

gains in our country, but also in foreign fields as well. They seem determined, committed, and willing to sacrifice all the usual comforts to spread their "good tidings." Christians, by comparison, are lazy, apathetic, and mesmerized by the same materialism that is choking the very life out of both our nation and the whole of Western civilization.

Philosophically speaking, what **does** the Western world really have to offer? When we're talking about so-called third world countries in Africa and Asia, where the average yearly income per person is under \$100, does the thought of a free enterprise system of capitalism really hold any attraction? These small bands of Communist "preachers" travel the countryside, sharing their vision of a "one-world society" with an economy that equally "spreads the wealth" to all. Does it surprise you that so many of the peasants are inspired to join them?

They've seen multi-national oil and mineral companies come and build large refineries and factories, while their own income hardly rises at all. They've seen Western governments colonize their economies and resources without raising the peasants' standard of living (and in some cases even lowering it)! All these people have seen of Western culture and democracy makes them suspicious and cynical. And how can you blame them? Ask yourself this, is there any *real* answer in the philosophy behind Western culture? At least the Communists hold out a promise—yes, I admit, a very empty one—but still a promise.

God has commanded the Church to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation!" (Mark 16:15) If we were really doing our job and living the lives Jesus has commanded us, then the people in these lands would have the truth of Jesus and His holy promises to compare with these Marxist pipe-dreams.

### Is Communism Really God's Worst Enemy?

**"And you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21)**

I want to be extremely careful not to be misunderstood. I believe that Communism is a counterfeit that has its origins in hell. But all the pulpit-pounding and the sermon-screaming we

have heard in recent years against the evils of Communism needs to be examined. Is God really as concerned about systems as much as He is about **sin**? Do you really believe in your heart that Communism breeds more sin than "the American dream"? Ask yourself this: do you think there is more adultery in Russia than in America? More fornication? More greed and lust? More stealing and murder? How about pornography and drugs, corruption and deceit? See what I mean? God is tremendously hurt, pained to His heart by the state of sin that the Western world has now accepted and pronounced "**socially normal**."

Of course, there cannot be a "Christian Communist." You cannot condone a system that denies the existence of God and share God's righteousness at the same time. But which is worse? Someone who denies that God exists, and acts accordingly? Or someone who believes there's a God and still lives a life that totally denies Him? "*For to whom much is given, much is required*" (Luke 12:48), and "*He who knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin.*" (James 4:17) **What do you really think grieves God more? A land that says "religion is the opiate of the masses," or a land whose money says "In God We Trust," yet is full of sin, violence, and immorality?**

### Ezekiel 16

Remember, God's grief with His people Israel was far greater than His disappointment over Egypt or Babylon. He expected a land full of witchcraft and idolatry to act wickedly and perversely; but His heart was broken when He saw His bride, Israel, committing adulteries and harlotries with the heathen and their idols. Remember, God's enemy is not Communism, God's enemy is sin, and the current revival which is being reported in the Church behind the Iron Curtain only shows that a godless system cannot keep God from moving among His own people. But as the Church of the Western world flirts with the god of materialism, they will see no great move of God among them, because their sin is much greater than the Communists' (whom they so vocally love to hate).

In a land of freedom, where believers have never had a greater opportunity to see the Lord's glory descend upon a nation, the cry of

"Depart from Me, I never knew you!" awaits an unfaithful bride who loved her pleasures and programs, who delighted in her fundraising and building, more than the holy pleasure of delivering America and its spoil to a mighty God, through a true revival of prayer, repentance, and holiness. (See Matt. 25:14-30.)

The persecuted Church has little choice but to endure their tribulations to the end. (Matt. 24:14) But the fat, obnoxiously wealthy Church of our land "who has need of nothing" will be horrified when they see their temples were built of wood, hay, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12-14), and their gold, silver, and jewels (men's precious souls and the restored honor of God) were left lying on the ground, ignored, never having been put into the treasury of the Lord.

"So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. Because you say 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked ..." (Rev. 3:16-17)

We are in grave danger of being judged as the Church in Laodicea. Remember, there are two runners in the race—Revival and Judgment. Let us get on our knees and win!

1. The book *The Disciplined Life* by Richard S. Taylor, Bethany House Publishers, 1962, was used as a source for this section.

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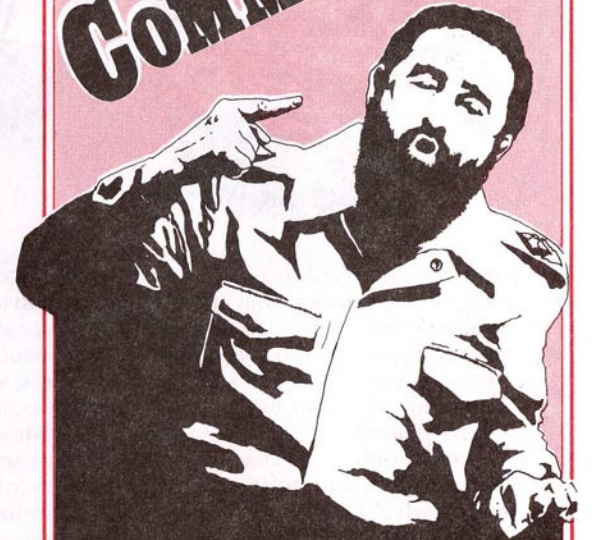
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# TOTAL COMMITMENT



## COMMUNISM VS. CHRISTIANITY

—by Keith Green

*"These men who have upset the world have come here also!" (Acts 17:6)*

When Jesus gave His final instructions to the disciples before He ascended to the Father, He made it clear that they had a job of mammoth proportions to accomplish. "*And you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8) This was the first time the disciples were instructed to look beyond their little country. In fact, Jesus had commanded them on previous missionary journeys to "*not go in the way of the Gentiles [people who were not Jews] and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" (Matt. 10:5-6) All of a sudden their eyes were



opened, their vision expanded. All prejudice, bigotry, nationalism, and cultural bounds had to snap at Jesus' words "Samaria and the remotest part of the earth." No self-respecting Jew would even step on Samaritan soil, let alone speak to one; and "the remotest part of the earth" would mean preaching to the heathen Gentiles! "Surely," they must have thought, "He means we should preach to the scattered Jews in foreign lands!" It's almost funny, as you continue reading Acts, how one by one, God proved to each disciple that He meant just what He said... "I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:47)

### A Great Void

There's a great emptiness in the world, and in the hearts of all men. This is the void that Jesus is meant to fill, in every nation as King, and in every man's heart as Lord. If the void remains, then men and nations will seek desperately to fill it with something else that will fulfill them. Satan is always willing and ready to provide an alternate, a counterfeit peace. The greatest danger about a counterfeit is that it looks just like the real thing, but has no value whatsoever.

Christianity swept the world in the first century A.D. It is the force of truth that was meant to answer and quench the thirst in all mankind for a reason and purpose to life. The thing that made the good news so believable to those who heard it at that time was not the message itself... but the messengers! Charles Finney once

wrote "Christians themselves are the greatest reason for accepting Christ. But they are also the greatest excuse for rejecting Him."

What made the early Christians so convincing? What was it that made 3,000 people convert in **one day** and be baptized in a city hostile to the Gospel... a city that had murdered their Lord only weeks before? (Acts 2:41) It was their **commitment**. It was their lifestyle. It was the Holy Spirit breathing the life and image of Jesus into a people who literally had left **everything**, were willing to suffer **anything**, and were ready to give **all** they had (possessions, time, even blood) to **anyone** to prove that their message was the **only** truth that could save men's souls from eternal suffering!

### Communists' Zeal Surpasses Christians'

It is this same commitment, this same willingness to leave everything and anyone for the "cause," the "people," and the "Party"—this same desire to "save" the whole world from suffering injustice and social evils, that is causing individuals, nations, and even whole continents to turn to a godless counterfeit—one that promises to unite the world for the common good and establish a "world order" that will end all oppression of the "common people." Again, it isn't really the message, but the messengers who are convincing the masses. And it puts us as Christians to shame!

Many Christians felt strongly rebuked when Billy Graham first read the following letter, written by an American college student who had been converted to Communism in Mexico. The purpose of the letter was to explain to his fiancé why he must break off their engagement:

*"We Communists have a high casualty rate. We're the ones who get slandered and ridiculed and fired from our jobs and in every other way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned. We live in virtual poverty. We turn back to the Party every penny we make above what is absolutely necessary to keep us alive. We Communists don't have time or the money for many movies or concerts or T-bone steaks or decent homes and new cars. We've been described as fanatics. We are fanatics! Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor—the struggle for World Communism.*

*"We Communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money could buy. We have a cause to fight for, a definite purpose in life. We subordinate our petty, per-*

*sonal selves into a great movement of humanity. And if our personal lives seem hard or our egos appear to suffer through subordination to the Party, then we are adequately compensated by the fact that each of us in his small way is contributing to something new and true and better for mankind. The Communist cause is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife and mistress, my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. Its hold on me grows, not lessens, as time goes on. Therefore, I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without relating it to this force which both guides and drives my life. I evaluate people, books, ideas, and actions according to how they affect the Communist cause and by their attitude toward it. I've already been in jail because of my ideas, and if necessary, I'm ready to go before a firing squad."*

If Communists can be as devoted as this, how much more should Christians pour themselves out in intense devotion for their glorious Lord!

### The World Belongs To The Disciplined

One of the most alarming disclosures coming out of the Communist world is that of the rugged training and discipline they are putting their youth through. In contrast, there has never before been such a mass pilgrimage to the altar of leisure in our country. At the end of the rainbow for every American is relaxation and recreation. The Western world loves to play. Americans average over eight hours a day of television per household!

In the 1920s, inter-collegiate debating drew large crowds. Now the debates are held in side rooms while crowds cheer at the basketball game. It takes discipline to learn a new art, or science, or skill; it takes no discipline to watch football or a wrestling match. The point must be made that the shift of excited, popular interest from debates to sports is a sign of cultural decline. As someone once said, "It is either discipline or decadence."

And the Church has not escaped. Never has there been such an interest in sports among "the saints." I've heard much more talk and excitement about the national ratings of college teams among Christians in churches and Sunday schools, than about how to conquer the land for God. As an almost unbelievable example, I recently heard about one large church in Texas who during the Superbowl (when the Dallas Cowboys were playing) feared that the Sunday evening service (not to mention the offering) would be poorly attended. So the pastor and elders came up with a wonderful idea! They brought a large-screen video projection system into the sanctuary and pro-

ceeded to "entertain" the parishoners with a nice, American, Christian display of "knockin' and hittin' 'em for Christ!" This might be a blatant example, but the spirit of "fun in the Son" is threatening to destroy what little hope we have left to avoid judgment, by having true cross-embracing revival. "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God... and if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?" (1 Peter 4:17-18)

Communist Lenin once said: "With a handful of dedicated people who will give me their lives, I will control the world." This must have sounded like quite a rash statement to those who first heard it, but it did not prove an empty boast. In 1903, this one man, with 17 followers, began his attack on the world. By 1918, the number had increased to 40,000, and with that 40,000 he gained control of the 160 million people of Russia. And the movement has gone on and now controls over one-third of the population of the world. With this in mind, consider the warning of the American President, Theodore Roosevelt:

*"The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living, and the get-rich-quick theory of life."*

### The Army Of God (Eph. 6:10-18)

What's needed today is an army. A truly Christian force, armed to the teeth with love and the power of God, completely trusting God to meet their needs and lead them into battle and victory!

I have heard reports from missionaries visiting home that there is much division and contention between missionaries on the field. The same doctrinal differences that plague our denominations at home are bringing a bad name to our Lord in other lands. "A house divided against itself will not be able to stand." (Mark 3:25) What are we to do? A world starving for the truth will not wait for us to get our act together... it will pass us by and drink up the newest, nicest sounding philosophy or religion to come along. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Moonies are not only making great