LIBERATION THEOLOGY

CATHOLICISM DISTORTED IN LATIN AMERICA

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"And Yahweh said, 'I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slavedrivers. Yes, I am well-aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow....'" (Exodus 3: 7-9)

"He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly, the hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away." (Luke 1: 52-53)

"In Latin America the world in which the Christian community must live and celebrate its eschatological hope is the world of social revolution; the Church's task must be defined in relation to this. Its fidelity to the Gospel leaves it no alternative: the Church must be the visible sign of the presence of the Lord within the aspiration for liberation and the struggle for a more human and just society. Only in this way will the message of love which the Church bears be made credible and efficacious.

---Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, (p. 262)

"...the Church must go on collaborating in the construction of your society, by discerning and nourishing the aspirations for justice and peace that it finds in individuals and in the people, with its wisdom and its effort to promote such aspirations. The

Church will respect the competence of public authorities in these matters. It will not claim to intervene in politics; it will not aspire to share in managing temporal affairs. Its specific contribution will be to fortify the spiritual and moral bases of society by doing what is possible for all or any activity in the field of the common good, carried out in harmony and coherence with the directives and demands of a human and Christian ethic."

---Pope John Paul II, Address in Salvador, Brazil, July 6, 1980

INTRODUCTION

"Liberation theology" is a term that eludes easy definition, both because of the diversity of ideas that it seems to encompass and because of the vagueness of many of the ideas themselves. Adjectives such as "Marxist-Leninist," "revolutionary," "unorthodox," and "unreligious" are often used to describe this school of thought. "Innovative," "insightful," "progressive," and "inspired" are also used. However one chooses to describe it, those who pass judgement on liberation theology seldom hold lukewarm opinions. The subject elicits either enthusiasm or contempt among most writers. This polarizing effect of liberation theology threatens to create a permanent division in the Roman Catholic Church of Latin America.

This paper will demonstrate that although liberation theology generally rebels against the traditional social teaching of the Church, it was facilitated and sometimes encouraged by official Church teachings, especially during the papacy of Paul VI. Moreover, the social teaching of the Church over the past two centuries has contained some of the same major elements, such as antiliberalism and utopianism, that are keenly evident in liberation theology. The fluctuating, unclear nature of much of the Church's social teaching during the past twenty-five years has left many clergymen and laymen searching for more defined goals and policies. This is the main attraction of liberation

theology for Christians. A world free from misery is what liberation theology offers---and it offers it next year, not in some future generation. A socialist revolution, justified by various broad, unorthodox theological arguments, is usually the means provided to achieve this end.

Some argue that liberation theology has become so popular in Latin America because it appeals to the poverty-stricken masses of that continent. Others contend that Latin America has been especially targeted for subversion by international communism. Still others claim that the Spanish-Catholic antiliberal legacy has left the continent particularly susceptible to extremist ideologies of the Left and Right. There is probably some degree of truth in all of these arguments. The author holds that liberation theology is indefensible on theological grounds. It is, at best, a poorly developed Christian theology that attempts to justify revolutionary measures for social change with carefully selected and edited biblical and magisterial quotations. At worst, it is Marxist-Leninist propaganda, covered with a thin veneer of Christian utopian rhetoric.

The spectrum of liberation theologians and their opponents will be examined in this paper. Hopefully, it will shed a good deal of light on the often dark recesses of socio-religious thought within Latin America and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic Church, like many other religions, has had to deal with social, political, and economic issues throughout its history. Compelled to either endorse the status quo or advocate change, the Church has historically upheld the prevailing social order, and urged the poor to focus on the ultimate reward of heaven rather than promoting revolutionary measures.

The socio-political conservatism of the Church dates back to the first centuries A. D., when the early Fathers developed a theory that wealth and poverty were not contradictory, but complementary elements in society. While the rich physically supported the poor by almsgiving, the poor spiritually aided the wealthy with prayers of thanksgiving.[1]

The first radically new Christian teaching on this issue was formulated at the beginning of the third century by Clement of Alexandria. His stoic-influenced thesis was that the presence or absence of possessions was morally neutral. He taught that men were saved or lost because they controlled or failed to control their passions. Therefore, the challenge or Christianity was equalized for the rich and the poor.[2]Over the centuries, Clement's stance, adopted by the Church, became one of the focal points for those who labelled Christianity "reactionary."

Catholic social doctrine remained for the most part conservative and unchanged down to the modern era. The Enlightenment and the ensueing birth of liberalism created a

sustained challenge to the Church's authority, both in the spiritual and temporal spheres. During the papacy of Pius IX (1846-78), the liberal assault on Catholic doctrine and the temporal power of the popes became especially intense. This provoked the pope to issue the infamous Errorum syllabus (1864), which condemned the proposition that divine revelation is imperfect and subject to progress corresponding to the progress of human reason.[3] As Michael Novak has observed, "That poisonous experience has continued to be reflected in papal teaching. Virtually every use of the word 'liberal' in papal documents is pejorative."[4]

Pius IX and his predecessors opposed the major features of both strict liberalism and socialism. In liberalism, they held the emphasis on individualism, laissez-faire, and the universal moral supremacy of the market to be incompatible with Catholic teaching. In socialism, they pointed to the sustained, systematic atheism of most of its proponents, along with a false illusion of equality and an unlimited, dangerous concept of the state. They also condemned socialism's rejection of private property, which the popes held to be a basic human right. Consistent with their cynical view of the state, they felt that the elimination of private property would only make the poor poorer, divesting them of what little they could call their own.[5]

In 1867, Monsenor de Segur, one of the leading exponents of French counterrevolutionary thought, wrote The Frenchmasons, a

book somewhat indicative of Church thought on liberalism at this time. This work was not only a study of the Masonic Order, but also an examination of what Segur saw as a worldwide liberal-Masonic-demonic assault on the Catholic Church and traditional Western institutions. Segur traced the history of the Masons back to the sacrilegious Knights-Templars of medieval times, who were castigated by Pope Clement V in the fourteenth century, then allegedly reemerged as the Masons four centuries later.[6] Segur attributed the Masons (Voltaire, Rousseau, Robespierre,etc.) with inspiring and leading the French Revolution and the later liberal revolutions that overturned European society.[7] He expressed no doubt that the Masonic leaders, hiding under strange insignias and humanitarian works, were in reality anti-Christians secretly upholding the practices of the Knights-Templars and leading millions of innocent followers to condemnation. He wrote, "...as everyone knows, the leaders of the revolution want to transform the world, and substitute in all the land the rights of man for the rights and the reign of God."[8]

Segur wrote that the world sees most Masons as humanitarians who would be Christians if they only knew Christ. However, the true goals of the Masonic order are to alienate men from religion, isolate them from their families, and induce them to pursue easy pleasures and prohibited practices. Then, the Masons try to inculcate members with a desire for another existence, and a disgust for family and religion. Through this process, the

initiate, who had simply intended to join an active social organization, gradually becomes anti-Christian.[9]

Segur wrote that the Masonic Order stresses its universalism, and that it is open to all religions.[10] He also claimed that the hatred of Christ is the secret of the most elevated grades of French Masonry, and that the leaders reverse the meaning of the Bible, portraying God as envious of Lucifer, who is persecuted by Him. At the highest levels, Masonry discards symbolism, and concentrates on war against God and monarchies.[11] Using "liberty" as their catchword (like the apple in Eden), the Masonic atheists promote the complete independence of conscience, religious chaos, and revolution, according to Segur.[12] The mysterious triangle symbolizing their order is a sign of the equalitarian level that Masonry intends to bring to the globe, in order to eliminate all religion and authority not emanating from the order.[13] Segur also claimed that the celebration of the black mass is popular among the Masons,[14] whose only real doctrine is materialism.[15] He remarked on their desire to control education[16], and ended his book by citing numerous papal bulls condemning the Masons, ranging up to that of Pius IX in 1865.[17] Segur's equation of Masons with liberals and revolutionaries in both methods and beliefs will be of great significance as we continue this analysis.

Among the more important architects of Catholic social thought in the late nineteenth century was Wilhelm Emmanuel von

Ketteler (1811-1877), the Bishop of Mainz, who became a model for the thought of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903). An arch-foe of liberalism, von Ketteler believed that it supplanted humans' organic ties with mechanical, rationalistic principles of organization, particularly the unrestrained free market and unrestrained competition. Von Ketteler predicted that liberalism would lead to the immiseration and starving of the working class[18], and the virtual atomization of human beings.[19]

Michael Novak has noted that the German aristocracy was still alive and well, coexisting with industrialization at the time of von Ketteler. This contributed to the bishop's view that progress could be made through the old system. Also, Continental liberalism, unlike the Anglo-American form, was systematically anti-religious---a fact that influenced von Ketteler profoundly.[20]The bishop's bias led him to analyze liberal theory as a set of philosophical doctrines, labelling any pragmatism on the part of liberals a <u>non sequitur.</u> The German sought a "middle way" between liberalism and socialism, which he despised equally. This middle way became central to Leo XIII's social teaching. Indeed, through von Ketteler and others in Austria and Switzerland, reactionary Germany had a disproportionate role in the evolution of papal social thought.[21]

The papacy of Leo XIII saw the Church recommitted to St. Thomas Aquinas, who had integrated a type of fundamentalism and progressivism. Aquinas' natural law theory allowed Leo to address

those outside the Church, who did not accept biblical wisdom as normative, with sound arguments. This reemphasis of Aquinas was a big leap from the reactionism of Pius IX's Errorum syllabus, and facilitated the Church's acceptance of more of the tenets of liberalism.[22] In the encyclical, Rerum Novarum (1891), Leo XIII advocated the "Christianizing" of the conditions of the working classes, including the realignment of wages and better working conditions.[23] The pope stressed the sacredness of private property, but added that property imposes responsibility as well as rights. Furthermore, he wrote that social classes are not by nature nor historically hostile to one another, an obvious blow against socialism. Observing that socialism is at error in its moral principles, he added that capitalism is right in principle, but must reform its institutions.[24] The latter statement was truly a change from the total anti-liberalism of Pius IX.

In general, Leo XIII adopted a moderated form of the Catholic middle way" of von Ketteler during his papacy. He refused to side with a particular ideology, but called for natural justice and Christian ideals. He condemned socialism outright as a force that threatens to aggrandize the state exorbitantly at the expense of the family. The pope also criticized the liberal capitalism of northwest Europe as an unchecked force posing a threat to families and other traditional institutions.[25]

A similar middle way was propounded by Hilaire Belloc in his

1912 book, The Servile State. In this work, Belloc contended that European society had been based on slavery for the past two millennia. Belloc argued that poverty is at the root of this slavery, which Belloc claimed many accept as an alternative to indigence.[26] This Servile State of a few owners and many dispossessed went through an ancient and a modern stage, with a Distributive State in-between. This Distributive State began to develop with the advent of the villa system of the fifth and sixth centuries, wherein permanent slaves were allowed to keep their excess production. In the eighth century, the feudal system began to develop, and the sale and purchase of men disappeared. By the eleventh century, serfs nearly lived lives of free peasants. This feudal Distributive State of guilds and manors, according to Belloc, was a desirable form halfway between slavery and collectivism.[27]

Belloc saw a direct relationship between the strength of Catholicism and the weakness of the Servile State in the Middle Ages. He wrote,

> Whether the servile institution be a good or a bad thing, it did, as a matter of fact, slowly disappear as Catholic civilization developed; and it has, as a matter of fact, slowly begun to return where Catholic civilization has receded.[28]

Belloc blamed the rise of capitalism for the return of the Servile State. In Britain, the mishandling of the economic revolution in the sixteenth century was the culprit, he wrote. Henry VIII, upon confiscating the property of monasteries,

intended it to remain in the hands of the crown. However, Henry gave into pressures from the wealthy, gave them the land, and thereby set up a gentry who became the masters of the farmers around them.[29]

Throughout The Servile State, Belloc attacked capitalism as the modern world's greatest evil, defining it as "the dreadful moral anarchy against which all moral effort is now turned." It was not caused by the Industrial Revolution, but by the evil will of a few and the apathy of the masses.[30] Capitalism has reproduced a Servile State, according to Belloc, because the stakes that a wage earner plays for when he demands a minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and other benefits are too high. Even if he wins, he remains in a state of servility, for security and subsistence are even guaranteed to slaves.[31]

Belloc rejected socialism as a "cure" for capitalism, for he believed that socialists would be easily coopted by the capitalist state. He wrote,

> The path of Confiscation, the only way by which Socialists can reach their goal, gets more and more remote with every new and positive economic reform,undertaken,remember, with the aid and under the advice of Socialists themselves.[32]

Indeed, Belloc believed that society was approaching a more pervasive capitalism. It would be, he wrote,

> ...a society in which the capitalistic class shall be seen even more powerful and far more secure than it is at present: a society in which the proletarian mass shall not suffer

> from particular regulations, oppressive or beneficent; but shall change their status, lose their present legal freedom, and be subject to compulsory labor.... I think the tendency towards the reestablishment of slavery is due to the very fact that the new conditions may be found more tolerable than those obtaining under Capitalism.[33]

Ultimately, Belloc foresaw capitalism as giving way to a more stable, regimented state of compulsory labor, with a universal division of citizens into employers and employed. In effect, the proletariat would sell its partial freedom for material benefits.[34] This prediction, along with his attribution of the elimination of slavery in the Middle Ages to the Church, his disregard for the rise of the bourgeoisie, and his theory in general are certainly open to criticism. Yet, The Servile State carries undeniable significance for modern Latin America, as we shall later see.

Another remarkable antiliberal work of this period is The Error of Liberalism, by the cardinal and Thomist theologian, Louis Billot. Billot was a major collaborator with Pius X (1903-14) in the fight against modernism. However, he lost favor with Pius XI (1922-39) when he was perceived to have supported the Masonic-Leftist Herriot-Blum coalition in Paris in 1924. He ultimately resigned his cardinalship over papal opposition to Action Francaise, toward which he was sympathetic.[35] Known as the "theologian of iron," he disapproved of re-invoking the First Vatican Council after its interruption by war in 1870, because he feared it had become a vehicle for extremist elements.[36]

Billot assessed liberalism in these words:

> Liberalism, inasmuch as it is an error of faith and religion, is a multiform doctrine that frees to a greater or lesser extent man from God, from His law, from His Revelation, and, consequently eliminates from civil society all dependence on religious society, that is to say, on the Church, which is the custodian of the law revealed by God, its interpretation and teaching.[37]

Billot contended that liberalism's "inviolable liberty of the individual" is "absurd, antinatural, and chimerical."[38] This principle of liberalism is actually destructive to society and causes the loss of true liberty. He wrote,

> ...the principle of liberalism, in its applications to human matters, brings with it the separation and dissolution of all social organs, introducing everywhere the battle for life, in place of concord for life, which is the only law of life.... It also extinguishes all real liberties, replacing them with the constitution of a despotic, absolute, irresponsible, omnivorous state without any limit in its judgement and omnipotence.[39]

Billot expressed his general perception of liberalism in these words: "...the principle of liberalism is essentially antireligious, exhibiting its teeth of independence directly against God."[40]

Billot wrote that the path of liberalism can only take man back to a Hobbesian state of nature--an age of absolute liberty. The misconception that individualism should reign as the only law was demonstrated in all its horror during the French Revolution, he contended, for man is naturally social, and therefore can only

thrive in a social (not individualistic) state.[41]

In fact, Billot, echoing Segur, saw liberalism as a true evil, the "dictatorship of numbers."[42] He noted that an unprecedented anti-religious age began with the Enlightenment,[43] and claimed that liberty is an idol to seduce people into slavery under Satan.[44] He wrote,

> Modern progress cannot recognize anything but an immanent God, opposed to the transcendental God of Christian revelation; nor any morality outside the one true one, whose strength is human will determining by itself, and constituting itself in law.[45]

To Billot, this negation of the true God made absolute liberalism the equivalent of atheism and materialism. He accused moderate forms of liberalism that espoused a separation of Church and State of being manichaean.[46] If the secular ruler if independent of God, his loyalty must be to a rival of God, Billot argued.[47] Billot's reasoning led him to reject Catholic liberalism as an absolutely incoherent idea, for he viewed a liberal system as one in which the government is the true ruler, as opposed to the image of government as servant given in the Bible, where Yahweh reminds rulers that they are accountable to Him (Wisdom 6: 1-5)[48]

Billot, Belloc, and Segur reflected the Catholic Church of their time in their inability to come to terms with modern representative forms of government. They held onto the tradition of viewing liberalism in the context of the bloody, anti-religious revolutions of the Continent, and failed to see the potentially positive effects of representative governments

restrained by institutional checks and balances. Their refusal to deal with liberalism outside of the context of theory or revolution severely restricted their vision, as it did that of the Church as a whole.

Catholic social thought between Rerum Novarum (1841) and Quadragessimo Anno (1931) was dominated by Heinrich Pesch (1854-1926), a Catholic economist and student of scholasticism who stressed concern for the general welfare rather than private profit. An heir to the Church's narrow view of liberalism, Pesch refused to accept any approach to economics that excluded normative considerations or that claimed to be independent of social philosophic principles. He opposed liberalism as amoral and materialistic, and criticized its spiritual emptiness.[49] This lack of spiritual substance makes liberalism especially vulnerable to Marxism, according to Pesch, for Marxism is a type of religion, with components such as an irresistable tide of history and a common purpose in that history.[50]

Pesch, feeling that a "religion" needed to be invented to counter Marxism, proposed "solidarism," a philosophy that totally rejects socialism and favors liberal institutions, hearkening back to the days of the guilds (like Belloc).[51] Pesch searched for a new mediating institution between the individual and the state--a search that led to corporatism. Aimed at protecting the common good, corporatism fell into disrepute with Hitler and Mussolini, except in Latin America, where the idea still thrives.

Likewise, "solidarism" and "solidarity" figure prominently in official Catholic documents of the past three decades, but since John XXIII, compensating emphasis has been placed on the dignity of the individual.[52]

Pius XI (1922-39) was indirectly influenced by Pesch, for one of Pesch's students helped draft Quadragessimo Anno, essentially an updated version of Rerum Novarum that stated that all economic enterprise must be governed by principles of social justice and charity.[53] Issued during an economic depression by the same pope who signed the Lateran Treaty (1929) with Mussolini, the encyclical was more passionate in its attack on socialism than its predecessor. Quadragessimo Anno reiterated the Church's independent position vis-a-vis liberalism and socialism. Pius XI defended the moral integrity of the capitalist system, but criticized the ordering of it.[54] He flatly rejected the call for violent class struggle as "un-Christian," and condemned socialism's purely materialistic conception of society. Pius wrote that true socialism "cannot be reconciled with the teachings of the Catholic Church because its concept of society itself is utterly foreign to Christian truth." He followed this with the simple statement, "no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist."[55]

Evidently, the especially pronounced anti-socialism of Pesch and the repercussions of the Bolshevic Revolution contributed to the acute anti-socialist position taken in Quadragessimo Anno.

Perhaps the fact that the dire predictions of many writers about the future of capitalism did not materialize also drew the Vatican's attention toward socialism and away from liberalism. Vatican.

Michael Novak has termed the Church's socio-economic stance in this century "pre-capitalist." While the Church approves of traditional institutions such as private property and free markets, it opposes the capitalist ethos and liberal philosophy. This is particularly evident in Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Hilaire Belloc. But this position has gradually been changing in favor of liberalism-capitalism.[56] Novak noted that the Church has gradually moved toward a position in support of the institutiions of human rights. On a more gradual basis, the Church has also come to support institutiions of democracy and market-oriented development.[57] Novak pointed out that although Catholic social thought and liberalism are anti-utopian in principle, the revolutionary experiences of the Church with Continental liberalism led Catholic thinkers to identify the ideology with doctrines of human perfectibility, social Darwinism, and unrestrained self-interest. The Vatican mistakenly adopted the opinion that liberalism leads directly to socialism.[58]

Still, the Church in the twentieth century has not come to appreciate the value of liberal institutions. The mediating value of these institutions is what prevents liberal governments from becoming the alienating, tyrannical forces described by many

Catholic writers. Novak observed,

> Ironically, some of the poor nations of the world have modelled themselves on Catholic social thought. In such nations, Catholic social thought has not been notably effective in stimulating economic growth or in building the cultural and political institutions necessary to sustain respect for human rights. The doctrine is correct, although incomplete, but the teaching on institutions is uncertain.[59]

In fact, Novak contended, solidarist societies (such as Franco's Spain, modern Poland, and some Latin American countries) generate the most powerful socialist and communist parties. The solidarist assault on liberal values and institutions parallels that of socialism and communism. In addition, solidarist values cannot be protected by inherently weak solidarist institutions, which are easy prey for revolutionaries. Solidarist societies, even though they are anti-socialist and anti-communist, are vulnerable to their foes because they fail to grasp the indispensable role of liberal institutions in limiting state power.[60]

The papacy of Pius XII (1939-58) was strongly affected by the Second World War. After the war, Pius voiced clear praise for liberty--something that had not been done with conviction by any pope since the French Revolution. Pius became the champion of Christian Democratic parties, for the first time bringing Catholic social thought decisively to the side of democracy.[61]

In the encyclical Humani Generis (1950), Pius XII lashed out against the application of modern, non-Christian philosophy in

religion. The Immanentism of Espinoza, Kant, and Hegel was especially targeted for denying the existence of a supernatural, transcendent God.[62] Pius XII acknowledged that the terminology of the Church is always subject to improvement, but that transitory philosophies cannot be expected to cause a reevaluation of Church teaching. Pius continued:

> ...the things that have been composed through common effort by Catholic teachers over the course of the centuries to bring about some understanding of dogma are certainly not based on any such weak foundation. These things are based on principles and notions deduced from a true knowledge of created things. In the process of deducing, this knowledge, like a star, gave enlightenment to the human mind through the Church. Hence it is not astonishing that some of these notions have not only been used by the Ecumenical Councils, but even sanctioned by them, so that it is wrong to depart from them.[63]

Pius particularly stressed the need to adhere to the scholastic method and teaching. He wrote,

> ...the method of Aquinas is singularly preeminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with divine revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith, and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress.[64]

The preeminence of the scholastic approach as defined by Pius XII would become the center of controversy in the following decades, as we shall later see.

Pope John XXIII (1958-63) was the Church leader responsible for bringing the liberal human rights tradition into official Catholic teaching.[65] In Mater et Magistra, issued to commemorate

the seventieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum, John XXIII followed in the steps of his predecessor by stressing the right to private property and by characterizing liberalism as amoral. Mater et Magistra went beyond previous documents in putting more stress on the liberal principle of self-reliance.[66] In some ways, such as its great focus on the individual, it even transcended liberalism. John XXIII wrote,

> The cardinal point of this teaching is that individual men are necessarily the foundation, cause, and end of all social institutions. We are referring to human beings, insofar as they are social by nature, and raised to an order of existence that transcends and subdues nature.[67]

In specific matters, the encyclical advocated the just, equitable remuneration of work, and added endorsements for several more progressive ideas, such as worker's shares in company ownership and management, and the equitable distribution of wealth. It also gave strong support to labor organizations. Mater et Magistra, although calling for a more widespread distribution of property, insisted on the necessity of private ownership as a guarantor of individual freedom.[68] In fact, John implied that implementation of a very broad distribution of private property would be achieved quite easily, using "various techniques of proved efficiency."[69]The document also advocated that all sectors of society share the same standard of living.[70] In one sense, this was a conservative assertion for the Church in that it promoted the welfare of the rural classes, a traditional

Catholic stronghold. But the assertion was also very progressive in that it implied the need for state intervention to correct inequities between the industrial, service, and agricultural sectors.

Pope John XXIII's overall emphasis in Mater et Magistra, that the "common good" of a society composed of individuals must be the justification for all human action, was by the very use of its terminology indicating a somewhat less stratified view of the good society than that of Pius XI. The encyclical's emphasis on earthly well-being was far removed from the implied endorsement of the status quo evident in many of the early Fathers.

In John XXIII's last encyclical, Pacem in Terris (1963), he adopted almost all of the principles of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), while admitting that these principles were fully consonant with a truly democratic government.[71] He reiterated the call for just wages and his support for private property, and exhorted Catholics to take an active part in politics and public life.[72] Stating that all states must have constitutions based on basic rights and duties, he reiterated his theory of the justification for the existence of the state when he wrote, "The attainment of the common good is the sole reason for the existence of civil authorities."[73]Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, he condemned Marxist philosophy, but allowed that the use of Marxist

analysis might facilitate understanding of some of the world's socio-economic problems. [74]

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was marked by changes in many aspects of Church teaching and practice, from liturgical to political. Presided over by John XXIII until his death in 1963, then by Paul VI, the council took a noticeably progressive stance, reflecting to a large extent the positions of the two popes. A few passages from the council's final document, Gaudium et Spes (7 December 1965) will suffice to show this trend. In reference to the "common good," the document stated, "The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment."[75] The vague nature of this passage and the one following was to be a very important factor in later interpretations of the meaning of Vatican II. At another point, the document stated:

> Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic, or social order: the purpose assigned to it was a religious one. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigor to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the law of God.[76]

Later, Gaudium et Spes proclaimed:

> The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system. It is at once the sign and the safeguard of the transcendental dimension of the human person.[77]

Echoing John XXIII on economic and social issues, the document also explicitly supported democracy, stating, "Every citizen ought to be mindful of his right and his duty to promote the common good by using his vote."[78] Finally, Gaudium et Spes specified the Church's political role, declaring:

> By preaching the truths of the Gospel and clarifying all sectors of human activity through its teaching and the witness of its members, the Church respects and encourages the political freedom and responsibility of the citizen.[79]

All in all, the views presented by the Second Vatican Council were quite progressive (in the liberal tradition), rather vague, but not at all revolutionary. The Church advocated change, but that change was to come from within traditional political structures.

In the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI and the Vatican took several rather abrupt turns toward the Left that were to profoundly influence the worldwide Church. Unlike his predecessor, Paul VI held a rather dour outlook on the modern world. His writing reflected this with combinations of pessimism and utopianism that often lacked the clarity of other popes' works.[80] Yet, even in their clear passages, Paul's writings often proved to be a radical departure from those of earlier popes.

Quentin L. Quade has written that the mainstream teaching on the Church's political competence between 1891 and 1965

prescribed the following methods:

1."Modesty or caution about any capacity to know what right political action is on the basis of religious perception alone."

2. "Care in the terminology used when one is exhorting or prescribing."

3. "Rigor in respecting the essential difference between Church and State as human institutions."[81]

According to Quade, Paul VI's Popularum Progressio (1967) violated this tradition by specifically asserting the Church's competence in concrete matters. Quade wrote, "It [the encyclical] does not acknowledge that people of equal virtue may hold contrary judgements in the realms of politics and economics."[82]

Popularum Progressio focused mainly on world poverty and development. The pope painted a picture of a sick world in which poor nations were about to rise up in rebellion against rich ones. He called for a redistribution of world wealth from rich to poor nations, and posited that development is the path to peace.[83] Paul emphasized the need for the Church to scrutinize the world around it, and to advocate causes meant to better the human condition.[84] Then, he added,

> Everyone knows, however, that revolutionary uprisings--except where there is manifest, longstanding tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country--engender new injustices, introduce new inequities and bring new disasters. The

> evil situation that exists, and it surely is evil, may not be dealt with in such a way that an even worse situation results.

In effect, Paul VI made a guarantee of success (in traditional Catholic terms) a prerequisite for revolution. But the vagueness of this passage and others left the encyclical open to radical interpretations. As Quade observed,

> Popularum Progressio invites the removal of distinctions and obliterates the intermediate steps that good judgement demands. It does these things in such a way as to suggest to anyone who wants to hear that somehow the right religious spirit, expressed with sufficient passion, is the essence of prudent political action, rather than just one prelude to such action.[86]

As we shall soon see, Paul's message was construed by various theologians and Churchmen as an endorsement of revolutionary activity.

Pope Paul VI's pastoral letter, Octogessima Adveniens (1971) was a more balanced and clear document than Popularum Progressio. It recognized that the same Christian faith could lead to different political commitments, and avoided the use of universal temporal pronouncements.[87] However, the document still gave the distinct impression that it favored socialism over liberalism. It set forth the concept of "institutionalized sin," in which economic institutions, not political actors, were to be held responsible for socioeconomic injustice. The document praised the scientific rigor of Marxist analysis, while criticizing liberalism because of its stress on individualism.[88]

Paul VI did not claim as much knowledge in Octogessima Adveniens as he had in Popularum Progressio. Yet some of the knowledge he did claim seems to have been misdirected. Conservatives such as Michael Novak criticized Paul's praise for Marxist analysis for being outdated.[89] They pointed to the pope's commitment to human rights and economic development, then asked how he could possibly oppose liberal institutions. As they saw it, Paul was obsessed with the Catholic tradition of expressing disdain for liberalism.[90]Indeed, the Church's historical anti-liberalism seemed to be working against its own best interssts under Paul VI.

After Popularum Progressio had sent a shock wave throughout the Catholic world, less radical pronouncements were unable to effectively moderate the forces of change in the Church. A document produced by the Second General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Justice in the World (November 1971) reflected Popularum Progressio's ideas to a large extent. At one point, it strongly affirmed the active political role of the Church. The bishops wrote:

> Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.[91]

The radical approach of this statement was not, however, supported consistently throughout Justice in the World. The

document drew back from this position in the following line:

> Of itself it does not belong to the Church, insofar as she is a religious and hierarchical community, to offer concrete solutions in the social, economic, and political spheres for justice in the world.[92]

The bishops further stressed this point by restating a traditional principle of Catholic social thought:

> Christians' specific contribution to justice is the day-to-day life of the individual believer acting like the leaven of the Gospel in his family, his school, his work, and his social and civic life.[93]

The open-ended invitation to revolutionary activity (often called "liberating action") in the first of these three passages is so inconsistent with the conservativeness of the latter two that it leads to a confusion about the meaning of the document. This prompted Quentin L. Quade to observe that the bishops' work "does not distinguish between the Church as a City of God and politics as an art and practice in the worldly city. These flaws invite a too-easy presumption of political relevance."[94]

In 1975, the Synod of Bishops' Third General Assembly promulgated Evangelization of the Modern World, a document similar to Justice in the World in its ambiguous approach to politics. In Evangelization, the bishops wrote that they "expressed profound unity in reaffirming the intimate connection between evangelization and liberation," but left this connection undefined.[95] Paul VI's use of the term "liberation," with its anthropocentric implications, was adopted by the bishops, whose

vague activist message was expressed in passages such as this:

> ...let us nurture the hope that the Church, in more faithfully fulfilling the work of evangelization, will announce the total salvation of man, or rather his complete liberation, and from now on will start to bring this about.[96]

The references to "liberation" were combined with concepts reminiscent of Pope Paul's "institutionalized sin" in passages such as this:

> The Church will lead us toward freedom under all its forms--liberation from sin, from individual or collective selfishness--and to full communion with God and with men who are like brothers.[97]

One might wonder if the bishops were not afflicted with an acute sense of Pope Paul's utopianism while composing this manuscript.

During the same year, Paul VI published Evangelii Nuntiandi, in which he also expressed a vague interrelationship between evangelization and liberation, without separating or identifying the two terms. He wrote,

> The Church...has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children.... This is not foreign to evangelization.[98]

At another point, the pope seemed to be trying to refute those theologians who preached earthly salvation, restricted to a certain social class. He wrote,

> Salvation is offered to all...a transcendent and eschatological salvation, which indeed has its beginning in this life but which is fulfilled in eternity.[99]

Obviously, this was not a very powerful refutation, especially

when supplemented with ambiguous statements such as this:

> The Church strives always to insert the Christian struggle for liberation into the universal plan of salvation which she herself proclaims.[100]

This undefined "Christian struggle for liberation" is part of the rhetoric of liberation theology, which we will investigate in the following section.

SECTION II

The development of the Church in Latin America in recent decades has been marked by a conservative/radical Left split, with the Left steadily gaining ground. The semi-autonomous role practiced by the Latin American Church was greatly facilitated by the World Wars of this century, which made contact with Rome virtually impossible, thereby awakening the Church to the need for a degree of decentralization. In Latin America, this decentralization took the form of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM). The first CELAM conference, held at Rio de Janeiro, was simply organizational, and caused no great excitement.[101]

Major changes did not begin to take place in the Latin American Church until after the Second Vatican Council. Latin American Churchmen were not so optimistic about prospects for social progress as the Europeans, who had dominated the composition of the Vatican II documents.[102]

Dale Vree described the disparity this way:

> For the theologian, the situation of the developed world is as Dietrich Bonhoeffer described it: the mundige Welt (the world come of age), where technologically competent people no longer feel a need for God. In Latin America, on the other hand, the theologian must respond to quite another situation, a situation where people feel incompetent and helpless, and where suffering is a way of life with no end in sight. Here people do feel a

> need for God, but are at pains to understand how a loving God could have created such an unlovely world.[103]

In general, social, economic, and political conditions were bleak in Latin America in the mid-1960s. Some Latin American Churchmen felt that reform within the existing system was impossible, and turned to radical measures. In February 1966, Fr.Camilo Torres, a Colombian priest, died in combat while fighting as a guerrilla against government forces. This jolted many Latin American Catholics, and led to the publication of numerous manifestos by groups of priests calling for basic socioeconomic change.[104]

Latin America's Second Episcopal Conference (CELAM II) at Medellin, Colombia in 1968 attempted to apply the teachings of Vatican II (as interpreted in Latin America) to the continent. In Pope Paul's opening address, he encouraged the bishops to attack "systems and structures which cover up and favor grave and oppressive inequalities." This helped set a tone in opposition to elite groups, especially foreign elites, at the conference.[105]

Two key trends central to the future of theology in Latin America emerged at Medellin. First, the equation of liberation with spiritual and material liberation was advanced. The Church was called to struggle for the liberation of the masses not only from the shackles of sin, but also from the bondage of material deprivation and political oppression. This stance was justified by pointing to both the liberation of Exodus (hence, "Exodus theology") and Jesus' liberating proclamation of good news.

Secondly, the Medellin Conference advocated the formation of Basic Christian Communities (BCCs), essentially grassroots groups of laymen who study the Bible, interpret it on their own, and talk about personal, local, national, and international problems in the perspective of the liberating interpretation of scripture. These groups were to be initiated by laymen and to be governed by democratic decision-making, with no inner hierarchies of authority. This arrangement, in turn, was to give members a heightened sense of self-worth through participation.[106]

In a chapter of the conference statement entitled "Justice," the bishops restated much of Paul's encyclicals' teaching in their own context. They wrote of "unjust structures which characterize the Latin American situation."[107] They claimed not to be confusing the City of God and the City of Man when they wrote,

> We do not confuse temporal progress and the Kingdom of Christ; nevertheless, the former, to the extent that it can contribute to a better ordering of human society, is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God.[108]

This is a rather orthodox statement, if one does not make too much out of the word "vital." Other moderate statements, such as one supporting collaboration with civil powers, were also included. The bishops wrote,

> The Church--the people of God--will lend its support to the down-trodden of every social class so that they might come to know their rights and how to make use of them. To this end the Church will utilize its moral strength and will seek to collaborate with competent professionals and institutions.[109]

In regard to the Church's position vis-a-vis progressive organizations, the bishops wrote, "The moral force of the Church will be consecrated, above all, to stimulate them, not acting except in a supplementary capacity and in situations that admit no delay."[110] Such statements seemed to indicate that the Medellin Conference would take a more or less traditional stand in support of the Church's social teaching.

In its more explicit political references, the "Justice" chapter combined the "middle way" of Pius XII with the dependency theory economics of Paul VI. The bishops declared:

> The system of liberal capitalism and the temptation of the Marxist system would appear to exhaust the possibilities of transforming the economic structures of our continent. Both systems militate against the dignity of the human person. One takes for granted the primacy of capital, its power, and its discriminating utilization in the function of profit-making. The other, although it ideologically supports a kind of humanism, is more concerned with collective man, and in practice becomes a totalitarian concentration or state power. We must denounce the fact that Latin America sees itself caught between these two options and remains dependent on one or other of the centers of power which control its economy.[111]

The bishops went on to recommend changes along the lines of the modern social doctrine of the Church.

In another chapter of the Medellin document, entitled "Peace," the bishops leaned a bit more toward the Left, allowing an opening for revolutionary theologies. At one point, the bishops acknowledged that not all injustice is caused by men.

They wrote,

> When speaking of injustice, we refer to those realities that constitute a sinful situation; this does not mean, however, that we are overlooking the fact that at times the misery in our countries can have natural causes which are difficult to overcome.[112]

This balanced viewpoint was followed by an acknowledgement that positive efforts were being made to build a "just" society. However, a description of these efforts was not included in the document, which was meant only to call attention to "those aspects which constitute a menace or negation of peace."[113]

The bishops then began a strong denunciation of the economic imperialism of the world powers, focused presumably against the United States and Western Europe. They wrote,

> We wish to emphasize that the principal guilt for economic dependence of our countries rests with powers, inspired by uncontrolled desire for gain, which leads to economic dictatorship and the "international imperialism of money" (Popularum Progressio, 26) condemned by Pope Pius XI in Quadragessimo Anno and by Pope Paul VI in Popularum Progressio[114]

While proclaiming this antiliberal stance, the bishops wrote, "We here denounce the imperialism of any ideological bias exercised in Latin America either indirectly or through direct intervention."[115] In effect, they denied the use of any ideology, even their own, thereby nullifying politics altogether.

The bishops went on to treat violence, first approaching it in a conservative fashion, then allowing an opening for radical interpretations. They began by stating that violent methods for

bringing about change are ineffectual, and not in conformity with man dignity. They restated Paul VI's concepts of institutionalized violence and dependence, then made this ominous declaration:

> This situation demands all-embracing, courageous, urgent, and profoundly renovating transformations. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the "temptation to violence" is surfacing in Latin America. One should not abuse the patience of a people that for years has borne a situation that would not be acceptable to anyone with any degree of awareness of human rights.[116]

From this passage, which certainly did not condemn violence, the bishops went to the following one, which seemed to condone it:

> We address ourselves finally, to those who, in the face of injustice and illegitimate resistance to change, put their hopes in violence. With Paul VI we realize that this attitude "frequently finds its ultimate motivation in noble impulses of justice and solidarity" (Paul VI, Homily of the Mass on Development Day, Bogota, Colombia, 1968)[117]

The Latin American bishops stresed that education should emphasize the message of liberation, which encompasses the biological, economic, cultural, political, and social spheres. They criticized those who support the status quo, contending that such people lack social consciousness. They also attacked developmentalists---those who advocate achieving social advances within existing structures of society, usually through expansion of the means of production. Economic improvement could not be equated with social progress, the bishops contended. They ended their statement by criticizing those revolutionaries who identify

faith exclusively with political and social responsibility.[118]

The mixture of ostensibly contradictory conservative and radical positions in the Medellin documents was symptomatic of the indecisiveness and confusion in the Church under Paul VI. Paul's Church wanted to protect human rights of individuals and families, and to uphold intermediate institutions as Marxism did not, but it wished to accept the Marxist analysis of economic imperialism---a simple explanation for complex problems. This left the Church dependent almost solely upon dependency theory.A Church that had been moving toward an acceptance of liberalism became one split between various types of traditionalists and radicals.[119]

Although many of the declarations made at Medellin seemed revolutionary, a 1969 Rand Corporation analysis commissioned by the United States' Department of State concluded that the bishops were not a real threat to the status quo. Citing great divisiveness within the conference, the study projected that the Church would probably manage to do little more than extricate itself from alliances with various governments, and try to become a conscience for the respective states.[120] The Rand study guessed that the Church would only take political stands until its institutional interests were jeopardized. Subsequent events have shown these predictions to be largely inaccurate.[121]

SECTION III

Post-Medellin Latin America witnessed the emergence of "liberation theology," a term that encompasses the numerous radical strains of thought that were expressed at Medellin. The one unifying characteristic common to these liberation theologies is an emphasis (to varying degrees) on the value of Marxist theory for social, economic, political, and sometimes theological analysis. The degree to which Marxism is accepted often constitutes the major difference between these systems of belief.

Mexican priest Raul Vidales has written,

> There are no grounds for even suspecting that the theology of liberation aims to constitute itself as an ideological or strategic sponsor of a definite political praxis or of a definite school of scientific thought.[122]

This statement is simply untrue. Virtually every liberation theologian supports "Marxist praxis," Marxist theory, or a variation of it. While some assert that their religious beliefs and Marxism parallel one another coincidentally, the fact remains that their praxis is almost identical. This will become quite clear in this section and the one following it.

What does the term "liberation" mean to liberation theologians? The Chilean priest, Segundo Galilea, a leading figure in CELAM, wrote, "Liberation is the historical and theologico-spiritual place of encounter of the political and contemplative dimensions in the Christian.[123] The true "contemplative dimension" is not the mystical one adopted by the

Church, but "the authentic biblical dimension of contemplation, which we call historical or the contemplation of commitment."[124] This contemplation of commitment brings with it a consciousness of Christ. Galilea wrote,

> This consciousness of Christ is the place where prayer and commitment unite, and it prevents the latter from becoming hollow and empty, by including them both in the same contemplative experience.[125]

The Chilean priest seems to have tried to express some rather simple ideas in a complex way. In the end, one must conclude that liberation is the product of a combination of the contemplation of political commitment and prayer. This liberation, or participation in it, seems to be almost synonymous with the "consciousness of Christ." But what does "liberation" actually entail? Galilea has offered no real answer to this.

Brazilian priest Clodovis Boff has offered a more straightforward definition of "liberation." He wrote, "liberation is the social emancipation of the oppressed. Our concrete task is to replace the capitalist system and move toward a new society---a society of the socialist type."[126] More concisely, liberation equals social emancipation through socialism.

Leonardo Boff, the better-known brother of Clodovis, has written extensively on liberation theology. He expressed his definition of liberation in this passage:

> Radical criticism calls for a new form of organization for the whole of society, an organization on other bases---no longer from a point of departure of the capital held in the

> hands of a few, but an organization of society based on everyone's labor, with everyone sharing in the means and the goods of production as well as in the means of power. And this is called liberation.[127]

So, liberation seems to entail a form of socialism. However, another passage by Boff adds a theological dimension to liberation. He wrote:

> Liberation is the act of gradually delivering reality from the various captivities to which it is historically subject and which run counter to God's historical project---which is the upbuilding of the kingdom, a kingdom in which everything is oriented to God, penetrated by God's presence, and glorified on the cosmic level as on the personal level (the level of divinization).[128]

Liberation here seems to be a gradual process moving toward a religious utopia. This utopia-kingdom is "God's historical project," involving men as the builders. Yet, at another point, Boff seems to suggest that the "kingdom" is to be arrived at by a less gradual process. He wrote,

> ...the Kingdom of God means precisely revolution in the structures of this world, with the world being preserved as the place where God reveals his glory.[129]

Boff elaborated on this, writing,

> ...if Christians aim at taking power because this appears to them to be the imperative of the moment, they must do so not as domination but as service and not in a spirit of vengeance but as a reconciliatory solution to discrimination in social structure. This attitude is the achievement of Christianity. If other Christians renounce power and preach non-violence, because the situation demands this, they do so in the same evangelical spirit as the group already mentioned, by

> incarnating in this way the feelings of Christ himself (Phil 2: 5) about selflessness and practical service.[130]

Taken together, these passages indicate that Christianity, to Boff, offers two paths, one that of a humanitarian social revolution, the other the imitation of the Jesus of the Gospels.

One may ask why Boff constructed this dual path of Christianity, and how social revolution can be justified within the context of Christ's life and message or that of the historical Church. As Philippians 2: 5 states, "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus." Boff explained the dual path in this way:

> Each generation brings a new parousia of Christ because in each age he is given a new image, the result of the difficult synthesis between life and faith. The true Jesus is not really the Jesus of history. All that has been said and done with regard to the person and message of Jesus through the centuries is part of the mystery of Jesus, the definitive shape of which is still being formed. Only at the end of history will we know who Jesus Christ really is and was.[131]

This fluid definition of Jesus allows for many diverse interpretations indeed.

An examination of Leonardo Boff's writing reveals many of the features most characteristic of liberation theology. The anti-imperialist rhetoric, the theory of the marginalization and exploitation of the poor, economic dependency theory, and discontent with reform from within existing social structures manifest themselves. Boff wrote,

> Today the poor are a whole class of marginalized and exploited persons in our society, marked as that society is by an exclusive partnerahip with a dependent capitalism.[132]

Boff's writing is characterized by phrases such as the "ongoing mechanisms of poverty and marginalization."[133] These mechanisms seem to be liberal-capitalist socio-economic structures, for he wrote, "development in capitalist modes is effectuated at the cost of the people, and generally against the people. Progress benefits only some strata of the population, marginalizing broader sectors."[134] This position is remeniscent of the Church's historical anti-liberalism. It especially reminds one of Paul VI when it defines underdeveloped countries as those "maintained in a state of underdevelopment," and dependent on "hegemonic centers."[135]

Rather than stopping with a denunciation of capitalist society, Boff went a step farther than Paul VI by writing,

> Today...we perceive that the Christian ideal is closer to socialism than to capitalism. It is not a matter of creating a Christian socialism. It is a matter of being able to say that the socialist system, when actually carried out in reality, enables Christians better to live the humanitarian and divine ideals of their faith. These ideals can also be realized in the capitalist system, as we see from centuries of Christianity lived by a capitalist society. But the capitalist society is attended by many contradictions that could be overcome in another system---which for its part will present other contradictions, but lesser ones.[136]

Boff moved completely away from Pius XI's condemnation of

socialism, and from Paul VI's acceptance only of Marxist analysis, to the acceptance of socialism as the best socioeconomic system.

Leonardo Boff stressed the importance of Medellin and Evangelii Nuntiandi for the understanding of the liberation-salvation relationship. He also gave particular emphasis to the third CELAM conference at Puebla, Mexico, in January, 1979, which made liberation its central theme. Unlike more radical liberation theologians, Boff did not condemn the position of Pope John Paul II at Puebla, but praised him for moving from reticence to "enthusiastic support" of liberation theology.[137] What Boff termed "enthusiastic support" many radicals and conservatives would define as opposition, but some of this discrepancy is due to the more integral way in which Boff defined liberation theology in the context of Puebla. In effect, Boff altered his revolutionary definition of liberation theology in order to make it coincide with John Paul II's more conservative, mystical definition expressed at the Puebla Conference. Although Boff argued that the pope did in fact support liberation theology at Puebla, the priest could not avoid exposing the fact that John Paul supported a very different form of liberation.

Boff began his analysis of Puebla by writing, "It can be said that, in general, the pope takes his distance from the vocabulary of the theology of liberation, but adopts its main theses."[138] Rather than producing a quote of the pope in support

of this statement, Boff curiously cited this papal interview in Veja in which John Paul II said,

> Liberation theology, you know, is a genuine theology. But it can perhaps be a false theology. If theology begins to be politicized, begins to make use of systems or means of analysis that are not Christian, then it is no longer theology. Liberation theology, surely, but which?[139]

Boff stated that John Paul's outlook is that of Evangelii Nuntiandi, with added accents on the integral perspective of liberation. However, Evangelii Nuntiandi's position is so vague that it renders Boff's observation somewhat useless. In fact, John Paul II opposed revolutionary liberation theology at Puebla, and proposed a more spiritual form of liberation. Boff, perhaps inadvertently, demonstrated this with the following lines from John Paul's "Opening Address" at Puebla. Citing Evangelii Nuntiandi, the pope proclaimed a "fuller liberation" that he defined as "'liberation from everything that oppresses human beings, but especially liberation from sin and the evil one, in the joy of knowing God and being known by him.'"[140] John Paul II clarified this by warning against a narrow view of liberation. Adopting the words of John Paul I, he declared:

> It is a mistake to state that political, economic, and social liberation coincide with salvation in Jesus Christ; that the regnum Dei is identified with the regnum hominis.[141]

John Paul II made it clear that even though the kingdom of God is anticipated on earth, human history is not equivalent to eschatology, as many liberation theologians would claim. Boff

summed up the pope's viewpoint well when he wrote,

> In a nutshell, we could say: Liberation in Jesus Christ is not identified with political, economic, and social liberation, but it is historically identified in political, economic, and social liberation.[142]

Boff has expressed great admiration for John Paul II's position on liberation theology. He cited the pope's first General Audience in Rome (February 21, 1979), when he proclaimed:

> One of the great theologians of our day [Hans Urs von Balthasar] is correct when he calls for a liberation theology of universal dimensions.... The reality of the "liberty for which Christ freed us" (Gal. 5: 1) is universal. The task of theology is to discover the authentic meaning in its various concrete, historical, and contemporary contexts.[143]

This statement, in the context of those already shown, is not at all revolutionary. Boff's praise for the pope and his general approval of the Puebla Conference (which will be treated more extensively in Section IV) indicates that Boff is (or, at least, has become) a moderate representative of liberation theology. Nevertheless, he is a true disciple of this theology in several ways. For one, he has concentrated his attention almost solely on the poor. Boff wrote,

> ...in the gospels, the poor are the primary addressees of Jesus' message and constitute the eschatological criterion by which the salvation or perdition of every human being is determined. (Matt. 25: 35-46)[144]

Boff also adhered unquestioningly to Marxist analysis, which is, as has been noted, a hallmark of liberation theology. He wrote,

> The utilization that liberation theology makes of this instrument [Marxist analysis] is not servile. Dialectical analysis is science, divorced from its philosophical presuppositions, divorced from dialectical materialism. Science is knowledge submitted to control by experimentation and verification.[145]

Nowhere does Boff call forth the results of any experimentation with Marxist analysis, however.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Boff's liberation theology, shared by many others, is the notion passed down from Popularum Progressio that the Church has a unique form of political competence. Boff revealed some of the effects of Paul VI's opening of the Pandora's box of politics when he wrote,

> When the church...concerns itself with politics, it does not do so politically, struggling for power with other competitors. It does so theologically: it discerns, within political material, a dimension of salvation or perdition---a theological dimension, then, that is accessible only to the understanding of faith, not to that of political science.[146]

This passage, taken alone, might be construed as consistent with traditional Church teaching. But in the context of Boff's option for Marxist analysis and his tendency to attribute specific knowledge, instead of guidance, to the Church, this becomes a more radical statement.

In Salvation and Liberation, Boff attempted to define the relationship between the kingdom of God and the just society. He began by writing,

> Kingdom of God and just society are not totally coextensive. But they overlap. Hence

> we can speak of an identification of one <u>in</u> the other, though not of an identity of one <u>with</u> the other.[147]

To clarify this, he wrote,

> For the Christian, heaven does not come only after this earthly life. It is already within this earthly life. But it is not in its plenitude here. It crosses out beyond, it transcends, this life, to touch eternity (Luke 10: 9, Luke 17: 21, Matt. 4: 17, Luke 11: 2, Matt. 6: 10, Matt. 19: 28).[148]

Taking another approach, Boff wrote:

> What is important to retain is that just as in a sacrament grace is always conjoined to a sign, and never appears as grace <u>simpliciter</u>, so also historical liberation is always conjoined to salvation---even though salvation is not present in historical liberations alone, just as grace can be had independent of any particular sign.[149]

Boff also pointed out the intimate relationship between love of God and love of neighbor (John 4: 8-16, 1 John 4: 20-21, Matt. 25: 40-45). He wrote:

> Historically, the eternal Son, in whom we are God's offspring (Eph. 2: 10), became incarnate as the suffering Servant. Hence all the sufferers of history are special sacraments of Jesus Christ, the suffering Servant.[150]

Perhaps Boff's best model for examining the kingdom and the just society is the relationship between body and soul. Boff cited <u>Gaudium et Spes</u> (14): "Though made of body and soul, man is one." Then, he observed,

> In historical liberation (corresponding to the body in our model) is the whole of salvation (corresponding to spirit); but this salvation is no more shaped by the confines of a historical liberation than spirit is shaped

> by body. Salvation always transcends liberation, just as spirit transcends body.[151]

Leonardo Boff falls short of giving us any clear description of the relationship between the kingdom of God (salvation) and the just (liberated) society. The just society seems to be a prelude to, indeed an intimate and necessary part of the kingdom, but it is only the historical dimension of the kingdom , which is somehow directed by salvation itself.

Clodovis Boff has also tried to define the just society/kingdom relationship. In a vein similar to his brother's, he termed salvation "transhistorical." Salvation (the kingdom) is to be found within the process of a morally good liberation, he observed. And liberation is the "dominant dimension of salvation" in the context of dependent Latin America. This "explanation," much like the one in Evangelii Nuntiandi, sheds little light on the subject. Liberation, as a component of salvation, seems to be a necessary part of, even a prerequisite for the master plan of God. Clodovis Boff's assertion that Christian faith is the guarantor that liberation (revolution) will move in the direction of salvation is certainly optimistic, but not particularly reassuring.[152]

Perhaps the best-known of all liberation theologians is Gustavo Gutierrez, a professor of theology at the Catholic University in Lima, Peru. His 1973 book, A Theology of Liberation, is generally recognized as the classic presentation of the subject. More revolutionary than Leonardo Boff, Gutierrez

criticized Catholic theology in his book for stagnating, or failing to contribute to new knowledge.[153] He quickly proceeded with an ostensibly critical examination of Marxism (the central component of his work) that managed only to exalt it.

Near the beginning of his book, Gutierrez wrote, "Many agree with Sartre that 'Marxism, as the formal framework of all contemporary philosophical thought, cannot be superseded.'"[154] Then, the theologian set forth his theory of "fruitful confrontation," in which Christianity learns from Marxism. He observed,

> ...contemporary theology does in fact find itself in direct and fruitful confrontation with Marxism, and it is to a large extent due to Marxism's influence that theological thought, searching for its own sources, has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of the world and the action of man in history. Further, this confrontation helps theology to perceive what its efforts at understanding the faith receive from the historical praxis of man in history as well as what its own reflection might mean for the transformation of the world.[155]

Somehow, theology seems to have lost contact with its roots, for it is now "searching for its sources." The activist challenge of Marxism forces theology to examine itself in the realm of human life, not just human contemplation. But Gutierrez took this observation much farther when he set forth the concept of orthopraxis," a new mixture of orthodoxy and action, with priority obviously given to the latter. He wrote,

> The intention...is not to deny the meaning of

> orthodoxy, understood as a proclamation of and reflection on statements considered to be true. Rather, the goal is to balance and even to reject the primacy and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life and above all to modify the emphasis, often obsessive, upon the attainment of an orthodoxy which is often nothing more than fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable interpretation. In a more positive vein, the intention is to recognize the work and importance of concrete behavior, of deeds, of action, of praxis in the Christian life.[156]

This is much more than just a social gospel. It is a call to build a completely new Church. For, if one discards the historical doctrinal teachings of the Church, which form the mortar of the Catholic structure, one also discards the value of two milennia of searching for the fullness of the truth. This is indeed a radical proposition. If tradition can be considered obsolete, then the Church can be reduced to a community of humanitarians, fundamentalists, or Marxists with an interest in interpreting Biblical messages. Any interpretation of the scriptures, of history, or of the purpose of the Church may be acceptable, for the arbitrary denial of doctrinal tradition implies the illigitimacy of the magisterium.

Gutierrez not only questioned the validity of traditional theology, but reversed the order of priorities in Christian life when he declared:

> The pastoral activity of the Church does not flow as a conclusion from theological premises. Theology does not produce pastoral activity: Rather it reflects upon it.[157]

If action is to precede, to inform, to lead to theology, what

Gutierrez is writing about is not theology at all, but his own redefinition of it. Much of his writing, in fact, depends upon his revisions of traditional definitions and concepts rather than any attempts to build on tradition with new insights.

According to Gutierrez, Third World countries have no desire to model themselves after the rich nations of the world, for they realize that the status of the latter is "the fruit of injustice and coercion."[158] He submitted that a "broad and deep aspiration for liberation inflames the history of mankind in our day." He supported this statement by writing,

> Proof of this is awareness of new and subtle forms of oppression in the heart of advanced industrial societies, which often offer themselves as models to the underdeveloped countries. In them subversion does not appear as a protest against poverty, but against wealth.[169]

This claim seems to come straight out of a Marxist primer, like much of Gutierrez's writing, which he makes little attempt to document.

Indeed, Gutierrez praises the modern philosophy that Pius XII condemned. He praises Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Marx for developing man's self-concept. The theologian displayed his naive acceptance of Marx when he wrote, "Basing his thought on... intuitions, he went on to construct a scientific understanding of historical reality."[160] At another point, he remarked on "...the change from the capitalist mode of production to the socialist mode, that is to say, to one oriented towards a society

in which man can begin to live freely and humanly."[161] Gutierrez contended that Marxist thinkers should be reconsidered in light of history and praxis, but offered no criticism of them. In fact he continued, all this should not lead us to an attitude of distrustful reserve toward these ideas."[162] In another work, he noted,

> A relapsing into ideology made to justify a particular social situation is inevitable when the Gospel is not lived as the word of a Father who loves us freely and gratuitously, with a love which renews the face of the earth, and calls us always to new life in his son.[163]

In other words, the lack of a Christian lifestyle brings about unjust societies and the ideologies made to justify them. By implication, following a Christian lifestyle would lead to a great social and ideological improvement. According to Gutierrez, the process of "conscientization," in which an oppressed person becomes aware of oppression, then commits himself to social transformation, leads to violent social revolution.[164] He proclaimed:

> The goal is not only better living conditions, a radical change of structures, a social revolution; it is much more: the continuous creation, never ending, of a new way to be a man, a permanent cultural revolution.[165]

To clarify this goal, he wrote,

> To support the social revolution means to abolish the present status quo and to attempt to replace it with a qualitatively different one; it means to build a just society based

> on new relationships of production; it means to attempt to put an end to the domination of some countries by others. The liberation of these countries, social classes, and people undermines the very foundation of the present order; it is the greatest challenge of our time.[166]

The Marxist-Christian revolution, according to Gutierrez, will not be peaceful in any way. He wrote,

> ...the building of a just society means the confrontation in which different kinds of violence are present---between groups with different interests and opinions. The building of a just society means overcoming every obstacle to the creation of an authentic peace among people.[167]

At another point, he called the revolution "a conflict-laden, interpellating experience."[168] In effect, Gutierrez designed his own theory of a just war, or to be more precise, adopted Marx's.

To Gutierrez, liberation is the central issue of Christian life. He wrote, "Participation in the process of liberation is an obligatory and privileged locus for Christian life and reflection."[169] Indeed, he implied that without this gospel-based liberation on earth, life could be futile, when he wrote, "We must search the gospel message for the answer to what according to Camus constitutes the most important question facing all people: To decide whether life deserves to be lived or not."[170]

Gutierrez criticized both Gaudium et Spes and Popularum Progressio for shunning issues of class confrontation and for avoiding use of the language of liberation. Like many other liberation theologians, he saw a collective will to reject God

and neighbor (sin) behind unjust social structures.[171] He criticized the Church for supporting the status quo, asking, "Is the Church fulfilling a purely religious role when by its silence or friendly relationships it lends legitimacy to a dictatorial and oppressive government?"[172] He added, "[The Latin American] is freeing himself in one way or another from the tutelege of an alienating religion which tends to support the status quo."[173]

Gutierrez broke away from the Church completely with his theory of universal salvation and unconscious Christianity. This vaguely-formulated concept is made possible by the reasoning that men are called as a whole, not as individuals, to salvation. He wrote,

> The historical point of view allows us to break out of a narrow, individualistic viewpoint and see with more Biblical eyes that men are called to meet the Lord insofar as they constitute a community, a people. It is a question not so much of a vocation to salvation as a convocation.[174]

Free of the shackles of Church tradition, Gutierrez is able to "see" many new things. He continued,

> To accept the historical viewpoint of the meaning of human existence is to rediscover the Pauline theme of the universal lordship of Christ, in whom all things exist and have been saved.[175]

Enrique Dussell, a professor of history and philosophy in Cuyo, Bolivia, expressed the same idea when he wrote,

> Since the liberating and redemptive death of Christ, world history has been living under a new order of reality, since any man of good will receives enough grace for salvation.[176]

Claude Geffre, a collaborator with Gutierrez, agreed with this line of thought when he wrote,

> In fact encounter with Christ necessarily occurs through the mediation of the poor brother who exists as an exploited class, as a forgotten race, and as a marginalized culture.[177]

These assertions naturally lead to Gutierrez's belief in "unconscious salvation," which he aptly expressed in this passage:

> ...man is saved if he opens himself to God and to others, even if he is not clearly aware that he is doing so. This is valid for Christians and non-Christians alike---for all people.[178]

In the eyes of Gutierrez, this assertion implicitly opens the door of salvation to atheist Marxists, for they are great humanitarians. The following statement further affirms this universal potential for holiness and salvation, with or without Christ. Gutierrez wrote,

> To speak about the presence of grace---whether accepted or rejected---in all people implies, on the other hand, to value from a Christian standpoint the very roots of human activity. We can no longer speak properly of a profane world.[179]

Indeed, Gutierrez seems to believe in an earthly salvation---perhaps only an earthly salvation, for he wrote,

> Salvation is not something otherworldly, in regard to which the present life is merely a test. Salvation---the communion of men with God and among themselves---is something which embraces all human reality, transforms it, and leads it to its fullness in Christ.[180]

In a vague attempt to distinguish liberation from salvation, the theologian wrote,

> ...The historical, political, liberating event <u>is</u> the growth of the kingdom and <u>is</u> a salvific event; but it is not <u>the</u> coming of the kingdom, not all of salvation. It is the historical realization of the kingdom and, therefore, it also proclaims its fullness.[181]

Although one might interpret this statement as a recognition that even though the kingdom of God may be foreshadowed in history, it is actually an otherworldly event, Gutierrez never specifically made such a statement. One is left to wonder if he believes in a heaven apart from the earth, or if he believes instead that earth will become heaven. Such doubts are at least partially confirmed by his belief that all men have been made holy through Christ. He wrote, "Since God has become man, humanity, every man, history is the living temple of God. The "pro-fane," that which is located outside the temple, no longer exists."[182] This assertion allowed Gutierrez to, in effect, deny the need for God in the modern world when he wrote,

> It is not enough to say that love of God is inseparable from the love of one's neighbor. It must be added love for God is unavoidably expressed <u>through</u> love of one's neighbor.[183]

Although Gutierrez added a warning that love for man is not complete without love for God, the previous statement stands at the center of his comprehensive theory of unconscious, universal, un-Christian salvation.

Why, one might ask, was Jesus not a political revolutionary

Why, one might ask, was Jesus not a political revolutionary if that is what he meant his followers to be? Gutierrez answered that some theologians have seen Jesus as a Zealot, but that he was actually not interested in revolution because he felt that the end of the world was imminent. And this is the theologian's final answer.[184]

Gutierrez expressed the belief that reformism is a dangerous temptation in Latin America. The actual need for liberation, he wrote, came from a crisis in the developmentalist policies of the Latin American nations---a crisis caused largely by capitalist countries, especially the United States. The Cuban Revolution was the catalyst for the radicalization of Latin America, whereas the Sino-Soviet split "precipitated the birth of new and more radical revolutionary groups." The theologian wrote that his continent was in need of its own adaptation of Marxism, and proposed revolution for the entire area. He observed, "it is becoming more obvious that the revolutionary process ought to embrace the whole continent. There is little chance of success for attempts limited to a national scope."[185] Indeed, Gutierrez posited that if the Church fails to support revolution, it will be discredited. He wrote,

> In Latin America the world in which the Christian community must live and celebrate its eschatological hope is the world of social revolution; the Church's task must be defined in relation to this. Its fidelity to the Gospel leaves it no alternative.[188]

Gutierrez staunchly affirmed his belief in the class

struggle, which every disciple of Marx must do. He presented no historical analysis or statistics to back up his anti-liberal claims, but simply declared:

> The history of the private ownership of the means of production makes evident the necessity of its reduction or suppression for the welfare of society. We must hence opt for social ownership of the means of production.[189]

Furthermore, he insisted that the theory of dependence be placed within the framework of class analysis.[190] His assertion of the factuality of class struggle became a bit comical, for he seemed determined to use the word "fact" enough to convince the non-believer. He wrote,

> Those who speak of class struggle do not "advocate" it---as some would say---in the sense of creating it out of nothing by an act of (bad) will. What they do is to recognize a fact and contribute to an awareness of that fact. And there is nothing more certain than a fact.[191]

Taking Christ's injunction to love one's enemies to a strange new level, Gutierrez wrote,

> In the context of class struggle today, to love one's enemies presupposes recognizing and accepting that one has class enemies and that it is necessary to combat them. It is not a question of having no enemies, but rather of not excluding them from our love.[192]

Far from turning the other cheek, one is now to combat his class enemies. This is made possible by Gutierrez's assertion that Christ did not expect history to continue much longer, and that there is no separation between the spiritual and the temporal---

that there is only one history.

Another major proponent of liberation theology is the Uruguayan Jesuit, Juan Luis Segundo. Segundo has spent much time answering those who contend that the Church should distance itself from politics because Catholicism is for all men. Along the lines of Hans Kung, he has criticized the Church for its vertical, mystical, transcendental stress on the God-man relationship. According to Segundo, this emphasis must be redirected toward the historical function of Christianity in order that theology can concentrate on the crucial issue of capitalism versus socialism.[193] Segundo also attacked the European theologians who oppose liberation theology and contend that God, not man, must bring about the Kingdom. He cited Rudolf Weth, who wrote, "God himself effects the decisive revolutionary action for the coming of his Kingdom. That action cannot be effected or replaced by any human action."[194] Segundo condemned this attitude as justification by faith alone, then supported his position by pointing to the authority that Weth cited to back up his claim, a commentary by Luther on Matthew 25: 34. Luther wrote,

> How could (the Sons of the Kingdom) merit what already belongs to them and has been prepared for them since before they were created? It would be more exact to say that it is the Kingdom of God which merits us as possessors....The Kingdom of God is already prepared. But the children of God must be prepared in view of the Kingdom, so that it is the Kingdom which merits the children, and not

the children of God who merit the Kingdom.V195V

According to Segundo, the post-conciliar Church has unfortunately moved close to Luther's position.

Ideologically, Segundo has claimed to adhere to Marxism only as a science of the behavior of the masses, and has condemned it in its other respects. He believes that it is impossible for Christians to "avoid the risk of ideologies." He cited the following passage of Thomas W. Ogletree as being in concert with his own views, and applicable to the gospel and faith-ideology issues:

> Man must answer for what he does.Being able to answer cannot be equated with success in "measuring up" to some pre-established standard. The openness of the historical process continually erodes the authority of such standards, unless they are given a highly abstract form, e. g. ,"loyalty to being," or "doing what love (agape) requires." Since the abstractions of such formulations makes their applicability to concrete situations problematic, it is clear that there is no precise measuring instrument by which human behavior can be tested....There is no way to remove the moral risk from human action, partly because no one can adequately grasp the nature of his situation or the possible consequences of his action, but also because the appropriate tack in a given context may be to innovate, to give rise to the new possibility which cannot be comprehended in terms of previous values and understandings.196

According to one's interpretation of this, it can present an outright challenge to the Church's competence in normative issues, or it may simply open a door to innovative action in certain cases. Segundo takes a position in-between, citing

Gaudium et Spes (11): "Faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God's design for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human." The Jesuit elaborated on faith in this way:

> However lofty it may be, it [faith] is ever in the service of historical solutions to human problems---even though the latter solutions will always be provisional and incomplete. Faith, then, is a liberative process. It is converted into freedom for history, which means freedom for ideologies.[197]

Without ideologies, then, faith cannot be put to practical use. Or, as Segundo put it,

> Without ideologies faith is as dead as a doornail,and for the same reason that James offers in his Epistle (James 2: 17): it is totally impracticable.[197]

Ideologies in Scripture, Segundo contended, "are responses learned vis-a-vis specific historical situations."[199] The work of the Holy Spirit has led to a succession of ideologies dealing with the concrete problems of history. In fact, Segundo wrote, the New Testament did not correct the Old, but was an ideological adaptation to specific historical circumstances. This, he noted, is the same approach used by exegesis in dealing with the Bible.[200]

Segundo fitted Christ into this picture as the liberator who pointed out the true, unappreciated sense of older revelation. Just as the Mosaic Law revealed the reality and enslaving power of sin, Christ eliminated man's subjection to the Law, and liberated man with the gift of faith.[201] This faith, wrote

Segundo, "entails the freedom to accept an educational process that comes to maturity and abandons its teacher to launch out into the provisional and relative depths of history (Gal. 4:1ff; Rom. 8: 19-23; 1Cor. 3:11-15).[202] The Jesuit summed up his redefinition of faith in this way:

> Faith, then, is not a universal, atemporal, pithy body of content summing up divine revelation once the latter has been divested of ideologies. On the contrary, it is maturity by way of ideologies, the possibility of fully and conscientiously carrying out the ideological task on which the real-life liberation of human beings depends.[203]

Segundo's writing has dealt to a great extent with trying to take religion from the realm of theory to that of practical action. In this respect, he has been a dedicated theologian of liberation. But his task has been more of a theoretical one because of his desire to sway the intellectual thought of Catholicism. Whereas Gutierrez often neglected to support his revolutionary position with Catholic teaching, Segundo has spent much time trying to build a "faith bridge" between liberation theology and tradition. Nevertheless, when he has considered it necessary, he has rejected Church teaching outright. He showed support for Marxism as an innovation in a negative Latin American system, pointing out that while Rerum Novarum and The Communist Manifesto both condemned the inhuman aspects of capitalism, Leo XIII only taught how to live more morally in the given economic order, whereas Marx presented a viable alternative.[204]

One could attempt to summarize the works of other liberation theologians, but it is probably best to look at a few of the assertions of these men, then compare them to some of the material already covered. Arthur F. McGovern, in an article entitled, "The Bible in Latin American Liberation Theology," provides a good vehicle for this. One of the more interesting characters investigated by McGovern is Jose Miranda, the author of Marx and the Bible. Miranda claims that Western translations of the Bible since the sixth century have robbed the texts of their force, because the Hebrew text intended to connote as "justice" what the translations rendered later as "almsgiving." To do justice, Miranda contends, is the only way to a knowledge of God (Isaiah 42: 5-7; Exodus 6: 3). In fact, Yahweh rejected Israel on the basis of its injustice (Micah 3: 9-12). Summing up Miranda, McGovern wrote, "In short, justice is decisive for God. One cannot claim to know, love, or worship God except through doing justice."[205] But even McGovern, whose article is part of A Radical Religion Reader, admitted that Miranda presented only one dimension of the biblical message by stressing the punitive, unmerciful God. McGovern elaborated on this, writing,

> He [Miranda] claims that not even the anarchist Bakunin made assertions more subversive of the law than St. Paul, overlooking Paul's admonitions that slaves obey their masters and wives their husbands.[206]

McGovern seemed to be embarking upon an anti-revolutionary tract when he wrote, "The sources most often cited by liberation

theologians could be used to show that liberation does not come through struggle and oppression."[207] He pointed out that the Jews did not overthrow the Egyptians, but fled. Yahweh told the Jews that He was the cause of their liberation. The prophets, McGovern noted, did not call for collective political action when they denounced injustice. Rather, they called for the conversion of the powerful and wealthy, insisting that only God could provide true justice (Isaiah 1: 24ff., Exodus 3: 79). Likewise, Jesus did not organize the masses to overthrow unjust structures.[208]

However, these examples, McGovern claimed,

> ...only serve to illustrate Segundo's argument about the distinction between faith and ideology....If exact imitation of what the prophets did or what Jesus did is made a matter of faith, then few of the institutional ministries of the Church could be justified.[209]

This concept of the evolution of ideologies, with faith as a bridge between ideologies and historical problems, seems to be what opponents of liberation theology do not understand, according to McGovern. In fact, he claimed,

> ...where facile identifications of liberation and Marxism are made, they are most often the products of opponents, or of militant political groups using liberation theology, not from within liberation theology itself.[210]

Perhaps the relationship discussed by Gutierrez between liberation theology and Marxism was not "facile," but it still seems to have drawn an intimate connection between the two. If MCGovern indeed shares the belief of Segundo that faith

conditions and utilizes ideology, one has to wonder why he is so determined to contradict opponents (and Gutierrez) who draw a close relationship between liberation theology and Marxism.

The "revolutionary" flight from Egypt in the book of Exodus is often cited as an occurrence justifying similar action today by liberation theologians. They often point to the Exodus as an event meant to encourage the abandonment of immobilist attitudes. Once Christians leave behind these obsolete ways, God will guide them along the proper path, they contend.

To those who criticize the revolutionary basis of liberation (Exodus) theology, we have already seen the type of answer that Juan Luis Segundo would give. Alfred Fierro offered a quite different rejoinder:

> The fact that biblical authors might not have taken account of the subversive political significance of the flight from Egypt is not a crushing blow. The crucial point is that from the way they relate the event this subversive political significance seems to be clear and obvious. It flows from the very nature of the event, whether those who reported the event in the Bible were aware of it or not. The Exodus from Egypt was a political act, clearly bearing the stamp of resistance and rebellion. and if an act of that sort lies at the very origin of biblical tradition, then on that score there is justification for an Exodus theology and its prolongation in a theology of liberation.[211]

The contention that the Exodus was a subversive political event is not so hard to accept, but the reasoning in this passage that this then justifies a theology of liberation is rather shallow.

Fierro declared,

> In presenting certain actions performed by our forefathers in the faith as an integral part of history in which God is a participant, the biblical account authorizes us to take analogous action on the basis of our faith.[212]

However, Fierro nowhere defined this "analogous action." Are the Latin American poor to flee their oppressors and set up a promised land in Patagonia? Are they to plan on the Lord sending plagues upon the Latin American elites, and finally to vanquish them? Clearly, Segundo's theory is better developed, and no more unorthodox than Fierro's "analogous action."

As we have seen, there are a great variety of approaches and beliefs among liberation theologians. While it may seem that all of them favor socialism or communism, even this is not true. Joseph Comblin, a Belgian priest expelled from Brazil for subversive activities in 1972, wrote,

> There is no social change without the intervention of political power, but a socialism built by the power of the State, whatever it may be called, is always a system of domination. There is freedom only in the control and limitation of power by the citizens and by private associations. The proletarian state is a myth which serves to conceal the ascent of a new middle class and a new capitalism, as is shown by the development of those countries of Eastern Europe which are directed more and more towards the discovery of the merits of capitalism.[213]

Perhaps it would be accurate to write that all liberation theologians are at least anti-capitalist.

On the other extreme, Rudolf J. Siebert, in an article

entitled "Jacob and Jesus: Recent Marxist Readings of the Bible," wrote of the serious study of the Bible by atheistic Marxists, and the great potential this offers to Christianity. He observed that, according to Hegel, all men, even those who are afraid of religion or hate it, are inwardly preoccupied with it as an integral part of their humanity. Then, Siebert optimistically proclaimed, "Marxists have seldom been afraid of religion. Their hatred toward religion is today receding everywhere. Their longing for religion is growing."[214]

According to Siebert, some theologians of liberation, such as Gutierrez, have begun to understand what Hegel meant, namely,

> ...that materialism and atheism can only be superseded by a political proof of God, the Christian practice of qualitative social change toward a new more humane world.[215]

This requirement of a proof of God through social change is very far from orthodoxy, and seems to imply the total irrelevance of faith. Siebert continued,

> Only when Christians do not capitulate before immanentism will the common reading of the Bible by Marxists and Christians become exciting and productive for both of them.[216]

In effect, Siebert defied the immanentist outlook of liberation theology here. Yet, one must wonder if the "excitement" and "productivity" that Siebert referred to could have any religious dimension at all.

SECTION IV

Since the death of Paul VI, the forces of conservatism in the Church have been led by the Vatican. Pope John Paul II has taken a less favorable view of liberation theology than his predecessor. As Cardinal Karol Wotyla, he was one of the principal authors of the document Lumen Gentium at Vatican II. This work oriented the Church away from the concept of the monarchical pyramid to that of a community in which all members share responsibility.[217] Wotyla was also a major reviser of Gaudium et Spes, and the only council father to have written, as a cardinal, a major systematic work on Vatican II.[218]

Wotyla's book, The Acting Person (1969), provided a Catholic theological underpinning for personalist philosophy. His objective, to search for a third path between capitalism and communism, was reached in this work by steering personalism along a more orthodox path. This was, according to Carl Marzani, "an intellectual contribution that was keenly appreciated by the more knowledgeable cardinals who voted in the Conclave for a man equipped to defend the faith against modern philosophies."[219]

Cardinal Wotyla, who became Pope John Paul II in 1978, soon got the opportunity to exercise his authority over liberation theology. By the time of the Third Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELAM III) in Puebla, Mexico (January 1979), substantial changes had taken place in the Latin American Church. Attacks of

various governments against the liberal-radical elements within the Church had brought moderates and progressives close together. The success of Basic Christian Communities in revitalizing Catholic life underscored Medellin's thrust toward a more horizontal view of the Church, making reimposition of the more monolithic, hierarchical structure very difficult. The work of the Church had also drawn international attention to the status of human rights in Latin America. In addition, although John Paul II had frequently warned the Church to keep faithful to the gospel, and had pointed out that Christ was not a revolutionary, he had also affirmed Medellin's joining together of angelization and liberation, and had suggested that Medellin (interpreted conservatively) be viewed as a point of departure by the bishops at Puebla. However, the economic deterioration in Latin America since Medellin helped support the demands of radicals.[220]

In a critique of the preparatory document of the Puebla Conference, Gustavo Gutierrez judged that the conference secretariat had drawn up an inadequate basis for deliberations. He pointed out that the document made no mention of the dependent capitalism burdening the Latin American nations.[221]He blamed internatioinal capitalism for the destabilization of governments that try to promote the economic advancement of their workers.[222] In addition to this attack on capitalism and the preparatory document's tendency to ignore the subject, Gutierrez condemned

the paper for failing to define material poverty as "evil."[223] He lashed out at what he saw as the orthodox approach of caring for souls while neglecting bodies.[224] On the other hand, others, such as the Polish-born priest, Miguel Poradowski, condemned the preparatory document as highly influenced by Marxism.[225]

John Paul II's Opening Address at Puebla (January 28, 1979) was not exactly what radicals had hoped for. The pope announced:

> The Gospels show clearly that for Jesus anything that would alter his mission as the Servant of Yahweh was a temptation (Matt. 4: 8; Luke 4: 5). He does not accept the position of those who mixed the things of God with merely political attitudes (Matt. 22: 21; Mark 12: 17; John 18: 36). He unequivocally rejects recourse to violence. He opens his message of conversion to all, and he does not exclude even the publicans. The perspective of his mission goes much deeper. It has to do with complete and integral salvation through a love that brings transformation, peace, pardon, and reconciliation.[226]

Striking out against proponents of class struggle and revolution, John Paul II portrayed Christ as the peaceful Redeemer-Liberator of all classes, and reasserted the Church's spiritual, rather than political role. Then, he embarked on a passage confirming the necessity to obey the magisterium. Citing St. Cyprian, he declared, "one cannot have God for one's Father if one does not have the Church for one's Mother."[227] He also cited St. Augustine, declaring, "One possesses the Holy Spirit to the extent that one loves the Church of Christ."[228] Citing Evangelii Nuntiandi, he exhorted evangelists to preach "not themselves or

their personal ideas, but a Gospel that neither they nor the Church own as their absolute property, to dispose of as they see fit."[229] He then stressed the teaching that the magisterium is the transmitter of the authentic word of God.[230] (1 Thess. 2: 13; Lumen Gentium 12).

John Paul II attacked the view that the kingdom is brought about by a simple commitment to justice and change. First, he cited Lumen Gentium 5: "the Church...receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God. She becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom." But, he qualified this by citing Pope John Paul I: "it is a mistake to state that political, economic, and social liberation coincide with salvation in Jesus Christ; that the regnum Dei is identified with the regnum hominis."[231]

The pope continued his address by pointing out a paradox of the modern age of atheistic humanism, which although it is anthropocentric, has witnessed the debasement of human beings to "previously unsuspected levels." He also emphasized that men are the directors of economic and political processes, not the pawns of them.[232] This led into an endorsement of private property as a guarantor of freedom, and an optimistic vision for the future, which he expressed in these words:

> Eventually, the Christian, evangelical principle [private property] will lead to a more just and equitable distribution of goods, not only within each nation but also in the wide world as a whole. And this will prevent

> the stronger countries from using their power to the detriment of the weaker ones.[233]

The pope went on to warn against forms of liberation based on ideologies inconsistent with Christianity. Then, he made a rather imprudent statement, given the orthodox emphasis of the address as a whole. He declared:

> Let us make no mistake about it: as if by some evangelical instinct, the humble and simple faithful spontaneously sense when the Gospel is being served in the Church and when it is being eviscerated and asphyxiated by other interests.[234]

This statement seems to play into the hands of radical theology, for it is in the Basic Christian Communities, where study groups ponder the "revolutionary" message of the Bible, that most radical Catholic activity in Latin America originates.

Nevertheless, John Paul's Opening Address set a more conservative tone for the Puebla Conference than Paul VI had done at Medellin. The actual Puebla Conference was not a harmonious affair by any means. On the second day, the bishops voted to elect the powerful steering commmittee of the conference, rather than allow the conservative secretary general to appoint it. Conservatives in the CELAM leadership then replaced theological experts from Medellin with their own, and banished all progressives from the seminary building where the conference was meeting. The progressive theologians, pastoral specialists, and social scientists (numbering about three dozen in all) who were banned from the conference joined together to

produce eighty-four position papers that various CELAM commissions considered when composing the Puebla Final Document.[235]

The Puebla Final Document was somewhat uneven, due to contributions from twenty-one different committees. In general, Pope John Paul II seems to have been quite successful at convincing the majority of bishops to follow traditional Church social teaching, to seek a "middle way" between capitalism and socialism, to renounce revolution, and to avoid direct political involvement. The paper did not specifically address human rights or the persecution of the Church, but it did call for the Church to be active in human liberation (in a moderate sense). It emphasized the "pauperization" of Latin America during the previous decade, blaming government leaders for the abuse of power in the name of economic progress. While renouncing political aspirations for the Church, it also denounced purposely nonpolitical preaching as constituting complicity with the established order.[236]

In the Final Document, the bishops warned that liberation must always be guided by the message of the Gospel. If the Gospel were disregarded, the Church would lose its significance, and its message would be bereft of originality. This would leave it prone to manipulation or takeover by political parties or ideologies.[237] The bishops confirmed their loyalty to John Paul's concept of liberation when they wrote,

> It should be made clear that this liberation is erected on the three great pillars that John Paul II offered us as defining guidelines: i. e., the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about the Church, and the truth about human beings.[238]

They clarified their concept of liberation in these terms:

> The sort of liberation we are talking about knows how to use evangelical means, which have their own distinctive efficacy. It does not resort to violence of any sort, or to the dialectics of class struggle. Instead it relies on the vigorous energy and activity of Christians who are moved by the Spirit to respond to the cries of countless millions of their brothers and sisters.[239]

Although the reference to what is ruled out is clear, the type of Christian activity that is approved is unclear. The words hint of traditional Christian charity combined with evangelism, but any more precise definition was probably precluded by the wide divergence of opinion at the conference.

At another point in the Final Document, the bishops wrote, "the need for the Church's presence in the political arena flows from the very core of the Christian faith." This soundsas if it would lead to a more activist position than that so far expressed. But they continued by stating that the message of Christ is liberating "because it saves us from the bondage of sin, which is the root and source of all opression, injustice, and discrimination."[240] This stress on sin itself, instead of sin as the equivalent of unjust social structures as the cause of injustice is a significant shift from the era of Paul VI and Medellin.

The political role of the Church was further defined at Puebla in the following passage:

> The purpose that the Lord assigned to his Church is a religious one; so when it does intervene in the sociopolitical arena, it is not prompted by any aim of a political, economic, or social nature.[241]

The bishops also cited Gaudium et Spes 43: Party politics is properly the realm of lay people."[242] The Church's role, they stated, is to form consciences. They also condemned revolutionary ideologies, writing, "when an ideology appeals to violence, it thereby admits its own weakness and inadequacy." In fact, the bishops defined the terms of legitimacy for a government when they wrote, "an ideology will be legitimate if the interests it upholds are legitimate and if it respects the basic rights of other groups in the nation."[243]

In accordance with their call for reliance on the social doctrine of the Church, the bishops followed the traditional line of opposing both capitalist liberalism and Marxist collectivism. The former they called "the idolatrous worship of wealth in individualistic terms."[244] Adopting the anti-liberal legacy of von Ketteler and Pesch, along with Marxian dependency theory, they declared:

> The illegitimate privileges stemming from the absolute right of ownership give rise to scandalous contrasts, and to a situation of dependence and oppression on both the national and international levels.[245]

On the subject of Marxist collectivism, they wrote, "With its

materialistic presuppositions, it too leads to the idolatrous worship of wealth---but in collectivist terms." This, they asserted would only lead to a dictatorship of the party.[246]

In a straightforward attack on Marxism and Marxist analysis, the bishops at Puebla managed to incorporate a notably clear anti-Marxist statement of Paul VI into their teaching. They wrote,

> All the concrete historical experiments of Marxism have been carried out within the framework of totalitarian regimes that are closed to any possibility of criticism and correction. Some believe it is possible to separate various aspects of Marxism---its doctrine and its method of analysis in particular. But we would remind people of the teaching of the papal magisterium on this point: "It would be foolish and dangerous on that account to forget that they are closely linked to each other; to embrace certain elements of Marxist analysis without taking due account of their relation with its ideology; and to become involved in the class struggle and the Marxist interpretation of it without paying attention to the kind of violent and totalitarian society to which this activity leads." (Octogessima Adveniens 34)[247]

The bishops further warned of ideologization through theological reflection when that reflection is based on a praxis influenced by Marxist analysis. They stated, "The consequences are the total politicization of Christian existence, the disintegration of the language of faith into that of the social sciences, and the draining away of the transcendental dimension of Christian salvation." [248] On the subject of liberalism versus Marxism, they concluded, "the Church chooses to maintain its freedom with

regard to the opposing systems, in order to opt solely for the human being."[249]

The conservative domination of the Puebla Conference was also evident on the issue of human rights. Archbishop Romero of El Salvador and Archbishop Obando y Bravo of Nicaragua repeatedly appealed at the conference for the condemnation of governments' disregard for human rights. However, the conservative Argentinian and Uruguayan bishops opposed public confrontations with governments, and effectively blocked the motions. Nevertheless, after the conference, forty cardinals and bishops representing eleven Latin American nations signed a document denouncing tyranny, rights abuses, and the persecution of the Church in El Salvador and Nicaragua.[250]

Some Churchmen did not agree with the assessment of the Puebla Final Document as a moderate work, following the guidance of John Paul II. Leonardo Boff wrote that the document used liberation theology as the basis for its argument, but that it refused to identify it as such.[251] Boff recognized the stamp of the pope's "integral liberation" in the treatise, but criticized it for ideological contradictions. He observed that the need for ideologies in social activity is recognized, but later denied.[252] In fact, Boff seems to have failed to grasp the document's adherence to the doctrine of the two spheres as a key to its teaching on ideologies. It takes no great insight to ascertain that the more radical theologians of liberation were even less

satisfied with the Puebla Conference.

On the other hand, Miguel Poradowski was disaffected by the document because he felt that it lacked religiosity. He wrote, "...the general tenor of the Final Document is very far from the doctrine of John Paul II, for it is completely lacking in what is most typically Catholic, that is to say, reference to supernatural life." [253] The document could easily be construed as Protestant if references to the pope were removed, Poradowski claimed. He gave the example of the use of the phrase "the powers of evil" as a replacement for the "devil" to illustrate the "lack of theological language" employed by the paper.[254] Porodowski also criticized the document for identifying economic problems with injustice, when they are often not related. Finally, he observed that the paper omitted reference to the greatest Latin American problem, Marxist penetration, while anathemizing the doctrine of "national security."[255]

Since the Puebla Conference, John Paul II has stood on a middle ground between traditionalists and liberation theologians in Latin America. In an address in Rio de Janiero on July 2, 1980, he declared:

> In this evangelical fight the Church of the poor will not serve immediate political purposes or power struggles. She tries at the same time with great care to ensure that her words and actions are not used for that purpose, that is, "instrumentalized."[256]

The Pope's message, spiced with Medellin-type phrases such as

"Church of the poor" was nevertheless reformist , not revolutionary. He reaffirmed this the following day in an address to workers in Sao Paulo, where he announced,

> The Assembly of bishops at Puebla willed to commit the Chruch in Latin America to an option for the poor. That option is essentially this: that the poor have the Gospel preached to them, that the Church once again set all her energies to work so that Jesus Christ may be announced to all, chiefly the poor, and that all have access to this living fount, the table of the word and of bread, the sacraments, the community of the baptized.[257]

The pope's strictly religious definition of the "option for the poor" is certainly not what liberation theologians mean whan they use that phrase. John Paul does not capitulate to Marxism, but he also keeps a distance between himself and liberalism. In a speech on July 4, 1980, he declared, "The persistence of injustice...exists when the distribution of goods is grounded only in the economics of growth and a bigger profit."[258]

In a July 6, 1980 , address in Salvador, Brazil, John Paul II summed up his teaching on the Church's role in the temporal sphere, declaring,

> ...the Church must go on collaborating in the construction of your society, by discerning and nourishing the aspirations for justice and peace that it finds in individuals and in the people, with its wisdom and its effort to promote such aspirations. The Church will respect the competence of public authorities in these matters. It will not claim to intervene in politics; it will not aspire to share in managing temporal affairs. Its contribution will be to fortify the spiritual and moral bases of society by doing what is possible for

> all or any activity in the field of the common good, carried out in harmony and coherence with the directives and demands of a human and Christian ethic.[259]

If radical liberation theology had in any way affected the pope, it certainly was not evident in this speech.

In September 1981, John Paul II published the encyclical, Laborum Exercens, which criticized both capitalism and collectivism for leading to materialism, selfishness, and pride. He referred to Marx and Engels not as men to be anathemized, but as economic theorists who were seriously deficient, despite presumably good intentions. He also classified anonymous advocates of liberalism, "rigid" capitalism, and neocapitalism in this category.[260]

In a critique of Laborum Exercens, Michael Novak has claimed that what the pope really opposes is "economism," the belief in the primacy or superiority of the material over the personal and the spiritual realms. Like his predecessors, John Paul II misperceives modern capitalism, ignoring the mediating value of liberal institutions.[261] But Laborum Exercens was more liberal than previous encyclicals in that it gave greater emphasis to individuals in society.[262]

Michael Novak has labelled John Paul's social teachings "creation theology." This theology, he claims, has shifted the point of view of Catholic social thought away from liberation and towards creation.[263] This kind of "personalistic solidarity" has its roots in The Acting Person and other early works of the then

Cardinal Wotyla. Novak delineated creation theology from liberation theology in this passage:

> Creation theology differs from liberation theology, first, in rejecting the thesis of class struggle; second, in justifying capital as the material embodiment of human labor down the ages, while stressing the priority of labor; third, in rejecting the primacy of the contrast between oppression and liberation, in favor of the contrast between the absence and the presence of creativity; fourth, in emphasizing the strict connection between the human person as the subject of labor and his right to the fruits of his labor, including the right of ownership; fifth, in highlighting the danger of nationalization, collectivization, and socialization in which a "new class" of government administration comes to power, claiming for itself a monopoly of the administration and disposal of the means of production and not refraining even from offending basic human rights; sixth, in interpreting the meaning of 'socialization' more exactly than ever before, so as to preserve in it respect for the individual human person and his rights to private property.[264]

Creation theology, then , seems to value many principles of liberalism highly, without recognizing that they are indeed a part of the liberal tradition. One might even call it an attempt to more greatly "humanize" liberalism. It sees socialist experiments in the light of past failures, and takes a middle way, endorsing such practices as labor-ownership associations. In fact, Novak termed John Paul's social teaching "creation theology" because, he wrote, it "calls forth the human capacity to create a new world."[265]

In September 1984, the Vatican published an "Instruction on

Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation." After endorsing the aspirations of the poor for a better life, the document entered into a criticism of various "deviations...brought about by certain forms of liberation theology which use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought."[266] The paper criticized the belief that all sin is social , or due to bad structures in the organization of material life. It also denounced the exclusively political reading of biblical texts because such an approach ignored the "radical newness of the New Testament" that transcends boundaries such as politics.[267]

The Vatican document stressed particularly the politicization of Exodus and the gospels. It warned that social theory must not be raised to the level of theology, and made clear that freedom in the Christian sense is freedom from the slavery of sin.[268] The Vatican rejected the idea of the class struggle toward a classless society as a myth that slows reform and aggravates poverty and injustice. It asked those who believe in this myth to "reflect on the bitter examples history has to offer about where it leads."[269]

In January 1985, Pope John Paul II announced that a special synod of bishops would be held in Rome in November to "deepen the understanding" of the Second Vatican Council's teaching "in the light of new needs."[270] Liberals soon began to accuse the Vatican of planning to use the synod to turn back the clock by imposing a

narrow interpretation of Vatican II. This may well be an attempt to squelch various radical trends, such as some forms of liberation theology, that have sprung up since the council. Liberals were also upset in 1985 by the decision of the Vatican's Congregation (Department) for the Causes of Saints to schedule the canonization of Pope Pius IX, whose Syllabus errorum is not recalled with much warmth by liberals and socialists. Also, in a decision directly affecting liberation theology, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith imposed a year's public silence on Leonardo Boff. A group of ten Brazilian bishops described this action as "an attack on the rights of man" and an insult to the Brazilian Bishops' Conference.[271] Why Boff, who is less radical than many liberation theologians, was singled out has not been explained.

Criticism of liberation theology from outside the Vatican has been popular in recent years, both from theological and politico-economic orientations. Quentin L. Quade has criticized liberation theologians, and Gustavo Gutierrez in particular, for being utopians who have adopted anti-capitalism as their means to a glorious end. Quade wrote,

> Basically, Gutierrez is a utopian; he believes man can make heaven on earth. He traces sin and evil to systems,not to human nature, and appears to believe that greed began with capitalism and will end with its demise.[272]

Quade also observed that Gutierrez has attributed one of his two

major ideas to the wrong source. The assertion that the Gospel teaches compassion for the poor is correct, but the contention that the Gospel therefore demands a new social order is not to be found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. In other words, Quade does not accept the liberation theologians' proposition that the Bible has very different implications in different ages.[273]

Quade has also challenged Gutierrez's view that the Church, by remaining nonpartisan, can avoid religious overextension. This "reflects a profound misunderstanding of politics," wrote Quade, for politics is naturally divisive, and parties are only bodies used to articulate options.[274] According to Quade, liberation theology is not liberative at all, but restrictive. He observed,

> To think of the Church both as the people and as a united organization for political purposes is to engage in a utopian dream that diminishes the freedom of believers who have different visions.[275]

Quade admitted that revolution might, under certain circumstances, be correct in the context of Christianity, even if the religion contains no political program. But he saw a great weakness in liberation theology's utopian presumptions about revolution.[276]

Dale Vree has found fault with liberation theology for turning the idea of a Marxist-Leninist utopia into the millenium.[277] He noted that liberation theology is very close to being a form of the ancient Pelagian heresy. Vree wrote,

> Were one to say that the Kingdom is political liberation and that liberation is the product

> of human action, one would all too easily fall into the classical Pelagian heresy [salvation through works]....Hence it is impossible for a Christian to equate liberation with salvation.[278]

Vree cited the definition of "Kingdom of God" in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, where it states that the kingdom "will be the effect solely of divine intervention."[279] The liberation theologian's problem, then, is to reconcile the idea of salvation as a gift to liberation theology without inducing passivity and indifference to politics. Meanwhile, the Pelagian heresy must also be avoided. No matter how one tries to interpret Gutierrez, one cannot avoid Pelagianism, according to Vree. He wrote,

> For Gutierrez, salvation is obviously contingent on man's prior action.... Enter Pelagius! Enter Thomas Muntzer and a whole host of heretical chiliasts whom Friedrich Engels correctly identified as the forerunners of Marxism.[280]

Gutierrez's concept of an earthly process of becoming the kingdom of God does indeed seem to be a form of chiliasm. Surely, the fact that men are to take the initiative in building the kingdom cannot be reconciled with the definition of "kingdom" in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, even if one suggests that God inspires man to act.

Vree also noted that in Gutierrez's thought, salvation seems assured to all Marxists, but perhaps not all Christians, because liberation (revolutionary socialism) is a precondition for salvation. To Gutierrez, loving mankind is the "only way" to have a "true encounter with God", and "knowledge of God" is a

"necessary consequence" of loving mankind. So, Marxists, who have the best interests of mankind always in view, must be considered holy people.[281] Vree summed up his view of Gutierrez by writing, "The good Father is empowered to turn bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. Now he presumes to turn Marxists into Christians."[282]

Miguel Poradowski, a Polish priest and doctor of law, theology, and sociology who emigrated to Chile in 1950, claims that the seminaries of Latin America have been highly penetrated by Marxism, which he considers to be an enemy of the Church. In fact, he believes that Marxism dominates the Church in Latin America.[283] Poradowski has compared Catholic Marxists to biblical Sadducees, who did not believe in an afterlife, and therefore spent their time imploring God to make temporal conditions pleasant.[284]

Poradowski pointed to the Proteestant theologian, Karl Barth as one of the more influential figures in Marxist Christianity. Barth was one of the first to conclude that Christianity and Marxism have the same end: the construction of a new future society. A member of a Marxist socialist party, Barth saw Marxism as the way to reach the reign of God on earth.[285]

Poradowski gave many examples of the Marxist strategy to subvert the Church. Among these, he pointed to the communist writer, Konrad Farmer, who wrote, "the theology of hope should be developed into a theology of communism, for communism is the

one and complete hope of man."[286] Farmer also instructed that, in order to prevent reversion from Marxism to Christianity, Marxists should collaborate with Christians.[287] In general, Poradowski wrote, Marxists try to combat religion, but tolerate faith. This "demythologizing" of Christianity entails depicting Jesus as merely an exemplary man, and reducing religious practice to living for others.[288] According to Poradowski, Barth and Protestants in general are especially susceptible to this demythologization, for it forms a central component of both Protestantism and Marxism.[289]

In what Poradowski has termed "atheistic Christianity," Christ is seen as a precursor of Marx and Lenin.[290] Some Churchmen have even made Marxism a precondition for Christianity. Ernesto Cardenal, a Nicaraguan priest, declared, " in order to be a good Christion one must be first a true Marxist-Leninist."[291] This same attitude is shared by Gustavo Gutierrez, who, according to Poradowski, has written no theology at all, but has tried to destroy traditional theology by asserting that it is obsolete.In the opinion of Porodowski, Gutierrez's A Theology of Liberation is rife with one-sided citings of biblical texts and the Church Fathers, and a ridiculously optimistic view of Marxism.[292] He concluded, "all of the true theologies of liberation are neither theologies, nor Latinamerican, nor do they speak to us about liberation in the Christian sense of the word."[293] Theologian Fernando Moreno agreed, writing, "Today it

seems almost banal to qualify such positions as 'Marxist-Leninist.'"[294]

Poradowski concurred with the much voiced claim that liberation theologians are not Latin American, but European, for either their education or their thought is based on European trends.[295] Infact, a little research proves that most leading theologians of liberation have been at least partly educated in Europe. Poradowski claimed that liberation theology is based on "Judeo-European" Marxism, a response to Jewish and social problems of the first half of the nineteenth century. Strauss' Das Leben Jesu (1835) considered the prospect of removing revelation from religion. This influenced Marx, whose Zur Judenfrage (1843-44) proposed the political liberation of the Jews through the liberation of religion.[296]

Porodowski labelled Latin American liberation theology "myopic temporalism," comparing its followers to the biblical Jews, to the immediate disciples of Christ who did not understand his mission, and to the New Testament Jews who expected the reign of God on earth. A true liberation theology does exist, according to the Pole, in the documents of the magisterium and various non-revolutionary theologians.[297] However, this is far from the revolutionary theology so common in Latin America, where the apostles are portrayed as traitors to Christ who turned his revolutionary message (Luke 4: 14-21) into a mystical one (Acts 2:38). The true theology of liberation lies in passages such as

Luke 24: 13-27, and Psalms 15: 8-11, according to Porodowski. The false theology is penetrated by the historical materialism of French and German seminaries. [298]

In order to show the irreligiosity of Marxist Christians, Porodowski described a sacriligious mass allegedly concelebrated by thirty-four bishops and a number of priests in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Archbishop of Sao Paulo, Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arno, purportedly presided over the mass in the name of the pagan god, Tupa, an immanent deity. The author of the mass was the Spanish Marxist bishop Casadaliga, who replaced the cross with a hammer and sickle. The pagan mass , among other things, glorified nudity and free love, scorned baptism, and called missionaries "bearers of death."[299] Poradowski observed, "The general opinion of postconciliar missionaries is that the pagan Indians, living according to natural customs, are closer to God than civilized, baptized people."[300] Porodowski also claimed that the Marxist clergy of Latin America often celebrates the black mass, and promotes various satanic and biological cults. This, he pointed out, is in accordance with the Sixth Congress of the Third Communist International (1928), which instructed Latin American communists to approve tribalism for subversive purposes.[301]

Porodowski characterized Marxism as completely in opposition to Thomism. Without Thomism, theology cannot exist, he claimed. The priest wrote,

> Without the knowledge of Thomism theological

> speculation becomes impossible; without an intellectual formation based on Thomism, Christian theological works become incomprehensible, or at least their reading and study become extremely difficult.[302]

Porodowski believes that Marxists have deliberately eliminated Thomism from many universities and seminaries in an attempt to integrate Marxism into Christian thought. Without Thomism, Christianity is an easy target. This is why Protestants, who were alienated from Thomism, were the first to fall under the influence of Marxism.[303] As an example of this, Porodowski pointed out that Karl Barth was totally seduced by radical Marxism, and came to see the State as a form of institutionalized class violence.[304] The Pole wrote, "for Barth, God is the explosive element, the force, the destructive dynamic of the Marxist revolution, that is to say, what normally each Christian, unalienated by Marxism, calls Satanism."[305]

Continuing his indictment of Protestants, Porodowski blamed the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer , who is not Marxist, with contributing greatly to the Marxist infiltration of the Church. In an attempt to revivify Christianity, Bonhoeffer redefined it anthropocentrically as love for one's fellow men. This new concept evolved into a faith without religion, playing directly into the hands of Marxists.[306]

The man most responsible for anthropocentrism in modern Catholic theology is German Jesuit Karl Rahner, according to Poradowski. In an attempt ot add existentialism to Christianity,

he reduced theology to anthropology, opening the door to penetration by ideologies. Styling himself as a modern Aquinas, Rahner became the spiritual leader of the Maoist movement CALAMA in Chile during the Allende regime.[307]

After pointing out the major culprits in the Marxistization of Christianity, Porodowski embarked on a critique of Marxism itself. Marxist analysis, he wrote, is nothing more than Marx's attempt to justify his desire for the "inevitable revolution." The priest wrote that Marxist analysis "has no scientific value and is not a scientific method of social investigation." It is dogmatic, utopian, and draws much of its reasoning, such as the concept of economic contradictions, from Proudhon (an avowed Mason).[308] The theory of class struggle, according to Porodowski, is nothing but outdated social Darwinism. Interestingly, he pointed out that the liberation theologians' concept of <u>conscientization</u> throws doubt on Marxist theory, for people are supposed to be aware of class problems naturally. Conscientization, then, is nothing more than a variety of Marxist sociological propaganda.[309] The Pole utilized Marx's <u>Zur Judenfrage</u> to define the true aim of Marxist theology. In it , the priest pointed out, Marx equated the liberation of man with liberation from religion. In effect , man became the Supreme Being.[310] Echoing the message and straightforwardness of Pius XI, Porodowski wrote, "Every man who is 'freed' from voluntary dependency on God automatically, immediately falls onto

dependency on Satan."[311] Marxist Christianity is absolutely impossible, he wrote. His assessment of Marxist society is far from that of liberation theologians. He commented,

> Hatred based on envy is the foundation of all communisms, for all the members of this society pretend to reach absolute equality because they envy the man who could become greater than the rest.[312]

In effect, Porodowski attributed Marxism with the same negative basis---envy---as many liberation theologians attribute to capitalism.

Porodowski subscribed to a Jewish conspiracy theory, believing that the International Bank financed the Bolshevic Revolution, then financed the Kaiser in Germany, after realizing the dangers of communism.[313] The Pole repeatedly pointed out the Jewish origins of Lenin and Trotsky, and expressed his belief in monolithic world communism, with one objective: a Marxist-Communist world empire.[314]

According to Porodowski, the revolutionary threat in Latin America was very real until the mid-seventies. He noted that in Riobamba, Ecuador in August, 1976, fifty-five priests, bishops, monks, and laymen met under the direction of Belgian priest Joseph Comblin, who planned to overthrow Latin American governments by the use of general strikes. The Ecuadorian government expelled this group.[315] As we have seen , Comblin is not even among the most extreme of liberation theologians. The Tupamaros (Uruguay), the Montoneros (Argentina), Maristas (Chile)

and other terrorist groups, closely tied to Christians for Socialism and CALAMA, comprised a revolutionary terrorist network for some time. But the destruction of the Montoneros in the mid-seventies, added to the strength of Rightist governments in Latin America, basically precluded the "via violenta" of the Marxists. This led to a new Marxist strategy, similar to Eurocommunism, that supported social democracy. In 1977, a reunion of Leftist bishops in Bogota was held to formulate a new, non-violent way to transform society. This strategy of working within institutions was dealt a hard blow by the conservative impact of John Paul II at Puebla.[316]

According to Porodowski, the current strategy of Marxism is to get Marxist Catholics to adopt only new ideas, and to forget tradition. Eventually, these Marxist Catholics will supposedly deny Catholicism altogether, and be won over to pure Marxism.[317] This probably is the strategy in much of Latin America, but it is quite obvious that a radical backlash has occurred since Puebla in some areas, such as Nicaragua, where the path of violence has not been abandoned.

Among the critics of liberation theology who focus on its economic theory, Michael Novak is among the more prominent. Novak believes that the underdevelopment of Latin America is largely due to the values and spirit of the people, not a lack of resources or manipulation by foreign forces. Latin Americans, unlike the British, failed to turn agricultural wealth into

capital in the nineteenth century, possibly because of a Catholic ethos that was opposed to capital formation and investment. Novak compared the Latin Americans unfavorably to the Japanese, noting that in 1950, Japan's economy was weaker than that of several Latin American nations.[318]

Novak believes that Catholic social thought, although it has progressed in recent years, is still at the root of many Latin American problems. It still does not teach or promote the ethos on which the free market is based, namely, saving, investment, entrepreneurship, invention, and the virtues of commercial and industrial life. Latin Americans overlook the practice and value of liberal institutions, just as the Church has done for so long.[319]

Latin American economies are not capitalist at all, according to Novak. Rather, they have remained precapitalist by neglecting free markets in favor of a neo-mercantilism in which markets are highly controlled by the state.[320] According to Novak, the landed aristocray still sets the economic agenda in Latin America, because the Industrial Revolution never occurred to break the power of the landholders. So-called "bourgeois values" scarcely exist, and are often disdained. A relatively small middle class is dominated by professionals.[321] Furthermore, commercial-industrial skills are not widespread and not highly prized.[322]

Novak believes that the dependency theory held by liberation

theologians is a part of a Latin tradition of blaming outsiders for one's problems. Latin Americans aspire to the benefits of capitalism, but refuse to "recognize the moral validity of its requisite habits and institutions." Novak observed, "This is perhaps an ethnic bias, at root, based upon the disdain for Anglo-American (and Japanese) culture."[323]

Novak has cited a variety of statistics to refute the arguments of dependency theory. He conceded that dependency is not a total myth, but that the sweeping claims of liberation theologians against the United States do not hold up. Actually, liberation theologians are ignorant of economics and even of Marxist theory, according to Novak. They know little about the creation of wealth, but a lot about exploitation. They use Marxist slogans, and are naively committed to Marxist praxis.[324] The major publishing house for liberation theology in the United States, Maryknoll's Orbis Books, demonstrated this political and economic bias in 1970 when it announced:

> ...the majority of Christians live in the affluent communities of the North Atlantic community, which controls almost 80 per cent of the world's resources but accounts for only 20 per cent of the world's population....Christians bear a heavy responsibility for a world that can annually "afford" to spend $150 billion on arms, but can scarcely scrape together $10 billion for economic and social development....Total development will demand the restructuring of oppressive political and social orders wherever they exist, in Calcutta or Chicago, New York or Recife. For this reason, the word <u>development</u> should be replaced by <u>liberation</u>."[325]

Orbis seems quite ignorant of the true distribution of the world's resources. This did not stop the publisher from attributing most of these to North America, which was blamed for the poverty of the rest of the world. Remarkably, Orbis does not concentrate on liberation in any communist countries. As of the end of 1978, the complete Orbis catalog of publications contained 141 titles, thirty-nine of which were concentrated on Latin America, none on Communist lands.[326] Although the pro-communist bias of liberation theology is unfavorable, the speculative, unsupported nature of liberation theology is its greatest fault. One can read extensively in liberation theology without garnering any knowledge about the politics, economics, or histories of the countries that are being "analyzed."[327] It is hard to deny that liberatiion theologians are Marxists mostly by faith, not reason.[328] Evaluating the works of liberation theologians as a whole, Michael Novak wrote, "Their originality lies chiefly in their openness to fantasy."[329] Of course, one would expect this of utopians.

In Latin American, even more powerful criticism of liberation theology has come from laymen on the Right. The Latin American Anti-Communist Federation voted in 1977 "to publicly denounce the existence of a clearly planned and defined policy and strategy of Communist infiltration of the Church."[330] In addition, the group pledged "support, confidence, and solidarity"

to the "Christian anti-Communist governments of Latin America who firmly struggle for the preservation of our Western democratic Christian civilization."[331] This civilization is, of course, exactly what the liberation theologians would term "un-Christian."

An Argentine critic of liberation theology, Alphonse Max, went so for as to link it directly to the Kremlin. Soon after World War II, according to Max, the Soviets began "surreptitiously disseminating the thesis that 'Christianity and Marxism have many things in common, such as their defense of the poor and their love for justice.'" Max felt that John XXIII was naive, and called Pacem in Terris "thoroughly materialistic and non-religious." He guessed that Paul VI was likely a socialist sympathiser.[332]

Alphonse Max stated that it was not surprising that the clergy and guerrillas were attacking the multinational corporations, for this is all part of a communist conspiracy to discourage foreign investment, thereby causing greater misery for the masses, and ultimately leading to revolution.[333] He criticized the Puebla Conference for terming the materialism of the elite a "social sin." Max wrote, "One may ask oneself why a materialistic attitude is a sin on the part of the rich and not onthe part of the poor. And is Marxism not materialism to the nth power?"[334] The Argentine pointed to a clergyman who followed his line of thought, Archbishop Alfonso Lopez Trujillo of Medellin,

the Secretary General of CELAM in 1984. Echoing Max, Trujillo asked,

> Are there two Churches, one for the bourgeois and one for the poor? ...The church loves the poor, but not to the exclusion of everyone else. Ideologies and political standpoints are outside the realm of the Church.[335]

Alphonse Max's preference for traditional government and the traditional Church, along with his belief in an international communist conspiracy, is not uncommon in Latin America. A more reactionary form of this position was taken by the Argentine Christian nationalist, Jordan B. Genta, who, in the 1964 book, Guerra Contrarrevolucionaria, proposed that Argentina mobilize the entire population for a war to overthrow the imperialism of international money, and to reestablish "natural" Christian hierarchies and institutions.[336] Genta, following the traditional Church, condemned liberalism for substituting a free conscience for the authority of truth. This leads to relativism and agnosticism, he concluded. Marxism is simply a radicalized, systematized form of liberalism changed into praxis, according to Genta. His definition of revolution is quite interesting, for he equated revolution with the dechristianization of the intelligencia, beginning with Luther, Descartes, and Kant.[337]

Genta adopted the concept of the sacred organic state, rooted in tradition and manifesting its will in the armed forces.[338] Western Christian societies are supported by three pillars: Christian revelation and the Roman Catholic Church,

classical Greek philosophy, and Roman law and politics.[339] According to Genta, Protestantism is one of the great threats to this system, for by attacking visible authority, it kills the authority of Christian truth and the revealed supernatural order. Liberalism goes hand-in-hand with Protestantism, for it overturns authority, leading to a radical abolition of the established order.[340] The liberal desire for state neutralism is impossible, Genta wrote, because a state is either religious or anti-religious, Catholic or anti-Catholic.[341]

In the tradition of Monsenor Segur and Cardinal Billot, Genta not only saw the Reformation and the Enlightenment as the sad beginnings of the overthrow of the good society, but also believed in an international Masonic conspiracy. He wrote,

> International Communism and the International Financial Power constitute, with International Masonry the three ideological instruments of the Revolution against the Christian West; that is , of the Revolutionary War in its complete development on the point of throwing us into the communist inferno.[342]

Masonry is particularly dangerous because it promotes hatred of the Spanish past and portrays the indigenous peoples of Latin America as exploited and oppressed, according to Genta.[343]

Although Genta wrote in 1964, he already criticized radical priests for being in the vanguard of communist subversion.[344] The Church, like all sectors of society in Latin America, is penetrated by communism. This communism, the interior enemy of the state, is integrally linked to international usury, which is

the exterior enemy of the state. In order to overthrow communism, the state must also cast off the yoke of usury.[345] In fact, the Argentine wrote of the "Revolutionary War of Communism financed by the International Bank---whose officers are principally Jews." The final outcome of this monstrous conspiracy against Western civilization, if not prevented, will be the state of Antichrist.[346] Genta wrote,

> ...the International Supercapitalist of the Bank is going to coincide ultimately---if God permits it---with the Supercapitalist State of International Communism in a single, exclusive dominion of the entire world: a single flock and a single pastor that in place of being the Vicar of Christ will be the Vicar of Satan, the Antichrist.[347]

This vision of the great threat is what prompted Genta to propose a counterrevolutionary war, and to propose that the state sign a concordat with the Church giving it official status and state confessional status.[348] To Genta, the eschatological war, presumably with Catholics on one side and communists, usurers, Masons, liberals, and protestants on the other was absolutely necessary if Western civilization were to overcome the Antichrist.

Gordon Genta and Alphonse Max are only two examples of extreme Rightist opposition to Marxist activity in Latin America. Like the liberation theologians, these reactionaries combine the traditional Catholic anti-liberal bias with a reliance on the conspiracytheories so popular in Latin America. The liberation

theologians and the reactionaries differ mainly in that while liberation theologians postulate that society's ills are rooted in tradition, the extreme opponents of liberation theology believe that social malaise is a result of straying from tradition. Both groups condemn liberalism and the International Bank, and their remedies for society's problems often include violence. But while liberation theologians seek a new utopia, the reactionaries seek a return to a semi-utopian past.

Caught in-between these two extremes is the Church of John Paul II, who has skillfully sought a middle way between liberalism and socialism. This entails upholding the humanitarian values of Catholic social thought, such as the constant stress on a progressive improvement of the human condition. This is to be achieved not through a total reliance on traditional means such as charity and the free market, but it is also not to rely on a state that usurps individual freedom in the name of the common (material) good. John Paul II's task of reconciling the new radicals in the Church who sprang out of Paul VI's papacy to an integral social, economic, and political theory that updates Catholic thought in the context of Catholic tradition is an enormous challenge indeed.

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