

# Marxist Parallels with the Seven Mountain Mandate

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## KEY WORDS

| Seven Mountain Mandate | New Apostolic Reformation | Althusser |  
| Societal Change | Marxist | Cultural Hegemony |

## ABSTRACT

The Seven Mountain Mandate (SMM), a teaching recently promoted by Christian leaders typically associated with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), shares similarities with earlier Marxist conceptions of cultural hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. While each of the two groups directs its followers to strive for antithetical goals, the strategies of both groups to achieve societal change is uncannily similar. These commonalities include the identification of a nearly identical set of change agents that promote a radical conversion of culture. The spheres of influence that both groups target include: religion, family, education, media, government (politics and legal), business (trade unions), and media (arts and entertainment). The historical origins and emergence of these seven spheres, along with their tactical adjustments, are revealed through examples of tactics to control two societal realms, education and business, in both Marxist and Christian literature. The parallels discovered between the Christian and Marxist tactics examined imply a need for broader study of the SMM to reduce confusion and to more fully understand uniquely Christian transformation of society.

## INTRODUCTION

The historical tensions between evangelical Christianity and Marxism are well known, so it is remarkable that many Christians who are primarily non-denominational charismatics unknowingly share a strategy with earlier Marxists philosophers on how to increase influence on society. Specifically, key elements of the Christian strategy, first dubbed the Seven Mountain Mandate (SMM) by evangelicals Dr. Bill Bright and Loren Cunningham (Pinnacle Forum, “The Seven Mountains of Culture” section), are nearly identical to the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) developed by Louis Althusser (1918-1990), on the basis of the theories of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), and others (Althusser 2014). Current-day SMM subscribers and historical Marxists like Althusser outline the key objects of societal influence to be religion,

family, education, media, government, business (trade unions), and arts and entertainment. Although both Marxists and, more recently, certain groups of Christians seek to increase a particular movement’s influence and power by targeting these societal spheres, their desired social outcomes differ tremendously. Curiously, both groups have identified the exactly same arenas in which they believe they must bear influence as a formula to promote their goals. This study seeks to uncover the similarities of both approaches and raise questions about the roots of the SMM. Attention will also be particularly directed to examining parallel Marxist and SMM views within the areas of education and business. Focused inquiry into historical influences on the SMM is crucial for understanding the political, ideological, and religious impact that may eventually be

achieved, especially because these strategies are creating confrontations and potential changes in both political and religious realms.

### BACKGROUND OF THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE

There is nothing new about Christians advocating for positive change or reflecting on causes of judgment in government and society. St. Augustine's *City of God* (c. 426) refuted the assumption that Christians had caused the fall of Rome and instead suggested that the vices and the alternative gods of Rome were to blame. In regards to constructive change, Martin Luther is heralded for "shap[ing] the German language, mentality and way of life," and this impact is still being felt today ("How Martin Luther" 2017). In the 1950s, teachings on Christian influence and dominion can be found in the work of R. J. Rushdoony (Clarkson 2016). Rushdoony's influence extended beyond his writings as he was also an activist for home-schooling, founder of a Christian think tank called the Chalcedon Foundation, and grassroots organizer (McVicar 2015, 122). Rushdoony "articulated a social project that called Christians to 'take dominion over all spheres of human society—including the state—and turn them toward explicitly Christian purposes'" (McVicar 2015, 146). Such appropriations of power by Christian leaders align well with Lasswell's definition of politics in a book of the same title, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (1936), in which Lasswell succinctly identifies issues related to power dynamics that have been theorized and applied since the first governmental systems were conceived.

The SMM strategy fits into this context of historical Christian desire for national or world dominion through focused activism, albeit in different forms and with different pretexts. The

trope of "seven mountains" can be attributed to various sources. Bill Bright (Campus Crusade for Christ), Loren Cunningham (Youth with a Mission: YWAM), and Francis Schaeffer (L'Abri) each independently reported God-given revelatory instructions to his people to focus on seven areas that, if transformed through the power of God and the activism of Christians, could propel the church towards a certain, future state of dominion (Christian International; M'Kayla 2010). These seven mountains or areas to be influenced in culture included business, government, media, arts and entertainment, education, the family, and religion (Marketplace Leaders, "There Are 7 Mountains of Influence in Culture"). According to an interview with Cunningham (2007), his revelation took place in August 1975. Cunningham also reports that Bright similarly received the revelation prior to their meeting together in Colorado later that year. Weeks later, Cunningham's wife also heard Francis Schaeffer describe the same mandates on Schaeffer's televised broadcast. Some sources leave Schaeffer out of the list of originators of the Seven Mountain Mandate (Generals International), while others report that he taught on the SMM independently of Bright and Cunningham (Christian International).

Although these leaders are attributed with promoting changes in the seven spheres in the 1970s, relatively few works that referred directly to the SMM were published until the 2000s. It appears that only later were the social areas of the SMM incorporated into words of prophetic revelation. An example of this is from the Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders, in 2014, who decided to include some statements on the SMM as part of their annual prophetic statement (Jacobs, "7 Mountains Movement" section). It should be noted that there is no record to our knowledge of Francis Schaeffer ever claiming

that the spheres of influence were divinely revealed. He had read books by Rushdoony and, as a philosopher, was acquainted with dominionist thought (FAMPEOPLE.com, “Influence of Rushdoony” section).

### SELECT TERMINOLOGY AND THEOLOGY LEADING TO THE SMM

A number of concepts and labels overlap and are used loosely by both SMM adherents and their critics. First, most if not all of the SMM leaders can be found within the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) movement. The term NAR was coined by C. Peter Wagner in 1994 to indicate the inception of a new reformation involving the “restoration of the offices of prophet and apostles as found in the earliest years of Christianity” (Poloma 2016, “Timeline” section). Typically, the NAR has written about, or otherwise used SMM not only to promote its version of social and political activism, but also to promote a “victorious eschatology...that the kingdom of God will grow and advance until it fills the earth” (Eberle and Trench, introductory section). While some NAR and SMM leaders distance themselves from earlier movements, many do have associations with a plethora of groups or events with labels such as the Latter Rain, Kingdom Now & Kansas City Prophets, Dominion Theology, Manifest Sons of God (Joel’s Army), Third Wave, and Toronto Blessing (SO4J-TV & Video Productions). These labels do not refer to identical groups, but to groups or events that were predecessors and/or adopters of the SMM. NAR leaders may have slight differences in doctrine, though most if not all teach and promote the SMM.

Within a broader context, “Dominionism is the idea that conservative Christians have

the right—and the responsibility—to take dominion over all aspects of life, including the government” (Conn 2011, 10). Some researchers have developed criteria for “hard” versus “soft” dominionist labels (Clarkson 2005). Soft dominionists are considered “Christian nationalists” who use litmus tests for policy choices. They are willing to work within the framework of existing government. Hard dominionists want the U.S. to be a Christian theocracy led by Christian leaders (Berlet 2008), including some who seek to follow Old Testament Laws (Miles 2011). Presumably hard dominionists also conceive of worldwide Christian influence and dominion as well. Critics and other observers typically include SMM as dominionists (Clarkson 2016).

However, Wagner denies that NAR leaders seek to usher in a theocracy, “but rather to have kingdom-minded people in every one of the Seven Mountains” so that they can exercise their influence (2011, “A Theocracy” section). Other NAR leaders eschew the term dominionism as it implies “control and manipulation” and is too often associated with a flawed, earlier movement (Marketplace Leaders, “Theology,” “Reclaiming” section). Disagreements over this label occur in political circles, too; for example, *Christianity Today* recently sought to distance U.S. Senator Ted Cruz from dominionism (Gagnon and Humphrey 2016). It is also worth noting the differences between earlier reconstructionists, such as Rushdoony, and the NAR leaders. Rushdonny believed that conversions taking place over centuries or even thousands of years would usher in Christian dominant society (Clarkson 2016). SMM leaders, on the other hand, suggest that a top-down approach is possible, that a Christian elite can dominate society in a matter of years. “Culture is defined by a relatively small number of change agents

who operate at the tops of cultural spheres or societal mountains” (Hillman, introductory section). While the history that led up to the SMM is important, the particular focus of this paper is the subset of Protestants (primarily charismatics) who associate with NAR and who subscribe to the Seven Mountain Mandate.

### INFLUENCE OF NAR AND THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE

Since the NAR and SMM are so closely tied together, one should note the extent of their influence. The SMM impact is attracting followers worldwide and is seeking to influence many charismatic Protestants, including those in more mainstream denominations such as the Assemblies of God. This is despite some teachings that contradict official Assembly of God doctrine (Boyd 2015). Wagner (2011) himself writes, “Most of the new churches in the Global South, even including many which belong to denominations, would comfortably fit the NAR template” (“What Is the NAR?” section). Examples of this far-reaching influence are found in many megachurches worldwide, and in smaller counterparts that often rely on the teaching resources of their larger counterparts. NAR churches use common popular worship songs by various artists and have developed a powerful media presence by virtue of such vehicles as their own GOD-TV and Charisma Media’s *Charisma Magazine* (Pivec 2013). Various NAR leaders endorsed and worked actively to secure the election of President Donald Trump, and some are on Trump’s Evangelical Executive Advisory Board (Spreeman 2016). Altogether, the NAR/SMM influence can be seen in many churches and to a lesser extent in the other “mountains” of culture.

### TEACHINGS AND CRITICISM OF THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE

Johnny Enlow has written extensively on the SMM and continues to emphasize it prophetically. In a recent excerpt of Enlow speaking for God in a way that clearly reflects part of the seven mandates, he proclaimed, “My present intervention in your government, your media and your economy is all part of the process of enabling you to be positioned for maximum reflecting of My brilliance among the nations” (Enlow 2017, “I Have Chosen Trump” section). According to Enlow (2008), the seven mountains are delineated in the Revelation of John: “Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12, AV). Enlow articulates that the seven attributes of majesty each represent a “main pillar of every nation’s culture or society” (2008, 9). Enlow adds that “power speaks of Government; riches speaks of the Economy; wisdom speaks of Education; strength speaks of Family; honor speaks of Religion; glory speaks of Celebration (Arts and Entertainment); and blessing speaks of Media” (9). Enlow suggests that these altered meanings are based on his interpretations from the Greek Bible. Exegetically issues arise with Enlow’s interpretations and understanding of the context of Scripture, as Enlow urges that Christians should “disciple or instruct...the nations in these seven foundations of culture so that we would in turn deliver them to Him, thus fulfilling Revelation 11:15. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord” (9).

Other NAR leaders also build heavily on the Seven Mountain Mandate. Mike Bickle (2008) of The International House of Prayer, for instance,

writes in his study notes of Revelation that “the greatest spiritual breakthroughs in history will occur, affecting our culture in the areas of business, education, government, media, and arts, etc.” (2). In addition, various prominent NAR leaders combine their thoughts in the book *Invading Babylon: The Seven Mountain Mandate* (Wallnau and Johnson 2013). According to the introduction, “each chapter offers a different perspective on relevant ways to infiltrate and influence our society with Christian values and standards” (10).

The NAR doctrine is not without its critics. Numerous books and websites have sought to reveal its error (Pivec 2013; SO4J-TV & Video Productions). These sources specifically call into question the Seven Mountain Mandate and NAR doctrine. No source to our knowledge, however, yet links the Seven Mountain Mandate to earlier Marxist teaching.

### SELECT MARXIST INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AGENTS OF CHANGE

Many political philosophers have written about ways to influence or organize various spheres of society in order to further applications of their ideologies. However, none of these ideologies is aligned with the SMM more closely than are some variants of Marxism. Karl Marx, publishing *Das Capital* in 1867, was a revolutionary who wanted to put his ideas into practice. Marx proposed a theory about an enduring class struggle and insisted that economics influenced all other behavior, including “politics, science, religion, art, etc.” (Foot 2004, “Ideas” section). In propagating this philosophy, Marx was a revolutionary. His goal was economic change through the proletariat rising up against the capitalists. Only then could

a lasting transformation of cultural arenas be accomplished.

Later Marxists, however, downplayed the role of economics as an agent of change and began to examine other variables. Particularly, Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci advocated a view of cultural hegemony. His view explained how economics was relegated to a far less influential position as just one of many societal aspects to be transformed through activism. In place of a theory dominated by economics, Gramsci “tried to build a theory which recognized the autonomy, independence and importance of culture and ideology” (Stillo 1999, “Concept of Hegemony” section). “Like most revolutionaries of his time, Gramsci was very interested in discovering how a particular social group (a class) could achieve dominance over an ‘entire national society’” (Day 2004). Various forces vie for control of the state; Gramsci’s vision for society would bring about “not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity” (Day 2004, 721; Gramsci 1971, 5460). Thus, Gramsci and other revolutionaries sought to expand the targets of their influential effects to the widest breadth of society as possible (Day 2004, 722). Any group that could gain the most power would be the “hegemon,” which *Merriam-Webster.com* defines as the leadership or dominance over other social groups, or the “social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group” (“Definition” section). Gramsci once credited Lenin with the theory of hegemony, though Gramsci expanded it and thus deserves recognition as well (Day 2004, 720). Thinking deeply on class and power, Gramsci advocated for various strategies and interests through which the working class can become the hegemon (Stillo 1999). These varied interests extended beyond economics.

Writing in his own historical context, Gramsci encountered resistance from forces representing Mussolini's fascism and was jailed from 1926-1937. He accomplished most of his writing during this time in prison, which ended with his death.

### ALTHUSSER AND IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES

Another Marxist theorist, Louis Althusser, followed Gramsci's assumptions to produce a scheme that has uncanny resemblance to the SMM. Althusser published *Lénine et la Philosophie* in French in 1968, which was republished in English as *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971b). Additionally, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" was first published in 1970 in the review *La Pensée* (Althusser, xix). Althusser was the Marxist who systematically outlined the concept of a coercive and repressive state power that works in tandem with eight Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) to ensure the continuance of the capitalist system. These ISAs are essentially influences that are required to hold hegemonic power (Bollinger and Koivisto 2009, 305). Thus, social struggle revolves around change in each of the eight ideological areas. Not just the arena of economics, but instead eight different arenas become the battlefield, as an oft quoted statement from Althusser instructs: "No class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser 2014, 245; Bollinger and Koivisto 2009, 305). Althusser (1971a) outlined these eight specific ISAs (243), which are compared and contrasted with the elements of the SMM (see Figure 1). These ISAs are important "to understand how ideology brings off the feat of making things

and people 'go all by themselves'" (Althusser 2014, 93). They are "relatively autonomous" and critical to examining how class struggles unfold (Bollinger and Koivisto 2009, 305).

### CONTRASTING ISA'S WITH THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE

Althusser's ISAs and the elements of the more recent Seven Mountain Mandate are nearly identical. Still, there are some differences. Particularly, to Althusser, the state uses coercion and therefore is outside of the ISAs. The state through repression interacts with the ISAs to insure hegemony. Thus, Althusser sees government separately, with the ISAs as the supporting cast (See Figure 1).

Meanwhile, in the SMM, the government is simply just one of the mountains. A second difference is that Althusser specifically identifies the legal and political ISAs. SMM does not separate these categories out but instead subsumes them under their category of government. Thirdly, the SMM uses the term "business," whereas Althusser identifies one ISA with the term "trade unions." This occurs since the trade unions basically supplant capitalism within Althusser's framework (Althusser 2014, 105).

Of course, the implications of the differences between Althusser's ISAs and the SMM as targeted sites for lasting social change are substantial. In general, while Marxists advocate for the social dominance of the working class by effecting social change through the catalysts of the ISAs, the SMM leaders seek a different outcome: Christian dominion through activism in each of the seven spheres of influence. Remarking on the effective path to societal change, Althusser explicitly states that "there is no parliamentary road to socialism" (Althusser

Elements of Althusser and SMM Compared		
Althusser’s State Power and ISAs	versus	Seven Mountains of SMM
The religious ISA (the system of the different churches)	↔	Religion
The educational ISA (the system of the different public and private “schools”)	↔	Education
The family ISA	↔	Family
Repressive state power (identified, but not an ISA) The legal ISA The political ISA (the political system, including the different parties)	↔	Government
The trade-union ISA	↔	Business
The communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.)	↔	Media
The cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.)	↔	Arts and Entertainment

Figure 1. Elements of Althusser’s ISAs and SMM Compared

2014, 107). SMM leaders, on the other hand, are more prone to seeing at least some of the changes being initiated by Christian executive and legislative leaders. While some SMM leaders hoped that Senator Ted Cruz would win the Republican nomination for U.S. President in 2016, many also supported Donald Trump as their candidate for change. Key to their acceptance were various prophecies, such as one by Wallnau, who prophesied that Trump would be a leader who would carry out God’s purposes in ways similar to King Cyrus’ actions, as described in Isaiah 45. Additionally, months before the election, Wallnau proclaimed that Trump would be the leader who would restore America. Trump “was a warrior against the global ‘demonic agenda,’” and was “raising the

warning cry about the unraveling of America” (Gordon 2017).

In their rhetoric, the SMM leaders do emphasize the spiritual, but according to Wagner, “the chief producer of influence in the six non-Religion mountains is not spirituality but success” (Wagner 2016). Hillman, an SMM popularizer, identifies the importance of two earlier authors who theorize about cultural conflicts. First, Collins’ *The Sociology of Philosophies* (1998), a secular work, asserts that civilizations are influenced by a small number of philosophers. Secondly, Hunter’s *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991) identifies five arenas where cultural battles take place in a “Fields of Conflict” section. These five arenas do not include religion, but parallel five of the

other seven “mountains.” Indeed, the subtitle of Hunter’s book, *Making Sense of the Battles over the Family, Art, Education, Law, and Politics in America* directly lists these five arenas. Thus, Hunter is one of the first writers in mainstream Christianity to systematically raise questions in these spheres of influence. Although there is no known association between Hunter and the SMM leaders, and in fact Hunter predicts that deep cultural division in the U.S. will never be resolved, the SMM leaders likely borrowed some from Hunter’s work. Still, Hillman acknowledges only secular, not specifically Marxist, parallels with SMM in his writings.

Even as they emphasize the spiritual dimension, SMM leaders do not portray this spiritual process as the slow reconstructionist process described by Rushdoony that may take centuries. Instead, SMM leaders typically urge that actions towards Christian dominion should be taken immediately (Wagner 2006, 35). This immediacy contrasts with the approach of Collins (1998), who suggests that the minimum amount of time for significant intellectual change is one to two generations (60). SMM leaders place a high priority on change coming through the restoration of apostles, prophets, and intercessors, and also through direct Christian influence on targeted elites who have the power to make the kinds of changes in each of the respective seven spheres. “When thousands of Apostles begin to stand up in their ministry, the church will become free to effectively disciple nations that are open to receiving the Lordship of Christ” (DeKoven 2001, xi-xii).

The importance of spirituality in the predicted, successful transformation to Christian dominion is predicated upon spiritual warfare. This means that the ultimate end is to gain ascendancy over each one of the

seven mountains, as apostles work to “cast out territorial spirits that control those institutions” (Geivett and Pivec 2014, 3152). Interestingly, Gramsci himself, in thinking of founding an Italian Communist Party, “expressed admiration for early ‘primitive’ Christian communities that offered a model of cultural ‘revolution’ based on their ‘creation of a novel and original system of moral, juridical, philosophical and artistic relations” (Adamson 2013, 469). This ideal, four-fold description is similar to the “primitivism” that Laitinen (2014) attributes to SMM leader C. Peter Wagner, who was “longing for simpler and purer church” (83). Althusser’s (2014) views on a social transformation suggests that “revolutions are made by the masses” (107). He also “argues that communism will require ‘unprecedented forms,’ intense political struggle and take a very long time period to achieve” (Wall 2014). Altogether, both SMM leaders and Marxist philosophers desire change for different reasons, and envision powers being transferred to very different groups. The commonality, however, remains: both NAR leaders who are teaching Christian dominion through SMM dogma, and also Marxists who are advocating for communist revolution identify essentially the same societal spheres to target in order to propel desired changes forward.

## EDUCATION

Although any one of the seven “mountains” or any one of the eight ISAs could be examined more closely, we have selected education and business to provide a sample of the similarities and differences between Althusser and select SMM writers. Maiden (2011), one such SMM proponent, examines education and identifies humanism as a central problem to implementing a Christian view (139-150).

He also formulates three questions that can guide evangelical Christians as they seek to influence educational systems with the goal of Christian dominion. First, do educators have a Christian worldview? Secondly, what exactly is being taught? Thirdly, what is the motivation for teaching: is it “an anti-God” perspective? (141). In addition to these important questions, Maiden offers observations concerning family responsibility in discipline and teaching (141). However, Maiden offers no specific educational policy prescriptions. Maiden simply exhorts all to believe that a renaissance is coming and will cause “new Harvards, Princetons, and Yales to spring up” (149). He asserts that either existing institutions of “higher learning” will become Godly, or new institutions will replace them (149).

Enlow (2015) gives far greater specificity in his chapter on education. He notes that next to the Christian mandate to influence religion in society, infiltrating education is likely the most important mandate (101). He identifies two problems in current educational structures. The first problem in current secular education centers on its priority to develop the “left brain” when an optimal educational system would privilege instruction of the right brain. Enlow associates learning and aptitudes of the left brain with “verbal skills, abstract thinking, most mathematics, and inferential logic” (104), and he associates right-brain learning with being able to produce “discernment or gut feelings” and “lov[ing] patterns, metaphors, analogies and visuals” (103). The second problem that Enlow finds with current education in the U.S. is that the wall of separation between state and religion is improper. As a result, systems and structures of education are basically instilling government morality, which is diametrically opposed to Christian morality, in students (107). A Seven

Mountain Mandate curriculum should replace the current one, Enlow says, not only with a different type of thinking and morality, but with a greater penchant for American history and civics (110-111). According to Enlow, a system of education leading to and reflecting Christian values would encourage the freedom of religion by including some compulsory religion classes starting in the sixth grade. Then, after basic instruction in various religions, parents would be free to choose among representatives in religion who would instruct children further (113-115). Education would also more deliberately help students find their passion in arts, entertainment and sports (112-113). To his credit, Enlow acknowledges that his educational reforms are not comprehensive, as they do not address concerns about discipline, class size, teaching quality, and school violence (130). Additionally, SMM leader Johnson includes the “mountain” of education as a target for influence. He offers a simple yet effective way to influence education: by volunteering to serve for the benefits of others, Christians can become welcome additions to the educational system (Walnau and Johnson 2013, 26).

Althusser’s (2014) views on the arena of education agree in some ways with Enlow’s (2015); both assert that education is the most important area to target for influence. Althusser notes that formerly religion was the dominant arena for influence in society, as the church exercised a central role over education from the 16th to the 18th centuries (142). According to Althusser, during the French Revolution, attacks on the church over time resulted in the bourgeoisie instilling their hegemony in education at the expense of the church. Through targeting education and the other ISAs, the bourgeoisie gained the ability to continue the capitalist system of production, and they thus

co-opted and maintained hegemony over the realm of education (143). Althusser observes that children are vulnerable: a completely “captive audience” (146). Education “pumps them full, with old methods and new, of certain kinds of ‘know-how’ (French arithmetic, natural history, science, literature) packaged in the dominant ideology” (145). After being dominated throughout school by ideology that reinforces capitalism, at some point the children are brought into production as workers. In ways that are similar to those of the SMM leaders, Althusser is critical of the state’s methods in education “since it depicts the school as a neutral environment free of dominant ideology because it is...not religious” (146). Althusser indicated plans to write a second volume to explain these theories more fully, but this volume was never written.

Other Marxists have acknowledged education as a vulnerable target for societal influence. Few, if any, share Althusser’s (2014) historical, religious contemplations as the foundation for views about the role of education in Marxist revolution, yet alternative Marxist views are forthright as to how education can be changed. Hill (2016), for instance, notes that Marxists are committed to three practical tenets:

1. Capitalism must be replaced through a revolution;
2. Marxists must embrace activism to effect change; and
3. Marxists are co-laborers with all groups against every form of discrimination, including economic rights that are achieved only through removing capitalism.

Hill continues with a “socialist manifesto” for education that contains 21 specific points for change. These points include removing private, faith-based and charter schools, but expanding

the realm of public, state education to include free lunches, free college and adult education, and “an honest sex education curriculum that teaches children not just ‘when to say no,’ but also when to say ‘yes.’”

To be fair, this selection of contemporary Marxist thought demonstrates how the Marxists’ goals for revolutionary changes in the sphere of education differ from SMM leaders’ goals. The intended outcomes of modern Marxists like Hill (2016) can certainly be contrasted to SMM ideals about Christian education. Further, modern Marxists seem to be more organized and prepared, having specific goals, whereas the strategic plans of SMM leaders appear to lack details. A critical point is that extensive or revolutionary educational reform requires the acquiescence of perhaps a majority of teachers, whether they are influenced by Marxism or by Christian-based SMM thinking. No cadre exists of either radical Marxists or Christian teachers at any level who would subject themselves to wholesale changes towards Marxist-based or SMM-influenced pedagogies. Furthermore, local school boards and states have an enormous amount of autonomy, so radical changes are difficult though both Marxists and SMM leaders have shown some progress toward their goals in local school battlefields.

## BUSINESS

NAR leaders identify business as one of the Seven Mountains. Because Marxists desire profits to go to workers and not to the owners of production, this presents a significant difference in their approach. Althusser (2014) specifically omits business owners and instead uses trade unions as his ISA. NAR writers who are sympathetic or enthusiastic about the SMM, on

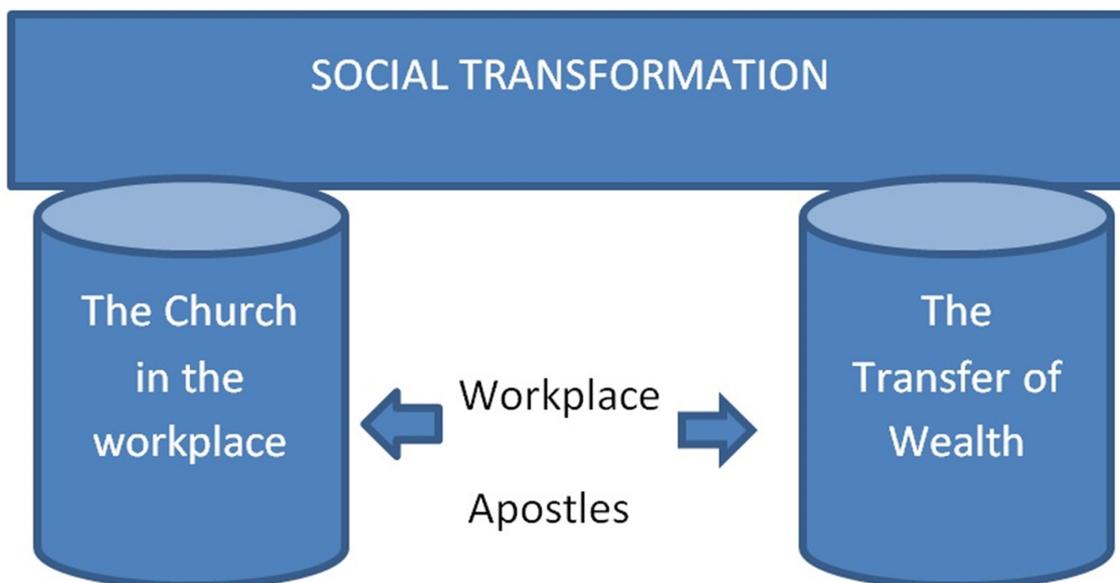


Figure 2. Social Transformation by Workplace Apostles (Wagner 2006, 8)

the other hand, identify the sphere of influence, or “mountain,” as “business.” Their conception of “business,” however, ranges from the general economy to specific “workplace apostles,” or wealthy Christians who have the unique ability to gain access to money and other powerful influences to change government (Geivett and Pivec 2014, 3113). Wagner (2006) describes this as a new paradigm where “extended church apostles” assume roles in the workplace (52). He diagrams their role (8; see Figure 2).

According to this paradigm, extended church apostles and, to an extent, all Christian believers will gain the resources needed to make change. Another NAR writer, Ponder, even more directly addresses the ministry of business owners. On the website advertising his book *Cracking the Apostolic & Prophetic Code*<sup>TM</sup> (2008), he admonishes business leaders:

It is NOW TIME for you to rise up, be confirmed and ordained and SET IN YOUR PLACE as Apostles and Prophets in

the marketplace and be recognized and honored as an EQUAL and on the same level as every other four-walled church leader, pastor or those who minister behind the pulpit so that the Transfer of Wealth can begin to take place in the Kingdom of God [emphasis in the original].

Others, like Walnau (2016), see business change in more general terms as they advocate for traditional conservative values in the economy, such as deregulation, a balanced budget, and lower corporate tax rates. Such policy transformations will implicitly help empower politically conservative Christian business leaders to gain power and influence in society. NAR leaders typically advocate prosperity for believers, warn against greed, and expect a shaking or new outpouring from heaven toward believers to finance the Seven Mountain Mandate agenda (Maiden 2011, 92-99).

It is doubtful that NAR “workplace apostles” would redistribute all their wealth, so as NAR

leaders are compared with their Marxist counterparts, the opposing stances on equality issues are strikingly apparent. SMM teaching envisions society ruled by a new Christian elite while maintaining capitalism. Marxists, on the other hand, typically emphasize some sort of central planning and ownership either by the people or the state. Marxists such as Gramsci favored workers' cooperatives, where the workers would own the business and earn all the profits (Jossa 2009, 3-4). Through trade unions, control over the companies would lie in the hands of workers (Gramsci 1920). Althusser (2014) follows earlier Marxists and sees state-run capitalists as repressive and alienating. More specifically, the capitalist system is held together by the machinations of state dominance, "the repressive state apparatus on one hand and the ideological state apparatuses on the other" (140). Within individual ISA arenas like business or education, class struggles in such a milieu ensue, and the working class can overthrow the dominant class (153). In the business realm, workers' unions take up the class struggle (157). However, unlike some previous Marxists, Althusser expands the potential impact to the extent that the class struggles occur in all the other ISAs as well (157). Additionally, ideology to Althusser includes some devotion to a belief such as "God, duty, or justice" (259). Failing to follow prescribed paths that violate beliefs is deemed "wicked" (260). One can extrapolate from this the conclusion that not only does capitalism need to be overturned and the current economic system replaced, but the ideology associated with capitalism must also be shamed.

Altogether, the challenges in transforming the workplace and the entire economic system seem more problematic for Marxists than the challenges to SMM advocates because, for

Marxists, a complete overhaul of the capitalist system and its associated ideology is required. SMM leaders, on the contrary, teach that transforming "business" simply means that wealth must be transferred, while the capitalist system remains in place. Even if the increased flow of wealth to Christians as the result of innovative ideas and entrepreneurial skills is insufficient, just a few key converts from among the uber-rich could theoretically tip the scale towards SMM transformation of business as SMM leaders describe this. Of course, the SMM way of thinking is far different from that of earlier church leaders like Martin Luther, who suggested that "In determining how much profit you ought to take on your business and your labor, there is no better way to reckon it than by computing the amount of time and labor you have put into it, and comparing that with the effort of a day laborer who works at some other occupation and seeing how much he earns in a day" (1962, 251). Christian-based ideology has historically changed its assumptions about business.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccles. 1:9, AV). The commonalities between the hegemony-based, Marxist thought of Gramsci and Althusser and categories of influence, or "mountains," that are embedded in the SMM are uncanny. Both groups present pathways to change or even revolutionize society in ways that correspond with their respective ideologies. Many have critiqued Marxist thought and Marxist paths toward

societal change; the comparison presented here has focused on some of the specific ideas of Gramsci and Althusser. In the specific area of education, Althusser can be seen holding views that are similar to those of the SMM leaders on the failure of secular education. Both groups require drastic changes in how education is carried out. While the SMM can stand alone as a strategy, it is best understood if examined broadly. Though this study has placed SMM in the context of earlier Marxist thought, SMM should also be examined in the context of other Christian and non-Marxist ideas on the topic of power and influence.

Likewise, in education, it is important to understand the goals of modern Marxists such as Hill (2016) and how antithetical they are to most Christian values and specific goals for education. When SMM leaders strategize the Christian transformation of business, they assume that capitalism continues unabated, while Marxists like Gramsci do not. One need not endorse socialism, worker's councils, or a state-controlled economy to acknowledge that alternative economic systems do exist and may be empowered by the same cultural channels as the SMM. Other characteristics and nuances of Marxist thought should be studied by all who propose Christian transformation of society, whether they use SMM or some other framework.

Although claims about divine revelation accompany early descriptions of the inception of SMM as a strategic plan for Christ's church achieving dominion across America and around the world, varied and sometimes very specific theological pronouncements need to be more fully examined. Questions concerning whether SMM teachings are truly original or divinely inspired are important but outside the scope of this study. It is possible that SMM

revelations are divine and that leaders such as Cunningham, Bright, and Wallnau received them independently or expounded on what had earlier been revealed.

The goal of expanding Christian influence is worthy and estimable. Whereas Collins' work in sociology rests primarily on the wisdom of secular philosophy, the SMM relies on the edifying and authoritative pronouncements of leaders in varied Christian denominations, alliances, and churches. This seems remarkable especially since the Scriptures have been searched for centuries without an explicit discovery of the potential power of seven "mountains" of influence. Variations in eschatological or theological viewpoints aside, the promotion of Christian activism in any or all of these seven spheres of culture could be warranted. Serious logistical questions for effecting such wholesale changes, however, remain, despite variations in SMM ideologies. Millions of artists, cultural icons, bureaucrats, educators, and businessmen embrace the current system and would resist changes, perhaps especially the kind of changes that would accompany a major shift to Christian principles in the U.S. In the absence of a national crisis or truly divine intervention, transformational changes in national direction face nearly insurmountable obstacles.

Marxists fully recognize the force of this hegemony, partly through their struggles and failures to effect a lasting change in a socio-political system historically. Christians can be hopeful about wholesale changes, but many believe that Christianity has been on the decline in America for a number of years, and recent data results confirm this trend (Dinges 2015, 189). This decline may not be inexorable, however, and the inroads that the SMM leaders have made are noteworthy. Still, one must contemplate what may happen if SMM

followers become too impatient. It would seem doubtful that the movement could persist for decades if the strategies of the SMM leaders yield little or no lasting changes. Disquieting, too, are the ways in which some SMM leaders criticize Christian believers who reject their mandates or the eschatological underpinnings of their teachings. This is particularly true of dispensationalists including some charismatics who pioneered some of the teachings that SMM and NAR leaders accept. Rather than ostracize those with alternative beliefs, greater unity among Christians is preferred. One such example of a SMM writer is Lake (2016): “And some have given in to a spirit of resignation or hopelessness, believing we can’t make a difference, and that, in order for Christ to come back, things have to get much worse anyway. But if we’re just hanging on till the rapture, we’ve missed our call to occupy.”

A more ecumenical approach to activism is warranted, along with greater specificity on how influence can be accomplished. That the Seven Mountain Mandate shares Marxist roots does not invalidate it. Competition for influence in society is a normal and necessary part of life in our world, and can be healthy. There are times when hegemony falls. Historically, people of faith have succeeded in shepherding changes. In many areas of society, Christians and their cause, morality, and values have been subdued, and a more aggressive stance may be justified. Regardless of one’s views on the original revelations and subsequent prophecies surrounding various parts of the seven mandates, this line of research is worthwhile and should be expanded to include earlier Christian and secular writings that examine the methods, paths and spheres of influence.

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