

Political Socialism and the Church Community

By Dave DeWitt

Why is it that evangelicals, who oppose socialism in government, promote it in the church?

Government Socialism Is

1. Build the government institution bigger.
2. Redistribute wealth. Tax the rich and distribute it to the needy, as determined by the government, rather than encouraging people to give to independent charities individually.
3. Build up an elite class of leaders, especially the president and his staff and appointees (or czars).
4. The Government creates the jobs (bridges to nowhere, electric cars, wind generators, alternative fuels) rather than individuals creating jobs to meet the demands of the market.
5. Create a large dependent group of people that need government handouts to survive. Don't make them productive, manage their problems so they will need you, and re-elect you.
6. Ignore the financial deficit. Make people think we are working on it because we talk about it. But make them think it doesn't matter because they are getting a weekly check.
7. Allow open borders and "illegal immigrants" because they will receive government handouts, and vote for the socialist leaders.
8. The government takes care of you (and controls you) from the cradle to the grave.
9. The government takes precedent over the family because "it takes a village."
10. Create an entitlement society where people think it's the government's job to meet their needs.

Church Community Is

1. Build the church institution bigger.
2. Redistribute wealth. Collect a 10% tithe from the rich and distribute it to the needy, as determined by the church, rather than encouraging people to support independent ministries.
3. Build up an elite class of leaders, especially the pastors, worship leaders and elders.
4. The church creates jobs (like small groups, mission trips, counseling, support groups) rather than individual believers teaching and forming groups to meet needs.
5. Create a large dependent group of people that think they need the church to get to God. Don't take a stand against their sin, manage it with church programs so they will continue to attend the church.
6. Ignore the moral & theological deficit. Make people think we are concerned about sin in general because we talk about it. But make them think it doesn't matter because we do a good weekly "service".
7. Encourage "seekers" because they will receive the program, become dependent on the church and support the church leaders.
8. The church takes care of you (and controls you) from the cradle to the grave.
9. The church takes precedent over the family because "it takes a community."
10. Create an entitlement congregation where church-goers think it's the church's job to meet their needs.

Community Destroys Hope

Hope is desired expectation. The biggest enemy of hope is to have limited desire or limited expectation. Hope will always be limited when we believe that excelling in any area is bad. Interestingly, that's what many preachers preach. And it's usually deceptively disguised as a push for community. For example, in his sermon on January 29, 2012, Jim Samra, pastor of Calvary Udenominational Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, began his sermon with the following quote from the book: *Called to be Church* by Anthony Robinson. First, I shall give you Robinson's words, then Samra's.

“So our North American sense of placing high value on the individual, in many ways a strength, has the flip side of weakening the community.”

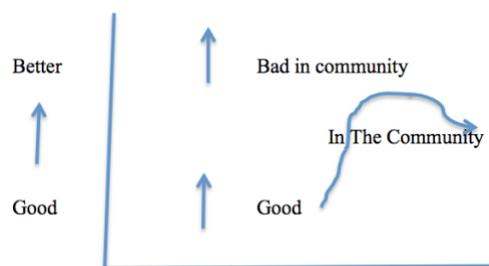
So, according to Robinson, a value which is a strength becomes a weakness when we pursue it too much, because it destroys community.

Speaking in agreement with Robinson, Jim Samra said this:

God is for the individual. God created us as individuals. He saves us as individuals. Jesus says He calls us individually by name. **But with every positive that God does there is always a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use** and in this case the blessing of individuality can become the curse of individualism, when we become isolated from others, disconnected, and solely focused on ourselves. And nowhere is this tendency toward individualization more dangerous than in the area of money and possessions. It's my money and my stuff... We have been talking about God's desire for us to be in community...the way God loves us is beyond knowledge, you cannot learn about it. You can only experience it, and God tells us that it is experienced in community.

So here is the Samra's morality: **“But with every positive that God does there is always a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use.”**

Let's put this on a graph. Any rational person understands that if “up” on a graph is good, then further up on that graph is also good. It's usually referred to as “better.” But according to Samra, what Satan does is not contrary to what God does, it is **corresponding** to what God does. It's the same thing—just too much of it. Specifically, **“the blessing of individuality can become the curse of individualism.”** So when I take what God says too far it becomes a curse.



I want you to get this loud and clear.

NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE IS THE CHURCH EVER CALLED A COMMUNITY.
NEVER! EVER! ANYWHERE!

Nor is it ever described as a community. Nor are there any New Testament Greek words which somebody somewhere translates as “community.” None, no not one. Quite the opposite. The church is called a **body**, never a community (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:4, 12, 16). A body is something in which every individual part is essential. *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it* (1 Corinthians 12:27). Notice in this sentence, there is no “community” between *Christ's body*, and being *individually members of it*. The healthier each part is, the better the body is.

The New Testament is full of examples of how people served one another voluntarily, directly *out of their private means* (Luke 8:3; 16:10-31). This was sometimes done collectively, but never communally. Giving activities, such as described in Acts 4:32-37; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; and 2 Corinthians 8-9 were: temporary, personal, and city-wide.

Community is communism, where nobody is individually significant, and anybody can be replaced by somebody else. The focus on community is to extinguish hope (desire and expectation). I traveled for years in the Soviet Block countries under communism. I saw doctors, engineers, and teachers who cared nothing about their personal development or the progress of anything they were working on. I know a mathematics professor who quit teaching at the university to take a job sweeping streets because he could make more money sweeping streets. Community destroys individual desire and expectation, thus neutering hope. What evangelicals are upset about in their government, they are promoting in their churches.

There is an old Russian story about Ivan and Uri. Ivan and Uri were neighbors, but Ivan hated Uri because Uri had a goat and Ivan didn't. One day, Ivan was digging in his garden and found a bottle and a genie came out and said, "I'm only a one-wish genie, so what one wish can I grant you? What Ivan wished for was that Uri's goat would die.

This is a product of communism. It's the same as a socialist government saying we need to increase the taxes on the rich so we can give more to the poor (via building a stronger government and creating a dependent entitlement society that will re-elect socialist leaders).

The problem is, you don't make the weak strong by making the strong weak. But that's exactly what is going on with preachers who promote community. These preachers tell us too much good is bad. So, is too much righteousness, holiness, and justice bad? Samra tells us "**with every positive that God does there is always a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use.**"

By the way, would preachers like Samra conclude that if community is good, too much community is bad? Since Samra tells us that God wants us to be in community, then should we conclude that too much community is "**a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use**"?

Unlike things (which are neither good nor bad—Romans 14:14), evil is always bad, and virtue is always good. For example, *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Galatians 5:22). Am I to believe that if I have too much love or joy or peace or patience or kindness or goodness, etc. that it will become "**a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use**"?

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Am I to believe that if I go too far in being kind, not seeking my own, not being provoked, not taking into account a wrong suffered, that I am in danger of "**a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use**"?

It's the perversion of a good thing that's bad, not taking it too far. Bad is breaking what is good, not pursuing more of it. Did the prophets overdo it when they obeyed God to their own peril? Was Jesus going too far when He obeyed the will of God all the way to the cross? Were the apostles going too far when they gave up everything to follow Christ? Were the martyrs of the 100s and 200s going too

far when they were burned and fed to lions for their faith? And, by the way, all of those were extreme individual decisions, not the function of a community.

Community thinking, that we should be *lukewarm*, keeps us from hope, and it is reprehensible to the Lord. Jesus told the church of Laodicea:

*I know your deeds, that you are **neither cold nor hot**; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are **lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth*
(Revelation 3:15-16).

If being an individual is good (and it is, it's not just western or European), then there is no way to overdo it. Becoming part of a community is what's bad, because it sacrifices my development as an individual, reduces my perspective of my responsibility, encourages me to commit the sins of my community, and diminishes my hope.

If I am driving on a freeway among 100 cars on four lanes, all of us going 20 miles an hour over the speed limit, and we pass a parked police car, I have very little concern of getting pulled over (and being held accountable). I'm in a community. But if I am on a lonely country road by myself driving 20 miles an hour over the speed limit, and I go past a parked police car, now I am concerned. Community tends to make me feel good about my sin. Nobody likes to drink alone.

Orrrrr you can get divorced and remarried and feel okay about it because everybody else in the community does it or tolerates it. Orrrrr your son or daughter (or grandparent) can be cohabitating with their girlfriend or boyfriend and nobody says anything, and we feel good about it because bunches of people are doing it, and it is tolerated by our church "community." Orrrrr you can have women teaching men, overlook homosexual relationships, casual blasphemy, lying and cheating, because it's tolerated by the "community." But you cannot develop yourself as an individual because that's "**a corresponding negative that Satan tries to use.**"

Altruism Is Promoted by Community and Destructive to Hope

The following was written by Walter A. Henrichsen.

Our culture, with its emphasis on altruism, calls into question the legitimacy of the biblical theme of hope. The dictionary defines altruism as "selflessness." It is meeting the needs of others without any desire for or anticipation of personal gain. As one of my seminary professors taught, "The Christian life should be characterized by disinterested piety"... Hope, on the other hand, always entails personal gain. You always hope in the direction of what you consider to be in your interest.

This means that hope and altruism are mutually exclusive. You can only be altruistic to the degree that you are void of hope. Those who believe that people should be altruistic repudiate the role of hope in motivating people to do what God calls good. However, God created all people in such a way that they are motivated by hope. Altruism insists that people learn to be motivated contrary to the way God made them. Their premise: our job is to educate people in such a way as to correct the mistake God made when He created man.

All biblical commands assume that people are motivated by hope. You obey God because you wish to avoid the consequences of His displeasure and anticipate His rewarding you for your obedience.