

that they have a different method of fighting and a different form of "justice" to that taught by Amos. It is very presumptuous and quite undefendable to equate the courageous preaching of Amos with the terrorist tactics of ZANU, and the Theocracy of Israel with the Marxist-socialism of present-day communist revolutionaries.

Liberation theologians will also quote *Isaiah 61:1-2* as their ultimate proof-text. Christ came to: **"proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners."**

But this argument has a hollow ring to it. No matter how much they try to equate Jesus with a politically subversive revolutionary, the fact remains that Jesus rejected the role of a political leader (John 6:15); He taught submission to authority (Luke 20:25); He claimed that *"My Kingdom does not belong to this world"*, John 18:36; He never spoke against the oppressive foreign domination of the corrupt Roman government; He lived and taught a life of non-violence; and He told the people to pay the taxes they owed to the Romans (Mark 12:17).

It is unacceptable to try and justify hunger-strikes for criminals in jail, subversion, riots and terrorist warfare by an appeal to Christ's role as a Liberator. To truly follow the example of Christ would involve a far deeper revolution - that of Regeneration. Revolutions destroy society and kill people. Jesus changes attitudes and gives new life to individuals. What we need in South Africa is not a theology of revolution, justifying and inciting violence - what we need is a Theology of peace. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Liberation and Political Theologians, in their selectiveness, have ignored the teaching of the Scripture that God also loves the "oppressors", that Christ also died for the rich. They neglect to emphasise that the poor and "oppressed" will also face God's future Judgement unless they repent from their personal sin and believe the true Gospel. They do not give proper place to the Biblical doctrines of the lostness of man and the inability of salvation outside of Christ.

**I find that they have a perverted view of justice, a biased view of history, and a highly selective treatment of Scripture. Their Marxist philosophy has pre-determined their selection of Scriptural texts and their interpretations of those texts. Their "theology" is very unbalanced and lacking the essentials of the Christian Gospel of Salvation and Discipleship.**

**Their perspective of history is distorted, their consciences are selective and their motives are questionable. Their treatment of Scripture is shameful and blasphemous, and their attitude to Society very dangerously subversive.**

**The Bible does teach us to be involved in our society, loving our neighbours and helping to meet their needs. It also commands us to respect those in authority, pay our taxes, pray for all leaders and support their attempts to implement justice. Only when faced with a government order forbidding obedience to God, may we disobey. But violent revolution is clearly forbidden.**

Scripture is meant to be understood in its natural and most obvious sense. Political philosophies tend to distort this clarity and find allegories in some incidents of Scripture which they then complicate and apply to illustrate their bias. The historical-grammatical method of Scriptural interpretation is essential to understand the original sense of the message.

Yet, all too often, a political bias will ignore this and make unjustified parallels and assumptions from a Biblical story meant to teach something completely different. **Scripture interprets Scripture**, yet politically motivated theologians use their philosophy and interpretation of their situation to re-interpret Scripture. Their selective treatment of Scripture abuses this principle of **the harmony of Scripture**.

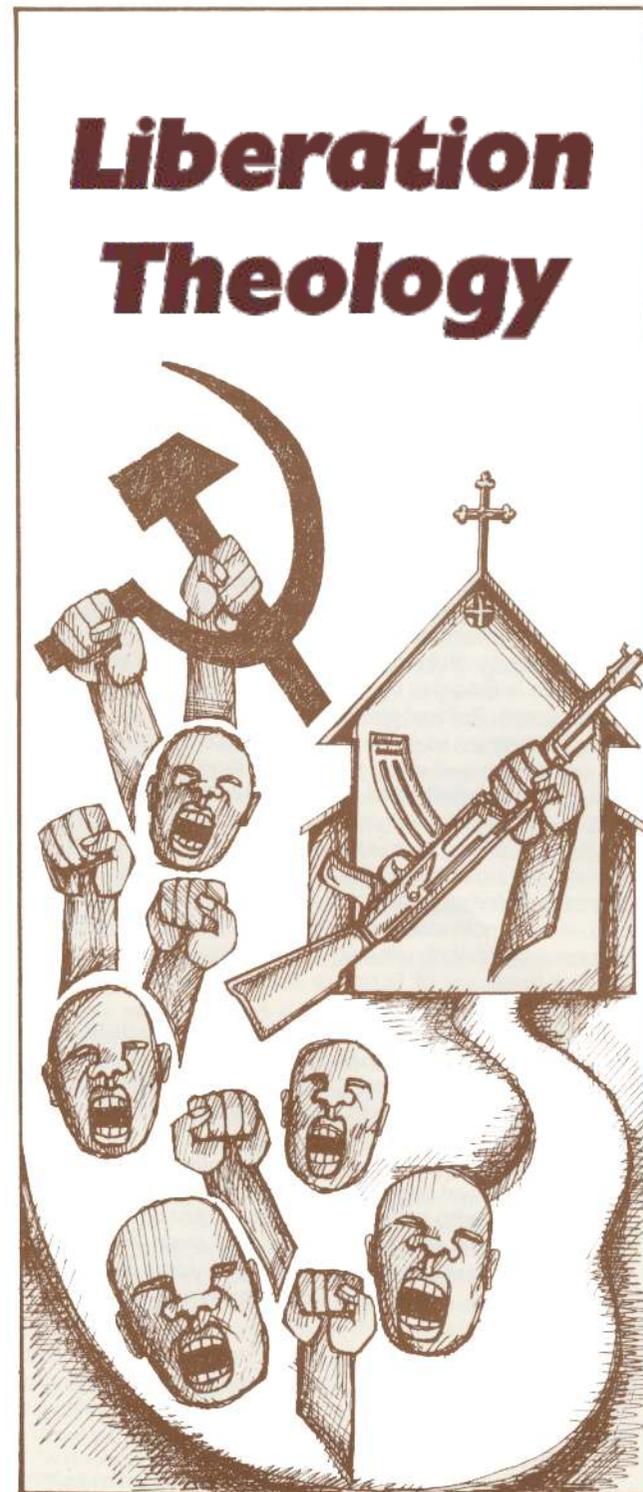
**I find liberation theology a totally unacceptable distortion of the Scriptures. Their "gospel" is Marxism, their "kingdom" is communism, their "freedom" ends up in oppression, their "evangelism" is subversion and violence, and their "missionaries" are terrorists. This is neither a theology nor a liberation.**

**"I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the One who called you by the Grace of Christ, and are accepting another gospel. But even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different... may he be condemned to hell!" Galatians 1:6,8**

1. "The Cape Times" (29.7.83) reporting on the WCC Assembly at Vancouver.
2. Ecumenical Press Service, 21-25 September 1984.
3. "Under the Red Dragon", by H. Martinson, page 134, Augsburg Publishing.
4. "Lenin on Religion", published by Novosti Press, Moscow, 1983.
5. The Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) was the forerunner of the Marxist MPLA. In 1961, after 42 women, children and men were run through a sawmill buzz-saw at Matadi by GRAE terrorists, the WCC granted them R37 500 - "The Fabric of Terror", Teixeira, 1965, pages 77-90.
6. FRELIMO, a "Marxist-Leninist vanguard party", declared war on the Church in Mocambique in 1977 and has been vicious in its persecution of Christians.
7. The Patriotic Front, responsible for the murder of civilians on airliners, as well as missionaries, women and children in the most gruesome ways, was granted R22 500 by the WCC in 1979.
8. SWAPO, which received 90% of its military and 60% of its general support from Communist states, also received US \$100 000 from the WCC in 1984.
9. This terrorist group received US\$70 000 from the WCC in 1984.
10. This Communist, Cuban-supported, terror group took over Nicaragua with WCC support in 1979.
11. "Evangelicals and Liberation", Armerding, page 24.
12. "Protestant Biblical Interpretation", Ramm, page 169.
13. "A Theology of Liberation", Gutierrez, S.C.M., page 159.
14. "Protestant Biblical Interpretation", Ramm, page 177.



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# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARX

It was with shock that I first read of Bishop Tutu, of the South African Council of Churches, praising the arrival of a Marxist-socialist government in Zimbabwe. He described this take-over by the communist ZANU terrorists (who had been responsible for the murders of 40 missionaries and hundreds of black evangelists, pastors and believers), as "*the arrival of the Kingdom of God in Zimbabwe*". (*Ecu News Bulletin*, 11/1980).

It was just as bewildering to hear this same clergyman thanking the communist dictator, Samora Machel, for all that he and his Frelimo government had done for Mozambique! This seemed an amazing attitude to take towards an atheist who had declared war on the Church in 1975, destroyed or confiscated over 8 000 churches, imprisoned tens of thousands of believers, massacred thousands more, banned the Bible and expelled all missionaries (*In the Killing Fields of Mozambique*).

It seems impossible that religious leaders, such as Allan Boesak, could plead for "*church support of the oppressed to take up arms in their struggle*" against the South African government.

Yet these attitudes and pronouncements are perfectly understandable in the light of their theology. To understand this political theology is to understand why the World Council of Churches (WCC) could grant millions of dollars to terrorist organisations, including - SWAPO, ANC, and PAC.<sup>2</sup>

To listen to the teachings of these "liberation theologians" is to learn a different "language", to enter into another "world", to hear another "gospel".

*"The faith of Communism has gripped the world as no other movement since the rise of Christianity. I am convinced that a synthesis of the two faiths is possible and will eventually bring blessings to the entire human race ... Is Communism Christian? I say 'YES'."*<sup>3</sup>

This is the view of Rev. Dr. Hewlett Johnson, the "*Red Dean*" of Canterbury. Yet the very first sentence of the first chapter of "Lenin on Religion", states that:

**"Atheism is the natural and inseparable part of Marxism."**<sup>4</sup> A Marxist philosophy and analysis of socio-economic history is at the heart of liberation theology.

As a sharp reaction to the traditional notion of God "**up there**", objectively revealed in the Scriptures, many modern theologians began to speak of God "**down here**", involved and immersed in human history and encountered and experienced in our daily existence. This trend sees itself in an emphasis of the **here and now** rather than a study of past history. It is more subjective than objective. It is more concerned with **society** than an individual's soul. It is an attempt to present a relevant, up-to-date, practical theology attractive to the oppressed and effective in destroying unwanted "structures" of society.

To such people as Gutierrez, author of "*A Theology of Liberation*", theology must begin, not with the Scriptures, but with the

sociological reality, the present social and political involvement of the Church, interpreted by the use of the social sciences. Out of this understanding of the **socio-political** situation, the interpreter develops a new basis for understanding the Scriptures. Another essential ingredient of this political theology is their concept of the Kingdom of God as the ideal social and political order. Gutierrez regards this order as both the judgement of all present *unjust* regimes, and social forms, and the inspiration of all attempts to create a "new man", reshaping our lives.

This political theology is based on individuals' interpretations of circumstances and their commitment to a specific political solution. They maintain that *God is on the side of the poor and the oppressed*, that *capitalist democracies are evil*, that *the rich are exploiters* and that *socialist revolution is the answer*.

The ultimate result of this political hermeneutic, and theology of revolution, or *liberation*, is that these theologians side with what they term "*freedom fighters*" engaged in violent opposition to South Africa, South West Africa and right-wing South American governments. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that anything that is anti-capitalist, anti-free-enterprise, anti-democracy, whatever is anti-western, whatever is anti-White, any group that is committed to a violent overthrow of a Western status quo - that movement will be supported by liberation theologians. They have an amazing bias for communist/socialist terrorist/guerilla groups.

In practice this has resulted in such political theologians supporting vocally, morally and financially Marxist terrorist groups such as GRAE,<sup>5</sup> FRELIMO,<sup>6</sup> ZANU and ZAPU,<sup>7</sup> SWAPO,<sup>8</sup> ANC,<sup>9</sup> FSNL,<sup>10</sup> etc.

The question that arises from a merely practical point of view, is this: **Who decides who is oppressed and who is the oppressor?** The answer is not as simple as some would have us believe.

Why are communist guerilla groups supported, and why are anti-communist guerilla groups never helped? Why were the RENAMO in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola, ZAPU dissidents in Zimbabwe, and Afghan guerillas fighting Soviet oppression not supported? Are communists never guilty of oppression or exploitation? Was not the Soviet Union one of the most oppressive totalitarian states in the world? Why did we never hear a word of condemnation of Soviet oppression of the Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Bulgarians, Afghans, etc.?

Was Mao Tse Tung's "*cultural revolution*" not unjust? Were these massacres of millions acceptable to liberation theologians? Is the murder of defenceless missionaries and harmless babies just? Why was the WCC silent on Iran and Libya? Why was Idi Amin never criticized by these liberation theologians? Did they regard these actions as "*God involved in liberating the oppressed*"?

Dr. Martin Luther taught that: "*The best teacher is the one who does not bring his meaning into the Scripture but gets his meaning from the Scripture.*"

Liberation theology did not grow out of a study of the Scriptures, but out of a Marxist analysis of socio-political history. It then sought to strengthen, or justify, its philosophy from the Scriptures. In doing this, political theologians brought their message to the Scriptures

and sought to inject their Marxist philosophy of revolution into the Scriptural texts and give a "liberation" content to the words of the Bible.

The philosophy of Marxist revolution determined the selection of texts and this philosophy also gave the content and predetermined their interpretation of these Biblical texts. Liberation theologians, for example, simplistically identify the "*poor*" in Scripture with the "*oppressed proletariat*" of Marxist philosophy. They also presumptuously attribute the activities of anti-western terrorist/guerilla groups to God. In claiming that God is at work in the processes of History, and that God is always on the side of the poor and the oppressed, liberation theologians see any activity that attacks what they term an "oppressive structure" as God's activity. In practice this highly subjective approach is open to every bias and prejudice of the interpreter.

*"A Theology of Liberation, by Contrast, seems to find too little in the Bible, and too much in a Marxist analysis, all the way down to the style and methods of participation in the liberation process. As a result, the Bible seems to function too much as merely a book of illustrations for a story written essentially from other sources."*<sup>11</sup>

This political theology is not as concerned with the discovery of the doctrines of Scripture as with the transformation of the world from a Western democratic rule of law style to a Marxist-Socialist form of society. Yet one of the principal rules of Protestant hermeneutics is that: "**Theology must be grounded in Revelation and not in philosophy.**"<sup>12</sup>

**In that political theologians teach that God is against evil, that He is for the poor and oppressed and committed to justice, they are correct. The problem comes in when their Marxist philosophy pre-determines what is evil and what is good. It is their concept of justice that creates the difficulty, and it is their violent view of how that justice is achieved that most Christians will take issue with.**

Liberation theologians appeal to the deliverance of the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt as recorded in *Exodus* as a key illustration of how God favours the oppressed and destroys the oppressors.<sup>13</sup> Yet, as Ramm puts it: "*The mere listing of proof texts is of no value unless each verse is underwritten by sound exegetical work. It is disconcerting to discover how many verses set down in a book of theology to prove a point melt away when each is examined rather vigorously from the standpoint of exegesis.*"<sup>14</sup>

In fact, this is just the kind of hermeneutical error that political theologians fall into often - particularly with this example from **Exodus**. They missed the main point. God liberated the Hebrews - not a left-wing guerilla group using terrorist tactics. God judged the Egyptians - not the World Council of Churches. God delivered and transformed and forged the Hebrews into a nation of Israel - they did not forge their own destinies. God took the initiative - not man. Moses got his guidance from God - not from Marx!

The Book of **Amos** is another favourite Scripture used by political theologians to support their argument. As Amos fought for "a just social order", so too do they. This sounds impressive except