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Liberation Theology in the Economic and Social Context of Latin America

Economy and Theology, or the Irrationality of the Rationalized

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Liberation theology is concrete theology, historical theology. For this reason it is appropriate to question the historical context of this theology. Its development can be observed in the agitated history of Latin America of the last three decades. Consequently, we are going to encounter a liberation theology that reflects on, is reflected by, and re-elaborates the very history of which it consciously forms a part.

As concrete theology, liberation theology inserts itself into Latin American society. Base communities, popular movements, and even political parties are key places from which this theology unfolds. Not only does liberation theology speak out of these concrete places but it reflects their historical situation in its own development. Therefore its analyses are tightly linked with theories of social science. Its concrete analyses cannot be deduced from its theological positions, but at the same time its theological positions cannot be independent from the results of its concrete analysis.

However, liberation theology is not a social science; rather it is theology. In relation to its concrete analysis of historical situations, this theology is developed as a theological dimension of actual his-

torical situations. As such, it is exposed to the risk of being mistaken. It does not have absolute truths specified in an a priori manner. In terms used often by liberation theologians, the question is not orthodoxy, but *orthopraxis*. The problem of liberation theology is to find the appropriate praxis for a given situation. Therefore it is in a continual state of gradual development, in which the problems change and new knowledge must be acquired for confronting them. It is living theology.

Yet, a theology can be pronounced as such even before entering in the concrete analysis and the corresponding *orthopraxis*. As theology it precedes *praxis*. Preceding praxis is a collection of empty beliefs. The existence of God, its trinitarian character, redemption, etc., upon being professed as acts of faith, independent from their historical and concrete insertion, become nothing more than empty abstractions that compose a dogmatic whole without content. Liberation theology's problem is not to deny these beliefs, but to question their significance. Therefore, its question is not "Does God exist?" but "Where is God present?" and "How does God act?". The point of departure for liberation theology is, then, the question of the concrete and historical place in which God reveals (it)self.

Liberation theology is born from the answer it gives to these questions. The answer of liberation theology is given through what these theologians call "the option for the poor." This option for the poor is God's option, but equally is the option of human beings, inasmuch as they want freedom. Freedom is liberation of the poor. It is not an act made by others who have the obligation to liberate the poor, and see them as objects. Without mutual acknowledgment between subjects, in which poverty becomes the negation of the acknowledgment, there is no option for the poor. Human subjects cannot recognize each other without recognizing themselves as corporeal, natural, and needed beings. Poverty is a living negation of this acknowledgement. From liberation theologians' point of view, human beings cannot liberate themselves without a mutual acknowledgment between subjects. Therefore, the poor person as subject, who is within a relationship of recognition, is the place in which it is decided whether this recognition is effective or not. As a result, the other side of mutual acknowledgement between human subjects as natural needy beings is the option for the poor.¹

The absence of this mutual recognition between human beings is present in the poor then. According to liberation theology, God is

present wherever this acknowledgment occurs. The fact that this has not happened demonstrates a human relationship bereft of God. The existence of the poor attests to the existence of a Godless society, whether one explicitly believes in God or not. This absence of God is present wherever someone is crying out. The absence of God is present in the poor person. The poor are the presence of the absent God.

Out of this reflection, liberation theology is born as concrete theology, although theologians may express this differently. In this way liberation theology can interpret historical reality. God's absence is a place that can be pointed to. One can protest God's abandonment and God's absence, one can reclaim the assumption of responsibility for this absence, and one can call for the acknowledgement of God, which can also mean a call for this absence to be transformed into presence. The presence of God is no longer an internal emotion, but rather is transformed into praxis (orthopraxis). Its criteria lie in actual reality. God is present if there is no poverty. God's presence is a doing, a praxis.

In this sense, liberation theology is orthopraxis. God does not dictate what needs to be done. God's will is to liberate the poor, but the path of freedom has to be searched out. That which ends up being God's will depends on an analysis of reality. Therefore one cannot know God's will without an analysis of reality that never ignores social sciences. And the results of social sciences fall directly upon what, for liberation theology's orthopraxis, is God's will.

Orthodox theology is different. It stands by its dogmatic affirmations without positioning them within an historical context. Because of this it is easy for orthodoxy to place itself next to domination. Domination is always abstract; it reclaims validity independent of concrete and historical situations. However, it calls attention to the fact that, in the dispute between liberation and orthodox theology there are hardly ever discussions about dogmatic groupings. Orthodoxy affirms it, as does liberation theology. There is no religious conflict in this sense. This situation is completely different from the conflicts of Europe's Middle Ages. Currently, the conflicts revolve around the contents of the dogmatic whole. The schism between the occidental and oriental churches comes undone with the trinitarian formula, that is to say, the presence and origins of the Holy Spirit. The conflict of the Middle Ages had to do with the question of the resurrection of the body. During the Reformation the conflict was

predominantly of this type also, i.e., over the interpretation of the Eucharist and the meaning of the saints' heaven.

Economy and Theology at the Beginnings of Liberation Theology

The conflict over liberation theology, then, has had little to do with discrepancies relating to the dogmatic whole. The corresponding discussion, therefore, is not about theological content in the formal sense, but rather about the concrete meaning of these contents. But given that orthodox theology is exclusively dogmatic, this discussion confronts the orthodox position, which reduces the theological content to the pronouncement of empty eternal truths, with the position of liberation theologians, which defends the historical concretization of this same faith. Thus, the use of the social sciences in liberation theology plays a key role within this conflict.

This conflict emerged in the public for the first time during the Popular Unity Party's government in Chile from 1970–1973. Liberation theology had already risen in the previous years, especially during the late sixties. It did not rise primarily in the academic environment but through pastoral activity in the churches, for at that time mainly priests and pastors worked with the poor of Latin American countries. Their first publications appeared as mimeographed manuscripts and were distributed at meetings or by mail. At the end of the sixties the first books appeared (Assmann, Gutiérrez, Miguez Bonino, Juan Luis Segundo). This way of thinking rapidly influenced seminaries and theology departments and created a current of opinion in Latin America, was expressed most intensely in Chile after the electoral victory of the Popular Unity Party in 1970.

Since its inception liberation theology has been closely linked to the popular movements of the sixties. In Chile these movements searched for public expression just as much in the Popular Unity Party as in the Democratic-Christian party. These movements looked for the economic and social integration of popular groups. This problem became more pronounced during the sixties, manifesting itself in the marginality of the poor, felt mostly in the shantytowns of the urban centers, but also in the countryside with the farmers who lacked land and with the small land holder, and in a standstill in employment. Although industrial production continued to expand, this mostly created increases in work productivity,

not increases in employment. These factors characterized marginality as structural exclusion and not as a phenomenon of simple transition.

This situation explains the fact that popular movements pushed for changes within social and economic structures. During the sixties many popular movements still hoped for a possible solution from reformist capitalism, sponsored by the Chilean Christian Democracy. However, especially after 1968, popular movements oriented themselves toward the Popular Unity Party. At this time the division in the Democratic-Christian Party occurred in Chile, after which part of this party went on to support the Popular Unity Party.

A profound experience corresponded with the changes in political orientation of these popular movements. It became evident that indeed there was no possibility of economic and social integration within the structural logic of capitalism. This orientation was at first expressed in terms of the need for non-capitalistic development, but later was articulated in terms of a socialist development.

The majority of liberation theologians shared this experience of the incapacity of the logic of capitalist structures to create a society capable of solving the economic and social problems of popular groups. They also shared the interpretation that integral development could not be effective without profound change in the actual capitalist structures. Therefore, they formed a Latin American organization that represented many liberation theologians under the name "Christians for Socialism." They had their first important meeting in Santiago de Chile in March of 1972. It possessed an ecumenical character and it was there that many liberation theologians, Catholic as well as Protestant, met and organized themselves.

The critique of capitalism and the search for an alternative for the transformation of capitalist structures, brought about a conflict with not only orthodox theology but also with the Catholic Church. This church had been a tight ally of the Christian Democracy Party during the sixties. Upon the latter's turning toward anti-socialist and anti-communist positions, the Catholic Church took the same route. Nevertheless, it was very difficult to rebut the experience of liberation theologians and the theory of dependence, which undergirded it. Besides, today, after thirty years of capitalism in Latin America, we can see that the liberation theologians' interpretation of it—and of the theory of dependence—has been completely confirmed, although it has become more difficult to understand the

alternatives than it was thirty years ago. Indeed, taken Latin American's capitalism to the extreme, the marginalization of the population has become more acute and has transformed itself into exclusion without destination.

Because of this, orthodox theology and the Catholic Church of Chile might have argued with liberation theology, but without justification. Furthermore, there were no major discrepancies at the level of the dogmatic whole of their faith, and the critique of capitalism by liberation theologians, at least in its strongest version, was irrefutable. Therefore, they did not enter into any discussion with the debate, rather they simply dedicated themselves to denunciation.

The Denunciation of Liberation Theology

An orthodox theology that acts in the name of a dogmatic whole with the pretense of eternal truth cannot make itself concrete historically. Therefore, in order to confront liberation theology, one cannot dismantle it without denouncing, however irrelevantly and even perversely, the manner by which this theology concretizes itself. Orthodox critics cannot enter into the discussion of concretization, because in this case one would have to accept that theology is and has to be concrete and historical theology.

Denunciation remains as a way out for orthodoxy. And since liberation theologians return many times to Marxist theory to think out their lived experiences, the orthodox denounces liberation theology for being Marxist. In a modern bourgeois society, nevertheless, Marx is—in an Orwellian sense—the non-person that all the world must attack in order to demonstrate its fidelity to the values of the self-proclaimed "Free World." Marx is for the free world what Trotsky is for the Soviet world: the non-person in which evil is supposedly incarnated. Therefore the denunciation of the Marxist social analysis of liberation theology implies an irrational and ideological condemnation of this theology, without any need to answer to its concrete challenges. The concrete disappears. There is no need to discuss or argue. The other always already reveals itself as enemy.

In order that the denunciation serve this goal, Marxist thought is transformed into a great magic, from which there is no escape. Whoever comes close gets lost. It is a great turbulence, not theory, but rather the temptation of evil. Cardinal Ratzinger sums up well the vision of this Lucifer:

Marxist thought constitutes a totalizing conception of the world in which numerous facts of observation and descriptive analysis are integrated in a philosophical and ideological structure which imposes the meaning and relative importance that they recognize. . . . The separation of heterogeneous elements that compose this hybrid epistemological amalgamation come to be impossible, in such a way that believing to accept only that which is presented as analysis ends with the obligation of accepting the ideology at the same time.²

In fact, liberation theologians had only said that the option for the poor is in conflict with the logic of the capitalist structure. Therefore, taken seriously and realistically, this option must overcome this logic. According to critics, this overcoming is called socialism. A real exchange would have to address the question of whether or not this is what liberation theologians maintain. Yet there is not one word about this.

The reason for this rejection is not because that liberation theologians have used Marxist theory. The condemnation was the same even when the theologians had not referred to Marx. But, according to critics the result, that the option for the poor is in conflict with the logic of capitalist structure, proves its marxism. Ideological condemnation prohibits the question, and once the question is prohibited, there is no need to address an answer.

Along with the magical denunciation of marxism, appears the anti-utopic condemnation. The anti-utopic denunciation is nothing but the other face of this magical anti-marxism. Once again a denunciation is substituted for the discussion of concrete and historical situations. Nor does a discussion of the utopic or an analysis of the problematic appear. Liberation theologians asked for structural changes so that society could confront the solution of the problem of poverty. They were not asking for the realization of utopias. They had a realistic objective, although the realism of this goal surpassed the possibilities of their current living situation, that of capitalistic society.

Liberation theologians recognized the utopic dimensions of their political goals and coupled them with a critique of the utopic contents in relation to the realistic structural changes. The anti-utopic denunciation of pro-capitalist forces, however, did nothing more than demonize them, avoiding the dialogue.³ This led to a situation in which the Chilean Catholic Church made the strongest condem-

nation of the "Christians for Socialism" group after the military coup, when the group was already being persecuted by the terrorism of the State of National Security.

The formal condemnation of the group "Christians for Socialism" has its own history. The condemnation was decided in secret, without being published, at the Chilean Episcopal Conference in April of 1973. Two days after the military coup d'état of September 11, 1973, an additional document was passed by the same Episcopal Conference. Their condemnations were put in circulation October 26, 1973, and definitively published in April 1974. During this period more than sixty priests were exiled from Chile and some were tortured. Many lay members of "Christians for Socialism" were either killed, tortured, or detained. State terrorism effectively repressed the "Christians for Socialism."⁴

Liberation Theology and the Dictatorship(s) of National Security

The Chilean Military coup of September 11, 1973 signified a caesura for the Christians for Socialism, and for liberation theologians in general. It was not a traditional military coup in which a military group assumes power over the government while assuring the continuity of the preexisting bourgeois society. The Chilean Military coup was a coup of National Security. The military government took over the task of reconstructing the Chilean bourgeois society from its roots and following a preconceived ideological scheme. A society established itself, which according to abstract principles was one without any relation to Chilean history. For the first time in present history a clearly neoliberal regime appeared in Chile. Through state terrorism, an abstract model of government, deduced from the principles of totalized capitalist market, was imposed. Hence the jacobin character of this coup d'état.⁵

The politics of the military junta prompted a change in the entire society. It was not simply a question of eliminating any trace left by the Popular Unity Party's politics, but of actually transforming the capitalism that had previously existed. This capitalism had been one of reforms, of an interventionist character, which had given way to the existence of an expansive civil society in which popular organizations had held a legitimate and important place. The ideologists of the military junta saw in the capitalist reformation the foundation of the Popular Unity Party's rise. In fact, the Popular

Unity Party had only further carried out the same reformism of the actual capitalist structure but to such a degree that it had put the very capitalist structure in check. Therefore, the military junta took two main lines of action. On the one hand, they directed themselves against all popular organizations in order to destroy them completely, especially the syndicates, the local organizations, and the cooperatives. As these organizations had strong social and political roots, this objective implied the destruction of all popular parties. The terrorism of the State played its principle role here. The politics of terror lasted more than a decade and succeeded in eliminating whatever popular power had previously existed. On the other hand, the politics of the junta also directed itself towards the change of the State. The reformist and interventionist, market-based State was the other face of the popular movements' strength. It was transformed into an anti-reform and anti-intervention State serving a totalized market. The privatization of State functions in the economic, social, and public enterprise arenas shaped for Latin America the first case of a systematic application of abstract outlines brought in by the leaders of this process from the Chicago School of Economics. This concerns precisely the politics that soon after was assumed everywhere by the IMF under the name of structural adjustment.⁶

In this new environment the reflections of Latin American liberation theologians became inscribed. Although a rupture was not produced in this theology, important matrixes were changed. Whereas in the period preceding the Chilean coup a liberationist focus had prevailed, there now prevailed a focus on resistance. There had always been an intense effort on transformation in the ecclesial base communities. But this work had been strongly interwoven with the work of popular organizations. Now, popular organizations were persecuted and had lost much of their force; therefore base communities played a much greater role. In many parts of the country these communities transformed themselves into the only places of popular activity, maintaining the churches as protected spaces from repression. (In place of the popular organizations, many human rights defense groups appeared. Only in Central America was the situation different, especially in Nicaragua and El Salvador. But this tendency began to reverse during the eighties.)

At the center of liberation theology now appeared the themes of idolatry and of the God of life confronting the gods of death. The

theme of idolatry had a long tradition extending back to Jewish roots. According to this tradition the idol is a god whose existence and veneration leads to death. Whether the idols exist or not is not as important as the fact that the idol exists, but rather the idol is seen as a force toward death, which is venerated as a god. The idol is a god of death, which therefore confronts the God of life. Consequently, the God of life is seen as a god whose existence and veneration produce life and not death. Since liberation theology holds that corporal life is the final resort of pure, whole life. Although the body does not live except as a body with a soul, neither does the soul live except with the body (*Gratia supponit naturam*).

Thus, for liberation theologians the problem is not one of theism and atheism, but one of idolatry and the God of life. The position contrary to belief is not unbelief. Faith in God can be idolatry or not, just as atheism can be. An atheism whose experience leads to death is idolatry; one whose experience leads to life is not. Life and death are the criteria, not abstract metaphysics. There are also atheists in the family of God. Nevertheless the affirmation of life continues to be seen as starting from the mutual recognition between subjects who perceive themselves as natural and needed human beings. Hence, life and death again confront the option for the poor. Nevertheless the poor now have a new dimension. They are not only poor, but also victims, as they are persecuted by the apparatus of state repression.

Starting from this examination of idolatry and its victim, liberation theology analyzes further the processes of victimization. Orthodox theology is now confronted as a theology of "sacrificiality," or of a God who desires sacrifices. Liberation theology develops a strong criticism of this theological sacrificiality based on an analysis of the sacrificiality of the economic and social systems of Latin America. An entire history of sacrificiality is discovered in the very conquest of America and of the early reactions in support of the indigenous. Liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez returns to the discussion of the theology of the conquest and reclaims the figure of las Casas as a key ancestor of liberation theology.⁷

Yet some theologians go deeper into the subject of the problematic in the relation between economy and theology, especially at DEI (*Ecumenical Department of Investigation*) in Costa Rica (Assman/Hinkelammert 1989). The theme of sacrificiality is also focused on in terms of the economic and social systems (Hinkelammert 1991).

The sacrificiality of Western culture itself is discovered and the non-sacrificial judeo-christian tradition is reclaimed.

The Conflict Around Liberation Theology

There has always been a latent conflict between liberation theology on the one side and orthodox theology and the churches that support it on the other. We have already seen how this conflict broke out towards the end of the Popular Unity Party's government and during the first year of the Chilean military junta. But with the Rockefeller report of the late sixties another conflict opened up: the conflict between political power and the empire.

Liberation theology ends up being a danger to empire for various reasons. One important reason is ideological, playing an important part during the cold war. This Manichean confrontation needed clear trenches. The empire interpreted itself as the christian (western) world, a reign of god facing a reign of atheist evil. Although the foundation of bourgeois society's legitimacy is not Christian but rather rests on secular myths, the religious dimension is also essential in anchoring itself in transcendence. To believe in God and to fight on capitalism's side against enemies seemed to be the same. This identification is even stronger in the U.S. than in Europe, although it also exists there. This leads to what in the U.S. is called civil religion, which is the underlying religiosity of the actual way of life in the U.S. It is the religiosity that includes all of the specific religions. Therefore, the religious tolerance facing diverse faiths has as its condition the respect accorded these in the framework of the civil religion. Religion is considered a private affair inasmuch as it inscribes itself in the civil religion as in public religiosity.

Liberation theology threatened this religious homogeneity—even christianity—of the empire. This was much more sensible, so much more that liberation theology had a positive reception in various churches in the U.S. and Europe, including in the general public. Consequently, the Manichean condemnation of popular movements, their protests, and the demand for structural changes were not carried out easily since important currents of these movements expressed themselves in their religious faith (that is, in their theology). At the same time, certain sectors of the U.S. and European general publics began to doubt the simplicity of cold war ideology.

A similar shift happened among Latin America's popular movements, but from the opposite perspective (e.g., reacting to the orthodox "left"). Liberation theology was one of the currents of thought which allowed a way out of the narrowness of Marxist orthodoxy, especially as it was promoted by the Marxist literature edited by the Moscow Academy of Sciences. This orthodoxy very soon ran its course because it did not succeed in relating to the reality in which the members of these popular movements lived. It was as abstract in its lack of connection to this reality as were market-based ideologies.

Thus an important contribution for these popular movements was the rise of a theology that thought of the world from a similar point of view as these movements and that allowed faith to exist as a participant in the struggles of these movements. Although the majority of theologians were not antimarxist, and actually found inspiration in Marxist thought for the analyses of their reality, they maintained a critical position, one that effectively reinforced these popular movements.

All of this was sufficient reasoning for the empire to react. The Rockefeller Report of the late sixties gave the signal. The very same empire now began to develop its theology, which at first promoted the negation of and later the recuperation of liberation theology.

In the sixties theological centers of a completely new character appeared. The first was the department of theology of the American Enterprise Institute directed by Michael Novak. Its reason for existence was to protest against liberation theology in Latin America and in the U.S. It was followed soon after by the Institute of Religion and Democracy, directed by Peter Berger, an entity that had the same purpose but acted more at a state level of political organizations and churches in the U.S. Michael Novak's books, which appeared in Spanish, were distributed by the impresarial organizations in Latin America and by the U.S. embassies on the continent. Michael Novak made trips for conferences and round tables in Latin America that were organized by embassies or impresarial organizations. The European impresarial organizations followed the American Enterprise Institute and organized their respective theological centers. Even the Pentagon formed a group of specialists in this field to take part in the Pan-American military organizations. Similarly in the late eighties the International Monetary Fund (IMF), headed by secretary Michel Camdessus,

developed its own theological reflection. The principle daily papers became voices of the new theology of empire. The Santa Fé document of 1980, which formulated the electoral platform for Reagan's presidency, detected the front between the popular church and liberation theology in Latin America as one of the principle preoccupations of U.S. National Security.

Through the mid-eighties the arguments used against liberation theology by the proponents of empire were similar to those used by orthodox theology. Principally, they attacked the Marxist analyses that appeared as the theoretical element of the concretization of liberation theology and its utopic formulations for a liberated future. But there is at least one noticeable difference: anti-utopianism of this imperial theology is much more extreme than the anti-utopianism of orthodox theology and anti-liberationist churches.

Certainly, theological orthodoxy reproached liberation theologians as having a false utopia. But they did not reproach the utopia itself. As christian orthodoxy, it maintained its own vision of the coming kingdom of God, and of the heavens. Critics could not reproach liberation theology for its hope in a kingdom of God. Therefore, this theological orthodoxy reproached it for interpreting this reign in material, bodily, and earthly terms—a false concept of the kingdom. The orthodox kingdom of God understands itself as a kingdom of pure souls, for whom corporeality is something ethereal, even ephemeral. The kingdom of God imagined on the part of liberation theologians is a New Earth, it is "this earth without death," it is a kingdom in which corporeal needs are satisfied. Orthodoxy sees this as "materialistic," that is to say, as a false hope, to which it counterpoises its vision of "true" hope. But it does not deny the vision of the coming kingdom of God.⁸

The imperial theology of the seventies and of the first half of the eighties is different. It is clearly anti-utopic setting a world without hope against the utopic vision of a world with hope. Although it continues to utopianize the market, understanding the market as a place of "providence" tending towards equilibrium, it does not establish relations between market-based utopia and the kingdom of God. Therefore, solidarity appears as human perversion and atavism.⁹

It has to do with a theology that corresponds to the manicheanism of the Cold War. The authority sees itself in a struggle between God and the devil, and sees utopia as that which is incarnated in

the kingdom wrongly presented by the devil, and sees itself as a reign of realism, one which does not need utopias. The confrontation of god-devil corresponds, therefore, to the confrontation of realism-utopia. This extreme manicheism was interpreted by Popper as They who desire heaven, produce hell (Popper 1971).

But this vision of utopia causes problems within the conservative coalition which in the eighties. We have already seen that in its clarity it is not acceptable for actual orthodox theology. But neither did it serve the political coalition of christian fundamentalism in the U.S., one of the pillars of Reagan's government. This fundamentalism is highly utopic and messianic with a wholly apocalyptic vision of history.¹⁰ Thus its own existence daily contradicted the cold war ideology on which its imperial theology is based. The Christian orthodox utopia contradicted the imperial theology's initial anti-utopia.

At the same time as the visible disintegration of the socialist countries took place, a growing utopianism of the actual empire was also produced. The politics of structural readjustment with their disastrous effects on third world countries needed promises of a better future in order to legitimize themselves. The infernos produced on earth demanded the promise of coming heavens. With its conversions and gospel of the market, neoliberalism transformed itself into a religion.

Imperial Theology's Attempt to Co-opt Liberation Theology

After all of this, a transformation in the imperial theology was produced. This theology passed from the negation of liberation theology to its co-option. In the mid-eighties this co-option was in full effect, although it had been notable in Latin America ever since the Chilean military coup d'état.¹¹

In 1985 David Stockman, who came from a fundamentalist background, resigned from his position as chief of budget for Reagan's government and he published a book entitled *The Triumph of Politics*. He reproached Reagan for having been a traitor to the clean model of neoliberalism and for having favored populism. Stockman's book develops a neoliberally positioned, academic theology, that does not denounce utopias, but presents neoliberalism as the only efficient and realistic means to realize them. It attacks the socialist "utopias" in order to reclaim them in favor of the

attempted neoliberal realism. According to Stockman, it is not the utopia that threatens, but the false utopia against which he contrasts his "realist" utopia of neoliberalism.¹²

Michel Camdessus, Secretary General of the IMF, echoes the transformed theology of empire grounding it in certain key theses of liberation theology. In a conference on March 27, 1992 he directed the National Congress of French Christian Impresarios in Lille.¹³ Mid-discussion he summarizes his central theological theses:

Surely the Kingdom is a place: these new Heavens and this new earth of which we are called to enter one day, a sublime promise; but the Kingdom is in some way geographical, the Reign is History, a history in which we are the actors, one which is in process and that is close to us since Jesus came into human history. The Reign is what happens when God is King and we recognize Him as such, and we make possible the extension, spreading of this reign, like a spot of oil, impregnating, renewing and unifying human realities. "Let Thy Kingdom come. . . ."

He immediately counterpoises the power of this world and the Kingdom of God:

One grounds itself on power, the other on service, one, supported by force, orients itself toward possession and monopoly, the other, toward sharing; one exalts the prince and his barons, the other exalts the excluded and weak; one draws up borders, the other links; one supports itself with the spectacular and immediate, the other prefers the discrete germination of the mustard seed. They are complete opposites! and at the heart of these differences is that which condenses them: the King identifies himself with the POOR. . . . In this Kingdom, who judges, who is King? In the gospel the answer is given to us in a formidable, solemn manner with the announcement and perspective of the Final Judgement: today- my judge and my king, is my Brother who is hungry and thirsty, who is a stranger, who is naked, sick or imprisoned. . . .

Camdessus contrasts power, possession and monopoly, the prince and his barons, borders, the spectacular and immediate to service, sharing, the excluded and weak, bonds, and the germination of a

mustard seed. He contrasts pride and humility. Nevertheless, he claims that the IMF, structural adjustment, and the entire neo-liberal concept of the society incarnate precisely the humility and pride of those exercising resistance, arriving at the following conclusion:

Our mandate? It resounded in the synagogue at Nazareth, and from the Spirit we are given the receiving of that which the apostles of Jesus denied to accept: precisely the realization of the promise made in Isaiah (61, 1-3) beginning with our present history! It is a text of Isaiah which Jesus explained; it says (Luke 4, 16-23): "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me in order to announce the good news to the Poor, to proclaim liberation to captives and the return of sight to the blind, to free the oppressed and proclaim the year of grace granted by the Lord." And Jesus only had one short response: "Today this message is fulfilled for you that you should listen." This today is our today and we are part of this grace of God, we who are in charge of the economy (the administrators of a part of it in any case): the alleviation of suffering for our brothers and the procurers of the expansion of their liberty. It is we who have received the Word. This Word can change everything. We know that God is with us in the work of spreading brotherhood.

A liberation theologian could have written the text of the secretary general of the IMF. Camdessus formulated the center of liberation theologians' evangelical interpretation, especially the promise of God's kingdom and the option for the poor.

Nevertheless the cited text is only one part of the conference. The anterior and posterior parts contradict key tenets of liberation theology, disparaging "populisms." In the language of the Fondo "populisms" summarizes all possible attitudes and politics that do not assume the strict positions of the IMF's structural adjustment. The speech, therefore, is virulently directed against:

All of these forms of populist demagoguery which are current and we know where they will lead: to hyperinflation and through it—because the market had not heard the promises— to the economic debacle, of the increase in misery and the return of "forceful" regimes, that is to say, of the end of freedom.

In this way the conference was transformed from an option for the poor to an option for the IMF. Those who wanted anything different from what the IMF's structural adjustment politics conceded, produced "the economic debacle, the increase in misery and the return of the 'forceful' regimes, that is to say, of the end of liberties". This would damage the poor. Therefore, those who are on the side of the poor, by force have to stay with the Fondo. There are no alternatives.

As Camdessus was speaking to a mostly Catholic audience, he also addressed traditionally social Catholic doctrine:

Of course, the marketplace is the most effective mode of economic organization for increasing individual and collective richness; we should not have an attitude of embarrassment that some generations of our social catholic brothers felt with respect to the market: this "yes, but . . .". The matter is resolved and the Holy Pope left the point very clear in the *Centesimus annus*. For the effectiveness that it assures, the market can permit greater solidarity. From this point of view, the marketplace and solidarity do not oppose each other but rather can be reunited. Besides, the impresarial economy, as you well know, is an economy of responsibility wherein human beings can develop to their fullest dimensions.

Outside of the market no possible activity remains, even solidarity is in practice as a result of the marketplace. Therefore, Camdessus presented the IMF as the great world organism whose responsibility is the exercise of solidarity. Furthermore, according to Camdessus, there is a definitive kingdom beyond history that does not meddle in the matters of the marketplace. He concludes:

The citizen of the Kingdom—we will refer to him in this way—is in the vanguard of courage so that all forms of fear, mistrust, egoisms, "this idolatry" as Saint Paul calls it (Ephesians 5, 5) recede, and so that finally the field of sharing expands, where the Kingdom already impregnates human reality, and in which human beings find a little more space, freedom and happiness. This, knowing full well that "there will always be poor among us." Which means to say, among other things—and it is indebted to Jesus' saying it—that the Kingdom will not be realized on this earth, not at least until the day on which "He will make all things new." We cannot realize this work

of impregnating human realities without our hearts and our intelligences expanding and being renewed, "full of Grace from on High." For those who exercise our type of work, in this urgency of service to humanity, there is no other solution—I am sure and at the same time far from knowing—than saintliness, or if you wish, of "refashioning" the New Man: that one formed from the earth but that—I return to Saint Paul—"Since Christ came from Heaven, as he belongs to Heaven." Formed from the earth but pertaining to the heavens: the key is there and in Prayer in order to receive this gift.

It is the total declaration of the empire without any escape, neither on earth nor in the heavens. The IMF politics have been transformed into God's will on this earth. Not a will expressed by any Sinai, but by reality itself. Reality is such that, when human actions attempt structural adjustments, the results necessarily will be worse than the situation that is trying to be changed. There is no alternative because the search for one inevitably leads to the worsening of the situation. For this reason, to opt for the poor is to opt for realism. Capitalism has transformed itself into "total capitalism," as Friedman calls it (Sorman 1994). Preferential opting for the poor and preferential opting for the IMF are identified with each other.¹⁵

Of course, for churches, a great temptation appears. In the vision opened up by Camdessus, one can opt for the poor without entering into any conflict with the powers that be. Great harmony seems to have been achieved. And liberation theology is now part of the orthodoxy itself. The New Man has returned as an official of the IMF.¹⁶

The empire now appears as absolute and closed. Nothing remains outside of it. It is better not to look for alternatives. When the punishment is greater than what can be achieved in the search for an alternative, it is preferable not to search. In such a situation, power dictates what reality will be like. In between power and reality a circuit is established in which reality tautologically confirms the theses of those in power.¹⁷

Liberation theologians perceive this condition of an absolute and closed empire as an apocalyptic situation in the judeo-christian tradition. In such a situation there are no visible ways out and there can be no concrete projects for change. According to tradition, the apocalypse is revelation. The apocalypse reveals that, faced with an

absolute and closed empire, an unknown alternative exists. Total power of the empire reveals its weakness, but its fall is not seen as a product of an intentional political action. The name of this empire is Babylonia.

This reading of the apocalypse entails analyses of the known apocalyptic texts, as well as the analyses of their economic, social, and political contexts. One rediscovers the fact that these apocalyptic texts have appeared in historical situations similar to ours. The believers found themselves face-to-face with an impregnable empire from which there must have been an, albeit unknown, escape.

Apocalypse does not signify catastrophe. As revelation, the apocalypse reveals that the monster is a giant with clay feet whose fall will leave open the future for realizing alternatives.¹⁸ This reading of the apocalypse, as it now appears in liberation theology, is not directly comparable with the reading of the apocalypse made by Christian Fundamentalists in the U.S. For the latter, the apocalypse is again only a catastrophe that comes by God's will, in the form of inexorable historical law. The world is condemned to perish and its salvation is achieved by a god-judge upon the consummation of history itself. History's own law is human catastrophe. But, the recuperation of liberation theology that Camdessus tried to achieve is perfectly compatible with such a world vision.

Certain liberation theologians' current reading of the apocalypse does not coincide with any of these meanings. The absolute and closed empire of today, as were the Roman, Hellenic, and Babylonian empires, is a Babylonia. As such, it is a giant with feet of clay. It falls, but the reason for its fall cannot be a voluntary human act. It falls due to unintentional effects resulting from its own omnipotence. There is no metaphysical law of history that makes it fall. It falls because "suddenly a stone is detached, without intervention of any human hand and, comes to hit the statue on its iron and clay feet and it pulverizes them."¹⁹

The apocalyptic situation also inspired wisdom literature. One of the greatest testimonies of this literature, that today has been reclaimed by liberation theology, is the book "Ecclesiastes" of the Bible, which was written in the third century B.C. Faced with an unshakable and disastrous empire, Ecclesiastes has a more or less tragic sense of life. The lament over the loss of a sense of life prevails. Ecclesiastes has much in common with certain currents of contemporary postmodernism. Upon the return by some theolo-

gians to the reading of the apocalypse, this problematic also appears today in liberation theology.²⁰

The Challenge of Liberation Theology: The Irrationality of the Rationalized

As we saw precisely with the IMF, the negation of liberation theology was the construction of an anti-liberation theology. This anti-theology is an inversion of liberation theology.

Again the fact that these two contrary theologies cannot be distinguished on the level of a clearly theological discussion stands out. At this level liberation theology does not visibly distinguish itself from the anti-theology presented by the IMF. The conflict seems to be over the application of a theology shared by both sides. The theology of the empire—the theology of the IMF *is* the theology of the empire—assumed the key elements of liberation theology: the preferential option for the poor and the hope for the kingdom of God, incarnated in the *orthopraxis*. At least this is all of its obvious appearance.

On a different level, another problem returns which we have seen at the beginning of this article. There we analyzed the fact that liberation theology arose in such a way that the conflict with orthodoxy did not appear as a religious conflict because no religious dogma was questioned. The conflict appeared as a conflict over the concretization of a common faith. The preferential option for the poor and the incarnation of the kingdom of God in the economic and political world were the instruments of this actualization. As a concretized theology, liberation theology was seen as one of conflict.

These days, imperial theology assumes these positions. Imperial theology is in agreement with the preferential option for the poor and with the economic and social incarnation of God's kingdom. It presents itself as the only realist path for fulfilling these demands.

Surely the theology of the empire distorts liberation theology's option for the poor. From liberation theology's point of view, this option is the consequence of a mutual acknowledgement between human subjects. The poor are a sign of the loss of the acknowledgement which verifies that all human social relations are distorted. Imperial theology can only focus on the poor as an object of the others who are not poor.

Under the claims of imperial theology, the option for the poor can no longer identify any specification and natural affinity for libera-

tion theology. Now, the question is over the realism of the concretization. No preconceived faith can give the answer. One cannot decide the truth of one of the positions without returning to empirical sciences, especially economic sciences. It is they who decide. As a result, they transform themselves into carriers of the criteria of truth about the theologies. Indeed, with neoliberal economic politics in their hand, the option for the poor is transformed into an option for the IMF. From the point of view of a political and critical economy, the option for the poor is transformed into the demand for an alternative society, in which everyone has a place. Theology as theology cannot decide. Scientific results recognize the concrete content of theology.

For this reason, the recuperative intentions of liberation theology force the development of new problematics. In order to continue supporting the option for the poor in terms that respect the poor as a subject—something specific to liberation theology—this option has to be linked in a specific way with the mutual acknowledgment between embodied and needed subjects.

This leads to the need for the development of liberation theology along two lines. The first refers to the critique of the neoliberal political economy and its respective utopianization of market law. The second refers to the Christian tradition of a theology critical of the law. Both constitute space for a discussion that today is often summed up as “economy and theology.” This confirms the relevance of economic analysis for the discernment of faith content.

The first line of the critique of a neoliberal political economy could be summed up as follows: the rationalization by competitiveness and efficiency (profitability) reveals the profound irrationality of the rationalized. Efficiency is not efficient. Upon reducing rationality to rentability the present economic system transforms itself into irrationality. It unties destructive processes that cannot be controlled from the parameters of rationality that it has chosen. The exclusion of a growing number of persons from the economic system, the destruction of the natural bases of life, the distortion of all social relationships and consequently, of actual mercantile relations are the nonintentional results of this reduction of rationality to rentability. The market laws of total capitalism destroy society and its natural environment. By making absolute these laws by way of the myth of the automatism of the market, these destructive tendencies become uncontrollable and convert themselves into a threat for human survival itself.

This critique leads to an analysis of rationality that includes the irrationality of the rationalized. It deals with the development of a concept of a natural and social circuit of human life that has to globalize and to condition the halfway-ended rationality that underlies the calculation of rentability. This excludes the neoliberal totalization of market law for integrating mercantile relations into social life. The neoliberal politic, however, treats the market as the constituent element of all social relations, in this way leading to its politics of total capitalism.²¹

With analyses of this type, liberation theology is faced once again with the need to confront Marxist thought.²² Marxist thought is the existing theoretical body that precisely critiques the irrationality of the rationalized. Upon confronting this problem today, any conceptualization will develop thoughts close to those developed first by Marx. The Marxist critique still presents problems for liberation theology. It has to do with Marxist hope in being able to solve the problems of absolute capitalism by completely overcoming capitalism itself. With the neoliberal totalization of capitalism, marxism led to a totalization analogous to that in which we live. Liberation theology has to overcome the totalizations, if it indeed wants to contribute to the building of a new faith. Yet however criticized these totalizations, the conceptualizations of the critique of the irrationality of the rationalized are indispensable in order to constitute an adequate concept of the rationality of human behavior. The theory of rational behavior, as stated by Max Weber, does not go beyond the reductionism of rational behavior to its expressions in terms of a means-ends rationality, i.e., the measurable in terms of profitability and efficiency.

This brings us to the second line of liberation theology's necessary development in today's world. The critique of the irrationality of the rationalized must be expressed in theological terminology itself. This occurs today precisely because of the recuperation of a long theological tradition of the critique of the law, which begins in the gospels themselves and has its first theological elaboration with Saint Paul of Tarsus, especially in his letter to the Romans. In fact, it is the first production of the critique of the irrationality of the rationalized that exists.²³

Liberation theologians emphasize the key elements of Pauline theology in their critique of law. On the one hand, Paul makes visible that the law, inasmuch as it is a law of fulfillment, leads those who

fulfill it or who are obliged to fulfill it to death. Even the law that serves life leads to death. Here, law is any law. Therefore, the privileged law State, which appeared as the Roman Empire for the first time in history, is not the maximum expression of humanity, but rather, is a threat. The law does not save by its being fulfilled. On the other hand, Paul considers sin not as an infraction of the law. Sin, in the way it is dealt with in Paul's vision, is committed in fulfilling the law. Infractions of the law are secondary. Therefore, sin is committed with the good conscience of fulfilling the law.²⁴ Traces of this thought were still maintained in the European Middle Ages: *Suma lex, maxima injustitia*. Or the more ironic opposite: *Fiat injustitia, pereat mundus* (that the law be fulfilled even if the world must perish).

In this sense, the critique of the law already develops the problem of the irrationality of the rationalized. For this reason, liberation theologians can reclaim this theology in relation to market law. On the one side, the law of the market leads to the death of humanity. On the other side, a sin is committed in fulfilling the law of market and it is committed with the good conscience of fulfilling the maximum law of humanity. Christian freedom returns therefore, in the sense pronounced by Paul, as a freedom that is sovereign before the law. The free subjects are free to the degree that they are able to make the law relative with respect to their own needs. Freedom is not in the law, but rather in the relationship subjects have *with* the law. Considering market-based law, freedom consists precisely in being able to subordinate and even to break the law, if the needs of the subjects demand it. The mutual acknowledgement between embodied and needy subjects implies unequivocally the acknowledgement of the relativization of any law as a function of this acknowledgment. Upon mutually acknowledging each other as subjects, they recognize themselves as sovereign before the law. Law is valuable only to the degree that it does not impede this mutual acknowledgment.

The option for the poor can now be taken back in a sense in which imperial theology will never accept it. The mutual acknowledgement between embodied and needed subjects implies the option for the poor, and because of this implies at the same time the sovereignty of the subject over the law. Without this sovereignty there can be neither mutual acknowledgement between subjects nor the option for the poor. This reconceptualization also demands a reconceptualization of the kingdom of God (Sung 1994).

Therefore, liberation theology denies not only the making absolute of market law in "total capitalism," but also of any metaphysical law of history. The making absolute of the law—that is to say, its transformation into metaphysical law of history—is totalization, which in the end leads to totalitarianism. Its motto is always that one of "the end of history," and the negation of all alternatives (Assman 1994).

With this result, liberation theology leads not only to a critique of capitalism, but also to one of modernity itself. It arrives at the confirmation of a crisis of Western society itself.

Nevertheless, it is not postmodern. Postmodernists take great care to analyze the law of the market law as a metaphysical law of history. They attack from all sides metaphysical laws of history. But, the law of the market as the only case today of the imposition of a metaphysical law of history, is not even mentioned. They conceal the metaphysical laws of history in force today in the name of the critique of so many laws of past history.

Translated by Elizabeth Wing

Notes

1. Emanuel Levinas's philosophy is one of the sources of this thinking. Refer to his *Totalidad y Infinito: Ensayo sobre la Externidad*. Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca, 1977 and his *De otro modo de ser, o mas alla de la esencia*. Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca, 1987. In a later work Levinas summarizes the position, when speaking of loving one's neighbor: "What does 'as yourself' mean? Buber and Rosenzweig here had their greatest problems with translation. They said: 'as yourself', does this not mean that one loves the self more? In place of the translation mentioned for you, they translated: 'love your neighbor, he is like you'. But if one already agrees to separate the last word of the hebrew line, 'kamokha', from the beginning of the verse, it can all be read in another way: 'Love your neighbor; this creation is like you, yourself'; 'love your neighbor, you are he'; 'this love for your neighbor is what you are'." Levinas, Emanuel: *De Dieu qui vient a l'idee*. J. Urin, Paris, 1986. p. 144.

2. Ratzinger, *Libertatis nuntius*, VII, 6. See also Hinkelammert, Franz: "Befreiung, soziale Sunde und subjektive Verantwortlichkeit" in Venetz, Hermann-Josef, and Vogrimler, Herbert, ed. *Das Lehramt der Kirche und der Schrei der Armen*. Edition Exodus y Liberacion, Freiburg/Munster, 1985. p. 60-76.

3. Comblin summarizes this critique of utopia by liberation theologians: "The future has been planned by God and stays always out of humanity's reach: it is the renewed man, the man of the new alliance. . . . The future is lived by living the present. One cannot sacrifice the present to the future, but the opposite rather, the future should be lived and realized in the present in

the form of image or likeness. Not to sacrifice the present man in the light of future brotherhood and peace, but to live this future peace in an imperfect present, but a valid and real image. On the other hand, the present has no meaning in the immediate satisfaction that it bestows, but in the image of the future which it allows to be realized." Comblin, *Mensaje*, July, 1974. p. 298. See also Hinkelammert, Franz: *Ideologías del Desarrollo y Dialectica de la Historia*. Editorial Universidad Católica de Chile. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1970.

4. The same Cardinal of Santiago, Raul Silva Henriquez, declared in a trip to Italy, that the Christians for Socialism had taken a path which "as a matter of fact, made them renounce their Christianity. . . ." (*Avvenire*, according to *Mercurio*, 10-25-73).

5. The analysis Hegel makes of jacobism, clearly affirms the Chilean military coup d'état and its previous politics: ". . . when these abstract conclusions came into power, they afforded for the first time in human history the prodigious spectacle of the overthrow of the constitution of a great actual state and its complete reconstruction *ab initio* on the basis of pure thought alone, after the destruction of all existing and given material. The will of its re-founders was to give it what they alleged was a purely rational basis, but it was only abstractions that were being used; the Idea was lacking, and the experiment ended in the maximum of frightfulness and terror" (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T. M. Knox, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1942), Paragraph 258, p. 157). This jacobism, with its disposition to state-sponsored terrorism is also notable in many later cases of the Chilean military coup, in which the schematics of the neoliberal ideology were imposed. One of the coup's mottos comes directly from Saint-Just: "No freedom for the enemies of freedom." On the French Revolution refer to: Gallardo, Helio: "La revolución francesa y el pensamiento político" in *Pasos*, (DEI. San José), 1989, Nr. 26 Nov/Dec.

6. Milton Friedman later called this move the politics of "total capitalism."

7. The theology of the victim also has roots in German theology of the Nazi era. See Gutiérrez, Gustavo: "Los límites de la teología moderna: Un texto de Bonhoeffer" in Gutiérrez, Gustavo: *La fuerza histórica de los pobres: Selección de trabajos*. CEP. Lima, 1979; and Hinkelammert, Franz: "Bonhoeffer" in *Teología alemana y teología latinoamericana de la liberación: Un esfuerzo de diálogo*. DEI. San José, Costa Rica. 1990.

8. "The Marxist doctrine of the final hour is a promise of intra-worldly salvation. Karl Marx secularized the fate of the Jewish people—slavery in Egypt and the exodus to the promised land—as the hope of the messianic salvation of the Old Testament in order to transpose them to our time, the period after Jesus Christ—a disturbing reduction and an imitation (*Nachaffung*: behave as a monkey) of the salvation which was given to all of humanity through Jesus Christ. Marxism is an anti-gospel." (Hoffner, Josef: *Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, Kevalear 1975. p.171-172.)

9. "The traditional and socialist societies offer a unitarian vision. They arouse in all activity a *symbolic solidarity*. The human heart is hungry for this bread. Atavistic memories besiege every free man. *The 'paramo' (high barren plain) which we find in the heart of democratic capitalism is like a field of war on which many individuals wander amidst cadavers*. But this desert, like the

dark night of the soul in the journey of mystics, fulfills an indispensable intention. . . . Of course the transcendental dominium is mediated by literature, religion, family and similar institutions; but in the last instance, it is centered around the interior silence of each person." Novak, Michael. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*. An American Enterprise Institute/ Simon and Schuster Publication, N.Y. 1982.

"In conclusion: The 'children of light' are in many ways a greater danger for biblical faith than the 'children of darkness'." Novak, op.cit. p.71. Novak, Michael. *El Espíritu del Capitalismo Democrático*. Ediciones Tres Tiempos: Buenos Aires, 1983.

10. Refer to Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Eventos del Porvenir: Estudios de Escatología Bíblica*. Editorial Vida: Miami, 1984 or Lindsay, Hal. *La Agonía del Gran Planeta Tierra*. Editorial Vida: Miami, 1988. (*The Late Great Planet Earth*. Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1970.) During the seventies more than 15 million copies of Lindsay's book were sold.

11. "The Declaration of the Principles" of the Chilean military government of 1974 makes this clear.

12. Stockman presents himself as a converted leftist, who at one time was partisan to a false utopia, but who has now discovered the true utopia: "In a deeper sense, however, the new doctrine [he even speaks of the "gospel of the offering"] of the offering was nothing but a re-working of my old social idealism in a new form and, as I thought, matured. The world could begin again from the start. The economic and social crises, that are getting bigger, could be overcome. The oldest evil inheritors of racism and pauperization could also be overcome with profound reforms which are born of political causes. But most of all, the doctrine of the offering offered an idealist alternative to the sense of a time of cynicism and pessimism."

13. The quotes that follow are translated from the published text: Camdessus, Michel: *Marché-Royaume. La double Appartenance*. Documents EPISCOPAT. Bulletin de secrétariat de la conférence des évêques de France, Nr. 12. Juillet-Aut. 1992. Camdessus presented a similar conference before Christian businessmen in Mexico.

14. At a conference at the *Semana Social de Francia/ Social Week of France* in 1991, Camdessus also confronted the option for the poor with what he calls populism: "Let us be careful with our judgments so that we may never confuse the preferential option for the poor with populism" (p. 100). See Camdessus, Michel. *Liberalisme et Solidarité à l'échelle mondiale*. XXX, *Concurrence et Solidarité. L'économie de marché presque ou? Actes de Séminaires sociales de France tenues à Paris en 1991*, Paris, ESF editeur, 1992.

15. In this sense, Hugo Assmann cites Roberto Campos: "In rigor, nobody can directly opt for the poor. The option that they have to make is for the inversionist, they who create work for the poor." In Assmann, Hugo: *Economía y Religión*. DEI: San José, 1994. p.101. See also Moll, Peter G.: "Liberating Liberation Theology: Towards Independence from Dependency Theory." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. March, 1992; Haigh, Roger S. J.: *An Alternative Vision: an Interpretation of Liberation Theology*. Paulist, N.Y.; Sherman, Amy L.: *Preferential Option: A Christian and Neoliberal Strategy for Latin America's Poor*. Grand Rapids, MI. 1992.

16. Refer to: Assmann, Hugo/Hinkelammert, Franz J.: *A Idolatria do Mercado: Ensaio sobre Economia e Teologia*. Vozes, Sao Paulo, 1989.

17. Hannah Arendt skillfully describes this network: "The affirmation that the Metro of Moscow is the only one in the world is only a lie while the Bolsheviks do not have the power to destroy all the rest. In other words, the method of infallible prediction, more than any other totalitarian, propagandistic method, denotes its final objective of world conquering, given that only in a world completely below its control can the totalitarian dominator possibly make reality all of their lies and accomplish the fulfilling of all of their prophecies." Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Taurus, Madrid 1974, p. 435. She continues, "Then, all discussion around the accurate or erroneous of the prediction of a totalitarian dictator results as fantastic as discussing with a professional assassin about whether their future victim is alive or dead, given that killing the person in question the assassin can immediately apportion the test of veracity of their declaration" (435). In an interview Camdessus describes this mechanism as seen from the IMF, asking, "What would the social cost be of the measures to place public finances in order?" and answering, "The question is what would the cost be for the people of Costa Rica to not adjust their structures? The cost might be the interruption of internal financing, reduction of inversion/investment??, the paralyzing of an agreement for recognition of debt, and the interruption of importing. The cost might be a recession. . . . Our position is not exactly that of recommending nor imposing measures, our position is one of dialogue. . . . But, the fact that the goals have not been respected and that we may have suspended the expenditure, does not signify a punishment but a reality which the country faces by adapting their politics. Later, we will pay." Interview with Michel Camdessus, director-general of the IMF. (*La Nacion*, San José, 3-5-90.)

18. Perhaps the best description of the apocalyptic situation is the following from the prophet Daniel: "You, oh king, have seen this vision: a statue, an enormous statue of extraordinary brilliance, of terrifying aspect, arises before You. The head of this statue was of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and loin of bronze, its legs of iron, and its feet part iron and part clay. You are looking, when suddenly a stone is unfastened, without the help of any hand, comes and hits the statue's feet of iron and clay and pulverizes them. Then everything was left pulverized at once: iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. . . . And the stone that had hit the statue converted into a great mountain that filled all the earth." (Dan. 2. 31-35).

19. Cf., Richard, Pablo, "El pueblo de Dios contra el imperio. Daniel 7 en su contexto literario e historico" in *Ribla*, Nr. 7. DEI, San José, 1990. Also, Richard, Pablo, *Apocalipsis: Reconstruccion de la esperanza*. DEI: San Jose, 1994; Mesters, Carlos, *Apocalipsis: La esperanza de un pueblo que lucha*. Rehue: Santiago de Chile, 1986; Foulkes, Ricardo, *El apocalipsis de San Juan: una lectura desde America Latina*, Buenos Aires, 1989; Rowland, Christopher: *Radical Christianity: A Reading of Recovery*, Orbis: New York, 1988.

20. Cf., Tamez, Elsa: "La razón utópica de Qohélet" in *Pasos*, Nr. 52. DEI: March/April 1994.

21. Gallardo, Helio: "Radicalidad de la teoría y sujeto popular en América

Latina" in *Pasos*: Numero especial, 3/ 1992. DEI: San José, Costa Rica. And: Hinkelammert, Franz J.: "La lógica de la expulsión del mercado capitalista mundial y el proyecto de liberación" *Pasos*: Numero especial, 3/ 1992.

22. Cf., the respective works of Enrique Dussel, *La producción teórica de Marx: un comentario a los "Grundrisse"*. Siglo XXI: Mexico, 1985; *Hacia un Marx desconocido: Un comentario de los Manuscritos del 61-63*. Siglo XXI: Mexico, 1988.

23. The book most emphasized in this sense is: Tamez, Elsa: *Contra toda condena: La justificación por la fe desde los excluidos*. DEI: San José, 1991. Cf. also, Hinkelammert, Franz J.: *Las armas ideológicas de la muerte*. DEI: San José, 1981. Second Edition, revised and expanded with an introduction by Pablo Richard and Raul Valdes.

24. This leads to an analysis of sacrificiability as being a result of the law. The law, upon being treated as totalitarian, demands human sacrifices. This was clear in early Christianity. All of the Evangelists, for example, insist that Jesus was killed in fulfilling the law, in fulfillment of the law. Therefore there are no persons guilty of this death. It is the relation with the law that originates it. The later orthodoxy preferred to blame the Jews in order to escape the consequences of a theology critical of the law, which was completely incompatible with the aspirations of Christianity of imperial power. Cf., Hinkelammert, Franz J.: *La fe de Abraham y el Edipo Occidental*. DEI: San José, Segunda Edición Ampliada, 1991; Hinkelammert, Franz J.: *Sacrificios humanos y sociedad occidental: Lucifer y la Bestia*. DEI: San José, 1991; Pixley, Jorge: "La violencia legal, violencia institucionalizada, la que se comete creyendo servir a Dios" in *Ribla* 18: San José, 1994.

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