

Christianity and Global Redistribution of Resources

The question of redistribution of wealth has been a big question for a long time. Specifically for Christians. This paper argues that Christians are not required to redistribute their wealth but are encouraged to give as they are able and have the desire to. This paper will discuss what the bible has to say, what various christian writers have to say, and a rebuttal to some of the leading reasons that christians should be required to redistribute their wealth.

Before we begin, I would like to define some terms. We will only be looking at the dominations of christianity who believe the whole bible and do not have other texts that they hold to the same standard as the bible. Also the redistribution of wealth refers to the wealthy giving money to the less wealthy so everyone has roughly equal money.

The bible has a lot to say about this topic. (NIV 2011, Acts 5:1-11) is a perfect example of this. In this passage, Ananias and his wife (her name is not given in the text) sold some land and gave some to the church. They kept half of the land and gave the other half but told the church that they were giving all of it. In (NIV 2011, Acts 5:4) Peter asks ““Didn’t the land belong to you before you sold it? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing something like this? You have not lied to human beings but to God.””. This shows that he was not required to give his money at all but only encouraged. The problem was that he and his wife falsely stated that they gave all of the money to the church so that they could better their reputation. Peter is saying that the land was his and he could have done whatever he wanted to with it. The only reason that he is in the wrong is that he lied about how much of it was given to the church. Another verse that discusses this is (NIV 2011, 2 Thess. 3:10) which states “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat”. There are plenty of people who are too lazy to work and would benefit from global redistribution without doing work. Those who are not willing to put the work in to do have a job should not be able to leach off of those who are working honestly and required to give because of their religion.

Many christian authors have also written about this topic. (Challies n.d.) writes “But is there an opposite extreme of having too much wealth? In contrast to many admonitions to help the poor, there is no corresponding command in the New Testament to take some wealth away from the very rich, and there is no teaching that a large amount of wealth is wrong in itself. But there are strong warnings against spending too much on oneself and living in self-indulgent luxury”. This also shows that required redistribution is not and should never be part of what it means to be a christian. If the wealthy are not wrong for being rich, then they should not be forced to give up the majority of that money to others. If they wish, by all means should they give to the poor but they can do what they want with their money as a christian. As Challies says, there are of course concerns with spending too much money on selfish things that are not needed. Apart from those, they have free rain to do as they want. Another author (Smith n.d.) writes “For the earliest Christians, property wasn’t just optionally shared, it was held communally as an expression of loving gratitude in Christ—not as a legal requirement, but as a spiritual commitment.” From this, we see that christians are to be generous with their property but this was specifically not a legal demand. This continues to support the idea that God wants christians

to have the ability to do what they want and that any giving they do should come out of a desire to please God and not as an obligation.

Many would argue that Global Obligation should be a requirement of the church. One such person is (Chan n.d.) says ““Do you know that nothing you have is yours? Everything you own is a gift from God. He wants you to be focused on what you can give, not what you can keep.”” This is correct to some degree. Yes nothing we have is ours because it all comes from God but “God loves a joyful giver (NIV 2011, 2 Cor. 9:7)”. This shows that the heart matters. We should not be required to give because many would give from a heart that wants to check a box and not because they actually care. This is a problem because it defects the point of giving to make it required and minimizes the value of the giving. A perfect example of this is the passage where a woman gives 1 cent and her giving was counted as better than that of people giving thousands. Because she gave from a joyful heart, even though she gave less, her giving was counted as more. This is even more eye opening when we learn that she gave all that she had owned and trusted that she would be safe. This takes incredible faith and a desire to give instead of a need to give because of a law or requirement to go to heaven. (Teresa n.d.) says “When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed”. This is one way of thinking about this. She is saying that Christians are the reason that people die of hunger if we choose not to give. If this is the case, why are not every person in the world required to give to these people to save them? The reason is that under the constitution, we are allowed to do what we want with our money and time to keep us as free as possible. This is the same with God's laws for us. Because God wants us to have free will, he will only encourage us to be generous with our money and not force us to do with our money what some of us do not want to do.

The bible has a lot to say about this topic and so do Christian authors. At the end of the day, I believe that Christians should only be encouraged to give not required. I hope that this paper has shed some light on this topic regardless of your religion or status.

Works Cited

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Biblical References Cited:

- Acts 5:1-11
- Acts 5:4
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 (referenced as "God loves a joyful giver (NIV 2011, 2 Cor. 9:7)")