

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

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Workers of the Church, Unite!: The Radical Marxist Foundation of Tim Keller's Social Gospel Part 1 by Timothy F. Kauffman

When Bill de Blasio, the new mayor of New York City was running for office in 2013, he acknowledged that he has been largely influenced by the Marxist Liberation Theology movement,¹ and his campaign web site boldly proclaimed that he would tackle “the crisis of income inequality.”² In his inaugural address, Mayor de Blasio promised to end the economic inequality that is threatening New York,³ and his solution for this is the enactment of a living wage law.⁴ The enactment of living wage laws is a typical attempt by a Marxist to return “surplus value” to the worker—which is to say, the “living wage” redistributes profits from the capitalist back to the worker to whom it allegedly belongs. According to Marxist theory, all profit is “surplus value,” and “the capitalist who produces surplus value” does so by “extract[ing] unpaid labour directly from the labourers.”⁵ Profit, therefore, is

wages that have been withheld, or stolen, from the laborer. In his *Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, Marxist economist Ernest Mandel explains the significance of the living wage:

[T]he living cost of labour-power constitutes its value and that surplus value is the difference between this living cost and the value created by this labour-power.... [E]verything beyond this fraction is surplus value, free labour supplied by the worker and appropriated by the capitalist without an equivalent offset.⁶

The “living wage” therefore is simply a euphemism for redistribution of wealth generated in a capitalist system. To de Blasio, paying workers anything less than a “living wage” is “wage-theft,” so a part of his platform was to “create a dedicated legal services fund to support low-income workers challenging wage theft.”⁷ But as Mandel explains, “the concept of a living wage...is not a physiologically rigid one but incorporates wants which...tend to increase” over time.⁸ There can therefore be no end to calls for a higher “living wage.” No wage can ever be enough if it is based on a man’s wants, and as long as there yet exist profits in a free market system, there will be calls for those profits to be returned to

¹ Javier C. Hernandez, “A Mayoral Hopeful Now, de Blasio Was Once a Young Leftist,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/23/nyregion/a-mayoral-hopeful-now-de-blasio-was-once-a-young-leftist.html?pagewanted=all>, accessed January 4, 2014.

² Bill De Blasio, *One New York, Rising Together*, <http://www.billdeblasio.com>, retrieved January 5, 2014.

³ Bill De Blasio, “Inaugural Address,” *New York Times*, January 1, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/02/nyregion/complete-text-of-bill-de-blosiosinaugurationsspeech.html>, retrieved January 3, 2014.

⁴ De Blasio, *One New York, Rising Together*, 9.

⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 7: “The Accumulation of Capital.”

⁶ Ernest Mandel, *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, (Chippendale, New South Wales, Australia: Resistance Books, 2002), 19-20.

⁷ De Blasio, *One New York, Rising Together*, 9.

⁸ Mandel, 19.

the workers through an increase in the living wage. That is Marxism.

In November 2013, newly elected Pope Francis issued his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, in which he criticizes the theory of trickle-down economics and Adam Smith's "invisible hand" that essentially uses the price mechanism of a free market as the engine for the efficient allocation of scarce resources with alternate uses. He criticizes those who advocate for free markets and who trust in "the invisible hand" to establish market prices for goods and services. In short, Francis teaches that free-market supply-side economic theory is a "selfish ideal" and "has never been confirmed by the facts."⁹ Pope Francis denies that he is Marxist,¹⁰ but his Apostolic Exhortation is riddled with Marxist economic theory. He calls for a "just wage," which is another term for the "living wage" and reflects his desire that wages be set by the purchasing preferences of the workers rather than by the market value of their labor: "A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use."¹¹

It bothered Marx that the value of a worker's labor in a capitalist society was expressed in monetary terms established by a free market exchange—what he called the commoditization of labor¹²—and it apparently bothers Pope Francis, too. He wants people to be paid according to their needs, not according to the market value of their labor. Francis' complaint that corporations are known to "increase profits by reducing the work force"¹³ pays homage to Marx's theory in which "profit" is "surplus value," and "surplus value" is essentially "unpaid labor."¹⁴ Profits realized through gains in operational efficiency by reducing workforce, according to

Francis, are actually wages taken from the newly unemployed.¹⁵ That is Marxism.

Only a few days after Pope Francis issued his Apostolic Exhortation, U. S. President, Barack Obama declared that income inequality "is the defining challenge of our time."¹⁶ This is the core belief of Marxist philosophy, and as Obama himself acknowledges in his memoirs, he is naturally drawn toward Marxism, and intentionally chose Marxist professors while he attended Occidental College.¹⁷ Barack Obama's former church in Chicago, Trinity United Church of Christ, lists as part of its 10-point mission to work toward "economic parity," because God "is not pleased with America's economic mal-distribution!"¹⁸ In 1996, Barack Obama joined the leftist New Party, a political party that is "deeply hostile... to American capitalism."¹⁹ His affection for Marxist economic theory and his distaste for capitalism are the basis for President Obama's famous quip to Joe the Plumber, "when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody." Not surprisingly, President Obama identifies Reinhold Niebuhr, a committed Marxist, as "one of my favorite philosophers."²⁰ Like Liberation Theologians of today, Niebuhr "argued that social radicalism and Marxism owed their existence to Christian inspiration."²¹ Biographer Ronald H. Stone provides the background of Niebuhr's Marxism:

¹⁵ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 204.

¹⁶ David Jackson, "Obama: Income Inequality Threatens American Dream," *USA Today*, December 4, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/12/04/obama-income-inequality-speech-center-for-american-progress/3867747/>, accessed January 4, 2014.

¹⁷ Barack Obama, *Dreams From My Father* (New York: Random House, 2007), 100.

¹⁸ Trinity United Church of Christ, "About Us," "Our Mission," <http://www.trinitychicago.org/index.php>, accessed January 5, 2014.

¹⁹ Stanley Kurtz, "Obama's Third-Party History: New Documents Shed New Light on His Ties to a Leftist Party in the 1990s," *National Review*, June 7, 2012, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/302031/obamas-third-party-history-stanley-kurtz>, accessed January 5, 2014.

²⁰ David Brooks, "Obama, Gospel and Verse," *The New York Times*, April 26, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/26/opinion/26brooks.html?r=0>, accessed January 4, 2014.

²¹ Ronald H. Stone, *Professor Reinhold Niebuhr: A Mentor to the Twentieth Century*, (Louisville, KY, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 87.

⁹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 54, 204, <http://www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en/index.html>, November 24, 2013.

¹⁰ Philip Pullella, "I'm No Marxist, Pope Francis Tells Conservative Critics," *Reuters*, December 15, 2013, http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/12/15/21909041-im-no-marxist-pope-francis-tells-conservative-critics?lite, accessed December 30, 2013.

¹¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 192.

¹² Marx, *Capital*, 1, 1, 1, 4: "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof."

¹³ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 204.

¹⁴ Marx, *Capital*, 1, 1, 1, 7: "The Accumulation of Capital."

Late in the 1930s [Niebuhr] outlined his essential agreement with Marxist thought. Marxism furnished an analysis of the economic structure of society that was essentially correct. It correctly perceived the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as inevitable. He agreed that private ownership of the means of production was the basic cause of periodic economic crises. Marxism was right in its judgment that the communal ownership of property was the prerequisite of social justice. He accepted Lenin's view that capitalism was responsible for the economic imperialism that characterized the advanced nations.²²

When he saw the vast accumulation of wealth by the Ford Motor Company, Niebuhr "argued that an entity the size of the Ford Motor Company was in fact a public corporation and should no longer be privately owned."²³ This conviction is the same as that behind President Obama's restructuring of America's health care industry. One of the key planks in a transition to Marxism, according to Engels' *Principles of Communism*, is the "gradual expropriation" of private industry "through competition by state industry."²⁴ Obama campaigned for the inclusion of a public option in his signature Affordable Care Act: "I continue to believe that a public option within the basket of insurance choices would help improve quality and bring down costs."²⁵ The inclusion of a "public option" to compete with private corporations was just part of his strategy to transition the U. S. health care industry to a single-payer, government run industry.²⁶ That is Marxism.

Whether through the campaign of Mayor de Blasio in New York, the writings of Pope Francis in Rome,

²² Stone, 89.

²³ Stone, 32.

²⁴ Frederick Engels, *The Principles of Communism*, Question 18, (ii).

²⁵ Jake Tapper, "Obama's School Speech and Health Care Push Highlights Challenges of Presidency," *ABC News*, September 8, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obama-school-speech-health-care-push-highlights-challenges/story?id=8513467>, accessed January 5, 2014.

²⁶ President Obama's pledge to transition the US Health Care industry to a single-payer system can be seen at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/05222009/watch2.html>.

or the philosophical meanderings of President Obama, Christians throughout the world are being exposed to the economic theories of high-profile Marxists. Because of the recent prominence of Marxist thought in the daily news diet of the informed Christian, it may serve the Church well to become familiar not only with the fundamentals of Marxism, but also with the Biblical condemnation of Marxism as an economic theory.

Socialism, which according to Marx merely serves as a transition in an economic shift away from capitalism toward Marxism,²⁷ may justifiably be called the institutionalization of man's natural proclivity for covetousness. P. T. Bauer wrote that socialism and its advocates essentially "institutionalize and organize envy and resentment against economically effective people."²⁸ Economically effective people have a propensity for accumulating wealth, and that concentration of wealth is the object of the socialist's envy. The sole necessary ingredient for socialism is for a populace to *covet* its neighbor's goods. In a socialist economy, the government sanctions that covetousness and appropriates the goods of the economically effective to the economically ineffective. Appropriation of another man's property, however, is immoral because it is theft.

Capitalism, on the other hand, requires something more than the raw desire to obtain another man's property. It requires that a man *value* his neighbor's goods. There is nothing so efficient in establishing the objective value of another man's goods as the price mechanism of the free market. The prelude to a commercial exchange in capitalism is not only "which of my neighbor's goods do I *desire*?" but also, "what is the *value* of my neighbor's goods?" It is the difference between "I want to eat my neighbor's apples," and "What are my neighbor's apples *worth*?" The price mechanism itself does not quench man's covetousness—it merely informs it, and that information is what draws the line between theft and legitimate acquisition. Because theft is prohibited, the buyer must decide whether he wants

²⁷ Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Part IV: "On Democracy," (May 1875), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/>, accessed January 5, 2014.

²⁸ P.T. Bauer, *Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 24.

his neighbor's apples more than he wants to keep his own money, and his neighbor must decide whether he wants the buyer's money more than he wants to keep his apples. The completion of such a transaction is purely voluntary, as neither party is obligated or compelled to part with either his goods or his money. Promiscuous consumption of "thy neighbour's goods" is thus discouraged when price informs desire and when a government respects the property rights of both parties. Put simply, capitalism respects property rights, establishes objective value through the price mechanism, and stands in the way of a man's natural proclivity for covetousness. It is no surprise, as we shall see, that socialists despise the price mechanism precisely because it has this effect. Socialists do not appreciate, and do not approve of, the erection of a moral barrier between their desire and its object.

The Scriptural prohibition against appropriating one's neighbor's property is found in *Deuteronomy* 27:17, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." Before God, it is reprehensible to appropriate thy neighbor's goods. God's final commandment in the Decalogue therefore prohibits the only thing that can make socialism work: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (*Exodus* 20:17). Paul's exhortation in *2 Thessalonians* 3:10—"if any would not work, neither should he eat"—is based on these principles. Paul refused to appropriate his neighbor's bread unless it was obtained in a free market exchange for the equivalent value of his labor: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you" (*2 Thessalonians* 3:8). In this context, when Paul says that we should work in quietness and eat our own bread, lest there be "some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all" (*2 Thessalonians* 3:11), he is prohibiting socialism. A man cannot simply take his neighbor's bread because he is hungry. He must earn it by monetizing his labor, converting his labor into a wage, and then accumulating wages sufficient to acquire his neighbor's bread in a voluntary exchange. Paul's parting words to the Ephesian elders were that he had not "coveted" his neighbor's

goods, but rather had acquired his "necessities" by actually *earning* them (*Acts* 20:33-34). This, as we shall see, is deeply and gravely offensive to the socialist mind.

Because it is un-Biblical, socialism must always be repackaged and remarketed to Christians in a manner that cloaks its lawlessness behind the curtain of the ostensible kindness and compassion of its advocates. As Bauer observes, "Politicians and intellectuals have supplied articulation and a veneer of intellectual respectability to envy and resentment," in their advocacy for socialism.²⁹ There is one high-profile Marxist who is particularly effective at repackaging Marxism for a Christian audience, but due to his ability to disguise his economic philosophy, he is largely flying "under the radar." That Marxist is Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.

It may come as a surprise to his conservative evangelical readers that Tim Keller's recent book, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*, is simply a recapitulation of Marx's theory of alienation, and that Keller's solution to the problem of alienation is indistinguishable from Marx's. It will surprise his readers to know that Keller's theory of wages is derived from Marxism. It will surprise his readers to know that when Keller recommends modern examples of churches that implement a Christian economic ideal, he identifies churches and organizations that are thoroughly Marxist, and are inspired by leftist Saul Alinsky, the author of *Rules for Radicals*. In this article, we will review Keller's words and his sources to establish his economic theory. What we shall find is a consistent call for a transition from a capitalist economy to a socialist economy through class struggle based on Marxist principles—all cloaked in the language of Biblical Christianity.

Marx's Theory of Alienation

According to Marx, alienation occurs in society when "private individuals or groups of individuals ...carry on their work independently of each

²⁹ Bauer, 24.

other,”³⁰ and wage labor is the “most profound form of alienation.”³¹ According to Marxists.org, “Since wage workers sell their labour power to earn a living, and the capitalist owns the labour process, the product of the workers’ labour is in a very real sense alien to the worker.”³² When a man works in order to obtain money by which he procures food in order to live, he has been unjustly alienated from the product of his labor. Tim Keller’s recent book, *Every Good Endeavor*, is marketed as a Christian approach to work, but it is actually Keller’s defense of a Marxist economic paradigm within the church. Keller makes this clear:

Karl Marx was the first person to speak of “alienated labor” in the heyday of the early-nineteenth century European industry.... The great shift from an industrial economy to a knowledge and service economy has improved the immediate working conditions of many but has locked countless others into low-paying service sector jobs that experience the same alienating disconnectedness from the fruits or products of their work.³³

Keller has simply restated the basis of Marx’s economic theory: because the capitalist owns the labor process, the product of the workers’ labor is in a very real sense alien to the worker. In such an environment, Marx wrote, “my work is an alienation of life, for I work in order to live, in order to obtain for myself the means of life.”³⁴ But Marxists have a solution: “Alienation can be overcome by restoring the truly human relationship to the labour process, by people working in order to meet people’s needs,

working as an expression of their own human nature, not just to earn a living.”³⁵

Keller explains from the beginning that the purpose of his book is to overcome alienation by doing exactly what Marxists suggest. He is not nearly so candid, but this is exactly what he proposes to do. Keller writes,

Robert Bellah’s landmark book, *Habits of the Heart*, helped many people name the thing that was (and still is) eating away at the cohesiveness of our culture—“expressive individualism.” ... [N]ear the end of *Habits*, the author proposes one measure that would go a long way toward reweaving the unraveling culture: “*To make a real difference... [there would have to be] a reappropriation of the idea of vocation or calling, a return in a new way to the idea of work as a contribution to the good of all and not merely as a means to one’s own advancement.*” That is a remarkable statement.³⁶

The “expressive individualism” that is “eating away at the cohesiveness of our culture,” is just another way of expressing Marx’s concept of alienation, *i.e.*, when “private individuals or groups of individuals ... carry on their work independently of each other.” Bellah’s challenge, italicized above, is simply a recapitulation of the Marxist solution to it. Keller dives in and takes Bellah’s challenge:

If Bellah is right, one of the hopes for our unraveling society is the recovery of the idea that all human work is not merely a job but a calling.... And so, taking our cue from Bellah’s challenge, in this book we will do what we can to help illuminate the transformative and revolutionary connection between Christian faith and the workplace.³⁷

What Bellah proposed was government intervention to end capitalism by reducing the “punishments of failure and the rewards of success.” To give the reader an indication of the vast sociological and

³⁰ Marx, *Capital*, 1, 1: “Commodities and Money,” 1: “Commodities,” 4, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof.”

³¹ See “Alienation” at <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/a/l.htm>.

³² See “Alienation” at <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/a/l.htm>.

³³ Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 104, 105.

³⁴ Karl Marx, *Comments on James Mill, Éléments D’économie Politique*, 1844, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/james-mill/>, accessed January 5, 2014.

³⁵ See “Alienation” at <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/a/l.htm>.

³⁶ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 18, 19 (brackets in original, emphasis added).

³⁷ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 18, 19.

economic significance of the Marxist “challenge” issued by Bellah and taken up by Keller, we provide Bellah’s actual words from *Habits of the Heart*, including what Keller left out:

If we are right in our stress on a revitalized social ecology, then one critically important action that government could take in a new political atmosphere would be, in Christopher Jencks’s words, to reduce the “punishments of failure and the rewards of success.” Reducing the inordinate rewards of ambition and our inordinate fears of ending up as losers would offer the possibility of great change in the meaning of work in our society and all that would go with such a change. To make a real difference, such a shift of rewards would have to be a part of a reappropriation of the idea of vocation or calling, a return in a new way to the idea of work as a contribution to the good of all and not merely as a means to one’s own advancement.³⁸

Bellah is calling us to implement Christopher Jencks’ recommendation from his book, *Inequality*. Jencks recommends that we equalize distribution of income through government intervention and break the capitalist link between effort and reward. That is Marxism. In his book, Jencks makes no attempt to cloak this desire: “The reader should by now have gathered that our primary concern is with equalizing the distribution of income.”³⁹

What offends both Jencks and Bellah is the capitalist idea of linking wages to productivity, and risk to reward. To correct this problem, Bellah recommends a Marxist solution to effect a “great change in the meaning of work in our society.” Keller passes it on to the church for consumption by first sanitizing it of its Marxist context. This is no passing or accidental reference to Bellah’s work by Keller. It is rather the core of Keller’s thesis. Later in *Every Good Endeavor*, Keller re-emphasizes this, reminding the reader that the purpose of the book is to respond to Bellah’s challenge to implement a Marx-

ist solution: “Bellah called us to recover the idea that work is a ‘vocation’ or calling, ‘a contribution to the good of all and not merely... a means to one’s own advancement,’ to one’s self-fulfillment and power.”⁴⁰

The origin of Bellah’s affinity for Marxism is evident from his own words: “I was a member of the Communist Party as a Harvard undergraduate from 1947 to 1949. During that period I was mainly involved in the John Reed Club, a recognized student organization concerned with the study of Marxism.”⁴¹ It is no accident, therefore, that Bellah’s “challenge” is simply a call to implement Marx’s solution to the problem of alienation. What is surprising is that Keller takes it up and expects the church to swallow it whole *as the hope* “for our unravelling society”!

Marx’s Theory of Wages

Marx’s solution to alienation was to change completely how people think about wages. Marx’s concern about the capitalist paradigm was that earning a wage in exchange for labor is a way of serving oneself, rather than the needs of the community: “Production has become a means of gaining a living... I have produced for myself and not for you, just as you have produced for yourself and not for me.”⁴² To Marx, the wage one ought to receive in exchange for his labor is not money, but the pleasure of “looking at the object” produced as a “manifestation of my life,” and the satisfaction of having served the needs of the community:

In my production I would have objectified my individuality, its specific character, and therefore enjoyed not only an individual manifestation of my life during the activity, but also when looking at the object I would have the individual pleasure of knowing my personality to be objective, visible to the senses.... In your enjoyment or use of my product I would have the direct enjoyment both of being conscious of having satisfied a human need by my work... and of having

³⁸ Robert Neelly Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 287, 288.

³⁹ Christopher Jencks, *et al*, *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 261.

⁴⁰ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 66 (ellipses in original).

⁴¹ Robert Bellah, “To the Editors,” *The New York Review of Books*, (July 14, 1977), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1977/jul/14/veritas-at-harvard-another-exchange/>, accessed September 27, 2013.

⁴² Marx, *Comments on James Mill*.

thus created an object corresponding to the need of another man's essential nature.... In the individual expression of my life I would have directly created your expression of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have directly confirmed and realised my true nature, my human nature, my communal nature.⁴³

One advocate of Marx's theory of wages was Dorothy Sayers, and in *Every Good Endeavor*, Keller says Sayers got it exactly right. Like Marx, Sayers resented the monetization of labor, and felt that labor should be an expression of one's true nature rather than an activity performed in order to earn a wage. That true nature, she believed, should be spent in service to society rather than for the purpose of "gainful employment." She wrote in her two essays "Creed or Chaos?" and "Why Work?,"

The modern tendency seems to be to identify work with gainful employment; ... The fallacy being that work is not the expression of man's creative energy in the service of Society, but only something he does in order to obtain money and leisure.... The habit of thinking about work as something one does to make money is so ingrained in us that we can scarcely imagine what a revolutionary change it would be to think about it instead in terms of the work done.⁴⁴

This idea of work as a means of gainful employment was considered "heresy" in Sayers' eyes,⁴⁵ just as it was with Marx. As with Marx, Sayers wanted to eliminate the price mechanism in commercial exchanges, and replace it with a subjective communal determination of the value of goods and services. Workers would thereby be provided just enough to continue doing that which most enflames their creative passions. No longer should they have to consider salary, *or even whether there is a demand for their products*. In fact, Sayers thought workers should be able to choose their occupation independently of "economic or any other considera-

tions."⁴⁶ Society would require of each man according to his skills and abilities, and provide him with sufficient compensation to meet his needs.⁴⁷ His wages are simply to contemplate the product of his labor and to know that he has served the community. She writes:

[W]hat a revolutionary change it would be to think about [work] instead in terms of the work done. To do so would mean taking the attitude of mind we reserve for our unpaid work—our hobbies, our leisure interests, the things we make and do for pleasure—and making *that* the standard of all our judgments about things and people. We should ask of an enterprise, not "will it pay?" but "is it good?"; of a man, not "what does he make?" but "what is his work worth?"⁴⁸; of goods, not "Can we induce people to buy them?" but "are they useful things well made?"; of employment, not "how much a week?" but "will it exercise my faculties to the utmost?" ... So long as Society provides the worker with a sufficient return in real wealth to enable him to carry on the work properly, then he has his reward. For his work is the measure of his life, and his satisfaction is found in the fulfillment of his own nature, and in contemplation of the perfection of his work.⁴⁹

That is Marxism. Sayers arrived at these conclusions at the height of World War II, and marveled that, in a time of scarcity when survival is the primary objective, everyone was keenly focused on the quality of his work rather than on profits.⁵⁰ In fact, she deeply resented capitalism, and recommended that the wartime mentality of scarcity be preserved after the war: "[S]hall we want to go back to that civilization of greed and waste which we dignify by

⁴⁶ Sayers, "Why Work?" in *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 131.

⁴⁷ Sayers is also parroting Roman Catholic Social Teaching, as she was also a Romanist. – Editor.

⁴⁸ Sayers means "worth" apart from the price mechanism of the free market here. As she clarifies in the next paragraph, a product should not be "valued for what it will fetch, but only for what it is worth in itself" (Sayers, 126).

⁴⁹ Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 125, 126. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁰ Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 119-121.

⁴³ Marx, *Comments on James Mill*.

⁴⁴ Dorothy Sayers, "Why Work?" in *Letters to a Diminished Church: Passionate Arguments for the Relevance of Christian Doctrine*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 65, 125.

⁴⁵ Sayers, "Creed or Chaos" in *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 65.

the name of a ‘high standard of living?’⁵¹ Yet in *Every Good Endeavor*, Keller highlights Sayers’ “revolutionary way of looking at work” and recommends it to the church as the ideal. Listen to Keller extol the wisdom of Sayers’ approach:⁵² “This revolutionary way of looking at work gives all work a common and exalted purpose: to honor God by loving your neighbor and serving them through your work. Author Dorothy Sayers recounts how many British men and women stumbled upon something like this understanding of work during the dark days of World War II.”⁵³

To bring about this new world order, Sayers proposes in true Marxist style that the workers of the world should unite and throw off the shackles of the Bourgeoisie, so the Proletariat can take over:

Now the answer to this question, if we are resolute to know what we are about, will not be left to rich men—to manufacturers and financiers. If these people have governed the world of late years, it is only because we ourselves put the power into their hands. The question can and should be answered by the worker and the consumer.... We could—you and I—bring the whole fantastic economy of profitable waste down to the ground overnight, without legislation and without revolution, merely by refusing to cooperate with it.... Whatever we do, we shall be faced with grave difficulties. That cannot be disguised. But it will make a great difference to the result if we are genuinely aiming at a real change in economic thinking. And by that I mean a radical change from top to bottom—a new system; not a mere adjustment of the old system to favor a different set of people.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 123.

⁵² Why are Protestants extolling the “wisdom” of Roman Catholic writers? Douglas Wilson has advocated Sayers medieval Romanist Classical education for years. Keller also recommends many Roman Catholic mystics: “The best things that have been written almost are by Catholics during the Counter Reformation—Ignatius Loyola, Francis de Sales, John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila—great stuff!” (from Keller’s *Meditation—What it is*, October 5, 1998, leadership training session at Redeemer Presbyterian Church (24:50-25:00), retrieved from <http://sermons2.redeemer.com/sermons/meditation-what-it>). – Editor.

⁵³ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 74.

⁵⁴ Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church*, 123-125.

This woman’s theory of wages, says Keller, is the model for the Christian work ethic—a theory of wages derived straight from Marx—to solve the Marxist problem of alienation. This was no passing or accidental reference to Sayers. Rather Keller returned to her over and over again: “So Dorothy Sayers could write.... Dorothy Sayers recounts.... Dorothy Sayers writes.... Dorothy Sayers explores this point.... Dorothy Sayers helps us understand.... This is what Dorothy Sayers meant....”⁵⁵

It will be helpful here to remember that Keller introduced *Every Good Endeavor* with Bellah’s challenge to solve the Marxist problem of alienation.⁵⁶ He ends the book with Sayer’s Marxist solution to it: “This is what Dorothy Sayers meant when she urged us to serve the work.”⁵⁷ Recall that Bellah’s challenge *in its original context* was a Marxist call “to reduce the ‘punishments of failure and the rewards of success.’” “Reducing the inordinate rewards of ambition and our inordinate fears of ending up as losers would offer the possibility of great change in the meaning of work in our society and all that would go with such a change.”

Keller left this out of his citation of Bellah, but he clearly did not leave it out of his conclusion: “Those who grasp this understanding of work will still desire to succeed, but will not be nearly as driven to overwork or made as despondent by poor results.”⁵⁸

Let us remember that the ultimate goal of Marxism is “the separation of labour from wages”⁵⁹ and the elimination of competition between workers.⁶⁰ By answering Bellah’s challenge, Keller thinks he has helped us arrived at a Christian work ethic, but he has merely led us to a Marxist one.

Part two will conclude in the next Trinity Review.

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⁵⁵ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 38, 74-76, 110, 111, 229, 241.

⁵⁶ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 18.

⁵⁷ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 241

⁵⁸ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 79.

⁵⁹ Marx, *Comment on James Mill*.

⁶⁰ Engels, *The Principles of Communism*, Question 18, (iv).