



THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

A Position Paper...

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LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Here is another one of the key words of our time. Everyone wants to be liberated from some kind of real or imagined (or contrived) oppression. The word has even grown into a religious form, we call it "the theology of liberation."

Liberation theology has grown to rather large proportions in Latin America and is now touching many naive evangelicals in North America. Because you will soon hear of it (perhaps even from your church pulpit), we should take a moment to understand what this interesting new call to Christian liberation is all about.

IT'S ABOUT MONEY! Oppression is not having enough money. Sin is to have more money than someone else. Evangelism is to take money from the rich and give to the poor (while retaining, of course, a fair percentage for services). Consecration is to be -- or appear -- poor, and private wealth is the essence of iniquity.

IT'S ABOUT POLITICS. America is the oppressor, comparable to Egypt of old. "The Third World" is the oppressed, like the Children of Israel in that day of the house of bondage in Egypt. Russia is the ideal, the anticipated perfect society, like the promised land of Canaan. Marx and Lenin are the liberators, like Moses, like (shall I say it?) Jesus.

IT'S ABOUT RELIGION. Christ is the liberator and, if He were here now, would take up arms against the establishment like He did against the money changers. Communion has become "the bread of the workers" and salvation is to be liberated into the blessings of the socialist world revolution. The Christian life is to relate to the poor and oppressed, and witnessing is to tell the impoverished of their enslavement by capitalism and promise the economic freedom that comes through revolution.

IT'S ABOUT MISSIONS. It sings glad songs such as "Christ for the Workers" and "The Christ of the Sugar Cane Fields." Its story to tell to the nations is that of world liberation from capitalist oppression and the new freedom of the socialist world revolution. Salvation is "holistic" (whatever that means), implying social liberation, physical freedom and sweet relationalism as the essence of the Gospel. The Gospel itself is newly defined as "the economic healing of the nations."

This new theology is only biblical in the sense that the scriptures say, "In the latter days some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (I Tim. 4:1). It is a new great evidence of the subtle spiritual defection which the Bible promises will come to pass in the last days.

Perceptive Christians therefore will not be fooled by the theology of liberation. They will know that here again Satan is transforming himself into an angel of light and we therefore can expect that some of his ministers will do the same (II Cor. 11:14).

Tragically, all Christians are not up to date in their perceptions about these things. For want of a careful understanding of the Word of God, some have even allowed their leaders, educators and pastors to preach these things without ever raising their voice in objection. Some continue to support missions, schools, publications and organizations which have become "liberated" from the truth of scripture. The art of deceiving the elect has become refined in our time as new false witnesses expand their efforts in perverting the Gospel of Christ.

We must therefore heed as never before the warning which the Apostle Paul gave to the Ephesian elders,

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I knew this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

We must therefore beware of the wolves as never before, and we must look closely, for some of them are wearing sheep's clothing. Some may even indeed be our friends, our children, our trusted former associates. A new generation is coming upon us and some of that generation have forsaken the God of their fathers to embrace a religion called "evangelical Christianity" but which is in fact a counterfeit gospel. Nothing can any longer be taken for granted, for some of the enemy have now slipped inside the walls of the household of faith.

Make no mistake, we Christians are concerned about the heartbreaking needs of many of the people of our world. Pagan lands are an ocean of poverty, disease and death which should move every believer to tears . . . and action. The fact is that no non-government group on earth has done more to alleviate the physical needs of downtrodden humanity than have evangelical Christians. Ours is a beautiful record of human help which is too often down-played by those who would continue to lay the problems of the world to the charge of God's elect.

The Christian, however, understands that the real problem of the world is that it is lost in sin. Furthermore, he knows that, so long as a man is yet in his sins, all other forms of human aid can be but of temporary succor. Spiritually perceptive Christians therefore in all of the ages of the church have believed that the purpose of human help is to bring a person to the place where he would see his spiritual need and receive Jesus Christ as Savior. We used to call philanthropic activities by Christians "earning the right to preach the Gospel."

Alas, a new day has come upon us. Young humanists within the church have now introduced this new form of theological corruption called liberation theology which could, if it grows unchecked, destroy the spiritual nature of our missionary activity and close the door to eternal life for many. "Laying down your life for the healing of the nations and working for peace and justice is not an implication of the gospel, it is the gospel" says one of them. Such an arrogant perversion of sound doctrine could produce the ruin of the church.

The art of deceiving the elect grows. The church must therefore, at all cost, return to the Gospel and stand inflexibly on the biblical definition of the Gospel, namely, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 1:3). Here alone is the hope of mankind.