



LABOR UNIONS AND END-TIME EVENTS

by Tammie Burak



Behold, they shall
surely gather together,
but not by me.

Isaiah 54:15

I grew up in a union home. My dad was a proud union man. His lunchbox, thermos, and hardhat were decorated with union stickers. He religiously attended meetings at his local and brought us to his local's family Christmas parties. Dad bought "union-made" and made sure we understood why. All his buddies were union men, too. According to Dad, collective bargaining gave him good pay, good work, good benefits. Union had made all things good. In our home, union was religion.

So when I learned that a 19th century Christian author had warned Christians to keep out of them and had linked unions with last day events, I was taken aback. *"The trades unions and confederacies of the world are*

a snare. Keep out of them, and away from them, brethren. Have nothing to do with them," she'd written. *"The trades unions will be one of the agencies that will bring upon this earth a time of trouble such as has not been since the world began,"* she warned.

How could this be? To be sure, as a young adult, I'd seen the dark side of unions: violence on the picket line, punishment of union members who didn't comply with union directives, and the demonization of a class of laborers known as "scab" (that is, non-union). But hadn't unions brought decent wages and working conditions to exploited workers? How could unions possibly usher in the time of trouble?

A Fundamental Flaw of Unionism

In a perfect world apart from sin, everyone would have enough work and not too much, each would do work best suited for his or her interests and abilities, and the work of each person would contribute to the happiness of others. But selfishness has led to a spirit of competitiveness and an attitude of “survival of the fittest,” or rather, survival of the most ruthless, prevails.

Greedy business owners must be kept in check if workers are to have any quality of life. Unions have forced employers to pay decent wages, give employees weekends for rest, limit workdays to eight hours, and offer other benefits that we’ve come to take for granted today. These are all good things that wouldn’t have come about without labor union action.

Nevertheless, the fundamental flaw of unions is that they’re based on unChristian principles: the principles of might makes right, the end justifies

the means, and all for one at all costs, among others. When a union votes to take action, all members must act together, regardless of whether some voted against the action. There is no room for dissent or individualism.

Well, fine, you may think. How else could unions fight for workers’ rights unless all fight together? Doesn’t God care about workers? Shouldn’t workers band together to defend their rights?

First of all, modern ideas about “human rights” have their origin in “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” of 1789, a product of the French Revolution. When the document was published, the illustration showed the rights written in the style of the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone. The illustration was embellished with masonic symbols to show that the power of freemasonry was behind the document which was intended to supplant God and His law with another authority and another law. This is where our ideas of human rights come from.



Print of the 17 articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789—Wikipedia

On the other hand, the Bible teaches that our only inherent “right” is the death deserved by traitors against God’s government “for all have sinned” (Romans 3:23) and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

But—praise God!—He has “made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). Through Christ, we have inherited all the rights and privileges of adopted children of the King of kings, but these are not for us to defend in this world. We’ve been warned that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Because we have been bought by the blood of Christ, it is our

right and duty to live for Him. But to fight for “human rights” is not something Christ has appointed to us.

However, God is concerned with the rights of workers and requires that they be paid fairly and on time. (See Jeremiah 22:13, Leviticus 19:13.) In his warning to the rich, James implies that God will one day act on behalf of jilted laborers:

“Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth” (James 5:4).

But God’s employment standards are not necessarily those of the labor unions. For one thing, while two-day weekends and eight-hour workdays are attributed to labor union action, God commanded, “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work” (Exodus 20:9).

And if Jesus’ parable in Matthew 20 is any indication, a working day may have been 10 to 12 hours long.

Today, some unions have become so powerful that they’ve won for their workers working conditions that can hardly be considered fair for employers. By restricting the supply of labor to an employer, unions demand above-market wages and benefits that may be difficult for employers to meet. Unrealistically high wages, reduction in employee motivation since all

workers are treated equally regardless of work ethic, and lower productivity tend to force costs up for employers and consumers. Unions also limit an employer’s discretionary hiring and firing ability.

Some unions have set pay rates at \$40-80/hour, which drives costs up. We’re all familiar with powerful unions that have shut down essential services in an attempt to squeeze out a wage increase of a few cents per hour from an already maxed out employer. I’ve heard of workers who’ve been paid to sit on a bus most of the morning to arrive at the jobsite and work for half-an-hour, then be shuttled back to the coffee room for a break, etc., putting in only a couple of hours of honest labor by the end of the day. In places where several unions work on the same site, an electrician has to stop his or her work, call for and wait for a carpenter to arrive to move a nail, before he or she can return to the wiring. Can Christians conscientiously support such conditions?



In heaven, Lucifer organized the angels against God Himself. The concept of using group power as a weapon and the downplaying of freedom of individual thought or voice stems from Satan. God, on the other hand, says, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). Christ uses reason to persuade, not force to coerce. Christ works with individuals. His "bargaining power" is His great unselfish

love for sinners. When a sinner is converted, he or she willingly surrenders and lives for Christ. No compulsion is involved. On the other hand, compulsion is an important principle in unionism.

Un-Christlike principles are just one reason why Christians should have nothing to do with unions. In addition, we need to understand unionism as a movement and what it offers to the rulers of this world.

Unions: A Brief History

Craft unions began forming in the late 18th century in America to protect workers' income. The first of these was the shoemakers union of Philadelphia, but others soon followed including workers in printing, textile manufacturing, and construction. Workers with specialized skills formed what was called "combinations." These collectives united master workers, journeymen, and apprentices in their particular trades. Before industrialization, independent skilled workers organized into unions by industry to set prices for their services. But when machines began to replace them, skilled workers were less needed. Factories hired mostly unskilled workers who were willing to work for low wages and long hours and run the machines. Instead of setting a fixed price for a job as they had done, the skilled workers were forced to hire themselves out on the factory owner's terms, and work for wages set by the factory owners just to survive.

The days of the master craftsman were ending, and as industrialization dawned, there were no regulations to protect workers and reign in unscrupulous factory owners driven by rampant greed. Men, women, and children labored under inhuman conditions for meager wages that scarcely provided for their daily needs. Workers formed unions and went on strike, forcing employers to do better.

Machines never tire but workers need regular periods of rest. As the Industrial Revolution spread, workers organized not only for fair wages, but to demand safer working conditions, shorter workdays and work weeks. In fact, unions are largely credited with the establishment of an 8-hour workday and two-day weekends as the norm for laborers.³ Before union action, ten-hour days or longer and six-day work weeks were the workingman's lot.

The Seal of the Knights
of Labor—Wikipedia



Evolution of Unions in America

The first strike in America was by journeyman tailors in 1768, but it wasn't till almost the turn of the century that the labor movement really took off. Along with the spread of worker's unions whose focus was mostly fair wages and working hours, the 1800s also saw a push for more extensive labor reforms through politically minded organizations like the Knights of Labor who worked for equal rights and whose goal was a "just society." Attracted by these ideals, workers from different industries joined the Knights, weakening the power of the unions, whose primary focus remained on fair pay. In response to lost membership to the more politically minded Knights of Labor, trade unions representing their particular industries banded together to form the American Federation of Labor (AFL).



American
Federation of
Labor AFL—CIO
Founded
December
8, 1886—
Wikipedia

Unions move into politics

The AFL determined to back away from political involvement and refocus workers on job-conscious goals upon the principle of "pure-and-simple unionism."⁴ The success of the AFL was at least partly responsible for the eventual demise of the Knights of Labor. Nevertheless, by the close of the 19th century, trade unions themselves began to move into politics, creating powerful national lobbying structures. Today, massive national and international federations of unions represent hundreds of millions of workers worldwide and hold enormous lobbying power in all levels of government. How will this power be used in the last days?

Funneling the Political Power of Unions

There's no denying that unions have brought benefits to working people but it's also undeniable that they have been used to further the ends of corruption in high places. More than this, unions have been seen as a way to capture political power. For example, Marxism sees unions as a tool for overthrowing capitalism. The democratic organizational structure of unions can be infiltrated to change the mindset and focus of workers from the inside. Then when conditions are right, members can be moved to open revolution. Let's take a closer look at this process.



Garment Workers on Strike,
New York City circa 1913—Wikipedia

Step 1 – Organization

Unions are democratic in structure. Members elect executive board members and officers who manage the affairs of the union, similar to the way a board of directors manages a corporation. General members pay union dues, participate in elections, and attend meetings. In order to remain in good standing and benefit from union entitlements members must abide by union by-laws, which includes participating in strike action when told to do so. The power of unions rests in their ability to have members act in unison. When a decision is made, all must act together. There is no room for dissent or individualism, and unions have recourse to strong measures to ensure the compliance of its members. It's this well-organized, self-governing structure of unions that makes them so appealing and indispensable to the world's power mongers.

However, unions are often socialist by nature. The ideals held by those associated with unions often reflect socialist principles, humanism, “the common good,” and social justice. Although the reasons given for these ideals often sound noble and fair, the realization of these principles usually ends up in restricting one group of people for the benefit of another instead of truly being fair and just to all.

Step 2 – Subversion

Organized labor unions, and other mass movements, represent opportunities for the capture of political power. For instance, early influential members of the socialist Fabian Society were involved in unions. The Fabian Society was founded in 1884 and calls itself “Britain’s oldest political think tank.”⁵ Famous humanists who believed socialism was the answer to the world’s injustices made up the ranks of the new society. Their influence has had a profound effect on unionism and political thought.

Who were those early Fabians and what did they believe?

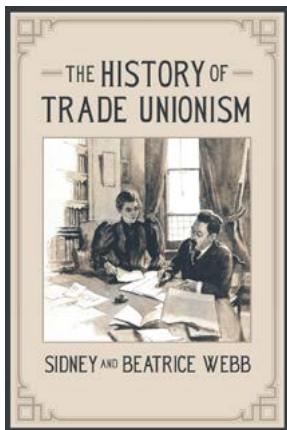
In 1894, Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb published *The History of Trade Unionism*, which supplied a rationale for the British labor movement. They introduced the term “collective bargaining” in 1891⁶ and Sidney co-founded the London School of Economics with fellow Fabian George Bernard Shaw. Today it is a leading university in social science research with a goal of having the “greatest global impact.”⁷

Famous playwright George Bernard Shaw who wrote the Fabian Society’s first manifesto, felt that the best way for socialism to succeed was through infiltration of existing political parties. His legacy includes more than twenty Fabian tracts on socialism. His ideas also found their way into public discourse through sixty plays, the most famous of which is *Pygmalion*, still studied in schools today. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925.

Another Fabian, Annie Besant, was an early leader in the New Age movement and a disciple of theosophist Helena Blavatsky. Besant organized Britain's matchgirls' strike in 1888 and was later elected as president of the Indian National Congress in 1917, before traveling to the United States to present her adopted son as the reincarnation of Buddha.

The influence of these and other early Fabians is still felt in society today. Economic policy, entertainment, and New Age beliefs reflect Fabian ideas. The Fabian logo is a tortoise, representing the Fabians' slow and gradual working process. Its coat of arms is a wolf in sheepskin.

For Fabians and others seeking to shape society, labor unions are a suitable vehicle for subversion and takeover because they share commonalities, to begin with, that open the door to the capture of power. Once infiltrated, unions become steppingstones toward the end goal, a new social order as described in Revelation 13.



The History of Trade Unionism
by Sidney and Beatrice Webb—Wikipedia

Step 3 – Revolution

To understand how unions could be instrumental in restructuring society, consider the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx regarding them. Karl Marx took over the leadership of the International Working Men's Association, or the "International," when it was founded at London in 1864.

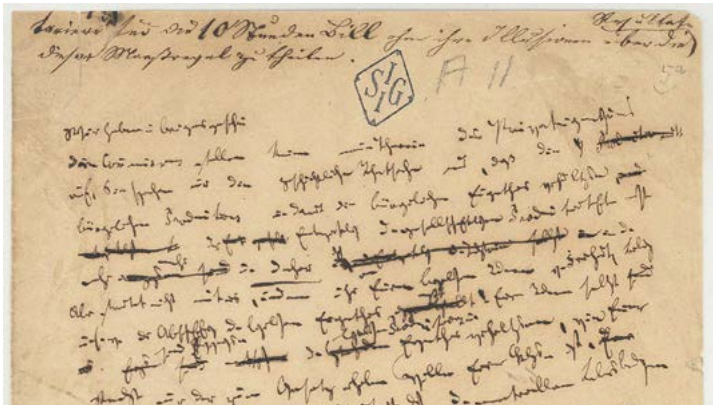
The International came out of a meeting called by leaders of English trade unions who were mostly interested in workers' wages but it became the start of the workers' movement which birthed federations and organizations of workers worldwide.⁸ Marx was the unifying force behind the disparate interests and ambitions of workers' representatives. Historian and political scientist Saul Padover noted that "in the International, Marx saw a great historic opportunity, and seized it."⁹ Engels wrote of the International, "Its aim was to weld together into one huge army all the fighting forces of the working class of Europe and America."¹⁰

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels blatantly declares, "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."¹¹ What role did Marx envision the unions to play?

"Both Marx and Engels link the daily struggle, the struggle of the trade unions and strikes with the struggle for class emancipation."¹²

Marx saw the unions as a stage of the development of the proletarian class, wage laborers, that would eventually overthrow the bourgeoisie, the ruling classes. The real "fruit" of strikes, riots, and revolts was not the occasional victory for unions but "the ever expanding union of the workers," wrote Marx.¹³ Simply put, trade unions prepare the working class for revolution. Georgi Dimitrov, who later became Bulgaria's first communist leader, explained the task of unions like this, "We have to have a struggle waged by the whole proletariat, which it will terminate with arms in hand! To rally the masses, to educate and prepare them for this struggle . . . is today the foremost task of the trade unions."¹⁴

Taking up Marx's view of unions, Lenin exploited unionism to realize his goals for the Russian Revolution of 1917 which brought in communist rule.

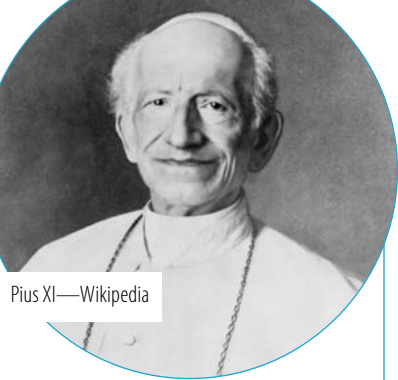


Only surviving page from the first draft of the Manifesto, handwritten by Karl Marx.—Wikipedia

It was “the unions and shop committees (which) furnished and formed the frame of the workers’ columns which made the October (Russian) Revolution,” wrote the Bolshevik revolutionary Solomon Abramovich Lozovsky in 1920.¹⁵ “The Russian Communist party inspired and led them. . . . Thanks to the unions, the conquest of power was accomplished.”

It’s clear that what unions supply to the world’s power mongers is ready-made organization, opportunity for infiltration and takeover, and finally the power of the masses bent on revolution.

Unions will undoubtedly play a significant role in the cataclysmic upheavals of society portrayed in the end-time scenarios Christ described in Matthew 24 and Revelation 13. But we know that worship will be the central issue in the final conflict and the Roman Catholic Church will lead the world in worshipping the dragon. That being the case, let’s consider some papal statements to understand how unions fit into Roman Catholic social teaching.



Pius XI—Wikipedia

Catholic Social Teaching and Unions

In 1891 Pope Leo XIII published his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, meaning “of new things.” Set against the societal upheavals brought on by the industrial revolution, his encyclical expresses the foundational principles of Catholic social teaching, including the common good, the universal destination of goods, solidarity, and subsidiarity (the idea that matters should be dealt with at the most local level possible). What does this encyclical teach about labor unions?

The problem of the great divide between the rich and the poor is the apparent focus of *Rerum Novarum* but the real focus is the prosperity and promotion of the Church. The Roman Catholic rhetoric often uses words that sound good, but in reality their understanding of those words is very different than that of the casual reader. For example, in opposition to the socialists for “striving to do away with private property,” Leo identified private property ownership as the solution to poverty and injustice, saying, “If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the consequence will be that the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over, and the respective classes will be brought nearer to one another.”¹⁶

The idea that everyone should have the right to private property sounds so good and noble, but it’s important to understand the Church’s true position on property ownership.

The “share in the land” that the Pope is talking about is the same kind of “share” that the serfs had when feudalism was the economic structure of the Dark Ages. Feudalism is the Roman Catholic ideal system. And when they discuss redistribution of wealth, it is about removing wealth from the middle class, and setting up a feudalistic system where the elite manage the rest of society to increase their personal gain and power and that of the Church of course, while general society accepts a universal income and fulfills their role as defined by the Church and world leaders. All this is done under the guise of helping society, helping the earth, or whatever other noble cause they may come up with.

The symbol of the three-tiered papal tiara with the globe on top represents the Pope’s claim to be governor of the world and vicar of Christ. In other words, the Papacy claims the right in the place of Christ to determine who should have property and how it is to be used.

The Papacy recognizes only one legitimate owner of all earthly property, and that is the Papacy itself. For more on this, see the sidebar “Catholic Social Teaching and Private Property.”



Nevertheless, the way to ensure that everyone has property of their own, the Pope said, was by forming associations, especially trade unions. He felt that unions were “greatly to be desired (and) that they should become more numerous and more efficient.”¹⁷

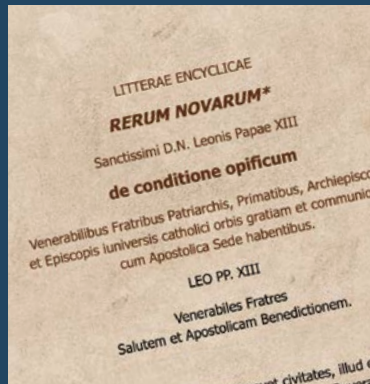
Before going on to describe how unions should be organized and governed, he points out that the purpose of “working men’s associations” is to “better his condition to the utmost in body, soul, and property.”

In other words, labor unions, in procuring better wages for their members ensure that workers and their families have what they need to live. More than that, though, unions, Leo said, “must pay special and chief attention to the duties of religion and morality.” Not surprisingly he advised, “Let the working man be urged and led to the worship of God, to the earnest practice of religion, and, among other things, to the keeping holy of Sundays and holy days. Let him learn to reverence and love holy Church, the common Mother of us all; and hence to obey the precepts of the Church.”¹⁸ According to *Rerum Novarum*, unions can never focus solely on secular interests, but must serve the interests of the Church.

Subsequent encyclicals have contributed to further development of Catholic social teaching. Pius XI saw *Rerum Novarum*, which he called the “Immortal Encyclical,” as the inauguration of the “reconstruction of human society.”¹⁹ Marking *Rerum Novarum’s* 40th anniversary

in 1931, *Pius’s Quadragesimo Anno: Reconstruction of the Social Order* expanded upon the Church’s plan for this restructuring. This included the recruitment and training of “auxiliary soldiers of the Church”²⁰ to be “apostles to the workers,” and for Catholic associations to be formed alongside secular labor unions to zealously engage in “imbuing and forming their members . . . so that they in turn may be able to permeate the unions.”²¹

Rerum Novarum—Wikipedia





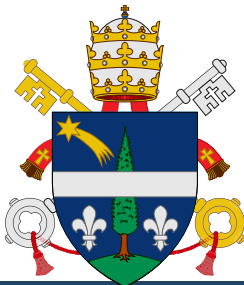
Pope Francis
—Wikipedia

***Rerum Novarum's* influence today**

Now, more than 125 years after *Rerum Novarum* – with more than a century-and-a-quarter to crystallize and experiment with the implementation of its teachings – the Church is much closer to its goal of a reconstructed social order. In June 2021, Pope Francis addressed the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) at its 109th conference. His message was an urgent call to action.

He said, “This Conference has been convened at a crucial moment in social and economic history” and that “the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to cure the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family.”²² He referred to “this historical phase,” that the ILO has come to that will require “careful decisions.” Apparently, “this historical phase” is the opportunity of re-ordering society’s wreckage left in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, or rather, the opportunity to rebuild society after the de-structuring, destabilizing effects of the stringent mandates imposed by governments in response to it.

Francis spoke to his ILO partners using inclusive language. He called the conference a “moment of reflection, in which we seek to shape our future action and shape a post-Covid-19 international agenda” and spoke about “the Catholic Church and the International Labour Organization” continuing in a joint effort “to seize the opportunities,” and “to collaborate in a wide variety of important actions.”²³



Catholic Social Teaching and Private Property

Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* stated, "The first and most fundamental principle, therefore, if one would undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property."⁶³ However, the "inviolability of private property" does not mean what it seems to mean at first glance.

Many conditions, stipulated by the Church, make it clear that private property ownership is not a guaranteed right for everyone. There are many papal statements that make this clear. For the sake of brevity, here

is but one taken from points 23 and 24 of *Populorum Progressio*⁶⁴:

"The right to private property is not absolute and unconditional. . . 'as the Fathers of the Church and other eminent theologians tell us, the right of private property may never be exercised to the detriment of the common good.'"

If certain conditions are not met for the use of privately owned land, "the common good sometimes demands their expropriation."

- i. Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html #15
- ii. Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, Mar. 26, 1967, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html



Catholic Social Teaching Terms

COMMON GOOD

—what's good for all humanity as determined by the Pope.

UNIVERSAL DESTINATION OF GOODS

—all have the right to the common use of goods regardless of who produced the goods or who they “belong” to since all things ultimately belong to God; the Church, as God's representative, determines who should have access to resources.

SOLIDARITY

—we're all in this together so it's all for one; we all act in unison in concert with the Church.

SUBSIDIARITY

—all levels of government, especially the most local, are required to promote the duties of citizens as determined by the Church.



The “legacy of the Enlightenment”

What does he hope to accomplish with the help of the unions? Perhaps the following statement from the same speech provides insight: “It is time to permanently free ourselves of the legacy of the Enlightenment.”²⁴ This is the task at hand for the unions now. But what is “the legacy of the Enlightenment”?

The Catholic News Agency, reporting on the Pope’s message to the theological commission of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on November 29, 2019 shed some light on “the legacy of the Enlightenment.”

Referring to a document released by the commission, the article says, “The pope highlighted the document’s critique of the ambiguity within an ‘ethically neutral’ State, which he said, ‘risks leading to an unjust marginalization of religions from civil life to the detriment of the common good,’ noting that this is ‘the legacy of the Enlightenment.’”²⁵ In other words, the “legacy of the Enlightenment” is an “ethically neutral state.” And a result of the “ethically neutral state” is the “unjust marginalization of religions from civil life.” It seems from this statement that a more just society would be one in which religion plays a more central role in civil life, which is one of the hallmarks of the Dark Ages.

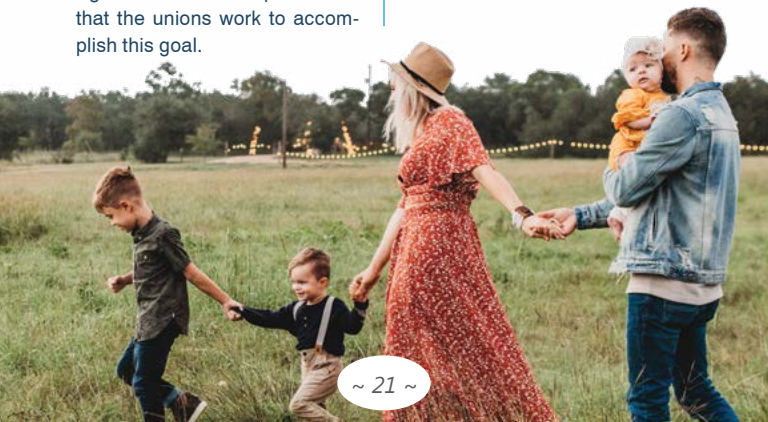
Where did the idea of the “ethically neutral state” come from? The Protestant Reformation which broke out in the 16th century challenged the authority of the Church in all aspects of society, asserting that people were ultimately and individually accountable to God.

This started a process of emancipation from church control that progressed through the events of the Enlightenment. Secularism and atheism were both results. But so was the separation of church and state. The authority of the Church was grossly undermined by the Reformation and the Enlightenment. The Church lost control over the state and civil matters, and the state declared itself ethically neutral. Is this the legacy from which we must “permanently free ourselves”? Apparently. In other words, the “ethically neutral state” must give way once again to church-state union, where the Church controls the state as it did during the Dark Ages. And it is the Pope’s desire that the unions work to accomplish this goal.

The common good

Another theme in the Pope’s message to the ILO was his concern for the “common good.” He called on the ILO to “continue to exercise ‘special care’ for the common good” and called for religious unity, saying that for the sake of the common good, “it is also essential that all confessions and religious communities work hard together.”²⁶

What is the “common good” that everyone should work together for? The common good is an umbrella term that encompasses the goals of the papal social order.



It's what the Papacy decides is good for everyone - itself and select others excluded as fits the circumstances, of course. The common good is a way of saying that everyone must share the same goals and work toward them in the same way as determined by those in charge. So if, for example, it's for the common good that everyone wears a mask and gets a vaccine, then those who disagree, for whatever reason, can be singled out as being selfish, uncaring, dangerous trouble-makers.

When the Pope instructed the ILO to "continue to exercise 'special care' for the common good," he was calling for renewed commitment to solidarity. When he said religious unity is for the common good, he was calling for all religions to unite in support of the Church's new social order. When it comes to the common good, there is no room for individuality or dissent. Union members understand this concept. This is why unions make perfect allies for the Pope.

“Decent work” and a “just transition”

The Pope also asked the ILO to “understand work correctly” regarding the Decent Work Agenda, part of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. “Decent work” is also enshrined as Sustainable Development Goal #8, part of The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the UN calls “a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet.”²⁷ What is “decent work”?

The term “decent work” was introduced in 1999 by the ILO²⁸ and embraces, among other things, rest days protected by law. In accord with the Decent Work Agenda, in 2014, the European Sunday Alliance, “a network of national Sunday Alliances, trade unions, civil society organizations and religious communities,” launched a Pledge for a Work-free Sunday.²⁹

The pledge was “aimed at committing European politicians to the promotion of a common weekly day of rest.”³⁰ “A work-free Sunday and decent working hours are of paramount importance for citizens and workers throughout Europe,” says the pledge.³¹

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is the world’s largest trade union federation³² and is also a strong supporter of the International Labour Organization’s Decent Work Agenda. The ITUC organizes an annual “World Day for Decent Work,” a day on which “all the trade unions in the world . . . stand up for decent work.”³³ According to ITUC’s website, “The ITUC represents 200 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 332 national affiliates.”³⁴

Another important phrase today is “just transition.” The term was coined in the early 1990s when labor leaders called for a plan to support workers threatened by environmental policies.³⁵ The meaning of the term has evolved over time and is now tied to action on climate change.³⁶

“Just transition” encompasses a wide range of societal changes that are being promoted as necessary supports for moving to a fossil-free, low-carbon future. “Decent work” is to be part of a “just transition.” The two go hand in hand.

One of the proposals for bringing about a “just transition” is a move to shorter working hours and a shorter work week. For instance, “A four-day workweek is just one idea the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) is proposing to make the future of work better for workers,” reports Vox.³⁷ This idea provokes many questions. Could a move to shifts of four-day or three-day work weeks be a solution to rising unemployment rates? Could such a move result in required Sabbath work for some? Time will tell.



Different religions rest on Fridays and Saturdays. Images—Unsplash

Sunday's the answer

One thing is certain, however. Whatever shape the new world of work will take in the near future will be promoted as being for the common good and for the saving of the earth because Sunday legislation is touted as the cure-all for almost every earthly malady. It's been marketed as a Covid antidote, workers' necessity, cure for selfishness, remedy for an ailing economy, the source of strength for families,³⁸ a "revitalizing life tonic,"³⁹ and a "tech shabbat"⁴⁰ to help the wired generation reconnect with real life. For those pushing for Sunday legislation, Sunday is the answer.

But why Sunday? Why the push for a *common* rest day? Wouldn't the enforcement of Sunday as the day of rest offend large portions of society? Specifically, wouldn't legislating Sunday as a rest day be opposed by Muslims and Jews? On the contrary. Way back in 2013, Israel trialed Sundays off,⁴¹ in addition to Fridays and Sabbaths, but found it to be objectionable – not on religious grounds, but for economic reasons. Workers didn't like the 10-hour days that resulted, and employers were forced to include an additional paid break for dinner. Also, some said Israel lost the economic advantage of working on a day that other countries had off.

Still, it's conceivable that if given a compelling-enough reason, Israel would support Sundays off. If the objections against Sundays off could be addressed, they would have no reason not to support such a move considering that the objections were not moral, but only practical. There was no argument against Sundays off because it was morally offensive, say, because of its pagan roots or because it's considered a Christian holy day. No. Sundays off were simply inconvenient for various reasons.

And in December 2021, the United Arab Emirates' government shifted the weekend from Friday and Saturday to Saturday and Sunday, with half-day Fridays.⁴² This change marks a departure from traditional religious practice for Muslims whose holy day is Friday. Strangely, there appears to be no opposition to this intrusion into sacred time, not even by religious liberty advocates.

The power of Catholic social teaching

From a Biblical viewpoint, there's no satisfying explanation for why Sunday should be the day the world unitedly stops its activities apart from the fact that it is the child of the Papacy. But is it really possible that Rome's influence could be that great? Who, besides devout Catholics, recognizes the Church as an authority?

You might be surprised to learn the answer. The deadly wound is in its final stages of being healed. In fact, it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the influence of Catholic social teaching (CST) on the world today. Here is a story to illustrate this point. Maurice Glasman, a Jewish member of the House of Lords, the UK's upper house of parliament and the director of the Common Good Foundation, gave some insight into the behind-the-scenes power and influence of CST.

He explained how he had discovered CST while doing research for his doctoral dissertation at a secular university.⁴³ He had been struggling to find an academic explanation for the post-war German economy because existing economic theories failed as models to explain the data. As he discussed this problem with a fellow student, she asked him if he had read any Catholic social teaching. Though he knew about liberation theology, he admitted he was not aware of CST. At that point he began researching the social encyclicals and discovered the theoretical solution which had previously eluded him. What he learned was, he said, “transformative of my understanding of the German political economy.” More than that, CST inspired him to establish Blue Labour, a conservative socialist party within the Labour Party.

So it was Catholic social teaching that was responsible for the restructuring of German society after World War II. Though some would deny it, Catholic social teaching is responsible for restructuring of society through

violent revolution also. For instance, it was the development of liberation theology – which is in line with principles put forward in *Rerum Novarum* – that led Roman Catholic priests to take an active part in Nicaragua’s Sandinista revolution in 1979. Although some might argue that liberation theology is not a product of CST, many Catholics have had no problem reconciling the two. For example, though Pope John Paul II publicly scolded Father Cardenal for his role in the revolution, Pope Francis later absolved him from all canonical censorships.⁴⁴

The point is, Catholic social teaching permeates the popular movements, the birth pangs, wracking society today. The masses believe these movements will create a more just, sustainable, healthier, happier world. On the other hand, Bible students know these things will culminate in the worship of the beast and the enforcement of Sunday law.⁴⁵ And unions will play a significant role in the transition – not toward a more just society, but toward a kingdom ruled by Antichrist.

Unions Then and Now

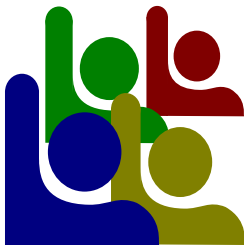
In the late 1800s and early 1900s, bloody street battles were fought between striking workers and the police or militia in different locations across the United States.⁴⁶ Guns, bombs, killings, and property destruction were all part of capital-labor tensions in those days. Conditions brought about by rapid industrialization are partly to blame and it may be tempting to think that warnings to Christians against joining unions were relevant then but no longer apply now.

However, the principles of unionization are just as unGodly and unBiblical today as they were then. Those who join unions place themselves under an authority opposed to God, are in transgression of God's laws, and are taking part in a satanic misuse of power that will lead others away from God. Unions will play a significant role in the suffering of the last days and powerful unions are a sign of the end.

Let's take a closer look at the dangers of unions for Christians.

Unions bring members into bondage to another authority

Individual accountability to God's authority is a Biblical Protestant principle. Peter clearly stated this principle when he said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). And Paul wrote, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Union members, however, are bound to by-laws and voted actions, and they cannot freely oppose union mandates without facing repercussions.



Transgression of God's law

James wrote, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Holding membership in unions makes it impossible for Christians to keep God's law. How so? Union membership involves coming under the authority of another apart from God, coercing others, demanding a greater share of limited resources, the imposition of sanctions that hurt the poor, and other actions that oppose the law of love embodied in God's law.

Misuse of power

God gave Adam dominion "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26), but not over his fellow man. In the Old Testament, men in positions of power were required to exercise fairness and

humility. (See for example, Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:16, 25:1; Numbers 12:3; 2 Samuel 7:18.) It is a misuse of power for those in positions of authority to use coercive force upon others. God condemns this misuse of power which is so often seen in unions. (See Leviticus 25:17; Isaiah 5:7; Ezekiel 22.)

Today, just as in the days of the Industrial Revolution, Christians place themselves under the authority of their unions when they become union members. In addition, the principles under which unions reach their goals are just as much against Biblical principles today as they were then. The principles of union membership that were problematic for Christians in the 1800s are still problematic for Christians today. Therefore, the warning to keep away from unions is just as relevant today as when it was given. In fact, we are closer now to the time when unions will contribute to the final crisis before Christ's return. Now more than ever, we must stay away from unions if we are to stand free in Christ and avoid being caught up in the calamities that unions will initiate.

In the News: Unions and Last- day Events

As has been shown, the Papacy itself confirms that unions have an important role to play in the reconstruction of society based on Catholic principles. Do the events making headlines today give any indication of this? A brief look at recent events shows that just as predicted, unions are playing an important role in last day events. Here is a sampling of how the unions are making news today.

In France, support for Sunday closing is coming not just from churches, but from unions and climate change activists. An article in *The Local*, May 3, 2022 reported, “While traditionally it was Christian groups who opposed Sunday opening, these days it’s just as likely to be trade unions – who are concerned about the effect on employees’ work-life balance and right to time off if Sunday opening becomes the norm.”¹⁴⁷ A poll run by this same paper found that 58% were against increasing Sunday openings.

In the United States, Joe Biden has renewed his strong support for unionism with a report making 70 recommendations that encourage union membership and organization. One writer reports, “Biden is leaning into his association with organized labor more aggressively than any president in modern times. Over the last few weeks alone, he’s warned major businesses that their workforces will seek to unionize, with his support.”¹⁴⁸



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, a contender for an appointment by President Joe Biden to the US Supreme Court, has ruled in favor of unions in a recent court appeal. This ruling could put her in a favorable position with Biden and the Democrats as “labor unions are an important constituency for Democrats,” according to a Reuters report.⁴⁹

In 2020, at the 40th anniversary of the Polish Solidarity movement, Pope Francis said, “I congratulate you on your service for the common good.”⁵⁰ He added that solidarity supports those deprived of “the right to decent working conditions, to the just rewards necessary to support the family, to health care or to rest.”

In addition, the Pope sees collective bargaining as a tool to rebuild economies devastated by the pandemic. NBC reported that “he called the ‘right to organize in unions’ one of the fundamental protections for workers.”⁵¹ Francis has called upon unions to work toward “decent and dignified working conditions,” which ultimately encompasses legal protections for Sunday.

Union membership has always been dangerous but is immeasurably more dangerous now in these last days. For it is now, at the end of time, that the dragon will marshal all his forces to make one final assault against God’s kingdom, “to make war with the remnant” (Revelation 12:17). As economic, social, religious, and political issues become more volatile, it is imperative that God’s people heed the warning:

The trades unions and confederacies of the world are a snare. Keep out of them, and away from them, brethren. Have nothing to do with them.
GCB April 6, 1903 **AD**

just transition
DECENCY
LABOR MOVEMENT
Covid antidote
property
work-free Sunday
SUBSIDIARITY

Terms: Unions, confederacies, monopolies, trusts

Ellen White often spoke of trade unions in conjunction with “confederacies,” “gigantic monopolies,” and “trusts.” For example, she wrote, “The wicked are being bound up in bundles, bound up in trusts, in unions, in confederacies.”ⁱ What did she mean by these terms?

In Sister White’s time, a trustⁱⁱ was an organization of several businesses in the same industry that limited competition by controlling the production and distribution of a product or service. A monopoly is similar in that it has “the sole power of vending any species of goods.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Trusts and monopolies corner the market and effectively limit or eliminate any competition.

Mrs. White herself explained what she meant by “confederacies.” She wrote, “You know what a confederacy is,—a union of men in a work that does not bear the stamp of pure, straightforward, unswerving integrity.”^{iv} Though we may use different terms today, Sister White’s warnings against union membership are equally applicable to all organizations that fall within these definitions.

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Trade Unions & Secret Societies



Is there a connection between labor unions and secret societies? Secret societies are undoubtedly associated with labor movements. Many, if not all, unions and labor federations have strong masonic roots. For example, the Knights of Labor, formed in 1869, was itself a secret society that acted as a labor federation.ⁱ Many of the masonic institutions of the Knights of Labor were adopted by trade unions after its dissolution.

Another type of labor organization started in the late 19th century was the protective order which provided life insurance to laborers' families. The first of these was the Ancient Order of United Workmen, which, like manyⁱⁱ of the other fraternal labor organizations created in the Golden Age of Fraternity at the end of the 19th century, was organized much like a Masonic lodge, with secret rituals and masonic symbolsⁱⁱⁱ Freemasonry itself is said to have its origins in stonemasons' guilds.^{iv} Not surprisingly, union insignia contain many masonic symbols.

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