
An Examination of Christian Strategies in Countering the Threat of Communism

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Abstract

This paper examines the multifaceted strategies employed by Christians in response to the perceived threat of communism during the 20th century. The study highlights the ideological clash between Christianity, which upholds spiritual and moral values, and communism, characterized by atheism and materialist doctrines. By analyzing historical documents, speeches, and theological writings, the research identifies key tactics used by Christians to counteract communist influence. These include the promotion of Christian social teachings as an alternative to Marxist ideology, active participation in anti-communist political movements, and the establishment of educational programs aimed at reinforcing Christian values. Additionally, the role of various Protestant denominations in global anti-communist efforts reveals a blend of diplomacy, covert actions, and grassroots mobilization. The paper concludes that while Christian strategies were diverse and sometimes contradictory, they collectively contributed to shaping the ideological battleground of the Cold War era, ultimately influencing both religious and political landscapes across the world.

Keywords: Christian, Strategy, communism, atheism

Introduction

The rise of communism has been a significant political and social phenomenon in the world. Communism as a political

and economic ideology advocates for the abolition of private property and the establishment of a classless society. The ideology emerged in the 19th century and gained popularity in the 20th century, especially after the Russian Revolution of 1917. The United States of America has been a leading capitalist country, and the rise of communism in the country has been a topic of interest for many scholars. This study seeks to explore the impact of Communism and the strategies a Christian can adopt to counter this wicked ideology.

Biblical Perspective on the Concept of Communism

Communism is an economic and political ideology that advocates for the abolition of private property and the establishment of a classless society. The concept of communism has been a topic of interest for many scholars, and some have explored its compatibility with the Bible. While some biblical passages seem to comply with communist ideals, little evidence can be found that the Bible truly supports or endorses communism.^{1&2} The Acts 2 passage, which describes the early Christian church as having everything in common, has led some people to defend the idea that communism is biblical. However, there is a crucial difference between the church in Acts 2 and a communist society that must be understood. In the Acts 2 church, the people were giving to each other out of their goodwill to those who had a need, and they were giving freely, without regulation of how much they were to give. In a communist society, people give because a system of government forces them to give. They don't have a choice in the matter as to how much they give or to whom they give. This, therefore, does not reflect on who they are; it says nothing about their identity or character. Under communism, the cheerful, generous giver and the stingy man are both required to give the same amount – namely, everything they earn. The issue is one of cheerful

1 <https://www.gotquestions.org/communism-Bible.html>

2 <https://www.compellingtruth.org/Bible-communism.html>

giving (which the Bible supports) versus forced giving.³ Communism has historically held a negative view of religion, particularly in its Marxist-Leninist form. Karl Marx famously referred to religion as the "opium of the people," suggesting that it was used by the ruling class to control and pacify the working class. Communism has sought to promote atheism and secularism, viewing religion as a tool of oppression and a hindrance to social progress.⁴ Communist ideology has often been critical of religious institutions, seeing them as perpetuating social inequality and maintaining the status quo. The Soviet Union, for example, was an atheist state in which religion was discouraged and, at times, persecuted⁵. Some communists have even characterized communism itself as a form of religion, with its own set of beliefs and dogmas. However, this view is not universally accepted and is a matter of debate among scholars.⁶

The Threat of Communism to Christianity

The United States has historically been a Christian nation. The Founding Fathers invoked the Christian God in many of the founding documents, including in the Declaration of Independence, when Thomas Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Through this statement, Jefferson clearly expressed that three of the founding rights upon which the nation was based come from God. The large-scale rejection of a biblical worldview in America, even amongst the Christian church, has led to this exponential growth in support of a communist ideology. Adopting this communist agenda is not

3 <https://www.gotquestions.org/communism-Bible.html>

4 <https://www.marxists.org/archives/bukharin/works/1920/abc/11/html>

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marxism_and_religion

6 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archieve/1931/04/the-religion-of-communism/650366>

only anti-Christ but is the antithesis of capitalism, which is the economic system that has supported Christian tradition throughout the United States' history and the world at large. To stop the spread of communism, a biblical worldview must be restored and capitalism must be upheld.

The Rise of Communism in the United States

Communism is an ideology that was created to eradicate inequality and achieve a classless society through community ownership of resources and control of the means of production⁷. To build this type of society, the existing oppressive societal structures must be violently overthrown. Once all property is in the hands of the newly formed proletariat state, it will be allocated to create a society in which everyone is equal⁸. It is both an economic theory and a

7 Communism. In J. M. Palmisano (Ed.), *World of sociology*, Gale. Gale. Credo, 2001 Marx, K. & Engels, F. *The communist manifesto*. International Publishers 2021 (Original work published 1848).

9. socialism. In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). Columbia University Press 2018.
CredoReference:<http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/socialism/0?institutionId=5072>

10 Kengor, P.. *The devil and Karl Marx*. TAN Books. 2020

11 Barna, G. (2020b). (rep.). *Restoring America by Reframing Its Worldview*. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CRC_AWVI-2020_Release12_Restoring-America-by-Reframing-Its-Worldview.pdf.

12 Barna, G. (2021b). (rep.). *What Americans Find Attractive about Marxism*. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2021/09/CRC_AWVI2021_Release07_Digital_02_20210930.pdf.

13. Barna, G. (2021a). (rep.). *CRC 2020 Post-Election Survey Finds America's Thirst for socialism Has Plummeted*. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/CRC_2020PostElectionSurvey_Report03_Digital_01_20210203.pdf.

social ideology. What many people do not know, is that communism was birthed as an extreme form of socialism⁹.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels believed that communism was the only form of socialism that

could achieve socialism's goal of government ownership of the factors of production and redistribution of resources. They also were both staunch atheists who rejected God and biblical principles in their personal lives¹⁰. These beliefs pushed them to define communism and outline its goals in *The Communist Manifesto*, which they published in 1848. Communism has had a huge effect on the evolution of the socialist movement and the two

theories are inextricably linked¹¹. This is important to remember, as much of the communist agenda is hidden behind socialism, or sometimes what is referred to as democratic socialism, in America today.

Historically, communism has been unpopular in the United States, as it denies individual freedom under the law; however, Barna¹² noted that while less than 1% of American adults primarily adhere to a Marxist worldview, 10% are strongly influenced by it. Even more shocking is the fact that approximately one-third of American adults support socialism¹³. It is extremely concerning that communism and socialism have become so popular because the communist ideology and economic theory are in complete opposition to Judeo-Christian tradition and compete with a biblical worldview. To understand this claim, the principles of

14 Marx, K. & Engels, F. (2021). *The communist manifesto*. International Publishers. (Original work published 1848).

15. *ibid*

communism will be discussed followed by an analysis based on a biblical worldview and Judeo-Christian tradition.

Principles of Communism

Marx and Engels¹⁴ believed inequality and the problems of society are created because the bourgeoisie has oppressed the proletariat. To solve these problems, the class system must be eliminated and the societal institutions that systemically uphold the class system, thereby propitiating oppression, must be destroyed. According to Marx and Engels, ten steps must be taken to achieve a classless, collective society by way of centralizing resources and means of production in the hands of the state. The ten steps include abolishing private property, implementing a heavy progressive tax, centralizing credit through a national bank, handing over the means of communication and transportation to the state, ownership of state-owned factories, and equitably distributing the population over the land. Completing the ten steps is part of the process to tear down systemic oppression.

Within *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels illuminated what they believed to be oppressive systems that must be eradicated. One such system is the traditional family. Marx and

Engels referred to the traditional family structure as the bourgeois family because they believed its foundation was capital and private gain. They also claimed that the family allowed for parents

to exploit their children and for husbands to oppress their wives. Another radical goal, both then

and now, consisted of eradicating countries and nationalities to end hostility among people groups and to prevent the exploitation of one nation by another.

Finally, they wished to eradicate religion, specifically Christianity¹⁵. Religion, they claimed, was a way for the oppressors to control the proletariat as well as a coping mechanism and distraction from life's despair for the oppressed. Marx believed that this despair was caused by the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. The distraction of religion must be eradicated for people to recognize how truly miserable their lives are. This realization will inspire them to fight for true happiness which can only be found by overthrowing the system which oppresses them and creating a classless society. Marx and Engels recognized that this overthrow must be violent. The proletariat will seize political power, implement the ten points and overthrow oppressive structures, which hypothetically, according to Marx and Engels would create a system that eradicates the conditions for class superiority, ultimately creating new conditions for a classless society.

Communism based on Biblical Worldview

Several problems immediately present themselves with the communist ideology due to how it conflicts with a biblical worldview and Christian tradition. First, one of the main principles of communism, collectivism, is unbiblical. In Ezekiel 18:20, the prophet Ezekiel expressed that humans are responsible for their own, personal sin. One is not responsible for the sins of his ancestors nor is he responsible for the sins of his sons. The verse ends with Ezekiel explaining that the consequences of one's righteous actions will result in righteousness while one's wickedness will result in

16. English Standard Bible. (2016). Crossway Bibles. (Original work published 2001).

wickedness¹⁶. Similarly, Americans have traditionally valued individualism, recognizing that each person is unique and should have the opportunity to play to their strengths to find success. Success or lack thereof is mostly attributable to an individual's life decisions and overall work ethic¹⁷. Communism, on the other hand, groups people based on their socioeconomic class and attributes the same sins to the group, regardless of individual action. One big problem facing America today is critical race theory, which is an ideology that derives from communism¹⁸. Instead of viewing the world as rich versus poor, critical race theory views the world as white people versus people of colour. Like communism, it is collectivist: white people are the oppressors and people of colour are oppressed. It holds that society is structured to systemically oppress people of colour. To fix this problem, systems must be restructured, and resources must be redistributed from the so-called oppressors to the oppressed. Critical race theory is just another way in which communism is creeping into American society in everything from school curriculums to governmental policy¹⁹. A biblical worldview perspective recognizes that there will be injustice in this fallen

17 Kusserow, A. (2015). American Individualisms. In W. G. Scarlett, *The Sage encyclopedia of classroom management*. Sage Publications. Credo Reference:

18. Gonzalez, M. (2021, September 8). Marxism underpins black lives matter agenda. *The Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/commentary/marxism-underpins-black-lives-matter-agenda>

19. *ibid.*

20 .Kengor, P. (2020). *The devil and Karl Marx*. TAN Books

21. Bassani, L. M. (2004). Life, liberty, and...: Jefferson on property rights. *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 18, 31-88. <https://mises.org/library/life-liberty-and-jefferson-property-rights-0>

22. U.S. Const. amend. I

23. English Standard Bible. (2016). Crossway Bibles. (Original work published 2001).

world, but that injustice should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Second, communism rejects any form of personal property, which is unbiblical. Two of the Ten Commandments imply a right to property ownership when God commanded humans not to steal and not to covet in the eighth and tenth commandments, respectively²⁰. After all, it can only be wrong to steal and covet if someone owns the property in question. The property right is also inherently American, stemming from this Christian principle. John Locke, an Enlightenment philosopher, wrote that all people are born with three natural rights: the rights to life, liberty, and property. This idea of natural rights had a large influence on the Founding Fathers, especially Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence and has had a lasting impact on American values²¹. Both the Fifth and the Fourteenth Amendments protect an American citizen's right to property²². Private property rights have come under attack in recent history, especially from liberal, progressive policies. One of the most prominent ways this occurs is through strict regulations that have been put on ownership of property as well as regulation on what one can do with the property they own. Changes to the face of property require permits and approval from local government authorities, which may also increase property taxes. People can no longer simply use their personal property the way they want because of the government's large intervention in regulating the use of private property.

24 Metaxas, E. (2016). *If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty*. Penguin Books.

25 Courtois, S., Werth, N., Panné, J.-L., Paczkowski, A., Bartošek, K., & Margolin, J.-L. (1999). *The Black Book of Communism: Crime, Terrore, repression*. (J. Murphy & M. Kramer, rans., M. Kramer, Ed.). Harvard University Press.

Third, communism's goals of abolishing social classes, the family structure, nations, and religion do not align with Judeo-Christian values and a biblical worldview. The Bible holds that there will always be poor in society, but that the church and family are responsible for caring for them, not the government²³. In American culture today, the traditional family structure is rapidly being eradicated due to a rise in the acceptance of LGBTQ+ lifestyles, divorce, promiscuity, and abortion. God created the family to be the foundation of society and He set clear standards for family structure in the Bible. God's family design starts with the marriage of one man and one woman. Husbands are to lead their wives and parents are to lead their children. Extended family members, like grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, are to support each other and work together to create a functioning society²⁴. None of this matters, however, if religion is abolished because if religion is abolished, then absolute truth is abolished. Absolute truth is what binds people to a common moral code and compels them to obey. There is no reason for Americans to comply with Judeo-Christian tradition under communism nor is this tradition acceptable because communism rejects the truth upon which it is based.

Fourth, communism requires violence. Historically, wherever communism has been tried, there has been much violence. During the 20th century, it is estimated that approximately 100 million people died as a result of communism²⁵. The Bible teaches that all people are made in the image of God and are

26 *English Standard Bible*. (2016). Crossway Bibles. (Original work published 2001).

27 U.S. Const. amend. I

28 Blair, D. (2021b, April 9). When government demands social media censorship, Americans all political beliefs lose. *The Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/commentary/when-government-demands-socialmedia-censorship-americans-all-political>

to be respected as such Genesis 1:27.²⁶ The mass amount of death shows that communist ideology blatantly disregards the sanctity of human life.

The collective nature of communism has also led to censorship and violence against those who disagree with the ideology. One of the foundational elements of the United States is that citizens have freedom of speech, regardless of their ideological differences or disagreements with each other or the government²⁷. Recently, with the rise of communism, the United States has seen mass censorship of ideas and free speech, especially on social media platforms, against people who disagree with the government or popular societal opinions²⁸. Cancel culture, a society in which it is acceptable for people to turn on each other and verbally, emotionally, or even physically abuse individuals who do not agree with them to try and force them to conform to the perceived prevailing opinion on specific issues, is also acquiring a large foothold in America²⁹. Violence of this kind undermines the First Amendment and violates Judeo-Christian tradition and biblical values. From a Christian perspective, human beings are to love one another despite differences and should not wish harm upon someone over a disagreement.

Lastly, the United States has seen violent movements inspired by Marxist ideals gaining mass support over the last few years. In May 2020, a video circulated of a black man, George Floyd, lying on the ground unable to move or breathe because he was held down by a police officer kneeling on his neck.

29 Blair, D. (2021a, March 24). Cancel culture comes for all: How 10-year-old tweets cost this journalist her job. The Heritage Foundation. Retrieved March 23, 2022, from <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/commentary/cancel-culture-comes-all-how-10-year-old-tweets-cost-journalist-her-job>

Black Lives Matter, an organization that claims to fight against racial injustice, called for protests as a response to Floyd's death, which resulted in violent riots across the nation. Throughout the summer of 2020, the riots in 140 cities resulted in \$2 billion worth of damage mainly due to vandalism, looting, and burning³⁰. After this amount of violence, not to mention the numerous businesses and individuals who were targeted and cancelled for not supporting the movement, it is not surprising to learn that the three founders of Black Lives Matter have openly admitted to being Marxists and the movement is based on critical race theory³¹. Biblically, people are not to participate in senseless, unnecessary violence. Rather, Christians are called to be the peacemakers, even when they have been wronged or oppressed.

Christianity and the Judeo-Christian traditions on which America was founded are simply incompatible with communism. The growing support for communist ideology in America must be stopped for America to remain true to the ideals that made her great. To stop the spread of communism, two solutions readily present themselves: Restoring a biblical worldview in the United States and upholding capitalism.

Strategies based on Biblical and Christian Tradition to Counter Communism

Unlike communism, there are several ways in which capitalism complies with a biblical worldview to uphold Christian tradition. Capitalism is compatible with the biblical definition of human nature, both the created nature and the fallen nature. It is clear in Genesis 1:27 that humans are created in the image of God, hence human life holds innate value and must be respected. Additionally, humans were created as individuals, free to make their own choices. While

the consequences of these choices may affect others, the responsibility for those decisions

lies with the individual alone. God also implanted a desire to work in human nature. The Bible is

full of God's condemnation for those who do not work. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, Paul revealed that, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat"³². God praises those who, "work heartily," as Paul wrote in Colossians 3:23, "do all things without grumbling or disputing," as he explained in Philippians 2:14, and "do all to the glory of God," as he said in 1 Corinthians 10:31. Human nature was also uniquely created to have dominion over the earth and given the role to subdue it. Humans are supposed to bring all things to submit to God's will and His standards and are expected to treat all creation with respect³³. Along with this comes the responsibility to steward resources wisely and use them efficiently for the glory of God. Communist ideology cannot comply with these aspects of human nature.

To further counter communism using religious methods, Christians can employ several other strategies such as:

- Promote religious freedom and tolerance: Encourage governments to protect religious liberties and foster an environment conducive to diverse religious expressions.

30 Zilber, A. (2020, September 16). Rioting in 140 cities after George Floyd's death will cost insurance industry \$2 billion. Daily Mail.com. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8740609/Rioting-140-cities-George-Floyds-death-cost-insurance-industry-2-BILLION.html>

31. Gonzalez, M. (2021, September 8). Marxism underpins black lives matter agenda. The Heritage Foundation. Retrieved January 31, 2022, from <https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/commentary/marxism-underpins-black-lives-matter-agenda> English Standard Bible. (2016). Crossway Bibles. (Original work published 2001).

33. Pearcey, N. (2008). Total truth: Liberating Christianity from its cultural captivity (study guide edition). Crossway Books

- Support underground religious networks: Assist in establishing covert educational and worship opportunities for individuals living in areas where religious practice is restricted.
- Strengthen ecumenical partnerships: Collaborate with fellow Christians from various denominational backgrounds to create a united front against communist ideologies.
- Highlight the role of religion in resisting communism: Share stories of faith leaders and ordinary believers who have challenged communist regimes and defended human rights through their religious convictions.
- Offer spiritual resources: Provide materials and guidance that help individuals develop a robust faith and equip them to confront communist ideologies.³⁴

Conclusion

The writer believes the introduction of communism was another strategy used by the devil to destroy the kingdom of Christ. This is especially because the philosophy denied God and the Bible and all that has to do with Religion. Although philosophy has had much effect on society, then the kingdom built by God was not to be destroyed by any means. As a result, Communism collapsed and if Christians can properly adopt the strategies suggested, the Philosophy will be completely wiped out.

³⁴ Marx, K. & Engels, F. (2021). *The communist manifesto*. International Publishers. (Original work published 1848).

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