenance. To make the State our provider, our parent, is to deny God (Deut. 8:1; Dan. 4).”<sup>4</sup>

Farah goes on to answer his other questions, but I will limit myself to briefly answering “What does the Bible teach about economics?”

The Bible gives us three legitimate ways to gain wealth:

**(1) Industry:** you work for it.

Genesis 3:17 says, “And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life.”

2 Thessalonians 3:10 records, “For even when we were with you, this we

commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

**(2) Investment:** You take the money that you have earned by working, and invest it in some enterprise to make more. This is seen in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25). It is also seen in the ideal woman of Proverbs 31:16, “She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.”

**(3) Inheritance:** Your family passes wealth down to the next generation. Proverbs 13:22 says, “A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just.”

**Why doesn't socialism work?** It may look attractive, because everyone contributes to the community, and then everyone takes from the community what they need. There is just one problem – human nature.

Socialism does not work because it provides no real incentive to work hard or produce, because no matter how hard you work, you get no extra pay or reward. People stop exerting themselves and become dependent on the State. Government replaces God.

<sup>1</sup> “Socialism”, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, Copyright 2009, Houghton Mifflin Company. July 2, 2009. [<http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary>].

<sup>2</sup> “Socialism.” *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. MICRA, Inc. 02 Jul. 2009. [Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/socialism>].

<sup>3</sup> “Socialism.” *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. 02 Jul. 2009. [Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/socialism>].

<sup>4</sup> DeMar, Gary. “Give Me Money”, *American Vision News*, July 1, 2009. <[www.americavision.org](http://www.americavision.org)>

## The Truth About

# SOCIALISM



## Chains We Cannot Afford

*“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, [and] hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”*

– Jeremiah 2:13



**By Tom Stiles**

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Ministries

**P.O. BOX 16319**

**Rochester, NY**

**14616**

[www.ariseministries.org](http://www.ariseministries.org)