

ASIAN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON LIBERATION

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I. THREE TYPES OF "LIBERATION THEOLOGY"

It may be proper to classify "liberation theology" in three types. The first type come out from the third world, especially from the Latin American context. Although it does not call itself as liberation theology, we may put A Theology of Human Hope (Corpus Publications, New York, 1969; Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1972) of Rubem A. Alves, a Brazilian Protestant theologian, in this first type as one of pioneer work in this direction. Beginning with the first chapter "In Search of Freedom", titles of all six chapters show us clearly that "freedom" was his basic concern through out the book. As his title of the last chapter, the sixth chapter, "Theology as language of freedom" shows us, it is his originality to discuss about the problem of freedom in terms of hermeneutic. In New Theology (1972) no. 9, edited by Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman, we know that he still holds this basic direction in his "Theology and Liberation of Man" (pp. 230-250). Works of Catholic theologians such as Rene Laurent in Liberation, Development & Salvation (originally 1969, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 1972) or Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (originally 1971, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 1973) are following the work of Alves.

While this first type came outside of the U.S. context, the second and the third types emerged within the United States. A monumental work of this second type might be A Black Theology of Liberation (J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia & New York 1970) written by James H. Cone, who already published Black Theology and Black Power (The Seabury Press, New York, 1969) in the previous year. This was followed by James Denotis Roberts, Liberation and Reconciliation, a Black Theology (Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1971) and Black Religion and Black Radicalism (Doubleday and Company, New York 1972) of Gayraud S. Wilmore, who has also written The Church's Response to the Black Manifesto in 1969 as Chairman of the Division of Church and Race in the UPCUSA Board of National Mission.

The third type belongs to the movement of Women's Liberation. In 1970 Sookie Stambler edited Women's Liberation, Blue Print for the Future (ACE Books, Charter Communications, New York 1970) in which we also find an essay of Hilary Langhorst "Eve's Sex Under God's Law". Sarah Bentley Doely also edited Women's Liberation and the Church. The New Demand for Freedom in the Life of the Christian Church (Association Press, New York 1970) and we find an essay of Jeanne Richie, "Church, Caste and Women" in New Theology no. 8 edited by Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (MacMillan New York 1971). And we now have a theology of liberation written by a woman theologian, "Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power" in Liberation Theology by Rosemary Radford Ruether (Paulist Press, New York 1972).

The change from 1960's to 1970's might be featured by the appearance of various types of liberation theologies. All these types agree basically with the understanding of the Gospel as liberation which was brought by Jesus Christ the liberator. Frederick Herzog's "Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel" in Liberation Theology (The Seabury Press, New York 1972) deals with this very basic understanding through the theological interpretation of the fourth Gospel. Although challenged by the second type, namely by the Black Theology, this does not belong to one of these types, but rather deals with the basic understanding of the Gospel which will be the foundation of every type. Differences among each type are mainly caused by what one concretely understands by oppression and liberation. The first type understands these socio-politically and stresses the liberation from the capitalistic colonialistic oppression. The second type understands these ethnically and stresses the liberation from oppression based upon racism. The third type understands these in terms of sexuality and stresses the liberation from the male dominance.

II. ASIAN THEOLOGY AND AMERASIAN THEOLOGY

Although it is not able to separate completely, it may be nevertheless necessary to distinguish sharply "Asian Theology" from "Amerasian Theology".

Asian Theology is first a theology in Asian context. Or in another word, Asian Theology is a theology of the people of God in Asia, who are called to participate in the Mission of God (*missio Dei*) in Asia. It is a reflection to the Asian way of participation to the work of God in Asia. This Asian Theology, as a theology of the third world, will find itself to be mostly affiliated with the first type of liberation theology. It stresses the liberation from the colonialistic oppression mainly on socio-political dimension, but also in cultural, religious dimension. The title of the report of the Asian Christian Youth Consultation for Development (Hong Kong, 1970) is *Lead us not into Imitation* (EACC 1973). Its basic tone is the liberation from the Western captivity in every area of life, which is to be carried on by Asian themselves through their obedient participation to the work of God who precedes us all.

Amerasian Theology, on the other hand, is first a theology in American context. This difference should be kept in mind. While the context of Asian Theology is "Asia", that of the Amerasian Theology is "America". Amerasian Theology is a theology of the people of God in America, who have ethnically an Asian origin and are called to participate in the Mission of God in America. This Amerasian Theology, as a theology of American Asian, is mostly affiliated with the second type of the liberation theology, with the Black Theology, while the Asian Theology is affiliated with the first type. Amerasian Theology will stress, so far as I know, liberation from racial oppression, holding firm to its ethnical identity. In case of the Asian Theology, one who is involved may have no discrepancy between one's national identity and one's ethnical identity, in general. But in case of the Amerasian Theology, one who is involved has a problem of double identity which makes another great difference between Asian Theology. Amerasian Theology is to be carried on by American who has ethnically Asian origin. He is to have national identity as an American, but at the same time he is to have ethnical identity as a person of an Asian origin. This double identity may not be quite harmonious and may have strong tension. An easy going stress on the superiority of the national identity under the white dominance today may result a status quo, which just needs liberation. But another extreme may cause another difficulty. One sided stress on the superiority of ethnical identity will result in separatism, as in Black Panther. Amerasian Theology of liberation should be carried on between these two extremes of status quo and separatism.*

III. TWO BASICALLY DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF LIBERATION

Each type of liberation theology has a vision of a new society where justice will be realized in its fullest sense. They all have a "passion for and vision of human deliverance." (Paul Lehmann, *Ideology and Incarnation*, John Knox Press, Geneva, 1962, p.25) All types have a kind of Messianism in their basis where salvation and liberation and humanization are understood almost synonymously. The problem, however, lies in the fact that there is a fundamental difference in this basic point, as Rubem A. Alves pointed out. According to Alves there are two totally different understanding of liberation. (op.cit. pp.85ff.) One is "humanistic messianism" which understands humanization or liberation as a human "task" that can be realized by human power alone. Liberation "theology" is changed into a liberation "anthropology" here.

Some examples of such humanistic messianism can be seen among contemporary radical theologians in Japan. AKAIWA Sakae (1903-1966), a minister of Presbyterian background, became Barthian and then tried to be a member of Japan Communist Party through dualistic understanding of faith in the line of Karl Barth and social action toward liberation of the oppressed in the line of another Karl, Karl Marx. AKAIWA, moreover, changed his position from Barth to Bultmann and went beyond Bultmann by

* As to Amerasian Theology, materials compiled by Roy Sano, Amerasian Theology of Liberation. A Reader, 1973 might be helpful.

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denying the deity of Jesus Christ at all. His last book was Kirisutokyo Dasshutsuki (Exodus from Christianity, Rironsha, Tokyo 1964) which could be said as the first liberation theology in very peculiar sense. What oppressed AKAIWA was Christianity as ideology and it was Jesus, and not christ, who emancipate him for the realization of the true humanity. Jesus became a symbol of "the human" which everyone is supposed to have. At the last stage of his life, he even became to declare that he was Jesus.

After the death of AKAIWA, a new Testament scholar TAGAWA Kenzo (1935-) succeeded him as a leader in the church or rather an assembly where AKAIWA was a pastor. TAGAWA published his study on the Christology in Mark, Miracle et Evangile. La pensee personnelle de l'évangéliste Marc (Press Univ. France, Paris 1965) or Gensi Kirisutokyo no Ichidanmen (A Phase in the History of Primitive Christianity, Keiso Shobo, Tokyo 1968). Using the hypothesis of Jerusalem tradition and Galilee tradition, TAGAWA classifies the former in the category of establishment and the latter in the category of anti-establishment, where Jesus, according to him, was a leader. The basic intention of the Christology of Mark was to describe the figure of this Jesus against Peter who represented establishment in Jerusalem. It is quite characteristic that he puts such ideological scheme of establishment and anti-establishment into the Biblical studies.

Based upon this line, another version of liberation theology in Japan, is being developed. This distinguishes Paul from Jesus strictly, also from ideological point of view. While Paul had a Roman citizenship and could be quite secure under the protection of the Roman Empire, Jesus stood outside such establishment without having any protection and was crucified by this Roman Empire. Paul, therefore, could not be a man of anti-establishment movement, as Jesus was. The only thing that Paul did was to extend his religious activities within the realm of the Roman Empire, under its protection. His Christology, which became the basis of the whole Christological doctrines, was nothing but the product of this imperialistic ideology. According to TAGAWA and his followers, not only Paul, but the whole development of Christianity within the Roman Empire, which Acts describes, should be denied on the same reason. So everything which came out of the development of the Christianity, not only Chrostology, but also teaching on atonement, or on sacrament, ministerial system and Bible as canon should be denied. This is nothing but a liberation, or using the title of AKAIWA's book, exodus from Christianity, which is in its essence, not a liberation "theology" but a liberation "anthropology".

What deserves to be called as liberation theology is not based upon such "humanistic messianism" but upon "messianistic humanism" which understands humanization as a Gift. To make the divine initiative clearer, I would like to define liberation as a process of the missio Dei toward the full realization of the Kingdom of God, which has its very basis in the triune God Himself. A theology of liberation is a theological reflection of the people of God called to participate to this by God initiated work in the given context. This theological reflection might be very critical, because it will not at all satisfied only to repeat the given patterns of Christian affirmations, which do not necessarily come out from the context where we stand. But on the other hand it cannot be critical to the humanistic messianism which result in the dissolution of the very foundation of the liberation, namely the basic affirmation that Jesus is christ, the liberator from all the powers and principalities. True liberation theology based upon Messianic Humanism will find its way between these "repetition" and "dissolution". It will concentrate itself to the "interpretation" to find out the real meaning of the Gospel within the given context and equip the people of God to participate to the liberation work of God here and now. Using the terminology of Schillebeeck, quoted by Gustavo Gutierrez (op.cit.p.13), liberation theology based upon the Messianic Humanism could be called as "the hermeneutics of the Kingdom of God".

THE FUTURE USE OF ISSEI ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Introduction

Rev. Heih Takarabe

The Issei Oral History Project is a project to interview Japanese immigrants (Issei) and make their life stories available to ministers, educators of the Christian faith, and also to the Ethnic Studies Program of the colleges and universities. It is urgent that these life histories of Issei be orally recorded before the remaining members of this group pass away. The Issei came to America mainly between 1890 and 1924, and they are presently in their 70's and 80's.

This project provided much needed information about these Issei, because their life stories remain relatively unknown to us. There is very little information and knowledge about them and this project will be a major resource material for the public in the near future.

The specific project objectives are 1) to continue interviewing Issei; 2) to transcribe and to translate interviews; 3) to make life histories available to ministers and church school teachers, both ethnic and nonethnic, and to interested students and scholars.

Currently the Project has completed 49 interviews ranging from 2 to 4 hours; 10 interviews are translated and they ranged from 50 to 70 pages. The Project has received \$2,000 from the Self-Development of People Funding, is promised \$2,000 from various Presbyterian churches.

For more detailed information, see the attached "Sacramento Issei Oral History Project".

The Future Use of Issei Oral History Project

The following are some of my thoughts which occurred during interviews with Issei. The Issei History Project is a very time-consuming and very involved process, but every second spent on the project has been worthwhile.

1) Reclaiming the Pioneers: It is a very tragic thing that Issei have been excluded from active participation in the mainstream of American life. This happened mostly because of the language difficulty. In recent months, students have been revisiting their grandparents asking them about their past experiences. These Sansei who did the interviewing had to use interpreters. Even though the process was cumbersome, those who did go through the process benefitted from it tremendously. Issei experiences are very valuable, and one has much to learn from them.

One of the most outstanding experiences of interviewing and translating interviews has been a discovery of beautiful humanity in these outwardly quiet, seemingly insignificant old pioneers. The word to describe the experience is "fantastic!"

The project has gained much vital information from Issei, and as we begin to publicize this information, we are certain that Sansei and future generations will be reclaiming the Issei from forgotten status. In fact this process is already happening in many small groups like Kimochi, Inc. in San Francisco, or ACS in Sacramento.

The liberation of any ethnic group must include all of its sectors. One cannot experience liberation without bringing youth, women, aged and the rest to togetherness. The Issei History Project will aid this process greatly.

2) Grassroot Theology? We have been collecting many life stories and attitudes toward life and toward critical events. It is basically their struggle to understand life and its mystery. It is essentially the struggle to grasp the Ultimate Reality--theology at the grassroot level, however rudimentary it seems.

3) For Christian Educators: Christian educators can use Issei life stories as a vehicle to explain Biblical events and concepts to their students. For example, Abraham's migration and settlement can be tied with the Issei immigration pattern and settlement. The Babylonian Captivity can be explained along with the Relocation Camp experience of the Japanese people. This effort to tie up Biblical events and one's own historical events can make biblical studies more meaningful and closer to our lives. Self-understanding is also enhanced in this kind of approach.

4) Self-Development of People: Asians must work very hard to preserve and remember the past experiences, even though some of the memories are very painful. It was very important for the Hebrews to remember their past as it was described in Deut. 26:5-11. This memory of the past will enable our people to have a sense of history, humility and self understanding.

In order for a man to develop selfhood, he must find his roots. Without this vital knowledge, he cannot begin to advance. What a man is, is the result of not only his own experience but also of his race's experience. A man must go through this discovery process before he can afford to develop his own selfhood. Thus, self-development of people must obtain the information about one's own pioneers.

5) Indigenous God! Many times Asian ministers have had to fight the battles of "foreign God" vs. "indigenous God". Christianity was always looked upon by Asians as white man's religion; and Yahweh as white man's God. This has been one of the greatest obstacles of Mission for Asians. To become a Christian meant to forsake one's own cultural and historical background to join the "white people".

It is now the Asian minister's and responsible Asian Christians' responsibility to rediscover, theologize and explain to fellow Asians that the God of the Bible is the God who has been involved in our lives as our Pioneers migrated from the old country to this new world just as He did with Abraham. This is our task. The life stories of these immigrants can provide much needed resources for this purpose.

With this knowledge one can celebrate life as God's gift, not as life in general, but as it happened in the life of the Issei and the following generations, in concrete ways. Asians should remember their pioneers as well as the Pilgrim Fathers on Thanksgiving day.

6) Liberation from the Ghost of the Past: One of the most tragic events in the life of minorities in a racist society is to accept the stereotyped images put on them by the majority. The Oral History Project has revealed many courageous people, both Asian and white, who fought against dehumanizing forces. legislation and other evils, and did not accept the roles which were forced upon them by the society. For example, Kitano (Japanese Americans, 1969, p. 26) maintains that

there were a number of anti-Japanese legislation which appeared in the California legislature after 1910. These included forbidding Japanese the use or ownership of power engines, forbidding Japanese to employ white girls, making Japanese inheritance of land illegal, and raising the standard fishing license fee of \$10 to \$100 per year for Asians.

The project is discovering that there were many Issei who had organized a legal defense committee and used other means to combat these racist and dehumanizing legislation. Some of these struggles can be found in the interview with Mr. Shichinosuke Asano, and also his published book, Zaibei Yonjunen (My Forty Years of Life in America), published by Uki-Shobo in 1962. Mr. S. Asano is President of the Nichi-bei Times Newspaper in San Francisco.

Reflection

This paper has become a discussion on liberation from a personal and psychological point of view. Most of the so-called liberation movement has been the liberation from bad past experiences, or oppressive custom and tradition, and systems. However, without a serious examination and due respect for the past, one is forever caught by the enslaving past.

One learns much from the Issei History Project in that, for one thing, one can examine his past, and then one may even find courageous people who were, in fact, liberated and liberating others. In this way one will not have to advance into the future gazing into the rear-view mirror.

Knowing one's past as well as one's own racial experience of the past is one of the first steps toward the experience of liberation. In the West, a highly individualized society, it is essential that individual persons be provided with vital information such as this.

THE ETHICS OF LIBERATION

Harold Hakwon Sunoo

One of the thorniest but most noble challenges a democracy can face is reconciling private conscience with public need. If public need is not served, democracy is meaningless. But if private conscience is not honored, this can be equally fatal to all that democracy holds dear. The great issue is to harmonize this right of the individual conscience to do what his best conscience dictates with the right of society to protect and enforce what a democratic consensus of opinion deems the highest good.

A Church historian once remarked with a touch of irony and sadness, that the early Christian expected the Kingdom, but what they got was the Church. History is made often apart from and against our individual conscious intentions. But when the majority of us realize the system frustrates our aspirations, an institutional crisis is inevitable to occur.

The conflict in the human reality is one manifestation of the conflict that goes on in all things in all times. Progress covers through the continual process of resolution of contradiction. New contradictions constantly arise. Stability is relative while struggle is absolute. A philosophy of struggle is always a threat to those who seek to exploit others.

Within the Christian Church this consciousness of struggle has been growing in recent years. The new church is asking again the basic human question which is as old as man himself; What is the meaning of life? Or what is the meaning of life for man living with his fellow man on this earth here and now? Now is the time that we must take a new look at Christian life. We must not pretend that the issues are nothing new, and have always existed. That would be totally unrealistic. Furthermore, such an evasive attitude is to avoid the Christian commitment. Our commitment to build both the Church and the world is indeed very clear.

Problems of the ethics of liberation enter due to our commitment to build the Church and the world.

What are some of these problems which are associated with the ethics of liberation?

First of all, we must recognize the existence of economic exploitation which has created a serious conflict between the poor and the rich. Any sensitive Christian recognizes that a large portion of the Church today is alienated from the great majority of mankind. The reason is simple. The Church, a major part of it, identifies with economic and political power in the present world. The church became friends of the rich, not the poor, friends of power, not the oppressed, friends of the rulers not the ruled. This state of affairs is clearly offensive to His children, therefore to God Himself.

Man is entitled to all the basic necessities of life. It was no other than John Locke himself who advocated in his celebrated theory of property that God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being.

Yet, two thirds of the world population continue to struggle in poverty and hunger while the developed nations create wealth even faster - increasing 50% from 1960 to 1970 - at the price of the underdeveloped nations.

The gospel asserts in quite unequivocal terms that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Christ knew that poverty, hunger, injustice, exploitation, alienation, racism, and war are all products of men's greed for wealth and power. To be a good Christian, then, meant to stop such men so that all persons might benefit from the earth as God intended.

The earth belongs to the poor, the meek and the powerless. According to the scripture, the spirit of the gospel and the spirit of modern capitalism are utterly incompatible. Capitalism measures man by his economic achievements and society by its gross national products. Man is how much he earns. Being is displaced by having.

The impact of this trend advanced by the Western capitalist nations upon the underdeveloped nations has clearly been demonstrated since the end of the Second World War. For instance in South Korea, the dynamics of capitalist economy leads to the establishment of a center and a periphery, simultaneously generating growing wealth for the few and social imbalances, political tensions and poverty for the many.

A new kind of dependence arises, less apparent, but no less real.

Currently Japanese investment is gravitating towards the modern sector of the economy, that is to say, towards the more dynamic elements of budding native industry, binding it ever more closely to international capitalism under the leadership of Japanese finance capitals.

Second ethical issue of liberation is: the existence of political inequality between the rulers and the ruled at home, and the rich dominating nations and the poor dependent nations.

Just about a year ago, November 1972, the French Bishops' conference, meeting in Lourdes, adopted a statement recognizing the existence of class struggle. The statement noted that conflict does exist "between those who have property, power and knowledge and those to whom these goods have been given sparingly." While emphasizing that one is "never entirely reducible to his membership in a class," the bishops also noted that it is "a false theology of love" that denies class struggle, "camouflages situation of conflict," and minimizes "the reality of antagonisms of all kinds."

If we compare the bishops' statement with that of Chairman Mao, one may be surprised by some similarity between them. Mao said:

"We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is, unconditional and absolute."

To Mao, liberation did not mean an end to class struggle in China. Revolution is permanent. He recognized that there are contradictions between the leaders and the led, between the party and the people, and that these contradictions need to be handled properly to avoid violent differences.

With such a concept of the conflict and contradiction, it is not difficult to comprehend the frustration of the Third World today. As a matter of fact, the perception of the fact of dependence and its consequences has made possible a new awareness of the Third World reality.

It is not only the economic factors which bring the imbalance between developed and underdeveloped countries, but their relationship becomes more acute as the political factors and the cultural factors are taken into consideration. The poor keep falling behind, the gap continues to grow. What happens when the gap between two groups or two classes grow?

The poor, oppressed, and the exploited do not stay where they are indefinitely. They become gradually aware that they are the men of destiny, an agent of history, therefore aware of responsibility for their own future. They are conscious that the laws of nature penetrate to their society and history as well. This class revolutionary consciousness will eventually build a new society. This is the messianic word of Marx. Such a Marxian concept of man derives from no other place than from the historical Christian vision of man. It is a Christian view of man which offers man the possibility of being a fuller man.

It is true that the majority of the Christian hierarchy continues to condemn those progressive forces who dare to oppose the established disorder. And most of them obey naturally and dutifully as though they are serving humanity and God. They do not realize their assistance to the cause of anti-humanity. They take their role in the sublime on behalf of the foreign interests. They deliver the people's wealth to the thieving imperialism.

Under the leadership of Bishop Dom Helder Camara, 17 bishops signed a document called, "Gospel and Revolution: Pastoral Letters from the Third World," in Recife, Brazil and denounced the conspiracy of international imperialism as the principal cause of the Third World's ills. They condemned churchmen who tie themselves to the ruling elite, insisted that in time of crisis, especially of revolution, the pastor's place is with his people, asked all Christians and men of good will to renounce their privileges and personal fortunes "so that the human community may benefit from greater socialization."

The pastoral letter concluded with a statement that "the time has come for poor people...to succeed in the defense of their right to life."

A Peruvian priest wrote an open letter to the cardinal from his prison cell in San Quinton Prison. He said, "The people are no longer a flock of sheep, as before. And the Church must change itself, not by creating new liturgies, for which it would be ridiculous to convene an ecumenical council, but by condemning the banks, the imperialists, and the colonialists, by giving the right to the people to choose their bishops, by supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...Let not the same error be committed now - free Barrabas and crucifying Christ." (Father Solomon Bolo Hidalgo, Arauco (Chile, No. 70) Nov. 1965)

In order to industrialize, poor countries have been competing for the help from the rich countries. The economic aids of the rich nations to the poor resulted, however, in complete failures. Because the supporters did not attack the roots of the evil. If there were any changes, as claimed by the American officials referring to the cases of South Korea and the Philippines as "economic miracles," the "miracles" were nothing more than new and underhanded ways of increasing the wealth and power of a few select politico-economic groups.

To the poor nations, modernization equals industrialization. It became, however, ineffective in the long run to achieve a real change of the society.

The rich nations do not have any intention of modernizing the poor nations without benefiting their own interests. It would be foolish for the poor to think any other way. For instance, why did the governments of Seoul and Manila declare martial law last fall (1972) in their countries? In reference to the case of the Philippines, Leon Ma Guerrero, the senior career ambassador to Manila from the United States, said: "...the proclamation of martial law was the only way out."
(New York Times, Nov. 24, 1973)

The ambassador commented that the Manila regime experienced 25 years of Watergate. He understands also that it is imperative to redistribute the land among those who actually worked it, but the break-up of the large estates was prevented. Why? Because the policy-makers in Manila were themselves landlords or in their pay.

He noted that tumults and riots led by young people in and out of school swept through the streets of Manila protesting against the regimes that offer nothing for them in the future except hopeless poverty in a closed system already suffering from an unemployment rate of 10% of the labor force.

In South Korea, the situation is no better.

The poor countries are gradually beginning to learn through their bitter experiences that their relationships with the rich countries is more like the poor with the rich in their own countries. They are beginning to realize now that they must break-up their present unequal relationships with the rich countries in order to achieve their true modernization and development.

True development means a liberation. Either speaking of one nation or one individual, he cannot be liberated as a true independent nation or a complete man while he is subjugated by another nation or another social class.

Development must, therefore, challenge the basic root cause of the problems. Among them are the socio-cultural, and political dependence on other countries. They are just as bad as economic dependence upon others. The oppressed nation must challenge the oppressing nation in a given situation just as the oppressed class-people must challenge the oppressing class in a given society. This is a scientific approach to solve present unequal political situations which create conflicts and contradictions in the world.

The third ethical issue of liberation concerns man's responsibility to his own destiny - total liberation.

920 Latin American priests assembled in Meddlin, Columbia in August, 1968 and issued a historical statement. The statement not only condemned the American imperialism, but also the domestic oligarchical system in Latin America. It stated: "Exhort all Christians of Latin America clearly and firmly, to work for everything that contributes to the real liberation of man." (See Appendix for full statement in John Gerassi's Revolutionary Priests, Vintage Books, 1971.)

It has become evident that the dynamics of capitalistic systems of the world leads simultaneously to the creation of greater wealth for the few and greater poverty for the many.

Knowing the facts of such faults, the poor countries are now less interested in modeling themselves after the rich countries. The reasons the poor are not going to model after the riches are more than economics. The poor are increasingly more convinced that the status of the rich is the fruit of injustice and coercion. They were convinced even before the recent endless scandals of the Nixon-Agnew Administration.

The poor nations are attempting to overcome material insufficiency and misery but it is in order to achieve a more just and human society. Bonhoeffer expressed it in this way:

"Freedom is not something man has for himself but something he has for others....It is not a possession, a presence, an object,...but a relationship and nothing else. In truth, freedom is a relationship between two persons. Being free means 'being free for others,' because the other has bound me to him. Only in relationship to others am I free." (Creation and Fall, Temptation, MacMillan Co., 1966, p. 37)

The fullness of liberation is a free gift from Christ - is communion with God and with other men. This is the meaning of total liberation. I cannot be a free man when my neighbor is a slave.

A Marxian philosopher, Professor Marcuse expressed it this way:

"The specter of a revolution which subordinates the development of the productive forces and higher standards of living to the requirements of creating solidarity for the human species, for abolishing poverty and misery beyond all national frontiers and spheres of interest, for the attainment of peace." (Marcus, H., An Essay on Liberation, Beacon Press, 1969, p.x.)

We could, therefore, say that to sin is to refuse to love one's neighbors. According to the Bible, sin is the ultimate result as well as cause of poverty, injustice and the oppression in which men live.

Things do not happen accidentally and that behind an unjust structure there is a personal or collective will responsible - a willingness to reject God and neighbor.

Man, in order to fulfill his historical mission must make it his responsibility to liberate himself and his neighbors from a breach of contract and restore to a contract of friendship.

Conclusion

God awakens the vocation of a liberator. The case of Moses:

"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their outcry against their slave-masters. I have taken heed of their sufferings, and have come down to rescue them from the power of Egypt... I have seen the brutality of the Egyptians towards them. Come now, I will send you to Pharoah and you shall bring my people Israel out of Egypt." (Exodus 3: 7-10)

Moses began a long, hard struggle for the liberation of his people. The alienation of the children of Israel was such that at first "they did not listen to him; they had become impatient because of their cruel slavery." (6-9)

They even complained after they had left Egypt - the enemy. Theologically, there is no contradiction between the liberation of Israel from Egypt and the liberation of China from its misery, if we accept that the work of man is the transformation of nature as the continuity of human creation. After all, the concerns of all the Third World countries revolve around the relationship of oppression and liberation.

The concept of the conflict between oppression and liberation is also found in Biblical sources. The unjust situation is presented not accidentally, just the existence of sin is not an accident. It is historical. It requires liberation so long as there is injustice and sin. Sin demands a revolutionary change in man, and it demands a revolutionary liberation. In the process of the revolutionary liberation of men or nations, there is no discriminatory attitude. Salvation of Christ is a radical liberation from all these miseries, oppressions, alienations and exploitations.

We cannot hold a neutral position. Either we denounce injustice and sin or we are guilty of being an accessory to the injustices and sins being committed. When a system ceases to promote the common good and supports privileged groups, the Church must take a stand with the people and condemn the evil system.

Today, more than ever, there is an urgency for such an action.

ASIAN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON LIBERATION

Rev. Juan Pia, Jr.

A discussion of an Asian setting gives me the opportunity to talk about the Philippines. This allows me to reflect as an Asian in an Asian situation about a country in Asia.

The Philippines has an area of 115,707 square miles, slightly larger than Arizona, spread out to 7,100 islands. Its population is 39,079,000 which comprises 30% urban, 70% rural with a population growth rate of 3.4%, one of the highest in the world.

The break down of religious affiliation are the following: 83% Roman Catholic, 9% Protestant, 5% Moslem, and 3% primarily animistic. We have 87 languages native to the country, but eight of these are mother tongues of over eighty percent of the population. The official languages are Pilipino, English, and Spanish. Very few speak Spanish and its use is decreasing. Forty percent of the people use English as a second language. Pilipino is taught in all schools.

Our unemployment is 1.1 million out of a work force of 12.5 million. 77.1% of the Filipino families live on less than \$461.00 a year.

Over 200 U.S. companies have holdings in the Philippines with assets of at least \$1 billion and probably closer to \$2 billion. About 60% of the Philippine sugar crops is bought by the U.S. at better than world market prices. At the end ² of 1970, U.S. concerns accounted for 76.2% of foreign investment in the Philippines.

It is in this context that the Church in the Philippines pursued its task. The Philippine Church has passed the age of separating the religious from the secular, although some of its members still hold to such approach to life. Its programs for development include both the spiritual and material. In fact, such delineation is not projected in many instances of its goals and aspirations.

My involvement in the Church's ministry are on three levels with varied intensity and concerns. First, I managed a radio network of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines covering three fourths of the Philippines, with a big share of listenership in the central and southern portion of the country.

The radio network tailored its program and thrust to reflect the concerns of the church for the total man. It became our prophetic task to accent the positive dimensions of the government and its developmental programs. However, whenever there were limitations and failures, graft and corruption of the government, these were brought into the open for criticism and discussion.

This watchdog posture of the Church's radio network was not only for the government but all of the establishments and institutions of the community, including the church as an institution. Thus, government officials regarded one of the radio stations of the network as a station with integrity and authority in matters of social welfare as well as the spiritual life of the community.

It was this kind of acceptance that the Church's radio was not a mere mouthpiece of the church but an integral part of the community, seeking together with other elements in the community the development for all and by all. The radio network also became a channel of information where the church interacts with the community and the community interacts in return.

The other level of my involvement was with an organization of more than 28 civic, religious and government welfare agencies. The Fourth District Welfare Council of Manila (FDWC) was an organization right in the heart of Manila with a population of 3.5 million. I coordinated the loosely organized group as its chairman for the past five years until I left the Philippines. This was an effort to coordinate the varied interests and involvement of these groups which ranged from training of manpower, organizing the masses, to outright doleouts.

It is quite amazing how entities such as these could surmount bureaucracy and limited logistics to help the slum dweller and the working class. Some welfare agencies organized the slum dwellers to help themselves by common effort, structure-wise in cooperatives both consumer and marketing.

Classes were held to develop skills among the masses, cooperating with business entities for job placements. Classes were also held in order to improve the health conditions; daycare schools were held for the children; mother craft sessions taught wives how to give the right nutrition to the growing population of such an area. Seminars on drug abuse, family planning were held for the opinion leaders of the community.

The Fourth District Welfare Council harnessed the resources of the community for the development of the community. However, these were efforts seemingly inadequate to meet the demands of liberating man from the shackles of economic and political bondage, victims of a system so overwhelming that the common man has to express his desperation of helplessness.

We are all products of a system so big that I begin to see the futility of one's aspiration to reach beyond that system for liberation. I end up with the stagnant concept of survival. I have to struggle for survival in order to exist. Usually, whenever we are in such a predicament, we end up working within the system or with the system. Where then, is liberation from bondage?

Thus, this leads me to the third level of involvement. The Philippine Church have also explored the avenues of liberation by changing traditional structures. It is contended that futility can be surmounted when traditional structures will be toppled down and a new age will dawn. But such thinking belongs only to a few within the church.

There is a need to redirect the whole church to such thinking. The National Council of Churches in the Philippines decided to go beyond its ongoing developmental programs by confronting the structures that be with what the NCCP believes should be a need to change and modify traditional structures such as the church, the government, the industries, and their involvements.

This NCCP aspiration remained in Statements only, knowing the spectrum of convictions of individuals and denominations within the NCCP.

Other church groups organized the masses for power such as ZOTO in the heart of Tondo, Manila. The struggle was for people to find its own identity on the basis of issues, never end its efforts in mere discussion of such issues but confronting the powers that be in order to achieve a dialogue. Such confrontation allowed the balance of power but not logistics. Thus, such efforts were heard but questions are raised as to its efficiency in changing traditional structures. For sure, the people were finding their own identity.

Talk about revolution was going on in some church quarters but such ended there. The church never dared indulge in organized revolution to the extent that activists and radical nationalists raised their voices of criticism against the church, labeling the church to be instruments, lending itself to be used by the establishment.

This is my frame of reference as I come to this consultation.

A year ago, the change in the Philippine political situation greatly modified the Church's activities and involvements. It has never changed its conviction and concern.

The curtailment of the freedom of speech meant that the NCCP radio network continued to broadcast its concerns but not to criticize the government programs and structures. What the radio station management pursued as its prophetic task in its total ministry to the community was labelled as subversive.

The new political situation meant that the church continues with its worship services, its welfare program, its cooperatives but never talk about the ills of society, the plight of the downtrodden, more so, never to advocate change in government structures. If ever there are such whispers, it has no other recourse but to go underground.

The FDWC continues with its organizing the masses within the framework of government initiated organizational structures, side by side with manpower training, seminars on family planning and drug abuse which are also national programs of the government.

What then is the Asian Theological reflection on liberation? This was my dilemma as I reopened the radio stations of the National Council of Churches under the new political situation in the Philippines. I raised pertinent questions relevant to mass media. What will we broadcast? Will it be mere entertainment? Can I continue with my prophetic role as the mouth piece of the conscience of the community? Will I lose my integrity and identity if ever I broadcast, knowing that my listeners know how much censorship of news is going on? Where then lies my Christian witness?

Further questions: Can I continue with my Christian perspective if I broadcast information material given me by the government information agency? Will I give up my prophetic role if I continue to broadcast government activities, particularly on national development?

I hear many persons say that the Church cannot pursue justice for the oppressed where the political situation is not democratic and, therefore, such curtailment of freedom limits the church to fulfill its task. Either the church must confront the powers that be or surrender its birthright. The church is criticized from the distance even by Filipinos in the United States.

But the church in the Philippines does not see itself from the perspective of one who resides in the United States. The Philippine church sees itself as the church in the middle of martial law, in the middle of curtailed liberties, in the middle of the absence of the freedom of speech, in the middle of strict censorship.

It is a church that also sees that in spite of all these limitations, it acknowledges what the government is aiming to do in the field of economic and social development even at the sacrifice of freedom. There is no doubt that the church can exist in any given kind of political milieu. But can it speak about justice for the oppressed and the downtrodden?

I believe that the Philippine Church will not be inhibited by Marcos' "New Society" because the Church is versatile enough, strengthened by God's grace, to pursue other expressions of justice and love. This is the belief that becomes a springboard for an Asian theological reflection on liberation.

"....theological reflection is concerned with faithfulness, discernment, and judgment in actual life-situations and must therefore take account of those aspects of reality which can be thrown into relief by any relevant disciplined analysis." ³

I find the Statement issued by 19 representatives of theological schools in Asia (Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia) relevant, with or without martial law.

1. There are many kinds of power, but ultimately power belongs to God who creates and redeems....The church as a servant of God in the world is called to assist in the transformation of these powers to serve God and man.
2. Political authority is power to govern. It is responsible to the people and to God.
3. We live in the midst of the powers of traditional structures and customs. We must practise the gentleness of a dove and wisdom of the serpent in discerning which traditions and customs the gospel would have us conserve.
4. Responsible development of Asian economic power has a high priority in the power to be harnessed for liberation.
5. The promotion of the various Asian quests for self-identity is the church's task.
6. Technology participates as do all the other powers discussed in God's creation.
7. The anti-revolution prejudice of the institutional church must be overcome without idolizing any revolutionary movement. God may call Christians to participate in a revolutionary struggle, but at the same time he calls us to oppose those forces in revolution which do not bring liberation or justice.
8. The church does not encourage isolationism and must never serve imperialism. Its task is to promote interdependence in a system which protects freedom and social justice.
9. Asians must come up with native theologies which can help Asians understand when to oppose and when to cooperate with other movements in the search for development in freedoms and justice.

⁴Statement issued by the 10th Regional Study Institute of the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia on "Order, Revolution and Covenant".

THE IMAGE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CHINESE EYES:

Rev. Teng Kiat Chiu

I should like to try to present my thoughts about "THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH" from the viewpoint of some of the Chinese intellectuals who came to study in our Christian colleges and universities in China but did not become full members of our churches. When I was studying at Fukien Christian University, Foochow, China, we were all required to attend College Chapel every morning from Monday to Friday. We were also required to take certain Religious Courses every year. Most of the students from the non-Christian families did not like this at all. But they could not protest against the College authority, and so they often turned on the Christian students to release some of their grievances and hostilities which they could not direct to the proper channel at that time. Usually their knowledge of the Holy Bible was rather bald and sketchy. However, they would criticize the Christian Church in the light of the teachings of Jesus as they could see and understand them. Most of them had great respect for Jesus, but they had great reservations when they came to think of "THE CHURCH" and "THE CHRISTIANS".

Of all the different biblical images of "THE CHURCH", such as "The New Israel", "The People of God", "The Bride of Christ", "The Body of Christ", and others, - it seemed to me that the image of the church as "The Family of God, or "The Household of God", is the most appealing one to us all. More often than not, when we take a look at "THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH" as "THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD", we see "THIS HOUSEHOLD" much more like "THE FAMILY" which Jesus portrayed in Luke's Gospel, chapter 15, Verses 11-32, than anything else. No matter where we go, we can always find "THE CHURCH" divided into two, like that FAMILY OF THE FATHER "who had TWO SONS". In our discussions, heated arguments, and disputes, certain facts began to stand out clearer and clearer before our eyes. As "CHRISTIANS" we are often cornered to examining ourselves with some very searching questions in our innermost being.

1. Are you sure that you are God's sons? As God's sons do you have your Father's love in your hearts?
2. What do you really love in the secret of your hearts? Do you love your share of the inheritance, - "THE GIFTS" or do you really love "THE FATHER" - "THE GIVER"? If you cannot serve TWO MASTERS at the same time, as Jesus has so clearly taught, which one will you serve as YOUR MASTER? "THE GIFTS" or "THE GIVER"?
3. Why did the YOUNGER BROTHER gather up all he had and leave home for a distant country? Did the "ELDER BROTHER" have anything to do with his leaving his father's house?
4. Sometimes the non-Christians would be very frank with us. They would tell us: "We know what you are thinking in your minds. You believe "YOU ARE SAVED!" and "WE ARE DAMNED", because we are not baptized. You look at us like "THE PRODIGAL" because we refuse to join your "CHURCH". But you cannot see yourselves as we can see you. We see you like "THE ELDER BROTHER", so self-conceited, so self-righteous, and so ill-mannered. To tell you the truth, your delight in your supposedly superiority is the very stumbling block which is preventing us from seeking to enter the Kingdom of God!"
5. They tell us: "When we come with you to visit your "CHURCHES" it does not take us long to find out, that within your church walls, you have the so-called "Fundamentalists" or "Conservatives", who far out-numbered the so-called "Liberals" or "Modernists". Again the relationship between these two groups is even more like the relationship between "THE ELDER BROTHER" and "THE PRODIGAL" than that between "you" and "us". Although you do not kill one another like Cain actually killed his younger brother, Abel, which one of you is completely free from not judging his brothers in the secret of his hearts? (Matthew V:21-24). You accuse us as "IDOL WORSHIPPERS" but we see in you no real God in your life!"

6. And when we come to study your "CHURCH HISTORY", how can we shut our eyes to the great number of pages which were fully covered with the BLOOD of the poor and the oppressed.

7. They told us, the more deeply we understand the motive of the "ELDER BROTHER", the more clearly we discern, how he would like to murder not only his own YOUNGER BROTHER but also "HIS FATHER" if he could have his own way. Though you live under the same roof with your FATHER, so far as people can see, you don't really understand your FATHER'S LOVING HEART! You take secret pride in knowing how TO JUDGE AND TO CONDEMN others, but you do not have the TRUE HUMILITY to admit, how much more you have yet to learn about HOW TO SEEK THE LOST and HOW TO SAVE THE DEAD! You only call Jesus "Lord! Lord!" with your lips, but you don't really know what it is to do the Will of God.

8. Indeed, you take great pride in considering yourself to be "God's Chosen People - The New Israel", but you really do not know WHO IS YOUR FATHER? As Jesus said to his own people 2,000 years ago, so he can say the same thing to "THE CHRISTIANS" today! "Your father is the devil, and you choose to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and is not rooted in the truth; there is no truth in him." (John VIII:44)

9. How can the people of the world live in "Justice" and "Peace" when "THE SONS" do not really love their father?

Most of the Chinese intellectuals whom I have come into contact with in our Christian Colleges and Universities are quite happy to leave the "BIBLE STUDIES AND INTERPRETATIONS" and our "THEOLOGICAL TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINAL DISPUTES" with us. Because in their coming to live with us for a period of 4 years or 5 years, or even more, the thing which puzzles them without end is this: -

"HOW CAN YOU CLAIM TO BE GOD'S CHILDREN, BUT CONTINUE TO LIVE ON AND ON LIKE "THE ELDER BROTHER" AND "THE PRODIGAL SON?"

MINISTRY FOR A LIBERATING ETHNICITY

(part of a presentation to U.N. Methodist Consultation)

Roy Sano

If we are following the mainline Protestant theologians we are frequently brow beaten to engage political and economic issues. We need to address the issue of cultural oppression and foster liberation. When we do so we see what a difference it would make to the way we do our theology. We will begin to talk about liberation for one. The word liberation is a scary one for many. Notice how our mission study finally accepted it as a legitimate word. This may in part be due to the critique of "development" as a valid theological concern which Gustavo Gutierrez offered in his book, A Theology of Liberation.¹¹ He, along with James Cone in A Black Theology of Liberation¹² have provided for us stimulating reasons to regard liberation as the critical norm which judges what is truly theological.

A recent scanning of theological literature which informed my generation led to a re-examination of Gustav Aulen's Christus Victor.¹³ It has been difficult to appreciate this book. Most of us were raised with the moral influence theory or a story about legal transactions. Now, however, since liberation has become the critical norm to determine the primary theological category, we may have grounds to appreciate the work of Christ as an act of redemption. Aulen's historical survey of this interpretation of Christ's redemptive work approximates our view of liberation. In what follows, I will develop a few implications.

Time permits but a brief survey of the implications. First and foremost the historical and classical view places redemption ahead of reconciliation. Redemption or liberation presupposes oppression by principalities, powers and rulers of the darkened world, who intervene between God and his people. In the "three storied universe" of the biblical mythos the satanic forces drive a wedge between God and his people, setting them at odds and placing the people out of reach of that which concerns them ultimately. God engages these forces in a warfare or contest to restore the relationship which they have disrupted. The principalities exhaust their armaments in the engagement and Christ prevails against them. As Paul says, God "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him (Christ)." (Col 2:15) After the death and resurrection of Christ these forces are subjected to the one God, Almighty, and his Lord, Jesus the Christ. Although they may continue to exist in some form their status is at best ambiguous. (I Cor 8:5) What is most important is that man is now back in touch with his God, man is reconciled as a consequence of the liberating or redemptive event. Those familiar and reassuring words in Romans 8 convey greater impact if we read them from the perspective of a redemptive act accomplished at least in principle, a defeat in the process of being made effective:

No, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39, RSV)

We are reconciled because we have been redeemed. Reconciliation thus becomes a derived theological concept; it feeds on redemption. Because of the tension-filled 60's which polarized the citizenry, denominations have adopted various programs of reconciliation. They have rushed to numerous Fund for Reconciliation, the United Methodist included. From the perspective of liberation theology, efforts for the sake of reconciliation seem mis-directed. As it turns out, it may be one of the most sanctimonious dodge-words in our theological vocabulary, leading to the most subtle snow-jobs and inhumane oppressions in our churches and society at large.

Redemption and liberation is the primary work of God, and our task as well. Since the mopping-up campaign still exists the principalities, powers and rulers of the darkened world need to be convinced who indeed is Lord of all petty "lords," and who will be for us our God above all the tin, or gold, "gods." We continue to do battle with these "lords" of racism and "gods" of racists who would oppress and mislead. Since they operate through each of us, at times we must take on that which is oppressing in the other, but in fact, we are not engaged in a warfare with flesh and blood, against human beings, but battling the "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" which operate through us. (Ephesians 6:12) Many of the colorful and the colorless do not recognize what constitutes the real issue, the actual battle. Liberation from oppressive racism is the issue, and, only derivatively reconciliation. The battle does not take place between man and those forces which oppress us and divide us. We need not succumb to glib hopes about reconciliation automatically resulting from liberation from racist oppression. We will have to address that issue, but the prior one is liberation.

Further, notice what kind of reconciliation Paul had in mind. His major emphasis in reconciliation dealt with the relation between God and man, and only by consequence did he deal with reconciliation between man and man. Most efforts at reconciliation are therefore two steps removed from the crucial theological issue. They are concerned about bridging the gap between peoples. Paul was concerned first about redemption as a basis for reconciliation, second, about reconciliation between God and his people, and third, about reconciliation between people. Our participation in funds and task forces on reconciliation should therefore bear in mind the prior consideration necessary to affect reconciliation between peoples.

If liberation theology restores the primacy to redemption which Paul and the classical interpretations of Christ's work had seen, we can examine quickly the consequences for other theological categories which have been highlighted in recent years. In the 50's numerous authors wrote about renewal of the church to cope with urbanization; in the 60's we heard much about relevance of the church to the growing secularity of our society; and by the 70's as indicated above reconciliation assumed a position hitherto not assigned to it in church campaigns. From the perspective of liberation theologians, the three R's of renewal, relevance and reconciliation become subordinate to redemption; they are derivatives of the primary event of redemption. Through redemption we are reconciled to our God and our neighbor; through redemption we experience renewal; through redemption we can become relevant to current issues and contemporary developments.

This shift in emphasis to redemption has far broader historical significance. The current emphasis on liberation may have introduced us to a shift in theological priorities comparable to the transition from ancient to medieval, medieval to reformation, reformation to modern, and modern to recent existentialist orientation. It was Paul Tillich who outlined those transformations in theological norms . According to him, the ancient church offered man salvation from the problems posed in his finitude; the medieval and reformation man sought in various ways forgiveness for his guilt; and the modern Protestant either turned to the personal and social ideals of human existence or the prophetic message of the kingdom of God. For his day, Tillich offered the New Being to cope with disruption, conflict, self-destruction, meaninglessness and despair. I suspect a cultural bias in his description of man's ultimate concern. Tillich reflects a European troubled by the loss of initiative and control over world developments. Tillich for this reason may be rediscovered as American whites see the passing of their imperial splendor in the years ahead.¹⁵

One other consequence might be mentioned. Liberation is not only the basis for reconciliation, it may unite diverse movements for liberation. The diverse colorful peoples within the United States and abroad in the Third World can find in the theme a uniting task. Furthermore, other movements for liberation (feminist, gay, poor,

or defrauded whites, etc.) may also find cause to combat oppression as well, in their own special situations.¹⁶

Cultural Liberation and the Ethnic Churches

Of the various forms of oppression, I have drawn attention to the importance of cultural oppression as the fundamental issue; of the various theological concerns, I have argued for the centrality of liberation. Cultural liberation, thus becomes the focal point of issues before us. Further, it has been suggested that the ethnic churches potentially have the most crucial role in fostering cultural liberation since they deal with the ultimate concerns of people. The kind of liberation we are calling for is not a liberation from ethnicity, but liberation through ethnicity. Just as one would not convert the feminist movement into a massive transvestine operation, we do not propose to convert the movement for liberation of ethnic people into a liberation from ethnicity.

I only have time to suggest two important means to promote a ministry for a liberating ethnicity. First, the point of training our ministers, we have much more work than we are doing. Theological education is woefully negligent of the ethnic dimensions in Bible study,¹⁷ folk culture in church history, ethnicity in theological positions, racism in ethics, and ethnic possibilities in worship, evangelism, education, architecture, etc. We should demand that all funds from this church should cease from being distributed to seminaries and other centers of training which do not meet a criteria of ethnic sensitivity which we feel is authentically Christian. We should call for a decertification of all training centers which do not meet the human standards of taking ethnicity seriously enough to live with it and quit trying to overlook it in us and in themselves or trying to eliminate it. We should mandate our Board of Higher Education and Ministry to take leadership in these issues and to demand affirmative action in staff, faculty and administration.¹⁸

Second, if we take this position of the ethnic churches and ethnic ministries, think what we should do about funding criteria. Most church funds are still trying to prove to the world outside that we can be selfless. These funds avoid giving to some desperately poor ethnic churches because we believe, you see, in funding secular organizations who are addressing political and economic oppression. If you accept the reading I am developing about priorities of oppression and liberation, the ethnic church assumes a role hitherto never assigned to it. Even our Commission on Religion and Race which funds our own ethnic minority community organization which are addressing political and economic issues may be misusing funds, if they do not deal with cultural liberation. But just any ethnic minority church will not do, because it is more often than not staffed and supported by people who became Protestants in order to become colorless. We need to support ethnic minority churches which are struggling to define and execute a ministry of a liberating ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

In this presentation I have attempted to outline the rationale and objective of ethnic ministries. The central issue we have to address is racism as it expresses itself in cultural oppression and its consequence in cultural genocide. Political and economic oppression, it has been argued, may have become subordinated to the fundamental issue of cultural oppression.

If racial oppression in its cultural form is the key issue, then our ministry should foster movements of liberation from this oppression. The work of Christ as primarily one of liberation or redemption was explored. By implication our primary task becomes liberation. The liberation from cultural oppression of ethnic minorities might best be affected through that institution which deals with the ultimate

Liberating Ethnicity

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concerns of people. The ethnic church could well be that institution and the ethnic minister could well be the central figure.

The training of those ministers becomes critical and the support of the ethnic churches becomes paramount. Since it is quite obvious that the centers of training which we support are woefully negligent in their training for ethnic ministry and combatting racism, and since funding agencies toward which we contribute often direct resources away from ethnic minority churches, it is quite clear we have much work ahead of us. That is why we are here. We have come to clarify what we are trying to do, why and how. "There is nothing quite so practical as good theory and nothing so good for theory-making as direct involvement with practice." (Kurt Lewin) We've probably had enough of theory; let us explore practice and implementation.