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Saved from Capitalism?

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Abstract

Global capitalism is currently driving vast and unprecedented inequality in the human community and a planetary ecological crisis. Many have argued that such life-denying tendencies are intrinsic to the structure of capitalism. But what is capitalism? This paper will argue that the complex historical phenomenon that has been labelled as “capitalism” is perhaps best understood through the New Testament’s descriptive language of “the powers”. Drawing on Barth, Yoder and Wink, it will consider capitalism as a spiritual force with real sociological shape. Whereas the bulk of theological literature on capitalism has tended to consider it through primarily a political and ethical lens, this paper will consider the soteriological implications of capitalism, and therefore, also its implications for the content of evangelism. It will conclude with some suggestions on what this might mean for the witness and mission of the church in the current moment.