

Happy Friday, New South Family!  
Welcome to the 90th edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending April 23, 2021.

## **Announcements**

### **1) First, Some Annual Conference Details:**

**A) New South Annual Conference Logistics** Annual Conference is scheduled for May 21 – 22, essentially noon Friday to noon Saturday, at Wilmore FMC. Business sessions from noon to 5:00p on Friday, and 8:00a to noon on Saturday and the ordination service at 7:00p on Friday evening. The complete notebooks will be out soon, but the agenda / draft schedule is below, as well as the listing for housing nearby. Note that this happens to be, unfortunately, the same weekend as Asbury Seminary graduation and also our local high school graduation, so rooms may be difficult super-close to Wilmore. Plan now to attend.

While inside, we will be wearing masks while moving and while singing, but they may be removed at other times. We'll sit in a distanced fashion around tables during business sessions. Visitors and family welcome, especially for the ordination service. We will be livestreaming the ordination service, but not the business sessions.

**B) Annual Conference Reports** – If you are a reporting entity to the NSC and would like your organization's document / report included in the conference materials booklet, please submit those to [Charlie Fiskeaux before May 7 by clicking here](#).

**C) Memorials At Annual Conference** Each year at Annual Conference, we take a moment and honor those from our churches who have passed on to Christ throughout the past year. Since we did not really do this last year, we'll honor those this year who have died since May 1, 2019. If you'd like those names included in the conference booklet, please submit the name and church affiliation m to [Charlie Fiskeaux before May 7 by clicking here](#).

**D) Delegates Names / Contact Information Needed** Please submit your delegate's (or delegates') name, address, phone number and e-mail address to Charlie Fiskeaux ASAP for this year's annual conference. [You can do that via e-mail by clicking here](#). A blank fillable form for delegate credentials can be found attached / below.

**2) Local Church Annual Reports** The World Ministry Center has not yet sent the annual / statistical report to local churches. I've promised you that for several weeks, but so far, they've not released it. I'll certainly pass it along when they do, so again, you haven't missed it. 😊

## **Resources**

**1. Impact Middle East Vacation Bible School Mission Resources** - Impact Middle East has produced a series of videos and projects that could be used to bring a missions emphasis to the VBS or children's ministries or your churches. Details are attached / below.

**2. New Room Conference** – in Nashville...in September, 2021. Information: <https://newroomconference.com/>

**3. Holy Land Trip** – available to anyone interested, sponsored by the Pacific Northwest conference of the FMC [https://pnwc.formstack.com/forms/2022\\_holy\\_land\\_trip\\_registration\\_form](https://pnwc.formstack.com/forms/2022_holy_land_trip_registration_form)

**4. Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy Conference** – March 10-12, 2022 in Texas. Information here: <http://www.whwomenclergy.org/>

**5. Local Church Live Streaming Training** available in Nashville – check it out here: <https://www.cmcnashville.com/worship-tech>

**6. Leadership In Tumultuous Times Video Series** The conference superintendents from Bishop Cowart's area have been creating these video discussion / training sessions from a few months now. We have completed three so far. Simply click on the title below. (The first one is a little over an hour, but the next two are shorter!)

#1 – Title: [Self-Differentiated Leadership](#)

#2 – Title: [Responding to Reactivity](#)

#3 – Title: [Managing the Herd Mentality](#)

## Articles

**1) Watching Our Words and Meaning What We Say** In our broader culture these days, there is a dangerous redefinition of words going on...examples like the words "love" and "justice" come quickly to mind, such that two people can be speaking the same word, but meaning very different things. In our arrogance, we all think everyone else is using our language/definitions. Keeping clear definitions in word use is critical, not only for the sake of understanding within communication, but also for the sake of offering grace one to another. In the article attached / below, Dr. Paul Kengor takes on the word, "socialism," which is also being systematically redefined in our society, and strangely, especially so in the Christian world.

**2) Playing Against Politics** by Ray Hacke, World Magazine

For schools participating in interscholastic sports, holding Biblical views of sexuality increasingly draws LGBT ire

College and high school sports are becoming the new battlefield between LGBT advocates and Christian schools holding orthodox views on sexuality. Take, for instance, one of the biggest upsets in this year's NCAA men's basketball tournament.

Oral Roberts University (ORU) entered the tournament seeded 15th in the South Region and comes from one of basketball's less heralded conferences. But then it busted office-pool brackets everywhere by stunning No. 2 seed Ohio State in its opening game before toppling 7th-seeded Florida to reach the 68-team tournament's Sweet 16. It nearly made it to the Elite 8, losing in the final minute to No. 3 seed Arkansas.

Media outlets love toasting giant killers like ORU—they are what give March Madness its name, after all. But this time, a USA Today op-ed by Hemal Jhaveri ripped ORU for requiring its students to adhere to traditional Biblical mores concerning marriage and sexuality, claiming the school imposed standards that are "wildly out of line with modern society and the basic values of human decency."

Jhaveri further argued that "any and all anti-LGBTQ+ language in any school's policies should ban them from NCAA competition," as its participation would give the school a platform to promote its values: "There is no way to separate their men's basketball team from the dangers of their religious dogma, no matter how many top seeds they defeat."

The NCAA probably won't go so far as to ban Christian schools from its postseason tournaments—yet. The governing body for big-time college sports would open itself up to discrimination lawsuits if it did.

But the NCAA's sympathies certainly seem to lie with commentators like Jhaveri. The NCAA yanked seven championship events out of North Carolina during the 2016-17 school year to protest that state's now-repealed "bathroom bill." The bill required transgender persons to use the public restrooms associated with the sex listed on their birth certificates.

In the wake of states passing bills that would protect girls and women from having to compete against biological males in school sports, the NCAA Board of Governors released a statement in April saying it would only hold championship games in states that are "free of discrimination" toward transgender athletes. This would disqualify Idaho, Mississippi, and Arkansas, which have all passed "Save Girls' Sports" bills.

A desire to host NCAA postseason events in South Dakota caused the state's Gov. Kristi Noem to reverse course after initially pledging to sign a bill aimed at protecting girls' and women's sports. Afraid the NCAA would rule out South Dakota as a host for postseason events, she demanded the state Legislature remove language requiring the state's

universities to bar biological males from participating in women's sports. (Noem issued executive orders regarding K-12 female sports and recommendations for universities, but conservatives called the orders toothless.)

Over the past five years, pro-LGBT forces have staged boycotts pressuring states deemed anti-LGBT to change their ways: California and New York banned their public universities from sending teams to states whose laws they considered discriminatory, a move aimed at robbing such states of valuable sports-related dollars.

And in 2019, the Sheridan School of Washington, D.C., a secular private school, refused to send its basketball teams to road games at Immanuel Christian School in nearby Virginia due to the latter's Biblical stance on sexuality.

Some Oregon lawmakers also tried to use sports to require private schools—including Christian schools—to accept LGBT values this year. An Oregon Senate bill would have excluded private schools from interscholastic competition with public schools unless they submitted to oversight by the Oregon Department of Education in areas related to student safety.

State Sen. Michael Dembrow claimed the requirement was to protect students from predatory teachers. But it also included following state standards in bullying and suicide prevention, measures linked to LGBT nondiscrimination statutes that could put private schools at legal risk. (The bill didn't pass.)

With millions of dollars at stake, colleges likely won't refuse to play a school like ORU in the NCAA tournament. Still, if ORU's success at this year's basketball tournament is any indication, Christian schools participating in the "Big Dance" won't be the belles of the ball anytime soon.

**3) After Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill, Canadian Evangelicals Reassess** by Meagan Gillmore, Christianity Today  
Christians joined disability advocates and UN experts to oppose amendment, but failed to stop it.

Canadian evangelicals are decrying a new law that expands access to physician-assisted suicide to people who are sick or disabled but aren't dying.

"Many of us are quite heartbroken over this," said Derek Ross, the executive director of Christian Legal Fellowship. "We're now dealing with a legal system that is making more and more exceptions to the once exception-less principle that you cannot consent to the harm of having your life ended by another person and that all lives are inherently and equally full of worth and value of dignity."

Physician-assisted suicide—known popularly as "Medical Assistance in Dying" or MAID—has been legal in Canada since 2016. The law was limited to people who were experiencing what the Criminal Code called a "grievous and irremediable medical condition": an illness, disease, or disability that causes enduring physical or psychological pain that cannot be relieved in any way the patient accepts. To be eligible, the patient also had to be dying.

But in March, the government passed an amendment to the Criminal Code, Bill C-7, that removed the criteria that someone must be dying to receive MAID. Canada now allows people who have an illness or disability to have a physician-assisted suicide, even if their death is not imminent. People who are dying no longer have to wait 10 days. Canada also plans to allow MAID for people whose only medical condition is a mental illness.

"The law is now presenting death as a medical response to suffering in a wide range of cases—not just when somebody is already dying, but at potentially any stage of their adult life," Ross said. "Instead of prioritizing supports to help people to live meaningful lives, we've prioritized ways to make death more accessible. This is a heartbreaking message."

Evangelicals joined Canadians from many religious traditions in protesting the expansion of physician-assisted suicide. In October 2020, shortly after the bill was introduced, more than 150 religious leaders signed a public letter detailing their opposition, with Baptists, Wesleyans, and Pentecostals joining their names with Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mormon, Jewish, and Muslim leaders.

The most public opposition came from disability organizations. Evangelicals threw their support to those activists, backing their arguments and attempting to raise their visibility.

“We were very intentional about that,” said David Guretzki, executive vice president and resident theologian at the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), an organization that represents evangelicals across the country. “The public has a reticence to talk about religion, or they’re nervous when religious groups speak up. We thought it was better on this issue in particular for us to allow the voices of disability advocacy groups to speak and for us to come alongside and support them.”

The EFC, for example, joined Inclusion Canada, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, the Disabled Women’s Network of Canada, the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship, and 120 other organizations supporting disability rights in an open letter to the members of Parliament. The letter endorsed the concerns of United Nations’ human rights experts who wrote that the proposed amendment would violate the Canadian commitment to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“From a disability rights perspective,” the UN experts wrote, “there is a grave concern that if assisted dying is made available to all persons with a health condition or impairment, regardless of whether they are close to death, a social assumption might follow (or be subtly reinforced) that is better to be dead than to live with a disability.” the letter says.

A poll commissioned by the faith-based think tank Cardus showed that about a third of the country enthusiastically supports physician-assisted suicide as a basic human right. Nineteen percent oppose. Forty-eight percent are cautiously supportive, but express concern about potential negative impact on vulnerable Canadians. Despite that, and despite the concerted political effort, Bill C-7 passed the House of Commons last month by a vote of 180–149.

Evangelicals aren’t surprised by the result. “Most Christians have come to grips with the fact that we are actually in a pluralistic society in which many of the points of view that they hold are minority perspectives and not majority perspectives,” said Ray Pennings, executive vice president of Cardus.

The next political battle, activists say, will be protecting the rights of doctors and other medical professionals who believe it goes against their religious convictions to participate.

The federal law clearly states that no one should be forced to perform a suicide, but Christian doctors may still be required by their regulatory and licensing colleges to either participate or give a referral, depending on their province or territory they live in, according to Larry Worthen, the executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada.

“Doctors are living in fear of having a complaint against them and being disciplined,” Worthen said. “Doctors are already stressed out because of COVID-19 and concern about their patients and overwork, and you add on top of that fear that the next patient who comes in is going to ask for MAID and report them, and the burden just becomes too great.”

In Ontario, the country’s most-populous province, the courts have said doctors are required to refer patients to medical procedures like physician-assisted suicide or abortion, even if making the referrals violates the doctor’s conscience or goes against their religious beliefs.

According to the EFC, it’s hard to remain optimistic about coming political battles, as the influence of Christian ideas about the value of life decline. About half of Canada identifies as non-religious today, up 30 points in the past 20 years. Only about 20 percent of Canadians attended church at least once a month. But Guretzki said he thinks the situation provides a great opportunity for churches.

“Now that we’ve been pushed out of the center again, much more to the margins, I think we’re actually closer to what the New Testament church was facing,” Guretzki said. “I think we have a chance to learn some new lessons about what it’s like to be a Christian witness when you can’t rely on political or cultural influence to get your message across.”

For church leaders, this means encouraging Christians to love people well and faithfully testify to God's grace across political differences while still standing up for the vulnerable.

"Our political leaders are not the enemy," said Steven Jones, president of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, a denomination with 500 congregations across the country. "For us, they're the mission field. We love them in the name of Jesus. We need to speak up and let them know there are Canadians that have a different viewpoint."

Jones said he's seen more Christians engaging in Canadian politics in recent years, possibly because of a greater sense of marginalization. While some of the energy is focused on religious liberty, and protecting the rights of Christians in society, he said, there needs to be increased concern about marginal social groups who are told their lives are not particularly valuable, Jones said, such as people with disabilities and the elderly.

"We need to be out in the community intentionally coming along and loving people who are marginalized and need the care and love of Jesus," he said.

Experienced advocates are reminding themselves to stay patient and remain faithful in the face of losses. Victoria Veenstra, justice communications coordinator of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, said that she views advocacy as a spiritual discipline.

"When we pin all of our hopes on one specific policy, or we expect a policy to change rapidly, we get really burnt out and discouraged," she said. "We want to see justice now. But if we can keep training ourselves to keep moving towards justice in the long-term, faithfully, steadily, Christ is there with us."

Veenstra said it's also important to remember that changing the law is not the only way faithful followers of Jesus can speak up for the value of life.

"This is bad," she said, "but as Christians, we can still come around people and make MAID a less desirable option."

## **Regular Free Methodist Newsletters / Communications** (click the links below)

[This Week's Issue of the Light and Life Magazine](#)

[The Latest Issue of the Free Methodist Foundation Financial Newsletter](#)

[The Latest Issue of the FM Pastors and Leaders' Newsletter](#)

## **New South Conference Calendar**

May 21-22 NSC Annual Conference – Wilmore

June 17-20 NSC Family Camp

June 21-27 NSC Teen Camp

June 28-July 2 NSC Kids Camp

## **May / June Birthdays**

Mark Driskill, May 12

Roberta Zent, May 12

Tim Huff, May 17

Scott Clark, June 4

Joy Ireland, June 11

James Demaray, June 19

Sarah Baldwin, June 21

Jan Coleman, June 24

Sharon Bryson, June 27

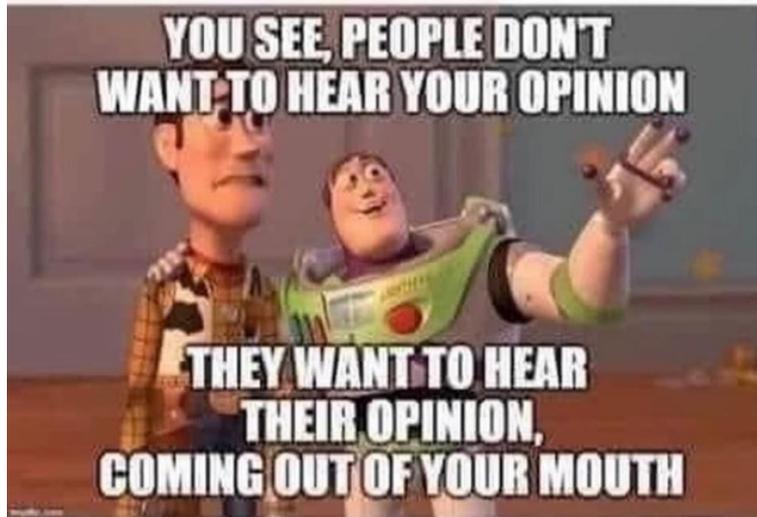
\*I'd love to know your birthday, so the conference can send you an expensive present...or maybe just a "Happy Birthday" wish. If yours is not listed, [please e-mail it to me](#).

## This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

**Passage:** This Sunday I'll return to the book of John to the Passion Place of the seashore, where Jesus forgave and then restored Peter.

**Quote:** "Preaching should break a hard heart and heal a broken one." ~ John Newton

**Joke:**



Blessings on your worship this weekend!

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Here are **PLACES TO STAY IN WILMORE AND NICHOLASVILLE.**

Lexington, of course, has many other options. We suggest a search via [booking.com](http://booking.com) or [travelocity.com](http://travelocity.com).

Places to stay in Wilmore:

Scott Station: [scottstationinn.com](http://scottstationinn.com)

Asbury Inn: [asburyinn.com](http://asburyinn.com)

Red Bud Inn: [1898redbudbandb.com/](http://1898redbudbandb.com/)

The Home Place: <http://homeplaceguesthouse.com/>

Places to stay in Nicholasville:

Holiday Inn Express:

[https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/nicholasville/nvlky/hoteldetail?cm\\_mmc=GoogleMaps- -EX- -US- -NVLKY](https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/nicholasville/nvlky/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps- -EX- -US- -NVLKY)

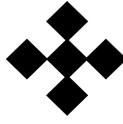
Comfort Inn South:

<https://www.guestreservations.com/comfort-inn-lexington-south/booking?gclid=CjwKCAjw34n5BRA9EiwA2u9k39i042DwNhtCVw6meJKdiYPf02Uf85W6T9gIHWEYRhV63vgRK LnOhoCnFgQAvD BwE>

Home Place Inn: <https://homeplaceinn.com/>

The Cottage at the Corner: [cornerhouse.com](http://cornerhouse.com)

The Corner House B&B and Corporate Housing: <https://the-corner-house-b-corporate-housing-nicholasville.booked.net/>



# Children Like These

Five short videos and reproducible handouts  
Perfect for VBS or Children's Ministries

access videos and handouts at

<https://www.impactmiddleeast.org/children>



Meet **Nisaf**, a winsome twelve-year-old girl in Kurdistan (northern Iraq). She lives with her family in a refugee camp, along with 8,000 other children and their families, after they fled from ISIS terrorists.

### Meet Nisaf



Nisaf is a twelve-year-old girl who lives in a refugee camp in Kurdistan. She is in the sixth grade.

#### Nisaf Likes To

- play with her friends and her sisters
- help her mom with household chores
- give a bath to her younger sister
- go to the marketplace
- play with dolls
- cook
- play video games on her father's cellphone

#### Nisaf's Family

- Father
- Mother
- Sister Seeyda (16 years old)
- Twin sisters Warjeen and Warveen (15 years old)
- Brother Wisam (6 years old)
- Sister Mna (6 year old)

Nisaf and her family are Yazidis. Yazidis are very simple people; most are farmers or shepherds. They are also known for producing wonderful honey and animal lard.



#### Nisaf's Past Home

Nisaf used to live with her family in another part of Iraq — the district of Sinjar. They fled from their home with just the clothes they were wearing when ISIS terrorists attacked their village. The family lived in a very simple mud brick house with very limited electricity. They did not own much furniture. The floor was covered by cloth rags, and they slept on thin mattresses placed on the floor. They ate while sitting on the floor. All their food was fresh from their garden, and they used milk, butter and cheese made from the sheep and goats they owned. The toilet was a hole in the ground, and the family used firewood for heat in the winter.

Nisaf only speaks Kurmanji Kurdish — the Shengali dialect and is currently learning Arabic and English at the Noor Center.

Through **five short videos** Nisaf shows us where she lives and other special places in the camp, including the **Noor Center**. Established by Impact Middle East, the Noor Center creates ways for children to laugh, play, and feel safe again after all the trauma they have experienced in their lives.

**Reproducible handouts** provide activities and additional information for each of the videos. **Project options** provide ways for children's groups to help children like Nisaf.



*Save the dates!*



CAMP REGISTRATION PACKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE  
APRIL 26, 2021!

2021  
NEW SOUTH  
summer  
camps  
@ EAGLE RIDGE  
RETREAT CENTER  
BOWLING GREEN KY

**FAMILY CAMP**  
June 17-20, 2021

QUESTIONS? CONTACT SCOTT CLARK~ SCTCLRK777@AOL.COM

**TEEN CAMP**  
June 21-27, 2021

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ANDREA ~ATINSLEY@WFMC.NET

**KIDS CAMP**  
June 28-July 2

QUESTIONS? CONTACT REBEKAH~ RFTINSLEY@GMAIL.COM  
OR JALYN~ JALYNMGORFORTH@GMAIL.COM

The Early Church Was Not Socialist

April 22, 2021 Paul G. Kengor

“The early church was a socialist church.”

So said Rev. Raphael Warnock in 2016, four years before the citizens of Georgia elected him a U.S. senator.

It’s a strange statement, least of all because the description “socialist church” is an oxymoron. Not only would the Church fathers be puzzled by it, but so would socialism’s fathers.

“Everyone must be absolutely free to ... be an atheist,” wrote Vladimir Lenin, “which every socialist is, as a rule.”

“Religion and communism are incompatible, both theoretically and practically,” noted Nikolai Bukharin, founding editor of Pravda. “Communism is incompatible with religious faith.” On behalf of the Bolsheviks, he insisted: “A fight to the death must be declared upon religion. We must take on religion at the tip of the bayonet.”

That they did. They knew that religion and socialism/communism were incompatible.

(For the record, Marxism-Leninism defines socialism as the final transitional step into communism. As Lenin explained: “And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the ‘first,’ or lower, phase of communist society.” Communism shares the exact same goal of socialism, namely: common ownership of the means of production—the literal definition of socialism even by Merriam Webster. “We call ourselves Communists,” stated Lenin. “What is a Communist? Communism is a Latin word. Communism is the Latin for ‘common.’ Communist society is a society in which all things—the land, the factories—are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism.”)

Nonetheless, statements like Warnock’s are not unusual among the “social justice” Religious Left. I’ve written about this here before, and clearly will need to continue to address it again and again, but I write now because of the recent New Testament reading from the Lectionary, which prompted one person to ask me to clarify how that reading from the “early church” (as Warnock would describe it) does or does not support socialism. Here’s the passage from Acts 4:32-35:

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

It’s this passage that Warnock was clearly invoking. He told Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist Church back in 2016:

The early church was a socialist church. I know you think that’s an oxymoron, but the early church was much closer to socialism than to capitalism. Go back and read the Bible. I love to listen to evangelicals who stand on the Bible. Well, they had all things in common. They took everything—I’m just preaching the Bible—they took all of their things and they had all things in common. But even the folk who say they just follow every word of the Bible, they’re not about to do that. But if we would just share what we have, everybody can eat, everybody ought to have water, everybody ought to have healthcare. It’s a basic principle.

Well, it’s certainly not a “socialist” principle.

Let’s start with indeed the most basic principle, which is this: this passage from Acts is not socialism.

Socialism/communism does not bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, or to belief of God. Likewise, do not be deluded by the phrase “distributed to each according to need.” Karl Marx, as he often did in his aping and mockery of religion, appropriated that line and rewrote it as, “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

How does this passage bear no resemblance to socialism/communism? For many reasons, but above all, the religious believer reading this passage must understand that the passage deals with a religious movement. Socialism/communism is an anti-religious movement.

“Communism begins where atheism begins,” explained Marx. He wrote: “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” He and Engels in the Communist Manifesto said that communism represents “the most radical rupture in traditional relations.” It seeks nothing less than to “abolish the present state of things.” He and Engels closed the Manifesto by calling for “the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.” ([Click here to read about “Marx on Christianity, Judaism, and Evolution/Race.”](#))

That included religion above all. Socialism/communism is a revolutionary ideology that completely rejects religion.

“There is nothing more abominable than religion,” declared Vladimir Lenin. He said that “all worship of a divinity is a necrophilia.” He echoed Marx: “Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze.”

I could list quotes like this one after another. Here’s one more example:

William Z. Foster was the first major public face as well as chairman of what became known as (and remains) Communist Party USA, prior to which he had been with the Socialist Party of America. Note this 1930 exchange he had with Congressman Hamilton Fish during sworn congressional testimony:

Fish: Does your party advocate the abolition and destruction of religious beliefs?

Foster: Our party considers religion to be the opium of the people, as Karl Marx has stated, and we carry on propaganda for the liquidation of these prejudices amongst the workers.

Fish: To be a member of the Communist Party, do you have to be an atheist?

Foster: In order to be—there is no formal requirement to this effect. Many workers join the Communist Party who still have some religious scruples, or religious ideas; but a worker who will join the Communist Party, who understands the elementary principles of the Communist Party, must necessarily be in the process of liquidating his religious beliefs and, if he still has any lingerings when he joins the party, he will soon get rid of them.

He must get rid of them because one could not be a communist and a Christian. (For the record, in the USSR, one had to be an atheist to be a member of the Communist Party, as the party militantly pursued what Mikhail Gorbachev described as a “wholesale war on religion.”)

As for the passage from Acts, there have long been religious communities that engage in common ownership. Those communities are driven by religious motivation. They are voluntary movements of free will. Members agree to sell property and share things by their own choice, not under compulsion by a coercive socialist/atheistic state which insists that every citizen, under threat of punishment, sell and share all resources.

An even cursory read of the Communist Manifesto or the brute decrees of Lenin and Stalin and Mao and the Kims and Castro shows no similarity with the language of the Old and New Testaments. The fact that certain passages of Scripture, or certain guidelines of religious orders, express forms of communalism doesn’t mean they’re thus practicing the perverse and destructive 19th century ideology known as communism/socialism. That’s a really silly simplification. From the Acts of the Apostles to, say, the Franciscans, these groups were forged on a Christian model; religion served as their anchor, their rudder, their animating force—the very spiritual force that communism ridicules, rejects, and seeks to abolish. Read any writing by Marx or Engels or Lenin vs. Jesus Christ or Paul or St. Francis; they’re completely different in every meaningful respect.

Moreover, the Bible offers vigorous defenses of property rights, as rudimentary as the understanding implicit in the Creator's 10 Commandments: thou shalt not steal. To steal is to take someone's property, a basic right according to Biblical and natural law. The assertion by Marx and Engels in the Manifesto that "the entire communist program may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property" is completely antithetical to the teachings of God.

I could go on and on with examples. In the New Testament, individuals like the Good Samaritan or Zacchaeus or the vineyard owner all voluntarily give their own wealth or earnings as free-will acts of benevolence, not as forced responses to state fiat. (Read on in Acts 4, which in the next line speaks of the first of two disciples who voluntarily "sold a piece of property that he owned").

I'll close with a word of advice to Rev.-Sen. Warnock. It comes from the landmark encyclical by Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*. "Religious socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms," stated *Quadragesimo Anno*, "no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist." Pius XI advised: "Those who want to be apostles among socialists ought to profess Christian truth whole and entire, openly and sincerely, and not connive at error in any way. If they truly wish to be heralds of the Gospel, let them above all strive to show to socialists that socialist claims, so far as they are just, are far more strongly supported by the principles of Christian faith and much more effectively promoted through the power of Christian charity."

As Pius XI noted, there's "no reason to become socialists."

Indeed. In other words, just become a Christian—and please stop with the nonsense about "Christian socialism."