I. Liberation Theology

1. Social Context

1. Colonialism/Neo-colonialism

a. from White Man’s Burden to developmentalism

1. Grand Area Strategy

i. Third world as service area

ii. Latin America to serve U.S.

iii. threat

1. enforcing GAS in Latin America

i. ideology: Cold War and National Security

ii. U.S. support “friendly dictators”

iii. U.S. military aid, training, advisors, intelligence

iv. Army School of the Americas

d. consequences

i. economic inequality of colonialism

ii. land reform for wealthy and mncs

iii. export crops

iv. destruction of natural resources and environment

v. internal migration

vi. extreme violence towards “subversives”

vii. resistance: people, Catholic priests, and nuns

viii. Archbishop Romero, Fernando Lugo, Jean Baptiste Aristide

3. Example: Guatemala

a. 1945: Birth of democracy

b. 1954: Overthrow

1. 1954-early 1990s

i. military dictators

ii. reverse reforms

iii. genocide: 200,000 killed

4. Example: Haiti

1. Liberation Theology

1. Theologians: Enrique Dussel, Gustavo Gutierrez, Paulo Freire

2. Liberation

a. “from”

i. oppressive social structures

ii. fate

iii. personal inertia

b. “to”

i. participate in creating a just society

ii. act

iii. accept personal responsibility

3. Christian Theology

a. hope and moral obligation

b. starting point: reinterpreting the Scriptures

i. story : by, about, and for poor

ii. written “from below”

iii. unique document

iv. poor of LA similar situation

v. what do Scriptures say to poor of LA

c. Scriptures: main points

i. God acts in history to liberate poor so that they may

create just society

ii. to “know” God is to practice justice to the poor

iii. poverty is a consequence of social org

d. God in history

i. Exodus: central story

ii. Covenant

obligation of people: egalitarian community of social justice

promise: God will stand with people in creating new community

iii. prophets and the poor

poor

challenge power structure

core message: social justice

test: how are the poor treated

demand radical transformation of social order

“messianic vision”

e. Jesus of Nazareth

i. poor person

ii. followers: poor, strangers, and outcasts, Zealots

iii. universalizes Covenant

iv. love: active commitment to poor

v. challenges political and religious power

vi. killed for political reasons

vii. persecution, crucifixion, and resurrection is sign of God’s identity with poor and hope/this world

f. meaning for Latin America

i. identify with poor

ii. act to change world

iii. human beings must create Kingdom of Heaven on earth

iv. challenge power structure (capitalism) in name of social justice

v. challenge Church

4. Base communities (Basic Christian Communities)

a. new church: grass roots organizations

b. Bible readings and discussions

c. hunger: soup kitchens and food pantries

d. education: literacy

e. health care: clinics

f. family: child care

g. political activism: privatization of water

h. consequence: empowerment of the poor

i. HaitParaquay: Fernando Lugo