1. Liberation Theology and Latin American History

Latin American liberation theology, which is so closely bound to praxis, lives in a vital connection to the history in which it developed. Its rise has been accompanied by a surge of interest in the history of Latin America,[1] with emphasis both upon the history of the Latin American church[2] and recent events that have stimulated and marked the growth of liberation thought.[3] This chapter examines the significant factors that have shaped liberation theology's understanding of history. This includes its view both of Latin America's more distant past as well as its reading of current events.

Three preliminary remarks are in order. First, liberation theology's understanding of history is in many ways at variance with traditional readings. The primary reason for this is that liberation theology seeks to interpret history from the point of view of the victims of history whereas conventional approaches to history draw their normative interpretation from the victors. This makes liberation theology's understanding of history at times contentious and controversial. For the interpretation of recent events, perhaps only a historian separated by time will be able to offer a less partisan account. In the meantime this history is being interpreted by those deeply involved in the very events described, which inevitably colors interpretation.

Second, it is clear that a nuanced understanding of the historical dynamics influencing the theology of liberation requires consideration of the particular historical development of each of the individual Latin American countries. In a theology that so strongly emphasizes context, the particular context of each of the countries plays a significant role beyond the historical and cultural elements that they share in common.[4] Such an analysis of the individual countries, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Primary attention is given to the historical factors that have had a more general influence throughout Latin America.

Third, it is essential to note that history is more than an accounting of the events that make newspaper headlines. For this reason it is of importance to underscore the significance of the formation of numerous (estimates once

ranged up to 150,000) "base Christian communities" for Latin American history. The history of liberation theology and Latin America cannot be limited to accounts of secular history or the history of the institutional church. Nor would it be adequate to examine the writings of the liberation theologians as an historical factor in isolation from the reality of the "grass-roots" church. To be sure, secular and official ecclesiastical events (as well as the books, articles, and unpublished manuscripts of the liberation theologians) have played a central role in this history. But even more the history of the theology of liberation has been written by the activity of the people, the poor, who have affirmed God's liberating presence in their midst. In many discussions of the significant historical factors shaping Latin American liberation theology, this vital dimension has been overlooked. The life of the base Christian communities needs to remain a constant reference point when describing history in relationship to liberation theology.[5]

This chapter describes the central events that recur in the literature of the theology of liberation and constitute its particular understanding of Latin American history, past and present. Because of the intimate and vital connection between liberation thought and the historical context in which it has arisen, liberation theology's understanding of history is in many ways constitutive of the theology itself.

Latin American History according to Liberation Theology

Colonial Christendom (1492–1808)

Prior to the conquest and colonizing of Latin America, there existed two major civilizations, the Inca and the Mayan-Aztec, as well as other native cultures, for example, the Chibchas in Colombia.[6] The Iberian "discoverers" of the "New World" did not enter upon a land that had no prior history but rather forcefully imposed their culture and will upon the native peoples. As John Hart writes: "The conquistadores had a twofold objective: The conversion of the indigenous peoples and the acquisition of their wealth."[7] The history of this period is marked by the "genocide of native peoples" and "slavery and dependence upon the European metropoli," things that "have little in common with the harmless and therefore false notion that the white man colonized the rest of the world in order to spread civilization, religion, knowledge and development."[8] It is estimated that the native population was reduced from 100 million to 10–12 million in less than a century after the Spanish conquest.[9] The culture of the native people was likewise decimated,

submerged beneath that of their conquerors. The church was an accomplice in this sordid history, the religious rationale for the colonization process in which the Catholic faith was imposed upon the native people as an indistinguishable dimension of Spanish rule.[10] "The salvation of these infidels through their incorporation into the Church was the recognized motive for Spain's work in America."[11]

From the moment colonization began, the theology of liberation interprets the history of Latin America as one of dependency.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked by a continuation of the evangelization process of the Indians by the church and by the development of an extensive organizational system.[12] The church through its missionaries, clergy, universities, schools, and literature became the primary vehicle for promulgating Iberian culture and values. The period of conquest was followed by a time of relative stability in which the imposed distinctions between native people and the Iberian conquerors became the new norm.[13] The Bourbon period of the eighteenth century saw no innovations but rather an entrenchment of the church as part of the colonial establishment. The expulsion of the Jesuits in the mid-eighteenth century (due to their progressive attitudes) discloses the extent of this entrenchment.[14]

Colonial Witness to Justice: Bartolomé de Las Casas

In contrast to the dominant forces of colonial Christendom, the figure of Bartolomé de Las Casas stands in sharp relief. "Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566) was the most well-known name of those who, from the point of view of the gospel and of the poor, denounced the conquest and the colonization of the Indians."[15] In 1512 Las Casas was the first Catholic priest ordained in the New World.[16] Although sharing many of the intrinsic presuppositions of colonial Christendom regarding the conversion of the indigenous peoples in order to win their eternal salvation, Las Casas protested against the use of force as a means of provoking conversion and demanded that justice be included in the policy of the Church toward the Indians.[17]

Because of this stance, Las Casas received the title "Universal Protector of the Indians of the Indies," a title that he deserved in many ways. For example, Las Casas denounced the "*encomienda* system by which estates were granted in the New World by the Spanish kings which included the subservience of the native peoples living there. He challenged the "*requerimiento*," the method by which conversion was imposed upon the Indians. This

method consisted of declaring to the Indians the rights over them that the pope had granted to Spain and threatening war if they did not accept the faith and submit to Spanish rule. Las Casas also debated against the most well-known 16th-century defender of the theology of conquest, advocating just and humane treatment of the Indians commensurate with the gospel message.[18]

Throughout his life, Las Casas witnessed to the rights of the Indian people and advocated non-violent evangelization.[19] References to the work of Bartolomé de Las Casas and other early voices of protest against the injustices of colonial power recur in the writings of the theology of liberation.[20] These advocates of justice, by their persistent defense of the native peoples, are claimed as a redemptive element in the colonial history of the church in Latin America.[21] The witness of Las Casas serves as a symbol of the spirit of liberation theology already in the colonial period.

Independence from Spanish Rule (1808–1825)

The late eighteenth century saw increasing resistance to Spanish exploitation, sometimes in the form of revolutionary movements.[22] The years 1808–1825 define the period in which the Creole (those born in Latin America but of European ancestry) oligarchy revolted and won independence from Spanish rule. During this period, Spain's grip on the colonies was weakened by the need to direct attention to the challenge of Napoleon in Europe. Within Latin America many factors contributed to the growth of the independence movements: resentment by the Creoles of the Spanish economic monopoly, mismanagement of the colonies by the Spanish, the encouragement given to the independence movements by rival powers seeking new economic markets (particularly England), and the growing unrest of the native peoples.[23] It is important to note that these independence struggles did not, however, result in the liberation of the native population. The shifting of power from Spain to the Creole oligarchies within Latin America did not introduce significant change in the overall cultural or religious order.[24] At the beginning of this period, the church was sought as an ally for supplying order and unity within the new nations and their rulers. However, the church (apart from some significant exceptions among the clergy) persisted in giving primary loyalty to the original colonial powers. This led the new leaders to a growing alienation from and even hostility against the church.[25]

The New Colonialism (1825–1929)

The securing of independence was followed by a period of organizing the new states around geographical centers and the securing of power by the existing oligarchies.[26] National identities were forged that increasingly sought to separate themselves from the influence of the church. For example, the constitution of Colombia (1849) proposed the separation of church and state, a remarkable development considering the traditional Latin American pattern of alliance between them. Many of the new governments that arose in the last half of the nineteenth century sought to distance themselves from the former Spanish rule and from the vestiges of Christendom. France became the inspiration for new cultural ideals just as the United States became the inspiration for new technological innovation. Positivism became an influential philosophical viewpoint with an emphasis on reason and law.

Simultaneous with these political and cultural developments was the more gradual shift of economic dependency from Spain to the capitalistic economies of Britain and, increasingly, the United States.[27] The liberal governments of Latin America in the nineteenth century in promoting freedom and modernity also opened their countries to the expansion of the free enterprise system. As foreign business interests gained increased influence over the political leadership, a new form of colonialism emerged, one no longer characterized by dependence on Spain but by dependence upon other foreign economic powers. While the ruling oligarchies profited greatly from this new arrangement, the poor suffered under a new form of oppression.

The church throughout this period sought to maintain the privileges that it possessed under the alliance of throne and altar under Spanish rule.[28] Where the church possessed economic interests, it sought to protect its interests by aligning with the new order. However, the basic intransience of the church in the new political situation led to a growing isolation and withdrawal from political affairs. As the century progressed, the church was attacked by its intellectual opponents for its extreme conservatism. This prompted a defense of traditional dogmatic formulas. The crisis of the church in this period was compounded by an extreme shortage of clergy and members of religious orders, since a new generation was no longer forthcoming from Europe as during Spanish rule. The hesitancy of Rome to recognize the new civil authorities and its favoring a return to the monarchical rule of Spain magnified this problem and prompted increasing animosity toward the church by the state.

The New Christendom (1830–1962)

Around 1930, in the midst of the international economic depression and a weakening of the power of the anti-Catholic liberal classes, a new attitude began to manifest itself in the church.[29] An innovative model for defining the church's relationship to the world was proposed, called the "New Christendom."[30] Its purpose was to develop a more positive relationship between the church and the world. The New Christendom movement derived from an intellectual renewal that received its impetus from Jacques Maritain and his book *True Humanism* (1936). The medieval worldview served as the backdrop for this movement [31] with its basic notion of the power of grace at work to perfect nature.[32]

One significant feature of this model that differentiates it from that of the medieval world was the proposal that the church should operate on two distinct levels, first through evangelization proper and second by Christian inspiration of the temporal sphere.[33] Three basic principles undergirded the New Christendom: "(1) the lay character of political institutions; (2) the underlying Christian inspiration of the state; (3) the full incorporation of non-Christians into the state by virtue of its temporal aims as a civil society."[34] The Church should seek to build a public consensus and permeate the temporal order with Christian values. This was to be achieved particularly through the involvement of Christian laity in society. "The three most significant efforts at mobilizing the church to face the challenge" were "Catholic Action, the Catholic Trade Union Movement, and the Christian Democrat Parties."[35] Through these organizations a burst of enthusiasm and optimism would flow through the Church into a society benumbed by years of conservativism and stagnation. In spite of its ambitions, the New Christendom model has been criticized by liberation theologians for its triumphalistic mentality.[36] Although it contributed to a more progressive political outlook, it has been critically evaluated for its timidity, ambiguity, and a failure to propose new social forms.[37]

The Concept of Development

The decade of the 1950s inaugurated the concept of development as a new model for interpreting the economic and social problems of Latin America. Building on the earlier economic theories of Schumpeter and Clark, the findings of the Bandung Conference of 1955 (attended by representatives of many countries especially those from Asia and Africa) recognized the

fundamental problem of the impoverished lands to be one of underdevelopment.[38] It was at this conference that the term "Third World" was promulgated to describe those underdeveloped countries that belong neither to the developed capitalist economy of the West nor to the nations influenced by the political and economic system of communism.[39] The Bandung Conference was to have initiated the introduction of policies that would lead the Third World out of underdevelopment through the material assistance and moral commitment of the developed world. Underlying the concept of development was the idea of a continuum along which development and underdevelopment were the extreme poles. The object of developmental programs was to speed the process by which the underdeveloped nations could reduplicate the modernization pattern of the developed nations.[40]

Both secular and ecclesiastical structures soon joined forces to cooperate in the development of the Third World. The United Nations declared the first "decade for development" in 1960. A number of international organizations were created: The International Development Bank, International Aid for Development, and the International Money Fund. Prompted by the Bandung Conference, the United Nations also created organizations, such as the United Nations Commission for Trade and Development and the Economic Committee for Latin America, in order to negotiate better terms of trade.[41] Furthermore, "the Alliance for Progress, the Kennedy administration, and the rise of reformist democratic movements in several countries of the continent—notably in Chile, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia—all signaled a new era of hope for peaceful but steady economic and social reform in Latin America."[42] The churches also joined the cause of development: Protestants through the World Council of Churches and various national church bodies; Roman Catholics through the influence of national hierarchies, volunteer programs, and papal encyclicals.[43]

By the middle of the 1960s the model of development became increasingly discredited in Latin America, when the gap between rich and poor nations continued to increase.

The chasm between the developed and the underdeveloped world was growing wider instead of narrowing, not only because the expected minimum measure of growth was never reached, but because, applied to widely different starting points, even the same rate of growth results in ever-increasing inequality. Foreign investment was taken out of Latin America far more than it has invested. The process of production, distribution, and finance has been almost totally transferred to outside agents (international monopolies). The terms of trade continue to be unfavorable. The prices paid

for the use of technology—protected by licenses in the Northern world—far outweighs the benefits of its use. Production has been unable to cope with the increase of population and thus the number and condition of marginals have become worse.[44]

The theory of development has been criticized by the theology of liberation for these inadequacies and has been replaced by the theory of dependency.[45]

The Cuban Revolution (1959)

According to the theologians of liberation the socialist revolution in Cuba pointed toward a new possibility for the future of Latin America beyond developmentalism and reformism.[46] Although representing only a small fraction of the Latin American people, the revolution in Cuba (under the leadership of Fidel Castro) awakened hopes for new political and economic structures.[47] Cuba served for many as symbol for the possible future of Latin America. Especially influential aspects of the Cuban revolution throughout Latin America were the use of guerrilla tactics, reference to Marxism as an interpretive framework, and the establishment of a pattern for socialist society.[48] Cuba's advances in the area of agrarian reform was particularly important.[49]

Although Christians took little part in the Cuban revolution,[50] the Roman Catholic Church initially showed a basic openness to the new regime.[51] Shortly thereafter, however, serious tensions developed between state and church when the state required a declaration of adherence to Marxism and nationalized the schools. As a result, "dissatisfaction spread and translated itself in many cases into a radical and complete change of attitude to the revolution."[52] This new attitude resulted in persecution of the church and a drastic reduction in the number of priests and nuns in Cuba. For about ten years the church in Cuba was reduced to silence.[53] Liberation theology remained noticeably uncritical of the persecution against the church that took place at this time.

With the appointment of Cesare Zacchi as Apostolic Nuncio to Cuba, a new attitude emerged, by which church and state increasingly sought to overcome their animosity.[54] Castro at times showed surprising openness to the church as "a strategic ally of socialism in Latin America."[55] The statement of April 1969, in which the Cuban episcopate denounced the economic blockade of Cuba, was indicative of this new attitude.[56]

The struggle of the church in Cuba has been instructive to the theology of liberation regarding the dangers facing the church in relationship to revolution, Marxism, and socialist governments. At the same time, the Cuban revolution also prompted many to view Cuba as an appropriate model for all of Latin America. The decisions of Camilo Torres and Nestor Paz to engage as Christians in guerrilla activity followed the lines drawn by the Cuban revolution.[57] It should be noted that the theology of liberation has emphasized the more favorable aspects of the Cuban revolution with minimal criticism of its abuses.

Vatican II (1962–1965) and Papal Encyclicals (1961, 1963, 1967)

The papacy of John XXIII and the invoking of the Second Vatican Council are of fundamental significance for the attitude that prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church prior to the birth of liberation theology in Latin America. Although the actual Latin American representation at Vatican II was criticized as inadequate, the implications of the Council for the renewal of the Church in the years that followed were monumental.[58] Because the Council took place over a number of years, from 1962 to 1965, the participants themselves underwent a process of transformation during this period.[59] Therefore it is possible to speak of "preconciliar," "conciliar," and "postconciliar" outlooks.[60] It was especially the postconciliar outlook that influenced the emergence of liberation theology. Pope John Paul II remarked that, "Without Vatican II, the Medellín Conference would have been impossible."[61]

Of the many documents originating at Vatican II,[62] *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*), with its emphasis on the importance of analyzing social reality, has been particularly important.[63] The church was called upon to envision "as her primary mission the serving of humanity, especially the economically and socially marginated peoples of the world, service designed to make human life more human."[64] In summary, the Second Vatican Council:

> . . . urged all Catholics to scrutinize 'the signs of the times' and share in the agonies of modern man so as to make the gospel credible to the people of our day, especially to the suffering and oppressed. They had described the Church as the sacrament of mankind's unity, consciously pointing to the Spirit's actions, which go far beyond the institutional framework of

> the Church itself. Hence the ecclesiological principles of Vatican II were clearly oriented to the service of the world and its struggles for justice and dignity.[65]

Complementing the forces of renewal released in the Roman Catholic world by Vatican II, the encyclical letters of John XXIII and Paul VI added to this new spirit.[66] John XXIII issued two encyclicals of particular importance for Latin America, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), which was important for the way it related the church's social teachings to practical issues (especially economic issues),[67] and *Pacem in Terris* (1963), which gave direction not only to individual life but also to the forms of society and state.[68] Paul VI issued *Populorum Progressio* (1967), which contained criticism of capitalism and called for a form of development that would go beyond the technical and economic model of the developed nations[69] and also *Humanae Vitae* (1967).[70] It was *Populorum Progressio* that found special resonance within Latin America.[71] While it was also possible from these documents to draw conclusions that were more conservative than those drawn by liberation theology, it was the "liberating" vision of Vatican II and the encyclical letters that served to stimulate the vision of the theologians of liberation.[72]

The Theology of Revolution

During the 1960s considerable attention was given to a "theology of revolution," particularly in Europe and Latin America. The term "theology of revolution" was coined during the Second All-Christian Peace Conference held in Prague in 1964.[73] In the succeeding years a considerable literature emerged.[74] The theology of revolution introduced new and radical themes into theological discourse. Christian advocacy of guerrilla activity, the use of violence as a means of social change, and the advocacy of revolution provoked heated debate. The address of Richard Shaull, as spokesman for the Third World at the World Council of Churches sponsored World Conference on Church and Society (July 1966 in Geneva), added fuel to this debate.[75] Although the theology of revolution originated with Latin American writers "for whom revolutionary terminology held no taboo," the theology of revolution became "far more typical of Europe than of Latin America."[76] As the discussion became increasingly theoretical, interest for a theology of revolution waned in Latin America.[77] Nevertheless, the theology of revolution marked a turn in theological discussion from an emphasis upon "humanism

and existence toward things political."[78] The theology of revolution served as an important antecedent for the rise of liberation theology.

In this context, it is important to mention the dialogues that took place in Europe between Marxists and Christians in the years 1964–1966.[79] The literature prompted by these Marxist-Christian encounters adds one additional current to the different streams that fostered the emergence of Latin American liberation theology.

The Place of Liberation Theology in Recent Latin American History: The Emergence of Latin American Liberation Theology (1968)

There were many forces at work in the mid-1960s that influenced the emergence of liberation theology: the New Christendom movement, the rejection of the theory of development, the Cuban revolution, the progressive spirit of Vatican II and the encyclicals that promulgated this spirit, and the debate over a "theology of revolution." The emergence of liberation theology cannot be isolated as a single event but was precipitated in this ferment of forces. It is important, however, to distinguish two major lines of development through which the "theology of liberation" came into existence.

A *first* Protestant line has a number of significant antecedents, especially deriving from the activity and conferences of the World Council of Churches in the years 1948–1968, whose concern for the social implications of Christianity had immediate implications for the Latin American context. One organization related to the World Council of Churches must be singled out for its role in the Protestant stream leading to the emergence of liberation theology: *Iglesia y Sociedad en la America Latina* (ISAL or "Church and Society in Latin America"). This group can also be traced back to the Christian Youth Movement, which was created in 1961 at the second Latin American Evangelical Conference.[80] Among the theological concerns addressed by the leaders of the ISAL movement (including Rubem Alves, Emilio Castro, Jose Míguez Bonino, Julio de Santa Ana, and Richard Shaull), three are especially noteworthy for the emergence of liberation theology: the affirmation of the theory of economic dependency, the use of biblical paradigms (for example, the Exodus) for interpreting the Latin American context, and the introduction of the term "liberation" to describe what was needed in light of Latin America's problems.[81]

In giving international attention to the views of ISAL, the role of Richard Shaull was especially significant. His lecture at the World Council of

Churches meeting at Geneva in 1966 proposed revolution, guerrilla struggle, and violence as relevant themes for Christian discourse. Also significant was the theological work of Rubem Alves, who completed his doctoral work under Shaull at Princeton in 1968 with the title, *Towards a Theology of Liberation*.

It was through the periodicals, books, and congresses of the ISAL and the presence of its members at various national and international meetings that the questions of violence, guerrilla struggle, and Marxism came to be inseparably connected with liberation theology from its inception.[82] It is interesting to note that these are the exact themes that have been most severely attacked by European and North American critics of liberation theology as they first encountered this particular line of liberation theology. These issues had inordinate influence upon the international discussion of liberation theology. However, it is important to stress that this was only one of the two major lines of development for liberation theology. Moreover, it is the second line of development that had the most influence within Latin America itself.

A *second* line leading to the emergence of liberation theology, Roman Catholic in origin, can be traced to the organization of a large number of seminars and movements among Latin American priests (including various worker-priest movements) in the mid-1960s. Notable among these movements were the "Priests for the Third World" in Argentina in 1965[83] and the "National Office of Social Information" (ONIS) in Peru, organized in 1968.[84] In the spirit emanating from Vatican II, attempts were made by priests in these and many other groups to make a connection between the Christian faith and the historical, social, and political situation in Latin America.[85] The authors of the ONIS documents chose the theme of "liberation" as an organizing concept in describing its proposal for Latin American reality.[86]

The work of ONIS is linked by the person of Gustavo Gutiérrez to a small group of theologians who in 1965 began to meet periodically in different Latin American cities.[87] Gathering out of a desire for personal friendship and a common concern for Latin American theology, the group included Juan Luis Segundo, Segundo Galilea, and Lucio Gera, along with Gutiérrez. From 1965 to 1970, these authors formulated their central theological viewpoint and began to publish works from the perspective that came to be known as liberation theology. It was in such groups that one can say that liberation theology emerged among Latin American Catholics. The influence of Gustavo Gutiérrez upon the ONIS movement and this small group of theologians (and thereby upon the origins of liberation thought) should

be stressed.[88] It was also through the personal involvements of Gutiérrez and Lucio Gera that the perspective of liberation theology found prominence in the documents that were produced at Medellín.[89]

There is a basic distinction to be made between these two lines of development leading to the theology of liberation.[90] In the *first* line (deriving from the ISAL) a highly critical attitude toward the various institutional churches came to prevail.

The churches could not follow the theological and ideological definition of ISAL and the latter criticized the isolation in which the Protestant churches lived as "cultural enclaves" more closely related to the overseas metropolis than to their own environment.[91]

Correspondingly, Protestant members of ISAL often found themselves condemned, excluded, or regarded with suspicion by their own denominations (while the Roman Catholic members of ISAL were generally no longer recognized by their own church).[92] Thus alienation and distance from the various institutional churches prevailed in the ISAL.

In the *second* line of development, the theology of liberation developed not in alienation but in connection with the structures of the Roman Catholic Church. These liberation theologians were and remained in good standing with their church and bishops. It is this line that had a particular influence upon the monumental deliberation of the Second Conference of Latin American Bishops held at Medellín in 1968. Although both lines of development share many common concerns (for example, an affirmation of the theory of dependency),[93] the contrast in the two outlooks needs to be stressed for a proper understanding of the emergence of liberation theology in Latin America.[94] It is clear in terms of sheer numbers and in terms of impact that the Roman Catholic line of liberation thought has had primary influence throughout Latin America.

Because of the complexity of events that led to the emergence of liberation theology, it is difficult to precisely date its origin. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic antecedents can be traced throughout the decade of the sixties or even earlier. A key year, however, is 1968, based on number of publications that began to appear at this time and on the preparation process for the Medellín conference held that year.[95] Subsequent to 1968 and the Medellín conference, one should note the growing cooperation between Protestant and Roman Catholic proponents of liberation theology and the merging of their concerns.

CELAM II: Medellín, Colombia (1968)

The first meeting of the General Conference of CELAM (Latin American Bishop's Conference) in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 had its primary significance in creating a structure that linked the various national episcopacies of Latin America.[96] In the succeeding years the infrastructure of CELAM provided a forum for increased cooperation and the sharing of concerns common to the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. It was, however, at the Second General Conference held at Medellín, Colombia, from August 24 to September 6, 1968 that the work of the Bishop's Conference attained worldwide significance.

The year 1968 was on many accounts one of turbulent forces. Across the globe there were signs of restlessness: the revolts in France, the racial riots in the U.S.A., and the student movements in many countries.[97] In Latin America itself the revolution in Cuba, the decisions of Che Guevara and Camilo Torres for guerrilla struggle, student strikes, and the crisis of the Christian Democrat regime in Chile are some examples of the widespread disillusionment with reform programs under the developmental model and the system of neocolonialism that it was seen to represent.[98] In this milieu the Latin American bishops laid extensive groundwork for Medellín through a process of preparation that included written commentaries upon official declarations of the church (for example, Letter of Sixteen Bishops of the Third World, the documents of Vatican II, and the most recent papal encyclicals), preparatory meetings, and widespread discussion of preparatory documents.[99] The visit of Pope Paul VI to the Eucharistic Conference in Bogota immediately prior to the opening of CELAM II also focused attention upon the Latin American context.[100]

It is not adequate to interpret the results of the Medellín Conference on the basis of any antecedents.[101] Instead the Medellín Conference went beyond what anyone might have expected.[102] The 150 bishops and the host of others gathered at Medellín—who included "theological, political, sociological, and other experts; ecumenical observers; workers slaving away often at two or three jobs a day; families from ghettos; labor leaders with their nerve ends in a frazzle; impoverished parish priests; small farmers worried how long their patch of land might sustain them; and underground revolutionaries with their life constantly in danger"—experienced a week-long process of study, discussion, and dialogue as they labored toward the production of a document.[103] The participants of diverse backgrounds made the Medellín Conference an "event" that became for liberation theology a reference point in the hope for a better future in Latin America.

The sixteen documents that were produced at Medellín[104] seek "to situate the church and theology in the human reality, specifically the reality of oppression and liberation, and in effect say that pastoral work and church structures are to be a function of this human reality."[105] To this end the insights of the social sciences, theology, ethics, and pastoral reflection were employed. [106] In these documents a new outlook prevailed that became the basis for a new attitude.[107] According to the official documents, the signs of the times in Latin America called for a strong critique of the developmental model.[108] Institutionalized violence was named and rejected as a negative force exploiting and oppressing the Latin American people under the present order.[109] The desire for peace was seen to be inseparable from the requirement of justice and the promotion of a new order.[110] The Medellín documents had very definite political implications. The church began to look upon itself in a critical way that attempted to make a break from its alliance with unjust structures[111] and to align itself with the common people, the poor.[112] The church was to become a servant of the poor and to count this service as a pastoral priority. Evangelization and conscientization through base-communities and lay movements were to become signs of this new priority.[113] In the words of Hugo Assmann, Medellín "put the stamp of approval on 'liberating language,' using it both in a sociological sense . . . and in a theological sense."[114]

By no means was everyone present at Medellín in agreement with the final conclusions.[115] In the years that followed, these same documents, drawing upon their more traditional and less innovative statements, would be employed to counter the church reforms and liberation outlook that also claim Medellín as their precedent. Nonetheless it would be "difficult to exaggerate the importance of Medellín,"[116] in its attempt to be faithful to the situation of the majority of the Latin American people.[117] Medellín became both a sign to the world and a program for the Latin American church.[118] The theology of liberation saw Medellín as a "green light" approving of its theological agenda, and in the next years a period of tremendous theological creativity ensued.[119]

The Proliferation of Liberation Theology: Conferences and Literature

In the years immediately following the Medellín conference an explosion of conferences, symposia, and literature dealing with the theology of liberation burst forth in Latin America and eventually throughout Europe and North

America. This was a time of immense enthusiasm for the vision of liberation theology and optimism about the possibility of liberation within Latin America. A brief accounting of a number of these conferences and symposia indicates the extent to which the theology of liberation flowered during this period. In November 1969, a Theology Congress, held at Mexico City under the auspices of the Archdiocese, grappled with the new concerns raised by the theology of liberation.[120] In March 1970 an international symposium on the theology of liberation was held at Bogota, resulting in the establishment of a coordinating center, two volumes of quickly prepared essays, and a bulletin entitled "Theology of Liberation" that began to circulate privately.[121] After a series of regional meetings, in July 1970 this symposium was repeated with an emphasis on underdevelopment as a form of dependence. Also in July 1970 a gathering of biblical scholars took place at Buenos Aires on the theme "Exodus and Liberation" and many of the papers were later published in the journal *Revista Biblica*.

In August 1970 twenty theologians attended an ecumenical seminar at Buenos Aires on liberation theology and this seminar was repeated the following year. Ciudad Juarez (Mexico) hosted a seminar in October 1970 with several internationally known theologians (Harvey Cox among them) and some of the presentations began to circulate throughout Latin America. In December 1970 nine papers were presented at a theological and pastoral seminar held at Oruro (Bolivia). One of the most well-publicized and influential gatherings, the first Latin American Congress of Christians for Socialism, April 1972, was held at Santiago (Chile) and will be described in the following section. These are but a sample of the ways in which the theology of liberation began to proliferate throughout Latin America.

Internationally, at El Escorial (Spain) in 1972, a number of papers by liberation theologians were presented, describing Christianity and social change in Latin America.[122] In the United States "Theology in the Americas: 1975" was held at Detroit in August as an attempt to discover the significance of Latin American liberation theology for the United States.[123] This gathering has been critically interpreted by many.[124] It served to confront North American theologians with the basic concerns of Latin American liberation theology as well as to confront the Latin American theologians of liberation with the differences in the North American context, especially how the concerns of racism and feminism were raised by theologians from the United States.[125] A second Theology in the Americas conference was held at Detroit in August 1980 and attempted to negotiate the criticisms made of the first conference.[126]

The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians was another forum for communicating the concerns of liberation theology. The Latin American participants in this association initially had a dominant influence, but not without a growing sensitivity to the differences between other Third World contexts (Asia and Africa) and Latin America.[127]

International Ecumenical Congresses of Theology were held in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in 1976, Accra (Ghana) in 1977, Colombo (Sri Lanka) in 1979, São Paulo (Brazil) in 1980,[128] New Delhi (India) in 1981, Geneva (Switzerland) in 1983, and Oaxtepec (Mexico) in 1986. The São Paulo meeting especially focused upon Latin American concerns under the theme "Ecclesiology of the Popular Christian Communities." In addition to emphasizing the importance of basic Christian communities and the "irruption of the poor into history," this meeting showed increased awareness of the unique problems of women and blacks in Latin America, indicating responsiveness to the concerns raised at the first "Theology in the Americas" conference.[129] At the Oaxtepec meeting, the Latin American participants further addressed the issues of race, indigenous peoples, and gender.[130] Such opportunities for international dialogue have proven to be a broadening experience for Latin American liberation theologians.

One very significant development ran counter to this proliferation of liberation theology. In the years following Medellín, the various departments within CELAM reckoned with the challenge of liberation theology. But noticeable within CELAM in these years was a growing suspicion by some of the implications of liberation theology. Already at a meeting of presidents and secretaries of the Episcopal Education Commission held in Medellín from late August to early November 1970, growing reservations were voiced to the CELAM hierarchy in a lengthy paper delivered by the General Secretary of CELAM.[131] At the fourteenth ordinary conference of CELAM at Sucre (Bolivia) in November 1972 a decidedly conservative swing within the organization took place.[132] Through a process of restructuring and the election of a predominantly conservative slate of officers, most notably Archbishop Alfonso Lopez Trujillo as General Secretary, there was a significant change in the attitude toward liberation theology. Conservative forces mobilized themselves into what has been described as a "campaign against liberation theology" with support not only within Latin America but al so overseas, particularly from Germany.[133]

The Sucre Conference criticized liberation theology, the Latin American Pastoral Institute (IPLA), and the church's option for the poor. Thus the

church was left without a critical voice on the continental level—though not on local or national levels.[134]

In the meetings of the Synod of Bishops in the years 1974 and 1977, the conservative reaction continued to grow.[135] In the preparations for and holding of the Third General Conference of CELAM in Puebla (Mexico) in 1979 the influence of this conservatism became evident.[136] The increasing conservatism within CELAM during these years had its parallel in the growing conservatism among several Latin American governments during this period.[137]

In conclusion, it is not possible to recount the number of meetings, groups, and publications dealing with liberation theology in the years following Medellín. The proliferation of books, articles, journals, and unpublished manuscripts on liberation theology within Latin America, Europe, and North America testify to the rapid growth of the liberation perspective. Virtually all major theological periodicals published articles discussing liberation theology. In some cases whole issues were devoted to this topic.[138] Worthy of special mention for its worldwide influence was the publication of Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, in Spanish in 1971 and in English translation in 1973.[139] The theological work of Gutiérrez is but the most well-known of the many serious contributions by liberation theologians who elaborated their perspective during this highly creative period. As the decade of the 1970s continued, the theology of liberation increasingly had to deal with the opposing and even reactionary forces.

Christians for Socialism (April 1972)

Perhaps the most controversial, well-publicized, and instructive of the movements at work in Latin America in the early 1970s was "Christians for Socialism." This movement arose in Chile during the presidency of Salvador Allende between 1970 and 1973.[140] The group first became widely known in April 1971 for the "Declaration of the 80," a statement by 80 priests committing themselves as Christians to the implementation of socialism.[141] In the following months, plans were made to hold a convention for those Latin American Christians "who regarded socialism as a necessary precondition for the construction of a just and humane society."[142] The stated objectives included the desire to analyze the concrete experiences of revolutionary Christians in Latin America, to give public expression to this revolutionary option, and to provide for sharing between various groups involved in

the revolutionary struggle.[143] From its inception the Christians for Socialism movement participated in a critical exchange with the hierarchy of the Chilean Episcopate.[144] The political activity of priests, the option for Marxism, and accusations about inadequate theology were prominent concerns expressed by the hierarchy. It was made clear that the upcoming convention was neither sponsored nor approved by the church leadership.[145]

On April 23-30, 1972, at Santiago, Chile, the "First Convention of Christians for Socialism" was held. Over 400 delegates gathered from Chile and throughout Latin America, including some Protestant representatives (from ISAL) and observers from Europe and North America.[146] A majority were priests. Prominent among the theologians were Hugo Assmann and Gustavo Gutiérrez. After initial emphasis on national reports and the sharing of regional issues, attention was focused upon the work of various sub-committees, one of which drafted the Final Document approved by the convention.[147] In this document it was clear that socialism itself was not a question for discussion. Rather, the question was how to carry out the existing commitment to socialism in Latin America. It was perceived that only two options existed for the future of Latin America: either the existing state of exploitative dependency or socialism. Through the use of dependency theory and class analysis, cooperation with Marxists for a socialist future was understood as a necessary choice for Christians who wished to side with the poor and oppressed. The political-ideological nature of this struggle was affirmed. The Christian faith was called upon to act as "a critical and dynamic leaven for revolution."[148] Thus participants in the Christians for Socialism movement opted for political, even revolutionary, struggle as a necessary part of their faith in light of the Latin American reality.

The Christians for Socialism movement was widely criticized for being naive, overly optimistic, impatient, doctrinally weak, idealistic, or opportunistic. One of the most extensive critiques was from the Chilean bishops who defended the church's moral position and authority against the decision for Marxism, class struggle, and partisan politics.[149] This conflict between the hierarchy and the Christians for Socialism movement indicates the tensions that developed within the Roman Catholic Church during the 1970s. Finally, the decision was made by the hierarchy to deny priests and members of religious orders membership in the organization.[150]

The Christians for Socialism movement demonstrates how the urgency of the Latin American situation of poverty and oppression called for a new and radical response by many Christians, a response that led them to new alliances and gave them courage to speak openly about the need for

revolution. The movement represents the choice of an extreme option, yet one that many Christians felt compelled to make in light of the Latin American reality. The existence of this movement was cut short by the military coup of September 11, 1973 when the Allende government was toppled and the Christians for Socialism movement outlawed.

Growing Repression (1970s)

The September 1973 overthrow of the Allende government in Chile was representative of a growing tide of repressive governments sweeping through Latin America in the mid-1970s.[151] The coups in Brazil in 1964, Argentina in 1966, and Peru in 1968 were followed by a dramatic swing toward rightist governments in the 1970s: the coup in Bolivia and the rule of Banzer (August 21, 1971), the dissolution of the Uruguayan Congress (June 27, 1973), the coup in Chile and the Pinochet rule (September 11, 1973), the rule of Morales Bermudez in Peru (August 28, 1975), the fall of the nationalist military government in Ecuador (January 13, 1976), and the fall of Peron to General Videla in Argentina (March 24, 1976).[152] These new governments, when seen in conjunction with the already existing rule of Stroessner in Paraguay, Duvalier in Haiti, and Belaguer in Santo Domingo and the military dictatorships under the pretense of democracy in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, paints a picture of repression that stood in sharp contrast to the hopes raised at Medellín and the growth of liberation theology.[153]

One of the most influential theories used to support this swing to the right was "National Security."[154] National Security theory, having originated as a part of U.S. foreign policy, was adopted by several Latin American governments during this period. The roots of National Security as a part of U.S. policy dates back to the presidency of Truman and the founding of the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947. It found growing importance in relationship to the Korean War, expanded during the Kennedy administration in response to the Cuban crisis, developed further during the presidencies of Johnson and Nixon in response to the Vietnam War, and also during the presidency of Carter with the formation of the Trilateral Commission.[155] Based upon worldwide strategy and a geopolitical outlook, a central concern of National Security theory was to curb communist influence throughout the world. The world was understood as the arena for a perpetual struggle between opposing world powers

with the survival of the free state as the ultimate goal. Liberation theologians criticized the ideological role of this theory in defending U.S. corporate and military interests.

In Latin America, the theory of National Security was promoted by military and authoritarian governments as a way of combating communism and defending U.S. interests. According to Rockefeller's "Report on the Americas" in 1969, Brazil was singled out by President Nixon as a test case that would be decisive for the future of Latin America.[156] Billions of dollars in foreign aid and military armaments were invested in Brazil's "one-party state in order to protect 'national security' and 'profit and stability' in the global war between communism and the West."[157] Social, political, and economic rights were regularly sacrificed in the effort to oppose subversive influences and threats of communism whether they came from political parties, labor unions, the press, universities, churches, or other groups and individuals.[158] Support for National Security states by the U.S. was continued in other countries throughout Latin America.[159]

National Security theory spread by the U.S. training of Latin American army personnel[160] and through the influence of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.[161] One action in which the CIA played a major role was the "Banzer plan" in Bolivia in which progressive bishops were to be harassed and foreign priests and nuns arrested and expelled.[162] A similar plan was later adopted by ten other Latin American governments.[163] In sum, the theory of National Security has served as an umbrella term for a policy that promoted military and authoritarian governments ruling in an "emergency" situation under the suspension of civil rights in order to combat the influence of communism and promote economic development by the free enterprise system.[164] The wealthy ruling classes and the military governments in cooperation with multinational corporations and banks obtained significant economic advantages under the protection of governments devoted to preserving National Security.[165]

While repressive forces were taking hold in many Latin American countries, conservative forces were also increasing pressure on the Latin American church. Reservations about the new direction of the church at Medellín were growing, especially among the most conservative hierarchies.[166] On the international level, changes in the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, the end of the progressive periodical *Publik* in Germany, and the removal of Father Louis Colonnese as director of the Catholic Interamerican Cooperation Program were indicators of a changing mood.[167] Within Latin America the changes in CELAM under the leadership of General

Secretary Lopez Trujillo were considerable. Among those measures that were described as a "campaign of CELAM" against the theology of liberation include the replacement of liberation theologians by its opponents in the Pastoral Institute founded at Medellín, the organization of theological congresses at which liberation theology was opposed, and the increasingly polemical stance against liberation theology evidenced in CELAM supported publications.[168] Catholic movements such as "Tradition, Family, and Property" were supported during this period and found favor by military governments as a Roman Catholic voice more compatible with their interests.[169] Smear campaigns, para-police harassment, and attempts to expel foreign clergy and bishops were used as tactics.[170]

Opposition to the theology of liberation was also the goal of foreign financed campaigns waged in Latin America under the direction of the Belgian Jesuit Roger Vekemans. Vekemans was transferred from his position teaching sociology at Rome in 1957 to a position training Jesuits in Chile and initially participated in several reform measures. However, due to his anti-communist sentiment, Vekemans developed into an influential opponent of liberation theology.[171] Through the 1960s, Vekemans received financial support for his Centro Bellarmino (Center for Research and Social Action) at first from the West German bishops and government, and later from the Alliance for Progress and the Central Intelligence Agency.[172] Increasingly Vekemans was approached by the CIA for information and help in opposing the threat of communism. Leaving Chile upon the election of Allende in 1970, Vekemans organized the Research Center for the Development and Integration of Latin America (CEDIAL) in Bogota.[173] Through CEDIAL and publications such as *Tierra Nueva* Vekemans organized an attack upon the theology of liberation.[174] Important contacts for Vekemans were Cardinal Sebastiana Baggio, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America in Rome, and CELAM's General Secretary Lopez Trujillo.[175]

The campaign against liberation theology and other progressive movements in the Latin American church was formalized in March 1976 at a meeting in Rome of the "Church and Liberation Circle of Studies," a meeting co-sponsored by the Roman Curia and Adveniat, the German bishop's aid agency for the Latin American Church.[176] Several German theologians took part as well as Latin American theologians known to be opponents of liberation theology.[177] Among the arguments employed by Vekemans for opposing liberation theology was his equation of the Christians for Socialism movement in Chile with the essence of the theology of liberation,

employing the Final Document of the 1972 Christians for Socialism convention as a summary of liberation theology, together with a critique of the use of Marxism.[178]

A strong reaction against the use of Adveniat to support the work of Vekemans in his opposition to the theology of liberation was published by over one hundred German theologians in November 1977.[179] In addition to protesting the activities of Vekemans and Lopez Trujillo, the German theologians called for an accounting by Adveniat (and in particular by Bishop Franz Hengsbach, Adveniat's director) for its role in the campaign.[180] In spite of such denunciations, Adveniat continued its attack on liberation theology and was supported in its efforts by financial support from a Catholic organization in Milwaukee called the De Rance Foundation.[181]

The list of those individual groups, priests, and bishops who were harassed, arrested, tortured, expelled, and even put to death under the wave of repression flooding Latin America during the 1970s is vast.[182] Repression both by governments and those within the church led to a change of mood among the theologians of liberation. Assmann spoke of a farewell to the euphoria that characterized the church immediately following Medellín.[183] One commentator described the next task as "doing theology in a (counter-) revolutionary situation."[184] The themes of martyrdom,[185] persecution,[186] "captivity," and "exile"[187] increased in importance under these new conditions. Also the question of human rights took on new and pointed significance. This historical background shaped the theology of liberation in the period leading to the third General Conference of CELAM in Puebla, Mexico in 1979.

CELAM III: Puebla, Mexico (1979)

The Third General Conference of CELAM, held at Puebla, Mexico, from January 27 to February 13, 1979, needs to be interpreted in the full context of events and influences that took place prior to and during the conference itself.[188] In the process leading up to Puebla, the General Secretary of CELAM, Lopez Trujillo, sought to reverse the progressive tide released at the Medellín Conference and to cease the influence of liberation theology.[189] The reorganization of CELAM and the influence given to the ideas of Vekemans were indicative of a dramatic change of attitude within CELAM under its new leadership.[190] Thus it was not a surprise when on November 30, 1977, the 214-page preparatory document for Puebla, written by Lopez Trujillo and a

staff of conservative sociologists and theologians, expressed their opposition to liberation theology and sought to alter the direction of Medellín.[191] In this document the theory of development was revived to explain the problems of Latin America. It avoided condemning human rights violations, abuses by multinational corporations, and the threat posed by National Security states. The church's role was to maintain a traditional Catholic society and to give the poor hope and consolation in a better hereafter. [192]

Negative reaction to the document, not only by liberation theologians but by bishops, priests, religious, basic Christian communities, peasants, and natives, was spontaneous and overwhelming.[193] A substantial literature critical of the preparatory document developed rapidly.[194] The rejection of the document by a majority of the bishops conferences and even by many conservative bishops led to the rewriting of the document in mid-1978 by a small team of moderate bishops under the direction of Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider. The result of their revision was a shorter, more concise document that employed language from the Medellín documents especially regarding the church's commitment to the poor and oppressed.[195] The process of debate, discussion, and rewriting proved fruitful in involving a broad segment of the church prior to Puebla. This may not have been possible without the delay of the start of the conference (originally October 1978) necessitated by the death of Pope John Paul I in August 1978. Otherwise the Puebla conference may have started on time and allowed a different resu1t.[196]

The opening of Puebla took place in the wake of the five-day visit of Pope John Paul II to Mexico during which he delivered a total of over 40 addresses. An estimated 20 million people were captivated by the charisma of the new1y elected pope, the first non-Italian in five centuries to hold this office.[197] The evaluations of the pope's visit and especially of his speeches have been varied.[198] Those emphasizing his initial addresses noted their conservative tone and considered them a retreat from Medellín and even an attack upon liberation theology.[199] At least one interpreter suggested that this conservativism should be attributed not to the pope himself but to his advisors.[200] By contrast the later addresses of the pope, particularly the "Address to the Indians of Oaxaca and Chiapas," spoke clearly of the suffering and unjust treatment of the poor and refered to "a social mortgage on all private property."[201] It appeared that Pope John Paul II was changed by his encounter with the people and the poverty of Latin America.

Those sympathetic to the theology of liberation have been highly critical about a number of matters surrounding the preparation of the conference

itself. The location of the conference at Puebla harked back to an era when the church remained untouched by "the disrupting tides of a troubled civilization."[202] The location, in a highly conservative city filled with numerous churches and cathedrals, was carefully chosen by the CELAM leadership.[203] Especially ominous was the stone wall (over ten feet high) surrounding the seminary where the conference met.[204] Tight security measures were enacted to limit entrance exclusively to delegates, press, and staff. The selection of delegates had been carefully guided by Lopez Trujillo and Cardinal Baggio of the Vatican. In addition to the conservative CELAM staff and the conservative or moderate delegates from the bishoprics who participated in Puebla, an additional 117 de1egates—12 with vote—had been appointed by John Paul I and confirmed by John Paul II according to the recommendations of Baggio and Lopez Trujillo.[205] Especially noteworthy was the decision that the "periti" (or experts) supplied to the bishops as a guide to their discussions were to be appointed by the pope rather chosen by the bishops themselves as had been the case at Medellín. Thus most of Latin America's best-known theologians, especially those sharing the perspective of liberation theology, were officially excluded from the total of 350 delegates, observers, experts, and other representatives allowed entrance to the conference.[206]

The conference opened with a homily at the January 27 mass and an opening address the following day by John Paul II. His address emphasized many concerns that would be incorporated into the final document of Puebla.[207] From the very start of the Puebla Conference the production of the Final Document was given top priority. A revision of the agenda proposed by Lopez Trujillo indicated early in the conference that a progressive element was still represented at Puebla.[208] Various measures designed to exclude the viewpoint of liberation theology and Medellín's option for the poor were frustrated. Although the liberation theologians were denied access to the conference itself, it proved impossible to deny exit to the progressive bishops and delegates.[209] Having consulted with their own experts, they returned to the meeting with insights and position papers by liberation theologians that circulated throughout the convention.[210] Eighty-four position papers for the 21 various commissions were circulated by the liberation theologians and social scientists working outside the conference. It has been estimated that perhaps 25% or more of the Final Document can be attributed to this source.[211] Evidence for the machinations of Lopez Trujillo was a letter dictated by him to a conservative bishop within CELAM prior to the conference that indicated his plans to manipulate Puebla.[212]

It was the moderates, moved by the testimony of bishops such as Paulo Evaristo Arns and Oscar Romero together with the witness of those having experienced persecution in countries such as Argentina and El Salvador, who prevailed in the Final Document in its approved form.[213] Though the Final Document contains ambiguities and can be interpreted variously, the basic thrust of Medellín was not denied but reaffirmed.[214] Especially strong was the document's analysis of the underlying roots of Latin American poverty in which the role of economic systems, multinational corporations, the arms race, and the need for structural reform are emphasized.[215] The document also affirms "A Preferential Option for the Poor"[216] and articulates a vision of "Church Activity on Behalf of the Person in National and International Society."[217] The structural dimensions of Latin American poverty, injustice, and violations of human rights are emphasized. Throughout the main body of the text, in discussing the theme of "evangelization," the liberation point of view appears in the midst of more traditional concerns dealing with the inner life of the church and its relationship to the Latin American context.

The evaluations of the Final Document by those supportive of liberation theology have been overwhelmingly positive. [218] This was remarkable in light of the efforts taken to secure the opposite result. Many reviewers judged that the Puebla document stood firmly in the tradition of Medellín, particularly in its affirmation of the church's option for the poor and the significance of the base Christian communities for Latin America. A new emphasis was the critical stance toward the National Security ideology that arose in Latin America after Medellín.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the importance of Puebla as an "event" transcends the written "text" of the conference. [219] In this regard Puebla continued to be appropriated by the church in the years to follow. Although the control of CELAM remained in the hands of those opposed to the liberation perspective,[220] the events at Puebla indicated that liberation theology would continue to be a vital force within the Latin American church.

The Revolution in Nicaragua (1979)

The overthrow of the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debyle on July 19, 1979 as leader of one of Latin America's most oppressive regimes became a focal point for the hopes of liberation in Latin America in the early 1980s. The revolutionary movement in Nicaragua was called the "Sandinista Front,"

named after the thought and example of the freedom fighter Augusto Cesar Sandino. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Sandino identified with the poor in opposing and fighting against U.S. control of Nicaragua.[221] He became a symbol of liberation for Nicaragua when in February 1934, Sandino was invited to dinner by the U.S. supported leader, Anastosio Somoza Garcia (grandfather of Somoza Debyle). Upon leaving the dinner Sandino was murdered by Somoza's forces. [222] Since that time, the four pillars of Sandino's thought—nationalism, democracy, Christianity, and social justice—gave impetus to the revolutionary movements which finally led to the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship.[223]

Of special significance was the role played by Christianity and the church in the Nicaraguan revolution. In contrast to the Cuban revolution, many priests and Christian lay people took active part in the revolutionary process. For example, Father Ernesto Cardenal, together with many members of the Solentiname community, chose to take active part in the revolution.[224] Christians were also appointed as leaders in the new government, including Miguel d'Escoto as foreign minister and Ernesto Cardenal as minister of culture.[225]

At the meeting of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians held in São Paulo in 1980, speakers from Nicaragua were given a significant place on the agenda. The liberation theologians present were influenced by the reports of recent events in Nicaragua. At this meeting Juan Hernandez Pico spoke optimistically of the compatibility between the Christian option for the poor and the project of socialism in Nicaragua. He attempted to minimize both Christian fear of atheistic ideology and mistrust of Christians by revolutionaries, speaking of the need for "a strategic alliance between non-believing revolutionaries and revolutionary Christians."[226] Miguel d'Escoto spoke of hopes of the Nicaraguan people—their sense of pascal joy, their role as forgers of history, and their solidarity in the revolutionary struggle.[227] Thus the revolution in Nicaragua became a symbol of the hope for liberation, reviving the idea of Christian participation in revolutionary activity at the end of a decade marked by an increase in repressive governments.

Among the most significant of the reforms by the new Nicaraguan government were its policies of land redistribution, rural development, and a gradual shifting from export to staple crops.[228] The Nicaraguan revolution was not without serious flaws, however. One of the most serious was the treatment of the Miskito Indians.[229] In admitting their mistakes in this regard, representatives of the Nicaraguan government have seen strikingly

candid.[230] Also the Nicaraguan government was criticized for its censorship, the increasing militarization of the Nicaraguan society, and the delay of national elections. In the early 1980s the United States supported counter-revolutionary military forces based in Honduras and introduced strong economic sanctions against the Nicaraguan government. The U.S. government justified these actions with reference to the failures of the Nicaraguan government in the areas of human rights and in delaying democratic elections. The desire to halt communism and defend U.S. military and economic interests played a prominent role in the Central American policies of the U.S. government.[231] At the same time a large number of U.S. church leaders were highly critical of U.S. policy, given evidence for their convictions by the reports of church representatives who visited Nicaragua.[232] The Nicaraguan revolution served as a symbol of hope for liberation theology in Latin America in the 1980s.

The Decade of the 1980s

The 1980s were a decade of dramatic developments in the history of liberation theology. A major publishing project was initiated in 1985, a proposed fifty-volume collection of books to be known as the *Theology and Liberation Series.* Eleven volumes in the series were published between 1986 and 1988. These were also translated into English and published by Orbis Books. However, the combination of market pressures and increasing opposition by the Vatican led to the suspension of the series after the publication of only twelve of the projected books. Another major project, edited by Jon Sobrino and Ignatio Ellacurio and published as *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, encompassed fifty chapters.[233] This volume in many ways serves as the epitome in publishing by liberation theologians and remains a major milestone for all students in the field.

Due in part to interaction with theologians from other global contexts, the range of topics examined by Latin American theologians expanded in the 1980s, in particular in the areas of ecology and feminist theology. An increasing number of women liberation theologians began to participate in theological discussion, challenging liberation theology to incorporate a critique of sexism into its analysis.[234] The participation of Latin American theologians in EATWOT further contributed to the expansion of themes.

In the larger political landscape there was a shift away from government by dictatorship over the course of the decade with the shift to limited

democracies in several countries. While the economic situation for the majority of the poor in Latin America remained in crisis, international pressures increased for Latin American governments to conform to free-market standards, as established by international monetary organizations. The Reagan administration in particular implemented measures to pressure Third World governments to enact free-market economic mechanisms that increased dependency on foreign investments and indebtedness to foreign banks.[235]

As part of the contest with the Soviet Union for global influence, the U.S. also exercised military force to stem the tide of communist influence, particularly in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In El Salvador internal pressures for more equitable distribution of wealth were opposed by the U.S. backed government, leading to a devastating civil war against guerrilla groups and their suspected sympathizers. The murder of six Jesuits (including Ellacuria), their housekeeper, and her daughter in November 1989 has been remembered as a particularly brutal act of violence against the church. In Nicaragua the U.S. government supported the insurgency of the "contras" from military bases in Honduras in order to overthrow the Sandinista regime. In Guatemala massive state violence against the Mayan peoples aimed to defend the political and economic status quo by eliminating dissent. In other Latin American countries torture was used by the government to stifle opposition (for example, Chile)[236] and counterinsurgency against guerilla movements led to the terrorizing of civilian populations (for example, Peru).

U.S. intelligence identified liberation theology as a particular threat to U.S. business interests in Latin America and steps were taken in the 1980s to undermine its influence. The Institute for Religion and Democracy was founded in 1981 as an independent organization that engaged in an ideological contest with liberation theology and has close ties with the U.S. government. In a similar way the American Enterprise Institute supported a series of publications critical of liberation theology, especially research by and books authored by Michael Novak.[237]

Of chief importance for the future of liberation theology was the increasing opposition expressed by the Vatican under the leadership of John Paul II, especially as directed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was appointed as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in 1981. Throughout the decade of the 1980s, the Vatican engaged in a sustained effort to oppose the influence of liberation theology, particularly what were understood to be its most radical elements. The work of organizations like *Opus Dei* were

strengthened and served as a counterforce to the proliferation of the liberation perspective. As new bishops were appointed, there was a consistent pattern of appointing those who opposed liberation theology. Cumulatively, this did much to stem the expansion of the base Christian community movement, which lost its connection to the institutional Roman Catholic Church.

The Vatican contested the appointment of priests as members of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, leading in 1984 to the suspension of four priests from the priesthood in January 1985.[238] Also during the 1980s, the Vatican undertook formal investigations of major liberation theologians, including Jon Sobrino, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Leonardo Boff. The case against Boff involved an extensive investigation of his theology, particularly of his criticisms against the institutional church, and resulted in his silencing for a period of nearly a year.[239] During the period in which the writings of these major liberation theologians were been examined, two major critiques of liberation theology were issued by the Vatican: *Instruction on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology* (1984)[240] and *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* (1986)[241]. The use of Marxist categories in theological work, an overly politicized concept of liberation, and the advocacy of revolutionary violence as a means of social change received major criticism in these documents. While affirming the need for justice for the poor and a nuanced use of the idea of liberation, both documents advocated a more spiritual understanding of salvation from sin and defended the traditional sacramental ministry of the church. While the second instruction expressed a more positive appreciation for the theme of liberation, the term was appropriated into more traditional conceptuality based on freedom from sin. In response to the Vatican criticisms of liberation theology, many liberation theologians refused to acknowledge that the criticisms accurately depicted their own thought and writings. Some sought to appropriate the more positive references in the instructions into their own work.

More than anything else it was the appointment of a series of more conservative bishops throughout Latin America, many who were opponents of liberation thought, that had the greatest effect on interrupting the influence of liberation theology. The decade of the 1980s ended with a monumental and little-anticipated event that had dramatic significance for the future of Latin American liberation theology: the end of the Soviet Union, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the collapse of the Eastern Block.[242] In Nicaragua the defeat of the Sandinista party in the elections of February 1990 symbolized the arrival of the new world order to Latin America.

World historical events seemed to have overtaken the vision of liberation for a more just future in Latin America.

The 1990s and Beyond

The triumph of global capitalism beginning in the 1990s created a dramatically different context for liberation theologians. Dramatic structural change in the direction of socialism seemed impossible in the new political and economic context. The framing of the international landscape shifted from a confrontation between East and West to the enormous disparity between North and South. While the need for social justice among the poor was as great as or greater than ever, advocating for structural change employing the previous arguments appeared futile. As a consequence many liberation theologians began giving primary energy to local and regional issues (for example, climate change and deforestation) rather than focusing on macroeconomic issues. One particular focus was opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was understood to increase the dependency the Latin American countries on the North, thereby negatively affecting the lives of the poor.

CELAM IV, meeting at Santo Domingo in 1992, offered the increased number of conservative bishops the occasion for consolidating opposition to the perspective of liberation theology. Unofficial advisors were carefully excluded from conference proceedings, and the concluding document depends on traditional theological categories that are employed apart from a close connection to the Latin American context.[243] By contrast, the five-hundred-year anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas also in 1992 gave occasion for addressing the decimation of the native peoples by the European conquest. Theologians were able to offer analysis of the failure of the church to defend the rights of the indigenous peoples from a liberation perspective. Gustavo Gutiérrez authored a major work on Las Casas as a significant contribution to historical memory of this event.[244]

The expanded influence of Pentecostalism in Latin American offered the poor an alternative to the viewpoint of liberation theology. While Pentecostalism received much of its support from churches in North America and some with decided anti-liberation theology intent, Pentecostal congregations with their emphasis on the Spirit's work in the lives of the people could easily become indigenized among the Latin American poor. The mutual support by members of the Pentecostal fellowship, including what was needed for

basic human survival, offered a practical and concrete response to the poverty that liberation theology had also attempted to address. David Martin has argued that Pentecostalism helped Christians in Latin America, including many formerly involved in the base-community movement, to adjust to the new economic and political realities after the end of the socialist era and the victory of global capitalism.[245]

Increasingly by the 1990s dramatic changes in the political order, economy, institutional church, and society had interrupted the earlier momentum of liberation theology. This led many commentators, particularly critics, to speak of the "end" of liberation theology or even its "death."[246] Another challenge involved the emergence of a new generation of liberation theologians, equipped to engage the changed context from a liberation perspective.

David Tombs has argued that the very concept of liberation had lost its currency in the changed global environment. Nevertheless, the achievements of liberation theology needed to be recognized and appreciated.

Despite this, liberation theology leaves a potent legacy within theology. It highlighted the political significance of all theological work, questioned the value of intellectual study divorced from action, stressed the value of dialogue with those beyond the academy, and identified the struggles of the poor and oppressed as a privileged epistemological *locus* for an engaged theology. [247]

Tombs stressed the shift in liberation theology over the decades from a highly political and economic understanding of liberation to an epistemological understanding of liberation that privileged the perspective of the poor for theology. In addition, liberation theology has brought to prominence for theology and the church many biblical texts that demonstrate God's concern for the poor and oppressed.

Rather than claiming the demise of liberation theology, an unfinished task is to examine the manifold ways Latin American liberation theology has altered the entire global theological and ecclesial scene. For example, the ways systematic theology itself has been changed by the contributions of liberation theologians remains to be examined and documented.[248] In this way the perspective of liberation theology should no longer be understood as an enclave within theology but a dimension of all contemporary theology.

In concluding this account of liberation theology's contributions to Latin American history it is important to note how this history continues to unfold among the Latin American people. The primary actors in this history remain nameless in this account. It is important to emphasize the unwritten history that continues to unfold in the parishes and Christian communities of Latin America.

2. Liberation Theology's Critique of Luther's Two-Kingdoms Doctrine

THE THEOLOGIES OF liberation have undertaken as part of their agenda a thorough examination and critique of the fundamentals of the Western theological tradition. Latin American liberation theology in particular has subjected Western theology to rigorous criticism for its Euro-centrism, subjectivism, and intellectualism.[1] Liberation theology has insisted that theological attention be directed instead to the historical context of Latin America (not Europe), to the lives of poor people (not the reflection of the thinking subject), and to praxis (not intellectual apologetics). In carrying out their critique, particular liberation theologians have commented on many individual points of doctrine, including the continuing political impact of Luther's two-kingdoms formula. While some, like Hugo Assmann, have simply dismissed Luther's though as hopelessly dualistic,[2] others, like Juan Luis Segundo and Walter Altmann, have given Luther a more thorough hearing. This chapter will concentrate on the thought of these two theologians and offer an evaluation of their arguments based on the writings of Luther himself.

Juan Luis Segundo: The Liberation of Theology

Already in his book *The Liberation of Theology* (1975), Juan Luis Segundo traced what he believed to be a critical failure in contemporary European and North American political theology to its root in Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine.[3] Segundo, drawing on the work of Harvard church historian James S. Preus,[4] charged that in Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, the doctrine of justification becomes wrongly depoliticized. Luther (in order to provide a political basis for its reforms) divided society, by means of the two-kingdoms doctrine, into a religious realm to which the doctrine of justification properly pertained and a secular realm to which it did not. By emancipating the reform-minded princes from their tutelage to Rome, Luther succeeded in establishing the political foundation upon which his proposals for reform

could continue. The cost of this move, however, was the effective severance of the secular authority from the gospel imperatives of justice and righteousness. The depolitization of the doctrine of justification in Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine effectively rendered the state autonomous. The church provided the function of legitimizing the state insofar as the preaching of an individualized gospel was not threatened.

Both Segundo and Preus do recognize a liberating moment in Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. Insofar as the temporal entanglements of the Roman Church threatened to make impossible the preaching of the gospel of justification, its power had to be radically questioned. Preus in particular sees a shift, however, in the thrust of Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine from its early "liberating function" over against Rome to a more constrictive function commencing with the formation of territorial churches based on the principle "*cuius regio, eius religio*." This constricting of the more liberating political aspects of the two-kingdoms doctrine bore its bitterest fruit, according to Preus, in Luther's defense of the princes against the peasants in the Peasants' Revolt.[5]

This depoliticizing of the doctrine of justification via the doctrine of the two kingdoms leads, in Segundo's analysis, to major difficulties in those political theologies deriving from the Lutheran heritage. Segundo cites Reinhold Niebuhr regarding the devastating consequences in Hitler's Germany of a two-kingdoms doctrine that tended to divide the world into a "realm of heaven" for the governance of individual morality and a " realm of earth" to govern official morality.[6]

Political theologies, such as those of Rudolf Weth and Rubem Alves (who although Brazilian is characterized as a disciple of Moltmann), are faulted not for their theological neglect of things political but rather for their failure to adequately mediate between the revolutionary activity of God in bringing to fulfillment God's own eschatological kingdom and any specifiable political activity of humanity in the present. Every causal relationship between human historical activity and the constructing of God's eschatological kingdom is carefully avoided. The current political theologies are far more successful at providing the "eschatological relativization of any and every existing historical reality"[7] than they are at constructing a definable political program. The failure to identify a clear political agenda insures that these political theologies at best remain neutral and at worst undermine the enthusiasm necessary to generate a revolution.

Segundo also applies this criticism in a different way to the political theology of Richard Shaull. While Shaull does not hesitate to articulate

the basics of a political program, he does fail to provide a sufficient linkage between said program and the eschatological future to be ushered in by God. When pressed to describe the relationship between what God brings into being and human collaboration, Shaull becomes too vague for Segundo. He is faulted for speaking only of the human attitudes of hope, freedom, and service that God awakens, not, however, of the historical impact made by a concrete political agenda in the creation of God's kingdom.

Segundo criticizes Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine for its depoliticizing of the doctrine of justification. While the freedom of the gospel that Luther defended was a freedom "from" all external works, it was not matched by an adequate elaboration of what those freed by the gospel are freed "for." The two-kingdoms concept led to an individualized preaching of the gospel within the confines of the church and a neglect of the implications of the gospel for a just society. The consequences of two-kingdoms thinking can be seen in the work of political theologians who sharply distinguish between an eschatological future to be inaugurated by God and any specific political program. Because it leads to political passivity, Segundo argues for the abandonment of the two-kingdoms schema that bifurcates reality into distinct and mutually exclusive realms.

Walter Altmann: God's Kingship in the Church and in Politics

Walter Altmann, President of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, differs markedly from Segundo both in his interpretation of Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine and of its potential contribution to a contemporary political theology.[8] While Altmann would agree with Segundo regarding the *use* of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms to legitimize a number of diverse modern political ideologies (for example, the separation of church and state in the United States, the facism of Nazi Germany, or the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile), he would further argue that this use is a misappropriation of Luther's thought:

> I wish to state very clearly, beforehand, that the dichotomic dualism between church and state cannot be legitimately ascribed to Luther. It is true that he drew a distinction of competencies between one and the other, but he has never separated them as autonomous identities. The distinction seemed to be an indispensable task for him. His purpose was very clear: to stand against the corruption of the church which had become a temporal and political power.[9]

Instead of marking a clear separation between church and state, Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine is an attempt to return to the state its proper competence in administering secular affairs. In a historical period when the church had usurped massive political power, Luther "turns himself very radically against the political power of popes and bishops (who were often political authorities), against the system of feudal ecclesiastical properties, against the civil jurisprudence of the church, against it complicated and diversified fiscal system, etc."[10] Luther objected vehemently that such political power was being wielded in the name of the Christian gospel. His proposal for reform was a return of political power to the secular authorities, the very ones whom God intended to occupy these positions. Luther encouraged in particular the Christian nobility to see in their baptism the basis for their calling to exercise temporal authority, to guard against political chaos, and to administer political matters justly. That Luther never systematically separated church and state can be illustrated by his repeated admonitions to Christian rulers to live up to their God-given calling. Not only did Luther seek to dignify the public vocations of political authorities, judges, educators, and soldiers, but he also continued to admonish them in the name of God to live up to their calling.

Where Segundo sees in Luther's two-kingdoms concept the foundation for a strict separation of church and state, Altmann argues for a dialectical understanding of their inter-relationship:

> Thus the so-called "two Kingdoms" can be distinguished regarding their duties and means, but they overlap each other in terms of space. Besides, they are together based on one foundation—God is the Lord of both—and they have a common goal—the good of all humanity. Church and state are therefore instrumentalized, limiting and binding themselves reciprocally. The state limits and regulates the church as a social institution (for example, in matters of property). The church proclaims God's will to the state (for example, criticizing its arbitrariness or calling it to work for social, political, and economic transformations).[11]

While Luther's specific admonition and advice to the Christian nobility may appear from a later historical perspective to be at times tragic if not wrong, nonetheless one cannot accurately accuse Luther of a strict separation of church and state.

In interpreting Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine, Altmann emphasizes that Luther's worldview was fully pre-modern. Luther operated

unquestioningly within the idea of "Christendom." Secular authorities were, for Luther, still functioning within a temporal order under the direct rule of God. Thus Luther offered without hesitation his counsel and advice to those holding office, especially if they were Christians. The notion of an autonomous secular state functioning independent of divine control would have been incomprehensible to Luther.

On the basis of his interpretation of Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine, Altmann proceeds to differentiate Luther's dialectical model of the relationship between church and state from: (1) a model structuring the separation of church and state and (2) a model establishing an alliance between church and state. Models of the first type, which separate between church and state, can lead either to the demonizing of politics and concomitant withdrawal of "true" Christians from the political arena, or to the rendering of politics as fully autonomous. Where politics is understood as its own autonomous activity, the church avoids interference in political affairs. To do so would be to pervert the true nature of the gospel, which properly applies only to the realm of private faith and morality. As examples of this model, Altmann mentions both the National-Socialism of Nazi Germany and the principle of the separation of church and state widespread in the United States.[12] In criticizing the model of the separation of church and state, Altmann approximates Segundo's position regarding the negative consequences of depoliticizing the gospel. The essential difference, however, is that Segundo directs his criticism at Luther whereas Altmann at a misappropriation of Luther's thought.

Altmann would also differentiate Luther's dialectical model of the relationship between church and state from a model that attempts their alliance. Altmann argues that any attempted alliance between church and state leads inevitably to the domination of one by the other. Attempted alliances eventually result either in the domination by the church over the state (for example, certain periods of the Middle Ages) or in the domination by the state over the church (for example, the establishment of Lutheran state churches in Germany and Scandinavia and the use of the church by the state in the colonization of Latin America). The serious failure, according to Altmann, of both the model of the separation of church and state and the model of their alliance is their inability to challenge the use and abuse of power. Each of these models serves in its own way to buttress the position of those holding power.

The model that Altmann defends based on his reading of Luther (with reference to the work of Ulrich Duchrow) is a dialectical one. History as a

whole is understood as a battleground between God and the devil in which humanity and creation are inexorably involved. God stands for justice, truth, hope, and faith, whereas the devil and the devil's idols seek to work injustice, untruth, despair, and sin. The individual human being, the church, and the state are each in their own way caught up in the struggle between the new reality belonging to the kingdom of God and the old reality belonging to the rule of Satan. While the final eschatological victory of God has been guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ, the outcome of a given historical instance in the ongoing battle between God and the devil remains in doubt. What is decisive in this model is not demarcating the relationship between the church and state but rather evaluating them both on the basis of how they are contributing to the cause of justice. In spite of widespread criticism of Luther as one who was subservient to political authority, Altmann looks to several instances in Luther's preaching where he directly challenged the perceived abuses of political rulers.

On the basis of Luther's own dialectical approach to the two kingdoms, Altmann rejects all dualistic approaches that separate gospel and politics, church and state. The devastating consequences of all dualistic approaches can be read from the annals of Latin American history. Only a dialectical model can take with utmost seriousness the historical situation in allowing the church to opt at a given moment for a position of (1) critical-constructive participation, (2) critical-passive resistance, or (3) critical-active transformation vis-à-vis the state based on the criterion of what best serves the cause of justice.

Evaluating Liberation Theology's Critique

The arguments of Segundo and Altmann raise numerous issues regarding both an adequate understanding of Luther's two-kingdoms schema in its original context and its appropriate contribution to a contemporary political ethic. The following five theses are offered as proposals for guiding this discussion beyond its present contradictions and confusions. Insofar as they are correct, they may have a wider application to the entire theological discussion of Luther's two-kingdoms teaching.

1. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between Luther's own application of the two-kingdoms concept in his own historical situation and the use that has been made of the two kingdoms as a "doctrine" in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Too often the writings of Luther have been used

facilely by theologians in their eagerness to draw contemporary political lessons based on the authority of Luther.[13] Ulrich Duchrow has documented at length the emergence in Germany of Luther's two-kingdoms concept as a "doctrine" late in the nineteenth century.[14] Whether articulated by confessional theologians with emphasis upon the political authority as an "order of creation" or by liberal theologians with emphasis on the autonomy of both social institutions and the natural order, the primary consequence was the same: the subservience of the church to the established political order and the withdrawal of religion into the private sphere.[15] Increasingly the nineteenth-century dualism between an autonomous public order and a privatized religious devotion came to be super-imposed upon the two-kingdoms categories of Luther.[16] It is this nineteenth-century dualistic interpretation of the two kingdoms that has become the basis for extensive debate in the twentieth century, especially because of its impact on political ethics in the course of two world wars.[17] It was not until the controversy surrounding Luther's concept of the two kingdoms in the wake of German national socialism in the 1930s that the elements of Luther's teaching coalesced into the technical designation, "the doctrine of the two kingdoms."[18] Insofar as this doctrine of the two kingdoms was used as an ideological support for acquiescence to the Third Reich in Germany under Hitler, it has been subject to severe criticism for leading the church into political quietism.[19]

Given this transformation of Luther's two-kingdoms teaching of the sixteenth century into a two-kingdoms doctrine in the early twentieth century, contemporary theology is well served by interpretations of Luther that are rigorously historical in understanding Luther within his own context and worldview. Of the two Latin American theologians here discussed, only Altmann attempts to differentiate between the thought of Luther himself and the subsequent misappropriation of Luther's thought for ideological purposes. Segundo's criticism of the ideological consequences of the doctrine of the two kingdoms is especially appropriate when applied to modern interpreters of Luther.

2. The inherent differences between the worldview of Luther out of which he developed his schema and the current understanding of things political seriously limits its usefulness for the construction of a contemporary political ethic. The presuppositions that guided Luther's two-kingdoms thought diverge enormously from post-Enlightenment presuppositions about what is politically possible.

For Luther, it was God's providential hand that directed history and insured that evil be judged not only at history's closure but also at decisive

moments within history. The significance of the human will and human actors in shaping the outcome of specific historical periods is minimized.[20] History, according to Luther, is a drama in which God is the director and human beings the actors whose willing and acting are held within quite narrow parameters.[21]

Luther held that the end of the age was very near and that the warfare between God and Satan was to be particularly intense as this world came to an end.[22] Social and political chaos was for Luther a seed sown by Satan and for that reason Luther favored in principle an established order that provided order and stability.

Luther was convinced that the given political authorities had been instituted by God for the purpose of punishing wickedness and maintaining peace, law, and order. No passage of Scripture was quoted more frequently by Luther in relation to politics than Roman 13:1: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." Luther's confidence that God was the one who sanctioned the authority of those in power gave a fundamentally conservative slant to many of his political utterances.

Luther operated under the giveness by God of both the territorial rule of the nobility and the feudal economic system. Luther was a man bound by his setting in that he could not begin to imagine a participatory form of government. The world was an ordered hierarchy with God at the pinnacle and the territorial ruler as God's chosen representative for administrating temporal affairs. Democracy as a political alternative simply remained inconceivable to Luther. Likewise the feudal economic system was for Luther immutable.[23] What Luther had to say about the innovations of early capitalism was highly critical. However, "[of] the far-reaching economic revolution which was gradually transforming Germany from a nation of peasant agriculturalists into a society with at least the beginnings of a capitalist economy, he had no conception whatsoever."[24]

Another basic presupposition, correlative to his emphasis upon the God-instituted authority of the political rulers, is Luther's stress upon the Christian's duty to suffer injustice.[25] It is only for the sake of the harm to the neighbor that disobedience might be justified . However, even in such a case, the means by which opposition is to be expressed is through a word of admonition designed to persuade rulers, not through the use of force or rebellion.[26]

Each of these presuppositions differs enormously from modern political presuppositions. While the presuppositions of Luther may well serve as

a foil over against which a modern viewpoint might be challenged and re-examined, this does not change the fact that a vast gap separates his thought from post-Enlightenment political presuppositions. The activity of God is no longer seen in such providential, even interventionist, terms. No longer are political decisions shaped by an imminent apocalyptic eschatology. No longer are specific political leaders understood as instituted by God. Political democracy and modern economic systems (whether capitalism, socialism, or communism) have supplanted the territorial rule of a feudal nobility. The servile attitude by which Christians are to suffer injustice has now the French, American, and Russian revolutions as its modern counterpoint. No longer in the modern period is admonition of the ruler given such significance. Rather, the use of checks and balances and a rule of law are to govern even the behavior of political leaders. All of this is to underscore the gap that separates Luther from modern political understandings and to caution against facile attempts to apply Luther's political thought to contemporary political issues.

3. A dialectical model of understanding Luther's two-kingdoms schema is more adequate than a dualistic model. A dualistic model separating church and state fails to comprehend the many tensions and complexities found in Luther's political thought. If there exists any dualism in Luther's two-kingdoms concept, it is the opposition between the rule of God and the rule of Satan (as elaborated by Altmann with reference to Duchrow), not any dualism between church and state.

Church and state are each in their own way to serve in the cause of God against the power of Satan. The church has as its task the proclamation of the gospel of redemption in Jesus Christ through Word and sacrament. The state has as its task the preservation of temporal order and justice against the threatened chaos of the devil. Both church and state are to be mutually supportive of one another in ensuring that they each fulfill their assigned task. Therefore it is proper, on the one hand, for the church to admonish the temporal rulers in the fulfilling of their God-assigned duties. And it is likewise proper for the church to resist the state when it threatens the church's freedom to proclaim the gospel. The state, on the other hand, has as its responsibility the protection of the church's freedom to preach the gospel. And it properly resists any attempts by the church to overtake its responsibility for temporal rule. One of Satan's ploys, according to Luther, is to confuse either church or state into usurping the task assigned by God to the other. The two-kingdoms schema was developed by Luther in order to clarify the proper task of each and to unify them in their common assault upon Satan's power.

The way in which Luther applies his two-kingdoms teaching in any given instance is complex and decisively shaped by the particularities of that situation. It is a dialectical model for interpreting Luther's two-kingdoms writings that can best do justice to the complicated arguments which Luther employs in defending a course of action in a specific situation. For example, a dualistic model cannot begin to appreciate the complex line of argumentation offered by Luther in "Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People" (1531) as he comes to defend resistance to the emperor.[27] By articulating a dialectical model, Altmann more adequately represents the complexities of Luther's two-kingdoms thought than does Segundo's dualistic interpretation.

4. The constant and decisive factor that lends clarity to all of Luther's diverse utterances on political affairs is *his consistent defense of the freedom to proclaim the gospel*. One of the greatest confusions surrounding the discussion of Luther's two-kingdoms writings in the last century has been to view them primarily as political statements rather than as theological. Contrary to the position of Segundo (and Preus), the argument for a shift in Luther's political viewpoint from radical (against Rome) to conservative (as he obtained the protection of the Electors of Saxony) is unwarranted. *Luther's political position is perfectly consistent when measured by the criterion of what best guards the free proclamation of the gospel!*

Against Rome's entanglement in temporal rule and the resulting abuses that overshadowed the church's primary task of gospel proclamation, Luther thundered his protest against indulgences, relics, the system of benefices, annates, the papal bureaucracy, investiture, papal regalia, the use of the interdict, special masses, etc.[28] Luther defended the temporal rule of political office holders in order to stem the tide of the Roman abuses that obscured the gospel.

Although ordered by Prince Frederick to remain at the Wartburg, Luther felt himself compelled to defy this order and return to Wittenberg in order to protect the gospel from the onslaught by the fanatic "Zwickian prophets."[29] For the sake of the gospel Luther asserted his right to religious freedom even when banned by the church and designated an outlaw by the emperor. Luther also advocated defiance of the order by temporal rulers that would have had his books publicly burned, this again because his books witnessed to the right proclamation of Christ's gospel.[30]

Even the position taken by Luther during the Peasant's revolt can be understood as consistent when evaluated on the basis of what he believed best guarded the free proclamation of the gospel. While the Roman church

of the sixteenth century had to be challenged for obscuring the gospel of Christ, for the same reasons it was the peasants and not the princes who obscured the true gospel during the peasants' uprising.[31] Luther sided with the princes against the peasants because they were the ones who, in his estimation, best guaranteed the conditions under which the correct proclamation of the gospel might continue.

A final example of the consistency of Luther's application of his two-kingdoms concept is his support in the 1530s of possible resistance to the emperor in the eventuality that military action be taken to suppress the Protestant movement.[32] Luther saw such resistance justified in self-defense against the machinations of the pope who was manipulating the emperor.[33] Again Luther's foremost concern is the preservation of the freedom to proclaim the gospel.

This brief survey of the political positions taken by Luther reveals a consistency in his application of the two-kingdoms concept when understood principally as a theological construct in defense of the gospel. While the two-kingdoms schema clearly also bore political consequences, these must be seen as secondary to Luther's primary theological interest.

5. Unresolved in the contemporary debate about the two-kingdoms concept of Luther is the question of whether or not the gospel of Jesus Christ does have intrinsic political significance. To return to the arguments of Segundo and Altmann, it is appropriate to ask: Is the heritage of Luther's two-kingdoms "doctrine" really responsible for the "fastidious depolarization of the doctrine of justification" (Segundo)? Is the criterion employed by Altmann in his evaluation of the proper use of the two kingdoms (i.e., whether or not it contributes to the cause of justice) faithful either to Luther or inherent in the gospel itself? Or is it perhaps the case that the New Testament gospel itself already is a depoliticized gospel?

Fundamentally at issue in the controversy over Luther's two-kingdoms writings is the very definition of the gospel itself.[34] Already in the New Testament there appears to exist tension between Jesus' proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God and, for example, Paul's preaching of the gospel of justification. Much depends on one's understanding of the nature of the salvation promised by the biblical gospel. If the gospel of Jesus Christ offers salvation first to individuals who then subsequently may (or may not) work for the redemption of the political order, then it is fair to say the gospel itself is depoliticized, regardless of what Luther and his interpreters have subsequently done to expound it. If however, the gospel of Jesus Christ offers salvation not only to individuals but also to the entire creation (cf.

the Hebrew idea of *shalom*), then it would appear the gospel itself insists on fulfillment not only in the lives of individuals but also in political life. The entire debate about Luther's two-kingdoms concept revolves in this way on no less an issue than the very definition of the gospel itself and the nature of the salvation that this gospel promises.