

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Alvin Moser 2007

The term socialism, in its modern sense, made its first appearance around 1830. In France it was applied to the writings of Fourier and the Saint-Simonians and in Britain to those of Robert Owen. (**Encyclopedia Britannica 2004**, *Origins of the socialist idea*)

Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte (count) de Saint-Simon French social theorist and one of the chief founders of **Christian socialism**. In his major work, *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), he proclaimed a brotherhood of man that must accompany the scientific organization of industry and society. (**Britannica**)

A few social visionaries experimented with religious socialism, others with secular socialism. Robert Owen, a Welshman, provides one of the more interesting examples by blaming religion for all of society's ills. Owen came from a Christian home and he believed his early heritage contributed much good to his character's development. In adulthood, however, Owen rejected Christianity as patently false. In his 1829 debate with **Alexander Campbell**, Owen tried to prove: (**XVII COMMUNAL LIVING: Early Social Reactions to Christian Orthodoxy**, by **Michael Hines**) www.newhumanist.com/md17.html

Since the United States offered a more promising field for such experimentation, he came here and purchased the entire village and surrounding countryside at New Harmony, Indiana. (Hines)

Charles Fourier (1772-1837) led a second communitarian experiment. A French socialist, Fourier began several socialist societies here in the United States. Fourier's communities numbered about 1,600 in communes of 5,000 acres. He began, but did not complete, an experiment at Brooke Farm. Fourier also promoted women's emancipation, marriage's abolition and complex sexual freedom. (Hines)

John Humphrey Noyes (1811-1886) Noyes established Oneida, New York, as a communal society where everyone utilized their skills for everyone's benefit. All shared equally in its fruits as well. Oneida's fame came from silverware they produced for sale. ... He tried a kind of sexual communism called "complex marriage." In Noyes' "complex marriage" everyone married everyone else. (Hines)

The transcendentalists grow out of the Unitarian movement. Most transcendentalists attended Harvard and were highly intelligent and articulate men. Among them you'll find Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau and Theodore Parker. (Hines)

George Ripley began the first transcendentalist experiment at Brooke Farm. Ripley believed individuals held the key to solving all social ills. He envisioned a community where all labor had equal dignity and a provided each inhabitant with a creative environment where all may interact. He wanted the laborers to teach artists to respect physical labor and artists to teach art appreciation to the laborer. He organized Brooke Farm as a joint stock company. He attracted about 80 people, mostly writers who were transcendentalists, to the farm. Few laborers showed much interest. This forced the intellectuals to work hard physically. The writers and artists soon objected to such labor because it stifled their creativity. At that point, the experiment degenerated leading Ripley to admit his failure. The experiment lives on in Thoreau's work Walden Pond. (Hines)

Religious romanticism reacted against Protestant orthodoxy. Communal experiments also reacted to Protestant orthodoxy, but they also reacted to social ills. (There are still other alternatives open to early Americans and one of the more important reactions seen in the early 1800s is that of Mormonism. The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, with more than five million members, may be the fastest growing religious body in America today. Mormonism demonstrates the American emphasis on the common man because it demonstrated that any individual could amass wealth and power. **Mormonism** illustrates the day's experimental climate because it too tried to establish a communal society and build unique social structures.) (Hines)

Church History

Parley Pratt, Sidney Rigdon and Lyman Wight had been associated together with the **Campbells**, Walter Scott, and Barton W. Stone, in the developing of the movement inaugurated by Thomas and Alexander Campbell. OH

They first stopped at Kirtland, Ohio because here was where some of Parley P. Pratt's former ministerial associates were living. They found Sidney Rigdon the pastor of a group of people, thirteen families in all, living in a community type of society, wherein they had all things in common. Sidney Rigdon was soon converted, and was baptized with his wife November 14, 1830. OH

About this [time] Joseph and Sidney arrived at Kirtland, to the joy...of the

saints. The disciples had all things common and were going to destruction fast, as to temporal things... They considered...that what belonged to one brother belonged to any...they would take each other's ...property and use it without leave... (This) brought on confusion and disappointments; they did not understand the scripture (The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment, p. 2”.)

During this period,1916-17, quite a few of the members of the Church had organized themselves into a group called Zion’s Co-operative Industrial Association, for the purpose of establishing a more equitable means of living. An acreage was leased south of Independence & several of the brethren, under the direction of A. O. Frisbey & Charles N. Denham, carried on a farming project; others of the group engaged in their regular occupations, contributing the monetary assets of the society, in which all enjoyed the results of their joint labors together, & thus were able to demonstrate that the “all things common” or Consecration law could be carried out successfully if a group were determined to do so. At the April17, 1918 conference, the entire assets of this society were turned over to the Church to be administered by the Church. This proved to be a fatal mistake, for officers were chosen to administer its affairs who were opposed to co-operative efforts of this kind & they soon liquidated the assets & closed out its affairs, much to the dissatisfaction of those who had so enthusiastically given it to the Church in the hope that their demonstration would inspire others to carry on its work. OH.

GOD'S ALL THINGS COMMON

1 Kings 4:25 Zion under Solomon: every family separate, under their own vine and own fig tree.

Micah 4:3-5 The millennium after Satan is bound.

Acts 2:42-47 as every man had need

Acts 4:31-37 the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul

Acts 5:1-10 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?

3 Ne 12:10-13 every man dealing justly, one with another

4 Ne 1:1-4 the people were all converted unto the Lord,...every man did deal justly one with another;

LAW OF THE HEART

3 Ne 9:10-11 Jesus words exactly.

3 Ne 11:1 Words of Jesus

Jer 31:31-34 new covenant

Mat 15:18-19 heart

Mat 7:12 Golden rule

AID

Ephesians 4:28 Work.

Hebrews 13:2 Strangers

1 John 3:17 Brother in need

Galatians 6:10 especially unto the household of faith.

James 2:15 Brother or sister naked or destitute.

1 Timothy 2:5 Widow indeed.

Mosiah 9:60-62 Impart of your substance.

Alma 1:40 According to that which you have.

Jacob 2:23-24 seek kingdom of God first, then riches to do good.