



Blowin' in the Wind Just/Faith and the Socialist Indoctrination of the Church

In 1962 four years after John XXIII became Pope, he called the Second Vatican Council to open the windows of the past, so that the winds of modernization or what he called *Aggiornamento* would blow a refreshing breeze over the Church. That same year, songwriter Bob Dylan wrote the lyrics to *Blowin' in the Wind*, which was a paean to the Civil Rights movement that was blowing across the American social landscape. Since then both powerful winds have merged to create a prevailing weather system that has penetrated the deep corridors of the Catholic Church in America with tornadic force.

The Winds of Change

With the Church's open windows, many innovative and unique programs have substantially changed the face of the Church. Among the sex education courses, centering prayer groups, and the like, is JustFaith, which has an activist pedigree that dates back to the Social Gospel of the late 19th century.

The Social Gospel was a Protestant intellectual movement during the early 20th century that applied Christian ethics to social problems, especially inequality, alcohol, crime, racial tensions, poverty, child labor, and labor unions. The leaders of the Social Gospel were predominantly associated with the Progressive Movement. In true utopian fashion they sought to institutionalize the words of the Lord's Prayer, *thy will be done on earth*. The *Second Coming* could not happen until mankind had cleansed the world of its social evils.

The founder of the Social Gospel Movement was Walter Rauschenbusch. He wanted to spread the *Kingdom of God*, not in the fire and brimstone style of 18th century Puritan preacher Cotton Mather, but by leading an exemplary Christian life. He believed that the Kingdom of God *is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven*. In his 1907 book, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, he wrote that *whoever uncouples the religious and the social life has not understood Jesus*.

Unfortunately, Rauschenbusch had ulterior motives. He was a doctrinaire Fabian Socialist who wrote in 1893, *the only power that can make socialism succeed, if it is established, is religion*. In his priorities, religion took second place to his

socialism. Faith was primarily a convenient tool with which he could make socialism a permanent fixture on the cultural landscape.

A Faith Journey

A closer look at JustFaith indicates that it is more like the Social Gospel than it is Christianity. While JustFaith purportedly tries to foster a passion for social ministry as part of a *journey of faith*, religious doctrine is conveniently tossed aside in favor of fostering a deeper commitment to the social work of the Church on earth. It stresses the interconnection of *the Gospel message of peace and justice* with Catholic social teaching *and the intersection of spirituality and action*.

JustFaith sees many prominent social problems such as poverty, race, planetary care, war, and the death penalty through the lens of the Catholic faith. Its rhetoric sounds like something adapted from a Marxist handbook as its *process groups* meet weekly to discuss their textbooks, videos, listen to guest lectures and participate in active discussions of all aspects of faith, especially those regarding the poor. Many faithful Catholics seem to have missed the point that JustFaith's appeal to social justice is little more than an infusion of progressive social solutions and political networking.

In an interview in the St. Louis Review, Pat Dougherty of Catholic Charities was ecstatic about this new program, which he saw as a *fascinating journey* where he encountered the Gospel understanding of *the wonderfully rich Catholic tradition we have on social justice*. With robotic precision, he boasted that JustFaith had *challenged* him to look and think about things differently and change the way he lived.

Unsurprisingly, Just Faith has spread like wildfire to over three hundred areas in the United States with the tacit support of a growing number of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, many of whom were active in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe made a spirited defense of the justifiably beleaguered Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) in his column in the archdiocese's April 2010 issue of its monthly newspaper, *People of God*.

In the Valley of Jezreel

Jack Jezreel is the founder and director of JustFaith, which began in Louisville, Kentucky in 1989. From a Biblical standpoint, Jezreel is a fascinating name. The Valley of Jezreel was where King Jehu had the apostate Queen Jezebel slain (2 Kings 9:1-10). It is also the purported location of the *Battle of Armageddon* at the end of time.

A professed Catholic who holds a master's of divinity degree from Notre Dame University, Jezreel tells his interfaith audiences that he feels a special kinship with those committed to the poor and vulnerable, regardless of their religious background. His ecumenical notion of spirituality includes a dismissal of doctrinal truth in favor of a common dedication to social work. Jezreel vaguely describes his goals as making the world a *more hospitable place* and ending the cycle of failure for the people of good will.

Jezreel's first principle is to establish a lasting relationship with the poor, rather than just writing a check or pulling a "celebrity parachute jump" into impoverished areas to dole out food for a day or two. He cites the lives of "saintly" people like Dorothy Day to illustrate his social message. Sounding more like a born-again Barack Obama, Jezreel sees the importance of building lasting change through community. JustFaith is his way to radically *transform parishes*, with all parishioners' goods being held in what he calls a *shared economics*.

He believes that the biggest obstacle to bringing justice to America *is the segregation of the poor, the oppressed, the exploited, and the neglected from the well off*. He sees America's cities *like subtle little apartheids, leading the wealthy into a dangerous illusion of security and the poor into hopelessness*. What Jezreel fails to mention is that this is usually the fault of the liberal politicians who have controlled most major cities since the dawning of the Progressive era.

Just Trouble

Despite its growing popularity, JustFaith has unleashed a legion of critics who point out that Jezreel's program is nothing but a platform for an ultra left wing social, political, and economic agenda that is NOT consistent with traditional Catholic social teaching. The trouble with the JustFaith Ministries is that it is not about either justice or faith but about power. As Walter Rauschenbusch said in the late 19th century, religion is just a means to get, not justice but socialism, which is a demonic attempt to corral the world's masses into a single unit that will be forced to march to its secular drummer.

JustFaith reduces Catholicism to an unofficial set of economic and political solutions to the gamut of social problems that afflict this country. It overemphasizes aspects of Catholic social teaching or takes them out of context to the point that they become easy fodder for their secular political and economic agenda.

The JustFaith syllabus contains grave doctrinal errors, regarding the ordination of women and other questions on the

divinity of Christ. Its facilitators have been known to reject personal salvation and sin in favor of collective salvation and social sins, such as poverty and racism. These attitudes are detrimental to the faith and salvation of individual Catholics. No matter how great their commitment to social justice, dissenting opinions such as these can only confuse Catholics as to what their Church actually teaches.

JustFaith's dogmatic waters are muddied even further through its public affiliations. In 2005 it announced a partnership with The Catholic Campaign for Human Development to promote and support parish and diocesan involvement in the JustFaith program. While JustFaith is purportedly dedicated to justice, it fails to publicly admit that it supports the injustice of abortion. Call to Action also disseminates a liberationist approach, which is not a Catholic position on social justice. It also works in partnership with many other controversial Catholic social groups, such as Bread for the World, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and *Pax Christi*.

A Cloud of Theology

Similarly, JustFaith's reading list is riven with dissenting writers, whose distortions of Scripture and Catholic teaching stress more the divisive needs to *reveal* class antagonisms and to restructure society along Marxist lines.

JustFaith enthusiastically recommends *Selected Readings in Liberation Theology* by Gustavo Gutierrez. Dennis A. Jacobsen's *Doing Justice* is an introductory theology of congregation-based community organizing based on Jacobsen's many years of personal experience in urban ministries. He designed his book to be used by church leaders, congregations and ministerial students to help America's poor, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised. Ironically Jacobsen's strategies rely heavily on atheistic Saul Alinsky's rules of disruption to weave his activist's handbook for urban social justice.

The *Cloud of Witnesses* by evangelical minister Jim Wallis is the most revealing on Jezreel's reading list. The articles and interviews were adapted from material published in Wallis' pacifist *Sojourners Magazine*. Wallis also promotes the New Sanctuary Movement for illegal immigrants in America through the *Faith in Public Life* network of *spiritual progressives*, many of whom advocate abortion and homosexual marriage.

The articles selected for *Cloud of Witnesses* support the standard socialist causes and includes many left wing Catholic peace activists and dissenters as well as a Masonic veterans group. The book contains a policy statement in favor of recognition and legal protection for homosexuals, including *gay marriage*, and the articles favor the ordination of women. *Cloud* serves as an introduction to liberation theology, which the Church has refuted, beginning with Pope Pius XI's 1937 Divini Redemptoris and continuing with every pope since then.

The Common Good for All

Questions about social justice invariably lead to the issue of socialism in the Church. The first known usage of the term *social justice* derived from a 19th century priest,

Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, whose *sociology of politics* attempted to recover the ancient virtue of what had been called *general justice* in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, but in a new contemporary form.

The idea of social justice evolved into the notion of the *common good* which became an integral part of traditional Catholic social teaching. Pope Leo XIII relied on it when he issued his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, for the purpose of combating the excesses of both *laissez-faire capitalism* and atheistic communism.

But Pope Leo was not a socialist. He did not equate *social justice* with a false kind of guaranteed economic equality. He believed that inequality was the natural state of a society because people's skills are unequal. In *Rerum*, the pope underscored the inherent right to private property while insisting on the role of the state in requiring a living wage. The pope considered the means of production to be both private property requiring state protection and a dimension of the common good requiring state regulation. He clearly understood that in the hands of the government, private property is always at high risk.

The Tender Road to Death

Since the early 20th century, the progressive left has boldly adapted the history and the rhetoric of social justice and the common good to the detriment, not only of the Church, but also the country. Most Catholics have nothing more than a generic understanding of the term, *social justice*, which seems to have replaced sin in the dogmatic lexicon. It is promoted from the pulpit as an unexplained given that should not be questioned or discussed. This new understanding recognizes the government as an agent of social justice and the unabashed purveyor of the redistribution of a nation's wealth and resources.

When married to social justice, notions of *equality* tilt the playing field in favor of the poor and the dissident. Charity quickly becomes the business of politics and not religion. One need only refer to Lyndon Johnson's 1964 *War on Poverty*, which virtually destroyed the black family. Since 1973 one third of the nation's 50 million abortions were performed on black women.

Church leaders have cast aside any notions of private property by trumping them with modernist ideas of equality, fairness, and diversity. Social justice has become a government policy that

has redistributed resources confiscated from the wealthy who earned them and given to those who did nothing to deserve them in exchange for votes. The Church makes no mention of these wholesale violations of the 7th Commandment.

A Product of the Sixties

A simple knowledge of Church history requires that any Christian articulation of social justice that seeks to hand the poor over to government for dependency and control is antithetical to the concept of justice and the common good. In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI related social justice to the necessary set of conditions where each person makes free, non-government-coerced contributions to the common good.

Social justice according to Pius XI referenced the necessity of private property against the tenets of socialistic thinking because the right of private ownership not only enabled individuals *to provide for themselves and their families but also that the goods which the Creator destined for the entire family of mankind...* It mentioned the importance of wealth creation in providing a basis for charity. It warned against arbitrary wage demands, which *a business cannot stand without its ruin and consequent calamity to the workers*. Pius XI's definition of social justice included the importance of subsidiarity and a return to the moral formation so that people would not confuse freedom to accomplish with passions that have been disordered because of original sin.

These ideas have apparently been revised. According to Frank Morriss of *the Wanderer*, the Catholic Church is fast becoming a product of the sixties. He laments the fact that *The Catholic Church doesn't exist to solve your problems*. And neither does the government. It is already clear that the United States is not going to be able to meet the obligations that it has assumed well into the future.

There is going to be a great crisis of social democracy in the next 10 years in this country. The proverbial sword of Damocles hangs by an even more frayed thread in Europe. One does not have to be a weatherman to notice that the winds of social change that have been blowing through the Catholic Church's open windows this past half century have been arguably pushing the Church off its divinely-oriented course.



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The Month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory



The month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life, but have not yet attained the joys of heaven.

St. Paul warns us that we must not be ignorant concerning the dead, nor sorrowful, “even as others who have no hope ... For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven ... and the dead who are in Christ shall rise.”

The Church has always taught us to pray for those who have gone into eternity. Even in the Old Testament prayers and alms were offered for the souls of the dead by those who thought “well and religiously concerning the resurrection.” It was believed that “they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them” and that “it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.”

*Excerpted from Liturgical Meditations,
The Sisters of St. Dominic*

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George Washington's Prayer For Our Country

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and be glad to do Thy will.

Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners.

Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance and from every evil way.

Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought out of many kindreds and tongues.

Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be peace and justice at home, that through obedience to Thy law, we may show for Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble suffer not our trust in Thee to fail.

THANKSGIVING—CMF is thankful to our many friends who remember us with monthly prayers and contributions (no remembrance is too small) so that the mission to defend Faith, strengthen Families and expand Freedom may grow! May God bless you and yours during this special Thanksgiving season.

NOVEMBER—MONTH OF THE POOR SOULS.

May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

“Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”

Pope Benedict XVI