REFORMULATING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

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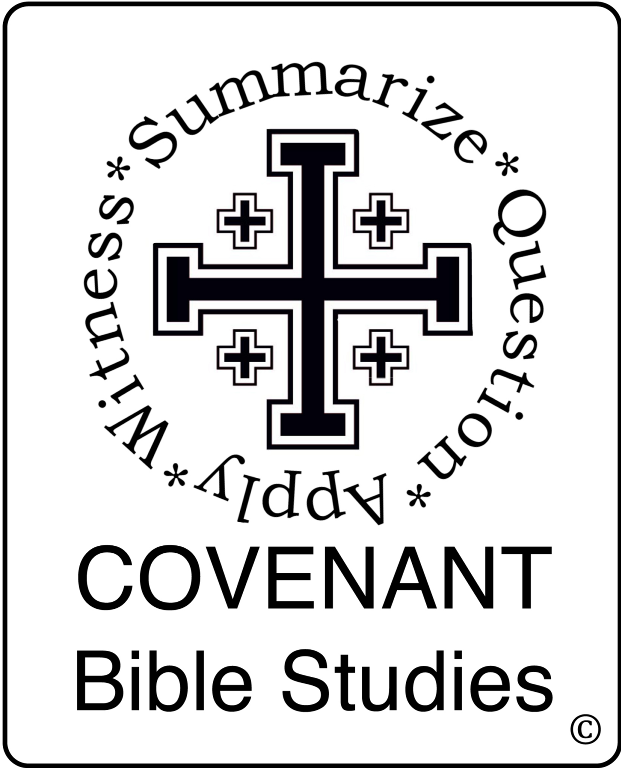
The picture on the cover is entitled, "Christ among the Ibans," and hangs in the Chapel of Christ Hospital, which is located in Kapit, Sarawak in the Federation of Malaysia.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PREFACE

The work that follows is partially a result of my struggles as a missionary and teacher in the Methodist Theological School in Sibu, Sarawak (Federation of Malaysia). It has also been influenced by my work as a pastor in Texas, Georgia, and Wisconsin. My missionary and pastoral experiences have caused me to reformulate the mission of the church many times according to the various situations in which I found myself. This has been confusing at times but always inspiring and rewarding.

When I was first introduced to political and liberation theology in Seminary and Graduate School, I was fascinated with what these theologians had to say and began to recognize that the church often lacks the courage to take up its proper social task. It was somehow felt that if the world could be evangelized, social justice would somehow automatically establish itself as a result of so many transformed persons. I went to Malaysia believing this but was confronted by the hard realities of poverty and oppression. I had the good fortune of working with the Iban people, who began teaching me more than I taught them. To use Jacques Ellul's term, the Ibans are the "uninteresting poor" in Malaysia. They are not angry with the British, the former colonial power, nor are they involved in any violent revolutionary activity to overthrow the Malay-dominated government. They do not even hate the Chinese who dominate the economic system where they live; they simply eke out an existence as subsistence farmers. They would like more than they have, but they do not seem to blame their misfortune on anyone else. Although they are the poor and the oppressed, many of them do not know it. As I worked with them, I learned a great deal from them and became sensitized to the fact that the church ought to demonstrate more of an interest in them than it does. My reading of the classical missiological statements did not help very much, and so I turned to the political and liberation theologians for some new and fresh insights. As I moved among the indigenous theological educators related to the Association of Theological Schools in Southeast Asia, I found an increased awareness of political and liberation theology and a desire to develop a critical Asian way of doing theology. I was

disappointed at times because the interest usually centered on the "interesting poor" rather than on the "uninteresting poor."

It is my hope that this work might play some small part in placing the church on the side of those, like the Ibans, who need to know that somebody cares. At least it has been helpful to me to recognize that the social task of the church must be taken up at the same time as the evangelistic task; it cannot be left to take care of itself. It has also made me aware of the fact that the mission of the church changes according to the cultural environment or social situation in which the church finds itself. Instead of thinking that I have reformulated the mission of the church, I look forward to always being in the process of reformulating the mission of the church, a task that is never finished.

Many people have been very helpful to me, as I have done the research, organized the material, and finally put it all in writing. I am grateful to my wife Barbara and our children David and Jane for their patience and to Dr. E. Clinton Gardner, Dr. Theodore Weber, and Dr. Theodore Runyon, who offered criticisms and helpful suggestions to me as I struggled through it. I must also express my thanks to Mrs. Jane Rosendahl, who offered to type the final manuscript, when my pastoral duties made it difficult for me to do it myself.

I am always open to comments and criticisms. The reader may get in touch with me by email.

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INTRODUCTION

The Purpose

In the important collection of essays on missiology edited by Gerald Anderson, *Christian Mission in Theological Perspective*, S. Paul Schilling calls for a radical rethinking of missiology in the light of the revolutionary developments taking place all over the world. Schilling, however, does no more than to pose the problem. He has valid insights into the church's preoccupation with a dominantly other-worldly conception of the gospel, its indifference to the rightful aspirations of underprivileged people, and its identification with an unjust status quo; but he does little more than open up the issues.[1]

The critical problem in missiology is that the classical positions in the field—those developed by William Ernest Hocking and Hendrik Kraemer—were formulated prior to the revolutionary developments now taking place all over the world. As a result, they offer little guidance for the church's task of rethinking the nature of mission today.

After a brief review of the classical missiological positions, we shall lift up some of the problems for a modern missiology, offer a brief summary of political and liberation theological themes, and attempt to show what is lacking in the Hocking and Kraemer statements. Next, we shall state some of the major questions which a contemporary missiology needs to answer; and finally, we shall seek tentative answers or contributions from three representative contemporary theologians—Paul Lehmann, a North American; Jürgen Moltman, a European; and Juan Luis Segundo, a Latin American—each of whom represents a distinctive approach to the question of rethinking Christian faith and the Church's responsibilities in a revolutionary context. "Messianic," "political," and "liberation" are descriptive of their various approaches to theology. There are differences in the manner in which these three

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[1] S. Paul Schilling, "Restating the Aim of Mission," *Christian Mission in Theological Perspective*, ed. By Gerald H. Anderson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), pp. 242-257.

theologians do their theological work, but there is also a commonality in all three approaches. They are all concerned with involving the church in political, economic, social, and racial issues. All of them can be identified with what we might call the experience, or socially oriented, forms of contemporary theology. The arguments with them over missiology have less to do with differences in scriptural and doctrinal interpretation than with the changes in the experience of the church in the world and the different perceptions of the church in a changing world. Our analysis and comparison of their theologies will focus on some of the major issues involved in a reformulation of the mission of the church, as well as on the strategies that follow from that mission. The issue, which proves to be a kind of test case for such theologies, is the question of the church's stance toward violence. A consideration of this question, therefore, helps to clarify the differences between the positions, and provides a basis from which to draw some conclusions regarding the contributions made to a contemporary missiology by these three theologians. As a way of opening up some of these major issues in missiology, let us now turn to an examination of the two classical missiological statements made by Hocking and Kraemer.

The Classical Restatements on Missiology

William Ernest Hocking formulated the first major restatement on missiology in *Re-Thinking Missions*, which was a report of a commission that had investigated the problems and challenges of the missionary task of the church between the world wars. This report was written up by Hocking and published in 1932.[2]

The second classical restatement on missiology in this century was articulated by Hendrik Kraemer in his book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, which was first published in 1938. Kraemer's book was written at the request of the International Missionary Council for use in connection with the world missionary conference held at Tambaram, Madras, India, in 1938. Hocking's

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[2] The Committee consisted of representatives from the following seven churches: Northern Baptist, Congregational, Reformed Church in America, Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian Church in the USA, and United Presbyterian.

report represents the liberal view, and Kraemer's book represents the neo-orthodox view of mission. One might also refer to these two positions in terms of idealism and realism, with Hocking representing idealism and Kraemer linked with realism. Let us now examine these diverse positions in an attempt to get at some of the major issues in missiology.

William Ernest Hocking

Hocking perceives the emergence of a world culture in which superstition will disappear upon simple contact with the rationalism conveyed by a new democratic world order. Although there is a tendency for this coming world culture to commit itself to secularism, there is no reason to think that this is inevitable. Hocking concluded that there was generally an openness in every country visited by the commission, that whatever is valid in morals needs something of the nature of religion to give it full effect in the human will. This religious ingredient, however, will not be identical with any of the positive religions now offering themselves; rather, a simpler, more universal and less contentious religion will come into human consciousness, which might be called the religion of modern man.[3]

The rise of nationalism does not, in Hocking's opinion, negate this emerging world culture. The nationalism of the East is a deliberate reaction against western domination and cultural control and is not an expression of hostility to the spread of world culture. It may even be considered a phase of that movement inasmuch as national distinctiveness is one of the characteristics of the modern world. This newer nationalism is inclusive rather than exclusive. It has learned to take what is universal rather than what is western as its own and then to cultivate and strengthen its own distinctive tradition. Hence the new states are becoming self-conscious and self-determining members of the world community.[4]

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[3] William Ernest Hocking, *Re-Thinking Missions* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), pp. 19-21.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 22.

If the penetrating power of commerce and science are causing something like a world culture to appear, then, reasons Hocking, is not a world religion the inevitable result of world culture?[5] Hocking assumes that it is, and that there is also continuity between religions. "The relation between religions," says Hocking, "Must take increasingly hereafter the form of a common search for truth."[6] Hocking thus presupposes the discernibility of truth by all religions and an original knowledge of God; he forsees the converging of religions on the basis of what he calls reconception. Hocking acknowledges that his view may be called "liberalism,"[7] but he distinguishes it from "indifferentism," which says that all ways are equally good ways; from "relativism," which asserts that each person's religion is right **for him**; and from "syncretism," which borrows freely without maintaining a principle of coherence.[8] "Synthesis" comes closest to Hocking's term of reconception; but because it does not maintain a principle of coherence, it lacks the means by which the hearts of the particular religions can somehow be brought together. Synthesis means growth by broadening whereas reconception is a growth in depth. In synthesis the particular essence of a religion is given broader expression by new elements added to one religion from another; in reconception these new elements become part of the expression of a new essence. Hocking's norm, then, for the relation of religions and for the coming world religion is mutual growth through the process of reconception; hence the various religions maintain their separate identities while they grow toward a common understanding of their common ground.[9]

From what has been said thus far, it should be clear that the aim of the Christian mission is not to replace other religions with

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[5] William Ernest Hocking, *Living Religions and a World Faith* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), pp. 21 and 51-52.

[6] Hocking, *Rethinking Missions*, p. 47.

[7] William Ernest Hocking, *The Coming World Civilization* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 146.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

[9] Hocking, Re-Thinking Missions, p. 33.

Christianity; rather, the aim of this mission is to cooperate with other religions in the common search for truth, which means continued co-existence with them, each stimulating the other in growth toward that ultimate goal—unity in the completest religious truth.[10] The Christian mission is not to attack nonchristian systems of religion nor to denounce the errors and abuses found in them, but to present in positive form the Christian conception of the true way of life and let it speak for itself.[11] Hocking is more interested in influencing other religions than in drawing from them converts to Christianity. If the Spirit of Christianity can penetrate the other religion, that is enough; for such mutual interaction contributes to Hocking's notion of reconception. It should also be noted, however, that Christianity must be ready to be influenced by other religions as well.[12]

Hocking asks whether it is really necessary to send missionaries abroad inasmuch as students from Asia penetrate the western world and the old impediments to communication are gone. Every important idea is now an item of world-knowledge, including the knowledge of the gospel.[13] It almost seems as if Hocking's liberal position has undercut any real motive for sending missionaries into other lands, but Hocking is not ready to say that; rather, he suggests that in the coming era it would be natural for the church to maintain a few highly equipped persons in foreign lands as ambassadors representing the Christian way of thought and life. They would be present to give advice and counsel to the national church or even to leaders of other religions and ideologies.[14]

Such an elite group of missionary ambassadors would not only have to be acceptable to the national church, they would also have to be politically neutral. Missionaries, says Hocking, "are in no sense apologists for, nor promoters of, any political or economic system, or interest: they are there in the interest of religion and its applications,

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

nothing else."[15] Since these missionaries would be guests of the government, they would also owe it their loyal obedience. This does not mean that they have to assume that such governments are incapable of error and that reform is unnecessary; rather, they would demonstrate the commitment of the mission to an orderly rather than a violent approach to problems.[16] Although Christianity has traditionally supported capitalism, it should not do this uncritically. Christianity must attack the evils of capitalism as well as those of socialism and communism, but missionaries should "maintain insofar as possible friendly relations with leaders of every variety of economic thought—capitalist, socialist and communist."[17] Missionaries are supposed to be politically and ideologically neutral.

Hocking recognizes that missionaries have not worked too closely with governments and that the Christian mission has been involved in much more than planting churches. A few of the institutions connected with the mission are schools, colleges, hospitals, traveling dispensaries, agricultural stations, publishing houses, and social settlements.[18] Many of these institutions have been used for evangelistic purposes; that is, to build up the numerical membership of the church. Hocking opposes using these institutions for proselytizing and calls for setting them free from such misuse.[19] He does admit that the separation of evangelism and social concern can never be complete inasmuch as ministry to the secular needs of persons in the spirit of Christ is evangelism, but it does not have to be the kind of evangelism that concerns itself with building up the membership of the institutional church.[20] Hocking would like to see these various institutions as the finest expressions of Christian concern and was very disappointed when the commission

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 11. Hocking says more about political and economic neutrality on pp. 77, 121, and 253-254.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[17] *Ibid*, pp. 253-254.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[19] Ibid., pp. 28, 70-72, 100-101, 163-165, 199, 201, 214, and 326.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

encountered so many inferior educational, medical, and agricultural institutions. If these institutions cannot maintain the highest standards in their respective fields, he claims, they should be closed.[21] "As the mission faces the future," he says, "it becomes a matter of honor that its standards of teaching, or of medical service, or of art or music or literature or whatever it touches, are higher, not lower, than those of secular performance."[22]

Hocking was also disturbed by what he saw of the church in the countries surveyed by the commission. The tendency to build large and expensive church buildings, which the local Christian community could not afford and the continued financial dependence of the national church on foreign subsidies troubled Hocking very much. What distressed him most, however, was the weakness of the church's pastoral leadership. One of the reasons that the ministry is so weak, he concludes, is because ministers are free from financial dependence upon those they are supposed to serve.[23] The commission, therefore, recommended that the churches in India, China, and Japan be put on an independent and self-supporting basis as rapidly as the adjustment for it could be made and that mission boards specify a period of decreasing subsidies during the transition period with a definite end to supporting churches and church personnel.[24] Hocking does not discuss how or whether the national church should support the educational, medical, and agricultural institutions themselves; we can only assume that such a conclusion would be implied and necessary. Hocking concludes his report by

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 177 and 201ff.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309. Another reason implied by him in India, for example, is the fact that Christianity first took hold among the outcastes and the lower classes of society. He acknowledges this as part of the church's mission but thinks that it has hindered the spread of Christianity in India. Christianity must somehow penetrate the elite classes as well. This is a general impression one gets from reading Hocking's analysis of the church in India, but it is confusing in that he does not see the church's mission as that of actively seeking members for the church, especially if those sought are already members of another religion.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

pointing to the transition from the temporary work of church planting and pioneer work in medicine, education, and the training of leaders to the more "permanent function of promoting world understanding and unity on a spiritual level through the ambassadorship of relatively few highly equipped persons, and through institutions for the study of theology and civilization, and the emerging needs of the adopted land."[25]

Hendrik Kraemer

Kraemer agrees that no part of the world can ignore any other part of the world. Due to modern means of invention and communication, the world situation has changed drastically. A hundred years ago what happened in Asia, Africa, or the Muslim world was quite immaterial to the western world. The repercussion of events, emanating from a certain center, had no world circumference; but, were more or less, of a restricted, local influence. "This localism or regionalism," says Kraemer, "is definitely destroyed and abolished and has given way to a single planetary world."[26] There is no way back. We can only accept this planetary world and move forward.

What will this mean for the world's religions? Kraemer does not take the same position as Hocking in projecting the emergence of a new world religion as an inevitable result. Secularization has become a worldwide phenomenon and threatens to destroy the tribal relations of Asia and Africa as institutional and organized bodies of religious life.[27] The same may not be the destiny of some of the higher religions. In writing about India and Hinduism, for example, Kraemer discusses how deeply secularized India has become. However, this process has not resulted in the repudiation of religion in the social sense.[28] Even if secularization could destroy the higher

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[25] *Ibid*., p. 328.

[26] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1938), pp. 2-3.

[27] *Ibid*., pp. 16 and 231.

[28] *Ibid*., p. 243.

forms of religion, this would not mean that people could do without religion. The ultimate problem of the modern person is the problem of religious certainty. The planetary world in which we live, and the phenomenon of secularization have meant the loss of all absolutes and the emergence and dominion of the spirit and attitude of relativism.[29] In the absence of religious certainty, people begin to create pseudo-absolutes out of their race, their nation, or even such ideals as the classless society. This clearly demonstrates "that [we] cannot live on bread, on relativism, alone."[30]

All religions, including all philosophies and worldviews, insists Kraemer, are efforts of people to apprehend the totality of their existence. Some are efforts at apprehension by way of knowledge (philosophies); others represent these same efforts by way of the heart (religions).[31] Religion, (also philosophy), is therefore conceived of by Kraemer in very negative terms, for it leads to religious idolatry. Even an empirical, historical form of Christianity can be viewed as a specimen of human effort in the field of religion, which would make it guilty of idolatry as well.[32] Thus Kraemer would reject Hocking's formula of "reconception" as a way of getting at religious truth. In contrast to Hocking's liberalism, we find in Kraemer the Barthian view. Instead of continuity between religions (Hocking), there is discontinuity (Kraemer).

In light of this discontinuity between religions, how is the Christian mission to proceed? According to Kraemer, the foundation for the Christian mission lies in biblical realism. "Our starting point," he insists, "is the dynamic theocentric world of biblical realism which is a direct antithesis to the naïve evolutionary conception of Christianity as a movement of growing truth."[33] The Bible presents no religious or moral philosophy, nor does it in its intense realism even present theology. "It presents the witness of prophets and

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

apostles."[34] Revelation in the Biblical sense is not enlightenment nor a sudden intuitive insight but "the self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen Lord, which is a 'stumbling-block' to the Jew, 'sheer folly' to the Gentiles, and only adorable and saving mystery to the eye of faith."[35] It is a tale about "the wonderful things God has done."[36] Revelation is solely divine activity, while religion or philosophy is based upon human experience and reason. Religion and Philosophy, then, are human and rational attempts to understand the nature of reality, and they fail because of the perverse and sinful nature of humanity. One can only understand general revelation in the light of special revelation. In contrast to religion and philosophy, Kraemer suggests that the heart of biblical realism is God's *sui generis* revelation in Jesus Christ. Through God's act alone is humanity saved. All other religious and philosophical systems are futile attempts at self-redemption. The conclusion to which Kraemer's biblical realism leads him is that the gospel presupposes "the necessity of conversion for everyone."[37]

Kraemer's discontinuity means that it is useless to look for a point of contact between Christianity and other religions. We should not look for cultural or religious similarities on which to build a relationship between Christianity and the nonchristian religions. An apparent point of contact can act more as a barrier than a bridge.[38] According to Kraemer, there can only be one point of contact and that is the disposition and the attitude of the missionary. He admits that this is a heavy burden to place on the missionary but concludes that this is the only possible point of contact between Christianity and the nonchristian religions.[39]

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[34] *Ibid*., p. 65.

[35] *Ibid*., pp. 69-70.

[36] *Ibid*., p. 72.

[37] *Ibid*., p. 45.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 300. Kraemer gives an example of how apparent similarities between Christianity and the bhakti-religions in India and the Far East in regard to faith and grace became a barrier rather than a bridge.

[39] *Ibid*., pp. 132 and 140.

It is thus important for the missionary to know the mission of the church in relation to nonchristian religions. Kraemer describes the aim and motive for the Christian mission as follows:

> …the only valid motive and purpose of missions is and alone can be to call men and peoples to confront themselves with God's acts of revelation and salvation for man and the world as presented in Biblical realism, and to build up a community of those who have surrendered themselves to faith in and loving service of Jesus Christ.[40]

Kraemer and Hocking come to some very different conclusions when they define the Christian mission to nonchristian religions. For Hocking it does not involve conversion and proselytism; for Kraemer conversion and proselytism make up the very core of the missionary enterprise.[41] Kraemer not only disagrees with Hocking's definition of the aim of the Christian mission; he thinks that it would mean the suicide of the Christian mission itself to follow any other approach than that of evangelism.[42] It is obvious that Hocking and Kraemer are working with two very different concepts of evangelism.

Kraemer's evangelistic approach contains under one heading three aspects: evangelism, adaptation, and service.[43] An evangelistic approach means first of all evangelism, which involves conversion. The determining factor in most cases of conversion to Christianity has been "the respect for the Christian character of the missionary, a conduct which shows a wealth of affection, kindheartedness and

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 296. Kraemer uses the term "proselytism" without any concern for possible negative connotations. One should not, however, identify Kraemer's approach to that taken by fundamental missionaries concerned only with "soul-winning." There is a strong social consciousness in Kraemer's missiology, but he defines the church's primary mission in terms of faithfulness to God's revelation and building up a community of believers who would then involve themselves in Christian service.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

manliness." Thus missionaries must understand their own Christian identity, but they must also be familiar with the cultural and religious background of the people with whom they will be working.[44]

Familiarity with culture and religion is necessary if adaptation is to take place. Adaptation is the expression of the Christian revelation in indigenous forms and has nothing to do with assimilating Christianity into nonchristian culture and religion.[45] In assimilation the Christian church would lose its identity as Christianity becomes a part of another religion, and Kraemer wants nothing to do with such an approach to missions. This is a danger that he sees for Hocking's missiology and criticizes him severely for it. It is the undercutting of the Christian mission, which ought to be rejected. Adaptation does not fall into the same trap, for it uses the indigenous language and culture to communicate the Christian revelation and calls together a Christian community to express its faith within these forms. There is of course the question of whether to adapt and use the ancient or modern forms of culture present in a given society, for in Asia one can find both present within the same community. The decision to employ or reject certain aspects of the culture must always be guided by that which is the best means of communicating a vital expression of the Christian revelation to a given people.[46] It must also be remembered that there is more to adaptation than simply using the indigenous language. Behind the symbolism of language lies a whole heritage of culture and religion.

The main purpose of adaptation is to translate the Christian revelation into the thought-patterns of the people so that they can understand the gospel in their own cultural situation. Beyond this there has always been a division of opinion as to what should be done next. Should the Christian mission be the Christianization of the people (Volkschristianisierung) or the gathering of flocks of converted individuals (Einzelbekehrung)? Kraemer opts for the

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[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 307 and 432.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 308, 318, and 323.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

latter.[47] "In all times and under all circumstances," he says, "it is a prime missionary duty to strive for building up a vigorous Church and a strong Christian community life."[48] He does not indicate to whom missionaries should go first to build up this Christian community; but in discussing the outcaste problem in India, he concludes that the church is under an apostolic obligation to bring them under the dominion of Christ as well, particularly when they are lifting up their eyes in its direction.[49] Regardless of with whom the church works, any new church must become indigenous. This is part of the process of adaptation. Ever since Henry Venn first defined the indigenous church as being self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, the topic of self-support has been a very marked one in missionary discussions.[50] Kraemer accepts these three criteria for the indigenous church but insists that it is more important for the church to become conscious of what a real church is first. After the church comes to grips with its own identity, then it can begin to deal with its environment.[51] In defining the church, Kraemer states that it is not an ideal institution but a community and fellowship of those united in a common faith, common love, and common worship of Him who is their life and Head. It finds its origin and end in God's redemptive Will for the world and therefore enters fully into the need and peril of the world. If, however, it is true to its nature, it can never feel at home in the world because it looks forward to the eschatological Kingdom of God.[52]

The third aspect of the evangelistic approach is that of service. All the activities of the church and of its mission in social service, in education, in rural reconstruction, and in medical work only get their right missionary foundation and perspective when they belong to the category of evangelization. These activities are not ***accessories*** to the

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[47] *Ibid*., p. 349.

[48] *Ibid*., p. 399.

[49] *Ibid*., p. 377.

[50] *Ibid*., p. 424.

[51] *Ibid*., p. 415.

[52] *Ibid*., pp. 415-416.

church's program of witness and proclamation of the gospel but ***expressions*** of its very nature. If the church is true to its nature, it cannot but express its service of God in service to persons; but its social and cultural activities will come from a deeper source than direct social and cultural aims can provide. The church, for example, will not be fired by utopianism because it knows the world for what it is; and yet, the church lives and acts by the love of God and by the desire to fulfill His will in a spirit of humility, longing for that Kingdom which transcends all kingdoms and societies.[53] By its example, the Christian mission has stimulated governments as well as indigenous agencies; and much of what has been done will fall under governmental control in the future. If the church desires to continue in various kinds of service, it will have to excel in creativeness of mind and in the quality of its work. It will have to resolve the problem of how to preserve the Christian character of its schools, as they become part of the national system of education. While medical work does not face the same kind of control, the church will have to search for ways of maintaining an intensely Christian and missionary spirit in its medical institutions at the same time that it demonstrates an eagerness to cooperate with other agencies for the alleviation and prevention of the colossal amount of human suffering that exists in the world.[54]

The one thing that should be made clear is that the church can never promise the solution of economic, social, and political problems. To promise the elimination of economic misery and social disturbance is to invite inevitable disillusionment, because economic misery and social disturbance are caused by many factors beyond the control of the church. The church can only put its influence in the scale and ought to do so; and while it is natural to be critical in the midst of terrible economic, social, and political conditions, criticism is laid at the wrong door if it implies that the church ought to guarantee the realization of an ideal social and political order. Such criticism derives from a misconception of the nature of the church and from a wrong view of the dual character of the world, which is

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[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 433-434.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 435-438.

the battleground of divine and demonic forces. The promises and guarantees of communism and any other social idealism that they will achieve an ideal social and political order may be well-meaning, but they are also deceitful illusions. To say this, insists Kraemer, is not pessimism or quietism but faithful realism.[55] The consequences of all this is that the church is not permitted to use the New Testament for definite social or political theories, whether conservative or radical.[56] For Christians it is, however, a concrete duty to be involved in the one principle of the Christian ethic; namely, the concrete obedience to God's Will and to discover the implications of that obedience. This in itself contains very important implications for social and political life, but whatever solutions might be suggested are only partial and temporary. On account of sin they will remain imperfect and broken. The church has no right to pretend to Christianize the spheres of life. All the church can do is

> "…to instill the influence of concrete Christian lives into the general life. A 'Christian' social, political or international order would mean a way of life in which all coercion had vanished and everything happened in the freedom of love."[57]

Kraemer does not call for a gradual withdrawal of missionary activity in the world; rather, he calls for the whole church to take up the Christian mission in a nonchristian world, for it ***is*** the whole world that is nonchristian. The relationship between the older and younger churches will be one of cooperation in the future, for the task of persuading the nonchristian world to surrender to Christ, as the Lord of life is a work of long-persevering moral and religious persuasion. Although Christianity has traditionally relied on the support of western civilization to help in this task, it can no longer rely on this traditional ally. Western civilization is no longer an ally. In fact, autonomous western civilization and Christianity have separated. This may well be confusing to the eastern mind that tends to relate religion and culture; it is certainly the reason why so many

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[55] *Ibid*., pp. 60 and 430-431.

[56] *Ibid*., p. 95.

[57] *Ibid*., p. 99.

have confused becoming Christian with becoming western. Unlike all earlier missionary periods in the history of the church—with the single exception of the first century—in the future the Christian mission will have to work by purely religious and moral persuasion. The most difficult task of the church lies ahead of it, but the heartening lesson of the past informs us that the gospel can spread under any and all circumstances. The Christian message in the nonchristian world must be accomplished in a complicated world with all the means of human intelligence, ingenuity, and devotion at our disposal; and we must make the hearing and expression of God's revelation and message as palpable as possible. Theology, history, psychology, and anthropology must be exploited to achieve the one aim of becoming "a better instrument in conveying the conviction that God is speaking in Jesus Christ His decisive Word to individuals, nations, peoples, cultures and races, without any distinction."[58]

A Debate Emerges

These two restatements of mission have resulted in a debate over missiology, which seems irreconcilable. This debate between Hocking and Kraemer was not merely between two rational arguments but between two very different faiths, which cannot be resolved by reason. "To demand a rational argument for faith," said Kraemer, "is to make reason, that is, man, the standard of reference for faith, and ends in a vicious circle."[59] Faith as an orientation towards reality is the starting point which gives rise to philosophical and theological systems. One's orientation or standpoint is not the end of a rational process but the beginning. One's standpoint cannot be demonstrated by rational arguments; rather, it is the foundation upon which reason builds a philosophical or theological system.[60]

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[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 40, 52-57, and 444-445.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[60] Terry Louis White, *Religion and Religions in the Thought of W.E. Hocking and Hendrik Kraemer* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972), p. 47. White gives an excellent definition of a standpoint and how reason follows rather than precedes one's standpoint.

Hocking's standpoint lies in a philosophy of religion. For him there is an original knowledge of God and religious truth is discernible to persons in spite of sin. This is his presupposition, orientation, or standpoint. Kraemer's standpoint is the biblical revelation, and he takes a very negative view of philosophy and religion. Sin has blinded us. We cannot know God or truth apart from God's own special revelation, and any value that general revelation might have for us must be viewed in the light of special revelation. Religion and philosophy speak about what we think of God; revelation speaks of what God thinks about us and is saying to us.

What does one do in the light of these two very diverse statements on the Christian mission? Does one accept one and reject the other, or does one attempt to synthesize the best of both positions? There is much in Hocking and Kraemer that is still usable in building a missiology, but there are also some inadequacies in both positions. The answer, however, does not lie in synthesizing the best out of the two contradictory positions; rather, it lies in pointing out what is usable and what is inadequate on the basis of the contemporary situation and then adding to this the contributions of the political and liberation theologies that are so prevalent in much of the world today. In doing this, we hope to make some small contribution to a restatement of the church's mission for our time. This task will never be finished, for every generation will have to take it up again. The church must constantly reformulate its mission in order to deal with the needs of a rapidly changing world. Let us begin this task by pointing to some of the difficulties that a contemporary mission faces with both the Hocking and Kraemer restatements. We shall do this first on the basis of personal experience in mission.

Some Problems for Missiology and the Need for a Reformulation

In taking a look at the Hocking and Kraemer restatements on missiology, we noticed that a debate emerged over whether the church was to enter into dialogue with other religions in the hope of constructing a new world religion or continue to aim at building new Christian communities from people of all races, cultures, and nations. Hocking opts for the former, Kraemer for the latter. Both

agree, however, that the church must be politically neutral as it attempts to carry out its mission. Let us analyze these ideas on the basis of our own personal experiences in mission in the Federation of Malaysia from 1968 to 1976.[61]

Dialogue and Conversion

The kind of dialogue mentioned by Hocking is not taking place to any large extent. Islam, the State religion of Malaysia, is also a missionary religion; hence, it is involved in intense missionary activity to gain converts. Christianity is thus placed in a defensive posture. The church, on the other hand, has never been a serious threat to Islam. The Malay race, which has been traditionally Muslim, has been off-limits to the Christian mission; and the churches have observed this restriction very carefully. The government permits the Christian mission to work among the other racial groups, who are somewhat resistant to Islam because of its prohibitions against eating pork: conversion of Malays to Christianity is prohibited by law. Islam is currently trying to overcome the resistance of certain racial groups in Malaysia by permitting the adults to eat pork but asking them not to feed any to their children.[62] Hocking's emphasis on dialogue is difficult to carry out at the present time in Malaysia, but so is Kraemer's emphasis on proclaiming the gospel to all persons and forming Christian communities from those who respond to God's revelation. Christian communities cannot be formed among the Malays; they are prohibited by law. It is difficult to predict what a Muslim state might do as it gains more and more converts from these other races, who previously were turning to Christianity. There is already a great deal of political pressure being exerted on these races to turn to Islam. How can a church under such pressure enter into dialogue, and how can it be true to its own mission in the face of such legal restrictions? The church's options seem to be to surrender to Islam, disobey the

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[61] The Federation of Malaysia was formed on September 16, 1963.

[62] We are discussing a situation in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. The major racial groups are Malay, Chinese, and Iban. We are most aware of the pressure being exerted on the Ibans, who are more similar to the Malays than are the Chinese.

legal restrictions, or search for a new missiology that can be used within the situation.

The political Neutrality of the Church

The stance of political neutrality is a difficult one to maintain. There is no doubt that it has been tried in Malaysia as well as in many other countries where the church is involved in carrying out its mission. The impossibility of carrying it out, however, can be seen in what happens to the church as it has developed its own social institutions, the main ones having to do with education, health, and agriculture. The church may have taken up much of this work at a time when the government was unable to serve the needs of most of the population, but in recent years these institutions have had to cooperate with the government to assure their very existence. Government has become so involved in some of them that they can hardly take a politically neutral stance. Some of the church's schools have become "government aided" and are now financially dependent upon the state. This may relieve the financial burden for the national church and permit it to keep these schools open, but it also makes it increasingly difficult for the church to remain politically neutral. It has now aligned its school system with the government in power; that is to say, with the status quo. The question that needs to be asked is this: Should the church hang on to these institutions? Giving them up may not make the church politically neutral, but it will certainly make it easier for the church to take a critical and prophetic stance.

The Political Neutrality of the Missionary

Hocking and Kraemer also believed that missionaries could maintain political neutrality and suggested that they should pay attention to the mission of the church. They did not seem to be aware of the fact that this really meant the support of the status quo or, in their case, the colonial government in power. The alternative to this, of course, was the expulsion of the missionaries. This indeed is still a problem today. Even when missionaries desire to maintain neutrality, it is very difficult if not impossible. Missionaries tend to be identified with the status quo or with their own national origins. A few examples might help to clarify this point. In visiting many

congregations in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, we used to sit up late into the night talking not about Christianity but about the United States. People tended to see us as Americans first and only secondarily as Christians. If this was true within the church, one can imagine how much more true it was outside of it. The same thing was true for other missionaries working in Malaysia as well.[63] The Filipino missionaries found it very difficult to obtain visas when political relations between Malaysia and the Philippines deteriorated over the latter's claim to own the Malaysian state of Sabah in North Borneo. Although most of the missionaries from Taiwan remained following the Malaysian Prime Minister's visit to the People's Republic of China, there was a certain uneasiness felt among them and they were left without a consulate to which they could relate. What I am trying to say is that missionaries tend to be identified first by their national origins whether they like it or not and only secondarily by their Christian faith. They can try to maintain political neutrality, but it will not mean very much when political events affect them anyway. No matter what they do, they cannot remain neutral entities. When they say nothing about politics, they are identified with the politics of their countries. When they cooperate too closely with the government in the country where they are working, they can be accused of supporting the status quo and sometimes oppression. The only option they might have is to identify with liberation movements, but this would most likely lead to their rapid expulsion from the country. The impossibility of neutrality certainly raises the question of the future role of missionaries in third world countries.

The Future Role of Missionaries

Hocking does not question the future existence of missionaries, only the way in which they might be used. His call for an ambassadorship of missionaries to be formed is very idealistic and would run into numerous practical difficulties. There were many missionaries from various parts of the world in Malaysia, and this

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[63] In Malaysia there were western missionaries from Australia, England, Holland, the United States, and West Germany. Asian missionaries were also present and came from India, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand.

gave the mission there an international flair; but it also presented many problems, one of which was the ranking of missionaries according to their national origins. The most important question to be raised is the implication of creating such an elite group of missionary ambassadors. Does this mean that every national church would aim at maintaining missionaries in every other national church? Obviously this would be too difficult to do and too expensive besides. Kraemer's call for the whole church to take up the Christian mission to the nonchristian world may sound more practical in that it aims at developing cooperation between the older and younger churches in the task of persuading the nonchristian world to surrender to Christ as the Lord of life.[64] The problem, however, as we have observed it, is the West's inability to know what to do with third world missionaries. Since returning home in 1976, we have had many opportunities to visit churches and district meetings within The United Methodist Church to interpret the world mission of the church. We have had opportunities to meet some of these missionaries from third world countries. For the most part, we have seen them itinerating in the churches much as we have been doing. They go from church to church or to the various district mission saturation events and relate the story of missions in their home countries.[65] Occasionally they talk about the need for liberation in such countries as Rhodesia or South Africa, but only rarely are they brave enough to confront us or minister to us in any meaningful way. They are never in one spot long enough to get to know us; they are too busy itinerating. Not only do we need a new misisology to give us direction as we send missionaries into other countries; we also need a new missiology in regard to what we should do with missionaries coming from other countries to us.

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[64] Kraemer considers all of the world nonchristian, including the western world usually thought of as Christian.

[65] A district mission saturation is an attempt to inform the various congregations in a district about the world mission of the church and to solicit their financial support. American missionaries, third world missionaries, and persons interested in mission are asked to speak in every church in the district as well as to meet with small groups during the week. The event usually lasts about one week but occasionally takes place over a weekend.

While the question of what we might do with missionaries coming to us is an important one, it will not make up the major portion of this work.[66] We shall be working with political and liberation theology and how they force us to reformulate the mission of the church. We suspect that not too much will be said about sending and receiving missionaries, whether they be western or third world. What we expect to see is the rejection of western missionaries or, at most, a call for a moratorium on the sending and receiving of missionaries. This is at least the message we have heard from those that have become deeply involved in liberation theology in Southeast Asia. We do not, however, expect any complete moratorium to take place; and so there is still a need to reformulate the mission of the church. If the political and liberation theologians see missionaries as a threat to their goals, then it is important for us to take a serious look at what they are saying to us. Have they discovered something about Christianity that we need to incorporate into a new missiology? Let us now look briefly at some of their main themes as they relate to the mission of the church.

Issues Raised by Political and Liberation Theology Affecting a Reformulation

Let us now summarize briefly some issues raised, by political and liberation theology that affect future reformulations of the church's mission. This will not be a comprehensive survey of political and liberation theological themes; rather, it will be an attempt to life up some issues which challenge prior restatements on mission such as those made by Hocking and Kraemer. In this way we are not only better able to evaluate these former restatements, we are also given some assistance in making some tentative contributions to future reformulations of the mission of the church.

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[66] Although we have worked with a few missionaries from other lands, we have not had an opportunity to investigate how all of them are being used. We suspect that they are not being used in the same sense as our missionaries are used in their countries. A study of how we use them would make an interesting project, but it is beyond the scope of this work.

The Theological Starting Point

Does the church begin with biblical and theological reflection, or does it begin with reflection on the political, economic, and social environment in which it lives? This issue is being raised particularly by the Latin American liberation theologians, and their answer is clear. They want to begin with their situation of poverty and oppression, and so they have broken with the academic and systematic theologians from the west. To some extent, Hocking's restatement on missiology resembles their approach. He reformulated his missiology on the basis of a comprehensive survey of the existing situation in specific Asian countries and then proceeded to restate the future mission of the church. His approach is much closer to the liberation theologians from Latin America than to the approach used by Kraemer. Kraemer begins with biblical realism and is much closer to the western academic and systematic theologians criticized by the Latin Americans. Regardless of where one begins, it is impossible to ignore the other factors. Those who begin with the political, economic, and social situation do not come to this situation without any biblical and theological knowledge; and those who claim to be starting with the Bible and theology must also apply their theories to the political, economic, and social realities that exist. Does it really matter where one starts as long as one takes both factors into consideration? Is it not simply a question of where one places the emphasis?

The Church's Mission and the Poor

Does the church begin its mission by reaching out to the poor and the oppressed, or does it hope to reach them by winning first the rich and the elite? Political and liberation theology claim that the church ought to reach out to the poor and the oppressed and push for their liberation from those who cause their poverty and oppression. Reconciliation with the oppressor is a second step. Hocking and Kraemer are aware of widespread poverty in Asia, but they do not identify the mission of the church in terms of reaching out to them and identifying with them to the temporary exclusion of the rich and the influential. Hocking mentions the fact that the outcastes were some of the first to become Christians in India but expresses

disappointment that the church was unable to penetrate the upper classes of Indian society. He believes that the church would have been more successful had it reached them first. Kraemer accepts the mission to the outcastes of India mainly because they have lifted their eyes to the Christian mission, but he makes no attempt to identify them as the primary concern of the Christian mission. Political and liberation theology ask the question: Does God choose, the best people in society, does he treat everyone equally, or does he become especially concerned about the poor and the oppressed? On the basis of the theme of liberation in the Exodus event, the Old Testament prophets, and the concern of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the New Testament, these theologians express a special concern for poor and oppressed persons and nations. If their concerns are valid, what effect will this have on a reformulation of the church's mission? We shall be pursuing this matter further.

The Gap between Affluence and Poverty

There is a concern among political and liberation theologians over the dehumanizing gap between affluent and poor persons and nations. There is a clear consensus for narrowing this dehumanizing gap between affluence and poverty but not on how this might be done. For some of these theologians, there is the suggestion that affluent persons and nations might move towards a voluntary austerity so that poor persons and nations might catch up. There are also many theologians—perhaps a majority of them—who do not believe the gap can be narrowed on a voluntary basis and that pressure and force are required. This same awareness that the gap can be narrowed by austerity on the part of the affluent is not present in the Hocking and Kraemer missiologies. Although both Hocking and Kraemer recognize the growing gap between the rich and the poor, neither of them suggests that this might only be possible by slowing down the pace of western development. The emphasis seems to be on the use of western technology to help the poor "catch up" without affecting the privileged position of the affluent. Nothing is said about how the wealthy might have to give up something in order to aid the poor in their development. This seems to be an emphasis that comes through loud and clear in political and liberation theology. What does this mean for a reformulated mission of the

church? This is an important issue, but it will require more than theological reflection to answer the question that it raises.

Evangelism and Humanization

The political and liberation theologians have redefined evangelism to include a concern for humanization and social justice. This has caused some polarization in the church as their redefinition of evangelism has been challenged. This same kind of polarization can be seen in the debate that emerged between Hocking and Kraemer concerning the mission of the church. While Kraemer saw the formation of new Christian communities as a vital part of the mission, Hocking did not share that concern. For Hocking, what was important was the truth that would emerge as a result of Christianity cooperating with other religions. Not only would a deeper truth emerge, a new world religion might also surface. Kraemer's concern for evangelism does not mean that he has no social consciousness. He makes social service a direct consequence of evangelism, but he does not submerge the one into the other. Kraemer—and Hocking as well—tends to view social concern in terms of services and philanthropy instead of in terms of establishing justice. Political and liberation theology place much more emphasis on humanization and justice and hopes to eliminate the need for social service. This has important implications for how the social mission of the church might be reformulated, but is there any way of tying evangelism and humanization together so that the polarization can be eliminated? What does political and liberation theology have to contribute towards resolving this polarization, or do they just contribute to it? These questions must be taken up in any restatement of the church's mission.

The Issue of Political Neutrality

We have already dealt with our own difficulties in regard to taking a politically neutral stance. Political and liberation theologians reject any possibility of a neutral stance. This would mean the same as supporting the status quo; hence, if a government is engaged in political repression and economic oppression, then the Christian mission becomes an ally in this as well. Hocking and Kraemer do not

deal with these kinds of problems. Although they assume that the Christian mission can be neutral, this does not mean that it would not be critical. Criticism is in order whether the government is capitalist, socialist, or communist. It is easier for the Latin American liberation theologians to reject political neutrality for the church because they are speaking primarily of the mission of the church within their own countries. Hocking and Kraemer were dealing with how missionary personnel from one country ought to maintain political neutrality in another nation. The question of the feasibility of political neutrality must be raised in any future reformulation of the church, even if it makes involvement of the church across national borders more difficult. This latter problem was the concern of Hocking and Kraemer. If the church takes sides, it may well become impossible to make much of a contribution across these borders; but on the other hand, the liberation theologians remind us that if it tries to be neutral, then it may end up as an ally for those who represent dehumanization within the status quo. Does taking sides in the political arena mean the end to missionary involvement across national boundaries? Just what does the rejection of political neutrality mean for the world mission of the church? We are only beginning to deal with these questions.

Earlier, we tied Christian social institutions in with the problem of political neutrality. Perhaps something more needs to be said about these institutions. The Latin American liberation theologians do not discuss them at any great length, but some of their references are significant even though they are brief. They tend to view them not as symbols of political neutrality but as symbols of the status quo. Hocking and Kraemer display little awareness of this problem. Hocking does not want to see these institutions as tools of evangelism, although he acknowledges them as expressions of the Christian faith with some evangelistic implications. Because they are expressions of the Christian faith, they should be superior to the secular institutions; and if they are not superior, they will have an adverse effect and will not gain the respect of nonchristians. In this case they should be closed down. Kraemer, however, plays down all claims to superiority on the part of Christianity and its institutions; and although he does see an evangelistic role for these social institutions, he does not think of them as being the primary point of

contact between Christians and nonchristians. The primary point of contact is the missionary. What Hocking expects of the Christian institution, Kraemer expects of the missionary. The latter must attract and not repel. Neither Hocking nor Kraemer, however, questions the existence of Christian institutions; they just want to be sure that such institutions maintain something that is particularly Christian about them. There is little awareness that these institutions might support the status quo, nor, is there much questioning of how the indigenous church will ever be able to take over such expensive institutions in the future. Nothing is even said about how these institutions might affect the development of the indigenous church. Are these institutions, for example, expressions of the indigenous church itself, or are they propped up by western mission boards and really expressions of a western approach to third world problems? What about the unequal pay scales between personnel in the Christian social institutions and pastors in the indigenous church, which further weakens the church in relation to the Christian institutional expression of social concern? The consequences of all this could be the demise of the indigenous church, and then these institutions clearly would be nothing but expressions of western Christianity. Neither Hocking nor Kraemer deals seriously enough with the tensions existing between the church and these institutions. For the most part they are not expressions of the indigenous church. What can we learn from political and liberation theology about the role of these Christian social institutions and their political implications? Can they remain politically neutral or do they indeed take sides?

The Question of Violence

Not all political and liberation theologians suggest the necessity of using violence to deal with political, economic, and social problems; however, many of them do, and so we shall have to deal with the question of violence. The issue is raised in no uncertain terms by many theologians in the first as well as in the third world. The suggestion is made that God is at work destroying inhuman institutions and is busy liberating persons and nations from dehumanizing circumstances. The very possibility that the Christian mission might support the use of violence is not even discussed by Hocking or Kraemer; rather, both of them express a commitment to

an orderly and cooperative approach to social and political problems. While Hocking would perceive God at work in such an approach, Kraemer would suggest that, "because of the corruption and disorder of all spheres of life by sin, no human mind is able to indicate where exactly He is at work and where not."[67] Political and liberation theology, for the most part, seem confident that God is at work in revolutionary activity and that the traces of his work are clearly visible. While it is admitted that Jesus did not use violence in his own time because he expected the end to come by the power of God, there are quite a number of theologians who believe that Jesus would act differently today. He would resort to the use of violence for liberating persons and nations from poverty and oppression, and this is in fact what they believe God to be doing in our midst. This is their interpretation of the revolutionary events taking place all around us, and they are calling the church to faithfully cooperate with God's present activity in a changing world. Does this mean that the Christian mission must be reformulated to support violence in the liberation of oppressed people and nations, or have political and liberation theology taken a wrong turn here? Any contemporary missiological restatement will run head-on into the question of violence and must respond to it in some meaningful way.

Major Questions for a Contemporary Missiology

Thus far we have examined the two major restatements on missiology for our century, some problems that we noticed from our own personal involvement in mission, and some of the issues raised by political and liberation theology. Let us now attempt to state briefly the major questions that must be answered in any reformulation of the church's mission. We shall not do much more than to formulate the issues into questions. We have discussed some of these issues already and intend to deal with them more in depth in the subsequent chapters of this work. More questions could be added later as a result of our research; but for the moment, we are only interested in stating the major questions that have emerged from the

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[67] Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, pp. 428-429.

above three sources.[68] Our purpose is to point out some of the questions that a new missiology must consider; and although we do not expect to answer every question satisfactorily, we do hope to make some contribution to the constant need to reformulate the mission of the church. Let us now list some of the major questions for a contemporary missiology.

1. Does the new way of doing theology suggested by the political and liberation theologians have an effect on how we define the church, or do we continue to use traditional definitions of the church? Do we need to rethink the nature of the church in light of a shrinking, changing, and revolutionary world?

2. Is there a primary mission for the church, or must the church give equal attention to other missions at the same time? Does one have to choose between evangelism and humanization at this point, or is there some way of defining the primary mission of the church without polarizing these two aspects of mission?

3. What is the evangelistic mission of the church? Is the aim of evangelism the building up of Christian communities or the spread of the Christian revelation, faith, and hope? Do we confront other cultures and religions with the gospel and expect conversion, or do we enter into dialogue and aim at cooperating with them in the humanizing of the world?

4. What is the humanizing mission of the church? Do we achieve humanization by aiming at a positive vision of what it means to be human, or do we achieve humanization by eliminating all those things that negate it? What is the divine role and what is the human role in the mission of humanization? Can the church fulfill its humanizing mission better by working through its own social institutions, or should it spend its time and energy trying to bring about change in the social institutions run by the state?

5. What should the church's political stance be? Can it remain neutral, or does the church have to take sides? Does the church have

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[68] We are referring to our examination of the two major restatements on missiology, our own personal experience in mission, and some of the issues raised by political and liberation theology.

to choose between political ideologies such as capitalism, socialism, and communism, or should the church work within whatever political ideology it finds itself, trying to humanize it? Can the church do this and still play a prophetic and critical role?

6. How should the church respond to the plight of poor and oppressed persons and nations? Is the church to take sides with them over against rich and powerful persons and nations, or does the church penetrate the rich and powerful in the hope that it can resolve the problem of poverty and oppression by working at it from the top?

7. When the church faces racial discrimination and alienation, what does it do? Does it set an example by including persons of different racial and cultural backgrounds into the same Christian community, or does it deal with the problem by separating people according to culture and race so that they are better able to look after their own needs and concerns?

8. When political, economic, and social problems become so severe that violence erupts, what should the church say and do? Should the church cooperate with nonchristian leaders who are seeking liberation, even when they resort to the use of violence, or should Christians attempt to lead liberation movements and insist upon the use of nonviolent methods?

9. Is there any future role for missionaries in the various national and indigenous churches? Does missionary service across national boundaries contribute anything to the world mission of the church, or can national workers fulfill the mission of the church within their own nations better by themselves?

The above questions represent but a summary of some of the major issues. There are many more questions that have not been asked, but those that have been asked at least give us some direction as we proceed to examine the reformulation of the church's mission in light of the demands coming to us, from political and liberation theology. Let us now deal with how we intend to deal with the issues raised by these questions.

The Principal Theologians to be Studied

We shall attempt to answer some of these major questions for a contemporary missiology by making a study of three theologians deeply involved in the themes of political and liberation theology. Prior to choosing the principal theologians, we examined some of the writings of several theologians. From among the Latin Americans, we looked at the works of Rubem A. Alves, Hugo Assman, José Míguez Bonino, Dom Helder Camara, Emilio Castro, Orlando E. Costas, Paulo Freire, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Juan Luis Segundo. We did not find very much written by the Asians; but we did look at the works of Kosuke Koyama, Emerito P. Nacpil, M.M. Thomas, and Choan-Seng Song. The main theologians examined from America and Europe, were James H. Cone, Paul L. Lehman, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, J. Deotis Roberts, Rosemary Ruether, and M. Richard Schall. Many other writers were helpful to us, in trying to understand the impact of political and liberation theology on the mission of the church. Some of them are Hannah Arendt, Gerald H. Anderson, John C. Bennett, Jacques Ellul, Denis Goulet, Frederick Herzog, Ivan Illich, David E. Jenkins, Alistair Kee, Jan Milic Lochman, Richard J. Neuhaus, Roger Lincoln Shinn, John M. Swomley, C. Peter Wagner, Charles C. West, and John H. Yoder. The names are too numerous and their works too extensive to make any kind of complete listing or bibliography at this point. We shall be referring to many of the above writers in the following chapters, but our purpose is to choose three theologians that have been influential in political and liberation theology and focus on them.

Before dealing with our principal theologians, let us clarify briefly how our approach differs from other attempts to reformulate the church's mission in light of political and liberation theology. We are only aware of two major attempts to do this, one by Orlando E. Costas and the other by Choan-Seng Song. There may be many others who are interested in the relationship between missiology and political and liberation theology, but what we are referring to here is a specific attempt to reformulate the church's mission in light of that

theology.[69] This new theology has had a tremendous impact on the field of missiology, and it should not surprise us that these two attempts have come out of the third world. It is in the third world, which we have previously thought of as the mission field, where political and liberation theology have had to be taken seriously. The need to reformulate the church's mission can be more keenly felt in such an environment. The first attempt to reformulate the mission of the church was done by Orlando E. Costas, who approached the subject with an interest in the "church growth" movement, which became popular under the influence of Donald A. McGavran.[70] He considers himself an evangelical who takes seriously liberation theology but who also derives his missiology from the Bible. He

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[69] There are many theologians writing from the perspective of political and liberation theology, but few of them take much of an interest in the problems of the world mission of the church. On the other hand, a number of theologians concerned about that mission write very defensively in regard to the political and liberation theologians whom they consider as a threat to missions. In singling out the works of Costas and Song, we are referring to two major attempts to relate missiology to political and liberation theology. There have been a number of writers in missiology who have taken an interest in studying liberation theology, two of whom are C. Peter Wagner and Gerald Anderson, but they are not attempting to do anything as creative as that done by Costas and Song. Wagner does a critical study of some of the liberation theologians in his book, *Latin American Theology*, which was published in 1970 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Anderson edited two books, *Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* and *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*; the first book was published by Abingdon Press in 1967 and the second by Orbis Books in 1976. These books represent a collection of articles by persons interested in the problems of mission and the new theologies. There is also a third book along the same lines, *Mission Trends #3: Third World Theologies*, which was edited by Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky and published by Pulist/Eerdmans in 1976. Alistair Kee takes a similar approach with his, *A Reader in Political Theology*, which is a collection of articles written by political and liberation theologians. This book was published by SCM Press in 1974. All of the above books introduce the subject of political and liberation theology and present us with ideas that need to be dealt with in missiology, but they do not attempt to reformulate or reconstruct the mission of the church. Costas and Song make such an attempt.

[70] Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1974).

strongly believes in carrying out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-21 and reacts critically to any questioning of this by the liberation theologians. Much of his book is a reaction to the trend he sees in the ecumenical movement that opposes both “church growth” and “evangelical missions.” He comes closest to Kraemer in the Hocking-Kraemer debate. A second attempt to deal with reformulating the mission of the church in light of political and liberation theological themes was done by Choan-Seng Song, whose theological stance is on the opposite extreme to that of the evangelicals.[71] Song suggests that we have come to the end of the missionary era and claims that the practice of singling out some Christians to be missionaries is obsolete. He is also very critical of the church growth movement and comes much closer to Hocking in the Hocking-Kraemer debate. Neither Costas nor Song refers to Hocking or Kraemer, but the same kind of debate continues as a result of the positions they take. Perhaps this is inevitable, even if it is unfortunate.

Our approach is going to be different. We do not intend to react to the ecumenical movement (Costas) nor to the missionary movement (Song); rather, we shall examine in some depth three political and liberation theologians, who have been influential. Then we shall attempt to offer some tentative directions for reformulating the mission of the church and for a new missiology. We have chosen to work with Paul L. Lehmann, Jürgen Moltmann, and Juan Luis Segundo. We have selected them partially on the basis of the following principles: (1) that they have been writing in the sixties and seventies; (2) that they write from a Christian perspective; (3) that they have an ecumenical concern, and (4) that they deal with the themes of liberation and humanization. Many others could have been chosen on the basis of these same principles; but we have elected to work with Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo because they have been quoted frequently by some of the other writers and also because their literature parallels many of our own concerns. Although only Segundo can be called a third world theologian, both Lehmann and

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[71] Choan-Seng Song, *Christian Mission in Reconstruction—An Asian Attempt* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1975). The above book is now available through Orbis Books in Maryknoll, New York.

Moltmann have been very influential in the writings of third world theologians. Therefore it seems appropriate to turn to these three men for help in analyzing and reformulating the Christian mission for today's world. Let us examine briefly each of the three theologians with whom we intend to work.

Paul L. Lehmann

Lehman was ordained by the North Illinois Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and accepted his first full-time teaching position at Elmhurst College in 1933. In 1946 when he was forty, there occurred the sharpest shift in the direction of his life. He began his ministerial membership in the Presbyterian Church and also a career at Princeton Theological Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary, and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. At the present time he is retired from teaching and lives in New York City.[72]

Although Lehmann has written numerous journal articles, he has written only two major books, *Ethics in a Christian Context* and *The Transfiguration of Politics*; but he is well known for his "contextual ethic" and the currency of such concepts as "humanization," "the politics of God," and the "question of the future of theology."[73] We shall be referring to some of the elements of his "contextual ethic" in subsequent chapters, but our primary reason for focusing on him is his influence among third world theologians. One example of that influence is the Latin American theologian, Rubem Alves, who weaves through the whole fabric of his first book Lehmann's happy expression: "to make and to keep human life human."[74]

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[72] Alexander J. McKelway and E. David Willis, ed., *The Context of Contemporary Theology: Essays in Honor of Paul Lehmann* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), pp. 16-17. Information about Dr. Lehmann's retirement and present residences in New York City was given to us by Neely D. McCarter, Dean of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[74] Rubem A. Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (New York: Corpus Books, 1969).

Lehmann's teaching career covered a major economic depression, a world war, a radical realignment of the world's powers, and some of the most violent upheavals in American culture that our nation has ever known. One could not accuse him of being a detached scholar. His awareness of the inner dynamics of the experience of the German nation in the thirties and forties was intensified by his theological kinship with both Barth and Bonhoeffer. This provided him with a prophetic feeling for what happened to western civilization both during and following World War II, and it also led inevitably to a bruising clash with the mid-century McCarthy phenomenon. This proved to be one of the most serious political battles of his life. Lehmann was also able to gain a perspective from which he could sympathize with and support the struggles for freedom in Latin America; and through his personal contacts, student movement activities, publications, and travels, he became very much involved in the struggles for freedom abroad as well as within his own country.[75]

Categorizing Lehmann's theological position is difficult. He does not fit easily into any theological position. It has always been his genius and burden to espouse a theological position at odds with his environment. For example, he ran headlong into the polemic of liberalism versus fundamentalism, making enemies on both sides. He and his friend Bonhoeffer (1930-1931) found themselves virtually isolated between the biblical conservatism of Broadway Presbyterian Church and the theological liberalism of Riverside Church. In a secular environment he has always seemed too Christian and in Christian circles too secular. Among the Presbyterians at Princeton, he was sometimes viewed as a dangerous radical; but when he went to Harvard, he was received as a Calvinist. McKelway and Willis describe him as "a theological loner."[76] We agree that he is difficult to place. He is not as optimistic about the future as is Hocking; but unlike Kraemer, he seems sure of himself when he points to God's activity in the world. He is no idealist, but neither is he a realist. Categories do not seem to fit him.

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[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

What then can be said about him? Lehman takes the community at worship as the occasion for theological reflection. In this way, he reflects his theological kinship with Bonhoeffer and their common theological ancestry in both Karl Barth, who spoke of worship as the center of the church's life, and John Calvin, who described the marks of the church in liturgical terms. Lehmann never lost the genuine piety of his youth nor his understanding of worship as the central action of the Christian community, but this did not bring about a divorce between theology and the social and political questions of his time.[77] It has driven him into a never-ending series of dialogues with the prevailing issues and crises of society—social, economic, and political. Throughout his career, Lehmann has insisted upon the necessity of the church to live in intimate dialogue with society; and he has always taught that the larger context of theology is both relative and fluid and that theology must learn to operate at the intersection of the sacred and the secular. This is particularly evident in *Ethics in a Christian Context*, where he acknowledges his debt to the social sciences in the formulation of ethical questions.[78]

In Lehmann's thinking, theology cannot be articulated once and for all. It all depends upon what God is doing at the moment. God is free to transcend what he has done in the past, and contemporary theology is done, by discerning what God is doing in the present. "God's action and God's freedom," suggests Lehmann, "are never more plainly misunderstood than by those who suppose that God has acted and does act in a certain way and cannot, therefore, always also act in other ways."[79] God, for example, might have acted one way in the Exodus event and quite another way in Jesus' time. The ends might be the same, i.e., liberation and humanization; but the methods used to achieve these ends could be different. If God's action is likely to change as he responds to human need and oppression, then the church too must be ready to respond accordingly. The mechanism that helps the theologian to perceive what God is doing is the

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[77] *Ibid*., pp. 21-22.

[78] *Ibid*., p. 11.

[79] Paul L. Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), pp. 72-73.

theonomous conscience. "The *theonomous* conscience," says Lehmann, "is the conscience immediately sensitive to the freedom of God to do in the always changing human situation what his humanizing aims and purposes require. The *theonomous* conscience is governed and directed by the freedom of God alone." The concrete instance of the theonomous conscience is the preeminent claim of the neighbor's conscience upon and over our own.[80] Thus, theology for Lehmann has to do with our perception of God's activity in relation to our neighbor's need; hence, we must be open to the possibility of God's changing activity and his concern for liberation and humanization. Theological perception must remain fluid and open.

Jürgen Moltmann

Moltmann came to the Christian faith and hope while interned in an English POW camp during World War II. Upon repatriation to Germany, he continued his studies at the University of Göttingen, where he received the Th.D. degree in 1952. He served the country parish of Wasserhorst, near Bremen, for about five years. In 1967 he became a professor of systematic theology at the University of Tübingen, after having held similar positions at the University of Bonn and Wuppertal.[81]

The works of Moltmann are numerous, but his major books consist of only three, which are *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. He may be regarded as a European political theologian, but the development of his political theology has led him into the deeper dimensions of his systematic theology. The development of his theology is focused

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[80] *Ibid*., pp. 358-359.

[81] More detailed information about Moltmann's past can be found in the following four sources: Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, trans. by Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), p. xv; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Gospel of Liberation,* trans. by H. Wayne Pipkin (Waco: Word Books, 1973), the back cover; Jürgen Moltmann, "Hope in the Struggle of the People," *Christianity and Crisis* (March 21, 1977), pp. 49-50; and Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, trans. by M. Douglas Meeks (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. vii.

upon resurrection, cross, and Pentecost—each one corresponding to the titles of his major books.[82]

Moltmann was moved by Auschwitz and especially by a visit through the remains of a concentration camp at Maidanek in Poland.[83] How and why could this have been allowed to happen, particularly in a nation where the church has had such influence? He concludes that it must not happen again and defines the task of theology in terms of changing society rather than simply interpreting it. He proceeds to do this by pointing to certain theological shifts, which have brought us from a cosmological to the current political theology of today. In a world plagued with mass injustice, theology cannot be concerned with mere interpretation but must proceed to transform the world. Things might be different if injustice did not exist and all we needed to be concerned about were meaning. In light of the actual situation, however, the reformulation of the church's mission must be undertaken. Moltmann proceeds to do this by attempting to give hope to the poor and the oppressed and reformulating the mission of the church to bring about their liberation and humanization.

The historical situation, which appeared in the sixties, was characterized by a feeling that the process of secularization and democratization had aborted and that both liberal and revolutionary humanism had failed. *Theology of Hope* was optimistic, but it never really corresponded to the futuristic expectations of the early sixties. Although *Theology of Hope* speaks of the resurrection of the Crucified One, it is also a text, which understands and experiences the negative and knows itself to be out of joint with the times.[84]

Moltmann's interest in the cross did not follow his interest in hope but actually preceded it. The cross has actually been the guiding light of his theological thought and can be traced back to

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[82] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, trans. And ed. by M. Douglas Meeks (London: SCM Press LTD, 1975), p. xi. The above reference was taken from the foreword written by M. Douglas Meeks.

[83] Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, pp. 46-47.

[84] *Ibid*., p. x. See the"Foreword" written by M. Douglas Meeks..

some of his first theological questioning as a prisoner of war behind barbed wire. He attributes this interest to lectures on reformation theology, which he first heard from Hans Joachim Iwand, Ernst Wolf, and Otto Weber in Göttingen in 1948-1949. He was part of a generation whose hopes had been shattered and broken and who were returning from camps and hospitals to the lecture room. A theology, which did not speak of God in light of the one who was abandoned and crucified, simply had nothing to say to them.[85] Out of this context emerged a theology of hope; and yet the theology of the cross, remained in the background, even if the greater emphasis seemed to be on hope. The cross again came to his mind when the movements of hope in the sixties began to meet stiffer resistance and stronger opponents than they could stand. Moltmann himself became deeply disappointed in the failure of "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia, the loss of momentum in the civil rights movement in the United States, the temporary halt in the reforms of both the ecumenical movement and the Roman Catholic Church, which began so confidently with the Uppsala Conference and the Second Vatican Council.[86] Thus Moltmann moved away from Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope to the questions of "negative dialectic" and the "critical theory" of T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, together with the experiences and insights of early dialectical theology and existentialist philosophy. The conclusion that Moltmann reaches is that the Christian hope cannot be realistic and liberating unless it apprehends the pain of the negative.[87] His theology of the cross is not a correction of his theology of hope but simply an unfolding of the basic dialectic between cross and resurrection with which Molmann's theology began.[88] One of the major issues, which Moltmann takes up in his theology of the cross, is the problem for Christianity between identity and relevance. He sees the present crisis of the church as not merely the choice between

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[85] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press LTD, 1974), p. 1.

[86] *Ibid*., p. 2.

[87] *Ibid*., p. 5.

[88] Moltmann, *The Experiement Hope*, pp. xv.

assimilation with modern culture and retreat into the ghetto to maintain its own identity; rather, the Christian church can become relevant to the problems of the modern world only when it reveals the "hard core" of its identity in the crucified Christ and through the latter is called into question, together with the society in which it lives.[89] These same themes of identity and relevance are taken up in Moltmann's latest major book, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Here Moltmann indicates that every crisis means finding new bearings. The swift change of external circumstances, the revolutionary progress in science and technology, and a simultaneous threat through social, military, and ecological conflicts have caused a general insecurity among many people in society. These things affect the way in which the church formulates its mission, but they also send the church back to its roots. This is why Moltmann indicates that his latest book is designated to help the church find its bearings. When the church's traditions are threatened by insecurity, the church is thrown back to its foundation. It will then take its bearings even more emphatically than before from Jesus, his history, his presence, and his future—as the church of Jesus Christ is dependent on him and on him alone.[90]

Moltmann's theology has had a tremendous impact on the liberation struggles in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Part of this might be due to his concern for and work within the ecumenical movement.[91] The major reason, however, has to do with how he relates theology to the political, economic, and social problems of society. Moltmann affirms that theology does have its own subject matter, but it can only be understood as the theologian (and the church) understands its effect on society.[92] Theologians should be aware of the interests they are serving and must constantly ask: "For whom is my theology good? Which persons and which power structures does it serve?" Instead of beginning with demythologizing

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[89] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 3.

[90] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, pp. xiii-siv.

[91] Molmtann, *The Experiment Hope*, p. xiv.

[92] Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, trans. by Margaret Clarkson (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. vii.

and form criticism as applied to the object of Christian theology, theologians should begin with a criticism of their own social and political context. Only then can they move to the second task of helping the church to become aware of its own ties with society, with politics, and with particular economic systems. Moltmann is pleading for the proper application of theology and desires to place the church on the side of those who are being dehumanized.[93]

Moltmann is difficult to categorize in terms of the liberal idealism of Hocking or the biblical realism of Kraemer. We can find a great deal of idealism in Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*, but there is also a good dose of realism in *The Crucified God*. He tends to draw idealism and realism together, the most obvious examples of this being his concrete utopias. The "utopias" that he envisions for society, reflect his idealism, and his making them "concrete" expresses his concern for realism. He is also difficult to categorize in terms of the Hocking-Kraemer debate over the purpose of missions. Is the purpose to seek a common truth with other religions, or is there an evangelistic goal that expects conversion and the formation of new Christian communities? Moltmann believes in cooperating with other religions and ideologies for the purpose of liberation and humanization, but he also expresses a concern for the formation of Christian communities within different racial and cultural groups. Moltmann insists that evangelism and humanization are not alternatives and that the church must be involved in both. He also places a great emphasis on dialogue and cooperation not only with other religions but also with other ideologies, such as Marxism.

The great strength of the approach that Moltmann takes in regard to formulating the mission of the church is that of balance. He does not allow anyone to emphasize only evangelism or humanization. These are not alternatives or options that the church can choose between; rather, both must be done, and so Moltmann articulates a more holistic approach to the mission of the church. This balance can also be seen in his emphasis on the multidimensionality of human oppression and liberation. He demonstrates that working exclusively within any one vicious circle of dehumanization may actually

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[93] Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, pp. xii-xiv.

increase oppression or exploitation in another vicious circle. The real liberation of human beings depends on struggling simultaneously against racial and sexual alienation, economic exploitation, and political oppression.

Juan Luis Segundo

The third theologian we shall study is Juan Luis Segundo, a Jesuit priest in the Roman Catholic Church and presently the director of the Peter Faber Center in Montevideo. His major concern has been to develop a new way of doing theology and can be seen in his five-volume work, *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, which he describes as a major course in theology for adult lay people. Instead of exploring all the details of theology as a scholarly science, he takes the present crisis of faith as its concrete starting point. His second major work is *The Liberation of Theology,* which is an expanded version of a course given at Harvard University in the Spring of 1974. Here he subjects the methodology of academic theology to a thoroughgoing critique and offers major contributions to the development of a new theological methodology.[94] His latest book, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, reflects a dialogue that took place over a period of ten years between himself and various North Americans and Europeans preparing to work in Brazil. Segundo tried to make them aware of how Catholic institutions were being used to exert pressure on persons to enter and conform to the church. He also tried to show them how the church was an ally of the status quo and how difficult it would be for them to be anything else. In short, he tried to make these foreigners aware of how Catholic institutions were used as tools of evangelism and instruments of the rich and powerful. These are the hidden motives behind pastoral action, and they help to determine the mission of the church. Segundo wants to demonstrate how these institutions are being used so that the church can escape from them and take a new approach that relies on the power of the gospel alone and nurtures personal liberty. This approach would set persons free from the pressure of Catholic institutions and at the same time set the church free from

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[94] José Míguez Bonino, *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age* (London: SPCK, 1975), pp. 62 and 68.

being an ally of the status quo in Latin America. Segundo's conclusions, if followed, would have widespread consequences for both the nature and mission of the church in the future.

We have selected Segundo as one of our models because he seems to be the most "ecumenical" of the Latin American theologians in terms of his deep roots in European theology, his interest in tradition, his desire to interpret Vatican II, and in the range of his theological interests. Segundo does not, however, simply reflect European theology in a Latin American context; he openly challenges the way in which Europeans and Americans do theology. It is difficult to summarize his thought, but it is possible to characterize it as "an open theology for adult laymen."[95] He suggests that reflection done by lay people does not start from theology; rather, it begins with real everyday life and its problems. This approach is very different from that of the apologists of the nineteenth century. The latter tried to show people that the Bible was right and that all they had to do was learn how to apply it. The problem with this approach, says Segundo, is that by this "they understood a specific conception of man and the universe which was elaborated at a given moment in history." Today we realize that our expression of the faith—and the Bible, which is a vehicle of faith—is not exhausted by a specific conception of humanity and the universe. A new kind of human being has emerged, and the modern conception of humanity and the universe is not the same as the biblical one. Therefore we cannot start with the Bible but must begin with where we are today. The content of our own faith is a valid response to the real problems that form our history. This is the Christian's most persuasive sign of the divine origin of the message proposed to him by the faith.[96] Thus, Segundo's approach to theology is based on the Christian's real-life questions. This new approach to theology has two characteristics, which have been used by him in his five-volume series. First, theology for Segundo is reductive. He does not begin with twenty centuries of accumulated doctrine but reduces the

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[95] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[96] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), p. viii.

multitude of dogmatic enunciations to certain fundamental mysteries of revelation that give an account of our faith. Secondly, theology for Segundo begins with and takes account of the world in which we live and work rather than in systematic theology or even the Bible. Therefore it would be a mistake for anyone to look for a complete theology of the church or even an ecclesiology in his book about the church; this does not mean, however, that the issues he treats are any less important. He deals with contemporary issues that affect how we look at the church today and not how it was conceived two thousand years ago.[97]

In taking this approach, Segundo is certain that he is doing theology differently from the way it is normally done in the great theological centers around the world. He believes that Gustavo Gutiérrez took this approach in his work, *A Theology of Liberation*, and now he himself decides to get down to epistemology. By this he means not so much an analysis of Latin American theology but rather, an analysis of its methodological approach and its connection with liberation. He does this in *The Liberation of Theology*. He is fully aware that any struggle or combat of this sort is a rematch of David against Goliath but feels that the time has come to go on the offensive, even if such an attack should draw heavy criticism from the great centers of learning.[98]

Segundo is a liberation theologian quite different from Lehmann and Moltmann. It is his starting point for doing theology that is different. Although Lehmann and Moltmann are very interested in relating their theology to the problems of society, Segundo begins his theological reflection in society. In discussing European political theology, he says:

> …it does not have a great deal in common with our formulation of the issue since it derives politics from theological sources whereas the theology of Jesus derives

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[97] *Ibid*., p. ix.

[98] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis books, 1976), p. 5.

> theology from the openness of the human heart to man's most urgent problems.[99]

He even goes so far as to say that one cannot recognize Christ and come to know God unless he or she is willing to start with a personal commitment to the oppressed.[100] Although Segundo claims to move from society to theology, he also comes out of a Christian context himself, which has definitely left its mark on him as a theologian.[101] Segundo, however, is not simply determined by this background; he comes up with some interesting conclusions about the church, which are very different from tradition. We shall be analyzing some of these later.

When we attempt to compare Segundo with Hocking and Kraemer, we find that he is an idealist. This does not mean that he parallels Hocking's theological or missiological concerns. We are calling him an idealist because of his confidence in the future. Segundo's overriding interest is not in dialogue with other religions for the sake of uncovering some religious truth; rather, he is interested in such dialogue for the sake of liberation and humanization. He believes that the emphasis has been on orthodoxy far too long and that we should begin to stress the importance of orthopraxis. He realizes that liberation and humanization will be difficult and that they may even require violence to achieve; but he has confidence that they can be achieved to some extent within history. He draws heavily on Teilhard de Chardin's thought to support this. One thing Segundo is not interested in is the biblical realism of Kraemer, which he would claim to be a hindrance to the goals of liberation and humanization. Segundo would also be against any definition of the church's mission that would aim at building up the Christian community in numerical terms. He believes this would affect the church's ability to symbolize its true nature.

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[99] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[101] Míguez Bonino, *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age*, p. 64.

The Direction of the Study

We shall now proceed with the study of these three theologians and attempt to discover some tentative answers to the questions we raised for a new missiology. In order to draw our concerns out of their theologies, we have decided to approach them in a thematic manner. We shall begin in the first chapter with a brief analysis of the effect of their theologies on the nature of the church. The second chapter will be an attempt to demonstrate how these theologians envision the mission of the church. This will involve a positive description of what liberation and humanization mean, the human role in achieving this, and how it all affects the actual mission of the church. The third chapter will deal with the negative factors that thwart the mission of the church and what the church can do about them. In the fourth chapter, we must deal with the question of violence. We shall be asking whether the new strategy for mission that we discover emerging out of their theologies can meet the criteria for being called Christian. Finally we shall attempt to draw together our conclusions and suggest some tentative answers and directions that need to be taken into consideration in the development of a new missiology.

I. RETHINKING THE NAUTRE OF THE CHURCH

We shall open our study by analyzing the effect of political and liberation theology on the nature of the church. Have the themes of liberation and humanization being articulated by Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo had any significant effect on how they define the church? Have these themes caused them to mix the nature and mission of the church together? If they have and what they do is valid, what does it mean for the church? Does the church have to include these emphases before it can be identified as the true church? These are important questions for anyone concerned about the church and its mission. This is the reason why we are beginning our task by examining how Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo define the church in relationship to its mission. As we deal with each theologian, we shall attempt to sum up the essence of his thought on the church. We realize that much more could be said, but our purpose is to get at the heart of their definitions on the church to see whether they add anything new to the way we have traditionally defined the nature of the church. Has there been a rethinking of the nature of the church?

Paul Lehmann: The Body of Christ as a Liberating Community

Lehmann defines the church as a liberating community, which is involved in what God is doing in the world. His basic image of the church is the "body of Christ." This imagery is not static but dynamic in character. Thus he says:

> The "body of Christ" is the characteristic New Testament way of speaking about the church, and the metaphor of the body underlines the point…that each individual functions properly himself in relation to the whole….[102]

This body gives Jesus Christ a presence in the world. Lehmann even claims that: "Christ has no real presence in the world apart from this fellowship-creating relationship in which the 'one' confronts the 'other' in the maturing humanity of man." The members of this body, however, are not simply related to the whole but are primarily related to the head, who is Jesus Christ.[103]

The body of Christ is a fellowship of diverse gifts. "There is no uniformity, no monotony, the *koinonia*." This diversity is part of God's

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[102] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 62.

[103] *Ibid*., p. 68.

purpose according to which Christ functions in the world. It is focused and grounded upon the unity of the head, who is Christ; but it expands beyond its center (Christ) to include the various parts of the body along with the diverse gifts that these members offer.[104] The diversity of this body is also called the "Mystery of Christ." The "Mystery of Christ" is explained in Ephesians 3:6 where we are told, that "the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." [105]

The next step in Lehmann's thinking about the church reflects how he is rethinking its nature. He defines the body of Christ as a revolutionary community rather than as an institutional structure.[106] This brings up the question of the relationship of the body of Christ to the institutional church. The relationship is best described as the "ecclesiola in ecclesia." This is the little church within the church or the leaven in the lump. He believes that this idea has a biblical foundation and that it comes from the hidden reality of the remnant and its relationship to the empirical reality of the covenant people.[107] The New Testament term "koinonia" suits his purpose better, and so he uses it to refer to this kind of a Christian fellowship. There is a tension between the "koinonia" and the "ecclesia," but they are also dynamically and dialectically related in and through God's action in Christ.[108] There is no satisfactory way of explaining this interrelationship, nor is there any neat way of separating the koinonia from the empirical church. One can only agree with Augustine that such a separation can only be accomplished in the Judgment.[109]

While Lehmann seems to be establishing some continuity between the body of Christ and the empirical or institutional church, he also leaves room for discontinuity. "The concrete reality of the *koinonia* is inseparable from the visible institutional structures of the Church;" says Lehmann, "but the visible institutional structure of the Church is not identical with the

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[104] *Ibid*., p. 52.

[105] *Ibid*., p. 68.

[106] Paul L. Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 168.

[107] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 70.

[108] *Ibid*., p. 72.

[109] *Ibid*., p. 70.

koinonia."[110] Lehmann agrees that where Jesus Christ is, there is the koinonia; but he does not agree that where the empirical church is, there is Jesus Christ. The church is supposed to be the flesh of Christ, who is its spirit; but the Spirit is free to look for other structures to take its place.[111]

In rethinking the nature of the church, Lehmann appears to mix the "what" and the "where." The "what" is the church as a community (the body of Christ). The "where" is the involvement of this community in liberation and humanization. If the community is not engaged in activity of this kind, it is not the church. This would mean that the nature and mission of the church cannot be separated, and we agree with the importance of holding them together.

Rubem Alves, who draws on some of Lehmann's thought, helps to shed some light on the significance of this idea. Alves suggests that one of the most important tasks for us today is to answer the question: "Where is the Church?" Medieval Catholicism began to answer this question by saying that the church existed wherever its structures were in evidence. Christ thus became present through the structures. Protestantism offered itself as a corrective and suggested that Christ becomes present only as community. The distinction becomes clear when we think of what separated Luther from Erasmus. Erasmus, says Alves, had already found the church and merely tried to reform it; but Luther, on the other hand, launched into the search for it. According to the first position, the Spirit is immanent in the structures; but according to the second position, the Spirit is free, and we need to continue the ceaseless search for those communal signs of the Spirit's activity. Where the Spirit is present, there is the church. If "historical continuity" established the limitations and the shape of the Spirit in Catholicism, "correct theological thinking" began to fulfill the same function in Protestantism. The Spirit became captive in both cases.[112] Thus we need to rethink not only the mission of the church but also its nature, which affects the way in which the mission will be expressed. The Spirit cannot be captive to the church; the church must be captive to the Spirit. The church is present only where, a community of people, work

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[110] Paul L. Lehmann, "The Foundation and Pattern of Christian Behavior," *Christian Faith and Social Action*, ed. by John A. Hutchison (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 104.

[111] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 53.

[112] Rubem A. Alves, "Is There any Future for Protestantism in Latin America?" *The Lutheran Quarterly* (February, 1970), pp. 54-58.

together with the Spirit for the liberation and humanization of persons. Lehmann and Alves both agree that the church is a community and that it is a community involved in liberation and humanization. It is not simply a community in historical continuity or even a community with correct beliefs, but rather a liberating community. It has to be involved in liberation and humanization, according to Lehmann, because that is what God is doing in the world.

Jürgen Moltmann: The Wandering People of God as an Eschatological Community and a New Exodus

According to Moltmann, the New Testament church was regarded as the "community of eschatological salvation" and therefore serves the coming salvation as "an arrow sent out into the world to point to the future."[113] Since the future has been demonstrated in the resurrection, Moltmann views Easter rather than Pentecost as the birthday of the church.[114] He recognizes the difficulty of determining the origin of the church but proceeds to say that:

> …one is led from Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh to Easter and the vocation of the Apostles. But Easter points unmistakably to Good Friday since it was as the crucified one that Christ appeared to the disciples in the brilliance of the glory to come.

"From the suffering of the Messiah the messianic people are born, namely, 'the people of the Beatitudes.'" This is the people who hope for his glory and suffer for its coming.[115]

Moltmann is searching for a dynamic image of the church. He does not really define what he means when he calls the church the people of the Beatitudes, but he does discuss another image that fits well into his search for a dynamic image; and this is the church as an exodus community or, as he says in another place, the wandering people of God (Hebrews 13:13-14). Moltmann is not talking about an exodus or emigration of the church from society into the ghetto but precisely the opposite. It is the departure from

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[113] Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. by James W. Leitch (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 325 and 328.

[114] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 10.

[115] Jurgen Moltmann, "The Ecumenical Church under the Cross," *Theology Digest* (Winter, 1976), pp. 382-383.

exile and ghetto into freedom. As an exodus community or the wandering people of God, the church must move away from the role that society defines for it and define its own reason for being.[116]

Moltmann does not think that we can deal with the nature of the church apart from a consideration of its mission. He sees the church present where Christ is present and discerns Christ present among believers, the poor, and in glory. We shall deal with Christ's presence among believers and the poor and not discuss his presence in glory. The first two are relevant to our purpose, while the third is not. The first characteristic of the church is the "brotherhood (friendship) of believers." [117] Moltmann calls this the "manifest church" and uses Matthew 18:20, Galatians 3:28, and Colossians 3:11 to describe it.[118] The true church is where Christ himself is, and this church has Christ behind it in Word, Sacraments, and brotherhood

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[116] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 83. For a better understanding of the Babylonian Captivity of the church from which Moltmann says it ought to make an exodus, see the following two sources: Jürgen Moltmann, "New Boundaries of Christendom," *Dialog* (Autumn, 1968), pp. 283-287; and Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 110-117.

[117] *Ibid*., p. 316. Moltmann realizes that the term "brotherhood" is not a neutral term and that, while it surmounts the language of rule and privilege, it only extends to the male sex. For this reason he suggests the term "friendship" as a better expression for what is meant. The church would be the fellowship of friends who live in the friendship of Jesus and spread friendliness in the fellowship by meeting the forsaken with affection and the despised with respect. One can find a brief description of what Moltmann means by friendship in the following book: Jürgen Moltmann, *The Passion for Life*, trans. by M. Douglas Meeks (Philadephia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 60-63. In this book Moltmann discusses friendship as open. Open friendship transfigures an otherwise unpleasant world and prepares the ground for a friendlier world. It brings to light a harmony with other men and women, with God, and with creation. It overcomes discord by accepting the forsaken. Moltmann seems to be moving away from his former use of "brotherhood" to the use of "friendship."

[118] See Moltmann's description of the brotherhood of believers and the texts he uses in the following works: Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, pp. 123ff.; Jürgen Moltmann, "Fellowship in a Divided World," *The Ecumenical Review* (October, 1972), p. 446; Jürgen Moltmann, "Political Theology," *Theology Today* (April, 1971), pp. 21-22; and Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 11.

(friendship).[119] The new identifying mark of this church is that it is composed "not of equal like-minded men (persons), but of dissimilar men (persons), indeed even of former enemies." One can say of this church in modern times:

> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Greek nor barbarian, neither master nor slave, neither man nor woman (and if we may proceed with modern relevance: neither black nor white, neither Communist nor anti-Communist) for all are one in Christ Jesus.[120]

This naturally means that, "national churches, class churches, and race churches are false churches of Christ and already heretical as a result of their concrete structure.[121] In spite of all these diverse people within the brotherhood (friendship) of believers, the church gains its Christian identity in the brotherhood (fellowship) of the crucified one; and where this connection is lost, the church loses its Christian identity.[122]

The second characteristic of the church is that it is the "brotherhood (friendship) of the poor." This brotherhood (friendship) is called the "latent church" and draws upon the New Testament passage found in Matthew 25:31-46. "I think," says Moltmann, "that these words from Matthew 25 belong not only in social ethics but primarily in ecclesiology." In order for the Christian community to be in the full truth of Christ, it must be constituted by believers and the poor, or the double brotherhood (friendship) of Christ.[123] It is Christ himself who waits for the church "among the starving, the captive, and the humiliated of this world, and he says to the brotherhood (friendship) of believers: 'Inasmuch as you visit them, you visit me.'" Consequently the church has him before it as well as behind it, and it is its task to be present with all its resources wherever Christ himself is present.[124] As Jesus himself became a brother (friend) to

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[119] Moltmann, "Fellowship in a Divided World," p. 436.

[120] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 141.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[122] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[123] Moltmann, "Political Theology," pp. 21-22.

[124] Moltmann, "Fellowship in a Divided World," p. 436.

the poor, we also are to follow his lead.[125] It was this brotherhood (friendship), insists Moltmann, that recognize him; "it was not the devout, but the sinners, and not the righteous but the unrighteous…because in them he revealed the divine righteousness of grace, and the kingdom." [126]

When we look closely at Moltmann's double brotherhood (friendship), what do we find? We find him defining what the church is and where it is. The brotherhood (friendship) of believers defines what the church is, and the brotherhood (friendship) of the poor defines where the church is.[127] Thus we have the nature and the mission of the church coinciding in Moltmann's thought. We have also perceived this same development in Lehmann's thought when he defines the body of Christ as a community where liberation and humanization are taking place.

We have one difficulty with the way Moltmann deals with the church at this point. We would call into question Moltmann's use of the term "brotherhood" which he himself tries to replace with "friendship." What is wrong with "community?" Perhaps he does not want to use community at this point because he wants to include the poor in his definition of the "latent" church, but we see very little point in trying to include persons in a church—even a latent one—if they do not understand themselves in this way. The same kind of mistake is made when we attempt to make Christians out of nonchristian revolutionaries. José Míguez Bonino is critical of this procedure and points out what is wrong with it:

> Nonbelieving revolutionaries are then baptized as "latent," "crypto," "potential," or "unknowing" Christians, a new form of Christian paternalism which elicits a quite justified rejection on their part.[128]

There is nothing wrong in excluding persons from the church, as long as such exclusion does not at the same time mean that they are condemned to hell and excluded from the future Kingdom of God. The nature of the church should be more narrowly defined in terms of a community of believers and what this community should be doing for and with the poor. It certainly should not aim at becoming a community of the poor. Poverty

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[125] Jürgen Moltmann, "Hope Beyond Time," *Duke Divinity School Review* (Spring, 1968), p. 119.

[126] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 27.

[127] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 129.

[128] José Bonino, *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age*, p. 163.

is a negative to be overcome, not sought. Moltmann agrees with this, but why does he use such general terms as "brotherhood" and "friendship?" "Community" would be a more suitable term.

Moltmann does use the term "community" when he discusses the nature of the church; he just does not use it when he elaborates on the church as the brotherhood (or friendship) of believers and the poor. The reason is probably because he is trying to link the church as a community of believers to the place where Christ is present among the poor and where no visible community of believers has yet been established. Moltmann has something more specific in mind when he uses the term "community." This term is tied together with and dependent upon particular assignments. He names the following assignments as being necessary for the nature of such a community: (1) the charge to proclaim the gospel, (2) the charge to baptize and celebrate the Lord's Supper, (3) the charge to carry out charitable work. What are essential for the work of the community then can be summed up in three words: *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*.[129] Moltmann must recognize that these things are not present among the poor, even though Christ is present, and so he is unable to use the more narrow term of "community." He has to use something like that of "brotherhood or friendship."

Nevertheless, Moltmann is also involved in mixing the nature and mission of the church. He thinks that the church has been caught up in a modern Babylonian captivity and that only an exodus from certain expected societal roles will free it. In order for this to happen, the church must understand its own reason for being. The nature and the purpose coincide; and so if one must be reformulated, so must the other.

Juan Luis Segundo: Leaven, Salt, and Light as a Minority Community Called to Serve

In rethinking the nature of the church, Segundo concludes that the church should be a minority community, with the basic imagery being leaven, salt, and light. At the same time, he wants to include some of the same elements mentioned by Moltmann. Segundo begins by describing the church as particular and universal realities, which are made up of the community of believers and the community of those who love. The community of believers makes up the particular reality, and the community of those who love signifies the universal reality.

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[129] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, pp. 305-307.

Let us look first at the particular reality of the church. The church, says Segundo, "has been and always will be a particular reality." The particularity of the church means that it does not encompass all of humanity. How can we explain the church's failure to lead all of humanity into the church? One explanation attributes this failure to the sins and unworthy behavior of Christians, who have failed to carry out the missionary commandment to all the world. Segundo replies that there was no unworthiness in Christ, and so this explanation is insufficient. If he, who was without sin, could not attract everyone to himself and his mission, then how can we, who are tainted by sin, expect to succeed with the mission of the church? A more realistic explanation has to do with the fact that the church has been planted into history, and its limitation is the result of incarnation. The church follows in the footsteps of Jesus, its founder, who took on flesh and entered into our history, thus limiting himself and the church. The particularity is thus caused by incarnation, and so one cannot talk about a universal church if one is referring to the number of its members.[130]

The second characteristic of the church is its universal reality. "The Church," says Segundo, "will be and always has been universal." The universality of the church can be seen in the name it selected for itself. The early Christians did not call themselves Christians—that is what others called them; but they called themselves "catholic," which means nothing less than "universal." This designation means that they saw themselves as representing no less than all humanity. They regarded the church as universal, not because of the number of its adherents, but because it embraced the dimensions of humanity itself.[131] The idea of universality emerged from an understanding of salvation available to all humanity. There are no ethnic barriers that can separate people from each other. In the consciousness of these early Christians, there is the overcoming of a particularistic notion about being a chosen people and the realization that Christ came to create out of Jews and Gentiles a single new humanity in himself.[132]

Segundo claims that the church has always affirmed these particular and universal realities. Although a distinction has been made between the

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[130] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 4-5.

[131] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 22. Segundo supports the idea of creating a new humanity out of Jews and Gentiles by referring to Ephesians 2:15.

two, the latter are inseparable; and although they may differ in terms of faith and the sacraments, they do not differ in terms of salvation content.[133] In showing the relationship between these two realities, Segundo appeals to the two central texts dealing with them, viz., Mark 16:15-16 and Matthew 25:31-46. In one line of thought, salvation is conditioned by particular specific means (faith and the sacraments), while the second line shows salvation in its absolutely universal dimension (love)." The key factor for salvation in both lines of thought has to do with how God decides whether people are to be saved or condemned, and the Last Judgment suggests that salvation hinges upon the answer to the following question: "What did you do for me when I was hungry, thirsty, alone, and mistreated?" Eternal life will be rewarded in both cases on the basis of true love; that is, to those who aided the God-made-man.[134] The synthesis between these two realities emerges in that which distinguishes the Christian in the portrait of the Last Judgment. He is one who already knows and will not be surprised that love is the basis for acceptance.[135] To sum it up, Segundo says the following:

> The Church is simultaneously an historical movement, a sign and sacrament (i.e., a particular reality) on the one hand, and the salvation of humanity (i.e., a universal reality) on the other hand.[136]

Along similar lines, Segundo defines the church as a community of belief and love. Christians are conscious members of the community of belief which "possesses the secret of what is happening in human history, knows its warp and woof, and understands the stakes that are being played out." The main characteristics of the community of belief are "faith" and the "sacraments." It is through one's faith in God's revelation that one submits to baptism, which is the initiation into the community of believers.[137]

Not everyone belongs to the community of belief; hence, Segundo thinks that it is necessary also to discuss the community of love. Persons can belong to the community of love even though they do not belong to the community of belief. "Sacramental baptism" is the means by which

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[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

[134] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 8-9.

[135] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

Christians receive grace and are initiated into the community of belief, and the "baptism of desire" is the means by which others receive grace and are initiated into the community of love. "God," says Segundo, "does not deny his grace to anyone who does his part." Segundo applies this one principle to the whole theology of the sacraments.[138]

Members of both communities receive grace and are involved in the same reality. The only difference is the Christian's awareness of it. This special knowledge that the Christian possesses cannot be viewed as a privilege that fashions an intellectual elite. The old image that sees humanity traveling an erroneous path which does not lead to salvation, while only believers have found the right road, must be changed into an image that sees all persons traveling the same road which leads them to salvation. It is the road of self-giving through love. The journey is common to all persons who have turned in the right direction by the law placed in their hearts by God. The law consists of the obligation of the church (and all of humanity) to love.[139]

Segundo places a great deal of emphasis on the nature of the church as a community, although he admits that the church is badly in need of renewal at this point.[140] In order to restore community to the church, he makes three suggestions. First, the church must become a "base community." The primary trait of a base community is that it constitutes a group, and a group is "composed of a restricted number of people who have relationships with each other." The second suggestion is that base communities become "gospel creators" rather than "gospel consumers." Segundo explains the difference as follows:

> A group, precisely because it is a group, must elaborate what it receives. It must confront, debate, and transform it. A large crowd in a church can simply listen to the Gospel reading with more or less attention. A group of people must discuss it together, reflect on it, compare it with real life, and see what import a gospel passage

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[138] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[140] Juan Luis Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 81.

has for their own concrete existence as individuals, families, and members of a society.[141]

Community is jeopardized where people become "gospel consumers" (passive objects) and encouraged where people become "gospel creators" (thinking subjects). The third suggestion he makes is the "re-expression of the Gospel in liturgy and life." "Two words," says Segundo, "seem to be an indispensable part of any Christian Community. One is sharing, the other is giving." The Christian community must be a community of mutual aid in which people practice the dimensions of real encounter and fraternal love, but it must also become a self-giving community. The community must exercise service to the rest of humanity. "If a community did not have this goal that transcends itself, it would rapidly run down." Thus a Christian church is a base community in which the gospel is creatively read and re-expressed in liturgy and life.[142]

Segundo, like Lehmann, has emphasized the importance of defining the church as a community. In rethinking the nature of the church, Segundo concludes that only a minority church can fulfill its true mission; and yet, Segundo, like Moltmann, wants to include other persons of good will in the church. His community of love is based on Matthew 25 just as is Moltmann's brotherhood (friendship) of the poor. We can sympathize with this concern to include all persons of good will, but why is it necessary to include them in the church? Do salvation and membership in the church—even an invisible one—have to be equated? The only reason for wanting to include these persons in the church might be a belief that there is no salvation outside of the church, an idea, which Matthew 25 rejects. Segundo mixes his definition of the church with his concept of salvation. In other words, he mixes up his concern for a more broadly based understanding of salvation with his more narrow definition of the church as a community. Moltmann does a similar thing.

Segundo says that this community called church will never be anything but a minority community. He might be expressing his dissatisfaction with the "pressure" methods used by the Roman Catholic Church to maintain its majority status in Latin America today and the fact that the institutional church is doing very little for the liberation and humanization of persons. He even claims that there is very little, if any, evangelization going on in

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[141] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Sacraments Today*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 32.

[142] *Ibid*., pp. 34 and 39-40.

Latin America. Evangelization, for Segundo, involves contact with nonchristians and permits persons to make choices in "freedom" and without "pressure."[143] There is a contradiction between his acceptance of the necessity of a minority community and what he says about including the community of love into his definition of the church, not to mention what he says about the unity and oneness of humanity. The oneness of humanity is a mandate to aim at growth for the community of faith—growth both in numbers and in maturity. Growth and maturity are not necessarily alternatives. They do not come easily, but we must still aim at both simultaneously.

Conclusions

Political and liberation theology do affect how the nature of the church is defined. The manner in which Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo define the nature of the church in relation to its mission confirms this. All three of our writers emphasize the church as a community; and although Moltmann uses terms such as brotherhood and friendship to describe this reality, he too emphasizes the importance of community in the church. The church, however, is not just any community; therefore, its nature must be reformulated in order to coincide with its mission.

Two questions become important in any attempt to rethink the nature of the church. The first one is, "What is the church?" All three writers answer this question by describing the church as a community, fellowship, brotherhood, or friendship among believers. Each has his special emphasis, but they are not too far apart on this point. None of them is content to stop here, though, for all three wish to define what it is this community is supposed to do as well. The second question is, "Where is the church?" Lehmann's answer is that it is present where liberation and humanization are taking place and that this needs to be related to the first question as well. Moltmann insists that the church is present where Christ is present—among the poor and the oppressed. Thus he links the brotherhood of the poor and the oppressed with the brotherhood of believers. Segundo sees the church present among those who believe (particular reality) but acknowledges its presence among those who love as well as all persons of good will (universal reality). True, Moltmann's "brotherhood (friendship) of the poor" and Segundo's "community of those who love" only make up a latent church; but since they have found salvation, Moltmann and

[143] Juan Luis Segundo, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978), pp. 68-69, 81, and 120ff.

Segundo are interested in including them in some kind of definition of the church.

Can a new missiology go as far as Moltmann and Segundo do with ecclesiology? They have confused their definitions of the church with their concepts of salvation. Surely the community of believers (what the church is) ought to be involved in liberation and humanization among the poor (where the church is), but can we really define the brotherhood (friendship) of the poor and the community of love (universal reality) as a church, even a latent one? We might be able to regard persons from the brotherhood (friendship) of the poor and the community of love as potential members of the church, but we can hardly include them in the church now. They are not yet part of the believing brotherhood (friendship) or community, nor are they necessarily moving in this direction. We find Lehmann's description of those persons of good will as the "other sheep of the Holy Spirit" much more acceptable.[144] They do not make up a community or a church, but they are involved in doing the will of God. We do not have to worry about their salvation, but neither do we have to include them in the church. On the other hand, a community of believers could exist with little or no involvement in liberation and humanization. Can such a community be called a church? Political and liberation theology informs us that the mission of the church must be taken into consideration when we attempt to define the nature of the church, and so the answer to this question is that a community that simply believes is not a church, ether. Belief must express itself through mission. The mission cannot be simply to aim at increasing the size of the community of believers; it must also become a liberating and humanizing community in society. The nature of the church does need to be rethought in relation to where it ought to be and what it ought to be doing, but if other religions or kinds of communities are involved in liberation and humanization, this does not necessarily nor automatically make them into Christian churches. As a community of believers cannot be called a church unless it is involved in liberation and humanization, neither can a community involved in these things be called a church unless it has faith in Christ.

Political and liberation theology force us to some very important conclusions. A Christian community does not exist simply because it stands in historical continuity with the past or because it maintains orthodox

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[144] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, pp. 157-159. Lehmann uses this term when he discusses how koinonia ethics avoids a double standard. We will return to the idea of the "other sheep" in a later chapter.

Christian beliefs. These things may help us to define the "what" of the church, but such a definition is incomplete. The "what" of the church cannot be separated from the "where" of the church. The community of believers must be where Christ is present. The basis for calling a Christian community together is found in Mark 1:15 where Jesus begins his ministry by announcing the coming of a new kind of Kingdom. In the middle of his ministry, he describes something of the nature of this Kingdom (Matthew 5-7) and insists on the importance of living as if this Kingdom were already here (Matthew 7:21 and 24). This new community must take up, as part of its mission, love and justice or liberation and humanization; and when it fails to do this, it fails in its task as the church and can no longer be defined as such. Matthew 25:31-46 makes this point very clear. The church also has been given the mission of expanding itself, and the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 is the basis for this phase of the mission. Evangelism is an important element in any definition of the church, but so are love and justice. The nature of the church cannot be defined without taking into consideration both the evangelistic and social tasks of the church.

II. REFORMULATING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We have thus far concluded that the mission of the church affects any definition of the church we might attempt to make. Political and liberation theology force us to rethink the nature of the church and to conclude that there is more to the church than historical continuity or correct theological thinking; the church is also a liberating and humanizing community. If it fails to express these elements, then it fails to function as the true church and can no longer be defined as "church."

Since the psychological and sociological situation changes from one period of history to another, the church is forced to respond to new circumstances, and its response will affect the way in which the very nature of the church is defined. In the time of the Reformation, people experienced guilt and condemnation and were thus concerned with discovering a gracious God; but today, some people—especially the poor and the oppressed—experience poverty and oppression and are more interested in what God is doing in terms of liberation and humanization. They want to discover a gracious neighbor.[145] They also accuse the first world of neglecting liberation and humanization, and so many third world theologians have taken up these concerns.

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[145] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 40-62. Tillich discusses three types of anxiety—ontic, moral, and spiritual—which he then relates to different periods of history. In early civilization anxiety was experienced relatively in terms of fate and ultimately in terms of death. Of particular interest to us, however, is what he says about the Middle Ages and the modern period. He suggests that in the Middle Ages anxiety was experienced relatively in terms of guilt and ultimately in terms of condemnation, and that in the modern period it was experienced relatively in terms of emptiness and ultimately in terms of meaninglessness. While Tillich suggests the predominance of a particular kind of anxiety in different periods of history, he also insists that the other two types of anxiety are also present and effective. In making the suggestion that political and liberation theology are more concerned with a gracious neighbor than with a gracious God, we do not mean to imply that there is no concern with the concept of a gracious God. Such theologians believe very much in a gracious God who is busy liberating and humanizing persons; they just want to emphasize that this God takes sides with the poor and the oppressed, and only those who become a gracious neighbor will perceive God as gracious.

Living in the midst of poverty and dehumanizing circumstances, they are no longer willing to do theology in the traditional sense. The situation in the third world can be understood more in terms of the need for social change than in terms of guilt and condemnation and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The new emphasis is social and requires reconciliation between persons. It is more concerned with the present than with the future. Anthropology becomes as much of a concern to them as does theology; in fact, they find it difficult to separate the one from the other.

The emphasis on liberation and humanization is a concern for the social, and it forces us to reconsider all of the missions of the church. Is there a primary mission that the church must focus its attention on more than the others, or does the church have to maintain a balance between several missions at the same time? We shall begin this chapter by attempting to formulate a positive vision that each theologian has for the social mission of the church. Then we shall attempt to distinguish between the human and the divine roles in bringing about this vision. Finally we shall deal with the missions of the church and how they relate to one another.

The Human Vision

In the thinking of Paul Lehmann, maturity is what makes a person human. To become human is to attain wholeness or maturity. Lehmann realizes that there is a lot of ambiguity surrounding the concept of maturity, and so he compares a Christian definition with a psychoanalytic one. Psychoanalytic theory, he admits, defines maturity as "self-realization through self-acceptance," and thus underlines a basic aspect of what is fundamentally human. Christianity, however, adds something significant to maturity. "For Christianity," says Lehmann, "what is fundamentally human in human nature is the gift to man of the power to be and to fulfill himself in and through a relationship of dependence and self-giving toward God and toward his fellow man." Maturity is self-acceptance through self-giving. It means wholeness or the full development of a

person as an individual and of persons in their relationships with one another.[146]

The point and goal of the Christian life is "mature manhood." Morality cannot be the goal. Therefore we do not aim at morality but rather at maturity. Morality is only a by-product of maturity. Instead of seeking to universalize conduct, one seeks to socialize it. It is in the social rather than in the moral dimension of existence that one becomes human. It is not the ethical person that can be called the new humanity but the mature person. Maturity and the new humanity are identical. The mature humanity and the new humanity stand or fall together, for they are the same thing.[147]

But, someone might ask, does Protestantism not stress primarily the individual aspect of human life? Lehmann admits that the teachings of Jesus do express a very real and basic concern for individuals and gives such examples as the lost sheep and the prodigal son; but even the latter are returned to the larger group, the sheep to the flock and the lost son to the family. Lehmann insists that it was no accident that Jesus came preaching about the Kingdom rather than the individual.

> Jesus did not come saying, "Are you saved?—You! And You and You!" He did not come with an invitation to come forward, give yourself to Christ, fill out a card, and join the church! Individuals are "saved" into the koinonia, not one by one! Jesus came preaching the gospel of God, which is: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."[148]

Lehmann attempts to correct the mistaken idea that Protestantism emphasizes primarily the individual aspect of salvation. The concept that Protestantism and individualism belong together is false. It is not that there is no truth in it, he says, but that there is much more to be said. The error lies in the contention that religious individualism is the characteristic stress and principal fruit of the Reformation. To

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[146] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 16.

[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 17 and 54.

[148] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

stress the individualistic element at the expense of the "communion of the saints" is to miss an important truth of the Reformation. The difference between Luther and Calvin at this point concerns only the origin and not the significance of the communion of the saints. For Luther it was the society of the justified, for Calvin it was the body of the elect; but in both cases, they were talking about a community —persons in relationship.[149]

When we examine the way in which Moltman reformulates what it means to be human and what we should therefore aim at in the church, we find it difficult to describe this in one word as we did with regard to Lehmann and maturity. In the first place, Moltmann himself says that it is easier to describe what dehumanizes us than it is to point out what makes us human. It is in the negation of the negative that the positive becomes open to us; yet, we do not end up in pragmatism and reaction.[150] Moltmann makes this contrast as follows:

> …Christian social action will press for the overthrow of "all circumstances in which man is a humiliated, and enslaved; a forsaken and a despised being" (Marx), in order that this man may become a more abundant, upright, sovereign, and purposeful man.[151]

Full humanity is characterized by abundance, uprightness, sovereignty, and purposefulness. Let us now look at these characteristics.

In the first place, the human is denied by poverty, hunger, illness, and suffering; therefore, if one is to be human in the fullest sense, these negatives must be overcome. An abundant person must emerge. Hunger, poverty, and illness must cease for as many people as possible. No one can be called abundant unless all are abundant. "The struggle against hunger and poverty through the forces of industrialization," claims Moltmann, "must be either universal and without distinction or it has not even begun." This means that

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[149] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

[150] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 35 and 81.

[151] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

abundance must also be shared with those who live outside of industrially developed societies too, or else our abundance is dehumanizing rather than humanizing.[152]

The second thing that makes one human is uprightness. The official myth of the economic order is to confuse the satisfied slave of affluence with an "abundant" person. An abundant person must also become an upright person. In addition to abundance, we must also be able to hold our heads up because of our intrinsic worth. If people are judged and acknowledged according to race and color, they really do not have any human identity. Prosperity programs and industrial leaps forward should not be purchased at the price of enforced denial of rights, freedom, and independence. Next to the slogan "Bread for the World" belongs its counterpart "Justice for the World." [153]

Abundance and uprightness must also be accompanied with sovereignty. Self-determination is also an important element of human life. Sovereign persons are not controlled by the products of their own hands. They control what they create. Therefore we must gain control over the technical, economic, and military processes, which we have set in motion. If technology and industrialization gain control over us, then we become enslaved and are no longer human. Moltmann puts it clearly as follows:

> Science and technology and the processes they have set in motion are beginning to enslave the very ones who had intended to utilize them for their liberation from nature and fate. Management of his complex scientific "creatures" gets beyond the rational control of man. At first he is served by the machine. Then he ends up serving the machine. A man who is enslaved by his own industry is no longer human.[154]

Liberation or the achievement of humanization at this point means social democracy. This is how one gains control. This kind of a democracy is based on the recognition of human rights as the basic

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[152] *Ibid*., pp. 122-123.

[153] *Ibid*., pp. 123-124.

[154] *Ibid*., pp. 124-125.

rights of the citizen in a state, and the aim of the democratic movement "is the making possible and the realization of human dignity through liberation from political oppression and control."[155]

The final characteristic of a truly human life is purposefulness. More prosperity, more dignity, and more sovereignty do not automatically lead us into the new humanity. "On the contrary," says Moltmann, "these conditions confront man with an inner void and a surrounding nothingness with which he can scarcely cope." Some people already have been freed from hunger, do not feel degraded, and do not lack political freedom; and yet this oppressive nothingness has not been eliminated from their lives. The problem has just shifted from one level to another, and they feel just as dehumanized as ever. It is at this very point that the problem really becomes clear. Dehumanization is not simply the result of economic, social, and political problems; it lies much deeper than this. It is the loss of meaning and purpose that forms the real structure for dehumanization. Moltmann also believes that this nothingness, this lack of purpose, this loss of hope can be overcome. Thus he says: "I think that the man of faith has reason to hope for the destruction of this 'nothingness' by the God who creates out of nothing." The beginning of the humanization process does not take place within the economic, political, or even the social; rather, it begins when people have meaning, purpose, and hope. People without meaning, purpose, and hope are dehumanized; and they can only begin the process of humanization when they find meaning and purpose through hope. For purposeful persons liberation and humanization mean "courage to be and faith." In short, humanized persons are a unity of purposefulness, sovereignty, uprightness, and abundance.[156]

More can be said about Moltmann's vision of what it takes to be human, especially as it relates to Jesus and his teachings. Moltmann is not asking us to imitate Jesus in every possible way, and he does not assume that the life Jesus lived twenty centuries ago should be

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[155] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 333.

[156] See the discussion on purposefulness in Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 126-128. One might also take into account the discussion on meaning and purpose in Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, pp. 326-337.

our goal. Moltmann puts it very profoundly when he says: “He became the kind of man we do not want to be: an outcast, accursed, crucified.” Jesus demonstrated the possibility of being human even in the midst of dehumanizing conditions, but this was not his goal—nor should it be the goal of Christians today. The goal is not to aim at humanization under dehumanizing conditions but to break the vicious circles and overcome the dehumanizing circumstances forever. Jesus managed to live a human life in the midst of dehumanizing circumstances, and we ought to attempt the same thing; but this does not mean that we should do nothing about the dehumanizing circumstances. We ought to be aiming at what Jesus aimed at; and yet, Jesus was not simply a social reformer. He was proclaiming the advent of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we do not aim at simply living a human life within dehumanizing conditions but at becoming fully human within humane conditions. Jesus did not come simply to make us Christians but rather to make us human persons in relationship with God and one another.[157]

Another implication from this vision of what it takes to be human is Moltmann’s emphasis on universalism. In the new humanity there will be “neither Jew nor Greek…neither slave nor free (Gal. 3:28).” The community “called together from Jews and Gentiles, cultured and uncultured, masters and slaves can understand itself…as the representation of the new mankind.” [158]

Moltmann and Lehmann approach what it takes to be human differently, but there is a common element in both of them. They suggest that one cannot be human in isolation.[159] To be human is to be in relationship. Moltmann’s thought on this topic is more highly structured, and for this reason more comprehensive. We would change the order slightly to show a relationship of dependence.

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[157] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 205.

[158] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 216.

[159] Moltmann has a very interesting discussion on man and language as well as on the “I-Thou” and “I-it” words (Buber). He seems to conclude that we cannot be truly human unless we can communicate with and relate to others. His discussion of this can be found in the following work: Jurgen Moltmann, *Man*, trans. by John Sturdy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 80-81.

Persons must have meaning and purpose for the process of humanization to begin. The next step involves treating others with dignity. Then political organization can take on some meaning as persons are given opportunities to participate in the political process. If we can treat one another with dignity, perhaps the political process can serve the cause of justice, for economic equality and abundance are very much dependent upon political organization. We are not claiming that purposefulness is more important than abundance but only that humanization begins with meaning, purpose, and hope. The latter element of purposefulness is a gift from God, who then sends us out to work on creating the right conditions for uprightness, sovereignty, and abundance.

We have two difficulties with the way Moltmann describes what it means to be human. The first is with his choice of the word "abundance" to counteract "poverty." Dom Helder Camara expressed something of our difficulty with the word abundance when he wrote: "Poverty makes people subhuman. Excess of wealth makes people inhuman."[160] We do not argue that poverty dehumanizes people but only that abundance seems closer to excess than it does to some middle term of having enough. We have not come up with a suitable term either, but we feel the need for something that would express sufficiency rather than excess. Abundance sounds closer to excess.

Moltmann also needs to address himself more thoroughly to the issue of social democracy. He seems overly optimistic about the redemptive possibilities of democracy. Some third world theologians have lost confidence in democratic structures and see them as tools to prevent real social change. While Moltmann does qualify his concept of democracy with the word "social," he does not deal with some of the objections raised by those who are dissatisfied with the ballot.[161]

It was difficult to find one word to describe what Moltmann means by being human. For Lehmann it takes maturity to be human;

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[160] Dom Helder Camara, *The Desert is Fertile*, trans. by Dinah Livingstone (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 32.

[161] More will be said about this problem in the next chapter where we will be dealing with the negation of the negatives.

and for Juan Segundo it takes freedom, the end of which is maturity. Segundo illustrates the importance of freedom with the story, "The Farewell of Gorgias" by Rodó. In this story, Gorgias is about to die by taking a cup of hemlock. Lucius, one of his disciples proposes to the others that they all swear an oath of absolute fidelity to every word of their master. He proposes absolute obedience to the past teachings of Gorgias. Gorgias responds to such submissiveness by telling them about his mother's dream, the interpretation of it, and the effect it had on his own life. In the dream, Gorgias' mother was very much attached to her son. She wanted him to remain pure and innocent, and so she obtained magic potions from a sorceress that would ensure this innocence. It worked for many years, but periodically she had to get a fresh supply from the sorceress or the effect would wear off. One day the supply ran out, and she was unable to get the needed potion. When she returned home empty-handed, she found herself confronted with a bitter old man. He responded fiercely to her: "Your savage egotism has robbed me of my life, offering me instead a demeaning bliss…you have robbed me of ennobling action, illuminating thought, and fruitful love…Give me back what you have taken away." It was too late. It was time for him to die, and so all he could do was to despise and curse his mother for having taken his freedom from him.[162]

What does this story mean? The child's mother is uneasy about the possibility that her son might choose evil, and so she suppresses this possibility by suppressing liberty itself. Innocence and morality are more important than freedom and maturity. The son lives out a life of innocence as an infant and enjoys only a few brief moments of adulthood at the very end of his life. In those few brief moments, he curses his mother for depriving him of a free, adult life. Here we find two conceptions of the meaning of a truly humanized life. The mother's conception is morality and innocence; the son's is freedom. For the mother freedom is not a good, a value in itself, but merely the capacity to choose between two things. For the son freedom itself is the value, and so he curses his mother who has withheld freedom from him. "What," asks Segundo, "does a man risk by not being

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[162] Juan Luis Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 42-43.

free…?" "A man without freedom," he answers, "would not be a human person." Thus freedom is worth the trouble whatever the end result might be. What makes a person truly human is freedom. That is why it is so important.[163]

This story only tells the importance of freedom, and so we must now investigate what freedom means for Segundo. According to the latter, the classic conception of a person's liberty is to possess the ability to choose between good and evil; but Segundo understands liberty as the option for love or egotism. "Everything achieved by love is inscribed in the positive history of humanity. Everything effected by egotism is a return to the blind force of the prehuman."[164] One is free to decide for love or against egotism. Segundo illustrates this point by interpreting the parable of the Good Samaritan. "A man was on his way from Jerusalem down to Jericho when he fell in with robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went off leaving him half dead." (Luke 10:30-34) The option open to the priest and Levite who passed him by was not that of leaving their calling and becoming robbers. In the midst of their lofty and respectable callings, they failed to take note of "the greatest commandment of the law." They were on a relatively long journey with no fixed time of arrival, so they could have taken an hour off to help the man lying there. It was a moment in which they could have opened up their love to a person in need and lying close at hand, but they did not. "Real liberty," explains Segundo, "is thus conceived of as man's possibility of defining his own person in the creative work of love."[165]

Segundo recognizes that a person is not entirely free but insists that to deny freedom is to depreciate a person's humanity. Because people are not completely free they need to be saved, or, as Segundo puts it—liberated. "Jesus himself," insists Segundo, "indicates that we should translate the eminently 'religious' term salvation as liberation, in its most generic sense, when He defines His own

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[163] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

[164] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149.

[165] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149.

mission with the latter term (Luke 4:16-21)."[166] The whole history of the universe is a pageant of liberation, and the goal is freedom. We are in the process of being liberated and are thus becoming human. The goal of freedom is maturity, for freedom and maturity are the same thing. "If we wanted to sum up everything we have said…" writes Segundo, "we would choose a statement by Paul Lehmann…: 'In short, maturity is salvation.'" It echoes sentiments of Paul himself: "So shall we all at last attain…to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)[167] Christ makes persons truly free by enabling them to live in communion with God, and this becomes the basis for all human relationships. Freedom is not some privatistic enjoyment of the self but an involvement or relationship with others. God's aim is that all in heaven and on earth might be brought into a unity in Christ. (Ephesians 1:9-10)[168] This means that a single new humanity is to be created (Ephesians 2:15);[169] and this involves not only the unity of Christians and Jews but also of the whole human race.[170]

We can agree with Segundo's suggestion that a person cannot be human without some degree of freedom, but Segundo begins with a concept of freedom that seems very individualistic. He then tries to redeem himself by linking it with Lehmann's concept of maturity. He wants freedom and maturity to be the same thing. We are not convinced of this. We do agree that it is better to choose creative love than it is to choose egotism, but is Segundo's concept of freedom really different from the classic concept of freedom, which he says makes the choice between good and evil? Could Segundo's options not be stated in the same categories—creative love being good and egotism being evil? At any rate, we agree with him that freedom must lead to creative love and relationships without regard

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166 Juan Luis Segundo, "Education, Communication, and Liberation: A Christian Vision," *IDOC International* (November 13, 1971), p. 82.

167 Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, pp. 152-158.

168 *Ibid*., p. 205.

169 *Ibid*., p. 22.

170 *Ibid*., p. 184.

to race. By using the parable of the Good Samaritan, Segundo stresses the need for developing a social concern and relationship with the neighbor-in-need; but we would prefer to add to this the need for personal and continuing relationships. This latter element can be found in the parable of the Prodigal Son. In this parable, on which Rubem Alves gives an excellent commentary, the prodigal son is exercising freedom in a very irresponsible manner. He is not mature. Alves says that he was a dreamer who paid no attention to the rules of the game of life. On the other hand, his brother was a paradigm of hard work and discipline. Jesus inverts their roles. The older brother becomes symbolic of inhumanity, and the prodigal discovers what it means to be human. What is the difference between these two? One places the emphasis on morality (in terms of rules and principles), the other discovers himself and relates to the father. A person discovers oneself (becomes human) not in rules and principles but in relationship with others.[171] Such relationships must be personal and continuing (the parable of the Good Samaritan). To be human involves more than simply being in relationship; it also involves what is happening in the relationship.[172]

Both Segundo and Lehmann make much of the fact that Christians do not aim at morality (defined as rules and principles); rather, they aim at freedom and maturity (defined in terms of relationships). Why does morality have to be defined only in terms of rules and principles? Naturally rules and principles, which only have functional value, are not to be our goals. They are aids and not ends in themselves, but must the concept of morality be limited to them? Is not the proper exercising of freedom, which is supposed to lead to maturity, also moral behavior? We are not so sure that freedom can be called an end in itself. It does not necessarily lead to maturity, although it is necessary for a person to be truly called human.

It seems to us that there are at least two elements necessary to make us human. Both of these are of equal importance. The first is "freedom" or as David Jenkins put it: A person is "a decision-taking

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[171] Rubem A. Alves, *Tomorrow's Child* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 131.

[172] *Ibid*., p. 131.

animal." "It is by the taking of decisions," says Jenkins, "that men can become free to build their own communities, cultures, and forms of communion and thus to become themselves because they are freely forming themselves. Freedom and decision-taking are closely related." [173] The second element of what it takes to be human is to be in "relationship," or to use Lehmann's term—maturity. Kosuke Koyama put it succinctly: "To be a human means to live in relationship." [174] Jenkins says about the same thing when he calls a person "a language-using animal." "It is by the use of language," he says, "that men have the chance of creating a community and of developing a culture which can grow into the richness of a diversity of communion and common living." [175] Although Lehmann talks more about maturity and Segundo tends to equate freedom with maturity, they could agree with the conclusion that to be human involves both freedom and maturity. Freedom alone does not make one human, for a wrong choice could lead one to an inhuman life—a lesson learned by the prodigal son. Moltmann would not disagree with the necessity of freedom and maturity to make up the human, but he does not deal with it in the same manner as does Lehmann and Segundo. Moltmann attempts to structure what would be involved for persons to experience the human. The concept of freedom is present in his suggestion that persons must be abundant, upright, sovereign, and purposeful in order to be truly human. Moltmann is more comprehensive in dealing with what it takes to make a person human. The element of freedom is present, and so is the element of maturity.[176]

To sum up, we would say that Lehmann clearly discerns an individual emphasis in society and reformulates the human vision to

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[173] David Jenkins, "Towards One New Man in Jesus Christ," *New Humanum Studies 1969-1975* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975), pp. 32-33.

[174] Kosuke Koyama, *Pilgrim or Tourist* (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1974), p. 19.

[175] Jenkins, "Towards One New Man in Jesus Christ," pp. 32-33.

[176] Moltmann also mentions man and the importance of language, which enables one to enter into relationship with others. See his discussion of this in the following source: Molmtann, *Man*, pp. 80-81.

conform more closely to the teachings of Jesus and the Reformation. He knows that the New Testament and the Reformation express concern for the individual but insists that the individual is always part of a group. If the individual emphasis is expressed in excess, then a reformulation of the human vision is needed. We might add that the opposite is also true. The individual cannot be swallowed up in an emphasis that expresses the social in excess. Moltmann attempts to give structure to his vision of the human in light of the contemporary themes of liberation and humanization. He structures his vision of the human person in response to the world situation and insists that we must move ahead on all fronts simultaneously. He does not, however, take into account that the social and political situation might not permit this. We find Segundo's position closer to Lehmann than to Moltmann. His individualistic definition of freedom moves very quickly into a social definition of the human. The only real difference is that he draws more heavily on Vatican II than on the Reformation. All three, however, are involved in reformulating a vision of the human for today's shrinking world. Whereas in Luther's time there was a need for a vision of a gracious God, today there seems to be a need for a vision of the human. Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo still talk about God, but the vision of God is related more to what he is doing in the world to make human life human. The new focus is on liberation and humanization, and if we are to catch a glimpse of God it is within the context of his involvement in liberation and humanization.

The Human Role

If the modern interest is on what God is doing in the world to make human life human, then what is our role as human beings in the process of liberation and humanization? Are we made human, or do we make ourselves human? This is not an easy question to answer, and in a sense there is some truth in both possibilities. Let us look at how Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo deal with the human role.

The position of Lehmann comes through clearly when he distinguishes between "humanistic messianism" and "messianic humanism." "Humanistic messianism," he says, "is a passion for a

vision of human deliverance and fulfillment by the powers of man alone. Its radical immanentism denies the reality and the necessity of incarnation." "Messianic humanism, on the other hand, is a passion for and vision of human deliverance and fulfillment derived from the fact and the power of God's incarnate humanity in Jesus Christ." Messianic humanism insists that humanization takes place within history but has its origin in a power from beyond history, which refuses to abandon history.[177]

The key to understanding how Lehmann approaches this question is found in the word, "Incarnation." Incarnation means that God localized his activity as an architect of our humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.[178] This, however, does not mean that God was only incarnate in the world in the lifetime of Jesus, for he is also present today making human life human and bringing about human maturity. He does this through the *koinonia* but also through politics.[179] He does it for both the believer and the unbeliever. The only difference between the two lies in their imaginative and behavioral sensitivity to what God is doing to make human life human.[180] The Christian knows that it is God who is at work, while the unbeliever does not recognize the incarnate God at work in social and political events.

In Lehmann's latest book, he uses the term, "messianic politics." This reflects his own position, as well as that of Jesus, in regard to a belief that God is at work in liberation and humanization. This can be contrasted with the position of the Zealots, which Lehmann calls political messianism. The Zealots took things into their own hands and attempted to bring about liberation and humanization by force. For Jesus the violent use of force would have signaled a loss of confidence in God's action; hence, he refused to use force because he

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[177] Paul L. Lehmann, *Ideology and Incarnation* (Geneva: John Knox Association, 1962), pp. 25-26.

[178] Paul L. Lehmann, "The Shape of Theology for a World in Revolution," *Motive* (April, 1965), p. 12.

[179] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 45.

[180] *Ibid*., p. 117.

believed the end was near. He did not reckon with the continuation of the world for centuries but placed his confidence in God's action alone. Had he suspected that the end was not near, perhaps he might have acted differently, but would he have used the methods of the Zealots? This possibility, says Lehmann, cannot be ruled out.[181] Jesus' first followers had to reformulate their mission in light of the delayed end, and the contemporary church will have to recognize this problem as it attempts to reformulate its own mission. It cannot simply refer to how Jesus acted within his social context but must attempt to perceive how God is acting in the present and how he calls the church to act. This might involve adopting similar methods to the Zealots, although it would be interpreted as cooperating with God's action in history.

Lehmann still holds to his position of messianic politics (humanism), which is an orientation to political involvement, which is guided by the messianic story. The messianic story "is the narration in the power of language and of social cohesion of what it takes to be and to stay human in the world."[182] This story is represented by Jesus who was faithful to a truth beyond himself and can be partially illustrated from his conflict with Pilate (John 18:33-40). Pilate was involved in realpolitik (the primacy of power over truth), while Jesus was involved in political realism (the primacy of truth over power). Thus neither the state nor a revolution is free to act without reference to this truth beyond itself.[183] In the case of a revolution, it is the messianic story that prevents a revolution from devouring its own children, which is to say, from destroying itself and its purpose. It binds the revolution and humanization together.[184]

The presence of Jesus Christ "in the human story transforms revolutions from harbingers of futility, violence, and death into signs

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[181] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, pp. 90-93.

[182] *Ibid*., pp. 10-11.

[183] *Ibid*., pp. 48-66.

[184] *Ibid*., pp. 10-11.

of transfiguration in the power of a saving story."[185] Every revolution, however, must be transfigured. What this means is illustrated by a quotation Lehmann takes from a student of Moltmann's. The student was responding to a statement of Che Guevara in which he said that, "the vocation of every lover is to bring about revolution." Moltmann's student reformulates it to say that, "the vocation of every revolution is to bring about love." It is this kind of reformulation that the church must be involved in as it attempts to articulate its mission. The social context will force a reevaluation of what is necessary for liberation and humanization, but the messianic story keeps the church on the right track, which is to cooperate with God's action in history as that truth which is beyond itself.[186]

When Moltmann deals with how we become human, he contrasts Aristotle with Luther. Moltmann agrees with Luther and calls the idea that we can make ourselves human the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue. At first glance, agrees Moltmann, this seems very persuasive. Our humanity is up to us. We can realize ourselves or we can forfeit ourselves. Our humanity depends on what we do. Moltmann disagrees and says that this would make us subject to the law, which demands of us a justice we can no longer produce once we have become unjust. We become slaves to the law, which holds up to us a humanity, which it refuses to grant.[187]

Luther called the idea of the self-made person blasphemy. We are not our own gods. We cannot create our humanity through our works. Luther opposed the idea with the brief formula: "Man is justified by faith." By this Luther meant that no form of action leads from an inhuman to a human reality.[188] If this is true, then how do we become human?

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[185] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

[186] *Ibid.*, p. 70. The quotes came from Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 147.

[187] Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, trans. by Reinhard Ulbrich (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 45-46.

[188] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

We are made human only by God's creative action upon us. Only when sinners feel justified are they able to act justly. Only when sinners feel loved can they love others. The justification of the godless is the creative call of God for a new mode of being. "Man is born anew," says the language of the Bible. "We do not become just by doing justice," says Luther against Aristotle, "but because we have been justified, we do what is just." "Man," says Moltmann, "does not have to make himself. Rather he demonstrates his new being out of God by doing free works."[189] Humanized or justified persons do not flee in a spirit of social romanticism into a golden past, nor do they emigrate inwards into purity of heart, nor do they simply lose themselves in dreams of a better world.[190] Their eyes are turned towards the future, the place where they will find their true nature.

The dominant question of anthropology is not answered in the biblical narratives by comparing human beings with the animals, insists Moltmann; rather, the answer emerges in the face of a divine mission, charge, and appointment which transcend all that is humanly possible. Such a mission was given to Moses when he was asked to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:11). In the face of such a call, Isaiah recognized himself to be personally guilt-laden in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5). Jeremiah, in the face of his commission, thinks that he is too young (Jeremiah 1:6). In all of these cases, self-knowledge comes about in the face of a mission and call from a God who demands the impossible. Herein lies the answer to the question of who we are or what we are to become. Moltmann summarizes this as follows:

> Man attains to knowledge of himself by discovering the discrepancy between the divine mission and his own being, by learning what he is, and what he is to be, yet of himself cannot be. Hence the answer received to man's question about himself and his human nature runs: "I will be with thee." This does not tell man what he was and what he really is, but what he will be and can be in that history and that

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[189] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[190] Moltmann, *Man*, pp. 114-115.

> future to which the mission leads him. In his call man is given the prospect of a new ability to be. What he is and what he can do, is a thing he will learn in hopeful trust in God's being with him. Man learns his human nature not from himself, but from the future to which the mission leads him.[191]

We have become the Lord of nature and history; and we may even have the potential to create a more human world, but we can only be our own gravediggers. The call from God is to create, not to destroy. In the face of so many failures, the task may seem like too much; but God holds out a hope and urges us to become what we think is impossible. This hope directs us towards God and the coming Kingdom and is not to be reduced simply to human hopes within history.[192] Our future is greater than the accomplishments of our own hands, and that is why we can throw ourselves fully into the task to which we are called. God starts us off by justifying us and granting us meaning, purpose, and hope; then he leaves us free to work together with him in creating more humane conditions. God does not do everything for us; rather, he calls us to do what may seem impossible. It may well be impossible to liberate and humanize the world within history, but then this hope is not limited to history, as we know it.

Our human nature does not lie in the past but in the future. It may be prefigured in Christ but can only be realized in the future. We have only been justified; we have not yet been perfected. Therefore we cannot accept reality as it is. Reality does not lie imprisoned in a system. We are justified and set free to create a new future. Moltmann is not trying to create any "paradise lost" or "golden age." He calls these the "dream turned backward." [193] Nor is he looking for a utopia somewhere beyond the seas; rather, he wants to emphasize a future, which is desired, possible, and expected.[194] This hope-for

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[191] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 285-286.

[192] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 134-136.

[193] *Ibid*., p. 24.

[194] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 234.

future he calls the concrete utopia, which he distinguishes from an abstract utopia. The abstract utopia separates itself completely from the present reality and its possibilities and proceeds to build castles in the air. Moltmann rejects the abstract utopias in favor of a concrete utopia where the spirit steps over existing reality and takes a look into the future of possibility. Such a vision is always related to the concrete contradictions and sufferings of the present so that they can be overcome. Because the contradictions of the present are kept in view, the vision of the future aims at concrete transformations. Concrete utopian thought presupposes freedom to create a new future. Wherever one of these elements—freedom, possibility, or future—is given up, the others also wither away. Concrete utopian thought is essential for both our freedom and our humanity.[195]

The concrete utopia dare not dream about eternity beyond time. It must bring the hoped-for future into contact with the misery of the present. This is what Jesus did. He did not merely announce the Kingdom of God, but he practiced it in his love of sinners and publicans.[196] The future hope, the Kingdom, or the City of God does not lie in readiness in the future. Even though the Kingdom of God is truly God's Kingdom, it is also something we must seek in order to find. We do not wait passively for it and withdraw from the world. "We are construction workers," says Moltmann, "and not only interpreters of the future whose power in hope as well as in fulfillment is God." This means that the Christian hope is a creative and militant hope within history.[197] Moltmann thus uses his "concrete utopia" in much the same sense as Lehmann uses his "messianic story." These are images that guide us in liberating and humanizing our world. In neither case does it mean that we make ourselves human, for without these images we would simply take the path of dehumanization. We need these images to become human; therefore, it is God who makes us human by justifying and guiding us into his own future.

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[195] Jurgen Moltmann, *Mensch* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1971), pp. 65-67.

[196] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 139-140.

[197] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

Segundo sees the human condition as the departure point for grace. He says that "man appears to be a divided being, enticed on the one hand by determinisms that lead toward alienation and on the other hand by a liberty that urges him to fashion his own personal being." [198] Grace is the dynamism that liberates us. It starts the whole process, and without it, we could not find liberation. Grace liberates us from religious alienation and enables us to journey forward as human beings from the natural human condition into the fashioning of the total body of Christ—the new humanity.[199]

Grace is given and not created—at least by us. The purpose of God's grace, however, is to move us to associate with him in his creative work in history.[200] At the start of the humanization process, history was given to us ready-made, and we simply reacted to its immediate challenges. We did not even interpret it but simply reacted to it. We were but products of evolution. There reached a point, however, when human beings began to direct history themselves.[201] The task of creation passed from the hands of the Creator into the hands of human beings.[202] Thus we take part in the construction of a better world. In fact, God has given this task to us.[203]

For Segundo the church also ought to be involved in the evolutionary process of liberation and humanization. The church exists to serve the rest of humanity, and Christians are to

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[198] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, pp. 15-37.

[199] See Segundo's discussion of religious alienation, which we will take up again in the next chapter. This can be found in Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, pp. 114, 152, and 156-157.

[200] *Ibid*., p. 170.

[201] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, pp. 37-39.

[202] Juan Luis Segundo, *Evolution and Guilt*, trans. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 140.

[203] As we first learned to control nature, now we are learning how to control history. This is similar to Rubem Alves' statement that, "The ape becomes man when he begins to transform nature." See his discussion of this in Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*, p. 165. We do these things, however, in cooperation with God. We do not have complete control. There are limits.

authentically love people within society. Authentic love sees the societal arena as a precondition for the human fulfillment of those it loves. "To love others authentically," writes Segundo, "means to give them a society in which they can develop and reach fulfillment. To impatiently tear down the foundations of the society in which other men live, out of supposed love for them, is either a mistake or a sin."[204] Segundo feels that Jesus turned his life into a labor of love, a concrete labor of love; and like any human being, he could love all persons in theory, but he began by being sensitive to the proximity of specific persons.[205] Authentic love does have the welfare of the masses in mind, but it is also sensitive to what is happening to them as individuals. For Segundo our social relationships can lead to faith. Love is more than the fruit of faith; it is also a faith-beginning.[206] If this is so, one can understand why the social situation is so important in reformulating the mission of the church.

Common to all three writers is the belief that God is working together with us for liberation and humanization. The only one who could say that we are working for these things alone would be a complete deist, an atheist, or perhaps a Marxist. Christians may vary in how much of a role we have, but they agree that divine activity has something to do with liberation and humanization. This does not mean that God is doing everything for us but that we are co-workers with him. Both grace and creativity are involved here. Rubem Alves helps us somewhat at this point when he discusses the nature of the pact between God and ourselves. The pact means that God waits for what we can give to the new tomorrow. It means that God, in the fullness of his eternity, needs, longs, and waits for us. We have an important part in creating the future. It is not simply a future created by God for us but one created by God with us in "historical dialogical cooperation."[207]

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[204] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, p. 167.

[205] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, p. 167.

[206] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 56-60.

[207] Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope*, pp. 141-142.

We find great difficulty in trying to sort out what God's part is and what our part is and how we can recognize what God is doing in relation to what we ought to be doing. We do not find Lehmann and Segundo very helpful at this point. Lehmann comes close to one of his students, M. Richard Shaull, who indicated that we are on a road without any signposts and that we need to engage in a political struggle without any answers to our most urgent special problems.[208] Segundo has some reservations about such an approach but realizes that the oppressive situation might demand action now. Moltmann realizes that there are serious problems but affirms that we should know where we are going. In this, Moltmann holds a similar position to that of Alves. Alves insists that one does not destroy the old order before having a vision of the new one. The new order must come into view before the old one is challenged and destroyed.[209] Moltmann proceeds to articulate the concrete utopia that points our way, and his vision offers us more signposts than either Lehman or Segundo. He also sketches the negative elements that must be negated but only as a means of getting at the abundant, upright, sovereign, and purposeful person. He demonstrates to our satisfaction that the first moment in the process of humanization is not an act of negation but rather an affirmative act. A negative act kills without giving life. It is like expelling demons and leaving the house empty. The house is likely to be taken over by seven worse demons. Moltmann wants to fill the house with something concrete and is convinced that we can have a positive vision ahead of time as to what we might put in the house. This vision is not simply our own creation but is something that God holds out in front of us. He does not force it on us but preserves our autonomy. The vision is there, and he expects us to act upon it. As Alves puts it: "…for the desert to become a garden it is not enough to pluck up thorns and thistles; one must plant flowers and orchards."[210]

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[208] M. Richard Shaull, "On 'Containment and Change,'" *Worldview* (March, 1973), pp. 19-20.

[209] Rubem A. Alves, "The Hermeneutics of the Symbol," *Theology Today* (April, 1972), p. 51.

[210] Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*, p. 201.

It is easy to raise an objection to God's involvement in liberation and humanization. If God is involved, why do we not seem to be getting anywhere? Moltmann admits that we have had many failures and that the realists have some good objections against utopian thought.[211] Reinhold Niebuhr, for example, wrote the following:

> The conclusion most abhorrent to the modern mood is that the possibilities of evil grow with the possibilities of good, and that human history is therefore not so much a chronicle of the progressive victory of the good over evil, of cosmos over chaos, as the story of an ever increasing cosmos, creating ever increasing possibilities of chaos.[212]

Jacques Ellul, another realist, claims that there is a very basic misunderstanding contained in the assumption that Christianity exists to establish social and political justice. He sees this as a return to the medieval approach to Christianity in which the Kingdom of God became confused with a politico-social system; for Ellul, this mistake should not be made again.[213] On the other hand, someone like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is very optimistic, in spite of recent setbacks, concerning an overall movement of progress. He believes that the utopians make the most sense:

> Our modern world was created in less than 10,000 years, and in the past 200 years it has changed more than in all the preceding millennia. Have we ever thought of what our planet may be like, psychologically, in a million year's time? It is finally the Utopians, not the "realists", who make scientific sense. They at least, though their flights of fancy cause us to smile, have a feeling for the true dimensions of the phenomenon of man.[214]

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[211] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 211.

[212] Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1935), pp. 97-98.

[213] Jacques Ellul, *Hope in Time of Abandonment*, trans. by C. Edward Hopkin (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), p. 207.

[214] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man*, trans. by Norman Denny (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), p. 74.

Only the future can verify whether the realists or the utopians are right. Segundo is close to Teilhard de Chardin. Moltmann and Lehmann stand between Ellul and Teilhard de Chardin but closer to the latter. Moltmann tries to take account of the problems by proposing his concrete utopia, but he is vague and does not give thorough attention to the organizational problems involved in achieving such a utopia. Lehmann is trying to hold the messianic story out there to keep the revolution from destroying its purpose. Neither of them wants to give up the vision. God has given our role to us, and now he expects us to respond and work together with him in the world. As progress is made or as we experience regression in certain areas, the concrete mission of the church may have to be reformulated to stay in touch with the vision of liberation and humanization; nevertheless, the task is clear. God has pointed us in the right direction, and he expects us to carry out the mission or missions. Let us now look more closely at the human mission of the church and its various dimensions or missions to see how they relate to one another.

The Human Mission

The human mission of the church for all three of our theologians is to seek out what God is doing and to work with him. God is involved in liberating and humanizing persons, and so this becomes the mission of the church. Let us now examine how each of our theologians approaches the details of this mission.

Lehmann affirms the "will of God" as the obvious answer to what the church is to be doing. For the Pharisee, doing the will of God was simple. All one had to do was to obey the Law and the Tradition of the Elders.[215] For the Christian it is not quite so simple. The will of God cannot be made into traditions, rules, and principles; rather, it emerges out of the activity of God in the world, and it is to this same activity that the church is called. The will of God, the

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[215] Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context, p. 76.

activity of God, and the mission of the church all coincide.[216] Lehmann expresses this mission in at least four themes, which are: maturity; fellowship or socialization; the inclusion of nonchristians; and forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation.

The church aims at maturity. The mature or new humanity has already become a fact with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; this means that a person's essential nature is not to be found in the first Adam (primal Adam) but rather in the second Adam (Christ). "The fact of the new humanity," says Lehmann, "established in and by the second Adam, means that all behavior is a fragmentary foretaste of the fulfillment which is already on its way."[217] The second Adam points toward the ethical reality of the Second Advent. This means that Jesus Christ, who inaugurated a new age and a new humanity, will come again to consummate what he has begun. This causes the Christian to live not by his Adamic or Christian past but by the future of which the present is already the foretaste of the new humanity. The Second Advent, however, is not cosmological but ethical in nature; hence it forces us to be concerned about the present, for the present is a foretaste of the future. The church's task is not simply to talk about the coming mature or new humanity but to begin living out that reality now.[218]

This reality leads us into his second theme of fellowship or socialization. "It is God's will," says Lehmann, "not to be himself by

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[216] Lehmann, "The Foundation and Pattern of Christian Behavior," pp. 109 and 112. Lehmann does not use the word "coincide" but we affirm that this is a correct interpretation of Lehmann's thinking in regard to how God operates in the world. Christians possess a theonomous conscience, which enables them to perceive God's will and act accordingly. Their action becomes divine activity or at least a reduplication of it. Lehmann is not simply talking about a human response shaped by reflection upon Christian beliefs about God's revelation in Jesus Christ. For Lehmann Christians can perceive divine activity and become involved in it. We have difficulty with Lehmann at this point, as does James Gustafson. For Gustafson's discussion on this problem, see James Gustafson, *Christ and the Moral Life* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 258

[217] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 122.

[218] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

himself but in fellowship with 'a people for God's own possession'."[219] If God seeks to have fellowship with his people, then the church too becomes a fellowship-creating reality. The church as the body of Christ is to become the fellowship-creating reality of Christ's presence in the world.[220] Thus the primary function of the church is social, and this function is derived out of its very nature as the fellowship of believers. Lehmann supports this socialization task of the church by referring to Jesus' parables and the Protestant Reformation. He admits an individualistic concern in these as well but insists that their main thrust is social. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, for example, stress restoration to the flock, the owner, and the father's house.[221] The basic conception of the Protestant Reformation was the "communio sanctorum" (McNeill). Lehmann thinks that the individualistic error was perpetuated through the formula of the "priesthood of all believers." This formula tended to suggest that we are all our own priests when it should have emphasized that we are all priests to our neighbors. The proper interpretation is that we are to be a Christ to one another.[222]

A third theme has to do with the inclusion of nonchristians. As God was active in the mission to the Gentiles[223] in New Testament times, today unbelievers are also to be included. As the Gentiles were not excluded from the Israelitic "Inheritance," so unbelievers are not to be excluded from the unsearchable riches of Christ. As there was a mission to the Gentiles, so is there to be a mission to unbelievers. "The responsibility of believers," says Lehmann, "is so to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ that the fellow heir in the economy of God is drawn into the *koinonia* and does not

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[219] *Ibid*., p. 95.

[220] *Ibid*., p. 49.

[221] *Ibid*., p. 57.

[222] *Ibid*., pp. 57 and 63. Lehmann draws on John T. McNeill, *Unitive Protestantism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1930). He does not cite any page numbers.

[223] Lehmann calls this the "Mystery of Christ" and refers to Ephesians 2:14-16 and 3:6 to support the inclusion of the Gentiles.

remain outside."[224] When Lehmann talks about drawing the unbeliever into the koinonia, he is not thinking of conversion in the traditional sense but of the fact that God rules over believers and unbelievers alike. God is not the God of the church alone; he is also the God of unbelievers. He reigns over both church and society, over religion and politics.[225] Lehmann wants to bring both Christians and nonchristians under the Lordship of Christ, but this does not mean an evangelistic crusade. The difference between believers and unbelievers is not that of being inside or outside of what God is doing in the world; rather, it involves the difference between being in a situation which is hidden and being in one that is open.[226] In this context, the mission of the church is to move from the Jew to the Gentile to the unbeliever and to involve everyone in God's humanizing activity. The church is to do this in such a way that nothing remains hidden, but everything is done in the open. Christ as King rules over all, and it is the mission of the church to make this reality known.

This reality is not made known simply through love. Love is not concrete enough, and so Lehmann defines the will of God to include forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation. This makes up the final theme we detect in Lehmann's understanding of the mission of the church. All three of these terms define what God is doing and what the church is also to be doing to make and keep human life human. The aim is to extend a "bridgehead until the enemy and all territory under enemy occupation are brought into the orbit of God's reconciling action in Jesus Christ."[227] Forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation belong together in defining the pattern of Christian behavior. Such behavior moves along a line, which may be plotted graphically by three points. The first point is forgiveness. This is a gift, free and undeserved, of a new possibility of life. At the other end of the graph is reconciliation. Reconciliation is the condition,

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[224] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, pp. 51-52.

[225] *Ibid*., p. 82.

[226] *Ibid*., pp. 117 and 119-120.

[227] Lehmann, "The Foundation and Pattern of Christian Behavior," pp. 112-113.

which emerges whenever the alienation of enmity has been transmuted into fellowship. In between—not in the middle, but somewhere along the line—is what the Bible calls justice. “Justice is God’s setting right what is not right in the doing of His will in the world.” God’s justice is being applied in the world whenever and wherever the exalted are brought low, and those of low degree are exalted (Luke 1:52). The aim of the bridgehead is to make love concrete, thus depriving it of its abstractness; and this is done by establishing forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation in the world.[228] This is also the point at which Christians and nonchristians can work together. The mission of the church is not simply to call people to become Christians but to work together with all persons—Jews, Gentiles, and even unbelievers—for the liberation and humanization of all. Christians may respond to this task out of “obedience to God,” while nonchristians may respond out of “obedience to the social good,” but both will be involved in cooperating with God for liberation and humanization.[229] Nonchristians may be considered the “other sheep” not yet in the fold (John 10:16), but the aim of both sheep is the new humanity. In relating Christians and nonchristians, Lehmann has shifted the emphasis from the first article of the creed (God the Creator) to the third article of the creed (the activity of the Holy Spirit). The first article tried to relate Christians and nonchristians on the basis of natural law or common ethical wisdom, but the third article relates them on the basis of common ethical behavior directed by the Holy Spirit within the ethical situation.[230]

Lehmann defines the human mission of the church in terms of working together with God for a new maturity, which includes fellowship and socialization, an inclusion of nonchristians and unbelievers, and a concern for social justice. Lehmann concludes that Christians and nonchristians cannot get together on the basis of a common faith, but this fact should not stop them from working together on the basis of a common social concern. They should be able to work together in the area of social justice. Dialogue with

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[228] *Ibid*., pp. 113-114.

[229] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, pp. 153-155.

[230] *Ibid*., pp. 155-159.

nonchristians might also take place, but calling them to faith and into a Christian community would be a doubtful mission. It is on the basis of their works that Christians and the “other sheep” of the Holy Spirit (nonchristians working for liberation and humanization) find their oneness. Does not the oneness of humanity also require a common faith in the one God who created us all and lives and works among us? We are not willing to separate faith and works; and although Lehmann would no doubt agree, he does this when he defines the mission of the church in terms of working together with nonchristians for maturity, socialization, inclusion, and justice. He also ought to stress the importance of a common faith in the God who alone can lead us in these directions.

Moltmann’s concept of the human mission of the church is difficult to describe. We would call it freedom to evangelize and humanize but realize that this does not say everything. Other major themes must also be discussed in addition to the double foci of evangelism and humanization, and some of them would be eschatology, liberation, and dialogue and cooperating with nonchristians and unbelievers.

The church has an eschatological mission. “The whole body of Christians,” claims Moltmann, “is engaged in the apostolate of hope for the world and finds therein its essence—namely that which makes it the church of God.” The church itself is not the hope of the world, but it is called to point to that hope.[231] This hope became visible in Jesus Christ, and Christians are persons converted to hoping in God’s future and infecting others with the same hope. The church—as that part of the world open to God’s future—begins to draw the hoped-for future into the present, for this is its eschatological mission.[232] This eschatological orientation can be seen in every aspect of the church’s life.[233]

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[231] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 328.

[232] Jürgen Moltmann, “The Future as Threat and Opportunity,” *The Religious Situation*, Vol. II, ed. by Donald Cutler (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 934.

[233] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 325-326. Moltmann describes how this can also be seen in the proclamation of the Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.

The church has hope in the coming Lordship of the risen Christ, but his Kingdom does not lie in readiness out there in the future. We must seek it in order to find it. It is God's Kingdom, but we are construction workers and not mere interpreters of the future hope.[234] We do not merely announce this hope. We are involved in the historic transformation of life, and yet our actions are only possible within a horizon of expectation. If we did not have this horizon of expectation, our actions would be desperate thrusts into a void.[235] Thus the church exists to infect the rest of the world with this hope and to bring about the transformation and humanization of the world now.

Moltmann affirms that the church should be free to carry out its eschatological mission, and this leads us to what we wish to describe as a second theme, which is related to the mission of the church—liberation. As Israel made an Exodus through the desert away from Egypt (geography), the Christian church is also to make an Exodus from the past into the future (history).[236] It means breaking out of a modern Babylonian captivity, which has assigned the church specific rules in society and making the long march into the future for the humanization of persons and society itself.

The principal aim of society used to be the true reverence of God, which implied a religious goal for society; but with the rise of industrial society, the old harmony between *ecclesia* and *societas* was destroyed and the church was assigned new roles.[237] Moltmann lists three such roles, which have been assigned to the church by modern society, and he calls these roles the Babylonian captivity of the church. The first is the "cult of the private," which is the retreat from the public to the private sphere; the next is the "cult of co-humanity or community," which is a kind of Noah's Ark for socially

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[234] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 217.

[235] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 326-327 and 329-330.

[236] Jürgen Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," *The Ecumenical Review* (July, 1974), p. 423.

[237] Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, pp. 131-132; but see also Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 306-309.

alienated persons; and the third is the "church as an institution," which brought about the non-involvement of persons, or at most, support of the status quo. Moltmann considers these three roles unacceptable and calls for their rejection. The church needs to formulate its own roles or mission.[238]

In the past, the church has responded to the world by leaving it to its own devices and living apart from it (a fossil church), or by accommodating itself completely to society (a chameleon church). "A fossil belongs in a museum," concludes Moltmann, "a chameleon in the botanical gardens."[239] According to Moltmann, the church must be free to follow another path. The church must resolve its identity crisis and follow the voice of Christ alone, but it must also be relevant to society.[240] Molmtann's favorite verse of scripture used to describe this Exodus is Hebrews 13:13-14, where he interprets: "Therefore let us go forth…outside the camp (and this holds true for all camps), bearing abuse for him (Christ). For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come."[241] The new image of the church is "the wandering people of God." It is not simply an institution but a community involved in an Exodus toward the future City of God (temporal rather than spatial). "The church," he says, "is a way, a bridge, a transition. It does not exist for the purpose of vindicating and maintaining itself but of dissolving itself in the Kingdom of freedom which encompasses the whole creation."[242] Christians do not talk about empty promises for another world but begin living out this reality in the midst of hope, suffering,

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[238] *Ibid*., pp. 133-139; and also Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 310-321.

[239] Jürgen Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," *New World Outlook* (November, 1972), p. 483.

[240] Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," p. 422; and Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, pp. 141-142.

[241] See all of the following: Jürgen Moltmann, "Christian Rehumanization of Technological Society," *The Critic* (May-June, 1970), pp. 15-16; Moltmann, *Hope and Plannning*, pp. 145-147; Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 118-119; and Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 304.

[242] Moltman, "Christian Rehumanization of Technological Society," pp. 15-16.

and joy. The mission is reformulated not to conform to society, but rather to make society what it should be as a part of God's world.

This leads us into the theme of the Christian mission as a combination of evangelism and humanization. This twofold mission takes place within the eschatological expectation of the coming Kingdom of God and is not to be separated and understood as exclusive alternatives. Moltmann makes this decisively clear when he says:

> Christian theology is being confronted today on various sides with false alternatives. There is no alternative for it between evangelization and humanization. There is no alternative for it between interior conversion and improvement of social and political conditions. There is no alternative for it between the vertical dimension of faith and the horizontal dimension of love. Whoever separates and divides any of these destroys the unity of God and man and of the future of Christ.[243]

Both tasks must be carried out together, but not everyone has to be doing both, although everyone should recognize the other charismata in the body of Christ.[244]

Moltmann perceives evangelism and humanization as being as closely related to each other as the body and soul are related in persons.

> Personal interior transformation without change in socio-economic conditions is an idealistic illusion—as if man were only a soul and not a body as well. Change in conditions without a personal transformation of the inner man is a materialistic illusion—as if man were only a product of his conditions and nothing more. In the liberating power of

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[243] For the relationship between evangelism and humanization, see the following sources: Jürgen Moltmann, "Christian Theology and Its Goals Today," in *Theology in Action*, Series I (Singapore: *The Christian Conference of Asia*, 1972), p. 34; Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," p. 485; and in Jürgen Moltmann, "Directives for Theological Reflection," *Thesis Theological Cassettes* (1972).

[244] Moltmann, "Christian Theology and Its Goals Today," p. 34; and also Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," p. 485.

> practical action, self-transformation and change in conditions coincide.[245]

We are not to assume that our own transformation must be accomplished before we can transform conditions, nor are we to assume the reverse. Both must be done at the same time; and although not everyone will be placing the same emphasis on both, there should be respect for both phases of the mission.

Evangelism, for Moltmann, involves a universal mission to all persons and leads directly into the process of liberation and humanization. In its universal mission to all persons, Christianity differs very much from the Old Testament tradition. Moltmann defines that difference as follows:

> Christian "tradition" is mission that moves forwards and outwards. It does not ride the line of the generations from father to son, but spreads outwards to all men. It is not through birth, but through rebirth, that faith is propagated.[246]

This universal mission to all persons was born out of the early church's experience of the appearances of the risen Lord, who commissioned it to service and mission to other peoples and nations.[247] The promise was given to both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 3:6), that, "no corner of this world should remain without God's promise of new creation through the power of the resurrection."[248] This means that Christians must search for (1) the freedom to proclaim God's liberating power publicly, (2) the freedom to assemble a new congregation of brothers out of Jews and heathen, masters and slaves, black and white, and (3) the freedom of critically cooperating in the processes of community according to the criteria of creative love.[249] This last point leads us into the process, which Moltmann calls humanization.

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[245] Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," p. 487.

[246] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 301.

[247] *Ibid.*, pp. 166 and 202.

[248] *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147 and 328.

[249] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 70.

For Moltmann, evangelization leads to direct involvement in the social and political problems of society.[250] One who identifies with the crucified one also identifies with the suffering of the poor and the misery of the oppressed and consequently presses for the overthrow of all those circumstances that humiliate and dehumanize persons so that they might become more abundant, upright, sovereign, and purposeful.[251] In proceeding along these lines, the church becomes the "church for the other" or the "church for the world."[252] To say this can mean nothing else but "church for the Kingdom of God" and the "renewing of the world."[253] Yet being a church for the world or being-there-for-others is not the final answer. It ought to lead to being-there-with-others. The church-for-others leads all too easily to paternalism. Humanization is not simply social service (charity or paternalism) to the poor and oppressed; rather, it involves social action directed toward the goal of eliminating poverty and oppression completely. The end of the church is not just being for others but being with them as the liberated and humanized community of persons.[254]

Moltmann is convinced that humanization cannot be achieved by any one group itself but can only come through communal efforts. Therefore, Christians will have to work with nonchristians as they seek liberation and humanization. He recognizes that Christians themselves do not express unity; hence, he calls for communal efforts on two fronts. The various Christian churches need to get together. Moltmann calls their separation and disunity a scandal. The second front is closer cooperation between Christianity and other religions and ideologies. That which gives Christians their very identity—the cross and resurrection—also points them to their

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[250] Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," p. 486.

[251] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 122 and 133.

[252] Jürgen Moltmann, "Theological Basis of Human Rights and of the Liberation of Man," *Reformed and Presbyterian World* (1971), p. 349.

[253] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 327-328.

[254] Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, p. 71; but see also Moltmann, "The Future as Threat and Opportunity," p. 937.

common future with nonchristians. It is not just a Christian future but a future for the whole world. This is sufficient reason for Christianity to enter into relationship with other religions and ideologies. They all share this common future. It was the industrial complex of communication that began to force this issue upon us, says Moltmann, for men "are becoming for the first time what they have always thought themselves to be, but never were—men in one human race." Tribes, races, and nations are being united into a history of one world for the first time, and this necessitates dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of various religions and ideologies.[255]

Dialogue is necessary for the very survival of humanity; for this reason, the churches should strive to initiate it everywhere.[256] Christians should not fear that faith will be relativized in dialogue. Moreover, through dialogue Christianity can reveal its truth, for dialogue brings Christianity into relationship with other religions and ideologies. All of us are dependent upon dialogue for discovering and spreading the universal truth. Christianity can learn something as it makes its particular contribution.[257]

We cannot, however, stop with dialogue but need to move on to creative cooperation in regard to common aims and goals.[258] Before God, all individual destinies and national histories merge into a single and common world history. Dialogue and cooperation are means by which we can all move toward this goal. It is not something we can simply create with our own hands, however; but we can move ahead with confidence, for the historical monotheism of the Old Testament logically leads to the notion of one humanity, as do the cross and resurrection hope found in the New Testament.[259]

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[255] Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, p. 191; but also Moltmann, "The Fuutre as Threat and Opportunity," p. 934.

[256] Moltmann, "Christian Theology and Its Goals Today," p. 39.

[257] *Ibid*., p. 39.

[258] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 70.

[259] Moltmann, "Theological Basis of Human Rights and of the Liberation of Man," p. 350.

Moltmann's reformulation of the church and its mission is more balanced than is that of Lehmann. Moltmann began with hope, which is a gift, but one that leads us into a kind of freedom to participate in a New Exodus from society. When society goes astray, the church must break out of society's grip. It must reformulate its mission in light of what society is doing, but the church's mission is never simply to conform to society. Rather, it is to help shape society into what it ought to be. When society conforms more closely to the Kingdom of God or strays further from it, the mission of the church changes. The church must be free to create new congregations as it works towards the liberation and humanization of persons. In addition to this more personalized mission, the church must also work for the transformation of conditions. For centuries, the church has thrived on social service understood as charity; but Moltmann is reformulating the mission in light of the themes of liberation and humanization, which call for the elimination of charity in favor of justice. Lehmann did not speak directly about the problem of charity versus justice, but he would agree with Moltmann's desire to reformulate the social mission in this way.

Lehmann has reformulated the mission of the church almost to the extent of excluding evangelism, or submerging it into humanization so that it becomes unrecognizable as a means of bringing persons to faith in Christ and into the Christian community. He wants the church to work with unbelievers and nonchristians on transforming conditions but not bothering with questions of faith. Moltmann asks for the freedom to form new congregations of believers. He also reformulates the mission of the church as he struggles with the problem of social relevance, but he includes in his reformulation the problem of Christian identity. He assumes that the church has had difficulty in being relevant because it has lost track of its own identity; so, he holds together the two foci of evangelism and humanization insisting that they are not alternatives. He even suggests that not everyone will be doing both but that everyone should at least respect and acknowledge the work of the other. At least he does not submerge the one into the other, as Lehmann does. When he begins to discuss dialogue and cooperation between Christianity and other religions and ideologies, he seems to place a lot less emphasis on evangelism, although he stresses the fact that

Christian faith is not necessarily relativized when the church dialogues and cooperates with other religions and ideologies. The church has something to contribute, as well as something to learn from these other groups. Now let us look at how Segundo reformulates the mission of the church in light of Vatican II and the desires of Latin Americans for liberation and humanization.

Segundo thinks that the church has gone down the wrong track, and thus the nature and mission of the church needs reformulation. The church has lost its ability to function as a sign of salvation both to those inside of the church and to those who are still on the outside. The church, the visible community with its formulas of faith and sacraments, is to the community of God's people and those outside of this community what a banknote is to the reality it signifies and conveys. Although a banknote is only a piece of paper, it has a precise signification; and billions of people depend upon this network of signs. The church too is supposed to signify something beyond itself. It is to be a universal sign of salvation to all persons.[260]

The church must maintain the clarity and transparency of its sign function. This is important for both the member inside of the church and the nonchristian outside of the church. Salvation may not depend upon being a member, but consciousness of it does depend upon receiving a clear sign from the church. Paul is willing to excommunicate a member not only for the sake of the sign but also for the sake of the member's own soul. Segundo concludes that the multitude is in the gravest danger when the church loses its sign-bearing function.[261] The church is also to be a sign for people moving towards faith but do not yet know it. Love is the beginning of faith for persons of good will, and it is the consciousness of this fact that is the good news that the Christian has to give.[262] This is why Segundo says: "In the midst of the human race there must be people who know the mystery of love, who will meet and dialogue with those who are moving toward the gospel and confronting the

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[260] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 54-55.

[261] *Ibid*., pp. 78-85.

[262] *Ibid*., pp. 54-57.

question raised by love."[263] Because the church has lost this sign function, it must be restored. The mission must be reformulated.

Segundo also reformulates the mission of the church when he discusses whether it should aim at mass or select membership. Segundo thinks that a church aiming at mass membership has to take the line of least resistance in order to make it possible for the largest number of people to join. Segundo notes that the contemporary church tries to keep the mass of professed Christians inside the church, even if it seriously affects the ability of the church to signify its message to others. The primary preoccupation ought not to be with membership growth but with the kind of a sign that is being presented.[264]

Segundo's rejection of mass membership presents him with a problem, and he is quite aware of it. If the church is not to become the community of all persons, then what is to keep it from becoming an aristocratic community or a minority elite? Segundo is convinced that Jesus opted for a selective minority who would be faithful to the sign and would avoid elitism by serving the masses. This small group was not taught that membership in the inner circle mean "privilege" but "responsibility to serve."[265] The reformulated mission then is for the church to aim at serving the masses rather than at getting them inside the church.

Evangelism, then, for Segundo has primarily to do with the transmission of the faith. Although the proclamation is made to the nonbeliever, it is also made to the nonevangelized areas of Christian existence. The church is commissioned to proclaim that the Kingdom is already here in our midst—in the midst of both believers and nonbelievers.[266] Evangelism does not spring from our concern over conversions, baptisms, communions, and church membership, but

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263 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

264 *Ibid.*, pp. 78-85.

265 This point is further illustrated in a reference to a union activist in Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 88-90; and by a reference to medical doctors in Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, pp. 210-211.

266 Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 67 and 70.

from the mandate of the Lord.[267] The true purpose for evangelism, according to Segundo, is as follows:

> We must preach the gospel, not because man will be condemned without our word but because man needs this revealed word to reach his full measure. He needs the proclamation of the Good News and a personal knowledge of it: "I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fullness" (John 10:10).[268]

Segundo does see evangelization as the primary task of the church, but his concept of evangelization differs sharply from traditional definitions of the term. He has reformulated the concept. He uses Seumois' definition which suggests that authentic evangelization consists of: (1) communicating only the essentials of the Christian message; (2) communicating it as good news; and (3) adding nothing further except at a pace that will allow the essential element to remain precisely that.[269] Segundo does not want Christianity to gain converts by means of pressure. True conversion takes place only when a person is allowed to decide in freedom.[270] Evangelization, however, does not make up the whole of the church's task; rather, it is presented by Segundo as a solid and suitable foundation for a new pastoral approach in Latin America, which expresses itself in freedom and service.[271]

There are individualistic elements in Segundo's emphasis on freedom in responding to the Gospel, but one should not conclude that this is where his main emphasis lies. Segundo is aware of the debate between individual and social transformation but insists on the primacy of the social. The idea that society can be transformed

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[267] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, pp. 53 and 129.

[268] *Ibid*., p. 129.

[269] Segundo, The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action, pp. 110-132. Segundo gives an excellent commentary on Seumois' definition of evangelization and concludes that very little—if any—evangelization is taking place in Latin America today.

[270] *Ibid*., pp. 66-70.

[271] *Ibid*., p. 132.

only after individuals are changed is based on an erroneous conception of humanity. "It does not appreciate the fact that the individual can be truly liberated only in terms of his total human condition: i.e., within his social context."[272]

The message must be proclaimed in the same way that it was transmitted in the Old Testament. God revealed and transmitted his word through the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egyptian imperialism. When we fail to follow this model today, we divorce faith from life. It means we would be setting up a private "religious zone" on the outskirts of our concrete life. Yet one cannot simply equate pastoral activity with development work. The gospel preacher does something very different from development work, although the former is certainly related to the latter. The pastor—and Segundo reminds us that every Christian is a pastor by virtue of baptism—"is not someone who simply knows the bible and certain dogma." The pastor, or the Christian, knows how to read the plan of God in contemporary history. In discovering the divine activity guiding history, Christians work together with God and nonchristians for the liberation and humanization of persons.[273]

What does such involvement mean to the church as it relates to political institutions? Segundo deals with this kind of a relationship when he discusses the administration of funds given by churches in developed countries for development work in Latin America. Who should be in charge of such funds? The hierarchical church has been quite willing to assume the task of administrating such aid. Segundo, however, questions the church as the proper or best agent to administrate such funds, for it is always tempted to use its privileged position for its own best interests. In a modern pluralistic society, not everyone will have equal access to the development funds. Therefore, Segundo suggests that the church should only shoulder this task when there is a lack of secular personnel or institutions to handle it, but even this would be only a temporary solution. The task of administrating aid, regardless of the source of such aid, rightly belongs to civil officials and local leaders; and if they are not

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[272] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, p. 37.

[273] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

responsible and honest people, then the church must focus its attention on changing the political situation. To continue to administrate aid on its own and to try to carry on an apolitical approach only means the support of the status quo.[274] The church would be more faithful to its mission if it "evinced a clear commitment to collaborate in the work of authentic human development, without getting mixed up in the political government of the state; or even if she reacted strongly against political regimes that violate man." Christians should assume personal responsibility in development work, even if the institutional church is not in charge of things. They can do this by supporting regimes that foster human betterment and rebelling against those which do the opposite.[275] In short, the way to transform persons is to first transform conditions, and Christians can do this by putting pressure on political institutions. They are not spectators but function as leaven in the dough, salt in the meal, and light in the household.[276]

Christians, however, cannot be involved in liberation and humanization without rubbing shoulders with nonchristians. This involves establishing some kind of dialogue and relationship with the unbelieving world. Segundo believes that nonchristians also search for truth and are interested in liberation and humanization; he also believes that dialogue between Christians and this other part of the world can be of mutual benefit to both parties.[277] While unbelievers or the world may not be interested in loving God, they are concerned with social problems; and it is at this point that the church can act as a leaven and make its contribution.[278]

Segundo does not think that the Christian possession of a revelation, a dogma, or doctrine constitutes a barrier to authentic

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[274] Segundo, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, pp. 95-106. Segundo discusses the church's rationale for acting as a "substitute" for the political institutions, and then he raises several questions in his criticism *of such rationale*.

[275] *Segundo, The* Community Called Church, pp. 96-97.

[276] *Ibid*., pp. 81 and 86.

[277] Christians also make up part of the world.

[278] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 72-73 and 118.

dialogue. All religions and ideologies possess a doctrine (a system of coherent ideas and values) through which they receive, analyze, and judge their own experiences. Any such doctrine could become a barrier, but Segundo suggests that such doctrines—even Christian revelation—cannot be interpreted as a recipe book of solutions for concrete problems. The church knows about God's activity in the world through revelation, but it does not have any monopoly on his activity; and it is for this reason that it is dependent upon dialogue with the world. God's merciful activity is present in the history of all humanity, and therefore the church must be faithful to both the Word and history in order to perceive his activity in the world. The church knows it cannot monopolize God but is called to service in his world.[279]

The church and the world are dependent upon one another. The world has something to offer the church, and the church has something to offer the world. The world makes the church aware both of its needs and problems through the modern means of communication and also of the possibilities for solving these problems through the available energy resources. Everything that the church receives from the world informs its sign-bearing obligation and its service-bearing responsibility.[280] The church also has something to offer the world. Christians do not deal with social problems on the basis of principles but rather on the basis of sincere searching and dialogue with nonbelievers.[281] Segundo draws heavily on Paul at this point. Paul told the Galatians that they were liberated from the law but not to live as they pleased. They were liberated to follow a new law that exists in the embodiment of their free being—the law of love.[282] The essential point is that we focus on the conscience of the person in front of us and not on ourselves. The liberty of the Christian always results in a creative and progressive

[279] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-103.

[280] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-103.

[281] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

[282] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

force in the service of the neighbor.[283] Thus Christian morality is essentially a morality of neighbor love and loving service. Christians are not tied to fixed principles from the past.[284] Through dialogue the church is better able to respond to the needs of our age, but Christians contribute an awareness of God's activity in history. Yet, the relationship between "persons of good will" and "Christians" is not simply collaboration from different levels of knowledge, one being implicit and the other explicit. Both are working toward the betterment of the world. "Persons of good will" are moving towards "Christians" as a result of this involvement, for the work of love is the beginning of faith for persons of good will.[285] Those who do not love the neighbor do not know God, and those who do love the neighbor already know God. Those outside of Christianity may not know God through the religious structures we have created, but they may know him by giving assent to the deepest dynamism God has placed in humanity—the love of other persons. Love prepares the way for faith.[286]

Both the world and the church contribute to the necessity of the unity and liberation of humanity. "As is evident," says Segundo, "the proper and innermost mission of the Church works toward the unity, not only of believers, but also of the whole human race."[287] The church offers the world a sign of this new reality.[288]

Segundo very clearly reformulates the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America when he begins to emphasize that

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[283] See also, 1 Corinthians 10:23.

[284] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, p. 111.

[285] *Ibid*., p. 56.

[286] *Ibid*., pp. 65-66.

[287] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, p. 184.

[288] One should not draw the conclusion that Segundo is interested in the "internal unity" of the Christian Church. He thinks this can only be accomplished by minimizing and playing down the radical historical oppositions that divide its members. See his discussion of this topic in Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, pp. 42-43.

the church should stop aiming at mass membership and begin to develop a select minority. Lehmann and Moltmann may share such feelings, but they do not reformulate the mission of the church as radically as does Segundo. Among the principal factors contributing to Segundo's reformulation of the mission of the church are the predominant position that the Roman Catholic Church holds in Latin America and the momentous proportions of oppression and suffering found there. Both of the above have contributed to the loss of the all-important "sign" function of the church.

In Segundo we also find a more complete reformulation of the concept of evangelism than we do in Lehmann. Evangelization, for Segundo, does not lead to a larger church; rather, it leads to a minority church dedicated to social service and justice. The starting point is not the transformation of persons, which then leads to transformed conditions; it is the transformation of social conditions, which is necessary before individuals can be truly transformed. Both Christians and nonchristians experience this transformation, but Christians recognize the activity of God in the struggles for liberation and humanization. Segundo believes that there must be a community of Christians to meet those who are moving towards faith by their involvement in liberation and humanization (acts of love and justice). Those moving toward Christianity, however, should be free to become Christians without pressure from the church. The evangelistic task of the church is not to urge persons to make commitments of faith and join the church; rather, it is to make clear the essence of the Gospel and to make known how God is liberating and humanizing persons. Nonchristians come to faith through love and their own involvement with God in bringing about social justice and the conditions necessary for a more humanized world for all. Thus the concept of evangelism is completely reformulated.

Segundo, like Lehmann, does not develop a reformulation of the mission in terms of moving from "charity" to "social justice," but it appears that he would be in agreement with Moltmann on this point. Segundo does talk about the relationship between the institutional church and the political institutions when it comes to handling aid, and he concludes that the church should take up this responsibility only when the political institutions are not able to discharge it.

Segundo, like Lehmann and Moltmann, strongly believes that the church should put pressure on the political institutions to become involved in shaping a society that will liberate and humanize persons. All this is possible because both Christians and nonchristians are concerned with liberation and humanization, and it is for this reason that there must be dialogue and cooperation between all persons with such an interest. Moltmann says this as well as does Lehmann, but Segundo is not as interested as Moltmann in drawing together the various elements in Christianity to present Christian unity. For Moltmann the disunity is a scandal, but for Segundo it is not. Segundo believes too much has to be given up for the sake of Christian unity; hence, he is not as concerned about it as is Moltmann. Instead, he wants the church to get on with the task of liberation and humanization and to dialogue and cooperate with all those groups that share this common interest. The task is too important to get bogged down in problems of disunity in matters of faith and organization. The church's mission is really a human one, even though the church is working together with God in carrying out this mission.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have tried to emphasize the positive concerns and challenges being made by political and liberation theology, and we have done this by examining the works of Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo. Let us now summarize some of those challenges that must be included in our reformulation of the church's mission, for they tend to speak to some of the questions we raised concerning a new missiology.

The first concern to be taken into consideration in reformulating the mission of the church is the desire for self-esteem, self-determination, and the need for social change. The experiences of guilt and condemnation, and the consequent desire for a realization of forgiveness and reconciliation are still valid concerns; but they do not make up the primary concerns of the poor and oppressed in the third world. If the church's mission is to be carried out in the third world, it will have to deal as much with the concerns found there for social liberation (or a gracious neighbor) as the first world's concern

for a gracious God. The emphasis will have to be on what God has done and is doing for the poor and the oppressed, even if this does not make him look so gracious in the eyes of the rich and those involved in oppressing others, whether such involvement is conscious or unconscious.

The second thing that might be said is that it is God's activity for liberation and humanization in the present that determines the church's mission and not fixed rules and principles from the past. All three writers accept this line of thinking, but none of them deals satisfactorily with how we might distinguish divine from human activity. While they do discuss signs of liberation, humanization, and justice as evidence of divine activity, they do not demonstrate how we can know that God is involved in these things rather than only human beings. While they are unable to offer any proof that it is God's activity, they do articulate certain criteria; and to some extent, all of them claim that the Christian is able to perceive divine activity, whereas unbelievers and some nonchristians see it as human activity. Perception is with the eye of faith rather than by physical sight or human reason.

The coming Kingdom of God is the context out of which the church's mission is formulated and reformulated. This is the third concern that needs to be included in a new missiology. The church's mission is certainly not to be determined by society, although society may well set the agenda for the church. Moltmann in particular discusses a new exodus in which the church must break out of the captivity and domination by society; indeed, the church exists to influence and give shape to society so that it adapts and conforms to the coming Kingdom of God. Society is a part of God's world, and for this reason needs to be shaped accordingly. The church does not exist simply to interpret the coming Kingdom of God but to transform our society so that it begins to conform to it. We cannot liberate and humanize ourselves completely, but we have been given a role to play. We are to begin living like liberated persons. All three of our theologians recognize the possibility of failure, but they affirm that liberation and humanization are not completely dependent upon human efforts. Lehmann writes that our efforts must be related to the messianic story or the truth not our own; otherwise, we fail no matter

how much we appear to succeed. Moltmann recognizes that we can become our own gravediggers but acknowledges that this possibility does not destroy the coming Kingdom of God. Segundo seems to give human beings the heaviest responsibility when he discusses the fact that God has handed the task of evolution over to us, although he does not insist that everything depends upon human effort. We cooperate with God, for we are construction workers (Moltmann) in the transformation of society and in the building up of God's Kingdom.

The fourth concern any new missiology must deal with is evangelism. Lehmann tended to dissolve evangelism into humanization, making the two indistinguishable. Segundo admitted that evangelism was primary, but his concept of evangelism differs sharply from Kraemer's. While Segundo uses the Great Commission passage found in Mark 16:15-16 in his definition of the church, he ignores completely any obligation for the numerical expansion of the Christian community. Instead, Segundo calls for a minority church devoted to serving the rest of humanity; consequently, he is not very far away from Lehman in dissolving evangelism into humanization. We find Moltmann's position more acceptable in our attempt to reformulate the mission of the church. Evangelism and humanization are two valid elements of the mission; they both have their different functions but are not alternatives. They are related to one another as the body is related to the soul, and yet some persons can be involved more in the one while others are more involved in the other. Each acts according to the gifts given. Finally, an evangelistic concern always leads directly into a concern for humanization, although we affirm the necessity of distinguishing between evangelism and humanization. Evangelism ought not to be completely dissolved into humanization. We also have to say something else that none of our theologians have said clearly enough. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) obligates us to grow numerically as well as in the depth of the Christian life. Our three theologians have placed a great deal of emphasis upon the Last Judgment passage (Matthew 25:31-46) as they have formulated the mission of the church, but very little—if any—attention has been given to the Great Commission passage. The only real contribution that political and liberation theology make to our understanding of evangelism is that

evangelism must lead into a concern for humanization and that the church must be concerned with what it is signifying in and to the world. Segundo especially makes us aware of the importance of the sign function of the church, and although the others do not discuss it in the same terms, they would undoubtedly agree with him.

A fifty concern is very closely related to the relationship of evangelism and humanization. It has to do with the relationship between individual transformation and social transformation. We have already seen how Lehmann perceived an overemphasis on the individual in the interpretation of the Reformation and his correction of it by pointing out the presence of the social in the very heart of the Reformation. Moltmann also stresses the interrelationship between the transformation of persons and society and insists that both must be done simultaneously. These are not alternatives, but neither is one to be overemphasized. Moltmann is calling for this balance because he perceives a past overemphasis on the individual; at least he does not overreact, as does Segundo. Segundo affirms the transformation of conditions prior to the transformation of persons. He even suggests in his latest book that Christianity might not be relevant until the social conditions are right.[289] Without trying to overemphasize one, both must be dealt with simultaneously. We agree with what E. Stanley Jones once said: "An individual gospel without a social gospel is a soul without a body. And a social gospel

[289] Segundo, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, pp. 94-95. In spite of Segundo's stress on personal freedom and faith based on personal commitment without pressure, he also questions whether the gospel message was ever intended to be addressed to people living in subhuman conditions. God waited a couple of million years, claims Segundo, before he sent Christ. God chose a moment when the gospel would be useful and appropriate in history. He chose the right social conditions into which to send his son. We affirm that an argument could be developed to demonstrate that Jesus did bring the gospel into an oppressive situation. Our point here, however, is to demonstrate Segundo's stress on the primacy of social transformation. Social transformation according to him, must precede individual and personal transformation.

without an individual gospel is a body without a soul. One is a ghost, and the other is a corpse."[290]

Moltmann, particularly, offers us a sixth challenge by calling for a shift in emphasis from charity and social service to that of social justice. Although Moltmann is the only one who deals specifically with this theme, Lehmann and Segundo are in basic agreement with him. Moltmann deals with this subject when he discusses the role of the church as being-there-for-others. Being-for-others leads too easily into the old paternalism and throwing charity at people when justice is required. The church's involvement in humanization aims at reducing the "dehumanizing gap" between the rich and the poor. It can never be satisfied with asking the rich to share out of their abundance with the poor; rather, the church aims at creating a situation in which the poor are no longer dependent upon the rich for the meeting of basic human needs. Jan Milic Lochman articulates what this might mean for the church when he calls Christian philanthropy "a harmful limitation of Christian brotherly love." "To help a person effectively," he continues, "demands a purposeful, organized and planned system of welfare for the whole sphere of men's social life, a reconstruction of society, not only the dealing with crying individual needs."[291] Moltmann, however, insists that beyond the establishment of socialism, the personal turning of a person to another person is still necessary. We can never say completely that the cup of cold water must be given only through public health measures and economic planning. The personal element cannot be lost as social justice is established, but the church cannot continue to emphasize the methods of philanthropy and charity simply because they seem more personal. The emphasis must be upon the establishment of social justice, and the church is guided here by its concept of the coming Kingdom of God where philanthropy and charity will not be necessary.

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[290] *World Outlook* (September, 1968), p. 50. The quote was taken from a news story about E. Stanley Jones.

[291] Jan Mlic Lochman, "The Service of the Church in a Socialist Society," *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World*, ed. by John C. Bennett (New York: Association Press, 1966), pp. 246-247.

All of our writers call for more political involvement on the part of the church. This makes up the seventh element that a new missiology must consider. The point being made is that the church cannot exist outside of the political arena; it has to take an interest in political affairs. It ought to influence and help to shape political action. Segundo recognizes that the church already is very influential in Latin America but that it has come down on the side of the elite and not on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Any new missiology must take this criticism very seriously. What is confusing, however, is the kind of relationship that ought to exist between the church and the political and social institutions; and none of our theologians deals adequately with this problem. Segundo does discuss the problem briefly at one point when he asks who should be responsible for the distribution of development aid. He concludes that the political and social institutions should normally be responsible and that the church should assume responsibility only when the former fail in this regard. Segundo warns, however, that the church usually assumes this task too eagerly and then is unwilling to let go, as the political authorities are able to resume the responsibility. The church always seems to rationalize why it should stay in the business. Segundo suggests that the hidden motive is that the church is fearful that the gospel does not have the power it once had to attract people on its own and stands in need of political and social alliances to carry on its task.[292] The same problem is lifted up by Wolfhart Pannenberg, who writes:

> The Church's devotion is to the impact of the future of God's Kingdom on present life in all its dimensions. The specifically social activities of the Church (its establishments, schools, etc.) are subsidiary and temporary. The Church engages in these activities as a substitute for the political community. The Church's effort should be directed toward making the state ready and able to assume these responsibilities which are appropriate to the political structures of society. It is a strange twisting of its sense of mission when the Church becomes jealous of the state and wants to monopolize certain welfare activities. The Church's

[292] Segundo, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, pp. 92-106.

satisfaction is in stimulating the political community to accept its responsibilities. The only irreplaceable social contribution of the Church is the personal integration of human life by confronting man with the ultimate mystery of life, with the eternal God and his purposes in history.[293]

In Segundo's work we find a criticism of the church for supporting the wrong side, i.e., the elite and those in power who are involved in oppressing others. At the same time, the church has used its social institutions to promote its own evangelistic ambitions. Hocking was also critical of this but did not question the existence of such Christian institutions as long as the church could support them and provide institutions of the highest quality and standards. None of our three theologians asks the church to divest itself of its schools, medical facilities, and agricultural programs, although there is a tendency to separate evangelism from such institutions, especially when evangelism is interpreted in terms of gaining new members for the church through these institutions. We do not have time to deal adequately with the issue of whether the church should continue these social institutions, but it is an important issue for missiology and one that needs to be taken up soon. For the present we can only take a brief look at the problem. Should the church continue to operate schools, medical work, and agricultural programs? When the church does involve itself in such social institutions as these, does it not relieve some pressure that ought to be exerted on the political community to improve such services? Should the church be setting up Christian institutions, or should it participate in and try to influence the public institutions that everyone else has to use? There is also another question that needs to be asked from the third world churches as they become autonomous. Is it even possible for these newer churches to assume financial responsibility for these institutions that have been established by western missions? If it is not, then they cannot become truly autonomous. Even if an autonomous church could support some of them, the more basic question needs to be asked. Is this what it should be doing? This question needs attention. We are inclined to say that the church ought

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[293] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 90-91.

to divest itself of these institutions for three reasons. The first reason is that the newer autonomous churches simply cannot afford them. The second reason is that such institutions are competing for the leadership that is so badly needed within the autonomous churches. The final reason, which is the most important, is that these institutions tend to relieve pressure that needs to be concentrated on the political community to do its job better. The political community is also subject to God and must be made aware of its responsibility. When the church builds its own social institutions, it is much easier to forget this fact.

A final challenge presented to us by political and liberation theology is that of dialogue and cooperating with other religions and ideologies with similar goals. All three theologians are interested in seeking out those with whom they can work in the tasks of liberation and humanization. They are not, however, interested in dialogue as it relates to belief systems and doctrines. Segundo even insists that doctrines will not interfere because all religions and ideologies hold certain doctrines through which they analyze reality. We may think that our doctrines are derived from revelation, but even this should not get in our way. Our doctrines are based on our perceptions of revelation and need not be thought of as fixed forever and ever. Doctrines inform us as to how God has acted in the past, but we in no way control his activity. Thus we can engage in dialogue and cooperation with others and learn from them even as we have something to contribute. This new emphasis on dialogue and cooperation differs from the past when Christianity was in open conflict with other religions and ideologies. This is a healthy reformulation of the mission of the church as long as it does not completely relativize its message. It enables us to build up relationships with other religions and ideologies that would otherwise not exist. Lochman demonstrates how this might work when he draws on Roger Garaudy's concept of "mutual interpellation." This concept has to do with a double contribution that was realized out of the Christian-Marxist dialogue in which Lochman and Garaudy participated. The Marxists saw their unique contribution as placing the emphasis on historical and social immanence, and the Christians saw their contribution in emphasizing

the relevance of transcendence.[294] “The one thing,” said Lochman, “that we really owe to the atheist is the message about the sovereign love of Christ.”[295] But how does mutual interpellation work between two religions where transcendence is taken for granted? Lochman does not deal with this. Our three theologians emphasize dialogue and cooperation in a common effort to achieve liberation and humanization and, to some extent this does open up the possibility of establishing relationships with other religions. If, however, both religions possess a strong missionary consciousness, there is not likely to be much cooperation or dialogue. If Hocking’s missiology is accepted, the kind of dialogue Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo discuss would be possible; but if one accepts Kraemer’s missiology, then dialogue and cooperation with other religions would be much more difficult, even if the emphasis is primarily on cooperation for humanization and justice. The latter has a strong missionary consciousness and would therefore expect much more difficulty in achieving the kind of dialogue and cooperation being suggested by political and liberation theology. Political and liberation theology, however, affirm the need for such dialogue and cooperation; and in spite of the problems connected with it, any attempt to develop a new missiology must deal with it.

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[294] Jan Milic Lochman, *Church in a Marxist Society* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), pp. 185-186.

[295] *Ibid*., p. 165.

III. A STRATEGY FOR MISSION: OVERCOMING THE HISTORICAL NEGATIVES

In the last chapter, our purpose was to take into consideration the positive visions our three theologians projected concerning the church's mission and then to evaluate them critically and draw some tentative conclusions for a reformulation of the church's mission and a new missiology.

Now we shall turn to a strategy for mission. How is the church to do its work? As the church attempts to carry out its mission in society, it cannot only deal with its own positive vision. It also has to deal concretely with the historical negatives that constantly confront it and challenge it. These negatives may be defined as anything that denies personal and social fulfillment to persons. These negatives cannot be avoided but need to be overcome. They also make us aware of what needs to be done in order to bring about liberation and humanization. We need to move through these negatives—overcoming them—in order to reach a more humanized world that conforms to our visions of the coming Kingdom of God.

It should be obvious that we are drawing more from Moltmann than the others in organizing this chapter, but this does not mean that we are forcing Lehmann and Segundo into any kind of straightjacket. One of the main characteristics of political and liberation theology is its concern with overcoming the historical negatives so that persons and societies may become more human. All of our writers share this concern, but Moltmann proceeds to give structure to the negation of specific negatives.

Moltmann gives two reasons why the "negation of the negative" is necessary as a strategy. First, he says that it is more difficult to clarify positive affirmations of the human than it is to point to what is inhuman.

> On the one hand what true humanity is can be comprehended in a positive affirmation only with extreme difficulty. On the other hand, what inhumanity is—from Nero to Hitler and from the hell of Auschwitz to the hells of our day—can be designated with moderate precision from our experience.

Secondly, he claims that "the positive, the new, the future which we seek can be historically circumscribed in the process of the negation of the negative."[296] Moltmann realizes that this is not likely to happen without having positive visions and concrete utopias in mind and warns us of the danger of falling into pragmatism and reaction without them.[297] We agree that the church needs to have a positive vision before it can respond to the historical negatives that confront it, and that is why we dealt with the positive in the last chapter. However, it is impossible to take everything into consideration before one constructs that positive vision; and so one must always be open to revision as new factors become obvious. These new factors do become obvious as one's positive vision is attacked and challenged by the historical negatives. This is why we have chosen to call the negation of the historical negatives a strategy of mission.

We now turn to an examination of how Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo deal with some of these negatives in four different but related areas. We realize more areas could be named, but we consider these to be most important for our purpose. Others that might be mentioned would have to relate to one of these four in some way. The ones we have chosen for consideration are the economic, political, social, and religious. From an analysis of the negatives in these areas, we hope to be able to suggest some tentative directions for reformulating the mission of the church and the development of a new missiology.

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[296] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 30. The idea, "the negation of the negative," comes from Hegel originally (cf. *Werke*, Vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Glockner, 1927), p. 543) but is used extensively by Ernst Block, Moltmann's mentor, and is very important for the Frankfort School of Critical Theory (Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas, Marcuse), with which Moltmann is in dialogue in *The Crucified God*. See Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, pp. 5 and 25ff.; and Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 158ff.

[297] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 35.

The Economic Negatives

As we take up the historical negatives, it will be clear from the start that all of them are intimately interrelated; nevertheless, we plan on separating them for the sake of discussion. This close interrelationship and the difficulty in separating the negatives is most obvious in the relationship between the economic and political negatives. We shall begin with the economic because it is one of the most powerful reasons for the very emergence of political and liberation theology. It has to do with providing persons and nations with their sufficient basic needs; hence, it deals with the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

According to Lehmann, there is not much indication that the first world is willing to slow down its own development so that the third world might catch up. Imperialist colonialism (economic imperialism) has simply replaced colonialist imperialism (political imperialism) and can be defined as "the domination of foreign places and peoples by powerful expansionist states in other ways than conquest or annexation."[298] Economic domination takes place through the indirect exercise of political and economic hegemony over territories, resources, and peoples, always with the threat of military intervention lurking in the background. The two main powers exercising such imperialism are the United States and the Soviet Union. The Chinese Revolution was and is a direct attack on the imperialism of both of these powers; the Cuban Revolution is an explicit challenge to the imperialism of the United States and implicitly to that of the Soviet Union.[299] These revolutions are bearers of new and humanizing possibilities breaking in upon old and dehumanizing ones; from the perspective of messianic politics, they are signs of transfiguration. They have passed judgment on economic imperialism and domination, even though they may

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[298] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 110.

[299] *Ibid*., p. 142. Lehmann does not elaborate on how Cuba is an implicit challenge to Soviet imperialism. The implication being made here might be that Cuba has no intention of simply exchanging masters but intends to move in an independent direction.

introduce new forms of dehumanization. What is needed to prevent and overcome these new negatives is the messianic story.[300]

The Chinese and Cuban Revolutions negated the economic negatives, but they were not led by Christians. Lehmann does deal with Christian leadership and involvement when he discusses the two Latin American heroes, Camilo Torres and Néstor Paz Zamora.[301] These Christians become involved in negating economic imperialism along with the communists. They entered the revolution as Christians and met communists already working. While Christians and communists did not enter the revolution with the same perspectives, they did have similar goals. Both groups were interested in negating the negatives present in economic and political society, rather than in enhancing themselves. Even the Vice Rector of the University of La Paz, a Marxist, said in memory of Néstor Paz Zamora: "Our history becomes fuller and America is grander because a handful of heroes understood that to fight to change the destiny of the poor is more important than to enjoy life."[302]

Lehmann calls for Christian involvement in revolutions alongside of communists and whoever might be aiming at liberating persons from economic imperialism. This is something very different from what we have heard in the past and is a reformulation of the mission of the church in itself. He sees such involvement as necessary to negate the economic negatives, as well as the political ones. Christians have the messianic story, which will keep the revolution from adopting new negatives or at least help keep them under control. Therefore, Christian involvement is necessary. Lehmann is a little too willing to involve Christians with nonchristians and particularly communists on the basis that such groups are signs of transfiguration against certain negatives, whether they be economic or political. He seems altogether too confident that Christians with the messianic story will succeed in keeping things under control and says little about the problem of getting them to

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[300] *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

[301] *Ibid.*, p., 149.

[302] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

take the messianic story seriously. The one thing that is clear from his writings is his support of socialism as a way of dealing with the economic negatives. All of the movements of transfiguration named by him for liberating persons from economic imperialism are movements that advocate some form of socialism.

When we come to Moltmann, we discover that he defines the economic negative as “the vicious circle of poverty.” He calls poverty intolerable in a time that has also produced affluent societies and insists that the present capitalistic and nationalistic industrial systems have given proof of the possibility of overcoming poverty. They have failed in accomplishing this task, however, and have succeeded only in making the gap between the rich and the poor larger. This disparity exists within the class differences of individual societies as well as between the advanced industrial countries and the less developed agrarian countries. The price of agricultural produce falls while the price of industrial goods rises; consequently, the hopeless circle of poverty continues.[303]

Moltmann’s concrete utopia envisions a future in which hardships cease and all persons can live free from hunger and anxiety. In such a utopia, the material needs of persons must be met in regard to nourishment, clothing, housing, and health care. The vicious circle of poverty can only be broken by a redistribution of economic power, for class domination and exploitation must be negated. Social welfare might be necessary for those who are economically weak, and development might be necessary for the so-called underdeveloped nations; but both of these are only transitional measures to keep persons and nations alive who, would otherwise go to the wall. The victims of economic injustice must be helped, for there can be no humanity without solidarity. According to Moltmann, “socialism is the symbol for the liberation of men from the vicious circle of poverty.” [304]

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[303] Molmtann, *The Crucified God*, p. 330; Moltmann, “Fellowship in a Divided World,” pp. 442-443; and Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, p. 38.

[304] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 332; and, Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 38.

In stating that the capitalistic and industrial systems have given proof that the vicious circle of poverty can be broken and at the same time placing Christianity on the side of socialism, Moltmann is involved in the reformulation of the church's mission. He is not simply calling for a transformation of capitalism but, rather, for the reorganization of society along socialistic lines. He could be severely criticized here on two points. First, he seems to assume that socialism would not make the same mistake; and, second, he assumes that under socialism the gap between the rich and the poor would be smaller.[305] In spite of these criticisms, we would like to point out that Moltmann is reformulating the mission of the church in light of the contemporary themes of liberation and humanization. He is trying to make Christianity relevant. His reformulated conclusion would mean austerity on the part of wealthy persons and rich nations so that poor persons and nations have a chance to catch up.[306] But, we would ask, will the rich and powerful accept this austerity without revolution?

Segundo, like both Lehmann and Moltmann, wants to make the third world less dependent on the first and second worlds; but unlike Lehmann and Moltmann, he takes a fresh look at what he considers to be the economic negatives that make liberation difficult. In the end he makes a clear commitment to socialism.

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[305] M. Richard Shaull speaks to the first point when he says the following: "We could move from a capitalistic to a socialist economy and still be dominated by the basic logic of an industrial and technological society, by the drive constantly to produce—and consume more, as well as to compete with each other." M. Richard Shaull, "On Containment and Change," p. 19. Ivan Illich speaks to the second point when he says: "The gap between the consumption of the university graduate and that of the average citizen is even wider in Russia, China, and Algeria than in the United States. Cars, airplane trips, and tape recorders confer more visible distinction in a socialist country, where only a degree, and not just money, can produce them." Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper and Rob, Publishers, 1972), p. 50.

[306] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 175.

The first negative he takes up is the "profit motive" which he rejects as lacking in any Christian foundation.[307] Segundo admits that the church has been critical of the inhuman aspects of capitalism; but unlike Marxism, the church has not offered any workable alternative. Segundo believes that Marx created the image of a society not based on profit and began to move society in a new direction. This is what Segundo wants the church to do as well, and he has confidence that it can be done.[308] He indicates some degree of success in the European Common Market, the Central American Common Market, and the Latin American Free Trade Association. The church ought to aim at using technological progress as a means of distributing greater benefits for all. This would make life more human and less primitive.[309] Thus Segundo expresses some confidence that we cannot only negate the profit motive but that we can also overcome our greed.

The second negative to undergo change is "the meaning of private property." Segundo acknowledges the fact that Pope John also affirmed the private ownership of the means of production as a natural right, and he does not oppose him on this.[310] He reformulates what this means. He begins by insisting that the natural right to a thing is not satisfied when just anybody possesses it. Ownership cannot be limited to a few individuals but must be the right of all. Segundo gives a few examples of how the private ownership of the means of production has become a negative. In Argentina 1 per cent of the landowners hold 50 per cent of the arable land. In Chile 90 per cent of the people receive only 10 per cent of the national income, while 10 per cent receive 90 per cent. In the United States 6 per cent of the world's population uses up to 40 per cent of the world's resources. These instances do not fulfill the natural right to the means

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[307] Juan Luis Segundo, "Social Justice and Revolution," *America* (April 27, 1968), p. 574.

[308] *Ibid.*, p. 576.

[309] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 119-120.

[310] The question raised was whether the natural right to private property applied only to consumer goods or whether it took in the means of production as well. Pope John affirmed both.

of production.[311] What then does Segundo suggest? He suggests that persons must join in association if they are to own viable means of production. Business enterprises must merge in order to survive, and this is just as true in socialist as it is in capitalist nations. But, when such mergers take place, should they be owned by the elite or the workers themselves? Segundo opts for a form of socialism that serves the common good rather than the bank accounts of the elite or the expatriation of profits to foreign banks.[312] The fulfillment of the natural right of the ownership of the means of production really means for Segundo that everyone has access to the means of production. The elite capitalists do not have the right to own them. Everyone has a right to the means of production and not just the privileged few. The state will have to exercise some control over them, but this does not necessarily mean state ownership.

The third economic negative has to do with "industrial expansion" in the third world. Segundo talks about three components in economic expansion: population growth, technological progress, and human organization together with geographic expansion. These components produce an irreversible need for economic expansion. A larger population increases the need for technological progress, and more technological progress brings about an increased need for human organization.[313] However, Segundo is not as concerned about population growth in poor countries as he is about overconsumption in the rich nations. The greater negative to be negated is overconsumption among the rich. The children of the rich will be more prone to overconsume than will the children of the poor.[314]

Segundo is very pessimistic about the possibility of any economic or industrial development, taking place. Industrialization gives people a glimpse of a better life only to deny it to them. The

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[311] Segundo, "Social Justice and Revolution," p. 577. For the example about the United States, see Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 215.

[312] *Ibid.*, p. 577.

[313] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, pp. 118-119.

[314] Juan Luis Segundo, "Has Latin America a Choice?", *America* (February 22, 1968), p. 215.

third world needs a break, but it will not get this break. The monopolies of the international market will never give the slightest break to the infant industries of the developing nations, and these industries are too weak to compete with them. Is there no other option? Segundo discusses the possibility of gradual industrialization through a country's own resources but writes it off as hopeless:

> But the poor countries are also, separately or even collectively, very poor markets. And they have to import the new techniques, the machinery, even the research, to make such industrialization possible—and all this is extremely costly. It is almost cheaper, if we want to provide income for our workers, to pay them not to work and buy the products manufactured in industrial countries.[315]

Industrialization is taking place in the third world, and the first world is encouraging it; but, asks Segundo, "Why?" The answer is found in one word, "profits." If there are new industries in Latin American countries, it is because foreign corporations earn more profits there than at home. According to a recent issue of the German *Deutsche Außenpolitik*, says Segundo, "General Motors made a profit in 1968 of 25 per cent in the United States and about 80 per cent in their Latin American branches." Even financial assistance from Washington is relatively modest in contrast to the profits derived by American companies, and what assistance is given has had to be diverted from development to the satisfaction of imperative short-range needs such as housing and food programs. What then do Latin American countries expect from American investments? The answer is simple. They expect practically nothing at all; they only look forward to something to hang on to, which is another way of saying that all they have to look forward to is despair.[316]

Segundo is more specific in dealing with the economic negatives than either Lehmann or Moltmann; but all of our writers agree that the church must choose and support some form of economic organization, and for them it is socialism. The need to be open to a

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[315] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

[316] *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

new political or economic ideology has not always been obvious to the church. Segundo comes through the loudest on this point when he says that even a church that refuses to choose does so by its very refusal. This is a confirmation of the status quo. Every faith, he insists, must express itself in some form of ideology. As faith without works is dead, so is faith without an ideology.[317] José Míguez Bonino, however, put it much more succinctly when he wrote: "There is no divine politics or economics. But this means that we must resolutely use the best human politics and economics at our disposal."[318] Does this mean, however, that socialism must be chosen in every country? Does not the social and cultural context have to be taken into consideration? If the church must support a political or economic ideology, the former must be open to constantly reformulating its task as it tries to relate to the social context in which it lives. In the future, there may emerge an even better form of economic organization, which the church may have to support over socialism.

It could be that all three of our theologians are overly optimistic about the prospects of socialism avoiding the mistakes of capitalism. Segundo mentions the problem of the profit motive but seems to think that socialism has successfully negated it. Is socialism really free of the profit motive, or has it simply moved into a kind of socialistic capitalism? Segundo has not taken seriously enough the writing of Reinhold Niebuhr, who wrote in 1935:

> The most grievous mistake of Marxism is its assumption that an adequate mechanism of social justice will inevitably create individuals who will be disciplined enough to "give according to their ability and take according to their need."[319]

We agree with Segundo that a change needs to take place, but we are not as confident as he is that it can happen simply by adopting a new form of economic organization. The profit motive, which can hardly be separated from financial rewards, is a powerful force. Denis

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[317] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, pp. 106-110.

[318] Míguez Bonino, *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age*, p. 149.

[319] Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 201.

Goulet reminds us of how strong it is when he says: "A torrential 'migration of minds' or 'brain-drain' occurs because skilled men gather where rewards are greatest, not necessarily where such men are most needed."[320] This stands in need of reformulation, and the church ought to be leading the way by demonstrating that at least it can overcome the problem of the profit motive. It could do this by taking the inequities out of its own reward system so that its pastors could respond to need rather than to seeking those appointments or congregations that offer the highest financial rewards. The church can hardly be very critical or society as long as it has not resolved the problem itself.

One of the purposes of choosing socialism is to make possible a more just distribution of the world's goods and to narrow the dehumanizing gap between the rich and the poor. In the past, it was too easily assumed that this gap could be narrowed by helping the poor catch up with the rich. Ivan Illich points out the fallacy of such thinking when he claims: "No breakthrough in science or technology could provide every man in the world with the commodities and services which are now available to the poor of the rich countries."[321] There might be enough goods to satisfy everyone's basic needs, but there cannot be enough goods to satisfy everyone's greed. Moltmann and Segundo have reformulated the task to that of abolishing poverty rather than seeking affluence. Lehmann would agree. None of our writers deals with ways of reformulating this task except through revolution or economic and political organization. Ivan Illich, on the other hand, calls for an intermediate technology and the development of convivial tools that seem to point the way to abolishing poverty over against simply obtaining affluence.[322] It might be that the political and economic ideologies would need to be chosen before an intermediate technology could be put into full operation. In any

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[320] Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 288.

[321] Illich, *Deschooling Society*, p. 162.

[322] See Illich's discussion of this in the following works: Ivan Illich, "The Alternative to Schooling," *Saturday Review* (June 19, 1971), pp. 59-60; and in Ivan Illich, *Tools for Convivilaity* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1973), pp. 84-85.

event, our writers are involved in the task of reformulating the mission of the church as it relates to economic organization and to the themes of liberation and humanization. This also presents us with a challenge as we attempt to contribute something to a new missiology.

The Political Negatives

All three writers recognize the constant emergence of new political negatives; as a result, the mission of the church includes assistance in overcoming these new negatives.

One of the political negatives identified by Lehmann is colonialist imperialism, which he defines "as the conquest of, and rule over, foreign places and peoples intrinsic to the expansionist policies of powerful states."[323] For the sake of clarity, we shall refer to this negative as colonialism. Lehmann cites two examples of the successful negation of colonialism in Asia, the first being the Chinese and the second being the Vietnamese Revolutions. He calls these signs of transfiguration because they put an end to colonialism in their respective countries, although some ambiguities remain.

These ambiguities are caused by the necessity to consolidate revolutionary power after the revolution at the same time that less attention is given to a revolutionary consciousness. Lehmann describes this shift of emphasis—necessary as it might be—as the movement from "the power of an ideology" to "the ideology of power." "The power of an ideology is the power of a humanizing vision to shape values and of values to shape the organization of a social order in which freedom has the space to undergird the people's happiness." On the other hand, an ideology of power "is the self-justifying defense and expansion of existing power through a subtle and pervasive invasion of the people's consciousness in order to achieve an identification between the happiness of the people and the security guaranteed by the very power that seeks to justify itself." Within this vicious circle, "freedom" is exchanged for "security." However, it would be premature to claim the success of humanization in the technocratic society of the West and a mistake to

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[323] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 110.

assume that Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh have missed the moment to found freedom. If one looks at the world from the perspective of "messianic politics," the signs of transfiguration are present. The moment of truth for colonialism has arrived, and its doom has been accomplished. At least one negative has been negated, even though new negatives emerge.[324] The church supports such secular political revolutions as signs of God's liberating and humanizing activity, but it also opposes any new negatives as they emerge. It is the church's continual task to remind both revolutionary and political leadership of these negatives and to point the way to bringing them under control. The church possesses the messianic story, which has the power to prevent the emergence of new political negatives; hence, it is this messianic story that helps to transform a revolution from a mere sign of transfiguration into a transfigured revolution.

All of these examples that Lehmann gives for negating colonialism have ended up with dictatorships. They have been successful at negating some dehumanizing circumstances, but they have not been very successful in preventing the emergence of new negatives. We might ask why it is so necessary to prevent these new negatives from taking root? We find it difficult to think that people have really been liberated when they have been merely liberated from one master to another. Liberation takes place when people become subjects of their own history. What is needed is not a new power elite or dictatorship but a decentralization of power so that the people can share in the creation of their own history.[325] In such a context, this means that the church might have to change sides and oppose the leadership it once supported. Lehmann does not say this, but we do not see how he can avoid such a conclusion. The messianic story would force us to oppose all of those negatives that prevent liberation and humanization, and the emergence of any new negatives would force the church to reformulate the way in which it views the new regime.

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[324] *Ibid*., pp. 130-134.

[325] John Swomley, *Liberation Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), pp. 14 and 81.

Moltmann calls the political negative "the vicious circle of force." He finds it difficult to separate the economic and political negatives, and the presence of one or the other leads to the vicious circle of force. Hopeless spirals develop. "After each unsuccessful attempt at revolution, the machinery of oppression returns better organized than before while successful revolutions all too frequently lead to new forms of organized oppression." The problem does not only exist between the dictatorship of a privileged elite over the unprivileged but also between powerful and weak nations.[326]

The concrete utopia here is the transformation of nationalistic foreign policy into the beginning of a worldwide domestic policy. "The primary questions," says Moltmann, "is not 'What is good for my land and my standard of living?' but 'What is good for the peace of the world and the building of a coming world community?'"[327] Moltmann is suggesting "world government" even though he realizes how difficult it would be to establish. "The idea seems quite realistic when we consider the deadly threat to mankind," he says, "but utopian when we consider the political situation." This is consistent enough with his concept of aiming at a "concrete utopia," but can such a thing be accomplished? Moltmann seems to think so. Since peace can only be achieved through world government, "particular governments and agencies have a right to exist only if they contribute to world peace and help bring about world government."[328]

Moltmann is convinced that the vicious circle of force can only be broken by democracy—not simply a democracy within a single state but also the democratization of relationships between competing states. This democracy must find its standard in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Democracy," continues Moltmann, "means the recognition of human rights as the basic rights of the citizen in a state. The aim of the democratic

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[326] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 330; and, Moltmann, "Fellowship in a Divided World," p. 443; as well as, Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 38-39.

[327] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 39.

[328] Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, p. 174.

movement…is the making possible and the realization of human dignity through liberation from political oppression and control."[329] Socialism must be carried forth in conjunction with the democratization of society and of international relationships. We cannot give priority to one at the expense of the other. If we neglect one, we create the very misery we set out to overcome. Socialism means economic justice, and democracy means freedom on the basis of human rights. There is no socialism without democracy, and there is no democracy without socialism.[330]

Moltmann believes that his conclusions are a logical consequence of the church's being true to its mission. Through the years, political constitutions and forms of government have been going through a constant process of alteration; and it has been the task of the church to encourage forms of government which best serve human fellowship and human rights and dignity. The church has also had to resist those forms, which hinder and suppress the latter. The political task of the church has not been simply to live in an existing political order but actually to take part in forming it. The church has done this through the centuries. The early church desacralized the emperor cult and placed limits on it, although it interceded on the emperor's behalf. The Reformation secularized political rule and relativized the political order but still placed it in service of the welfare of all. A critical distinction, however, was made between welfare and salvation. Puritanism abolished the divine right of kings, replacing it with the political contract, the covenant or constitution of free citizens. The demand for freedom of religion was followed by the demands for freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and civil liberties. Consequently Christianity has been on a path of desacralization, secularization, and democratization of political rule. It must remain on this path if it wants to remain true to its faith and hope. Today's orientation towards human rights is a continuation of that same movement.[331]

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[329] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 333.

[330] Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," p. 426.

[331] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 179.

Moltmann seems less willing than Lehmann to permit new negatives to arise as one seeks liberation and humanization. Moltmann wants to negate all of the negatives at the same time without allowing new ones to emerge. The big problem with Moltmann's thought is that he suggests that the political negatives can only be negated by also aiming at a world government. This "concrete utopia" is very close to an "abstract one." Even if a world government were to be established, what would keep it from becoming the tool of powerful interest groups? How could one prevent such a movement from simply becoming a new form of colonialism? Lehmann indicates that nations such as China and Vietnam are signs of transfiguration because they have negated colonialism and want to become subjects of their own history. They may not be aiming at world government in the sense of Moltmann's "social democracy"; but in terms of their own ideology, they hope for and anticipate a worldwide proletarian fraternity. Does this give them the right to exist? Moltmann would probably not deny them that right, but he would still insist on the primacy of social democracy on a worldwide basis. We are, after all, in a stage of transition. We have not yet arrived.

What, we might ask, does this mean for the mission of the church? If the first century church was not pressing for a worldwide social democracy, then why is it necessary to incorporate such ideas in the mission of the modern church? Moltmann's answer would be that the Christian community was never called together to live in the present political order as it is; it was called into existence to help shape it so that the political institutions also contribute to liberation and humanization. The church then cannot be apolitical. Even though a Christian political ideology cannot be derived from the New Testament, the church still has the responsibility of supporting those ideologies that aim at liberation and humanization. Moltmann believes that social democracy does this best without permitting new negatives to emerge, and so he would have the church place its support behind this ideology. This would not be done, however, uncritically. The aim is still to seek humanization on all fronts simultaneously.

Political and economic issues are also closely interrelated in the thinking of Segundo. Although it is difficult to separate them, let us attempt to deal with those negatives that seem more closely related to the political issues. The first political negative he wants to overcome is that of the "external proletariat." The vast proletariat that makes life and prosperity possible for the great empires today, says Segundo, is external to them. Both Russia and the United States have an external proletariat, which makes their affluence possible; but since Segundo writes from Latin America, he is more concerned with showing how Latin America is "the principal external proletariat of the American Empire." This external proletariat can do nothing to remedy its plight, because the ultimate decisions are made in the United States. This is neither fair nor consistent, for the American democracy claims to be based on the principle that legislation—like taxation—without representation is unjust. Consequently, Latin Americans have become objects rather than subjects of their own history.[332]

What makes the problem even more complex is that both the rich and the poor in the United States have an interest in perpetuating the external proletariat. They both are interested in perpetuating the source of their wellbeing and progress, which is the internal economic structure and its growing imbalance between prices offered for raw materials and prices demanded for manufactured goods. Segundo is both pessimistic and optimistic about change from within the United States as it is engaged in an economic-political struggle with a rival power; yet he can see no other way out for the external proletariat except to depend upon and press for that change.[333] The hoped-for change is a slowdown in the pace of development in the United States and in all other rich nations. Segundo puts it as follows:

> If we are to make every human being a subject of his own destiny rather than its object, this presupposes that we are going to reduce the speed with which some few nations are

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[332] Segundo, "Has Latin America a Choice?" pp. 215-216.

[333] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

experiencing the ultimate possibilities of the universe. To speed up the pace is to lose sight of the human race.[334]

The above means that false concepts of development must also be negated. Segundo points out that the antidevelopment attitude in Latin America does not stem from any contempt for development, but it does represent a refusal to equate underdevelopment with backwardness. "When underdevelopment is pictured as… backwardness," he continues, "we are offered formulas which 'technical experts' picture as being endowed with some kind of automatic efficacy." It means that the investment of foreign private capital is a tool needed to get development moving. According to Segundo, development means more than modernization. When nations are kept on the margin of the economic-political; empire and remain objects instead of subjects of their own history, then development has not occurred, no matter how modern a country might appear on the outside.[335]

A second political negative has to do with the "illusions of the electoral process." Segundo points out that the ability to choose between two political parties—which are essentially alike—has nothing to do with exercising decisive political influence. We are not able to choose the political system under which we want to live in this way, even though we are given the opportunity to vote from now until doomsday. Every so-called democratic society has worked out hidden rules and mechanisms that prevent the majority from really exercising directly the power it possesses in theory.[336] Both capitalistic and socialistic democracies operate on the principle that the majority would not know how to use power for human betterment, and thus it would be disastrous to turn such power over to them.[337]

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[334] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, p. 127.

[335] Segundo, *The Sacraments Today*, p. 56.

[336] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 51.

[337] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

Even the church tries to manipulate the electoral process for its own benefit and protect its privileged position within society. As one nonbeliever put it:

> In Latin America it is impossible to carry out any revolutionary program without having the collaboration (?) or the consent of the Church; to insure such support, one must guarantee all the demands she makes with regard to legislation concerning religious worship, religious education on the three levels of schooling, the prohibition of divorce, etc.[338]

In other words, the church judges political parties according to how they stand in regard to the special interests of Christian institutions. It then tries to influence its members to vote for those who support its own institutions; and this, according to Segundo, could result in Christians voting for the worst candidates as long as they do not attack the ecclesiastical institutions. The church ought to negate this traditional use of power to enhance itself and its institutions and place itself in the service of human beings. Segundo believes that Vatican II has tried to correct this problem.[339] This means that the church will have to take seriously the political programs of persons and parties, regardless of whether or not they enhance the Catholic Church.

It is difficult to perceive what Segundo really wants. Does he want a "world government" such as is being suggested by Moltmann, or does he want each Latin American nation to simply control its own destiny? Certainly he understands the complex interrelationships that exist between nations, and he does not appear to be asking for a worldwide democracy with each nation having representation. The problem he raises concerning the external proletariat would be better solved, however, with such a worldwide democracy; hence, his conclusions would be more consistent if he adopted Moltmann's line of thought. Instead, he appeals to those nations out in front to slow down before they lose sight of what it

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[338] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, p. 94.

[339] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

means to be human. Segundo is not very realistic when he suggests that the developed nations might reduce the speed of development so that the developing nations can "catch up." Is it really very likely that the rich and powerful will voluntarily give up their power and prestige so that they will not lose sight of the human race? Segundo hopes so but is not very optimistic about it himself.[340] Segundo becomes even more pessimistic when he discusses the problem of the rich and the poor within one nation, and this will become more evident as we deal with his thoughts on revolution and violence in the next chapter. For the present, let us say that he agrees with Rubem Alves who insists that history "does not tell us a single case in which the powerful have given up power willingly."[341] Not only do rich nations have to be challenged and pressured, so do the wealthy and powerful within the developing nations. If this reading of history is correct, the fundamental question that remains is: In what way are the powerful to be pressured—through violence or nonviolence?

We have said that Moltmann was more concerned about not creating new negatives in overthrowing the political negatives than was Lehmann; now we must conclude that Segundo is also less concerned with this than Moltmann. In fact, Segundo is very critical of Europeans (like Moltmann) and Americans who require that the Latin Americans guarantee in advance that no new negatives will emerge as they press for liberation and humanization. Segundo

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[340] Segundo, "Has Latin America a Choice?" pp. 213-216. In this article, written in 1969, Segundo notes Latin America's dependence on the willingness of the United States to change its policies that cause oppression and poverty in Latin America and states that the present policy in the United States even violates the principles of its own democracy. Since he recognizes how dependent Latin America is on the United States, he challenges the United States to change out of concern for the Latin American situation and the humanization of its people. Segundo's challenge sounds something like that made by Denis Goulet, who hopes that nations will stop chasing after "affluence" and begin to see the central target as "abolishing poverty or misery." Affluence for all is not a possibility, but abolishing poverty should be. We just have to get our goals straight. See Goulet, *The Cruel Choice*, pp. 252 and 255.

[341] Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*, p. 109.

replies by saying that Christian theology must be based on what liberates persons here and now; it cannot be too concerned about foreseeing and excluding all possible errors and dangers. This kind of thinking would make the achievement of liberation and humanization very elusive.[342]

All three writers are concerned about nations and persons becoming subjects of their own histories. Moltmann expresses interest in democracy. Lehmann and Segundo would not be opposed to democratic structures if they could achieve liberation and humanization. Segundo is only critical of the way in which the "electoral process" has been abused in the past and is in no way calling for a dictatorship. The corrective that all three would suggest for democracy is some form of socialism. Socialism would give direction to democracy and help to prevent certain abuses that majorities might otherwise exercise, consciously or unconsciously, over minorities. In linking democracy to socialism, we perceive a reformulation of the mission of the church taking place, for much of traditional theology came down on the side of capitalism. Here we have the mission of the church reformulated so that the church makes a choice to support socialism.

The Social Negatives

As we take up the social negatives, we shall begin with racial problems; however, we do not mean to restrict the former to the latter.

When Lehmann discusses this negative, he expresses considerable concern over what he calls racism. He defines racism as follows:

> Racism is the social attitude and behavior that make of color, regardless of its superficiality, the effective source and justification of preferential valuation in inter-group relations. Consequently, racism is the denial, to the group so devalued,

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[342] Juan Luis Segundo, "Capitalism—Socialism: A Theological Crux," *Concilium* (June, 1974), pp. 120-122.

of the reciprocity between identity and creativity essential to personal and group self-identification.[343]

Racism can be distinguished from the other social negatives by its depth, for it achieves dehumanization by the "de-identification" of persons.[344]

Lehmann lifts up the Black Revolution and discusses four movements within that revolution that negated racism. These movements were led by Frantz Fanon, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers. Fanon concluded that violence was necessary as a first step in the decolonization necessary for black liberation.[345] King led a movement deeply rooted in the biblical and Christian faith and in the pragmatic nonviolence of Mahatma Gandhi.[346] Malcolm X discovered the meaning of blackness in Islam and was militant and violent at first.[347] Lehmann points out that King and Malcolm X were moving closer together before they were assassinated. King was moving from passive resistance to militant nonviolent protest while Malcolm X was moving from hatred and violence to separation and nonviolent militancy.[348] The Black Panthers did not obtain their vision from Christianity or Islam but, rather, from the "Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution" and from "Marxism-Leninism and the teachings of Mao Tse-tung."[349] In spite of the different approaches used by these four movements, they were all organized to combat the negative of racism.

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[343] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 164.

[344] *Ibid*., pp. 163-164.

[345] *Ibid*., pp. 173-174.

[346] *Ibid*., p. 184.

[347] *Ibid*., p. 203.

[348] *Ibid*., p. 197.

[349] *Ibid*., p. 215.

Lehmann understands all of these movements as signs of transfiguration.[350] They point to what God is doing to negate racism and contribute to what he is doing to make and keep human life human. The different methods used do not seem to disturb Lehmann very much. As long as they all aim at negating racism, they are signs of transfiguration and what God is doing to liberate and humanize persons.

When Moltmann deals with the social negatives, he, too, discusses racism and calls for the destruction of "the vicious circle of alienation." "If a man is judged and acknowledged according to his skin color, whether black or white or yellow," says Moltmann, "he has in effect no human identity." He is offended in the very core of his person, and this is precisely what has happened. The progress of the white has been purchased with the regress of the nonwhite person. The nonwhite person has been reduced to a certain "place" and forced to serve white progress; he only shares in the latter within clearly delineated boundaries. Such persons have been reduced to the level of objects to be manipulated and molded to suit their rulers. When this happens, they lose their names and their self-respect and are robbed of their identity. Thus the whole superiority complex of whites has at the same time bred an inferiority complex in nonwhite persons. It is also inevitable that the victims of white racism rebel and sue for their lost humanity.[351]

The mission of the church is to envisage "a new identity for humanity, which overcomes, relativizes, and destroys all racial identifications."[352] This does not mean that we do away with all racial and cultural differences, for this would be impossibile. "Integration," explains Moltmann, "cannot lead to a grey mass of uniform men. Identity cannot mean ultimate separation. Identity and

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[350] While Lehmann does consider all four movements signs of transfiguration, he does not consider all of them transfigured movements. A transfigured movement does not permit new forms of racism to emerge.

[351] The vicious circle of alienation is described in the following three sources: Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 332; Moltmann, "Fellowship in a Divided World," p. 444; and Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 40.

[352] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 40.

acknowledgement belong together and are not possible without each other." Liberation from the vicious circle of alienation means "personalization in socialization and finding one's identity in the recognition of others." The symbol here is "emancipation" in which persons gain self-respect and self-confidence in the recognition of others and fellowship with them.[353]

Moltmann deals with racism much more broadly than does Lehmann. Lehmann tends to speak only to the black/white problem, while Moltmann defines it to include all nonwhites. This needed to be done, but we might ask whether the problem is really so simple? The conclusion to be drawn from both Lehmann and Moltmann is that the white person is the racist and the nonwhite is not, that white persons are the exploiters and the nonwhites are the exploited. We realize that they do not generalize; but what they say comes close to such a conclusion, for they do not discuss racist attitudes among nonwhites. It is not difficult to find examples of nonwhite racists and nonwhites exploiting others. There is no question that the world is caught up in the vicious circle of alienation (racism), but it can hardly be defined as simply a problem between whites and nonwhites. We agree with Moltmann that we are not to aim at a "grey mass of uniform men" but, rather, at "personalization in socialization," or finding one's identity in the recognition of others. The church, however, needs to reformulate its mission to include the negation of racism wherever it might exist. We are not saying that Lehmann and Moltmann would disagree, but they have not dealt with nonwhite racism and oppression. Perhaps it is because white racism and oppression seem so widespread and whites make up such a large proportion of the societies in which they live.

Segundo's social context causes him to speak to more than racial issues; consequently, he expresses a strong concern over class and the social negatives that perpetuate the problem between the rich and the poor and the oppressors and the oppressed. He describes these negatives in terms of class, race, religion, and nation and insists that a church that stresses service to human beings rather than the enhancement of its own institutions will negate all of the boundaries

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[353] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 333.

set up by these negatives. Segundo gives an example of a church unwilling to do this when faced with countless homeless children following a natural catastrophe. Catholics, he said, were told not to give them shelter in their own families. Why? The answer was that these children came from other life-styles and moral circles and that Catholics should not jeopardize the moral life and Christian faith of their own children.[354] This illustration has serious social consequences. For Segundo, the world, which is divided into watertight compartments based on class, race, religion, and nationality is to be negated in favor of a world without such boundaries.[355]

A different kind of humanity will emerge as a result of the negation of these boundaries. All of us have a common destiny, and we should begin cooperating as we move toward it. Segundo quotes the following image taken from the works of Teilhard de Chardin:

> Up to now human beings have lived apart from each other, scattered around the world and close in upon themselves. They have been like passengers who accidentally met in the hold of a ship, not even suspecting the ship's motion. Clustered together on the earth, they found nothing better to do than to fight or amuse themselves. Now, by chance, or better, as a natural result of organization, our eyes are beginning to open. The most daring among us have climbed to the bridge. They have glimpsed the ship's prow cutting the saves. They have noticed that a boiler keeps the ship going and a rudder keeps it on course. And, most important of all, they have seen clouds floating above. It is no longer agitation down in the hold, just drifting along; the time has come to pilot the ship. It is inevitable that a different humanity must emerge from this vision.[356]

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[354] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, p. 59. Unfortunately, Segundo does not clarify what the problems were with the children's life-styles and morality.

[355] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[356] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

The imagery here is that we assume control over history. Previously Segundo said that the task of evolution was handed over to us. Because we are dependent upon one another, we must break down barriers and begin working together for the sake of our common destiny.

Segundo at least points out that the problem is not only one of race and that we also need to be liberated from our tendency to idolatrize our own class, religion, and nation. We do not mean to imply that such distinctions should not exist but only that they should not become the basis for dehumanizing others. At the same time that we find our identity in our own race, class, religion, and nation, we should also respect others who differ from us.

In looking at the social negatives and how our writers deal with them, we conclude that although Segundo discusses racial issues, he is less concerned with them than is Lehmann and Moltmann. This is probably true because oppression in Latin America is more closely allied to questions of social class and economics than it is to that of racism.

The Religious Negatives

In discussing the religious negatives, we are interested in getting at those things that undercut meaningfulness in life and hinder us from successfully negating the social, political, and economic negatives.

Pride and selfishness seem to characterize this for Lehmann. Human craving for power and for self causes persons to lose sight of what it takes to be human. Lehman describes the problem as follows:

> God's will to fellowship is displaced by man's will to power; and in consequence man has lost the secret of his humanity and the key to the meaning of his life and of the world in which he cannot help but live it out. The fullness of life now, as always, awaits the fullness of time. God neither breaks off the covenant nor destroys the world. God uninterruptedly

> wills his will, but man pervertedly and superfluously wills himself.[357]

The above quotation is as close as Lehmann comes to defining the negative of sin. How is this negative to be overcome? Sin, for Lehmann, is not simply "a disease" or "a wound" but, rather, "a corruption" and "a distortion." Yet persons cannot help themselves, for they are totally depraved. Lehmann believes in the total depravity of humanity but does not think that the doctrine should lead to ethical defeat. "The doctrine" (on total depravity), says Lehmann, "simply expresses the fact that whatever it takes to overcome the ethical predicament of man does not lie within the powers of man. Human renewal is not intrinsic to human capacity; it comes to man as a gift."[358]

Moltmann defines the religious negative as "the vicious circle of meaninglessness." More prosperity, leisure, and justice, insists Moltmann, do not lead a person automatically to true humanity and self-realization. These things only confront one with a void within and a kind of meaninglessness.[359] This nothingness and meaninglessness is the result of the negatives of sin and death. A person's real misery can be seen in self-inflicted servitude under the powers of sin and death.

Moltmann suggests, that "the real sin is to be without hope."[360] He acknowledges the place that pride has taken in any traditional definition of sin but suggests that this is only one side of sin. The other side is that of hopelessness, resignation, inertia, and melancholy.[361] Lehmann's concept of sin seems to be more dynamic (pride) while Molltmann seems to emphasize the static element

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[357] Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, p. 96.

[358] *Ibid*., p. 96.

[359] Moltmann, "New Boundaries of Christendom," p. 293.

[360] Jurgen Moltmann, "The Realism of Hope, the Feast of the Resurrection and the Transformation of the Present Reality," trans. by Gilbert A. Thiele, *Concordia Theological Monthly* (March, 1969), p. 149.

[361] Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 22

(hopelessness). Moltmann does say, however, that hopelessness takes two forms. First, it can become "presumption" or "overconfidence." This form of hopelessness results from a premature, self-willed anticipation of the fulfillment of what we hope for from God. The second form of hopelessness is "despair." Despair is the result of a belief that what we hope for is impossible of fulfillment. Both presumption and despair are similar in one respect, for both want immediate fulfillment. When fulfillment is delayed, the result is hopelessness. The essence of sin then is not a person's desire to be like God (pride), but rather, one's loss of hope in God. The sin, which threatens a person is not the evil done but the good one fails to do, not one's misdeeds but one's omissions. Our omissions accuse us of this lack of hope.[362]

The other negative that threatens hope is death. "The real problem of all thinking in terms of hope," says Moltmann, "is posed by death."[363] The Christian faith must take death seriously, for it is the "last enemy" of humanity. Our hope does not emerge in the mere acceptance of death but in the resurrection hope and the hope of resurrection.[364] It is at this point that we gain a new understanding of the meaning of resurrection. Resurrection does not cause us to dream about some future time; rather, it empowers us to work for liberation and humanization within history. We cannot liberate ourselves from death; but because death has been conquered, we no longer need to be afraid of it. All liberation movements in history begin with a few people who are no longer afraid and who for this reason begin to act differently than expected by those who threaten them.[365]

In conclusion, the liberation of the believer from sin and death cannot take place simply by victory over economic need, political oppression, and cultural alienation.[366] Liberation is brought about by

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[362] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23; or, see Moltmann, "The Realism of Hope, the Feast of the Resurrection and the Transformation of the Present Reality," p. 153.

[363] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 165.

[364] Moltmann, *The Gospel of Liberation*, pp. 129-136.

[365] Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, p. 14.

[366] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 334.

God, not by politics or anything else, although such a liberation should influence political, economic, and social life.[367] In spite of the different ways in which Lehmann and Moltmann seem to perceive sin, they would not disagree on this point. The negatives of sin and death are overcome by God, and this fact empowers persons to work for liberation from the other negatives in history. God's gifts to persons are "courage to be," "faith," and "hope." These gifts cannot be created without the power of God, and so our liberation and humanization begin with him and his work among us.

Segundo defines the negative of sin as "idolatry," from which follows as an inevitable consequence "our sins against human beings."[368] In this sense, he tends to agree more with Lehmann than with Moltmann. Sin is active. However, Segundo also talks about the sin of omission and not simply some individual infraction of the law. The sin of omission is also the sin against the Spirit. Segundo discusses the latter in two places. He writes:

> The sin against the Spirit is not to recognize with "theological" joy a concrete liberation happening before one's eyes.
>
> To sin against the Spirit is precisely to refuse to accompany Jesus in his work of liberation.[369]

It almost seems as if a person can overcome sin, as it has been defined by Segundo, by oneself; but Segundo does not say this. Segundo equates salvation with liberation and says that we are liberated (saved) from such things as sickness, error, sin, and death. We are liberated by God from all those evils which—here and now in this life—point toward absolute paralysis, absolute enslavement, and absolute death. It is the dynamism of grace that liberates us from religious alienation in order to launch us into the fashioning of the

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[367] *Ibid.*, pp. 319-320.

[368] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, p. 65.

[369] Segundo, "Capitalism—Socialism: A Theological Crux," p. 120; and Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, p. 45.

total body of Christ—the new humanity.[370] Thus liberation means the same thing for Segundo as it does for Lehmann and Moltmann. A person is liberated from "sin" and "death" in order to create the new humanity.

Although we have found something on the religious negatives of sin and death in our writers, we are disappointed that none of them gives these negatives the analysis they deserve.[371] Gustavo Gutiérrez has pointed out that sin should not be regarded only as an impediment to salvation in the afterlife but that it is also an impediment to humanization in this life.[372] For this reason it deserves our most serious attention. Jan Lochman eloquently stressed the importance of facing the negative of death seriously when he wrote:

> If death remains unconquered, or is left out of consideration when the future is envisioned, then the life of man is hardly more than a time of transition leading to ultimate nothingness. It is true that life can be lived courageously in the shadow. The biblical hope does not ignore death. On the contrary, it identifies death as the ultimate enemy, the enemy absolutely superior to man. Yet it refuses to capitulate. The ultimate enemy in the world of men is the first to be conquered in the City of God: "and death shall be no more." [373]

Without such a hope, death remains the victor; and the oppressor wins over the oppressed. James Cone agrees and states the problem as follows: "If death is the ultimate power and life has no future beyond this world then the rulers of the State who control the

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[370] Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, pp. 114-152, and 156.

[371] We have not found anything in Lehmann's works about the negative of death. This is a serious defect in his work and the work of any theologian.

[372] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. and ed. by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 152.

[373] Jan Milic Lochman, "Marxist Expectations and Salvation," *The Christian Century* (April 11, 1973), p. 422.

policemen and military are indeed our masters."[374] It should be clear at this point that we are not suggesting that we come to God because we cannot deal with the problems of sin and death but that these two problems threaten any discussion about the purpose and future of humanity. They threaten meaningfulness. It takes liberated persons to liberate, and the incentive to liberate comes from God's act of liberating us from sin and death. This is the background for Moltmann's reformulation of the resurrection. The resurrection is not just a means of pacifying us as we wait for some future hope in eternal life beyond the negation of death; rather, because we have hope that this life is not the end, we are driven by this hope to deal with the other negatives in this life. Liberation from sin and death enables us to give ourselves more fully to the task of negating the other negatives of life and thus to create more humanized conditions. Moltmann does deal with these negatives more comprehensively than do Lehmann and Segundo. At least he articulates the importance of the relationship between religious liberation and other kinds of liberation:

> Religious liberation is the most important in so far as without such liberation (from apathy, anxiety and aggressiveness) there can be no liberations in the other dimensions. Only those who are liberated can liberate.[375]

Lehmann and Segundo do not make any lists, nor do they say specifically which of the negatives are most important to eliminate. Lehmann seems to consider racism as the deepest of the negatives because it deprives persons of their identity. As we have pointed out, Moltmann sees meaninglessness and hopelessness as the most serious. Segundo is preoccupied with economic issues, and although he occasionally mentions racism, he rarely discusses the problem of meaninglessness. Thus each of these theologians places the stress on a particular negative according to the cultural context in which he finds himself. Lehmann is concerned about racial questions and lives in a country, which has been preoccupied with racial problems.

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[374] James H. Cone, "The Social Context of Theology: Freedom, History and Hope," *Risk*, IX (1973), p. 23.

[375] Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," p. 425.

Segundo lives where the primary problem has been economic imperialism; hence, he places the stress on economic issues. Moltmann lives in a country where religion has declined; thus, he seems to find meaninglessness as the more important of the negatives. The mission of the church must tie in with the specific needs of a particular social context. This is important to remember as we attempt to reformulate the mission of the church and develop a new missiology.

Conclusions

We have called the negation of the historical negatives a strategy in mission. We acknowledge that it is not the only strategy nor is it even the primary one. All that is being claimed is that the negatives cannot be ignored and that the church has to deal with them. As the church confronts them, it will not only have to respond to them; it will also have to suggest strategies for overcoming them. Let us now summarize some of the suggestions being made by political and liberation theology as they come to us through Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo. We shall then discuss whether or not these strategies can be considered in a reformulation of the mission of the church and the development of a new missiology.

The main economic negative has to do with the dehumanizing gap that continues to grow between the rich and the poor within nations and between nations. Related to this is the economic imperialism of the wealthy nations, which makes it impossible for poorer nations to control their own destinies. The strategy for overcoming these economic negatives that is suggested by all three of our theologians is the introduction of socialism as a form of economic organization. Socialism is supposed to reduce this dehumanizing gap and bring about more equity and justice for all. None of our writers claims that Jesus taught socialism, but they do affirm that the church is responsible for lending its support to the best possible economic organization available. Our writers suggest that for our time, the best form of economic organization happens to be socialism. The underlying assumption here is that socialism stands the best chance of narrowing the dehumanizing gap between the rich and the poor in every nation. Is this really the case, and is it

the case for every nation? The church may have to support one form of economic organization over another, but the mission of the church is not simply to promote the worldwide establishment of one form of economic organization. In dealing with the economic negatives, the mission of the church is to liberate persons and nations from the dehumanizing gap between wealth and poverty and not simply to support socialism as a worldwide means of doing this. It might be that some other form of economic organization can do this better within a specific cultural context. The context must be taken into consideration before the church gives its support to any form of economic organization. If another form of economic organization demonstrates the possibility of accomplishing this task, then there is no reason to replace it with socialism. What might be important here is that the people of every nation have a part in making the choice themselves and that they also be given control over their own destinies. This would of course have to be within certain limitations, for there is an interrelationship between nations; and economic imperialism does need to be kept in check. What does this mean for the mission of the church and for the development of a new missiology? It means that the church will have to judge all forms of economic organization on the basis of whether they are eliminating the economic negatives and that it will lend its support to those forms of economic organization that best demonstrate an ability to overcome the dehumanizing gap between wealth and poverty. In some nations, this might mean the support of socialism; in other nations, this might not be the case. One cannot apply a general rule here that will apply worldwide. This is true whether we are discussing the church's traditional relationship with capitalism or the suggestion being made by political and liberation theology in regard to adopting socialism. The church should be able to work with any form of economic organization that aims at overcoming the economic negatives. It is also hoped that the church's pressure to negate these negatives would bring about change so that fewer negatives would exist in whatever economic organization happens to exist or be selected.

The political negative that comes through most clearly is the inability of peoples and nations to become subjects of their own histories. For Moltmann, the strategy for negating this negative is a

worldwide democracy. Segundo recognizes the interdependency of peoples and nations but does not go as far as Moltmann. In order to be more consistent with his concern over the external proletariat, he ought to; but his situation informs him that the economic negatives are worse than any new political negatives that might emerge as a result of challenging the economic ones. Moltmann wants to negate all of the negatives at the same time, but Lehmann and Segundo are not as concerned about this. They want to overcome the worst ones first and deal with any new ones later. We agree with Moltmann on his choice of democracy as a means of negating the political negatives for two reasons. In the first place, it seems like the best possible way of giving persons within nations the opportunity of becoming subjects of their own histories. The second reason why we agree with Moltmann's choice of democracy is that the political negatives need to be held under control, and this seems like more of a possibility through democratic structures. Segundo's criticism of the electoral process, however, needs to be taken very seriously to insure that people really have choices and are not simply manipulated by those in power. The real issue here is not that of simply supporting democracy as a political ideology, but of giving people the means by which they can become subjects of their own history. As the world grows smaller and smaller, one might then ask whether some kind of democratically organized world government is possible. Moltmann is the only one who takes up this concern, and for the present it seems like an abstract utopia. It is an issue that is difficult to deal with, because nations of the world do not seem to be moving in this direction. They are more involved with trying to become subjects of their own destinies, and world government threatens to infringe upon that self-determination. Self-determination may have to follow smaller groupings of peoples and nations. If part of the church's mission is to negate the political negatives, then it has no choice but to stay on the path that leads to democratization. This offers the best opportunity for national self-determination.

The social negatives are determined by the particular society in which the church lives. Lehmann, for example, is concerned with race and lives where racism has been a problem. Segundo perceives the problem in terms of class and the gap between the rich and the poor. The church must always deal with the social negatives to be

overcome according to the forms in which they exist in a particular society. If these are racist, then it must negate racism; if they are economic, then the church must deal with those negatives that permit the dehumanizing gap to exist between the rich and the poor. The church's strategy in mission, when it comes to the social negatives, is to become an inclusive church and press for this same inclusiveness in society. All races are to be given a place, but what about the class problem mentioned by Segundo? Even Segundo does not suggest a classless society, but he does aim at liberating persons from poverty and oppression and claims that God is at work doing this. The implication here is that the gap between the rich and the poor needs to be narrowed considerably and that the church ought to therefore press for a church and society where this dehumanizing gap does not exist. There will still be class differences, just as there are racial and cultural differences; but persons will not be dehumanized by these differences. They will find their identities in them, and the exchange that takes place between persons who are different will enrich both identities. Class differences are only permissible as long as they do not lead to this dehumanizing gap between the rich and the poor and to feelings of superiority and inferiority on the part of the classes involved.

The religious negatives were difficult to deal with, because so little has been written about them by our three theologians. Their primary concern has been with the economic, political, and social negatives. Only Moltmann defined the religious negatives as the most important to be overcome and proceeded to discuss their importance in relationship to meaning and hope. We then took the liberty of defining sin and death as the main religious negatives, which threaten meaning and hope and proceeded to discuss what Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo had to say about these negatives. We concluded that sin is not only an impediment to salvation but also to liberation and humanization. Moltmann demonstrated, to our satisfaction how the concept of resurrection needs to be reformulated to become a driving force for liberation and humanization. One cannot, however, suggest any strategy for overcoming the negatives of sin and death; this lies beyond human ability. All our writers agree and affirm that humanity is dependent upon the grace of God at this point. Sin needs to be forgiven and death needs to be overcome. It is

God alone who can liberate humanity from these negatives and set persons free to cooperate with him further in the overcoming of the economic, political, and social negatives.

We have lifted up the economic, political, social, and religious negatives for the sake of discussion and analysis. We have also tried to show how they interrelate and affect one another. The mission of the church in regard to these negatives is to respond to them and support strategies for overcoming them. We have detected that each of our three theologians expresses more concern over the negative affecting his own situation. Lehmann lives in a society where racism has been a problem; hence he expresses more concern over racial issues. He perceives racism as the deepest of the negatives. Moltmann lives in a society where faith has been on the decline; hence, he perceives meaninglessness and hopelessness as the most important negatives to be overcome, for without liberation here there can be no liberation in the other dimensions. Segundo mentions racial issues, but his main emphasis is not on racism. He deals with questions of faith but clearly concludes that "faith" is not an issue in Latin America. Everyone believes, but not everyone puts faith into practice. The real issue is the relationship of faith to economic and political issues. The problem has been idolatry and not the lack of faith or belief. In spite of these differences, which are due to the various social contexts, all of these men attempt to make their theological reflection relevant in a wider ecumenical and international context. This approach is appropriate for our purposes. The main emphasis in reformulating the mission of the church must be on negating those negatives that are causing the most difficulty in a particular setting; but because the church is involved in a worldwide mission, it must also speak to the wider ecumenical and international community. One issue that cannot be avoided and which has been lying under the surface throughout this discussion of the historical negatives is the role that revolution and violence might play in the process of liberation. As we search for insights and directions for a reformulation of the church's mission and the development of a new missiology, what part can revolution and violence possibly play in all of this? We must now take up these issues.

IV. REVOLUTION AND VIOLENCE AS A TEST CASE OF MISSIONAL STRATEGY

In chapter two we attempted to lift out of the writings of our three theologians some positive visions for the mission of the church. This gave some direction to what is needed in a contemporary reformulation of the church's mission, but it also made us aware of some critical problems in pursuing those visions. Therefore it became necessary in chapter three to discuss one strategy of mission as the overcoming of the historical negatives that tend to thwart those positive visions. There may well be other strategies available to the church, but the political and liberation theologians tend to emphasize this one. Positive images are important, but images alone do not liberate and humanize persons. Therefore some kind of strategy is necessary, and it must somehow involve the negation of the four historical negatives we have just discussed in the last chapter. The problem that it confronts us with, however, is the means suggested to overcome them. Lehmann and Segundo tend to be more pessimistic about negating these negatives peacefully; hence, they are more interested in getting on with the revolution. Moltmann, on the other hand, has more reservations about revolution; he wants to insure that any such involvement would not create new negatives, which would have to be negated later. Since we are presupposing that Christianity would not be opposed to negating these negatives peacefully, we are now going to turn our attention to how our three theologians struggle with the more violent means of overcoming the negatives. We shall also be asking whether the church's mission can accept violence as a means of overcoming the negatives and still remain Christian.

Revolution and the Church's Mission

All of our writers have paved the way for Christian involvement in revolutionary activity. We find this quite different from what Christianity has generally said in the past, and it also presents the world mission of the church with some serious problems. If the church must support revolutionary activity in order to pursue its goals of liberation and humanization, does this imply an end to the church's mission as we now know it on an international scale or does

the church's mission simply have to be reformulated to take this new thesis into account? We shall try to answer this question, but let us first analyze how our three theologians perceive the meaning and purpose of revolutionary activity.

Lehmann wrote in 1965 that "revolution is simply change at an accelerated rate and range" and that "revolution is the natural environment of the Christian."[376] He does not seem to have changed his definition, but he does clarify it. He agrees with Hannah Arendt that, "revolution is born of the passion for humanization."[377] On the negative side, revolutions happen—but are not made—whenever and wherever the human is lacking.[378] Something desired must be lacking before persons will revolt. As a fever signals that the health of the body can no longer be ignored, so revolutions signal that the health of a society can no longer be deferred but must be set right. Revolutions happen when there is a lack of freedom and justice, or both; and if freedom and justice are present, then it would be very difficult if not impossible to start or make a revolution.[379]

A revolution is supposed to aim at humanization. It is "the lifestyle of truth," which is to say, that it is to be a bearer of a truth or righteousness not its own.[380] Lehmann is well aware of the fact that not all revolutions bear this truth or righteousness not their own and that many of them end up devouring their own children and destroying themselves. The thing that can save a revolution from this fate is the messianic story. Although no revolution has been completely faithful to the messianic story, Lehmann is hopeful that

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[376] Lehmann, "The Shape of Theology for a World in Revolution," p. 11.

[377] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, pp. 3-5.

[378] *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

[379] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

[380] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, pp. 5 and 24.

in the future the messianic story will maintain control over some revolution. Such a revolution would be a transfigured one.[381]

There is a difference between a transfigured revolution and a revolution, which is a sign of transfiguration. Revolutions are signs of transfiguration when they negate colonialism, imperialism, and racism; but they also stand in need of transfiguration so that they do not devour their own goals and purposes. Lehmann believes a revolution has been transfigured when it successfully revises two political priorities. The first revision has to do with making "freedom the presupposition and the condition of order" and rejecting the establishment logic that "order is the presupposition and the condition of freedom."[382] The second revision involves making "justice the foundation and the criterion of law" rather than "law the foundation and criterion of justice."[383] This revision of political priorities suggests that there is a correspondence between the biblical and human meaning of politics; it implies the primacy of freedom and justice in human social interaction and points to a transcendent referentiality as their ultimate foundation.[384]

Lehmann does not see the transfigured revolution as merely a "midwife" of history. Revolutions of this kind become "the catalysts" of the new and human future that God through them is already making present.[385] Revolutionaries are the "supplicants" of history. They are the bearers of a righteousness not their own, and

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[381] *Ibid*., p. 281. Lehmann makes a distinction between a revolution as a sign of transfiguration and a transfigured revolution. A revolution as a sign of transfiguration negates certain negatives, although it may create new ones. A transfigured revolution does not create new negatives. It remains faithful to the truth beyond itself, for it is guided by the messianic story.

[382] *Ibid*., pp. 240-241.

[383] *Ibid*., p. 250.

[384] *Ibid*., p. 255.

[385] *Ibid*., p. 240.

they are a saving remnant of humanity in the world. As such they are closer to the heart of God than are the existing authorities.[386]

There is no question that Lehmann desires Christian participation in revolutionary activity; indeed, the very success of the latter may depend upon the former.

> Perhaps…Christians are the ultimately real revolutionaries because their ultimate commitment commits them to keeping revolution and truth and life effectively together. Christians have glimpsed in the darkness of the Gospel the illuminating confidence that "freedom for revolutionary action can be bound up in faith with freedom from the coercion of revolutionary action…. Perhaps they are something like the fools of revolution. (But)…where this spirit of freedom reigns…there the revolution can take place, the deliverance of revolution from the alienating forms which it assumes in the struggle.[387]

Christians have the potential to prevent a revolution from undoing itself by bringing into it the messianic story, but they are likely to be rejected by other revolutionaries. This rejection does not occur only on account of the Christian's aversion to violence but also because Christians might appear as laggards or traitors for dragging their feet when nonchristian leadership wants to act. Christians will seem like Trojan horses within the camp just when the decisive battle is about to begin. Lehmann recognizes this as part of Christianity's history and tradition, but he proceeds to reformulate the present and future task of the church. Christians are to become the liberating (saving) vanguard of the revolution, for Christian participation has the power to keep the revolution on course and to prevent it from devouring itself.[388] Christians must participate so that revolutionary activity not only aims at but also achieves love and reconciliation and is not destroyed by those lacking the vision of the messianic story.

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[386] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

[387] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

[388] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

Lehmann laments that "with few exceptions revolutionaries have not only not been Christians, they have not even been theists. They have been atheists."[389] This is unfortunate because Christians have something to contribute, as does revolutionary politics. Revolutionary politics, says Lehmann, keeps biblical politics concretely human, and biblical politics keeps revolutionary politics steadfast in its vocational faithfulness and hope.[390] Christians are to work alongside nonchristians in their common vocation to make and keep human life human, for both have something to offer each other in the pursuit of humanization.

Lehmann seems to presuppose that most of Christianity has misunderstood its own natural environment and has thereby been unfaithful to its true task and mission. He ought to point out the need for Christians to feel uneasy in every environment, including that of a revolutionary one. No temporal environment can be natural for the Christian. The only environment that can be natural for Christians is the Kingdom of God, and that is still coming. Lehmann, however, is calling Christianity away from its comfortableness with the establishment and trying to make it feel more at ease in revolutionary activity. What we are concerned with at this point is his reformulation of the church's mission. He has moved the support of the church away from the established political power and placed it in service of those who challenge such power. This makes the church a threat to any government where it happens to be working and affects the church's ability to carry out its mission in the world.

Moltmann does not agree with Lehmann's statement that revolution is the natural environment for Christians. Christians, he insists, will always be "strange birds and unreliable allies" in revolutionary activity.[391] Christians know that, whatever good a revolution may do, the latter cannot be absolutized. Therefore, their participation will always be tempered by a capacity for self-criticism, a commitment to proportionate means of violence, a spirit of

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[389] *Ibid*., p. 279.

[390] *Ibid*., pp. 286-287.

[391] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 146; and Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," pp. 415-416.

festivity, and an awareness that all revolutions fall short of their goals. Moltmann describes the behavior of Christians in the following manner:

> Christians will be strange birds in the revolution. Perhaps they are something like the fools of revolution. They are deeply committed to it but also laugh about it and thus appear strange. They are forerunners of a yet greater revolution, in which God will abolish even greater oppositions than any human revolution can envision.[392]

When Moltmann defines revolution, he says: "I understand revolution to mean a transformation in the foundations of a system—whether of economics, of politics, of morality, or of religion. All other changes amount to evolution or reform."[393] Moltmann's definition differs from that of Lehmann in that he does not bring in the idea of the speed of change; he simply states that a revolution is the transformation of a system. Moltmann sees God present in a revolution that negates the negatives and establishes the concrete utopia. God's activity is not perceived as providing social cohesion to existing society; rather, the former creates new possibilities for a not-yet-realized society. Moltmann understands God as the instigator of change who also permits the use of proportionate political violence against the ruling elite when justice can be obtained in no other way. Moltmann does not think that any systematic theology of revolution can be discerned in the New Testament; but he does suggest that, by their worship of God in the crucified Jesus, the early Christians acted like revolutionaries. They seized the nerve-center of the political religions and the religious politics of their time. They negated negatives and, although they had no theology of revolution, their theology was a revolution.[394] This caused them to transform the society in which they lived, and this is what we are to do today. "The theologian," says Moltmann, "is not concerned to supply a different

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[392] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 146.

[393] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[394] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

interpretation of the world, of history and of human nature, but to transform them in expectation of a divine transformation."[395]

Christians, therefore, must participate in revolutionary activity that negates the historical negatives; this is what God is doing, and Christians are to be working together with God. This does not mean, however, that Christians will feel comfortable participating in revolutionary activity alongside of nonchristians. "Revolutions," reports Moltmann, "have a tendency towards legalism. … they are often dominated by a moralism by which they view themselves as good and the opposition as inevitably bad." Christians will have to suppress this tendency towards Manichaeism. They will do this by countering all feelings of moral superiority held by their companions, thereby mitigating all self-righteous acts of cruelty committed against an enemy considered singularly evil.[396] Christian participation in revolutionary activity must aim at reconciliation. For this reason, nonchristians may consider them "unreliable allies." Although Christians struggle against the oppressors, they are primarily interested in reconciliation, even while the conflict is still going on.[397] Christian commitment leads not only to the "damned of the earth" but also to those who do the damning.[398] "They (Christians) know that God's reconciliation also embraces their opponent and that for this reason justice can be achieved only through mutual transformation."[399] Because Christians are not interested in the reversal of the master-slave relationship, but its elimination, they hold the key for the true liberation of humanity.[400] According to Moltmann, the resurrection verifies this hope and assures us that the vicious circles of hate and vengeance will be

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[395] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 84.

[396] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, p. 145.

[397] Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," pp. 415-416.

[398] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in the Revolution*, Student World (1968), p. 249.

[399] Jürgen Moltmann, "God Reconciles and Makes Free," *Reformed and Presbyterian World* (September/December, 1970), p. 117.

[400] Moltmann, "Political Theology," p. 21.

broken and that a new humanity will be created from among both the victims and their executioners.[401]

Moltmann is ready to place the church on the side of a violent revolutionary movement, but he would prefer to resolve social and political problems in some other way, such as through dialogue. "If we do not talk to each other," he says, "someday we will be shooting at each other."[402] The difficulty with what Moltmann says about dialogue is that he discusses dialogue between Christians, Marxists, and other liberals, and he does not deal enough with how dialogue might be arranged between the oppressed and their oppressors. Jacques Ellul reminds us that reconciliation (and dialogue) is easy between allies. The person on the right has no trouble being reconciled with the army, nor the person on the left with the revolution. The capitalist has no trouble being reconciled with the bourgeoisie, nor the union leader with the working person.[403] It is easy to talk about dialogue and reconciliation when you have similar goals, but what happens when your goals are opposed to one another? Is dialogue still possible? Ellul rejects an easy acceptance of revolution and violence but concludes that this position forces the Christian into a more active role in bringing about dialogue between the oppressors and the oppressed. Thus Ellul writes:

> The Christian is necessarily on the side of the poor—not to incite them to revolution, hatred, and violence, but to plead their cause before the powerful and the authorities. If need be, he must break down the doors of the powerful and declare the claims of love and justice. This role is much more difficult and thankless than that of a guerrilla chieftain or a corporation head, and there is no glory in it. To gain entrance to a corporation head and insist on discussing his workers' plight with him is much more difficult than to march in a picket line, for it requires much more in the way of

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[401] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, p. 178.

[402] Moltmann, "Christian Theology Today," p. 489.

[403] Jacques Ellul, *False Presence of the Kingdom*, trans. by C. Edward Hopkin (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), pp. 197-198.

> intelligence, ability, precise information, and strength of soul.[404]

Neither Lehmann nor Moltmann rejects participation by Christians in violent revolutions, as does Ellul. Moltmann prefers dialogue but feels that the situation could become so bad that Christian responsibility would require participation. Hence, both Lehmann and Moltmann move the support of the church away from the establishment to those involved in revising political priorities or creating the concrete utopia. Not every revolution is seen as a sign of transfiguration, nor is God present in every revolution; but he is said to be there with those who seek liberation and humanization. When the church begins to support revolutionary movements opposed to governments in power, it begins to affect its ability to fulfill its mission across national borders. It may well be true that Ellul's kind of dialogue with the powerful would also get the church into trouble, but its commitment to nonviolence might at least make it more possible to carry on with its mission across borders; whereas, the church's commitment to violent revolutionary activity would probably make this impossible. This does not mean, however, that the church could not fulfill its mission across borders when it supports revolutionary movements. Obviously the church could offer both financial and moral support to those so engaged, but it would become much more difficult to offer assistance by sending personnel. Governments under the threat of revolutionary activity supported by the church could simply deny such personnel entry. The only logical conclusion in such a case would be a forced moratorium on personnel.[405]

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[404] Jacques Ellul, *Violence*, trans. by Ceclia Gaul Kings (New York: The Seabury Press, 1969), pp. 151-152.

[405] None of our theologians discusses the concept of a moratorium in relationship to the point being made concerning the church's involvement in revolutionary activity. Moltmann does discuss moratorium in relationship to allowing the indigenous churches to become independent and for the emergence of a truly world mission. He does not, however, discuss the effect the church's support of a particular revolution would have on the exchange of personnel in the emerging world mission of the church. See his discussion on moratorium in Moltmann, *The Passion for Life*, p. 110.

Segundo, like Moltmann, does not understand revolutionary activity as the natural environment of Christianity. He suggests that the Christian's stricter moral code would cause a collision with nonchristian revolutionaries and that there would be grounds for calling Christians "bad revolutionaries." Christians, he says, "would take an anti-Manichean stance and would not be willing to divide the world into two easily identifiable factions." Christianity is anti-Manichean because it is guided by Matthew 25:34-40 which makes of brotherly love the only law of the universe, thus making an absolute value out of every person. This causes a problem for Christian participation in revolutionary activity.[406]

We are not aware of any precise definition of revolution made by Segundo, but he does believe in the inevitability of a revolution when injustice and oppression are widespread. When Segundo deals with the relationship of Christianity to the coming revolution in Latin America, he begins by rejecting two easy solutions. The first of these is that Christianity supports evolution but not revolution, change but not violence.[407] This is a simple answer because it does not see the relationship between evolution and revolution. Segundo alludes to this relationship when he discusses the effect that education would have on the Latin American masses.

> It would undoubtedly be a fine thing to teach the 50 per cent of Latin Americans who still cannot read to do so. But such a development would lead to a dramatic rise in demands for all sorts of things: for better hygiene, for social reforms, for more and better tools. It would accelerate the migration to the cities. It would, in fact, lead in a very short time to violent revolutionary explosion.[408]

The implication of the above is very important for the mission of the church. It means that the church's involvement in such areas as education could be the spark that kindles the fires of revolution. One

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[406] Juan Luis Segundo, "Christianity and Violence in Latin America," *Christianity and Crisis* (March 4, 1968), pp. 33-34.

[407] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[408] Segundo, "Has Latin America a Choice?" p. 213.

might still resist violent revolution and affirm faith in nonviolence as a method of achieving the same goals. If, however, one attempts to use nonviolence for religious reasons, says Segundo, one should not conclude that it will always be successful politically. Segundo admits that Gandhi's campaign for freedom in India and King's fight against racial segregation in the United States experienced success; but in these cases the goals were more clearly defined and specific. In Latin America, continues Segundo, "we are not dealing with the attainment of concrete and definite objectives…but with the transformation of an entire social structure…."[409] If one opts for a nonviolent revolution, what does one do when it fails or undermines the chances of success for liberation and humanization? Segundo opts for success even if it means violent revolution and takes an anti-Christian course of action.

The other easy answer has to do with the "assumption that the state of the poor and exploited justifies whatever is done for them or with them." An image that needs to be rejected is the way in which a violent revolution proceeds. Many Christians perceive it as the uprising of the masses to seize power. Segundo describes this misconception as follows:

> Their myth is the taking of the Bastille—a multitude that one day decides to take to the streets, that advances rapidly towards its clear objectives, that acts clearly in its own defense against those who oppose violence with violence, and thus arrives at the second phase of the revolution: the power and the new order.[410]

While it is true that the violence of the masses is a reaction to an existing violence under the guise of a legal regime, it also takes a long and powerful effort to expose the violence hidden under the appearance of order and security. Only after the life of the oppressed is made so unbearable that the masses clearly understand that they have nothing to lose will they take to the streets in order to confront the existing order. If the existing order cannot be exposed, then the

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[409] Segundo, "Christianity and Violence in Latin America," p. 34.

[410] *Ibid*., pp. 31-32.

advocates of revolution will have to make a choice about becoming the catalysts of the revolution.[411] Making such a decision is no simple and easy task. Are they justified in anything they do on behalf of the poor and the exploited? If they do decide to go ahead with it, they must be careful not to become the new oppressors.

Segundo insists that there is no third way for Christians to act. They either take a nonviolent position and support the status quo or they involve themselves fully in the revolution. They cannot enter revolutionary activity halfheartedly and expect success. Segundo laments how Christians usually begin with sympathy for a revolution, but then they impose "evangelical" conditions on it; finally, in the name of the gospel, they end up opposing the revolution and fighting on the antirevolutionary side.[412] Suppose that Christians attempt to pursue the goals of a revolution with nonviolence. What happens when their nonviolent methods fail? They must realize that nonchristians will not call off the revolution. They will go ahead with it. Segundo is convinced that the revolution will become violent and that Christians must be ready for this. In fact, he calls Christians to commit themselves totally to the revolution and to lead it, even when it turns violent. Their reason for being so involved is to insure that the goals of the revolution are attained and that liberation and humanization are truly established. The fact that Christians are not under any mandate to use the "means" of two thousand years ago in a revolution taking place today. The Christian message, says Segundo, "was not directed to

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[411] Ibid., pp. 32-33. Segundo points out how current governments avoid the extreme oppressive methods of the Batista regime in pre-revolutionary Cuba. This makes it more difficult to expose an oppressive regime and places the burden on the revolutionaries to prove their case against the existing government. According to Segundo, they may well have to adopt brutal measures against the people in order to make the situation so bad that the people will be motivated to join in the campaign against what the revolutionaries themselves have made into an unbearable situation. The question for Christians at this point will be whether such measures can be adopted or whether such strategies and tactics will have to be rejected. If the latter were to be the case, Christians might have to be considered bad revolutionaries.

[412] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 91.

men of all times, but was inserted into history at a certain determined epoch." It was introduced to a specific people and in a particular part of the world that was ready for it, and to suppose the contrary would be to make the date elected by God for his revelation a crime against humanity. Segundo, however, does not believe that the right time has come for Latin America; hence, it is necessary to get on with the revolution. The revolution then not only aims at liberation and humanization; it also prepares the way for Christianity, which can be properly inserted only after the revolution is over and Latin American society is ready for it.[413]

Segundo has not only reformulated the mission of the church in light of the need for liberation and humanization in Latin America, he has rejected the use of Christian methods in achieving Christian goals. Therefore he is willing to suspend Christianity until after the goal of liberation has been attained. He appeals to a kind of unreadiness for Christianity on the part of the Latin American continent but doe not take into account that the social conditions in Roman times were also far from ideal. Poverty and oppression were present then as well, but Christianity was inserted into history anyway and changes did begin to take place. Segundo's real reason for suspending Christianity is not that it has come to Latin America too soon; rather, he does not want the goal of liberation to be thwarted by Christian aversions to violence and Manichaeism. Reconciliation, a Christian virtue, must also be put off until after the revolution, or else the revolution may not be successful in achieving its goals. Christian reconciliation simply cannot be applied without affecting the success of the revolution, and for Segundo success is very important. Once liberation has been achieved, then

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[413] Segundo, "Christianity and Violence in Latin America," p. 34. The above does not mean that the goals of Christianity are suspended, only the nonviolence referred to in the New Testament. Segundo does not go into great detail on this question, and so he does not deal with who might insert Christianity into Latin American society after the revolution. His primary point is that Christians do not have to restrict themselves to the nonviolence that they find in the New Testament. What is important is that the revolution succeeds so that liberation and humanization become a reality. Then Christianity can be put into effect as the religion of brotherly love.

reconciliation can become a legitimate goal. In this Segundo comes very close to James Cone's position that reconciliation is to be sought only after liberation has been achieved. Cone puts it as follows:

> There can be no reconciliation with masters as long as they are masters, as long as men are in prison. There can be no communication between masters and slaves until masters no longer exist, are no longer present as masters. The Christian task is to rebel against all masters, destroying their pretensions to authority and ridiculing the symbols of power.[414]

Without a doubt Segundo has reformulated the mission of the church to support revolutionary movements. In his discussion about suspending Christianity, he does not mention the elimination of the church. His call for a minority church over against a majority church is not to eliminate the church but to make of it a clearer sign of the gospel. This is a contradiction. If Christianity is to be suspended for the duration of the revolution, then why is the church still needed to give a clear sign of what the gospel means?

Segundo, however, is not the only one who wants to place the church on the side of revolutionary activity. Lehmann and Moltmann do the same thing, although they do not discuss the suspension of Christianity. Lehmann interprets revolutionary activity as signs of transfiguration and believes that involvement in revolutionary activity can be Christian, particularly as it aims at transfiguring the revolution. Moltmann, like Segundo, has doubts about whether Christians can become good revolutionaries; but Moltmann does not go as far as Segundo by calling for a suspension of Christianity. Moltmann sees revolution as a last resort for Christians who can find no other way of achieving liberation and humanization; hence, he permits involvement, believing that doing something about the problem is better than doing nothing. One is guilty of sin in either case. In one case, it is the sin of commission; in the other case, it is the sin of omission. Both, however, can be forgiven. Moltmann does

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[414] James H. Cone, "Black Theology on Revolution, Violence, and Reconciliation," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (Fall, 1975), p. 14.

not mention which one might be more serious, but his support of revolutionary activity seems to imply that he considers the sin of omission more serious than the sin of commission.

Segundo is more optimistic than Lehmann and Moltmann that revolutionary activity will bring liberation and humanization. There is a high degree of optimism in Lehmann as well when he suggests that the messianic story has the power to transfigure a revolution, although he admits that it has not yet happened within history. Moltmann tries to keep some realism in his idealism as he adds the word "concrete" to his concept of "utopia." The inability to achieve a transfigured revolution and the sought-after utopia presents these theologians with a serious problem, and that is the open-endedness of all revolutions. Revolution s never seem to accomplish their goals, and so Christianity will always have to be involved in revolutionary activity. As soon as one side wins, Christianity will have to switch sides and support the newly oppressed. This would explain why the political and liberation theologians neglect the role of government as a divine instrument of preservation against chaos and make of justice their priority. They see God at work tearing down the inhuman structures rather than in holding structures together. Since no revolution ever seems to accomplish its goals, Christianity will always have to support revolutionary activity. Political and liberation theologians do not like to admit that there is no end to the vicious cycle; for such an admission would make it difficult to get persons to sacrifice their all for a revolution that will have to be fought all over in a few decades.[415] As long as justice is given priority over order, however, the problem perpetuates itself. Christians will have to be involved in revolutionary activity because no established order ever has been or ever will be just. We would question the prioritizing of either justice or order. Is it really necessary to prioritize them? Do they not simply need to be held in tension? To prioritize one over the other means that you feel compelled to give more importance to one than the other. When order is given the priority, the emphasis is on the church rendering support to government as an instrument of preservation or of the status quo; on the other hand, when justice is

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[415] See a more detailed discussion of the problem of perpetual revolution in Goulet, *The Cruel Choice,* pp. 316-317.

given the priority, the emphasis falls on the church supporting revolutionary activity which aims at tearing down the unjust and inhuman structures. Even though the latter emphasis also aims at building new and liberating structures for the purpose of a humanized world, experience informs us that we will corrupt them. The end result will be more oppressive and inhuman structures, and our goals will go unrealized. It is not possible to seek justice without at the same time being concerned with order. To do so places the church into supporting perpetual revolutionary activity, just as an overemphasis on order would place it perpetually on the side of the status quo. We have no alternative but to live in the tension between order and justice.

By giving justice priority over order, political and liberation theology asks the church to choose sides and the side chosen usually has to do with revolution, as if only those involved in revolutionary activity are concerned with justice. The concern of the establishment for justice and humanization is hardly considered, for it is generally viewed as the status quo, which is incapable of any such concern. What concerns us at this point, however, is not whether the establishment is capable or incapable of liberating and humanizing persons; rather, we are concerning with the idea presented by political and liberation theologians that the church must choose sides, even if the side chosen uses inappropriate means to achieve goals that the church also shares. The church cannot side with only the revolution any more than it can side only with the establishment. The church, rather, must make it clear to both revolutionaries and the establishment alike that it is interested in liberation, justice, and humanization, but that it cannot simply choose between revolutionary activity and the establishment. The church must be able to speak to both groups and direct them both toward reconciliation with one another and with what God is doing in the world to liberate and humanize persons. The church, as both Moltmann and Segundo admit, is anti-Manichean and cannot simplify the matter by saying that only one side is concerned with liberation and humanization. The church has to be able to speak to both groups and direct them both towards reconciliation with one another and with what God is doing in the world to liberate and humanize persons. There are times when the church might have to

make a choice, but it will never feel comfortable with the choice. Even in the midst of the struggle, the church will feel obligated to seek reconciliation between the two sides. It is just as possible for revolutionary activity as it is for the establishment to be unjust, inhumane, and oppressive.[416] If the church decides to support one or the other, it is still faced with the thorny question of violence, to which we shall now turn. We need to discuss violence because all three of our theologians understand violence as a necessary part of the revolutionary activity, which they would support. The question we need to ask is whether the church can go this far and still be Christian. If it can, then what the political and liberation theologians are saying to the church might have to be incorporated into a reformulation of the church's mission; but if it cannot, then the church may have to back away from political and liberation theology at the point of violence.

Violence and the Church's Mission

Since all of our writers accept—to some extent—involvement of the church in revolutionary activity, we must now take a closer look at how they view violence as a means to achieve the goals of liberation and humanization. Then we must ask whether the means suggested by them can be included in the mission of the church.

Lehmann defines violence as he contrasts the positions of James Cone and Jacques Ellul. We believe that both of them would accept the following definition:

> *Violence is the violation of the humanity of my neighbor, by whatever means—military, psychological, moral, medical, institutional, religious*. Violence is not exhausted by the use of a hammer, or a gun, or a knife upon and against my

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[416] Jan Milic Lochman, "The Just Revolution," *Christianity and Crisis* (July 10, 1972), p. 168. Roger Shinn, in his response to Lochman's article, makes the following insightful statement about this problem: "Revolutionaries and rebels include despots as well as liberators. They include American slaveholders rejecting the control of a federal government, Nazis striking at the Weimar Republic, white Rhodesians throwing off British sovereignty in order to keep Africans repressed. Revolutionaries, like all warriors, need ethical scrutiny."

> neighbor. Violence is neither confined to, nor exclusively defined by, the killing of somebody, whether by accident or deliberately. Violence is what I do to my neighbor insofar as my involvements make it impossible for him to be a human being.[417]

Lehmann affirms the inevitability of violence in a world without justice. Any ruling power will have to face counter-violence when it attempts to justify itself apart from justice. Even a collective approval of power does not have the ability to avoid the eruption of this violence, for power can be justified only by its relationship to justice (truth/righteousness).[418]

When violence breaks out as a result of injustice and dehumanizing circumstances, the whole question of violence must be transposed into the apocalyptic sphere. Violence, insists Lehmann, can no longer be dealt with in ethical (moral), legal, or even sociological terms. It becomes an apocalyptic phenomenon.[419] In the following passage, Lehmann claims that violence as an apocalyptic phenomenon coincides with the thought of Jesus:

> According to Jesus, violence is an apocalyptic happening that erupts whenever, in the dynamics of the world's formation for freedom over order and justice over law, the power of systemic violence has provoked the counter-violence of the concrete responsibility for setting right what is not right, for setting aside what is dehumanizing, and setting straight what is humanizing in the world. The apocalyptic character of violence means that violence is a sign of the imminent breaking in of the divine judgment upon an established order

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[417] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 265.

[418] Paul L. Lehmann, "Christian Theology in a World in Revolution," *Openings for Marxist-Christian Dialogue*, ed. by Thomas W. Ogletree (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 123; and Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 122. See the discussion by Lehmann on power and its relationship to justice in the above works.

[419] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, p. 262.

> of power and life that has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.[420]

Violence, then, apocalyptically understood, is judgment passed upon a systemic default in the use of power for the humanizing of persons.

Violence cannot be justified any more than the inbreaking of a new order is a matter for justification. The inbreaking of a new order is a judgment upon an old order on the way out, but even the new order is not for that reason justified. The new order can also undo itself when it makes violence a policy and moves toward self-justification. This has already happened in the old order, and that is why there is an outbreak of violence. The outbreak of violence can be called "revolutionary counter-violence" until it makes violence into a policy and tries to justify itself. Violence must always remain a risk; it can never become a policy or program. Violence is very ambiguous. It both contradicts what God is doing in the world to bring about humanization, and it is instrumental to this same activity. Violence is inevitable where justice is lacking, but it is never justifiable. The real test of its credibility is its power to shape action and humanize persons without becoming a calculated policy.[421]

Although Lehmann does not discuss the relationship between means and ends, one could say that the end justifies the means in his concept of revolution and violence. In one rare comment that comes close to the issue, he says that "…hypocrisy, not crime, is the mortal sin of revolution…"[422] This seems to indicate that violent means might be used as long as they aim at humanization. He does not, however, attempt to justify violence; rather, he insists that the apocalyptic nature of the situation puts the whole process beyond the scope of ethical evaluation and criticism. The consequence of all this is that by refusing to deal with the question of means and ends, Lehmann ends up supporting the position that the end justifies the means; hence, the church is free to choose whatever means are necessary, provided that they aim at liberation and humanization.

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[420] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, pp. 266-267.

[421] *Ibid.*, pp. 260 and 266-267.

[422] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The use of violence is permitted even though it cannot be justified. It is a risk that should not be made into a policy. As long as the political priorities are in the right place and violence is used only to bring about liberation and humanization, the revolution is still a sign of transfiguration and has a chance of becoming transfigured.

Lehmann recognizes a slight difficulty with his position and the way in which Jesus responded to the establishment in his own time. Jesus did not resort to the violent use of force because he was expecting God's action in the establishment of the Kingdom. If he had acted, it would only have signified a loss of confidence in God's activity; but this by no means indicates that Jesus would not have used violence had he known the end was not near.[423] His expectation of what was going to happen caused him not to use violence just as our social situation and the lack of justice calls us to support the use of counter-violence. If we had the same expectation today that Jesus had then, perhaps there would be no reason to resort to the use of violence; but since we do not have that expectation, we may have to resort to it. We do not, however, have to justify it morally. It is an apocalyptic phenomenon and lies beyond moral judgment and the categories of right and wrong, good and evil.

Evaluation and criticism of Lehmann's position on violence is not easy, especially when he appeals to a special ability to perceive what God is doing in the world to make human life human. We admit that it is the task of the church to perceive God's will and to discern what he is doing today, but as John Yoder has so aptly put it: "This task of discernment is much less simple than seems to be assumed by many who in the last decade have been encouraging us to look for God at work in 'the World Revolution (whatever that is).'"[424] Lehmann proceeds as if the task is simple, and this enables him to resolve contradictions with the New Testament emphasis on nonviolence. As we have seen, Lehmann acknowledges that Jesus did not yield to the Zealotist temptation to bring in the Kingdom by force; rather, he proceeded in a nonviolent manner, expecting God to

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[423] Lehmann, *The Transfiguration of Politics*, pp. 90-93.

[424] John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 159.

establish the Kingdom. Had Jesus acted differently, he would have signified a loss of confidence in God's activity and ability. Lehmann does not hesitate, however, to reformulate Jesus' position on violence for today; and he bases his reformulation on the assumption that had Jesus known the end was not imminent, he might have resorted to violence. How does Lehmann know this, and on the basis of what criteria does he have the right to suggest that Jesus would act differently? Is not Lehmann actually throwing out the only unique Christian approach to the problem of injustice and yielding to the inevitability of violence wherever injustice is present?

Moltmann, like Lehmann, does not try to justify violence, nor does he suggest nonviolence as the only Christian option; rather, he struggles with the problem of violence versus nonviolence as a strategy and the possibility of using violence as the responsible action of love. "The problem of violence and nonviolence," he writes, "is an illusory problem. There is only the question of the justified and unjustified use of force and the question of whether the means are proportionate to the ends." By "Illusory," Moltmann is referring to the paradox existing between those who advocate nonviolence and those who embrace revolutionary violence. Those who advocate nonviolence are usually those who control police power, and those who embrace revolutionary violence are usually those who have no means of power.[425] The word "violence" suggests undertones of the abuse of power and is not generally applied to the legitimate and legal exercise of power. The word "power" is more appropriate here. Power is the means by which something is obtained by force; unless power is justified, it is injustice, despotism, outrage, terror, brutality—in other words, violence. At one point, Moltmann refers to "revolutionary or liberating violence"; but later he changes his wording and calls such action "legitimate political power."[426] The unjustified use of force on either side would be considered as violence by Moltmann.

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[425] Moltmann, *Revolution, Revolution, and the Fu*ture, p. 43.

[426] Jürgen Moltmann, "Racism and the Right to Resist," *Study Encounter* (1972), pp. 5 and 7.

The justification of "power" and the "use of force" must come from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenants on Human Rights (1966).[427] According to Moltmann, these statements have their roots in the Christianization of the European states, which transformed the relationship of man to the state. "If man is God's image," he says, "he is a responsible person and bearer of the rights and duties of freedom." "Man does not exist for the sake of the state, but the state for the sake of man." "The state," he continues, "is no longer 'God on earth,' but has to respect and guard the dignity of man. With this, human rights become the *basic rights* of state constitutions." That state "power" cannot be taken for granted but must be justified is, therefore, the result of the Christianization of these states.[428] This does not mean that power did not have to be justified prior to these statements; it only means that today we have internationally binding statements on human rights. Moltmann recognizes the inadequacies of the present statements and calls Christians to the task of constantly identifying and promoting clearer statements on human rights. The present statements do not speak adequately to the nations of the third world, which are demanding more than abstract ideals. They want economic, social, and political self-determination. They do not view human rights from a western perspective but from their own situation of poverty and oppression. They insist that human rights are not only violated; they are also abused. They are abused when they are used to justify private interests over against the rights of other human beings and nations. They are abused when they are divided up, and

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[427] Jürgen Moltmann, "A Christian Declaration on Human Rights," *Theological Basis of Human Rights* (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1976), p. 7. This work was written from a theological consultation held in London on February 18-21, 1976. The International Covenants on Human Rights (1966) include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

[428] Moltmann, "Theological Basis of Human Rights and of the Liberation of Man," p. 351. Moltmann goes into much more depth than we have in showing the roots of Christianity in the declaration on human rights. For more detail one can read the above article on the subject.

when it is pretended that only part of them stand for human rights. There can be no priority of individual rights over social rights, says Moltmann, just as there can be no priority of social rights over individual rights. There must be a balance. Finally, fundamental "human duties" need to be formulated, without which "rights" and "freedoms" cannot exist. These rights, freedoms, and duties are all interrelated and interdependent. They also stand in constant need of revision in the future, but they still make up a foundation for justifying power and the use of force. If power is being justified by the state, its constitution and actions must be based on these basic human rights; and if justification is sought outside of the state, then these basic human rights must be aimed at and written up in any proposed constitution.[429]

Moltmann suggests that we are wrong to endorse "conserving violence" (unjustified use of power) and to reject "liberating or revolutionary violence" (justified use of power). It is too simply to insist that military service is a possibility for Christians and, at the same time, to say that resistance must follow the line of nonviolence. It seems to indicate that a tyrannical government is better than a revolution.[430] Moltmann supports resistance against tyranny and suggests that tyranny can be proven when there is continuous violation of the law, of the constitution, or of human rights. Resistance in such a case would be the legitimate use of justified political power, and for Christians "it is normal political participation in abnormal circumstances." In order for it to maintain its justification, resistance must aim at the restoration of legality, a constitution, and human rights as the basis of both.[431]

One question remains. What form can this resistance take? Is nonviolence the only thing that is consonant with the gospel? "No!" says Moltmann. What is consonant with the gospel is not "nonviolence" but the "responsible action of love." Nonviolence, at

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[429] Jürgen Moltmann, "A Christian Declaration on Human Rights," pp. 7-8, 10-11, and 14. See also the article on Human Rights in Moltmann, "Theological Basis of Human Rights and the Liberation of Man, pp. 351-353.

[430] Moltmann, "Racism and the Right to Resist," pp. 1-4.

[431] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

least in the sense of nonresistance, cannot be justified in tyrannical situations because it permits and encourages violence. It does not preserve the personal innocence of the individual but leads to a more irredeemable guilt. If nonviolence is to be used, it must resist tyranny; and if liberating violence (the justified use of force) is resorted to, it must take the shape of the responsible action of love. We cannot approve of everything that needs to be done in the name of liberating violence, but there is forgiveness.[432] "Those who forget this and justify violence," says Moltmann, "become a public danger. But those who do nothing, in order to avoid guilt, still fail in obedience to God."[433] Those who use force may be guilty of many wrongs, some of which we might call sin; but those who do nothing are more guilty, for they are guilty of the sin of omission.

Moltmann does deal with the question of means and ends, something that Lehmann seems to ignore. "The humane goals of a revolution," says Moltmann, "must not be brought into disrepute by inappropriate means of violence." In saying this, Moltmann suggests the possibility of a revolt of the means against the ends in revolutionary activity, and he would like to avoid this. He does not want disproportionate means to betray the goals of the revolution. Therefore he suggests that revolutionaries cannot afford to be inhuman during the transitional period.[434] It is in the transitional period, the time when revolutionaries are trying to seize power and direct it towards liberation and humanization, that they are tempted to adopt methods that are not commensurate to the goals they are seeking, and Moltmann warns: "One cannot exorcise the devil with another devil."[435] Yet one must act, for to fail to act is to commit the greater sin. Naturally it is difficult to act lawfully and without using terrorist methods in a situation of legalized disorder, injustice, and terror.[436] The oppressors, however, should not be allowed to

[432] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[433] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

[434] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 143-144.

[435] Moltmann, "Liberation in the Light of Hope," p. 419.

[436] Moltmann, "Racism and the Right to Resist," p. 7.

prescribe the means used, and those who copy their means are not yet the new humanity. “Any means may be appropriate,” claims Moltmann, “but they must be other and better than those of the opponents if they are to confuse them.”[437] A revolution of the present for the benefit of a more humane future “must not mold itself after the strategies of the world to be overthrown.” The goal is to conquer and abolish the vicious circle of force; moreover, revolutionaries who react to violence with counter-violence have to reconcile their means with their sought-after goal later on, and this is by no means easy. Thus it is better to use means consistent with one’s goals; but if one does risk the use of violent means, one should keep in mind that the criterion for such action must always be “the measure of possible transformation.” Revolutionary violence can only be justified by the humane goals of the revolution; and if the latter are lost sight of, then any means would be inappropriate.[438]

In defining violence as an apocalyptic phenomenon, Lehmann has separated the use of violence from the need for ethical scrutiny. He does suggest, however, that counter-violence must aim at setting the political priorities of freedom and justice straight, but he does not suggest concrete criteria for doing this. He relies on his theonomous conscience for being able to recognize where God is at work and when justice is present. Moltmann does try to be more concrete when he suggests the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the concrete criteria to be used, and he even attempts to demonstrate Christian roots for human rights. When these rights are violated, resistance can be initiated; and if the violations are serious enough, such resistance might even turn into liberating violence. Here is where Moltmann runs into some difficulty. In his definition of violence, he chooses to call violence the unjustified use of power or force. If power or the use of force is justified, then he would not call them violence but, rather, legitimate political power. This would apply even to revolutionary activity, in which case it would be called legitimate political power in abnormal circumstances. How, then, can Moltmann discuss the concept of revolutionary or liberating

[437] Moltmann, “God in the Revolution,” p. 251.

[438] Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, pp. 143-144.

violence? If revolutionary activity can justify what it is doing, it would not be violence at all but the justified exercise of power and the legitimate use of force. The same would hold for a government in power if it is aiming at justice and humanization according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, there would be no such thing as revolutionary or liberating violence. Moltmann would have to agree with Ellul that there is only one kind of violence.[439] The difference between Moltmann and Ellul at this point would be that Ellul refuses to make the distinction between violence and force that Moltmann clearly makes.[440] Not only is Moltmann's definition of violence inadequate, it is also used inconsistently in his discussion about Christian involvement in revolutionary activity.

Moltmann never seems to deal seriously with the contradiction between his position and the nonviolence of Jesus in the New Testament. Lehmann took the matter seriously and interpreted it as Jesus' confidence that God would act decisively in history and usher in the Kingdom. Therefore, human action would not be necessary and would actually signal a lack of confidence in God. Lehmann then suggested that Jesus might have acted differently had he known that the Kingdom was not going to be ushered in by God. Moltmann does not deal with Jesus' nonviolence; instead, he suggests that nonviolence—when it is interpreted as nonresistance—must be rejected as irresponsible. Moltmann does not, however, attempt to deal seriously with nonviolent resistance as an alternative to revolutionary activity.

Segundo also writes nonviolent resistance off; however, his point is that there is no such thing and even if there were, it could not be

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[439] Ellul, *Violence*, pp. 97-99 and 113.

[440] *Ibid*., p. 84.

effective in the Latin American environment.[441] Violence is assumed by Segundo to be a legitimate response on the part of Latin Americans to the existing violence already being used against them under the guise of legality. Even development programs are to be viewed with suspicion; for development, suggests Segundo, is a new name for violence. Development programs make more bearable an order that, under the appearance of law, hides an inhuman violence; and counter-violence is a legitimate reaction against this.[442]

When Segundo attempts to define violence, he does so by discussing two related concepts: love and egotism. Love and egotism are polar opposites, but violence is part of both of these opposing tendencies. His clearest definition runs as follows: "…*violence is an intrinsic dimension of any and all concrete love* in history just as it clearly is an intrinsic dimension of any and all concrete egotism."[443] Let us now attempt to get at what he means by this. "Egotism," he says, "is no more violent than love; love is no less violent than egotism."[444] Love involves giving something to a person, whereas egotism involves obtaining something from a person. "Pure violence," continues Segundo, "would be egotism: i.e., the total relativizing of others so that they are seen only in terms of one's own advantage." However, there is no such thing as pure violence, just as there is no such thing as pure love. There are only degrees of love and egotism—and violence. Violence is mixed with love, and love is

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[441] Segundo, "Christianity and Violence in Latin America," p. 34. We have already referred to Segundo's comments on the nonviolence of Gandhi's campaign for India's freedom and the fight against racial segregation in the United States. What bothers us at this point is that Segundo contrasts these nonviolent strategies with Latin America's problems and simply writes nonviolent resistance off as ineffective. In a later book, *The Liberation of Theology*, he defines violence in such a way as to reject any possibility of anyone acting nonviolently. We shall be dealing with this definition next.

[442] *Ibid*., pp. 32-33.

[443] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 161.

[444] *Ibid*., p. 157.

mixed with violence. In fact, there is no concrete love without some violence.[445]

As we can see from Segundo's discussion of violence, violence is not only physical. In fact, it is only secondarily physical. "Any and every denial of the unique, central, irreducible worth of each person," claims Segundo, "is a certain violence."[446] Egotism as violence can be more destructive than any weapon traditionally viewed as an instrument of violence. Segundo points out that human egotism "is already destroying our planet, for it is systemically and perhaps irrevocably eating up the resources of this planet during a nuclear 'peace.'"[447] But not all violence is destructive. There are, concludes Segundo, two kinds of violence—violence which cures and violence which destroys. There is even a good dose of violence in evangelization, which many would call good because it cures rather than destroys.[448] Violence of any kind, whether institutionalized or revolutionary, must be judged by whether it destroys or cures. Segundo considers it sociologically significant that the subject of violence usually comes up in connection with revolution but seldom in regard to the police or the army. Regardless of which kind of violence we are discussing, we must ask the following question: Does this violence aim at curing or destroying the humanity of persons?[449]

What, we might ask, does Segundo have to say about Jesus as a nonviolent person and whether he preached nonviolence as a method to be adopted in the face of all eventualities? Segundo does deal with the question and concludes that Jesus was God incarnate; therefore, even for him, the total exclusive opposition between love and violence was not a historical possibility. Jesus was immersed in history; and for this reason, he could not escape the use of violence, although the latter is evidenced more clearly in his attitude than in

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[445] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, p. 164.

[446] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[447] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 157.

[448] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, p. 166.

[449] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 157.

his message. Jesus spent his whole lifetime overcoming prejudices (Mark 7:25-27), on occasion he judged people en masse (Mark 7:6-7), and he sometimes resorted to physical violence without previous dialogue concerning the problem (Mark 11:15). Love and violence were present in Jesus as they are present in us. They were present because Jesus was God incarnate and immersed in history.[450]

Not only does Segundo reject the idea that Jesus was nonviolent, he also states that his own phenomenological and exegetical analysis of the problem of violence leads him to the logical and obvious, but scandalous, conclusion that *the end justifies the means*. Christian morality is a morality of ends not just any ends. There are certain ends, he admits, which are bad and cannot justify any means, however sacred or legal they might seem to be.[451] Once ends have been justified, the next step is the selection of means that will attain those ends. Christian morality, however, is not grounded on the means. The means derive their value from the ends for which they are employed, and the means cannot even be considered apart from their relationship to justified ends and concrete situations. Segundo is aware of the fact that an overemphasis on the ends—even justified ends—might lead to the use of foolish means (killing, robbing, defying society) to carry them out. Segundo calls them foolish because they might actually thwart the desired ends. He does not, however, rule out such means simply because they are violent in nature. "The danger," says Segundo, "is not that the end may justify the means. The danger is that we may use means which only seem to bring us to our goal but actually block us from it in the long run." Christians are primarily concerned with ends and how certain means can achieve those ends. The morality of the means is derived from their relationship to the sought-after ends and not from their own intrinsic nature. Means can never be ultimate in themselves. Means are necessary to achieve ends; but if the former show signs of undermining the latter, such means must be rejected. The Christian

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[450] Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, pp. 164-169.

[451] Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, pp. 171-172.

message, he concludes, places us in the best position to effect the continuing moral purification of the means being employed.[452]

Segundo comes closer to justifying violence than either Lehmann or Moltmann. By rejecting nonviolence as a possibility, he comes close to James Cone, who said: "…ours is a situation in which the only option we have is that of deciding whose violence we will support—that of the oppressors or the oppressed, whites or blacks."[453] This position, which both Lehmann and Moltmann also accept—although Moltmann refers to the violence of the oppressed as justified force—contrasts sharply with that of Jacques Ellul who says that "the idea that there are two kinds of violence is utterly mistaken."[454] None of our writers agrees with Ellul. All of them accept violence to some extent and perceive two kinds of violence—one that dehumanizes and one that liberates. They presuppose that violence can be controlled, even though Lehmann admits that no revolution has ever been successful in preventing violence from becoming a policy. Insofar as the latter remains true, the church would have to change sides when new establishments begin to justify themselves and make violence into a policy.

No one, not even Segundo, is interested in making violence into a policy and continuing the vicious circle, but Segundo comes dangerously close to doing this when he suggests that violence is part of both egotism and love. He goes a little too far when he suggests that egotism is no more violent than love. This kind of a discussion on violence may support him in his claim that even Jesus

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[452] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, p. 109.

[453] James H. Cone, "Black Theology on Revolution, Violence, and Reconciliation," *Dialog* (Spring, 1973), p. 131.

[454] Ellul, *Violence*, p. 113. See pp. 97-99 and pp. 101-102 for more detail on Ellul's rejection of two kinds of violence.

was involved in violence, but it does not deal adequately with Jesus' veto against his disciples' desire to use violence.[455]

Like Lehmann and Moltmann, Segundo does not take seriously enough the possibility of nonviolent resistance as a Christian approach to systemic violence. Perhaps they do not because they are presupposing that the higher good is to make history move in the right direction and nonviolent resistance does not seem to possess the ability to do this. John Yoder admits that nonviolence might indeed be ineffective in making history move in the right direction, but he also claims that Jesus himself gave up every handle on history and this is what brought about his triumphant suffering on the cross.[456] Yoder understands the cross as a political alternative to both insurrection and quietism and suggests that Jesus willingly accepted evident defeat over against complicity with evil. He thus aligns himself with the ultimate triumph of God.[457] Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo are not willing to accept defeat and rely on any ultimate triumph of God in the future; rather, they desire to see that triumph take place in the present. That is why they are willing to place the church in support of revolutionary activity with the use of violence to achieve the goals of liberation and humanization. The only option they seem to perceive is that of doing nothing, which to them would be equal to supporting the status quo. Yoder suggests, however, that this was never a temptation for Jesus and cannot be one for Christians. Social withdrawal, quietism, or nonresistance was excluded at the outset. Any alliance with the Sadducean establishment in the exercise of *conservative* social responsibility was also excluded at the outset. The only temptation Jesus faced—and he faced it again and again—"was the temptation to exercise

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[455] Although Segundo mentions certain passages from the New Testament to support his claim that Jesus was violent, he does not mention the passages brought up by Ellul. "Every time the disciples wanted to use any kind of violence," writes Ellul, "they came up against Christ's veto (the episode of the fire pouring from heaven on the cities that rejected Christ, the parable of the tares and the wheat, Peter's sword, etc.)." See a discussion on this in Ellul, *Violence*, pp. 129-130.

[456] Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, pp. 233-234, 239-241, and 246.

[457] *Ibid*., pp. 43 and 245.

social responsibility, in the interest of justified revolution, through the use of available violent methods."[458] Ellul agrees that the rejection of violence does not mean that Christians do nothing and are absent from the world. He suggests that it is curious that Christians should be accused of being absent from the world because they reject the world's ways, means, and objectives. Being present in the world should not mean helping hate and evil to proliferate. The following, he says, expresses the Christian presence in the world:

> Christians will be sufficiently and completely present in the world if they suffer with those who suffer, if they seek out with those sufferers the one way of salvation, if they bear witness before God and man to the consequences of injustice and the proclamation of love.[459]

Ellul is not against change. He just does not believe that violence is the means appropriate for a revolution *in depth*. Violence, he concludes, can only "produce apparent, superficial changes, rough facsimiles of change." "But it never affects the roots of injustice—social structures, the bases of an economic system, the foundations of a society."[460]

Conclusions

There seems to be little doubt that all three of our theologians would formulate as part of the church's task the support of violent revolutionary activity when the cause is just and the timing seems necessary. What implication does this have for the world mission of the church? It can hardly make the involvement of the church across national borders any easier, and it would certainly make the exchange of personnel much more difficult. This, however, is not a sufficient reason to reject the church's support of violent revolutionary activity. Even if the church decided to steer a middle course between those who hold power and the revolutionaries, the church would still face just as many difficulties. It would, for

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[458] *Ibid*., p. 98.

[459] Ellu, *Violence*, pp. 174-175.

[460] *Ibid*., pp. 117-118.

example, find itself in the middle of the conflict, and both sides would express hostility towards the church. If the church decided to support those in power, then it would face serious difficulties with the revolutionaries. Therefore, it can never reject revolutionary violence simply because it makes the world mission of the church more difficult; there must be better reasons for drawing such a conclusion than that. The church was never promised an easy task, nor should it ever expect one.

Better reasons for rejecting violent revolutionary activity have been offered by Moltmann and Segundo themselves as they have dealt with two difficulties that they perceived present among most revolutionaries. The first one is the Manichean attitude that seems to be so necessary for the success of the revolution, and the second is that of reconciliation. When should revolutionaries seek reconciliation with their enemies, during or after the revolution? Moltmann opts for the former, Segundo for the latter.[461] They both admit that Christianity is anti-Manichean and pro-reconciliation. This in itself would seem to say that the church cannot fully support violent revolutionary activity and that Christians would made bad revolutionaries.

If we were to reject violent revolutionary activity, it would be helpful to have more reasons than those mentioned by political and liberation theologians themselves. They have already admitted the two problems mentioned above in their advocacy of violent revolutionary activity, and they have tried to respond by dealing seriously with them. What bothers us most about how these theologians do their work is their certainty in perceiving the messianic tearing down of the structures as the activity of God. While they do talk about the creation of liberating structures for the purpose of humanization, they never seem to mention the role of government as an instrument of preservation and how God might also be active there. Their primary emphasis seems to focus on the destruction of the negative elements in society, as if that is what God is primarily doing in the world. When their perception of divine

[461] In opting for the latter, Segundo decides to suspend Christianity until after the revolution is over. Then he would seek reconciliation.

activity does not square with the New Testament, they very conveniently reinterpret the New Testament to support their own conclusions. Lehmann assumes that Jesus would have acted differently if he had only known that the end was not near; and Segundo reinterprets violence so that no one can be nonviolent, even Jesus. There is no doubt that they are attempting to do theology, but one wonders whether their approach to theology is really Christian. If it were Christian, would they not be trying to find some kind of guidance in their conclusion that is uniquely Christian in its approach? They do make references to Jesus, but one wonders whether they are really being guided by him or simply using him to support their own theological work. That others who oppose revolutionary violence might also have misused Jesus is not the point. What is at issue is whether they are doing theology in a Christian sense.

One thing we have noticed is that they generally have justified their support of violent revolutionary activity under the single criterion of its being in the service of liberation and humanization. They have a just cause. We have dealt with the ends-means dilemma, which some of them deal with but which none of them gives the attention it really deserves. This does not interest them very much, for they are certain that they can perceive God's activity in the world. Their primary concern is to cooperate with him, not to deal with his methods morally and ethically. His activity lies beyond human understanding of morality and ethics. We are not so sure that it is as simple as they suggest. Therefore we would like to lift up a few additional problems with their support of violent revolutionary activity on the basis of some of the just war criteria, which has its roots in the Christian tradition. This will at least help us to understand some additional difficulties with placing the church in support of violent revolutionary activity. It will also give us some additional reasons for rejecting or accepting their conclusions.

Our purpose in using some of the just war criteria is to place ourselves in a better position to analyze these particular political and liberation theologians and their support of violent revolutionary activity. We do not plan on making an exhaustive study of the just war criteria nor do we intend to use all of the criteria. We shall use,

however, those criteria that point to problems in the work of our three theologians. This might not seem fair since none of these theologians appeals to just war criteria, but it should be pointed out again that all of them emphasize very strongly the justice of their cause and tend to subsume the means to obtaining their goals under the just war criteria of just cause.[462] We must admit that it is at this point where they really excel. It is difficult to deny them the fulfillment of the criterion on just cause. They have done a remarkable job, and we find it easy to accept most of their goals and ideals related to liberation and humanization.

We find two or three just war criteria particularly helpful in lifting up some of the problems that, neither Lehmann, Moltmann, nor Segundo deals with in depth. The first one is the question of a competent authority. Let us look briefly at this first one before turning to any others. There is no doubt that justified reasons are given for a revolt against an oppressive government. Moltmann even discusses how to determine when oppression and tyranny are present and what steps must be taken by a justified revolution in the restoration of human rights. He does not, however, deal with who has the right to assume such authority, nor do Lehmann and Segundo. There is a need to establish authority in order to exercise power and lead a revolution, and such authority ought to have some kind of basis in the community for which one is exercising that authority. Segundo suggests that revolutionaries may have to begin their work without much popular support and that they might even have to take brutal measures against the people in order to make the situation so bad that the people will be motivated to join the campaign against what the revolutionaries themselves have made into an unbearable situation. The question we would raise at this point is: Can Christians support this kind of an approach to establishing one's authority? Even if such methods were accepted to

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[462] Jan Milic Lochman has written an article on the just revolution and in that article he contrasts the just revolution with the just war. He interprets the just war as being primarily concerned with maintaining an existing order, whereas, the just revolution is concerned more with gaining a better, more humane order. George Houser, James Cone, and Roger Shinn make some very interesting responses to his article. See this in Lochman, "The Just Revolution," pp. 163-168.

get the revolution moving, how can we know that the leaders of such a revolution are the right ones to be leading it? That they claim to be able to perceive God's activity in the world is not enough. That might be sufficient reason for one to speak out prophetically, but it is not enough to give one authority to lead a revolution or become the head of a government. Establishing the criteria for taking such leadership is necessary, for anyone advocating violent revolutionary activity and neither Lehmann, Moltmann, nor Segundo does this. They simply have not dealt deeply enough with the question of who a competent authority might be that can lead a violent revolution against oppression and tyranny.

A second just war criterion that points to a problem in violent revolutionary activity is the principle of discrimination that is usually included under the broader category of just conduct. It has to do with whether the war can be conducted in a just manner. The principle of discrimination forbids any intent to harm noncombatants and destroy their society. Revolutionary activity, however, takes place among and between the people and denies the validity that anyone can be a noncombatant. Roger Shinn points out in his response to Lochman's article on the possibility of a just revolution that "guerrilla warfare" denies this principle of discrimination just as truly as does "nuclear war," though certainly not on so grand a scale.[463] The rejection of this principle on the part of revolutionaries is well known. Revolutionaries—at least in the beginning—avoid direct confrontation with military forces and attack instead the civil structures of society. They attempt to undermine public confidence in the government and demonstrate to the people that the government is unable to provide protection for them. They direct their attack against those persons, whose services might otherwise improve society, thus reducing the need for violent revolutionary change. The problem, however, is not only that revolutionaries violate the principle of discrimination or noncombatant immunity, but that the reason they do it is because they interpret the conflict in ultimate terms. The situation is serious and they are not playing around. This is the reason that moral limits tend to fall away as they struggle to destroy the enemy, whom they perceive as totally evil. When they

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[463] Lochman, "The Just Revolution," p. 168.

perceive and conduct the struggle in such ultimate terms, they tend to evoke a corresponding response from the enemy and the conflict takes on a religious character. This is the danger we perceive in the approach taken by political and liberation theologians, Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo included. We perceive the danger less in Moltmann than we do in Lehmann and Segundo. It is most obvious in Segundo who suggests the suspension of Christianity to get on with the revolutionary task, but all of them seem to agree with the rejection of the just war criterion of noncombatant immunity. No one can be immune from the conflict. Everyone has to be involved. Not to support one side means that you support the other.

One final criterion might be mentioned and that is the one concerning last resort. No one mentions any criteria for deciding how violent revolutionary activity might be justified on the basis of it being the last resort. It is just assumed because the cause seems just and the timing is right. Ellul, however, says the following:

> The Christian can never entertain this idea of "last resort." He understands that for the others it may be so, because they place all their hopes in this world and the meaning of this world. But for the Christian, violence can be at most a second-last resort.[464]

On the basis of the two problems mentioned by Moltmann and Segundo—that Christianity is basically anti-Manichean and pro-reconciliation—and on the basis of an inadequate discussion by Lehmann, Moltmann, and Segundo on the just war criteria concerning competent authority, the principle of discrimination, and the possibility of last resort, we find no alternative but to reject their support of violent revolutionary activity as a Christian approach to the problems of oppression and injustice that they so adequately describe. This approach cannot be included in any reformulation of the church's mission in the pursuit of liberation and humanization. This does not free the church from an even greater responsibility to the victims of oppression and injustice. Developing that approach, however, is beyond the scope of this work; but it will definitely have to take into account much of what political and liberation theology

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[464] Ellul, *Violence*, p. 170.

have to say. We shall be summarizing some of those contributions as we now turn to a summary of our conclusions.

V. SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

In this concluding chapter it is our intent to state as briefly and clearly as possible some of our tentative conclusions for a new missiology as a result of the influence of political and liberation theology. It is not our intent to offer these conclusions in detail at this time. We have already done that in the preceding chapters. In some instances we shall be suggesting some directions which our writers have not dealt with in detail but which we affirm as consistent with their thought. We admit that additional research would be necessary in order to take them seriously, but such research lies beyond the scope of this present work and must be left for a future project.

Political and liberation theology have made us acutely aware of the inseparability of the nature and mission of the church. Therefore we have been forced to rethink the nature of the church and include the mission of the church in defining it. The following represents some of our conclusions concerning that definition.

1. The church is a community of believers who are involved in both an evangelistic and social mission. This community is not to be defined merely in terms of its historical continuity or in terms of orthodox Christian belief. Orthopraxis is as important as orthodoxy.

2. The "where" of the church is as important as the "what" of the church. The church must make itself present where Christ himself is present and wants it to be present. Since Christ moved among the poor and the oppressed, the church too must choose this path to express its evangelistic and social mission.

3. The church, however, should not confuse ecclesiology with salvation. It is not necessary to include nonbelievers, whose activities happen to coincide with the church's concern for liberation and humanization, as part of the church. One must have faith in Christ to be called a Christian and be included within the church. This does not mean that nonbelievers lie outside of God's love and care, only that the Christian community includes both faith and works in its definition of itself.

As the church proceeds to fulfill its essence by becoming involved in liberation and humanization, it needs a positive vision of

what it is all about. What, for example, does it mean to be human? At least two elements of humanization have been lifted up in political and liberation theology and they are “freedom” and “maturity” (interrelatedness). Moltmann structured these much more tightly by describing the human in terms of the abundant, upright, sovereign, and purposeful man. We agree with this and would like to suggest at least eight conclusions, which we have reached as a result of having examined how our three model theologians have attempted to deal with the human vision, the human role, and the human mission of the church. These conclusions represent where we have come out and, in some cases, our conclusions may differ greatly from one or more of the theologians we have studied. The following conclusions therefore represent how we would reformulate the mission of the church in our time:

1. The concerns of people in different times and cultures may vary. Among many of the poor and oppressed in the third world countries, the concern is not so much for forgiveness and reconciliation with God as it is for self-esteem, self-determination, and the need for social change. These aspirations of the poor and oppressed must be taken into consideration in the formulation of the church’s mission.

2. It is God’s involvement in liberation and humanization in the present that determines the church’s social mission and not the fixed principles and rules from the past. We agree with this conclusion from the political and liberation theologians, but we are not as confident as they are when it comes to the ability to perceive and distinguish his activity in the present. They do not deal adequately with this problem. About all that they can say is that God’s activity is perceived more with the eye of faith than it is with the eye of reason.

3. The coming Kingdom of God is the context out of which the church’s social mission is formulated and reformulated. Although the social situation does not determine the mission, it may well set the agenda. The church does not only interpret the Kingdom of God to the world, it calls for the world to conform to it and be transformed by it. Liberation and humanization, however, are not totally dependent upon human efforts; rather, persons cooperate with the coming Kingdom. They are construction workers with God in the

transformation of society and in the building up of the Kingdom of God.

4. We are suggesting that the church has two missions—evangelistic and social. Evangelism is primary; it is the foundation from which the social mission emerges. These are not alternatives; both must be done simultaneously. They are related to one another as the soul is to the body. There is a tendency in political and liberation theology to submerge evangelism into humanization to the extent that the former loses its distinctiveness. We do not accept Segundo's call for a minority Christian community. Evangelism involves the inviting of everyone who will respond into the Christian community. It is not merely the transmission of the Christian faith.

5. There is an interrelationship between the transformation of persons and the transformation of society. These are not alternatives. We cannot work only on the transformation of persons expecting the society automatically to be transformed by persons who have been transformed. Both must be worked on simultaneously because they affect one another.

6. We must move from philanthropy, charity, and social service to the establishment of social justice so that the former are no longer necessary. This conclusion has not been developed to any extent by our model theologians, but we affirm that it is a logical consequence of their thought and their concern with liberation and humanization.

7. The church must exert pressure on the political and social institutions to become more humane. Should the church develop social institutions of its own, such as it has done with mission schools, mission medical facilities, and mission agricultural programs? Hocking and Kraemer did not question the existence of such institutions, only whether or not they were good institutions and how they were being used. There is a tendency to divorce such institutions from being used for evangelistic purposes, but there is little questioning of whether or not they should even exist. They have generally supported the status quo, making it difficult for the church to speak prophetically. We would like to suggest that their very existence be questioned. This is one of those conclusions that, needs much more research to be taken seriously, but our tentative conclusion is that their very existence should be questioned. The

church should be free to exert pressure on government to establish political and social institutions that are more humane.

8. The church ought to dialogue and cooperate with other religions and ideologies. Such dialogue should focus on both faith and works. Political and liberation theologians tend to place all the emphasis on dialogue with religions and ideologies to cooperate in liberation and humanization. They prefer to bracket any dialogue concerning faith or belief. Faith and works cannot be that easily divorced. Faith affects works. These are not alternatives. Dialogue and cooperation may be difficult between two missionary oriented religions, but it is a necessary path to follow if any meaningful relationship is to exist between the religions.

The church needs a positive vision of the human before it negates the historical negatives. Negating these negatives is like chipping away on a piece of stone to create a statue. One needs at least an approximate vision of the finished statue before one begins to chip away at the material out of which it will be shaped. One has to begin somewhere and the historical negatives cannot be ignored. The church must respond to them and formulate strategies for overcoming them. The church will naturally respond first to the negatives that cause the most difficulty in a given society, but this does not mean that it will neglect all the others for the sake of one or two. All of the negatives must be overcome if humanization is to be achieved, and they must be worked on simultaneously. We would suggest the following four strategies for negating the main historical negatives:

1. The church must support the best form of economic organization for a particular society. The biblical materials are not helpful at this point since they do not suggest one form of economic organization for all circumstances. The economic negative most obvious is the dehumanizing gap that exists between rich and poor persons and nations, and the political and liberation theologians suggest socialism as the best form of economic organization to negate this negative. We agree with their choice but insist that the church must always remain open to new and better forms of economic organization. Socialism may not always be the best form of economic organization for every society, although our experience

in the third world gives us a positive impression of its potential for negating the economic negatives. The problem, however, is that the dehumanizing gap between the rich and the poor cannot be reduced without also reducing the economic position of the wealthy. Socialism teaches us that poverty can be eliminated but not by an unchecked pursuit for affluence. The economic situation of the rich may have to be lowered in order to increase the economic situation of the poor. There are not enough resources to support everyone at the same economic level in which the present American middle class lives. This conclusion was suggested by our model theologians, but it was not dealt with in detail. More research is necessary, but this is beyond the scope of this work. We agree with it, but without the proper research, it can only remain a tentative conclusion and direction for the mission of the church.

2. The second strategy being suggested is that of democracy, which is needed to overcome the negative of political oppression. Persons and nations need to become subjects of their own histories. Segundo's criticism of the electoral process needs to be taken seriously so that persons and nations really have choices, not only between candidates and parties, but also between different forms of government. His criticism, however, should not lead to the rejection of democratic structures; rather, it should lead to providing democratic structures, which will enable persons and nations to become subjects of their own destiny. World government still seems like an abstract utopia and may actually deprive smaller political groupings of their own self-determination.

3. Social and class differences will always exist, but they should not be dehumanizing. The social negatives of class and race must be overcome by respect and inclusiveness in the society as a whole and in the church in particular. Eliminating these differences may enable a particular church to grow faster numerically; but in the process, the church loses its ability to symbolize a true Christian community, making of it nothing but a class or racial church. Respect and inclusiveness must be highly visible in the church, or the church is not following any strategy for negating the social negatives.

4. The only strategy that the church can have for negating the religious negatives is that of proclamation. Sin and death are the

main negatives to be overcome. Political and liberation theology inform us that sin is not only an impediment to salvation; it is also an impediment to liberation and humanization. Sin can be defined both in terms of presumption (sin of commission) and despair (sin of omission) and persons cannot overcome these negatives by themselves. Sin needs to be forgiven, and forgiveness is a divine gift. This is what needs to be proclaimed. Death, like sin, is an impediment to liberation and humanization as well as to the prolongation of life. Death threatens purpose, meaning, and hope and overcoming it through human effort is futile. Death can only be overcome by God, and resurrection is pure gift. The Christian concept of resurrection not only restores purpose, meaning, and hope; it also becomes a driving force for liberation and humanization. It leads directly into the negation of the social, political, and economic negatives. While human effort counts for nothing in overcoming the religious negatives, human effort is very important in negating all of the other negatives.

The church must deal with these historical negatives, but can it accept violent revolutionary activity to do it? Would this not make the international missionary activity of the church more difficult and force a moratorium on missionary personnel as well? This would probably be the case, but the difficulty of the task is not a legitimate reason for backing off. The only legitimate reason for backing away from violence is that it is a nonchristian method of dealing with the problems of dehumanization and injustice. On the basis of the two problems mentioned by Moltmann and Segundo—that Christianity is basically anti-Manichean and pro-reconciliation—and on the basis of an inadequate discussion by all three of our model theologians on the just war principles of competent authority, discrimination, and last resort, we must reject their support of violent revolutionary activity as a Christian approach to the problems of dehumanization and injustice, which they have so adequately described under the principle of just cause. They might have helped their own cause much more by distinguishing between "force" and "violence" and insisting that revolutionary activity does not really involve violence at all; rather, it is involved in the justified exercise of power and the consequent legitimate use of force against an unjust government. They would have had to develop a genuine case for such

revolutionary activity along the lines of the just war criteria. This same kind of rationale has been used in order to justify Christian involvement in the military service and it might be possible to do the same for revolutionary activity. It would, however, have to deal more seriously with the just war criteria; it is not enough to justify violent means on the basis of one's personal perception of the revolutionary activity of God in the world. Taking up such a task is beyond the scope of this work, as is dealing with the problems that such an approach would raise. One of those problems is the difficulty that such an approach would create for carrying on international missionary activity in the midst of the church's support of justified revolutionary activity. Political and liberation theology have described the problem for the church, but the former's support of violent revolutionary activity must be rejected. The church must now take seriously what it has learned from these theologians and place itself more squarely on the side of the poor and oppressed using methods consistent with its faith and goals. While such methods might not be all that clear, political and liberation theology have added significantly to the church's understanding of its social task in a world that needs to be liberated and humanized. The church must reformulate its mission accordingly.

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