

Franky Schaeffer, editor; *Is Capitalism Christian?* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Publishers, 1985). Pp. 461. Reviewed by James E. Huff.

Included in the book are articles by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Warren T. Brookes, Michael Novak, Paul Johnson, P.T. Bauer, Jean-Francois Revel, Humberto Belli, Thomas Sowell, Michael Levin, Paul W. Weaver, Peter Berger, Charles Maurice, Charles W. Smithson, Rael and Erich Isaac, Richard John Neuhaus, Lloyd Billingsley, Julian L. Simon, Herman Kahn, and Nick Eberstadt.

This book was written in response to the “rising tide of evangelical Christian radicalism” during the decade leading up to its publication. Such radicalism was demonstrated by *Sojourners*, *The Other Side*, and *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. This radicalism

argues that America is fundamentally unjust, that the West is responsible for Third World poverty, that forced redistribution of money, goods, and services will bring about increased equality, and that socialism is more compassionate than capitalism.

The premise of the book is that

democratic capitalism [in this country we have a republic, not a democracy—*reviewer’s note*] allows man more freedom to achieve his rightful place in the universe as a creature of dignity made in the image of God than any other socio-economic system.

The book consists of five main parts, plus several appendices. The five parts are “In Defense of Free Enterprise: How Freedom Produces Prosperity,” “Death of the Socialist Experiment,” “The Socialist Solution in America,” “The Uninformed Hysteria of the Doomsayers,” and “Liberating the Church from Marxism.” Not all the writers are Christian, but “each one writes from within and with a profound respect for the Judeo-Christian world view that is America’s heritage.”

Schaeffer writes in the introduction that the lesson of the twentieth century is

that those whom we should fear most are those with the best intentions. Dictators come and go, but utopian theology grows more and more virulent and destructive. Capitalism is no better or worse than the citizens who employ it as a system of commerce. Socialism, on the other hand is always worse as a system than the collective sum of its people. Human beings deserve better than the endless gray and dreary grindstone to which Socialist systems harness people.

Of particular note is the theme of part five, “Liberating the Church from Marxism.” One of the essays covers such topics as “liberation theology,” “eschatology and Marxism,” and “Marxists doing God’s work?” The thinking in some liberal and evangelical socialist circles is that of Gustavo Gutierrez who thinks that

by making political liberation a necessary part of the salvational process, Gutierrez is able to bring Marxism into the drama of Christian salvation. As a result, it is obvious that

Marxists are *really* doing God's work. Furthermore, by liberating man, Marxists are *quite literally* freeing God's hands so he can usher in the kingdom. Hence, Marxists are really Christians incognito.

Such is "torturous theologizing" by Gutierrez.

The book *Is Capitalism Christian?* is very worthwhile. It contains a wealth of information that is very useful in answering the false claims of "Christian socialism."