

Who is Jim Wallis and Sojourners?

Excerpt quotes from *Spiritual Sharing Service (Tri-S) #3*, author Miles J. Stanford, written 30+ years ago, October 1974.

"CONSERVATIVE RADICALISM" -- There is a harsh radical and rebellious faction within the neo-Body realm, mainly student-centered. This element seeks to bring down the Establishment, including the Church and present form of federal government. Their creed is more political and social than scriptural, and is probably most clearly expressed in the recent Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern, now known as "*The Chicago Declaration*."

SOCIAL DECLARATION -- A cross-section listing of those who formulated and those who signed this Social Declaration should give each of us pause for thought. Besides "evangelical radical" students, the who's who includes: Sharon Gallagher, editor of Christian World Liberation Front's paper, *Right On*; Samuel Escobar, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's director in Canada; Carl Henry, ex-editor of the neo-evangelical *Christianity Today*; Carl Thomas McIntire, of Toronto's Institute of Christian Studies (leftist son of Dr. Carl McIntire); Wm. Peterson, editor of *Eternity*; Bernard Ramm, professor at California Baptist Seminary; Foy Valentine, Southern Baptist social-concerns executive; Joseph Bayly, author; **Jim Wallis**, editor of *The Post-American*; Wes Michaelson, aide to Senator Mark Hatfield; Myron Augsburger, president of Eastern Mennonite College; Paul Henry, of Calvin College; Wm. Pannell, of Tom Skinner Associates; Frank Gaebelein, former headmaster of Stony Brook School; Rufus Jones, Conservative Baptist executive; David Moberg, professor of Sociology at Marquette University; and Lewis Smedes, theologian at Fuller Seminary.

SOCIAL TABLOID -- One of the propaganda papers of this radical party is the sub-culture tabloid, *The Post-American* (later named *The Sojourner*). Its motto is, "Our faith must be distinctively post-American." This particular small, but typically vocal, radical nucleus is composed mainly of students and grads centered about Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. It must be said that their attitude and aim do not reflect those of the school as a whole.

ANTI-SOCIAL -- The trouble with these young Turks is that in their laying about with their curved swords to cut down the Establishment, their inexperience and blood-thirsty spirit is causing them to cut themselves asunder. In living by the sword, the movement is being hopelessly divided by the same sword.

SOCIAL TEXTBOOK -- The present "textbook" of this movement within a movement is Richard Quebedeaux's *The Young Evangelicals*. One of their patron saints is Dietrich Bonhoeffer with his non-doctrinal discipleship. Fuller Seminary is one of the sources of their "revolutionary biblical Orthodoxy."

Although this type of Body life gathers in cells outside the established church, the young evangelical radicals are urged to become "subversive" for Christ in their home churches. Their "truly evangelical social Gospel" calls for the "proper use of political power and economic pressure" to bring about "a more just acquisition and redistribution of the nation's wealth and services." In all of this burden concerning the woes of the world, there is nary a word against Communism (Marxism).

Despite their progressive stance and challenge, they still advocate and utilize sensitivity training, transactional analysis, and group encounter in their version of interpersonal theology. Like so many others, they see the "wrongs" but fall short of producing the "rights" for replacement.

See more below.

Excerpt quotes from the *Introduction to IS CAPITALISM CHRISTIAN?*, 1985, Crossway Books.

During this same period of bureaucratization [L.B. Johnson's "Great Society"], the Catholic leadership began to engage in "ecumenical dialogue." One result was that the Catholic hierarchy and their bureaucrats began to take their cues from liberal Protestantism, which they saw at that time as much more "progressive" than the traditional Catholic Church. One might accurately say that the emergence of the left-wing Catholic Church hierarchy in America and its bureaucracies owes a good deal to its imitation of liberal, secularized, mainline Protestantism.

As the bishops began to depend more and more on "experts" for social relevance, these specialists were drawn increasingly from secular academic sources and were often only nominally Catholic or wholly secularized and anti-religious. The academic world of the sixties and seventies from which these bureaucrats came was largely leftward in its thinking, as indeed the academic community still tends to be today.

Thus we find, more and more, that standing between the bishops and their flocks are a group of leftist bureaucrats and specialists, typified by Father Brian Hehir. Father Hehir, an "expert" on political and economic issues, orchestrated the 1983 Pastoral Letter on war and peace, a Gandhian pacifist statement on nuclear weapons. He has also been the guiding light in putting together the leftist vision of America contained in the first draft of the Pastoral Letter on the economy. In both cases he was quite successful in seeing that moderate and traditional voices got little if any hearing in the process.

Many other writers and commentators have been distressed by the bishops' letter. George F. Will in his nationally syndicated column (Friday, November 16, 1984) writes,

All the important social policy discussions of the last decade evidently occurred without the bishops noticing....

American capitalism is the most efficient anti-poverty machine the world has ever seen. It is arguable that, at this point, less government action would serve the poor by enhancing the general growth of the economy. . . . The Conference of Bishops is located in Washington. Small wonder it has come to sound like just another liberal lobby.

The tragic irony is how very far to the left of common sense (let alone the common good!) the Catholic bureaucrats surrounding the bishops have moved. While the U.S. Catholic bishops were drafting their utopian economical nonsense, Planned Parenthood Federation, headquartered in London, England, published a very similar booklet called *Human Numbers, Human Needs*. This pro-population planning, Socialistic, pro-abortion (and therefore anti-orthodox-Catholic) book presents an economic "analysis" almost identical to the Pastoral Letter issued by the bishops in America. The Planned Parenthood booklet states: "There is a clear need for long term planning, at national, and where possible, global levels." The authors then go on to plead for "redistribution of wealth" and "redistribution of incomes and resources." According to Planned Parenthood's analysis of the world, "the affluent consumers of the northern countries and the southern elites constitute perhaps the major threats to the world's oceans and fish stocks, tropical forests, genetic diversity and global climate."

The model for the future Planned Parenthood admires most is China! We read: "The most remarkable of all family planning policies, . . . Chinese parents are told that if action had been taken sooner it would have been acceptable for them to have two children--the need for the one child limit is, it is stressed, the price of delay." The booklet does not mention (let alone condemn) China's recent barbaric practice of forced third-trimester abortions and infanticide. The *Wall Street Journal* noted in an editorial on December 19, 1984, "Planned Parenthood's love affair with socialism has become more than a harmless upper middle class hobby and now borders on the ludicrous."

It also seems ludicrous that the bishops' Pastoral Letter so closely mirrors Planned Parenthood's leftist coercive utopian ideology in all their views except, for the time being, on abortion. Tragically the Catholic bishops have allowed themselves to be pushed by their "New Class" bureaucrats and "scholars" into squandering their moral capital by buying into the utopian and failed Marxist ideologies of the left.

The Roman Catholic Church is not alone in its problems. Within the evangelical community, too, leaders have emerged whose gullibility is made dangerous by their popularity. Though perhaps sincere in their Christian concern for the poor, Ronald Sider, Tony Campolo, **Jim Wallis**, and John Alexander, for example, have allowed their zeal for a socially conscientious gospel to lead them towards leftist dogma in one guise or another. Their common stock in trade is to nourish a kind of wallowing guilt and self-recrimination against the United States, capitalism, and prosperity. Campolo makes us feel guilty for eating too many potato chips; Sider, for having too many children and eating too many bananas. America's economic and agricultural miracle, which feeds not only the United States, but much of the world, becomes in the words of Ronald Sider a "grain monopoly" to be decried. John Alexander, another member of the evangelical Hate America Club, has referred to the United States as an evil empire comparable only to the Soviet Union.

Wallis, founder of the Washington-based Sojourners community, stated that America should have apologized to Iran for taking American hostages. America, says **Wallis**, is partly responsible for the Soviet attack on Korean Flight 007, and responsible as well for seducing the Vietnamese boat people with an addiction to Western consumerism. In his own publication **Wallis** wrote: "Many of today's [Vietnamese] refugees were inoculated with a taste for a Western lifestyle during the war and are fleeing to support their consumer habit in other lands" (Sojourners, September 1979).

Such a statement is staggering. With the exception of George Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party, no one in the West besides **Jim Wallis** went on record in defense of the Communists and in criticism of the boat people. Even the Italian Communist Party had the strength of mind to denounce the genocidal butchery of the North Vietnamese and later the Khmer Rouge. As Lloyd Billingsley points out in the final essay in this book, these "evangelical" purveyors of guilt are caught in a logical inconsistency:

On the one hand, they say poverty is abominable, and God's wrath is called down on us for allowing it.... On the other hand, radical Christians lead us to believe that poverty is the only acceptable lifestyle for Christians and hence desirable. One cannot have it both ways.

A hyperactive guilt reflex seems to be the motivating force behind their reasoning, not true Christian compassion. As P. T. Bauer puts it in his essay included in this book, "Exponents of guilt are concerned with their own emotional state and that of their fellow citizens, and not with the results of the policies inspired by such sentiments." The self-proclaimed prophet handing out sackcloth and scattering ashes is one thing. More troubling is how the evangelical establishment, like a sort of penitent Nineveh responding abjectly to the disgruntled prophet, has flung open its doors to such voices. The lecture circuit is packed; the evangelical periodicals are loaded, with the purveyors of guilt. It is one thing to have wild-eyed doomsayers within the fold; it is another thing to make them our leaders.

Unfortunately the drift of the evangelical leadership toward socialism, or at least pop-New Age leftism, is not solely the preserve of a few isolated individuals such as **Jim Wallis**.