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LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN EUROPE **LA TEOLOGÍA DE LA LIBERACIÓN EN EUROPA**

VOICES



**BY: STEFAN SILBER & JOSÉ MARÍA VIGIL (COORDS.),
C. ACKERMANN, F. BARBERO, B. DOMINGUES, J. ESTERMANN,
B. FORCANO, PH. GEITZHAUS, B. KERN, J. LIS, L. MARTÍNEZ,
B. OFFENBERGER, F. SCALIA, P. SCHÖNHÖFFER, S. VILLAMAYOR**

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LA TEOLOGÍA DE LA LIBERACIÓN EN EUROPA

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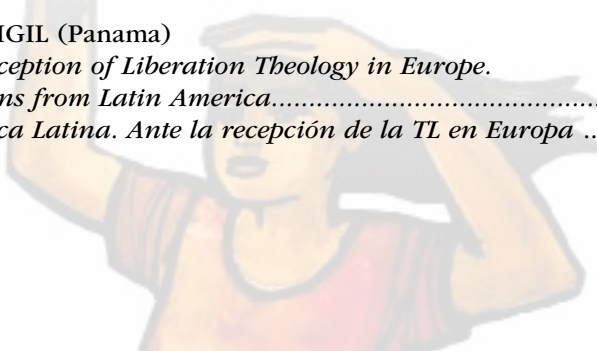
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DOSSIER



Presentation

Stefan SILBER

“As long as there will be the poor, there will also be Liberation Theology.” Whoever in Latin America first coined this well-known phrase – the past forty years have proven it true. Wherever new forms of poverty arose or poverty was described in new ways, also new theologies of liberation emerged.

Something different happened to the reception of Liberation Theology in Europe. After the hype surrounding liberation theology in the eighties, in Europe soon it became quiet around it. Erroneously, as well was pointed out repeatedly. While in Latin America, Liberation Theology not only always stayed alive and up-to-date, and kept developing, becoming more differentiated, more creative, ecumenical, and secular, in Europe, people started complaining about an alleged nostalgia in those trying to keep tracks with Liberation Theology.

Of course, there were crises. The collapse of the old bipolar world “order” around 1990 was also felt profoundly in the liberation theology community. Other crises were the questions about the role of gender, ethnic identity, and culture in the description of poverty and in the practice of liberation. Inner-church criticism and discrimination have greatly affected liberation theology. On the methodological level, the farewell to the “grand narratives” had to be digested. But the gradual detachment from European theological and scientific theoretical patterns of thought, the diverse criticism of post-structuralism, and the global struggle for the decolonization of science have changed liberation theology, have kept it alive and up to date. What has remained untouched fundamentally are the Option for the Poor and the praxis-orientated methodology.

Much of this has gone unobserved by great parts of the European theological communities. It is very common here to consider Liberation Theology only a subject of the past, an episode of Latin American Church History at most. Many of the contributions to this issue of VOICES reflect this experience. It is quite saddening to notice that all over Europe, at least in the countries that have participated in this issue, people have had to make these same experience, mostly in the time of the two former

pontificates, but also up until the present. On the other hand, we can also find the encouraging testimonies of many theologians in these countries who dedicated themselves to the reception and recreation of Liberation Theology in Europe.

In this issue, **Josef Estermann** from Switzerland, who has worked for many years in the ISEAT in La Paz (Bolivia), discusses poverty, migration and eurocentrism as major challenges for a genuine European Liberation Theology. While migration at present is a major global challenge with roots and consequences in Europe, there exist also genuine European forms of poverty that defy theology. Estermann's claim that European theology has to tackle the problem of eurocentrism is of utmost importance for any contemporary discussion of the reception of Liberation Theology in Europe.

Bruno Kern, from Germany, translator and renowned expert of Leonardo Boff's theology, presents an ecotheology of liberation not only as a blind spot of European theology, but also as a necessary new paradigm that shows a way out of neoliberal and technological destruction of the planet.

The member of the internationally known German Institute for Theology and Politics (ITP), **Julia Lis**, points out different forms of liberating theologies and praxis in the social and political context of Germany. European politics of austerity and immigration in Germany are used as examples to present social analysis as a starting point for theology, prophecy, and solidarity.

My own contribution deals with the experiences we could make in the area of reception of Liberation Theology during a period of ten years, creating and nurturing a network of people interested in Liberation Theology in German-speaking Europe

Bernhard Offenberger, a young German Protestant theologian and pastor, recalls and reflects on his own experiences creating and developing an ecumenical network of Liberation Theologies in Germany, founded by and addressed at young theologians. These theologians not only tried to integrate Latin American theological developments, but brought together experiences, reflections, theological and scientific theories from all over the world, including feminist and postcolonial perspectives.

The integration of liberationist theory into the praxis of political movements in Church and society is reflected by German activist and theologian **Peter Schönhöffer**. Together with a critical appraisal of the present status quo of these movements, he proposes conditions and methodologies for a renewed mysticism in the quest for liberation confronting contemporary challenges.

Young german theologians **Cordula Ackermann** and **Philipp Geitzhaus**, both members of the ITP, show how the encounter of Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology can enrich and criticize each other, while both possess great potential for the renewal and conversion of European theology.

With **Felice Scalia SJ**, we turn to other European countries, first to Italy. Scalia examines the reception of Liberation Theology in Italy, mainly from an academic perspective. His exploration into what he calls “Italian exceptionalism” are quite intriguing.

Franco Barbero complements this view on Italy from the grassroots movements’ point of view. Both show that important and interesting attempts at creating a proper Italian Theology and Church of Liberation were hindered and partly destroyed by Church authorities that feared too great an influence of spiritualities inspired by the II. Vatican Council.

From Luxembourg, **Luis Martínez Saavedra** describes the reception of Liberation Theologies in Francophone Europe. While he mentions a great number both of theologians and of institutions in France and in Belgium that ventured, in their time, to integrate and recreate Liberation Theology in these Central European contexts, he also must conclude that in contemporary times, the acceptance of Liberation Theology, particularly in academic contexts, is very poor.

In his three „chronicles“, **Frei Bento Gonçalves Domingues OP** recalls the context of the conciliar and post-conciliar years in Portugal, marked by dictatorship and what he calls „political and ecclesiastical oppression“. Despite this oppression, there grew a movement that won the recognition of Clodovis Boff, who considered it an equivalent to Liberation Theology.

The contribution of **Benjamín Forcano** about the situation of Liberation Theology in Spain shows similarities to that of other European countries: While in the years after the II. Vatican Council, Latin American Liberation Theology was openly accepted as part of the global catholic renewal process, during the pontificate of John Paul II., conservative restoration reverted the post-conciliar developments. In Spain, the Theological Association John XXIII., could resist some of these tendencies, and organize a continuous dialogue with Latin American theology.

Finally, **Santiago Villamayor** discusses the situation in Spain from the perspective of grassroots movements and communities. He emphasizes relationships between ecclesiastical and political struggles, and shows how political secularism influences in the construction of lay grassroots Church movements and combines with political and social activism.

To conclude this issue, **José María Vigil** contributes a consideration of the dialogue between Latin American Liberation Theology with different European theologies, from the Latin American perspective, both in the past and in the present. It presents various aspects of this fraternal and open dialogue that has existed in these five decades since the celebration of the Second Vatican Council, a dialogue that goes far beyond condemnation and suspicion and will still help us in the future to face the different challenges of each context.

We would have liked to integrate experiences from other countries as well, like Great Britain and Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria and – what we really sincerely regret – Poland and other Central Eastern European countries. Due to our limited possibilities and those of our partners in these countries, our intentions could not be fulfilled. Also, we intended to include more articles by younger and by female authors. Notwithstanding, we believe, that this small collection of essays constitutes an appropriate and reasonable image of what is the situation of reception of Liberation Theology in Europe today.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians EATWOT and its theological commission for giving us the opportunity to share our experiences from Europe with the readers of VOICES in the whole world. It is not obvious that a Third World journal should render this service to First World theologians. I sincerely hope that this collective reflection about the obstacles and opportunities of recreating Liberation Theology in the North may further reflections and elaboration of Liberation Theology in the South and improve our dialogue. I would also like to thank all the authors and translators for their selfless and eager contribution to this issue. Not the least, I must pay my absolute gratitude to José María Vigil who gave the initial impulse to this collection and ongoing support throughout its elaboration.



Presentación

Stefan SILBER

“Mientras haya pobres, habrá Teología de la Liberación.” Quien sea, en América Latina, que haya acuñado esta famosa frase, los últimos cuarenta años han demostrado que es verdad. Dondequiera que aparecían nuevas formas de pobreza o la pobreza se describía de nuevas maneras, también surgían nuevas teologías de la liberación.

Algo diferente sucedió con la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa. Después del hiperinterés que rodeaba la Teología de la Liberación en la década de los ochenta, en Europa pronto el ambiente a su alrededor se volvió tranquilo. Erróneamente, como fue señalado repetidamente. Mientras en América Latina, la Teología de la Liberación no solo permaneció viva y actualizada, y siguió desarrollándose, volviéndose más diferenciada, más creativa, ecuménica y laica, en Europa, la gente comenzó a quejarse de una supuesta nostalgia en aquellos que trataban de mantenerse al día con la Teología de la Liberación.

Por supuesto, hubo crisis. El colapso del antiguo “orden” bipolar mundial alrededor de 1990 también se sintió profundamente en la comunidad de la Teología de la Liberación. Otras crisis fueron las preguntas sobre el papel del género, la identidad étnica y la cultura en la descripción de la pobreza y en la práctica de la liberación. La crítica y discriminación al interior de la Iglesia afectaron la Teología de la Liberación en gran medida. A nivel metodológico, la despedida de las “grandes relatos” tuvo que ser digerida. Pero el desprendimiento gradual de los patrones teóricos de pensamiento teológicos y científicos europeos, la crítica diversa del post-estructuralismo y la lucha global por la descolonización de la ciencia han cambiado la Teología de la Liberación, la han mantenido viva y actualizada. Lo que ha permanecido intacto fundamentalmente es la Opción por los Pobres y la metodología orientada por la praxis.

Mucho de esto pasó sin ser observado por grandes partes de las comunidades teológicas europeas. Aquí es muy común considerar la Teología de la Liberación como un tema del pasado, como máximo como un episodio de la historia de la Iglesia latinoamericana. Muchas de las contribuciones a este número de VOICES reflejan esta experiencia. Es muy tris-

te notar que en toda Europa, al menos en los países que han participado en este número, las personas han tenido que hacer esta misma experiencia, sobre todo en el tiempo de los dos últimos pontificados, pero también hasta el presente. Por otro lado, también podemos encontrar los testimonios alentadores de muchos teólogos en estos países que se dedicaron a la recepción y recreación de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa.

En este número, **Josef Estermann** de Suiza, quien ha trabajado durante muchos años en el ISEAT en La Paz (Bolivia), analiza la pobreza, la migración y el eurocentrismo como los principales desafíos para una genuina Teología de la Liberación europea. Si bien la migración en la actualidad es un gran desafío mundial con raíces y consecuencias en Europa, también existen formas genuinamente europeas de pobreza que desafían a la teología. La afirmación de Estermann de que la teología europea tiene que abordar el problema del eurocentrismo es de suma importancia para cualquier discusión contemporánea sobre la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa.

Bruno Kern, de Alemania, traductor y reconocido experto para la teología de Leonardo Boff, presenta una ecoteología de la liberación no solo como un punto ciego de la teología europea, sino también como un nuevo paradigma necesario que muestra una salida a la destrucción neoliberal y tecnológica del planeta.

La colaboradora de la institución alemana internacionalmente reconocida Instituto para Teología y Política (ITP), **Julia Lis**, señala diferentes formas de teologías liberadoras y prácticas en el contexto social y político de Alemania. Las políticas europeas de austeridad y la inmigración a Alemania se usan como ejemplos para presentar el análisis social como un punto de partida para la teología, la profecía y la solidaridad.

Mi propia contribución trata sobre las experiencias que pudimos hacer en el área de la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación durante la última década, creando y nutriendo una red de personas interesadas en la Teología de la Liberación en los países europeos de lengua alemana.

Bernhard Offenberger, un joven teólogo y pastor protestante alemán, recuerda y reflexiona sobre sus propias experiencias al crear y desarrollar una red ecuménica de Teologías de la Liberación en Alemania, fundada por y dirigida a teólogos jóvenes. Estos teólogos no solo trataron de integrar los desarrollos teológicos latinoamericanos, sino que reunieron experiencias, reflexiones, teorías teológicas y científicas de todo el mundo, incluidas las perspectivas feministas y poscoloniales.

La integración de la teoría liberacionista en la praxis de los movimientos políticos en la Iglesia y la sociedad se refleja en el texto del

activista y teólogo alemán **Peter Schönhöffer**. Junto con una evaluación crítica del estado actual de estos movimientos, propone condiciones y metodologías para una mística renovada en la búsqueda de la liberación que enfrenta los desafíos contemporáneos.

Los jóvenes teólogos alemanes **Cordula Ackermann** y **Philipp Geitzhaus**, ambos miembros del ITP, muestran cómo el encuentro entre la Teología de la Liberación y la teología poscolonial puede enriquecerse y criticarse mutuamente, mientras que ambos poseen un gran potencial para la renovación y la conversión de la teología europea.

Con **Felice Scalia SJ**, nos dirigimos a otros países europeos, primero a Italia. Scalia examina la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Italia, principalmente desde una perspectiva académica. Su exploración en lo que él llama "excepcionalismo italiano" es bastante sugerente.

Franco Barbero complementa esta visión sobre Italia desde el punto de vista de los movimientos de base. Ambos muestran que los intentos importantes e interesantes de crear una verdadera teología e Iglesia de la liberación italianas fueron obstaculizados y parcialmente destruidos por las autoridades de la Iglesia que temían una influencia demasiado grande de las espiritualidades inspiradas por el Concilio Vaticano II.

Desde Luxemburgo, **Luis Martínez Saavedra** describe la recepción de las teologías de la liberación en la Europa francófona. Mientras menciona a un gran número de teólogos y de instituciones en Francia y en Bélgica que se aventuraron, en su tiempo, a integrar y recrear la Teología de la Liberación en estos contextos centroeuropeos, también debe concluir que en los tiempos contemporáneos, la aceptación de la Teología de la Liberación, particularmente en contextos académicos, es muy pobre.

En sus tres "crónicas", **Frei Bento Gonçalves Domingues OP** recuerda el contexto de los años conciliares y posconciliares en Portugal, marcado por la dictadura y lo que él llama "opresión política y eclesiástica". A pesar de esta opresión, creció un movimiento que ganó el reconocimiento de Clodovis Boff, quien lo consideró un equivalente a la Teología de la Liberación.

La contribución de **Benjamín Forcano** sobre la situación de la Teología de la Liberación en España muestra similitudes con la de otros países europeos: mientras que en los años posteriores al Concilio Vaticano II, la Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana fue aceptada abiertamente como parte del proceso global de renovación católica, durante el pontificado de Juan Pablo II, la restauración conservadora cambió el rumbo postconciliar. En España, la Asociación de Teólogos y

Teólogos Juan XXIII, pudo resistir algunas de estas tendencias y organizar un diálogo continuo con la teología latinoamericana.

Finalmente, **Santiago Villamayor** analiza la situación en España desde la perspectiva de los movimientos y comunidades de base. Él enfatiza las relaciones entre las luchas eclesíásticas y políticas, y muestra cómo el laicismo político influencia en la construcción de movimientos eclesiales de base laicos y se combina con el activismo político y social.

Para concluir este número, **José María Vigil** contribuye una reflexión sobre el diálogo entre la Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana con las diferentes teologías europeas, desde la perspectiva latinoamericana, tanto en el pasado como en el presente. Presenta diferentes aspectos de este diálogo fraterno y abierto que se ha podido vivir en estos cinco décadas desde la celebración del Concilio Vaticano II, un diálogo que va mucho más allá de las condenas y sospechas y nos ayudará también en el futuro a enfrentar los diferentes desafíos de cada contexto.

Nos hubiera gustado también integrar experiencias de otros países, como Gran Bretaña e Irlanda, los Países Bajos, Austria y – lo que realmente lamentamos sinceramente – Polonia y otros países de Europa Centro-oriental. Debido a nuestras limitaciones y las de nuestros socios en estos países, nuestras intenciones no han podido cumplirse. Además, intentábamos incluir más artículos de autores jóvenes y de autoras. No obstante, creemos que esta pequeña colección de ensayos constituye una imagen apropiada y razonable de la situación de la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa hoy en día.

Me gustaría expresar mi profundo agradecimiento hacia la Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos y Teólogas del Tercer Mundo EATWOT-ASETT y su Comisión Teológica por darnos la oportunidad de compartir nuestras experiencias de Europa con los lectores de VOICES en todo el mundo. No es obvio que un periódico del (mal llamado) Tercer Mundo preste este servicio a teólogos del (aún peor llamado) Primer Mundo. Espero sinceramente que esta reflexión colectiva sobre los obstáculos y las oportunidades de recrear la Teología de la Liberación en el Norte pueda profundizar las reflexiones y la elaboración de la Teología de la Liberación en el Sur y mejorar nuestro diálogo. También me gustaría agradecer a todos los autores y traductores por su contribución desinteresada y voluntaria a este tema. No como último, debo expresar mi absoluta gratitud a José María Vigil, quien dio el impulso inicial a esta colección y el apoyo continuo a lo largo de su elaboración.



Poverty, Migration and Eurocentrism

Challenges for a genuine European Liberation Theology in the 21st century

Josef ESTERMANN

Global South in the global North

Classical Liberation Theology has its origin and place (*locus theologicus*) in situations of poverty, injustice, violence and discrimination of all kind (economic, social, sexual, ethnic, and religious), focusing mainly on human precariat in the so called Global South (former “Third World”).¹ Although the “objective” conditions for the need and urgency of a liberationist perspective of theological thinking have changed in the past fifty years, there is today not less poverty, marginalization and injustice on a global scale. In absolute numbers, there are perhaps less poor people (or less “very poor people”) than in the 1980ies, but the inequalities have increased dramatically and the exclusion of huge human groups from the neoliberal and consumerist banquet is a new scandal, recognized even by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The classical “poor” in the sense of economically poor people have been diversified even within Liberation Theology (women, indigenous people, afro-descendants, sexual minorities, youth, Mother Earth, etc.), and the former antagonism between “First” and “Third World” has been broken up in much more complex structures of inequalities, injustice and asymmetries.

Some scholars suggest that today the main scandal for theological thinking is not anymore poverty, but wealth. Among the main factors for destabilization of the actual world order (or world disorder) there is in the first place the scandalously unequal distribution of wealth, resources and

¹ Although EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of third World Theologians) still uses the notion „Third World“, I prefer in the present context the binary expression „Global South/North“. They are sociological notions and not geographical ones; in political and economic contexts, the notions of “developing” [sometimes even “underdeveloped”] and “developed” countries are still in use.

information in a globalized world. One percent owns more than the rest of the world population, which means: more than 50% of all resources and finances², and 99% of the world population have to live with less than half of the resources, or have to buy the goods and services which are property of others. Even common goods as water and landscape, organisms and information are in a constant process of privatization. Or in other words: rich people are becoming even richer and poor people poorer. The Gini index of inequality³ has increased in the last two decades in almost all countries, even in those of the Global North or the former “First World”. The boundaries between rich and poor are not anymore the limits between the northern and southern hemisphere, not even if we consider that there are countries in the geographical south belonging to the Global North and vice versa. The boundaries cut today countries, regions and cities into poor majorities and rich minorities, even in the Global North.

Europe has become a continent with huge contradictions and tensions. It's not possible any longer saying that “the” Europeans are rich, white, Christians, mass consumers, fully employed, talking some Indo-European language, etc. The phenomena of “new poverty”, of racial and ethnic discrimination, of dropouts of the labor market, of considerable amounts of non-European migrants, of religious radicalization and intolerance, are some of the landmarks of the actual map of Europe, beyond an ideological struggle for preserving Western inheritance and the legacy of Enlightenment. The “global village” with its shanty towns and ugly squares, criminal gangs and racism, has reached Europe as well. Politicians and big business try to show the world still the image of a clean and well-ordered main square, high wages and social security for everybody, security for men and women, but just around the corner, there are poverty belts of the “Global South” in almost all European countries.

Discrepancy of academic theology and the socio-political context

Liberation Theology has been since its very genesis a movement from “below”, from the grassroots’ movements and small communities, neighborhood organizations and groups of self-help and political analysis. Although in most contexts of the Global South, this kind of theological

² This data are according to Oxfam, a British NGO (<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-30875633>). Oxfam also calculated that the richest 62 people in the world had as much wealth as the poorest half of the global population.

³ See footnote 9.

reflection has also entered into the academia, it is still a phenomenon of communities and pressure groups. In Europe, theology has been, at least in the last two centuries, an endeavor of academics, church leaders and ministers, and only as a minority a response of concerned communities to the challenges raised by the modern world, such as nuclear rearmament, student movements, Cold War, neoliberal economics and migration. Even Political Theology (Carl Schmitt, Johann Baptist Metz, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jürgen Moltmann), has its origin in the Academia and not in concrete political or social struggle, although it has been adapted and adopted by dissident groups such as Religious Socialists or Christians for Socialism, as well as movements inspired by Liberation Theology (students' protests; anti-nuclear campaigns; solidarity groups).

There are, of course, important exceptions such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothee Sölle or Leonardo Ragaz, the movement of worker priests or the ecumenical process of Justice, Peace and Conservation of Creation. And there are initiatives taken by concerned and engaged groups all over Europe to elaborate other approaches to the social, political and economic challenges which are in consonance with the principles of Liberation Theology. A lot of these initiatives are mentioned in this publication, but most of them do not have their origins in academic theology of the universities or higher institutes.

Academic theology in Europe, in its majority, did and does not start with a socio-economic analysis of the actual situation which surrounds the faculties and seminaries, but follows a deductive way of “describing” and “explaining” the main theological topics proposed by divine revelation (mainly protestant theology) or the dogmatic tradition of the Church (mainly catholic theology). If Liberation Theology is a topic in European academia, it is one of the currents to be treated as historical phase of “contextual” theologies in the Global South. Most of the professors of theology in Europe consider Liberation Theology as “antiquated” or as some kind of contextual thinking which cannot pretend to have universal value, supposing of course that their own theologizing not only has universal pretension, but is universal itself.⁴

⁴ In the theological faculties where Liberation Theology has still a place, it is dealt with in the context of missiology, extra-European Christianity or intercultural theology. Outside the universities, there are Institutes and NGOs, civil movements and activist groups which try to introduce and develop Liberation Theology and its method.

The “application” of theological reflection on social and political, economic and ecological issues does not take place, in its majority, at the universities, institutes or seminaries, but by pastoral agents and basic communities, NGOs and militant organizations. But even so, Liberation Theology proceeds just the other way round: it starts with concrete socio-political reality as theological “place” and looks for criteria for its theological interpretation in religious tradition and revelation. Theology has not to be “adapted” to reality; to the contrary: reality is the main theological subject and the place where redemption and salvation – in the form of integral liberation – takes place. For most of academic theology at European universities, the discrepancy between a highly abstract theological discourse on grace, revelation, redemption and God, on the one hand, and the concrete situation of unemployed young people, discriminated migrants, tax injustice, white collar corruption and increasing suicide rates, on the other hand, is not really a problem, because academic theology is often self-referential in the Nietzschean sense of a “ruminant science”.⁵ With exceptions, most of European academic theologians are not “organic intellectuals” (Gramsci), imbedded in grassroots’ movements and basic Christian communities.

Descending from the “splendid isolation”

Fortunately, there are an increasing number of theologians and socially engaged Christians in Europe who try to cope with the challenges the complex global world presents to them. They can be engaged within the churches or stay outside, working in politics or civil society, in pressure groups or formal NGOs. Their conviction shared with Liberation Theology is the assumption that faith, spirituality and religion have to do with this concrete world in all its ugliness and suffering, and that theology has to give concrete answers to the main challenges this very world is presenting. In other words: the main “object” of theology is not God or Holy Scripture, but the concrete experience of the believing people of suffering, injustice, poverty, but also of hope, joy and satisfaction, in the light of a determinate religious tradition. There is no way to stay any longer in the “ivory tower” of theological purity and supposed universality, if we want to be faithful to the very core of the Gospel which is “incarnation”. Decontextualized theology is some kind of blasphemy, and not

⁵ Nietzsche spoke about Western philosophy as “ruminant” thinking, that is, interpretation of texts and even interpretation of this very interpretation, without dealing with “reality” outside the libraries.

the reverse, such as conservative theologians and church leaders often state: that theology has to abstain from mixing up with “worldly” issues. As God did mix up with “worldly” issues in Jesus Christ and solidarized himself with the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized and humiliated, it would be a blasphemy for theology to remain in the “splendid isolation” of decontextual and ahistorical reflection.

Why does European academic theology not recognize the “signs of the time” and renounce to its supposed “universality” and arrogance? I think there are several reasons for it. First of all, it has to do with eurocentrism still very strong in European academia. European academic theology still pretends to speak for theology in the “strict sense of the word”, in spite of the process of “tertiarization”⁶ of Christianity (today, the majority of Christians live in some of the countries supposed to belong to the “Third World”), decolonial thinking and church leaders coming from the Global South (as pope Francis). Second, European academic theology is still “elitist” in the sense that it has lost organic connection (or never have had) with grassroots’ movements, concrete church or small Christian communities. And third, the philosophical background of European academic theology is still some kind of Hellenistic or idealist transcendental thinking which does not allow perceiving “worldly” problems as theological topics and interpreting redemption in terms of “liberation”. Dualism and individualism do still prevail, and holistic non-dualistic theological thinking has not really become a mainstream: for most European theological currents, there are still a lot of contradictions or incompatibilities between world and God, the profane and sacred, redemption and liberation, faith and politics.

Liberation Theology, on the other hand, intends to think God and the world together, overcoming dualisms as those founded by the Hellenistic tradition (mainly of Neoplatonism) the former pope Benedict XVI insisted so much on.⁷ For Liberation Theology, the world is the place of God’s redemption, and people’s struggle for liberation and a

⁶ This notion (from *tertia terra*: “Third World”) stresses the fact, that demographically, the Christian population has shifted in the last fifty years from the “First World” (Europe, USA and dependent countries) to the “Third World”. The notion is coined by Giancarlo Collet: Collet, Giancarlo (1993), „Bemerkungen zur Notwendigkeit einer interkulturellen Theologie“, in: Fornet-Betancourt, Raúl (ed.), *Theologien in der Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte Lateinamerikas*, Bd. 1, Die Perspektive der Armen, Eichstätt, 30-37. 34.

⁷ See footnote 14.

“good living” (*Buen Vivir*)⁸ is an intrinsic moment of soteriology. Dualism and individualism are two important obstacles to an implementation of Liberation Theology in Europe. But there is also another point: Liberation Theology follows an inductive and more empiric method, while European academic theology still sticks to deductive and dogmatic procedures. It is still (classical occidental) philosophy which is the conceptual and methodological framework of theologizing, and not social sciences or even economics.

For a (future) European Liberation Theology I'd like to point our three challenges. The first two have to do with the socio-economic and political context of the continent, the last one with the Eurocentric and “colonial” condition of academic European theology itself.

Poverty in Europe?

16.4 % of the population of the European Union, 80 million people, lives below the poverty threshold, if fixing the threshold at 60 % of national median income, on the basis of 2010 data. The Czech Republic (9 % of the population), the Netherlands (10 %), Austria and Hungary (12 %) are the countries where poverty is lowest. With a rate of 13.5 %, the poverty rate of France is also among the lowest in Europe, just after the Nordic countries (around 13 %). The highest rates, superior to 20 %, are observed in Eastern Europe, in Romania and Bulgaria. Spain and Greece have similar poverty levels of about 20 %: these two countries are seriously affected by the economic crisis and have seen their unemployment rate rise considerably, especially among the youngest.

Thus, the living standards of poor people in rich countries cannot be compared to the poor in poor countries. The United Kingdom for example counts 17 % of poverty, but the poverty threshold at 60 % is 853 Euro per month and person, against 176 Euro for Romania, which counts 21 % of poor people. There are not only huge differences between countries, but also among different groups of the population of one and the same country. So, across the European Union, the poverty rate of women is higher than of men: it is at 17.1 % against 15.7 % for men. For children less than 16 years, it is 20.2 %, for young people from 16 to 24 years, it is 21.6 %, and for immigrants born outside Europe, it ascends

⁸ See: Estermann, Josef (2013), „Zivilisationskrise und das Gute Leben: Eine philosophische Kritik des kapitalistischen Modelles aufgrund des andinen Allin Kawsay / Suma Qamaña“, *Concordia. Revista Internacional de Filosofía* No. 63, 19-48.

even to 26.9 %. If we compare these poverty thresholds with countries of the Global South, they are relatively high, but so are the costs for living. If we would like to have some good measure to compare poverty worldwide, it would be the purchase power, that is, the relative rate of income and living costs.⁹

In comparison to poverty in the Global South, poverty in Europe is almost invisible, stigmatized and associated to shame and culpability. Immigrants, single mothers with children and young people are the most vulnerable ones, before all in Southern and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the Gini index of inequalities within countries has also increased in Europe and not only in so called “developing” countries where it is traditionally very high.¹⁰ That means that not only “poverty” as such is a *locus theologicus* for a European Liberation Theology, but even more the scandal of “wealth”: rich people get always richer, poor people poorer. The gap between a small wealthy elite and a huge poor or extreme poor population has become a global phenomenon. In the midst of “wealthy” Europe, poor people have to cope with different kind of discrimination and exclusion. They are “officially” non-existent, and if they are recognized, they are often supposed to be “losers”, “lazy” and “culpable”. There is need for structural analysis, not only of the interdependent connections between global North and South, but also of the unjust distribution of goods, wealth and resources within Europe.

⁹ The World Bank raised in October 2015 the global poverty level from 1.25 \$ to 1.90 \$ using 2011 prices. This amount would ascend to some € 53 per month and person, much below of the rate of the poorest European country Romania (€ 176). According to this criterion, some 770 million live in 2015 under the level of extreme poverty. So you have to take the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) that allows us to put each country’s income and consumption data in globally-comparable terms. The PPP is computed on the basis of price data from across the world. To compare European countries with a country as Bangladesh with a national median income (NMI) of € 100, you have to compare the ratios of the prices for a basic “basket of goods” (cost of living) and the IMN of one country with that of another. The local purchasing power in Bangladesh, for example, is 32.4 % lower than in Romania; together with the difference of the NMI, a Bengali is twice as poor as a Romanian, as an average value.

¹⁰ The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within a national economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. On a world scale, South Africa is with an index of 63.38 on top; the first European country Macedonia comes in the ranking on place 40 (44.05) and Ukraine has the lowest Gini index of Europe (24.55). Azerbaijan holds the world record of the lowest index (16.64). These data are indifferently from 1999 to 2013 and should be much higher in 2017 for the European countries. (<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators/SI.POV.GINI/rankings>)

Liberation Theology worldwide has to do with poverty as a structural sin, but excessive and unjust wealth would perhaps be an even more important “sin” to be dealt with. This is specially the case for the European context where excessive wealth is not only a scandal for poor people, but also a threat to global peace and the climate. Economic injustice and huge social inequalities are the main challenges in Europe for a liberationist theological approach, alongside with consumerism and the idolatry of the Market.

Migration as threat or chance

Another important context to be considered by liberationist theological thinking as a genuine *locus theologicus* is the increased and still increasing amount of discrimination and marginalization of minorities, mainly refugees and immigrants from non-European countries. Migration – especially in the form of refugees from Africa, the Middle East and Asia – has become a “hot” topic in politics and civil society in almost all European countries. The new phenomenon of “mass immigration” (as it is called mainly by rightist nationalist movements) has produced, on the one hand, a radicalization of national policies towards foreigners, and on the other hand, an increasing number of discrimination of non-European immigrants in the sense of racism and xenophobia.

The first tendency can be described as the re-emergence of strong nationalisms in almost all European countries, skepticism towards the European Union and the renaissance and visibility of neo-fascist or even neo-Nazi movements. The second (complementary) tendency has to do with more restrictive policies in the field of immigration and the acceptance of refugees, which have dramatic consequences for thousands of people who intend to reach Europe, but also of refugees already arrived. While some countries officially defend a “culture of welcome” towards the immigrant refugees (as it has been the case of Germany until the end of 2016), huge sectors of civil society in most European countries show a hostile attitude and practice policies of manifest discrimination, racism and xenophobia.¹¹

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers are among the most vulnerable groups in contemporary Europe. They not only suffer precarious economic and social situations (the threshold of poverty is the

¹¹ This is mainly the case of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, but as well of traditionally “liberal” countries as the Netherlands, France and Austria.

highest among these groups), but have to bear attitudes of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and even open aggression, as well. On their way to the European “paradise” across the Mediterranean Sea, every year 3000 to 4000 refugees lose their lives (2014: 3279; 2015: 3771; 2016/October: 3800). In several European countries, refugees and asylum seekers have been targets of attacks by extreme nationalist and racist organizations, some of them with lethal consequences. While nationalist movements claim the “Christian West” against a supposed “islamization” of Europe, the same groups reject *de facto* Christian values of mercy, solidarity, and love for the stranger, hospitality and justice for all human beings. “Christianity” has become for many people in Europe (mainly secular ones) some kind of *Leitkultur*, which is: “leading” culture of the western worlds against the threats coming from the global South and the Islamic world.¹²

Liberation Theology should take up this context as a challenge in a twofold way: as a criticism of any kind of “cultural Christendom” which is exclusive, ethnically defined and which fosters apartheid within Europe and even the churches, on the one hand, and as a prophetic voice to fight for inclusion and solidarity with all human beings victims of racist, xenophobic and other kind of discrimination, on the other hand. In this context, social and economic issues have to be thought about together with religious and interreligious topics. Liberation Theology has to be aware of the ideological use and abuse of religion and to stress the conviction that it is not religion which redeems¹³, but the liberating potential of prophetic faith and the belief that God is a liberating fountain and force of life.

Dehelenization of theology

One of the most notorious characteristics of European academic theology is its still very common eurocentrism, in the sense of an illegitimate

¹² One of the most emblematic political group is PEGIDA (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*: Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, which claims the defense of Christian values against Islamic danger. In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, there are movements fighting for the reestablishment of a “pure” Christian heritage, hand in hand with nationalist restoration of a glorious past (Hungary, Poland, and Croatia).

¹³ See: Estermann, Josef (2012), “Religion does not redeem: Theological reflections about the role of ‘religion’ today”. In: *Voices* Vol. XXXV, No. 2012/1, New Series. EATWOT (ed.). *Towards a post-religional paradigm? EATWOT’s Latin American Consultation on Religion - ¿Hacia un paradigma posreligional?: Consulta teológica latinoamericana sobre religión - Para um paradigma pos-religional?: Consulta teológica latino-americana sobre religião*. 71-88.

universalization of the proper position, as if European theology would be “theology” in a supracultural or even absolute way.¹⁴ Although Christianity has its cultural origin in non-western contexts (Semitic world) and geographically not in Europe (Western Asia), European theologians consider the Hellenistic and Roman contextualization of the new religion as constituent or even “dogmatic” parts of Christian theological identity, such as pope Benedict XVI stated on different occasions.¹⁵ Taking into account that the focus of Christianity has moved the last century from the global North to the global South and that actually only 25.9 % of world Christianity live in Europe (in 1910: 66.3 %), insisting still in the equation of European theology with universally relevant theology is a clear manifestation of eurocentrism or occidentocentrism.¹⁶

I’m aware of the fact that the accusation of theologians coming from a western context to be “eurocentric” has been received with growing annoyance or rejected simply as not pertinent or in the worst case as an expression of some disapproval of European hegemony by the global South. Another strategy to tackle the issue is to insist on the “universality” and meta-culturality of the own position. I think that it is of great importance to distinguish between “cultural centricity” (or monoculturality) – where eurocentrism and occidentocentrism belong to – and “contextuality”. European Liberation Theology (as any current of European theology) is contextual, but not eurocentric, and intends to make explicit

¹⁴ The fact that European theology defines God as its main „object“, the following fallacy is quite common: “God is absolute and supracultural [beyond all cultural determination and contextuality]. Theology has to do with God. Therefore, theology is absolute and supracultural, as well.” This syllogism has its ideological background in the principle of connaturality (or absolute evidentialism) of Platonism and Neoplatonism.

¹⁵ I refer to the statement of pope Benedict XVI that Christianity were connected inseparably to Hellenistic thought to such an extent that it could and should not be „dehellenized“. In his lecture at the University of Regensburg on September, 12, 2006, he stressed once more the indispensable role of Greek *logos* for the theological reflection of Christian faith, as he had done before as Prefect of the Congregation of Faith: „Das Christentum ist ... die in Jesus Christus vermittelte Synthese zwischen dem Glauben Israels und dem griechischen Geist [Christianity is the synthesis of Israel’s Faith and Greek spirit, mediated in Jesus Christ]“ (Ratzinger, Joseph (1983), „Europa - verpflichtendes Erbe für die Christen“, in: König, Franz and Rahner, Karl (ed.), *Europa: Horizonte der Hoffnung*, Graz, 61-74, 68).

¹⁶ As this illegitimate universalization is not only a feature of mainstream European, but also of US-theology and other theologies depending on western philosophical thinking, I’d like to use the notion „occidentocentrism“ rather than „eurocentrism“. But as the context of this contribution is Europe, we can still use the later concept.

the (unconscious) claim of “universality” as illegitimate procedure.

European Liberation Theology has to “liberate” academic mainstream theology from its *hybris* to be the only strict theology, by means of a consequent “contextualization” of its own theologizing. In the case of Europe, “decolonial” theology as a liberationist current of theology means – among other aspects – a thorough process of dehellenization and historical, political and social re-contextualization. Postmodern philosophy and theology have not achieved to dehellenize European thinking, because the Hellenistic “software” of European mainstream thinking cannot be revealed from within, but only in a dialogue or polylogue with cultural and human alterity. And that leads us to the final statement that genuine European Liberation Theology has to be intercultural in a critical sense.

Abstract

This contribution shows to which extent a theological perspective from the Global South can criticize European theologies and help them at the same time find paths of conversion and reorientation. It discusses poverty, migration and eurocentrism as major challenges for a genuine European Liberation Theology. While migration at present is a major global challenge with roots and consequences in Europe, there exist also genuine European forms of poverty that defy theology. Estermann’s claim that European theology has to tackle the problem of eurocentrism is of utmost importance for any contemporary discussion of the reception of Liberation Theology in Europe.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag zeigt, in welchem Maß eine theologische Perspektive aus dem Globalen Süden europäische Theologien kritisieren kann und ihnen gleichzeitig Wege zur Umkehr und Neuorientierung aufzeigt. Er untersucht Armut, Migration und Eurozentrismus als schwerwiegende Herausforderung für eine echte europäische Befreiungstheologie. Während die Migration

in der Gegenwart eine zentrale weltweite Herausforderung darstellt, die Wurzeln und Folgen in Europa besitzt, gibt es auch echte europäische Armutsgestalten, die die Theologie anfragen. Estermanns Forderung, dass sich die europäische Theologie mit dem Problem des Eurozentrismus befassen muss, besitzt größte Wichtigkeit für jegliche gegenwärtige Diskussion der Rezeption der Befreiungstheologie in Europa.



Ecotheology of Liberation - a Blind Spot of European Theology

Bruno KERN

Summary:

This article is dealing with ecotheology of liberation as a challenge which is not yet accepted by european theologians. It was the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff who developed liberation theology in this sense. In his view not only capitalism is at stake but also industrialism. Boff is also insisting that ecology is not just a single issue of social ethics but a theological question in the strict sense of the word. A spirituality of ecological transformation will demand a "new paradigm", that is a new vision of the cosmogenetic process itself.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag behandelt die Ökologie der Befreiung als eine Herausforderung, die von europäischen TheologInnen bislang noch nicht aufgegriffen wird. Es war Leonardo Boff, der die Befreiungstheologie in diesem Sinn weiterentwickelte. Aus seiner Sicht steht nicht nur der Kapitalismus, sondern die Industrialisierung auf dem Spiel. Boff insistiert außerdem, dass Ökologie nicht nur ein Einzelthema der Sozialethik, sondern eine theologische Frage im strengen Wortsinn. Eine Spiritualität der ökologischen Veränderung wird ein „neues Paradigma“ erfordern, das eine neue Vision des kosmogonischen Prozesses selbst beinhaltet.

Introduction

I consider ecotheology as elaborated by the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff to be the most important and at the same time the most challenging development of liberation theology for industrialized

countries in recent times. However we must state that this challenge is hardly accepted by European theology till now. Western theologians in their majority share the ecocapitalist illusions clearly refused by Boff. They only refer to “technical” solutions and remain within the framework of industrialism and capitalism. They don't dare to challenge our questionable welfare. Of course this is true not only for theologians, but also for social movements (among them even the so called degrowth movement) and non governmental organisations. Everything is subordinated to the question of what one could demand of the European public used to a high standard of living. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, one of the most popular and influential ecologists in Germany, speaks out openly what it is about:

“To ask Europeans, Americans and Japanese to dress in sackcloth and ashes and renounce prosperity and progress, is a strategy doomed to failure. So, in order to be politically accepted by the public, the new way of running the economy should have the character of a new model of prosperity. (1992, 12).

Beyond “green capitalism”

Boff was the first one among latinamerican theologians to realize that, globally seen, the question of ecological destruction ist the most urgent social question. His publications on this issue are pointing out the connexion between the processes of impoverishment and ecological destruction in the following manner:

1. The main cause of the destruction of nature on the one hand and that of the world-wide process of impoverishment or economic-social exclusion on the other hand are the same: the capitalist economic system – especially in its present-day escalation under the neo-liberal paradigm – which is now prevailing all over the world and which is subject to a growth compulsion.

2. The growing world-wide chasm between the rich and the poor finds direct and the most evident expression in an extremely unequal proportion of consumption of natural resources. The rich 20 percent of the world population, those living in the OECD-states, consume more than 80 percent of the non-renewable energy and other resources, and they (therefore) dump 80 percent of the polluting substances in the biosphere. (However, in the case of many non-renewable resources China and India are at present racing to catch up with the OECD states.)

3. The environmental costs resulting from the consumption of natural resources in the rich industrialized countries and climate change are

for the most part saddled upon the impoverished majority of the Third World people. A 1992 study of the Fraunhofer Institute estimates that if the present course is not radically changed, an additional 900 million to 1.8 billion starvation deaths will take place till 2030 due to shifts in the vegetation zones. That means, a starvation catastrophe of hitherto unknown dimensions would result not from any distribution injustices, but as a direct consequence of climate change (cf. Wohlmeyer 1994, 221f.). Not included in the figure are would-be victims of rapidly spreading diseases like malaria or catastrophes like floods, hurricanes etc. Already today, apart from economic and political power relations, ecological devastation is a direct cause of growing impoverishment and armed conflicts in the Third World.

Boff is insisting, that not only capitalism is at stake but also industrialism. Especially in some of his recent books he is formulating a sharp critique on what we can call a “green capitalism” (cf. Boff 2016, 51–60; Boff 2012, 185–191). Using the catchword “green new deal”, a great number of people are spreading the illusion that capitalist growth could be continued as before with other technical means. It is being suggested that, through the use of renewable energies and efficiency increasing technologies, “decoupling” of economic growth and resource and energy consumption could be achieved to a sufficiently high degree. This is one of the most dangerous illusions of “eco-capitalism”. In all technologies, potential for efficiency increase is limited and subject to the law of diminishing marginal returns. Likewise, the potential of renewable energies is not inexhaustible. The energy density that has until now been available to us with the now dwindling fossil energy sources, cannot even be approximately achieved with the renewable energy sources. That is, although we indeed have to use some “green technologies”, at the final count, significantly less net energy will be available to us than today (for more details see Boff 2013, 186–190).

Not only global capitalism – which, as we know, is dependent on continuous capital accumulation on an ever higher scale and on a globally functioning strongly differentiated division of labor – but also industrial society as a whole has reached a crisis point! Viewed from the perspective of human history, industrial society is a singularity that cannot be generalized – an exceptional situation of short duration enjoyable only for a minority of humanity. It has only been possible on the basis of massive exploitation of fossil fuels – first coal, then oil and gas. Future sustainable societies will have to manage with a very modest resource base. Mass motorized individual travel, the commonness of long-haul flights, etc. will then no longer be possible. With renewable energies

much fewer blast furnaces can be fired, much less cement and aluminum can be produced etc. etc.

If one looks at the situation impartially, one must face four fundamental problems:

1. The potential of renewable energies is fundamentally limited. Renewable just does not mean inexhaustible.

2. In addition to the growing scarcity of energy from fossil sources, we are at the same time facing a scarcity of some other raw materials, which constitutes additional barriers to developing the technological prerequisites and the necessary infrastructure for renewable energies.

3. Given the fact that the time slot available to us is narrow, given also the fact that our resource base (fossil fuels and other raw materials) is rapidly eroding, it is doubtful whether we can really translate the theoretically existing potential into reality.

4. The discussion on renewable energies is mostly limited to electricity generation, although it accounts for not more than one-fifth of our total energy consumption. A more serious problem, however, is the energy that we need over and above electricity, particularly for mobility, which is also of vital importance to our globalized capitalist-industrial society. In the form known to us, mobility is hard to imagine without the fossil energy base (Boff 2013, 186–187).

Given the growing scarcity of energy and given the fact that the growing shortage cannot nearly be compensated for through the use of renewable energies, through more energy efficiency etc., we have to face the situation that we must in the near future manage with considerably less net energy. But then, the capitalist economic system with its accumulation logic (continued accumulation of capital at ever higher levels) cannot be kept going any more. It requires a highly differentiated international division of labor with correspondingly high and cheap transport capacities (necessarily based mainly on fossil fuels) as well as ever more energy-intensive production. But not only capitalism, our industrial society altogether becomes unsustainable. In the face of this situation, our task can only be to forestall the collapse as far as possible and to consciously steer the unavoidable deindustrialization process.

Those who want to secure the basis of life in the world must strive to create an economy and culture of “enough”. They must say goodbye to our pseudo prosperity with its parasitic character. As the saying goes, you cannot eat the cake and have it too. We cannot enjoy the prosperity offered by the industrial societies and also protect the biosphere.

In refreshing contrast to the ecological welfare-chauvinism prevailing in western industrial societies, for which the above quoted Weizsäcker might be a good example, Jeremy Rifkin makes it clear that nothing less than our industrial society and the associated lifestyle and habits are at stake:

“Those wedded to [...] the industrial age will no doubt regard these observations about solar technology as pessimistic. Many will consider it inconceivable that urban life, industrial production, and all the creature comforts that make up the so-called American Dream are antithetical to the Solar Age. However, ecologists and economists like Georgescu-Roegen, Daly, Odum, Bookchin, and Ophuls would argue that to ignore the historical reality in front of us ... is sheer madness and will lead to an even greater fall for humankind, perhaps an irreversible one. Regardless of which course we follow, the coming transition is sure to be accompanied by suffering and sacrifice.” (Rifkin 1980, 203. Emphasis added)

Ecosocialism

In taking serious this profound critique of Boff I try to draw the conclusions for which I call an ecosocialist vision of society (for what follows see Sarkar 1999; Boff 2016, 60–63):

In future, the economy will not only not grow any more, but it will inevitably shrink! Politically, we are facing the choice between letting the shrinking process chaotically descend upon us or to control and shape it consciously. In our sense, that would mean to control and shape it in a just way and in the spirit of solidarity. The economy will have to shrink until it has reached a state of stable equilibrium (“steady state”, an expression coined by Herman Daly).

Such a shrinking process cannot however be managed within the framework of capitalist relations. In standard economic terms, as we know, it would be tantamount to a deep depression. That is, there would be large-scale destruction of capital, whole industries would decline, and falling profit rates would prevent private investment. A shrinking economy is in contradiction to the immanent growth imperative of capitalism. That is, the process of gradual dismantling of the industrial structure could only be organized beyond capitalism – and probably defying its expected resistance.

Under the condition of scarce and dwindling resources, market mechanisms no longer work effectively. A market economy works effectively – if at all – only on condition that all market participants can react flexibly and adequately to market signals. But dwindling resource

availability would entail that, in this area, we would have to do with sellers' markets. Then there would be serious misallocation of resources. Scarce resources would not then flow to areas of the economy we as society consider to be essential and desirable, but to those where sufficient purchasing power exists. Under scarcity conditions, the market would not be able to ensure a minimum level of social justice. This means that we would need, instead of market mechanisms, conscious planning, quantitative controls, price controls, a quota system etc.

In the first phase of transformation of the economy – the shrinking phase – the state must necessarily be a strong player. This is of course not an ideal solution. Ideally, planning should be as decentralized as possible, with maximum participation of the stakeholders, and it should aim at a high degree of self-sufficiency of local communities. That is why bottom-up approaches in the sense of a solidarity-based economy would be of central importance for the transition period.

An eco-socialist economy would be characterized by a strong emphasis on the local and the regional (Hathaway and Boff are speaking of “the bioregional alternative” in this context; cf. Hathaway / Boff 2009, 353–357), and it would strongly restrict long-distance trade. It would be characterized by a much higher use of labor-intensive technologies (today's high labor productivity is essentially the result of undesirably high resource consumption in capital-intensive technologies), a much lower level of division of labor, and a high degree of self-sufficiency.

Towards a new cosmological spirituality

Of most importance, however, is the spiritual and theological reflection of this situation in a strict sense. Western theologians are treating ecology almost only as a single issue of social ethics. They don't realize at all, that it concerns the heart of theology itself. As far as I see the only exception among German speaking theologians is the protestant thinker Jürgen Moltmann, who collaborated a lot with Boff in recent times.

Together with the Canadian ecologist Mark Hathaway Leonardo Boff published the foundational work of ecotheology. Their principal thesis is that our struggle for liberation on a societal level would be in vain, if it would not be sustained by the tendencies of the developing universe towards more consciousness, “interiority”, more freedom and a greater capacity to love. The cosmos itself is not just determined by eternal laws and blind mechanistic movements. On the contrary, it is revealing a deep underlying purpose. Hathaway and Boff are elaborating a set of unconscious supposedly “scientific” presumptions guiding our

thinking and behaviour, which they call a “cosmology of domination”, because they totally correspond to our attitude of exploiting nature. For example: There is an objective reality existing outside of our minds; mind and matter (which also means mind and body) are separate entities; the universe is a dead, lifeless and purposeless substance, composed of elementary particles; reality is reduced to the world of material, which can be captured by the senses, measured and quantified; mind itself must be seen as just an epiphenomenon emerging of a pure material reality; nature and the cosmos as a whole are merely understood in mechanistic terms like a giant clockwork machine; consequently we can come to a complete knowledge of the whole by reducing it to its parts; there is no purpose to nature or to cosmos, but only fixed eternal laws governing all things; time is understood as unidirectionally moving forward; the cosmos is essentially determined by mechanical causes. If it were possible to know all preconditions it would be also possible to predict the future exactly (the famous “demon of Laplace”); life on earth is the result of pure chance and the competition of survival, leading to the “survival of the fittest” (see Hathaway / Boff, 142–143)

These supposedly “scientific” presumptions make it possible to develop an attitude of reckless exploitation towards nature and its resources. Nature is totally submitted to our interests. At the same time reducing the process of evolution of life to pure randomness is essential to justify the Promethean enterprise of industrial society which involves systematically transforming the biosphere so that it may best satisfy short term interests of capitalist profitmaking. This would not be possible if evolution would be seen as a grand project of its own tending to achieve a sense. Reducing evolution to pure randomness also involves the statement that what order there is in the world has been created by science, technology and industry rather than by the evolutionary process of the cosmos or by any God.

On a psychological level this cosmology of domination tends to lead us to an ever greater despair and resignation. Indeed the question of purpose turns out to be a key question for the orientation of mankind within history and for the possibility to change society. A living cosmology, that is a cosmology of liberation may help us to find meaning within our own lives. If we ourselves are mere results of randomness and just part of a long chain of accidents, if our hopes and fears, our loves and beliefs are just the result of accidental collision of atoms and if the cosmos were to reveal no meaning at all, our lives would ultimately be reduced to a senseless struggle for survival. “Would it really matter, in the larger scheme of things, to strive for authentic liberation, searching for a

way to live harmoniously within the greater biotic community of Earth?" (Hathaway / Boff 2009, 271)

In order to overcome our internalized powerlessness and despair which prevent us to engage for liberation we need a new understanding of reality as a whole. This would provide us a new sense of the place of humanity within the cosmos. What we need is a "living and vital cosmology", that is a shared worldview, that gives meaning to our lives. Boff and Hathaway contrast the above described cosmology of domination with a cosmology of liberation. They are referring to the results of modern sciences like the quantum theory and are showing how a new understanding of the cosmos itself is emerging from the most recent developments within science itself. They discuss the ideas, models and theories of the most outstanding contemporary thinkers and natural scientists like Rupert Sheldrake, Fritjof Capra, Lynn Margulis, James Lovelock etc. and draw conclusions concerning a new scientific worldview which envisions an evolving universe as an ideal conceptual framework for the liberatory transformation we urgently need. According to contemporary science the universe is not longer regarded as a machine composed of elementary building blocks. Ultimately we have to understand the material world as a network of inseparable patterns of relationships. As Fritjof Capra states:

"In modern physics, the image of the universe has been transcended by a view of an indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood as patterns of cosmic process. At the subatomic level the interrelations and interactions between the parts of the whole are more fundamental than the parts themselves. There is motion there but there are no actors; there are no dancers, there is only the dance." (quoted by: Hathaway / Boff, 2009, 172)

The planet as a whole can be seen as a living, self-regulating system. The evolution process on earth is not longer conceived as a competitive struggle for survival but rather as a "cooperative dance" characterized by creativity and the constant emergence of novelty. This emerging new scientific vision of the cosmos is fully compatible with the spiritual dimension of liberation. Spiritual experience consists first and foremost in a new consciousness of oneness with all and a profound sense of belonging to the universe as a whole. Connectedness, relationship, interdependence and the awareness of belonging to nature are fundamental concepts of ecology. In this sense Hathaway and Boff are pleading for an ecological spirituality which would be able to grant the future of the planet and of humanity as a whole.

The cosmology of domination as it prevails till now is rejecting any sense of purpose outside the human sphere. If man is facing a

meaningless, cold, mute and mindless universe, then human beings themselves ultimately lose their own sense of purpose. As Martha Heynemann puts it:

“If we imagine the universe as ‚it‘ – an universe of dead matter and blind force‘ – something in us goes dead and blind. We can engage without remorse (until we understand that our own existence is threatened) in the wholesale destruction of nature. If we imagine, moreover, a purposeless universe, we suffer, in the letdown that follows the momentary elation of achieving a proximate goal, from a baffled feeling of depression. If the universe has no meaning, can my life have any ultimate meaning? If the whole has no purpose, can the part? (quoted by Hathaway / Boff 2009, 157–158)

A holistic cosmology however as suggested by Hathaway and Boff could turn out to deeply threatening the existing economic and social disorder. As long as we view nature and humanity itself as mere complex machines, we can maintain that our needs are only material and technological – so cosmic growth and “development” can satisfy all our needs and we can persist in following the surrogate cosmology of consumerism. On the other hand, if reality as a whole is essentially about relationship and if all of nature is alive, then we may come to the conclusion, that our real needs are ever less satisfied by infinite progress and economic growth.

Within the cosmology of liberation as suggested by Hathaway and Boff the entire universe is seen to be imbued with a deep and abiding sense of purpose. This is however not to be understood as a “design” or a blueprint, but rather as a cosmos attracted by a hidden wisdom (Which may be called “tao”) to a certain direction or a nondeterminative pattern as we know it from “chaos theory”.

Humanity is bound up in this purpose. Ultimately our strugglings for liberation consist in aligning ourselves with the wisdom deep inside and revealed by the whole cosmic evolution.

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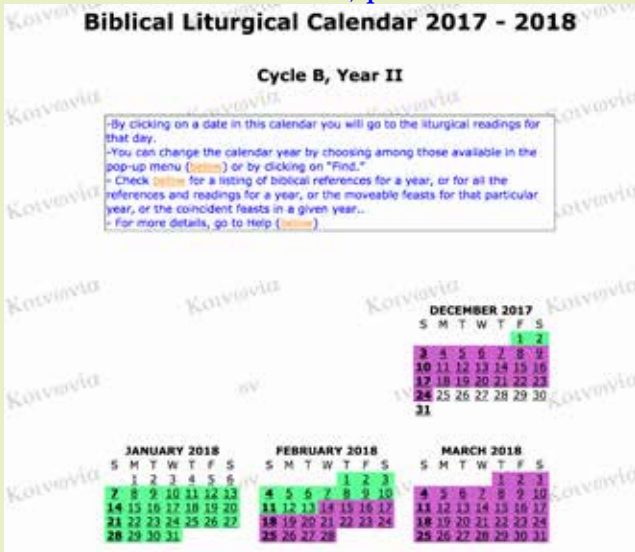
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Between Austerity Politics and „Welcome Culture“

Doing Liberation Theology in a German context

Julia LIS

Abstract:

This article focusses on the current challenges of doing liberation theology in a German context. Liberation theology commits itself to the primacy of praxis. Therefore it depends on a detailed social analysis based on ideological, economic and political aspects. At present, all three aspects are influenced in a fundamental way by the social forms of neoliberal capitalist globalization. In this article politics of austerity and migration in Germany are used as examples to present some aspects of social analysis as a starting point from which some theological consequences of this can be seen. In a last step we consider how prophecy and solidarity can contribute to change in the praxis of Christians in Germany.

Zusammenfassung:

Der Artikel beschäftigt sich mit den Herausforderungen, die sich aktuell für eine Befreiungstheologie im Kontext der BRD ergeben. Befreiungstheologie sieht sich ihrem Selbstverständnis nach unter dem Primat der Praxis und bleibt deshalb auf eine genaue Gesellschaftsanalyse unter ideologischen, ökonomischen und politischen Aspekten angewiesen. Alle drei werden heute maßgeblich bestimmt durch die Vergesellschaftungsform einer neoliberalen kapitalistischen Globalisierung. Exemplarisch werden im Folgenden an der Austeritätspolitik und der Migrationspolitik der BRD einige Aspekte einer Gesellschaftsanalyse und theologische Konsequenzen, die sich daraus ergeben, angeführt. In einem letzten Schritt wird daran anschließend an einigen Beispielen aufgezeigt, wo und wie sich verändernde Praxis von ChristInnen gemäß der Grundkategorien von Prophetie und Solidarität heute im Kontext der BRD ereignen kann.

The summer of 2015 was filled with unforgettable images: People at the borders with pictures of the German chancellor Angela Merkel in their hands, the cover of BILD¹ newspaper with its headline „Refugees Welcome“, thousands of supporters at German train stations greeting the arriving refugees, Merkel’s encouragement that „We can do it“ and all the speeches about the dramatic transformation the country had made. All of a sudden, these images overshadowed the merciless austerity measures which Merkel’s government had placed on Southern European countries during the financial crisis just months previously; measures which resulted not only in alarmingly high unemployment rates, especially among the young, but also in the destruction of social infrastructures, the rise of homelessness, increased difficulty in receiving medical insurance and a notably higher suicide rate. In a matter of a few weeks the perception of Germany and its representative figure, Angela Merkel, shifted from one of people brutally defending their own interests at the cost of others to one of generous hosts and examples of solidarity. Here were people who were sure they had a lesson to teach the rest of Europe. At the same time, however, less visible but truly draconian restrictions of rights were imposed on refugees and asylum seekers. Even for those whose asylum cases have been accepted, new regulations limited where new-comers are allowed to reside. For those whose fates were not yet decided a prohibition to work and, for some, the requirement to live in a camp, made life more difficult. The new policy of unannounced deportations and the declaration of many conflict-ridden countries of origin as „safe“ left many refugees feeling incredibly vulnerable. The injustice of these measures was compounded both by the closure of the Balkan route in 2015 which, although precarious, had given refugees at least some freedom of movement, and the deal between the EU and Turkey. Originally this left many refugees stranded in Greece, waiting in vain to continue their journey to Northern Europe. Now they continue to wait, not with the hope of moving forward but instead with the fear of being brought back to Turkey. When keeping all this in mind, the only possible assessment of the summer of migration is that “the perceived humanitarian orientation exists only virtually and is far away from the political reality. Even Chancellor Merkel has quietly changed her politics and continues to close the German border in spite of contributing to a discourse that suggests the opposite.”² One can even

¹ A popular German tabloid which normally represents rather conservative and sometimes even nationalist political positions.

² Voigt, Claudius: Asylpolitik der Bundesregierung. Das „freundliche Gesicht“ ist Geschichte, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik / Netzwerk Kirchenasyl Münster (ed.): KIRCHEN.ASYL. Kirchenasyl ist Menschenrechtsschutz – eine Handreichung, Münster 2016, S. 32.

say that at this juncture, the perception of a human, friendly face of the German government can only be understood as relative compared with the open hate speech of the AfD³.

This being the case, if we want to talk about the possibilities of a liberation theology in Germany today, we must first analyse the political conditions and take them as a base from which to change.

Primacy of praxis in Liberation Theology

From the outset, the concept of praxis was very important for new political theology and liberation theology. Praxis in this context does not mean the application of a specific theory to a concrete situation. Rather, „the intelligible force of praxis itself meaning a dialectic relationship of theory and praxis“⁴. Christian praxis is understood as social praxis.⁵ A theology, religion or church trying to be neutral towards broad social praxis becomes guilty „through the attempt to buy political innocence by remaining nonpartisan in the historical struggles of all people as subjects“.⁶

The classic definition of liberation theology in Gutierrez' „theology of liberation“ understands this theology as „a critical reflection of historical practice done in the light of the word“⁷. Gutiérrez stresses that the pastoral practice of the church is not simply derived from theological premises but is, itself, a theological space.⁸ Theology is understood „as one moment in a process by which this world is changed“⁹. Theological knowledge is no longer just an interpretation of the world but part of a practice of change.¹⁰ This affects the historical reality, that is, the present

³ The „Alternative für Deutschland“ [Alternative for Germany] is a right-wing political party which became popular after their foundation in 2013 which was based on a platform of Euro-skepticisms. It has since become an important political force which maintains a nationalist and racist discourse and which critiques what they believe to be 'liberal German politics' towards migrants and asylum seekers. In the elections of autumn 2017 this party also won several seats in the German parliament.

⁴ Metz, Johann Baptist: *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Mainz 1977, p. 47.

⁵ Cf. Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, p. 51.

⁶ Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, p. 69.

⁷ Cf. Gutiérrez, Gustavo: *Theologie der Befreiung*, Mainz 1992.

⁸ Gutiérrez: *Theologie der Befreiung*, p. 78.

⁹ Gutiérrez: *Theologie der Befreiung*, p. 83.

¹⁰ Castillo, Fernando: *Befreiende Praxis und theologische Reflexion*, in: id. (ed.): *Theologie aus der Praxis des Volkes. Neue Studien zum lateinamerikanischen Christentum und zur Theologie der Befreiung*. München 1978.

social practice, which becomes a product of human acts that changes the world.¹¹ Referring to Karl Marx, Castillo gives a more precise definition of praxis, making clear that it does not only refer to a liberating praxis but to all social praxis. It is an activity, a work through which humans produce their material needs and, in so doing, affect a change in the world and nature.¹² If in this sense a liberating theology should and wanted to mean a reflection of praxis, it would depend on making social praxis, that is the material conditions of production and reproduction in a specific social formation, a part of its reflection. This should be the starting point of every work on a concrete praxis of liberation. In the opinion of the French theologian, Casalis, developing such a praxis is the condition for a theology of liberation which is more than a „mere discourse on praxis“. ¹³ Such a theology must be judged by its fruits and not only by its theoretical intentions.¹⁴ It depends, as stated before, on an analysis reflecting social practice in its economic, political and ideological dimensions and the relation between all these dimensions. Such a reflection is a part of social praxis. It cannot be done from a neutral point of view apart from history and society but only when considering specific social conditions.

Doing Theology under Neoliberal Conditions

Because of this, every truly conscientious theology has to take into consideration the economic, political and ideological conditions of doing theology as well as the relationship of all these. Referring to a globalized society we can call this relationship today a neoliberal one „dominating all economic, political and ideological conditions in which people all over the world work, love, struggle, consume, starve, believe, hope, resist...“¹⁵ In economic terms neoliberal globalization is marked by a crisis of quantitative growth; in other words, the necessity of producing ever more

¹¹ Cf. Castillo: *Befreiende Praxis*, p. 15.

¹² Cf. Castillo, *Befreiende Praxis*, p. 33. According to Althusser we could give further explanations on different forms of practice (economical, political, ideological and theoretical practice) on the one hand and their unity on the other hand. (see also Füssel, Kuno: *Zeichen und Strukturen. Einführung in die Grundbegriffe, Positionen und Tendenzen des Strukturalismus*, Münster 1983, p. 78).

¹³ Cf. Casalis, Georges: *Die richtigen Ideen fallen nicht vom Himmel. Grundlagen einer induktiven Theologie*, Berlin 1980, p. 39.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁵ Geitzhaus, Philipp / Lis, Julia: *Ambivalente Subjekte – Befreiungstheologie und Nachfolgepraxis im Neoliberalismus*, in: Lassak, Sandra/Weiler, Birgit/Gmainer-Pranzl, Franz (eds.): *Theologie der Befreiung heute*. Salzburg 2017.

profit which can then be reinvested in production.¹⁶ It is also characterized by attempts to compensate the lack of natural growth demanded by the financial markets.¹⁷ It is shaped by the inclusion of the internet in the production process which, in itself, marks a significant rupture which influences all spheres of life.¹⁸ When combined, all this gave birth to new possibilities of rationalization resulting in the development of transnational relations of production.¹⁹ The technological development of capitalism allowed capital to move the limits of its spheres of operation even further, resulting in more fluent borders between national economies on the one hand and the borders between foreign and self-control or working time and free time on the other hand.²⁰ In this way it influences the political, economic and ideological spheres and is part of the specific conditions of neoliberal subjectification processes.

In an ideological perspective the domination of neoliberalism is anchored in the deep conviction that there is no alternative. The basis of free market principles which are supposed to enable free competition amongst individuals, becomes an all-encompassing goal, thereby rationalizing its appearance in more and more areas of life. Structural problems which are caused by the capitalist organization of society and by this principle of rationality become invisible because all responsibility is given to the individual.²¹ This corresponds with a modified neoliberal economical discourse in which Hinkelammert sees the transition from a utopian to a cynical capitalism. The lack of balances in the market is no longer regarded as an imperfection of the market which needs further correction but as a result of humans acting imperfectly in relationship to the all-powerful market.²²

¹⁶ Cf. Ramminger, Michael: Christliche Existenz heute: die andere Globalisierung. Globalisierung als Krise des Kapitalismus, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik (ed.): In Bewegung denken. Politisch-theologische Anstöße für eine Globalisierung von unten, Münster 2003, p. 12.

¹⁷ Cf. Ramminger: Christliche Existenz, p. 13.

¹⁸ Cf. Haug, Wolfgang Fritz: High-Tech-Kapitalismus. Analysen zu Produktionsweise, Arbeit, Sexualität, Krieg und Hegemonie, Hamburg 2003, p. 36.

¹⁹ Cf. Haug: High-Tech-Kapitalismus, pp. 40f.

²⁰ Cf. Haug: High-Tech-Kapitalismus, p. 39.

²¹ Cf. Strobel, Katja: Zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Solidarität. Arbeit und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Neoliberalismus aus feministisch-befreiungstheologischer Perspektive, Münster 2012, p. 60.

²² Cf. Hinkelammert, Franz: Der Schrei des Subjekts. Vom Welttheater des Johannesevangeliums zu den Hundejahren der Globalisierung, Luzern 2001, p. 333.

Here we can observe a growing interest in the concept of resilience which was one of the key words in the G20 summit 2017 in Hamburg. Resilience is defined as „the ability of a system to deal with disturbances and stressful situations“²³. Strategies which are presented as a response to the permanent phenomenon of crisis in neoliberal capitalism are meant to make individuals more resilient to deal with these crises. Resilience presents possibilities for self-optimization.²⁴ The responsibility for crises and risks is, in this way, taken away from society as a whole and put on subsystems. With the help of the concept of resilience, neoliberal capitalism is then successful in “encompassing all of the risks and dangers which lurk in our present world in an aura of economic inevitability“²⁵. The acceptance of the concept of resilience enables society to make a transition from the avoidance of crises to one of crises management.²⁶ It can be regarded as a key concept of the current condition of neoliberal capitalism.

Austerity Politics in Times of Crisis

The political management of the financial crisis starting in 2008 can be better understood if seen in the context of neoliberal rationalization. The success of this strategy was founded in the fact that, according to neoliberal capitalism it could claim to be the only option. Critique of this rationality, therefore, went unheard in spite of the fact that it was clearly not a humane answer to the financial crisis. Austerity politics of the troika of European Central Bank, EU-commission and the International Monetary Fond were based on a neoliberal strategy which had previously been used in the context of Latin America with tragical results for many Latin American countries.²⁷ When transferred to the countries of Southern Europe, it caused a social catastrophe, especially in

²³ Höhler, Sabine: Mensch – Umwelt – System. Eine Geschichte der Stressbewältigung von der Erholung zur Selbstoptimierung, in: Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History 11 (2014) 3, p. 428.

²⁴ Cf. Höhler: Mensch – Umwelt – System, p. 440.

²⁵ Gebauer, Thomas: Fit für die Katastrophe. Ein neues entwicklungspolitisches Modewort verhindert Ursachenbekämpfung, in: medico international (ed.): Fit für die Katastrophe? Kritische Anmerkungen zum Resilienzdiskurs im aktuellen Krisenmanagement, Gießen 2017, p. 14.

²⁶ Cf. Gebauer: Fit für die Katastrophe, p. 15.

²⁷ Cf. Strobel, Katja: In Zeiten der europäischen „Krise“. Herausforderungen für eine feministische Befreiungstheologie, in: Geitzhaus, Philipp et.al. (ed.): Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums, Münster 2017.

Greece. This manifested itself, not least of all, in the rise of homelessness and unemployment, especially among youth, restricted access to health care and the rise of suicide. The debt crisis in Greece was a direct consequence of the decision to prevent the devaluation of capital which, in turn put capital-related interests at the centre of governmental politics.²⁸ Politically the debt crisis was blamed not on the economic crisis and the political measures which followed from this, but on errors made by the countries most affected by the crisis. During the following social and political conflicts the capital related interests were given priority to the well-being of the citizens in the countries concerned.²⁹ According to Stützele the euro crisis helped to introduce a specific form of neoliberalism in the EU.³⁰ This is characterized by the development of competitiveness in the global market and on a form of stability in which budget consolidation and pressure on wages are employed as the authoritative governmental measures.³¹ In this framework debts can be necessary to justify politically austere measures and social cuts as well as to establish the market.³² This is the situation against which Franz Hinkelammert reacts in his theology of debts, a theology which is informed by his interpretation of St. Paul's critique on law which holds that any law can become despotic, if taken only by the letter and not measured by the criterion if it protects the life of all human beings.³³ When transferred to the debt problem the logic applies that where a debtor is required to repay a debt, which he or she is incapable of paying, the law becomes a despot. The requirement to pay back debts in this case becomes „a crime against the spirit of the law“³⁴. Such a conclusion can be drawn when taking into consideration the criterion of evangelical solidarity which goes against the logic of concurrence.³⁵ This makes it possible to radically call into question the economic, ideological and political practices in which austerity politics are founded since they contradict the biblical logic of emancipation. Hinkelammert's critical theological analysis is prophetic in that it helps

²⁸ Cf. Stützele, Ingo: Austerität als politisches Projekt. Von der monetären Integration Europas zur Eurokrise, Münster 2013, p. 315.

²⁹ Cf. Stützele: Austerität, p. 319.

³⁰ Cf. Stützele: Austerität, p. 338.

³¹ Cf. Stützele: Austerität, p. 343.

³² Cf. Stützele: Austerität, p. 349.

³³ Cf. Hinkelammert, Franz: Reflexionen zum Schuldenproblem: die Entleerung der Menschenrechte, Arbeitspapier III, Münster 2015, p. 7.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cf. Hinkelammert, Schuldenproblem, p. 8f.

us see the dimensions of current European politics which are hostile towards life. By unveiling the dominating power relations we are able to continue the process of liberation.

Politics of Migration in light of the „Welcome Culture“

German politics since the summer of migrations should not be understood as a shift away from austerity politics but as a continuation of the same principles in a different context. Even during the partial opening of borders, Merkel's government was influenced by experts from the economic and media sector as well as other representatives of neoliberal capitalism. The government's action can be explained by a shift in power relations which resulted in a wave of migration along the Balkan route, the collapse of the Dublin Accord and heavy critique by leftist and liberal forces of the EU's inhumane borders politics.³⁶ However, it was also caused by neoliberal forces which regarded this development as a chance to – literally – capitalize on new resources by means of a migration management which focused not longer on isolation and defense but optimizing the potential of the labour force for the economic system.³⁷ The hidden change of migration politics which resulted in the reestablishment of border controls in early 2016 can be explained as a political reaction of the government towards the nationalistic conservatives who protested against the politics of liberalization which became institutionalized in the AfD.³⁸

The reasons for the movements of many thousands of people in the summer of migration were various global crises such as malnutrition, climate catastrophes, civil wars and the failure of governments.³⁹ After all, when people experience that their situation does not match their hopes and needs in a fundamental way, they attempt to change their fate by choosing an exit-strategy.⁴⁰

This factor is critical for as soon as this is taken into consideration it requires that we shift the discourse from one which regards refugees as victims and objects of welfare to one which sees them as subjects fighting for justice in a powerful and hopeful way. At the same time it demands that we resist from romanticizing them as likely actors in the fight for

³⁶ Cf. Georgi, Fabian: Widersprüche im langen Sommer der Migration. Ansätze einer materialistischen Grenzregimeanalyse, in: PROKLA 183 (2016), p. 191.

³⁷ Cf. Georgi: Widersprüche, p. 191f.

³⁸ Cf. Georgi: Widersprüche, p. 192.

³⁹ Cf. Georgi: Widersprüche, p. 194.

⁴⁰ Cf. Georgi: Widersprüche, p. 195.

sweeping social change. After all, the vast majority of refugees are not interested in changing current power structures in Europe, but rather in integrating into these structures in the hopes that they might thereby improve their own situation.

When seen in this context and because of its direct reliance on social praxis, an analysis from within a liberation theology framework cannot limit itself to appeals to humanize the situation of migrants and refugees. This marks a profound difference between this approach and that of other theologies which derive an ethical-moralistic appeal from their dogmatic premises. In contrast to these, liberation theology focuses on an analysis of social practice in such a way that their economic, political and ideological dimensions are all taken into account. In so doing it raises the question of how to develop processes of change by means of a liberating practice which enables the conditions of exploitation, oppression and injustice to be overcome.

Prophecy and solidarity as Means of Acting

This brings us back to our original question: where in the concrete conditions of Germany today can we find starting points for a theology of liberation that contribute to fundamental change in society? Austerity politics during the financial crisis and migration politics were set beside one another as two important contextual dimensions which are important for our practice in the Institute of Theology and Politics. In our situation there are two key aspects to participating in a liberating practice: prophecy and solidarity. Gutiérrez himself described the function of prophecy in liberation theology as that of reading the historical events and understanding their meaning such that they make the „liberating engagement between these occurrences radically“⁴¹ clear. In a biblical sense prophecy involves a critique of the current order of power from a perspective of opposition against the powerful.⁴² It focuses on „the message that the world can be changed, conditions of oppression can be ended and historical plausibility and the status quo can be overcome“⁴³. In this sense prophecy includes „the revealing dimension of theological discourse“⁴⁴ as well as the public

⁴¹ Cf. Gutiérrez: *Theologie der Befreiung*, p. 80.

⁴² Cf. Zenger, Erich: *Die Bücher der Prophetie*, in: Ders. u.a.: *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Stuttgart 31998, pp. 371-381.

⁴³ Kern, Benedikt: *Prophetische Rede – prophetische Orte. Um „Gottes Willen“ Anklage erheben*, in: *Rundbrief des ITP 42 (2015)*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Geitzhaus/Lis: *Ambivalente Subjekte*.

protest against the inhumane conditions which have been unmasked. One example of such a protest against austerity politics which we at the Institute of theology and politics experienced was during the Blockupy-protest in Frankfurt.⁴⁵ Their aim was to „make visible the different forms of exploitation, oppression and injustice that accompany neoliberal capitalism and, at the same time, to highlight the struggles and resistance which are aimed at overcoming this system which stands in the way of fulfilment for all people“⁴⁶. We can understand the protest against the summit of the G20 in Hamburg as being related to and a continuation of Blockupy. Many people used these days to make public their fundamental dissent to the rules of neoliberal capitalism which are sustained by the use of resilience⁴⁷. With regards to the politics surrounding migration, a prophetic approach must call out the fact “that both the blatantly closed approach as well as the seemingly open approach to refugees which, however, regards them primarily in terms of human capital to be used in the neoliberal economy contradict the ‚calling of God‘.“⁴⁸

Along with this prophetic dimension is the liberating praxis of solidarity. The Blockupy-protest was an expression of solidarity with people in Southern Europe who were suffering under austerity politics. It tried to put in relation and show the connections between the struggles of people for liberation here and there.⁴⁹ For us at the Institute of Theology and Politics, our work with church asylum is an area where we connect solidarity and prophecy in the context of migration politics. We encourage parishes to open their doors and, in this way, to demonstrate solidarity by organizing structures of protection for people whose dignity

⁴⁵ Blockupy protests were organized by an alliance of different political groups and associations (attac, the party „DIE LINKE“, radical-left organisations) which worked together with anti-racist, anti-fascist, (queer-)feminist movements. The aim was to block for some hours the European Central Bank in Frankfurt to show solidarity with people in Southern Europe affected by austerity measures.

⁴⁶ Lis, Julia: Krisenprotest im Herzen der Bestie. Theologische Herausforderungen symbolischer und politischer Praxis am Beispiel Blockupy, in: Geitzhaus, Philipp/Lis, Julia/Ramminger, Michael (ed.): Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums, Münster 2017, p. 208.

⁴⁷ Cf. <http://christengegeng20.blogspot.de/>

⁴⁸ Hellgermann, Andreas: Nützlich, gewollt, willkommen heißen, ausgeschlossen, „...denn ihr selbst seid in Ägypten Fremde gewesen“, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik / Netzwerk Kirchenasyl Münster (ed.): KIRCHEN.ASYL. Kirchenasyl ist Menschenrechtsschutz – eine Handreichung, Münster 2016, p. 21.

⁴⁹ Cf. Lis, Krisenprotest, p. 219.

is endangered by deportation. By practising church asylum, the bigger problems of asylum politics are made concrete and brought into focus and people are better able to consider the root problems caused by the structures of society. In this way, the practice of offering church asylum or sanctuary can become a powerful prophetic sign.

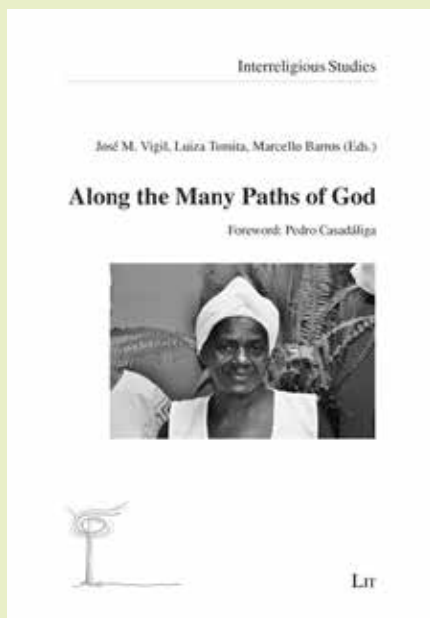
In this article I could only mention a few examples of where and how a change that accords with the spirit liberation theology are possible. However, they make clear that doing liberation theology in a German context remains dependent on a profound analysis of social praxis. This analysis helps make concrete where Christian interventions today can act prophetically and in solidarity with all people.

Along the Many Paths

Jose M. VIGIL, Luiza TOMITA, Marcelo BARROS (eds.)

Foreword: Pedro CASALDÁLIGA

Series : Interreligious Studies, edited by Frans Wijzen and Jorge Castillo
Published by the Chair of World Christianity
at Radboud University Nijmegen



Latin American theology is associated with liberation, basic Christian communities, primacy of the praxis and option for the poor. The present volume shows that Latin American theologians added new themes to the previous ones: religious pluralism, inter-religious dialogue and macroecumenism. It is the fruit of a programme of the Theological Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in Latin American, to work out a liberation theology of religions.

This volume summarizes the three first ones of the series of five volumes.

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Zwischen Austeritätspolitik und „Willkommenskultur“

Befreiungstheologie treiben in der BRD

Julia LIS

Abstract:

This article focusses on the current challenges of doing liberation theology in a German context. Liberation theology commits itself to the primacy of praxis. Therefore it depends on a detailed social analysis based on ideological, economic and political aspects. At present, all three aspects are influenced in a fundamental way by the social forms of neoliberal capitalist globalization. In this article politics of austerity and migration in Germany are used as examples to present some aspects of social analysis as a starting point from which some theological consequences of this can be seen. In a last step we consider how prophecy and solidarity can contribute to change in the praxis of Christians in Germany.

Zusammenfassung:

Der Artikel beschäftigt sich mit den Herausforderungen, die sich aktuell für eine Befreiungstheologie im Kontext der BRD ergeben. Befreiungstheologie sieht sich ihrem Selbstverständnis nach unter dem Primat der Praxis und bleibt deshalb auf eine genaue Gesellschaftsanalyse unter ideologischen, ökonomischen und politischen Aspekten angewiesen. Alle drei werden heute maßgeblich bestimmt durch die Vergesellschaftungsform einer neoliberalen kapitalistischen Globalisierung. Exemplarisch werden im Folgenden an der Austeritätspolitik und der Migrationspolitik der BRD einige Aspekte einer Gesellschaftsanalyse und theologische Konsequenzen, die sich daraus ergeben, angeführt. In einem letzten Schritt wird daran anschließend an einigen Beispielen aufgezeigt, wo und wie sich verändernde Praxis von ChristInnen gemäß der Grundkategorien von Prophetie und Solidarität heute im Kontext der BRD ereignen kann.

Viele erinnern sich noch an die Bilder aus dem Sommer der Migration 2015: Menschen an den Grenzen und Bahnhöfen, die Bilder von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel in den Händen halten, die BILD-Zeitung, die plötzlich den Slogan „Refugees welcome“ verwendet, viele Tausend Helfer_innen an deutschen Bahnhöfen, die die neuankommenden Geflüchteten willkommen heißen, Merkels „Wir schaffen das!“ und die vielen geflügelten Worte davon, dass dieses Land ein anderes geworden sei. Diese Bilder ließen vieles vergessen, was bis dahin das Bild der BRD in Europa bestimmt hatte: das gnadenlose Spardiktat gegenüber den südeuropäischen Ländern in der Finanzkrise und seine Folgen. Die erschreckend hohe Arbeitslosigkeit, insbesondere unter Jugendlichen, die Zerstörung der sozialen Infrastruktur, mit der soziale Not wie Wohnungslosigkeit oder mangelnde Versorgung im Krankheitsfall einhergingen, die zunehmende Selbstmordrate aufgrund der tief empfundenen Perspektivlosigkeit waren direkte Folgen dieser Politik. Nun wandelte sich die Stimmung 2015 innerhalb weniger Wochen: die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und ihre Repräsentationsfigur Angela Merkel waren plötzlich nicht mehr diejenigen, die brutal eigene Interessen auf Kosten anderer durchsetzen, sondern WillkommensweltmeisterInnen und Vorbilder der Solidarität, die alle anderen in Europa nun schulmeisterhaft belehren konnten. Im Windschatten dieses positiven Images ist es gelungen, drastische Verschärfungen des Asylrechts durchzusetzen. Auch das wurde wieder von entsprechenden politischen Interventionen in Südosteuropa flankiert. Die Balkanroute auf der sich die Geflüchteten im Sommer 2015 das Recht auf Bewegungsfreiheit erkämpft hatten, wurde nun geschlossen und der EU/Türkei Deal besiegelte das Schicksal vieler Geflüchteter, die es bis nach Griechenland geschafft haben und vergeblich auf eine Weiterreise in den Norden Europas hofften. Sie sollen nun vielmehr in die Türkei zurückgeführt werden. So ließ sich bereits ein knappes Jahr später bilanzieren: „Die humanitäre Grundausrichtung ist nur noch virtuell vorhanden und hat mit der politischen Realität nur noch wenig zu tun. Auch die Bundeskanzlerin hat eine heimliche Wende vollzogen, die aller gegenteiligen Rhetorik zum Trotz die weitgehende Abschottung Deutschlands betreibt.“¹ Die Gesetzesverschärfungen haben einen asylopolitischen Winter eingeläutet, der auch diejenigen schwer trifft, die bereits hier leben: verschärfte Residenz- und Lagerpflicht, Arbeitsverbote, Abschiebungen, die nicht mehr angekündigt werden, die

¹ Voigt, Claudius: Asylpolitik der Bundesregierung. Das „freundliche Gesicht“ ist Geschichte, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik / Netzwerk Kirchenasyl Münster (Hg.): KIRCHEN.ASYL. Kirchenasyl ist Menschenrechtsschutz – eine Handreichung, Münster 2016, S. 32.

Erklärung von vielen Ländern zu „sicheren Herkunftsstaaten“ sind nur einige der Maßnahmen, die dazu führen, dass die Existenzbedingungen von Geflüchteten immer schwieriger werden. Das humane, freundliche Gesicht der Bundesregierung lässt sich da nur noch aufrechterhalten als Kontrast zur offenen Hetze der AfD².

Wer also darüber sprechen möchte, wie wir heute in der BRD eine befreiungstheologische Positionierung erarbeiten können, wird an einer Analyse nicht vorbeikommen können, die diese politischen Bedingungen in den Blick nimmt und zum Ausgangspunkt einer verändernden Praxis macht.

Primat der Praxis in der Theologie der Befreiung

In der Neuen Politischen Theologie wie in der Befreiungstheologie spielt der Begriff der Praxis von Anfang an eine herausragende Rolle. Praxis wird dabei gerade nicht als Anwendung einer bestimmten Theorie auf eine konkrete Situation verstanden, sondern das Augenmerk wird auf „die intelligible Kraft der Praxis selbst – im Sinne einer Theorie-Praxis-Dialektik“³ gelegt. Christliche Praxis wird dabei als gesellschaftliche Praxis aufgefasst.⁴ Eine Theologie, eine Religion oder Kirche, die sich zu der gesamtgesellschaftlichen Praxis neutral zu verhalten sucht, macht sich schuldig „durch den Versuch, sich durch Teilnahmslosigkeit gegenüber den geschichtlichen Kämpfen um das Subjektseinkönnen aller Menschen ihre politische Unschuld zu erkaufen“⁵.

Bereits in der klassischen Definition der Befreiungstheologie in Gutiérrez! „Theologie der Befreiung“ wird diese verstanden als „kritische im Lichte des Wortes ausgeübte Reflexion über die historische Praxis“⁶. Auch Gutiérrez betont, dass sich die Praxis, die er als Pastoral der Kirche bezeichnet, nicht aus theologischen Prämissen als deren einfache Ableitung ergibt, sondern selbst zum theologischen Ort wird.⁷ Theologie

² Die „Alternative für Deutschland“ ist eine rechte politische Partei, die nach ihrer Gründung 2013 zuerst durch einen euroskeptischen Kurs populär wurde und vor allem seit 2015 durch eine Kritik an der ihrer Meinung nach zu offenen Asyl- und Migrationspolitik in der BRD, bei der die Partei immer wieder nationalistische und rassistische Töne anschlug, einen Aufstieg erlebte, so dass sie seit Herbst 2017 auch im Parlament vertreten ist.

³ Metz, Johann Baptist: *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Mainz 1977, S. 47.

⁴ Vgl. Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, S. 51.

⁵ Metz: *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 69.

⁶ Vgl. Gutiérrez, Gustavo: *Theologie der Befreiung*, Mainz 1992.

⁷ Gutiérrez: *Theologie der Befreiung*, S. 78.

ist somit „als ein Moment in dem Prozess zu verstehen, mittels dessen die Welt verändert wird“⁸. Die theologische Erkenntnis wird so über die bloße Interpretation der Welt hinaus selbst zu einem Teil einer verändernden Praxis.⁹ Diese begreift die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit, die gegenwärtige gesellschaftliche Praxis als Produkt menschlicher Tätigkeiten, durch die eine Veränderung geschieht.¹⁰ Unter Bezugnahme auf Karl Marx erläutert Castillo den Praxisbegriff näher und macht deutlich, dass sich dies nicht nur auf eine befreiende, sondern jede gesellschaftliche Praxis als eine Tätigkeit, eine Arbeit durch den der Mensch seine materielle Existenz produziert und dabei auf eine Veränderung von Welt und Natur hinwirkt, bezieht.¹¹ Wenn eine befreiende Theologie in diesem Sinne eine Reflexion der Praxis sein soll und will, dann bleibt sie darauf angewiesen, die gesellschaftliche Praxis, also die materiellen Bedingungen, unter denen Produktion und Reproduktion innerhalb einer bestimmten Gesellschaftsformation erfolgen, in ihre Reflexionen miteinzubeziehen und davon ausgehend an einer Praxis der Befreiung mitzuarbeiten. Die Mitarbeit an einer solchen Praxis ist für den französischen Theologen Casalis die Bedingung einer ihr entsprechenden Theologie, die nicht zur „reinen Rede von der Praxis“¹² verkommen darf. Sie erweist sich an den Früchten, nicht lediglich an der inneren Haltung.¹³ Sie bleibt dabei, wie aus dem vorhergehenden deutlich wurde, auf eine Analyse angewiesen, die gesellschaftliche Praxis in ökonomischer, politischer und ideologischer Hinsicht, wie auch in ihrer Beziehung zueinander reflektiert. Diese Reflexion selbst ist Teil einer gesellschaftlichen Praxis und geschieht nicht von einem neutralen Standpunkt jenseits von Geschichte und Gesellschaft, sondern unter bestimmten gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen.

⁸ Gutiérrez: *Theologie der Befreiung*, S. 83.

⁹ Castillo, Fernando: *Befreiende Praxis und theologische Reflexion*, in: ders. (Hg.): *Theologie aus der Praxis des Volkes. Neue Studien zum lateinamerikanischen Christentum und zur Theologie der Befreiung*. München 1978.

¹⁰ Vgl. Castillo: *Befreiende Praxis*, S. 15.

¹¹ Vgl. Castillo, *Befreiende Praxis*, S. 33. Hier ließen sich im Anschluss an Althusser noch weitere Differenzierungen hinsichtlich der Unterscheidung zwischen unterschiedlichen Praxis-Arten (ökonomische, politische, ideologische und theoretische Praxis) einerseits und ihrer Einheit andererseits (vgl. dazu Füssel, Kuno: *Zeichen und Strukturen. Einführung in die Grundbegriffe, Positionen und Tendenzen des Strukturalismus*, Münster 1983, S. 78).

¹² Vgl. Casalis, Georges: *Die richtigen Ideen fallen nicht vom Himmel. Grundlagen einer induktiven Theologie*, Berlin 1980, S. 39

¹³ Vgl. ebd.

Theologie treiben unter neoliberalen Bedingungen

Deswegen muss sich eine Theologie, die sich nicht dem Vorwurf aussetzen möchte, bewusstlos zu sein, mit den ökonomischen, politischen und ideologischen Bedingungen auseinandersetzen, unter denen ihr eigenes Theologietreiben erfolgt, wie auch mit dem Zusammenhang dieser Bedingungen untereinander. Dieser Zusammenhang ließe sich heutzutage der globalisierten Vergesellschaftung entsprechend als Neoliberalismus beschreiben, der „die ökonomischen, politischen und ideologischen Bedingungen vorgibt, unter denen Menschen auf dem ganzen Globus arbeiten, lieben, kämpfen, konsumieren, hungern, glauben, reisen, hoffen, Widerstand leisten usw.“¹⁴ Ökonomisch ist die neoliberale Globalisierung gekennzeichnet durch eine Krise des quantitativen Wachstums, welches das Erwirtschaften von immer größeren Profiten, die dann neu in die Produktion reinvestiert werden können, meint.¹⁵ Zugleich ergaben sich Verschiebungen, die eine Kompensation eines solchen fehlenden Wachstums aus eigener Kraft darstellten, verbunden etwa mit der zunehmenden Bedeutung des Finanzkapitals.¹⁶ Zugleich markiert der Einzug der EDV und später auch des Internets in die Produktion einen entscheidenden Einschnitt, der nicht ohne Auswirkungen auf andere Lebensbereiche bleiben kann.¹⁷ Dieser besteht vor allem in neuen Rationalisierungsmöglichkeiten und der sich daraus ergebenden Entwicklung transnationaler Produktionsverhältnisse.¹⁸ Aus dem sich technologisch fortentwickelnden Kapitalismus, in dem das Kapital die Grenzen seiner Operationsbereiche immer weiter verschieben kann, ergeben sich Verschiebungen, die Grenzen zwischen nationalen Ökonomien ebenso durchlässiger machen wie Grenzen zwischen Fremd- und Selbststeuerung oder Arbeitszeit und Freizeit.¹⁹ Sie betreffen somit die politische, ökonomische und ideologische Sphäre und stellen die spezifischen Bedingungen neoliberaler Subjektivierungsprozesse dar.

¹⁴ Geitzhaus, Philipp/Lis, Julia: Ambivalente Subjekte – Befreiungstheologie und Nachfolgepraxis im Neoliberalismus, in: Lassak, Sandra/Weiler, Birgit/Gmainer-Pranzl, Franz: Theologie der Befreiung heute. Salzburg 2017 [im Erscheinen].

¹⁵ Vgl. Ramminger, Michael: Christliche Existenz heute: die andere Globalisierung. Globalisierung als Krise des Kapitalismus, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik (Hg.): In Bewegung denken. Politisch-theologische Anstöße für eine Globalisierung von unten, Münster 2003, S. 12.

¹⁶ Vgl. Ramminger: Christliche Existenz, S. 13.

¹⁷ Vgl. Haug, Wolfgang/Fritz: High-Tech-Kapitalismus. Analysen zu Produktionsweise, Arbeit, Sexualität, Krieg und Hegemonie, Hamburg 2003, 36.

¹⁸ Vgl. Haug: High-Tech-Kapitalismus, 40f.

¹⁹ Vgl. Haug: High-Tech-Kapitalismus, 39.

Ideologisch hat die Durchsetzung des Neoliberalismus auch damit zu tun, dass es gelungen ist, ihn weitgehend als alternativlos erscheinen zu lassen. Das Prinzip des freien Spiels der Marktkräfte, das die freie Konkurrenz von Individuen untereinander ermöglichen soll, wird zu einem umfassenden Rationalisierungsprinzip, das sich in immer mehr Lebensbereichen vergegenständlicht. Strukturelle Probleme, die sich aus der kapitalistischen Organisationsform der Gesellschaft und damit aus eben diesem Rationalisierungsprinzip ergeben, werden unsichtbar gemacht, wenn jegliche Verantwortung den Individuen zugeschrieben wird.²⁰ Dies korrespondiert mit einem veränderten neoliberalen ökonomischen Diskurs, in dem Hinkelammert den Übergang vom utopischen zum zynischen Kapitalismus erblickt. Ungleichgewichte des Marktes werden nicht mehr als korrekturbedürftige Unvollkommenheiten des Marktes, sondern als Unvollkommenheiten im Verhalten der Menschen gegenüber dem Markt betrachtet.²¹

Bemerkenswert erscheint in diesem Kontext auch der in den letzten Jahren verstärkte Rückgriff auf das Konzept der Resilienz, die auch einer der Leitbegriffe des G20-Gipfels 2017 in Hamburg war. Resilienz beschreibt „die Fähigkeit eines Systems, akute Störungen und Stresssituationen zu bewältigen“²². Als Antwort auf die permanenten Krisenerscheinung im neoliberalen Kapitalismus erscheinen somit Strategien, die einzelne Systeme wie Individuen widerstandsfähig machen, um diese Krisen bewältigen zu können. Resilienz als Erfolgskonzept setzt dabei auf eine durch erhöhte Beanspruchung erzwungene Selbstoptimierung von Subjekten und Institutionen²³ und verlagert dadurch die Verantwortung für Krisen und Risiken weg von der gesellschaftlichen Gesamtstruktur in diese Subsysteme hinein. Mithilfe des Resilienzkonzeptes gelingt es daher, „all die Risiken und Gefahren, die in der heutigen Welt lauern, mit der Aura einer ökonomischen Zwangsläufigkeit zu umgeben“²⁴.

²⁰ Vgl. Strobel, Katja: Zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Solidarität. Arbeit und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Neoliberalismus aus feministisch-befreiungstheoretischer Perspektive, Münster 2012, S. 60.

²¹ Vgl. Hinkelammert, Franz: Der Schrei des Subjekts. Vom Welttheater des Johannesevangeliums zu den Hundejahren der Globalisierung, Luzern 2001, S. 333.

²² Höhler, Sabine: Mensch – Umwelt – System. Eine Geschichte der Stressbewältigung von der Erholung zur Selbstoptimierung, in: Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History 11 (2014), H. 3, S. 428.

²³ Vgl. Höhler: Mensch – Umwelt – System, S. 440.

²⁴ Gebauer, Thomas: Fit für die Katastrophe. Ein neues developmentpolitisches Modewort verhindert Ursachenbekämpfung, in: medico international (Hg.): Fit für die Katastrophe? Kritische Anmerkungen zum Resilienzdiskurs im aktuellen Krisenmanagement, Gießen 2017, S. 14.

So kennzeichnet der Begriff der Resilienz den Übergang von der Krisenvermeidung zum bloßen Krisenmanagement.²⁵ Er kann somit als einer der Schlüsselbegriffe für den momentanen Zustand des neoliberalen Kapitalismus angesehen werden.

Austeritätspolitik in Zeiten der Krise

Auch der politische Umgang mit der seit 2008 beginnenden Finanzkrise lässt sich im Kontext neoliberaler Rationalitäten verstehen. Der Erfolg dieser Politik gründete ebenfalls auf der Tatsache, dass sie innerhalb der herrschenden Rationalitäten des neoliberalen Kapitalismus als alternativlos gelten kann, wobei es kaum gelingt, ebendiese Rationalitäten grundsätzlich infrage zu stellen, auch wenn gerade die Finanzkrise bewiesen hatte, wie wenig sie ein Versprechen eines guten Lebens für alle in sich tragen. Die von der Troika aus Europäischer Zentralbank, EU-Kommission und Internationalem Währungsfond maßgeblich vertretene und durchgesetzte Austeritätspolitik folgte dabei einer neoliberalen Strategie, die zuvor schon bei der Schuldenkrisenbekämpfung in Lateinamerika angewandt worden war.²⁶ Eine solche Politik verursachte in den Ländern Südeuropas insbesondere in Griechenland eine soziale Katastrophe, die sich in einer drastisch erhöhten Jugendarbeitslosigkeit, massiven Einschnitten in der Gesundheitsversorgung, einer dramatisch gestiegenen Zahl von Wohnungslosen, einer erhöhten Selbstmordrate uvm. manifestierte. Die Staatsschuldenkrise in Griechenland lässt sich als unmittelbare Folge der Krise des Kapitals verstehen, in der der Staat die Entwertung des Kapitals verhinderte und somit das Interesse des Kapitals ins Zentrum der eigenen Politik rückte.²⁷ Politisch wurden die Ursache der Krise der Staatsverschuldung jedoch nicht in der Wirtschaftskrise und den politischen Maßnahmen, die auf diese folgten, gesehen, sondern im Fehlverhalten der von der Krise am meisten betroffenen Staaten. In den darauf folgenden sozialen und politischen Auseinandersetzungen setzten sich die Interessen des Kapitals gegenüber denen der Mehrheit der Bevölkerung der betroffenen Staaten durch.²⁸ Laut Stützle hat die

²⁵ Vgl. Gebauer: Fit für die Katastrophe, S. 15.

²⁶ Vgl. Strobel, Katja: In Zeiten der europäischen „Krise“. Herausforderungen für eine feministische Befreiungstheologie, in: Geitzhaus, Philipp u.a. (Hg.): Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums, Münster 2017.

²⁷ Vgl. Stützle, Ingo: Austerität als politisches Projekt. Von der monetären Integration Europas zur Eurokrise, Münster 2013, S. 315.

²⁸ Vgl. Stützle: Austerität, S. 319.

Euro-Krise somit einer spezifischen Form des Neoliberalismus innerhalb der EU zum Durchbruch verholfen.²⁹ Diese zeichnet sich aus durch eine Fokussierung auf die Herstellung von Wettbewerbsfähigkeit auf dem globalisierten Weltmarkt und Stabilität, wozu Haushaltskonsolidierung und Druck auf Löhne, die als autoritäre staatliche Maßnahmen durchgesetzt werden, dienen sollen.³⁰ Schulden können dabei auch die Funktion einnehmen, Sparprogramme und Sozialkürzungen wie auch die Etablierung des Marktes politisch durchsetzbar zu machen.³¹ Hier setzt Franz Hinkelammert mit seiner Schuldentheologie an, die er in den Kontext der paulinischen Gesetzeskritik stellt: Jedes Gesetz hat einen Umschlagpunkt ins Despotische, wenn es auf seine formale Erfüllung reduziert wird.³² Übertragen auf die Schuldenproblematik ergibt sich daraus, dass dort, wo der Gläubiger die Rückzahlung der Schulden einfordert, obwohl dies die Lebensmöglichkeiten des Schuldners behindert, das Gesetz in Despotie umschlägt. Die Forderung nach Rückzahlung der Schulden wird so zum „Verbrechen, dessen Kraft das Gesetz ist“³³. Dieses Urteil ergibt sich aus dem Kriterium der evangeliumsgemäßen Solidarität mit den Anderen, die der Logik der Konkurrenz entgegengestellt wird.³⁴ So lässt sich die ökonomische, ideologische und politische Praxis, die die Austeritätspolitik bedingt und legitimiert, von der biblischen Logik der Emanzipation her radikal in Frage stellen. Mit Hinkelammert lässt sich also aufzeigen, wie eine kritische theologische Analyse dazu beitragen kann, die lebensfeindlichen Dimensionen gegenwärtiger europäischer Politik zu entschleiern. Diese Offenlegung der herrschenden Verhältnisse ist ein wichtiger Schritt innerhalb eines Prozesses in Richtung auf eine Befreiung aus dieser lebensfeindlichen Situation hin und gerade darin ist ihre prophetische Funktion grundgelegt.

Migrationspolitik im Zeichen der „Willkommenskultur“

Die von der Bundesrepublik seit dem Sommer der Migration betriebene Politik lässt sich nicht als das ganz Andere der Austeritätspolitik verstehen, sondern folgt den gleichen Rationalisierungsprinzipien. Die Regierung Merkel stützte sich auch bereits im Sommer der Migration bei ihrer Politik

²⁹ Vgl. Stütze: Austerität, S. 338.

³⁰ Vgl. Stütze: Austerität, S. 343.

³¹ Vgl. Stütze: Austerität, S. 349.

³² Vgl. Hinkelammert, Franz: Reflexionen zum Schuldenproblem: die Entleerung der Menschenrechte, Arbeitspapier III, Münster 2015, S. 7.

³³ Ebd.

³⁴ Vgl. Hinkelammert, Schuldenproblem, S. 8f.

der partiellen Grenzöffnungen auf neoliberale KapitalvertreterInnen wie ExpertInnen aus Ökonomie und Publizistik. Das Agieren der Regierung ist folglich zum einen mit veränderten Kräfteverhältnissen zu erklären, wie sie durch die autonomen Migrationsbewegungen auf der Balkanroute und den damit einhergehenden vorübergehenden Zusammenbruch des Dublin-Regimes sowie die Kritik der inhumanen Abschottungs- und Grenzpolitik der EU durch linke und linksliberale Kräfte gegeben waren.³⁵ Zum anderen aber waren es auch neoliberale Kräfte, die sich von diesen Entwicklungen eine bessere Nutzung der Potentiale und Ressourcen versprachen, die sich durch ein entsprechendes Migrationsmanagement ergeben, das nicht einseitig auf Abschottung und Abwehr setzt, sondern die Einwanderung von Arbeitskräften auch als strategischen Vorteil begreift und ökonomisch nutzbar zu machen versteht.³⁶ Die versteckte Wende in der Migrationspolitik, die auch zu einer Einführung neuer Grenzkontrollen seit dem Frühjahr 2016 führte, lässt sich dann vor allem als politische Reaktion auf den Protest gegen diese Politik der Liberalisierung vonseiten der VertreterInnen eines national-konservativen Hegemonieprojekts, das in der AfD einen organisatorischen Ausdruck fand, verstehen.³⁷ Auf der anderen Seite lassen sich die Bewegungen im Sommer der Migration vor allem durch die globalen Krisenprozesse erklären, die Hunger, Klimakatastrophen, Bürgerkriege und Prozesse staatlichen Zerfalls mit sich bringen und die Weigerung von Menschen, solche Prozesse unwidersprochen hinzunehmen.³⁸ Wo Menschen ihre Situation als zu stark mit ihren Hoffnungen und Wünschen in Widerspruch stehend empfinden, können sie auf diese mit einer Exit- oder „Escape-Strategie“ reagieren, um ihr Schicksal zu wenden.³⁹

Freilich bedeutet sich diese Tatsache klarzumachen, gleichermaßen zu erkennen, dass die Geflüchteten nicht einfach nur im Rahmen eines Opferdiskurses als Objekte von Hilfe und Fürsorge gesehen werden können, sondern diejenigen sind, die sich ihr Recht auf Rechte kraft- und hoffnungsvoll zu erkämpfen suchen. Gleichzeitig ist hier vor jeder Romantisierung zu warnen, die sie deshalb zu AkteurInnen einer radikalen Veränderung hochstilisiert und so übersieht, dass es der überwältigenden Mehrheit von ihnen gerade nicht um die Überwindung

³⁵ Vgl. Georgi, Fabian: Widersprüche im langen Sommer der Migration. Ansätze einer materialistischen Grenzregimeanalyse, in: PROKLA 183 (2016), 191.

³⁶ Vgl. Georgi: Widersprüche, S. 191f.

³⁷ Vgl. Georgi: Widersprüche, S. 192.

³⁸ Vgl. Georgi: Widersprüche, S. 194.

³⁹ Vgl. Georgi: Widersprüche, S. 195.

der momentan in Europa herrschenden Verhältnisse geht, sondern um eine Integration in diese, um eine individuelle Verbesserung der eigenen Situation zu erreichen.

Einer befreiungstheologischen Analyse kann es durch den ihr innewohnenden Bezug auf die gesellschaftliche Praxis nicht nur um Appelle zur Humanisierung der Situation der MigrantInnen und Geflüchteten gehen, was sie grundlegend von jeder Theologie unterscheidet, die abgeleitet aus ihrem dogmatischen Anspruch hier mit einem ethisch-moralischen Appell ansetzt. Vielmehr geht es ihr, wie hier skizzenhaft angedeutet, um eine Analyse gesellschaftlicher Praktiken in ihren ökonomischen, politischen und ideologischen Dimensionen wie in deren Zusammenhang und darin um die Frage nach der Ermöglichung von Veränderungsprozessen im Sinne einer befreienden Praxis, die ein gutes Leben aller Menschen ermöglicht und somit die Verhältnisse der Ausbeutung, Unterdrückung und Ungerechtigkeit überwindet.

Prophetie und Solidarität als Handlungsoptionen

Dies führt uns zurück zu der Ausgangsfrage, wo sich in den konkreten Verhältnissen in der BRD heute befreiungstheologische Ansatzpunkte erkennen lassen, die sich in Prozesse grundlegender gesellschaftlicher Veränderung einschreiben. Als zwei der wichtigen kontextuellen Dimensionen, die für die Praxis des Münsteraner Instituts für Theologie und Politik handlungsleitend sind, wurden vorhergehend die Austeritätspolitik in Zeiten der Finanzkrise und die Migrationspolitik angeführt. Die Mitarbeit an einer Praxis der Befreiung in dieser Situation muss dabei zwei zentrale Aspekte umfassen: Prophetie und Solidarität. Bereits Gutiérrez umschreibt die Funktion der Prophetie darin, dass sie die geschichtlichen Ereignisse zu lesen hat und ihre Bedeutung aufdeckt, um die Verpflichtung „zum befreienden Einsatz in diesen Geschehnissen radikal“⁴⁰ deutlich zu machen. Im biblischen Sinne zeichnet sich Prophetie durch die Kritik der bestehenden Herrschaftsordnung aus, die eine sich zu den Herrschenden in Opposition begebende Wirklichkeitsanalyse vornimmt.⁴¹ Sie stellt somit die „Verkündigung der Veränderbarkeit der Welt, des Endes der unterdrückerischen Verhältnisse und die

⁴⁰ Vgl. Gutiérrez: Theologie der Befreiung, S. 80.

⁴¹ Vgl. zur Eigenart biblischer Prophetie auch: Zenger, Erich: Die Bücher der Prophetie, in: Ders. u.a.: Einleitung in das Alte Testament, Stuttgart 31998, S. 371-381.

geschichtliche Überwindung der Plausibilitäten und des Status Quo⁴² in ihr Zentrum. Damit umfasst die Prophetie „die enthüllende Dimension theologischer Rede“⁴³ wie auch den öffentlich vorgetragenen Protest gegen die durch diese Enthüllung offen zutage tretenden Verhältnisse. Für uns am Institut für Theologie und Politik artikuliert sich dieser Protest gegen die Austeritätspolitik etwa in den Blockupy-Tagen⁴⁴ in Frankfurt, die zum „Sichtbarmachen der unterschiedlichen Formen der Ausbeutung, Unterdrückung und Ungerechtigkeit, die der neoliberale Kapitalismus mit sich bringt und zugleich der Kämpfe und Widerstände, die auf die Überwindung eines Systems zielen, das ein Leben in Fülle für alle Menschen verunmöglicht“⁴⁵ beitragen sollten. In ähnlicher Perspektive und gewissermaßen als Fortsetzung dieser Proteste lassen sich auch die Gegenproteste zum G20-Gipfel in Hamburg verstehen, wo viele Menschen ihren grundsätzlichen Widerspruch zur Inszenierung der Herrschenden wie zu den Spielregeln eines globalen neoliberalen Kapitalismus der zunehmend auf Resilienz setzt, auf die Straße brachten.⁴⁶ Im Bereich der Migrationspolitik muss ein solches prophetisches Handeln darauf verweisen, dass „sowohl ein auf Ausgrenzung und Abschottung setzendes Europa als auch eine vermeintlich weltoffene neoliberale Ökonomie, die jeden Geflüchteten aus der Perspektive einer Vermehrung von Humankapital mustert, den ‚Ruf Gottes‘ konterkariert.“⁴⁷

Neben dieser prophetischen Dimension umfasst die befreiende Praxis innerhalb dieser Verhältnisse aus einer befreiungstheologischen

⁴² Kern, Benedikt: Prophetische Rede – prophetische Orte. Um „Gottes Willen“ Anklage erheben, in: Rundbrief des ITP 42 (2015), S. 10.

⁴³ Geitzhaus/Lis: Ambivalente Subjekte.

⁴⁴ Die Blockupy-Proteste wurden von einem Bündnis von unterschiedlichen politischen Gruppen und Organisationen (attac, die Partei „DIE LINKE“, linksradikale Organisationen) in Zusammenarbeit mit antirassistischen, antifaschistischen, (queer-)feministischen Bewegungen vorbereitet und organisiert. Durch Blockaden sollte die Arbeit der Europäischen Zentralbank in Frankfurt behindert werden, um so ein mit Südeuropa und den Menschen dort solidarisches Zeichen gegen die Austeritätspolitik zu setzen.

⁴⁵ Lis, Julia: Krisenprotest im Herzen der Bestie. Theologische Herausforderungen symbolischer und politischer Praxis am Beispiel Blockupy, in: Geitzhaus, Philipp/Lis, Julia/Ramminger, Michael (Hg.): Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums, Münster 2017, S. 208.

⁴⁶ Vgl. zur Beteiligung von ChristInnen am G20-Protest: <http://christengegeng20.blogspot.de/>

⁴⁷ Hellgermann, Andreas: Nützlich, gewollt, willkommen geheißen, ausgeschlossen, „...denn ihr selbst seid in Ägypten Fremde gewesen“, in: Institut für Theologie und Politik / Netzwerk Kirchenasyl Münster (Hg.): KIRCHEN.ASYL. Kirchenasyl ist Menschenrechtsschutz – eine Handreichung, Münster 2016, S. 21.

Perspektive auch das Element der Organisierung von Solidarität. So waren die Blockupy-Proteste auch Ausdruck einer Solidarität mit den Menschen, die im Süden Europas unter der Austeritätspolitik am meisten leiden, und darin auch ein Versuch die Kämpfe der Menschen hier und dort für Befreiung miteinander in ein Verhältnis zu setzen und zu verbinden.⁴⁸ Ein Handlungsfeld, in dem für uns am Institut für Theologie und Politik im Bereich der Auseinandersetzung mit der Migrationspolitik Solidarität und Prophetie zusammenkommen ist, die Arbeit im Bereich des Kirchenasyls: Hier werden Gemeinden ermutigt, solidarisch Menschen aufzunehmen und sich dazu in den Gemeinden entsprechend zu organisieren, um Menschen Schutz bieten zu können, deren Würde durch eine Abschiebung bedroht ist. Da aber das Kirchenasyl immer auch auf die Missstände der Asylpolitik verweist und damit die darüber hinausgehende grundlegende Anfrage nach gesellschaftlichen Strukturen, die diese verursachen und ermöglichen, kann es aus dieser Perspektive auch zum machtvollen prophetischen Zeichen werden.

Dies sind natürlich nur einige Ansatzpunkte, die aufzeigen sollen, wo und wir ein veränderndes Handeln im Geiste der Befreiungstheologie möglich wird. Sie machen aber deutlich, dass eine Befreiungstheologie im bundesdeutschen Kontext auf eine genaue Analyse der gesellschaftlichen Praxis angewiesen bleibt, um konkret werden lassen, wo christliche Interventionen heute solidarisch wie prophetisch wirksam werden können.

⁴⁸ Vgl. Lis, Krisenprotest, S. 219.



Creating Networks, Building Bridges

Experiences with the Reception of Liberation Theology in German Speaking Europe

Stefan SILBER

Abstract:

This paper deals with the experiences made in ten years of networking Latin American Liberation Theology in German speaking countries in Central Europe. During this time, Liberation Theology and our perception of it have changed on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The first two chapters deal with these transformations. Finally, the paper discerns, how transformed and transforming Latin American Liberation Theologies still present urgent challenges to churches and societies in Central Europe.

Resumen:

Este artículo trata de las experiencias realizadas en diez años de trabajo en red con Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana en países de habla alemana en Europa Central. Durante este tiempo, la Teología de la Liberación y nuestra percepción de ella han cambiado en ambos lados del Atlántico. Los dos primeros capítulos discuten estas transformaciones. Finalmente, el documento discernirá, en qué medida las teologías latinoamericanas de la liberación -transformadas y transformadoras- presentan desafíos urgentes a iglesias y sociedades en Europa Central.

“Liberation Theology is alive!”¹ Our rallying call, with which we started the Platform for Liberation Theology² ten years ago, was meant

¹ Cf. Stefan Silber 2006. *Vielschichtig und lebendig. Neuere Entwicklungen in der Theologie der Befreiung*, in: Herder-Korrespondenz 60/10, pp. 523-528, here: 528.

² Cf. <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/>. It is destined to the networking of German speaking theologians, groups and institutions interested in Latin American Liberation Theology, mainly in Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

as a provocation as well as a statement of fact. While most people in our churches in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland at the beginning of the 21st century were convinced that Liberation Theology was something out of the past, a small group of theologians, study groups, and institutions, mostly in direct contact with Latin America, were aware of the transformations Liberation Theology had undergone and of its ongoing importance (and necessity) for the People of God in that continent, and in ours.

Today, over 400 people (what I would consider as many, in our context), living in 20 countries on four continents, receive our free circular letter three times a year, and an unknown additional number of readers have access to it through further distribution and via the internet. These digital letters contain condensed information about events, people and institutions dealing with related topics in Latin America and in our countries, reviews and lists of new publications about Liberation Theology in German, and invitations to forthcoming events in German speaking countries. Every four months they remind us, that Liberation Theology is alive, not only in Latin America, but also in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and many other parts of Central Europe – and in the world.

This paper deals with our experiences throughout these ten years of networking. During this time, Liberation Theology and our perception of it have changed. On both sides of the Atlantic Ocean these developments can be perceived. Finally, transformed and transforming Latin American Liberation Theologies still present urgent challenges to us, our churches and our societies in Europe³.

1. Our experiences in the past ten years

Liberation Theology has not been received amply in the German speaking academic world. There is not a single university chair dedicated to Liberation or even Latin American Theology. It is absent from most curricula in theology and religious studies, and when it appears, mostly it is presented as a closed chapter in history.⁴

When asked about or confronted with Liberation Theology, most academics and Church representatives will tell you that it was only valid within its own context and/or time, that Liberation Theology won't work within our own European contexts or simply that luckily this deviation of postconciliar theology already has been overcome.

³ Even when I use the general term "Europe", my focus in this paper will always be the German speaking countries.

⁴ See e.g., the textbook of Bruno Kern 2013. *Theologie der Befreiung* (UTB 4027), Tübingen / Basel: A. Francke.

Nevertheless, since the early days of European reception of Liberation Theology, there have always been institutions, movements, and individual persons, mostly outside the University, that dedicated themselves to the study and reception of Latin American theology and spirituality, and the development of a genuine German language Liberation Theology.

By the turn of the millennium, these movements had lost almost every visibility in public. So in 2007, we made an attempt at bringing together these different institutions and movements and getting them into public again. From the very start, one of the aims was, to inform all those interested in Liberation Theology about new developments and currents in Latin America, and another, to get young theologians in German speaking countries, that is, under-forties, into contact with the history and the present of Liberation Theology.

Both aims could be achieved. It is most interesting to see, every four months, how many people feel interested in the news from Latin America, how many publications in German language and events in our countries can be advertised, and how many voluntary contributions to the circular letters are sent in. There is no budget to cover this effort: Everything is done voluntarily; the circulars are distributed only via the internet, and free of charge. There is a constant growth of new subscribers to the letters, and, what is even more gratifying, an almost complete absence of unsubscribers.

It is certain that much of the news contained in our circular letters do not permeate into other media. Theological and ecclesiastical reviews still do not reflect very often the aliveness and relevance of Liberation Theology. This is precisely the reason why the circular letters are so helpful and still necessary: They highlight activities, events and informations that happen in some part of our countries, and would otherwise remain unperceived, but now can contribute to the overall panorama of Liberation Theology in Central Europe.

Of course, there are news items in the circular letters that refer to the past. When some famous (or not so famous) liberation theologian passes away, mostly we publish an obituary. When Dom Pedro Casaldáliga and Gustavo Gutiérrez turned 80 years, we acknowledged the fact with an appreciation looking back to their achievements. And, maybe most important, when Oscar Romero was beatified, we dedicated a full title page (and some more space) to this important event. But generally, it is more important for us, and more common in our pages, to report on current Congresses and Conferences, political protests and achievements, new ideas, institutions, movements and publications, and everything else

that happens contemporarily in Latin America or in our own countries and is related to Liberation Theology.

This is a conscious limitation of our circular letters: We restrict ourselves mostly to news about Latin American Liberation Theology, aware of similar and related developments on other continents, and even in other religions. A more global approach would surpass our capacities as a voluntary project.

To give some examples from the latest circular letter (No. 32, June 2017)⁵: We announce the recently released 2nd volume of the documentation of the 2015 Amerindia Congress in Belo Horizonte, to be downloaded freely from the internet. The news of the El Salvadorean law prohibiting metal mining, supported by the Catholic bishops and institutions, is communicated. We inform about a new dictionary on Liberation Theology in French and report from the Spring meeting of the Liberation Theology Network of young theologians in Nürnberg. There are invitations to a Christian participation in the protests against the G20-meeting in Hamburg and to the Liberation Theology summer school near Münster. A list of new publications (in German) and another of forthcoming events fill the last two pages.

These are average examples. These news help us realize that Liberation Theology is well and alive in German speaking countries as well as on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and they help us to learn of other people, institutions and movements who work within their areas, contexts and preferences, at the consolidation of dialogue between Latin American Liberation Theology and our own theological and ecclesiastic contexts.

2. Transformations and Developments

Contemporary Liberation Theology is no longer the same as it was in 1984, when it was first condemned by the Vatican and news of it filled even ordinary German newspapers. There even have been suggestions that contemporary theological developments in Latin America should no longer be called expressions of Liberation Theology. At present, however, it can be noted that even theologians that are critical with first-generation Liberation Theology, return to the use of this label, because it expresses the common conviction of the need for theology to contribute to human and social liberation. For instance, Marcella Althaus-Reid, who never would shy away from a harsh and poignant criticism, if necessary, writes

⁵ See: <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/Home/32-Juni2017.pdf>.

that “I am talking about Liberation Theology because it is my base”, and affirms that she does it “with criticism and love.”⁶ For Althaus-Reid, “the Liberation Theology that continues the ramble (caminata) is until now the most valid proposal we have”⁷. And there have been many theologies in Latin America that “continued the ramble”.

Referring to this plurality, Luiz Carlos Susín holds that it is still important to use the term in singular, in spite of the growing pluralization of Liberation Theology. For him, there is still a fundamental unity at the bottom of this plurality, and we still need to resist to any attempt at dividing up Liberation Theology, following the intention of legitimising some strains of it while condemning others.⁸

The knowledge of theological plurality inside the shared frame of Liberation Theology is one of the permanent features of last ten years’ circular letters. There have been news items about feminist and indigenous theologies, pastoral processes of liberation, political protests and developments, and academic projects. We could sense that throughout the continent, Liberation Theology is responding to precise social and political challenges and developing very different means to denounce injustices and promote liberation.

Also, Spirituality of Liberation still is very alive. In fact, Liberation Theology has developed from a profound and diverse spirituality of liberation. It is not only, and not even in the first place, an academic movement or a pastoral or political theory, but a reflection about a liberating way of Christian life and faith. The memory of the martyrs is one of the most important elements of this spirituality, another, the dedication to life and the quest for justice to everyone. Indigenous elements of spirituality and awareness of creation and responsibility for it add to the gamut of Liberation Spirituality.

The experience of all this diversity taught us to understand Liberation Theology as a movement in constant renewal. While still paying their tribute to the so called “fathers of Liberation Theology” like Gutiérrez and Jon Sobrino, the younger generations of Liberation Theologians have begun to develop new methodologies and address other contexts, some of which surely would have scandalized some of the

⁶ Marcella Althaus-Reid 2010. *Marx en un bar gay. La Teología Indecente como una Reflexión sobre la Teología de la Liberación y la Sexualidad*, en: Numen: revista de estudos e pesquisa da religião 11/1-2, pp. 55-69, here: 61

⁷ Ibid. 67.

⁸ Luiz Carlos Susín 2012. *Teología de la Liberación: ¿De dónde venimos y a dónde vamos?*, in: Alternativas 19/44, pp. 13-26, here: 16-17.

first generation's representatives.⁹ Moreover, Liberation Theologies have emerged in Africa, Asia, even North America and Australia, and also in Islam, Buddhism and Judaism.

Recent developments have included global dialogues with postcolonial and decolonial studies and theologies. There have been processes to give liberating answers to the problems presented by the theology of religious pluralism and to post-religious and secularized contexts. Liberation Theology incurred into the global discussion of climate change, environmental care and ecological justice for the poor. Queer, gay and lesbian theologies have emerged, new approaches in biblical studies like the archaeological-biblical paradigm are being integrated. Liberation Theology has entered for good into ecumenical and macro-ecumenical communication and cooperation. Still beyond all this plurality there are hybrid and mixed approaches to two or more of these new (and old) fields of theological exploration. Maintaining the foundation of the Option for the Poor, contemporary Liberation Theology, we learned, is expanding its methodological and thematic scope far beyond its former social and ecclesiastic limits, always trying to serve the different processes of liberation.

The same applies to the different processes of reception of Liberation Theology in German speaking countries that our letters reflect: While some of them are aimed at a wider broadcasting of Latin American Theology, its new developments, methods, and topics, other processes are directed towards the formation of genuine European theological answers to our own political and social challenges.

Also in our countries, and within our audience and contributors, we can find a host of different interests, partnerships, methods of theological and political action, and dedication to diverse political and social challenges. While some of us are trying to integrate experiences from Latin American Liberation Theology into the praxis and the organization of our churches or the academic theological discourse, others link themselves to political or cultural movements outside the Church pursuing global or local aims. We do not feel any contradiction or even tension in

⁹ This is surely the case of Marcella Althaus-Reid's "Indecent Theology" and many other creative methodologies in its wake. Cf. Marcella Althaus-Reid 2005. *La Teología Indecente. Perversiones teológicas en sexo, género y política*. Barcelona: Bellaterra. See also the plurality reflected in the above mentioned 2nd volume of the documentation of the Amerindia Congress in Belo Horizonte: Oscar Elizalde Prada / Rosario Hermano / Deysi Moreno García (ed.): *Iglesia que camina con Espíritu y desde los pobres. Talleres y Comunicaciones Científicas*, Montevideo: Amerindia 2017; download via <http://bit.ly/2sqwhWr>.

this, because we can see, that Liberation Theology in Latin America also is dealing with many different areas of dialogue and conflict.

Between 2012 and 2015, many of us dedicated ourselves to the memory and actualization of the 50 years of the II. Vatican Council and, sharply accentuated, with the Pact of the Catacombs associated with it.¹⁰ Our interest for and dedication to Latin American Liberation Theology demanded this close discussion, not only because of the prominence of figures like Dom Helder Camara in it, but mainly because both the Council and Liberation Theology stand for the same theological approach to a Church concerned with humankind, especially the poor, and justice.

When Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope four years ago, something similar occurred within our network: Although the Pope does not declare himself a Liberation Theologian, and cannot, according to many, count as one, and although most of us, in the past, have been very ready to criticize the Pope, the Curia, and the whole Roman Catholic system of vertical and hierarchical organization, we could sense a very positive reaction to the words and deeds of this Latin American Pope, and some of us entered eagerly into the diffusion and interpretation of his message.¹¹

At the same time, members of our network engaged in political movements for the reception of protection and respect towards refugees and migrants in Europe. There were organized and publicized participations in huge protests against radioactive waste management, coal mining, protection of international financial institutions, production and exportation of weapons, warfare in the Middle East, sexism, homophobia, racism and neo-nazism in Germany, and many others. In comparison to the political continence of vast majorities in our churches and the collaboration with conservative and neoliberal politics of other grand parts, these were small partisan activities. But they shed a light on the necessary political consequences of our faith, if we take it seriously and commit ourselves to an effective and credible option for the poor.

Another important area of commitment of our members is the broad field of global solidarity, international justice and institutions of

¹⁰ See. e.g.: <http://www.pro-konzil.de/> and Norbert Arntz 2015. *Der Katakombenpakt. Für eine dienende und arme Kirche* (topos taschenbuch 1037), Kevelaer: topos.

¹¹ Cf., for instance, this book dedicated to the dialogue with the political left: Franz Segbers / Simon Wiesgickl (ed.) 2015. »Diese Wirtschaft tötet« (Papst Franziskus). *Kirchen gemeinsam gegen Kapitalismus. Eine Veröffentlichung der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, in Kooperation mit Publik-Forum, Hamburg: VSA.*

development and aid. Quite a number of institutions have begun to introduce at least some ideas and concepts of Liberation Theology into their praxis. Even an institution like Adveniat in Germany, formerly known as one of the most decisive enemies of Liberation Theology, has learned, in constant contact with Latin American local churches, to appreciate better the specific importance of this theology for project design, contact with overseas partners and Public Relations at home.¹² In a similar way, Liberation Theology has been able to transform – albeit to different extents – some of our institutions with global perspectives.

Positions of Liberation Theology, however, still remain painfully marginalized in our churches and in most areas of academic theology. There has been an ongoing estrangement between many members of our community and the official, hierarchical Church. We share this experience with many theologians in the South, although mostly we do not suffer the same harsh consequences and punishments like bans and prohibitions, and even excommunications like some theologians in the South. On the other hand, we lack also the silent and sometimes implicit acceptance of positions of Liberation Theology like in the Aparecida Conference or in some Latin American local churches fully dedicated to a pastoral of liberation. We lean very much on these experiences, shared by some of us who have lived in Latin America, and we are very happy with figures like the Austro-brazilian bishop Dom Erwin Kräutler, who can build a bridge easily between our European context and the real life of a local church in America dedicated to a liberating praxis.

Our minority status within Church and University, however, does not deter us from continuing with this task of disseminating and reinventing Liberation Theology in Europe, simply because it is necessary. It is essential for the establishment of global, and local justice. And it is inescapable, if we really want to take our Christian faith serious, and put it into praxis.

3. Challenges for European Liberation Theologies

In the last fifty years, there have been many theologians that have tried to let Liberation Theology speak to European contexts.¹³ However,

¹² A good example is Adveniat's review "Blickpunkt Lateinamerika" that reflects the experiences of Latin American Churches and people and presents them to a broader public in Germany. Very often, the influence of Liberation Theology is quite tangible. Cf. <http://www.blickpunkt-lateinamerika.de/>.

¹³ Cf., still an important reference: Raúl Fornet-Betancourt (ed.) 1997. *Befreiungstheologie. Kritischer Rückblick und Perspektiven für die Zukunft*, Vol. 3: *Die Rezeption im deutschsprachigen Raum*, Mainz: Grünewald.

since contexts are shifting, and Europe has changed a lot and still is transforming, it is necessary to ask ourselves time and again, which are the challenges that our context presents to Liberation Theology and, vice versa, in which way a transformed and transforming Liberation Theology challenges our theological praxis in our own context.

I cannot do this here exhaustively, but I would like to share some preoccupations that seem important to me as someone living in Germany and looking at Europe through the lens of Latin American Liberation Theology.

Our task is the construction of a genuine “European Liberation Theology” in a geographical, contextual, and cultural sense. It is not enough to reproduce liberationist methodology applying it to our contexts: We need to recreate Liberation Theology here, create our own way of liberating theology from its eurocentrist captivity and develop a theology that contributes to the liberation of the poor.

The starting point, however, from my point of view, should be the same: The Option for the Poor. This is, because Liberation Theology has taught us, that this option is not an invention made by some Latin American theologians, but the fundamental structure of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Option for the Poor is an option made by God and made flesh in the incarnation. So we need to turn theologically to the poor if we want to create our own liberating theology in Europe.

Turning to the poor, in Europe, we will have to pay tribute to the diversity and plurality of poverty and exclusion within our contexts. Economic poverty, homelessness, sickness, joblessness and precarious labour conditions not necessarily go hand in hand. Violence and discrimination against women, racism, xenophobia, exclusion of children and elderly people and many other forms of group focused enmity persist in our societies and call for a highly differentiated as well as coordinated approach.

But very soon we will realize also that local and global contexts are merging rapidly and are already becoming indistinguishable: Forced and voluntary migration confront us with biographies of poverty that arrive from foreign places and alien cultures, yet are product of European capitalist exploitation and imperialist (neo-)colonization, of wars fought with weapons and ideologies made in Europe. Global climate change and environmental destruction also remit us to causes and responsibilities in our continent.

So the Option for the Poor, in Europe, will link us to poor and exploited people in Europe, to migrants and refugees, and to the poor

people of the global South, impoverished and exploited by ourselves. These are multiple and interconnected challenges for our theology and praxis: In which way can we relate personally to these different and diverse groups of poor people? How can they become subjects of European Liberation Theology?

Another serious and disturbing challenge can be found in the growth and strengthening of new right-wing and fundamentalist currents, both in religion and in society, more often than not interconnected with one another.¹⁴ Neo-nationalist and racist, anti-muslim and radically opposed to a liberating Christianity, these new movements, that arise simultaneously – and yet diversely – in virtually every European country, seemingly can present themselves as the defenders of threatened and underprivileged members of liberal and capitalist society, advocates of values and order, and upholders of what they like to call “Christian Occident”. It is very urgent that European theology should denounce the false assumptions of these movements and present alternative strategies and hopes for a more peaceful and solidary society beyond capitalism.

A third and most important challenge to European theology is the auto-critical recognition of the painful burden of eurocentrism in our philosophy and theology.¹⁵ Theologies from the Third World have criticized for many decades now, that (neo-)colonialism, racism, patriarchy, imperialism, and white superiority are still strong pillars of European thought and theology. So one significant task for a European Liberation Theology is a critical review of European theological methodology, towards a greater pluralization, variability and even transitority of theological thought.

Finally, among the many challenges to European theology (including those not mentioned here) there is the ongoing necessity of a deep solidarity with Latin American Liberation Theology and other emerging theologies from the South. This solidarity includes material and personal support, advocacy within the Church and the academy, reception, republication and reelaboration of theological production from the South, as well as a solidary and constructive criticism within a fraternal dialogue.

Constructing European expressions of Liberation Theology will be no easy task, but nevertheless a necessary one, because we believe – together with a good number of Latin American theologians, that this

¹⁴ See, for instance: Sebastian Pittl 2017. Für Christus, Volk und Vaterland. Die politische Theologie neurechter Bewegungen [12.07.2017], in: <http://www.feinschwarz.net/fuer-christus-volk-und-vaterland-die-politische-theologie-neurechter-bewegungen/>

¹⁵ See the contribution of Josef Estermann in this issue.

is no special or marginal area of theology, but exactly what theology is about. To quote Juan Luis Segundo: “I understood that the task wasn’t to use the term ‘liberation’ but to make a better and, therefore, more liberating theology.”¹⁶

Building bridges: “Wer darüber will geh’n, muss im Tanze sich dreh’n.”

Every bridge needs two heads, two pillars in order to stand and allow communication: If we want communication to take place between Latin American and European theologies, we will have to create a European bridgehead of Liberation Theology. This is what we pretended to achieve with our Platform for Liberation Theology: Contribute to the construction, strengthening and transformation of a bridgehead of Liberation Theology in German speaking countries. What we could accomplish was only a small contribution. But it showed that the bridge, however small and shaky, is standing and communication is flowing. This has been, and still is, a sign of hope.

There is a popular song about a bridge over the river Main, near which I am living, that says: “Wer darüber will geh’n, muss im Tanze sich dreh’n.” - “Whoever wants to cross it [the bridge], needs to do it turning in the dance.” I believe that this phrase resumes some of our experiences of 10 years of networking Liberation Theology: There is a constant need to turn around, leave false sureties behind and turn ourselves once and again to the poor, the excluded ones, the other. We need to follow the turns and steps of our Latin American dance partners. But also turn and react to the music played in our own contexts. It is a dance. It holds us in constant motion. It may be exhausting at times. But it helps us build the bridge and cross it. And the dance brings joy to our bodies.

¹⁶ Segundo, Juan Luis 1983. *Teología abierta*, Vol. I, Madrid: Cristiandad 21 [my translation].

Pluralität, Fragmente, Zeichen der Zeit

Aktuelle fundamentaltheologische Herausforderungen
aus der Perspektive der lateinamerikanischen Theologie der Befreiung

Stefan SILBER



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Dieses Buch widmet sich im ersten Teil der Weiterentwicklung und Rezeption der Theologie der Befreiung in der Zeit zwischen 1990 und 2017. Ein besonderes Augenmerk liegt dabei jeweils auf der Aktualität und sich fortschreibenden Gegenwartsbezogenheit sowie der wachsenden Pluralität dieser Theologie. Der zweite Teil blickt aus der Sicht und Tradition der Theologie der Befreiung auf die Frage der Religionen und ihrer Pluralität. Dieser Themenbereich wird in der Gegenwart immer brisanter und wurde vor allem im ersten Jahrzehnt des 21. Jahrhun-

derts von zahlreichen Befreiungstheologen bearbeitet. Der dritte Teil stellt sich – ebenfalls aus der Perspektive der Befreiungstheologie – den pluralen Entwicklungen der lateinamerikanischen Großstädte. Beide Themenbereiche, Religionen und Großstädte, werden als Zeichen der Zeit behandelt und stellen somit Herausforderungen für die Theologie dar; in beiden Bereichen wird gezeigt, dass die Theologie der Befreiung durch die prinzipielle Ausrichtung an der Option für die Armen über die besten Voraussetzungen verfügt, um diese Herausforderungen zu beantworten.

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Creando redes, construyendo puentes

Experiencias con la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en países europeos de lengua alemana

Stefan SILBER

Abstract:

This paper deals with the experiences made in ten years of networking Latin American Liberation Theology in German speaking countries in Central Europe. During this time, Liberation Theology and our perception of it have changed on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The first two chapters deal with these transformations. Finally, the paper discerns, how transformed and transforming Latin American Liberation Theologies still present urgent challenges to churches and societies in Central Europe.

Resumen:

Este artículo trata de las experiencias realizadas en diez años de trabajo en red con Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana en países de habla alemana en Europa Central. Durante este tiempo, la Teología de la Liberación y nuestra percepción de ella han cambiado en ambos lados del Atlántico. Los dos primeros capítulos discuten estas transformaciones. Finalmente, el documento discernirá, en qué medida las teologías latinoamericanas de la liberación -transformadas y transformadoras- presentan desafíos urgentes a iglesias y sociedades en Europa Central.

“¡La Teología de la Liberación vive!”¹ Nuestra consigna, con la que iniciamos la Plataforma para la Teología de la Liberación² hace diez años,

¹ Cf. Stefan Silber 2006. *Vielschichtig und lebendig. Neuere Entwicklungen in der Theologie der Befreiung*, en: *Herder-Korrespondenz* 60/10, pp. 523-528, aquí 528.

² Cf. <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/>. La plataforma está destinada a la creación de redes entre teólogos, grupos e instituciones en el área de habla alemana, ante todo en Austria, Suiza y Alemania, interesadas en la teología de la liberación latinoamericana.

significaba una provocación y a la vez una declaración de hechos. Si bien la mayoría de las personas en nuestras iglesias de Alemania, Austria y Suiza a comienzos del siglo XXI estaban convencidas de que la Teología de la Liberación era algo del pasado, un pequeño grupo de teólogos, grupos de estudio e instituciones, en su mayoría en contacto directo con América Latina, eramos conscientes de las transformaciones que la Teología de la Liberación había pasado y de su continua importancia (y necesidad) para el Pueblo de Dios en ese continente y en el nuestro.

Hoy en día, más de 400 personas (lo que yo consideraría como muchas, en nuestro contexto), que viven en 20 países de cuatro continentes, reciben nuestra circular gratuita tres veces al año, y un número desconocido de lectores acceden a ella a través de la distribución y vía internet. Estas cartas digitales contienen información condensada sobre eventos, personas e instituciones relacionadas con el tema en América Latina y en nuestros países, además de reseñas y listas de nuevas publicaciones sobre Teología de la Liberación en alemán, e invitaciones a eventos próximos en países de habla alemana. Cada cuatro meses nos recuerdan que la Teología de la Liberación está viva, no sólo en América Latina, sino también en Austria, Alemania, Suiza y muchas otras partes de Europa Central y del mundo.

Este artículo trata de nuestras experiencias a través de estos diez años de crear redes. Durante este tiempo, la Teología de la Liberación y nuestra percepción de ella han cambiado. A ambos lados del Atlántico se pueden percibir estos desarrollos. Finalmente, las teologías latinoamericanas de la liberación, transformadas y transformadoras, siguen presentando desafíos urgentes para nosotros, nuestras iglesias y nuestras sociedades en Europa³.

1. Nuestras experiencias en los diez años pasados

La Teología de la Liberación no se ha recibido ampliamente en el mundo académico de habla alemana. No hay una sola cátedra universitaria dedicada a la Teología de la Liberación o generalmente a la teología latinoamericana. Está ausente de la mayoría de los currículos en teología y estudios religiosos, y cuando aparece, sobre todo se presenta como un capítulo cerrado de la historia.⁴

³ En este texto, aun cuando uso el término más general de "Europa", siempre me referiré a los países de habla alemana.

⁴ Cf. p. ej. el tratado de Bruno Kern 2013. *Theologie der Befreiung* (UTB 4027), Tübingen / Basel: A. Francke.

Cuando se les pregunta o confronta con la Teología de la Liberación, la mayoría de académicos y representantes de la Iglesia dirán que sólo era válida dentro de su propio contexto y/o tiempo, que la Teología de la Liberación no puede funcionar dentro de nuestros propios contextos europeos o simplemente que afortunadamente esta desviación de la teología postconciliar ya ha sido superada.

Sin embargo, desde los primeros días de la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa, siempre han existido instituciones, movimientos y personas individuales, en su mayoría fuera de la universidad, dedicadas al estudio y a la recepción de la teología y espiritualidad latinoamericanas y al desarrollo de una genuina Teología de la Liberación de lengua alemana.

A principios del milenio, estos movimientos habían perdido casi toda la visibilidad pública. Así que en 2007, intentamos reunir a estas diferentes instituciones y movimientos y devolverlos al público. Desde un principio, uno de los objetivos era informar a todos los interesados en la Teología de la Liberación sobre los nuevos desarrollos y corrientes en América Latina y otro, conseguir que los jóvenes teólogos de los países de habla alemana, es decir, los menores de 40 años, conozcan la historia y el presente de la Teología de la Liberación.

Ambos objetivos podían lograrse. Es muy interesante ver, cada cuatro meses, cuántas personas se sienten interesadas en las noticias de América Latina, cuántas publicaciones en lengua alemana y eventos en nuestros países se pueden anunciar y cuántas contribuciones voluntarias a las cartas circulares se envían. No hay presupuesto para cubrir este esfuerzo: Todo se hace voluntariamente; las circulares se distribuyen sólo a través de internet, y de forma gratuita. Hay un crecimiento constante de nuevos suscriptores a las cartas, y, lo que es aún más gratificante, una ausencia casi completa de quienes quieren darse de baja.

Es cierto que muchas de las noticias contenidas en nuestras circulares no penetran en otros medios. Las revistas teológicas y eclesíásticas todavía no reflejan muy a menudo la vitalidad y relevancia de la Teología de la Liberación. Precisamente por eso las circulares son tan útiles y necesarias: ponen de relieve a actividades, acontecimientos e informaciones que suceden en alguna parte de nuestros países y de otra manera no se percibirían, pero ahora pueden contribuir al panorama general de la Teología de la Liberación en Europa Central.

Por supuesto, hay noticias en las circulares que se refieren al pasado. Cuando fallece algún famoso (o no tan famoso) teólogo de la liberación, en su mayoría publicamos un obituario. Cuando Dom Pedro Casaldáliga y Gustavo Gutiérrez cumplieron 80 años, lo reconocimos con

una apreciación de sus logros. Y, quizás lo más importante, cuando se beatificó a Oscar Romero, dedicamos una página de título completa (y un poco más de espacio) a este importante evento. Pero en general, es más importante para nosotros, y más común en nuestras páginas, informar sobre congresos y conferencias actuales, protestas y logros políticos, nuevas ideas, instituciones, movimientos y publicaciones, y todo lo que sucede actualmente en América Latina o en nuestros propios países y está relacionado con la Teología de la Liberación.

Esta es una restricción consciente de nuestras circulares: Nos limitamos principalmente a noticias sobre la Teología de la Liberación de América Latina, conscientes de desarrollos similares y relacionados en otros continentes, e incluso en otras religiones. Un enfoque más global superaría nuestras capacidades como proyecto voluntario.

Para dar algunos ejemplos de la última carta circular (nº 32, junio de 2017):⁵ Anunciamos el 2º volumen recientemente publicado de la documentación del Congreso Amerindia 2015 en Belo Horizonte, para ser descargado libremente de internet. Se comunica la noticia de la ley salvadoreña que prohíbe la minería metálica, apoyada por obispos e instituciones católicas. Informamos acerca de un nuevo diccionario sobre Teología de la Liberación en francés y desde la reunión de primavera de la Red de Teología de la Liberación de teólogos jóvenes en Nuremberg. Hay invitaciones a una participación cristiana en las protestas contra la reunión del G20 en Hamburgo y a la escuela de verano sobre Teología de la Liberación cerca de Münster. Una lista de nuevas publicaciones (en alemán) y otra de próximos eventos llenan las dos últimas páginas.

Estos son ejemplos regulares. Estas noticias nos ayudan a darnos cuenta de que la Teología de la Liberación está bien viva tanto en los países de habla alemana como al otro lado del Atlántico, y nos ayudan a conocer a otras personas, instituciones y movimientos que trabajan en sus áreas, contextos y preferencias propias para consolidar el diálogo entre la teología latinoamericana de la liberación y nuestros propios contextos teológicos y eclesiales.

2. Transformaciones y desarrollos

La Teología de la Liberación contemporánea ya no es la misma de 1984, cuando fue condenada por primera vez por el Vaticano y la noticia de este hecho llenó incluso periódicos alemanes ordinarios. Incluso

⁵ Véase <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/Home/32-Juni2017.pdf>.

hubieron sugerencias de que los desarrollos teológicos contemporáneos en América Latina ya no deberían ser llamados expresiones de la Teología de la Liberación. En la actualidad, sin embargo, se puede observar que incluso los teólogos críticos con la Teología de la Liberación de primera generación, vuelven al uso de esta etiqueta, porque expresa la convicción común de que es necesario que la teología contribuya a la liberación humana y social. Por ejemplo, Marcella Althaus-Reid, que nunca habría titubeado ante una crítica dura y punzante, si era necesaria, escribe que “estoy hablando de la Teología de la Liberación porque es mi base”, y afirma que lo está haciendo “con crítica y con amor.”⁶ Para Althaus-Reid, “la Teología de la Liberación que sigue la caminata es la todavía la propuesta mas válida que tenemos”⁷. Y han habido muchas teologías en América Latina que siguieron esta *caminhada*.

Refiriéndose a esta pluralidad, Luiz Carlos Susín sostiene que todavía es importante utilizar el término en singular, a pesar de la creciente pluralización de la Teología de la Liberación. Para él, todavía hay una unidad fundamental en la base de esta pluralidad, y todavía tenemos que resistir a cualquier intento de dividir la Teología de la Liberación, siguiendo la intención de legitimar algunas de sus expresiones condenando a otras.⁸

El conocimiento de la pluralidad teológica dentro del marco compartido de la Teología de la Liberación es uno de los rasgos permanentes de las circulares de los últimos diez años. Ha habido noticias sobre teologías feministas e indígenas, procesos pastorales de liberación, protestas y desarrollos políticos y proyectos académicos. Podemos sentir que en todo el continente la Teología de la Liberación está respondiendo a desafíos sociales y políticos muy precisos y desarrollando medios diversos para denunciar las injusticias y promover la liberación.

Además, la espiritualidad de liberación sigue muy viva. De hecho, la Teología de la Liberación nació desde una profunda y diversa espiritualidad liberadora. No es sólo, ni en primer lugar, un movimiento académico o una teoría pastoral o política, sino la reflexión sobre un camino profundo de vida y fe cristianas y de liberación. El recuerdo de los mártires es uno de los elementos más importantes de esta espiritualidad, otros, la

⁶ Marcella Althaus-Reid 2010. *Marx en un bar gay. La Teología Indecente como una Reflexión sobre la Teología de la Liberación y la Sexualidad*, en: Numen: revista de estudos e pesquisa da religião 11/1-2, pp. 55-69, aquí 61.

⁷ Ibid. 67.

⁸ Luiz Carlos Susín 2012. *Teología de la Liberación: ¿De dónde venimos y a dónde vamos?*, en: Alternativas 19/44, pp. 13-26, aquí 16-17.

dedicación a la vida y la búsqueda de la justicia para todos. Elementos de espiritualidad indígena, la conciencia de la creación y la responsabilidad por ella se suman a la gama de la espiritualidad de la liberación.

La experiencia de toda esta diversidad nos enseñó a entender la Teología de la Liberación como un movimiento en constante renovación. Mientras siguen pagando sus tributos a los llamados “padres de la Teología de la Liberación”, como Gutiérrez y Jon Sobrino, las generaciones más jóvenes de teólogos de la liberación han comenzado a desarrollar nuevas metodologías y abordar otros contextos, algunos de los cuales seguramente habrían escandalizado a algunos de los representantes de las primeras generaciones.⁹ Además, surgieron teologías de la liberación en África, Asia, hasta en Norteamérica y Australia, e incluso en el Islam, el Budismo y el Judaísmo.

Los desarrollos recientes incluyen diálogos globales con estudios y teologías postcoloniales y decoloniales. Ha habido procesos para dar respuestas liberadoras a los problemas presentados por la teología del pluralismo religioso y a contextos post-religionales y secularizados. La Teología de la Liberación entró en la discusión global sobre el cambio climático, el cuidado del medio ambiente y la justicia ecológica para los pobres. Aparecieron teologías queer, gay y lesbianas, y nuevos enfoques en los estudios bíblicos como el paradigma arqueológico-bíblico se están integrando. La Teología de la Liberación ha entrado a la comunicación y cooperación ecuménica y macro-ecuménica, ya para quedarse. Todavía más allá de toda esta pluralidad hay enfoques híbridos y mezclados dentro de dos o más de estos nuevos (y antiguos) campos de exploración teológica. Manteniendo el fundamento de la Opción por los Pobres, la Teología de la Liberación contemporánea, pudimos aprender, está ampliando su alcance metodológico y temático mucho más allá de sus antiguos límites sociales y eclesiales, siempre tratando de servir a los diferentes procesos de liberación.

Lo mismo se aplica a los diferentes procesos de recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en los países de habla alemana que reflejan

⁹ Esto sería el caso ciertamente de la “Teología Indecente” de Marcella M. Althaus-Reid y muchas metodologías creativas más que la siguieron. Cf. Marcella Althaus-Reid 2005. *La Teología Indecente. Perversiones teológicas en sexo, género y política*. Barcelona: Bellaterra. Véase además la pluralidad reflejada en el ya mencionado 2o volumen de la documentación del congreso de Amerindia en Belo Horizonte: Oscar Elizalde Prada / Rosario Hermano / Deysi Moreno García (ed.): *Iglesia que camina con Espíritu y desde los pobres. Talleres y Comunicaciones Científicas*, Montevideo: Amerindia 2017; descarga gratuita vía <http://bit.ly/2sqwhWr>.

nuestras circulares: Mientras algunos de ellos están dirigidos a una difusión más amplia de la teología latinoamericana, sus nuevos desarrollos, métodos y temas, otros procesos van dirigidos a la formación de respuestas teológicas genuinamente europeas a nuestros propios desafíos políticos y sociales.

También en nuestros países, y dentro de nuestra audiencia y contribuyentes, podemos encontrar una gran variedad de intereses, asociaciones, métodos de acción teológica y política y dedicación a diversos desafíos políticos y sociales. Mientras algunos de nosotros tratan de integrar las experiencias de la teología latinoamericana de la liberación en la praxis y la organización de nuestras iglesias o el discurso teológico académico, otros se vinculan a movimientos políticos o culturales fuera de la Iglesia que persiguen objetivos globales o locales. No sentimos ninguna contradicción ni siquiera tensión en esto, porque podemos ver, que la Teología de la Liberación en América Latina también está relacionada con muchas áreas diferentes de diálogo y conflicto.

Entre 2012 y 2015, muchos de nosotros nos dedicamos a la memoria y actualización de los 50 años del Concilio Vaticano II y, fuertemente acentuado, con el pacto de las catacumbas asociado a él.¹⁰ Nuestro interés y dedicación a la Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana exigió este trabajo, no sólo por la prominencia de figuras como Dom Helder Camara en el Concilio y en el pacto de las catacumbas, sino principalmente porque tanto el Concilio como la Teología de la Liberación representan el mismo enfoque teológico para una Iglesia que se ocupa de la humanidad, especialmente de los pobres, y de la justicia.

Cuando Jorge Mario Bergoglio fue elegido Papa hace cuatro años, algo similar ocurrió dentro de nuestra red: aunque el Papa no se autodeclare teólogo de la liberación y no puede, según muchos, ser reconocido como uno, y aunque la mayoría de nosotros, en el pasado, estuvimos muy dispuestos a criticar al Papa, a la Curia ya todo el sistema católico romano de organización vertical y jerárquica, pudimos sentir una reacción muy positiva a las palabras y hechos de este Papa latinoamericano, y algunos de nosotros entraron con entusiasmo en la difusión e interpretación de su mensaje.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. p.ej.: <http://www.pro-konzil.de/> y Norbert Arntz 2015. *Der Katakombenpakt. Für eine dienende und arme Kirche* (topos taschenbuch 1037), Kevelaer: topos.

¹¹ Cf., p.ej., este libro dedicado al diálogo con la izquierda política: Franz Segbers / Simon Wiesgickl (ed.) 2015. »Diese Wirtschaft tötet« (Papst Franziskus). *Kirchen gemeinsam gegen Kapitalismus. Eine Veröffentlichung der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, in Kooperation mit Publik-Forum, Hamburg: VSA.*

Al mismo tiempo, miembros de nuestra red participan en movimientos políticos para la recepción, la protección y el respeto hacia refugiados y migrantes en Europa. Ha habido participaciones organizadas y publicadas en grandes protestas contra la gestión de residuos radiactivos, la minería del carbón, la protección de las instituciones financieras internacionales, la producción y exportación de armas, la guerra en Oriente Medio, el sexismo, la homofobia, el racismo y el neonazismo en Alemania, entre otros. En comparación con la abstención política de las inmensas mayorías en nuestras iglesias y la colaboración con la política conservadora y neoliberal de otras grandes partes, estas fueron pequeñas actividades partisanas. Pero arrojan luz sobre las consecuencias políticas necesarias de nuestra fe, si la tomamos en serio y nos comprometemos a una opción efectiva y creíble por los pobres.

Otra área importante de compromiso de nuestros miembros es el amplio campo de la solidaridad global, la justicia internacional y las instituciones de desarrollo y ayuda. Muchas instituciones han comenzado a introducir al menos algunas ideas y conceptos de la Teología de la Liberación en su praxis. Incluso una institución como Adveniat en Alemania, antes conocida como uno de los enemigos más decisivos de la Teología de la Liberación, ha aprendido, en constante contacto con las iglesias locales latinoamericanas, a apreciar mejor la importancia específica de esta teología para el diseño de proyectos, el contacto con las iglesias hermanas de ultramar y las relaciones públicas en casa.¹² De manera similar, la Teología de la Liberación ha sido capaz de transformar – aunque de forma diversa – algunas de nuestras instituciones con perspectivas globales.

Posiciones de la Teología de la Liberación, sin embargo, siguen siendo dolorosamente marginadas en nuestras iglesias y en la mayoría de las áreas de la teología académica. Ha habido un alejamiento constante entre muchos miembros de nuestra comunidad y la Iglesia oficial y jerárquica. Compartimos esta experiencia con muchos teólogos en el Sur, aunque por lo general no sufrimos las mismas consecuencias y castigos durísimos como prohibiciones y despidos, e incluso excomuniones como algunos teólogos del Sur. Por otro lado, carecemos también de la aceptación silenciosa y a veces implícita de posiciones de la Teología de

¹² Un buen ejemplo es la revista de Adveniat "Blickpunkt Lateinamerika" que refleja las experiencias de las iglesias y pueblos latinoamericanas y las presenta a un público más amplio en Alemania. Muy a menudo, la influencia de la Teología de la Liberación es bastante tangible. Cf. <http://www.blickpunkt-lateinamerika.de/>.

la Liberación como en la Conferencia de Aparecida o en algunas iglesias locales latinoamericanas plenamente dedicadas a una pastoral de la liberación. Nos apoyamos en estas experiencias, compartidas por algunos de nosotros que hemos vivido en América Latina, y estamos muy contentos con figuras como el obispo austro-brasileño Dom Erwin Kräutler, que puede construir un puente fácilmente entre nuestro contexto europeo y la vida real de una iglesia local en América dedicada a una praxis liberadora.

Sin embargo, nuestro estatus minoritario dentro de la Iglesia y la universidad no nos impide continuar con esta tarea de difundir y reinventar la Teología de la Liberación en Europa, simplemente porque es necesario. Es esencial para el establecimiento de la justicia global y local. Y es ineludible, si realmente queremos tomar en serio nuestra fe cristiana y ponerla en acción.

3. Desafíos para las Teologías de la Liberación europeas

En los últimos cincuenta años, muchos teólogos han tratado de hacer hablar la Teología de la Liberación a los contextos europeos.¹³ Sin embargo, como contextos siempre cambian, así también Europa ha cambiado mucho y todavía se está transformando. Por esto es necesario preguntarse cada vez de nuevo, cuáles son los desafíos que nuestro contexto presenta a la Teología de la Liberación y, por el otro lado, de qué manera una Teología de la Liberación transformada y transformadora desafía nuestra praxis teológica en nuestro propio contexto.

No puedo hacer esto aquí exhaustivamente, pero me gustaría compartir algunas preocupaciones que me parecen importantes como alguien que vive en Alemania y que mira a Europa a través de los lentes de la Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana.

Nuestra tarea es la construcción de una auténtica “Teología de la Liberación Europea” en un sentido geográfico, contextual y cultural. No basta con reproducir la metodología liberacionista aplicándola a nuestros contextos: Necesitamos recrear la Teología de la Liberación aquí, crear nuestra propia manera de liberar la teología de su cautividad eurocentrista y desarrollar una teología que contribuya a la liberación de los pobres.

¹³ Cf., hasta la fecha una referencia importante: Raúl Fonet-Betancourt (ed.) 1997. *Befreiungstheologie. Kritischer Rückblick und Perspektiven für die Zukunft, Tomo 3: Die Rezeption im deutschsprachigen Raum*, Mainz: Grünewald.

El punto de partida, sin embargo, desde mi punto de vista, debe ser el mismo: La opción por los pobres. Es así, porque la Teología de la Liberación nos ha enseñado, que esta opción no es una invención hecha por algunos teólogos latinoamericanos, sino la estructura fundamental de la Iglesia de Jesucristo. La opción por los pobres es una opción tomada por Dios y hecha carne en la encarnación. Así que necesitamos volvernos teológicamente a los pobres si queremos crear nuestra propia teología liberadora en Europa.

En cuanto a los pobres, en Europa, tendremos que tomar en cuenta la diversidad y pluralidad de la pobreza y la exclusión dentro de nuestros contextos. La pobreza económica, la falta de vivienda, la enfermedad, el desempleo y las condiciones laborales precarias no necesariamente van de la mano. La violencia y la discriminación contra la mujer, el racismo, la xenofobia, la exclusión de niños y ancianos y muchas otras formas de enemistad enfocada en grupos persisten en nuestras sociedades y exigen un enfoque altamente diferenciado y coordinado.

Pero muy pronto nos daremos cuenta también de que los contextos locales y globales se están fundiendo rápidamente y ya se están haciendo indistinguibles: la migración forzada y voluntaria nos confronta con biografías de pobreza que llegan desde espacios extranjeros y de culturas alienas, productos de la explotación capitalista europea y del imperialismo (neo-)colonial, de guerras combatidas con armas e ideologías hechas en Europa. El cambio climático global y la destrucción ambiental también nos remiten a causas y responsabilidades en nuestro continente.

Así la opción por los pobres, en Europa, nos vinculará con los pobres y explotados de Europa, a los migrantes y refugiados, y a los pobres del Sur global, empobrecidos y explotados por nosotros mismos. Estos retos para nuestra teología y praxis son múltiples e interconectados: ¿De qué manera podemos relacionarnos personalmente con estos diferentes y diversos grupos de pobres? ¿Cómo pueden convertirse en sujetos de la Teología de la Liberación Europea?

Otro reto serio e inquietante se puede encontrar en el crecimiento y fortalecimiento de nuevas corrientes derechistas y fundamentalistas, tanto en la religión como en la sociedad, frecuentemente interconectadas entre ellas.¹⁴ Neo-nacionalistas y racistas, anti-islámicos y radicalmente

¹⁴ Cf., p.ej. Sebastian Pittl 2017. *Für Christus, Volk und Vaterland. Die politische Theologie neurechter Bewegungen* [12.07.2017], en: <http://www.feinschwarz.net/fuer-christus-volk-und-vaterland-die-politische-theologie-neurechter-bewegungen/>.

opuestos a un cristianismo liberador, estos nuevos movimientos que surgen simultáneamente - y sin embargo diversas - en prácticamente todos los países europeos, aparentemente pueden presentarse como los abogados de los amenazados y desfavorecidos de la sociedad liberal y capitalista, defensores de los valores y del orden y protectores de lo que les gusta llamar el “Occidente Cristiano”. Es muy urgente que la teología europea denuncie las suposiciones falsas de estos movimientos y presente estrategias alternativas y esperanzas verdaderas de una sociedad más pacífica y solidaria más allá del capitalismo.

Un tercer desafío a la teología europea, de mayor importancia, es el reconocimiento autocrítico de la dolorosa carga de eurocentrismo en nuestra filosofía y teología.¹⁵ Las teologías del Tercer Mundo han criticado desde hace muchas décadas que el neocolonialismo, el racismo, el patriarcado, el imperialismo y la superioridad blanca siguen siendo fuertes pilares del pensamiento y la teología europeas. Por lo tanto, una tarea significativa para una teología de la liberación europea es una revisión crítica de la metodología teológica europea, hacia una mayor pluralización, variabilidad e incluso transitoriedad del pensamiento teológico.

Por último, entre los muchos desafíos a la teología europea (incluidos los que no se mencionan aquí) está la necesidad de una profunda solidaridad con la Teología de la Liberación latinoamericana y otras teologías emergentes del Sur. Esta solidaridad incluye el apoyo material y personal, la promoción dentro de la Iglesia y la academia, la recepción, la reedición y la reelaboración de la producción teológica del Sur, así como una crítica solidaria y constructiva dentro de un diálogo fraterno.

Construir expresiones europeas de la teología de la liberación no será una tarea fácil, pero necesaria, porque creemos – con un buen número de teólogos latinoamericanos – que no se trata de un área especial o marginal de la teología, sino de la teología misma. Para citar a Juan Luis Segundo: “Entendí que la tarea consistía, no en nombrar la ‘liberación’ sino en hacer una teología más cabal y, por ende, más liberadora.”¹⁶

Construyendo puentes: “Wer darüber will geh’n, muss im Tanze sich dreh’n.”

Cada puente necesita dos cabezas, dos pilares para mantenerse parado y permitir la comunicación: Si queremos que haya comunicación

¹⁵ Véase la contribución de Josef Estermann a esta revista.

¹⁶ Segundo, Juan Luis 1983. *Teología abierta*, Vol. I, Madrid: Cristiandad 21.

entre las teologías latinoamericanas y europeas, tendremos que crear una cabeza de puente europea de la Teología de la Liberación. Esto es lo que pretendíamos lograr con nuestra Plataforma de Teología de la Liberación: Contribuir a la construcción, fortalecimiento y transformación de una cabeza de puente de la Teología de la Liberación en los países de habla alemana. Lo que logramos fue sólo una pequeña contribución. Pero demostró que el puente, aunque pequeño y tambaleante, está parado y la comunicación está fluyendo. Esto ha sido, y sigue siendo, una señal de esperanza.

Hay una canción popular acerca de un puente sobre el río Main, cerca del cual estoy viviendo, que dice: "Wer darüber will geh'n, muss im Tanze sich dreh'n." - "Quien quiera cruzarlo [el puente], tiene que dar la vuelta bailando." Creo que esta frase resume algunas de nuestras experiencias de 10 años de crear redes de Teología de la Liberación: Hay una constante necesidad de dar la vuelta, dejar atrás falsas convicciones y volvernos una y otra vez a los pobres, los excluidos y al otro. Tenemos que seguir las vueltas y pasos de nuestras parejas de baile latinoamericanas. Pero también reaccionar a la música que se toca en nuestros propios contextos. Es un baile. Nos mantiene en constante movimiento. Puede ser agotador a veces. Pero nos ayuda a construir el puente y cruzarlo. Y el baile llena de alegría nuestros cuerpos.



The Liberation Theology Network – Experiences in Doing Theology

Bernhard OFFENBERGER

*For the foolishness of G*d is wiser than human wisdom,
and the weakness of G*d is stronger than human strength.*

1Kor 1,25

Abstract:

The Liberation Theology Network has emerged as a students' initiative to be a space for experiment, reflection and common action since 2009. Doing Theology at the "head of the beast" includes developing a clear stance within a messy reality. For that purpose, self-reflection and the acknowledgment of the own entanglement with structures of sin are necessary.

The article outlines the history and working as well as the organizational and theological contributions of LTN towards transformative movements.

Zusammenfassung:

Das Befreiungstheologische Netzwerk ist 2009 als studentische Initiative entstanden, um als Raum für Erfahrungen, Reflexion und gemeinsames Handeln zu dienen. Theologie zu treiben „im Rachen des Löwen“ erfordert es, in einer komplexen Realität einen klaren Standpunkt zu finden. Zu diesem Zweck sind Selbstreflexion und die Anerkennung der eigenen Verflochtenheit in die Strukturen der Sünde notwendig.

Der Beitrag umreißt die Geschichte und Praxis als auch den organisatorischen und theologischen Beitrag des Befreiungstheologischen Netzwerks zu transformierenden Bewegungen.

The German Liberation Theology Network (Befreiungstheologisches Netzwerk) is a project aiming at connecting people interested in liberation theologies and helping create a practice of Doing Theology in the midst of German society, academy, political and religious contexts.

In this article we first try to give insights into the history and functioning of the network. We then describe the challenges of Doing Theology in present day Germany. Finally, we portray opportunities and possible contributions by Liberation Theology to social and religious movements in Germany and beyond.

1. Brief history of the Liberation Theology Network

Liberation Theology Network (LTN, Befreiungstheologisches Netzwerk) is a project started mainly by students of theology, both catholic and protestant, and other subjects in the year 2009.

The interest in Liberation Theology (LT) stems from different experiences. Some of us have had work or study experiences in countries of the South, where they met with LT traditions. Others discovered LT as a way of bringing together their political activism with their faith, whereas a third group brought with them engagement with critical and engaged forms of theology, such as Feminist Theologies or Political Theology.

Most of us shared the experience of being outsiders or marginalized in some form within academy, church and/or activist groups: In German academy, the notion of contextual theology or of having a political stance, is viewed with suspicion, as it seems to oppose the scientific ideal of objectivity. Engaged forms of theology are thus marginalized, as can be seen in the difficult standing of Feminist Theology. LT is nearly totally absent from theological curricula.

German churches are very much dominated by the middle class and therefore carefully avoiding too “radical” stances. In political activist groups, on the other hand, many times religious engagement or faith expressions are viewed skeptically.

In this context, the LTN grew into being an inspirational space for learning more about liberation theologies, developing own attempts of doing liberating theology, as well as for theological reflection on our own situation in the world, our political context, and the possibilities for activist involvement.

The LTN consists of diverse people and groups, organizing in different forms. Some groups gather as reading groups in a rather academic setting, others have a primarily activist emphasis, where the group serves as reflection and support backup. Additionally, personal friendships have

deepened among participants over time, and the group has become a spiritual home for many.

The Network itself meets twice a year. In the gatherings, we hold workshops on different aspects, approaches and topics, experiment with spiritual forms, share our experiences and plan common actions. Out of this we have participated in various activist movements and called others into doing the same out of a Christian reflection. Examples of this are the opposition to nuclear and fossil energy production (“Castor schottern”, “Ende Gelände”), the anti-capitalist Blockupy movement, the protests at the G20 summit, movements in support of refugee rights and freedom of movement as well as the promotion of church asylum.

We take these movements and situations as starting points for Doing Theology. They challenge us to be theologically accountable in order to explain to ourselves and to others the relevance and theological and spiritual dimensions of our commitment.

2. Doing theology in a non-revolutionary situation

2.1. *Struggling at the “head of the beast”*

How can we describe the context in which we are trying to Do Theology?

In many ways we can say, that we are very much at the “head of the beast”: the European Union and Germany within it is more and more expanding its hegemonic role in financial, cultural and geostrategic ways. Even though, Germany often hides – many times successfully – behind a “benign / humane face”, portraying itself as generous towards refugees or leader in ecological awareness. Both of these images must be questioned.

In an exemplary manner, the handling of the multiple crises affecting Greece by German political leaders, where German banks and companies are among the big winners of the dismantling of Greece's infrastructure and welfare system, gives proof of Germany's role.

If you claim to do liberation theology in Germany, it is a challenging aim. We realize on the one hand that we ourselves are profiting a lot from global exploiting mechanisms and mostly enjoy a lifestyle which could be termed “imperial”. Even the opportunities given to many of us, such as studying abroad – which helped some of us discover liberation theology – are symbols of great privilege. We furthermore find ourselves entrenched into structures and ideologies of consumerism, racism, sexism and other forms of exploitation and discrimination.

How then can the fight for justice be led at the “head of the beast”? In addition, how can the “option for the poor”, both as way of looking at the world and as political stance, be realized in this context?

2.2. *Neo-liberal transformation of German society*

On the other hand, we see that German society itself is experiencing a neo-liberal transformation leading to an increased sense of competition, lowering of social security standards, diminishing solidarity and the perception of a wide range of society that they have to struggle to maintain their social status and life standard.

These developments and mechanisms also affect us in our thinking and feeling. Fears of loss and anxiety, growing pressure and exhaustion are symptomatic of this trend. We see this entrenchment as a challenge and feel the need to look critically at our own participation in these mechanisms. However, we also recognize that our feelings, anxieties, experiences and hopes can be important tools for a clear analysis of how mechanisms and ideologies shape our forms of thinking, feeling and desiring. This can then be a starting point for resistance and even solidarity with different but structurally comparable situations.

2.3. *Multiple forms of oppression*

In analyzing the German context, we finally have to recognize the multiple forms of oppression and exclusion, such as racism, antisemitism or sexism.

The question of how to deal with and overcome these contradictions is a point of debate and leads to fractions even among progressive movements. Some of the debates in the political left might be traced back to a perceived opposition of “cultural” vs. “class” struggles, sometimes echoing Marxist notions of main contradiction and side contradictions (*Haupt- und Nebenwiderspruch*).

For example, in Germany's 2017 election campaign, the calls that “the left” has overemphasized so-called cultural issues and neglected the class struggle were manifold.

In contrast, we are sure that an intersectional approach is necessary and that classist, (hetero-)sexist and racist divisions in society and among movements with transformative ideals must be called out.

We often needed to realize ourselves that these mechanisms are active among ourselves and that it is difficult to approach them. For instance, it was easy to say in theory that patriarchal structures are active even among ourselves. However, when it comes to actual practice, we

saw that many times men* have more speaking time, are more likely to be heard for decisions and dominate discussions. To name this actual imbalance cost energy and often met with a lack of understanding or even harsh reactions. In a similar way, the confrontation with racist ideas and attitudes or antisemitic thought patterns in our theological thinking or political slogans, led to strong and sometimes hurtful debates. Various learning processes were catalyzed by that. We could thereby realize how we participate in the controversies that are going right across the left political spectrum.

One example, which is strongly debated in German left circles, is the use of theories like Critical Whiteness. The different positions towards this theory are likely to cause hardened fractions.

We are convinced, however, that these fractions can be seen as the result of the divisive forces of capitalism, racism, sexism, etc. Therefore, we shouldn't see the realization of differences among ourselves as obstacles but take them as a point of departure for in the apparent differences the working of oppressive structures can be laid open.

3. Contributions

In addition to being a haven for reflection and mutual support for the participants in the meetings, what can be the contribution of the LTN or of Liberation Theology in general?

3.1. *Connecting resources*

We don't see the churches as the main actors of transformation in the German or European context. Nevertheless, the LTN's being "in between" different systems and groups can help provide the resources which churches certainly have for transformative purposes and movements.

In this way, we can help forging alliances between different actors, such as church groups, political activists, and ecumenical organizations. By doing so, we try to push the boundaries of imagination within churches or religious groups in order to win them for progressive causes.

For example, we try to contact local congregations in proximity to protest camps or demonstrations. We ask them for their understanding and support. During Blockupy protests in Frankfurt/Main, several congregations offered places for protesters to sleep, opened their churches as places of retreat, or helped hosting Political Prayers.

Important resources can also be the traditions of singing, sharing and celebrating. Starting to sing in the middle of a demonstration surrounded by heavily armed police is just a small example of that.

No less important are the contacts and connections with international church groups, ecumenical bodies or solidarity organizations, which are crucial to deepen the mutual understanding and are the base for a joint struggle.

3.2. *Theological reflection*

More than that, we think that our theological reflections, too, can be helpful for advancing progressive debates.

For example, the notion of structural sin can help grasp the different aspects of guilt, entanglement, profit and power imbalances present in so many different ways and dimensions. Here, our own experiences of discussing these issues, of emotional rejection and struggle to reach to a common understanding, can be fruitful for further reflections.

We'd like to illustrate this with regard to the debates around Critical Whiteness. We view this theory as a tool to better understand the working of racist structures and privileges, because racism influences our structures of thinking and behaving. It is something that is learned unconsciously, but with very real effects on people's lives, affecting people very differently.

If we speak of racism as structural sin, we do not aim at singling out individual racists, but at acknowledging the pervasive nature of racist ideology, which holds grip on the whole society.

With the rise of openly racist parties in Germany and Europe, this is even more important: we have to counter the myth that racism is only the problem of a minority, relieving the majority from having to face their own involvement. Instead, we have to show how everybody is part of it.

Having realized this, Critical Whiteness can be a tool to describe and analyze how privilege is built and perceived as "normal", whereby White Privilege (and racist exclusion *vice versa*) becomes invisible. White persons, therefore, need to listen to the experiences of people who have experienced racism in order to understand their privilege and the working of exclusionary mechanisms, thereby becoming able to fight united against racist structures. As a group of predominantly White persons, as LTN we need tools like that to reflect upon our own connections with racism, to be aware of the marginalized voices and experiences and to address self-critically our forms of expression and action.

In a theological reflection of this issue we have to stress the need of repentance and forgiveness in this process, both individually and collectively, and can offer words and traditions of confession and point out the necessity that pardon (or "salvation") is given from outside (*extra nos*).

In this way, we also have to highlight shortcomings. In discussions about Critical Whiteness the notion may be understood, that it is enough to be self-reflective in order to act in an anti-racist way.

Pointing out the necessity to side with the poor as part of G*d's option for the poor takes us forward: Especially people of privilege need to be enlightened and sensitized by listening to the experiences of oppression and marginalization.

We must similarly raise questions when positions of marginalized people are seen in an essentialist manner, i.e. perceived as solely "true" expressions in contrast to "corrupted" expressions by privileged people.

Within Liberation Theology a long discussion has had place about who are "the poor" or "the margins" / "the marginalized". This background helps us to navigate the intricate situation of siding with marginalized people and learning from their experiences without essentializing them or their viewpoint.

In an exemplary fashion, the hermeneutic steps outlined by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza can be inspiring: Describing the steps of interpretation, such as the hermeneutics of experience, the hermeneutics of domination and social location, and the hermeneutics of suspicion, critical assessment and creative imagination, Schüssler Fiorenza points at the various aspects and moments essential for transformative understanding and action.

All of this points at Liberation Theology being a practice rather than a complete answer or solution to a pre-given problem. Starting to walk this way and inviting others to join us for all or some of these steps is our goal. We want to take our complex context as a starting point for theological reflection and action and, within the messy reality, nevertheless develop a clear stance in order to join G*d's option for the poor, the weak and the marginalized. For the foolishness of G*d is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of G*d is stronger than human strength.

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Sous la direction de
Maurice CHEZA, Luis MARTÍNEZ SAAVEDRA
et Pierre SAUVAGE

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Liberation Theology revisited

How to find the tracks of renewal

Peter SCHÖNHÖFFER

Summary

Advances in theory and praxis of liberation theology in German-speaking countries are confronted with a crisis of traditioning. They can also be expected again here, when we as Churches and social movements attend closely to the new contexts of the extended global victim zones, exercise resistance, carry our options in heart and mind, are prepared to follow a “mysticism of the street”, but at least find together like Jesus himself “away from prosperity and security”. The resulting new breakthroughs should not be straightened too early, following a prudent pastoral strategy. If these remain, however, without (church-institutional) support, verbal radicalism can occur without any altering effect or even paralysis.

In summary, we can say: With new emerging and rapidly fragmenting publics and formations as subjects, practices change. Nevertheless, the core of liberation action and reflection, praying and feeling appears intact; though the historic continuity has become even more fragile, has to be promoted and it is important to carry the message even further. On a medial and academic level, the situation is precarious. But still it is the “Spirit that Liberates” (literal translation of the German title of Sobrino’s “La Liberación del Espíritu”). This alone, maybe only this by itself gives us hope rather than the achievements of the humans.

Therefore, with our work for the 99 % of disadvantaged people we walk together onto rough terrain more and more renouncing our jargon of clerical insiders. Instead, we place our energy on the liberating effect to what we call “god”. Our key word is liberation, because we need education and information about “who we are”, about dealing with otherness, with our practices, our theologies and our coalitions.

Historical context – preparing the road for the spirit that liberates

Already in the landmark year of 1989 the humanists and social scientist A. Gorz wrote, “the utopia of industrial societies unravels into small pieces.” Soon after, he committed suicide. Almost 10 years ago, under the umbrella of the then “Catholic Council of Missions”, religious communities, students and quite a few top-representatives of Catholic associations formulated a “call for a prophetic church”. For quite a number of years it was a kind of a moderate ecclesial liberation theology in the context of Central European countries. A time of lively activities followed: Annual meetings, *Katholikentage*, political night prayers, media products and education programs. After a while, the movement stopped and left the field to a prevalent mild “church-depression”.

At the time, the source of the initiators’ strength was their outrage about the inexorable mind and mainstream totally subordinating almost everything with uniformity and objectification to maximizing profit. This attitude permanently stimulates consumerism, deadens our common sense, our human relationships become poor, exoticizes possible experiences of transcendency and destroys the beauty of creation waiting for redemption (Romans 8:18-23). Taken together it is an unstoppable attack to all natural livelihoods on our blue planet. A few years later, many of us feel still as much indignant internally – like all 4 million people who have read Stephane Hessel’s “*Empört Euch!*” (Original title: “*Indignez-vous!*”) just as the indignant movement in Spain.

The underestimated effect probably was, that the law of the financial capitalism with its occupancy role constituted an equivalent to religious beliefs. Simultaneously it looks like a functional totally enclosed world of power. Only a few organizations like the “Institute for Theology and Politics” in Münster, some brave and strong lone wolves and few of other people still included in institutions conceived this interrelationship. Therefore, it is often complicated to find a way to the basics of redeeming action with its spiritual liberation practice and theological comprehension. Ardently, with hopes and fears we still are waiting for the transformation-feast beautifully expressed as “Pentecost of love” by former popes to animate and encourage us and to release us from invisible chains. Meanwhile we are witnessing isolation, substantial drop into apathy or almost unlimited dynamics of discharges. Those dynamics seem like an expression of pointless rage as we could see it at the G20-summit 2017 in Hamburg. On the other hand, we are experiencing a kind of sinking in gentle forms of a tendency towards introversion. Withdrawal from public and sneakily refusal of perception become widespread.

Well, we are not going to kill ourselves as A. Gorz or the 300.000 farmers in India did. Those farmers acted out of desperation because of Monsanto – probably something unique in world history. Nevertheless, we should protest again and enter into a new culture of sustainability in daily life and in our political relationships. What does that mean? Changing our usual “behavior patterns” like guarantees, privileges, loyalties, at least we should carry on our social relocation motivated by liberation theology as H. Schlegel OFM and F. Hengsbach SJ, were proposing it? Thus, we are expecting nothing less than new heavens and a new earth, in which justice will dwell.

Indeed, it is still possible in our time and we should take it into our hearts always: In midst of rather frozen structures of our churches, subjected by constraints of the finance market capitalism we will find our new way by walking! The strength of hope which we should renew is, what Frei Betto and Leonardo Boff call “novo jeito de ser igreja” and “mysticism of street”. Becoming church, reflected in words of Liberation theology, still happens by a people, born through the Holy Spirit, organizing themselves in basic communities, autonomous in their creativity. In accordance with the Gospel, it could be the source for new services, creating an innovative way of what church means. Together, our feet on the ground, the aim should therefore be to support the communities, so they are able for rebelling and finally become the sourdough for changing the society. As well as a miracle of Pentecost, a new invasion of church by the poor is necessary. Otherwise, it will hardly succeed.

Settle down “far from prosperity and guarantee” - unconditionally and irrevocably

The eight richest individual's income is more than the income of the poorer half of the population. This is what we call mega rich with rapid growth. Scientists, bought by the rich and think tanks are booming not only in the U.S. In communion one collaborates with Goldman & Sachs, Monsanto/Bayer, a few major banks and reinsurance companies; all of them together are supporting the policy of private major projects. Those organizations and institutions are updating the “accumulation by dispossession” (David Harvey), working successfully against the recognition of man-made climate change, leaving behind death zones, dying coral reefs and swirling plastic waste in the oceans. At the same time, they ignore that there are only 15 years in maximum to slow down the climate catastrophe (Mojib Latif) and unanimously as a weird cartel of power, they refuse to ban nuclear weapons. Their behavior is arrogant as if millions of years old resources of this beautiful world are only to serve their imperial way of life.

Our task, as liberation Christians, is firmly to decode all these developments and attitudes. In contrast, we concentrate on inversion and a new individuation to make it manageable dealing with all of this, remembering St. Paul's insight of "the threatening, terrorizing and universal reign of sin" remedied in Christ. This we, the new creation, have to implement. In other words, formulated in one of the major international consultation processes by the thesis "Radicalizing Reformation Provoked by Today's Systemic Crises" means nothing more and nothing less than "Do not conform to the pattern of this world..." (Romans 12:2). In terms of its impact to the ordinary people in his day, Luther was very clear in his "Never" to structure and procedures of the banking and commercial companies, when he said, "If societies will remain, justice and honesty must come down. If justice and honesty will remain, societies must come down." (Weimar Edition, Bd. 15). Today we suffer from the threefold pressure of economic growth, multiplying money and privatization, which will lead to the death of our very planet. To cushion social consequences is obviously not helpful. On the contrary, the neoliberal capitalist system has to overcome in a long term. Specifically a new money and property ownership is necessary, orientated on commons and held responsible by the public in a democratically organized manner. (Thesis 22)

Tasks for Leading: Making clear liberating key points and consciously designing learning pathways

It will be the principle task of the church leadership to draw the appropriate conclusions and to be open persistently to the emerging social struggles. This would inevitably lead to new alliances, new locations and new learning pathways. Starting from the commitments based on the Gospel, we need fearlessness, waive of defense (defenselessness), sense of responsibility for the poor, networking with projects of hope, legal protection for the rights of Mother Earth, common spiritual sharing as a source of strength, decisive action and an offensive approach the ecumenical way of resistance as it was decided on the latest WCC assembly in Busan. There we found a new language to build bridges with Christ. Thus, it should be adhered specifically: Without making visible the spiritual and including liberation theology resources, we will not succeed easily as it was underway in the years of 2000, the area of awakening, when the resistant alliance of ATTAC was found. It was also the era of Pax Christi, before the Association of German Dioceses made ruinous cuts to this organization.

Unfortunately however many people from the peace-oriented churches, ecumenical or main churches grassroots communities could not stand it any longer. Thus, we were not able to draw from an abundance

of capacities. One thing gets very clear in the last decades. The new capitalist media mainstream-culture could actually develop antiseptic effects to emerging alternatives, if we are not able to withdraw those influences. Above all, the fact should not obscure that in other parts of our world the capitalist corporations are excluding, marginalizing and appropriating living labor. For some time Pope Francis has not been weary of emphasizing provocatively that “it is this economy that kills”. In any case, church leaders have compelling reasons to leave their safety distance behind to stand alive and ready for ongoing processes of change. This is the only way to be brought in and become aware of the significance of sharp theological terms like theology of sin, decision to abide in Christ, hope for salvation, wisdom of the cross.

Being confident for the biblical stories of resistance and hope

“You cannot serve God and the mammon” (Lk 16, 13). We believe that Jesus calls us to make a definite choice between God and Mammon. We confess being part of a “Babylonian captivity” that obstructs both the revolutionary spirit of the Reformation and people's and civil rights.

We especially call upon churches to develop and pursue ways of mission that aim to transform the political systems so that they become more humane. We also call upon the congregations, synods and mission agencies to draw action programs that promote peace and justice in society.”¹

Absolutely essential in my analysis is a new definition and role of the “tankships of Church” and its often anonymized “escort boats and speedboats” of social and cultural movements to become relevant to society again. Those inspired and socially engaged people supporting themselves by Liberation Theology interwoven with its twinned social change agents like Plural Economics, Degrowth, Civil-Enquete of quality for life, solidarity-based economy and the Economy of the common good have creatively to pave the way back to churches and working-class movements on behalf of the poor. They have to do this in common with

¹ Quoted by the final declaration ‘Justice Alone! *Radicalizing Reformation Provoked by Today's Systemic Crises*’. From January 7-10, 2017 the 3rd International Conference ‘Radicalizing Reformation’ took place in Wittenberg. Meanwhile the work is documented in seven volumes with remarkable partial results like the American study ‘The forgotten Luther’. Additionally, 50 selected participants gathered in the conference, scientists, Christians, Jews, Moslems all over the world. One result was the final declaration.

their theology of prophecy as well as with the capacities and concepts of integrity and relationship of the disadvantaged 99% of the people. Together this could be necessary as a “survival kit” for the upcoming revolts and times of change.

We will be successful only if we overcome half-hearted attitudes and achieve a “jesuanic career downward” (Heinz Schürmann). However, when we reconnect to the migration-proletariat of the devastated areas it could happen in combination with credibility, sharpness and fleet-footed of the old stories in a new framework. Partly this was visible at the G20-summit in Hamburg where local parishes in St. Pauli and Altona opened their doors. They offered prayers for peace. Both, the Institute for Theology and Politics, and engaged Christians against capitalist corporations and the authoritarian elites of the G20 gathered people. All together they were supporting the huge final demonstration with 76.000 people although fear was fomented prior to it. People from churches, artists, and sports associations provides assistance to this - indeed, in this respect the demonstration built relevant bridges to the civic camps.

A new vision is already becoming apparent. In our time, turning increasingly more uncomfortable, we can follow an old insight of Political Theology. We need a non-bourgeois structure. It is possible. In Vienna for example, they established circles to reconnect bible, Option for the Poor, and community building in a genuine liberation theology style, even in communities not explicitly Christian.

Being a liberating church in our time means to be a lawyer for transformative education under any circumstances. Therefore, we can move into social spaces in order to widen them and cause the great transformation and the social-ecological changes to come into view. It is obvious, that all of the “Pilates and Herods”, all the silent partners of the directly killing profiteers will be in conflict with our attitude and our action. Nevertheless, it is our task to make “structures of sin” relentlessly visible to view the unfolding conflicts of interest in the public. Therefore, we need clear options wholeheartedly, like our worldwide engagement for the poor, the impoverished youth, and the potential of women, a post-capitalism world and Deep Ecology. With our non-violent actions and with our hope through the bible, we have the right and the duty to rebuild a new movement in central Europe, which we can call Liberation Theology.

Becoming a healing community with sensuality and resilience

At the moment, we can observe new cultural movements where elementary learning processes and steps are obvious. We still face new

alternative school-structures, an ecological “walking-coaching” movement and Waldorf schools with all their projects of repair cafés, urban gardening, reclaim the streets, and movement activities. Subjects are re-established and political transformative intentions are cultivated. You can see this in the social surroundings of degrowth, in Eco-villages and Christian based communities as well as in reform universities like Leuphana in Lüneburg, buen-vivir-activities and transition-town-initiatives. Scientists take part in many of these projects, like Ulrich Brandt, Hartmut Rosa, Christoph Scherrer and Klaus Dörre. Both, individual biographies, and the historical roads of communities come together constantly in front of those gates where change is the attraction: Silence, art, Interbeing of Spirituality and Philosophy, compassion, love, sexuality, illness to name but a few.

Pope Francis says one serious threat in our times is the blocked feedback loop in our societies about resigning oneself to oppressive inequality, about using the earth as a mountain of waste, thus establishing the Status Quo. Schools and communities could be fruitful places for the growing up of new relationships leading us out of isolation and loneliness. Urgently it looks like as we have to run after the potential of prophetic radiating christian base testimonies in a pluralistic church in pluralistic societies. We have to protect the innermost widening circles of an eucharistic vision of a united church, ecumenical sharing, and common fights for a culture of just peace. We will take all of this in new emerging conflicts, appreciating sensuality and undisguised joy in the gospel - and in all this remaining a community of testimony and service.

Creating space for the capacity for relationship and experiencing spirit - in contrast to straighten too early

In our German-speaking regions only a handful of groups have managed this by immense efforts, like the “Institute for Theology and Politics” in Munster or the liberation-theological students network with its fresh manifestations, such as the base community in Luzern with its liturgical, musical, community-oriented, and poetical capacities of their pastors Josef together with Jacqueline Keune. Others in my view are initiatives of the ecumenical network Rhein-Mosel-Saar-Hunsrück with Heri Böttcher and Dominic Kloos. Derived from so called last remains in “dry messianic times” (Elsa Tamez) it should be possible to create new liberation-theological spaces and ways of life faster than we have thought possible, especially at hot spots and points of pain in situations of suffering and distress. So many of us have been waiting for these. In the same spirit the joint consultation of the World Council of Churches,

World Communion of Reformed Churches and Council of Global Mission in Sao Paulo 2012, the commitment was to overcome capitalism. It is said that the Christian understanding of every human being is embedded in community relations synchronized with the life philosophies of people from Africa, Eastern Asia and indigenous Latin America like Ubuntu, Sangsaeng and Sumak Kawsay - buen vivir. In 2006 in the New York Times, Warren Buffet, one of the ultra-rich, pointed out, "We live in a time of class warfare and we the rich who are waging this imperialist war, will win." Thus, we have only one option: We put great emphasis on the movement for social change and a different radical tradition against imperial rule unequivocally. We build on a Theology of Grace opposing the neoliberal pressure, which is reducing all life on its exchange value only (by reference to Romans 3, 24).

For a period of 5 years, the World Council of Churches proclaimed a global ecclesial pilgrimage of justice and peace. If one traces this for the next five years consequently, authentically and in keeping with the time, new targets are set for liberation Christians who already were called "followers of the new way" in the Acts of the Apostles, in a sense of overcoming a stiff system. Our path leads us with "Eucharistic support" and "liberating spirituality of transformation" to the confidence for a "mysticism of the people" within "ethical weakened cultures". Reconnected with the "proletarian migration movement" out of devastated world zones and heartened by "strategic partnerships with the working-class" the biggest priority is to develop a kind of a "turning point in research for a new culture and new individual resources". Equipped with profound cure of new cultural movements and with the paradigm shift of Deep Ecology ways of thinking and its skills they are on their way to healing communities. The pioneering words therefore are "denuncia - departure" and "anuncia - new ground". It is a matter of bringing home sensuality in combination with "our solidarity for the poor, for youth, for women and to Mother Earth". Together with the World Council of Churches "mission" keeps being is a structural principle (Mexico 1963, Geneva 1966) but today it happens in rapidly changing contexts becoming more and more obvious as a "calling out" for a real ecclesial characteristic in ecumenical communities. It means nothing more and nothing less, than to convert the dominance of capital, its cultural commercialization strategy and its processes of trivialization from inside out - from the periphery to its center - and then challenge it again from the outside.



Befreiungstheologie revisited – wo in die Spuren der Erneuerung treten?

Peter SCHÖNHÖFFER

Zusammenfassung:

Befreiungstheologische Theorie-Praxis-Schübe sehen sich im deutschsprachigen Raum vor eine Tradierungskrise gestellt. Sie können aber auch hier wieder neu erwartet werden, wenn wir uns als Kirchen und in sozialen Bewegungen ganz auf die neuen Kontexte der ausgeweiteten globalen Opferzonen einlassen, Widerständigkeit einüben, unsere Optionen im Herzen und im Kopf tragen, einer "Mystik der Strasse" zu folgen bereit sind, mindestens aber uns wie Jesus selbst neu zusammenschließen "fernab von Wohlstand und Sicherheit". Die daraus entstehenden Neuaufbrüche gilt es dann pastoralstrategisch klug nicht zu früh zu begründen. Bleiben diese allerdings ganz ohne (kircheninstitutionelle) Unterstützung, kann es zu Verbalradikalismus ohne verändernde Wirkung oder zum wieder Erlahmen kommen.

Man könnte in aller Kürze sagen: Die Praktiken wandeln sich mit den neu entstehenden und sich rasch fragmentierenden Öffentlichkeiten und Subjektformationen. Der Kern befreiungstheologischen Tuns und Nachdenkens, Betens und Fühlens scheint intakt, die historische Kontinuität ist indes mehr als fragil geworden und muss aktiv aufgesucht und weitergetragen werden. Prekär bleibt auch die mediale und akademische Vermittlungslage. Aber es ist noch immer „der Geist, der befreit“ (Jon Sobrino)! Schon das allein, vielleicht sogar nur das allein (und nicht so sehr des Menschen Marketing-Werk!) macht Hoffnung.

Gemeinsam wagen wir uns vor auf ungebahntes Gelände bei der Arbeit mit den benachteiligten 99 % des Volkes und seinen Bewegungen, mehr und mehr unter Verzicht auf den Jargon der kirchlichen Insider-Sprache. Vielmehr setzen wir direkt auf das befreiende Wirken dessen, was wir Gott nennen. Befreiung bleibt auch deswegen Leitwort, weil wir

Aufklärung benötigen über uns selbst und den Umgang mit Andersheit, unsere Praktiken, unsere Theologien und unsere Allianzen.

1. Zeitgeschichtliche Verortung – die Bahn ebnen für den Geist, der befreit

Schon im Epochejahr 1989 schrieb der humanistische Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftler A. Gorz: „Die Utopie, von der die Industriegesellschaften zehren, geht in Stücke“. Wenig später beging er Selbstmord. Vor nunmehr fast zehn Jahren haben Ordensgemeinschaften, Studierende und etliche Spitzenvertreter der katholischen Werke unter dem Dach des damaligen Katholischen Missionsrates einen *Aufruf für eine prophetische Kirche* gestartet, der einige Jahre lang so etwas wie eine kirchliche Befreiungstheologie weitgehend moderater Gangart unter mitteleuropäischen Vorzeichen durchhielt. Hervor gingen politische Aktivitäten wie Jahrestagungen, Katholikentagsveranstaltungen, politische Nachtgebete, Medienproduktionen und Bildungsprogramme. Die Bewegung erlosch wenig später und machte der Überhand nehmenden milden „Kirchen-Depression“ Platz.

Die Initiatoren handelten damals aus der vollen Kraft der Empörung über den unerbittlichen Geist der alles mit Gleichheit und Verdinglichung schlagenden Profitmaximierung, der uns zu permanenten Konsumsteigerungen antreibt, unseren Alltagsverstand abstumpft, unsere mitmenschlichen Beziehungen verarmt, mögliche Transzendenzerfahrungen exotisiert, die Schönheit der Schöpfung, die auf Erlösung wartet (Röm 8, 18-23), zerstört und die Lebensgrundlagen unseres blauen Planeten unaufhaltsam angreift. Einige Jahre später sind viele von uns innerlich noch genauso empört – so wie die vier Millionen LeserInnen des Bestseller-Büchleins *Empört Euch!* von S. Hessel und so wie die Bewegung der Empörten in Spanien.

Vermutlich hatten wir alle – bis auf das „Institut für Theologie und Politik“ in Münster und einzelne unerschrockene, teils eiserne Einzelkämpfer und einige weitere doch noch institutionell Eingebundene – eines erheblich unterschätzt: Das Gesetz der finanzmarkt-kapitalistischen Aneignung bildet ein Religionsäquivalent und eine scheinbar funktionsfähige, fugendicht abgeschlossene Machtwelt. So ist es vielfach erschwert, an die Grundgehalte dessen, was christliche Befreiungspraxis und theologische Durchdringung von Befreiungshandeln genannt zu werden verdienten, auch nur noch heranzukommen. So warten wir umso sehnlicher unter Hoffen und Bangen auf das Fest der großen Transformation, das die vielen unsichtbaren Fesseln lösen könnte, kurz: das „Pfungstfest der Liebe“ wie dies frühere Päpste so schön nannten,

das uns neu zu animieren imstande sein müsste. Derweil erleben wir immer mehr Vereinzelnung und um uns herum ein Absinken in *apathia* oder punktuelle Entladungen in grenzenlose, für Außenstehende sinnlos erscheinende Wut (wie in Hamburg auf dem G20-Gipfel im Sommer 2017 gerade wieder einmal!) und dann doch wieder das Hineingleiten in die milderen Formen von Rückzugstendenzen. Abschiede von der öffentlichen Bühne und schleichende Wahrnehmungsverweigerungen nehmen Überhand.

Nun ja, wir werden uns nicht umbringen wie A. Gorz und die 300.000 indischen Farmer, die seitdem - vermutlich einzigartig in der Weltgeschichte - aus Verzweiflung gegenüber Monsanto diesen Weg gegangen sind. Aber wir sollten sehr wohl wieder aufbegehren und uns in eine neue Kultur der Nachhaltigkeit im Alltag wie in unseren politischen Beziehungen hineinbegeben. Was bedeutet das? Ausziehen aus den bekannten Sicherheiten, Privilegien und Loyalitäten, mindestens aber einen befreiungstheologisch motivierten gesellschaftlichen Standortwechsel vornehmen - wie schon H. Schlegel OFM oder F. Hengsbach SJ dies vorgeschlagen haben. Denn wir erwarten nichts Geringeres als einen neuen Himmel und eine neue Erde, in denen Gerechtigkeit wohnt.

Ja, auch heute noch kann es stimmen und wir sollten es uns stets neu zu Herzen nehmen: Der Weg entsteht auch in kirchenerstarrten und den finanzmarktkapitalistischen Sachzwängen unterworfenen Umfeldern erst und wieder neu beim Gehen! Dieser hoffnungsstarke „novo jeito de ser igreja“, diese „Mystik der Straße“ (Frei Betto/Leonardo Boff) gilt es neu zu leben. Befreiungstheologisch reflektiert geschieht Kirche-werdung noch immer als Volk, das aus dem Heiligen Geist geboren wird, das sich in Basisgemeinden organisiert, die autonom sind in ihrer Kreativität, aber in Übersteinstimmung mit dem Evangelium zu einer Quelle neuer Dienste werden und jene neuartige Art und Weise, Kirche zu sein, aus sich hervorbringen. Mit den Füßen auf der Erde geht es also wieder neu darum, den Gemeinden zu helfen, dass sie rebellieren können und schließlich tatsächlich ein wirksamer Sauerteig der Veränderung in der Gesellschaft werden - ebenso wie ein Pfingstwunder brauchen wir eine neue Invasion der Kirchen durch die Armen. Ohne das wird es kaum gehen.

2. Uneingeschränkte Bedingung der Notwendigkeit: sich ansiedeln „ferna von Wohlstand und Sicherheit“

Die acht reichsten Einzelpersonen wiegen heute die ärmere Hälfte der Weltbevölkerung auf, der Superreichtum galoppiert, seine „gekauften“ Wissenschaftler und “think tanks” florieren nicht nur in den USA, in

Verbundenheit arbeitet man Goldman & Sachs, Monsanto/Bayer und einigen wenigen Großbanken und Rückversicherern in die Arme, diese wiederum "unterstützen" die Politik bei Privatisierungsgroßprojekten, schreiben „Akkumulation durch Enteignung“ (David Harvey) fort, arbeiten zwischenzeitlich sogar noch erfolgreich gegen die Anerkennung des menschengemachten Klimawandels, hinterlassen tote Zonen, sterbende Korallenbänke und Plastikwirbel in Ozeanen und nur noch maximal 15 Jahre Zeit um die Klimakatastrophe entscheidend abzubremsen (Mojib Latif), widersagen in einem skurrilen Machtkartell einmütig der Bannung atomarer Waffen und gebärden sich dabei so, als seien die Jahrmillionen alten Ressourcen dieser Welt einzig und allein für ihren imperialen Lebensstil da.

Wir Befreiungschristen haben all dies entschieden zu decodieren und den auf Umkehr und neue Selbstwerdung zielenden Umgang damit handhabbar zu machen, etwa derart, dass die paulinisch gesprochen „terrorisierende und universal zu werden drohende Herrschaft der Sünde“ in Christus gebrochen ist und dies auf Nachvollzug von uns allen wartet, die wir neue Schöpfung geworden sind im Messias Jesus oder, wie es in einer der auf einem bedeutenden internationalen Konsultationsprozess beruhenden Thesen „Die Reformation radikalisieren- provoziert von Bibel und Krise“ sehr gut nachvollziehbar heißt: „*Passt euch nicht den Strukturen dieser Weltordnung an...*“ (Röm 12,2) Angesichts ihrer Wirkungen auf die einfachen Leute seiner Zeit sagt Luther ein klares Nein zu Struktur und Handlungsweisen der Bank- und Handelsgesellschaften: „Sollen die Gesellschaften bleiben, so muss Recht und Redlichkeit untergehen. Soll Recht und Redlichkeit bleiben, so müssen die Gesellschaften untergehen“ (WA 15, 312). Da heute der dreifache Zwang zum wirtschaftlichen Wachstum, zur Geldvermehrung und Privatisierung unseren Planeten in den Tod stürzt, helfen letztlich keine sozialen Abfederungen, sondern nur eine langfristige Überwindung des neoliberal-kapitalistischen Systems. Speziell ist eine neue Geld- und Eigentumsordnung nötig und möglich, die sich am Gemeinwohl orientiert und öffentlich-demokratisch verantwortet wird.“ (These 22)

3. Führungsaufgaben: befreiende Eckpunkte klar bekommen und Lernwege bewusst gestalten

Es ist die Aufgabe der Kirchenleitung, daraus die Konsequenzen zu ziehen und den entstehenden sozialen Kämpfen beharrlich nachzugehen. Dies würde unweigerlich in neue Allianzen führen, zu neuen Orten und neuen Lernwegen. Was wir dazu mitzunehmen brauchen in unsere Reisebeutel, ist die Verpflichtetheit aus dem Evangelium heraus und

die Furchtlosigkeit, das Verzichten auf Verteidigung (Wehrlosigkeit), Verantwortungsgefühl den Armen gegenüber, die Vernetzung mit Hoffnungsprojekten, Rechtsschutz für das Rechts-subjekt von Mutter Erde, ein geteiltes spirituelles Miteinander als Kraftquellen, ein entschiedenes Einschwenken und eine offensive Auseinandersetzung mit dem bei der jüngsten Vollversammlung in Busan eingeschlagenen ökumenischen Widerstandsweg und das dadurch beflügelte Finden einer neuen Sprache, um mit Christus Brücken bauen zu können. Und doch bleibt auch hier noch einmal eigens herauszuheben: Ohne dass man die geistigen und darin eingelagerten befreiungstheologischen Ressourcen sichtbar macht, wird es nicht mehr so leicht von der Hand gehen wie noch in den 2000er Jahren des Aufbruchs in das große widerständige Bündnisprojekt *attac* und als *pax christi* noch nicht vom eigenen Verband der Diözesen Deutschlands „kaputtgespart“ werden sollte.

Leider haben indes nicht mehr so viele in den der Gesamtbewegung ausgehenden friedens-kirchlichen, ökumenischen oder großkirchlichen Basisgemeinschaften ausgehalten und überwintert, als dass hier aus dem Vollen geschöpft werden könnte. Eines jedenfalls ist in den letzten Jahrzehnten nur allzu klageworden. Die neue medienbasierte Mainstream-Kultur des Kapitalismus kann geradezu antiseptische Wirkung auf aufkeimende Alternativen haben, wenn man sich ihr nicht entschieden zu entziehen vermag. Vor allem aber darf man sich nach wie vor nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass sie in anderen Teilen der Welt ausschließt, fernhält, lebendige Arbeit aneignet und ja, auch tötet wie Papst Franziskus seit geraumer Zeit, „ob gelegen oder ungelegen“ nicht müde wird provozierend in den Raum zu stellen. Kirchliche Führungspersonen müssen in jedem Fall zwingend aus dem Sicherheitsabstand heraus, damit scharfe theologische Begriffe (Herrschaft der Sünde, Entscheidung in Christus, Erlösung auf Hoffnung hin, Weisheit des Kreuzes) wachgehalten und ganz Ohr für laufende Veränderungsprozesse ins Spiel gebracht werden können.

4. Sich den biblischen Widerstands- und Hoffnungsgeschichten anvertrauen

„Ihr könnt nicht Gott dienen und dem Mammon.“ (Lukas 16:13) „Wir glauben, dass Jesus von uns eine endgültige Entscheidung zwischen Gott und Mammon fordert. Wir bekennen, dass wir Teil einer „babylonischen Gefangenschaft“ sind, die die konstruktive Macht des revolutionären Geistes der Reformation und bürgerliche und soziale Rechte verhindert. Wir appellieren an die Christen und die Kirchen, neue Wege der Mission zu entwickeln, um die politischen Systeme zu transformieren. auch an die

Gemeinden, Synoden und missionarischen Einrichtungen der Kirchen, Aktionsprogramme zu entwerfen, die Frieden und Gerechtigkeit in der Gesellschaft fördern.“¹

Was meiner Analyse nach zwingend mindestens geschehen muss, wollen die „Kirchentanker“ und ihre oft anonym daherkommenden „kleinen Begleit- und Schnellboote in Form von sozialen und kulturellen Bewegungen“ wieder neu gesellschaftlich relevant werden, ist das Folgende: Die sich gegenseitig auf dem Weg haltenden, im besten Fall befreiungstheologisch inspirierten Sozialgestalten von Kirchen, entsprechend informierte Leitungen und die eng mit ihnen verschwisterten gesellschaftlichen Aufbrüche wie Plurale Ökonomik, Wachstumswende/ degrowth und Zivil-Enquete für Lebensqualität, solidarische Ökonomie und Gemeinwohlökonomie müssen lernen, sowohl prophetische Theologien als auch den benachteiligten 99 % im Volk, deren Integrität und Beziehungsfähigkeit nutzende Konzepte als Wagnis und Überlebensration für die kommenden Aufstände und Umbruchsphasen mit ins Gepäck zu nehmen und sich auf den Weg zurück zu Kirchen und Arbeiterbewegungen im Dienst der Armen zu machen.

Ohne eine über Halbherzigkeiten hinauskommende „jesuanische Karriere nach unten“ (Heinz Schürmann) aber wird dies alles kaum gehen bzw. durchzuhalten sein. Wenn wir uns aber „mit dem Wanderproletariat aus den verwüsteten Weltzonen verbünden“ (A. Badiou), wird es auch wieder möglich werden, glaubwürdig, scharf und leichtfüßig zugleich mit alten Geschichten in neuer Rahmung unterwegs zu sein. Dies ist teilweise auf dem G20-Gipfel in Hamburg 2017 durchaus bereits in Übergängen zu erkennen gewesen, wenn in St. Pauli und Altona die Kirchengemeinden Einsatz zeigten und ihre Tore öffneten, überall Friedensgebete angesetzt waren, das Institut für Theologie und Politik ernsthaft engagiertere Christen gegen die Kapitalherrschaft und die

¹ Die internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft „Die Reformation radikalieren“, die ihre Arbeit mittlerweile in sieben Bänden dokumentiert und weitere Aufsehen erregende Teilergebnisse wie die amerikanische Studie (mit Erwachsenenbildungsmaterial) „The forgotten Luther“ hervorgebracht hat, traf sich vom 7.-10. Januar 2017 in Wittenberg. Mehr als 50 ausgewählte AkademikerInnen, ChristInnen, Juden und Muslime aus der ganzen Welt, nahmen an dieser 3. Internationalen Konferenz des Projekts teil. Dergestalt entstand die zusammenfassende Abschlusserklärung „*Gerechtigkeit allein!*“ *Die Reformation radikalieren – provoziert von der heutigen Systemkrise*, aus der das Zitat stammt.

autoritären Eliten der G20 gesammelt hatte und eine Demonstration von Kirchenleuten, Kulturschaffenden und Sportverbänden die große Abschlussdemonstration mit 76.000 Menschen, vor der sehr viel Angst geschürt worden war, unterstützte - und in dieser Hinsicht tatsächlich relevante Brücken bis ins bürgerliche Lager gebaut hat.

Eine neue Vision zeichnet sich durchaus bereits ab: Einer alten Einsicht der neuen politischen Theologie folgend, braucht es auch heute wieder eine entschiedene Entbürgerlichung in zu-nehmend unbequemer werdenden Zeiten. Und das ist nicht unmöglich. So gibt es in Wien bis heute Versuche, Bibel, Option für die Armen und Gemeindegewerdung in einem genuin befreiungstheologischen Sinn eng aneinander zu binden und sogar in sich nicht explizit christlichen Gemeinschaften am Werk zu sehen.

Befreiendes Kirche-sein in der Welt von heute hat darüber hinaus unter allen Umständen Anwalt transformativer Bildung zu werden. Man kann dazu gesellschaftliche Zwischenräume bewohnen und weiten, damit die große Transformation und der sozial-ökologische Wandel in den Blick aller rücken. Nicht jedoch ohne Konflikte mit „den Pilatusen wie mit den Herodessen“, mit „den stillen Teilhabern wie mit den direkt tötenden Profiteuren“ einzu-gehen, „Strukturen der Sünde“ schonungslos offenzulegen und die Austragung von Interessensunterschieden öffentlich sichtbar zu halten. Dies wird man nur angehen können, wenn man unbeirrbar von klaren Optionen für die weltgesellschaftlich arm gemachten, die geistig arm gehaltene Jugend, das Potenzial der Frauen, den Postkolonialismus und die (Tiefen-) Ökologie auszugehen. In widerständigen Praktiken und auf Hoffnung hin, Bibel lesend und darin das Selbst neu aufbauend aber haben wir das Recht und die Pflicht, auch in (Mittel-)Europa dem Namen Befreiungstheologie wieder zu Ehre zu verhelfen.

5. Zeit für heilende Gemeinschaften, die die Sinnlichkeit und die Widerstandsfähigkeit heimholen?

Derzeit wird in neuen kulturellen Bewegungen Elementares gelernt und wieder angeeignet: Fähigkeiten, wie sie in der derzeit neu aufkeimenden Alternativschul- und ökologischen Wandercoaching-Bewegung, aber auch an Waldorfschulen nie aufgegeben waren (repair cafés, urban gardening, Bewegungsaufbau, reclaim the streets). Dort werden aber auch Subjektneukonstituierungen und politische Transformationsabsichten kultiviert, wie sie vor allem in den degrowth-Umfeldern, den Zivil-Enquete-Perspektiven, den politischen Öko-Dörfern und verbliebenen christlichen Basisgemeinschaften sowie rund um

Reform-Universitäten wie die Leuphana in Lüneberg oder im Umfeld von Professoren wie Ulrich Brandt, Hartmut Rosa, Christoph Scherrer und Klaus Dörre gedeihen sowie in buen vivir-Aktivitäten und transition town-Initiativen entstehen. Stets kommen Biografien einzelner wie historische Verläufe von Gemeinschaften dabei an Tore, hinter denen Wandlung lockt: die Stille, die Kunst, das inter-being in Spiritualität und Philosophie, Mitgefühl, Liebe, Sexualität, Krankheit, um nur einige zu nennen.

Die große Gefährdung liegt hingegen laut Papst Franziskus heute darin, dass sich Gesellschaften verschlossen und misstrauisch mit dem Status quo, d.h. mit lastenden Ungleichheiten und Müllbergen abfänden. Aus Isolation und Einsamkeit als neuen Formen von Armut aber könnten Schule und Gemeinde als fruchtbare Orte des neuen Heran-wachsens menschlicher Beziehungen herausführen. Vordringlich aber erscheint es, potenziell prophetisch ausstrahlenden basischristlichen Zeugnissen in einer pluralistischen Kirche und Gesellschaft regelrecht nachzulaufen, dasjenige zu beschützen, was die innersten Wachstumsringe einer eucharistischen Vision von Kirchewerdung, ökumenischem Teilen und geteilten Kämpfen ausmacht, die Kultur des gerechten Friedens in alle entstehenden Konflikte mit hineinzunehmen, die Sinnlichkeit und die unverstellte Freude am Evangelium neu wertzuschätzen und in alldem eine Zeugnis- und Dienstgemeinschaft zu bleiben.

6. Nicht zu früh begradigen, Beziehungsfähigkeit und Geisterfahrung Raum schaffen

Wenn dies im deutschsprachigen Raum einige wenige Gruppierungen geschafft haben, dann sind dies neben frischen Erscheinungen wie dem befreiungstheologischen Netzwerk oder sich mit ungeheurem Kraftaufwand haltenden Gruppierungen wie dem Institut für Theologie und Politik in Münster oder der liturgisch-theopoetisch-musikalisch-gemeinwesenorientierten Basisgemeinschaft in Luzern um Pfarrer Josef und Jaqueline Keune, aus meiner Sicht ganz besonders in Initiativen des ökumenischen Netzes Rhein-Mosel-Saar-Hunsrück um Heri Böttcher und Dominic Kloos. Sollten aus diesen „heilen Resten“ in „messianisch dürrer Zeit“ (Elsa Tamez) an den Brenn- und Schmerzpunkten heutiger Leidens- und Noterfahrungen erneut Funken schlagen, dann wären jene neuen befreiungstheologischen Orte und Lebensweisen wohl schneller als von manchen für möglich gehalten da, auf die so viele innerlich warten. So bekannte sich bei der gemeinsamen Konsultation von Ökumenischem Rat der Kirchen, Weltgemeinschaft Reformierter Kirchen und Weltmissionsrat in der Sao Paulo-Erklärung 2012 zu einer

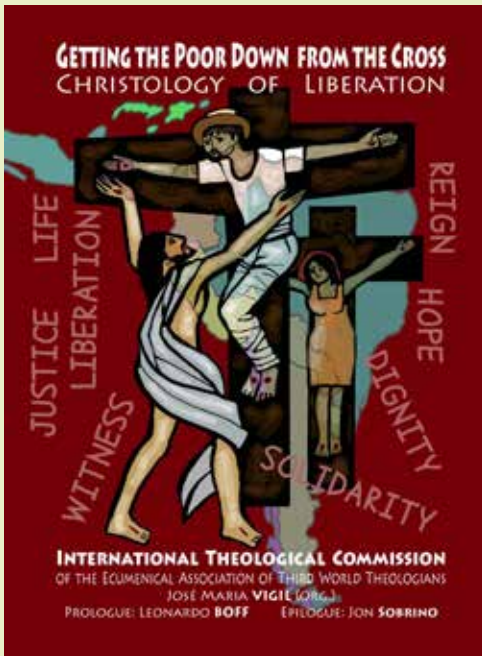
Überwindung des Kapitalismus, weil das christliche Verständnis der menschlichen Person in Gemeinschaftsbeziehungen eingebettet sei parallel zu den gemeinschaftsbezogenen afrikanischen, ostasiatischen und lateinamerikanisch-indigenen Lebensanschauungen wie Ubuntu, Sangsaeng und Sumak Kawsay/buen vivir. In einer Zeit, in der einer jener Ultra-Reichen, Warren Buffett, 2006 in der New York Times ganz offen aussprach „es herrsche Klassenkrieg, aber sei seine Klasse der Reichen, die Krieg führt und wir gewinnen“ bleibt nur noch eine Option: ein unmissverständliches Setzen auf Bewegungen sozialen Wandels und andere radikale Traditionen, die sich gegen die imperiale Herrschaft stemmen. Damit bauen wir auf einer Theologie der Gnade auf, die sich dem neoliberalen Druck, alles Leben auf seinen Tauschwert zu reduzieren, widersetzt (unter Bezug auf Röm 3, 24).

Verfolgt man den nunmehr für noch weitere fünf Jahre im Weltkirchenrat ausgerufenen weltweiten kirchlichen (Pilger-)Weg der Gerechtigkeit und des Friedens indes wirklich konsequent, authentisch und auf der Höhe unserer Zeit weiter und hält die am Ende von Kapitel 1 aufscheinenden und in Kapitel 2 bis 6 vertiefend herausgearbeiteten Wegmarken aufrecht, so ergeben sich für die Befreiungschristen, die in der Apostelgeschichte schon einmal in systemsprengender Absicht „Menschen des Weges“ genannt worden sind, die Umrisse einer neuen Wegstrecke. Dieser führt von „eucharistischer Stärkung“ und „befreiender transformativer Spiritualität“, zum Vertrauen auf „Volksmystik“ innerhalb „ethisch geschwächter Kulturen“. „Verbündet mit dem Wanderproletariat aus den verwüsteten Weltzonen“ und ermutigt durch die „strategische Partnerschaft mit den Arbeiterbewegungen und auf Tiefenheilung zielenden neuen kulturellen Bewegungen“ und ausgestattet mit Werkzeugen wie der Tiefenökologie unterwegs zu neuen „heilenden Gemeinschaften“ geht es im Blick auf „denuncia“/„Auszug“ und „anuncia“/„Neuland“ vorrangig darum, „Forschungswende, neue Arbeit und neue Kultur“ zusammenzubekommen, die „Sinnlichkeit“ wieder heimzuholen und zur „Solidarität mit den Armen, der Jugend, den Frauen und der Mutter Erde“ mit hinzunehmen. Mit dem ÖRK bleibt Mission Strukturprinzip (Mexico 1963, Genf 1966), aber sie geschieht heute in sich rasch wandelnden Kontexten und entdeckt doch in ökumenischer Gemeinschaft immer deutlicher ein „heraus-rufendes“, ein insofern im ursprünglichen Sinne des Wortes ganz „kirchliches“ Profil, nämlich „von den Rändern die Kapitaldominanz und ihre kulturellen Kommerzialisierungs- und Banalisierungsprozesse von innen heraus zu verwandeln“ - und von außen neu herauszufordern.

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Cristology of Liberation

A classical work of EATWOT's International Theological Commission



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Melting pot?

The encounter of Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology

**Cordula ACKERMANN
and Philipp GEITZHAUS**

Abstract:

This essay presents Liberation Theology and postcolonial theologies as two different critical theologies from the global South and shows how their respective reception processes in Europe give rise to convergences and mutual critiques. In particular, they question the concept of universalism, which is important in Europe, and contribute to a deeper understanding of it.

Zusammenfassung:

Dieser Beitrag stellt mit der Befreiungstheologie und den postkolonialen Theologien zwei verschiedene kritische Theologien aus dem globalen Süden dar und zeigt, wie sich aus ihren jeweiligen Rezeptionsprozessen in Europa Konvergenzen und wechselseitige Kritiken ergeben. Insbesondere stellen sie das in Europa wichtige Konzept des Universalismus in Frage und tragen zu einem vertieften Verständnis desselben bei.

1. Two narratives

The history of Liberation Theology and its relation to other contemporary theologies can be told in different ways. In most cases it starts of with the genesis of liberation theology as theological reflection out of the liberation movements in Latin America. Systematized and equipped with theoretic basics Liberation Theology gets into contact and into exchange with different other theologies. And at this point narratives part. Many continue as follows: Out of the encounters and discussions with theologies which all have their own potentials, liberating theologies with

varying characteristics develop. These other theologies are for example Feminist Theology, Gendersensitive Theology and Queer Theology, Black Theology and Postcolonial Theology, multiple types of contextual theologies. The images associated with this narration do have their own aesthetic: A tree which branches out more and more, or a network between different points which spreads wider and wider. These images illustrate the diverse and transformative continuation of Liberation Theology. This presentation could be called a harmonic or harmonizing narrative.

This story may also be told a little bit different, focusing on the points of controversy in the discussion. After all separate and independent theologies are meeting each other. Approaches of Liberation Theology were also sharply criticized. Not every encounter resulted in the declaration of common ground. Some theologians concluded that specific theoretical and practical elements of Liberation Theology should be rejected, but at the same time they understood this rejection as the continuation of liberating theology. This story of Liberation Theology is full of tensions and disruptions. A scientific-historical reconstruction of the history of Liberation Theology would most likely find both, productive encounters and unconciliatory arguments.

It is worthwhile to detect the tensions and disruptions between Liberation Theology and other contemporary theologies, for this shows which specific contribution Liberation Theology still has to make, also in the context of Europe. To do this we would like to look at the example of the encounter between Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology. Postcolonial theological approaches are increasingly received in Germany and whoever wants to practice Liberation Theology in Germany cannot avoid to concern oneself with Postcolonial Theology. So how does this encounter look like? Which links and which disruptions show themselves?

2. Reception of Postcolonial Theology in Germany

Postcolonial Theology was primarily received in the field of exegesis. The three intellectuals Edward W. Said, Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha who are acknowledged as founders of postcolonial theory, were and are doing studies of literature at universities in the USA. Their theory analyses the “role of literary texts in the process of dominance, resistance and collaboration” (Dube 2013, 92)¹ in the context of

¹ All quotations are taken from German versions of the texts and were translated into English by Cordula Ackermann.

direct colonial rule, but also in the context of neocolonial globalization. A particular emphasis lies on strategies of reading that reveal structures of colonial rule and bring out marginalized perspectives. The exegesis of Postcolonial Theology adopts this approach in various ways. It raises awareness for the fact that the Bible is the centre of reference of the Christian “civilizing” mission which accompanied and legitimized colonial rule. With this awareness Postcolonial Theology subjects the classical methods and results of exegesis to a critical examination. At the same time there were and there are resistant readings of biblical texts which subvert and rupture structures of colonial dominion. In order to do this, on one hand, traces of ancient empires in the texts of the Bible are made visible. On the other hand postcolonial exegesis traces the marginalized perspectives within the texts and on the texts. Kwok Pui Lan sees the task of Postcolonial Theology in “writing history anew from the perspective of the decentralized, the diaspora, the Third World, the Jews, the Blacks, the gay and lesbian, the immigrants, the brown skinned women” (Kwok Pui Lan 2013, 120f).

Postcolonial Theology understands itself as a contextual theology which, by reflecting also the social and geographical context of those doing theology, converts this context into an important source of understanding. To practice Postcolonial Theology in Europe means to practice theology in the centres of former colonial empires which didn't lose much of their functions during the process of globalization. Here exist a lot of opportunities “to examine and uncover the links of knowledge and power in the textual production of the West” (Sugirtharajah 2013b, 125) and in doing this to be guided by the perspectives and the knowledge of the peripheries. The objective of this is not an inversion of the relations of the poles of centre/periphery or colonized/colonizer which face each other in assumed dualistic opposition, but their deconstruction. “Therefore Postcolonial Theology exceeds the binary declaration of colonized and colonizer and it places emphasis on the critical exchange between both and on the mutual transformation of both positions.” (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 145.) For describing these “interspaces of cultural contact” (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 147) concepts from cultural studies, like hybridity and diaspora, are used. This indicates the shared characteristics of postcolonial theory and cultural studies. The central characteristic is a radical contextualism which refers to the problems and subjects as well as to the examining scientist and the utilized theories. For example in a reading of the Bible the text, the reading person and the employed theory meet in a specific constellation in which the respective contexts are integrated in the process of insight. The results of such a process can't be generalized easily. In accordance postcolonial theory takes not only its

subjects, but also its protagonists and its theories, into critical consideration: Scientists are expected to show a self-critical attitude and universal concepts are generally distrusted. The insights that are obtained this way by postcolonial studies are considered to be subversive and transforming. (Cp. Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 22f.)

3. Contact points and demarcations between Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology

Postcolonial Theology may be described as a theology which followed the cultural turn of humanities in the 1990s. Where are its points of contact with Liberation Theology? Or better said: Why is the confrontation of these theologies with each other necessary? The most conspicuous common features of Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology are their claim to be critical and emancipatory and their reference to postcolonial spaces and structures of power.

The commitment of Christians in the liberation movements in Latin America made the theological reflection about this necessary, starting from the 1960s (cp. Puertas 2017 and Torres Millán 2017). In this process the analysis of the colonial past and the still existing structures which originated from it played a crucial role. The assertive claim of validity by theology from the European centres was questioned by the preferred option for the poor. Postcolonial Theology also starts from the reality of (post-)colonial spaces to act critically and emancipatory in global structures of power. Because she constituted herself during the 1980s and 1990s, Postcolonial Theology was challenged from the beginning to concern herself with critical and emancipatory concepts that already existed.

Because of this geographical references, Postcolonial Theology and Liberation Theology were often received in the global North as “Third World Theologies”. In fact both theologies emphasize the closeness of their origins to the context of the so-called Third World, but both also claim that their reflections do have relevance beyond this context. Accordingly Liberation Theology assumes that a reflection which originates from the impoverished and the marginalized produces insight about global structures of oppression, and by this it’s able to contribute to a global resistance. Postcolonial Theology tends to emphasize the particularity of its insights, but precisely this particularity is considered as critical and emancipatory potential in the face of the hegemonic production of knowledge. Indeed the description as “Third World Theology” also ignores that both theologies work with theoretical basics originating for the most part from the context of Europe and the USA. Liberation Theology relies strongly on insights of social sciences and materialist (Marxist)

social analysis. Postcolonial Theology uses for example the theories of Gramsci about hegemony and subalternity, as well as the analysis of discourse by Foucault. This kind of link between periphery and centre also shows itself in the life of important protagonists of both tendencies. Postcolonial theorists, like Said, Spivak and Bhabha, are located in the diaspora in the USA, and intellectuals of Liberation Theology, like Gutiérrez, Dussel and Ellacuría, were educated in Europe and practised their theology in Latin America. In the theological discourse in Germany it sometimes is necessary to point out this trans-border character of both theological approaches to prevent exoticizing them.

The encounter of Postcolonial Theology and Liberation Theology results from a shared background of their origins and from the way they were received. Their exchange was supported during the 1990s by a discussion within Liberation Theology about the significance of culture. The commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Conquista, at the beginning of the 1990s, strengthened the orientation towards the subject of colonialism, and in the following years questions about the importance of (inter-)cultural questions were discussed (Fornet-Betancourt 1996a, 1996b, 1997, Ramminger 1998). These discussions shouldn't be underestimated, for they pushed ahead a paradigm change within Liberation Theology "that was about a transformation of the social analysis and its theological reflection" (Ramminger 2017). Gustavo Gutiérrez was among the most prominent agents of this paradigm change which he identified with the overcoming of economism limiting analysis and in creating awareness for a "complex universe" (Gutiérrez 2009, 22-27). Gutiérrez request aimed for a theoretical link of different humanities and sciences, still including economics, to confront this "complex universe" theoretically. This demand however was rarely met – maybe resulting from "resignation in reaction to the task of building up a comprehensive understanding of the world" - like Michael Ramminger points out (Ramminger 2017). The cultural turn in Liberation Theology realizes itself consequently more in a shift than in a link. "With the philosophical 'cultural turn' the hard social and economic analysis of Marxist background, that was typical for the first generation of theologians of Liberation Theology, was called into question." (Pilario 2016, 69.) Theologians of Liberation Theology who welcomed the paradigm change towards a "soft" social analysis found confirmation in Postcolonial Theology. Needs of demarcation in contrast to an alleged old Liberation Theology, marked by its economism, already came up in internal discussions and were a point of connection for Postcolonial Theology.

In 2013 a collection of essays on Postcolonial Theology was published in Germany (Nehring/Tielesch 2013) which probably not only by chance starts off with a sharp critique of Liberation Theology by R. S. Sugirtharajah: In spite of good intentions theologians of Liberation Theology would constantly run the risk of “reproducing a microcosmic version of exactly the kind of theology which they want to reject”, because they don’t consequently develop their theology from their social and cultural context, “but from the perspective of modernist values of solidarity, identification and liberation.” (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 59.) Although the context of the poor would be considered relevant for theological insight, the option for the poor does not consider the differences among them and homogenizes and romanticizes the poor (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 51 and 62). “The hermeneutics of liberation is modernistic in its attempt to speak for all and to determine hermeneutic objectives.” (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 59.) Likewise the publishers of the collection of essays underline the fact that Postcolonial Theology makes a “critique of a modern understanding of identity” and that it doesn’t spare other contextual theologies which base on this understanding of identity. The heart of this understanding of identity is, as mentioned before, made from binary oppositions which are precisely not ruptured “by, as happened in Liberation Theology, utilizing the option for the poor to simply invert values.” (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 146.) Also conciliatory approaches, trying to build a bridge between Postcolonial Theology and Liberation Theology, do see the handling of identities as a crucial point for demarcation. Mayra Rivera Rivera notices that biblical sciences increasingly use reading methods “which explicitly base on forms of subjectivity preferred by postmodern and postcolonial theory: diasporic hermeneutics, postcolonial interpretation and other forms of thinking across borders. These ways of reading stand side by side with interpretations that base on modern forms of resistance, like liberation and politics of identity.” (Rivera Rivera 2013, 162f.) The confrontation of “modern” Liberation Theology with “postmodern” Postcolonial Theology is central to both criticisms and states a progress in social analysis. But can this progress be claimed that easily? Is the emphasis of difference and particularity really a rejection of politics of identity or is it just another variety of the same thing?

Within the different points of criticism of Liberation Theology by Postcolonial Theology the rejection of universalistic concepts on various levels stands out. This is characteristic for postcolonial theory. Paulo Suess points out to scientific universalism which, as one of the “leading principals of colonialism”, survived the latter. It distinguishes itself by clinging to the alleged objectivity of scientific categories “which he con-

siders as universal because they [are not subjected to] any contextual influence” (Suess 2013, 192). The allegation of Liberation Theology with economism identifies its emphasis of a materialistic social analysis with exactly this universalism that subjects contextual circumstances to alleged neutral categories. Corresponding to this, the criticism of utilizing “modernistic values”, like solidarity and liberation, can be considered as criticism of a certain political universalism in Liberation Theology. Postcolonial Theology connects universalism to standardization and essentialism. This expresses itself in the critique of the “option for the poor” by Postcolonial Theology. This formulation would define the identity of “the poor” in an essentialist way. The linguistic representation of the marginalized as homogeneous group would ignore their particular perspectives and experiences. Spivak even describes this as “epistemic violence” which, as an inheritance from colonial discourses, continues to exist in the terms of anticolonial political movements that, by this, want to indicate a collective political subject (cp. Castro Varela/Dhawan 2015, 183-185). Can Liberation Theology consequently only be saved as emancipatory political movement if it distances itself from solidarity, liberation and the option for the poor?

4. Universalism from below

The critique of universalism by Postcolonial Theology, which sometimes goes as far as identifying any universalistic thinking as a (“epistemic”) form of violence, invites to a closer look on the concept of the universal. In recent years political-philosophical and political-theological analysis on this topic increased. These analysis demonstrate that the clarity concerning this concept, also suggested by Postcolonial Theology, does not bear a differentiated examination. Currently one of the most prominent theoretics of universalism would be Étienne Balibar (Balibar 2006 and 2016). Balibar points out the fundamental equivocation of the term which can not be analysed adequately by the confrontation of universalism and particularism. Balibar differentiates three types of universality: A real, a fictive and an ideal universality (Balibar 2006, 281-314).

By the term of real universality he understands “the thought of a reciprocal dependance between the elements or entities from which may be formed what we call the world” (Balibar 2016, 282). One could also call this the material sociation created by production and reproduction that today really exists globally. It means the (positive as well as negative) interaction and interconnection of different actors, institutions, groups and individuals on various levels (connected with each other), like the economic, the political but also the cultural level. This process of “world-

becoming of the world” was driven by the expansion and intensifying of capitalism (Balibar 2016, 310).

The term fictive universality means a universality existing in institutions and representations that produce social hegemonies. As such they may be constructions, but not only thought shapes which is why the term fictions is to be used with caution. It’s a question of “ideologies” or systems of politics with the pretence to be general (universal claim). As an example Balibar names the individuality introduced with the national state during modernity. She’s caught in the tension between liberation and normalization, inasmuch as she signifies on one hand an emancipation and questioning of original communities and dependences (liberation), but on the other hand she is being reorganized in the form of the national state (normalization).

Balibar also calls the ideal universality a “subversive element”. With the ideal universality he indicates the movement, meaning the struggle, for equaliberty (fr.: *egaliberté*). Equaliberty is a neologism that is supposed to express a necessary link between the terms of equality and freedom (liberty). It’s equality that cannot exist without freedom, and freedom that cannot exist without equality. The decisive thing is that the request of equaliberty is in principle unlimited and in this sense universal. But this ideal universality, or rather its bearers, did not always exist. In this aspect the intuition of Postcolonial Theology is right when it considers the general term of the poor to be inadequate. But Balibar points out that the ideal universality and its bearers have to be constituted as collective: “Against the dominant universality or against the present system of politics there is no spontaneous, as if it were natural, front of the ‘excluded’ or ‘minorities’ [...]. This doesn’t mean in any way that such an entity could not exist under certain circumstances. It just has to be formed, and it must be the object of a decision.” (Balibar 2006, 313f.) Balibar assumes that the other two universalities, or rather their destructive forms, can only be met by another – ideal – universality. Because of this one could speak of a “universalism from below”, because it’s being proclaimed from the “basis” and wants to develop itself from there.

Many critiques of universalism seem to refer mainly to what Balibar understands as “fictive” universality. As a result, on one hand the aspect of real universality, as world-becoming and sociation practically taking place, is effectively lost from sight (reproach of economism). To comprehend her, an understanding of political economy is just necessary. On the other hand, the rash rejection of universalistic thought also dismisses something like an “ideal universality” which is necessary to develop a concept such as equaliberty (and with this solidarity). This essentially

raises the question, how an emancipatory demand should be realized, that is to say how it should be organized. How can we imagine alliances? And how do different emancipatory demands interact with each other? Considering this background, pointing out that, for example, “the poor” consist of a diversity which can’t be summarized under this one term seems to “stop in midway”. Exactly because the actor of this term (e.g. the poor) often doesn’t exist, the challenge consists in constructing and organizing this actor. This is of course not a task for theory, but for political-organizational action. But theory and also theology can provide terms, analysis, concepts and critiques for (and from!) this political-organizational processes, instead of only affirmatively reflecting the “complex universe” (Gutiérrez). In this case there is no need for the rejection of terms like liberation, solidarity, Kingdom of God etc., instead Liberation Theology is continuously and anew challenged to put these terms into relation to each other and to a, at least potentially or necessarily, militant Christian practice. This also illustrates that the relation of Liberation Theology and Postcolonial Theology cannot be easily interpreted as that of a growing tree to its branches, in terms of the harmonizing narrative. It is indeed full of tensions, controversy and even incompatibility, if the paradigm change of the cultural turn is analysed critically.

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Melting Pot?

Die Begegnung von Befreiungstheologie und Postkolonialer Theologie

**Cordula ACKERMANN
und Philipp GEITZHAUS**

Abstract:

This essay presents Liberation Theology and postcolonial theologies as two different critical theologies from the global South and shows how their respective reception processes in Europe give rise to convergences and mutual critiques. In particular, they question the concept of universalism, which is important in Europe, and contribute to a deeper understanding of it.

Zusammenfassung:

Dieser Beitrag stellt mit der Befreiungstheologie und den postkolonialen Theologien zwei verschiedene kritische Theologien aus dem globalen Süden dar und zeigt, wie sich aus ihren jeweiligen Rezeptionsprozessen in Europa Konvergenzen und wechselseitige Kritiken ergeben. Insbesondere stellen sie das in Europa wichtige Konzept des Universalismus in Frage und tragen zu einem vertieften Verständnis desselben bei.

1. Zwei Narrative

Die Geschichte von Befreiungstheologie und ihrem Verhältnis zu anderen aktuellen Theologien lässt sich auf unterschiedliche Weise erzählen. Am Anfang der Erzählung steht meistens die Genese von Befreiungstheologie als die theologische Reflexion aus den Befreiungsbewegungen Lateinamerikas heraus. Systematisiert und ausgestattet mit theoretischen Grundlagen tritt die Befreiungstheologie in Kontakt und Austausch mit unterschiedlichen anderen Theologien. Und an diesem Punkt gehen die Narrative auseinander. Viele fahren folgendermaßen fort: Aus den Begegnungen und Auseinandersetzungen

mit Theologien, die ihr eigenes Potenzial besitzen, entwickeln sich befreiende Theologien mit unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen. Das sind z.B. feministische Theologie, gendersensible Theologie und queere Theologie, Black Theology und postkoloniale Theologie, verschiedene Formen kontextueller Theologie. Den Bildern, mit denen dieses Narrativ assoziiert werden kann, wohnt eine gewisse Ästhetik inne: Ein sich immer weiter verzweigender Baum oder ein immer dichter werdendes Netzwerk, das zwischen verschiedenen Punkten entsteht, veranschaulichen die plurale und transformative Weiterführung von Befreiungstheologie. Diese Darstellung könnte man ein harmonisches bzw. ein harmonisierendes Narrativ nennen.

Ein wenig anders lässt sich die Geschichte erzählen, wenn die kontroversen Punkte der Auseinandersetzung in den Fokus rücken. Denn schließlich treffen hier unterschiedliche eigenständige Theologien aufeinander. Befreiungstheologische Ansätze wurden auch scharf kritisiert. Nicht jede Begegnung resultierte in der Feststellung von Gemeinsamkeiten. Manche TheologInnen kamen zu dem Schluss, dass bestimmte theoretische wie praktische Elemente der Befreiungstheologie abzulehnen seien, aber sie sahen gerade in der Ablösung von diesen Elementen die Weiterführung befreiender Theologie. Diese Geschichte der Befreiungstheologie ist voller Spannungen und Brüche. Eine historisch-wissenschaftliche Rekonstruktion dieser Geschichte würde wahrscheinlich beides vorfinden: produktive Begegnungen und unversöhnliche Auseinandersetzungen.

Es lohnt sich, den Spannungen und Brüchen zwischen der Befreiungstheologie und anderen aktuellen Theologien nachzugehen, um den spezifischen Beitrag, den Befreiungstheologie auch für den europäischen Kontext nach wie vor leistet, zu verdeutlichen. Wir möchten dazu das Beispiel der Begegnung von Befreiungstheologie und Postkolonialer Theologie betrachten. Postkoloniale theologische Ansätze werden in Deutschland zunehmend rezipiert und wer im Kontext Deutschlands Befreiungstheologie betreiben will, kommt nicht um eine Auseinandersetzung mit Postkolonialer Theologie herum. Wie sieht also diese Begegnung aus? Welche Anknüpfungspunkte und welche Brüche tun sich auf?

2. Rezeption der postkolonialen Theologie in Deutschland

Postkoloniale Theorie wurde in Deutschland zuerst besonders im Bereich der Exegese rezipiert. Die drei als BegründerInnen der postkolonialen Theorie anerkannten Intellektuellen Edward W. Said, Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak und Homi K. Bhabha waren und sind als LiteraturwissenschaftlerInnen an Universitäten in den USA tätig. Ihre

Theorie analysiert die „Rolle literarischer Texte im Prozess von Dominanz, Widerstand und Kollaboration“ (Dube 2013, 92) im Kontext der direkten kolonialen Herrschaft aber auch im Kontext neokolonialer Globalisierung. Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt liegt dabei auf Lesestrategien, die koloniale Herrschaftsstrukturen aufdecken und marginalisierte Perspektiven zum Vorschein bringen. Die Exegese Postkolonialer Theologie greift dieses Vorgehen in mehrfacher Hinsicht auf. Sie ruft ins Bewusstsein, dass die Bibel der zentrale Bezugspunkt der christlichen und „zivilisierenden“ Mission ist, die die koloniale Herrschaft begleitete und legitimierte. Mit diesem Bewusstsein unterzieht die Postkoloniale Theologie die klassischen Methoden und Ergebnisse der Exegese einer kritischen Überprüfung. Gleichzeitig gab und gibt es widerständige Lesarten der biblischen Texte, die koloniale Herrschaftsstrukturen unterwandern und durchbrechen. Dazu werden zum einen die Spuren antiker Imperien in den Texten der Bibel sichtbar gemacht. Zum anderen geht die postkoloniale Exegese den marginalisierten Perspektiven in den Texten und auf die Texte nach. Kwok Pui Lan sieht es dabei als Aufgabe der Postkolonialen Theologie „Geschichte neu [zu] schreiben, aus den Perspektiven der Dezentralisierten, der Diaspora, der Dritten Welt, der Juden, der Schwarzen, der Schwulen und Lesben, der Einwanderer, der braunhäutigen Frauen“ (Kwok Pui Lan 2013, 120f).

Postkoloniale Theologie versteht sich als eine kontextuelle Theologie, die den gesellschaftlichen und geographischen Kontext der Theologietreibenden mitreflektiert und diesen so zu einer wichtigen Quelle der Erkenntnis macht. Postkoloniale Theologie in Europa zu betreiben bedeutet, Theologie in den Zentren der ehemaligen Kolonialimperien, die im Zuge der Globalisierung nur wenig von ihrer Funktion eingebüßt haben, zu betreiben. Hier gibt es reichlich Gelegenheit „die Verbindung von Wissen und Macht in der textuellen Produktion des Westens zu untersuchen und aufzudecken“ (Sugirtharajah 2013b, 125) und sich dabei von den Perspektiven und dem Wissen aus den Peripherien anleiten zu lassen. Ziel ist dabei nicht eine Umkehrung der Verhältnisse der sich vermeintlich dualistisch gegenüberstehenden Pole Zentrum/Peripherie, Kolonisierte/Kolonisierer, sondern ihre Dekonstruktion. „Postkoloniale Theologie geht somit über die binäre Feststellung von Kolonisierten und Kolonisierern hinaus und legt die Betonung auf den kritischen Austausch zwischen beiden und die gegenseitige Transformation beider Positionen.“ (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 145.) In der Beschreibung dieser „Zwischenräume des Kulturkontaktes“ (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 147) wird auf kulturwissenschaftliche Konzepte wie Hybridität und Diaspora zurückgegriffen.

Verschiedene der hier genannten Merkmale verbinden die postkoloniale Theorie mit den Cultural Studies. Zentral ist das Merkmal des radikalen Kontextualismus. Dieser bezieht sich sowohl auf die besprochenen Probleme und Gegenstände als auch auf die jeweils forschende WissenschaftlerIn und die benutzten Theorien. Zum Beispiel treffen bei einer Bibellektüre Text, LeserIn und angewandte Theorie in einer ganz spezifischen Konstellation zusammen, wobei die jeweiligen Kontexte in den Erkenntnisprozess einfließen. Die Ergebnisse eines solchen Prozesses sind also nur bedingt verallgemeinerbar. Entsprechend unterziehen Postkoloniale Studien nicht nur ihre Gegenstände, sondern auch ihre AkteurInnen und Theorien einer kritischen Betrachtung: Von WissenschaftlerInnen wird eine selbstreflexive Haltung erwartet und universalen Konzepten wird grundsätzlich misstraut. Das so durch Postkoloniale Studien erlangte Wissen wird als subversiv und transformatorisch verstanden. (Vgl. Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 22 f.)

3. Berührungspunkte und Abgrenzungen zwischen Befreiungs- und Postkolonialer Theologie

Postkoloniale Theologie lässt sich als eine Theologie beschreiben, die den cultural turn der Geisteswissenschaften in den 1990er Jahren mit vollzogen hat. Wo sind ihre Berührungspunkte mit der Befreiungstheologie? Oder besser gesagt: Warum ist die Auseinandersetzung dieser Theologien miteinander notwendig? Die auffälligsten Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Befreiungstheologie und postkolonialer Theologie sind ihr jeweiliger kritisch-emanzipatorischer Anspruch und ihr Bezug zu postkolonialen Räumen und Machtstrukturen.

Das Engagement von ChristInnen in den Befreiungsbewegungen Lateinamerikas machte ab den 1960er Jahren eine theologische Reflexion darüber notwendig (Vgl. Puertas 2017 und Torres Millán 2017). In diesem Prozess spielte auch die Analyse der kolonialen Vergangenheit und der daraus fortbestehenden Strukturen von Ungleichheit und Unterdrückung eine entscheidende Rolle. Der Geltungsanspruch der Theologie aus den europäischen Zentren wurde durch die vorrangige Option für die Armen in Frage gestellt. Auch die postkoloniale Theologie geht von der Realität (post-)kolonialer Räume aus, um in globalen Machtstrukturen kritisch-emanzipatorisch zu wirken. Da sie sich im Laufe der 1980er und 1990er Jahre herausbildete, war die postkoloniale Theologie in ihren Anfängen schon gefordert, sich mit bereits existierenden kritisch-emanzipatorischen Konzepten zu befassen.

Postkoloniale Theologie und Befreiungstheologie wurden im globalen Norden aufgrund ihrer geographischen Bezüge oft als „Dritte-

Welt-Theologien“ rezipiert. Zwar betonen beide Theologien die Nähe ihres Ursprungs zum Kontext der sogenannten Dritten Welt, aber beide erheben ebenso Anspruch darauf, dass ihre Reflexionen über diesen Kontext hinaus von Relevanz sind. So geht die Befreiungstheologie davon aus, dass eine Reflexion, die von den Armgemachten und Marginalisierten ausgeht, Erkenntnisse über globale Strukturen der Unterdrückung erlangt und somit auch zu einem globalen Widerstand beitragen kann. Postkoloniale Theologie betont tendenziell die Partikularität ihrer Erkenntnisse, sieht aber gerade in dieser Partikularität kritisch-emanzipatorisches Potenzial gegenüber der hegemonialen Wissensproduktion. Tatsächlich verkennt die Bezeichnung als „Dritte-Welt-Theologie“ auch, dass beide Theologien mit theoretischen Grundlagen arbeiten, die zum großen Teil dem europäischen und us-amerikanischen Kontext entstammen. Befreiungstheologie baut stark auf sozialwissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen und einer materialistischen (marxistischen) Gesellschaftsanalyse auf. Postkoloniale Theologie bedient sich z. B. Gramscis Theorien zu Hegemonie und Subalternität und Foucaults Diskursanalyse. Diese Verbindung von Peripherie und Zentrum zeigt sich auch im Leben wichtiger AkteurInnen beider Strömungen. Postkoloniale TheoretikerInnen, wie Said, Spivak und Bhabha, sind in der Diaspora in den USA verortet und Intellektuelle der Befreiungstheologie, wie Gutiérrez, Dussel und Ellacuría, wurden in Europa ausgebildet und praktizierten ihre Theologie in Lateinamerika. Für die theologische Diskussion in Deutschland ist es manchmal notwendig, auf diesen grenzüberschreitenden Charakter der beiden theologischen Ansätze hinzuweisen um eine Exotisierung zu vermeiden.

Die Begegnung von Postkolonialer Theologie und Befreiungstheologie ergibt sich also sowohl aus gemeinsamen Entstehungshintergründen, als auch daraus, wie sie von anderen rezipiert wurden. Der Austausch wurde in den 1990er Jahren durch Diskussionen innerhalb der Befreiungstheologie um die Bedeutung des Kulturellen befördert. Die Erinnerung an 500 Jahre Conquista am Anfang der 90er Jahre verstärkte die Orientierung auf das Thema „Kolonialismus“, und in den Folgejahren wurden die Fragen nach der Bedeutung des (Inter-) Kulturellen diskutiert (Fornet-Betancourt 1996a, 1996b, 1997, Ramminger 1998). Diese Diskussionen sind nicht zu unterschätzen, da sie einen „Paradigmenwechsel“ in der Befreiungstheologie forcierten, „dem es um eine Transformation der sozialen Analyse und deren theologischen Reflexion geht“ (Ramminger 2017). Gustavo Gutiérrez dürfte zu den prominentesten VertreterInnen dieses Paradigmenwechsels gehören, der diesen in der Überwindung der ökonomischen Engführung und in der Wahrnehmung eines „komplexen Universums“ sah (Gutiérrez 2009, 22-27). Gutiérrez Aufforderung zielte auf eine theoretische

Verknüpfung verschiedener (geistes-)wissenschaftlicher Disziplinen, zu der auch weiterhin die Ökonomie gehören sollte, um diesem „komplexen Universum“ theoretisch zu begegnen. Dieser Aufforderung wurde aber – wahrscheinlich aus „Resignation vor der Aufgabe eines umfassenden Weltverständnisses“ – kaum nachgegangen, wie Michael Ramminger aufzeigt (Ramminger 2017). Der cultural turn in der Befreiungstheologie äußerte sich somit eher in einer Verschiebung als in einer Verknüpfung. „Mit der philosophischen ‚Wende zur Kultur‘ wurde die harte sozio-ökonomische Analyse marxistischer Prägung, die für die erste Generation der Befreiungstheologen kennzeichnend war, in Frage gestellt.“ (Pilario 2016, 69.) BefreiungstheologInnen, die einen Paradigmenwechsel hin zu einer „weichen“ Gesellschaftsanalyse begrüßten, fanden dafür bei der Postkolonialen Theologie Bestätigung. Abgrenzungsbedürfnisse gegenüber einer angeblich alten und ökonomistischen Befreiungstheologie kamen also schon in Diskussionen innerhalb derselben auf und waren anschlussfähig für die Postkolonialen Theologie.

Eine 2013 in Deutschland erschienene Textsammlung zur Postkolonialen Theologie (Nehring/Tielesch 2013) beginnt wahrscheinlich nicht zufällig mit einer sehr scharfen Kritik R. S. Sugirtharajahs an der Befreiungstheologie: Trotz guter Absichten liefen BefreiungstheologInnen beständig Gefahr „eine mikrokosmische Version genau der Theologie [zu] reproduzieren, die sie zurückzuweisen versuchen“, da sie ihre Theologie nicht konsequent aus ihrem sozio-kulturellen Kontext entwickeln würden, „sondern aus der Perspektive der liberalen modernistischen Werte von Solidarität, Identifizierung und Befreiung.“ (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 59.) Der Kontext der Armen würde zwar als relevant für die theologische Erkenntnis angesehen, aber die Option für die Armen nehme die Differenzen derselben nicht wahr und homogenisiere und romantisieren die Armen (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 51 und 62). „Die Befreiungshermeneutik ist modernistisch in ihrem Versuch, für alle zu sprechen und indem sie hermeneutische Ziele festlegt.“ (Sugirtharajah 2013a, 62) Auch die Herausgeber der Textsammlung unterstreichen, dass Postkoloniale Theologie bei ihrer „Kritik an einem modernen Verständnis von Identität“ andere kontextuelle Theologien, die auf eben diesem Identitätsverständnis aufbauen, nicht aussparen. Den Kern dieses Identitätsverständnisses bildeten, wie bereits erwähnt, binäre Oppositionen, die gerade nicht durchbrochen werden „indem man, wie in der Befreiungstheologie geschehen, mit der Option für die Armen die Wertigkeiten einfach umdreht.“ (Nehring/Tielesch 2013, 146) Auch versöhnlichere Entwürfe, die eine Brücke zwischen Postkolonialer Theologie und Befreiungstheologie schlagen wollen, sehen im Umgang mit Identitäten einen entscheidenden Punkt der Abgrenzung. Mayra

Rivera Rivera stellt fest, dass in den Bibelwissenschaften zunehmend Lesarten angewandt werden, „die explizit auf den von postmoderner und postkolonialer Theorie bevorzugten Formen von Subjektivität basieren: diasporische Hermeneutik, postkoloniales Interpretieren und andere Formen des Grenzdenkens. Diese Arten des Lesens stehen Seite an Seite mit Interpretationen, die auf modernen Widerstandsformen basieren, wie Befreiung und Identitätspolitik.“ (Rivera Rivera 2013, 162f) Mit der Gegenüberstellung von „moderner“ Befreiungstheologie und „postmoderner“ Postkolonialer Theologie, die für beide Kritiken zentral ist, wird ein Fortschritt in der Gesellschaftsanalyse behauptet. Aber kann dieser Fortschritt so einfach postuliert werden? Ist die Betonung von Differenz und Partikularität tatsächlich die Abkehr von Identitätspolitik oder nur eine andere Spielart derselben?

Die unterschiedlichen Punkte der Kritik an Befreiungstheologie von Seiten der Postkolonialen Theologie zeichnen sich aus durch die Ablehnung universalistischer Konzepte auf verschiedenen Ebenen, die charakteristisch für Postkoloniale Theorie ist. Paulo Suess weist auf den wissenschaftlichen Universalismus hin, der als eines der „leitenden Prinzipien des Kolonialismus“ diesen überlebt habe. Er zeichne sich aus durch das Festhalten an der vermeintlichen Objektivität wissenschaftlicher Kategorien, „die er als universal ansieht, weil sie keinem kontextuellen Einfluss“ unterliegen. (Suess 2013, 192) Der Vorwurf des Ökonomismus an die Befreiungstheologie identifiziert deren Schwerpunktsetzung auf eine materialistische Gesellschaftsanalyse mit eben jenem Universalismus, der kontextuelle Gegebenheiten einer vermeintlich neutralen Kategorie unterordnet. Entsprechend lässt sich die Kritik an der Verwendung „modernistischer Werte“ wie Solidarität und Befreiung als Kritik an einem politischen Universalismus in der Befreiungstheologie verstehen. Postkoloniale Kritik verbindet Universalismus also mit Vereinheitlichung und Essentialismus. Dies zeigt sich in der Kritik Postkolonialer Theologie an der „Option für die Armen“. Diese Formulierung schreibe die Identität ‚der Armen‘ in essentialistischer Weise fest. Die sprachliche Repräsentation der Marginalisierten als homogene Gruppe setze sich über die partikularen Perspektiven und Erfahrungen hinweg. Spivak bezeichnet dies sogar als ‚epistemische Gewalt‘, die als Erbe kolonialer Diskurse auch in den Begriffen anticolonialer politischer Bewegungen, die dadurch ein kollektives politisches Subjekt bezeichnen wollen, fortgeführt würde (Vgl. Castro Varela/Dhawan 2015, 183-185). Ist die Befreiungstheologie als emanzipatorische politische Bewegung demnach tatsächlich nur zu retten, wenn sie sich von Solidarität, Befreiung und der Option für die Armen distanziert?

4. Universalismus von unten

Die Universalismuskritik der Postkolonialen Theologie, die teilweise sogar jedem universalistischen Denken eine gewisse („epistemische“) Gewaltförmigkeit zuspricht, lädt zu einer intensiveren Auseinandersetzung mit dem Begriff des Universalen ein. In den letzten Jahren gab es dazu vermehrt politisch-philosophische und auch politisch-theologische Analysen. Dort wurde und wird aufgezeigt, dass die u.a. von der Postkolonialen Theologie suggerierte Klarheit zu diesem Begriff einer differenzierten Betrachtung nicht standhält. Gegenwärtig dürfte einer der profiliertesten UniversalismustheoretikerInnen Étienne Balibar sein (Balibar 2006 und 2016). Balibar weist auf die grundsätzliche Äquivokation des Begriffs hin, die durch die Gegenüberstellung von Universalismus und Partikularismus nicht adäquat analysiert werden kann. Er unterscheidet drei verschiedene Typen von Universalität: Eine reale, eine fiktive und eine ideale Universalität (Balibar 2006, 281-314).

Unter dem Begriff der realen Universalität versteht er „den Gedanken einer wechselseitigen Abhängigkeit zwischen den Elementen oder Einheiten, aus denen sich das zusammensetzen lässt, was wir *die Welt* nennen“ (Balibar 2016, 282). Man könnte dies auch die materielle, durch Produktion und Reproduktion geschaffene Vergesellschaftung nennen, die heute tatsächlich als Globalisierung existiert. Gemeint ist das (positive wie negative) Zusammenspiel und die Verflechtung verschiedener Akteure, Institutionen, Gruppen und Individuen auf verschiedenen (miteinander zusammenhängenden) Ebenen, wie der ökonomischen, der politischen oder auch der kulturellen. Angetrieben wurde und wird dieser Prozess der „Weltwerdung der Welt“ durch die Expansion und Intensivierung des Kapitalismus (Balibar 2016, 310).

Der Begriff der fiktiven Universalität meint eine Universalität, die in Institutionen und Repräsentationen, die gesellschaftliche Hegemonien produzieren, existiert. Als solche handelt es sich zwar um Konstruktionen, aber nicht um bloß gedachte Gebilde, weshalb der Begriff der Fiktion mit Vorsicht zu verwenden ist. Es handelt sich um „Ideologien“ oder Systeme von Politiken mit Allgemeinheitsanspruch (Universalanspruch). Balibar nennt hier beispielsweise die in der Moderne mit dem Nationalstaat aufgekommene Individualität. Diese steht in der Spannung zwischen Befreiung und Normalisierung, insofern sie einerseits eine Loslösung und Infragestellung ursprünglicher Gemeinschaften und Abhängigkeiten bedeutet (Befreiung), aber auch in Form des Nationalstaats reorganisiert wird (Normalisierung).

Die ideale Universalität nennt Balibar auch ein „subversives Element“. Mit der idealen Universalität bezeichnet er die Bewegung d.h. das Ringen um Gleichfreiheit (fr.: *egaliberté*). Gleichfreiheit ist ein Neologismus, der einen notwendigen Zusammenhang der Begriffe der Gleichheit und der Freiheit ausdrücken soll. Es handelt sich um eine Gleichheit, die nicht ohne Freiheit und eine Freiheit, die nicht ohne Gleichheit existieren kann. Das entscheidende ist, dass das Anliegen der Gleichfreiheit prinzipiell grenzenlos und in diesem Sinne universal ist. Doch diese ideale Universalität bzw. ihre Träger sind keine, die immer schon existieren. In diesem Aspekt ist die Intuition der Postkolonialen Theologie richtig, wenn sie den allgemeinen Begriff des/der Armen für inadäquat hält. Balibar weist aber darauf hin, dass die ideale Universalität und ihre Träger als Kollektiv konstituiert werden müssen: „Es gibt gegen die herrschende Universalität oder gegen das bestehende System der Politik keine spontane, gewissermaßen natürliche Front der ‚Ausgegrenzten‘ oder ‚Minoritäten‘ [...]. Das bedeutet keineswegs, dass eine solche Einheit unter bestimmten Umständen nicht existieren kann. Sie muss eben hergestellt werden, und sie muss Gegenstand einer Entscheidung sein.“ (Balibar 2006, 313f.) Balibar geht davon aus, dass den anderen beiden Universalitäten bzw. ihren destruktiven Formen nur durch eine andere – ideale – Universalität begegnet werden kann. Man könnte deshalb auch von einem „Universalismus von unten“ sprechen, da er von der „Basis“ her proklamiert wird und sich von dort aus entwickeln will.

In vielen Universalismuskritiken scheint man sich u.E. vor allem auf das, was Balibar unter „fiktiver Universalität“ versteht, zu beziehen. Dabei gerät aber faktisch einerseits der Aspekt der realen Universalität als praktisch stattfindende Weltwerdung und Vergesellschaftung aus dem Blick (Ökonomismusvorwurf). Um diese zu begreifen, bedarf es aber gerade auch ein Verständnis von politischer Ökonomie. Andererseits wird mit der vorschnellen Ablehnung universalistischen Denkens auch so etwas wie eine „ideale Universalität“, die notwendig ist, um ein Konzept, wie das der Gleichfreiheit (und damit das der Solidarität) entwickeln zu können, über Bord geworfen. Damit kommt notgedrungen die Frage auf, wie denn ein emanzipatorischer Anspruch verwirklicht, d.h. auch organisiert werden soll. Wie sind Allianzen denkbar und wie verhalten sich unterschiedliche emanzipatorische Ansprüche zueinander? Vor diesem Hintergrund scheint der Verweis darauf, dass beispielsweise „die Armen“ aus einer Vielfalt bestehen und jene sich nicht unter diesen Begriff subsumieren lassen, auf „halbem Wege stehen zu bleiben“. Denn gerade weil der Akteur dieses Begriffs (z.B. die Armen) oftmals nicht existiert, besteht die Herausforderung darin, diesen Akteur zu konstruieren, d.h. zu organisieren. Das ist selbstverständlich keine

Aufgabe der Theorie, sondern eine politisch-organisatorische Tätigkeit. Die Theorie und auch die Theologie können aber für diese politisch-organisatorischen Prozesse (und aus ihnen heraus!) Begriffe, Analysen, Konzepte und Kritiken zur Verfügung stellen, statt das „komplexe Universum“ (Gutiérrez) bloß affirmativ zu spiegeln. Dann bedarf es auch keiner Absage an Begriffe wie Befreiung, Solidarität, Reich Gottes usw., stattdessen steht eine Befreiungstheologie weiterhin und immer wieder aufs Neue vor der Herausforderung diese Begriffe zueinander und vor allem zu einer, wenigstens potentiellen oder notwendigen, militanten christlichen Praxis in ein Verhältnis zu setzen. So zeigt sich auch, dass das Verhältnis von Befreiungstheologie und Postkolonialer Theologie weniger als wachsender Baum im Sinne des harmonisierenden Narrativs interpretiert werden kann, sondern als durchaus spannungsreich, kontrovers und mitunter unverträglich, sobald der Paradigmenwechsel des *cultural turn* kritisch beleuchtet wird.

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RISTAMPATO 2017

J.S. SPONG - M^a LÓPEZ VIGIL - R. LENAERS - J.M. VIGIL

A cura di Claudia FANTI e Ferdinando SUDATI

Oltre le religioni

Una nuova epoca per la spiritualità umana

John Shelby Spong
María López Vigil
Roger Lenaers
José María Vigil



Oltre le religioni

Una nuova epoca per la spiritualità umana

prefazione di
Marcelo Barros



Con i loro miti e i loro dogmi, con le loro leggi e la loro morale, le religioni sono state a lungo il motore del sistema operativo delle società. Ma, almeno nella forma che ci è familiare, non sono destinate a durare per sempre. "Per sempre" è la spiritualità, intesa come dimensione profonda costitutiva dell'essere umano, non la religione, che ne costituisce la forma socio-culturale concreta, storica e dunque contingente e mutevole. La tesi degli autori del libro - J.S. Spong, M. López Vigil, R. Lenares e J.M. Vigil, tra i nomi più prestigiosi, brillanti e amati della nuova teologia di frontiera - è che le religioni così come le conosciamo siano destinate a lasciare spazio a qualcosa di nuovo e non ancora facilmente prevedibile, ma sicuramente aprendo all'insopprimibile dimensione spirituale dell'essere umano un futuro ricco di straordinarie possibilità.

Ma che ne sarà della tradizione di Gesù? Riuscirà il cristianesimo nell'impresa di trasformare se stesso, reinterpretando e riconvertendo tutto il suo patrimonio simbolico in vista del futuro che lo attende? Riuscirà a liberarsi di dogmi, riti, gerarchie e norme, di tutti quei rituali religiosi che hanno finito per sovrapporsi al Vangelo?

È a questo compito tutt'altro che semplice che hanno rivolto le loro riflessioni, e dedicato la loro vita, gli autori di questo libro, ma a cui guardano con interesse e passione anche tutti coloro - e sono sempre di più - che avvertono la necessità di trasformare la propria religiosità, vivendo ormai dolorosamente la contraddizione con la dottrina ufficiale e coltivando una vita spirituale al di fuori di ogni steccato religioso.

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Liberation Theology in Italy

Felice SCALIA S.J.

Translation by Luigi Mariano Guzzo

Abstract:

In this essay we support the following thesis: Liberation Theology in Italy, though it enjoyed huge interest and charm, did not create here a theological and pastoral movement that might be compared to the ones in Latin America.

1. Some points

For us Liberation Theology is a complex phenomenon characterized as a “reflection and practice of faith inextricably connected, because it is aimed at expressing the social objective power of liberation, related to the event of Christian salvation”¹. It is a “charisma”, with its own original method of research, born in the Church after Vatican II, which requires studies of European theologians (but not only), and its grows up for the Church’s benefit.

Liberation Theology can be qualified like a “Southern World Theology”. Regions, historical frameworks, are its natural habitat, where the consciousness of slavery and of dependence, and the faith need of liberation from them, is clearer.

For centuries the connection between history and faith was unthinkable in the Church. It is changed in the 20th century thanks to the studies of the theologians, mostly European: J. Moltmann, J. B. Metz, K. Rahner, etc. This occurred not without serious concerns from the Roman magister, who fears always any form of distancing from the classical deductive theology. Without the discovery that history is a theological place, perhaps we would not have anywhere Liberation Theology. And this is not without significance.

¹ Giacomo Canobbio – Piero Coda (eds.), “La Teologia del XX secolo”, 1, Città nuova, Roma, 2013, p. 71.

Liberation Theology is the Vatican II daughter. But the “childbirth” didn’t happen in St Peter’s Basilica, for expressed will of Council Fathers. Its origins go up after the Vatican II, at the so-called “XIV Scheme” which became then the “Pact of the Catacombs” and reform programme of many Latin-American bishops. The pact was signed not in the Council place, but in the Domitilla Catacombs². The only one Italian signatory was The Most Reverend Luigi Bettazzi, at that time auxiliary bishop of Bologna.

A question. The conditions of Liberation theology arise and have a great eco in Italy; in the Domitilla Catacombs the prelate knows to have with him the Council fathers who had debated about the poverty of a poor Church on the side of poor; it is known that Italian people are oppressed by evil “structures”; and otherwise a very Liberation Theology don’t arise. There are just “starters” and samples, and it ends up living with echoes and a regrets. Why?

First reason. Europe (and Italy) is not an oppressed Continent. On the contrary it is part of that West “predator” from which the oppressed want be free. A possible European Liberation Theology should start from the awareness that even predator is oppressed by his idols and inhuman ideologies. These are things that kill humanity and generate knock-on slavery among the privileged themselves. But this analysis does not structure the common way of thought and so it is without “prophecy”.

Second reason. Italian theologians have different faith issues: secularization, atheism, “God’s death”, the chance to abandon abstract theology in favour of a theology able “reading the signs of the times”. This objective difficulty, underlined also by Leonardo Boff³, was taken into account by the IDOC roman conference in 1982 about “Oppression structure, historical subjects and theological reflection in Italy in the ‘80s⁴”.

In the same way, historical, theological, cultural⁵, political context does not produce a systematic theological analysis about our situation of “oppression” and much less does not encourage the community to leave the sacristy. We have just a great echo of Liberation Theology of overseas. The development of the Latin-American Liberation Theology has always

² Xavier Pikaza – José Antunes Da Silva, “Il Patto delle Catacombe – La missione dei poveri nella chiesa”, Ed. EMI, Bologna, 2015.

³ See Leonardo Boff, “Chiesa: carisma e potere”, Borla, Roma, 1983, chapter IV.

⁴ See José Ramos Regidor, “Teologia della liberazione in Italia?”, in “Regno- attualità”, 20, 1982, p. 475.

⁵ We have to consider the cultural climate of young people dealing with the spread of drugs in the 60’s and with the sexual revolution triggered by Wilhelm Reich. Their interests were different from those of their Latin-American peers.

been followed with participation, emotion, enthusiasm and suffering. It may be argued that this empathy, which became “with-joy” for discovered horizons and “with-passion” (*compassion*) for the misunderstandings and the hierarchical “convictions”, was a very important contribution to Universal Church reflection.

Third reason: there is a lack of *bummus*, vital environment suitable for an Italian Liberation Theology. It was necessary to break free from many things

The courage to start an Italian Liberation Theology required getting rid of too many things for having the courage to dare that street. The stakeholders who should be involved are too many: State, politicians, propertied class and the Church hierarchy in itself.

As things stand, it is already enough significant that, despite an adverse climate, Italy has had all this realities of Liberating Theology, realities which today seem to reborn through Pope Francis’ words. Although it might seem a severe judgement, we can say that in Italy, more than talk about Liberating Theology, we should talk about on different liberating instances.⁶

2. Italian theologians, priests, communities in the Liberation Theology trail

The People of God is in moving in Italy too. Certainly Liberation Theology is a theology which shakes the consciences and contaminates writers, thinkers, journalists, priests and a relevant part of the people of God. From a direct experience of Italian priests and layperson, really enlightened people can be quoted, to which Italian Church owes much, at least in its part that is clearly with Pope Francis, with the Gospel and with preferential option for the poor: Lucio Gera⁷, José Ramos Regidor, Giulio Girardi, Ernesto Balducci, Giovanni Franzoni, Arturo Paoli, Fausto Marinetti, Raniero La Valle, Ettore Masina, Roberto Mancini, Alberto Melloni, etc.

⁶ Luigi Mariano Guzzo, “Istanze di liberazione nella comunità ecclesiale italiana”, Editoriale Progetto 2000, Cosenza, Cosenza, 2013, p. 57.

⁷ This renowned Italian theologian is quoted in this paper, although he has operated in Argentina. In 1967 he founded the “Movimento di sacerdoti per il Terzo Mondo” and he wrote “Teologia del popolo”, almost a precursor of what Liberation Theology would become in Brazil. In the Italian edition of 1978 (Dehoniane – Bologna Edition) Luisito Bianchi presents his theology as “liberating evangelisation”, while recently (2015) Alberto Melloni consider it “one of the internal variations of that contribution given from Latin America to the theology of the universal Church”.

Perhaps it should credit to Italian theology the contribution that some Italians, missionaries or residents in Latin America Theology for personal reasons, give and gave for the development of Liberation Theology in that Continent. An example is Friar Arturo Paoli, first sentenced to death during the Argentinian dictatorship and later honoured with a street in his name. Another example can be the fundamental contributions of Giulio Girardi. His writings pose problems going beyond nation's borders, pondering universal questions about man and faith man.

Many priests were sensitive to Liberation Theology during their pastoral activities. First of all, the "worker priests". Exceptional and generous people such as Luisito Bianchi or Sirio Politi are still remembered, and also Roberto Fiorini with his remarkable writings. We had and have priests and poets of tragic beauty, such as David Maria Turolfo; priests "thirst after righteousness" such as Primo Mazzolari, Zeno Saltini, Lorenzo Milani, Giuseppe Dossetti, Pino Puglisi; "street priests" such as Luigi Ciotti, passionate missionaries such as Alex Zanotelli, anti-war activists such as Albino Bizzotto, monks such as Enzo Bianchi or Carlo Carretto, and then Base Communities such as *San Paolo* in Rome, or the one in Viareggio, or the *Isolotto* in Florence, or such as the Salvadoran "Oscar Romero" in Milan. Besides, the association "Macondo", founded by Don Giuseppe Stoppiglia (Bassano del Grappa – Vicenza), and its magazine *Madrugada* have their own characteristic features.

Quickly Publication Name who adopted Liberation Theology were born. Only a few such examples should be mentioned: "Il Tetto" in Naples, "Adista" in Rome, the short life of "Un popolo in cammino" in Messina, "Preti operai", the pastoral spirituality magazine "Presbyteri" in Trento, "Oreundici" in Rome with its agile cultural movement. These magazines, especially the last two, aim for "liberations" of the integral man, with inner and ecclesiastical repercussions, always to be embodied in the social reality.

Given the fact that publishing houses are subdued by commercial limitations and considering that, the "catholic" ones have to face the Vatican's vibe, it is quite right to highlight the courage of companies such as Borla in Rome, Cittadella in Assisi, Dehoniane in Bologna, Queriniana in Brescia, Morcelliana in Brescia, just for quoting the most well-known and committed companies in Italy.

In this climate it is not still clearly emphasise the women's contribution to Liberation Theology, but we cannot forgot the journalist, writer and theologian Adriana Zarri. She was very appreciated also in secular circles, she became the voice of poor also in national broadcasting channels. Other women work behind the scenes, but this doesn't mean that

they are less important. They will be more decisive and will brought an original and valid contribution, which it is not end, once they will have access to Theology professorships in academic institutions. A few names: Marinella Perroni, Adriana Valerio, Cettina Militello, Silvia Scatena.

Has there been an institutional contribution of academic centres? The deprecated lack of State theological faculties had an impact on the negative answer about this question. It does not seem that any Italian Theological Faculty has established any Liberation Theology professorship, but many of the theologians mentioned above, and others not recalled, have operated in the same faculties exposing issues, arising questions, comparing arguments and situations, debating points and hot topics (such the one of many churches' outrageous silence about the Martyrs killed by other Christians, or on occasion of the "forgiveness" demanded by the pope for the Church contribution to oppression down the centuries⁸), examining documents, promoting exchanges with the same protagonist of the Liberation Theology. It is however difficult to distinguish the evident or hidden opposition of some of those prestigious faculties to the Vatican II (fashionable and ... career advancing aversion, if taken into account the mistrust of the ecclesiastical highest ranks about that event⁹) from their conviction to Liberation Theology, moreover not studied and so judged through second-rate information. Still today these faculties generate many willing crusaders for a Lefebvrian restoration of the Church.

Secular universities had more freedom to approach themselves the Liberation Theology, for its philosophical, juridical, sociological and political implications. Unfortunately, it happened in a random way, depending by the personal sensitivity of this or that professor, influenced by his faculty's thought, even unspoken. This prevented a general knowledge of the phenomenon, surely richer than you might assume. Just for example, we can mention the initiatives of the University of Messina, which maintained direct contact with the protagonists of the Latin-American Liberation Theology and with subjects in waiting of liberation. At the University of Urbino the quoted philosopher Roberto Mancini taught, while the University Magna Grecia of Catanzaro approached the issue in its Faculty of Law¹⁰.

We felt some Italian bishops close to Liberation Theology such as Anastasio Ballestrero, Michele Pellegrino, Tonino Bello, Luigi Bettazzi,

⁸ See Luigi Accattoli, "Quando un papa chiede perdono", Mondadori, Milano, 1997.

⁹ See below note 19.

¹⁰ Antonino Mantineo (ed.), "Per un approccio alle teologie del contesto", Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2012.

Giacomo Lercaro, Giancarlo Bregantini, Franco Montenegro, Raffaele Nogaro, etc.

Regarding theologians, we can quote other names in addition to those above mentioned, such as Carlo Molari, Giuseppe Ruggieri, Enrico Chiavacci, Carlo Maria Martini, Bernard Haering, Giuseppe Silvestre, Gianni Mazzillo, Silvano Fausti, etc. Together this last theologian, we have to remind the Jesuit *équipe* which operated in Villa Pizzone (Milano). For the Biblical scholars it seems important to mention precious work of Alberto Maggi, who reminds us Carlos Mesters' activity in Brazil.

What we have written above is not an exhaustive list. Neither these theologians are qualifiable only, or *stricto sensu*, as Liberation theologians. It is important to remark that, although far away from the theological production of South-America, or even Asia and Africa, our "thinking" Church did not stand by. If we consider the situation that will be discussed below, maybe no more could have been done. But Liberation Theology is not ended. It is more alive than ever because, in a globalised world also oppression is globalised, and so many particular problems become universal.

Probably, In Italy the most evident approach to Liberation Theology happened with the so-called "choice for Socialism" by the *Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana (FUCI)*, by the *Associazione Cattolica Lavoratori Italiani (ACLI)*, and by the *Movimento Scout Cattolico (AGESCI)*. Moreover this choice was repressed by the hierarchy¹¹.

3. "Italian exceptionalism"

"Italian Exceptionalism" is a phrase coined by John Paul II and it expresses efficiently the peculiar, unique situation in Italy, in every field where the Gospel and its way of being interpreted in life is involved. According to the Pope, the Italian person has a specific religious tendency; he is roman-catholic, almost by imprint, called to a task who transcend him.

Argument aside, it seems out of discussion that the factor "I" (Italy) looms has a considerable weight in every our cultural, political or religious event.

Italy lacks everything but not oppression. Italy has been divided into a rich industrialised and entrepreneurial North and a de-industria-

¹¹ For a comparison between Catholics and Left in Italy, see Filippo Gentiloni, "Oltre il dialogo. Cattolici e PCI: le possibili intese tra passato e presente", Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1989.

lised South since the 1870's. The South was destined to a workforce reservoir for Northern Italy or abroad, to an agriculture increasingly prey of strangling politics, to a reservoir of Catholic-Christian Democratic or Catholic-Fascist votes, to industrial dustbin of the Nation. This means that there is a real 'South' in Italy; there is the oppression of the mafia linked to authoritarian ambitions of politics, there is a sub-proletariat resigned or violent, not always organised, who, directed by the "highest ranks of mafia", can even become muscle to potential "state massacres", commissioned by those who believe that the only real problem threatening faith and freedom in Italy is the "communist threat"¹².

If "Liberation" (accepted in a restrictive meaning, that is social and political) was not considered theologians' issue, it was also because there was a Catholic or Christian-inspired party. At the beginning it was clandestine with the name of "*Partito Popolare*" (Popular Party) founded by the Sicilian priest Don Luigi Sturzo, later, in the post-war period, it became watered-down with the name of "Democrazia Cristiana" (Christian Democracy), and it had a strong anti-Communist dimension. The DC is an interclass party who struggles to view as oppressive the rules of market typical of Capitalism. The party developed an organic reading of the social situation and privileges a protest political interpretation, not moral and neither linked to human rights and dignity of sons and daughters of God. The existence of poor people is a social order issue – it is said -, to think that poor people don't exist but impoverished people exist is atheistic Marxism. A critique to Capitalism would have meant flattering Communism, and so to encourage the loss of Christian identity¹³. The anticommunism is so visceral that it reveals itself in the desire of Pope Pius XII through an alliance between DC and neo-fascism at the municipal elections of Rome in 1954. As a result, popular oppression struggles

¹² The reference is to those acts of delinquency which have scourged Italy starting at least from 1 May 1947, on the day of the "Portella della Ginestra massacre" by a bandit named Giuliano under commission from landlords, separatist and a number of law enforcement officers. Known in the world, the "Piazza Fontana massacre" in Milan, that of Brescia, on the train Italicus, the Capaci and di Via d'Amelio massacres in Palermo, in which the judges Falcone and Borsellino were killed (1992). See, among the various readings, G. Casarrubea, "Portella della Ginestra. Microstoria di una strage di Stato", Franco Angeli, Milano, 1997; Umberto Santino, "La democrazia bloccata. La strage di Portella della Ginestra e l'emarginazione delle sinistre", Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 1997; Luca Scialò, "Le stragi dimenticate. La strategia della tensione secondo la Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul terrorismo in Italia", Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008.

¹³ Still holding significance the interpretation of Pietro Scoppola, "La Repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico", Il Mulino, Bologna, 1991.

to have a theological connotation. The demand for labour rights, fairer laws at work, social interventions, etc. become the primary way to run into a much more severe oppression; the Stalinist model, with a consequent loss of freedom and faith.

Surely a distinction can be made between the various conflicts against social discriminations and Stalinism, between Marxism and Socialism, between historical materialism (reading method for society) and dialectical materialism, between materialism and humanities aspirations present in every form of socialism". It could be done, only in theory though. The excommunication of communists of Pope Pius XII threw everything into a heap, or at least left itself open to similar interpretations.

In Italy we had something from which we should to be free, but something more nailed people down to resign to their destiny. Some pastoral and ecclesial people spread the idea that you are born poor or rich according to a precise plan from God. One cannot fall into poverty, but poverty is a fate handed to you by God. This same people are convinced that "liberation" is not a "thing of God", but rather a creation of man, especially in regards to politicians and politics. To avoid people's overflow and "out of history" requests (such as "boors" requesting to farm nobility's uncultivated land) and also to contain a mass popular drift towards PCI (Italian Communist Party) which seemed to be the only party for poor people, Christian Democratic party takes over, together with its cross-class moderation. The people were then supposed to delegate and know its place. The result is a very low profile of oppression's consciousness and of liberation commitment.

We agree that, while the world is in turmoil for new hopes, even in Italy an ancient pastoral induces many people to accept some divine predestination to resign to. And the Church ends up to be not mother of liberation but mother from which be liberated; the protest of the end of '60s has as its object the Church too¹⁴.

Consequently, to allow the birth and proper develop of a Liberation Theology, it was necessary to get rid of those prejudice just mentioned. Not only, it was also necessary to get rid of other impediments, such as a merely economic and political reading of discrimination and mass oppression, or the castrating weight of an obsessive control by the Holy Office and then by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which used to confuse the varied Christian theology with the only Roman

¹⁴ Alessandro Santagata, "La contestazione cattolica", Viella Ed., Roma, 2016.

¹⁵ See Luke 12:54-59.

theology. Huge work for those baptized already used to go upstream, to think with their head and to judge the signs of the times¹⁵; impossible work for a Church so *clericalized*, in which the only saving virtue seems to be the blind obedience to hierarchy. It is well known that, towards the middle of the twentieth century, when the consciousness of injustice in the labour market threatened to explode into revolution, and to paint the Church as friend with the rich and in cahoots with the oppressors, the Church began to elaborate its “Social Doctrine” starting with Leone XIII. But the only one allowed to deal with potential complaint to the capitalist system was the Hierarchy and, at least under John Paul II, the pope and the Vatican diplomacy, never the people of God.

And to make matters worse, in the ‘70s in Italy born the Red Brigades and various extra-parliamentary groups involving also those Catholics who were been in associations and students Catholic organisations. The violence and “geometrical organisation” of the Red Brigades arises sympathy in those desperate young people who, after the “historic compromise” between Christian Democracy and Communist Party, had no longer a point of reference for a true social redemption, from another side it confirms who believed that the armed revolution was the only possible popular fight for justice¹⁶.

In summary, in Italy, the oppression of employed or poor people exists, although it is not caused by the enemies of God but by those conservative Catholics who call upon the Church’s support to placate the spirits and to allow the progress of the Country. The social justice – it is said – is a political, not religious, issue and the entrepreneurs have to face with politicians (the Christian Democrats). In order to avoid the worst, the Church has to become a teacher of social ethic and of a possible negotiation the highest ranks. It cannot allow that people become protagonist of its own demands.

There is the presumption that the Christianity is a religion for the after-death salvation and not the beginning of a new time of salvation from now and then forever. It seems obvious to think that the history has to be written by powerful people, and that poor can only be subjected to it. What is emerging is that Socialism and Capitalism are carriers of atheism and dictatorial oppression and never of “liberation”. In other

¹⁶ About the armed struggle in Italy and about the people who joined it, See Giorgio Galli, “Il Partito armato. Gli anni di piombo in Italia, 1968-1986”, Kaos edition, Milano, 1986. See also Sergio Zavoli, “La notte della Repubblica”, Nuova Eri, Roma, 1992.

terms ideological interested prejudice and, sometimes, historic aberrations of sometimes sharable and desirable goals, pose as principles *a priori*.

4. An Italy under “special control”

This last part of our article wants to value the effect of the theological control in Italy, the seat of the papacy in Rome, and finally the consequences of the aforementioned excommunication of Marxism by Pius XII¹⁷.

Little doubt remains about the discrepancy between Christ as reported in the Gospel and Christ as presented in history by Christians, between the Church of martyrs and also the Church after the Edict of Constantine in 313 A.D, regarding the issue of an exacerbated doctrinarism of the message and “event” of Christ. So it would not be a shock if under the “Christian regime” the balance weighs in favour of the rich, of the powerful, order, of the absolute obedience, of the resignation, of the waiting for eternal wealth, of sacrifice etc. The authentic Italian Catholic is authoritarian, conservative, and a “fascist-type” by birth. The cathedrals were built by the poor people’s blood, but according to erudite sermons, they have to be frequented by rich people because the “peasants” had other things to do. Not to mention the mine workers in Sicilian sulphur areas, exploited and despised, and even denied of religious funerals.

With the Vatican II council it seems that there is a clear farewell to the “Christian regime” and the achievement of the right to read one’s faith through the historical experience, or to judge history in the light of the Word. It was necessary to take over the “*munus propheticum*” of every baptized living his time and loving his world. It was possible to open a big space for theologians and for blooming of a thriving Italian Liberation Theology, typical of a Church who lives neurotically in a Country of opulence (and thus oppressor), but who hides big bags of internal oppression and exploitation. But the two pontificates succeeding the Council were careful about following this track of liberation. For them, the Vatican

¹⁷ The decree of the 1st July 1948 by the Holy Office Congregation, published after the approval from Pius XII in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1949, 334, declared illegal the affiliation in the Italian Communist Party and the people adhering were declared apostates and therefore excommunicated. See Andrea Riccardi, “La scomunica ai comunisti del luglio 1949”, in “Il Parlamento italiano”, 1861-1988, Pasquale Buccomino, Milano, 1991.

¹⁸ Giovanni Miccoli , “La chiesa dell’anticoncilio – I Tradizionalisti alla riconquista di Roma”, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2011; Id., “In difesa della fede – La chiesa di Giovanni Paolo II e Benedetto XVI”, Rizzoli, Milano, 2007.

II had to be forgotten¹⁸. The Popes fly to Medellin, Puebla, everywhere there was some glimmer implementing of the Council spirit, everywhere there is a poor Church for the poor. They go supervise, to ensure that the “fire” of Jesus doesn’t burn up too much. The expression “church of the poor” was weakened by “a choice preferential but not exclusive of the poor”. In some Italian dioceses it is forbidden to the seminarians to read Carlo M. Martini and Enzo Bianchi’s books.

Rome and The Vatican were not concerned by the fact that Liberation Theology was producing martyrs among bishops, priests, nuns, and catechists. The guideline remained the same for the all Wojtyła’s pontificate, and with remarkable traces during the following pontificate: to try the impossible to never break with the governments, also if in the head of those governments there is a sanguinary dictator. According to the dogma of a strange faith of the sacred palaces, it is not possible that Christian government could kill or oppress Christians. If a head of State, who performs mass with the Pope, tortures, kills, lets innocent people disappear, feeds political prisoners to the wolves, the “executed” are certainly not oppressed, but rather the atheist Marxists who want to destroy the Catholic identity of the Country.

It is also in the Congregation of Faith documents about the issue (1984 and 1986) that theologians and religious people are pressed to keep away from any involvement with Liberation Theology. They are documents questionable for their methodology and content, but by laymen they are an excommunication of authors such as Gutierrez, Boff, Ellacuria, Sobrino¹⁹, etc.

As a very human consequence, practising theology in Italy, writing in Italian, handing information to your students appears to be increasingly dangerous. The things are said only for who has appropriate ears and is whispered as an initiatory secret.

Also the Italian laity is widely clericalized and therefore it is not available, at least in its rich and cultured part, to disagree with the *koiné* of a conservative Catholic line of thought which reassures them. In the past, poor people were more prompt to be indignant and full of hope in the face of oppression, but today they are only trying to save what can be saved and continue to survive without risking anything. To belong at

¹⁹ About the “Sobrino case” the Publishing House Meridiana in Molfetta, Italy, published in 2008 “La Teologia scomoda – il caso Sobrino”, edited by Felice Scalia. It contains the resulting reports of a seminar of the theological area of the Jesuit Center for Christianity Studies and Justice of Barcelona, Spain.

Base Community, to be men who sympathize for the Liberation Theology doesn't do career. It is better to sleep. So "who has ears to hear, let him hear" and everything is at own risk and danger.

5. Conclusion

The Wojtylan- Ratzingerian outcome of the issue about Liberation Theology confirmed an Italian Church quite poor, *dormiens*, in "Christian regime". However the presence of Pope Francis and with him of "popular Theology" shakes up many people, wake up from sleeping. And for this there are reluctant people. Nowadays it is difficult to deny the need of a truly "new" evangelisation – that of "*Evangelii Gaudium*" and "*Laudato si*" – considering that the old evangelisation showed widely its weaknesses. It is also difficult to forget that the Church has to promote every person and the whole person. And it is hard to ignore that the survival of planet Earth is in danger, and there is an urgent need for liberation of an "oppressed mother Earth". And it is difficult too in repressing the desire to say "stop!" for any sacrifice, or that finally the only faith, for being lived and received by man, has to be embedded in the culture and in the history of that man. They are all pages to write with discernment and prophecy.

I would want to communicate other things to VOICES' friends. There is not pleasure to write what I wrote, except the experience of brotherly cooperation with friends such as Don Carlo Molari and Prof. Nino Mantineo, to whom I extend my deepest gratitude.



Teologia della Liberazione in Italia

Felice SCALIA S.J.

Sommario

La tesi che sosteniamo in questo contributo può essere così espressa: la Teologia della Liberazione (TdL), pur avendo goduto in Italia di enorme interesse e fascino, non ha creato una corrente di pensiero teologica e pastorale paragonabile a quella dell'America Latina.

1. Alcuni punti fermi

La TdL è per noi, quel fenomeno complesso che si caratterizza come “riflessione e prassi di fede indissolubilmente commesse, in quanto tese ad esprimere la forza oggettiva di liberazione anche sociale, per sé inerente all’evento della salvezza cristiana”¹. È un “carisma”, che ha un suo metodo originale di ricerca, che nasce nella chiesa dopo il Vaticano II, presuppone gli studi di teologi anche europei, cresce a beneficio di tutta la chiesa. Possiamo qualificare la TdL come “Teologia dei Sud del Mondo”. Essa ha per suo ambiente naturale le regioni, gli ambienti storici, dove più chiara è la coscienza della “schiavitù” e della “dipendenza”, assieme alla coscienza della necessità di fede di liberarsene.

La connessione fede-storia per secoli è stata quasi impensabile nella chiesa. La dobbiamo, nel secolo XX, all’opera di teologi in gran parte europei: J. Moltmann, J. B. Metz, K. Rahner, ecc. Ciò avviene non senza gravi preoccupazioni del magistero romano che teme da sempre ogni allontanamento dalla classica teologia deduttiva. Senza questa scoperta della storia come luogo teologico, forse non avremmo avuto in nessun posto una TdL. E ciò non è senza significato.

Se la TdL è figlia del Vaticano II, in realtà il “parto” non avvenne nella Basilica di San Pietro, per volere espresso dei Padri del Concilio. I

¹ Giacomo Canobbio – Piero Coda (Edd), “La Teologia del XX secolo”, 1, Città nuova, Roma, 2013, pg 71.

suoi inizi anzi risalgono al dopo-Vaticano II, al cosiddetto “Schema XIV”, che poi divenne “Patto delle Catacombe” e programma di riforma di molti vescovi latino-americani. Fu firmato quel patto non nella sede del Concilio ma nelle Catacombe di Domitilla.² Unico italiano firmatario fu Mons. Luigi Bettazzi, allora vescovo ausiliare di Bologna.

Sorge una domanda. I presupposti della TdL nascono in Europa e trovano largo eco in Italia; alle Catacombe di Domitilla il presule italiano sa di avere con sé quanti dei Padri conciliari italiani avevano dibattuto sulla povertà di una chiesa povera dalla parte dei poveri; è coscienza comune che gli italiani sono oppressi da “strutture di peccato; e tuttavia non nasce una seria TdL. Si registrano solo “inizi” e assaggi, si finisce per vivere di echi e rimpianti. Come mai?

Un primo motivo. L'Europa (ed in essa l'Italia) non è un Continente “oppresso”. Anzi fa parte integrante di quell'Occidente “predatore” di cui gli oppressi si vogliono liberare. Una eventuale TdL, dal versante europeo, dovrebbe partire dalla coscienza che anche il predatore è un oppresso dai suoi idoli e dalle sue ideologie disumane. Cose tutte che uccidono umanità e creano schiavitù a catena nelle stesse fila dei cosiddetti privilegiati. Una simile analisi non struttura però il pensiero comune che così si rivela privo di “profezia”.

Un secondo motivo. I teologi italiani sono alle prese con altri problemi di fede: secolarizzazione, ateismo, “morte di Dio”, possibilità di uscire dalla teologia astratta, metafisica, per una teologia capace di “leggere i segni dei tempi”. Questa difficoltà oggettiva, sottolineata a suo tempo anche da Leonardo Boff³, fu presa in seria considerazione dal convegno romano IDOC del 1982 sul tema “Strutture di oppressione, soggetti storici e riflessione teologica nell'Italia degli anni ‘80”⁴.

Così il contesto storico, teologico, culturale⁵, non produce una analisi teologica sistematica della nostra situazione di “oppressi”, e tanto meno incoraggia una comunità ad uscire dalla sacrestia. Ciò che abbiamo è una vasta eco della TdL d'oltre oceano. Si è seguito sempre con

² Xavier Pikaza – José Antunes Da Silva (a cura), “Il Patto delle Catacombe – La missione dei poveri nella chiesa”, Ed. EMI, Bologna, 2015.

³ Cfr il suo volume “Chiesa: carisma e potere”, Borla, Roma, 1983, cap. IV.

⁴ Cfr José Ramos Regidor, “Teologia della liberazione in Italia?” in “Regno-attualità”, 20, 1982, p. 475.

⁵ Bisognerebbe anche tenere conto del clima culturale dei giovani alle prese con la diffusione della droga negli anni ‘60 e con la “rivoluzione sessuale” innescata dalla popolarità di Wilhem Reich. I loro interessi erano ben altri rispetto a quelli vissuti in America Latina dai loro coetanei.

partecipazione, emozione, entusiasmo, sofferenza, ogni sviluppo della TdL latino-americana. Se si vuole, questa empatia che diventava “congioia” per gli orizzonti scoperti, e “con-passione” per le incomprensioni e le “condanne” gerarchiche, è stato un nostro importante contributo alla riflessione della chiesa universale.

Terzo motivo: manca l’humus, l’ambiente vitale adatto per una TdL italiana. Di troppe cose bisognava liberarsi per avere il coraggio di osare quella strada. Sono troppi gli interlocutori che dovrebbero essere coinvolti: lo Stato, i politici, il ceto abbiente e la stessa gerarchia ecclesiastica. Di questo parleremo più avanti.

Stando così le cose, ci sembra già abbastanza significativo che, nonostante ogni clima avverso, abbiamo avuto ciò che abbiamo avuto e che oggi pare rivivere dietro le parole di un papa Francesco. Anche se può sembrare un giudizio severo, più che TdL in Italia è più congruo parlare di “istanze di liberazione”.⁶

2. Teologi italiani, clero, comunità sulla scia della TdL

Il popolo di Dio anche in Italia si muove. Certamente la TdL è una teologia che scuote le coscienze e contamina scrittori, pensatori, giornalisti, preti e frammenti rilevanti del popolo di Dio. Dall’esperienza anche diretta di tanti preti e laici italiani, si possono citare persone davvero illuminanti a cui molto deve l’attuale chiesa italiana, almeno in quella sua parte che “sta” decisamente con Papa Francesco, il Vangelo e l’opzione preferenziale per i poveri: Lucio Gera⁷, José Ramos Regidor, Giulio Girardi, Ernesto Balducci, Giovanni Franzoni, Arturo Paoli, Fausto Marinetti, Raniero La Valle, Ettore Masina, Roberto Mancini, Alberto Melloni, ecc.

Forse bisognerebbe ascrivere alla teologia italiana il contributo che alcun italiani, missionari o residenti per vicende personali in America Latina, hanno dato e danno per lo stesso sviluppo della Teologia della Liberazione in quel Continente. Si pensi a Fratello Arturo Paoli, prima

⁶ Luigi Mariano Guzzo, o. c. pg 57.

⁷ Ci “appropriamo” di questo illustre teologo italiano anche se ha operato in Argentina. Nel 1967 fonda il “Movimento di sacerdoti per il Terzo Mondo”, scrive “Teologia del popolo”, quasi come un antesignano di ciò che poi diventerà in Brasile “Teologia della Liberazione”. Nell’Edizione italiana del 1978 (Ed. Dehoniane - Bologna) Luisito Bianchi la presenta come “evangelizzazione liberatrice”, mentre più recentemente (2015) Alberto Melloni la considera una “della varianti interne di quel contributo dato dall’America Latina alla teologia della chiesa univesale”.

condannato a morte in Argentina al tempo della dittatura, e poi onorato con l'intestazione di una strada a suo nome. Si pensi ai contributi fondamentali di Giulio Girardi. I suoi scritti pongono problemi che oltrepassano i confini di una nazione per assurgere a domande universali dell'uomo e dell'uomo di fede.

Alla TdL furono sensibili molti preti in attività pastorale. Primi, i "preti operai". Si ricordano ancora persone eccezionali e generose come Luisito Bianchi o Sirio Politi, e ci si nutre fino al presente degli scritti di un Roberto Fiorini. Abbiamo avuto ed abbiamo preti cantori di tragica bellezza come David Maria Turoldo; preti "assetati di giustizia" come Primo Mazzolari, Zeno Saltini, Lorenzo Milani, Giuseppe Dossetti, Pino Puglisi; "preti di strada" come Luigi Ciotti, missionari appassionati come Alex Zanotelli, lottatori antimilitaristi come Albino Bizzotto, monaci come Enzo Bianchi o Carlo Carretto, e poi Comunità di Base come quella di San Paolo a Roma, o di Viareggio, o dell'Isolotto a Firenze, o come quella salvadoregna "Oscar Romero" di Milano. Caratteristiche proprie ha l'Associazione "Macondo" di don Giuseppe Stoppiglia (Bassano del Grappa - Vicenza) e della relativa rivista *Madrugada*.

Nascono presto testate che fanno propria, per come possono, la TdL. Cito soltanto "Il Tetto" di Napoli, "Adista" di Roma, la breve vita di "Un popolo in cammino" di Messina, "Preti operai", la rivista di spiritualità pastorale "Presbyteri" di Trento, "Oreundici" di Roma con l'agile movimento culturale che le sta alle spalle. Queste riviste, in particolare le ultime due, mirano a "liberazioni" dell'uomo integrale, con ricadute interiori ed ecclesiali, sempre da incarnare nella realtà sociale.

Se si pensa che una casa editrice ha vincoli commerciali di cui tenere conto, e che se poi la casa editrice è "cattolica" deve fare i conti con l'aria che spira in Vaticano, ci sembra doveroso segnalare il coraggio di case editrici come Borla di Roma, Cittadella di Assisi, Dehoniane di Bologna, Queriniana di Brescia, Morcelliana di Brescia, solo per parlare delle più note ed impegnate in Italia.

In questo clima non è ancora molto evidente l'apporto delle donne alla TdL, ma non si può dimenticare la figura della giornalista, scrittrice, teologa Adriana Zarri. Molto stimata anche in ambienti laici, si fa voce delle istanze dei poveri anche in reti nazionali radiotelevisive. Altre donne lavorano all'ombra da riflettori, ma non per questo sono meno determinanti. Saranno più determinate e offriranno un originale e specifico contributo, che non pare esaurito, quando avranno accesso alle cattedre di Teologia negli Istituti accademici. Citiamo solo Marinella Perroni, Adriana Valerio, Cettina Militello, Silvia Scatena.

C'è stato un apporto istituzionale dei Centri accademici? La deprecata mancanza di facoltà teologiche statali nelle Università italiane, ha influito sulla risposta sostanzialmente negativa che ci sembra di dovere dare. Non ci risulta che una qualche Facoltà teologica italiana abbia istituito una cattedra di TdL, ma diversi teologi ricordati, ed altri meno noti, hanno operato all'interno delle stesse facoltà teologiche esponendo problematiche, suscitando domande, confrontando tesi e situazioni, dibattendolo punti e momenti caldi (come quelli dello scandaloso silenzio di tante chiese di fronte ai Martiri uccisi da altri cristiani, oppure in occasione del "perdono" chiesto dal papa per i contributi all'oppressione dati dalla chiesa lungo i secoli⁸), esaminando documenti, promuovendo scambi con gli stessi protagonisti della TdL. Difficile, d'altra parte, distinguere la chiara o sotterranea opposizione di alcune prestigiose Facoltà al Vaticano II (faceva moda e ... carriera questa avversione, se si considera la diffidenza di alte sfere ecclesiali verso quell'evento⁹), dalla loro condanna di una TdL per altro poco o per nulla studiata e quindi accostata tramite notizie d'accatto. È da queste Facoltà che ancora oggi partono tanti volenterosi crociati per la restaurazione lefebvrina della chiesa.

Molto più libere si sono mostrate le Università laiche nell'interessarsi della TdL per i risvolti che essa presuppone in campo filosofico, giuridico, sociologico, politico. Purtroppo tutto è andato in ordine sparso, legato alla sensibilità culturale di questo o quel docente, condizionato dal pensiero – anche inespresso - della facoltà dove egli opera. Questo impedisce una conoscenza dell'insieme, certo più ricco di quanto si possa presupporre. A solo titolo esemplificativo cito le iniziative dell'Università di Messina che ha curato contatti diretti coi protagonisti della TdL latino-americana e con i soggetti in attesa di liberazione. Presso l'Università di Urbino ha insegnato il citato filosofo prof. Roberto Mancini, mentre l'Università Magna Grecia di Catanzaro ha accostato il problema nella sua Facoltà di Giurisprudenza.¹⁰

Vicini alla TdL abbiamo percepito alcuni vescovi italiani come Anastasio Ballestrero, Michele Pellegrino, Tonino Bello, Luigi Bettazzi, Giacomo Lercaro, Giancarlo Bregantini, Franco Montenegro, Raffaele Nogaro, ecc.

⁸ Si veda di Luigi Accattoli, "Quando un papa chiede perdono", Mondadori, Milano, 1997.

⁹ Si veda più avanti nota 19.

¹⁰ Antonino Mantineo ((a cura), "Per un approccio alle teologie del contesto", Soveria Mannelli, Ed. Rubbettino, 2012.

Per quanto riguarda i teologi, certamente si possono citare alcuni nomi oltre i sopra ricordati, come quello di Carlo Molari, Giuseppe Ruggieri, Enrico Chiavacci, Carlo Maria Martini, Bernard Haering, Giuseppe Silvestre, Gianni Mazzillo, Silvano Fausti, ecc. Con quest'ultimo c'è da non dimenticare l'équipe dei gesuiti che operava a Villa Pizzone (Milano). Per i biblisti ci sembra preziosa l'opera di un Alberto Maggi che fa ricordare l'attività di Carlos Mesters in Brasile.

Quello che abbiamo offerto non è un lungo elenco esaustivo. Né si tratta di teologi qualificabili solo, o, in senso stretto, come teologi della liberazione. Insistiamo ancora nel dire che, pur trovandoci lontani dalla produzione teologica Sud-americana o anche asiatica ed africana, la nostra chiesa "pensante" non è stata a guardare. Se si bada alla situazione di cui parleremo subito, forse non si poteva fare di più. Ma la Tdl non è opera conclusa. Viva più che mai, in un mondo globalizzato, anche l'oppressione si globalizza e quindi anche molti problemi particolari diventano universali.

Probabilmente il più vistoso avvicinamento alla TdL si è avuto in Italia con la cosiddetta "scelta per il socialismo" da parte della Federazione Universitari Cattolici (FUCI), dell'Associazione Cattolica Lavoratori Italiani (ACLI), del Movimento Scout Cattolico (AGESCI). Scelta che fu del resto prontamente repressa dalla Gerarchia¹¹.

3. "L'eccezionalismo italiano"

L'espressione è di Giovanni Paolo II e crediamo esprima bene la particolare situazione italiana in ogni campo dove è in gioco il Vangelo ed il modo di declinarlo nella vita. Secondo il pontefice, l'italiano avrebbe una specifica inclinazione confessionale; quasi per imprinting sarebbe un cattolico-romano, chiamato ad un compito che lo trascende.

Quale che sia l'opinione in merito, sembra fuori discussione che il fattore "I" (Italia) abbia un peso notevole in tutte le nostre vicende, culturali, politiche o religiose che siano.

L'Italia di tutto difetta ma non di oppressione. Essa è divisa tra un Nord industrializzato, ricco, imprenditoriale, ed un Sud de-industrializzato fin dal 1870, designato a serbatoio di mano d'opera per il Nord Italia o l'Estero, ad una agricoltura sempre più preda di politiche che

¹¹ Per un confronto tra cattolici e sinistra in Italia, cfr. Filippo Gentiloni, "Oltre il dialogo. Cattolici e PCI: le possibili intese tra passato e presente", Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1989.

la strangolano, a serbatoio di voti catto-democristiani, o catto-fascisti, a pattumiera industriale della nazione. Questo vuol dire che c'è un vero e proprio "Sud" in Italia, c'è l'oppressione della mafia legata a mire autoritarie di politici, c'è un sottoproletariato rassegnato oppure violento, non sempre organizzato che, diretto da "cupole mafiose", può divenire perfino manovalanza per eventuali "stragi di stato" commissionate da chi crede che il vero problema per la fede e per la libertà in Italia sia la "minaccia comunista".¹²

Che la "liberazione" (intesa in modo restrittivo, cioè sociale e politico) in Italia non fosse ritenuta problema di teologi nasceva anche dal fatto che esisteva un partito cattolico o di ispirazione cristiana. Prima clandestino col nome di "Partito popolare" fondato dal siciliano don Luigi Sturzo, poi, nel dopoguerra, piuttosto annacquato, col nome di "Democrazia Cristiana" (DC), a forte connotazione anticomunista. La DC è un partito interclassista che stenta a leggere come oppressive le leggi di mercato volute dal capitalismo. Fa una lettura organicistica della situazione sociale e privilegia una interpretazione politica della protesta. Non morale, non connessa coi diritti dell'uomo e con la dignità dei figli di Dio. Che ci siano i poveri è questione di ordine sociale – si afferma – pensare che non esistono poveri ma impoveriti è marxismo ateo. Una critica al capitalismo avrebbe significato blandire il comunismo, e così fomentare la perdita della identità cristiana.¹³ L'anticomunismo è così viscerale che rivela se stesso nel desiderio di Pio XII di una alleanza DC-neofascismo già a partire dalle elezioni comunali di Roma del 1954. Ne deriva che l'oppressione popolare, stenta ad avere una connotazione teologica. Richiedere diritti sindacali, leggi più giuste nel lavoro, interventi sociali, cose simili, vengono indicate come via maestra per incappare in una altra oppressione molto più grave, quella stalinista, con perdita della libertà e della propria fede.

¹² Mi riferisco a luttuosi avvenimenti delinquenziali che insanguinano l'Italia almeno a partire dal 1° maggio 1947, giorno della "Strage di Portella della Ginestra" ad opera del bandito Giuliano su commissione di latifondisti, separatisti e frange di "Forze dell'Ordine". Note nel mondo la strage di Piazza Fontana a Milano, quella di Brescia, sul treno Italicus, la Strage di Capaci e di Via d'Amelio a Palermo per l'uccisione dei giudici Falcone e Borsellino (1992). Cfr., tra le diverse letture, G. Casarrubea, "Portella della Ginestra. Microstoria di una strage di Stato", Franco Angeli, Milano, 1997; Umberto Santino, "La democrazia bloccata. La strage di Portella della Ginestra e l'emarginazione delle sinistre", Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 1997; Luca Scialò, "Le stragi dimenticate. La strategia della tensione secondo la Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul terrorismo in Italia", Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008.

¹³ Rimane interessante la lettura che ne dava Pietro Scoppola, "La Repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico", Il Mulino, Bologna, 1991.

Certo si poteva distinguere tra lotta alle varie discriminazioni sociali e stalinismo; si poteva distinguere tra marxismo e socialismo, tra materialismo storico e materialismo dialettico, tra materialismo ed aspirazioni umanistiche presenti in tutti i “socialismi”. Si poteva, ma solo in teoria. La scomunica dei comunisti da parte di Pio XII metteva tutto nel mucchio, o almeno offriva il fianco a simili interpretazioni.

In Italia avevamo dunque di che liberarci, ma più di qualcosa inchiodava la gente alla rassegnazione davanti al proprio destino.

Qui entra in gioco tanta pastorale ecclesiale che ha convinto la gente che si nasce poveri e si nasce ricchi per un preciso piano di Dio. Non ci sono impoveriti, ma poveri per destino voluto da Dio. Queste stesse persone sono convinte che la “liberazione” non sia “cosa di Dio” ma affare di uomini, di politici appunto, o di rivoluzioni cruento. Per evitare eccessi popolari e richieste “fuori dalla storia” (come quella che dei “cafoni” richiedessero di coltivare terre incolte della nobiltà), ed anche per arginare una deriva popolare in massa verso il PCI che si presentava come l’unico partito dei poveri, si offre la Democrazia Cristiana ed il suo moderatismo interclassista. Il popolo deleghi e stia al suo posto. Ne derivava un profilo molto basso della coscienza di oppressione e dello stesso impegno di liberazione.

Dobbiamo convenire che una pastorale antica induce molti anche in Italia, mentre il mondo è in subbuglio per speranze nuove, a pensarla in senso di predestinazione divina a cui rassegnarci. E la chiesa finisce per essere non madre di liberazione ma madre di cui liberarsi; la contestazione della fine degli anni ’60 ha per oggetto anche la chiesa.¹⁴

Perché potesse nascere e pienamente fiorire in libertà una TdL, bisognava dunque prima “liberarsi” dai pregiudizi appena indicati. Non solo, ma anche da altre remore, come la lettura meramente economica e politica della discriminazione e dell’oppressione delle masse, o il peso castrante di un controllo ossessivo del Sant’Ufficio e poi della Congregazione della fede che imbrigliava la variegata teologia cristiana nell’unica teologia romana. Lavoro immane per battezzati già abituati ad andare controcorrente, a pensare con la propria testa, a giudicare i segni dei tempi.¹⁵ Lavoro impossibile per una chiesa clericalizzata dove la sola virtù salvifica sembra l’obbedienza cieca alla gerarchia. È a tutti noto che, quando verso la metà del secolo XIX, la coscienza delle ingiustizie subite nel mondo del lavoro rischia di esplodere in rivoluzione, e di presentare

¹⁴ Alessandro Santagata, “La contestazione cattolica”, Viella Ed., Roma, 2016.

¹⁵ Cfr Lc 12,54-59.

la chiesa come amica dei ricchi e connivente con gli oppressori, questa elabora a partire da Leone XIII la sua "Dottrina sociale". Ma a gestire eventuali denunce al sistema capitalistico doveva essere solo ed esclusivamente la Gerarchia, anzi, almeno con Giovanni Paolo II, il papa e la diplomazia vaticana, mai il popolo di Dio.

A peggiorare le cose, negli anni '70 nascono in Italia le "Brigate Rosse" (BR) e diversi movimenti extraparlamentari che ospitano anche singoli cattolici che avevano vissuto l'impegno associativo dentro le organizzazioni studentesche cattoliche. La violenza e la "geometrica organizzazione" delle BR, mentre suscita simpatie in giovani disperati, convinti che ormai, dopo il "compromesso storico" tra Democrazia Cristiana e Partito Comunista, non esista più un punto di riferimento per un vero riscatto sociale, da un altro versante conferma coloro che nella lotta popolare per la giustizia vedevano solo lo sbocco della rivolta armata¹⁶.

In sintesi, in Italia, l'oppressione del mondo salariato o povero esiste, ma a causarla non ci sono nemici di Dio ma cattolici conservatori che invocano l'appoggio della chiesa per tenere buoni gli animi e permettere così il progresso della Patria. La giustizia sociale - si dice - è problema politico, non religioso e gli imprenditori si devono confrontare con politici (democristiani). Per evitare il peggio, la chiesa si faccia maestra di etica sociale e di eventuale trattativa ad alti vertici. Non permetta mai comunque che il popolo diventi protagonista delle proprie rivendicazioni.

Si sta presupponendo che il cristianesimo sia religione per la salvezza del dopo-morte, non inizio di un tempo nuovo di salvezza fin da ora e poi per sempre. Sembra ovvio pensare che la storia debba essere fatta dai potenti, e che i poveri debbano solo subirla. Si sta affermando che il socialismo e lo stesso marxismo siano portatori non di "liberazione" ma di ateismo ed oppressione dittatoriale. In altri termini si spacciano per principi a priori quelli che in realtà sono pregiudizi ideologici interessati, ed a volte involuzioni storiche di mete in sé auspicabili.

¹⁶ Sulla lotta armata in Italia e su coloro che via aderirono, cfr. Giorgio Galli, "Il Partito armato. Gli anni di piombo in Italia, 1968-1986", Kaos edizioni, Milano, 1986. Cfr., altresì, Sergio Zavoli, "La notte della Repubblica", Nuova Eri, Roma, 1992.

¹⁷ Il Decreto del 1° luglio 1949 della Congregazione del S. Uffizio, pubblicato dopo l'approvazione da parte di Pio XII in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1949, 334, dichiarava illecita l'iscrizione al Partito Comunista Italiano e coloro che professassero quella dottrina erano apostati, e, quindi, scomunicati. Sul punto cfr. Andrea Riccardi, "La scomunica ai comunisti del luglio 1949", in *Il Parlamento italiano, 1861-1988*, Pasquale Buccomino, Milano, 1991.

4. Un'Italia sotto "controllo speciale"

Questa ultima parte del nostro contributo intende soppesare gli effetti di quel controllo teologico in Italia a cui abbiamo accennato, le ricadute della sede del papato a Roma, ed infine le ricadute della citata scomunica del marxismo di Pio XII¹⁷.

Sulla discrepanza tra il Cristo dei Vangeli ed il Cristo della storia presentato dai cristiani, tra la chiesa dei martiri e la chiesa dopo l'Editto di Costantino del 313, sulla problematicità di una esasperata dottrinalizzazione del messaggio e dell'"evento" Gesù, sono pochi i dubbi che si nutrono. Così non staremo a scandalizzarci se durante il "regime di cristianità" la bilancia pendesse a favore dei ricchi, dei potenti, dell'ordine, dell'obbedienza assoluta, della rassegnazione, dell'attesa dei beni eterni, del sacrificio, ecc. Il cattolico doc italiano è autoritario, conservatore, "fascistoide" per nascita. Le cattedrali erano costruite col sangue dei poveri ma, a sentire dotti quaresimali, ci andavano i ricchi perché i "cafoni" avevano altro da fare. Per non parlare dei minatori nelle zolfare siciliane, sfruttati e disprezzati, privati perfino dei funerali religiosi.

Col Vaticano II sembra che si abbia un chiaro addio al "regime di cristianità" e si sia conquistato il diritto di leggere la propria fede a partire dall'esperienza storica, o di giudicare la storia alla luce della Parola. Ci si doveva appropriare del "munus propheticum" di ogni battezzato che vive nel suo tempo ed ama il suo mondo. Poteva aprirsi un ampio spazio per i teologi e lo sbocciare così di una rigogliosa TdL di stampo italiano, cioè tipica di una chiesa che vive schizofrenicamente il suo collocarsi in un Paese dell'opulenza (e quindi oppressore) ma che nasconde sacche imponenti di oppressione e sfruttamento al suo interno. Solo che i due pontificati che succedono alla chiusura del Concilio si guardano bene dal seguire questa pista di liberazione. Per essi il Vaticano II è da dimenticare.¹⁸ I papi volano a Medellin, a Puebla, dovunque c'è uno spiraglio attuativo dello spirito conciliare, dovunque si tratti di chiesa povera e dei poveri. Ci vanno per controllare, perché il "fuoco" portato da Gesù non divampi troppo. Si annacqua "chiesa dei poveri" con "scelta preferenziale, ma non esclusiva dei poveri". In alcune diocesi italiane si proibisce ai seminaristi di leggere i libri del Card. Martini e di Enzo Bianchi.

Che la TdL produca martiri tra vescovi, preti, suore, catechisti, popolo di Dio, scuote ben poco Roma e la diplomazia vaticana. La direttiva

¹⁸ Giovanni Miccoli, "La chiesa dell'anticoncilio - I Tradizionalisti alla riconquista di Roma", Ed. La Terza, Bari, 2011: "In difesa della fede - La chiesa di Giovanni Paolo II e Benedetto XVI", Rizzoli, Milano, 2007.

rimane sempre la stessa, almeno per tutto il pontificato di K. Wojtyła, e con strascichi notevoli in quello successivo: tentare l'impossibile per non rompere mai con i governi anche se a capo di questi governi c'è un autentico sanguinario dittatore. Il dogma di una strana fede dei sacri palazzi dice che non è possibile che un governo cristiano uccida o opprima cristiani. Se un capo di stato che celebra Messa col Papa uccide, se fa scomparire nel nulla innocenti, se in pasto ai pescecani dà prigionieri politici ancora vivi, se tortura, sicuramente i "giustiziati" non sono creature oppresse, ma marxisti atei che vogliono distruggere l'identità cattolica del Paese.

Per i teologi e per il popolo di Dio il pressing a stare lontani da ogni commistione con la TdL viene anche dai due documenti della Congregazione della Fede (1984 e 1986) sull'argomento. Documenti discutibili per metodo e per contenuto, ma che per i non addetti ai lavori suonano come "scomunica" di autori come Gutierrez, Boff, Ellacuria, Sobrino¹⁹, ecc.

La conseguenza molto umana è che appare sempre più un pericoloso fare teologia in Italia, scrivere in italiano, passare qualche dispensa agli studenti. Il meglio viene fatto intendere a chi ha orecchie adatte, e sussurrato quasi in un segreto iniziatico.

Anche il laicato italiano è largamente clericalizzato e non è disposto, almeno nella sua parte benestante e colta, a mettersi in disaccordo con la koinè di un pensiero cattolico conservatore che lascia tranquilli tutti. Un giorno furono più disponibili i poveri ad ascoltare il grido che li faceva indignati e speranzosi di fronte alle varie oppressioni, ma oggi pare che anche essi siano nel ridotto del proprio fortilizio, per salvare il salvabile e continuare a vivacchiare senza rischiare mai nulla. Appartenere a Comunità di Base, essere uomini simpatizzanti della TdL non fa fare carriera. Meglio dormire. Quindi "Chi ha orecchie per intendere intenda" e tutto a suo rischio e pericolo.

Concludendo

L'esito wojtyła-ratzingeriano della vicenda TdL ha confermato una chiesa italiana piuttosto povera, dormiens, da "regime di cristianità". Tuttavia la presenza di papa Francesco e con lui della "Teologia

¹⁹ Sul "caso Sobrino", in sua difesa, l'Editrice Meridiana di Molfetta, Italia, nel 2008, pubblica, curato da Felice Scalia, "La Teologia scomoda - il caso Sobrino". Si tratta dei risultati di un seminario interno all'Area teologica del Centro Studi Cristianesimo e Giustizia dei gesuiti di Barcellona- Spagna.

popolare”, scuote tanti, sveglia dal sonno. E per questo abbondano i riluttanti. Difficile oggi negare che abbiamo bisogno di una veramente “nuova” evangelizzazione – quella di “*Evangelii Gaudium*” e “*Laudato sì*” - dato che l’antica ha vistosamente mostrato le sue lacune. Difficile dimenticare che la chiesa è chiamata alla promozione di ogni uomo e di tutto l’uomo. Difficile volgere altrove lo sguardo quando la stessa sopravvivenza sulla Terra è messa in pericolo, ed urge una liberazione di “madre Terra oppressa”. Difficile reprimere il desiderio che si dica “basta!” a tutte le vittime sacrificali, o che infine l’unica fede, per essere vissuta ed accolta dall’uomo concreto, debba incarnarsi nella cultura e nella storia di quell’uomo. Sono pagine tutte da scrivere con discernimento e profezia.

Avrei desiderato poter comunicare ben altro agli amici di VOICES. Non dà nessun piacere scrivere quello che ho scritto, se si eccettua l’esperienza di una fraterna collaborazione con amici come Don Carlo Molari ed il Prof. Nino Mantineo, ai quali va il mio più vivo ringraziamento.



From the System of Christendom to the Church of Liberation

Franco BARBERO

Abstract:

This article describes the impact of Liberation Theology and post-Vatican-II-theology in general on Church and society in Italy from the grassroots movements' point of view. Barbero recalls openness and eagerness of part of the Italian church to receive new ideas from Latin American experiences, but also a conservative reaction and intense fights. Although important and interesting attempts at creating a proper Italian Theology and Church of Liberation were hindered and partly destroyed by Church authorities that feared too great an influence of spiritualities inspired by the II. Vatican Council, he presents interesting experiences of the Italian grassroots church and expresses his hope of a continuity of this process into the future.

The decade of 1960-1970 has represented a very promising laboratory of faith and culture for the Italian grassroots church. Very different experiences, narratives, readings and elaborations were intertwined.

Around the “political theology” (Metz—Girardi—Díez Alegría—Gonzales Ruiz), to the growth of the worker-priests, to the political circles of “social Christians”, in the fervour of biblical groups in the neighbourhood, many parishes and several centres of spirituality attracted the voices of radical and constructive dissent that was spreading from north to south of Italy. These were Christians who, in the next decade, would participate with an acquired awareness of laity in referendums on abortion and divorce. It was the season of “spontaneous groups” that flourished a little everywhere.

The messages and proposals of the theologians experienced in the Second Vatican Council facilitated the establishment of a dialogue with the theology of liberation to which we were listening attentively in those years. We perceived deep familiarity, even in our own dislocated and different reality.

The initiatives of critical Christians against the concordat and the teaching of the Catholic religion in the schools of the Republic, the renewed interest for the protagonists of “modernism”, the years of 1968-69, the overcoming of the unique Catholic party, the labour struggles and the first dissonant voices of feminist theologies, as well as several critical reflections on the encyclical “*Humanae vitae*”, made us live the joy of being accompanied by some Pastors able to walk along with the people of God. It was exactly what happened in Latin America where some bishops broke the face of continuity in the name of the Council and in the name of the oppressed people. It seemed then that the “wind” of the Council was blowing unrestrainably.

However, the slow and progressive stricture of the Council's openings did not delay to be heard. The prophetic voices that came from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador... progressively made us more aware of what capitalism was about to do. The culture and the period of safe and unlimited progress became an illusion to our eyes. Oppression put into effect a planetary project under the hegemony of the United States. The new name of salvation progressively became liberation “from the slavery of Egypt”.

The 1970s saw a vast “circuit” of grassroots ecclesial realities, parishes and religious communities, to involve themselves in a more explicit and concrete way in opting for the poor in a poor church. In that context, the grassroots Christian communities and the “Christians for Socialism” were born in Italy.

Historical reconstruction of that time often focuses on the experiences that had greater renown, but it was the least apparent fabric that worked with great commitment and depth on the theological, biblical and social grounds.

The reaction surges

Paul VI thundered against what he called the “theological revolution”, but it was mostly his restrictive interpretation of the Council's openings that tried to stifle novelty and to marginalize the “most advanced” fronts.

In any case, it was Woytila's pontificate that engaged all the partisans of the reaction. The marginalization of open and conciliatory theologians started, while in the seminaries and in the theological faculties, absolute control began with a strict selection.

All of this resulted in a large stream of discouragement while favouring any disqualification of the grassroots church. The hierarchical

church soon began to empower the powerful and marginalize critical and creative experiences.

Conciliar experiences sought to practice a spirituality of resistance, but often the fear and the repressive climate diverted precious energies from the ecclesial community. Critical intelligence feared an institution that was trying to regroup by every means.

The church of liberation

We still had the voices of Milani and Mazzolari in our ears when other significant testimonies resounded: Turollo, Dossetti, Balducci, Giancarla Codrignani, Lidia Menapace, Pellegrino, Cuminetti, Raniero La Valle, Giovanni Franzoni, Vittorio Bellavite, Lercaro, Peiretti, Ramos Regidor, Luigi Sandri, Enzo Mazzi... kept the prospect of the Second Vatican Council high.

On the cultural level many magazines and periodicals carried out valuable work of critical information and consolidation, also acting as a bridge between the various churches of liberation. *Adista*, *Confronti*, *Tempi di Fraternità*, *Testimonianze*, *Il Gallo*, *Il Foglio*, *Quale vita*, *Rocca*, *Il Tetto*, *Concilium*, *Esodo*... These are only some titles among many.

Even the seminary for Latin America in Verona worked as a laboratory and as a dissemination centre for the theologies of Latin America. At that time theologians like Mesters, Gutiérrez, Boff, Barros, Assmann, Ellacuría, Freire, Proño, Richard, Vigil, Gebara... became our own domestic theologians and travel companions of our experience.

Explosion of fights

From Conversano to Favara, from Pettorano sul Gizio to Rome, from Gioiosa Ionica to Lavello, from Parma to Trento, from Palermo to Milan, from Genoa to Pinerolo, from Florence to Turin, from Bergamo to Voghera, from Livorno to Verona... there were experiences of critique of sacred power, occupation of churches, priests brought to court for labour and anti-militarist struggles... While these struggles took place, theologian Rosino Gibellini edited, for the *Queriniana* edition, the most significant theological productions coming from all the areas of the planet, encouraging a constant deepening and expansion of the cultural and theological map.

It was still in the decade of the 1970s and 1980s that in several cities of southern Italy a political and theological process of growing dissociation from the mafias started. In later years, priests and magistrates were persecuted and killed because they dared to counter the interests of criminal organizations. It was in the seventies that *Ciro Castaldo* gave

birth to the national bulletin of the grassroots Christian groups and communities: an instrument that facilitated a constant confrontation between the various national realities.

In those years the engagement and contribution of feminist theologies and the voice of women that promoted a radical criticism of the dominant patriarchy in society and churches became increasingly important. Feminist research has always been at the centre of the movement of grassroots Christian communities. Particularly stimulating moments in community life were the regional, national conferences and study seminars.

The community's journey could not possibly forget the contribution of theologians such as Hans Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Tissa Balasuriya, John Hick, Ortensio da Spinetoli, Giuseppe Barbaglio, Adriana Valerio...

Tensions and problems

A certain anti-institutional tendency, a difficult communication between communities and experts, different sensitivities, and even deep differences over the priorities of the movement itself have created over the years important difficulties. In the mid-seventies, at the initiative of the theologian Amilcare Giudici and a few others, the proposal was made to transform the theological collective, which had worked out and wrote the volume "Massa and Meriba", into a permanent national laboratory for the training of community animators. The idea was not followed, but what are now theological seminars and Bible courses were born (the ones in Turin have celebrated their 40th birthday). The grassroots church in Italy today is making the difficult but fruitful journey towards a mutual acceptance of differences, taking into account real divergences on the political and religious grounds.

The eighties: repression and fear

In the 1980s, the great pontifical initiatives, with extraordinary media visibility, determined a clerical turning point in which it seemed that the institutional church was able to harness the Council's prophecy, which instead, for us, constituted a path open to the future. Then began the bloody period of mariolatry, santomania, papolatry and devotionism. Research on church structures, Christologies, liturgical languages, the role of women, the family, civil unions and homosexual marriage... became "dangerous" grounds. Those theologians and religious people who were condescending, varnishers of the old catechism and "good for all seasons" were the preferred ones.

While in seminars and theological faculties a serious decline in scientific theology was –and still is– being noted, streamlined theologians and clerics found extensive presence and visibility across all media, resulting in information that hid critical innovations and research that was more pungent on the hot terrain that today's reality places on churches and religions. Just do not “touch”, do not tackle with rigour certain ethical or dogmatic topics, so you can live quietly.

Despite the prophetic voice of Pope Francis on central issues of human and cosmic coexistence, despite his passionate appeal to an outgoing church, our local churches are often sleepy, filled with saints and madonnas, with rosaries, processions, apparitions, of patronal festivals,... The military chaplains, the concordat between the Italian State and the Catholic Church, the catholic religion at school, the official catechism continue as before. The transition to a church that works an annunciation and a testimony of faith in the sacraments has just begun. There is still a pastoral practice that focuses on sacramentalization, but the passage is in place and needs medium-long times.

An extraordinary opportunity

The dehumanizing spirit of capitalism has completely permeated daily life with the religion of “wellbeingism” and the globalization of indifference. This diffused climate knocks the door even to our communities and our lives. But on the other hand, alongside those who give up this idolatry, beside those who live the decline of the “*societas christiana*” in disappointment or regret, there is a minoritarian but widespread reality of women and men who live in the current season as a difficult challenge and a great opportunity.

In the fatigue, in the scarcity of the fruits, many women and many men, at all levels of our church, live with active hope the evangelical service of sowing the mustard grain and give their testimony in the streets of the world.

Men, women, priests, pastors, catechists: there is a multiform and dispersed community that does not yield to the “overall” temptation, that is, of the great scenic image, but lives every day in constant reference to the existence of the last days, immersed in struggles for rights, against inequalities. There is, almost totally silenced by official voices, a christological research, a grassroots ecumenical dialogue, a research of a new language to talk about God today when an important game is being played. In this context, a new ministeriality, indeed a new community, is slowly created from below.

“Church of all–Church of the poor” is not a slogan, but a path that wants to network, in communion, all those experiences that try to free Christianity from the idolatry of power and dogma. Many, without illusions, work, study, pray, and work in this direction, entrusting God with the times of the journey.

It seems to me that this is the authentic spirituality of liberation. It is a historic opportunity to move from the prevalence of sociological Christianity to personal and communal faith in the God of liberation who, for us Christians, has manifested itself in Jesus of Nazareth and in the most marginalized, fragile and oppressed people.

Translation: Stefan SILBER



Dal sistema cristianità alla chiesa della liberazione

Franco BARBERO

Abstract:

This article describes the impact of Liberation Theology and post-Vatican-II-theology in general on Church and society in Italy from the grassroots movements' point of view. Barbero recalls openness and eagerness of part of the Italian church to receive new ideas from Latin American experiences, but also a conservative reaction and intense fights. Although important and interesting attempts at creating a proper Italian Theology and Church of Liberation were hindered and partly destroyed by Church authorities that feared too great an influence of spiritualities inspired by the II. Vatican Council, he presents interesting experiences of the Italian grassroots church and expresses his hope of a continuity of this process into the future.

Il decennio 1960-1970 ha rappresentato per la chiesa di base italiana un laboratorio di fede e di cultura assai promettente. Si intrecciavano esperienze, narrazioni, letture ed elaborazioni molto diverse.

Attorno alla "teologia politica" (Metz-Girardi -Diez Alegria- Gonzales Ruiz), alla crescita dei preti operai, ai circoli politici dei "cristiani sociali", nel fervore dei gruppi biblici di quartiere, molte parrocchie e parecchi centri di spiritualità raccolsero le voci del dissenso radicale e costruttivo che stava diffondendosi dal nord al sud dell'Italia. Furono questi cristiani che, nel decennio successivo, parteciparono con una acquisita coscienza di laicità ai referendum sull'aborto e sul divorzio. Fu la stagione dei "gruppi spontanei che fiorirono un po' ovunque.

I messaggi e le proposte dei teologi esperti al Concilio Vaticano II facilitarono la costruzione di un dialogo con la teologia della liberazione di cui in quegli anni eravamo in attento ascolto. Percepivamo una profonda parentela, sia pure nelle nostre dislocate e differenti realtà.

Le iniziative dei cristiani critici contro il Concordato e l'insegnamento della religione cattolica nelle scuole della Repubblica, il rinato interesse per i protagonisti del "modernismo", il 1968-'69, il superamento del partito unico dei cattolici, le lotte operaie e le prime voci dissonanti delle teologie femministe, parecchie riflessioni critiche rispetto all' enciclica "Humanae vitae", ci fecero gustare la gioia di essere anche accompagnati da alcuni pastori capaci di camminare insieme al popolo di Dio. Era esattamente ciò che avveniva anche in America Latina dove alcuni vescovi rompevano, in nome del Concilio e in nome del popolo oppresso, il fronte della continuità. Sembrò allora che il "vento" del Concilio soffiasse inarrestabile.

In realtà la stroncatura lenta e progressiva delle aperture conciliari non tardò a farsi sentire. Le voci profetiche che giungevano dal Cile, dall'Argentina, dal Brasile, da Cuba, dal Nicaragua e da El Salvador... ci resero progressivamente più attenti a ciò che nel capitalismo stava avvenendo. La cultura e la stagione del progresso sicuro ed illimitato diventavano ai nostri occhi una illusione. L'oppressione metteva in atto un progetto planetario sotto l'egemonia degli USA. Il nuovo nome della salvezza diventava progressivamente la liberazione "dalla schiavitù d'Egitto".

Gli anni '70 videro un vasto "circuito" di realtà ecclesiali di base, parrocchie e comunità religiose, coinvolgersi in modo più esplicito e concreto nella scelta dei poveri in una chiesa povera. In quel contesto nacquero in Italia le comunità cristiane di base e i "cristiani per il socialismo".

La ricostruzione storica di quel tempo spesso si sofferma sulle esperienze che ebbero maggiore notorietà, ma fu il tessuto meno appariscente che lavorò con grande impegno e profondità sul terreno teologico, biblico e sociale.

Scattò la reazione

Già Paolo VI tuonò contro quella che definì "la rivoluzione teologica", ma fu soprattutto la sua interpretazione restrittiva delle aperture conciliari a tentare di arginare i fermenti di novità e ad emarginare le "punte" più avanzate.

In ogni caso, fu il pontificato di Wojtyła che ingaggiò tutti i partigiani della reazione. Iniziò l'emarginazione dei teologi aperti e conciliari, nei seminari e nelle facoltà teologiche si avviò un controllo assoluto con una selezione rigorosa.

Tutto ciò determinò una grande corrente di scoramento mentre veniva favorita ogni operazione di squalifica della chiesa di base. La

chiesa gerarchica molto presto cominciò ad affiancare i potenti ed a emarginare le esperienze critiche e creative.

Le esperienze conciliari cercarono di praticare una spiritualità della resistenza, ma sovente la paura e il clima repressivo allontanarono dalla comunità ecclesiale energie preziose. Le intelligenze critiche facevano paura ad una istituzione che cercava con ogni mezzo di ricompattarsi.

La chiesa della liberazione

Avevamo ancora nelle orecchie le voci di Milani e Mazzolari quando risuonarono altre testimonianze significative: Turollo, Dossetti, Balducci, Giancarla Codrignani, Lidia Menapace, Pellegrino, Cuminetti, Raniero La Valle, Giovanni Franzoni, Vittorio Bellavite, Lercaro, Peiretti, Ramos Regidor, Luigi Sandri, Enzo Mazzi... tennero alta la prospettiva del Concilio Vaticano II.

Sul piano culturale molte riviste e periodici svolsero un lavoro prezioso di controinformazione e di approfondimento, fungendo anche da ponte tra le varie chiese della liberazione. Adista, Confronti, Tempi di Fraternità, Testimonianze, Il Gallo, Il Foglio, Quale vita, Rocca, Il Tetto, Concilium, Esodo...: ecco alcune testate tra le tante.

Lo stesso seminario per l'America Latina di Verona funzionò come laboratorio e come centro di divulgazione delle teologie dell'America Latina. Allora teologi come Mesters, Gutiérrez, Boff, Barros, Assmann, Ellacuría, Freire, Proaño, Richard, Vigil, Gebara... divennero come teologi di casa nostra e compagni di viaggio della nostra esperienza.

Esplosione delle lotte

Da Conversano a Favara, da Pettorano sul Gizio a Roma, da Gioiosa Ionica a Lavello, da Parma a Trento, da Palermo a Milano, da Genova a Pinerolo, da Firenze a Torino, da Bergamo a Voghera, da Livorno a Verona... nacquero esperienze di contestazione del potere sacrale, occupazione di Chiese, preti portati in tribunale per lotte operaie e antimilitariste... Mentre si svolgevano queste lotte, il teologo Rosino Gibellini curò, per l'edizione Queriniana, le più significative produzioni teologiche provenienti da tutte le aree del pianeta, favorendo un costante approfondimento ed ampliamento della mappa culturale e teologica.

Fu sempre nel decennio 1970-1980 che in parecchie città del sud d'Italia si avviò un processo politico e teologico di crescente dissociazione dalle mafie. Negli anni successivi preti e magistrati furono perseguitati e uccisi perché avevano osato contrastare gli interessi delle organizzazioni criminali. Fu proprio negli anni '70 che *Ciro Castaldo* diede vita al

bollettino di collegamento nazionale dei gruppi e comunità cristiane di base: uno strumento che facilitò un confronto costante tra le varie realtà nazionali.

In questi anni diventò sempre più determinante l'impegno e l'apporto delle teologie femministe e la voce delle donne che promossero una radicale critica al patriarcato dominante nella società e nelle chiese. Le ricerche femministe sono sempre state al centro del movimento delle comunità cristiane di base. Momenti particolarmente stimolanti nella vita delle comunità sono stati i convegni regionali, nazionali e i seminari di studio.

Il cammino delle comunità non potrebbe certo dimenticare l'apporto di teologi e teologhe come Hans Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Tissa Balasuriya, John Hick, Ortensio da Spinetoli, Giuseppe Barbaglio, Adriana Valerio...

Tensioni e problemi

Una certa tendenza anti-istituzionale, una difficile comunicazione tra comunità ed esperti, sensibilità diverse ed anche profonde divergenze sulle priorità del movimento stesso hanno creato nel corso degli anni delle difficoltà non indifferenti. A metà degli anni settanta, su iniziativa del teologo Amilcare Giudici e di pochi altri, fu avanzata la proposta di trasformare il collettivo teologico, che aveva elaborato e scritto il volume "Massa e Meriba", in un laboratorio nazionale permanente per la formazione di animatori e animatrici delle comunità. L'idea non trovò seguito, ma nacquero qua e là seminari teologici e corsi biblici (quello di Torino compie 40 anni). La chiesa di base oggi in Italia sta compiendo il difficile ma fecondo cammino verso un'accoglienza reciproca delle differenze, facendo i conti con reali divergenze sul piano politico e sul terreno religioso.

Anni '80: repressione e paure

Negli anni '80 le grandi iniziative pontificali, con una visibilità mediatica straordinaria, determinarono una svolta clericale in cui sembrò che la chiesa istituzionale fosse riuscita ad imbrigliare la profezia del Concilio che, invece, per noi costituiva soltanto un sentiero aperto verso il futuro. Cominciò allora il funesto periodo della mariolatRIA, della santomania, della papolatRIA e del devozionalismo. Le ricerche sulle strutture della chiesa, sulle cristologie, sui linguaggi liturgici, sul ruolo delle donne, sulla famiglia, sulle unioni civili e il matrimonio omosessuale... diventarono terreni "pericolosi". Furono preferiti quei teologi e quei monaci

accondiscendenti, verniciatori del vecchio catechismo e “buoni per tutte le stagioni”.

Mentre nei seminari e nelle facoltà teologiche si registrò e si registra tuttora una grave decadenza della teologia scientifica, teologi e monaci allineati trovano una presenza e una visibilità vasta su tutti i mezzi di comunicazione, determinando un'informazione che nasconde le novità critiche e le ricerche più pungenti sui terreni scottanti che la realtà dell'oggi pone alle chiese e alle religioni. E' sufficiente non “toccare”, non affrontare con rigore certi argomenti che attengono al piano etico o dogmatico, ed allora puoi vivere tranquillo.

Nonostante la voce profetica di papa Francesco su temi centrali della convivenza umana e cosmica, nonostante il suo appassionato richiamo ad una chiesa in uscita, le nostre chiese locali sono spesso sonnolente, piene di santi e madonne, di rosari, di processioni, di apparizioni, di feste patronali... Continuano come prima le cappellanie militari, il Concordato tra Stato italiano e Chiesa cattolica, la scuola di religione cattolica, il catechismo ufficiale... Il passaggio ad una chiesa che operi un annuncio ed una testimonianza dalla fede ai sacramenti è appena avviato. Regna ancora una prassi pastorale che mette al centro la sacramentalizzazione, ma il passaggio è in atto e necessita di tempi medio-lunghi.

Una opportunità straordinaria

Lo spirito disumanizzante del capitalismo ha totalmente permeato il vissuto quotidiano con la religione del “benesserismo” e con la globalizzazione dell'indifferenza. Il clima diffuso batte anche alla porta delle nostre comunità e delle nostre vite personali. Ma in realtà, accanto a chi cede a questa idolatria, accanto a chi vive il tramonto della “societas christiana” come delusione o rimpianto, esiste una realtà minoritaria, ma capillarmente sparsa, di donne e di uomini che vivono l'attuale stagione come una difficile sfida e una grande opportunità.

Nella fatica, nella scarsità dei frutti, molte donne e molti uomini, a tutti i livelli della nostra chiesa, vivono con speranza attiva il servizio evangelico della semina del granello di senape e la loro testimonianza nelle vie del mondo.

Uomini, donne, presbiteri, pastori, catechisti: c'è una multiforme e dispersa comunità che non cede alla tentazione “panottica”, cioè della grande immagine scenica, ma vive ogni giorno in costante riferimento alla esistenza degli ultimi, immersa nelle lotte per i diritti, contro le disuguaglianze. Esistono, quasi totalmente silenziate dalle voci ufficiali, una ricerca cristologica, un dialogo ecumenico di base, ricerche di nuovi

linguaggi per dire Dio oggi in cui si gioca una partita importante. In questo contesto lentamente si crea dal basso una nuova ministerialità, anzi una nuova comunità.

“Chiesa di tutti chiesa dei poveri” non è un cartello, ma un sentiero che vuole mettere in rete, in comunione, tutte quelle esperienze che tentano di liberare il cristianesimo dalla idolatria del potere e del dogma. Molti, senza illusioni lavorano, studiano, pregano e operano in questa direzione, affidando a Dio i tempi del cammino.

Mi sembra che questa sia autentica spiritualità della liberazione. Si tratta di un'opportunità storica di passare dalla prevalenza di un cristianesimo sociologico alla fede personale e comunitaria nel Dio della liberazione che, per noi cristiani, si è manifestato in Gesù di Nazareth e nelle persone più emarginate, fragili ed oppresse.



The Reception of Liberation Theology in Francophone Europe

Luis MARTÍNEZ-SAAVEDRA¹

Fifty years after Medellín and the birth of Liberation Theology, their reception in Francophone Europe is quite limited. In this article we shall draw up a brief inventory of two Francophone countries² and present, subsequently, some reflections on the current situation and its possible evolution.

The reception of Liberation Theology in Francophone Europe

Liberation Theology in France

Since 1961, with the birth of the Episcopal Committee France-Latin America (CEFAL), the French Episcopal Conference has placed a large number of pastoral agents – priests, religious and lay persons – by way of *Fidei Donum* at the service of the Churches in Latin America.³ Many of them endorsed the options of Liberation Theology and went to live among the poorest people on the continent. A large number of them were chaplains of the Young Christian Workers (YCW/JOC) and of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs). Some stayed permanently in Latin America. Those who returned to France, have served as a sounding box for the church of the poor and Liberation Theology. Their commitment to the option for the poor in France has continued to this day in a wide variety of ministries: prison chaplains, parish priests in the suburbs, chaplains of solidarity

¹ Catholic lay theologian at the service of the Church in Luxembourg, professor at the *Lumen Vitae* International Institute, guest lecturer at the UCL and director of the *La Part Dieu* collection at the Jesuit editorial Lessius.

² Cf. our collective volume: Sauvage, Pierre / Cheza, Maurice / Martinez-Saavedra, Luis: *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la libération*, Lessius, Namur/Paris 2017.

³ Cf. CEFAL [Comité épiscopal France Amérique latine], *Faire Église... autrement!*, Cerf, Paris, 1999.

teams, of welcome teams for migrants and undocumented persons, of militants for the right to housing, activists of associations in favor of the "third world", participating in the "world social forums".

Among the great figures of French Fidei Donum missionaries, we can remember: Xavier de Maupeou, former CEFAL secretary, who was bishop in Brazil, support of landless peasants, and president of the important "Commission for Land Pastoral" (CPT) of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference; the Dominican lawyer Henri Burin des Rozières, defender of landless peasants, also in Brazil; Louis Dalle, apostolic administrator of the prelate of Ayaviri in the Andean South of Peru. A special mention deserve the French martyrs in lands of Latin America: the sisters Alice Domon and Léonie Duquet, assassinated in Argentine (1977); Father André Jarlan, a martyr in Chile under the dictatorship of Pinochet in 1984 and Gabriel Maire, who was assassinated in Vitoria, Brazil, in 1989.

At the level of the local churches, the archdiocese of Poitiers in the south of France was without doubt a major experience, which inspired a model of Church far beyond the borders of the diocese. Archbishop Albert Rouet⁴, now emeritus, tried to implement a pastoral praxis inspired by the practice of BECs in Latin America and a great openness to the world, especially the rural world. His retirement meant a brake, but not the disappearance of an experience that continues to resist.

Among the French theologians sensitive to Liberation Theology, some significant figures are the Protestant pastor and theologian Georges Casalis (1917-1987), who exercised a theological ministry very close to Liberation Theology, travelling regularly to the continent; he died in Managua in 1987. The Assumptionist Bruno Chenu (1942-2003), professor of theology at the Catholic University of Lyon, co-president of the Ecumenical Group of Dombes and member of the french Justice and Peace Commission; he is one of the great promoters of Liberation Theology throughout the world. The Dominican Vincent Cosmao (1923-2006), disciple of Fr. Lebrét, was a tireless promoter of the North-South dialogue and of Liberation Theology. His commitment is closely linked to the issue of development and justice in the world, especially through the network Développement et Civilisations. Christian Duquoc (1926-2008), also Dominican, professor of dogmatic theology at the Catholic University of Lyon and active contributor to the magazines *Concilium* and *Lumière et Vie*, very close to Liberation Theology, that he strongly supported,

⁴ Albert Rouet, *Un nouveau visage d'Église*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2005; *J'aimerais vous dire*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2009.

particularly at the time of the publication of the Instruction *Libertatis Nuntius* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1984). He was a fervent promoter of dialogue between liberation theologians and the most progressive European theologians. Claude Geffré (1926-2017), Dominican, professor of the Catholic Institute of Paris and until 1988 director of the famous collection *Cogitatio fidei* of the editions Cerf.

Within the new generation of French theologians, although few are attentive to the commitment on the side of the poor, we can mention the following: Etienne Grieu⁵, Jesuit, professor and director of the Parisian Sèvres center, and Roger Baudoin⁶, professor at the Bernardines in Paris. Among the academic centres, the Sèvres centre of the Jesuit province is one of the most receptive to Liberation Theology and to the church of the poor. For many years the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lyon was also a suitable place for Liberation Theology in France; it is there that G. Gutiérrez received his doctorate (1985).

At the level of dissemination of the practice of the Latin American Church and of Liberation Theology, Charles Antoine should be mentioned, a Fidei Donum priest in the early 1970s in Brazil who gave life to the DIAL magazine [Diffusion of Information about Latin America]. Another important figure is Jose de Broucker (1929-), journalist, promoter of the thought and the figure of Dom Hélder Câmara. The Cerf editions are a place of great fidelity to the thought and practice of Liberation Theology. During the 1990s, the *Libération* collection was implemented to reproduce the Theology and Liberation collection in collaboration with the Centre for Studies and Interdisciplinary Research (CERIT) of the Faculty of Theology in Strasbourg and sponsored by many congregations and institutions (CERIT, Centre Lebreton, Lumen Vitae, etc.) and French-speaking theologians (Abbé Pierre, Y. Congar, I. Berten, B. Chenu, C. Geffré, C. Duquoc, J. Rigal, among others). Its collection *Théologies* includes among its authors L. Boff, G. Gutiérrez and J.L. Segundo, and the prestigious collection *Cogitatio fidei* hosts books by Gutiérrez, Segundo, Sobrino, C. Boff and Rubem Alves. Recently, Cerf published the books of J. Sobrino: *Jesus the Liberator* and *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims*.

Another important place of diffusion are the Karthala editions of Paris, which in its collection *Signes des temps*, directed by Robert

⁵ *Nés de Dieu. Itinéraires de chrétiens engagés*, Cerf, Paris, 2004; *Un lien si fort. Quand l'amour de Dieu se fait diaconie*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2009; (ed.), *Qu'est-ce qui fait vivre quand tout s'écroule. Une théologie à l'école des pauvres*, Lumen Vitae, Namur, 2016.

⁶ *Doctrine Sociale de l'Eglise. Une histoire contemporaine*, Cerf, Paris, 2012.

Dumont, honours the memory of several Fidei Donum missionaries: Francis of Alteroche, François Glory, Michel Jeanne, Michel Candas, Pierre Dubois, Xavier de Maupeou, Charles Antoine, Claude Faivre-Duboz and Nelly Evrard. Two books by the author of these lines are also available in the collection⁷.

Liberation Theology in Belgium.

As in France, a large number of Belgian pastoral agents went to Latin America under the aegis of Fidei Donum. The College for Latin America in Leuven played an important role in the formation of these missionaries strongly committed to the liberating pastoral praxis of Latin America.⁸ Today, it is the network of non-governmental organizations around solidarity with the countries of the South and the marginalized people in the heart of the northern countries (Pax Christi, Entraide et fraternité, Avec Center, etc.) that is most open to TdL; theologians and pastors of the South are recurrent guests in search of support for the various campaigns of solidarity.

A number of theologians and pastoral agents of liberation in Latin America studied at the University of Louvain (C. Boff, I. Gebara, A. Brighenti, etc.) and the International Institute Lumen Vitae (R. Grand, J. Cela, R. Andrieta, etc.). This institute of pastoral formation was and is the most committed institution with Liberation Theology in Belgium (lumen-vitae.be). During the 1970s, the section Développement et Libération was created in which several liberation theologians were invited professors: G. Gutiérrez, E. Dussel, P. Freire, G. Girardi, among others. In 1974, Lumen Vitae published the French version of G. Gutierrez's book: *A Theology of Liberation. Perspectives*. In 1975, following a denunciation by Bishop López Trujillo, Secretary General of CELAM and a major opponent of Liberation Theology, the section was suppressed after a difficult exchange between the Society of Jesus and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. However, Lumen Vitae still is a place open to the Churches of the South and their problems. Its academic methodology develops a pastoral theology according to the see-judge-act method. Several invited professors come from the south and are part of the stable academic body

⁷ *Les conversions des églises latino-américaines. De Medellín à Puebla*, Karthala, Paris 2011, and (éd.) *Les chemins actuels de la théologie chrétienne en Amérique latine*, Karthala, Paris 2015.

⁸ C. Sappia, *Le Collège pour l'Amérique latine de Louvain et son ancrage au Brésil: 1953-1983*, Thèse doctorale Faculté d'histoire de l'UCL, 2013.

(Michel Amaladoss, Albertina Tshibilondi, Ignace Ndongala, Albertine Ilunga, Luis Martínez Saavedra).

Another alternative place of liberating formation is CEFOC (Cardijn Formation Centre), whose roots are the Cardinal Cardijn Seminary founded in 1967, with the aim to train candidates for the priesthood who come from the world of labour. The methodology used is the one of the YCW: see-judge-act, which seeks to make the link between life and faith in a liberating perspective. The CEFOC contributes to the maintenance of the basic communities that were born after the Council under the inspiration of the CEBs of Latin America and that still resist, but with a very limited and peripheral presence in the Belgian Church. Among the animators at the centre, theologians like Thierry Tilquin (also a professor at Lumen Vitae) and biblical scholar Jean Claude Brau⁹ are good examples of the church of the poor. Along the same lines, in the diocese of Tournai, Arthur Buekens¹⁰ remains very committed to Liberation Theology and the Latin American Church, especially in the circle of Belgian-French worker-priests that is articulated around the monastery of the Benedictin sisters of Hurtebise. Another place that has echoed and still echoes Liberation Theology is the AVEC Centre, which maintains a constant reflection and commitment with the world of the poor and the great social causes of today and serves as a sounding box of churches and social movements of the south (www.centreavec.be).

In the Faculty of Theology of Louvain-la-Neuve,¹¹ a cyclical course on extra-European theology is offered to the students; a place is reserved for Liberation Theology. In the year 2013, J. Broucker's archives on Don Hélder Câmara were incorporated into the Faculty during a study day on the participation of Latin American bishops in the Second Vatican Council¹². On the Flemish side, at the Theological Faculty of Leuven exists the Centre for Liberation Theologies founded by the Jesuit G. de Schrijver (1935-2016) and currently led by J. Haers SJ. It is a very active centre, which attracts many students and has a considerable bibliographical

⁹ with T. Tilquin, *La Bible: un livre... des lectures*, Lumen Vitae, Brussels, 1999; *S'interroger sur la résurrection de Jésus*, Lumen Vitae, Brussels, 2001; with J. Dewez, *Qu'as-tu fait de ton frère? Violence et Bible*, Lumen Vitae, Brussels, 2004.

¹⁰ with I. Berten and L. Martinez, *Enterrée, la Doctrine sociale de l'Eglise*, Lumen Vitae, Brussels, 2010; *Quand la Bible parle de Pardon*, Fidelité, Namur, 2013; *Des femmes audacieuses de la Bible*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2017.

¹¹ Cf. C. Sappia – P. Servais (ed.), *Les relations de Louvain avec l'Amérique latine. Entre évangélisation, théologie de la libération et mouvements étudiants*, Academia Bruylant 2006.

background on Liberation Theology. An important number of doctoral theses deal with the thinking of liberation theologians.

At the bibliographic level, *Lumen Vitae* editions have echoed Liberation Theology. Among its collections, several books take the viewpoint of the Church of the south; the collection *Sens et foi* [Sense and Faith] houses, for example, several community based Bible reading guides that follow the method of popular Bible reading. On the other hand, between the years 1964 and 2006, the magazine *Espérance des pauvres* [Hope for the poor] was a place of resonance of the struggles and the commitments of the liberating Church in Latin America and the world; the same can be said of the magazine *Alternatives Sud* of the Tricontinental center of Louvain-la-Neuve. Recently, Editions Lessius, that belong to the Jesuit province, published a historical Dictionary of theology of the liberation, that is a reference book. The same editorial has published several Latin American authors (S. Arnold, J. Sobrino, J.C. Scannone).

Among the Belgians, the figure of the recently deceased François Houtart (1925-2017) is a reference of Liberation Theology. He has been the founder of the Tricontinental Center (www.cetri.be), *Alternatives Sur* magazine and one of the founders of the World Social Forum; in 2010, he settled in Ecuador. The Dominican Ignace Berten¹³ (1940-) is another important proponent of Liberation Theology in Belgium. He was one of the professors of the Development and Liberation section in *Lumen Vitae* and one of the animators in the Cardinal Cardijn Seminar and CEFOC. Another theologian closest to Liberation Theology is Jacques van Nieuwenhove (1927-); his thesis at the University of Strasbourg deals with the relationship between faith and praxis in the theology of liberation in Latin America. He was director of the Development and Liberation section of *Lumen Vitae*; then he taught as a professor at the Catholic University of Leuven and later at the Catholic University of Nijmegen (The Netherlands). He participated in Puebla (1979) and in Santo Domingo (1992). The Jesuit Paul Tihon (1930-) played a prominent role among the Belgian theologians sensitive to Liberation Theology; he also was professor in *Lumen Vitae*. But, without a doubt, José Comblin (1923-2010) is the most emblematic Belgian liberation theologian, although his work was

¹² *Vatican II et l'Amérique Latine*, Cahiers internationaux de théologie pratique, série Actes n°10 (2016).

¹³ *Christ pour les pauvres*, Cerf, Paris, 1989; with R. Luneau, *Le rendez-vous de Saint Domingue*, Centurion, Paris, 1991; *Croire en un Dieu trinitaire*, Fidélité, Namur 2008; *Les divorcés remariés peuvent-ils communier*. *Enjeux ecclésiastiques...*, Lessius, Namur 2017.

mainly developed in Brazil. In the younger generations of the Belgian Jesuits, Martin Maier, himself a member of the European Jesuit community in Brussels, is a great promoter of Liberation Theology and of the memory of the martyrs of El Salvador¹⁴; as well as Thierry Monfils, who is a promoter of commitment to the poor along the lines of J. Wresinski, founder of ATD Fourth World¹⁵.

The contemporary situation

At present, the reception of Liberation Theology and of the pastoral practice of the church of the poor in the Francophone churches is quite limited. While during the 1970s and 1980s, Liberation Theology and the struggle of the Latin American church were supported by an important part of the Francophone world, which had repeatedly expressed its solidarity with the sister churches and theologians of the continent, since the beginning of the decade of the 90, oblivion settled. The ranks of "committed" Catholics grew old and discouraged because of the choices made by ecclesiastical authorities. Even so, many first-hour militants, close to the options of Liberation Theology, continue to meet in alternative and peripheral organizations of the church.

In a difficult ecclesial context¹⁶, the so-called "Generation John Paul II" of priests and bishops clings to a self-referential ecclesial model quite impermeable to the ecclesiology of Vatican II, especially *Gaudium et Spes*, a Church that is a servant of humanity and attentive to the signs of the times and even more to the Church of the poor. Based on an alleged shortage of priests, Francophone dioceses are filled with African priests or new communities, in order to maintain a rather clerical ecclesial life centred on the celebration of the sacraments.

Some older congregations (Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc.) are places where Liberation Theology is still present, especially thanks to their transcontinental presence and the return of the missionaries. On the contrary, the new communities that come from the model of the "new evangelization" are more aligned around a spirituality returning to the past, seeking to restore ancient practices of piety (EG 94), succumb to the pastoral routine (EG 81-83) or, even worse, spiritual worldliness (EG 207).

¹⁴ Oscar Romero. *Prophète d'une Église des pauvres*, Fidélité, Namur, 2016.

¹⁵ *Le Père Joseph Wresinski. Sacerdoce et amour des pauvres*, Lessius, Namur, 2017.

¹⁶ According to the *Annuario Pontificum* of 2017, the percentage of European Catholics passed between 2010 and 2015 from 23.8% to 22.2% of the total Catholics.

Others are engaged in the implementation of unfeasible pastoral projects because of their distance from reality, or are locked in Catholic ghettos that dream of reconquering a Catholic world that will not return (EG 82).

On the other hand, the European social and political context has consolidated a cliché that places Christians as part of the more conservative forces of society, far removed from the progressive conception of the same. In this way, very few progressive movements seek inspiration in Christian sources and hardly identify themselves with the Catholic options. There are, however, exceptions. In the working class, for example, the YCW – whose founder is the Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn – and the Christian unions have played and still play a greater social role in the defence of workers' rights. In France, an area of Christian liberation commitment is the Réseau du Parvis movement, which brings together various Christian and non-Christian groups working for a more just and fraternal world, for example, with a practice of welcoming and integrating the refugees and LGBT people (www.reseaux-parvis.fr). Another current place of reflection and commitment is the Lebret Center, today called Development and Communications Lebret-Irfed, which integrates the international network for a human economy and raises its voice in defence of the small and the safeguard of the Creation (www.lebret-irfed.org). The same thing happens with the team around the CERAS (Center of investigation and of Social Action) that is a place of reflection and commitment from the poor and the marginalized (<http://www.ceras-projet.org>).

Today, the option for the poor is widely accepted and recognized as part of the universal Church's patrimony, but its understanding remains linked mainly to being a further chapter of the Social Doctrine of the Church and in practice, as a synonym for charitable assistance. The liberation of the poor in the sense of structural changes is not part of the priority commitment of the majority of Catholics¹⁷. For example, some are committed to the cause of ecology; however, this commitment usually does not take into account the problems raised by *Laudato Si'*, which, following the reflection of Latin American eco-theology, relates the cry of the earth to the cry of the poor (LS 49,53).

In general, in French-speaking Europe, Latin American theology is well received and liberation theologians are welcome and often invited to take the floor in colloquia or as visiting professors in training programs

¹⁷ In the recent presidential elections in France, two-thirds of practicing Catholics voted right or extreme right (67%), among casual and non-practicing practitioners the percentage drops to 55% and 42% respectively (La Croix, April 24, 2017).

of various institutions. However, at the level of theological discipline, Liberation Theology remains classified as a daughter of pastoral theology or Social Doctrine; it has not yet been recognized in its capacity as a true "theological act". In fact, it is surprising that in his recent book, which traces the history of theology by pointing out the great "theological acts" over the centuries,¹⁸ the French theologian B. Sesboué dwells on Karl Rahner, completely ignoring the voluminous production of Liberation Theology. The parallelity and proximity between what is experienced by the Nouvelle théologie, which is the source of the Council, and Liberation Theology, as its fruit, does not attract the attention of the theologian.

Conclusion

The reception of Liberation Theology in Francophone Europe is very limited. From an initial enthusiasm during the decades of the 70s and 80s, it became the great forgotten of the 90s. On the theological level, an echo of the conflict is preserved around the two instructions of the Vatican; but fundamentally, it is perceived as a fact of the past. Hermeneutical options, with exceptions, had no reception in the research and thought of theologians, who remain locked in a rather academicist, deductive theology and without anchoring either in pastoral action or commitment in the world and the great challenges related to the fate of the poor.

At the level of pastoral practice, some local churches have sought dialogue with the churches of the south and their liberating options; but they are a minority. Trapped in a North-South logic, the churches of Europe still maintain an asymmetrical relation with those of the south, that are seen mainly like churches economically poor and in need of material aid, but with nothing to contribute at the theological and pastoral level to the churches of the North, except a reservoir of priests to secure masses in the old metropolis.

If, during the 1970s and 1980s, grassroots communities and networks that nurtured liberation theology grew, these groups have grown old without being able to adapt to the new circumstances and ended up depleted and isolated, without relevant contact with civil society and

¹⁸ E. Sesboué, *L'acte théologique*, Lessius, Namur/Paris, 2017. The author defines the theological act as: "a doing, an act, a creation. Something happens that did not exist. An author, by the quality of his work, has advanced theological intelligence on a point hitherto uncertain or controversial. The discovery of a displacement and a new problematic change the previous situation and open up unknown paths. Progress is so striking that it imposes itself and provokes, from the outset or slowly, a broad unanimity" (p. 6).

the social movements. However, these small communities have managed to remain a place of commitment and hope throughout all these years; nowadays they take a new breath and become enthusiastic, but in such an adverse ecclesial context, they find it difficult to return to the dynamism of the past.

The election of Pope Francis has meant a balm for all these experiences inspired by the theology of liberation and the revival of interest in the Liberation Theology and the praxis of the Church of the poor in Latin America. The innumerable gestures and words of the Pope recall that another way of being Church and living the Gospel is possible, and that the tradition of post-conciliar reception, made by Liberation Theology and a prophetic portion of the Latin American Church – the Abrahamic minorities of Dom Hélder Câmara, show a future path for the universal Church. The option for the poor, co-responsibility in the Church, the ministry of the laity, the liberating commitment... become themes that challenge the praxis of the Church and the theological reflection of some Francophone pastors and theologians. But this is still peripheral.

Translation: Stefan SILBER

Abstract

This contribution discusses the reception of Liberation Theology in France and Belgium. An inventory of institutions, people and activities related to this reception is created for each of the countries. As for the current situation, a significant setback must be recognized, due in many cases to a new ecclesiastical policy since the 1980s. Despite the new winds in the Church under the pontificate of Francis, up to the present, the acceptance of liberation theology, particularly in academic contexts, is very poor.

Resumen

Esta contribución examina la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Francia y en Bélgica. Se crea un inventario de instituciones, personas y actividades relacionadas con esta recepción, separado por países. En cuanto a la situación actual, se debe reconocer un retroceso significativo, debido en muchos casos, a una nueva política intraeclesial a partir de los años 1980. A pesar de los nuevos vientos en la Iglesia bajo el pontificado de Francisco, hasta el presente, la aceptación de la teología de la liberación, particularmente en contextos académicos, es muy pobre.



La réception de la théologie de la libération en Europe francophone

Luis MARTINEZ-SAAVEDRA¹

À cinquante ans de Medellín et de la naissance de la théologie de la libération, sa réception en Europe francophone est assez limitée. Dans le cadre de cet article, nous faisons un bref état des lieux de deux pays francophones², puis nous présentons quelques réflexions à propos de la situation actuelle et ses possibles développements.

L'état des lieux de la réception de la TdL en Europe francophone

La TdL en France. Depuis 1961 avec la naissance du Comité Épiscopal France Amérique latine (CEFAL), la conférence épiscopale française a mis un nombre important d'agents pastoraux –prêtres, religieux, religieuses et laïcs- *Fidei Donum* au service des églises latino-américaines³. Un nombre important parmi eux ont accueilli les options de la TdL et sont allés vivre parmi les plus pauvres du continent. Un nombre important deviendra aumôniers de la JOC et des CEBs. Certains vont rester en Amérique latine. Ceux et celles qui sont retournés en France, ont servi de caisse de résonance pour l'Église des pauvres et la TdL. Leur engagement restera jusqu'aujourd'hui dans la ligne de l'option pour les pauvres dans une grande diversité d'activités pastorales : aumôniers de prison, curés dans les paroisses populaires des banlieues, aumôniers de différentes équipes de solidarité, d'équipes d'accueil des migrants, de défense des sans-papiers, de lutte pour un droit au logement, militants

¹ Théologien catholique, laïc, au service de l'Église au Luxembourg, professeur à l'Institut International *Lumen Vitae*, professeur invité UCL et directeur de la collection *La Part Dieu* chez Lessius.

² Pour ce faire nous suivons notre ouvrage collectif: M. CHEZA, L. MARTÍNEZ-SAAVEDRA et P. SAUVAGE, *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la libération*, Lessius, Namur/Paris, 2017.

³ CEFAL [COMITÉ ÉPISCOPAL FRANCE AMÉRIQUE LATINE], *Faire Église... autrement!*, Cerf, Paris, 1999.

d'associations « tiers-mondistes », participants aux « forums sociaux mondiaux ».

Parmi les grandes figures de missionnaires *Fidei Donum* français, on peut citer : l'ancien secrétaire du CEFAL, Xavier de Maupeou qui a été évêque au Brésil, avocat des sans-terres, président de la « Commission Pastorale de la Terre » (CPT) de la Conférence des évêques du Brésil ; le juriste dominicain Henri Burin des Roziers, défenseur des paysans sans-terres et des paysans esclaves au Brésil ; Louis Dalle, administrateur apostolique de la prélatrice d'Ayaviri aux Andes péruviens. Une mention spéciale doit être faite aux martyrs français en terre latino-américaine : les sœurs Alice Domon et Léonie Duquet assassinées en Argentine (1977) ; le père André Jarlan, martyr au Chili de Pinochet en 1984 ; Gabriel Maire, assassiné en 1989 à Vitoria (Brésil).

Au niveau des églises locales, sans aucun doute, l'archidiocèse de Poitiers, dans le sud de la France, a été une expérience majeure, qui a inspiré un tout autre modèle d'Église au-delà des frontières du diocèse. Mgr. Albert Rouet⁴, aujourd'hui émérite, a essayé d'implémenter une pastorale inspirée de la pratique des communautés de base en Amérique latine et de grande ouverture au monde, spécialement au monde rural. Son départ a signifié un frein mais pas un arrêt définitif à cette expérience qui continue à résister.

Entre les théologiens français sensibles à la TdL, quelques figures significatives sont le pasteur et théologien protestant Georges Casalis (1917-1987), qui a exercé un ministère théologique très proche de la TdL en se rendant régulièrement au continent, il meurt à Managua en 1987. L'assomptionniste, Bruno Chenu (1942-2003), professeur de théologie à l'Université catholique de Lyon, co-président du Groupe œcuménique des Dombes et membre de la Commission Justice et Paix France, est un des grands promoteurs de la TdL dans toutes ses expressions à travers le monde. Le dominicain Vincent Cosmao (1923 - 2006), disciple du P. Lebreton, est un promoteur du dialogue Nord-Sud et de la TdL. Son engagement est fort lié aux questions du développement et de la justice dans le monde notamment à travers le réseau *Développement et Civilisations*. Christian Duquoc (1926-2008), dominicain, professeur de théologie dogmatique à l'Université Catholique de Lyon et un actif collaborateur des revues *Concilium* et *Lumière et Vie*, très proches de la TdL qu'il soutient avec vigueur, notamment lors de la publication de l'Instruction *Libertatis*

⁴ A. ROUET, *Un nouveau visage d'Église*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2005 ; *J'aimerais vous dire*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2009.

Nuntius de la Congrégation pour la Doctrine de la foi (1984). Il plaide pour un dialogue plus poussé entre les théologiens de la libération et les théologiens européens plus progressistes. Claude Geffré (1926 - 2017), dominicain, professeur à l'Institut catholique de Paris et jusqu'en 1988, directeur de la célèbre collection *Cogitatio fidei* du Cerf.

À l'intérieur de la nouvelle génération de théologiens français, si bien peu sont attentifs à l'engagement aux côtés des pauvres, on peut citer: Etienne Grieu⁵, jésuite, professeur et directeur du Centre Sèvres de Paris, et Baudoin Roger⁶, professeur aux Bernardins à Paris. Parmi les centres académiques, le Centre Sèvres de la province jésuite est un des plus réceptif à la TdL et à l'Église des pauvres. Pendant longtemps la Faculté de théologie de l'Université Catholique de Lyon a été aussi un pied à terre de la TdL en France, c'est ici que G. Gutiérrez a reçu son doctorat (1985).

Au niveau de la diffusion de la pratique de l'Église latino-américaine et de la TdL, il se doit une mention spéciale à Charles Antoine, lui-même prêtre *Fidei Donum* au Brésil au début des années septante et qui a assuré la revue DIAL [Diffusion de l'Information sur l'Amérique latine]. Une autre figure importante est celle de José de Broucker (1929-), journaliste, promoteur de la pensée et la figure de Dom Hélder Câmara. Les éditions du Cerf sont un lieu de grande fidélité à la pensée et la pratique de la TdL. Pendant les années quatre-vingt-dix, sa collection *Libération* a été dédié à la reproduction intégrale de la collection *Teología y liberación*, en collaboration avec le Centre d'études et de Recherches interdisciplinaire en théologie de Strasbourg, et sous le patronage de nombre de congrégations et institutions (CERIT, Centre Lebre, *Lumen Vitae*, etc.), et théologiens francophones (Abbé Pierre, Y. Congar, I. Berten, B. Chenu, C. Geffré, Ch. Duquoc, J. Rigal, entre autres). La collection *Théologies* comporte parmi ses auteurs L. Boff, G. Gutiérrez et J.L. Segundo et la prestigieuse collection *Cogitatio fidei* a accueilli les livres de Gutiérrez, Segundo, Sobrino, C. Boff et Rubem Alves. Récemment Cerf a publié les ouvrages de J. Sobrino: *Jésus-Christ libérateur* et *La foi en Jésus-Christ : Essai à partir des victimes*.

⁵ *Nés de Dieu. Itinéraires de chrétiens engagés*, Cerf, Paris, 2004; *Un lien si fort. Quand l'amour de Dieu se fait diaconie*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2009; (éd) *Qu'est-ce qui fait vivre quand tout s'écroule. Une théologie à l'école des pauvres*, Lumen Vitae, Namur, 2016.

⁶ *Doctrine Sociale de l'Église. Une histoire contemporaine*, Cerf, Paris, 2012.

Un autre lieu important de diffusion de la praxis libératrice latino-américaine, sont les éditions Karthala de Paris. Dans sa collection *Signes des temps*, dirigée par Robert Dumont, fait honneur à la mémoire de plusieurs missionnaires *Fidei Donum*: François d'Alteroche, François Glory, Michel Jeanne, Michel Candas, Pierre Dubois, Xavier de Maupeou, Charles. Antoine, Claude Faivre-Duboz et Nelly Evrard. Deux livres de l'auteur de ces lignes sont aussi présents dans la collection⁷.

La TdL en Belgique. Comme en France, un nombre important d'agents pastoraux belges sont partis en A.L. sous l'égide *Fidei Donum*. Le Collège pour l'Amérique latine de Louvain a joué un rôle majeur dans la formation de ces missionnaires qui vont s'engager fortement dans la pastorale libératrice latino-américaine⁸. Aujourd'hui, c'est bien le réseau des ONGs autour de la solidarité avec les pays du sud et avec les personnes en détresse au cœur des pays du Nord (Pax Christi, Entraide et fraternité, Centre Avec, etc.), qui se montre le plus ouvert à la TdL ; le passage des théologiens et pasteurs du sud est récurrent en vue du soutien des diverses campagnes de solidarité.

Plusieurs théologiens et acteurs de la pastorale libératrice en Amérique latine sont venus faire des études à l'université de Louvain (C. Boff, I. Gebara, A. Brighenti, etc.) et à l'Institut International *Lumen Vitae* (R. Grande, J. Cela, R. Andrieta, etc.). Pourtant, c'est bien *Lumen Vitae* (<http://lumenvitae.be/>) qui a été et reste le lieu le plus engagé avec la TdL en Belgique. Pendant les années septante, la section *Développement et libération* est créée ; un nombre important de théologiens de la libération y ont donné cours : G. Gutiérrez, E. Dussel, P. Freire et G. Girardi, entre autres. En 1974, les éditions *Lumen Vitae* publient la version française de la *Teología de la Liberación. Perspectivas*, de G. Gutiérrez. A partir de l'année 1975, suite à une plainte de Mgr López Trujillo, secrétaire du CELAM et farouche opposant à la TdL, la section est abolie après un échange difficile entre la Compagnie de Jésus et la Congrégation pour la Doctrine de la Foi. Néanmoins, *Lumen Vitae* reste un lieu tourné vers les églises du sud et leurs problématiques. Sa méthode académique reste fidèle et développe une théologie pastorale suivant la méthode du *voir-juger-agir*. Plusieurs professeurs venant du sud se relaient pour prendre

⁷ *Les conversions des églises latino-américaines*, Karthala, Paris, 2011 et (éd.) *Les chemins actuels de la théologie chrétienne en Amérique latine*, Karthala, Paris, 2015.

⁸ Cf. C. SAPPÍA, *Le Collège pour l'Amérique latine de Louvain et son ancrage au Brésil, 1953-1983*, Thèse doctorale Faculté d'histoire de l'UCL, 2013.

la Parole dans ces cours (Michel Amaladoss, Albertina Tshibilondi, Ignace Ndongala, Albertine Ilunga, Luis Martínez Saavedra).

Un autre lieu alternatif de formation libératrice est le CEFOC [Centre de formation Cardijn], dont les racines sont le Séminaire Cardinal Cardijn fondé en 1967, dans le but de former à la prêtrise des candidats venant du monde ouvrier. La méthodologie employée est aussi celle de la JOC : *voir-juger-agir*, qui cherche à faire le lien entre la vie et la foi dans une optique libératrice. Le CEFOC contribue au maintien des communautés de base nées dans l'après Concile sous l'inspiration des CEBs latino-américaines et qui résistent encore mais avec une présence très limitée et périphérique dans l'Église belge. Parmi les animateurs du Centre, les théologiens Thierry Tilquin (aussi professeur à *Lumen Vitae*) et le bibliste Jean Claude Brau⁹ sont un bon exemple de l'Église des pauvres. Dans la même ligne, au diocèse de Tournai, Arthur Buekens¹⁰ reste très engagé avec la théologie et l'Église latinoaméricaine, notamment dans le cercle des aumôniers belgo-français auprès du monde du travail articulé autour du monastère des sœurs bénédictines d'Hurtebise. Encore un lieu important qui fait écho à la TdL est le *Centre AVEC*, lequel promeut la réflexion et l'engagement avec le monde des pauvres et les grandes causes sociétales du moment actuel et se fait lieu de résonance des églises et des mouvements sociaux du sud (www.centreavec.be).

A la faculté de théologie de Louvain¹¹, un cours sur la théologie extra-européenne est proposé aux étudiants ; une place à la TdL y est réservée. L'année 2013, les archives de J. de Broucker sur don Hélder Câmara ont été accueillies à la Faculté lors d'une journée d'étude sur la participation des évêques latino-américains au Concile Vatican II.¹² Dans son versant flamand, à la Faculté de théologie de Leuven, il existe le *Centre de la Théologie de la libération* fondé par le jésuite Georges de Schrijver (1935-2016) et actuellement dirigé par Jacques Haers sj. C'est un Centre très actif, qui attire beaucoup d'étudiants et qui dispose d'un fond

⁹ *La Bible : un livre... des lectures*, avec T. TILQUIN, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 1999 ; *S'interroger sur la résurrection de Jésus*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2001 ; *Qu'as-tu fait de ton frère ? Violence et Bible*, avec J. DEWEZ, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2004 ;

¹⁰ *Enterrée, la Doctrine sociale de l'Eglise*, avec I. BERTEN y L. MARTINEZ, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2010 ; *Quand la Bible parle de Pardon*, Fidélité, Namur, 2013 ; *Des femmes audacieuses de la Bible*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2017.

¹¹ Cf. C. SAPPJA – P. SERVAIS (éd.), *Les relations de Louvain avec l'Amérique latine. Entre évangélisation, théologie de la libération et mouvements étudiants*, Academia Bruyland, 2006.

¹² COLLECTIF, *Vatican II et l'Amérique latine, Cahiers internationaux de théologie pratique*, série Actes n°10 (2016).

bibliographique sur la TdL assez important. Plusieurs thèses doctorales versent sur la pensée des théologiens de la libération.

Au niveau de la diffusion, les éditions *Lumen Vitae* ont fait un large écho à la TdL. Parmi ses collections, plusieurs livres portent le regard de l'Église du sud ; la collection *Sens et foi* accueille, par exemple, plusieurs guides de lecture communautaire de la Bible suivant la méthode de la lecture populaire latino-américaine. Entre les années 1964 et 2006, la revue *Espérance des pauvres* a été un lieu de résonance des luttes et des engagements de l'Église libératrice en Amérique Latine et de par le monde; de même, pour la revue *Alternatives Sud* du Centre Tricontinental de Louvain-la-Neuve. Récemment, les éditions jésuites Lessius ont publié un *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la Libération*, qui est appelé à devenir un ouvrage de référence. Les mêmes éditions commencent à publier différents auteurs latino-américains (S. Arnold, J. Sobrino, J.C. Scannone).

Parmi les acteurs belges, la figure de François Houtart (1925-2017), est une référence pour la TdL. Il est le fondateur du Centre tricontinental (<http://www.cetri.be/>), de la revue *Alternatives Sud* et il est l'un des fondateurs du Forum Social Mondial; depuis 2010 il a vécu en Equateur. Le dominicain Ignace Berten¹³ (1940-) est un autre acteur important de la TdL en Belgique. Il a été un des professeurs de la section *Développement et Libération* à l'Institut international *Lumen Vitae* et un des animateurs au Séminaire cardinal Cardijn et du CEFOC. Le théologien Jacques van Nieuwenhove (1927-) est aussi un des proches de la TdL. Sa thèse de doctorat à l'Université de Strasbourg *verse sur les rapports entre foi et praxis dans la théologie de la libération latino-américaine. Diagnostic et prospective*. Il a été le directeur de la section *Développement et libération* à *Lumen Vitae*; après l'affaire Girardi, il devient professeur à UC de Leuven, puis à l'Université Catholique de Nimègue (Pays-Bas). Il était présent à Puebla (1979) et à Saint-Domingue (1992). Le jésuite Paul Tihon (1930-) a aussi joué un rôle prééminent parmi les théologiens sensibles à la TdL en Belgique. C'est aussi à l'Institut *Lumen Vitae* qu'il exerce son enseignement. Mais, sans aucun doute, c'est José Comblin (1923-2010) qui reste le théologien belge de la libération le plus emblématique, même si son œuvre a été développée surtout au Brésil. Dans les nouvelles générations des jésuites en Belgique, Martin Maier -lui-même allemand- membre de la

¹³ *Christ pour les pauvres*, Cerf, Paris, 1989 ; *Le rendez-vous de Saint Domingue*, con R. Luneau, Centurion, Paris, 1991; *Croire en un Dieu trinitaire*, Fidélité, Namur, 2008 ; *Les divorcés remariés peuvent-ils communier. Enjeux ecclésiastiques...*, Lessius, Namur, 2017.

communauté jésuite européenne à Bruxelles, est un grand promoteur de la TdL et de la mémoire des martyrs du Salvador¹⁴; de même que Thierry Monfils, promoteur de l'engagement auprès des pauvres dans la ligne de J. Wresinski, fondateur du ATD Quart Monde¹⁵.

La situation actuelle

Dans la réalité actuelle la réception de la TdL et la pratique pastorale de l'Église des pauvres dans les églises francophones, est assez limitée. Si pendant les années septante et quatre-vingt, la TdL et le combat de l'Église latino-américaine a été bien suivi par une partie importante du monde francophone, qui a manifesté à plusieurs reprises sa solidarité avec les églises sœurs et les théologiens du continent, à partir des années quatre-vingt-dix l'essoufflement s'installe. Les rangs des catholiques « engagés » sont vieillissants et souvent, découragés par les options prises par les autorités ecclésiastiques. Aujourd'hui, beaucoup d'anciens, proches des options de la TdL, se regroupent dans des organisations alternatives et périphériques de l'Église.

Dans un contexte ecclésial difficile¹⁶, la « génération Jean Paul II » des prêtres et des évêques s'est cramponnée à un modèle ecclésial autoréférentiel assez imperméable à l'ecclésiologie du Vatican II, notamment à celle de *Gaudium et Spes* d'une Église servante de l'humanité et attentive aux signes des temps, et plus encore à celle de l'Église des pauvres. Prétextant une soi-disant pénurie de prêtres, les diocèses francophones remplissent leurs rangs de prêtres, venus principalement de l'Afrique ou de nouvelles communautés, afin d'entretenir une vie ecclésiale assez cléricale centrée sur la célébration des sacrements.

Certaines congrégations plus anciennes (jésuites, dominicains, franciscains, etc.) sont un lieu où la TdL reste présente, notamment grâce à leur présence transcontinentale et au retour des prêtres missionnaires. Mais, les nouvelles communautés issues du modèle de la « nouvelle évangélisation » se rangent plutôt dans une spiritualité tournée vers le passé qui cherche à rétablir des pratiques anciennes de piété (EG 94), d'autres succombent à la tiédeur pastorale (EG 81-83) ou, pire encore, à la mondanéité spirituelle (EG 207). D'autres, s'enferment dans l'élaboration de projets pastoraux voués à l'échec parce que trop éloignés de la réalité

¹⁴ Oscar Romero. *Prophète d'une Église des pauvres*, Fidélité, Namur, 2016.

¹⁵ Le Père Joseph Wresinski. *Sacerdoce et amour des pauvres*, Lessius, Namur, 2017.

¹⁶ D'après l'annuaire pontifical 2017, le nombre de catholiques européens, est passé entre 2010 et 2015 de 23,8% à 22,2% du total des catholiques.

ou s'enferment dans des ghettos catholiques qui rêvent d'une reconquête catholique d'un monde révolu (EG 82).

D'autre part, le contexte sociétal et politique européen a consolidé un cliché qui place les chrétiens parmi les forces conservatrices et assez éloignée des conceptions progressistes de société. Ainsi, peu de mouvements progressistes cherchent inspirations aux sources chrétiennes et difficilement s'identifient avec les choix catholiques. Malheureusement, ils avancent comme deux récipients étages. Néanmoins, les exceptions existent. Au milieu du monde ouvrier, par exemple, la JOC –dont le fondateur est le prêtre belge Joseph Cardijn– et les syndicats chrétiens ont joué et jouent encore un rôle social d'envergure dans la défense des droits des travailleurs. En France, un lieu d'engagement chrétien libérateur est celui du mouvement du *Réseau du Parvis* qui agglutine divers mouvements chrétiens et non chrétiens qui travaillent à bâtir un monde plus juste et plus fraternel, par exemple, dans l'accueil et l'intégration des réfugiés et des personnes LGTB (www.reseaux-parvis.fr). Un autre lieu actuel important de réflexion et engagement, est le *Centre Lebret*, aujourd'hui appelé *Développement et communication Lebret-Irfed*, qui fait partie du réseau international pour une économie humaine et lève sa voix en défense des petits et pour la sauvegarde de la Création (www.lebret-irfed.org). De même, l'équipe autour du CERAS [Centre de recherche et d'action sociale] reste un lieu de réflexion et d'engagement dans la défense des pauvres et laissez pour compte (<http://www.ceras-projet.org>).

L'option pour les pauvres est aujourd'hui largement acceptée et reconnue comme faisant partie du patrimoine de l'Église universelle, mais sa compréhension reste principalement liée à un chapitre de plus de la Doctrine Sociale de l'Église et dans la pratique, souvent synonyme d'assistantat. La libération des pauvres dans le sens de changements de structures ne fait pas partie des engagements prioritaires de la majorité des catholiques¹⁷. Certains s'engagent dans les causes autour de l'écologie; cependant, cet engagement est souvent loin de prendre en compte les enjeux soulevés par *Laudato Si'*, qui, suivant la réflexion de l'éco-théologie latino-américaine, lient le cri de la terre au cri des pauvres (LS 49.53).

En général, en Europe francophone, la théologie latino-américaine est bien accueillie et les théologiens de la libération sont les bienvenues et sont souvent invités à prendre la parole lors de colloques ou en tant

¹⁷ Lors des récentes élections présidentielles en France, deux tiers des catholiques pratiquants ont voté droite ou extrême droite (67 %), parmi les pratiquants occasionnels et non-pratiquants le pourcentage descend à 55 % et 42% respectivement (La Croix, 24 avril 2017).

que professeurs invités aux programmes de diverses institutions de formation. Cependant, au niveau de la théologie proprement dite, la TdL reste classée comme fille de la théologie pastorale ou de la DSI ; elle n'a pas encore acquis le statut d'un vrai « acte théologique ». En effet, il est étonnant que dans son ouvrage récent, qui parcourt l'histoire de la théologie en pointant les grands « actes théologiques » à travers les siècles¹⁸, le théologien français Bernard Sesboüé s'arrête chez Karl Rahner, ignorant tout à fait la volumineuse production de la TdL. Le parallèle et la proximité entre le vécu par la « théologie nouvelle », qui est à la source du Vatican II, et la « théologie de la libération », comme fruit de celui-ci, n'attirent pas l'attention du théologien.

Conclusion

La réception de la TdL dans l'Europe francophone reste limitée. D'un enthousiasme initiale pendant les années 70 et 80, elle est la grande oubliée depuis les années 90. Au niveau théologique, il reste un écho du conflit autour des instructions vaticanes ; mais, elle est ressentie comme un fait du passé. Ses choix herméneutiques, sauf exceptions, n'ont pas eu de réception dans la recherche et la réflexion des théologiens, qui restent enfermés dans une théologie académiste, déductive et sans grande ancrage ni dans l'action pastorale ni dans l'engagement dans le monde et ses défis sociétaux contemporains liés au sort des pauvres.

Au niveau de la pratique pastorale, certaines églises locales ont cherché à dialoguer avec les églises du Sud et leur choix libérateur ; mais, elles sont minoritaires. Coincées dans une logique Nord-Sud, les églises européennes gardent une relation asymétrique avec les églises du Sud, qui sont vues principalement comme églises économiquement pauvres et nécessiteuses d'aide matérielle, mais qui n'ont rien à apporter au niveau théologique et pastoral aux églises du Nord, sauf un réservoir de prêtres permettant d'assurer les messes dans les anciennes métropoles.

Si pendant les années 70 et 80 on a vu proliférer les communautés de bases et des réseaux se nourrissant d'une théologie libératrice, ces groupes ont vieilli sans avoir su s'adapter aux nouvelles circonstances et

¹⁸ E. SESBOÜÉ, *L'acte théologique*, Lessius, Namur/Paris, 2017. L'auteur définit l'acte théologique comme : « un faire, un agir, une création. Quelque chose advient que n'existait pas. Un auteur, par la qualité de son travail, a fait avancer l'intelligence théologique sur un point jusque-là incertain ou controversé. La découverte d'un déplacement et une problématique nouvelle changent la situation antérieure et ouvrent des voies encore inconnues. Le progrès est si parlant qu'il s'impose et provoque, d'emblée ou lentement, une large unanimité » (p. 6).

ils ont fini par s'épuiser et s'isoler, sans contacte relevant avec la société civile et les mouvements sociaux. Cependant, ces petites communautés ont réussi à rester de lieu d'engagement et d'espérance au long de toutes ces années ; aujourd'hui, elles prennent un nouveau souffle et reprennent l'enthousiasme, mais dans un contexte ecclésial si adverse, elles ont du mal à reprendre le dynamisme d'autrefois.

L'élection du pape François a signifié un baume pour toutes ces expériences inspirées dans la TdL et la renaissance de l'intérêt pour la TdL et la praxis de l'Églises des pauvres en Amérique latine. Les innombrables gestes et paroles du Pape sont venus rappeler qu'une autre façon d'être Église et de vivre l'Évangile est possible, et que la tradition de la réception postconciliaire, faite par la TdL et une portion prophétique de l'Église latino-américaine -les minorités abrahamiques, de dom Hélder Câmara-, montre un chemin de futur pour l'Église universelle. L'option pour les pauvres, la coresponsabilité dans l'Église, la ministérialité des laïcs, l'engagement libérateur, deviennent des sujets qui interpellent la praxis ecclésiale et la réflexion théologique de certains pasteurs et théologiens. Mais cela reste périphérique.

Abstract

This contribution discusses the reception of Liberation Theology in France and Belgium. An inventory of institutions, people and activities related to this reception is created for each of the countries. As for the current situation, a significant setback must be recognized, due in many cases to a new ecclesiastical policy since the 1980s. Despite the new winds in the Church under the pontificate of Francis, up to the present, the acceptance of liberation theology, particularly in academic contexts, is very poor.

Resumen

Esta contribución examina la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Francia y en Bélgica. Se crea un inventario de instituciones, personas y actividades relacionadas con esta recepción, separado por países. En cuanto a la situación actual, se debe reconocer un retroceso significativo, debido en muchos casos, a una nueva política intraeclesial a partir de los años 1980. A pesar de los nuevos vientos en la Iglesia bajo el pontificado de Francisco, hasta el presente, la aceptación de la teología de la liberación, particularmente en contextos académicos, es muy pobre.



La recepción de la teología de la liberación en Europa francófona

Luis MARTINEZ-SAAVEDRA¹

A cincuenta años de Medellín y del nacimiento de la teología de la liberación, su recepción en Europa de habla francesa es bastante limitada. En este artículo hacemos un breve inventario de dos países francófonos² y, a continuación, presentamos algunas reflexiones sobre la situación actual y su posible evolución.

La recepción de la TdL en Europa de habla francesa

La TdL en Francia. Desde 1961, con el nacimiento del Comité Episcopal Francia América Latina (CEFAL), la Conferencia Episcopal francesa puso un gran número de agentes pastorales - sacerdotes, religiosos y laicos- *Fidei Donum* al servicio de la Iglesias en América Latina³. Muchos de ellos hicieron suyas las opciones de la TdL y se fueron a vivir entre los más pobres del continente. Un gran número de entre ellos fueron capellanes de la JOC y de las CEBs. Algunos se quedaron definitivamente en América Latina. Los que volvieron a Francia, han servido como caja de resonancia para la iglesia de los pobres y la TdL. Su compromiso con la opción por los pobres en Francia se ha prolongado hasta hoy en una gran diversidad de ministerios: capellanes de prisión, sacerdotes en parroquias de los suburbios, capellanes de equipos de solidaridad, de equipos de acogida de migrantes e indocumentados, de lucha por el derecho a la vivienda, activistas de asociaciones en favor del “tercer mundo”, participando en los “foros sociales mundiales”.

¹ Teólogo católico, laico, al servicio de la Iglesia en Luxemburgo, profesor en el Instituto Internacional *Lumen Vitae*, profesor invitado en la UCL y director de la colección *La Part Dieu* en las ediciones jesuitas Lessius.

² Cf. nuestra obra colectiva: M. CHEZA, L. MARTÍNEZ-SAAVEDRA et P. SAUVAGE, *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la libération*, Lessius, Namur/Paris, 2017.

³ CEFAL [COMITÉ ÉPISCOPAL FRANCE AMÉRIQUE LATINE], *Faire Église... autrement !*, Cerf, Paris, 1999.

Entre las grandes figuras de misioneros *Fidei Donum* franceses, se puede recordar a: Xavier de Maupeou, ex secretario del CEFAL, quien fue obispo en Brasil, abogado de los campesinos sin tierra, y presidente de la importante “Comisión de la Pastoral de la tierra” (CPT) de la Conferencia de los obispos del Brasil; el abogado dominico Henri Burin des Roziers, defensor de los campesinos sin tierra, también en Brasil; Louis Dalle, administrador apostólico de la prelatura de Ayaviri en el Sur Andino peruano. Una mención especial merecen los mártires franceses en tierras de América Latina: las hermanas Alice Domon y Léonie Duquet, asesinadas en la Argentina (1977); el padre André Jarlan, mártir en Chile bajo la dictadura de Pinochet en 1984 y Gabriel Maire, asesinado 1989 en Vitoria (Brasil).

En el nivel de las iglesias locales, sin lugar a dudas, la arquidiócesis de Poitiers, en el sur de Francia, fue una experiencia mayor, que inspiró todo un modelo de Iglesia más allá de las fronteras de la diócesis. Mons. Albert Rouet⁴, ahora emérito, trató de implementar una pastoral inspirada en la práctica de las comunidades de base en América Latina y de una gran apertura al mundo, especialmente al mundo rural. Su jubilación significó un freno, pero no la desaparición de tal experiencia que continúa resistiendo.

Entre los teólogos franceses sensibles a la TdL, algunas figuras significativas son el pastor y teólogo protestante Georges Casalis (1917-1987), que ejerció un ministerio teológico muy cercano a la TdL, viajando regularmente al continente; murió en Managua en 1987. El Asuncionista Bruno Chenu (1942-2003), profesor de teología en la Universidad Católica de Lyon, copresidente del Grupo Ecueménico de Dombes y miembro de la Comisión de justicia y paz Francia, es uno de los grandes promotores de la TdL a través del mundo. El dominico Vincent Cosmao (1923-2006), discípulo del P. Lebret, fue un promotor incansable del diálogo Norte-Sur y de la TdL. Su compromiso está muy vinculado a la cuestión del desarrollo y de la justicia en el mundo, especialmente a través de la red *Développement et Civilisations* [Desarrollo y Civilización]. Christian Duquoc (1926-2008), también dominico, profesor de teología dogmática en la Universidad Católica de Lyon y colaborador activo de las revistas *Concilium* y *Lumière et Vie*, muy cercanas a la TdL que él apoyó vigorosamente, en particular al momento de la publicación de la instrucción *Libertatis Nuntius* de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe (1984).

⁴ A. ROUET, *Un nouveau visage d'Église*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2005 ; *J'aimerais vous dire*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2009.

Fue un ferviente propulsor del diálogo entre los teólogos de la liberación y los teólogos europeos más progresistas. Claude Geffré (1926-2017), dominico, profesor del Instituto Católico de París y hasta 1988 director de la famosa colección *Cogitatio fidei* de las ediciones *Cerf*.

Al interior de la nueva generación de teólogos franceses, si bien pocos están atentos al compromiso al lado de los pobres, se pueden citar los siguientes: Etienne Grieu⁵, jesuita, profesor y director del centro Sèvres de París y Roger Baudoin⁶, profesor en los Bernardinos de París. Entre los centros académicos, el centro Sèvres de la provincia jesuita es uno de los más receptivos a la TdL y a la iglesia de los pobres. Durante muchos años la Facultad de teología de la Universidad Católica de Lyon fue también un lugar propicio para la TdL en Francia; es allí donde G. Gutiérrez recibió su doctorado (1985).

En el nivel de la difusión de la práctica de la Iglesia latinoamericana y de la TdL, se debe mencionar especialmente a Charles Antoine, sacerdote *Fidei Donum* a principios de los años setenta en Brasil y que dio vida a la revista DIAL [Difusión de información sobre América Latina]. Otra figura importante es la de José de Broucker (1929-), periodista, promotor del pensamiento y la figura de Dom Helder Câmara. Las ediciones *Cerf* son un lugar de gran fidelidad al pensamiento y la práctica de la TdL. Durante la década de los 90, se implementó la colección *Libération* para reproducir integralmente la colección *Teología y Liberación*, en colaboración con el centro de estudios e investigación interdisciplinaria (CERIT) de la facultad de teología de Estrasburgo, y bajo el patrocinio de muchas congregaciones e instituciones (CERIT, Centre Lebre, *Lumen Vitae*, etc.) y teólogos francófonos (Abbé Pierre, Y. Congar, I. Berten, B. Chenu, C. Geffré, Ch. Duquoc, J. Rigal, entre otros). Su colección *Théologies* incluye entre sus autores a L. Boff, G. Gutiérrez y J.L. Segundo, y la prestigiosa colección *Cogitatio fidei* acoge por su parte libros de Gutiérrez, Segundo, Sobrino, C. Boff y Rubens. Recientemente, *Cerf* publicó los libros de J. Sobrino : *Jesucristo Liberador y La fe en Jesús. Ensayo a partir de las víctimas*.

Otro lugar de difusión importante son las ediciones *Karthala* de París, que en su colección *Signes des temps* [signos de los tiempos],

⁵ *Nés de Dieu. Itinéraires de chrétiens engagés*, Cerf, Paris, 2004 ; *Un lien si fort. Quand l'amour de Dieu se fait diaconie*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2009 ; (éd) *Qu'est-ce qui fait vivre quand tout s'écroule. Une théologie à l'école des pauvres*, Lumen Vitae, Namur, 2016.

⁶ *Doctrine Sociale de l'Eglise. Une histoire contemporaine*, Cerf, Paris, 2012.

dirigida por Robert Dumont, honra la memoria de varios misioneros *Fidei Donum*: Francis de Alteroche, François Glory, Michel Jeanne, Michel Candas, Pierre Dubois, Xavier de Maupeou, Charles Antoine, Claude Faivre-Duboz y Nelly Evrard. Dos libros del autor de estas líneas también están presentes en la colección⁷.

La TdL en Bélgica. Como en Francia, un gran número de agentes de pastoral belgas fue a A.L. bajo la égida de *Fidei Donum*. El colegio para América Latina de Lovaina jugó un papel importante en la formación de estos misioneros fuertemente comprometidos con la pastoral liberadora latinoamericana⁸. Hoy en día, es la red de organizaciones no gubernamentales alrededor de la solidaridad con los países del sur y las personas marginadas en el corazón de los países del norte (*Pax Christi, Entraide et fraternité, El Centro Avec*, etc.), que está más abierta a la TdL; teólogos y pastores del sur son invitados recurrentes en busca de apoyo a las diversas campañas de solidaridad.

Varios teólogos y agentes de la pastoral liberadora en América Latina estudiaron en la Universidad de Lovaina (C. Boff, I. Gebara, A. Brighenti, etc.) y en el Instituto Internacional *Lumen Vitae* (R. Grand, J. Cela, R. Andrieta, etc.). Dicho Instituto de formación pastoral fue y sigue siendo la institución más comprometida con la TdL en Bélgica (*lumen-vitae.be*). Durante los años setenta, allí se creó la sección *Développement et Libération* [Desarrollo y liberación], en la cual, varios teólogos de la liberación fueron profesores invitados: G. Gutiérrez, E. Dussel, P. Freire, G. Girardi, entre otros. En 1974, *Lumen Vitae* publicó la versión francesa del libro de G. Gutiérrez: *Teología de la Liberación. Perspectivas*. En 1975, tras una denuncia de Mons. López Trujillo, Secretario general del CELAM y gran opositor de la TdL, la sección fue suprimida después de un difícil intercambio entre la Compañía de Jesús y la Congregación para la doctrina de la fe. Sin embargo, *Lumen Vitae* sigue siendo hasta hoy un lugar abierto a las iglesias del sur y sus problemáticas. Su metodología académica desarrolla una teología pastoral según el método *ver-juzgar-actuar*. Varios profesores invitados vienen del sur y forman parte del cuerpo académico estable (Michel Amaladoss, Albertina Tshibilondi, Ignace Ndongala, Albertine Ilunga, Luis Martínez Saavedra).

⁷ *Les conversions des églises latino-américaines. De Medellín à Puebla*, Karthala, Paris, 2011 et (éd.) *Les chemins actuels de la théologie chrétienne en Amérique latine*, Karthala, Paris, 2015.

⁸ C. SAPPÍA, *Le Collège pour l'Amérique latine de Louvain et son ancrage au Brésil : 1953-1983*, Thèse doctorale Faculté d'histoire de l'UCL, 2013.

Otro lugar alternativo de formación liberadora es el CEFOC [Centro de formación Cardijn], cuyas raíces son el Seminario cardenal Cardijn fundado en 1967, con el fin de formar los candidatos al sacerdocio que venían del mundo del trabajo. La metodología utilizada es la de la JOC: *ver-juzgar-actuar*, que busca hacer el vínculo entre vida y fe en una perspectiva liberadora. El CEFOC contribuye a la permanencia de las comunidades de base que nacieron en el pos-concilio bajo la inspiración de las CEBs de América latina y que resisten aún, pero con una presencia muy limitada y periférica en la Iglesia belga. Entre los animadores del centro, teólogos como Thierry Tilquin (también profesor en *Lumen Vitae*) y el biblista Jean Claude Brau⁹ son un buen ejemplo de la iglesia de los pobres. En la misma línea, en la diócesis de Tournai, Arthur Buekens¹⁰ sigue muy comprometido con la TdL y la Iglesia de América Latina, especialmente en el círculo de capellanes belgo-franceses en el mundo del trabajo que se articula en torno al monasterio de las hermanas benedictinas de Hurtebise. Otro lugar que ha hecho y hace eco a la TdL es el Centre AVEC, el cual mantiene una reflexión y un compromiso constante con el mundo de los pobres y las grandes causas sociales de hoy y se hace caja de resonancia de las iglesias y de los movimientos sociales del sur (www.centreavec.be).

En la Facultad de teología de Lovaina la Nueva¹¹ un curso cíclico sobre la teología extra-europea se ofrece a los estudiantes; un lugar está reservado para la TdL. El año 2013, los archivos de J. Broucker sobre don Helder Câmara se incorporaron a la Facultad durante una jornada de estudio sobre la participación de los obispos latinoamericanos en el Concilio Vaticano II¹². En lado flamenco, la Facultad de teología de Lovaina existe un *Centro de la teología de la liberación* fundado por el jesuita G. de Schrijver (1935-2016) y actualmente dirigido por J. Haers sj. Es un centro muy activo, que atrae a muchos estudiantes y que tiene un

⁹ *La Bible : un livre... des lectures*, con T. TILQUIN *Lumen Vitae*, Bruxelles, 1999 ; *S'interroger sur la résurrection de Jésus*, *Lumen Vitae*, Bruxelles, 2001 ; *Qu'as-tu fait de ton frère ? Violence et Bible*, con J. DEWEZ, *Lumen Vitae*, Bruxelles, 2004 ;

¹⁰ *Enterrée, la Doctrine sociale de l'Eglise*, con I. BERTEN y L. MARTINEZ, *Lumen Vitae*, Bruxelles, 2010 ; *Quand la Bible parle de Pardon*, *Fidélité*, Namur, 2013 ; *Des femmes audacieuses de la Bible*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2017.

¹¹ C. SAPPRIA – P. SERVAIS (éd.), *Les relations de Louvain avec l'Amérique latine. Entre évangélisation, théologie de la libération et mouvements étudiants*, Academia Bruyland, 2006.

¹² COLLECTIF, *Vatican II et l'Amérique latine, Cahiers internationaux de théologie pratique*, série Actes n°10 (2016).

fondo bibliográfico considerable sobre la TdL. Un número importante de tesis doctorales versan sobre el pensamiento de teólogos de la liberación.

En el nivel de la divulgación, las ediciones *Lumen Vitae* han hecho eco a la TdL. Entre sus colecciones, varios libros llevan la mirada de la Iglesia del sur; la colección *Sens et foi* [Sentido y fe] alberga, por ejemplo, varias guías de lectura de la Biblia en comunidad que siguen el método de la lectura popular de Biblia. Por otra parte, entre los años 1964 y 2006, la revista *Espérance des pauvres* [Esperanza de los pobres] fue un lugar de resonancia de las luchas y los compromisos de la Iglesia liberadora en América latina y el mundo; lo mismo se puede decir de la revista *Alternatives Sud* del centro Tricontinental de Lovaina. Recientemente, Ediciones Lessius, que pertenece a la provincia jesuita, publicó un *Diccionario histórico de la teología de la liberación*, que es un libro de referencia. La misma editora ha publicado diversos autores latinoamericanos (S. Arnold, J. Sobrino, J.C. Scannone).

Entre los actores belgas, la figura del recientemente fallecido François Houtart (1925-2017) es una referencia de la TdL. Él ha sido el fundador del *Centro Tricontinental* (www.cetri.be/), de la revista *Alternatives Sur* y uno de los fundadores del Foro social mundial; el año 2010 se radicó en Ecuador. El dominico Ignace Berten¹³ (1940-) es otro actor importante de la TdL en Bélgica. Fue uno de los profesores de la sección *Desarrollo y Liberación* en *Lumen Vitae* y uno de los animadores en el Seminario cardinal Cardijn y del CEFOC. Otro teólogo de los más cercanos a la TdL es Jacques van Nieuwenhove (1927-); su tesis en la Universidad de Estrasburgo trata de *la relación entre fe y praxis en la teología de la liberación de América Latina*. Fue director de la sección *Desarrollo y Liberación* de *Lumen Vitae*; después partió como profesor a la Universidad Católica de Lovaina y luego a la Universidad Católica de Nimega (Holanda). Estuvo presente en Puebla (1979) y en Santo Domingo (1992). El jesuita Paul Tihon (1930-) desempeñó un papel prominente entre los teólogos belgas sensibles a la TdL; también fue profesor en *Lumen Vitae*. Pero, sin lugar a duda, José Comblin (1923-2010) es el teólogo belga de la liberación más emblemático, aunque su trabajo se desarrolló fundamentalmente en Brasil. En las generaciones más jóvenes de los jesuitas belgas, Martin Maier –alemán él mismo– miembro de la comunidad jesuita europea en Bruselas, es un gran promotor de la TdL

¹³ *Christ pour les pauvres*, Cerf, Paris, 1989 ; *Le rendez-vous de Saint Domingue*, con R. Luneau, Centurion, Paris, 1991 ; *Croire en un Dieu trinitaire*, Fidélité, Namur, 2008 ; *Les divorcés remariés peuvent-ils communier. Enjeux ecclésiastiques...*, Lessius, Namur, 2017.

y de la memoria de los mártires del Salvador¹⁴ ; lo mismo que Thierry Monfils, quien es un promotor del compromiso con los pobres en la línea de J. Wresinski, fundador de ATD Cuarto mundo¹⁵.

La situación actual

En la actualidad, la recepción de la TdL y la práctica pastoral de la iglesia de los pobres en las iglesias francófonas es bastante limitada. Si durante los años setenta y ochenta, la TdL y la lucha de la iglesia de América Latina contó con el apoyo de una parte importante del mundo francófono, que reiteradamente expresó su solidaridad con las iglesias hermanas y los teólogos del continente, desde principios del decenio de los 90, el olvido se instaló. Las filas de los católicos “comprometidos” envejecieron y se desalentaron a causa de las opciones tomadas por las autoridades eclesiásticas. Aun así, muchos militantes de la primera hora, cercanos a las opciones de la TdL, continúan reuniéndose en organizaciones alternativas y periféricas de la iglesia.

En un contexto eclesial difícil¹⁶, la llamada “generación Juan Pablo II” de sacerdotes y obispos se aferra a un modelo eclesial autorreferencial bastante impermeable a la eclesiología del Vaticano II, especialmente de la *Gaudium et Spes*, de una Iglesia servidora de la humanidad y atenta a los signos de los tiempos y aún más de la Iglesia de los pobres. Amparada en una supuesta escasez de sacerdotes, las diócesis francófonas se llenan de sacerdotes africanos o de las nuevas comunidades, con el fin de mantener una vida eclesial bastante clerical centrada en la celebración de los sacramentos.

Algunas congregaciones más antiguas (jesuitas, dominicos, franciscanos, etc.) son lugares en donde la TdL sigue presente, especialmente gracias a su presencia transcontinental y al regreso de los misioneros. Al contrario, las nuevas comunidades que provienen del modelo de la “nueva evangelización” se alinean más bien en torno a una espiritualidad vuelta al pasado, buscan restaurar antiguas prácticas de piedad (EG 94), sucumben a la rutina pastoral (EG 81-83) o, peor aún, a la mundanidad espiritual (EG 207). Otras, se abocan a la implementación de proyectos pastorales inviables debido a su lejanía con la realidad, o se encierran en guetos católicos que sueñan con la reconquista de un mundo católico que no volverá (EG 82).

¹⁴ Oscar Romero. *Prophète d'une Église des pauvres*, Fidelité, Namur, 2016.

¹⁵ Le Père Joseph Wresinski. *Sacerdoce et amour des pauvres*, Lessius, Namur, 2017.

¹⁶ Según el directorio Pontificio 2017, el porcentaje de católicos europeos pasó entre 2010 y 2015 de 23.8% a 22.2% del total de católicos.

Por otra parte, el contexto social y político europeo ha consolidado un cliché que ubica a los cristianos como parte de las fuerzas más conservadoras de la sociedad, muy alejadas de la concepción progresista de la misma. De este modo, muy pocos movimientos progresistas buscan inspiración en las fuentes cristianas y difícilmente se identifican con las opciones católicas. Sin embargo, hay excepciones. En el medio obrero, por ejemplo, la JOC –cuyo fundador es el sacerdote belga Joseph Cardijn– y los sindicatos cristianos han jugado y juegan todavía un rol social mayor en la defensa de los derechos de los trabajadores. En Francia, un espacio de compromiso cristiano liberador es el movimiento *Réseau du Parvis* [Red del Atrio] que aglutina diversas agrupaciones cristianas y no cristianas que trabajan por un mundo más justo y fraterno, por ejemplo, con una práctica de acogida e integración de los refugiados y de las personas LGTB (www.reseaux-parvis.fr). Otro lugar actual de reflexión y compromiso es el *Centro Lebret*, hoy llamado *Desarrollo y comunicaciones Lebret-Irfed*, que integra la red internacional por una economía humana y levanta su voz en defensa de los pequeños y la salvaguarda de la Creación (www.lebret-irfed.org). Lo mismo acontece con el equipo en torno al CERAS [Centro de investigación y de acción social] que es un lugar de reflexión y compromiso desde los pobres y los marginados (<http://www.ceras-projet.org>).

Hoy en día, la opción por los pobres se encuentra ampliamente aceptada y reconocida como parte del patrimonio de la Iglesia universal, pero su comprensión permanece vinculada principalmente a ser un capítulo más de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia y en la práctica, como sinónimo de la asistencia caritativa. La liberación de los pobres en el sentido de los cambios estructurales no forma parte del compromiso prioritario de la mayoría de los católicos¹⁷. Por ejemplo, algunos se comprometen con la causa de la ecología; sin embargo, habitualmente, dicho compromiso no tiene en cuenta las problemáticas planteadas por *Laudato Si'*, que, siguiendo la reflexión de la eco-teología latinoamericana, enlaza el grito de la tierra con el grito de los pobres (LS 49,53).

En general, en la Europa de habla francesa, la teología latinoamericana es bien acogida y los teólogos de la liberación son bienvenidos y a menudo invitados a tomar la palabra en coloquios o como profesores visitantes en programas de formación de diversas instituciones.

¹⁷ En las recientes elecciones presidenciales en Francia (2017), dos tercios de los católicos practicantes votaron por los partidos de derecha o de extrema derecha (67%), entre los practicantes ocasionales y no practicantes el porcentaje cae a 55 % y 42 % respectivamente (La Croix, 24 abril 2017).

Sin embargo, a nivel de la disciplina teológica propiamente tal, la TdL permanece clasificada como una hija de la teología pastoral o de la DSI; todavía no ha sido reconocida en su condición de ser un verdadero “acto teológico”. De hecho, es sorprendente que en su reciente libro, que recorre la historia de la teología señalando los grandes “actos teológicos” a lo largo de los siglos¹⁸, el teólogo francés B. Sesboüé se detiene en Karl Rahner, ignorando completamente la voluminosa producción de la TdL. El paralelo y la proximidad entre lo vivido por la *Nouvelle théologie*, que es la fuente del Vaticano, y la TdL, como la fruto del Concilio, no llama la atención del teólogo.

Conclusión

La recepción de la TdL en Europa francófona es muy limitada. De un entusiasmo inicial durante las décadas de los años 70 y 80, pasó a ser la gran olvidada de la década de los 90. En el plano teológico, se conserva un eco del conflicto alrededor de las dos instrucciones del Vaticano; pero fundamentalmente, se percibe como un hecho del pasado. Sus opciones hermenéuticas, salvo excepciones, no tuvieron recepción en la investigación y el pensamiento de los teólogos, que permanecen encerrados en una teología más bien academicista, deductiva y sin anclaje ni en la acción pastoral ni en el compromiso en el mundo y los grandes desafíos sociales relacionados con la suerte de los pobres.

En el nivel de práctica pastoral, algunas iglesias locales han buscado dialogar con las iglesias del sur y sus opciones liberadoras; pero son una minoría. Atrapadas en una lógica Norte-Sur, las iglesias de Europa mantienen aún una relación asimétrica con aquellas del sur, que son vistas principalmente como iglesias económicamente pobres y necesitadas de ayuda material, pero sin nada que aportar a nivel teológico y pastoral a las iglesias del Norte, salvo un reservorio de sacerdotes para asegurar las misas en las antiguas metrópolis.

Si durante los años 70 y 80 se vio proliferar las comunidades de base y las redes que se alimentaban de la teología liberadora, estos grupos han envejecido sin lograr adaptarse a las nuevas circunstancias y

¹⁸ E. SESBOÜÉ, *L'acte théologique*, Lessius, Namur/Paris, 2017. El autor define el acto teológico como: «un quehacer, un primer acto, una creación. Cuando ocurre algo que no existía. Cuando un autor, por la calidad de su trabajo, hace avanzar la inteligencia teológica sobre un punto hasta ahora incierto o controvertido. El descubrimiento de un desplazamiento y de una problemática nueva que cambian la situación anterior y abren caminos hasta ahora desconocidos. El progreso es tan claro que se impone y provoca, de inmediato o poco a poco, una amplia unanimidad» (p. 6).

terminaron agotándose y aislados, sin contacto relevante con la sociedad civil y los movimientos sociales. Sin embargo, estas pequeñas comunidades han logrado continuar siendo un lugar de compromiso y de esperanza a lo largo de todos estos años; hoy día, retoman aliento y se entusiasman, pero en un contexto eclesial tan adverso, les resulta difícil volver al dinamismo de antaño.

La elección del papa Francisco ha significado un bálsamo para todas estas experiencias inspiradas en la teología de la liberación y el renacimiento del interés por la TdL y la praxis de la Iglesia de los pobres en América Latina. Los innumerables gestos y palabras del Papa recuerdan que otra manera de ser Iglesia y vivir el Evangelio es posible, y que la tradición de la recepción postconciliar, hecha por el TdL y una porción profética de la Iglesia de América Latina –las minorías abrahámicas, de don Helder Câmara–, muestra un camino de futuro para la Iglesia universal. La opción por los pobres, la corresponsabilidad en la Iglesia, la ministerialidad de los laicos, el compromiso liberador... se convierten en temas que interpelan la praxis de la Iglesia y la reflexión teológica de algunos pastores y teólogos francófonos. Pero esto sigue siendo periférico.

Abstract

This contribution discusses the reception of Liberation Theology in France and Belgium. An inventory of institutions, people and activities related to this reception is created for each of the countries. As for the current situation, a significant setback must be recognized, due in many cases to a new ecclesiastical policy since the 1980s. Despite the new winds in the Church under the pontificate of Francis, up to the present, the acceptance of liberation theology, particularly in academic contexts, is very poor.

Resumen

Esta contribución examina la recepción de la Teología de la Liberación en Francia y en Bélgica. Se crea un inventario de instituciones, personas y actividades relacionadas con esta recepción, separado por países. En cuanto a la situación actual, se debe reconocer un retroceso significativo, debido en muchos casos, a una nueva política intraeclesial a partir de los años 1980. A pesar de los nuevos vientos en la Iglesia bajo el pontificado de Francisco, hasta el presente, la aceptación de la teología de la liberación, particularmente en contextos académicos, es muy pobre.



Theology of liberation or Liberation of theology?

Three chronicles

Frei Bento DOMINGUES, O.P.

Abstract:

The author divides his contribution into three successive “chronicles”, referring to different aspects. The first is the reference to the authoritarian heritage that the Catholic Church received from the late nineteenth century, Vatican I Council and its pontifical infallibility. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, theology was very creative and renewing, seeing itself crowned by the surprise of the convocation and the celebration of Vatican II, nowadays re-taken up by Pope Francis. In the second chronicle, on the background of the evolution of culture (three books, one of literature, one of biblical commentary, other one of current science) evaluates the distance and the lack of communication between the modern cultural world and the Church and its official theology, even under a Pope whom the author describes as “a resistant and practitioner of the theology of liberation and of liberation of the theology.” In the third chronicle he focuses concretely on the impact of liberation theology in Portugal. Even in spite of the ecclesial winter that also reigned in the Church of Portugal and its peculiar and agitated political history (April 25 Revolution), it had been present mainly outside the Academy, in the ISET of the religious Congregations. Even without the name, those theological contributions were truly liberation theology, according to Clodovis Boff.

Resumo:

O autor divide sua contribuição em três «crônicas» sucessivas, se referindo a aspetos diferentes. Na primeira toma como ponto de partida a referência à herança autoritária que a Igreja Católica recebeu do final do século XIX, o Vaticano I e a infalibilidade pontifícia, mas na primeira metade do século XX a teologia foi muito criativa e renovadora, se

vendo coroada pela surpresa da convocação e a celebração do Vaticano II, hoje retomada pelo papa Francisco. Na segunda crónica, sobre o pano de fundo da evolução da cultura (três livros, um de literatura, outro de tema bíblico, outro de ciência atual) avalia a distância e a incomunicação entre o mundo cultural moderno e a Igreja e sua teologia oficial, mesmo sob um Papa que o autor qualifica como «praticante e resistente da teologia da libertação e da libertação da teologia». Na terceira crónica se centra no impacto da teologia da libertação em Portugal. Mesmo a pesar do inverno eclesial que também reinou na Igreja de Portugal e sua peculiar e agitada história política (a Revolução do 25 de abril), teve sua presença sobre todo fora da Academia, no ISET das Congregações religiosas. Mesmo sem o nome, aquelas contribuições eran verdadeiramente teologia da libertação.

First chronicle: 12.11.2017

1. The XX century, when the persistent fights of the catholic theology that crossed it are observed, has shown it could not live with the authoritarian heritage of the XIX century settled by Pius IX, Vatican I and by the incomprehensible Papal infallibility. The idea from those who thought that from that moment on faith expressions were adequately formulated to face the modern times did not succeed. The ecclesiastic councils did not have a reason to be and the theologians could go on vacations.

That did not happen. That illusion forgot that the true energy of the Christian faith does not paralyse the cognitive and affection activities of the human being. It is not a sedative even less an anaesthesia. It is a vital boost and a new lucidity in the daily life heart. It is from the meeting of its flame with the inedited happenings that emerged the theological co-agitation and the light to its spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political liberation practices. Christianity shows its fidelity to the heaven and earth when it respects and feeds the originality of each of the multi-faceted dimensions of reality.

From the theological point of view, it should not be forgotten that the first half of the 20th century was constituted by one of the most innovating times. That innovation was a result of the new ways of biblical exegesis, of the Church Fathers' rediscovery, the historical analysis of the ecumenical councils, the unknown ways of liturgy, summarizing, from the meeting with the testimonies of the most genuine sources and much ignored forms of the different paths of Christian faith. Those were not tours to a museum of dead antiquities. The discovery of the lively

plurality and turbulence of the past opened the path to new experiences and movements.

The ecumenical, missionary and pastoral experiences and the ones from the encounter with a world where Churches were no longer commanding, demanded the faith intelligence to be more interrogative, more restless, more unsettled by the two world war upheavals. Theology had to abandon the world of abstraction and come to the specificities, to the human, daily realities. Mission places were no longer far away. However, apart from outstanding exceptions, the ideological blindness of the big lords of the Church institutions preferred condemnation to dialogue.

2. After so many Roman condemnations of the movements, the innovative experiments and the most creative theologians, and when many Catholics thought that there was no longer hope in Church renovation, on October 28, 1959 a man born in 1881 was elected Pope. His name was Angelo Roncalli. After the general surprise, it was thought it was an emergency exit until a safer guide was found for difficult and complex times.

In fact, John XXIII knew different realities, the internal Church happenings in the XIX and XX centuries and its difficulties in the relationship with the contemporary world. He did not present himself with any saviour roadmap. While shaving his beard he had the idea of an ecumenical council, as he liked to say to hide his divine clairvoyant.

He did not write a single line of liberation theology, but at that moment, he started the liberation of the Church and the liberation of theology in the world. I remember this because we are facing several organized movements that would like that the Catholic Church go back to the times before Vatican II. They do not tolerate that Pope Francis, after a long winter, returns to the springtime of John XXIII.

3. Currently the Catholic University and the Theology Faculty are celebrating 50 years. My congratulations!

A qualified delegation went to the Holy See. To the salutation of the Grand Chancellor, Manuel Clemente cardinal, the Pope replied with an incise interpellation and an appeal that originated in an interrogation that must oblige, professors and students, to a serious exam about the orientation that they are following. What do you search for? A career or a higher capacity to serve the poorest? ¹

¹ Audience with the Community of the Catholic University of Portugal, 26.10.2017 <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/10/26/171026c.html> (20.12.2017).

“It is right for us to ask ourselves: How do we help our students not to regard a university degree as synonymous with greater position, as synonymous with more money or greater social prestige? They are not synonymous. Do we help this preparation to be seen as a sign of a greater responsibility in relation to today’s problems, the needs of the poorest, and care for the environment? It is not enough to analyse and describe reality; it is necessary to generate space for real research, debates that generate alternatives for today’s problems. How important it is to be practical!”

In his speech, the Pope seems to have an obsession to come down to the reality: “I wished to remember here the principle being incarnated in the skin of our people. Their issues challenge us; their struggles, dreams and concerns have a hermeneutical value that we cannot ignore if we truly wish to follow the principle of incarnation. Our God chose this path: He was incarnated in this world, marked by conflicts, injustices and violence, full of hopes and dreams. We have no other place to find it if it is not in our real world, in your real Portugal, in your towns and villages, in your village. God is saving there.”

Bergoglio did not forget an even more global interrogation: what does the Catholic University exist for? Which interests does it serve?

“By nature and mission you are a university, that is, you embrace the universe of knowledge in its human and divine meaning, to guarantee that outlook of universality without which reason, resigned to partial models, renounces its highest aspiration: the search for the truth. In view of the greatness of its knowledge and its power, reason yields to the pressure of interests and the attraction of utility, eventually acknowledging it as the ultimate criterion.”

“But when human beings surrender to the blind forces of the subconscious, of immediate needs, of selfishness, then their freedom sickens. 'In this sense, we stand naked and exposed in the face of our ever-increasing power, lacking the wherewithal to control it. We have certain superficial mechanisms, but we cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and a spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint' ”. ²

In Portugal, the academic theology did not have the problems that I enunciated in the beginning of the chronicle. It was in a fasting period since 1911 until 1968. But this is not all. I will be back to this question.

² Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 105.

Second chronicle: 19.11.2017

1. Recently, I received three books from three renowned Portuguese authors. One is from António Lobo Antunes, other from Frederico Lourenço and the third one from António Damásio. One belongs to the literary world, the other to the enlargement of our biblical world, and the third one to scientific research. No one writes like Lobo Antunes, no one dares what Frederico Lourenço does, and the scientific anthropology, philosophical and wisdom of António Damásio is the script and the map that were missing to the fascinating trip to the life roots, sentiments and human cultures. It shows us how and why “the human being always end up by depending from the affections machinery and their connections with reason. There is no escape to that conditions”.

Knowing that machinery helps us to not be blind while driving other blind people for the individual and collective disaster. The research that aims to know who we are, how we are, who could we and should be, requires the cooperation of all sciences and wisdoms. The cooperation culture is an enlightened path so we can be get free from selfishness, the public and private enemy of the present and future of mankind.

It has been repeated over and over that science and technology can be used to improve our future – its potential still remains extraordinary – or can represent our destruction. On the other hand, it can be continued to develop the idea that the human being is a useless passion that should be replaced by anything cleaner, more intelligent and more profitable. This post-human thing is already configured, but I still do not know to whom.

I have highlighted the new book of this Portuguese researcher, living in the USA, because, in the first place, I need him – maybe I am not the only one – to understand “The strange order of the things” in the evident disorder of the world.

In the end, he expresses an attitude that is essential to the liberation of theology. I gave myself permission to transcribe: “First, and having in account the vast new and powerful scientific discoveries, it is easy to fall in the temptation to believe in certainties and premature interpretations that time will mercilessly reject. I am ready to defend my current vision about the feelings biology, of conciseness and culture mid roots, but I have no illusions about the durability of that vision. Secondly, even though it is possible to speak with a certain trust about the characteristic and functioning of living organisms and its evolution, and even though it is possible to place the beginning of the Universe about 13 billion years ago, we do not have any satisfactory scientific script about the meaning

and origin of the universe, this means, we do not have theory of all that is about us. This serves to remind us that our efforts are modest and hesitant, and that we should be opened and sensitive when we decide to approach the unknown”.³

2. If the Church leadership, the theologians, the priests and the catechist ministries would have had this careful way of pure common sense they would have avoided, to the Christian communities, plenty of fake problems in the field of cultural creation, sciences, pastoral work and ethics. They would have not taken attitudes and decisions that could stop a virtuous opening to the future, to the unpredicted and the unpredictable.

This is noticed in different domains, but it became a tragedy that is deepened and widens, day after day, in respect to the “ordained ministries” of singles and married, and above all to the declaration that women can never receive the Holy Order of Ordination. It could be questioned how could we know so much about the future and so little about the present?

Church functional institutions have been configured for certain social and cultural contexts that cannot have eternity guarantees. Not having this in account, pastoral life was left in a no way out, paralysed. Christ’s warnings have been abandoned: “new wine into new wineskins”; “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”. Saint Paul did not forget: “It is for freedom that Christ set us free”. While the question and the history of liberation theology are very important, I repeat that it is even more important to set free theology from ideology, the distorted vision of fidelity mixed with the repetition of the pre-defined, pre-known and the always prayed, as it was in the beginning, now and forever for the century of the centuries.⁴

One of the medieval models of the theology practice, that have always delighted me, was connected to the systematic questioning, this means, to the disputed questions (*quaestiones disputatae*). Moreover, Thomas Aquinas, was deeply marked by the negative theology, that had nothing of a nihilist. Any affirmation had to be accompanied with a denial. After describing his theory of the theological knowledge and showing the reasonability of God existence affirmation, he says it would

³ António Damásio, *A Estranha Ordem das Coisas*, Círculo de Leitores, 2017, pp. 331-332.

⁴ To whom that wish to know how theology narrow minded in the mid of last century, read the impressive, *Journal d’un théologien (1946-1956)*, Yves Congar, Cerf, 2000.

be normal that he would have tried to find how God is, but that would not be a way, as we can only know how He is not. This is one theology that set us free from our divinity concepts. ⁵

It was the time in theology of combining audacity with modest virtue in its practice. Thomas Aquinas knew how to unite what other would separate: looking to understand to believe and believe to understand.

3. When I am questioned, what was the role of liberation theology in Portugal, I have to take several aspects to answer. As I have mentioned before, between 1911 and 1968, the academic theology was on fasting period. It is not an interpretation. It is a fact. In the vast majority, theology of the seminars was imported, the justification of what was told to believe and think, it prepared priests. Fr. Joaquim Alves Correia was a freelancer theologian. He testified *The Greatness of God's Kingdom*, that gave him troubles, given the narrow minded dominant ideology.

There is an abundant historical research about the relationship between Church and “Estado Novo” and the catholic world that questioned it. In this research, liberation theology or the liberation of theology are not mentioned, but both existed with the limits that the ecclesial and political circumstances dictated. The knowledge of their paths, however, has to be left for another chronicle.

Today, I cannot forget that Pope Francis, the practitioner and resistant of the theology of liberation and the liberation of theology, has set the World Day of the Poor. It happens this Sunday. If the poorest are not in the mass, it is because it was stolen from them.

Third Chronicle: 26.11.2017

1. After the two previous chronicles, it matters to answer the question was on its origin and I tried to answer: what was the impact of the Theology of Liberation (TdL) in Portugal?

The Peruvian Gustavo Gutiérrez, considered the father of the TdL, explained, many times, how it was born and developed. For him, the years from 1965 to 1968 were the most decisive ones in the experience of Latin American popular movements and in the Christian participation in those movements. TdL has its roots there. The famous Medellín Conference (Colombia 1968) assumed one of the tasks that John XXIII had proposed to the Vatican II: the cause of the poor. The central topic of the Conference ended up to be formulated as: *the Vatican II Church in the Latin American reality*.

⁵ *Summa Theologiae*, q. III, Foreword.

In TdL there are two central intuitions that have been, even chronologically, the first ones: the theological method and the perspective of the poor. The first act is the compromise with the liberation process; theology rises from there as a second act, served by the human and social sciences. It is the critical reflection made upon and based on the historical praxis in confrontation with God's Word. This one is received in faith that comes to us from multiple and sometime historical ambiguous mediations, that matters to redo in the daily life. ⁶

The leaders of the Latin America Church did what should have been done in all continents. Vatican II worked on the turnaround of the Church's role in the contemporary world. Local churches had the role to confront themselves with what meant that turnaround. This task demanded the happening of mini-Vaticans II in accordance with the people and culture diversity, making the Council truly ecumenical.

2. In Portugal, as has been shown later by the President of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, Manuel de Almeida Trindade, the Vatican II was not prepared, was not followed and because of these there were no people or groups that were connected to this revolution. As Cardinal Cerejeira used to say we were already much more advanced that it was said at that time, discussed and decided in this conciliar assembly. There were evident gains: the translation of the liturgical books and in the Eucharistic celebration the priest had already abandoned the back position for the people.

The important was to stop any interrogations, discussions, debates. On the other hand, the political censure regime was sufficient to preserve the country of that contagion. The inertia of the Portuguese Church leadership could only be thankful.

It cannot be forgotten that the situation of the country, on a national and international level, was complicated and it got worse during the conciliar time: three war fronts ⁷, an increasing immigration and a youth without any perspectives. These are topics saturated with different analyses and there are plenty of studies about the relationship between the Church and the Estado Novo.

Nearly everywhere, the traditional Catholicism entered in crisis. Not because of the Council, as it has been said many times, but because even to the Vatican level, there was no practical answer to achieve the

⁶ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *La fuerza histórica de los pobres*, CEP, Lima, 1980.

⁷ Cf. António Lobo Antunes, *Até Que As Pedras Se Tornem Mais Leves Que A Água*, D. Quixote, 2017; Isto não é uma crónica, é um vômito de indignação, in Visão (08.06.2017).

conciliar guidelines. Some authoritarian measures, among which the ones related to the matrimonial ethic, the ordained ministries and the women, avoided that the Vatican II would go through its springtime. The following winter was very tough.

Portugal, besides suffering what other Churches suffered, was not ready, nor even had resources to face the originality of our difficulties. The Catholic Action entered in an irreversible crisis and the movements that meanwhile appeared were not worried with the future of Vatican II.

With April 25, 1974, the catholic militants, all of them with their own preferences, were interested above all with the social and political dimensions of the country. There were not, in the interior of the Church, spaces and means to feed the Faith in a new context. The so-called Catholicism Losers and the non-cult practising Catholics became a common designation.

3. Still the answer to the main question is lacking: what was the impact of the Liberation Theology in Portugal?

A well-documented and comprehensive answer is not for the dimensions of this chronicle.⁸ It is important to clarify that the situation lived in Portugal, when the Liberation Theology was born in Latin America, was, as mentioned, of political and ecclesial oppression. However, a small miracle happened within non-academic theology. The Religious Congregations (after that some Seminars too) got together to create the Instituto de Estudos Teológicos (ISET), following what had been initiated in Fátima (Sedes Sapientiae and ISTA). It had many different realizations in different cities of the country, but I only worked in the one of Lisbon. It was a theological school, profoundly democratic in its internal way of functioning, in a country of political and religious dictatorship.

Its program was elaborated to concretize the orientations of Vatican II. Above all it was not to explain its documents. The goal was much more ambitious: integrate in the theological reflection not only the human sciences, but the life of the country pulsing in its all transformation and complexity. It assumed the questions of war and peace, the fast transformation in the world of work and in the rural desertification. It

⁸ Cf. Frei Bento Domingues, O.P., *Alguns estilos de prática extra-universitária em Portugal. Breves notas de leitura*, in *Didaskalia XLVI* (2016) II, pp. 91-97; Catarina Silva Nunes, *Compromissos incontestados. A auto-representação dos intelectuais católicos portugueses*, Paulinas, 2005; Moisés Lemos Martins, *Os dominicanos e o ensino da Teologia em Portugal*, in *A restauração da Província Dominicana em Portugal*, Tenacitas 2012, pp. 105-120; Cf. Tb. *Teologia da Libertação e prática da Teologia*, Número especial de Igreja e Missão, nº 127 (1985).

built a new theology characterised by what was happening and by the “signs of the times”, in an attempt to prepare students and professors to discern what was demanded from the Church in our changing country.

Clodovis Boff, examining what was being done in ISED, testified in its Bulletin, concluded that apart from the name, the problematic and the method were the ones followed in the Latin America with the name of Liberation Theology.

The ISET of Lisbon functioned from 1967 until 1975. It started in the dictatorship and it was closed when freedom arrived to Portugal. An ecclesiastic campaign, accusing this theological centre from lack of orthodoxy, served to force its students to enrol in the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University, that was still incipient.

I remembered those past times, but what interests me is the reopened future by Pope Francis, dreamt and worked by many that could not have seen this new hope.

Translation: Adelaide Miranda





Teologia da libertação ou libertação da teologia?

Três crônicas

Frei Bento DOMINGUES, O.P.

Primeira crônica: 12.11.2017

1. O séc. XX, quando se observam as persistentes lutas da teologia católica que o percorreram, mostrou que não conseguiu conviver com a herança autoritária do séc. XIX, traçada por Pio IX, pelo Vaticano I e pela enigmática infalibilidade pontifícia. Não vingou a ideia dos que julgavam que, a partir daquele momento, as expressões da fé ficavam adequadamente formuladas para enfrentar os tempos modernos. Os concílios eclesiásticos deixavam de ter razão de ser e os teólogos podiam ir para férias.

Não foi o que aconteceu. Essa ilusão esquecia que a verdadeira energia da fé cristã não paralisa as actividades cognitivas e afectivas do ser humano. Não é um calmante e muito menos uma anestesia. É um impulso vital e uma nova lucidez no coração do quotidiano. É do encontro da sua chama com os acontecimentos inéditos que nasce a co-agitação teológica e a luz para as suas práticas de libertação espiritual, cultural, económica, social e política. Ao respeitar e alimentar a originalidade de cada uma dessas dimensões da realidade, sempre multifacetada, o cristianismo manifesta a sua fidelidade ao céu e à terra.

Não se deve esquecer que a primeira metade do séc. XX foi constituída por um dos tempos mais inovadores sob o ponto de vista teológico. Essa inovação foi o fruto das novas formas de exegese bíblica, de redescobertas dos Padres da Igreja, da análise da história dos concílios ecuménicos, das formas desconhecidas da liturgia, em suma, do encontro com os testemunhos das fontes mais genuínas e muito ignoradas dos diversos percursos da fé cristã. Não eram visitas guiadas a um museu de antiguidades mortas. A descoberta da pluralidade viva e turbulenta do passado abria o caminho a novas experiências e movimentos.

As experiências ecuménicas, missionárias, pastorais e as do encontro com um mundo no qual as Igrejas já não mandavam, obrigaram a

inteligência da fé a tornar-se mais interrogativa, mais inquieta, mais agitada pelas convulsões de duas grandes guerras mundiais. A teologia tinha de abandonar o mundo das abstrações e descer ao concreto, às realidades terrestres, humanas. As terras de missão já não ficavam longe. Mas a cegueira ideológica dos grandes senhores das instituições da Igreja, salvo fantásticas excepções, preferia condenar a dialogar.

2. Depois de tantas condenações romanas que atingiram os movimentos, as experiências inovadoras e os teólogos mais criativos e, quando muitos católicos pensavam que já não havia esperança na renovação da Igreja, foi eleito Papa, a 28 de Outubro de 1959, um homem nascido em 1881. Chamava-se Angello Roncalli. Depois da surpresa geral, julgou-se que era uma saída de emergência até se encontrar um guia seguro para tempos difíceis e complexos.

De facto, João XXIII conhecia muitos mundos, as peripécias internas da Igreja dos séculos XIX e XX e as suas dificuldades de relacionamento com o mundo contemporâneo. Não se apresentou com nenhum programa salvador. Ao fazer a barba, lembrou-se de convocar um concílio ecuménico, como gostava de dizer para ocultar a sua divina clarividência.

Não escreveu nenhuma linha da teologia da libertação, mas começou, nesse momento, a libertação da Igreja e a libertação da teologia no mundo actual. Lembro isto porque estamos confrontados com vários movimentos organizados para que a orientação da Igreja católica regresse aos tempos anteriores ao prodigioso Vaticano II. Também são activos em Portugal e, nomeadamente, em Fátima. Não toleram que o Papa Francisco, depois de um longo inverno, retome a primavera de João XXIII.

3. Estão a ser celebrados os 50 anos da Universidade Católica e da sua Faculdade de Teologia. Os meus parabéns!

Uma qualificada representação deslocou-se à Sé de Pedro. O Papa respondeu à saudação do *Grão-Chanceler*, cardeal Manuel Clemente, com uma incisiva interpelação e um apelo que nascem de uma interrogação que deve obrigar, professores e alunos, a um exame sério acerca da orientação que estão a seguir. Que procuram? Uma carreira ou uma maior capacidade de servir os mais pobres?¹

«É justo que nos interroguemos: Como ajudamos os nossos alunos a não olhar um grau universitário como sinónimo de maior posição, sinónimo de mais dinheiro ou maior prestígio social? Não são sinónimos.

¹ Discurso do Papa Francisco à comunidade da Universidade Católica Portuguesa por ocasião do 50º aniversário da sua instituição.

Ajudamos a ver esta preparação como sinal de maior responsabilidade perante os problemas de hoje, perante o cuidado do mais pobre, perante o cuidado do meio ambiente? Não basta realizar análises, descrições da realidade; é necessário gerar espaços de verdadeira pesquisa, debates que gerem alternativas para os problemas de hoje. Como é necessário descer ao concreto!»

O Papa, na sua intervenção, parece que tem a obsessão de voltar sempre ao concreto: «Quería aqui lembrar o princípio da encarnação na pele do nosso povo. As suas perguntas ajudam-nos a questionar-nos; as suas batalhas, sonhos e preocupações possuem um valor hermenêutico que não podemos ignorar, se quisermos deveras levar a cabo o princípio da encarnação. O nosso Deus escolheu este caminho: encarnou-Se neste mundo, atravessado por conflitos, injustiças e violências, atravessado por esperanças e sonhos. Por conseguinte não temos outro lugar onde O procurar a não ser no nosso mundo concreto, no vosso Portugal concreto, nas vossas cidades e aldeias, no vosso povo». É aí que Ele está a salvar.

Bergoglio não se esqueceu de uma interrogação ainda mais global: para que existe a Universidade Católica? Que interesses serve?

«Por natureza e missão, *sois universidade*, isto é, abraçais o universo do saber no seu significado humano e divino, para garantir aquele olhar de universalidade sem o qual a razão, resignada com modelos parciais, renuncia à sua aspiração mais alta: a de buscar a verdade. À vista da grandeza do seu saber e do seu poder, a razão cede perante a pressão dos interesses e a atracção da utilidade, acabando por a reconhecer como seu último critério.

«Mas, quando o ser humano se entrega às forças cegas do inconsciente, das necessidades imediatas, do egoísmo, então a sua liberdade adoce. “Neste sentido, ele está nu e exposto frente ao seu próprio poder que continua a crescer, sem ter os instrumentos para o controlar. Talvez disponha de mecanismos superficiais, mas podemos afirmar que carece de uma ética sólida, uma cultura e uma espiritualidade que lhe ponham realmente um limite e o contenham dentro dum lúcido domínio de si²».

A teologia académica, em Portugal, não teve os problemas que enunciei no começo desta crónica. Esteve em jejum desde 1911 até 1968. Mas não é tudo. Voltarei a esta questão

² Francisco, *Laudato si'*, 105

Segunda crónica: 19. 11. 2017

1. Recebi, recentemente, três obras de três consagrados autores portugueses. Uma é de António Lobo Antunes, outra de Frederico Lourenço e a terceira de António Damásio. Uma pertence à criação literária, outra ao alargamento do nosso mundo bíblico e a terceira à investigação científica. Ninguém escreve como Lobo Antunes, ninguém pode ousar o que Frederico Lourenço consegue, a antropologia científica, filosófica e sapiencial de António Damásio é o guião e o mapa que nos faltavam para a fascinante viagem às raízes da vida, dos sentimentos e das culturas humanas. Mostra-nos como e porquê “os seres humanos acabam sempre por depender da maquinaria dos afectos e das suas ligações com a razão. Não há maneira de fugir a tal condição”.

Conhecer essa maquinaria ajuda a não sermos cegos a conduzir outros cegos para o desastre pessoal e colectivo. As investigações destinadas a saber quem somos, como somos, quem podemos e devemos ser, requerem a cooperação de todas as ciências e sabedorias. A cultura da cooperação é um caminho luminoso para nos irmos libertando do egoísmo, o inimigo público e privado do presente e do futuro da humanidade.

Repete-se que a ciência e a tecnologia podem ser usadas para melhorar o nosso futuro – o seu potencial continua a ser extraordinário – ou podem representar a nossa perdição. Pode-se continuar, por outro lado, a desenvolver a ideia de que o ser humano é uma paixão inútil que importa substituir por outra coisa mais limpa, mais inteligente e mais rentável. Essa coisa pós-humana já está configurada, mas continuo a não saber para quem.

Destaquei o novo livro deste investigador português, radicado nos EUA, porque, em primeiro lugar, preciso dele – talvez não seja o único – para perceber “a estranha ordem das coisas” na evidente desordem do mundo. Ao chegar ao fim, exprime uma atitude que é essencial à libertação da teologia. Permito-me transcrever: “Em primeiro lugar, e tendo em conta as imensas novas e poderosas descobertas científicas, é fácil ceder à tentação de acreditar em certezas e interpretações prematuras que o tempo se encarregará de rejeitar impiedosamente. Estou preparado para defender a minha actual visão sobre a biologia dos sentimentos, da consciência e das raízes da mente cultural, mas não tenho ilusões sobre a durabilidade dessa visão. Em segundo lugar, embora seja possível falar com alguma confiança das características e das operações dos organismos vivos e da sua evolução, e embora seja possível situar o início do respectivo universo há cerca de 13 mil milhões de anos, não temos qualquer relato científico satisfatório quanto à origem e ao significado do Universo, ou

seja, não temos uma teoria de tudo que nos diga respeito. Serve isto para recordar que os nossos esforços são modestos e hesitantes, e que devemos estar abertos e atentos quando decidimos abordar o desconhecido”³.

2. Se as lideranças da Igreja, os teólogos, os padres e os catequistas tivessem estes cuidados de puro bom senso teriam evitado, às comunidades cristãs, muitos falsos problemas no campo da criação cultural, das ciências, da acção pastoral e da ética. Não tomariam atitudes e decisões que pudessem impedir uma virtuosa abertura ao futuro, ao imprevisto e imprevisível.

Nota-se isto em muitos âmbitos, mas tornou-se uma tragédia que se aprofunda e alarga, dia a dia, em relação aos “ministérios ordenados” de solteiros e casados, sobretudo à declaração de que as mulheres nunca poderão receber o sacramento da Ordem. Poder-se-ia perguntar como é que se sabe tanto acerca do futuro e tão pouco acerca do presente?

Configuraram-se as instituições funcionais da Igreja para determinados contextos sociais e culturais que não podem ter garantias de eternidade. Não tendo isso em conta, acabam por deixar a vida pastoral em becos sem saída, paralisada. Abandonaram-se os avisos de Cristo: “para vinho novo, odres novos”; “o sábado é para o ser humano e não o ser humano para o sábado”. S. Paulo não se esqueceu: foi para a liberdade que Cristo vos libertou.

É muito importante a questão e a história da teologia da libertação, mas volto a dizer que é ainda mais decisivo libertar a teologia da ideologia, da visão distorcida da fidelidade confundida com a repetição do pré-definido, do pré-sabido e do sempre rezado, assim como era no princípio agora e sempre pelos séculos dos séculos⁴.

Um dos modelos medievais da prática teológica, que sempre me deliciaram, estava ligado à interrogação sistemática, isto é, às *questões disputadas (quaestiones disputatae)*. Tomás de Aquino, além disso, estava profundamente marcado pela *teologia negativa*, que nada tinha de niilista. Qualquer afirmação tinha de ser acompanhada de negação. Depois de descrever a sua teoria do conhecimento teológico e de mostrar a razoabilidade da afirmação da existência de Deus, diz que seria normal que se procurasse saber *como é Deus*, mas não podia ir por aí, pois só podemos

³ António Damásio, *A Estranha Ordem das Coisas*, Círculo de Leitores, 2017, pp. 331-332.

⁴ Quem desejar conhecer o que era a prisão da teologia nos anos 50 do séc. passado, leia o impressionante *Journal d'un théologien (1946-1956)*, de Yves Congar, Cerf, 2000

saber como Ele não é. Esta é uma teologia da libertação da idolatria dos nossos conceitos da divindade⁵.

Era o tempo da combinação do atrevimento, na teologia, com a virtude da modéstia na sua prática. Tomás de Aquino sabia unir o que outros separavam: procurar entender para crer e crer para entender.

3. Quando me perguntam qual foi o papel da teologia da libertação em Portugal, tenho de ter em conta vários aspectos para poder responder. A teologia académica, entre 1911 e 1968, esteve em perfeito jejum, como já referi. Não é uma interpretação. É um facto. Na maioria dos casos, a teologia dos seminários era de importação, de justificação do que estava mandado crer e pensar, preparava párocos. O padre Joaquim Alves Correia era um teólogo por conta própria. Testemunhava a *Largueza do Reino de Deus*, que lhe saiu caro, dada a estreiteza da ideologia dominante.

Existe uma produção histórica abundante sobre a relação da Igreja com o Estado Novo e o mundo dos católicos que a questionavam. Nessa produção não se fala de teologia da libertação nem da libertação da teologia, mas existiram ambas com os limites que as circunstâncias eclesiais e políticas impunham, mas o conhecimento dos seus percursos tem de ficar para outra crónica.

Hoje, não posso esquecer que o Papa Francisco, o praticante e resistente da teologia da libertação e da libertação da teologia, instituiu o Dia Mundial do Pobre. Acontece neste Domingo. Se os pobres não estiverem na missa, é porque lha roubaram.

Terceira crónica: 26. 11. 2017

1. Depois das duas crónicas anteriores, importa responder à pergunta que as motivou e que elas tentaram introduzir: qual foi o impacto da Teologia da Libertação (TdL) em Portugal?

O peruano Gustavo Gutiérrez, considerado o pai da TdL, explicou, muitas vezes, como ela nasceu e se desenvolveu. Para ele, os anos que vão de 1965 a 1968 foram os mais decisivos na experiência dos movimentos populares da América Latina (AL) e na participação dos cristãos nesses movimentos. A TdL tem aí as suas raízes. A célebre Conferência de Medellín (Colômbia 1968) assumiu uma das tarefas que João XXIII tinha proposto ao Vaticano II: a causa dos pobres. O tema central da Conferência acabou por ser reformulado nos seguintes termos: *a Igreja do Vaticano II à luz da realidade latino-americana*.

⁵ Summa Theologiae, q. III, Prólogo.

Na TdL existem duas intuições centrais e que foram, mesmo cronologicamente, as primeiras: o método teológico e a perspectiva do pobre. O acto primeiro é o compromisso com o processo de libertação; a teologia brota daí como acto segundo, servida pelas ciências humanas e sociais. É a reflexão crítica a partir e sobre a praxis histórica em confronto com a Palavra de Deus. Esta é acolhida na Fé que nos chega através de múltiplas e, por vezes, ambíguas mediações históricas, que importa refazer no dia-a-dia.⁶

As lideranças da Igreja da AL fizeram o que deveria ter sido feito em todos os continentes. O Vat. II trabalhou na viragem do papel da Igreja no mundo contemporâneo. Pertencia às Igrejas locais confrontarem-se com a significação dessa viragem. Esta tarefa exigia a realização de *mini-Vaticanos II* de acordo com a diversidade de povos e culturas, tornando o Concílio efectivamente ecuménico.

2. Em Portugal, como mostrou mais tarde o Presidente da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, Manuel de Almeida Trindade, o Vaticano II não foi preparado, não foi acompanhado e, por isso, ficou sem pessoas ou grupos que tivessem incorporado esta revolução. Como dizia o Cardeal Cerejeira, nós já estávamos muito mais adiantados do que aquilo que era dito, discutido e decidido nessa assembleia conciliar. A tradução dos livros litúrgicos e, na celebração da Eucaristia, o padre ter abandonado a posição de costas para o povo foram ganhos evidentes.

O importante era impedir quaisquer interrogações, discussões, debates. Por outro lado, o regime de censura política era suficiente para preservar o país desse contágio. A inércia dos dirigentes da Igreja portuguesa só podia agradecer.

Não se pode esquecer que a situação do país, a nível interno e internacional, era complicada e agravou-se durante a época conciliar: três frentes de guerra⁷, imigração galopante e uma juventude sem perspectivas. São temas já saturados de análises diversas e também não faltam estudos sobre as relações entre a Igreja e o Estado Novo.

O catolicismo tradicional entrou em crise um pouco por toda a parte. Não por causa do Concílio, como muitas vezes se diz, mas porque, mesmo a nível do Vaticano, não houve resposta para concretizar as orientações conciliares. Algumas medidas autoritárias, entre elas as referentes

⁶ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *La fuerza histórica de los pobres*, CEP, Lima, 1980.

⁷ Cf. António Lobo Antunes, *Até Que As Pedras Se Tornem Mais Leves Que A Água*, D. Quixote, 2017; *Isto não é uma crónica, é um vômito de indignação*, In Visão (08.06.2017).

à ética matrimonial, aos ministérios ordenados e às mulheres, impediram que o Vat. II realizasse a sua primavera. O inverno que se seguiu foi muito longo.

Portugal, além de sofrer o que outras Igrejas sofreram, não estava preparado, nem tinha recursos para enfrentar a originalidade das nossas dificuldades. A Acção Católica entrou em crise irreversível e os movimentos que entretanto surgiram não era com o futuro do Vat. II que estavam preocupados.

Com o 25 de Abril, os militantes católicos, cada um com as suas preferências, interessaram-se, sobretudo, com as dimensões sociais e políticas do país. Não houve, no interior da Igreja, espaços e meios para alimentar a Fé em novo contexto. Os chamados *Vencidos do Catolicismo* e os católicos não praticantes (do culto) passaram a ser uma designação corrente.

3. Falta a resposta à pergunta principal: qual foi o impacto da Teologia da Libertação (TdL) em Portugal?

Uma resposta documentada e exaustiva não cabe nas dimensões desta crónica⁸. É importante esclarecer que a situação que se vivia em Portugal, quando nasceu a TdL na América-Latina, era de opressão política e eclesial, como foi referido. Aconteceu, no entanto, um pequeno milagre na *Teologia não académica*. As Congregações Religiosas (depois também alguns Seminários) uniram-se para criar o Instituto Superior de Estudos Teológicos (ISET), no seguimento do que já tinha sido iniciado em Fátima (*Sedes Sapientiae e ISTA*). Teve realizações muito diferentes em diversas cidades do país, mas só trabalhei no de Lisboa. Era uma escola teológica, profundamente democrática no seu funcionamento interno, num país de ditadura político-religiosa.

O seu Programa foi elaborado para realizar as orientações do Vaticano II. Não era, sobretudo, para explicar os seus documentos. O objectivo era muito mais ambicioso: integrar, na reflexão teológica, não apenas as ciências humanas, mas o pulsar da vida do país em todo o seu devir e complexidade. Assumia as questões da guerra e da paz, as

⁸ Cf. Frei Bento Domingues, O.P., *Alguns estilos de prática extra-universitária em Portugal. Breves notas de leitura*, in *Didaskalia* XLVI (2016) II, pp. 91-97; Catarina Silva Nunes, *Compromissos incontestados. A auto-representação dos intelectuais católicos portugueses*, Paulinas, 2005; Moisés Lemos Martins, *Os dominicanos e o ensino da Teologia em Portugal, in A restauração da Província Dominicana em Portugal*, Tenacitas 2012, pp. 105-120; Cf. Tb. *Teologia da Libertação e prática da Teologia*, Número especial de *Igreja e Missão*, nº 127 (1985).

transformações aceleradas no mundo do trabalho e na desertificação rural. Construía uma nova Teologia marcada pelos acontecimentos e pelos “sinais dos tempos”, numa tentativa de preparar alunos e professores para discernir o que é que se exigia da Igreja no nosso país em transformação.

Clodovis Boff, ao examinar o que se estava a fazer no ISET, testemunhado no seu Boletim, concluiu que, sem o nome, a problemática e o método seguidos eram os praticados na América Latina com o nome de Teologia da Libertação.

O ISET de Lisboa durou de 1967 a 1975. Começou na ditadura e foi encerrado quando a liberdade chegou a Portugal. Uma campanha eclesiástica, acusando esse centro teológico de falta de ortodoxia, serviu para obrigar os seus estudantes a frequentarem a Faculdade de Teologia da Universidade Católica, ainda muito incipiente.

Lembrei esse passado, mas o que me interessa é o futuro reaberto pelo Papa Francisco, sonhado e trabalhado por muitos que já não puderam ver esta nova esperança.

Abstract:

The author divides his contribution into three successive “chronicles”, referring to different aspects. The first is the reference to the authoritarian heritage that the Catholic Church received from the late nineteenth century, Vatican I Council and its pontifical infallibility. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, theology was very creative and renewing, seeing itself crowned by the surprise of the convocation and the celebration of Vatican II, nowadays re-taken up by Pope Francis. In the second chronicle, on the background of the evolution of culture (three books, one of literature, one of biblical commentary, other one of current science) evaluates the distance and the lack of communication between the modern cultural world and the Church and its official theology, even under a Pope whom the author describes as “a resistant and practitioner of the theology of liberation and of liberation of the theology.” In the third chronicle he focuses concretely on the impact

of liberation theology in Portugal. Even in spite of the ecclesial winter that also reigned in the Church of Portugal and its peculiar and agitated political history (April 25 Revolution), it had been present mainly outside the Academy, in the ISET of the religious Congregations. Even without the name, those theological contributions were truly liberation theology, according to Clodovis Boff.

Resumo:

O autor divide sua contribuição em três «crônicas» sucessivas, se referindo a aspetos diferentes. Na primeira toma como ponto de partida a referência à herança autoritária que a Igreja Católica recebeu do final do século XIX, o Vaticano I e a infalibilidade pontifícia, mas na primeira metade do século XX a teologia foi muito criativa e renovadora, se vendo coroada pela surpresa da convocação e a celebração do Vaticano II, hoje retomada pelo papa Francisco. Na segunda crônica, sobre o pano de fundo da evolução da cultura (três livros, um de literatura, outro de tema bíblico, outro de ciência atual) avalia a distância e a incomunicação entre o mundo cultural moderno e a Iglesia e sua teologia oficial, mesmo sob um Papa que o autor qualifica como «praticante e resistente da teologia da libertação e da libertação da teologia». Na terceira crônica se centra no impacto da teologia da libertação em Portugal. Mesmo a pesar do inverno eclesial que também reinou na Igreja de Portugal e sua peculiar e agitada história política (a Revolução do 25 de abril), teve sua presença sobre todo fora da Academia, no ISET das Congregações religiosas. Mesmo sem o nome, aquelas contribuições eram verdadeiramente teologia da libertação.



Liberation Theology in Spain

Benjamín FORCANO

Abstract:

After a first allusion to the conflict of the post-conciliar Church, the author begins by addressing the theme of the so-called “European Progressive Theology”, which buried the neo-scholastic theology and prepared and promoted the Council. It raises first of all the question of the relationship between this European progressive theology and the liberation theology that came to Europe from Latin America, focusing on the classic opinion of Jon Sobrino on this point. He then devotes a good space to the “restorative offensive” and the “post-conciliar involution” of the pontificate of John Paul II, as the ecclesial environment in which the theology of liberation landed in Europe and in Spain in particular. He then takes the Association of Theologians Juan XXIII as a significant symbol of the avatars that this theology experienced in the Spanish society, which, although it was very fought by the episcopal hierarchy, it managed to remain independent – thanks in large part to the recourse of its civil legal personality – and above all very active, with its annual Congresses and the presence of its public voice permanently accompanying the march of society. In short, the author traces a balance for nothing negative.

Resumen:

Después de una primera alusión a la conflictividad de la Iglesia posconciliar, comienza el autor abordando el tema de la llamada «Teología Progresista Europea», que fue la enterró a la teología neoescolástica y preparó y promovió el Concilio. Plantea en primer lugar la cuestión de la relación entre esta teología progresista europea y la teología de la liberación que llegó a Europa desde América Latina, centrándose en la opinión clásica de Jon Sobrino en este punto. Dedicar a continuación un buen espacio a la «ofensiva restauradora» y a la «involución posconciliar» del pontificado

de Juan Pablo II, como el ambiente eclesial en el que desembarcó en Europa y en España concretamente la teología de la liberación. Toma luego a la Asociación de Teólogos Juan XXIII como símbolo de los avatares que esta teología experimentó en la sociedad española, que si bien fue muy combatida por la jerarquía episcopal, logró mantenerse independiente –gracias en buena parte al recurso de su personería jurídica civil– y sobre todo muy activa, con sus Congresos anuales y la presencia de su voz pública acompañando permanentemente la marcha de la sociedad. En definitiva el autor trazza un balance para nada negativo.

The positive outcome of a difficult and harassed beginning

After 50 long years, we can joyfully come to the conclusion that Liberation Theology (LT), distrusted and feared when not rejected in its first approaches to Europe, has covered a widespread ground and achieved very good results.

We were inaugurating the radiant springtime of Vatican II, and the ideas of many theologians, fermented over long periods, took shape and vigour in the ecumenical atmosphere of the II Vatican Council.

Many Church movements, groups and communities were fully aware of the Church's situation of being behind the times and out of touch with present day reality due to its antimodern entrenchment in recent centuries.

The technoscientific, social and political advances of the years following the end of the Second World War, brought to light many errors of the past, disenchantment with imperialist and racist absolutisms and accelerated questioning, and challenges for a new way of thinking and expressing Theology.

However, this renovating conciliating vigour of Vatican II, was soon going to experience the strongest and not improvised paralysis and involution of John Paul II, continued afterwards by Benedict XVI with all his fears and final resignation.

It is a period of nearly forty years since the restoration (or return to the situation before the Council), imposed by Karol Josef Wojtyla, who at the age of 58, was elected on 16th October 1978, as the first Polish Pope in History and the first non-Italian Pope since 1523. His government lasted 27 years. And he was followed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, elected Pope, on 2nd April 2005, with a term lasting till 28th February 2013, when he resigned.

In the 1960ies, and even before, three factors appeared on the scene, that strongly influenced the socio-political-ecclesial period up to our present day: European progressive theology, the event of II Vatican Council and Liberation Theology.

Within these three factors, we can find a profound inter-relationship that, after a brief analysis in detail, allows us to understand the theological outlook that has developed between Europe and Latin America or, in broader terms, between the First and Third Worlds.

Liberation Theology within the Progressive Theology of Europe

If we go back to the years after World War II, progressive theology began to be very important in Europe, because of its relevance. In practical terms, it buried conservative theology and became the forge and motor for the preparation of the Second Vatican Council.

It were European theologians who accompanied their corresponding Bishops' Conferences as experts and who obtained a greater influence in the deliberations of the Council.

¿Does the domination-liberation dialectic exist in the European context?

Barely twenty years after the Council, there was widespread and alarmist news about LT. Already in 1969 shortly after the Medellín Conference, the Rockefeller Report launched this warning: *"We must take into account that if the Church puts into practice the decisions taken in Medellín, our interests will suffer"*.

And in 1979, the Santa Fe Council explicitly declared: *"American foreign policy must start confronting Liberation Theology as expressed in Latin America and not just confine itself to reacting against it"*.

Little by little, public opinion assumed to a growing degree that LT was a revolutionary Marxist policy that had infiltrated in the Church and was trying to replace the word of God with Marxism and the service of the poor by the Class War. Its method was invalid as it accepted historical materialism or it was only for Latin America and not for Europe.

Today, reading the testimony of some authors of that time, we can better understand the novelty and impact of Liberation Theology in the world of theology in general and in that of the Progressive European Theology, especially.

GIULIO GIRARDI.- The theologian Giulio Girardi, very knowledgeable on the subject, analysed this problem, in an article (Revista Misión

Abierta, *La posibilidad de una Teología europea de Liberación*, pp. 151-159, Madrid, 1984)(The possibilities of a European Liberation Theology), in which he recognised an incipient LT in Europe, with a positive function in the political and cultural context of Latin America and which could be a contribution for the European progressive theology.

With reference to the question: Does the dialectic domination-liberation exist in Europe? he concludes that internationally “*The dominant culture in Europe and in the United States tends to impose its own answers to the countries of the Third World*” (p. 154), in the sense of being guided by a subtle racism, presenting as preordained the international division of labour, colonization as part of the history of civilisation and concealing the way in which multinationals systematically conquer and sacrifice peoples in their own interests. It makes essential reading to understand the eurocentrism that has invaded our culture.

Domestically, in our own European nations, the dominant culture tries to ignore the problem of the poor in Europe, by insisting that in our countries there are no poor people, strictly speaking, nor are the poor a direct result of social and economic structures.

To overcome this situation, Girardi proposes the way of solidarity as a means of jointly creating subjects that are a real alternative.

To advance towards this, theology cannot avoid progressing in the light of the dilemma domination-liberation, endorsing it in the thought of Jesus of Nazareth, which was the comprehensive alternative to the culture and society of his time.

In this sense, LT supposes a certain break with progressive theology, by endorsing the fundamental inspiration of Jesus, the option for the poor: “*Ultimately, in the dialectic oppression-liberation, the life and message of Jesus are ranged on the side of liberation and represent a fundamental moment in the whole history of liberation.*” (p. 158). And, as a result, “*With regard to Liberation Theology there is no middle way of engagement: Either you accept it or you reject it. European theology cannot continue on its path of idealistically asserting “spiritual values” whilst dispensing with the power systems in which they are developed and with the actual role that they develop in these systems. In this theology, eurocentrism and Church centralism go hand in hand*” (pp. 158-159).

JOHANN BAPTIST METZ.- Metz, confronting the relationship between European Political Theology and Liberation Theology in Latin America, declared: “*The new political theology developed in Europe and the Latin American theology of liberation try to create a conscience of that final goodbye facing any Christian theology: the goodbye to its social and*

political innocence, and the goodbye to its cultural and ethical innocence, in other words, the Eurocentrism that it had assumed" (Cambio social y pensamiento cristiano en América Latina, Teología europea y teología de la liberación, Trotta, Madrid, 1993, pp. 263-264).

JON SOBRINO.- Jon Sobrino points out that, together with conservative and progressive theology, there was another newer theology "with an inspiration similar to Liberation Theology, that seriously takes into account the world of the poor and oppressed, in Europe and in the rest of the world, and makes them the place for the renovation of faith and also of theology (Misión Abierta, *Teología de la liberación y teología europea progresista*, n.4, 1987, pp. 11-12).

In Europe, this theology appears after the Council but does not manage to replace the relevance of progressive theology.

Jon Sobrino, in the article mentioned above, stresses the difference between the assumptions of the liberating theological tasks and those of progressive theology.

Progressive theology claims liberating the enslaved human subjectivity, giving back its autonomy, while Liberation Theology, without abdicating from the autonomy of a responsible reasoning, searches for the liberation of an oppressed reality, both of persons and peoples, that are slowly dying or are being crucified.

He does not consider that progressive theology and Liberation Theology are mutually exclusionary but while the former stresses the liberation of self, the latter stresses the liberation of the other persons and realities: "*When Theology is centred – obsessively – on the person of the believer, it can only become interested, with difficulty, in the liberation of the reality, whilst the interest for the reality better integrates the interest of the faith itself and de facto provides a positive solution*" (ibid. p. 15)

Liberation Theology differentiates, therefore, from progressive theology, in that what it claims to liberate more directly is the stronger oppression, consisting of the slow or rapid, structural or violent death of millions of human beings. In other words, the historical and social realities, referred to the Kingdom of God, that both theologies claim to liberate are not both equally near or far from this Kingdom; in the Third World, life is perennially threatened and this becomes the fundamental and decisive utopia of the kingdom, which is translated into partial accomplishments of that Kingdom and which must be discerned. The achievement of the Kingdom of God is the ultimate objective of Liberation Theology.

Sobrino highlights other aspects that differentiate LT from PT, such as the *sources of its knowledge and its cognitive and ethical character*.

Without denying the nature and merits of each one of them, what enhances whatever theology is developed is the Christian frame of mind of every theological task: fidelity to what has been transmitted to us by the revelation of God, with its corresponding effect of clarity and encouragement in the People of God and in the poorest of that people; service to a historical and meaningful liberation; a readiness to immersing oneself in the conflictivity of history and suffering some form of persecution; working among the people of God and at their service, in solidarity with all the entities of the People of God; an endeavour that must be spiritual and promote spirituality, that presents God in such a way as to motivate prayer, confidence, availability; speaking like this introduces the mystery of God; presenting Christ like this motivates following him.

This endeavour opens new eyes, that are grace, that invigorates the theological task, counting on the fact that very often this free experience occurs in the presence of the poor who are the privileged persons of the Good News. Good for humankind and history and good, above all, for the poor. Good, because it leads to our final fulfilment and now it humanises and saves History.

Sobrino recognises the past achievements of PT, its growing evangelical radicalism and its option for the poor, its openness to the reality of Latin America and the world: *“But, he concludes, there is no doubt that LT has placed its finger in the wound of Humanity today, the massive human misery, the crucifixion of entire peoples; and, on the other hand, their hopes of reaching the ability to live in dignity as children of God, their demand to cooperate in their own liberation”* (ibid. p. 26).

Vatican II and the Restoration Offensive of John Paul II

Some were in a hurry to declare that the time of the Council was over. *Pope Paul VI warned: “We cannot dispense with the Council. By its nature it is an important historical event, decisive for the life of the Church, it must last and it is clear that we will find it for a long time in our path. And it is good that this is so.”* (Osservatore Romano, 16th December 1965). *“To a certain degree, the period following the Council is more serious and arduous than the time of its celebration. In its acceptance and fidelity it is testing the vitality of the Church”* (AAS 58, 1966, 799s.).

¿What happened to that loyalty to Vatican II? What were the things that happened? It is interesting to highlight this to understand the real context in which the new Spanish theology came into existence, favouring

a line of complete loyalty to Vatican II, to the Theology of Liberation, liberty and resistance to the involution sought by the Church hierarchy.

Three fundamental things happened:

1) There was an initial period –up to 1978 more or less– in which there was an enthusiastic goodwill in the reception and application of the Council.

2) Then, immediately, began the deactivation of the Council. Although Vatican II projected the light of a new era in the Church, some new approaches, a new style that began to draw up a new concept of Catholic identity, with John Paul II (1978-2005), soon it was apparent that the winds were blowing in new directions. A tension started to consolidate in the Church, in which each day the neoconservative movements imposed their influence with increasing strength. Wojtyla aligned himself with the immobilist part of history, with a fondness for the past and with a fear of the future.

Vatican II took a leap: a new era was beginning in the Church in which it participated of the history of humankind and shared with all kinds of peoples and entities the search for a new way forward for humanity. It was not the exclusive depository of truth nor did it hold the monopoly of goodness, nor the obligatory entity for everyone for fulfilment and salvation. And it was designing, in a pragmatic way, a new style in relationships based on respect, mutual assessment, dialogue and engagement with the major causes of justice and peace.

Wojtyla brought another model and another direction. Major sectors of Christianity warned of the counterpoint: involution against renovation, authoritarianism against democracy, clericalism against the people of God, classism against equality.

Already in 1985, Cardinal J. Ratzinger qualified the 20 years of the post-conciliar period as being decisively unfavourable for the Church. That was the signal that the Restoration or Counter Reform was well underway. And it continued right up to the election of Pope Francis.

3) Major sectors of the Church, from then onwards, became disillusioned and opted to cease their engagement or leave the Church. The theologians, starting with those who prepared and developed the Council, were the ones who mostly suffered harassment, silencing and censure. Their dissent was made public spectacularly in the famous Declaration of Cologne, that was signed by more than 700 theologians, questioning the involutionist about-turn of John Paul II.

The decisive post-conciliar involution of the pontificate of John Paul II

Vatican II established a reconciliation with modernity, a dialogue with science, an unconditional support for human dignity in all its rights, a priority with the problems and major causes of humanity, a mobilisation of society for the major values of the Gospel. This seed made Christianity, integrated basically by lay people, sensitive to its own dignity, responsibility, independent criteria, creativity, adulthood and it was no longer possible to halt the change by appeals to obedience.

John Paul II came from a traditionalist formation, marked additionally by an Anti-Nazi social political context, that was also profoundly Anti-Communist and, to a certain degree, Anti-European. His country had suffered the humiliation of several empires and all its children had open wounds, cured largely by the Catholic Religion.

All this had made him see that Europe did not follow the path of his Christian past but was advancing on paths of secularisation and laicism, of atheism and of a hedonist and consumerist materialism.

His vision of modernity was negative, because he saw that in it the Church was losing prestige and predominance and was being reduced increasingly to the private sphere.

Wojtyla's option was therefore going to be to restore, rechristianize Europe, redirect everything to the past. It was vital to remedy present evils, reintroducing a preconciliar Church: a centralised, male orientated, clerical, compact, disciplined and obedient, anti-modern Church.

It is not surprising that the great theologian Schillebeeckx wrote:

“The second Vatican Council consecrated all the new modern values of democracy, tolerance, liberty. All the great ideas of the American and French revolutions, combatted by generations of popes; all the democratic values were accepted by the Council... There is now a tendency to take sides against modernity considering it a kind of Antichrist. The current Pope appears to deny modernity with his project to re-evangelise Europe: it is necessary -he says- to return to the ancient Europe of the Slav saints, Cyril and Methodius, and of Saint Benedict. The return to the catholicism of the first millennium is, for John Paul II, the great challenge. In the second millennium, Europe has declined and, with it, the whole western culture has declined too. To re-evangelise Europe, we must overcome modernity and all modern values and return to the first millennium... It is the pre-modern, agricultural, uncritical Christianity, that, according to the Pope's thinking, embodies the model for Christianity.

I criticise this return because the modern values of liberty of conscience, of religion, of tolerance, are not, evidently, the values of the first millennium” (*Soy un teólogo feliz*, pp. 73-74).

The restoration encompassed the universal Church at all levels and bodies: synods, bishops' conferences, meetings of the Latin American bishops, religious congregations, the CLAR (confederation of Latin American male and female religious), bishops, theologians, professors, publications, magazines, etc.

To undertake the restoration it was necessary to return to the instruments of power and be able to count on strong unconditional movements. These were mainly the Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, Neocatechumens, Legionaries of Christ, etc.

What happened inside the Church, was qualified by the great theologian K. Rahner as “a long winter's night”.

Such excessively negative conditions prevented finding in the Church structures of welcome that invited confidence, respect and dialogue. All this created a climate, in which in spite of vast multitudes applauding the Pope in stadiums and public squares, the churches became increasingly empty.

Justifiably, the theologian Hans Küng wrote: “We need a change of direction for the Church and for Theology: we must decidedly abandon the image of the medieval world and accept the modern image of the world and, consequently, a new paradigm for theology. (Küng, H., *Ser cristiano*, p. 173).

Liberation Theology in Spain.

In the 1980s, the government of Cardinal Enrique Tarancón was coming to an end. He had played a very important role in the transition from the dictatorship to democracy. With the appointment of John Paul II as Pope, the position and declarations of the Spanish bishops' hierarchy took on a new direction and provoked a growing discomfort and bewilderment among people. This situation reached its peak with the apparition of insistent declarations of the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy about the new social political situation created by the Socialist Government:

“There is a state of criticism and manipulation of facts about the Church, an uncompromising siege in the mass media. We are a Church that is being increasingly marginalised. Let us not delude ourselves. What is at stake is not a rejection of religious fundamentalism, it is not about specific debatable moral questions -What we are witnessing, perhaps without realising it, is a rejection of religions as such and more

in particular of the Catholic Church and of Christianity itself" (Mons. Fernando Sebastián, *Situación actual de la Iglesia: algunas orientaciones prácticas*, Madrid, ITVR, 29 –III-2007).

It cannot be ignored that over the last centuries there was a positive evolution in the social and ecclesiastical conscience. The Second Vatican Council understood this perfectly and, for the first time, there was an official reconciliation with the modern world, with Democracy, Equality, Pluralism and Liberty.

Before the Council, the situation was one of the alliance of the Church with State authorities, the primacy of the Catholic Religion, the prominence of the clergy, the subordination of human knowledge to the theological knowledge, the devaluation of the earthly and temporary, inequality, a distrust of the world and other religions, obedience as the supreme law.

And, in this same direction, John Paul II and Benedict XVI proposed to act, with the winds blowing towards an authoritarian and neoconservative model of Church, neither handmaid nor announcer of a Kingdom of brothers and sisters, in equality, liberty and love. It was a model that dictated a return to the past, fearful of an authentic insertion in the present.

Birth of the John XXIII Association of Theologians (Asociación de Teólogos Juan XXIII)

After all what has been related above, the importance for the 1980s in Spain of the creation of the "*John XXIII Association of Theologians*" can be understood.

It was founded in the year 1980, in that crossroads of the pontificate of John Paul II with the transition in Spain and, with Vatican II, disregarded and sidelined, but not dead.

After ten years of activity, the John Paul XXIII Association of Theologians assessed its progress and stressed that it was not prepared to deviate from its aims of promoting the development of theology in Spain and its dissemination; of introducing it with a renovating commitment in Church movements and communities, taking care of dialogue with the contemporary culture and with the advances of the modern day; making the preferential option for the poor the basic framework and epistemological location for theological reflections; contributing with the sectors most committed to the evangelical renovation of the Church; encouraging fraternal solidarity among all its members.

Objectives and Tasks of the John XXIII Association of Theologians

The Association knew from the start the arduous task it had assumed in the face of a clerical Church, depository of truth, management and control, with the simple faithful reduced to a passive and obedient flock.

To the astonishment of many, the Association had shown in its first ten years a strong staff of theologians (over 50) coming from the dioceses and several religious congregations, with studies in several foreign universities, well-prepared and willing to carry forward the fundamental spirit and contents of Vatican II. That was its strong point, which the hierarchy could not deny.

Without a doubt, the principal characteristic of the Association has been the convening of the Congresses of Theology which started in 1980 and continue to be held today.

I think it is important to underline what these Congresses have meant for the life of society and the Church in Spain.

The Congresses began to attract an interest and an impact in the media that is probably unknown in any other place in Europe, as some important observers declared later.

Their duration, in the first four years, was a week, with the presence of about 2,000 people. And, what had never occurred before, with a considerable presence in the television, radios and most important newspapers. Each session was supported by about 60 organizations, reviews and groups.

From the 5th Congress onwards, the duration was reduced to the last four days of the week. And it continues like that to this day.

Each Congress has a central theme: Theology and Poverty; Hope of the Poor, Christian Hope; Christians and Peace; Christians in a Democratic Society; God of Life, Idols of Death; Church and People; etc. So it goes on and so it was at the latest Congress, the 37th, "Women and Religion. From Discrimination to Gender Equality", which was held in September 2017.

The topics are treated in interrelated disciplines by means of 7 presentations, supplemented by testimonials and experiences in round tables and submissions. The speakers, alone, who have participated in the Congresses (sociologists, economists, politicians, historians, philosophers and, of course, theologians) number more than 250.

The male and female theologians have been many but among them the *Liberation theologians present must be counted in all the sessions...*

It is also important to note that the unabridged content of all the Congresses has been published by the *Centro Evangelio y Liberación*. Up to the present, they consist of 37 volumes; a gem for anyone who wants to research the theological history and content of this period.

Perhaps the most important thing about the Association has been that, since the first convocations, the different types of participants looked for a way to channel similar initiatives in the principal cities of Spain. Soon sessions of this type arose in Barcelona, Málaga, Valencia, Vitoria, Pamplona, Oviedo, Santiago de Compostela, Saragossa, Albacete, Burgos, Logroño, etc..., like a shock wave that accomplished and promoted increasingly the bond between movements, organizations and communities inspired by a renovated theology, that was engaged and liberating. The Congresses, Forums or Weeks stimulated the continuous demand for theologians to give talks in many venues and to distribute their writings.

In a separate chapter should be mentioned the list of all these publications, that have served to drive, deepen and strengthen this new liberating theology that gives a new vision of the gospel and a new face to the Church.

Relationship of the Association of Theologians John Juan XXIII with the Church hierarchy.

Taking into account the socio-political and ecclesiastical situation we have described, nobody would be surprised by the attitude of the Church hierarchy with the Association.

Over the first five years, it was a question of mutual misgivings and distrust. There followed a shorter spell of two years in which there was an attempt at alignment by means of a committee of five theologians with three bishops. This intent never achieved a positive agreement since the bishops expressed a series of fundamental points that the Association must abandon: Its non-hierarchical characteristic, its secular nature and its rejection of a canonical recognition. The Bishops' Conference -we were then under the new orientation of Pope John Paul II- had to accept the line of Rome, and could not forget the denunciation that Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had formulated against Liberation Theology.

The Association, in the above mentioned evaluation, wrote, "We honestly consider excessive the bishops' claim of almost continuously deciding in disputes on theological questions, and additionally, of pretending that theologians must be antennae to merely repeat the teaching of the hierarchy."

The attempt at dialogue ended there. The involution grew and there was a watchword among the bishops about not attending the Congresses, although some of them did go.

Fernando Sebastian, then secretary to the Bishops' Conference, sent a document addressed to the *Masculine and Feminine Religious' Conference*, in the following words: "The three bishops who have intervened in these dialogues with the theologians express our conviction at not reaching operational conclusions that would allow a modification of the Congresses to make them a legitimate activity within the Christian community... We have found a mentality... firmly anchored in the Liberation Theology movement and with some especially critical European theologians".

Against this position of the bishops, voices were not missing that denounced this statement as arbitrary and unjust. It is sufficient to cite these two examples:

"I do not understand the misgivings you can have with the John XXIII, when practically it is a good mediation to carry out this evangelically critical attitude in the face of a regime that presents itself as a liberator with respect to the recent dictatorship" (*José M^a González Ruiz*).

"I am against the suffocation carried out against the Second Vatican Council, which promised an opening up of Christianity, of the Christian social ethics and, however, this has not occurred. The strength of Christianity has been suffocated by the conservative movements that we all know." (*José Luis Aranguren*)

"I take off my mitre in front of the good theologians."

If it turns out that the renewal of the Church, before and after Vatican II, was prepared and driven by theologians, it is also true to say that no other profession has had to suffer the censure, discredit and repression after Vatican II like the theologians. Over a hundred had to suffer this.

For this reason, the joyful fraternal and loving words resounded in the presentation made by Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga (for 50 years a witness in the Brazilian Sertão, without ever coming home) and sent by video for the 16th Congress of 1996: *"I take this occasion to take off my mitre in front of the good male and female theologians of Spain in order to repair the tendency, an almost inbred, practically visceral tendency of certain bishops of the hierarchy in general, with respect to theologians. I ask the theologians to continue to help us. We bishops frequently believe that we are right, we normally believe we are always right, but what*

happens is that we do not always have the truth, especially the theological truth, so I ask you not to leave us in a kind of dogmatic ignorance. And speaking of the theologians of Spain, I think that it is only fair to say that today in Spain there are male and female theologians (the female theologians are more recent) with the stature of the Spanish writers and intellectuals of that Golden Age of Spanish literature and reason and neither Italy, nor France, nor Germany, to mention our nearest neighbours, can compete either in number or quality with the gallery of theologians we have in Spain, and I call on the Assembly to grant them an applause”.

Translated by Hugo CASTELLI EYRE



La Teología de la Liberación en España

Benjamín FORCANO

Abstract:

After a first allusion to the conflict of the post-conciliar Church, the author begins by addressing the theme of the so-called “European Progressive Theology”, which buried the neo-scholastic theology and prepared and promoted the Council. It raises first of all the question of the relationship between this European progressive theology and the liberation theology that came to Europe from Latin America, focusing on the classic opinion of Jon Sobrino on this point. He then devotes a good space to the “restorative offensive” and the “post-conciliar involution” of the pontificate of John Paul II, as the ecclesial environment in which the theology of liberation landed in Europe and in Spain in particular. He then takes the Association of Theologians Juan XXIII as a significant symbol of the avatars that this theology experienced in the Spanish society, which, although it was very fought by the episcopal hierarchy, it managed to remain independent – thanks in large part to the recourse of its civil legal personality – and above all very active, with its annual Congresses and the presence of its public voice permanently accompanying the march of society. In short, the author traces a balance for nothing negative.

Resumen:

Después de una primera alusión a la conflictividad de la Iglesia posconciliar, comienza el autor abordando el tema de la llamada «Teología Progresista Europea», que fue la enterró a la teología neoescolástica y preparó y promovió el Concilio. Plantea en primer lugar la cuestión de la relación entre esta teología progresista europea y la teología de la liberación que llegó a Europa desde América Latina, centrándose en la opinión clásica de Jon Sobrino en este punto. Dedicó a continuación un buen espacio a la «ofen-

siva restauradora» y a la «involución posconciliar» del pontificado de Juan Pablo II, como el ambiente eclesial en el que desembarcó en Europa y en España concretamente la teología de la liberación. Toma luego a la Asociación de Teólogos Juan XXIII como símbolo de los avatares que esta teología experimentó en la sociedad española, que si bien fue muy combatida por la jerarquía episcopal, logró mantenerse independiente –gracias en buena parte al recurso de su personería jurídica civil– y sobre todo muy activa, con sus Congresos anuales y la presencia de su voz pública acompañando permanentemente la marcha de la sociedad. En definitiva el autor traza un balance para nada negativo.

El resultado positivo de un comienzo difícil y hostigado

Después de unos 50 años largos, podemos concluir con gozo que la Teología de la Liberación, recelada y temida cuando no reprobada en sus primeros arrimos a Europa, hizo un itinerario sólido y alcanzó muy buenos resultados.

Estábamos estrenando la primavera radiante del Vaticano II, y los anhelos de muchos teólogos, fermentados desde hacía tiempo, cobraban vigor y forma en el ámbito ecuménico del concilio Vaticano II, acontecimiento el más importante de la Iglesia católica en el siglo XX.

Era clara la conciencia, entre muchos movimientos, colectivos y comunidades de la Iglesia, el atraso y el desfase que acompañaba a la Iglesia tras su atrincheramiento antimoderno en los últimos siglos.

Los avances tecnocientíficos, sociales y políticos de la posguerra mundial, airearon muchos errores del pasado, desencanto de absolutismos imperialistas y racistas y aceleraron interrogantes, y desafíos para un nuevo pensar y obrar teológicos.

No obstante, este brio renovador conciliar del Vaticano II, iba a conocer pronto la parálisis y la involución más fuerte, nada improvisada, de Juan Pablo II, continuada luego por Benedicto XVI con temores y dimisión final.

Es un período de casi cuarenta años, donde se impuso la restauración (*vuelta al preconclilio*) de Karol Josef Wojtyla, quien a sus 58 años, fue elegido el 16 de octubre de 1978, como el primer Papa polaco de la historia y el primer Papa no italiano desde 1523. Su gobierno duró 27 años. Y a él le siguió el del cardenal Joseph Ratzinger, elegido Papa el 2 de abril de 2005, con duración hasta el 28 de febrero de 2013, en que renunció.

Por los años 1960, y aún antes, aparecen en escena los tres factores, que condicionaron fuertemente el periodo socio-político-eclesial que llega hasta nuestros días: Teología progresista de Europa, Celebración del Concilio Vaticano II, Teología de la Liberación.

Dentro de estos tres factores, se descubre una profunda interrelación que, analizados un poco en detalle, nos van a permitir comprender el panorama teológico que se ha venido desarrollando entre Europa y América o, en términos más amplios, entre el Primer y el Tercer mundo.

La Teología de la Liberación dentro de la Teología Progresista de Europa

Si nos remontamos a los años de la última posguerra mundial, la teología progresista comenzó a ser muy importante en Europa, por ser la más relevante. Prácticamente, fue la que enterró la teología conservadora, convirtiéndose en fragua y motor de la preparación del concilio Vaticano II.

Fueron teólogos europeos los que acompañaron como peritos a sus respectivas Conferencias Episcopales y obtuvieron mayor peso en las deliberaciones del concilio.

¿Se da en el contexto europeo la dialéctica dominación – liberación?

Apenas habían pasado veinte años después del concilio y en Europa eran públicas y alarmistas las noticias sobre la TL. Ya en 1969, a corta distancia de la Conferencia de Medellín, el informe Rockefeller lanza esta alarma: *“Debemos tener en cuenta que si la Iglesia pone en práctica las decisiones de Medellín, nuestros intereses sufrirán detrimento”*.

Y en el 1979, el Consejo de Santa Fe afirmaba explícitamente: *“La política exterior norteamericana debe comenzar a afrontar la Teología de la Liberación tal como se plantea en América latina y no limitarse a reaccionar contra ella”*.

Poco a poco, iba tomando fuerza en la opinión pública la idea de que la TL era una política revolucionaria, marxista, que se había filtrado en la Iglesia y trataba de reemplazar la palabra de Dios por el marxismo y el servicio de los pobres por la lucha de clases. Su método no era válido por aceptar el materialismo histórico o lo era sólo para América Latina y no para Europa.

Hoy, atendiendo al testimonio de algunos autores de entonces podemos conocer mejor la novedad e impacto de la teología de la liberación en el mundo de la teología en general y en el de la teología progresista europea en especial.

GIULIO GIRARDI.- El teólogo Giulio Girardi, gran conocedor del tema, pudo analizar este problema, en un artículo (Revista Misión Abierta, *Posibilidad de una Teología europea de Liberación*, pp. 151-159, Madrid, 1984), en el que reconoce como incipiente en Europa la TL, con una función positiva en el contexto político y cultural de América Latina y que podía ser una aportación y estímulo para la Teología progresista de Europa.

Puesto a analizar si en Europa se da la dialéctica *dominación – liberación* concluye que a nivel internacional “*La cultura dominante en Europa y en Estados Unidos tiende a imponer sus propias respuestas a los países del Tercer Mundo*” (pg. 154), en el sentido de estar guiadas por un sutil racismo, un presentar como natural la división internacional del trabajo, un narrar la colonización como historia de civilización y un encubrir a las empresas multinacionales que subyugan y sacrifican sistemáticamente a sus propios intereses a los pueblos que someten. Sería una lectura ligada al eurocentrismo que invade nuestra cultura.

A nivel interno, en el seno de las propias naciones europeas, la cultura dominante trata de obviar el problema de los pobres en Europa, insistiendo en que en nuestros países no habría pobres en sentido estricto, ni procederían como elemento intrínseco de sus propias estructuras.

Para superar esa situación, Girardi propone como camino el de la solidaridad, que lleva a trabajar por crear colectivamente *sujetos* que sean una verdadera alternativa.

Para avanzar hacia ella, la teología no puede eludir realizarse a la luz del dilema dominación-liberación, apoyándola en el pensamiento de Jesús de Nazaret, que es alternativa global a la cultura y sociedad de su tiempo.

En este sentido, la TL supone una cierta ruptura con la Teología progresista, por hacer suya la inspiración fundamental de Jesús, la opción por los pobres: “*En definitiva, en la dialéctica opresión-liberación, la vida y el mensaje de Jesús se sitúan de parte de la liberación y representan un momento fundamental de toda historia de liberación*” (pg. 158). Y, en consecuencia, “*Frente a la Teología de la liberación no cabe una vía media de compromiso: o se la acepta o se la rechaza. La teología europea no puede continuar en su trayectoria idealista de afirmación de los “valores espirituales” prescindiendo de los sistemas de poder en que son realizados y de la función real que desarrollan en esos sistemas. En esta teología, el eurocentrismo y el eclesiocentrismo se dan la mano*” (pp. 158-159).

JOHANN BAPTIST METZ.- Metz, al frontar la relación que hay entre la teología política europea y la teología de la liberación en Latinoamérica, afirma: *“La nueva teología política que se hace en Europa y la teología latinoamericana de la liberación tratan de crear una conciencia de ese adiós definitivo que se enfrenta hoy en día cualquier teología cristiana: el adiós a su inocencia social y política, y el adiós a su inocencia cultural y ética, es decir, el eurocentrismo que tiene interiorizado”* (Cambio social y pensamiento cristiano en América Latina, *Teología europea y teología de la liberación*, Trotta, Madrid, 1993, pp. 263-264).

JON SOBRINO.- Jon Sobrino, señala que, junto a la teología conservadora y progresista, había otra teología más nueva *“Con una inspiración afín a la de la Teología de la Liberación, que toma en serio el mundo de los pobres y oprimidos, en Europa y en el resto del mundo, y hace de ellos lugar para la renovación de la fe y así de la teología* (Misión Abierta, *“Teología de la liberación y teología europea progresista*, n.4, 1987, pp. 11-12).

En Europa, esta teología aparece después del concilio, pero no llega a suplantarse la relevancia de la teología progresista.

Jon Sobrino, en el artículo citado, se detiene en subrayar la diferencia entre los presupuestos del quehacer teológico liberador frente a los presupuestos del quehacer de la teología progresista.

La teología progresista pretende liberar a la subjetividad humana esclavizada, devolviéndole la autonomía, en tanto que la teología de la liberación, sin abdicar de la autonomía de una razón responsable, busca la liberación de la realidad oprimida, tanto de las personas como de los pueblos, que mueren lentamente o son crucificados.

La teología progresista y la teología de la liberación, no las considera excluyentes, pero la primera hace hincapié en la liberación del yo, en tanto que la segunda lo hace en la liberación del otro y de lo otro: *“Cuando la teología se centra - y obsesiona- con el propio creyente, con dificultad llega a interesarse en serio por la liberación de la realidad, mientras que el interés por la realidad integra mejor el interés de la propia fe y de facto da una solución positiva* (idem, p. 15).

La teología de la liberación se diferencia, pues, de la progresista, en que lo que pretende liberar más en directo es la mayor opresión, que es la muerte lenta o rápida, estructural o violenta, de millones de seres humanos. O dicho de otra manera: las realidades históricas y sociales que, en referencia al Reino de Dios, pretenden liberar ambas teologías no todas están igualmente cercanas o lejanas de ese Reino; en el Tercer Mundo la vida aparece perennemente amenazada y pasa a ser elemento

fundamental y decisivo de la utopía del reino, lo cual se traduce en realizaciones parciales de ese Reino, que deberán ser discernidas. La realización del Reino de Dios es la finalidad última de la Teología de la liberación.

Sobrino destaca otros aspectos que diferencian a la TL de la TP, tales como las *fuentes de su conocimiento y su carácter cognitivo y ético*.

Sin negar la naturaleza y méritos de cada una de ellas, realza cuál debe ser, cualquiera que sea la teología que se haga, el talante cristiano de *todo quehacer teológico*: fidelidad a lo que se nos ha transmitido de la revelación de Dios, con su consiguiente efecto de lucidez y ánimo en el pueblo de Dios y en los más pobres de ese pueblo; servicio a una liberación histórica y trascendente; disponibilidad a inserirse en la conflictividad de la historia y padecer algún tipo de persecución; trabajo dentro del pueblo de Dios y a su servicio, en solidaridad con todos los estamentos del pueblo de Dios; un quehacer que sea espiritual y propicie espiritualidad, que presente de tal manera a Dios que se motive a la oración, la confianza, la disponibilidad; se hable de tal manera de estas últimas cosas que introduzca en el misterio de Dios; que se presente de tal manera a Cristo que se motive a su seguimiento.

Este quehacer supone unos ojos nuevos, que son gracia, que da vigor al quehacer teológico, contando con que muy frecuentemente esta experiencia gratuita ocurre en presencia de los pobres de este mundo, que son los privilegiados de la Buena Nueva. Buena para el hombre y la historia y buena sobre todo para los pobres; y buena porque conduce a la plenificación final y ahora humaniza y salva a la historia.

Sobrino reconoce los logros del pasado de la TP, su creciente radicalismo evangélico y opción por los pobres, su apertura a la realidad latinoamericana y mundial: *“Pero, concluye, no se puede dudar de que la TL ha puesto el dedo en la llaga de la humanidad actual, la miseria humana y masiva, la crucifixión de los pueblos enteros; y, por otra parte, sus esperanzas de llegar a vivir con dignidad como hijos de Dios, sus exigencia a colaborar en su liberación”* (idem, pg. 26).

El Vaticano II y la ofensiva restauradora de Juan Pablo II

Algunos tuvieron demasiada prisa en afirmar que el tiempo del concilio había terminado. El papa Pablo VI advertía: *“No podemos prescindir del concilio. Por su naturaleza es un acontecimiento importante, histórico, decisivo para la vida de la Iglesia, tiene que durar y es evidente que lo encontraremos largo tiempo en nuestro caminar. Y es bueno que así sea”* (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 de diciembre de 1965). *“En un cierto*

sentido, es más grave y trabajoso el período que sigue al concilio que el de su celebración. En su aceptación y fidelidad se está poniendo a prueba la vitalidad de la Iglesia” (AAS 58, 1966, 799s.).

¿Dónde quedó esta fidelidad al Vaticano II? ¿Qué cosas fueron las que pasaron? Interesa destacar esto para comprender el contexto real en que surgió la nueva teología española, decantándose por una línea de plena fidelidad al Vaticano II, a la Teología de la liberación y de libertad y resistencia a la involución pretendida por la jerarquía eclesástica.,

Pasaron tres cosas fundamentales:

1ª) Hubo un primer período –hasta el año 78 más o menos- en que hubo voluntad entusiasta en la recepción y aplicación del concilio.

2ª) Vino enseguida la desactivación del concilio. Si bien el Vaticano II alumbraba una nueva época de la Iglesia, unos nuevos planteamientos, un nuevo estilo y dibujaba un nuevo concepto de identidad católica, con Juan Pablo II (1978-2005), pronto se vió que los vientos iban por otros derroteros. Se fue así consolidando una tensión en la Iglesia, en la que cada día con mayor fuerza se imponían las fuerzas y movimientos neoconservadores. Wojtyla se alineaba de la parte inmovilista de la historia, que avanzaba a la defensiva, con apego al pasado y con miedo al futuro.

El Vaticano II dió un salto: se abría una nueva época de la Iglesia en que ella era copartícipe de la historia humana y compartía con toda suerte de personas e instancias la búsqueda de un nuevo camino para la humanidad. Ella no era la depositaria exclusiva de la verdad ni tenía el monopolio del bien, ni era la instancia obligatoria para todos, para realizarse y salvarse. Y diseñaba, con sentido pragmático, un nuevo estilo de relación basado en el respeto, la valoración mutua, el diálogo y el compromiso por las grandes causas de la justicia y de la paz.

Wojtyla traía otro modelo y otra dirección. Grandes sectores de la cristiandad advertían la contraposición: involución contra renovación, autoritarismo contra democracia, clericalismo contra pueblo de Dios, clasismo contra igualdad.

Ya en el 1985, el cardenal J. Ratzinger calificó a los 20 años del posconcilio de decisivamente desfavorables para la Iglesia. Fue ésta la señal de que la restauración o contrarreforma estaba en plena marcha. Y continuó ya hasta la elección del Papa Francisco.

3ª) Grandes sectores de la Iglesia, a partir de entonces, se sintieron decepcionados y optaron por aparcar su compromiso o exiliarse de la Iglesia. Los teólogos, comenzando por aquellos que prepararon y elaboraron el concilio, fueron los que mayormente sufrieron acoso, silencio

y censura. Su disenso se hizo clamorosamente público en la famosa Declaración de Colonia, que recogía la firma de más de 700 teólogos, cuestionando el giro involucionista de Juan Pablo II.

Determinante la involución posconciliar del pontificado de Juan Pablo II

El Vaticano II estableció una reconciliación con la modernidad, un diálogo con las ciencias, un apoyo incondicional a la dignidad humana en todos sus derechos, una prioridad a los problemas y causas mayores de humanidad, una activación de la sociedad por los grandes valores del Evangelio. Esta siembra hizo que la cristiandad, integrada fundamentalmente por laicos, estimulase la dignidad propia, la responsabilidad, el criterio propio, la creatividad, la mayoría de edad y no fuera posible ya detener el cambio con apelaciones a la obediencia.

Juan Pablo II venía de una formación tradicionalista, marcada además por un contexto sociopolítico antinazista, y también profundamente anticomunista y en cierto modo antieuropeo. Su patria había sufrido la humillación de diversos imperios y en todos sus hijos estaban abiertas las heridas, curadas en buena parte por la religión católica.

Todo esto le había hecho ver que Europa no caminaba en la dirección de su pasado cristiano, sino que avanzaba por las sendas de la secularización y del laicismo, del ateísmo y de un materialismo hedonista y consumista.

Su visión de la modernidad era negativa, pues en ella la Iglesia había ido perdiendo prestigio y hegemonía y se iba reduciendo cada vez más al ámbito de lo privado.

La opción de Wojtyła iba a ser, pues, la de restaurar, recristianizar a Europa, reconducir todo al pasado. Los males presentes era preciso remediarlos reintroduciendo la imagen de una Iglesia preconiliar: una iglesia centralizada, androcéntrica, clerical, compacta, bien uniformada y obediente, antimoderna.

No es de extrañar que el gran teólogo Schillebeekx escribiera:

“El concilio Vaticano II consagró los nuevos valores modernos de la democracia, de la tolerancia, de la libertad. Todas las grandes ideas de la revolución americana y francesa, combatidas por generaciones de papas; todos los valores democráticos fueron aceptados por el concilio... Existe ahora la tendencia a ponerse contra la modernidad, considerada como una especie de anticristo. El Papa actual parece negar la modernidad con su proyecto de reevangelizar Europa: es necesario –dice– retornar a la antigua Europa de Cirilo y Metodio, santos eslavos, y de san Benito. El

retorno al catolicismo del primer milenio es, para Juan Pablo II, el gran reto. En el segundo milenio, Europa ha decaído y, con ella, ha decaído toda la cultura occidental. Para reevangelizar Europa es necesario superar la modernidad y todos los valores modernos y regresar al primer milenio... Es la cristiandad premoderna, agrícola, no crítica, la que, según el pensamiento del Papa, es el modelo de la cristiandad.

Yo critico este retorno porque los valores modernos de la libertad de conciencia, de religión, de tolerancia, no son, desde luego, los valores del primer milenio” (*Soy un teólogo feliz*, p. 73-74).

La restauración alcanzó a la Iglesia universal en todos los niveles y estamentos: sínodos, conferencias episcopales, reuniones del episcopado latinoamericano, congregaciones religiosas, la CLAR (confederación de religiosos y religiosas latinoamericanos), obispos, teólogos, profesores, publicaciones, revistas, etc.

Para llevar a cabo la restauración había que volver a los instrumentos de poder y había que contar con movimientos fuertes e incondicionales. Tales fueron principalmente el Opus Dei, Comunión y Liberación, Neocatecumenales, Legionarios de Cristo, etc.

Lo ocurrido en el interior de la Iglesia, fue calificado por el gran teólogo K. Rhaner de “larga noche invernal”.

Condiciones demasiado negativas impedían encontrar en la Iglesia estructuras de acogida que invitaran a la confianza, al respeto y al diálogo. Todo un clima que hizo que, a pesar de grandes multitudes aplaudiendo al Papa en estadios y plazas, las iglesias se quedaran cada vez más vacías.

Con razón pudo escribir el teólogo Hans Küng: “Se requiere un cambio de rumbo de parte de la Iglesia, y de la teología: abandonar decididamente la imagen del mundo medieval y aceptar consecuentemente la imagen moderna del mundo, lo que para la misma teología traerá como consecuencia el paso a un nuevo paradigma” (Küng, H., *Ser cristiano*, p. 173).

La teología de la liberación en España.

Hacia los años 1980, en España se acababa el Gobierno del cardenal Enrique Tarancón, que tuvo tan destacado protagonismo en la transición de la dictadura a la democracia. Con el nombramiento de Juan Pablo II como Papa, la posición y pronunciamientos de la jerarquía eclesiástica española tomaban otro rumbo y provocaban creciente malestar y desconcierto en la gente. Esta posición alcanzó su punto culminante ante la aparición y declaraciones insistentes de la Jerarquía eclesiástica con la nueva situación sociopolítica creada por el Gobierno socialista:

“Se da una crítica y manipulación de los hechos de la Iglesia, un cerco inflexible y permanente por medio de los medios de comunicación. Somos una Iglesia, crecientemente marginada. No nos dejemos engañar. Lo que hoy está en juego no es un rechazo del integrismo o del fundamentalismo religioso, no son unas determinadas cuestiones morales discutibles. Lo que estamos viviendo, quizás sin darnos cuenta de ello, es un rechazo de la religión en cuanto tal, y más en concreto de la Iglesia católica y del mismo cristianismo” (Mons. Fernando Sebastián, Situación actual de la Iglesia: algunas orientaciones prácticas, Madrid, ITVR, 29 – III- 2007).

No se puede ignorar que en los últimos siglos hubo una positiva evolución de la conciencia social y eclesial. El concilio Vaticano II lo entendió perfectamente y, por primera vez, hubo una reconciliación oficial con el mundo moderno, con la democracia, la igualdad, el pluralismo y la libertad.

Previo al concilio, se había dado la alianza de la Iglesia con los poderes estatales, la primacía de la religión católica, el protagonismo del clero, la supeditación de los saberes humanos al saber teológico, la devaluación de lo terreno y temporal, la desigualdad, la desconfianza frente al mundo y otras religiones, la obediencia como norma suprema.

Y, en esa misma dirección, se propuso actuar Juan Pablo II y Benedicto XVI con los vientos hacia un modelo de Iglesia autoritaria y neoconservadora, no servidora ni anunciante de un Reino de hermanos y hermanas, en igualdad, libertad y amor. Un modelo que dictaba el regreso al pasado, con miedo a una auténtica inserción en el presente.

Nace la Asociación de Teólogos Juan XXIII

Después de todo lo dicho, se entenderá lo que representó para los años 1980 de España, la creación de la *“Asociación de teólogos Juan XXIII”*.

Fue fundada en el año 1980, en ese cruce del Pontificado de Juan Pablo II con la transición de España y, en espacio previo, el Vaticano II, desatendido y orillado, pero no muerto.

A los diez años de funcionar, la Asociación de teólogos Juan XXIII hace evaluación de su caminar y recalca no estar dispuesta a apartarse de su fines: promover el desarrollo de la teología en España y divulgarla; insertarla con empeño renovador en los movimientos y comunidades eclesiales, cuidar el diálogo con la cultura contemporánea y con los logros de la modernidad; hacer de la opción preferencial por los pobres marco básico y lugar epistemológico de la reflexión teológica; contribuir con

los sectores más comprometidos a la renovación evangélica de la Iglesia; fomentar la solidaridad fraterna entre todos sus miembros.

Fines y tareas de la Asociación de teólogos Juan XXIII

La Asociación sabía desde el principio lo arduo de la tarea que asumía frente a una Iglesia clerical, depositaria de la verdad, de la dirección y del mando, con simples fieles reducidos a grey pasiva y obediente.

Para sorpresa de muchos, la Asociación se había mostrado en sus diez primeros años, con una plantilla fuerte de teólogos (más de 50) procedentes de las diócesis y diversas congregaciones religiosas, con estudios en diversas Universidades del extranjero, bien preparados y dispuestos a llevar adelante el espíritu y contenidos fundamentales del Vaticano II. Era éste su punto fuerte, al que no podía sustraerse la misma Jerarquía.

Sin duda alguna, la característica principal de la Asociación ha sido la Convocatoria de los Congreso de Teología, que tuvieron comienzo en el año 1980 y que se vienen celebrando hasta hoy.

Pienso que es necesario subrayar lo que estos Congresos han supuesto para la vida de la Sociedad e Iglesia españolas.

Los Congresos comenzaron por tener un interés y una resonancia mediática, que probablemente no se da en ningún otro lugar de Europa, como posteriormente señalaron observadores importantes.

La duración fue, en los cuatro primeros años, de una semana, con asistencia de unas 2.000 personas. Y, como no había ocurrido nunca antes, con presencia y espacio notables en la televisión, radio y periódicos más importantes. La convocatoria viene apoyada por unos 60 colectivos, revistas y grupos.

A partir del 5º Congreso, la duración se redujo a los cuatro últimos días de la Semana. Y así sigue.

Cada Congreso tiene un tema central: Teología y obreza; Esperanza de los pobres, esperanza cristiana; Los cristianos y la paz; Cristianos en una sociedad democrática; Dios de vida, ídolos de muerte; Iglesia y Pueblo; etc. Así sigue y así era en el último Congreso, el 37, *“Mujeres y religión. De la discriminación a la igualdad de género”*, que se celebró en septiembre de 2017.

Los temas se tratan interdisciplinariamente, a través de 7 ponencias, completadas con testimonios y experiencias en Mesas Redondas y Comunicaciones. Sólo los ponentes que han pasado por los Congresos (sociólogos, economistas, políticos, historiadores filósofos y, por supuesto, teólogos) sumarían más de 250.

Los teólogos y teólogas, han sido muchos, pero entre ellos hay que contar *a los teólogos de la liberación presentes en todos ellos*.

Es también importante el hecho de que todos los Congresos han sido publicados íntegramente, por el *Centro Evangelio y Liberación*. Hasta la fecha, son 36 volúmenes. Una joya para el que desee conocer la trayectoria y contenidos teológicos de esa época.

Acaso lo más importante de la asociación haya sido que, a partir de sus primeras convocatorias, los asistentes de una y otra parte buscaron como dar cauce a esta iniciativa de un modo similar en las principales ciudades de España. En breve, fueron surgiendo Convocatorias de este tipo en Barcelona, Málaga, Valencia, Vitoria, Pamplona, Oviedo, Santiago de Compostela, Zaragoza, Albacete, Burgos, Logroño, etc..., como un onda expansiva que alcanzaba y promovía cada vez más la unión entre movimientos, colectivos y comunidades inspiradas en una teología renovada, comprometida y liberadora. Los Congresos, Foros o Semanas hicieron crecer la continua demanda de teólogos para impartir conferencias en otros muchos lugares y hacer circular sus escritos.

Capítulo aparte merecería la reseña de las publicaciones de todos ellos, en muy diversas modalidades, que han servido para impulsar, profundizar y fortalecer esta nueva Teología liberadora, expresión del Evangelio y de un nuevo rostro de Iglesia.

Relación de la Asociación de teólogos Juan XXIII con la jerarquía eclesial.

Teniendo en cuenta el escenario sociopolítico y eclesial que hemos descrito, a nadie extrañará la actitud que iba a tomar la jerarquía eclesial con la Asociación.

En el período de los cinco primeros años fue de recelo y desconfianza mutuas. Le siguió uno más breve de dos años, en que hubo un intento de aproximación y diálogo a través de una comisión de cinco teólogos con tres obispos. El intento no llegó a ningún acuerdo positivo, pues los obispos expresaron como puntos fundamentales que debía abandonar la Asociación: su carácter escasamente jerárquico, su carácter civil y su rechazo al reconocimiento canónico de la misma. La Conferencia episcopal, -estábamos ya bajo el nuevo rumbo del Papa Juan Pablo II-, debía aceptar la línea de Roma, y no olvidar la denuncia que el cardenal Ratzinger, Prefecto de la Congregación para la doctrina de la fe, había formulado contra la Teología de la liberación.

La Asociación, en la evaluación mencionada, escribe. "Creemos honradamente que es excesiva la pretensión episcopal de decidir casi

continuamente en cuestiones teológicas disputadas y, por supuesto, la de pretender que los teólogos sean antenas de repetición del magisterio jerárquico”.

El intento de diálogo acabó ahí. La involución creció y había con-signa entre los obispos de no asistir a los Congresos, aunque no por ello dejaron de asistir algunos de ellos.

A través del entonces secretario de la Conferencia Episcopal, Fernando Sebastián, se pasó información a la *Confer masculina y femenina* en estos términos: “Los tres obispos que hemos intervenido en estos diálogos con los teólogos quedamos con la convicción de no haber llegado a conclusiones operativas que permitan esperar una modificación de los Congresos hasta hacerlos aceptables como una actividad legítima dentro la comunidad cristiana... Nos hemos encontrado con una mentalidad... fuertemente vinculada al movimiento de la teología de la liberación y de algunos teólogo europeos especialmente críticos”.

Ante esta postura episcopal, no faltaron voces que la denunciaban como arbitraria e injusta. Baste coo muestra estas dos:

“No comprendo los recelos que podáis tener con la Juan XXIII, cuando pragmáticamente es una buena mediación para llevar a cabo esta actitud evangélicamente crítica frente a un régimen que se presenta como liberador con respecto a la pasada dictadura” (*José M^a González Ruiz*).

“Estoy en contra de la sofocación que se ha llevado a cabo del concilio Vaticano II, el cual prometía una apertura del Cristianismo, de la ética social cristiana y sin embargo eso no ha ocurrido. La Fuerza del Cristianismo está sofocada por movimientos conservadores que todos conocemos” (*José Luis Aranguren*)

“Me quito la mitra delante de los buenos teólogos”

Si resulta que la renovación de la Iglesia, antes y a partir del Vaticano II, fue preparada e impulsada por los teólogos, también es verdad que ningún otro gremio como el de los teólogos ha tenido que sufrir la censura, el desprestigio y la represión después del VaticanoII. Pasan del centenar los que hubieron de sufrirla.

Por eso, resonaron rogocijantes las fraternales y cariñosas palabras que el obispo Pedro Casaldáliga (50 años ya testigo del evangelio y sin retorno en el Sertao del Brasil) dijo en su ponencia mandada por video para el Congreso XVI de 1996: *“Aprovecho la ocasión para quitarme la mitra v delante de los buenos teólogos y teólogas que tiene España incluso para reparar la predisposición, una predisposición casi innata, casi*

instintiva de ciertos obispos de la jerarquía en general, bastante general con respecto a los teólogos. Yo os pido teólogos y teólogas, que sigáis ayundándonos. Con mucha frecuencia los obispos creemos que tenemos la razón, normalmente creemos que la tenemos siempre, lo que pasa es que no siempre tenemos la verdad, sobre todo la verdad teológica, de modo que os pido que no nos dejéis en una especie de dogmática ignorancia. Y hablando de los teólogos de España, creo que es de justicia subrayar que hoy en España haya teólogos y teólogas (las teólogas son más recientes) a la altura de aquel siglo de oro de las letras, y del pensamiento españoles, y ni Italia, ni Francia, ni Alemania, por citar a los países más vecinos, dejan atrás ni en número ni en calidad la galería de teólogos que tenemos en España, y pido a la Asamblea un aplauso”.



From National Catholicism to PostChristianity Grassroots Christian Communities in Spain and Liberation Theology

Santiago VILLAMAYOR LLORO

Abstract:

Latin American liberation theology, or rather praxis, arrived in Spain in the late 1960s and reached its peak in the decade between 1970 and 1980. It coincided with the anti-Franco struggle and the transition to democracy. A process of political, cultural and religious liberation that stretches from National Catholicism to the lay humanism of today. The fruit of this has been the rise of grassroots Christian communities inspired by the testimony of the martyrs and witnesses of the Latin American communities. In the 1990s and above all in the 21st century, postmodernity and globalisation, technological hyper-inflation and secularisation have moulded the liberal impulse of these communities towards internationalist solidarity.

Introduction

Liberation theology emerged as the most honest consequence of Vatican II, born in part in the Roman catacombs¹ and marginalised by the Roman Curia from the outset. All the power and weight of St. Peter's Basilica would fall straight on this evangelical underground over the following years. But the initiative had garnered strength in popular Latin American religiosity, inspired by the missionaries who had sought to

¹ The Pact of the Catacombs (1965) championed by Hélder Câmara was the first sincere commitment of the church to a structural service of the poor; the seed of liberation theology.

evangelise and ended up being evangelised themselves. The most relevant expression of this revival was the emergence of a great dual movement, religious and political, in the form of small grassroots Christian communities.

On the boundaries of the Church itself, many catechists, religious, and priests approached and embraced the poor, the indigent, slum inhabitants, and peasants struggling to survive and who, for their protestations, could lose their life easily. Latin American martyrdom displays the radicalism and sanctity with which the followers of Jesus of Nazareth assumed their role: the ever new, poor, and subversive prophet at the service of the people.

In Spain, the Latin American example gained a foothold quickly among hopeful Christians in the wake of the Council. These were the sectors that were unattached to the orthodoxy and political concubinage with the Franco regime; a petit bourgeoisie of sincere religion, workers in the industry of a still rural religiosity, liberal professionals, renegade students and the remnants of those elements of the left that lost that war but had not renounced their Christian culture. There then emerged a dynamic of rapprochement with the “working class”, of proletarianisation and solidarity in working class neighbourhoods. The revolutionary mysticism progressed, inspired by the Exodus and the Prophets.

In this paper we analyse, first and in general terms, the contribution of liberation theology in our country. We then look at the evolution of the communities. The headings of each section are inspired by the titles of a number of books that marked this evolution. They correspond, approximately, to the last 50 years but it is sometimes difficult to determine an exact chronology because there are no defined boundaries. It is a continuum and one that is perhaps artificially structured here. These great moments are: the discovery of secular commitment under the influence of Vatican II (1), the creation of grassroots Christian communities as an alternative to the big, all-powerful Church (2), the emergence of the Third World and the South into Christian view (3) and finally the present moment of deconstruction and renewal of the Christian message converted into a universalist supra-ethic (4).²

² These phases are revealed intuitively in the timeline prepared by the Christian People's Communities in Aragón. See: <http://ccparagon.pangea.org/quienes-somos/historiaccp.gif>

1. Influences of liberation theology in Spain

Marx and The Bible³

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any image of God, but listen to his clamour”.

José Porfirio Miranda’s book is not the most important text of liberation theology but it is one of the most influential among the communities. Strikingly, it places interhuman justice as an ethical principle common to both Marxism and Christianity: “Faith is to believe that there is a remedy to the world.” The Marxist analysis of alienation and the materialist interpretation of history became the medium theology needed to depart from ethereal and discredited metaphysical interpretations. Thus a “love more universal and therefore more divine” than that of the influential classes would be discovered, whose God “sits at the table of the patron.” Marxist sociology and the revolution of Christians put it in the eye of an ecclesiastical and political hurricane.

With this structural rapprochement with the poor there arises a new paradigm, a sincere key to interpret the reality, very simple and very powerful at the same time, that it is not the thought that determines the way of being or living but that it is the real existence, the social condition, that determines the way of thinking and, therefore, of acting. Paraphrasing our proverb, “tell me with whom you fraternise and I’ll tell you what gospel you write.”

This paradigm, this praxis of liberation theology, came to stay for good. It pervaded the Christian experience in such a way that, despite the profound transformation of societies, it still persists, albeit with new modes of expression, less radical perhaps but more far-reaching.⁴ A great deal of the democratising ideal, which prevails in many countries and institutions is the deferred fruit of the preference for the poor that places the politics of redistribution, of cooperation and assistance at the

³ “One of the greatest works of the origins of liberation theology, Porfirio Miranda does not appear, in the first instance, in the majority of lists of founding fathers of liberation theology. In general, the first to be cited is always Gustavo Gutiérrez, then Hugo Assmann or Juan Luis Segundo, and also Leonardo Boff.” Alberto Macko in *Revista de Teología Crítica*. Available from <https://goo.gl/htfmZn>

⁴ Santiago Villamayor, *Las Comunidades Cristianas Populares, sequía o desbordamiento*, in: <https://goo.gl/VH2wGj>. Also available with other similar documents on the blog: <http://redesreto10.blogspot.com.es/>

mercy of political agendas. Today there is greater solidarity than many years ago. The consensual maintenance of public services with our taxes is somewhat more generous than the medieval imposition of tithes on the part of the Church.

And we can also say that theology came to reconcile the Church with the left, as until the 1960 Catholicism remained the exclusive domain of the right. It came to build a bridge between the sincerity of Catholicism in some families and the “red heroes” who lost the war. Albeit that the episcopate and the hierarchy in general, very much in spite of Pope Francis, still resist this.

It also came to build the isthmus of a universalist, liberating humanism. A movement that assumes and surpasses religions and ideologies, theism and atheism, and that unites “Greeks, Jews and Gentiles” in a pluralist and undefined group interpreted by communities under the metaphors of the Kingdom and the Father. That is to say, inspired by the starry heavens of universal fraternity and moved by the memory of the most beautiful “good will” of our interior selves (Kant).

2. The evolution of the Grassroots Christian Communities in Spain

To believe is to commit

The Rupture with National Catholicism 1960-1970.

National Catholicism was the symbiotic movement built by the Franco regime that won the Civil War. It was the Spanish Church as a defender of the most traditional values of the Catholic Church and as a legitimiser of the Civil War which it defined as a crusade. Cut from fascist cloth, it imposed a way of life and of belief straight from the “valley of tears,” marked by resignation and silence surrounding the post-war atrocities. A Catholic dictatorship, this was a “triple alliance” of the coup army, economic powers that benefited from the war and the anti-communist and tridentine Church. Franco selected the appointment of bishops and entered churches under a palladium. The hierarchy, on the other hand, sat in the courts and stood upright at official ceremonies.

The loyal Catholic goes from bourgeois Catholicism, focussed on worship, on individual salvation, on morality, and sexual morality in particular, and the “other world” - won by the magical reaffirmation of the sacraments - to a Christianity dominated by solidarity among brothers and sisters who together seek liberation from their life conditions and their dignity, a transformation undergone right in the heart of a community.

It can almost be said that it was a miracle to emerge from such rigidity. But such a miracle did indeed occur. And above all in the 1960s when a series of very decisive and diverse circumstances, which we shall go into later, came together. Above all, there was the discovery of the extreme poverty of the isolated suburban neighbourhoods arising from the catechist missions. *Una chabola en Bilbao* (A Slum in Bilbao), by José Luis Martín Vigil expresses very well the sudden awareness of the despair and the injustice of the suburbs.

In this divorce from the regime, Father José María de Llanos, whom we may call the Spanish Óscar Romero, played a prominent role. Alongside him were the other two José Marías. The first was José María González Ruiz, Parish Priest and Canon of the Cathedral of Málaga, who was perhaps the most influential Spanish theologian at Vatican II, and the author of the book *Creer es Comprometerse* that gives this section its title. The second, José María Díez Alegría was the brother of two outstanding generals on the winning side of the war and a colleague of Llanos in Pozo del Tío Raimundo.

Father Llanos went from directing spiritual exercises for Franco to the poorest neighbourhood in Madrid, the aforementioned Pozo del Tío Raimundo. There he joined the workers in their struggles and enrolled in the Comisiones Obreras Trade Union and later the Communist Party. This was a scandal for the Regime and a bizarre leap of faith that had a tremendous impact on the nascent popular Christianity of the communities. Another Jesuit priest took a similar road. “Paco the Priest” as he was known, Francisco García Salve was the son of a Guardia Civil murdered by the Anarchists. He worked as a labourer and later as a labour lawyer. He became a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the management committee of Comisiones Obreras and, as such, was condemned in the famous “process 1001” of 1973. These striking conversions do not hide the extensive wave of renewal among “the laity”, until then seen as the “foot soldiers” but who came to be valued by some theologians such as Yves Congar.

Other less “spiritual” factors of a cultural or circumstantial nature contributed to the creation of a climate that allowed change. The ideology of development, tourism and television also came into play with the breath of the Spirit and opened doors to corporeality and attachment to the land as the hippy movement fed off free love and nature. The work of Wilhelm Reich arrived in Spain, inviting readers to the “sexual revolution” and this helped to desinhibit fears and accelerate non-conformism and the political revolution. The petit bourgeoisie embraced the miniskirt and jeans and bell-bottom trousers worn by the likes of the Beatles. This was

the “marvellous decade”. In Europe, May 68 was on the way and in the United States protest was growing against the war in Vietnam. In Cuba, Fidel Castro came to power and in Spain the Seminaries were abuzz.

It is in this environment that the first exclaustations for social commitment occur and the apostolic movements of the HOAC and the JOC grow closer to the bad company they are keeping in subversive Marxist circles. The “worker priests”, at great sacrifice, join the ranks of the manual wage labourers. Teams of religious men and women, grappling with their superiors, leave the colleges and seminaries and set off to live sharing neighbourhood, market and street with anyone and everyone. Parochial halls are given over to the then-clandestine workers’ struggle, and their presses print more political flyers than parish leaflets. The “Word of God,” the good seed, is no longer proffered with devout parsimony from the pews of the parish church but it is shouted across the streets in the early hours of the morning. And in this context, liberation theology enters the equation and grassroots Christian communities and other, similar groups emerge.

Both in Latin America and here in Spain these were times of messianic spirituality. Jesus was a revolutionary, like the Che, like Fidel or then even Daniel Ortega and the Christian community was something like Solentiname. And if there were any qualms about Marxism, inspiration came from the non-violence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The USA was the capitalist Leviathan and the revolutionary dream grew with anti-imperialism and looked admiringly eastwards at Mao’s revolution. To believe was to commit, to participate in the struggles of the workers and neighbours and to celebrate the subversive memory of Jesus of Nazareth. To sing along to Atahualpa Yupanqui, that nobody should spit blood so that others live better.

Of the two great currents in theology, the liberation theology of the “slum priests”, more focussed on the history and culture of the people, represented above all by Juan Carlos Scannone – companion and professor of his fellow Jesuit Jorge Mario Bergoglio, future archbishop of Buenos Aires and current pope – did not have as strong a presence in Spain or at least we were not as intimately familiar with it in the communities. The Marxist legacy of our own civil strife predisposed us to become embroiled, albeit not without critical reservations, in the perspective of “class struggle” and the “hegemony of the proletariat”.

In Theological Faculties, as well as Marxism, psychoanalysis and the evolutionism of Teilhard de Chardin was also being taught. Camus, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were widely read. Along with Robinson’s *Honest to God*, we read Bonhoeffer and Tillich. In the communities and

the training groups, these writings were divulged and the most pastoral theologians were read directly. Like Hélder Câmara, Garaudy, Girardi, García Nieto and Comín who founded the “Christians for Socialism” movement in Spain. Training booklets like the *Popular Theology* of José María Castillo proliferated along with the magazines of the HOAC, *Noticias obreras* (Workers' News), *Éxodo* (Exodus) and *Utopía* (Utopia), the latter produced by our communities. Julio Lois, Tamayo, Casaldáliga, Ivone Gebara, González Faus, and the pamphlets of “Cristianismo y Justicia” (Christianity and Justice), to offer some examples, would later continue this pedagogy of liberation. The poems of Cardenal and the songs of Victor Jara, Violeta Parra, Carlos Mejía Godoy and later Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés and others often imparted more theology than many academic writers.

The Christian alternative

Grassroots Christian Communities 1970 – 1980

The grassroots Christian communities reached their peak in these decades. We have already described their principal features. The book, by José María Castillo, whose title is borrowed for this section represents rather aptly what was being sought: an alternative to the traditional Church; a rebirth of Christianity from the people but without departing from them. We had reached a critical point. We were looking for “another voice of the Church” and to compensate the excessive right-wing loquacity of the hierarchy that always sought to marginalise the gospel.

Our communities evolved in parallel with those in Latin America, where they were met with harsher forms of repression. Here, there was great admiration for their bravery in the face of continued persecution, with the vigour of their theology, rooted in experience and martyrdom. The murder of Oscar Romero in 1980 was one of those landmark moments. For what he represented as an example of conversion to the evangelism of the poor from the highest rungs of the institutional ladder. In the wake of his death, the Oscar Romero Committees were created, taking liberation theology all over the world. Something similar occurred with the murder of the Jesuits and the two women who helped them in El Salvador.

“In 1969 an important event took place in the Christian communitarian movement. The first Peninsular Assembly of Christian Communities was held. This fact represented the consolidation of this community experience of the Church and of Spanish society”.⁵ And in 1973 the “People’s Church” project emerged, which crystallized in the

establishment of a number of common principles that were ratified at the first meeting of Christian People's Communities (CCP) of the state in Madrid in 1976. These were not the only Christian grassroots communities but the most important ones.

This first phase of the CCP was characterised by social and political militancy and belligerence. Due to criticism of the Church as an institution and, of course, clandestine activity the parishes and Christian Workers' Centres were placed under surveillance and denounced. In 1974, the democratic Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal and the effect was contagious. Pinochet's coup, however, brought back a strong dose of disillusionment, as did the "involution" in Nicaragua.

In the early 1980s, two debates dominated the communities: one on whether to maintain a presence or not in institutional politics, recently achieved by the left, and which took the momentum away from popular organisations. It seemed that to work within the institutions was a betrayal of the mobilisation in the streets. The communities suffered from this and given that, in general, they tended toward more idealistic positions, some more moderate members were lost. The other debate, in relation to whether our names should be added to communiqués of political nature was unanimous. Given that many belonged to different political groups, it was deemed preferable never to sign, as Christian communities, any documents other than those of a generic, humanitarian nature.

In the late 1980s, a period of work that was less notable but more efficient in its institutional scale began. To govern is another matter. In the communities, a climate of disenchantment and abandonment slowly grew. Even more so when Pope John Paul II distorted Vatican II and rebuked and humiliated liberation theology in the form of Ernesto Cardenal on his visit to Nicaragua. Spain, meanwhile, entered a period of economic prosperity which saw the growth of the middle classes and with them more conformist tendencies. "We were better off fighting against Franco," many would say.

And the south?

Internationalist Cooperation 1990 – 2005

This brief title of a humble magazine produced by the NGO Acción Solidaria Aragonesa represents just one of many liberation initiatives of

⁵ Jesús Gil García. Doctoral thesis: *La Teología de las Comunidades Cristianas Populares*. Libros Certeza. Zaragoza 2007, pp. 24ss.

an internationalist nature, significant in the evolution of the liberation praxis in the time of globalisation and miscegenation brought about by migration. Liberation Christianity spread to new social movements and internationalist pre-politics. It looked to the SOUTH. The 0.7% campaign and the accompanying camp protests in 1994 may be considered a landmark in the emergence of this new militancy. This same year also saw the “Women and Theology” group emerge in Feminist circles.

The 1990s were years of resistance and a reorientation of solidarity. A new cyclical crisis of capitalism arose and unemployment affected families and communities; caring for pre-adolescent children and the elderly meant less time for popular causes.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and with it the discrediting of countries with real socialism brought an end to the revolution understood in classical terms and opened the doors to homogeneous thinking and globalisation. Fukuyama published *The End of History and the Last Man*, confirming the triumph of capitalism. But in parallel, there also arose the anti-globalisation movements, the social forums calling for another world: the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the protests in Seattle in 1999 and the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001, organised by attac and the Brazilian Workers’ Party.

Little by little, a new culture of postmodernity has imposed itself. Liberation now has to compete with a certain lust for life and customs have been freed of religious dimensions. Relations have become more ephemeral and this rural culture of neighbours as family becomes more distant. Individualism, solidarity and anonymity expand in increasingly cosmopolitan cities. The features summarised later on by Bauman in *Liquid Modernity* are consolidated further.

Communities approached this convulsive period with multiple initiatives. They reviewed their basic, identifying values, educational and oration groups and state days of reflection. Every social encounter became a reason for hope and will to revive but the nostalgia and prophecy of old prevailed. However, the approach was universalised and the embers reignited by the upsurge of NGOs. Pluralism is now growing with immigration, concern for identity is diluted and an atmosphere of convergence for justice is created.

Throughout the final years of the 20th century, a number of theological approaches have acquired special importance. Interest in finding new symbols is growing as the classic sacraments become outdated. Disaffection with the Church has increased and the function of the priest has long since ceased to be recognised. Communities feel more comfortable in a secular society, more sincere in its manifestations than in a

religious one. The celebration of the Eucharist is completely renewed. It becomes something that belongs to the entire community: reflection, oration and snacks in the memory of Jesus' Last Supper. They are not Jewish or Christian Easters, nor redeeming sacrifices, and women begin to preside. Little by little the sacred character is lost and the common mood which is born out of sharing social action and preference for the poor is valued more. There are no consecrations or liturgies. There are symbols related to the gratuity of selfless love of, above all, a civic nature. And, very recently, the communities have begun to focus on helping immigrants and receiving refugees.

With new information technologies, social media and mobile devices, social activism is growing in the virtual world and being projected on reality. New technologies, neuroscience and robotics announce the arrival of a world even more contradictory of the old biblical and emancipatory tales. Liberation theology, which had eclipsed metaphysical and existential questions, finds itself once again facing radical questions of finitude and limitation. So now, having passed through the sieve of real and collective life: is another world possible? How long will popular achievements last us? As the saying goes, no revolution can survive for 50 years. What or who guarantees a remedy for the world? Oppression and injustice are seen from the traditional optics of evil and the communist, or community paradise inhabits the uncertainty of mystery and enigma. Religious pluralism places the relativism of religious responses on the table. Faith which seeks to understand is left feeling alone and insecure. Christians, no longer seen as the grassroots, are travel companions of active agnostics and atheists.⁶

Another christianity is possible

Post-religion and Universal Humanism 2005 – Present

Christianity has always reinvented itself. It has been debased so many times, generally as a result of power; call it wealth, authoritarianism, ego-centrism, that it has gone back to the prophets a number of

⁶ Term used by Richard Kearney (*Anatheism*. Columbia University Press 2009) for the return to God after God. This attitude, the search for “something more” that revolution or religion can't offer and that Science cannot respond to either. This situation is such that so many people are exiled from their old religion, on the threshold of eastern mysticism or in their disconcerted commitment or moral commitment with no definitive justifications. A shift towards the sacred secularity of liberation.

other times. But now the crisis and its mutation seem deeper. It affects very substantial aspects of the faith or even what the original message of the gospel was thought to be.

The coordinates or paradigms that govern the world have changed profoundly. The globalisation of poverty manifests itself in the great inequality gap between the 1% with financial power and the powerless 99%. The entire planet is entering the bounds of extreme risk. And meanwhile, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering and big data seem to want to take us to the edge of “transhumanism” with the artificial intelligent being.

In this panorama, many dare to say that we are in a new axial epoch. In a convulsive phase of metamorphosis which, in the case of Christianity is translated into a deconstruction of the great story of the Salvation and into an incipient butterfly’s flight towards humanitarian convergence. The communities no longer breathe the rhythm of great salvific events enunciated in early Pauline theology. The Bible is, for us, a great metaphor. It contains not reason but the soul of liberation. Creation, Sin, Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection and the Eternal Life are not the sequences of an historical epic. They are the symbols of the existential constants of the human condition; of what we call fraternity.

The works of Lenaers, Spong, Knitter, Hick and others are becoming known in Spain thanks to the Koinonia services, the Relat Library and the successive meetings with José María Vigil on his visits to Spain. It is the last step today for the influence of liberation theology in the communities. At first, these readings provoked a tough and painful bewilderment, but we have overcome this, and reached a new post-religional and supra-religional paradigm that offers relief and a new enthusiasm for liberation. It is the great wave of maximising civic love expressed with all its purity when it embraces the least fortunate.

Appendix: The speleology of hope

“...And dark times came,
In which all our conquests were destroyed,
By the hoards of blind mercenaries,
At the service of power and money.

Once again, hope
Had to seek refuge in the deepest cave,
So that greed could not sweep it

Away and expunge its memory;
And it was forced to stay silent,
Far from all things,
So that the silence would return to us
The simple conscience of love
And the full sense of the word”

*(Fragment of poem found in the ruins of Babylon,
beside the Ishtar Gate).*

“The Speleology of Hope” was originally intended to be the title of this article but I thought it somewhat flamboyant and more appropriate as the title for an appendix. I use the term “speleology” very intentionally because the task it requires of us is one of inquiry and creativity. Because “theology” is weakened while the anthropology and sociology of multiple human transcendencies grow. As such they tend towards the absolute, without ever reaching it or blemishing it. And we have to accustom ourselves to remaining in the cave, attempting to leave. We are incomprehension and limitation, the flesh of relativity saying God, Liberty. We are humanity splintered by injustice, waiting for a fraternal integration.

I also use this term because hope cannot be but attractive. How can we become enthusiastic about that which overwhelms us if it is announced from forced suffering or the impotence of a “mission impossible”?

We will explore the recesses of the injustice complex of this destructive late financial capitalism to seek economic and peaceable solutions; we will look in the seams of risk to discover the chinks of enduring liberty. Speleology is a beautiful endeavour of discovery that requires a bright light on one’s helmet; it is intense, suspenseful and dangerous work.

The faith that is born among the poor is called hope. The powerful live in the safety of the bright heavens, they know God, and they know who he is and call him by his name for they are with him. The poor feel his absence and await it and love without sufficient reason. The praxis of liberation has opened the cracks of the human cave of deep faith and active compassion and opens it wider every day.



Del Nacionalcatolicismo al Postcristianismo

Las Comunidades de base en España y la teología de la liberación

Santiago VILLAMAYOR LLORO

Abstract:

Theology, or better, the praxis of Latin American liberation, came to Spain in the late 1960s and had its most intense moment in the 1970s and 1980s. It coincided with the anti-Franco struggle and the transition to democracy. A process of political, cultural and religious liberation that extends from National Catholicism to the secular humanism of today. Its most outstanding fruit is the emergence of grassroots communities, animated by the testimony of the martyrs and witnesses of the Latin American communities. In the 1990s, and especially in the 21st century, postmodernism and globalization, hyper-technological inflation and secularization modulated the liberating impulse of the communities towards an internationalist solidarity.

Resumen:

La Teología, mejor, la praxis de liberación latinoamericana, llegó a España a finales de los años 1960 y tuvo su momento más intenso en las décadas de los años 1970 y 1980. Coincidió con la lucha antifranquista y la transición a la democracia. Un proceso de liberación política, cultural y religiosa que abarca desde el nacionalcatolicismo hasta el humanismo laico de hoy día. Su fruto más destacado es el surgimiento de las comunidades de base animadas por el testimonio de los mártires y testigos de las comunidades latinoamericanas. En los años 1990 y sobre todo en el siglo XXI la posmodernidad y la globalización, la inflación hipertecnológica y la secularización modularon el impulso liberador de las comunidades hacia una solidaridad internacionalista.

Introducción

La Teología de la Liberación es la consecuencia más honesta del Vaticano II, nacida en parte en las catacumbas romanas¹ y marginada por la curia romana desde ese mismo momento. Todo el poder y el peso de la gran Basílica de San Pedro caerían a plomo en los años siguientes sobre ese subsuelo evangélico. Pero la iniciativa prendió con fuerza en la religiosidad popular latinoamericana animada por los “misioneros y misioneras” que habiendo ido a evangelizar fueron más bien evangelizados. La expresión más relevante de esta renovación fue la formación de un gran movimiento de doble militancia, cristiana y política, en forma de pequeñas comunidades.

En las fronteras de la misma Iglesia, muchos catequistas, personas religiosas y sacerdotes se acercaron a los pobres, indígenas, chabolistas y campesinos que se ganaban el pan con dificultad, y que por sus protestas perdían la vida con facilidad. El martirologio latinoamericano muestra la radicalidad y la santidad con que se asumió el seguimiento de un Jesús de Nazaret, siempre nuevo, pobre y subversivo, profeta al servicio del pueblo.

En España el ejemplo latinoamericano cundió rápidamente sobre todo entre los cristianos esperanzados por el Concilio. Eran los sectores que se iban desgajando de la ortodoxia y el concubinato político con el Régimen franquista; una pequeña burguesía de religión sincera, trabajadores de la industria de religiosidad todavía muy rural, profesionales liberales, estudiantes contestatarios, y los restos de la izquierda que perdió la guerra y que no por eso habían renunciado a su cultura cristiana. Se originó entonces una dinámica de acercamiento a la “clase obrera”, de proletarización y de vecindad en los barrios. El misticismo revolucionario se abrió paso inspirado en el Éxodo y los Profetas.

En el presente artículo analizamos primero y en general las aportaciones de la Teología de la Liberación en nuestro país. Luego exponemos la trayectoria de las comunidades. Los epígrafes responden a los títulos de algunos libros que marcaron su evolución. Se corresponden aproximadamente con las décadas de los últimos casi 50 años, pero es difícil precisar porque no hay fronteras determinadas. Es un continuo quizás artificialmente pautado. Estos grandes momentos son: el descubrimiento

¹ El Pacto de las Catacumbas (1965) promovido por Hélder Câmara fue el primer compromiso sincero de la Iglesia al servicio estructural de los pobres, la semilla de la Teología de la liberación.

del compromiso temporal bajo la influencia del Vaticano II (1), la creación de las comunidades de base como alternativa a la gran y poderosa Iglesia (2), la irrupción del Tercer Mundo, el Sur, en la mirada cristiana (3) y finalmente el momento actual de deconstrucción y reinención del mensaje cristiano ya convertido en una supra ética universalista (4).²

1. Influencias de la Teología de la Liberación en España

“Marx y La Biblia”³

“No te harás imagen alguna de Dios, escucharás su clamor”.

Este libro de José Porfirio Miranda no es el más importante de la TL pero sí uno de los más decisivos en las comunidades. Llamativamente situaba a la justicia interhumana como principio ético común al marxismo y al cristianismo. “La fe es creer que este mundo tiene remedio”. El análisis marxista de las alienaciones y la interpretación materialista de la historia comenzó a ser la mediación que la teología necesitaba para salir de las etéreas y desprestigiadas interpretaciones metafísicas. Se descubría así un “amor más universal y por tanto más divino” que el de la atención a las clases influyentes cuyo Dios se sienta a “la mesa del patrón”. La sociología marxista y la revolución de los cristianos se situaban así en el ojo del huracán eclesiástico y político.

Con este acercamiento estructural a los pobres surge también un nuevo paradigma, una sincera clave de interpretar la realidad, muy sencilla y muy poderosa a la vez: que no es el pensamiento el que determina la manera de ser o vivir, sino que es la existencia real, la condición social, la que determina el modo de pensar y por tanto de actuar. Parafraseando nuestros refranes, el “dime con quién te codeas y te diré qué evangelio escribes”.

Este paradigma, esta praxis de la TL, vino para quedarse definitivamente. Impregnó la experiencia cristiana de tal modo que hoy, a

² Estas fases se exponen intuitivamente en el cronograma elaborado por Comunidades Cristianas Populares en Aragón. Véase: <http://ccparagon.pangea.org/quienessomos/historiaccp.gif>

³ “Una de las mejores obras de los orígenes de la Teología de la Liberación. Porfirio Miranda no aparece, en primera instancia, en la mayoría de listas de padres fundadores de la Teología de la Liberación. En general, el primero que siempre se cita es Gustavo Gutiérrez, luego Hugo Assmann o Juan Luis Segundo, y también a Leonardo Boff”. Alberto Macko en Revista de Teología Crítica. Disponible en <https://goo.gl/htfmZn>

pesar de la profunda transformación de las sociedades, todavía persiste, aunque con nuevos modos de expresión: con menor radicalidad quizás, pero con mayor extensión⁴. Una gran parte del ideal democratizador que prima en tantos países e instituciones es un fruto diferido de la opción preferencial por los pobres que sitúa las políticas de redistribución, de cooperación y de ayuda a la dependencia en las agendas políticas. Hoy se es más solidario que hace años. El consensuado mantenimiento de los servicios públicos con nuestros impuestos es bastante más generoso que la imposición medieval de los diezmos por parte de la Iglesia.

Y decimos también que esta teología vino para reconciliar a la Iglesia con la izquierda, pues hasta los años 1960 la exclusiva del catolicismo la tenía la derecha. Vino para hacer de puente entre la sinceridad del catolicismo en algunas familias y los “héroes rojos”, perdedores de la guerra. Si bien el episcopado y la jerarquía en general, y muy a pesar del Papa Francisco, todavía se resiste a ello.

También vino para construir el istmo de un humanismo liberador universalista. Un movimiento que asume y supera las religiones y las ideologías, el teísmo y el ateísmo, y que une a “griegos, judíos y gentiles” en una convocatoria plural e indefinida interpretada por las comunidades bajo las metáforas del Reino y del Padre. Es decir, animada por el cielo estrellado de la fraternidad universal, y movida por la memoria de la más bella “buena voluntad” en nuestro interior (Kant).

2. Trayectoria de las comunidades de base en España

“Crear es comprometerse”

La ruptura con el nacionalcatolicismo, ca. años 1960 y 1970

El nacionalcatolicismo fue el movimiento simbiótico construido entre el Régimen franquista ganador de la guerra civil y la Iglesia española defensora de los valores más tradicionales del catolicismo y legitimadora de dicha guerra civil, a la que calificó de Cruzada. De corte fascista, impuso una manera de vivir y de creer propias del “valle de lágrimas”, marcada por la resignación y el silencio ante las atrocidades posbélicas.

⁴ Santiago Villamayor, “Las Comunidades Cristianas Populares, sequía o desbordamiento”, en: <https://goo.gl/VH2wGj>

Disponible también con otros documentos similares en el blog: <http://redesreto10.blogspot.com.es/>

Una dictadura católica. Una “triple alianza”: del ejército golpista, el poder económico beneficiado por la guerra y la Iglesia anticomunista y tridentina. Franco seleccionaba el nombramiento de los obispos y entraba bajo palio en las Iglesias. La jerarquía a cambio se sentaba en las Cortes y permanecía erguida en los actos oficiales.

El fiel católico va pasando del catolicismo burgués, centrado en el culto, en la salvación individual, en el moralismo, sobre todo sexual, y en el “otro mundo” –ganado por la reiteración mágica de los sacramentos–, a un cristianismo de solidaridad entre hermanos, que buscan juntos una liberación de sus condiciones de vida y su dignidad. Un tránsito vivenciado conjuntamente en el seno de una comunidad.

Por eso casi se puede decir que fue un milagro salir de esa cerrazón. Pero el milagro se dio. Y sobre todo en los años 1960 donde concurren circunstancias muy decisivas y variopintas que luego comentamos. Sobre todo, el descubrimiento de la pobreza extrema en los barrios periféricos a raíz de las misiones catequéticas. “Una chabola en Bilbao”, de José Luis Martín Vigil expresa muy bien la concienciación experimentada ante el desamparo y la injusticia de los suburbios.

En este divorcio con el régimen tiene un lugar destacado el padre José María de Llanos, el monseñor Romero español podríamos llamarlo. Y con él los otros dos José Marías: José María González Ruiz, párroco de barrio y canónigo de la catedral de Málaga, que fue quizás el teólogo español más influyente en el Vaticano II, y autor del libro que da título a este apartado. Y José María Díez Alegría, hermano de dos destacados generales del ejército ganador, y compañero de Llanos en el Pozo del Tío Raimundo.

El Padre Llanos pasó de dirigir los ejercicios espirituales a Franco, a la barriada más pobre de Madrid, el citado Pozo del Tío Raimundo. Allí se enroló con los trabajadores y sus luchas e ingresó en el sindicato Comisiones Obreras, y posteriormente en el Partido Comunista. Fue un escándalo para el régimen y una locura de fe de gran impacto en el naciente cristianismo popular de las comunidades. Otro jesuita siguió pasos parecidos: “Paco el Cura”, Francisco García Salve, hijo de guardia civil asesinado por los anarquistas, peón de la construcción y después abogado laboralista. Llegó a ser miembro del Comité Central del Partido Comunista y de la dirección de Comisiones Obreras, y como tal, condenado en el famoso «proceso 1001» de 1973. Estas conversiones más llamativas no ocultan la extensa ola de renovación en el “laicado”, hasta entonces “clase de tropa”, y que ya empezaba a ser valorado por algunos teólogos como Yves Congar.

Otros factores menos “espirituales”, de naturaleza cultural o circunstancial, contribuyeron a crear el clima de apertura que permitió el

cambio. El desarrollismo, el turismo y la televisión entraron también con el soplo del Espíritu y abrieron las puertas de la corporalidad y el apego a la tierra; el movimiento hippy alimentó el amor libre y a la naturaleza. Llega a España la obra de Wilhelm Reich que invita a la “revolución sexual”, y ayuda a desinhibir los miedos y acelera el inconformismo y la revolución política. La pequeña burguesía se pone la minifalda y los vaqueros, o los pantalones-campana como los Beatles. Es la “década prodigiosa”. En Europa se prepara el “Mayo del 68” y en EEUU estalla la contestación a la guerra del Vietnam. En Cuba triunfa Fidel y en España los seminarios entran en ebullición.

Comienzan las primeras exclaustraciones hacia el compromiso social y los movimientos apostólicos. La HOAC y la JOC se acercan a las malas compañías de la subversión marxista. Los “curas obreros” se insertan con gran sacrificio en el trabajo manual asalariado. Equipos de religiosos y religiosas, forcejeando con sus superiores, dejan los colegios y residencias y se van a vivir a pisos compartiendo vecindad, mercado y calle como todo quisque. Se ceden los locales parroquiales a la lucha obrera, entonces clandestina, y sus ciclostiladoras imprimen más octavillas que hojas parroquiales. La “Palabra de Dios”, la buena semilla, ya no se deja con devota parsimonia en los bancos de la iglesia, sino que se lanza con rabia sobre las calles, de madrugada. Y en este contexto entra de lleno la Teología de la Liberación. Y se forjan las comunidades de base y otros grupos similares.

Tanto en Latinoamérica como aquí fueron momentos de mística mesiánica. Jesús era un revolucionario como el Che, como Fidel, como incluso entonces Daniel Ortega. Y la comunidad cristiana algo como Solentiname. Y si se tenían reticencias ante el marxismo, se tomaba como ejemplo la no violencia de Gandhi o de Martin Luther King. EEUU era el Leviatán capitalista. El sueño revolucionario se crecía con el anti-imperialismo y miraba con admiración la revolución de Mao. Creer era comprometerse, participar en las luchas obreras y vecinales, y celebrar la memoria subversiva de Jesús de Nazaret. Cantar con Atahualpa Yupanqui, que nadie escupiera sangre para que otros vivieran mejor.

De las dos grandes corrientes de la teología de la liberación, la de los “curas villeros”, más centrada en la historia y la cultura del pueblo, representada sobre todo por Juan Carlos Scannone –compañero y profesor del también jesuita Jorge Mario Bergoglio, futuro arzobispo de Buenos Aires y actual papa–, no tuvo una presencia tan importante en España o al menos no la conocimos en las comunidades con tanta intensidad. La herencia marxista de nuestra contienda civil nos predispuso para entrar, aunque no sin reservas críticas, en la perspectiva de la “lucha de clases” y de la “hegemonía del proletariado”.

En las facultades de teología, además del marxismo, se enseñaba el psicoanálisis y el evolucionismo de Teilhard de Chardin. Se leía a Camus, a Sartre, a Simone de Beauvoir. Con Robinson y su “Sincero para con Dios” nos acercamos a Bonhoeffer y Tillich. En las comunidades y sus grupos de formación se divulgan estos escritos y se lee directamente a los teólogos más pastorales. A Hélder Câmara, a Garaudy, a Girardi, a García Nieto y a Comín, que inician en España el movimiento de “Cristianos por el socialismo”. Proliferan los cuadernos de formación como la Teología Popular de José María Castillo, las revistas de la HOAC, “Noticias obreras” o “Exodo” y “Utopía”, ésta última de nuestras comunidades. Julio Lois, Tamayo, Casaldáliga, Ivone Gebara, González Faus, y los cuadernillos de “Cristianismo y Justicia”, por poner ejemplos, continuarían posteriormente esta pedagogía de la liberación. Los poemas de Cardenal o las canciones de Víctor Jara, Violeta Parra, Carlos Mejía Godoy y luego Silvio Rodríguez o Pablo Milanés, entre otros, nos transmitieron muchas veces más teología que muchos escritos académicos.

“La alternativa cristiana”

Las comunidades cristianas de base, ca. años 1970 y 1980

Las comunidades cristianas de base tienen su apogeo en estas dos décadas. Ya hemos citado sus rasgos principales. El libro, de José María Castillo cuyo título encabeza este epígrafe representa muy bien lo que se buscaba. Una alternativa a la Iglesia tradicional. Un reinicio del cristianismo desde el pueblo, pero sin salirse de ella. Nos situábamos en una pertenencia crítica. Buscábamos ser “otra voz de Iglesia” y compensar la excesiva locuacidad derechona de la jerarquía, que casi siempre dejaba en mal lugar el evangelio.

La evolución de nuestras comunidades discurre muy paralela con las de Latinoamérica, allí con mayor dureza y represión, aquí con mayor admiración por su valentía y continua persecución, por el vigor de sus teologías, arrancadas de esas experiencias y martirios. El asesinato de Monseñor Romero en 1980 fue uno de los hitos más importantes, por lo que significaba como ejemplo de conversión al evangelio de los pobres desde una alta esfera de la Institución. Su muerte dio lugar a los Comités Oscar Romero, que llevaron la teología de la liberación por todo el mundo. Algo similar ocurrió con el asesinato de los jesuitas y las dos personas que les ayudaban en El Salvador.

“En 1969 tiene lugar un acontecimiento importante en el movimiento comunitario cristiano. Se celebra en Valencia la primera Asamblea peninsular de comunidades cristianas. Este hecho supone la consolidación

de esta experiencia comunitaria en la Iglesia y en la sociedad españolas”.⁵ Y en 1973 surge el proyecto de “Iglesia Popular” que cristaliza en la elaboración de unas bases comunes que obtienen su ratificación en el primer Encuentro de Comunidades Cristianas Populares (CCP) del estado, en Madrid en 1976. No son las únicas comunidades de base, pero sí las más relevantes.

Esta primera etapa de las CCP se caracteriza por la militancia y la beligerancia social y política. Por la crítica a la Iglesia Institución y, cómo no, por la clandestinidad, pues también las parroquias y los centros obreros cristianos son vigilados y denunciados. En 1974 se produce la revolución democrática de los claveles en Portugal y el efecto se contagia. El golpe de estado de Pinochet supone sin embargo un asomo de desilusión, como lo sería después la involución nicaragüense.

A principios de los años 1980 se desatan dos debates en las comunidades, uno sobre la presencia o no en las instituciones políticas, recién alcanzadas por la izquierda, y que descabezaron las organizaciones populares. Parecía que el trabajar desde dentro de las instituciones era una traición a la movilización en la calle. Las comunidades se resintieron de la polémica y dado que, en general, se decantaron por las posiciones más idealistas, se produjeron algunos abandonos de la militancia más moderada. En lo relativo al otro debate, sobre nuestra adhesión o no a los comunicados de carácter político, hubo más unanimidad. Dado que se pertenecía a diferentes grupos políticos se prefirió no firmar nunca como comunidades cristianas, salvo los documentos genéricos de carácter humanitario.

A finales de los 80 se inicia una época de trabajo menos llamativo y más eficaz por su escala institucional. Gobernar es otra cosa. En las comunidades se va extendiendo poco a poco un clima de desencanto y de desierto. Más cuando Juan Pablo II ha torcido ya el espíritu del Vaticano II y ha reprendido y humillado a la teología de la liberación en la persona de Ernesto Cardenal en su visita a Nicaragua. España entra en una época de prosperidad económica que va ampliando las clases medias y con ellas un talante más conformista. “Contra Franco vivíamos mejor”, se solía decir.

⁵ Jesús Gil García, tesis doctoral: La Teología de las Comunidades Cristianas Populares. Libros Certeza. Zaragoza 2007, pp. 24 y sigs.

“¿Y el sur?”

La cooperación internacionalista, ca. años 1990 a 2005

Este breve título de una humilde revista de la ONG “Acción Solidaria Aragonesa” representa una de tantas iniciativas de liberación de carácter internacionalista, y es significativo de la evolución de las praxis de liberación, del momento globalizador y de mestizaje que empieza a darse por la inmigración. El cristianismo de la liberación se despliega en nuevos movimientos sociales y en la pre-política mundialista. Las miradas se dirigen al SUR. Las acampadas por el 0,7 en 1994 pueden considerarse como un hito en la irrupción de esta nueva militancia. También en ese año empieza a andar “Mujeres y Teología” en los cauces del movimiento feminista.

Estos años 90 son por tanto de resistencia y de solidaridad reorientada. Se produce una nueva crisis cíclica del capitalismo y el paro afecta a las familias de las comunidades; el cuidado de los hijos preadolescentes y de los mayores empieza a sustraer tiempo de las causas populares.

La caída del muro de Berlín y con ella el desprestigio de los países del socialismo real finiquita la revolución entendida al modo clásico y abre la puerta al pensamiento único y a la globalización. Fukuyama publica “El fin de la historia” para confirmar el triunfo del capitalismo. Pero paralelamente surgen también los movimientos antiglobalización, los foros sociales y el altermundismo: la Cumbre de Rio en 1992, las protestas de Seattle en 1999 y el primer FSM en Porto Alegre en 2001, organizado por ATTAC y el Partido de los Trabajadores de Brasil.

Poco a poco también una nueva cultura se va imponiendo, la postmodernidad. La liberación compite con el gusto por la vida y las costumbres se liberan de la religión. Las relaciones son más efímeras y lejos queda esa cultura rural del vecino que es como de la familia. El individualismo, la soledad y el anonimato se expanden por las ciudades cada vez más cosmopolitas. Se consolidan los rasgos que posteriormente resumirá Bauman en “La sociedad líquida”.

Las comunidades abordan estos momentos de contrariedad con múltiples iniciativas. Revisión de sus bases identitarias, grupos de formación y de oración, jornadas estatales de reflexión. Cada encuentro estatal se convierte en un motivo de esperanza y una voluntad de reanimación, aunque prima la nostalgia del profetismo de antaño. Sin embargo, la mirada se universaliza y el rescoldo se aviva con el auge de las ONGs. El pluralismo crece la inmigración, la preocupación por la identidad se diluye y se va creando una atmósfera de convergencia por la justicia.

A lo largo de los últimos años del siglo XX algunos planteamientos teológicos adquieren especial importancia. Crece el interés por encontrar nuevos símbolos, agotados los clásicos sacramentos. La desafección ante la Iglesia es cada vez mayor y la función del sacerdote ha dejado ya hace tiempo de ser reconocida. Las comunidades se sienten mejor en una sociedad laica, más sinceras en las manifestaciones que en el culto. La celebración de la eucaristía se renueva completamente. Es algo de toda la comunidad: reflexión, oración y *tentempié* en recuerdo de la cena de despedida de Jesús. No son Pascuas judías ni cristianas, ni mucho menos sacrificios redentores, y las mujeres empiezan a presidir. Poco a poco se pierde el carácter sagrado, se valora más el talante común que nace en el compartir la acción social, y la preferencia por los pobres. No hay consagraciones ni liturgias. Son nuevos símbolos vinculados a la gratuidad y al amor desinteresado sobre todo de carácter cívico. Y ya muy recientemente las comunidades se centran en la ayuda a los inmigrantes y la acogida de los refugiados.

Con las nuevas tecnologías informacionales, las redes sociales y los móviles, el activismo social crece en el mundo virtual y se proyecta sobre la realidad. Las nuevas tecnologías, las neurociencias y la robótica anuncian un mundo todavía más contradictorio con los viejos relatos bíblicos y emancipatorios. La TL, que había eclipsado los problemas metafísicos y existencialistas, vuelve a encontrarse con las cuestiones radicales de la finitud y la limitación, ahora pasadas por el tamiz de la vida real y colectiva: ¿Otro mundo es posible? ¿Cuánto nos durarán las conquistas populares? (“No hay revolución que 50 años dure”). ¿Qué o quién garantiza que el mundo tiene remedio? La opresión y la injusticia son vistas desde la óptica del tradicional problema del mal, y el paraíso comunista o comunitario entra en la incertidumbre del misterio y el enigma. El pluralismo religioso pone sobre el tapete la relatividad de las respuestas religiosas. La fe que busca entender se siente sola e insegura. Los cristianos, ya no tan de la base, son ahora compañeros de viaje de agnósticos activos y anateístas⁶.

⁶ Término utilizado por Richard Kearney (Anatheism, Columbia University Press, 2009) para indicar un regreso a Dios después de Dios. Esa actitud de búsqueda de “algo más” que la revolución o la religión no dan y que la ciencia tampoco puede responder. La situación en que se encuentran tantas personas en el exilio de su antigua religión, en los umbrales de la mística oriental o en su desconcertado compromiso o apuesta moral sin justificaciones definitivas. Un giro hacia la secularidad sagrada de la liberación.

“Otro cristianismo es posible”

La pos-religión y el humanismo universalista. Desde ca. años 2005 hasta hoy.

El cristianismo se ha renovado siempre. Y tantas veces como se ha degradado, generalmente por causa del poder, llámese riqueza, autoritarismo o egocentrismo, otras tantas veces han vuelto los profetas. Pero ahora la crisis y su mutación parecen más profundas. Afecta a aspectos muy sustanciales de su credo, incluso de lo que se creía que era el mensaje originario del Evangelio.

Las coordenadas o paradigmas que rigen el mundo han cambiado profundamente. La globalización de la pobreza se manifiesta en una gran brecha de desigualdad entre el 1% del poder financiero y el 99% de desposeídos. El planeta entero entra en los límites del riesgo extremo. Y por otra parte la inteligencia artificial y la ingeniería genética, los big-data, etc., parecen querer llevarnos al borde del “transhumanismo”, del ser inteligente artificial.

En este panorama muchos se atreven a decir que estamos en una nueva época axial. En una fase convulsiva de metamorfosis que en el caso del cristianismo se traduce en una deconstrucción del gran relato de la Salvación y en un incipiente vuelo de la mariposa hacia la convergencia humanitaria. Las comunidades ya no respiramos al ritmo de los grandes acontecimientos salvíficos enunciados en la primera teología paulina. La Biblia es para nosotros una gran metáfora, no tiene razón, sino alma de liberación. La Creación, el Pecado, la Encarnación, la Redención o la Resurrección y la Vida Eterna... no son secuencias de una gran epopeya histórica. Son símbolos de las constantes existenciales de la condición humana y de la llamada a la fraternidad.

Las obras de Lenaers, Spong, Knitter, Hick y otros, están siendo conocidas en las comunidades gracias a los servicios Koinonía, su biblioteca Relat y los sucesivos encuentros con José María Vigil en sus visitas a España. Es el último paso hoy por hoy de la influencia de la TL en las comunidades. Estas lecturas nos provocaron en un primer momento un desconcierto duro y doloroso, pero hemos remontado a un nuevo paradigma pos-religional y supra-religional que nos produce alivio y un nuevo ánimo en la liberación. Es la gran onda de la maximización del amor cívico que se expresa con toda su pureza cuando abraza a los más desfavorecidos.

Apéndice. La espeleología de la esperanza

“...Y llegaron tiempos oscuros
en que todas nuestras conquistas fueron destruidas
por las hordas de ciegos mercenarios
al servicio del poder del dinero.

Una vez más la esperanza
tuvo que buscar refugio en la cueva más honda
para evitar que la codicia la arrasara
borrando su memoria;
y hubo que guardar silencio,
lejos de las cosas,
de manera que el silencio nos devolviera
la conciencia sencilla del amor
y el sentido cabal de la palabra”

*(Fragmento de poema encontrado en las ruinas
de Babilonia, junto a la puerta de Ishtar).*

Éste iba a ser el título para este artículo, “La Espeleología de la esperanza”, pero me pareció muy llamativo. No así aquí, como epígrafe de un apéndice. Uso este término, “espeleología”, muy intencionadamente porque la tarea que se nos pide es de indagación y creatividad. Porque la “teología” se debilita a la par que crecen la antropología y la sociología de las múltiples trascendencias humanas. Como tales apuntan a lo absoluto, sin llegar a tocarlo ni mancharlo. Y nos tenemos que acostumbrar a seguir en la caverna tratando de salir. Somos incompreensión y limitación, carne de relatividad que dice Dios, Libertad. Somos humanidad escindida por la injusticia a la espera de una integración fraternal.

Uso este término también porque la esperanza no puede ser sino atractiva. ¿Cómo entusiasrnos con lo que nos desborda si se anuncia desde un sufrimiento obligado o la impotencia de una “misión imposible”?

Vamos a indagar pues por los recovecos de la compleja injusticia de este capitalismo tardío, financiero y destructor, a buscar soluciones económicas y de pacificación, vamos a mirar en las vetas de la contingencia para descubrir rendijas de libertad duradera. La espeleología es una bella labor de descubrimiento que requiere luz potente en el “casco”, intenso suspense y arriesgado trabajo.

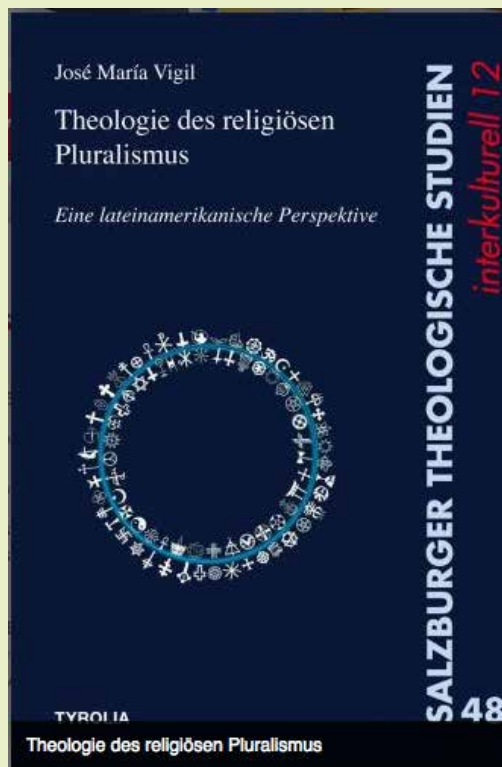
La fe que nace entre los pobres se llama esperanza. El poderoso

vive en la seguridad de los cielos luminosos, conoce a Dios, sabe quién es y lo llama por su nombre, porque está con él. El pobre siente su ausencia, anda a oscuras y lo espera y ama sin razones suficientes. La Praxis de la Liberación, ha abierto unas vetas en la caverna humana de profunda fe y compasión activa, cada día más anchas.

Theologie des Religiösen Pluralismus

Eine lateinamerikanische Perspektive

José María VIGIL



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José María VIGIL nähert sich dem Thema des religiösen Pluralismus durch eine "lateinamerikanische" Methodologie, die dem bekannten Schema "Sehen, Urteilen, Handeln" folgt. Aus historischer und aktueller Perspektive entfaltet er zunächst die Tatsache der religiösen Pluralität in der Welt. Im zweiten Schritt stellt er verschiedene Instrumentarien vor, die diese Wirklichkeit erläutern und interpretieren helfen. Er bespricht verschiedene Paradigmen des religiösen Pluralismus und betrachtet ihn unter biblischem, ekklesiologischem und christologisch-dogmatischem Blickwinkel. Schließlich führt er im letzten Teil des Buches

wieder in die konkrete Lebenswelt der Menschen, zum "Handeln", und entfaltet eine neue Spiritualität und eine neue Dialogpraxis.

Das gesamte Buch versteht sich als ein Glaubenskurs, der in einer Gruppe durchgeführt werden kann aber auch zur persönlichen Lektüre dient. Deshalb stellt Vigil in jedem Kapitel Texte zur Diskussion, empfiehlt Übungen und stellt Fragen zur persönlichen Standortüberprüfung.

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Before the reception of Liberation Theology in Europe

Considerations from Latin America

José María VIGIL

Abstract

The author starts from the emblematic Latin American character that is attributed to Liberation Theology worldwide, but recognizes that in reality it is a collective work, and that it also owes to Europe. Explicitly, he rejects the temptation of triumphalism, recognizing that sometimes the image has been enlarged by the media, while the reality has been smaller. He supports the attitude of humility that this theology has to have, because also theology can be measured, among other things, by the political efficacy of its results, which are quite few. Also, he points out that, 50 years later, we can not think of Liberation Theology as “the last novelty”, as if after Liberation Theology other important novelties had not occurred in the field of theology, with which it is important to “cross” Liberation Theology, without limiting intact as in the 80s. Finally, he argues that in the face of the wave of secularization or post-religion that in Europe has already had a big impact, and in Latin America is already visible to us by most of the points of our horizon, common sense asks us to turn our eyes to Europe again, with the same love with which during these 50 years Europe has supported and accompanied us, to hear from the Liberation Theology in Europe the lesson it can give us in front of the secularizing tsunami that seems to be forecast.

Resumen

El autor parte del carácter emblemáticamente latinoamericano que se le reconoce mundialmente a la TL, pero reconoce que en realidad es una obra colectiva y que tiene su deuda también

con Europa. Explícitamente rechaza la tentación del triunfalismo, reconociendo que a veces la imagen ha sido ampliada por los medios de comunicación, mientras la realidad ha sido de menores dimensiones. Apoya la actitud de humildad que le corresponde, pues también la teología se puede medir, entre otras cosas, por la eficacia política de sus resultados, que no son muchos. En cuarto lugar señala que, 50 años después, no podemos pensar que la TL es «lo último», como si no hubieran sobrevenido en el campo de la teología novedades significativas con las que importa «cruzar» a la TL, sin limitarse a conservarla intacta como en los años 80. Finalmente sostiene que ante la ola de secularización o pos-religionalidad que en Europa ya ha hecho verdaderos estragos y en AL ya se nos hace visible por la mayor parte de los puntos del horizonte, el sentido común nos pide en AL volver los ojos a Europa, con el mismo amor con el que durante estos 50 años Europa nos ha apoyado y acompañado, para escuchar de ella la lección que puede darnos ante el tsunami secularizador que parece que se pronostica.

A few more words, from Latin America, to finish this ample dossier. Not to give a “final word”, nor to draw a conclusion, which must be done by each reader, but to express with confidence some Latin American convictions that come to our hearts, following this “dialogue with Europe” in which consists this issue of VOICES about the reception of Liberation Theology in Europe. In response to a reception as varied and multiform as these pages present to us, these fraternal-sororal words spring from Liberation Theology to Liberation Theology, addressed to so many sisters and brothers and communities that think, pray and practice that same and at the same time diverse theology, that unites us in the struggle for the same Cause, the Utopia of Jesus.

1. Liberation Theology, a truly Latin American theology

There are many theologies in Latin America, but Liberation Theology is the one that can be called truly Latin American, that is, born and raised here, and fully identified with typical Latin American values. Other theologies may have more followers, and more institutional support, but they are theologies born elsewhere, imported, and sometimes imposed.

For those of us who accompany it since its birth, it has a great significance for this continent: it is the first systematic body of theology developed outside of Europe. And it is not the result of a mere application of the Second Vatican Council to the Latin American continent: that application that the Second General Episcopal Conference of Latin America in

Medellín wanted to do, turned out to be very creative and represented a qualitative leap towards a new paradigm (historical, critical, liberating, from the option for the poor...), really new, not only in the history of the continent, but of the whole big Church. It opened up new perspectives that were not in the conciliar text that it apparently “simply” wanted to apply.

In the early 1980s the specific difference was discussed (if there was one and what was it) between Liberation Theology and the so-called European progressive theology, which undoubtedly made a notable contribution to the possibility of the creation of Liberation Theology. We well know that, in sound theology, no absolute novelty is possible. And we also know that Liberation Theology does not have a “father”, nor does it recognize, at its origin, any teacher who has created around him a “theological school”, but that it was emerging collectively, a little everywhere in Latin America, starting from the spiritual and practical experience of an “oppressed and believing” people, like the Latin American one. This experience was a “first word”, of which the Liberation Theology that emerged in Latin America would be a second word.

But this second word could not have crystallized as it did, had it not been for the Second Vatican Council that needed to be applied (which certainly had very little Latin American contribution), and for the first developments of post-conciliar European theology, which were not unknown to the Latin American theologians who accompanied the process. Certainly the result was not a copy; it presented substantial innovations, mainly due to the difference between the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of Latin America and Europe, because of the different “social place” [lugar social] within the world society for which each theology worked. In fact, Rockefeller reacted angrily against Medellín and Liberation Theology, not against other theologies. From Latin America we seem to see that this people simultaneously “oppressed and believing” – with consciousness of the dialectic oppression / liberation and an “option for the poor” – is the specific difference that produced the registered trademark, the qualitative leap that Liberation Theology could give, without ignoring or underestimating the invaluable help that European progressive theology meant for it.

In any case, Latin American Liberation Theology can be considered truly as a contribution of the Christian Churches of this continent to the whole universal Church, and in fact today it is present in all the continents. It has not been exclusively Catholic, because the same process was experienced in the Protestant Churches, at the same time, at the Uppsala Conference, the “Church and Society Movement” of the World Council of Churches from Geneva... The innumerable “ecumenical” academic and

pastoral achievements, between Catholics and Protestants, in the matter of Liberation Theology have not stopped since the first moments of their appearance. More: without anyone having tried to “export” Liberation Theology, the truth is that we also find it in other religions, such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism...

Being the Latin American theology “par excellence”, it is also clear that it is not only Latin American, but also has other roots – European ones among others –, and above all it has many branches, already loaded with fruits, that were self-grafted in the most diverse places, on all the continents...

2. Liberation Theology: without triumphalism

To tell the truth, even in the 1970s and 80s, Liberation Theology did not hegemonically occupy the Latin American continent. It is true that it took the lead, that it was publicized by the media as news; but even then it wasn't perhaps a majoritarian theology in the Latin American people of God. Much less institutionally. But it did assume, almost alone, the palm of martyrdom: since the earliest times of the Church we had not witnessed such a “great cloud of witnesses”, the Latin American martyrology, the greatest proof of reliability of the spirituality of liberation (the first word of Liberation Theology).

In the 70s and 80s, the CLAR (Latin American Confederation of Religious) seemed to be totally hegemonized by Liberation Theology; in fact, more detailed analyses revealed that it was not more than a quarter of the religious life that was convinced of Liberation Theology – that is, profoundly –; the great part of religious life simply followed people who were convinced or resisted them. And the same could be said of the great bulk of the dioceses in the Catholic Church, and of the denominations and congregations in the Protestant Church. The reality of Liberation Theology has often been very significant, and very valuable in itself, but never massive or omnipresent. The political enemies and the institutional ecclesiastical adversaries have not been lacking, so that some decades of the ecclesial winter that we have gone through, have been especially hard. All this strips us of all triumphalism when talking about Liberation Theology; it is the same attitude with which we listen to the reports and the chronicles of the presence and reception of Liberation Theology in Europe. It is the way of the Gospel: always without triumphalism.

3. Liberation Theology: with humility

Liberation Theology has often been hailed as a return to the Christianity of the Gospel, to the primitive Church, that of the poor,

detached from alliances with the Empire. But if these praises are true, they must also be taken with humility, because we can not close our eyes to its impotence in the face of the sinful reality of our continent. Latin America, the continent famous for Liberation Theology, is equally sadly famous for being the economically most unequal continent in the world. Brazil, the country that came to have – it was said – more than 80,000 Basic Ecclesial Communities, is the country with the highest concentration of income, where 1% of the population retains 28% of the country's wealth – data of 2015, even after the levelling of equity effectuated by the Lula government, whereby more than 40 million poor people entered the middle-class. The Latin American Liberation Theology has to speak with humility, because the theoretical postulates that it works are very far from having been effectively reflected in just and successful socio-economic results within concrete historical political structures.

It is true that this contradiction between Christian religion and social inequity does not only correspond to the Latin American continent, but to the entire Western socio-cultural group, because, unfortunately, the West is the cradle and the support of global capitalism, recognized throughout the world as the champion of inequality, the exploitation of peoples and colonialism. Liberation Theology, both in Latin America and in any other part of the world, must be very humble, since it does not have many historical socio-economic-political transformations to boast of, although it can be humbly proud to be on the correct side of the necessary transformation of the world, of the side on which Jesus of Nazareth stood.

Especially facing Europe, the Liberation Theology can not be arrogant nor pretend to give lessons beforehand, because in fact, Europe, even being one of the regions that “produce most inequality at a global level”, and even being currently in a process of increasing inequality, still is the region of the world to which statistics attribute the least social inequality. Although this index is not the only important one in a reality as complex as the socio-political economy, there are analysts who propose Europe as an example to be followed by other continents in the fight against inequality in the world: implementing progressive tax regimes and increasing taxes on inheritance like in Europe, in addition to greater rigidity in the control of tax evasion. Social equity, as an element of the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus, a Utopia of Liberation Theology, seems not yet to be possible in a stable, lasting and integral way in any political regime inspired by or in line with Liberation Theology. We do not have any political reality to be proud of.

It is within this attitude of humility, as it is possible to welcome the presence of Liberation Theology in Europe, so different and peculiar in

each of the countries about which this issue informs us, as a very positive presence in any case, which strives to renew both Church and, above all, society, as befits Liberation Theology, which was always a theology “on the way out”, towards the other possible world, towards the Utopia of Jesus.

4. Liberation Theology is no longer “the last thing”

In the first decades of its emergence in Latin America, it may have seemed to some that Liberation Theology and the spirituality of liberation were “the last thing” and would continue to be almost forever... The world took an important socio-economic ideological turn in 1989, and from then on Liberation Theology received a strong decline in the admiration from abroad. The first reproach that was made at that time was that it did not evolve, that it repeated – albeit deepening – the fundamental issues, but without novelty.

There was a first reaction of Liberation Theology in defence against this first tiredness of the so-far-admirers, and it was the surprise of the diversification of its subjects, the “new emergent subjects”, as it was said: the women with their feminist theology, the indigenous with their Indian theology, African-Americans with their black theology... It was an unfolding, a diversification, not a separative division, but a deepening enrichment, so that although we can speak today of theologies of liberation, in the plural, it also makes sense to maintain the singular, for the strong fundamental unity that unites them all.

Even so, this diversification was not a novelty for Liberation Theology, but its deepening. Soon the complaint against Liberation Theology was repeated: it does not evolve, it has remained in the world of the 80s and 90s, it does not accept or respond to the new deep epistemological questions, to the “new paradigms” that a few decades ago have started to appear – although some come from far away, from past centuries. To give just one example: the classical Liberation Theology, from its origin, being as it was a “derivation” of an application of the Second Vatican Council, could not but be inclusive and Christocentric; in those years, even though the millenarian exclusivism typical of Christianity had recently been overcome, there was no other perspective to draw on; the pluralist paradigm was not to be seen on the horizon. However, toward the end of the 1980s, the theology of religious pluralism emerged, and with it the pluralistic paradigm, which soon began to gain space in theology. In many ecclesiastical sectors, classical Liberation Theology was baffled, not knowing what to do; many confused the fidelity to Liberation Theology with the closure to everything new, and a fear of

mixing and confronting and reconverting. But there were also Liberation Theology authors who accepted the challenge of confronting this new paradigm; in the collection “Along the Many Paths of God” (tiempoaxial.org/AlongTheManyPaths/), of EATWOT (five volumes of progressively organized content, with more than 70 authors), Liberation Theology is presented as combined with pluralism... and not necessarily inclusivist anymore.

And together with the pluralistic paradigm, several other “new paradigms” are present on the stage, showing their presence more and more clearly and receiving resistance from those who prefer not to face radical changes (the paradigmatical changes are, by definition, the most radical ones), and remain faithful to the Liberation Theology “of always”, to “the original”, to that of the 1980s, as if it were the “permanent novelty”. In addition to the pluralist paradigm are the feminist paradigm, the post-theist, the non-dualist, the ecocentric, the new biblical archaeological paradigm, the new epistemological paradigm...

The pages of this issue testify that although Latin America is the place where this confrontation of Liberation Theology with the new paradigms is more known and assumed, in Europe there are also countries that have entered – their basic communities more than their academic theologians – this path of the development of a Liberation Theology that is no longer “the last novelty”, but dialogues with the new theoretical challenges provoked by the renowned new “axial time” (tiempoaxial.org) that we are undoubtedly transiting. Maybe this is the time to embark on a European–Latin American collaboration in attention to this new “development of Liberation Theology” in the middle of the 21st century.

5. Latin America before the European Kairós

For some years now, in Latin America we are saying that, after several decades in which Europe has looked towards Liberation Theology and the Basic Communities (CEBs) as a *kairós*, a sign of the times that has illuminated and sustained many struggles in Europe, we are now at a time when the direction of the winds has changed. Now it is (also) time for Latin America to look closely at Europe, because the crisis of secularization that has developed there is also a “*kairós*” in which the Spirit speaks to Latin America. Without realizing it, after these decades of admiration received by Liberation Theology, we are left unconsciously with the idea that there are no new signs of the times outside of Latin America (because Liberation Theology would still be the last...), and this is not the case.

The current secularized situation in Europe is of such magnitude that one can already consider “post-religion” as a new paradigm that

begins to cover the entire continental territory; religion remains only in the older layers of population, called to disappear. The “transmission of faith” has practically disappeared in the cultural environment of young people in Europe. What will become of European Christianity in 30 years?

For us, in Latin America, this question is very serious, because, although not a few doubt it, there are many of us who think that, as we are also part of the West, the phenomenon of secularization will not only happen here, but rather is already happening, and more quickly than it seems. The statistics, in almost all countries, confirm it with an unmerciful forcefulness.

In this frame of what we might call the advent of post-religionality, we would like to find in Europe an orientation, so that what is coming to us as in Europe, can happen here in a different way. In that sense, we think that today it is Latin America that must look to Europe, to scrutinize the new path that we might deduce from its current religious developments.

Thus, the relationship of Latin American Liberation Theology with Europe is not one-way, but bi-directional, reciprocal, fraternal-sororal.

Translation: Stefan Silber



Desde América Latina. Ante la recepción de la TL en Europa

José María VIGIL

Resumen

El autor parte del carácter emblemáticamente latinoamericano que se le reconoce mundialmente a la TL, pero reconoce que en realidad es una obra colectiva y que tiene su deuda también con Europa. Explícitamente rechaza la tentación del triunfalismo, reconociendo que a veces la imagen ha sido ampliada por los medios de comunicación, mientras la realidad ha sido de menores dimensiones. Apoya la actitud de humildad que le corresponde, pues también la teología se puede medir, entre otras cosas, por la eficacia política de sus resultados, que no son muchos. En cuarto lugar señala que, 50 años después, no podemos pensar que la TL es «lo último», como si no hubieran sobrevenido en el campo de la teología novedades significativas con las que importa «cruzar» a la TL, sin limitarse a conservarla intacta como en los años 80. Finalmente sostiene que ante la ola de secularización o pos-religionalidad que en Europa ya ha hecho verdaderos estragos y en AL ya se nos hace visible por la mayor parte de los puntos del horizonte, el sentido común nos pide en AL volver los ojos a Europa, con el mismo amor con el que durante estos 50 años Europa nos ha apoyado y acompañado, para escuchar de ella la lección que puede darnos ante el tsunami secularizador que parece que se pronostica.

Abstract

The author starts from the emblematic Latin American character that is attributed to Liberation Theology worldwide, but recognizes that in reality it is a collective work, and that it also owes to Europe. Explicitly, he rejects the temptation of triumphalism, recognizing that sometimes the image has been enlarged by the media, while the reality has been smaller. He supports the attitude of

humility that this theology has to have, because also theology can be measured, among other things, by the political efficacy of its results, which are quite few. Also, he points out that, 50 years later, we can not think of Liberation Theology as “the last novelty”, as if after Liberation Theology other important novelties had not occurred in the field of theology, with which it is important to “cross” Liberation Theology, without limiting intact as in the 80s. Finally, he argues that in the face of the wave of secularization or post-religion that in Europe has already had a big impact, and in Latin America is already visible to us by most of the points of our horizon, common sense asks us to turn our eyes to Europe again, with the same love with which during these 50 years Europe has supported and accompanied us, to hear from the Liberation Theology in Europe the lesson it can give us in front of the secularizing tsunami that seems to be forecast.

Unas palabras más, desde América Latina (AL), para terminar este amplio dossier. No para dar una «última palabra», ni para elaborar una conclusión –que la debe decidir cada lector–, sino para expresar con confianza algunas convicciones latinoamericanas que afloran a nuestro corazón, tras este «diálogo con Europa» en que consiste de hecho este número de VOICES sobre la recepción de la teología de la liberación (TL) en Europa. Ante una recepción tan variada y multiforme como la que estas páginas nos presentan, nos brotan estas palabras fraterno-sororales, de teología a teología de la liberación, dirigidas a tantos hermanas y hermanos y comunidades que piensan, rezan y practican esa misma y a la vez diversa teología, que nos une en la lucha por la misma Causa, la Utopía de Jesús.

1. TL, una teología verdaderamente latinoamericana

Teologías hay muchas en AL, pero la TL es la que más propiamente puede ser llamada verdaderamente latinoamericana, es decir, nacida y crecida aquí, e identificada plenamente con los valores típicamente latinoamericanos. Otras teologías pueden tener más adeptos, y más apoyo institucional, pero son teologías nacidas en otro lugar, importadas, y a veces impuestas.

Para quienes la acompañamos desde su nacimiento, tiene un gran significado para este continente: es el primer cuerpo sistemático de teología elaborado fuera de Europa. Y no es el resultado de una mera aplicación del Concilio Vaticano II al Continente latinoamericano: esa aplicación que efectivamente la IIª Conferencia General Episcopal

Latinoamericana de Medellín quiso hacer, resultó ser muy creativa y representó un salto cualitativo hacia un nuevo paradigma (histórico, crítico, liberador, desde la opción por los pobres...) realmente nuevo, no sólo en la historia del continente, sino de la Iglesia entera. Abrió perspectivas nuevas que no estaban en el texto conciliar que parecía que «simplemente» quería aplicar.

En los primeros años 80 se discutió ampliamente la diferencia específica (si la había y cuál era) entre la TL y la llamada teología progresista europea, que sin duda, dio una contribución notable a la posibilidad de que apareciera la TL. Bien sabemos que, en sana teología, no es posible una novedad absoluta. Y bien sabemos también que la TL no tiene un «padre», ni reconoce en su origen a ningún maestro que haya creado en torno suyo esa «escuela teológica», sino que fue surgiendo colectivamente, un poco por todas partes en América Latina, a partir de la experiencia espiritual y práxica de un pueblo «oprimido y creyente», como el latinoamericano. Esta experiencia fue una «primera palabra», de la que la TL que surgió en AL sería una palabra segunda.

Pero esta palabra segunda no hubiera podido cristalizar como lo hizo si no hubiera sido por el Concilio Vaticano II que se quería aplicar (que por cierto tuvo muy poco de latinoamericano), y por los desarrollos primeros de la teología europea posconciliar, que no resultaban desconocidos a los teólogos/as latinoamericanos que acompañaron el proceso. Ciertamente que el resultado no fue una copia; presentó novedades sustanciales, fundamentalmente por la diferencia entre el contexto socio-económico y sociocultural latinoamericano y el europeo, por el «lugar social» diferente dentro de la sociedad mundial para el que cada teología trabajaba. De hecho Rockefeller reaccionó airado contra Medellín y la TL, no contra otras teologías. Desde AL nos parece ver que ese pueblo simultáneamente «oprimido y creyente» –con conciencia de la dialéctica opresión/liberación y «opción por los pobres»– es la diferencia específica que produjo la marca registrada, el salto cualitativo que la TL pudo dar, sin desconocer ni minusvalorar por ello la ayuda inestimable que le significó la teología progresista europea.

En todo caso, la TL latinoamericana puede ser considerada con verdad como una aportación de esta Iglesia cristiana continental a toda la Iglesia universal, y de hecho hoy se halla presente en todos los continentes. No ha sido una exclusiva católica, pues el mismo proceso se vivió en las Iglesias protestantes, por las mismas fechas, en la Conferencia de Uppsala, el «Movimiento Iglesia y Sociedad» del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias desde Ginebra... Las innumerables realizaciones académicas y pastorales «ecuménicas», entre católicos y protestantes, en materia de TL no han cesado

desde los primeros momentos de su aparición. Más: sin que nadie haya pretendido «exportar» TL, lo cierto es que la encontramos también en otras religiones, como el Islam, el judaísmo, el hinduismo, el budismo...

Siendo como es la teología latinoamericana «por antonomasia», es bien claro también que no sólo es latinoamericana, sino que tiene también otras raíces –europeas entre otras–, y sobre todo tiene muchas ramas, cargadas ya de frutos, que se auto-injertaron en los lugares más diversos, en todos los continentes...

2. TL: sin triunfalismo

Para decir la verdad, ni aun en las décadas de los 70 y 80 llegó la TL a ocupar hegemónicamente el Continente latinoamericano. Es cierto que llevó la voz cantante, que era publicitada por los medios de comunicación como una novedad periodística; pero ni aun entonces tal vez fue una teología mayoritaria en el pueblo de Dios latinoamericano. Mucho menos lo fue institucionalmente. Pero sí llevó, casi ella sola, la palma del martirio: desde los primeros tiempos de la Iglesia no habíamos sido testigos de una «tan grande nube de testigos», el martirologio latinoamericano, la prueba de fiabilidad mayor de la espiritualidad de la liberación (la palabra primera de la TL).

En los 70 y 80 la CLAR (Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosas/os) pasaba por estar totalmente hegemonizada por la TL; en realidad, análisis más detallados revelaban que no era más de una cuarta parte de la vida religiosa la que estaba convencida de la TL –profundamente, eso sí–; el gran conjunto de la vida religiosa simplemente seguía a las personas convencidas o les resistía. Y lo mismo podríamos decir del gran grueso de las diócesis en la Iglesia católica, y de las denominaciones y congregaciones en la Iglesia protestante. La realidad de la TL con frecuencia ha sido muy significativa, y muy valiosa en sí misma, pero nunca masiva ni totalizante. Los enemigos políticos y los adversarios eclesiásticos institucionales no han faltado, lo que ha hecho especialmente duras algunas décadas del invierno eclesial que hemos atravesado. Todo ello nos despoja de todo triunfalismo al hablar de la TL; es la misma actitud con la que escuchamos los informes y las crónicas de la presencia y la recepción de la TL en Europa. Es el camino del Evangelio: siempre sin triunfalismo.

3. TL: con humildad

La TL ha sido frecuentemente saludada como una vuelta al cristianismo del Evangelio, a la Iglesia primitiva, la de los pobres, desprendida

de toda alianza con el Imperio. Pero si estas alabanzas son ciertas, deben ser tomadas también con humildad, porque no pueden cerrar los ojos a su impotencia ante la realidad pecaminosa de nuestro continente. América Latina, el continente famoso por la TL, es igual de tristemente famoso por ser el continente económicamente más desigual del mundo. Brasil, el país que llegó a tener –se decía– más de 80.000 comunidades eclesiales de base, es el país que registra la mayor concentración de la renta, donde el 1% de la población retiene el 28% de la riqueza del país –datos de 2015, aun después de la nivelación de equidad que significó el gobierno de Lula, cuando más de 40 millones de pobres que ingresaron en la clase media–. La TL latinoamericana tiene que hablar con humildad, porque los postulados teóricos que ella trabaja están muy lejos de haberse visto reflejados efectivamente en resultados socioeconómicos justos y exitosos en estructuras políticas históricas concretas.

Es cierto que esta contradicción entre religión cristiana e inequidad social no corresponde sólo al continente latinoamericano, sino a todo el conjunto socio-cultural occidental, pues, lamentablemente, Occidente es la cuna y el respaldo del capitalismo mundial, reconocido en todo el mundo como el campeón de la desigualdad, la explotación de los pueblos y el colonialismo. La TL, tanto en AL cuanto en Europa o cualquier otra parte del mundo, debe ser muy humilde, pues no tiene muchas transformaciones socio-económico-políticas realizadas históricamente de las que presumir, aunque puede a la vez estar humildemente orgullosa de estar del lado correcto de la necesaria transformación del mundo, del lado en el que se situó el mismo Jesús de Nazaret, que también fracasó.

Especialmente ante Europa, la TL no puede ser arrogante ni pretender de antemano dar lecciones, pues de hecho, Europa, aun siendo una de las regiones que «producen más inequidad a nivel mundial», y aun estando en la actualidad en un proceso inequidad creciente, es todavía la región del mundo a la que la estadísticas atribuyen la menor desigualdad social. Aunque este índice no sea el único importante en una realidad tan compleja como la socio-economía política, hay analistas proponen a Europa como ejemplo a seguir por otros continentes en el combate a la desigualdad en el mundo: implementando como ella regímenes de tributación progresivos y aumentando los impuestos sobre la herencia, además de una mayor rigidez en el control de la evasión fiscal. La equidad social, como elemento del Reino de Dios predicado por Jesús, utopía de la TL, parece que no ha sido posible todavía de modo estable, duradero e integral en ningún régimen político inspirado por o en la línea de la TL. No tenemos ninguna realidad política de la que enorgullecemos.

Es dentro de esta actitud de humildad, como cabe acoger la presencia de la TL en Europa, tan desigual y peculiar en cada uno de los países sobre los que nos informa este número, como una presencia en todo caso muy positiva, que se esfuerza por renovar tanto la Iglesia como, sobre todo, la Sociedad, como corresponde a la TL, que siempre fue una teología «en salida», hacia el otro mundo posible, hacia la Utopía de Jesús.

4. La TL ya no es «lo último»

En las primeras décadas de su surgimiento en América Latina nos pudo parecer a algunos que la TL y la espiritualidad de la liberación eran «lo último» y lo iban a continuar siendo casi por siempre... El mundo dio un giro socio-económico-ideológico importante en 1989, y a partir de entonces sobrevino un fuerte declive en la admiración que la TL recibía desde el exterior. El primer reproche que por entonces se le hizo fue el de que no evolucionaba, que repetía –acaso profundizando– los temas fundamentales, pero sin novedad.

Hubo una primera reacción de la TL en defensa de este primer cansancio de los hasta entonces admiradores, y fue la sorpresa de la diversificación de sus sujetos, los «nuevos sujetos emergentes», como se dijo: las mujeres con su teología feminista, los indígenas con su teología india, los afroamericanos con su teología negra... Fue un desdoblamiento, una diversificación, no una división separativa, sino un enriquecimiento de profundización, por lo que aunque podamos hablar hoy de teologías de la liberación, en plural, también tiene sentido mantener el singular, por la fuerte unidad fundamental que une a todas ellas.

Aun así, este desdoblamiento no era una novedad frente a la TL, sino sólo su profundización. Pronto volvió a repetirse la queja contra la TL: no evoluciona, se ha quedado en su mundo de los años 80-90, no acoge ni da respuesta a las nuevas cuestiones epistemológicas profundas, a los «nuevos paradigmas» que desde hace unas décadas están apareciendo –aunque algunos vengan de muy lejos, de siglos pasados–. Por dar sólo un ejemplo: la TL clásica, desde su origen, siendo como era una «derivación» de una aplicación del Concilio Vaticano II, no podía menos que ser inclusivista y cristocéntrica; en aquellos años, aún recién superado el milenarismo exclusivista típico del cristianismo, no existía otra perspectiva de la que echar mano; el paradigma pluralista ni se oteaba en el horizonte. Sin embargo hacia finales de los 80 surgió la teología del pluralismo religioso, y con ella el paradigma pluralista, que pronto comenzó a cubrir espacios en la teología. En no pocos sectores eclesiales, la TL clásica quedó desconcertada, sin saber qué hacer; muchos confundieron la fidelidad a la TL con la cerrazón a todo lo nuevo, y un temor a mezclar-

se y confrontarse y reconvertirse. Pero hubo también autores y autoras de TL que aceptaron el desafío de confrontarse con este nuevo paradigma; en la colección «Por los muchos caminos de Dios» (tiempoaxial.org/PorLosMuchosCaminos), de la EATWOT (cinco volúmenes, progresivos, con más de 70 autores/as) se presenta una TL confrontada con el pluralismo... no ya necesariamente inclusivista.

Y junto al paradigma pluralista están presentes hoy en el escenario varias otros «nuevos paradigmas» en lid, mostrando cada vez más claramente su presencia y recibiendo la resistencia de quienes prefieren no afrontar cambios radicales (los cambios de paradigma son, por definición, los más radicales), y seguir fieles a la TL «de siempre», a «la original», a la de los años 80, como si fuera «último». Además del pluralista están el paradigma feminista, el posteísta, el no dualista, el ecocéntrico, el nuevo paradigma arqueológico bíblico, el nuevo paradigma epistemológico...

Las páginas de esta revista testimonian que aunque sea AL el lugar donde es más conocida y más asumida esta confrontación de la TL con los nuevos paradigmas, también en Europa hay países que han entrado –desde sus comunidades de base más que desde sus teólogos académicos– por este camino del desarrollo de una TL que ya no es «lo último», sino que dialoga con los nuevos desafíos teóricos que provoca el renombrado nuevo «tiempo axial» (tiempoaxial.org) que estamos sin duda transitando. Tal vez sea ésta la hora de emprender una colaboración Europa/AL en la atención a este nuevo «desarrollo de la TL» a mediados del siglo XXI.

5. AL ante el Kairós europeo

Desde hace ya unos cuantos años, desde AL algunos estamos diciendo que, después de varias décadas en que Europa ha mirado hacia la TL y las Comunidades de Base (CEBs) como un kairós, un signo de los tiempos que ha iluminado y sostenido muchas luchas en Europa, estamos ahora en un tiempo en que la dirección de los vientos ha cambiado. Ahora es (también) tiempo de que AL mire atentamente a Europa, porque la crisis de secularización que allí se ha desarrollado, es también un «kairós» en el que el Espíritu habla para AL. Sin darnos cuenta, después de estas décadas de admiración recibida por la TL, nos queda inconscientemente la idea de que no hay signos nuevos de los tiempos fuera de AL (porque la TL seguiría siendo lo último...), y no es así.

La situación secularizada actual de Europa es de tal magnitud que permite considerar ya la «pos-religionalidad» como un nuevo paradigma que comienza a cubrir todo el territorio continental; la religión queda sólo en las capas de más edad, llamadas a desaparecer. La «transmisión de

le fe» prácticamente ha desaparecido en el ambiente cultural de los jóvenes en Europa. ¿Qué va a ser del cristianismo europeo dentro de 30 años?

Para nosotros, en AL, esta pregunta es muy seria, porque, aunque no pocos lo dudán, somos muchos los que pensamos que, como Occidente que también somos, el fenómeno de la secularización, no es que vaya a ocurrir aquí, sino que ya está ocurriendo, y más rápidamente de lo que parece. Las estadísticas, en casi todos los países, lo confirman con una contundencia inmisericorde.

En esta tesitura de lo que podríamos llamar el advenimiento de la pos-religionalidad, quisiéramos encontrar en Europa una orientación para que lo que se nos avecina, como en Europa, pueda ocurrir aquí de otra manera. En ese sentido es que pensamos que hoy día es AL la que debe mirar a Europa, para escrutar el nuevo camino que pudiéramos deducir de su evolución religiosa actual.

Así, la relación de la TL latinoamericana con Europa no es de dirección única, sino de bi-direccionalidad, de relación recíproca, fraterno-sororal.

THE AUTHORS - AUTORES/AS

Cordula ACKERMANN, born in 1988, studied Catholic Theology in Bonn, Madrid, and Münster. She works at the Institute for Theology and Politics (ITP) which practices theology in the context of social movements. Her main focuses are education in Liberation Theology and feminist theory and theology.

Cordula ACKERMANN, nacida en 1988, estudió teología católica en Bonn, Münster y Madrid. Es colaboradora del Instituto para Teología y Política (ITP) que practica la teología en el contexto de movimientos sociales. Su trabajo se centra en la formación, en el marco de la teología de la liberación y teoría y teología feministas.

Cordula ACKERMANN, geb. 1988, studierte Katholische Theologie in Bonn, Münster und Madrid. Sie ist Mitarbeiterin des Instituts für Theologie und Politik (ITP), das Theologie im Kontext sozialer Bewegungen praktiziert. Ihre Schwerpunkte sind befreiungstheologische Bildung sowie feministische Theorie und Theologie.

Franco BARBERO. Born Savigliano, Italy in 1939. Ordained priest in 1963, from the early seventies on, he was involved in the movement of the grass-roots Christian communities. In 1974 he was the founder, with some men and women from parish experiences, of the Christian community of Pinerolo, of which he formally was a member until March 2014 when he gave life, still in Pinerolo, to a new base community, the "House of Listening and Prayer". Discharged from the clerical state by Pope John Paul II at the beginning of 2003.

Last works: *Come la samaritana, Omosessualità e vangelo, Il dono dello smarrimento*

Address: donfrancobarbero24@gmail.com

Blog: <http://donfrancobarbero.blogspot.com/>

See also Wikipedia.

Franco BARBERO. Savigliano, Italia, 24 febbraio 1939. Ordinato sacerdote nel 1963, dai primi anni settanta è impegnato nel movimento delle comunità cristiana di base. Nel 1974 è fondatore, con alcuni uomini e donne provenienti da esperienze parrocchiali, della comunità cristiana di base di Pinerolo, di cui fa formalmente parte fino al mese di marzo 2014 quando dà vita, sempre a Pinerolo, ad una nuova comunità di base, la "Casa dell'Ascolto e della Preghiera". Dimesso dallo stato clericale da Papa Giovanni Paolo II all'inizio del 2003.

Ultime opere: *Come la samaritana, Omosessualità e vangelo, Il dono dello smarrimento*

Indirizzo: donfrancobarbero24@gmail.com

Blog: <http://donfrancobarbero.blogspot.com/>

Cfr. anche Wikipedia.

Josef ESTERMANN: Born 1956 in Sursee (Switzerland). Swiss and Dutch citizen. Licentiate in Catholic Theology from the University of Lucerne (CH). Licentiate in Philosophy from the University of Amsterdam (NL). Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Utrecht (NL). Co-Worker of the Bethlehem Mission (CH) in Peru (1990-1998) and Bolivia (2004-2012). Director of the Institute of Missiology

Missio e.V. (MWI) in Aachen (D) (1998-2004). From 2004 to 2012, researcher and lecturer at different universities in Bolivia. Guest lecturer at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University of Frankfurt (2010) on "Andean Theology". Since 2012, director of the Romero Haus in Lucerne (CH) and lecturer at the University of Lucerne.

Principle recent publications (books in English or German): "Andine Philosophie: Interkulturelle Studie zur autochthonen andinen Weisheit" (1999); "Anatopism as Cultural Alienation: Dominant and Dominated Cultures in the Andean Area of Latin America" (2002); "Andean Philosophy as a Questioning Alterity: An Intercultural Criticism of Western Andro- and Ethnocentrism" (2009); "Apu Taytayku: Religion und Theologie im andinen Kontext Südamerikas" (2012).

Josef ESTERMANN: Nacido en 1956 en Sursee (Suiza). Ciudadano suizo y holandés. Licenciado en Teología Católica de la Universidad de Lucerna (CH). Licenciado en Filosofía por la Universidad de Amsterdam (NL). Doctor en Filosofía por la Universidad de Utrecht (NL). Colaborador de la Misión de Belén (CH) en Perú (1990-1998) y Bolivia (2004-2012). Director del Instituto de Misionología Missio e.V. (MWI) en Aquisgrán, Alemania (1998-2004). De 2004 a 2012, investigador y conferencista en diferentes universidades de Bolivia. Profesor invitado en la Universidad Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe de Frankfurt (2010) sobre "Teología andina". Desde 2012, director de Romero Haus en Lucerna (CH) y profesor de la Universidad de Lucerna.

Principales publicaciones recientes (libros en español): "Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo" (1998; 2006); "Si el sur fuera el norte: Chakanas interculturales entre los Andes y Occidente" (2008); "Movimientos sociales y Teología en América Latina" (Coord.) (2010); "Interculturalidad: Vivir la diversidad" (2010); "Compendio de la Filosofía Occidental en Perspectiva Intercultural", cinco tomos (2011); "Cruz y Coca: Hacia la descolonización de la Religión y la Teología" (2013); "Más-allá de Occidente: Apuntes filosóficos sobre interculturalidad, descolonización y el Vivir Bien andino" (2015).

Josef ESTERMANN: Geboren 1956 in Sursee (Schweiz). Schweizer and niederländischer Staatsbürger. Lizentiat in Katholischer Theologie an der Universität von Luzern (CH). Lizentiat in Philosophie an der Universität Amsterdam (NL). Dr. in Philosophie an der Universität Utrecht (NL). Mitarbeiter der Bethlehem Mission (CH) in Peru (1990-1998) und Bolivien (2004-2012). Direktor des Missionswissenschaftlichen Instituts Missio e.V. (MWI) in Aachen (D) (1998-2004). 2004 bis 2012 Forscher und Dozent an verschiedenen Universitäten in Bolivien. Gastprofessor der Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität Frankfurt (2010) für "Andine Theologie". Seit 2012 Direktor des Romero-Hauses Luzern (CH) und Dozent an der Universität Luzern.

Wichtige jüngste Publikationen (Englisch oder Deutsch): "Andine Philosophie: Interkulturelle Studie zur autochthonen andinen Weisheit" (1999); "Anatopism as Cultural Alienation: Dominant and Dominated Cultures in the Andean Area of Latin America" (2002); "Andean Philosophy as a Questioning Alterity: An Intercultural Criticism of Western Andro- and Ethnocentrism" (2009); "Apu Taytayku: Religion und Theologie im andinen Kontext Südamerikas" (2012).

Benjamín FORCANO has been director of the magazine "Misión Abierta" for thirteen years, belongs to the current board of the magazine "Exodus", directs the publishing house Nueva Utopía and is a member of the Association of Theologians Juan XXIII. Licentiate in theology by the University of Santo Tomás de Aquino (Rome) and specialized in moral theology by the Alphonsian Academy of Rome, he has taught in various centers in Rome, Madrid, Salamanca, Bogotá,

Havanna, etc. His dynamic character leads him to be involved in many adventures, to frequent diverse areopagus and to know about the reality and problems of the people. His numerous trips, conferences and articles show him as a good communicator and as a writer of agile journalistic style.

His works include: "¿Amor y natalidad en conflicto?" (Valencia, 1971), "El sueño de los pobres" (Madrid, 1992), "Nueva ética sexual" (Madrid, 1996), "Leonardo Boff: semblanza, textos básicos, proceso, situación actual" (Madrid, 1997), "El Evangelio como horizonte", 3 vols. (Madrid, 1999), "¿Qué queda del Vaticano II?" (Madrid, 2001), "Una injusticia a reparar: ¿hasta cuándo? Sacerdotes y religiosos/as secularizados/as" (Madrid, 2004), and "¿Por qué el terrorismo?" (Madrid, 2004). In PPC he published "Con la libertad del evangelio" (2006).

Benjamín FORCANO ha sido director de la revista "Misión Abierta" durante trece años, pertenece a la actual directiva de la revista "Éxodo", dirige la editorial Nueva Utopía y es miembro de la Asociación de Teólogos y Teólogas Juan XXIII. Licenciado en teología por la Universidad de Santo Tomás de Aquino (Roma) y especializado en teología moral por la Academia Alfonsiana de Roma, ha ejercido su enseñanza en diversos centros de Roma, Madrid, Salamanca, Bogotá, La Habana, etc. Su carácter dinámico le lleva a estar metido en muchas andanzas, frecuentar areópagos diversos y conocer de cerca la realidad y los problemas de la gente. Sus numerosos viajes, conferencias y artículos lo muestran como un buen comunicador y como escritor de ágil estilo periodístico.

Entre sus obras cabe destacar: "¿Amor y natalidad en conflicto?" (Valencia, 1971), "El sueño de los pobres" (Madrid, 1992), "Nueva ética sexual" (Madrid, 1996), "Leonardo Boff: semblanza, textos básicos, proceso, situación actual" (Madrid, 1997), "El Evangelio como horizonte", 3 vols. (Madrid, 1999), "¿Qué queda del Vaticano II?" (Madrid, 2001), "Una injusticia a reparar: ¿hasta cuándo? Sacerdotes y religiosos/as secularizados/as" (Madrid, 2004) y "¿Por qué el terrorismo?" (Madrid, 2004). En PPC ha publicado "Con la libertad del evangelio" (2006).

Philipp GEITZHAUS is member of the Institute for Theology and Politics (ITP) and studied Catholic Theology in Bonn, Madrid, and Münster. The main focuses of his work are New Political Theology, Church of the Poor, and Poststructuralism. Recently, he edited, together with Julia Lis and Michael Ramminger: *Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums*, Münster 2017.

Philipp GEITZHAUS es miembro del Instituto para Teología y Política (ITP) y estudió Teología Católica en Bonn, Madrid y Münster. Los principales enfoques de su trabajo son la Nueva Teología Política, la Iglesia de los Pobres, y el postestructuralismo. Recientemente, publicó, en colaboración con Julia Lis y Michael Ramminger: *Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums* (En las huellas de una Iglesia de los Pobres. Futuro y lugares de un cristianismo liberador), Münster 2017.

Philipp GEITZHAUS ist Mitarbeiter am Institut für Theologie und Politik und studiert(e) katholische Theologie und Philosophie in Bonn, Madrid und Münster. Seine Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind Neue Politische Theologie, Kirche der Armen, Poststrukturalismus. Zuletzt herausgegeben zusammen mit Julia Lis und Michael Ramminger: *Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums*, Münster 2017.

Frei **Bento Gonçalves DOMINGUES** op (1934, Travassos, Portugal), is a religious of the Order of the Dominicans, by many considered one of the most important Portuguese theologians. He contributed very much to collective works and numerous magazines such as *Igreja e Missão*, *Brotéria*, *Communio*, *Seara Nova*, *Reflexão Cristã*, *Ler*, and in several newspapers. He also participated in many national and international congresses and study weeks. An issue of the Portuguese Journal of Science of Religions (nº2, Year I, 2002) was dedicated specially to him. The President of the Republic, Jorge Sampaio, conferred on him the degree of Grand Officer of the Order of Freedom, on April 25, 2004. The Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies awarded him the Gold Medal of Recognition and Merit on January 19, 2005. The Human Rights Commission of the Order of Lawyers (CDHOA) awarded him the Ângelo d'Almeida Ribeiro Prize, for his work in defense of Human Rights, on December 10, 2010. The Assembly of the Republic awarded him the Human Rights Prize, as member of the National Commission for Relief to Political Prisoners, on December 12, 2010. Cfr. more in Wikipedia.

Frei **Bento Gonçalves DOMINGUES** op (1934, Travassos, Portugal), é um religioso da Ordem dos Dominicanos, por muitos considerado um dos maiores teólogos portugueses. Tem muita colaboração dispersa em obras colectivas e numerosas revistas, como *Igreja e Missão*, *Brotéria*, *Communio*, *Seara Nova*, *Reflexão Cristã*, *Ler*, e em vários jornais, assim como uma vasta participação em congressos e semanas de estudo nacionais e internacionais. Foi-lhe dedicado um número da *Revista Portuguesa de Ciência das Religiões* (nº2, Ano I, 2002). O Presidente da República Jorge Sampaio, conferiu-lhe o grau de Grande-Oficial da Ordem da Liberdade, a 25 de Abril de 2004. A Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias atribuiu-lhe a Medalha de Ouro de Reconhecimento e Mérito, a 19 de Janeiro de 2005. A Comissão de Direitos Humanos da Ordem dos Advogados (CDHOA) atribuiu-lhe o Prémio Ângelo d'Almeida Ribeiro, pelo trabalho desenvolvido em defesa dos Direitos Humanos, a 10 de Dezembro de 2010. A Assembleia da República atribuiu-lhe o Prémio dos Direitos Humanos, como membro da Comissão Nacional de Socorro aos Presos Políticos, a 12 de Dezembro de 2010. Cfr. Veja também Wikipedia.

Bruno KERN was born in Vienna 1958. He studied theology and philosophy in Vienna, Munich, Fribourg (Switzerland) and Bonn. His theological doctoral thesis is dealing with Marxism within Latin American Liberation Theology. At present he is living in Mainz (Germany) and works as an editor and translator. He is the translator into German for Leonardo Boff's publications. Bruno Kern is also a founding member of the ecosocialist initiative (www.oekosozialismus.net). Among his recent books there are several publications dealing with Karl Marx, such as a Karl Marx Reader, a biography and a critical discussion of Marx' critique of religion.

Bruno KERN wurde 1958 in Wien geboren. Er studierte Theologie und Philosophie in Wien, München, Fribourg (CH) und Bonn. Seine theologische Doktorarbeit behandelt den Marxismus in der Lateinamerikanischen Befreiungstheologie. Derzeit lebt er in Mainz und arbeitet als Herausgeber und Übersetzer. Er ist der Übersetzer für Leonardo Boffs Publikationen in deutsche Sprache. Bruno Kern ist außerdem ein Gründungsmitglied der Ökosozialistischen Initiative (www.oekosozialismus.net). Zu seinen jüngsten Büchern zählen mehrere Veröffentlichungen, die sich mit Karl Marx befassen: ein Karl Marx Reader, eine Biographie und eine kritische Diskussion von Marx' Religionskritik.

Julia LIS, PhD. studied Catholic Theology, German philology and Eastern European history in Münster, Jerusalem and Cracow. She did her PhD in Münster in the field of the theology of Eastern churches. Her primary fields of interest include: church asylum/sanctuary, theology in the context of social movements, refugees and migrants, church of the poor, crisis protests and Liberation Theology in a European context. Together with Philipp Geitzhaus and Michael Ramminger she co-edited recently: *Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums*, Münster 2017.

Dr. **Julia LIS** estudió en Münster, Jerusalem und Krakau Katholische Theologie, Deutsche Philologie und Osteuropäische Geschichte und promovió en Münster im Bereich der Ostkirchenkunde. Seit 2013 ist sie Geschäftsführerin am Institut für Theologie und Politik. Ihre Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind: Kirchenasyl, Theologie im Kontext sozialer Bewegungen, Flucht und Migration, Kirche der Armen, Krisenproteste, Befreiungstheologie im europäischen Kontext. Zuletzt herausgegeben zusammen mit Philipp Geitzhaus und Michael Ramminger: *Auf den Spuren einer Kirche der Armen. Zukunft und Orte befreienden Christentums*, Münster 2017.

Luis MARTÍNEZ SAAVEDRA is a Chilean theologian, layperson, married and the father of three children. He finished his doctorate studies in the UC Louvain-la-Neuve under the direction of Adolf Gesché, with a thesis about "The action of the Holy Spirit in the culture of the poor" (1994). From 1994 to 2003 he was professor in the theological institute of the UC of Temuco in the south of Chile, where he created and directed a diploma course on theological studies addressed to the lay persons' education. He emigrated to Luxembourg, the land of his wife, where he practices the theological ministry at the service of the catholic church in Luxembourg. He is a professor at the International Institute Lumen Vitae (Belgium), visiting professor at the UCL and director of the "La Part de Dieu" collection in the Jesuits editions Lessius (Paris/Namur).

Among his publications there are: *Evangelización Inculturada y acción del Espíritu Santo en el mundo*, San Pablo, Santiago, 1995; *Misericordia quiero, no sacrificios. Reencuentro con la humanidad de Dios*, Dabar, Mexico, 2002; *La conversion des Églises latino-américaines. De Medellín à Aparecida*, Karthala, Paris, 2011. Several books for the communal lecture of the Bible : *Lecture en communauté de l'évangile de Matthieu*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2010 ; *Les Actes des Apôtres en dialogue avec Vatican II*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2012 ; *Actualité de la Parole prophétique*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2014 ; *Un message d'espérance et de libération. L'évangile de Luc en dialogue Avec Evangelii Gaudium*, Lumen Vitae, Namur, 2015. In 2017, he published, together with M. CHEZA and P. SAUVAGE, the *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la libération*, Lessius, Namur/Paris.

Luis MARTÍNEZ SAAVEDRA es un teólogo chileno, laico, casado y padre de tres hijos. Realizó sus estudios de doctorado en la UC Louvain-la-Neuve bajo la dirección de Adolf Gesché, con una tesis sobre "La acción del Espíritu Santo en la cultura de los pobres" (1994). Entre los años 1994 y 2003, fue profesor en el Instituto teológico de la UC de Temuco en el sur de Chile; allí creó y dirigió un Diplomado en estudios teológicos dirigido a la formación de laicos. Emigró a Luxemburgo, la tierra de su esposa, donde ejerce su ministerio teológico al servicio de la Iglesia católica en Luxemburgo. Es profesor en el Instituto Internacional Lumen Vitae (Bélgica), profesor invitado en la UCL y director de la colección La Part Dieu en las ediciones jesuitas Lessius (Paris/Namur).

Entre sus publicaciones se encuentran: *Evangelización Incultrada y acción del Espíritu Santo en el mundo*, San Pablo, Santiago, 1995; *Misericordia quiero, no sacrificios. Reencuentro con la humanidad de Dios*, Dabar, Mexico, 2002; *La conversion des Églises latino-américaines. De Medellín à Aparecida*, Karthala, Paris, 2011. Una serie de libros para la lectura comunitaria de la Biblia: *Lecture en communauté de l'évangile de Matthieu*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2010; *Les Actes des Apôtres en dialogue avec Vatican II*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2012; *Actualité de la Parole prophétique*, Lumen Vitae, Bruxelles, 2014; *Un message d'espérance et de libération. L'évangile de Luc en dialogue Avec Evangelii Gaudium*, Lumen Vitae, Namur, 2015. En 2017, publicó junto a M. CHEZA y P. SAUVAGE un *Dictionnaire historique de la Théologie de la libération*, Lessius, Namur/ Paris.

Bernhard OFFENBERGER (aged 32) is a member of the Liberation Theology Network since 2009. He has studied Protestant Theology in Germany (Heidelberg, Halle/Saale) and South India (Madurai), his interests being Liberation Theologies in their plurality, including Dalit Theology, feminist and queer theologies and post-colonial approaches. He currently serves as a pastor in an Evangelical-Lutheran congregation in Augsburg.

Bernhard OFFENBERGER (32 Jahre alt) ist Mitglied des Befreiungstheologischen Netzwerks seit 2009. Er studierte Evangelische Theologie in Deutschland (Heidelberg, Halle/Saale) und Südindien (Madurai), mit einem besonderen Interesse an Befreiungstheologie in ihrer Vielfalt, einschließlich Dalit Theologie, Feministische und queere Theologien und postkoloniale Zugänge. Er arbeitet gegenwärtig als Pastor einer evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinde in Augsburg.

Peter SCHÖNHÖFFER studied Catholic Theology, Sociology and Pedagogy in Freiburg, Vienna, and Münster. Licentiate in Spiritual Theology. The theologian and sociologist lives with his family and two children in Ingelheim/Rhine. He is active on the board of www.kairoseuropa.de as well as in the commission "Globalization and Social Justice" of the Catholic peace movement Pax Christi, as well as for many years part of the nationwide list of speakers for attac. He is also a co-founder of www.akademie-solidarische-oekonomie.de.

Peter SCHÖNHÖFFER absolvierte katholische Theologie, Soziologie und Erziehungswissenschaften in Freiburg, Wien und Münster. Lizentiat in Theologie der Spiritualität. Der Theologe und Soziologe lebt mit Familie und zwei Kindern in Ingelheim am Rhein. Er engagiert sich im Vorstand von www.kairoseuropa.de sowie in der Kommission „Globalisierung – soziale Gerechtigkeit“ der katholischen Friedensbewegung pax christi, sowie seit vielen Jahren auf der bundesweiten ReferentInnenliste von attac. Außerdem ist er Mitgründer von www.akademie-solidarische-oekonomie.de.

Stefan SILBER, PD Dr. theol. habil., (b. 1966) is lecturer at the University of Osnabrück and works as theologian and pastoral worker in the Roman Catholic diocese of Würzburg. He also coordinates the Platform for Liberation Theology. From 1997 to 2002 he was Director of the Diocesan Catechists' Centre of Potosí (Bolivia), and between 2010 and 2013 he moderated an international investigation about Latin American mega-cities at the University of Osnabrück. Areas of academic interest: Liberation Theology, post-colonial and decolonial theologies,

and indigenous theologies. He is member of Pax Christi in the Diocese of Würzburg, married and has three children. Internet: stefansilber.wordpress.com

Stefan SILBER, PD Dr. theol. habil. (nac. 1966) es docente de la Universidad de Osnabrück y trabaja como teólogo y agente pastoral en la Diócesis católica de Würzburg. También coordina la Plataforma de Teología de la Liberación. De 1997 a 2002 fue Director del Centro Diocesano de Catequistas de Potosí (Bolivia), y entre 2010 y 2013 acompañó una investigación internacional sobre las megaciudades latinoamericanas en la Universidad de Osnabrück. Áreas de interés académico: teología de la liberación, teologías postcoloniales y decoloniales y teologías indígenas. Es miembro de Pax Christi en la diócesis de Würzburg. Casado y tiene tres hijos. Internet: stefansilber.wordpress.com

Stefan SILBER, PD Dr. theol. habil. (geb. 1966) ist Privatdozent an der Universität Osnabrück und Pastoralreferent in der Diözese Würzburg. Er koordiniert außerdem die Plattform Theologie der Befreiung. 1997 bis 2002 Direktor des Diözesanen Katechistenzentrums von Potosí (Bolivien), 2010 bis 2013 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter eines internationalen Forschungsprojektes über die lateinamerikanischen Megastädte an der Universität Osnabrück. Wissenschaftliche Interessensschwerpunkte: Befreiungstheologie, post- und dekoloniale Theologien und Indigene Theologien. Mitglied von pax christi in der Diözese Würzburg. Verheiratet, drei Kinder. Internet: stefansilber.wordpress.com

Santiago VILLAMAYOR LORO. Licenciado en Filosofía y profesor jubilado. Miembro de las Comunidades Cristianas Populares de Zaragoza, España. Ha publicado (coautor) algunos libros de texto de Filosofía e Historia de la Filosofía. Es autor de varios artículos sobre el paradigma postreligional como *La Biblia no tiene razón, tiene alma*, en esta misma revista VOICES, (Jul-Dic, 2015), *FAQ, objeciones y respuestas al paradigma postreligional*, en la biblioteca RELaT-Koinonía (servicioskoinonia.org/relat) y *Qué puede aportar hoy el mensaje evangélico en nuestra cultura y sociedad*, en Revista "Herria Eliza 2000". Ha escrito también diversos estudios e informes sobre el movimiento ciudadano en España y Zaragoza. Tales pueden ser *Antes y después del movimiento ciudadano* (Revista "XIX y veinte", Verano-Otoño-20013), *De la Vietnamita al Smartphonen* en la revista del IES Andalán (2016)

Santiago VILLAMAYOR LORO. Graduate in Philosophy and retired professor. Member of the Popular Christian Communities of Zaragoza, Spain. He has published (co-authored) some textbooks on Philosophy and History of Philosophy. He is the author of several articles on the postreligional paradigm such as *The Bible is not right, he has a soul*, in this same magazine VOICES, (Jul-Dec, 2015), *FAQ, objections and answers to the paradigm of the future*, in the RELaT-Koinonia digital Journal (servicioskoinonia.org/relat) and *What can the evangelical message bring today in our culture and society?*, "Herria Eliza 2000" Magazine. He has also written several studies and reports on the citizen movement in Spain and Zaragoza. Such may be *Before and after the citizen movement*. (Magazine "XIX and twenty", Summer-Autumn-2013), *From the Vietnamese to the Smartphone*, in the magazine of IES Andalán (2016).

José María VIGIL es graduado en Salamanca y licenciado en Roma en Teología Sistemática, licenciado en Psicología en Managua, Nicaragua, doctor en Educación en San José, Costa Rica, con post-doctorado en Ciencias de la Religión en Belo Horizonte, Brasil. Fue profesor de teología en la Universidad Pontificia de

Salamanca (en el CRETA, Zaragoza, España) y en la Universidad Centroamericana (UCA, Managua, Nicaragua).

Durante diez años se desempeñó como coordinador de la Comisión Teológica Latinoamericana de la EATWOT (Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos del Tercer Mundo, *eatwot.net*), y como editor general de su revista teológica VOICES (*eatwot.net/VOICES*); también trabaja en los Servicios Koinonia (*servicioskoinonia.org*) y en la Agenda Latinoamericana (*latinoamericana.org*, publicada en 18 países y 4 idiomas) y ha coordinado la colección de libros Tiempo Axial (*tiempoaxial.org*). Actualmente busca la nueva visión emergente en la confluencia de la teología (también de la Liberación) con los Nuevos Paradigmas.

<https://eatwot.academia.edu/JoséMaríaVIGIL>

E-mail contact at: <http://eatwot.net/contacto.php>

Jose Maria VIGIL is graduated in Salamanca and Licentiated in Rome in Systematic Theology, Licentiate in Psychology in Managua, Nicaragua, Doctor in Education in San Jose, Costa Rica, and Post-doctorate in Religious Sciences in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He was a professor of theology at the Pontifical University of Salamanca (in the CRETA, Zaragoza, Spain) and in Central American University (UCA, Managua, Nicaragua).

During ten years he served as coordinator of the Latin American Theological Commission of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, *eatwot.net*), and as general editor of its theological journal VOICES (*eatwot.net/VOICES*); he works also from Koinonia Services (*servicioskoinonia.org*) and the World Latin American Agenda (*latinoamericana.org*, published in 18 countries and 4 languages), and coordinated the Tiempo Axial collection of books (*tiempoaxial.org*).

Currently he searches the emerging new vision at the confluence of theology (also of Liberation) and the New Paradigms.

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Vivir en Dios, sin dios

ROGER LENAERS

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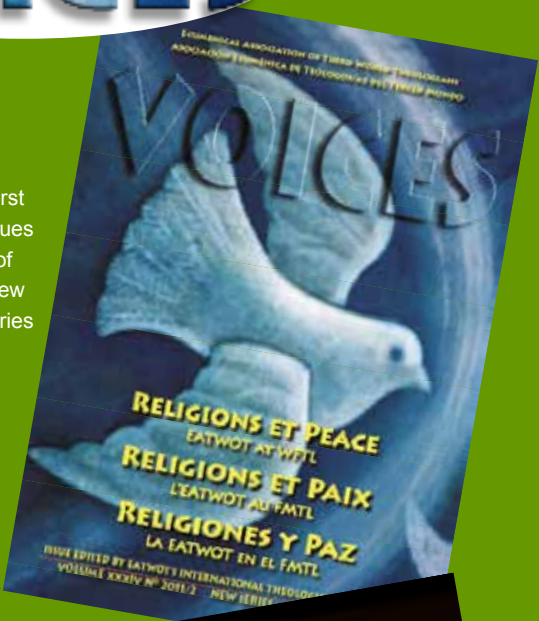
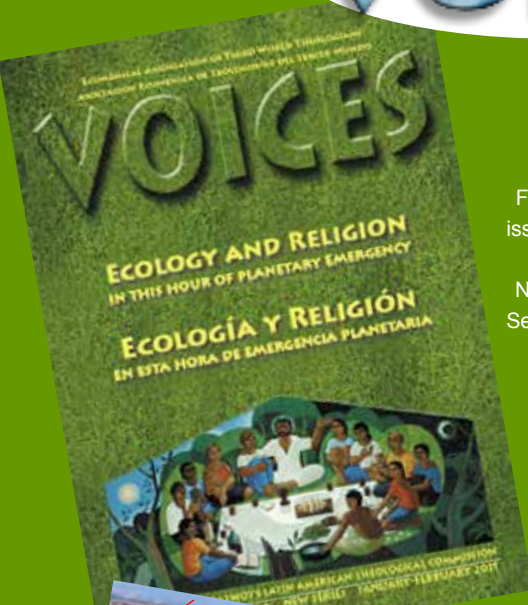
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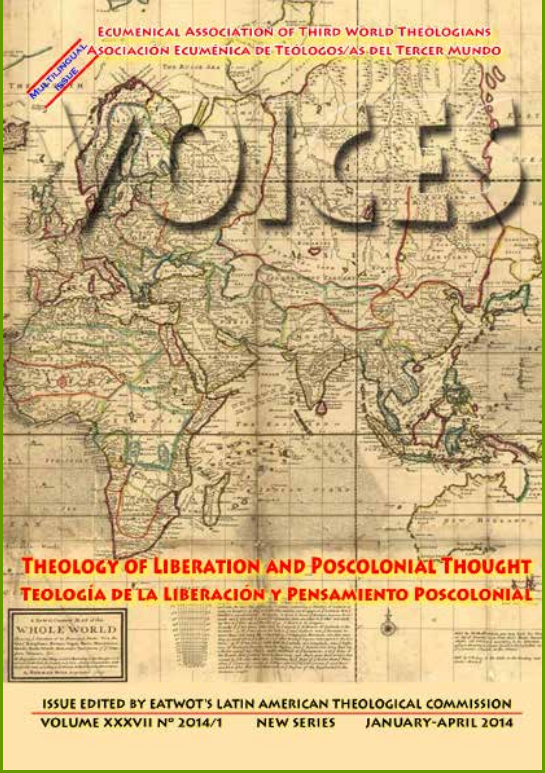
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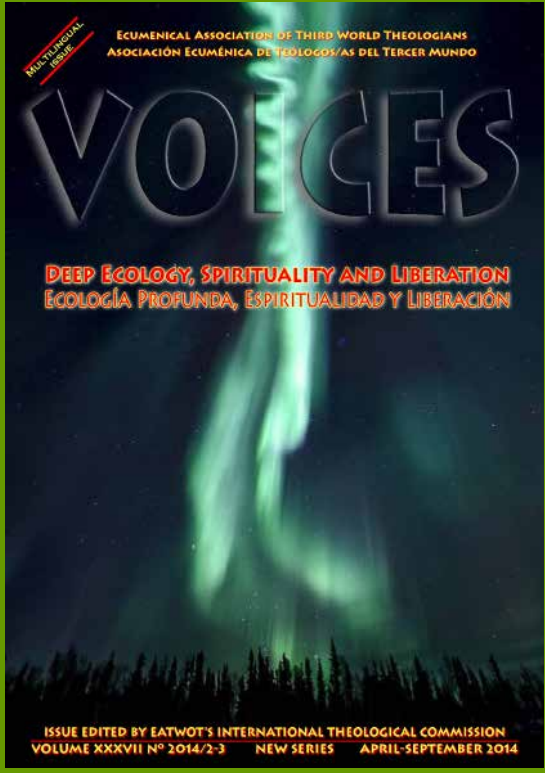
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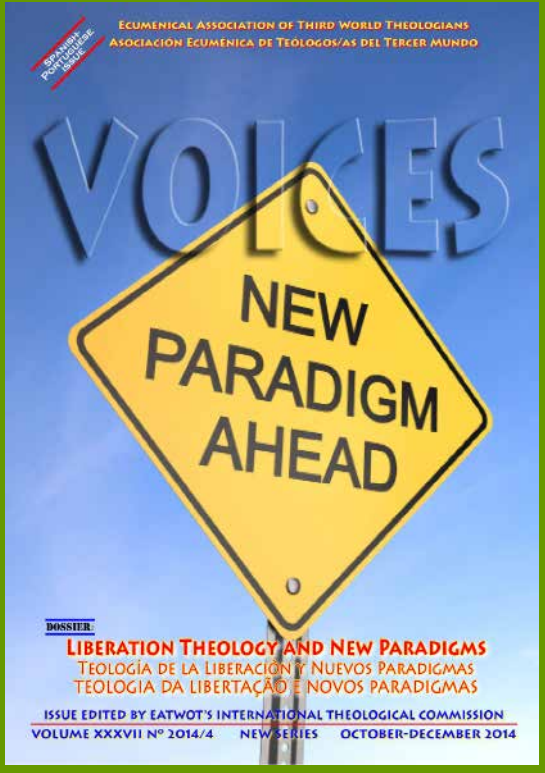


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