

Reconsidering Divine Principle's Call to Create a Socialist Ideal

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Divine Principle claims the ideals and values embedded in capitalist democratic free markets will give way to a socialist ideal:

“Because human beings are created to live in an ideal society, they will inevitably pursue a socialistic ideal as they strive for freedom and democracy and further search into their original nature (*Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 342).”

Regarding the economic system organized in a socialist society, Divine Principle:

“God’s plan is to develop a socialistic economy, although with a form and content utterly different from the state socialism that communism actually established (p. 341).”

Let’s examine Divine Principle’s call for the creation of a socialist ideal.

In the last 150 years, the Western capitalist system has proved better than any other method devised to produce politically and legally free individuals, distribute products via the free market mechanism and create material prosperity for the individual. In America — still the most prosperous country in the world — people enjoy the freedom to pursue material comfort, a stable democracy, limited government, and peace.



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Yet great numbers of individuals in our midst suffer from various forms of mental illness. Available data in the United States on destructive acts such as suicide, homicide, alcoholism, illicit drug use, and a multitude of other psychologically-based disorders, can give us cause to ask if there might be something wrong with our way of life and the aims we are striving for.

Mental health professionals identify three causal factors to mental illness: biological; psychological, and environmental. Outside of genetic factors, brain trauma injuries and neurological disorders, mental illness is often viewed as a deviation from expected social norms and behaviors. Those individuals who break with established social norms and behaviors are viewed as abnormal or

mentally ill.

One extreme example of this can be found in the 1970s anti-cult deprogramming phenomenon.

In response to the growing number of converts to new religious movements (NRM) in America, parents resorted to having their children abducted and subjected to a continuous barrage of arguments and attacks against their new religion, in hopes they would agree to leave the group.

Those parents believed it was not “normal” behavior for a grown adult to give up college, a job or a career and dedicate his/her life working in a NRM. According to established and expected social norms, young adults who ventured into these new religions were believed to have lost the ability to think freely and make rational decision about how to live life.

One definition of mental health and maturity can be found in the Introduction to Divine Principle:

“...But were genuine brotherly love to overflow from the depth of people’s hearts, they would no longer wish to do anything that would cause pain to their neighbor. How much more would this be true in a society of people who actually feel that God, who transcends time and space and observes their every act, wants them to love each other? Therefore, once the sinful history of humanity has come to an end, a new historical era will begin wherein people simply will not commit sin (p. 9).”

Indian philosopher and social critic Jiddu Krishnamurti believed that fitting in with a given society’s social norms does not necessarily mean one is experiencing vibrant mental health: “It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.” Sigmund Freud tackled the topic of how to determine if whole societies can be sick in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). He theorized it’s

possible that many systems of civilization and even the whole of humanity “have become neurotic under the pressure of the civilizing trends.”

Psychoanalyst Eric Fromm enlarged upon that idea in *The Sane Society* (1955). He believed the civilizing trends of mid-20th century American capitalism had created an unhealthy social character for its citizens; one that failed to satisfy fundamental *psychic* needs, i.e., the need to relate to self and others in a loving way; the need for a sense of identity; and the need to surrender in loving devotion to something greater than oneself.

According to Fromm, evolving American capitalist methods of production, distribution and consummation had ceased to be a means to a more dignified life (the aim of 19th and early 20th century capitalism) and had now become an end in themselves, with the average citizen now “consumption and production crazy.” He claimed 20th century American capitalism had gotten off track by failing to see that its successful pursuit of one aim (the production of more and more things) had prevented the pursuit of a more comprehensive aim, namely; a society achieving a sufficient production of necessary and useful goods. In the process of defending himself against accusations of being an apologist for Marxist economic theory and a proponent of Soviet-style communism, Fromm also took aim at outmoded Marxist concepts of human nature and the oppressive, over-centralized production and bureaucratization in Soviet Russia.

A recent fundraising letter published by libertarian Washington think tank, the Cato Institute, called for all Americans to rally around the Constitution and Declaration of Independence to come up with clear answers for many pressing problems plaguing our nation. Central to Cato’s agenda is the promotion of dynamic market capitalism, social tolerance, a strict respect for privacy and private property, civil liberties, and peaceful international relations. Cato believes the recent federal encroachment into the private affairs of its citizens poses the single biggest threat to American exceptionalism.

It is hard to argue against these ideals and principles, as they have managed to produce the most materially prosperous and free nation in the world. But Divine Principle insists that the radical inner transformation required for humanity’s salvation must be matched by the transformation of socio-economic conditions:

“According to God’s ideal of creation, God confers upon each individual the same original value. Just as parents love all their children equally, God desires to provide pleasant environments and living conditions equally to all His children. Moreover, in an ideal society, production, distribution and consumption should have the same organic relationship as exists between the functions of digestion, circulation and metabolism in the human body. Thus, there should not be destructive competition due to over-production, nor unfair distribution leading to excessive accumulation and consumption, which are contrary to the purpose of the public good. There should be sufficient production of necessary and useful goods, fair and efficient distribution of these goods, and reasonable consumption which is in harmony with the purpose of the whole. Just as the liver provides a reserve of nutrients for the human body, adequate reserves of capital should be maintained to ensure smooth operation of the entire economy (pp. 341-42).”

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, other centrally planned alternatives to the capitalist mode of production that led to oppression and dictatorship in the 20th century — e.g., China, Vietnam, Cuba, and even North Korea — are now embracing some features of a capitalist free market system. In particular, the idea of the commodity market as a mechanism by which prices are determined and products are regulated, and the principle that individuals competing among themselves for profit provides the greatest advantage for everyone, are cautiously emerging into the social fabric of these countries.

It appears the socialist ideal alluded to in Divine Principle is fading further from the consciousness of societies around the world. What capitalism has fulfilled by producing material prosperity and political and social freedoms seems to indicate we just need to continue with it throughout the 21st century and beyond. Anyone seriously suggesting the socialist ideal as the next great moral movement to usher in a new era where all of God’s children will be provided “pleasant environments and living conditions” may be considered abnormal or even mentally ill.

Socialist theories and applications developed since the 18th century have always been primarily concerned with what has happened to men and women in the industrial system. Critiques of capitalism revolved around the principle that human beings are not to be used as a means to an end — to produce social products for profit — but that material production is for the unfolding of our creative powers. In a socialist economy, production of products is for social usefulness and not for the making of profit and accumulation of capital (e.g., the 2008 “too big to fail” bank crisis that left American taxpayers on the hook). Social ownership and cooperative management of the economy characterize the means of production.

A brief overview of the Cranes Club and its inaugural conference held December 19-21, 2014 in Las Vegas.

Divine Principle's call for the emergence of a socialist ideal provides an opportunity to examine if the capitalist socio-economic structure corresponds to the deepest needs of human nature and produces vibrant mental health and maturity for all of its citizens. It also calls into question the role that society plays in helping or hindering the development of our innate creative powers and mental health. In other words, it is not enough to call for inner reform and transformation through the religious sphere. Shouldn't advocates of the Divine Principle view of the world also have to look at how the current socio-economic structure promotes or inhibits the cultivation of our essential human nature and mental health?

Over 60 years, the Unification Movement built up billions of dollars in assets. Thousands of volunteers worked in numerous business and service-related organizations for little money or non-competitive salaries while helping to accumulate those assets. In recent years, we unfortunately have witnessed battles waged among a few for claim to those assets. In the early 1980s, the American movement's communitarian-like style of socialism (where everyone lived together in small centers with a common ideal and shared equally of personal possessions and finances for the benefit of all) gave way to living fully under the accepted and expected norms of American capitalism. An intellectually honest examination of our movement's labor practices and its ensuing use of accumulated capital, calls into question the application of the ideas of our founder in relation to Divine Principle's claim that providential history is moving towards the establishment of a socialist ideal.

In December 2014, the inaugural meeting of the Cranes Club, an assembly of Unificationist young adults, was held in Las Vegas. These young professionals gathered for three days to discuss how to work together to have a more positive global impact. One of the top areas of challenge identified was clarifying a united vision/message. Isn't it time for some of those educated professionals to take up the challenge of considering how to move forward with Divine Principle's call to create a socialist ideal? Perhaps they can organize a conference on the theme "Divine Principle and the Socialist Ideal: Taking the Dream to the Next Level."

Let me reiterate Divine Principle's call for the creation of a socialist ideal:

"Because human beings are created to live in an ideal society, they will inevitably pursue a socialistic ideal as they strive for freedom and democracy and further search into their original nature."

Jack LaValley maintains a full-time career in the hospitality industry in New York City. He is the founder of true4ever.com and the author of the eLearning book, Seven Secrets to Finding True Love. He received his M.S.Ed. from the University of Bridgeport. Jack and his wife, Wha ja, are the proud parents of three grown children.