

THEOLOGICAL ENCOUNTERS WITH MARX

THEOLOGICAL ENCOUNTERS WITH MARX:

AN EXAMINATION
OF
JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN'S AND JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO'S
DIALOGUES WITH MARX

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the way in which Jürgen Moltmann and Juan Luis Segundo dialogue with Karl Marx. I point to the general similarities and differences that exist between each theologian's encounter with Marx. The scope of this thesis is limited to an examination of two of Segundo's works, *The Liberation of Theology* and *Faith and Ideologies*, and three of Moltmann's works, *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. While the thought of Marx has significantly influenced both Segundo and Moltmann, I argue throughout this thesis that Moltmann and Segundo profoundly disagree with the philosophical anthropology that is assumed by Marx. In other words, Segundo and Moltmann do not agree with Marx's way of defining the essence of the human being. Moreover, I contend that their disagreement with Marx on this issue, colours the way in which they react to every other aspect of Marx's thought. Finally, I suggest that while Moltmann is most interested in Marx's theoretical or abstract discussions, Segundo is much more concerned with the practical implications of Marx's thought.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

MER *The Marx Engels Reader*. Second Edition.
Edited by Robert C. Tucker.
New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978.

Works by Jürgen Moltmann

Th. H. *Theology of Hope.*
On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian
Eschatology. Translated by James W. Leitch. London: SCM
Press Ltd., 1967.

Cr. G. *The Crucified God. The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and*
Criticism of Christian Theology.
Translated by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden.
SCM Press Ltd., 1974.

Ch. P.S. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit. A Contribution to*
Messianic Ecclesiology. Second Edition.
Translated Margaret Kohl SCM Press Ltd., 1992.

Works by Juan Luis Segundo

Lib. Th. *The Liberation of Theology*. Translated by John Drury.
Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

F. Id. *Faith and Ideologies*. Vol. 1 of *Jesus of Nazareth*
Yesterday and Today. Translated by John Drury.
Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984.

INTRODUCTION

Liberation and Political theologies are, without doubt, two of the more significant movements in Christian theology in the latter half of the twentieth century. These two theological movements have much in common. Both tend to show a concern for the less fortunate members of society and both tend to be concerned with developing theologies that can make difference to this world. Both of these theologies share, in many respects, a common overall approach to theology. Each represents a departure from the Christian theologies that came before them. The departure from traditional Christian theology is perhaps best described as paradigm shift in theology. This paradigm shift is best summed up by Rebecca Chopp:

[L]iberation theology orders issues of justice and freedom as central to the Christian faith; it introduces social and political categories for theological interpretation. This new paradigm centers on the metaphor of liberation, a metaphor referring both to God's acts in history and humanity's nature and purpose in history. Within this broad paradigm, liberation theologians ask such questions as the following: What is the witness of the liberating gospel? How do Christians encounter God in those who suffer? What is the vision of freedom disclosed in the Christian Scriptures? How are suffering and hope identified in Christ?¹

¹ Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering. An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p. 4. Note: Chopp is referring both to Political Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology when she employs the term liberation theology

Liberation and Political theologies take heed of Marx's Eleventh Thesis against Feuerbach in which he reminds philosophers that the point is not to describe the world but to change it.² Both movements have been influenced tremendously by the thought of Marx and the critical theory that flowed out from the Frankfurt School.³ They focus upon the social and political problems of the day and attempt to develop a theological response to these problems. Liberation and Political theologies are calling upon churches not to be silent partners in oppression and to preach a social ethic and not just a moral one.

POLITICAL THEOLOGY

Political Theology emerged in Germany in the 1960s when both churches and culture were undergoing an intense period of secularization in the developed nations of the West. While the movement was initially optimistic in its outlook, by the end of the sixties the movement took on a more somber outlook in the face of the Vietnam War, the recognition of the massive corruption of government, the failures of student protests, and the public recollections of the horrors of the Holocaust.⁴ In many ways, Political Theology can be seen as a response to Existentialist Theology.⁵ Existentialist theology focuses upon "the moment in which the individual stands wholly alone with God the eternal Thou."⁶ The problem with this theological focus, political theologians contend, is that it ignores the social

² Alfred T. Hennelly, *Theologies in Conflict. The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 10.

³ Douglas Sturm, "Praxis and Promise: On the Ethics of Political Theology," *Ethics* 92 (July 1982), p. 734.

⁴ Chopp, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁵ Sturm, *op. cit.*, p. 739.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 739.

character of human life and in so doing it embraces the individualist ideology of bourgeois society.⁷

Political Theology is centrally concerned with the social dimension of modern life and is attempting, from a theological perspective, to develop a set of social ethics to govern this dimension of life and criteria that will help shape a response to the various forms of oppression and thereby begin to right the wrongs of this world. “The true purpose of Christianity, maintains political theology, is to represent this human subject, the subject who suffers, through the retrieval of the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ. To oppose the suffering that Western culture and tradition have both caused and forgotten, political theology urges conversion to a new way of being human and a new way of following Christ.”⁸

An important aspect of most political theologies is the emphasis that it places on eschatology. Eschatology is highlighted in an effort to show that human life is inherently historical and that the world is open to new possibilities. Consequently, men and women should focus their attention on the action they might take to shape the world’s future.⁹ The focus upon eschatology demands that Christianity play a critical role in society and develop a new understanding and method for theological reflection.¹⁰ The Christian Church cannot be content to sit upon the sidelines and let history unfold as it will. The promises given by God that

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 739.

⁸ Chopp, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁹ Sturm, *op. cit.*, p. 739.

¹⁰ Chopp, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

are contained within the Bible are seen to create history in that history is understood to be the time between the bestowal of God's promises and their fulfillment. Thus, every historical epoch is seen to be incomplete and it is up to the Christian Church to say this and call for action in order to transform the world.¹¹

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when Liberation Theology began as a movement. Clearly though it lies sometime between the beginning of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 and the conference of bishops in Medellín, Columbia in 1968.¹² At Medellín the bishops proclaimed that:

Latin America is obviously under the sign of transformation and development; a transformation that, besides taking place with extraordinary speed, has come to touch and influence every level of human activity, from the economic to the religious.

This indicates that we are on the threshold of a new epoch in this history of Latin America. It appears to be a time of zeal for full emancipation, of liberation from every form of servitude, of personal maturity and of collective integration.¹³

The importance of Medellín for Liberation Theology is attested to by Gustavo Gutiérrez when he contends that since Medellín "the development of liberation theology in Latin America has been accompanied by an awareness that we have entered into a new historical stage in the life of our

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹² Hennelly, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹³ Quotation taken from Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation. History, Politics, and Salvation*, revised edition, translated and edited by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), p. xvii.

peoples and by a felt need of understanding this new stage as a call from the Lord to preach the gospel in a way that befits the new situation.”¹⁴

Liberation Theology is concerned with the oppressive and impoverishing conditions of South America and its desire to respond to these conditions from a Christian perspective. It is of course somewhat misleading to speak of Liberation Theology as if it were a monolith. Liberation Theology is not a static entity but is an ongoing project that remains in flux and includes a wide spectrum of theologians.¹⁵ But for the most part, Liberation theologians have at least two things in common. First, most Liberation theologians, to some extent, draw upon the thought of Marx and particularly upon his critique of capitalism. Second, Liberation theologians reinterpret the Bible from the perspective of the oppressed and focus on narratives that deal with the liberating power of God, especially the Exodus story.

JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN

In this thesis I will examine the thought of Jürgen Moltmann, a political theologian, and Juan Luis Segundo, a Liberation Theologian. Moltmann has been and continues to be one of the most significant voices in Political Theology. He first came to prominence in the sixties with his work *Theology of Hope*. With its publication German theologians came to see Moltmann, along with Wolfhart Pannenberg and Gerhard Ebeling, as one of the truly innovative theologians to emerge since Karl Barth and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

¹⁵ Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics. Toward an Assessment*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), pp. xv-xviii.

Rudolph Bultmann.¹⁶ Since the publication of the *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann has gone on to publish many more books and become one of the most influential of contemporary German Protestant theologians throughout the entire world in both church circles and in academic theology.¹⁷ The *Theology of Hope* was eventually followed by *The Crucified God* and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. These three works compliment one another and form an unofficial trilogy. Moltmann has said that he considers these work to be a preparatory for his recent four volume systematic theology¹⁸: *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*,¹⁹ *God in Creation*,²⁰ *The Way of Jesus Christ*,²¹ and *The Spirit of Life*.²² Moltmann's unofficial trilogy holds together rather well and each book can be understood as stemming, each from a different perspective, from the cross of Christ.²³

In the *Theology of Hope* the cross is seen from an eschatological perspective of the resurrected Christ from which hope reaches out to those who are suffering in the world today. *The Crucified God* is, in many ways, a radical departure from the emphasis of the *Theology of Hope*.

¹⁶ Carl E. Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics*, vol 2 of *New Directions in Theology Today*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 177.

¹⁷ Richard Bauckham, "Jürgen Moltmann," *The Modern Theologians. An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, edited by David F. Ford, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 293.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. The Doctrine of God*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (London: SCM Press, 1981).

²⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation. An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (London: SCM Press, 1985).

²¹ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ. Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (London: SCM Press, 1990).

²² Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life. A Universal Affirmation*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (London: SCM Press, 1992).

²³ Bauckham, "Jürgen Moltmann," pp. 295-296.

While the “*Theology of Hope* opened the world to the proclaimed nearness of God’s future, *The Crucified God* shattered history with the manifest presence of the abandoned Christ in all the forsakenness of this world.”²⁴ In *The Crucified God*, Moltmann reflects upon what it means to worship a God who suffered and the contradiction between the crucified Jesus and the risen Christ. In the final book of his trilogy, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, Moltmann develops an ecclesiology that is intimately tied to pneumatology. In it, Moltmann argues that the actions of a Christian church must be guided by the Spirit that flows from the cross of Christ and he attempts to outline what that entails. All three books are held together by the implicit claim that history is marching forth towards the day when the kingdom of God will at last be realized on earth and men and women will no longer suffer.

JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO

Juan Luis Segundo is without doubt one of the most important theologians to be found in Liberation Theology. While he published much before writing *The Liberation of Theology*, including the five volume work *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*,²⁵ *The Liberation of Theology* is without doubt his best known work and, next to Gustavo Gutiérrez’s *A Theology of Liberation*, is arguably the most important book

²⁴ Chopp, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

²⁵ Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, vol 1, translated by John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973); Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, vol 2, translated by John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973); Segundo, *Our Idea of God*, vol 3, translated by John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973); Segundo, *The Sacraments Today*, vol 4, translated by John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973); Segundo, *Evolution and Guilt*, vol. 5, translated by John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973).

to come out of Liberation Theology. In *The Liberation of Theology* Segundo announces that it is time that Liberation began “to get down to epistemology.”²⁶ In other words, Segundo wants to move beyond the actual content of Liberation Theology and focus upon the methodological approach that is employed by Liberation theologians.

Segundo’s interest in methodology was renewed in a later book entitled *Faith and Ideologies*. In that book, Segundo wrote more as a social theorist than as a theologian. While the theoretical discussions of that book most certainly had implications for theology, the book itself, with the possible exception of the last chapter, is not centrally concerned with theology. In both books, Segundo is attempting to help Liberation Theology come to grips with the implications of its method, particularly with regard to its relationship with traditional Christian theology.²⁷ He goes about this by examining the impact that the major secular thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including those of the Frankfurt School and especially Karl Marx, have had on the methodology employed by Liberation Theology.²⁸

ORIENTATION OF THESIS

It would of course be impossible to deal with Moltmann’s and Segundo’s entire theology within the confines of a Masters’ thesis. In what follows, I will examine the way in which Jürgen Moltmann and Juan Luis Segundo dialogue with Marx and the similarities that exist between the

²⁶ Segundo, *Lib. Th.*, p. 5.

²⁷ Hewitt, *From Theology to Social Theory. Juan Luis Segundo and the Theology of Liberation*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), p. 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

ways in which these two theologians encounter Marx. The scope of this thesis will also be limited by the works that I will examine. In the case of Segundo, I will offer an analysis of two of his books: *The Liberation of Theology* and *Faith and Ideologies*. In my treatment of Moltmann I will look at *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and the second edition of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. These works have been selected for the reasons that have I outlined on the previous pages.

A superficial reading of both Segundo and Moltmann would seem to suggest that these two theologians appropriate much of Marx's thought, especially his critique of capitalism. However, I will argue that Moltmann and Segundo profoundly disagree with the philosophical anthropology that is assumed by Marx. That is to say, Segundo and Moltmann simply do not agree with Marx's way of defining the essence of the human being. Moreover, I will contend that their disagreement with Marx on this issue colours the way in which they appropriate Marx's thought, because Marx's understanding of human nature is the starting point of his whole philosophy.

The thesis itself will be comprised of three chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter I will discuss what I perceive to be the more important aspects of Marx's thought for my discussion of Moltmann and Segundo. Thus, the chapter is intended to serve only as a brief review of the relevant aspects of Marx's thought for this thesis and not as a comprehensive of discussion of Marxism. In the second chapter, I will examine Moltmann's dialogue with Marx. The third chapter will be examination of Segundo's encounter with Marx. In my conclusion, I will

offer a general comparison of how Moltmann and Segundo dialogue with Marx.

CHAPTER ONE: KARL MARX

Both Jürgen Moltmann and Juan Luis Segundo show an interest in many different aspects of Karl Marx's thought. In this chapter I will present, as simply and briefly as possible, a summary, and not an extended discussion of these aspects of Marx's thought. This chapter is intended to serve only as a summary and not as a thorough discussion of Marx. I will discuss the following three aspects of Marx's thought: 1) his critique of capitalism; 2) his theory of history and revolution; 3) his critique of God and religion. I will conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of Marx's philosophical anthropology.

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM

In the capitalist system there are many different classes. However, once capitalism is established it is apparent that it is essentially comprised of two great classes: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.²⁹ The bourgeois class is comprised of the relatively few members of society who own capital and the means of production. In contrast, the members of the proletariat are quite large in numbers but they do not possess capital and do not own the means of production. The economic relations of capitalist society are very different from any other previous society. In the past, economic domination and subordination was forged between individuals

²⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 38-39.

through personal ties.³⁰ For example, feudal landlords would dominate individuals by way of personal connections of bondage and the direct payment of tithes. In contrast, capitalist societies universalize and simplify class relations.³¹ In short, domination and exploitation are systematized.

The systematized exploitation and domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie is not viewed by Marx as simply being the unfair distribution of wealth. Rather, it is the systematic dehumanization of the proletariat. In capitalism, members of the proletariat have sunk to the level of mere commodity and they are, for that matter, the most wretched of commodities.³² Marx labels the dehumanized condition that is caused by capitalism as *alienation*.³³ Some interpreters of Marx, such as Daniel Bell, have suggested that Marx eventually abandoned the notion of alienation, but I believe that Leszek Kolakowski is right when he says that the theory of alienation “is present in Marx’s social philosophy until the end of his life”³⁴ and it is under this assumption that I will proceed.

The central form of alienation for Marx derives from the fact that the proletariat do not own the means of production and distribution

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³² Marx, “The Economic Manuscripts of 1844,” *MER*, p. 70.

³³ I intend to employ the term alienation throughout my discussion of Marx even when commenting on passages where the term estrangement is found. From what I can see the terms mean essentially the same thing and I find it very confusing to employ both terms since it is nearly impossible to distinguish the meaning of one from another. Moreover, as Robert Tucker points out, the German term *Entfremdung*, which he renders as estrangement, can be and has been rendered by other translators as alienation. See *MER*, p. xii. See also Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 12 n. 43.

³⁴ Leszek Kolakowski, *The Founders*, vol. 1 of *Main Currents of Marxism*, translated by P. S. Falla, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 173. See also pp. 262-267.

and consequently, do not own the products of their labour. Labour's product has been "congealed" into an object and as a result, labour itself is objectified. This is the fundamental way in which members of the proletariat are alienated. Despite the fact that they do the work, and put their life into their work, they do not own the product of their labour and the more work the worker does the poorer the worker becomes. Labour is not valued in and of itself but is valued because it can produce objects of value. For Marx, this is a reversal of what should be the case. That is, objects should derive value from the value of the labour. In *Capital* Marx essentially refers to this same sort of alienation as *commodity fetishism*.³⁵ While the argument there is somewhat more involved than the form of alienation I am discussing here, commodity fetishism is basically "the appearance that products have value in and of themselves, apart from the labour bestowed on them."³⁶

Under the capitalist system every member of the proletariat ceases to be a full human being. Due to "the extensive use of the machinery and to the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only for the most simple, most

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173. For Marx's discussion of commodity fetishism see *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol 1, edited by Frederick Engels and translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, (New York: International Publishers, 1967) pp. 76-88. I recognize that Marx's conception of *commodity fetishism* involves more than this. Here, however, I am simply interested in pointing out that Marx maintained this understanding of alienation in his later writings.

³⁶ G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A Defence*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 119.

monotonous, and easily acquired knack, that is required of him.”³⁷

Labour, because it has been objectified, is no longer part of a worker's essential being, as it should be. In Marx's view “[t]he worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself.”³⁸ Labour is no longer a rewarding activity but is rather an activity that humans are forced to perform in the capitalist regime in order to fulfill their basic animal needs - the needs of subsistence - while their human needs are left unfulfilled. True human life is left behind as one attempts to do nothing more than to stay alive.³⁹ Members of the proletariat class also experience alienation outside the workplace in their relations with other human beings. They are all alienated from their essential nature and unable to confront each other as true human beings. Instead, each views the other “in accordance with the standard and the position in which he finds himself as a worker.”⁴⁰

Marx does not always state what he believes is the cause of alienation. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* the origins of alienation are not discussed. Although, Marx makes it clear that private property is not the cause of alienation. Rather, private property is an unhappy consequence of the alienation of labour.⁴¹ In *The German Ideology*, the term alienation is used less frequently but I believe, along with Kolakowski, that the concept of alienation remains important to

³⁷ Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, translated by S. Moore, (New York: International Publishers, 1948), p. 16.

³⁸ Marx, “The Economic Manuscripts of 1844,” p. 74.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁴¹ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

Marx.⁴² If this view is taken, then it would appear that in *The German Ideology* Marx is saying that the division of labour is the source of alienation, and through it, the source of private property.⁴³

In any given epoch it is the dominant class that essentially determines the social superstructure of a society. Thus, in capitalism the ruling class develops ideological forms that legitimize their domination.⁴⁴ While it is true that there is continuity over time in ideologies, neither continuity, nor changes in an ideology can be explained in terms of an ideology's internal content. Changes and continuity in ideologies always reflect the interests of the ruling class.⁴⁵ What is important to note then, is that for Marx ideologies are always false by definition. True meaning can only be found when we look toward the material conditions and ideologies always lead us away from them. But it is not just the ideas that are controlled and determined by the ruling class, but politics itself. Marx makes this clear when he claims that

the modern State, which purchased gradually by the owners of property by means of taxation their hands [the owners of private property] through the national debt, and its existence has become wholly dependent on the commercial credit which the owners of property, the bourgeois, extend to it, as reflected in the rise and fall of State funds on the stock exchange.... Through the emancipation of private property from the community, the State has become a separate entity, beside and outside civil society; *but it is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both*

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁴⁴ Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests.... Since the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomized, it follows that the State mediates in the formation of all common institutions and that the institutions receive a political form.⁴⁶

While the state is able to assert its independence from class forces in some instances, such as the bourgeoisie given up its parliamentary power to an autonomized bureaucracy, this assertion of independence is only undertaken by the state if it is necessary to ensure the continuation of the bourgeois class' dominant economic and political position within society.⁴⁷ Thus, politics is not a forum for real debate over ideas. It is the realm in which the interests of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, are legitimated.

THE MOVEMENT OF HISTORY, DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM, AND THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Marx locates meaning and truth in the realm of history. Hence, his philosophical method is often referred to as historical materialism. For the purposes of this thesis I will refer to it as dialectical materialism. The starting point of historical materialism are beliefs that 1) human history is the history of humanity's struggle with nature in its attempt to compel nature to service its needs; 2) human beings distinguish themselves from animals in that they make tools.⁴⁸ In ancient societies these tools were relatively basic, but as time went on equipment was developed to such an extent that individuals were able to produce more goods than they required

⁴⁶ Marx, "The German Ideology" *MER*, p. 187. Italics added.

⁴⁷ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

and this can result in “conflict as to the sharing of the excess product and in a situation in which some people appropriate the fruits of others’ labour - that is to say a, a class society.”⁴⁹.

The basic structure of the relations of production, which are comprised of property relations (which is the most important component), and the social division of labour, is determined by the level of productive forces. In addition, the relations of production determine the character of a wide range of phenomena, including political institutions, organized religion, laws and customs, and human consciousness, which make up what Marx calls the superstructure.⁵⁰ Two points need to be made about the Marx’s understanding of the superstructure and its relation to the mode of production. First, while the superstructure serves and legitimizes the interest and domination of a particular ruling class, the interests of the other classes are found there as well. Thus, political and legal institutions are a compromise of class interests; albeit a compromise that largely favours the ruling class.⁵¹ Second, the relations in production determine the superstructure in its entirety only in broad lines by “encouraging certain tendencies at the expense of others.”⁵²

History is of course not stagnate and the chief task of dialectical materialism is to interpret change in history. Ultimately, technology in the form of productive forces, is the motive for all historical change. Throughout history, that is since the dissolution of primitive tribal

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

society⁵³, every historical epoch has dissolved as new a one arose in generally the same manner. This understanding of history is best expressed by Marx in the following passage:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or - what is but a legal expression for the same thing - with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution . With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.⁵⁴

For Marx, every stable society is comprised of an equilibrium between the mode of production, the particular set of social relations which are a constituent component to that mode of production, and the superstructure.⁵⁵ Tension occurs between productive forces and the relations of production when progressive changes take place in the sphere of productive activity. This occurred in ancient Rome when manufacturing and commerce emerged within a dominantly agrarian economy.⁵⁶ The current set of relations of production form barriers to the emerging forces of production and the contradictions between these two become expressed as overt class conflicts. This conflict is essentially between two classes: the current dominate class and a subordinate class that is attempting to become

⁵³ Engels, "Preface," *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Marx, "Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," *Selected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), pp. 181-82. The name of the translator(s) is not given.

⁵⁵ Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

the dominant class in the next epoch as was the case in the conflict between the feudalists and the bourgeois.⁵⁷ Although it is true that other classes often participate they are not essential elements to the conflict. The subordinate class is engaged in a revolutionary struggle for power that is fought in the political sphere. Ideologically this conflict is manifested as battle between conflicting principles and the class that is engaged in a revolutionary struggle will “represent its interests as the common interest of all the members of society.... it appears as the whole mass of society confronting the ruling class.”⁵⁸ Such a revolution will result either in “the common ruin of the contending classes”, as was the case in Rome, or “a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large” which took place in instance of the supersession of feudalism by capitalism.⁵⁹ Once a revolutionary class attains power it loses its revolutionary character and begins to defend the new hegemonic order in which it is the dominant class.⁶⁰

Fundamentally, what makes Marx’s system dialectical is the claim that history moves from epoch to epoch as the result of a conflict essentially being fought between two classes. What makes dialectical materialism “scientific” is Marx’s claim that each social structure contains the seeds of its own downfall and from that information one can determine which class will become the dominant class in the next epoch. Still, it needs to be noted that Marx did not believe that there were not important

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵⁸ Marx, “The German Ideology,” p. 174.

⁵⁹ Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

differences in the process of social revolution.⁶¹ Thus, while economics is the dominant force in history, Marx never suggests that it is the only force. Friedrich Engels makes this absolutely clear when he states that “[a]ccording to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract senseless phrase.”⁶²

The epoch of capitalism marks a turning point in the process of history. Up until this point in history, every revolution that has taken place has resulted in the revolutionary class becoming the new dominant class and every dominant class “achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the ruling class previously, whereas the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly.”⁶³ The revolution that will bring the capitalist or bourgeois epoch to an end will put an end to class conflict. Capitalism is built upon a whole series of conflicts⁶⁴, including the conflicts that occur between members of the bourgeois; but the starkest and most important conflict is found in the relationship between capital and the working class.⁶⁵ In the revolution that will be led by the proletariat, Marx and

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶² Friedrich Engels, “Letter to Joseph Bloch: September 21-22, 1890,” *MER*, p. 760. Italics retained.

⁶³ Marx, “The German Ideology,” p. 174.

⁶⁴ On the conflictual nature of the capitalist system see: Giddens, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, and Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-325.

⁶⁵ Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

Engels argued that the proletariat would only be able to become “masters of the productive forces of society” by abolishing their own mode of appropriation, and consequently all modes of appropriation.⁶⁶ In other words, the proletariat become the dominant class, as it were, by eliminating private property and in so doing they eliminate class as a category.⁶⁷

Capitalism itself creates conditions necessary for a proletariat revolution. Like all other epochs before it, the road leading to the downfall of capitalism begins with tension between productive forces and the relations of production as a result of progressive changes taking place in the sphere of productive activity. As Engels tells us, this tension lies between socialised production and capitalist appropriation.⁶⁸ As a result of the tremendous technological developments, human labour is becoming superfluous. As machines improve, more and more workers are displaced. There are more workers than there are jobs and the size of the “industrial reserve army”, that is those workers without jobs, increases dramatically every time a crises within capitalism occurs.⁶⁹ Thus, workers are constantly be transferred from one occupation to another and this creates “a certain versatility in the working class”, which in turn “creates conditions for an upheaval in which the division of labour will be abolished”.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 20.

⁶⁷ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁶⁸ Engels, *Socialism, Utopian, and Scientific*, translated by Edward Aveling, (New York: International Publishers, 1972), pp. 58-66.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁰ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

Before the proletariat or communist revolution can take place a number of other developments must also occur. According to Marx and Engels, over time the unions of the proletariat, which initially served the interests of the bourgeois class, become larger and larger and begin working with one another against the bourgeois class in an effort “to keep up the rate of wages”.⁷¹ Gradually these unions will begin to develop national organizations. Perhaps the most important step that will be taken on the road to the revolution occurs when they are organized into a class and then into political parties since “every class struggle is a political struggle”.⁷² After the above mentioned developments have taken place, conflict between the bourgeoisie class and the proletariat class increases and some members of the bourgeoisie will begin to aid in the proletariat's revolutionary role. Here is how Marx and Engels describe this advancement in *The Communist Manifesto* :

[A]s we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. *These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.*

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier

⁷¹ Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 18.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, *a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole* ⁷³

So far as I can tell, this is as close as Marx ever comes to developing the idea of an intellectual vanguard. While this passage makes it clear that members of the bourgeois class will cross over to the proletariat class and help educate the members of the proletariat class, there is nothing to suggest that this development is of paramount importance to the revolution. These former members of bourgeois class may aid in the revolutionary cause of the proletariat by pointing out the truth of historical materialism and the falseness of bourgeois ideology. But they are not the absolutely necessary for the revolution to come about in the thought of Marx as they are for some later Marxist thinkers.

The all important turning point will come when the workers rise up in revolution and wrestle both the means of production and the state away from the ruling class. According to Marx, eventually the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois, which would become increasingly more and more pronounced, would evolve into open revolution. Throughout most of his career Marx insisted that this revolution would be a violent one. However, in 1872 he did allow for the possibility that violence might not be necessary in some cases:

You know that the institutions, mores, and traditions of various countries must be taken into consideration, and

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Italics added.

we do not deny that there are countries - such as America, England and if I were more familiar with your institutions, I would perhaps add Holland - *where the workers can attain their goal by peaceful means.* This being the case, we must also recognize the fact that in most countries on the Continent the lever of our revolution must be force; it is force to which we must someday appeal in order to erect the rule of the labor.⁷⁴

Deducing from this text how Marx would decide the issue violence today is a difficult matter. But it is necessary to at least try if there is any hope in judging Moltmann's and Segundo's appropriation of and dialogue with Marx. In my view there are two key issues that must be considered in attempting to resolve this matter. On the one hand, there are many countries in the world which have elections and in which governments do possess real power, as opposed to elected bodies without power, and in which the vast majority of the populace has a right to vote. On the other hand, private property, the real problem with capitalism for Marx, has, in almost all instances, been eliminated in those countries in which a communist revolution took place.

There are of course other important issues including the question of whether Marx would have kept the faith in the face of: 1) the brutality of the so called communist countries of the world; 2) the rise of the welfare state; and 3) capitalism's ability to sustain itself.⁷⁵ However, I

⁷⁴ Marx, "The Possibility of Non-Violent Revolution," *MER*, p. 523. Italics added.

⁷⁵ The demise of communism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc states is not an issue here since the works I am examining by Moltmann and Segundo were published before these events took place with the exception of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. However, in the case of that work the first edition was written and published in 1974 and therefore, it remains a non-issue for that book as well.

believe the two issues that I have mentioned above are the central ones. I am inclined to believe that if Marx were alive, and had remained a Marxist, he would favour violent revolution simply because he sees the problem of private property as the fundamental problem. Moreover, this position is strengthened more by the fact that in the majority of his writings he said violent revolution was the only way capitalism could be brought to an end. While I will admit that the opposite interpretation cannot be ruled out, for the purposes of evaluating Segundo's and Moltmann's dialogue with Marx, I will assume that Marx took the position that violent revolution is *necessary* for the proletariat to eliminate private property and bring the capitalist epoch to an end.

Following the revolution there will be a period in which the proletariat class will seize political power and transfer all the means of production that remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie to the state. But after this task is accomplished class distinctions and antagonism are eliminated and the state is no longer needed and "dies out".⁷⁶ The question that begs to be answered is what does it mean to say that the state "dies out". Concurring with Kolakowski, I believe that two conclusions can be drawn from this claim.⁷⁷ First, it means that the state in its function as a manager of class domination is no longer needed because classes have been eliminated. Second, the reason why the state needs to be eliminated, is that Marx conceived of and defined the state as an instrument of coercion that served the interests of the bourgeoisie. This does not mean that

⁷⁶ Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, pp. 69-70.

⁷⁷ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-360.

administrative functions that are necessary for the management of production will be abolished.⁷⁸

Marx does not tell us very much about what communist society will look like once the dictatorship of the proletariat has passed. Clearly, alienation will be eliminated and men and women will at last be able to fulfill their species being as labourers. In other words, human beings will be able to define themselves through the product of their labour. This will occur because the division of labour, and consequently private property will cease to exist. Moreover, it would appear that men and women will be able to pursue several avenues of fulfillment. In Marx's vision of communist society "nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing to day and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."⁷⁹ Finally, we may note that since alienation has been eliminated, one individual will no longer encounter another individual "in accordance with the standard and the position in which he finds himself as a worker."⁸⁰ Instead, individuals will now encounter one another as true human beings. Agreeing with Robert Tucker, I believe that this type of encounter is best described, to employ Martin Buber's terminology, as an "I-Thou relation".⁸¹

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁷⁹ Marx, "The German Ideology," p. 160.

⁸⁰ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," p. 77.

⁸¹ Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, second edition, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 159. See Martin Buber, *I and*

Truth, for Marx, is found in understanding the process and direction of history known as dialectical materialism and this claim to truth is an exclusive one. In fact, he does not even categorize dialectical materialism in the same category as other truth claims. Dialectical materialism is the only path to true meaning open to human beings. All other claims to the truth are false and categorized by Marx as ideologies. Simply put, Marx argues that all ideologies are “a false consciousness or an obfuscated mental process in which men do not understand the forces that actually guide their thinking, but imagine it to be wholly governed by logic and intellectual influences. When thus deluded, the thinker is unaware that all thought, and particularly his own, is subject in its course and outcome to extra-intellectual social conditions, which it expresses in a form distorted by the interests and preferences of some collectivity or other.”⁸² If one hopes to find truth one can only find it in the material conditions and the laws that govern the way in which these conditions change. Those laws are known as dialectical materialism.

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

Marx's critique of religion is comprised of an analysis of the concept of God and a discussion of the function of religion in capitalist society. While his discussion of God and religion are very much tied to his

Thou, translated by Walter Kaufman, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970). Indeed, Marx would have read the words “I and thou” in Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*. Feuerbach writes: “Man is himself at once *I and thou*; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought.” See Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*, translated by George Eliot, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1957), p. 2. Italics added.

⁸² Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

critique of capitalism and his theory of dialectical materialism, I have chosen to deal with the issue of God and religion separately because both Moltmann and Segundo react to Marx's critique of God and religion, to the extent that it is possible, separately from Marx's critique of capitalism. As almost everyone knows, for Marx religion is "the opium of the people"⁸³ and can never be anything more than that. The fact of the matter is that God does not exist for Marx and consequently, God can never be anything more than a distraction. While some interpreters of Marx, such as Tucker, claim that Marx's critique of God is not at all concerned with the existence or non-existence of a supreme being⁸⁴, Marx's own atheistic pronouncements are never qualified; therefore, I take Marx to be an atheist. However, it is true that the main purpose of Marx's critique of the concept of God has more to do with devaluation of humanity than it has to do with a discussion of the existence of God. God is nothing more than a projection of alienated human aspirations. Marx puts it, "[t]he more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself."⁸⁵ The concept of God is an abstraction that distracts humanity from the true nature of reality that is to be found in the material relations of human society and therefore, the concept of God serves to support the dominant class of any given epoch.

In essence, Marx's critique of religion is the same as his critique of the concept of God. Religion is an abstraction that distracts humanity. In his view, it is of the main components of the superstructure and as such each religion serves as a propagator of the ruling ideas of a particular

⁸³ Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* : Introduction," *MER*, p. 54.

⁸⁴ Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* ,p. 22.

⁸⁵ Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," p. 72.

epoch. Marx makes it very clear that religion will eventually be eliminated:

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their *real* happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a *call to abandon a condition which requires illusions*. The criticism of religion is, therefore, *the embryonic criticism of this vale of tears* of which religion is the *halo*.⁸⁶

The real question to be asked is whether religion must be eliminated from the lives of the proletariat who will fight the next revolution before the revolution can be fought or whether it will disappear when communist society is brought about and men and women no longer require illusory happiness in their lives. While Marx never explicitly states that a revolution is impossible without the abolition of religion at least in the lives of the proletariat, it would appear that is the case for two reasons. First, in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* Marx tells us that “Communism begins from the outset with atheism”.⁸⁷ I would place emphasis on the words “Communism begins” and argue that it refers to the pre-revolutionary period when workers are becoming communists. Second, I would argue that religion is an essential component of the superstructure that serves as a powerful, if not a necessary, supporter of the ruling class. Indeed, for Marx it would seem that intoxicating effects of religion is one of the chief reasons why the proletariat has been sedated for so long.

⁸⁶ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* : Introduction,” p. 54. Italics retained.

⁸⁷ Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,” p. 85.

MARX'S ANTHROPOLOGY

Marx's philosophical system is built upon a few key assumptions that Marx makes regarding philosophical anthropology. There are some Marxist scholars, such as Daniel Bell, who would argue that in the later writings of Marx, and especially *Capital*, not only is this claim false but would further contend that Marx does not define or assume what human beings essentially are.⁸⁸ But I believe that this is a mistake. As Kolakowski astutely points out:

Marx's exposition of the functioning and prospects of the capitalist economy cannot be studied in isolation from his *anthropological ideas* and his philosophy of history. His theory is a general one embracing the whole of human activity in its various interdependent spheres. The behaviour of human beings in all ages - whether active or passive, whether intellectual, aesthetic, or engaged in labour - must be understood integrally or not at all.⁸⁹

Marx understands human beings, anthropologically, as beings that make things. It is the characteristic that fundamentally defines what they are and the area of their lives where they may obtain ultimate fulfillment. It is this fundamental assumption about what human beings are that serves as the basis of Marx's critique of capitalism and especially his understanding of alienation.

Marx also understands human beings to be beings of history and society. Men and women define themselves through their acts of labour and the acts, to state the obvious, take place within history and society. But

⁸⁸ Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262. Italics added.

to define human beings, in essence, as both historical and societal beings is not obvious. Others might claim that actions within history and society are irrelevant to what human beings, in essence are, and argue that what makes human beings human is an inner spiritual condition or the contemplation of timeless truths. But Marx believes that history and society does matter and that human beings are engaged in a process of becoming truly human. This process is outlined in Marx's theory of history. Thus far, every epoch of human history has been an epoch of alienation and inhumanity. But the capitalist epoch brings promise to the world in that the proletariat class now has the opportunity to bring the process of dehumanization to an end and inaugurate a new epoch, the epoch of communism, in which true humanity will at last emerge. In communist society the division of labour, which is the root of private property and through private property the cause of alienation, will be eliminated and the activity of labour will no longer an activity primarily concerned with subsistence but an activity of human fulfillment. Monotony will vanish from the workplace as men and women will be able "to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."⁹⁰ True human relations will also emerge and individuals will no longer encounter one another "in accordance with the standard and the position in which he finds himself as a worker."⁹¹ Rather, individuals will encounter one another as true human beings and this relationship is best described, as I noted earlier, as analogous to Buber's understanding of an "I-Thou relation". History

⁹⁰ Marx, "The German Ideology," p. 160.

⁹¹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," p. 77.

and society are the realms in which true meaning is to be found for Marx. In the exclusive claim to truth he makes for dialectical materialism, Marx is arguing that all forms of meaning and truth are to be found in the material conditions and their evolutionary development in successive historical societies.

CHAPTER TWO: JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN'S ENCOUNTER WITH KARL MARX

The influence of Karl Marx upon the thought of Jürgen Moltmann is enormous and cannot be underestimated. Indeed, David Wells once said of Moltmann's theological project: "Here is Marxism with a religious soul."⁹² Moreover, Moltmann has repeatedly acknowledged the profound influence that the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch has had upon his thought.⁹³ But Moltmann's encounter with Marx is at all a simple one. For he certainly does not embrace every aspect of Marxism. In fact, Moltmann spends a great deal of time in conflict with Marx. In the case of Moltmann, he is neither entirely Marx's friend or foe. This, however, is what makes Moltmann's dialogue with Marx so interesting. He takes the challenge of Marx with a high degree of seriousness and is never content simply to dismiss out of hand the aspects of Marx's thought that he does not like.

Moltmann's dialogue with Marx is indeed extensive. In reading the *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* one gets the feeling that Marx is lurking behind almost every corner in Moltmann's theology. While there are of course numerous instances in which Moltmann is engaged in an explicit dialogue with Marx,

⁹² David F Wells, "Protestant Perspective on Human Nature," *The Human Condition in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, (Denver: KTAV Publishing House, 1986), p. 91.

⁹³ For example, see *Cr. G.*, p.5.

there many instances of implicit dialogue as well. Such dialogue occurs throughout these texts when Moltmann, by my reading, is developing themes in Christian theology, such as Jesus Christ as a god who suffers, in an effort to respond to Marx's claim that religion can only hinder the cause of liberation in the world. In this chapter, I will analyze Moltmann's implicit and explicit dialogue with Marx. Here I will be exploring both Moltmann's indebtedness to Marx and his disagreements with Marx. I will argue that Moltmann's appropriations and conflicts with Marx are not a result of Moltmann merely picking and choosing portions of Marx's thought he likes and discarding the rest at a whim. Rather, I will contend that Moltmann's conflicts and commonalities with Marx stem from the philosophical, anthropological assumptions from which both thinkers work.

CONFLICTING ANTHROPOLOGIES

Before beginning my examination of Moltmann's dialogue with Marx, I will briefly outline what I take to be the main elements of Moltmann's philosophical anthropology. After I have completed this task I will illustrate the points of contention in Moltmann's and Marx's philosophical anthropologies. Perhaps the most important aspect of Moltmann's philosophical anthropology is the place that Moltmann has for God. At first glance it might seem that the issue of God would have little to do with how human beings are to be anthropologically understood; however, the issue is, in fact, of central importance. As Moltmann himself points out, "[t]he question of God, however, and the converse question which is hidden in it, God's question about what is human in man, makes much open to question which we regard as hopeless. Accordingly, a book

about 'Man' will inevitably slip into being a book about God."⁹⁴ Similarly, we can assume that any discussion that Moltmann would engage in on philosophical anthropology will slip into being a discussion about God.

In Moltmann's mind, all persons are first and foremost creatures of God who are involved in an on going relationship with God.⁹⁵ As creatures of God we are intended to be free beings and thus, free of domination by nature, social structures and other persons. Every man and woman is made in the image of God; but this does not mean that we are divinized and empowered to act like gods in our world. This precludes all men and women, including "rulers, leaders and geniuses" from acting this way and "makes impossible for him [any member of humanity] the divinization of his nation, of his people, of his society or of his race."⁹⁶ Rather it means that we, like God, are in essence, infinitely free from all finite things in this reality. Therefore, if all of humanity were to understand what it meant to be human we would all be protected from the Stalins and the Hitlers who have tried to divinize themselves. In contrast to humanity, however, the world is not made in the image of God. It is the good creation of God but it is not made in God's image. Only human beings are. As a result, it is humanity that is responsible to mediate between the transcendent God and the immanent world.⁹⁷

The Trinitarian God that Moltmann presents is dynamic and in process. Properly understood, the Trinitarian God of Christianity is a God

⁹⁴ Moltmann, *Man. Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*, translated by John Sturdy, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. x.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108-111.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

to whom our finite existence matters and affects.⁹⁸ Such an understanding of God has profound implications for how our understanding of human beings. For Moltmann, the outer reality of this world is not insignificant in favour of an inner, spiritual reality. Consequently, one cannot understand humanity, “individualistically”, contrary to what existentialists would have us believe. To understand what humans are, one must see them in a wider process - the process of history.⁹⁹ We are in essence both social and historical beings. We live in history and hope for a future that will take place in history and not for some other worldly kingdom.¹⁰⁰ Thus, “[a] Christian anthropology will always insist that a general, philosophic anthropology understand human nature in terms of history and conceive its historic character in light of its future.”¹⁰¹

As historical creatures, we are both *actors* in history and *possessors* of history. We are actors in history in the sense that our actions are able to shape future history. We are possessors of history because, unlike animals who do not care about the past activities of their ancestors and species, humans beings have for thousands of years been aware of past historical events. However, our role as possessors of history is not limited to the collection and collation of historical data. For human beings, from the Israelites down to present day Hegelians and Marxists, have also attempted to give history meaning. The relationship between our

⁹⁸ I will develop this aspect of Moltmann’s theology at a later point in this section and again when I discuss Moltmann’s response to Marx’s critique of God and religion.

⁹⁹ G. Clarke Chapman, Jr. “Moltmann’s Vision of Man,” *Anglican Theological Review* 56:3 (1974), p. 319.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Cr. G.*, p. 308.

¹⁰¹ *Th.H.*, p. 287.

two historical roles, as actor and as possessor, is, for Moltmann, dialectical in nature. Our knowledge of past events and the meaning we assign to history shapes the way we act in history and our actions transform our knowledge of history. Thus:

Man neither stands *above* history, so that he could survey the world as a whole, nor does he stand wholly *within* history, so that he would have no need to ask about the totality and goal of history and this very question would be pointless. Always he stands both *within* history and also *above* history. He experiences history in the modus of being and in the modus of having. He *is* historic and he *has* history. He must be able to detach himself from history as an investigator and spectator, in order to experience it in the modus of having. He must identify himself with it as a hearer and actor, in order to experience it in the modus of being. He stands both in history and above it and must conduct his life and his thinking in this dialectical and ex-centric position. He is like a swimmer moving in the stream of history - or it may be, against the stream - but with his head out of the water in order to get his bearings and above all to acquire a goal and a future.¹⁰²

Moltmann sees the history of the world as the history of inhumanity. That is to say, human beings are not now, nor have they ever been truly human.¹⁰³ Our present and past inhuman existence is most apparent in our social existence. In true human relationships we encounter other men and women as human beings and not as objects. In such relationships people encounter one another as “[t]he ‘neighbour’ who is the object of Christian love”¹⁰⁴. Within truly human relations persons utter

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 271. Cf. *Cr. G.*, pp. 164-165.

¹⁰³ *Th.H.*, pp. 285-286.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

the basic dialogical word *I-Thou* to one another.¹⁰⁵ To encounter others and be encountered ourselves beyond our social roles and free of domination of any sort is what it means to be human for Moltmann. But this is not the state of humanity today nor at any point of time in the past. Human beings have always been forced, at least part of the time, to encounter one another in their social roles and it is difficult to imagine a time when this will not be the case.¹⁰⁶

Moltmann's God, however, is aware of our inhuman state and has taken steps to rectify our existence through the historical action of the Father and the Son. The most significant step that Moltmann takes in developing his understanding of the Christian, Trinitarian God who is in process, is conceiving of God as a God who suffers. In understanding God in this light, that is as the crucified God, Moltmann has developed a concept of God that has a serious impact on his anthropology.¹⁰⁷ With the crucifixion of Christ, God, as Father and as Son, enters into the process of this world for the sake of this world. "*God experiences something which belongs essentially to the redemption of this world: he experiences pain. In the night when the Son dies on the cross, God himself experiences abandonment in the form of this death and this rejection. We must add that this is a new experience for God, for which he has laid himself open and prepared himself from the eternity in his seeking love.*"¹⁰⁸ These actions are taken by God for the sake of all human kind.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 315. See also Moltmann, *Man*, pp. 80-84.

¹⁰⁶ *Th.H.*, p. 315, pp. 285 ff.; *Ch.P.S.*, pp. 111-112; *Man*, pp. I will further develop this theme when I examine Moltmann's critique of capitalism.

¹⁰⁷ *Cr. G.*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁸ *Ch. P.S.*, pp. 62-63. Italics added.

The implications of the crucifixion are tied directly to humanity's historical character in Moltmann's theology. As historical beings we are to work to change our historical situation and in effect change what we are. Consequently, human beings can escape the wretched state of their present and past existence through their collective, future action. Jesus was the first and thus far, the only truly human person to walk the earth. But he walked the earth in the midst of inhumanity and was crucified by those who are inhuman. Still, it is important to remember that Jesus was and is divine and chose his fate freely. This choice was made to offer humanity a way out from its inhuman existence: "The Son of Man is he who identifies with those who are below the mean of humanness, in order to call them human."¹⁰⁹

The crucifixion of Christ, of the Son of Man, lends hope to human beings because "[t]hey have also lost their resignation and given up their well-justified despair about themselves, because they have found in his solidarity with their misery the humanity of God, and love which takes away from them shame, and self accusation."¹¹⁰ When human beings turn toward the Cross of Christ they at last see true humanity in the Son of Man and in themselves. However, the drive towards true humanity does not end here. Moltmann, as was noted previously, does not understand humanity individualistically. True humanity must be realized collectively and historically. Thus, the impediments to true humanity must be removed. The recognition of the significance of the cross is only the beginning of this process.

¹⁰⁹ *Man*, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

True humanity lies in the hope of the resurrection and the kingdom of God. With the resurrection Christ was able to overcome the inhumanity of the cross. Similarly the kingdom of God gives all human beings hope that they may overcome their inhumanity. But such hope motivates us and calls us to act to change the present state of this world. It calls us to make this world more like the kingdom of God. At a general level, I would argue that this is the main point that Moltmann is attempting to make in the *Theology of Hope, The Crucified God*, and in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. This hope sets humanity on a historical struggle that will result in “a new creation of man in his world, in the contradictions of the present are raised to a new and lasting response to God.”¹¹¹ But in working towards this new creation we learn more about what we truly are. In Moltmann’s words:

Self-knowledge here comes about in face of the mission and call of God, which demand impossibilities of man. It is knowledge of self, knowledge of men and knowledge of the impossibility of one’s own existence in face of the possibilities demanded by the divine mission. Man attains to knowledge of himself by discovering the discrepancy between the divine mission and his own being, by learning what he is, and what he is to be, yet of himself cannot be. Hence the answer received to man’s question about himself and his human nature runs: ‘I will be thee.’ This does not tell man what he was and what he really is, but what he will be and can be in that history and that future to which the mission leads him. In his call man is given the prospect of a new ability to be. What he is and what he can do, is a thing he will learn in hopeful trust in God’s being with him. Man

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

learns his human nature not from himself, but from the future to which the mission leads him.¹¹²

As I come to the end of my discussion of Moltmann's philosophical anthropology the reader might ask: what, exactly, in essence is humanity for Moltmann? It is dangerous to attempt to reduce a discussion of a thinker as complex as Moltmann down to a sentence or two. However, I think it is accurate to say that, for Moltmann, there are in essence two main aspects of humanity. We are all made in the image of God and we all are creatures of hope.¹¹³ The latter statement is justified when we remember that human nature is not static but that our true essence, that is as creations made in the image of God, is to be discovered and arrived at through the process of history. We are both an "open question" "and often an open wound".¹¹⁴ We are the creators and makers of what we are - for better or for worse. For "man has only history, and at that an open-ended history in which he can squander or realize his humanity."¹¹⁵ The hope of the resurrected Christ and of the future kingdom of God reaches out to us and calls us forth. But it does not ask us to wait for an other worldly kingdom. Rather, it commands us, out of obedience to God, to make this world more like the kingdom of God, that is to work towards the kingdom of God, and in doing so making this world more human. Thus, our essence, our "identity and continuity, is

¹¹² *Th.H.*, pp. 285-286.

¹¹³ Chapman, "Moltmann's Vision of Man," p. 320.

¹¹⁴ Moltmann, "Man and the Son of Man," *No Man is Alien. Essays on the Unity of Mankind*, (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 208.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

determined by the call of God, by his [human kind] being called to a partnership in the covenant, by the event of justification.”¹¹⁶

While it is true that there is great divide between the philosophical anthropologies of Moltmann and Marx, many parallels also exist. Before moving on to a discussion of Moltmann’s dialogue with Marx, I will enumerate, at a general level, what I take to be the main differences and similarities in their philosophical anthropologies. In essence, three similarities exist in the philosophical anthropologies of Moltmann and Marx.

1) It should be noted that both Marx and Moltmann believe that humanity is presently distorted and that true human existence will not be attained until an historical struggle takes place to overthrow the obstacles to true human existence.¹¹⁷ In Marx’s thought, it is the communist society that will be established following the workers revolution. In Moltmann’s case, it is in the kingdom of God where this form of existence will at last be achieved. For Moltmann, the kingdom of God is most certainly an earthly kingdom that will be achieved through a human historical struggle directed by God.

2) The two thinkers are remarkably similar in their portrayals of the true humanity that will emerge once the obstacles to it are removed. Do not both define humanity, in part at least, as the ability for people to enter into an “I-thou” relationship with one another? Moltmann is quite explicit about this aspect of humanity and acknowledges his debt to Martin

¹¹⁶ Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, translated by Margaret Clarkson, (New York: Harper Row, 1971), p. 105.

¹¹⁷ I will comment on this struggle in more detail at later point in this chapter when I discuss Moltmann’s critique of capitalism.

Buber. Similarly, as was pointed out in the first chapter, we find in Marx the belief that relationships, which can justifiably be characterized as being “I-thou” in nature, will emerge in a future, communist society. Thus, both Marx and Moltmann think that the character of our relationships with other people are important.

3) Both Marx and Moltmann believe that true humanity cannot be understood at the level of the individual. We are part of a wider process. True humanity can only emerge in history and in society. In the eyes of Marx and Moltmann we are, in essence, historical beings. We discover what we truly are and can be once we turn our attention to historical conditions and potentialities. In Marx’s writings we are told that the members of the proletariat will at last realize their inhumanity once they look at their material conditions. While he is working from a different set of assumptions (about the role of God etc.), Moltmann is making a very similar claim when he says that “[m]an attains to knowledge of himself by discovering the discrepancy between the divine mission and his own being, by learning what he is, and what he is to be, yet of himself cannot be.”¹¹⁸

While similarities exist between Marx’s and Moltmann’s philosophical anthropologies, there are also two fundamental differences as well:

1) The fundamental difference between Moltmann and Marx is over how they understand what human beings in essence are. For Marx, human beings define themselves through their labour. He understands

¹¹⁸ *Th.H.*, p. 285.

human beings, anthropologically, as beings that make things. It is the characteristic that fundamentally defines what they are and the area of their lives where they may attain ultimate fulfillment. However, it is important to note that Marx has a very specific understanding of what true labour or what unalienating labour is. Labour will no longer belong to the “realm of necessity” but will belong to the “realm of freedom.”¹¹⁹ Labour will no longer amount to drudgery but will rather be a “self-induced activity” filled with “artistic creativity”.¹²⁰ Moltmann rejects Marx’s claim that labour is central to anthropology. G. Clarke Chapman, Jr. has argued persuasively that the problem that Moltmann has with Marx’s conception of humanity stems from the fact that for Marx, “man is what he makes of himself,” and consequently, “his *being human* depends on what he *does*. But what he does is subject to the law.”¹²¹ For even if capitalism is replaced by a communist society, this new society will still have to set rules of labour and thus, dictate the form of our true human essence which, according to Marx, we are supposed to attain freely.¹²² Moreover, if we are at all realistic about how the value of labour will be measured in a future communist society, it is apparent that a person’s worth will be “measured out in terms of what one contributes to the gross national product, the state, the vision of a new society, or some other performance

¹¹⁹ G. Clarke Chapman, Jr. “Jürgen Moltmann and the Christian Dialogue with Marxism,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 18:3 (Summer 1981), p. 443.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 443. Although, it should be pointed out that the older Marx acknowledged that some labour will take the form of drudgery.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 443. The quotations are taken from Chapman’s article who in turn takes them from: Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, translated by Reinhard Ulrich, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 46.

¹²² Chapman, Jr. “Jürgen Moltmann and the Christian Dialogue with Marxism,” p. 443.

principle".¹²³ Consequently, each person will become "the slave of a law which holds up to him a humanity it refuses to grant and demands of him freedom without setting him free."¹²⁴

2) Perhaps the greatest disagreement between Moltmann and Marx revolves around how God is to be understood and humanity's relation to God. Since I will be discussing this topic in much greater detail in the next section of this chapter I will limit remarks here to pointing out the major differences between the two thinkers on this subject. If we recall the discussion of Marx's philosophical anthropology from the first chapter it may be noted that there are, in essence, two aspects to his critique of the doctrine of God. First, for Marx, God is nothing more than projection of what is best in humanity. Second, human beings become alienated from their true humanity, in part, as a consequence of projecting their true aspirations onto a non-existent being that they have labeled God. In Marx's words, "[t]he more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself."¹²⁵ As we have seen, this is not the case for Moltmann. In his theology, humanity's relationship with God is not alienating, but rather an essential aspect of human existence. God, for Moltmann, is not some abstract identity that shows no concern for our earthly existence. Quite to the contrary, Moltmann's God is dynamic and enters into the historical process in order to help us change our earthly existence within history. God reaches out to us and offers us hope so that we might one day reach our true potential. In addition, Moltmann points out that when thinkers such as

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 443 Quoting Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, p. 46.

¹²⁵ Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," p. 72.

Marx eliminate our relationship with God, they, in fact, distort humanity further, rather than arriving at true understanding of what it means to be human .

GOD AND RELIGION

Moltmann rejects Marx's claim that God is a but a projection of humanity by stating that Marx's argument is a critique of the theistic understanding of God and not of God conceived of as the crucified God who is capable of both love and suffering . As he puts it, "[i]n their struggle against each other, theism and atheism begin from the preposition that God and man are fundamentally one being. Therefore what is ascribed to God must be taken from man and what is ascribed to man must have been taken from God."¹²⁶ In viewing God as "an all-powerful, perfect and infinite being", theism devalues human beings which are viewed as the opposite - "helpless, imperfect and finite being[s]."¹²⁷ Drawing upon the thought of Alfred North Whitehead, Moltmann argues that theism conceives of God in the image of: (1) an imperial ruler; (2) the personification of moral energy; (3) the final principle of philosophy. But this is not, Moltmann contends, the God of the cross. The Trinitarian God is not a "self-contained group in heaven, but an eschatological process open for men on earth, which stems from the cross of Christ."¹²⁸ The crucified God is a god in process who suffers out of love for humanity and triumphs over death through the resurrection and in doing so reconciles the

¹²⁶ *Cr.G.*, p. 249.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

tormenting dialectic that exists between suffering and love that plagues humanity.¹²⁹ To conceive of God in the images that theism employs is idolatrous because it eliminates the love and suffering of the Trinitarian God.

In discussing the God of theism, Moltmann agrees with Feuerbach's and Marx's claim that God is conceived at the expense of human beings. For the moral, political, and philosophical aspects of theism's God strips all persons of their humanity, alienates them from their freedom, joy and true being.¹³⁰ However, the fatal flaw of Marx and Feuerbach is in making theism its opponent and assuming that theism's conception of God is the only way that God can be conceived of. It reassigns the moral, philosophical, and political attributes given to God to humanity and in so doing develops an anthropotheism.¹³¹ In short, human beings are divinized. Marx himself makes this clear when he says: "Philosophy makes no secret of it. The confession of Prometheus, 'In a word, I hate all the gods,' is its own confession, its own aphorism against all heavenly and earthly gods who do not acknowledge human self-consciousness as the highest divinity. It will have none other beside."¹³² It

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 253-254. Moltmann describes this dialectic as follows: "Love makes life so lively and death so deadly. Conversely, it also makes life deadly and death lively. The problem of its existence is sustaining this dialectic: how can one continue to love despite grief, disappointment and death?" p. 253. Christ's death lifts away the forsakeness of humanity and sustains humanity in the face of suffering and death. Cf. Richard Bauckham, "Jürgen Moltmann," pp. 303-305.

¹³⁰ *Cr. G.*, p. 250.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹³² Karl Marx, "On the Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature," translated by Richard Dixon, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx: 1835-43*, vol 1 of *Collected Works* edited by Jack Cohen *et. al.*, (New York: International Publishers, 1975), Vol. 1, p. 30.

is such proud proclamations that ultimately discredit Marx's disproof of God Moltmann contends. For the proponents of this sort of atheism, such as Marx, "have overlooked the darkside of evil in man" and "a century's experience with such anthropotheism has shown that even these human deities can become man's wolf."¹³³

The difference of opinion between Marx and Moltmann on how God is to be understood cannot be fully understood in isolation from the rest of each thinker's thought. Fundamentally, their difference of opinion stems from their disagreement over anthropology. For Moltmann believes, against Marx, that there is a God and that our relationship with that God is both an important and characteristic dimension of our humanity. However, it is apparent that Moltmann is not content simply to dismiss both his critique of God and his arguments in favour of atheism. To do so would be to underestimate the power of Marx's critique and ignore the valid points that Marx makes. Instead, Moltmann argues that Marx is correct in critique of a theistic God. Moltmann makes use of Marx's criticisms in his own battle against theism and employs an understanding of God that responds to Marx's criticisms so that the ever important and all essential relationship between human beings and God can be preserved.

As we saw in the first chapter, Marx's critiques of God and religion are not limited to the thesis that God is a projection of what is best in humanity. Three points will suffice to recap my discussion of Marx's critique of religion in the first chapter.¹³⁴ First, religion is an expression

¹³³ *Cr.G.*, p. 251; pp. 251-252.

¹³⁴ cf. Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, translated by M. Douglas Meeks, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 94.

of real suffering. Second, it represents a protest against the suffering of this world. Third, religion is merely an abstraction that distracts humanity from the material conditions in which they exist and their suffering. It is in this sense that religion serves as “the opium of the people” by providing them with “illusory happiness” as they suffer.¹³⁵ Fourth, it is a component of the superstructure that must be eliminated before a revolution can take place. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly it is this aspect of Marx’s thought that has influenced Moltmann more than any other aspect. Moltmann, in fact, explicitly acknowledges his debt to Marx in this regard when he writes that “Christian theology can adopt Marx’s criticism of religion in order to detach the fellowship of Christ from the bourgeois-capitalist fetishism of gold and consumer goods”.¹³⁶ He takes Marx’s attack against religion and applies it against the type of Christianity he disapproves of. Moltmann accomplishes this by implicitly arguing that Marx’s analysis of what religion *is*, is incorrect, but that Marx is right as to how bourgeois Christianity, for the most part, currently *functions*.

The problem with the current function of religion, as Moltmann sees it, is that it has been relegated to the private realm and severed from the public or societal realm. Presently, religion can at best serve as a refuge from an overly rational and objective society. However, in doing so, religion serves to support the status quo of society and minimize the scope of its activity. As a result, the Christian ethic has become unable to develop a set of social ethics that could inform how we are to behave in the

¹³⁵ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction,” p. 54.

¹³⁶ *Cr.G.*, p. 296.

public realm.¹³⁷ Instead, it must remain content with developing recipes for personal morality. Being banned from the world of politics and business, Christianity is unable to work towards a just society and religion can only hope to serve as “island of humanity” that provides relief from the de-humanizing world.¹³⁸ However, Christianity’s relegation to the private realm does not mean that has merely become a neutral actor in the political realm. What needs to be realized, Moltmann argues, is that religion is not benefiting the general populace by serving as an “island of humanity”. Rather, it is supporting a society that should not be supported but changed. The relief that religion supplies to humanity is nothing more than “dialectical compensation and a disburdening of the soul, so that in the alternating rhythm of the private and public, of community and society, man can endure his official existence today.”¹³⁹ In short, it would be fair to say that for Moltmann a religion that is relegated to the private sphere functions as the “opium of the people”.

CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM

An important aspect of Moltmann’s theological project is his critique of capitalism. He views capitalism as one of the main problems of the modern world and one of the main obstacles to real humanity today. In fact, Moltmann goes so far as to rank the horrors of capitalism along side the horror of the detonation of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima in 1945.¹⁴⁰ As was noted in the first chapter, Marx’s critique of capitalism revolves

¹³⁷ *Th. H.*, pp. 313-316, 318-324.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹⁴⁰ *Cr.G.* p. 68.

around his claim that capitalism causes members of society, most especially the proletariat, to experience the condition of alienation. According to Marx, the proletariat are *alienated* because they do not own the means of production and distribution of goods and, consequently, they are alienated from the fruits of their labour and the labour itself. Labour is not an activity in which workers are able to experience fulfillment but an activity that workers engage in in order to satisfy their material needs. Members of the proletariat class are said to experience another form of alienation in the capitalist system because they are unable to confront each other as true human beings and are only able to view others “in accordance with the standard and the position in which he finds himself as a worker.”¹⁴¹

It can be said without any hesitation that Moltmann’s critique of capitalism relies heavily upon Marx’s understanding of alienation. While it is true that Moltmann does not always refer to the technical term alienation or estrangement¹⁴² by name, there are several passages in the three books that I am examining where it is apparent that Moltmann is talking about the same dehumanized states that Marx discusses. Moltmann, like Marx, believes that capitalism results in an estranged and alienated form of humanity. Labour is an alienating activity in modern capitalist societies because it is strictly concerned with the ascertaining of one’s own needs and the satisfying of the needs of others.¹⁴³ All members of the working class are forced to work for wages in dehumanizing conditions to fulfill their

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁴² Moltmann’s employment of the terms alienation and estrangement is such that the two terms are not interchangeable as they are with Marx. Thus, I will make distinction between these two terms here.

¹⁴³ *Th. H.*, p. 307.

material needs. But Moltmann's true debt to Marx shines through when he claims that workers are alienated because, on the one hand, they do not own a share in the products that they produce and on the other hand, they only make one part of a product on an assembly line. In *The Crucified God*, Moltmann states that "a social justice" demands that "all members of society [receive] a just share in the products they produce."¹⁴⁴ Workers are unable to find true fulfillment in the products they make because they only make a part of a total product in a repetitive and monotonous process on an assembly line.¹⁴⁵ By making such statements Moltmann is acknowledging that he is principally in agreement with Marx's claim that capitalism produces an alienated form of humanity.

Moltmann also speaks of another form of alienation found in Marx, the condition of estrangement, that is directly tied to the primary condition of alienation. In modern, capitalist societies, social relationships are restricted to those which "bind individuals together in the satisfying of their needs by means of their divided labour."¹⁴⁶ Truly human relationships where two people relate to one another as human beings and not as members of a social hierarchy are no longer possible in the work place and, if not impossible, such relationships are at best quite difficult in the other realms of life. Thus, individuals "conditioned and claimed by modern social intercourse only in functions which only partially involve him, now encounters his fellow man only as a 'representative' of socially

¹⁴⁴ *Cr. G.*, p. 332.

¹⁴⁵ *Man*, p. 54.

¹⁴⁶ *Th. H.*, p. 308.

predetermined roles.”¹⁴⁷ Under capitalism, the modern labourer becomes an object and is nothing more than a cog in a overly, rational and efficient machine. All that is human disappears and the estranged worker might as well be a machine.

There can be little doubt that Moltmann’s critique of capitalism relies heavily upon the thought of Marx. However, there are some serious differences between how these two thinkers understand the problem of capitalism. The crux of this dispute has to do with how much importance one gives to a human being’s role as a worker. For Marx believes, as I have noted many times already, that it is what defines us as human beings. While there can be little doubt that Moltmann sees humanity’s role as a worker to be important, it should be clear by now that for him, this is not what fundamentally makes human beings human. Recalling my discussion of philosophical anthropology at the beginning of this chapter, we may note that for Moltmann, the fatal flaw of Marx is the importance he assigns to humanity’s role as workers. Regardless of the society that replaces capitalism a new society will still have to set rules of labour and thus, dictate the form of our true human essence.¹⁴⁸ Such a situation is clearly not acceptable to Moltmann. Finally, we may note that Moltmann’s understanding of political representation in capitalist democracies is reminiscent of Marx’s understanding of the political institutions of the superstructure. While political representatives may claim to represent all

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 309-310.

¹⁴⁸ Chapman, “Jürgen Moltmann and the Christian Dialogue with Marxism,” p. 443.

of the population, in reality they are solely concerned with representing the interests of the ruling class.¹⁴⁹

What then are we to make of Moltmann's reliance upon Marx's critique of capitalism? The problem that Moltmann has with Marx's critique is not, for the most part, the critique itself but rather the importance that Marx places on it. The forms of alienation that occur as a result of the division of labour in all epochs are only a form of a general sort of alienation.¹⁵⁰ By supposing that these particular forms of alienation are in fact the general problem Marx fools himself into believing that if we could only eliminate these specific instances of alienation we would in fact eliminate the general problem itself.¹⁵¹ This is in part due to the fact that Moltmann's critique of capitalism is part of a larger critique of modernity. In essence, there are two aspects to Moltmann's critique of modern society. The first aspect of Moltmann's critique centers around our alienated and estranged condition. Modern society "contains nothing but what is demanded by 'the ascertaining of *needs* and the satisfying of the *individuals* by means of his labour and by means of the labour and satisfaction of the needs of *all the rest* '".¹⁵² As a result, societal relationships are restricted to those which "bind individuals together in the satisfying of their needs by means of their divided labour."¹⁵³ In society, where the institutions reigns supreme, human beings' lives are highly

¹⁴⁹ *Cr. G.*, pp. 330-331.

¹⁵⁰ *Man*, p. 54.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵² *Th. H.* p. 307.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

objectified and consist of relationships and “modes of conduct” that are axiomatic and unquestioned.

The second, and most important aspect of Moltmann’s critique is the emphasis of a loss of tradition in the public or societal realm which is very much without parallel in Marx. For Moltmann, a tradition is what gives human beings meaning. In modern society all traditions have been banished to the private realm. Thus, in the realm of society individuals are like cogs in a machine and all questions of meaning are irrelevant here and left to the private realm. This is in fact the biggest problem that modern society presents and Moltmann wonders how individuals “can endure, and even live in, the state of being torn between the rational objectification of his social life on the one and the free and infinitely variable subjectivity conferred on the other.”¹⁵⁴ Consequently, traditions such as Christianity become socially irrelevant and Christian churches become nothing more than “islands of meaning” that people may visit in their free time, but whose message cannot inform one’s public life or the operation of society.

In contemporary society, the problems of alienation, estrangement and meaninglessness are intricately tied to one another. They are, however, not essentially new problems. Human beings are not now, nor have they ever been fully human. The problems of alienation of labour, estrangement and meaninglessness are some of, but certainly not all of, the current objects that prevent us from attaining our true essence that we will eventually attain in the kingdom of God. But these specific problems are only the present day manifestations of more general

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

problems. Alienation, estrangement and meaninglessness have occurred in every historical period in different forms. As I noted earlier, the mistake that Marx made was in supposing that if the form of alienation in capitalism were eliminated the general problem of alienation would itself be eliminated. Consequently, it is not surprising that the problem of alienation was not eliminated but merely transformed, perhaps for the worse, in the communist states of the twentieth century.

Moltmann's understanding of alienation stems from the way he defines human beings. Alienation, in all its forms, is a form of domination that occurs when human beings attempt to play God on either a small or large scale. The fundamental flaw in those who alienate others is that they have forgotten that human beings are creatures of God who are made in God's image. When men and women are treated as if they were not created in the image of God they are alienated in that they are not able to be, in essence, what they truly are. If everyone were to remember that all human beings are made in the image of God and allow this fact to guide their actions, alienation would not occur.

While Moltmann most certainly believes that men and women are, in part, the cause of alienation, he does not exclusively locate the problem of alienation at the level of the individual. The problem of alienation cannot be corrected by changing the inner attitudes of men and women alone. A social ethics is needed as well. For almost every system that causes alienation, such as capitalism and technocracy "quietly develop in their own way. The causes of misery are no longer found in the inner attitudes of men, but have long been institutionalized.... Personal, inner

change without a change in circumstances and structures is an idealist illusion, as though man were only a soul and not a body as well. But a change without inner renewal is a materialist illusion, as though man were only a product of his social circumstances and nothing else.”¹⁵⁵ Two further differences between Moltmann’s and Marx’s understanding of alienation can be now noted. First, as the last quotation makes perfectly clear, Moltmann rejects Marx’s claim that alienation is simply a product of the social structure of capitalist society. While Moltmann believes that social structures are, in part, responsible for alienation, he contends that an individuals alienating actions are not merely the product of their social relations. Second, because Moltmann’s conception of alienation is much broader than that of Marx’s other problems besides the alienation of the worker can rightfully be called alienation as well. Consequently, I believe that when Moltmann speaks of such problems as imperialism,¹⁵⁶ human rights violations,¹⁵⁷ racism,¹⁵⁸ sexual discrimination,¹⁵⁹ discrimination of the handicapped,¹⁶⁰ and ecological destruction,¹⁶¹ he considers them to be forms of alienation even though he does not always explicitly state this.¹⁶² While some of these problems are indeed bred by capitalism not

¹⁵⁵ *Cr. G.*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁶ *Ch. P. S.*, pp. 174-175.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-182.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-184.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

¹⁶¹ *Cr. G.*, p. 331.

¹⁶² In the works I am examining it is sometimes difficult to tell what exact human condition(s) Moltmann defines as alienation. However, in *Man* Moltmann’s implicit understanding of alienation is much more inclusive and I find this inclusiveness to be more consistent with his overall argument and for that reason I am relying upon this understanding of alienation. See *Man*, pp. 46-56.

all of them are and therefore, the overthrow of capitalism will not result in world free of alienation as Marx believes it will.

TRINITARIAN HISTORY

To properly understand Moltmann's critique of capitalism it must be situated within his understanding of history as a whole. For Moltmann, the history of humanity is the history of inhumanity. The fundamental problem of our existence is that we are unable to come to terms with our finite nature. This will not change regardless of what changes are made to social political order. However, the problem with our finitude is not simply that we will all one day die. Although, that too is a part of it. Rather, we are all limited in what we are able to accomplish and in the way in which we behave. According to Moltmann we become aware of this when we, at some point in our lives, are "charged with something impossible by the call of God. In this event the man affected knows his own particular limits and inabilities and recognizes them as being his fault. He learns what sort of man he should be but cannot be of himself. He learns what could be made out of him, but as far as he is concerned cannot be."¹⁶³ I believe that the implications of this statement go directly to the heart of our inhuman existence throughout history. For it would seem that we all are, to some extent, and by virtue of our present state of being, unable to live our lives as creatures who are made in the image of God. This is why alienation and all forms of domination occur. Many people suffer and feel that they have been forsaken by the God who created them.

¹⁶³ *Man*, p. 16.

Those who responsible for the suffering of others often prosper and justice seems not to exist.

But the history of humanity is also the history of the God of promise who reaches out to us and calls us forth in hope. God, through a promised future, lends us hope that we may one day escape our dehumanized state and attain true humanity. This promised future “contradicts existing reality and discloses its own process concerning the future of Christ for man and the world. Revelation, recognized as promise and embraced in hope, thus sets an open stage for history, and fills it with missionary enterprise and the responsible exercise of hope, accepting the suffering that is involved in the contradiction of reality, and setting out towards the promised future.”¹⁶⁴ Moltmann’s conception of hope, then, is not a shield from one’s current intolerable situation. If anything, hope forces us to confront our present situation:

In effective hope man does not flee from the unbearable pressure of the present into a consoling, better future, but draws the other, human future into his present and lives already by it. This does not make the present any more bearable, but often rather more unbearable, in any case richer in conflict. In hope man opens himself to the future which has been promised him, and leaves the cocoon of his life, and of his society.¹⁶⁵

In Marxism, members of the proletariat class come to understand their alienated state and see the truth of the revolution that dialectical materialism prescribes for them when they at last turn their attention to the material conditions of their existence. In Moltmann’s theology, Christians

¹⁶⁴ *Th. H.*, p. 86.

¹⁶⁵ *Man*, p. 116.

come to comprehend their dehumanized existence when they turn their attention to the cross of Christ. There we find “the knowledge of God in the suffering caused to him by dehumanized man, that is, in the contrary of everything which dehumanized man seeks and tries to attain as the deity in him.”¹⁶⁶ The cross of Christ, and the knowledge that is derived from it, does not command us to sit benignly and wait for God to right this world. Rather, “[t]he theology of the cross is a practical doctrine for battle, and can therefore become neither a theory for Christianity as it is now, nor the theory of Christian world history. It is a dialectic and historical theology, and not a theology of world history. It does not state what exists, but sets out to liberate men from their inhuman definitions and their idolized assertions, in which they have become set, and in which society has ensnared them.”¹⁶⁷

Through the cross of Christ the Trinity is able to take up into itself all of human history and experience the essential conflict of our existence. Therefore, the crucifixion of Christ is truly a Trinitarian event in Moltmann’s theology.¹⁶⁸ In the crucifixion of Christ, the Father and the Son are separated and alienated from one another. The forsakenness of the Son is made clear in Christ’s cry from the cross: “My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?” But both the Father and the Son are forsaken in the cross of Christ. Upon the cross, the Son is forsaken by the Father and eschatologically surrenders himself to death and in doing so experiences the suffering of death. In the death and forsakenness of the Son, the Father

¹⁶⁶ *Cr. G.*, p. 71.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Bauckham, *Moltmann. Messianic Theology in the Making*, (Basingstoke, U.K.: Marshal Pickering, 1987), p. 99.

suffers in grief out of love for his Son. In the Trinitarian event of the cross the Father is sonless and Son fatherless.¹⁶⁹ While it is true that a great divide exists between the Father and the Son in the event of the cross, there is a “deep conformity of will” between the two at that time as well. In separation the Father and the Son, in fact, experience community. Thus, for Moltmann, “[i]n the cross, Father and Son are most deeply separated in forsakenness and at the same time are most inwardly one in their surrender.”¹⁷⁰

But the cross also gives rise and purpose to the third person of the Trinity. For it is out of the event of community in separation between the Father and the Son that Spirit proceeds. This event enables the Spirit to justify the godless, fill the forsaken with love and even bring the dead alive.¹⁷¹ It is the Spirit, then, that most directly brings the hope to human beings that they may one day escape their wretched existence. What is most important to realize though, is that the eschatological hope that Moltmann is promoting calls upon Christians to act. It is not the sort of Christian hope which recommends that Christians stand fast and realize that one day all will be made right by God in another world. The Spirit is the creative force in history that drives Christians through their faith and their obedience to work toward the Kingdom of God. For as I noted earlier, it is the Spirit that makes Christ rule present in the world today and reveals historical potentialities for liberation.¹⁷² As Christians anticipate the

¹⁶⁹ *Cr. G.*, pp. 243-244. .

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁷² *Ch. P.S.*, pp. 191-192, 220.

redeeming future of Christ and the contradiction that this world is to it, which was most typified by the unjust crucifixion and suffering of Christ, they should protest and work against this contradiction. Christians, if they are to be true to their faith, must work to change this world.

Thus hope has the chance of a meaningful existence only when reality itself is in a state of historic flux and when historic reality has room for open possibilities ahead. Christian hope is meaningful only when the world can be changed by him in whom this hope hopes, and is thus open to that for which this hope hopes; when it is full of all kinds of possibilities (possible for God) and open to the resurrection of the dead.¹⁷³

The mission that Moltmann is issuing to Christians is to create the kingdom of God on earth which he consistently insists is an earthly kingdom to begin with and not the kingdom of another world. Such a mission is of course problematic in that it seems to be assigning work to men and women that is properly the work of God. But Moltmann himself implicitly shows that he is aware of this problem and is able to escape this charge by noting that Christians who are attempting to bring about the kingdom of God on earth, are not in fact stepping into God's shoes, but are rather carrying out such work out of their obedience to God.¹⁷⁴ The argument that it is the Spirit that calls upon Christians to make this world more like the kingdom of God is present in all three of the books that I am examining. However, it is not until *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*

¹⁷³ *Th. H.*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306; 326-338.

that this argument takes center stage in Moltmann's theological project and Moltmann's understanding of the process of history becomes clearer.

Moltmann himself has said that the method he employed in writing the three books of this study was to approach the whole of theology from one focal point.¹⁷⁵ In the *Theology of Hope* the focal point was hope, in the *Crucified God* it was the cross of Christ, and in the *Church in the Power of the Spirit* the focal point was the Holy Spirit. In the *Theology of Hope*, it is the Christ event is seen from the perspective of the eschatological God. In *The Crucified God*, eschatology is seen from the perspective in the cross of Christ. In both books "one can see the emerging dialectic between this eschatological Christology and this christological eschatology from which derives a theology of the process of the Spirit and of the church."¹⁷⁶ It is the Spirit that takes center stage in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* that drives this dialectic and therefore, drives the process of history.

Like Marx, Moltmann believes that there is meaning to be found in the process of history, in that history is going somewhere and not simply a series of isolated events, and that this process is dialectical in its nature. What clearly separates Moltmann's understanding of history from that of Marx is that the dialectic found in Moltmann is most certainly not a materialist one. Moltmann's historical dialectic, as I have noted already, is driven by the Holy Spirit. Christians, out of obedience to God, are directed by the Spirit to make this world more like the kingdom of God.

¹⁷⁵ Moltmann, "Foreword," in *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making*, p. ix.

¹⁷⁶ M. Douglas Meeks, "Foreword," in Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, ed. and trans. M. Douglas Meeks, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. xi.

History itself will be completed, although it is unclear whether it will actually end in Moltmann's theology, when the kingdom of God is realized on earth. There are of course material ramifications to this process in that the material conditions of the world are being transformed in this process. This dialectic is significantly different from Marx's though. In dialectical materialism what drives the dialectic are the material conflicts that one finds in every epoch in history. This, as I have shown, is not the case in Moltmann. Thus, the similarity between Marx's and Moltmann's understandings of history is limited to their belief that history is dialectical in nature. Moltmann's dialectic is also different in the sense that history is not a "continuous series of advances" as it is for Marx at least in terms of the modes of production which improve with each successive epoch.¹⁷⁷ The difference between their understandings of history are not incidental though. Once again, the differences between the two thinkers on this particular subject stem from the disagreement over philosophical anthropology. Moltmann, unlike Marx, does not wish to banish God from the world and therefore God must be included in his understanding of the process of history.

RELIGION AND REVOLUTION?

My discussion of the mission that Moltmann has assigned the Christian Church in the previous section of this chapter was somewhat ambiguous in that specifics were not discussed. Here, I will attempt to flesh this mission out with the specific suggestions Moltmann makes to Christians living in Western capitalist societies. Lying at the heart of

¹⁷⁷ *Ch. P. S.*, p. 50.

Moltmann's call to Christians is his claim that Christian churches must stop fooling themselves into believing that they should be apolitical institutions. If we recall our discussion of Moltmann's critique religion, it will be remembered that this is claim is at the core of his critique. If Religions remain confined to the private sphere and banned from the sphere of society they threaten to become nothing more than "the playthings of inclination and the tumbling ground for varieties of unreal and ineffective beliefs and opinions".¹⁷⁸ Effectively, religion would become irrelevant. But Churches that believe that they are not taking sides in politics by remaining apolitical must come to realize that they are in fact supporting the existing social order.¹⁷⁹ In the case of capitalism then, churches are supporting a system that Moltmann claims is profoundly unfair and alienating to the working class.¹⁸⁰

According to Moltmann, Christian churches that choose not to enter into the public realm are ignoring the important, if not, the defining aspects of the Christian tradition.¹⁸¹ In the works that I am examining in this study the two aspects of the Christian tradition that Moltmann points to are the eschatological hope found in Judaism and early Christianity and the cross of Christ and all that it stands for. The hope that Moltmann preaches is built around God's promise of the eschaton made to Israel and the promise of the second coming of Christ. Moltmann's hope is the hope that God will one day redeem this world and bring about the kingdom of God

¹⁷⁸ *Th. H.*, p. 310.

¹⁷⁹ *Cr. G.*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁰ *Th. H.*, p. 320. Cf. *Cr. G.* p. 153.

¹⁸¹ *Cr. G.*, pp. 53-65, 153.

on earth as God has promised.¹⁸² Christians must once again look forward to the future and stop dwelling upon the events of the past. For it is only in the future that one is able to set people free by offering them hope in a future salvation.

The theme of the cross is equally important to Moltmann as the theme of hope. As Christians we all stand under the cross and we must ask what it means to worship the crucified God.¹⁸³ In its early days, Christianity was not such a respectable religion and the Christian symbol of the cross was viewed as both a contradiction and a scandal. It was a scandal because the person that Christians proclaimed as God was crucified for political reasons. He was seen, rightly or wrongly, as a threat to the established order. In short, Jesus of Nazareth, who Christians later deemed to be the Son of God, was a social outcast.¹⁸⁴ But there is also a serious contradiction in proclaiming a man that was crucified and humiliated as God. In place of a supreme, all powerful being, the God of the cross is a god who appeared powerless and humiliated. Such an understanding of God, Moltmann contends, contradicts everything that human beings have ever conceived, desired, or sought in the term God. But the scandal of Jesus was not merely a political though. The scandal also extends to Jesus' cry upon the cross: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

The themes of hope and of the cross intersect in the cry Jesus upon the cross. When we recall that Jesus was, from the standpoint of Christianity, the Jewish Messiah we realize that Jesus brought into the

¹⁸² *Th. H.*, pp. 327-338, 285-303.

¹⁸³ *Cr. G.*, p. 53-65.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-145.

world both eschatological awareness into the world and the longing for redemption.¹⁸⁵ The crucified Christ was forsaken by God and as a result, those who are godless and forsaken may find hope and salvation through him. There is a mysticism of the cross in which those who suffer today also suffer with Christ on the cross in some way.¹⁸⁶ The point of this mysticism is not, Moltmann warns, to serve as an opium to those who are suffering. But neither is this bonding with the crucified Christ an “expression of misery” as Marx suggests. Rather it is an expression of dignity in that those who suffer come to know that they are deemed worthy by God and that Christ loves them and in knowing this they should not sink back into misery.¹⁸⁷ However, it is a mistake to understand this mysticism of the cross as a model of submission. Jesus did not accept his fate passively. He incited the authorities by preaching the message of the Kingdom of God and therefore, is calling upon those who stand under the cross to work against the forces of oppression. Thus, for Moltmann the religion of the crucified God should be concerned first and foremost with reaching out to those who are oppressed and godless, as was the crucified God, and offering them both hope and liberation. The cross of Christ does not

bring man into a better harmony with himself and his environment, but into contradiction with himself and his environment. It does not create a home for him and integrate him into society, but makes him ‘homeless’ and ‘rootless’, and liberates him in following Christ who was homeless and rootless. The ‘religion of the cross’, if faith on this basis can ever be so called, does not elevate

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45 ff.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

and edify in the usual sense, but scandalizes; and most of all it scandalizes one's 'co-religionists' in one's own circle. But by this scandal, it brings liberation into a world which is not free... [and] alienates alienated men, who have come to terms with alienation.¹⁸⁸

The promise of the redeeming action of God in the future should not be seen as turning our attention away from the present conditions in the social realm. For "the world can be changed by the God of his hope, and to that extent also by the obedience to which this hope moves him."¹⁸⁹ The churches that are content to see the status quo preserved are not truly heeding the call of Christ that demands that Christians ethically judge society and transform what they believe to be unjust. For "the task of Christianity today is ... to resist the institutionalizing of things, and by 'raising the question of meaning' to make things uncertain and keep them moving elastic in the process of history."¹⁹⁰ In doing so they bring hope into the world and "[h]ope alone keeps life - including public, social life - flowing and free."¹⁹¹

The Christian church has no choice but to enter the realm of society and seek meaningful change if it is to follow Christ's example of service to the world. In a tradition where the expectation of the eschatological future event is emphasized hope is awakened such that our lives become determined by this expectation and meaningful action becomes possible within the horizon of this expectation. Churches that accept the call of Christ are empowered by the Spirit to promote liberation

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁹ *Th. H.*, p. 290.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

in this world. In fact, Moltmann goes so far as to say that a “church in the power of the Spirit is not yet the kingdom of God, but it is its anticipation in history.”¹⁹² A church’s commitment to liberation must be a total one and therefore, all of its activities must communicate this commitment. Moltmann clearly articulates this point of view in his chapter on Christian praxis, entitled “The Church in the Presence of the Holy Spirit” in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*.¹⁹³ In this chapter Moltmann discusses the Sending of the Spirit, The Gospel, Baptism, The Lord’s Supper, Worship, and the Messianic Way of Life. It is not necessary to discuss each of these topics to grasp Moltmann’s argument. Each of these activities, Moltmann argues, must contain an eschatological component that brings about an anticipation of the coming kingdom of God and resist complicity to the current socio-economic system. At the Lord’s Supper, for instance, Christians should not merely re-enact an event in the life of Christ, but reflect upon the sacrifice that was made through his suffering and anticipate the coming glory of the Kingdom of God and remember that the we can work toward the Kingdom of God today by advancing the cause of liberation.

The church that is empowered by the Spirit becomes a force of liberation in the world because it recognizes that “[t]he assimilation of Christianity by bourgeois society always means that the cross is forgotten and hope is lost.”¹⁹⁴ It is upon the shoulders of the Christian Church that Moltmann places the responsibility of transforming this world and bringing

¹⁹² *Ch. P. S.*, p. 196

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-288.

¹⁹⁴ *Cr. G.*, p. 58.

it closer to the future reality of the kingdom of God. He wants the church to lead the charge in undoing the alienation that is found throughout the world. However, as I demonstrated in my discussion of capitalism, Moltmann's understanding of alienation is not the same as Marx's. Moltmann sees many more forms of alienation and they are not all caused capitalism. Ultimately, all forms of alienation are the result of the fact that not all men and women treat human beings as beings made in the image of God. Instead, they themselves aspire to be a god and dominate both humanity and the world. Consequently, the Christian church will be able to begin undoing all forms of alienation in society the more they gain public acceptance of the fact that all men and women are made in the image of God. But alienation cannot be stopped simply by making changes in the hearts of men and women or to the present systemic structure of society. For Moltmann both of these changes are equally important.:

The true front on which the liberation of Christ takes place does not run between soul and body or between persons and structures, but between the powers of the world as it decays and collapses into ruin, and the powers of the Spirit and of the future. In inner experience of the Spirit in the liberty of faith, certainty and prayer are just as much anticipations of the future of Christ and of the liberating of creation as the opening of a ghetto, the healing of a sick person, a new right to social justice or a successful revolution for independence. There is no vertical dimension of faith opposed to a horizontal dimension of political love, for in every sphere of life the powers of the coming new creation are in conflict with the powers of a world structure which leads to death.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Thus, the key to Moltmann's quest then lies in establishing the rule of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of society.

Alienation, as was shown earlier in this chapter, takes many different and specific forms for Moltmann. The question that must be asked and answered, then, is: In what way will a "church in the power of the Spirit", that is the revitalized Christian church of the future that Moltmann is arguing for, begin to eliminate the specific forms of alienation that Moltmann himself has identified? The problems that are now caused by capitalism will begin to be reversed when the principle that guides actions of men, women and institutions is social justice and not economic growth.¹⁹⁶ In practical terms, this means that all members of society are given "a just share in the products they produce."¹⁹⁷ This will only come about, however, with the "redistribution of economic power."¹⁹⁸ Thus, Moltmann stands along side Marx in believing that the alienation of labour can only be brought to an end when the working class gain control of the means of production. However, it is at the very least ambiguous as to whether Moltmann believes that working class must take total control of the means of production and in this respect, he stands apart from Marx. The elimination of the alienation of labour will also result help eliminate the problem of estrangement. Once members of the working class have gained at least partial control of the means of production they will no longer encounter another member of the working class as a 'representative' of socially predetermined roles, but will confront them as a human being

¹⁹⁶ *Ch. P. S.*, p. 174.

¹⁹⁷ *Cr. G.*, p. 332.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

and say the basic dialogical word *I-Thou* to one another. This too, as was shown in my discussion of Marxism, is found in the thought of Marx. Politically, Moltmann believes that representatives will become more responsible to the whole of the populace, the more all members of society exercise political and economic control.¹⁹⁹ At a general level this is the case in the communist society that Marx describes.

Moltmann offers two very different forms of solutions to the practical problems he sees in the contemporary age. In the case of racism, sexual discrimination, and the discrimination of the handicapped he argues that these problems will be reversed the more the “social side” of the freedom of justifying faith is realized.²⁰⁰ Once a person is justified and they no longer have to prove themselves “through racial, sexual, or other prerogatives” and they may recognize others as possessing both human dignity and human rights.²⁰¹ Here, Moltmann is quite abstract and it is far from clear what exact changes will occur. In his discussion of imperialism, however, Moltmann is very precise about what changes will take place to change the current situation:

If Christians in the world understand themselves as world-wide Christianity - and that means *ecumenical* Christianity - they will strive for this ethic of solidarity and a corresponding new economic orientation. That includes renunciation of further economic expansion in the wealthy countries for the sake of the economic development which is necessary in the hungry ones. ‘Development aid’ cannot exhaust itself in alms won from one’s own development at the cost of people who

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 332-333.

²⁰⁰ *Ch. P. S.*, pp. 187-188.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

are kept underdeveloped; it must be directed towards an alteration of the economic structure in the interests of economic justice among men. We cannot consistently 'share and share alike' in private if we are not prepared at the same time to alter the economic structure in such a way that there will be 'equal shares' globally as well.²⁰²

The reemergence of the Christian Church in society will make the lives of men and women truly meaningful. In practical terms, this will mean that in the realm of society individuals will no longer lead a life that is overly rational and objectified, like that of a cog in a machine, where all questions of meaning are irrelevant left to the private realm. The Christian tradition will be able to inform the decisions and actions they take in all aspects of life and consequently, individuals will have to endure being torn between the rational objectification of his social life on the one and the free and infinitely variable subjectivity conferred on the other. There is, I believe, a unobvious parallel to this aspect of Moltmann's theology in Marx. It is the belief that men and women will only find true meaning in their lives when they discover the truth of dialectical materialism. Once this occurs they are able to take actions to remove all the impediments to realizing their true humanity as beings that make things. But in Moltmann's eyes the truth of dialectical materialism has its limits. While it does lead to a path out of the alienation that is found in capitalism it does not offer a solution to the most profound form of alienation of all - death. For Moltmann, all alienation is opposed to life and is in some sense a form of death. Christ's resurrection and God's promise to resurrect the dead not

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

only eliminates the ultimate alienation of death but encourages us to fight against all forms of alienation.²⁰³

The question that has been left lurking in the background throughout this section is: How exactly will a revitalized Christian Church make the changes to society that Moltmann has proposed? Two points need to be made to adequately respond to this question. First, Moltmann has assigned the responsibility of bringing hope to the world to the Christian Church. This task is accomplished by the Church when it explains to the world that while we presently are living an inhuman existence, we can become fully human if we begin to work toward the kingdom of God. In assigning such a responsibility to the Christian Church, Moltmann has, in effect, made it the vanguard class of his theology. He has admitted so much himself:

The church in the power of the Spirit is not yet the kingdom of God, but it is its anticipation in history. Christianity is not yet the new creation, but it is the working of the Spirit of the new creation. *Christianity is not yet the new mankind but is its vanguard, in resistance to deadly introversion and in self-giving and representation for man's future.* The provisional nature of its messianic character forces the church to self-transcendence over its social and historical limitations. Its historical finality gives it certainty in still uncertain history, and joy in the pains over its resistance. *In provisional finality and in final provisionality the church, Christendom and Christianity witness to the Kingdom of God as the goal of history in the midst of history.* In this sense the church of Jesus Christ is *the people of the kingdom of God.* ²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Cr. G., pp. 185, 195-196, 217, 329-330.

²⁰⁴ Ch. P. S., p. 196. The final set of italics are Moltmann's, the other sets are mine.

While I believe that Moltmann is using the term vanguard only metaphorically, the historical, responsibility of the church to bring liberation to the world, out of obedience to God and the rule of the Holy Spirit, fits with a more technical understanding of the term vanguard. Some Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century advocated the idea of a necessary intellectual vanguard class. In Moltmann's theology, the church parallels this role by informing men and women of their dehumanized existence, the existence they could live, the truth of the Christian message and that they should begin to work toward the kingdom of God today. However, Marx himself, as we saw in the previous chapter places little importance on the idea of an intellectual vanguard. The disagreement between Marx and Moltmann on this point stems from their disagreement over how they see history progressing. For Marx, progress occurs as a result of conflict between classes and each epoch the revolutionary battle is inevitable and thus, an intellectual vanguard class is not necessary. In the case of Moltmann, history moves forward as people are informed that they are made in the image of God and being called upon to transform their society by the Spirit. Thus, for Moltmann an intellectual vanguard class, in the form of the Christian Church, is necessary for history to move forward.

But we still have not addressed how the Christian Church will accomplish its task of leading the world to a new existence in the kingdom of God. I would say that Moltmann's response to this question is ambiguous at best. He certainly makes it perfectly clear that he is not in

favour of constructing a Christian theocracy.²⁰⁵ In fact, he believes that any worldwide or established Christian church needs small committed congregations and sects that tended to promote change, both in doctrine and political stances, more easily and more quickly than an enormous, hierarchical institution can have.²⁰⁶ Indeed, one of the specific tasks that Moltmann assigns to Christian churches today is to become critical of the prevailing ideologies and political religions.²⁰⁷ Christian churches, Moltmann argues, should also dialogue with socialists in an effort to promote the cause of liberation.²⁰⁸ He even goes so far as to say that “socialism is the symbol for the liberation of men from the vicious circle of poverty.”²⁰⁹

The clearest that Moltmann becomes in demonstrating how the Christian church will even begin to fulfill its political mission occurs when he states that “the church of the crucified Christ must take sides in the concrete social and political conflicts going on about it and in which it is involved, and must be prepared to join and form parties.”²¹⁰ Thus, it would seem that Moltmann wants Christian churches to work for societal change by aligning themselves with parties. But Moltmann quickly qualifies this claim when he writes, in the very next sentence, that the church “must not ally itself with the existing parties, but in a partisan fashion intervene on behalf of betrayed humanity and suppressed

²⁰⁵ *Cr. G.*, pp. 321-325 and *Ch. P. S.*, pp. 317-325.

²⁰⁶ *Ch. P. S.*, pp. 322-326.

²⁰⁷ *Cr. G.*, pp. 326-329.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 332. Italics removed.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

freedom.”²¹¹ The obvious question then is to ask how churches are to in a “partisan fashion intervene on behalf of betrayed humanity and suppressed freedom.” There is no clear answer.

It is not surprising that Moltmann does not favour revolution as Marx does. For he does not believe that the elimination of the alienation found in capitalism will solve the problem of alienation once and for all. But he never tells us the specifics of how Christians are supposed to work towards the kingdom of God. In every instance he remains abstract. This is a serious problem for Moltmann if he is attempting to provide an adequate Christian response to the challenge of Marxism. It may well be that Moltmann believes that different societies require churches to pursue different strategies. Perhaps he believes that the brutal form of capitalism found in some third world requires churches to call for and work towards a revolution, whereas Western capitalist societies only require churches to work informally in the political realm. But he never tells us exactly what he wants churches to do. The closest Moltmann comes to this is in *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* where he admits that violence is sometimes called for.²¹² But even then he does not offer a criteria for making such a decision or point to a specific situation where this might be necessary. Commenting on his book, the *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann once wrote:

I must admit that in *The Theology of Hope* I left my readers in the lurch as regards the practice of hope. Having read the book, many believed that they now

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²¹² *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, pp. 143-145.

knew what they wanted, but they did not clearly see what next step they should take. Maybe I did not know that myself very clearly and was waiting for others to show me. After all, can we expect anyone to find out everything himself?²¹³

Moltmann may well be right in claiming that no one can know everything but it does not change the fact that he is abstract about what exact actions need to be taken. Marx argued that religion must be eliminated before a revolution can occur because it will always remain an abstraction that deters people looking toward their material conditions and realizing that a revolution is necessary. By remaining abstract in what must be done to eliminate the problems of contemporary society Moltmann has not adequately responded to Marx's charge.

²¹³ Moltmann, "Politics and the Practice of Hope," *The Christian Century* March 11 (1970), p. 290.

CHAPTER THREE: JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO'S ENCOUNTER WITH KARL MARX

Juan Luis Segundo demonstrates a tremendous interest in the thought of Karl Marx. Segundo is constantly in dialogue with Marx throughout both *The Liberation of Theology* and *Faith and Ideologies*, the two works that I will be considering in this chapter. Marsha Hewitt suggests that Segundo is attempting “to apply Marx’s conception of society and history to Latin America while at the same time attempting to preserve some elements of theological discourse, but in a transformed way.”²¹⁴ In other words, she argues that Segundo develops “a Marxist theology” and in his attempt to synthesize Marxism and Christianity “Segundo becomes caught in major problems that are difficult to untangle, let alone solve.”²¹⁵

While I believe that Hewitt offers much insight into Segundo’s relationship to Marx, I also believe that Hewitt is wrong in assuming that Segundo really is attempting to appropriate and keep alive as much of Marxism as he can in his own theology. Rather, I would argue that what Segundo is attempting to do is to construct his own interpretive framework of reality which is profoundly influenced by Marx. Segundo is most certainly not attempting to develop a “Marxist theology”. Fundamentally, Marx and Segundo are engaged in a profound debate over how human

²¹⁴ Hewitt, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

beings are to be understood. All of the other disagreements between these two thinkers stem from their conflict over anthropology.

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In Segundo's eyes, there are two principle anthropological dimensions: faith and ideology.²¹⁶ The first anthropological dimension in Segundo's theology is that of faith. Faith structures existence and gives meaning to the lives of human beings by bringing "order into the complex realm of values" and by serving as "a mechanism which enables people to classify happenings and events, in a largely unconscious but nevertheless effective way".²¹⁷ All human beings possess many different values. These values, according to Segundo, form a scale. Some values are more important to an individual than other values. But in every man's or woman's life there is one value that is preferred above all the others. It is this value that structures our lives by giving direction to all the other values of our life. This value is said to be the absolute value in our lives. It is the value we choose not as a means to something else but because we value it in and of itself. On this point Segundo is absolutely clear:

there has to be something that we 'prefer' for itself, not as a means or condition for some other person or thing. Here we have the 'absolute' as a value. In other words, every value-structure, however elementary it may be, must be crowned by something that is not a means towards something else, that turns everything else into a means towards it. So we can say that every meaning-structure of human life is composed of things that a human being wills *hypothetically* (i.e. insofar as they

²¹⁶ *F. Id.*, p. 27.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

help him or her get to something else), and of something that he or she wills *absolutely* (i.e., for its own sake).²¹⁸

But why, one might ask, do we choose values and invest absolute values with faith? The answer that Segundo gives is straightforward. We choose values in an effort to attain happiness. For Segundo this is the most essential act that all men and women take. It is what defines us as beings of faith and ideology. Both faith and ideologies, as I will show later, are concerned with the attainment of satisfaction. We imagine the reality we would like and embrace the particular value that we think will get us there. In the case of absolute values, we are concerned with the ultimate reality that we desire in our lives and in the world that we live in.²¹⁹

Thus far, the term value has been used without any attempt at offering a definition. An effort must now be made to define what Segundo means by the term “values”. Segundo states that values have two fundamental characteristics. First, we all know from our practical experience that a value is something that we consider worthwhile. As Segundo puts it: “It’s *worth* the trouble.”²²⁰ Second, the term “value” is highly abstract in three ways. First, all of us talk about a value, such as power or justice, without ever making clear that these terms relate to people and not to things. Second, even when we focus on persons instead of things, “the *plurality* of values does not correspond to any concrete reality.”²²¹ All of our choices for different values are in fact made in the

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18. Italics retained.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 20-22.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Italics retained.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Italics retained.

unity of one life that is attempting to attain satisfaction. In other words, each choice that is made is an attempt to transform the life of an individual and that individual's desire to be fulfilled.²²² Third, in the real world individuals do not choose between pre-established values. What individuals choose, in fact, is a future reality that they imagine.²²³

It is by no means an accident that Segundo labels the action of choosing an absolute value that will guide a person's life as *an act of faith*. Although he never says so explicitly, it is apparent that there are two fundamental reasons why Segundo uses the term faith. Both are tied to the unprovable nature of absolute values. The first reason why Segundo employs the term faith revolves around the fact that we all possess a limited amount of energy.²²⁴ We imagine a future and choose the value that we believe will help us attain this reality. But we cannot be sure. We are unable to run simulations of our life based on a particular value and see how our lives turn out. As Segundo puts it, human beings "do not enjoy the (energy) possibility of traveling to the end of their lives and then knowingly choosing the values they wish to realize. So 'faith' serves as their necessary 'short cut,' as the fund of saved energy on which all human planning is based."²²⁵ However, in taking the "necessary short cut" of faith human beings also cut themselves off from other avenues they might have chosen. It is like coming to a fork in the road in our lives and choosing one road and not the other. We will never know for sure where

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6, 22-23.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

that other road might have taken us. In choosing one value over another in an effort to attain satisfaction, it becomes more difficult to compare the effectiveness of each value in attaining satisfaction the longer we invest our faith in one of the values. Thus, we steadily lose our freedom to choose possible values the more we exercise our freedom. The longer we stay with one value the more we lose “the possibility of *ourselves* experiencing the other types of satisfaction which other roads might bring to us.”²²⁶

The second reason why Segundo labels the action of choosing an absolute value an act of faith lies in the fact that every absolute value is transcendent in nature.²²⁷ When an individual invests their faith in a particular value that individual is not doing so on a whim. Everyone who invests faith in a value does so because they believe that value to be representative of reality. In other words, “[t]hey are saying that in the *ultimate instance* one will see that *this* way of acting rather than some other will prove to be satisfying.”²²⁸ To some extent, every value structure is grounded upon the ultimate satisfaction one will attain from the real world by having faith in and conducting one’s life in accordance with one particular value or set of values. Segundo states that every value that is the basis of faith is transcendent because it “transcends everything which can presently be verified empirically.”²²⁹ Simply put, we cannot know for sure whether a particular value will in fact prove true in an ultimate sense. But the fact of the matter is that “every human must *take a chance* on life,

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73, 154 ff.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

something whose value is not known in a personal, experiential way.”²³⁰

We all wager that satisfaction in our lives will ultimately be attained if we conduct our lives based on a particular value.

In Segundo’s theology, faith is a most important first step. But it is only the first step and if the second step to the realm of ideology is not taken, faith is dead.²³¹ An ideology is what makes faith historically relevant. For faith in values is irrelevant unless they are realized by ideologies through “the effective actualization of values”.²³² Ideologies are concerned with pinpointing the historical goals of a value and developing a plan to attain these goals. Faith serves as “the foundation stone for ideologies.”²³³ Faith and ideologies are not polar opposites as they are often portrayed in popular discussions. Rather, faith and ideologies are two sides of the same coin. Thus:

Faith, then, is not a universal, atemporal, pithy body of content summing up divine revelation once the latter has been divested of ideologies. On the contrary, it is maturity by way of ideologies, the possibility of fully and conscientiously carrying out the ideological task on which the real-life liberation of human beings depends.²³⁴

The relationship that faith and ideology have to one another is sometimes a bit clouded and confused. At one point, Segundo will say that it is “such fundamental attitudes as love, hatred, egotism, and

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

²³² Marsha Hewitt, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

²³³ *Lib. Th.*, p. 109.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

solidarity”.²³⁵ At another point, he will speak of Christian and Marxist faiths.²³⁶ Clearly, Marxism and Christianity are ideologies if we consider all the elements that make them up. Unfortunately, Segundo’s scheme does not seem to allow us to speak of faith in an ideology *per se*. There are two possible explanations that might help us escape this apparent inconsistency in Segundo’s thought. First, Segundo is quite up front about the fact that the relationship between faith and ideologies is far from precise. It is always difficult to say where the realm of ideology begins and faith ends. This is due to the fact that the two realms are, in reality, inseparable. While it is necessary to discuss faith and ideology as separate realms if we hold out any hope at grasping of what each means, in the real world “it makes no sense at all to ask what faith is when any and all ideology has been stripped from it.”²³⁷ Thus, it should not be surprising that we find some clouding of the two realms in Segundo’s thought. Second, I believe that what Segundo may be referring to when he speaks of a Christian or Marxist faith is a value structure. That is, all the values that one finds assembled in a hierarchical relationship in each of these “faiths”. However, this too is problematic because Segundo claims, as I will discuss later, that the same ideology is embraced by people who hold faith in different values. This is especially true of Christianity. Thus, we should conclude that the distinction that Segundo makes between faith and ideology is far from clear.

²³⁵ *F. Id.*, p. 99.

²³⁶ *Lib. Th.*, p. 101.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.181.

Ideologies are not concerned with objectively representing absolute values. While it is true that many people believe that the ideology that they employ is in fact an objective set of absolute values, this is not what the realm of ideologies is. Ideologies are relative and historically conditioned. They have to be. If they were not, then they would be unable to put the absolute values of faith into practice. Ideologies are rational in nature. They endeavour to convince others of the cause that they are trying to advance.²³⁸ It takes an absolute value, such as love, and decides how this value is best manifested in the current historical reality. Through rational argumentation it attempts to convince others who hold the same value that the way this ideology is prescribing to realize love is the best way to do so now. What is important to note, however, is that all the arguments of an ideology presume that a person already has faith in some absolute value. Many would argue that people are not able to embrace ideologies that are relative. They need a set of instructions that is absolute and valid for all time. This is true of many Marxists and Christians. But Segundo counters that those who have been liberated by true anthropological faith will “not give a hoot about the brand name of their instruments. Their primary criteria” will “be whether those instruments [are]... effective or not.”²³⁹ Faith cannot even be inextricably linked to a particular technique for its implementation in history. Problems change with the times and demand new formulations. Thus, a person who in faith embraces pacifism as his or her absolute value might favour violence

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²³⁹ *F. Id.*, p. 126.

against those who are causing violence to take place at a given moment in history.²⁴⁰

It is implicit in Segundo's two anthropological categories, faith and ideology, that Segundo sees men and women as historical beings. The reality of this world is important and the point of our lives is to make it the best reality that we can. In the life of every individual a judgment is made as to how this is best accomplished. We all, according to Segundo, embrace an absolute value and an ideology. The way that Segundo describes what he means by ideology makes it clear that the historical process of this world is important. Ideologies are concerned with transforming the values of faith into historical realities.

Up until now my discussion of faith and ideology has been concerned with the values that one embraces in faith and the role that ideology plays in realizing these values in history. I have yet to discuss either the epistemological aspect of faith and ideology and whether an alternative ideology may be used to critique one's faith. Faith and ideology play a central role in how we perceive reality.²⁴¹ In faith, we see certain things in reality and not others that are equally as obvious. An example might help to clarify this. A person whose faith embraces a Marxist value structure will obviously interpret and perceive reality differently than a traditional Christian. The Marxist will look at class relations and material existence whereas the Christian may not even perceive class issues at all. But if faith is central to how we perceive reality we might ask whether it is possible to employ an alternative ideology to critique somebody else's faith.

²⁴⁰ *Lib. Th.*, p. 158.

²⁴¹ *F. Id.*, p. 14.

Segundo certainly admits that once a person reaches adulthood they become more and more critical of their own faith and ideology.²⁴² It seems that for Segundo faith can be challenged by critical thought but only to a very small degree. While he appears to leave open the possibility that a person may abandon their faith in an absolute value, he argues that for the most part people will find away to eventually dismiss facts and arguments that contradict their faith. However, Segundo does believe that ideological beliefs are more likely to be transformed. He argues that “the more a person grows in every sense, the more and more clearly he or she perceives that a given attitude towards some value never constitutes the best solution once and for all vis-à-vis the problem at hand. If his or her faith is to persist, it must increasingly be based on the *creative ability* to solve many problems, in line with the growing complexity of the reality with which he or she must deal.”²⁴³

To some extent Marx and Segundo hold to very different conceptions of what human beings are in essence. They point to entirely different levels of humanity which, to some extent, are not comparable. Specifically, to say that human beings are in essence beings of faith and ideology does not necessarily preclude the fact that human beings are in essence makers of things. Segundo’s understanding of humanity is most definitely a form of relativism. While Segundo states that all human beings are in essence beings of faith and ideology, nowhere does he unequivocally say that a person must embrace a particular absolute value to attain true

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

human fulfillment and he is quite clear in stating that no one ideology is the correct one.

It would seem that Segundo would agree that if a person has a faith in a Marxist value structure then human beings, for that person, define themselves and realize their species being through their labour. What Segundo disputes is the exclusivity of this claim. He would simply argue that not all human beings define themselves through their labour. While every man and woman must possess a faith and an ideology, they do not necessarily have to be Marxists. Marx, on the other hand, is not offering up one of many understandings of humanity. It seems very clear that for him human beings are only properly understood when they are defined as labourers that produce things.

Marx's exclusive claim to the truth, of course, goes well beyond Segundo's philosophical anthropology. Marx believed that true meaning was only attainable to those who came to see the truth of dialectical materialism. Marx believed that dialectical materialism was scientific in its nature. Unlike philosophy, it did not speculate about the truth but rather saw the truth in looking at the objective, material conditions that human beings were living in. Thus, Marx would reject any attempt by Segundo to classify dialectical materialism as an ideology. Moreover, Marx would deny that any absolute value of faith was part of his system. Faith and ideology are always deceiving. They are part of the superstructure and therefore do not offer men and women true meaning. Hence, Marx would not be able to accept Segundo's categories of faith and ideology because they contradict with some of the central claims of his own system. But

Segundo rejects Marx's claim that his approach is value free and scientific in nature. Marx embraces the proletarian cause because of his humanistic values. In Segundo's words:

It is not the dialectic that leads Marx to place himself on the side of the proletariat and his system to entrust the proletariat with the destiny of humanity once the division of labor has occurred. Marx's position is not one of opportunism abetted by prediction which the dialectic makes possible. It is not a matter of climbing aboard the winning horse. By the same token there are no winners in a pure, idealist dialectic; on that point Hegel, Marx, and Engels agree. When Marx joins the struggle on the side of the proletariat, he is not paying homage necessity willy-nilly. His option is an effort to change the world by establishing values.²⁴⁴

The central conflicts between Marx's and Segundo's understanding of humanity revolve around faith and ideology. Marx rejects faith of any kind because it is abstract and not scientific in its nature. Marx opts for dialectical materialism because it is scientific in nature and does not require a leap of faith of any sort. Members of the proletariat class need only look at their material conditions to see the truth of dialectical materialism. Segundo's conception of ideology is influenced by Marx to some degree. Segundo argues, for instance, that ideologies do, in some cases, support the status quo and are part of the super structure.²⁴⁵ But the on whole one must agree that Hewitt is right when she states that Segundo adopts a view of ideology that is in total conflict with that of Marx.²⁴⁶ Segundo's disagreement with Marx over faith and ideology go to

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235.

²⁴⁵ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 7-8.

²⁴⁶ Hewitt, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

the heart of the dispute between the two thinkers. By making the concepts of faith and ideology central to his approach Segundo is able to rehabilitate Christianity and, at the same time, develop a Christian theology that is mindful of the criticisms of Marx and is able to embrace some of aspects of Marxism as well. In accepting faith as a true dimension of human life, Segundo has created room for God and thus, rejects Marx's claim that God is nothing more than a projection of alienated human aspirations. But by labeling religion as an ideology he is able to criticize religion as well.

CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM: ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Much of my discussion concerning Segundo's philosophical anthropology had to do with his analytical approach. In the final analysis, every analytical approach is part faith and ideology for Segundo. The question that needs to be addressed at this point is: what is the faith and ideology that Segundo embraces and employs to analyze phenomena? The faith that Segundo holds is without doubt, in my mind a least, a faith in liberty of human beings. That is to say that liberty is the absolute value that serves as a capstone to all the other values that he holds. Segundo himself has said so much when commenting on Christianity: "a human life liberated as much as possible from all alienation constitutes the *absolute* value, whereas all religious institutions, dogmas, sacraments, and ecclesiastical authorities have only a *relative* (i.e., functional) value".²⁴⁷ This is the fundamental, transcendent premise that Segundo works from.

²⁴⁷ Segundo, "Capitalism Versus Socialism: Crux Theologica," *Frontiers of Theology in Latin Americas*, ed. Rosino Gibellini and trans. John Drury, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 243. Italics retained.

What then does Segundo see as the problem of capitalism? In *The Liberation of Theology* Segundo sees South America suffering from a brutal form of capitalism in which the proletariat live and work in appalling conditions while the bourgeois and capitalist classes live in luxury. The analysis of this situation is most certainly Marxist at least in a “bare bones” form. What is lacking however is any discussion on the part of Segundo is the specifics of a Marxist analysis of capitalism. One wonders: Does Segundo believe, as Marx does, that: 1) capitalism is comprised of two classes who are engaged in a conflict that cannot be resolved within a capitalist framework?; 2) the main problem with the capitalist system is that it results in the *alienation* of the proletariat class? In both cases the answer is maybe but he never explicitly accepts or rejects Marx’s view on these matters .

When we turn to *Faith and Ideology* we find a slightly different situation. There, Segundo spends a great deal of his time discussing Marxism. Segundo, however, is not interested in employing Marxist frameworks. He has profound reservations about the overall approach of Marx. What he is interested in is the essential insights of Marx. What Segundo is attempting to do to both Marxism and theology is to liberate them “from their onesided, superficial, and self-sufficient aspects. Such liberation will go hand in hand with the relativization of both. But to relativize them does not mean to reduce their importance; it means to extract from both the worthwhile, durable, human and diological nucleus they contain.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ *F. Id.*, p. 178.

One of the central claims of Marxism is that dialectical materialism not only sheds light on truth in the world but that its method is scientific. Segundo believes that it is a complete waste of time to speak of dialectics in nature. Nature is simply not dialectical.²⁴⁹ History, however, is dialectical. Four points need to be noted about Segundo's discussion of dialectical materialism. First, by dialectical, Segundo means that moments interact and change.²⁵⁰ It does not necessarily mean that a thesis and an antithesis will inevitably result in a higher synthesis. Dialectics do not work in a mechanistic manner and their outcome cannot be predicted.²⁵¹ He argues that a dialectic based on "realism" and not on "idealism" cannot be deterministic.²⁵² Consequently, he rejects the determinism of Marx's dialectic. Second, Segundo questions the supposed materialism of dialectical materialism.²⁵³ While dialectical materialism is, for the most part, materially based, it is not exclusively so. Change cannot be explained materially. As Arthur McGovern notes, for Segundo "[m]odes of production are not 'material' factors. They involve conscious activity by spiritual persons, and they involve interrelations between persons."²⁵⁴

Third, he believes that Marx's dialectical materialism is a science. Although he is quick to add that like all sciences which are concerned with human beings, it is somewhat imprecise at times.²⁵⁵ Essentially, Segundo

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210. See also pp. 206-209.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

²⁵⁴ McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

²⁵⁵ *F. Id.*, p. 224.

believes it is worthwhile to speak of Marx's dialectical materialism as an ideology because it is concerned with the real world. Unlike Hegel, the opposition does not lie between ideas but between actual human beings.²⁵⁶ But this does not mean that dialectical materialism lies beyond the realm of ideology and faith. Scientific knowledge clearly belongs to the realm of ideology.²⁵⁷ Moreover, a science cannot designate the absolute value of faith that underlies it. It can critique certain absolute values of faith and show them to constitute a "bad faith" insofar as they are inconsistent and incoherent.²⁵⁸ Thus:

a coherent (anthropological) faith does not fall under the imperative jurisdiction of either historical or dialectical materialism. Their data are *hypothetical* with respect to praxis, as I suggested in Part One of this book: *if* you want a society with these particular features, then you must consider the efficacy of this or that set of meditations.²⁵⁹

Fourth, the ultimate truth of dialectical materialism rests on an absolute value of faith. It is not much a cognitive device as it is a tool for socialism. It is able to show members of the proletariat the state of their present situation and what it might be if they began to work toward the goals that dialectical materialism sets for them. Marx's dialectic "does not *explain* the world. Instead it seeks to change the world, to develop it in accordance with a purpose, with a particular conception of meaning and value."²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

The differences between how Segundo and Marx view dialectical materialism become most apparent when Segundo explicitly discusses Marx's analysis of capitalism. Segundo believes that Marx is right when he claims that the proletariat and bourgeois classes are dialectically opposed to one another. But he believes that a higher synthesis will only take place if certain conditions are met. For a revolution to take place the conflict between the bourgeois and proletariat classes must be taken to the extreme. If they do not reach the stage of extreme conflict a higher synthesis will not take place. Consequently, Segundo argues that we should not be surprised that revolution did not take place in many societies as Marx had predicted. Capitalists made changes to avoid "the growth of pauperism and successfully used the old tactic of offering the dominated class the possibility of climbing up a little bit (from proletariat to petty bourgeoisie."²⁶¹ The collapse of capitalism, as a result of the conflicts between the proletariat and bourgeois classes, is not a preordained event for Segundo, as it is for Marx. It is only one of several possible outcomes.

The main problem with Marxism, Segundo contends, is that Marxists do not take Marxism for what it is. Marxism is an ideology. As an ideology it has its limits. Segundo agrees with Marx that in the last instance all elements of the ideological superstructure (including both anthropological faith and ideology) depend on the interests that stem from the mode of economic production. But this is also true of those elements that are in the service of the proletariat as well. Consequently, Marxism itself depended on the mode of production of its age.²⁶² Thus, Segundo

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

argues that the whole of the ideological superstructure does not have to be dismissed. There are always elements of truth that are to be found in it. Marxist are only fooling themselves when they believe that Marxism somehow lies outside the superstructure. In other words, they make the mistake of thinking that Marxism is not an ideology. However, an even bigger mistake that is made on the part of Marxists is that they do not realize that an element of faith is tied to their philosophy as well. Without faith in an absolute value Segundo contends that it is impossible to value one idea over another and this is something that Marxists most certainly do. Segundo is certain that the anthropological faith that Marx held was humanism. It was this humanism that “enabled him in the first instance to place himself in the service of the more human cause while so many others were adapting themselves to the existing ideological structure.”²⁶³ If Marxists understood this then they would also realize “that every absolute must be pondered and realized anew over and over again amid the relativity of history. If we do not do that, if we give into convenience, routine or conservatism, then the absolute in which we say we believe will imperceptibly turn into an idol. It may preserve its earlier label, but it will not be the reality it was before.”²⁶⁴

The problems of late twentieth century South America are not the same as the problems that faced Karl Marx in the nineteenth century. Segundo wants to take those particular elements of Marxism that are applicable to the problems that he is now encountering. That is why one finds a very loose Marxist analysis of capitalism throughout *The Liberation*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

of Theology and Faith and Ideology. In both books he sees the capitalism of South America as the cause of institutionalized and systematic violence. Capitalism has caused a most inequitable distribution of wealth in South America. In the nineteen sixties, Segundo notes that even according to official statistics ninety percent of the national income was distributed among only ten percent of the population.²⁶⁵

The capitalist system of South America also made it very difficult for any real change to occur there. According to Segundo, people gradually caught on to the fact that all the “magical formulas of development” were really nothing more than a big lie.²⁶⁶ Each and every one of the development plans were unable to change the basic injustice of capitalism in South America because of the structural impediments that they faced. But the problems of capitalism in South America are different from the general problems of capitalism. Following the industrial revolution, the ground rules of the market economy enabled capital to impoverish the proletariat in a rather impersonal manner. This impoverishment was carried out until profits or the system itself is threatened.²⁶⁷ Today, Segundo contends that much the same thing is happening between nations. Employing the rules of the international markets to their advantage, developed countries have taken on the role of the capitalist and are impoverishing the countries on the periphery of the system.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ *Lib. Th.*, p. 130.

²⁶⁶ *F. Id.*, p. 278.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 279-280.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

Governments of South American countries are very limited in what they can do. The fact of the matter is that every time a source of capital moves from one country to another it forms political forces of its own. They support these forces economically with foreign capital and these political forces provide foreign capitalists with “the strong arm it needs to discourage temptations to nationalization, sabotage, effective domestic control, excessive taxation, and so forth.”²⁶⁹ Consequently, governments of South American countries have a limited sphere within which they may work. If they attempt to make real change then the government must “clash, at its own expense, with the rules of foreign trade; with the credit-granting powers; with the affluence and permanence of private sources of capital; with multinational producers or middlemen; and beyond the economic sector, with barefaced political and military intervention in one form or another.”²⁷⁰

The brutal form of capitalism that was found in South America during the nineteen sixties continued with institutionalized violence that had existed in South America for years or for centuries.²⁷¹ It was a result of this violence that subversives began to engage in violent action against the state in an effort to rectify the problem. The decision by those who have been oppressed to resort to violence led to further violence. The governments reacted by implementing much more repressive and violent tactics. In gorilla warfare, the revolutionary retains the appearance of being nothing more than a private citizen. Consequently, the government

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

suspects all its citizens and individuals may be persecuted for simply performing an act of kindness for a member of the resistance. This produces a society in which everyone fears persecution even when they have engaged in no revolutionary action themselves.²⁷² The middle class, which basically held a liberal and democratic ideological outlook, supported even further regressive measures and the suspension of democracy because they thought that these measures would restore order and preserve democracy in the long run.²⁷³ Eventually, totalitarian governments were established in which all liberties were curtailed with the exception of the economic realm. The free market was preserved at all costs.²⁷⁴ In South America, people no longer know who to trust and are ever fearful of being labeled as subversive. But this also destroys their humanity. They no longer have any clue how to act and who to trust.²⁷⁵

There can be little doubt that Marx has influenced Segundo's analysis of capitalism in South America a great deal. However, there is considerable difference between the two thinkers as well. Two points of contact exist between Marx's and Segundo's analysis of capitalism. First, there is no doubt that Marx and Segundo are in agreement that a market economy allows capital to impoverish the proletariat in an impersonal manner. In addition, I believe that Segundo is at the very least remaining true to the spirit of Marx, if not the letter, when he claims that developed

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 282-289.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 289-292.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-293. Much of Segundo's discussion is specifically dealing with the situation within Uruguay. However, Segundo is clear that this situation was common throughout South America.

²⁷⁵ *F. Id.*, pp. 297-300.

countries are impoverishing underdeveloped countries in the same manner. Second, in implicitly claiming, as he does throughout his analysis of South America, that the capitalists essentially control the government and possess real power, Segundo is drawing upon the thought of Marx.

At an earlier point in this chapter I claimed that Segundo's analysis of South American capitalism was a bare bones version of Marxism. While it is true that the two points that I just mentioned above are important aspects of Marx's critique of capitalism, other essential aspects of Marx's critique are lacking. Nowhere does Segundo deal with the problem of alienation. For Marx, alienation was the central problem of capitalism. But alienation seems to be of little interest to Segundo because he is working from a different understanding of humanity. If one does not define a human being as labourer that makes things, then it makes little sense to worry about the fact that they do not own the products of their labour *per se*. Segundo may be concerned about the fact that a labourer is economically hard done by because he or she does not own a just share of the products that produced, but he does not believe that their lack of ownership prevents them from fulfilling their species being.

If I am correct in thinking that Segundo places his faith in the value of liberty, Segundo's interest in Marx comes to light. The main problem that Segundo is concerned with in his analysis of the situation in South America is that liberty has been and continues to be impeded throughout the continent. He implicitly suggests that the capitalism of South America is partly, if not entirely, to blame. Moreover, he seems to lend little hope that it will help rectify the problems of South America:

“historical sensitivity in the face of starvation and illiteracy would seem to demand a society that was not ruled by competition and the quest for profit.”²⁷⁶ To put it succinctly, Segundo is interested in certain aspects of Marx’s critique of capitalism, in spite of his anthropological conflict with Marx, because these aspects of Marx’s thought help Segundo to construct an ideology that will realize his absolute value - liberty.

RELIGION AND LIBERATION

Thus far, my discussion of Segundo’s thought has had little to do with topics that are explicitly religious or theological in nature. Important theological issues such as God, Christ, and the historical role of the Christian church have been all but absent. But Segundo is a theologian and we will now turn our intention to more prominent, theological aspects of his thought. An excellent starting point will be the critique of traditional Christian theology and Christian churches in the *Liberation of Theology*. In some ways, this critique is the central concern of that book. He does not wish to deal with liberation as one theme, perhaps even the central theme, amongst others in Christian theology. Rather, liberation is what characterizes the Segundo’s theological methodology. His theology is one that seeks to be liberative when facing a “real-life situation”.²⁷⁷

In order to transform theology into a liberative force, Segundo engages in a polemic, throughout the *Liberation of Theology*, against what he perceives to be traditional Christian theology. In this respect, the title of his book is most suggestive. He wishes to liberate theology in two ways.

²⁷⁶ Segundo, “Capitalism vs. Socialism: Crux Theologica,” p. 255.

²⁷⁷ *Lib. Th.*, p. 9.

First, as Hewitt correctly points out, Segundo is seeking “to liberate theology *from* the strictly metaphysical, *to* the thoroughly historical and political realm of human experience. In other words, Segundo seeks to liberate theology from itself, in the sense of breaking down the distinctions between the metaphysical and historical planes of reality, with the result that all reality and human experience is situated within the historical and social realm of existence.”²⁷⁸ In accomplishing this first liberation, Segundo also liberates theology its “ideological imprisonment as a servant of the economic-political status quo.”²⁷⁹ It is my contention that Segundo, in his effort to “liberate theology”, is on the one hand, drawing upon Marx’s critique of religion to combat “traditional Christianity” and, on the other hand, respond to much of Marx’s critique of religion. The problem with organized religion, Segundo contends, is that theology has always been an ideology that has been unconsciously bound up with the existing social structure.²⁸⁰ Traditional theologians, Segundo contends, have always argued that God is more interested in the non-temporal or that which is absolute and eternal.²⁸¹ They believe that theology is properly carried out by first going back to the Bible, reinterpreting it, and then applying it to reality. Ideas expressed in the Bible are taken at face value as absolute and applicable for all time.²⁸² The problem, Segundo contends, is that these ideas are not absolute, but are rather historical. Ideas do not exist in a

²⁷⁸ Hewitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

²⁷⁹ Harold Wells, “Segundo’s Hermeneutic Circle” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 34 (March 1981), p. 29.

²⁸⁰ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 7-8.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 7

vacuum, but are influenced by historical circumstances and are themselves responding to historical conditions. This is true of theologians, biblical writers, and Jesus himself. Consequently, all ideas, including theology, are ideological in nature. By emphasizing the non temporal character of the Christian message, theologians ignore the fact that they too are influenced by historical forces and present, historical conditions.²⁸³ What they should do, is recognize the historical character of the Christian message and interpret it in light of the present day situation.

A direct consequence of the methodology that traditional theology employs has been its refusal to consciously make political choices. Traditional theologians and church leaders have offered up several arguments as to why Christian churches should take political stands. Some have said that it would be a mistake to take a stand in the name of Christianity since their positions cannot be entirely deduced from revelation.²⁸⁴ Another reason lies in the fact that political choices would be divisive for a church in that some Christians may not agree with the political choice or may even be, as consequence of their position in society (i.e. the bourgeois), attacked by a church.²⁸⁵ The problem with this position is that it assumes that churches can choose not to make a choice. The reality of the matter is that when churches choose not to make a choice they are actually siding with the existing superstructure.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 133, 137.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 132.

The influence of Marx's critique of religion upon Segundo's critique of Christian churches is fairly straightforward. According to Marx, religion is an abstraction that is bound up with the superstructure and supports the existing social structure by distracting men and women from their material conditions. In essence, this is what Segundo is saying about the churches he is attacking. Traditional theology directs men and woman away from the temporal and material conditions toward that which is non-temporal. In doing so, traditional theology unconsciously aids the ruling class' efforts to mask the reality and present economic, social order via an ideological superstructure. What is lacking in Segundo's critique of Christian churches is a discussion of what need churches are presently fulfilling. For Marx, religion is an expression of and a protest against the real suffering that is experienced by the members of the proletariat. While Segundo never explicitly says this, I think that this is the case for him as well. In discussing Marx's critique of religion Segundo does not object to this claim by Marx. What he objects to, as I will discuss in detail later, is that there is no valid role for religion to play following the revolution.

The differences between Marx's and Segundo's critique of religion lead us back to the central differences between the two thinkers. Religion cannot be dismissed just because it is based on a piece of transcendent data - God. Every faith and every ideology, including Marxism, is based upon transcendent data. Consequently, Segundo does not believe that God is a mere projection of humanity as both Marx and, before him, Feuerbach suggest. In fact, Segundo argues that when Marx makes such claims, he is conflict with his own methodology: "There is no more a

relationship between atheism and a materialism consistent with the thought of Marx... than there is between atheism and historical materialism, or atheism and dialectical materialism. That relationship, when it exists at all, must always be played out in the realm of history, not in the realm of metaphysics.”²⁸⁷ Thus, Segundo’s interest in Marx’s critique of religion lies, not in Marx’s dismissal of religion *per se*, but rather in the ability that Marx’s critique provides Segundo with to critique the sort of religion that he does not approve of.

Segundo argues that the type of theology that will not only have a place in the post revolutionary period, but can also be part of the revolution or the force that changes the current socio-economic order, will be one that employs what he calls a *hermeneutic circle* as its methodology. A hermeneutic circle is characterized by four decisive factors.²⁸⁸ First, reality will be experienced in such a way that it leads to ideological suspicion. I think it is fair to say that one could describe this way of experiencing reality as loosely Marxist. That is to say, one looks at material conditions and class relations to understand reality. Second, this ideological suspicion is applied to the entire superstructure and especially to theology. Third, a new way of experiencing theological reality will lead one to suspect that the prevailing interpretations of the Bible have omitted important pieces of data that might lead to a different interpretation. Fourth, is a new hermeneutic that will arise from the first three factors with which Scripture may be interpreted.

²⁸⁷ *F. Id.*, p. 241.

²⁸⁸ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 9-10. See also pp. 11-34.

Segundo implements his hermeneutic circle with his analysis of South America. It is not necessary to repeat our entire discussion of his critique of South American capitalism here. But the reader will recall that what Segundo sees in his analysis is a continent that has been ravaged by capitalism and destroyed by violence. It is from his understanding of South America that Segundo turns to the Bible. There he sees a God that is fundamentally a God of liberation. In the Hebrew Bible, this message is made explicit with God's continual actions on behalf of the people Israel.²⁸⁹ However, he believes that this message is equally present in the New Testament as well. He interprets the message of love and grace to mean that Christians have been infused with such a gratuitous love that they are compelled to help those who are in most need of liberation.²⁹⁰

The next step that Segundo takes is to develop an ideology that makes the value of liberation found in the Bible relevant to the real-life situation South Americans are facing today. Before preceding any further I want to point out the various reasons why Segundo take this step. The first, and most obvious reason is a necessary part of his hermeneutic circle. Second, his understanding of anthropological faith and ideologies when applied to religious faith "assumes that there is an empty space between the conception of God that we receive from our faith and the problems that come to us from an ever-changing history. So we must build a bridge between our conception of God and the real-life problems of history. This bridge, this provisional but necessary system of means and ends is what we

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116.

are calling *ideology* here.”²⁹¹ Third, Segundo argues that the Bible itself demands that this step be taken. As he puts it: “There are things that Jesus *cannot say* because they do not dovetail with the historical situation in which his disciples are living. They could not bear them *now*. When they are spoken by the Spirit, however, they will automatically be converted into ideologies associated with a specific historical situation that renders them comprehensible and useful.”²⁹² In fact, Segundo goes so far as to claim that “Christ freed his church once and for all so that it could devote itself to its commitment and function in history.”²⁹³ The only thing that is absolute is faith and faith itself is meaningless without ideology. Faith, for Segundo, is the freedom to choose an ideology and for him, both the New Testament and his methodology compel him to choose the ideology that will be the most liberating.

There is, I believe, some ambiguity in what Segundo means when he argues that the both the Old Testament and the New Testament espouse the value of liberation. There are two possible meanings. On the one hand, the value of liberation may be one value among many. In other words, it is not the absolute value but rather a value that is part of an ideologies value structure. On other hand, the value of liberation may be the absolute value of faith found in those texts. I am inclined to believe that the latter alternative is the case. In *Faith and Ideologies*, Segundo speaks of Christians who “structure the meaning of the meaning of their lives in accordance with what they *understand* to be the supreme values

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 121. Italics retained.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

conveyed by divine revelation in Jesus Christ".²⁹⁴ By employing the word "understand" Segundo is admitting that we can never really know for sure what the supreme values, or absolute value, of any community's faith is, especially one that existed two thousand years ago. If I am right, then what Segundo is trying to do is to come up with an ideology that will make the faith of the early Christians relevant to the situation that his communities are facing.

Segundo insists, throughout both the works that I am examining, that if Christians churches are going to make the value of liberation relevant in South America, they must develop a political program. While there can be no doubt that Segundo is quite prepared to support a revolution, and a bloody revolution at that,²⁹⁵ he never says that one must occur. Although it is note worthy that he offers a lengthy theological defence against Christians who claim that the moral teachings of Jesus, and especially his teachings on love, prevent them from supporting violence.²⁹⁶ Segundo notes that there are plenty of examples of violence being carried out in the Bible at the behest of God. What is lacking among those Christians who oppose violence in the name of love is a better understanding of love itself and the current state of capitalism in South America.²⁹⁷ For a means, which violence always is, can never be truly be judged on its own. One must look at the end which, for Segundo, most definitely justifies the means. In certain circumstances, love itself demands

²⁹⁴ *F. Id.*, p. 39. Italics added.

²⁹⁵ *Lib. Th.*, p. 173.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-170.

that violence be carried out.²⁹⁸ Moreover, traditional Christians should note that they are only fooling themselves if they believe that the forces of capitalism South America are not committing violence against the lower classes.²⁹⁹

Segundo never explicitly endorse one particular strategy for making the changes to South America that he believes are necessary. He himself states that he “does not propose to offer concrete solutions to problems which vary from place to place and from group to group on our continent. All readers can expect from my recourse to method here are general lines of orientation for the task we cannot postpone: i.e., laying the foundations for a culture that is truly our own, hence flexible as well.”³⁰⁰ But at the very least, he points the way as to how specific strategies should be arrived at. Drawing upon the thought of Vladimir Lenin, he argues that a minority who are immune to mass tendencies, that include living in the immediate and being unaware of the stages that are necessary to escape one’s present predicament, must be involved if change is going to come about in South America.³⁰¹ To claim that such a stand is elitist is merely to play with words, Segundo argues. In reality, masses and minorities are always interacting with one another in the political realm. As he puts it: “There is no politics without the masses. But neither is there any politics without the minorities.”³⁰² For it is the minority that can show the masses that the true reality of the existing socio-economic system is profoundly

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-175.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

³⁰⁰ *F. Id.* p. 320.

³⁰¹ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 216-221.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

unfair and disguised by the ideological superstructure of the ruling class and doing so inject them with a revolutionary consciousness. While it is not possible to permanently raise the consciousness of the masses, one can get a message to them in such a manner that the new forms of conduct that are needed from them will become mechanized.³⁰³ This is the role that the Church can help to perform. In fact, Roger Haight suggests that this is the Christian Church's historical role for Segundo.³⁰⁴ By employing a hermeneutic circle and demonstrating that the message of the Bible is one of liberation, Christians will at least be able to act and escape the present state of affairs in South America.³⁰⁵

Segundo places his faith in the absolute value of liberation. By now, it should be clear that the ideology that Segundo opts for is essentially a Christian one. While this ideology is most certainly influenced by other ideologies, particularly Marxism, it is still Christian in its essence. It is true, as noted earlier, that Segundo embraces Christianity because he believes that the faith espoused in the Bible is liberation. However, this is not the only reason. Ideologies are concerned with realizing values. Thus, Segundo chooses Christianity because he believes it is best suited to realize the value of liberation in South America. Segundo is trying to work out the best way possible to transform the cultural tradition in South America so that the value of liberation is embraced. "We must make a certain basic values-structure almost automatic. On that quasi-automatic structure we

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 221-226.

³⁰⁴ Roger Haight, *An Alternative Vision. An Interpretation of Liberation Theology*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 211.

³⁰⁵ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 228-237.

can then build the needed political ideologies with a certain degree of ease insofar as the use of energy is concerned.”³⁰⁶

Segundo admits that Marxism has the potential to help spread the value of liberation. However, he is quick to point out that there are problems with Marxism as a to transform South American culture.³⁰⁷ Marxism is deemed by most South Americans to be foreign and it is therefore not linked, in the minds of most, to South American culture. Furthermore, Marxism itself is rather esoteric in its nature and therefore, it “does not constitute a mechanism of cultural tradition”.³⁰⁸ Christianity, on the other hand, can avoid these problems. Certainly no one would contend that it is foreign to the culture of South America.³⁰⁹ Still there are problems that it faces too. While Christianity is usually not esoteric, it does run the danger of being overly simplistic and uncritical.³¹⁰ But if it is properly developed and communicated Christianity can serve as an instrument to teach people that they must continually update their ideologies in the face of new problems if they are to remain true to their faith.³¹¹ Segundo opts for Christianity because he believes that it is the best ideology suited to deal with the problems of South America today. If the themes of Christianity are properly developed, as he has attempted to do himself, Christianity will not only be equipped to create the minorities

³⁰⁶ *F. Id.*, p. 321.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 329-334.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-325.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

necessary for politics to occur³¹² and confront not only the problems of capitalism but also the problem of a social ecology that has been destroyed. Ultimately, it seems clear that he wants to see capitalist system replaced with some form of socialism in South America.³¹³

The issue of a revolution raises three important points with regard to Segundo's appropriation of Marx. First, it is of note that while Segundo is prepared to support a revolution in South America, it is questionable as to whether he believes a revolution is absolutely necessary and/or the inevitable outcome of the capitalist system. For as far as I can tell, there is no place where he states that a revolution is the *only* solution to the problem. It would seem that this ambiguity in Segundo's book is symptomatic of the fact that Segundo does not buy into the historical determinism of Marx. At no point do I find Segundo employing dialectical materialism to explain why a revolution is absolutely necessary. Thus, while much of Marx's class analysis informs Segundo's discussion, it would seem that Marx's determinism does not. Second, Segundo himself believes that Marx's doctrine of the spontaneous uprising of the proletariat is at best ambiguous if not totally flawed. Third, he does agree with Marx's claims, at least in some instances, that violence is justified to bring about the downfall of a capitalist society.

³¹² Dennis P. McCann, *Christian Realism and Liberation Theology. Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981), p. 216.

³¹³ McGovern has correctly pointed out that Segundo is more critical of the socialist option in *Faith and Ideologies*. This certainly is not the case in *The Liberation of Theology*. However, I am convinced, not so much by any one particular passage but by the overall thrust of the book, that even in *Faith and Ideologies* Segundo ultimately sides with the socialism. See McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

Second, Segundo believes that there is not only a valid role for religion to play in humanity but that there is also a valid role for religion in the revolutionary process. In fact, he explicitly attacks Marx on his inconsistency with regard to religion and the other ideological elements that make up the superstructure.³¹⁴ In Marx's writings, Segundo contends, "philosophy can *make* errors and undoubtedly has made them many times; but religion *is* an error, a unique and universal illusion, a barrier to any and all significant social change."³¹⁵ Thus, one is forced to ask whether religion has arisen solely as an ideological and superstructural form from the division of labour as Marx seems to imply by negating it completely from the post-revolutionary period. But it is also possible that there is a positive role for religion to play in the post-revolutionary period as is the case for art and philosophy. For Segundo, the latter is most certainly the case.

Religion does indeed have the power to bring about a revolution. In the *Liberation of Theology* it is that Segundo believes that church leaders and Christian intellectuals can serve as an intellectual class. While it is true that Segundo believes that other members of society can also serve this function, in that book Segundo is concerned with the role Christians have to play. He is, after all, a theologian. Obviously, Segundo is in serious conflict with Marx by the simple fact that Segundo allows religion to play a role in a revolution. This disagreement between Marx and Segundo stems from their disagreement over how they conceive humanity. To put it succinctly, Segundo's anthropological categories of faith and

³¹⁴ *Lib. Th.*, pp. 58-60.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59. Italics retained.

ideology allow religion to play a positive and meaningful role in the lives of men and women, while Marx always sees religion as alienating and dehumanizing.

The disagreement over religion is small in comparison to Marx's and Segundo's difference of opinion over the necessity of either a revolution or the need for an intellectual vanguard class. On the issue of an intellectual vanguard class, we may recall from the first chapter that while Marx allows for such a class to emerge and aid in the fostering of revolutionary consciousness among the members of the proletariat class, an intellectual vanguard class is not necessary for the proletarian or communist revolution to take place. But according to Segundo, an intellectual vanguard class is necessary. He argues "what is essential to the rise of a revolutionary consciousness is not belonging to this or that social class but *the potential to being immune to mass tendencies*"³¹⁶ and it is the equivalent of a intellectual vanguard class that is immune to mass tendencies in Segundo's thought.

Marx's and Segundo's conflict over the necessity of an intellectual vanguard class is intimately tied to their dispute over the necessity and inevitability of the proletarian or communist revolution. For Marx, the laws of dialectical materialism make the revolution inevitable. But Segundo does not fully embrace dialectical materialism. Human beings are not defined by Segundo through their labour and thus, for him the conflict between classes that emerges in each epoch as result of the division of labour is not the engine that drives history as it is for Marx. If a

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218. Italics added.

revolution is going to come about an intellectual vanguard class is necessary.

Segundo is not convinced that a revolution is required in South America. Here again, Segundo's rejection of Marx's claim that men and women are defined through their labour, frames their debate on the question of the revolution. Segundo simply does not see the problem of alienation from one's labour as a central issue. He simply wishes to see a society that is truly free emerge in South America. He wants a society where people are no longer impoverished and subject to systematic violence. While it is true, as I have already argued, that he believes socialism has a much better chance of bringing this about than any form of capitalism that is realistically attainable in South America, he is not dogmatic about the matter. Private property does not have to be eliminated for Segundo as it does for Marx. Furthermore, Segundo never argues that a revolution is necessary to bring a revolution about as Marx does.

I believe that Segundo's reluctance to call for, in all situations, the abolition of private property through a violent revolution stems from the failure of such revolutions in the twentieth century to produce anything that remotely resembles the utopian vision of Marx. In short, Segundo has faced the facts of history and realized that the elimination of private property does not necessarily bring domination to an end.³¹⁷ But he believes that there is a way to do this. Segundo's proposal to bring domination and poverty to an end stems from how he understands human beings. Men and women are beings of faith and ideologies. Thus, what is

³¹⁷ *F. Id.*, pp. 262-263.

necessary, is to get the population to embrace the value of liberty in an act of a faith and then develop an ideology to realize the value of liberty. He is convinced that the Christian tradition represents the best vehicle to accomplish this goal.

CONCLUSION

In the previous two chapters I have engaged in a detailed discussion of how Jürgen Moltmann and Juan Luis Segundo dialogue with Marx. However, I have yet to attempt to bring Moltmann and Segundo together. While the scope of this study prevents a full fledged comparison of these two thinkers, I believe a few general observations of the similarities and differences on how Moltmann and Segundo encounter Marx would prove worthwhile. My comparison of Moltmann and Segundo will be framed around the division of topics in the previous two chapters. Those topics are: the analysis of capitalism, the critique of religion, the method of liberation, and philosophical anthropology. Before dealing with these topics I would like to deal with the broader issue of how these two thinkers do theology.

Speaking in general terms one could say, without much exaggeration, that Moltmann is much more of a theologian than Segundo is. While both men show an interest in developing a theology that responds to suffering and injustice in the world, they do so from very different perspectives. Moltmann, in many ways, stands very much within the Christian tradition. As Chopp points out, “for Moltmann, Christianity interprets suffering, but suffering does not interpret Christianity.”³¹⁸ The same cannot be said of Segundo. It is true that Segundo spends some time talking about the sorts of things that typically interest theologians. Thus we find Segundo dealing with such topics as Christian love and the sacrament.

³¹⁸ Chopp, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

However, his approach to these topics is radically different from traditional theology. His

theology is radical in its implications because his methodology goes to the very root of fundamental theological principles, and reverses them, *radically*. At the centre of Segundo's theology are notions that stress the primacy of human praxis in the historical process of liberation, over all theological concepts, which become necessarily subordinate to praxis. Theological reflection can only be secondary to the concrete demands of each historical epoch. The result is that Segundo thoroughly politicizes and historicizes Christian theology, including the gospels, to the point that their specific theological (not religious) dimensions all but disappears.³¹⁹

The overall difference between the way in which Segundo and Moltmann do theology revolves around the concern that each shows for *praxis*. While there can be no doubt that both Segundo and Moltmann are interested in developing theologies that respond to the very real problems of this world, a large gulf exists between these two thinkers over the question of how much emphasis is to be placed on *praxis*. There is no doubt that Hewitt is correct when she states that Segundo subordinates theological concepts to *praxis*. Indeed, I think that this is the entire point of the hermeneutic circle that Segundo develops in *The Liberation of Theology*.³²⁰ Can the same be said for Moltmann? While Moltmann is certainly aware that when the Bible "is read in the light of the experiences and hopes of the oppressed, the Bible's revolutionary themes - promise,

³¹⁹ Hewitt, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Italics retained. Indeed, Hewitt herself admits some discomfort in referring to Segundo as a theologian. See p. 10.

³²⁰ Segundo, *Lib. Th.*, ch. 1, pp. 7-38.

exodus, resurrection and Spirit - come alive",³²¹ his own treatment of these themes is not subordinated to *praxis*. Clearly, in Moltmann's theology, *praxis* remains secondary to theological reflection. In what follows, I will argue that the varying level of importance that Moltmann and Segundo attribute to *praxis* significantly colours the way in which they encounter Marx.

The difference between Moltmann's and Segundo's overall approach to Marx, specifically, and theology in general may be best reflected in the way that each of them responds to and appropriates Marx's critique of capitalism. In discussing Segundo, I argued that his analysis of capitalism was a "bare bones" version of Marx's critique of capitalism. While he acknowledged, at least in *Faith and Ideologies*, that capitalist society is composed of two fundamental classes, the bourgeois class and the proletariat class, which are in dialectically opposed to one another, his interest does not lie in critiquing capitalism *per se* but in responding to the problems of South American capitalism. Consequently, there is no discussion of Marx's concept of alienation which is, as I argued in the first chapter, central to his critique of capitalism. While Segundo's discussion of Marx's methodology is reasonably sophisticated and at certain points detached from practical considerations, it can be seen as a practical exercise in the sense that Segundo is, indirectly, arguing with the Marxists of South America in this discussion over what the problem is. His interest in Marx then lies in the ability of Marxism, at least in spirit, to explain the

³²¹ *Ch.P.S.*, p. 17.

systematic exploitation and domination of South American countries which lie in the periphery by the developed countries of the West.

Moltmann's interest in Marx's critique of capitalism lies much more in the philosophical nature of Marx's critique. In contrast to Segundo, Moltmann is very much concerned with Marx's understanding of the nature of alienation that is found in capitalist societies. Moltmann agrees with Marx's understanding of the alienation that is found in capitalist societies and with the overall thrust of Marx's critique of capitalism. What Moltmann does not agree with, is the emphasis that Marx places upon his analysis of capitalism. Alienation is not isolated to the phenomena of labour but is found in many different aspects of life and its form is different in each society. If Moltmann's and Segundo's analysis of capitalism are contrasted with one another, the differences between the two thinkers should be obvious. While Segundo is centrally concerned with the practical problems of South American capitalism, Moltmann never discusses any one particular instance of capitalism and is more interested in the philosophical aspects of Marx's critique of capitalism.

The parallels between Moltmann and Segundo become much sharper in their appropriation of Marx's critique of religion. Both Moltmann and Segundo employ Marx's critique of religion against the type of Christianity they are arguing against. Traditional Christian churches, Moltmann and Segundo argue, have, despite their proclaimed neutrality, been supporting the interest of the bourgeois class. By not taking sides, churches in fact ally themselves with the status quo. But the emphasis of Moltmann's argument is different than that of Segundo's discussion.

Moltmann's appropriation of Marx's criticisms of religion is tied to Moltmann's discussion of religion's banishment to the private realm. If religion remains confined to the private realm, then it effectively serves as the *opium of the masses*. While there is no reason to believe that Segundo would not agree with Moltmann's claim that religion must play a role in the public realm, Segundo does not frame his discussion of Marx's criticism of religion in this way. Rather, Segundo focuses upon Marx's claim that religion is an abstraction and ties this to Segundo's overall argument that theology needs to be liberated from metaphysical abstractions and become concerned with the practical problems of the world.

While Moltmann would agree with Segundo's claim that religions should become more concerned with the practical problems of history, he certainly does not want to shelve the metaphysical aspects of theology. The difference between Moltmann and Segundo on this matter is expressed in their reaction to Marx's argument that God is nothing more than a projection of alienated humanity. Segundo all but ignores Marx's argument and is simply interested in Marx's methodological flaw in this regard. In contrast, Moltmann spends a great deal of time explicitly responding to Marx's charge and one could argue that his entire conception of God is, at least in part, a response to Marx.

Closely tied to Moltmann's and Segundo's responses to criticism of religion made by Marx are differing claims of how Christianity can serve as a liberative force within the world. Both Moltmann and Segundo argue that Christian churches cannot be content to be bystanders in the

political realm and that Christian churches ought to be fighting for the rights of the oppressed and the poor in the political realm. However, each of them goes about making this argument in quite a different way. Moltmann, for his part, reflects upon the meaning of the resurrection, the crucifixion and the Spirit to develop a theological basis for Christian activism in the world today. While it is true that Segundo spends sometime reflecting upon a few traditional themes of Christianity, such as Christian love, he spends much more time confronting the problems that are preventing actual change in South America from being brought about. The problem that he sees with Christians is that it has not accepted that Christianity is an ideology that needs to be transformed if it is going to realize the values of the faith, as he understands them, of the New Testament. But Segundo recognizes that there are no easy answers to the problems of South America today, and consequently, he does not prescribe one solution. Instead, he tells South Americans that they should be practical. In some circumstances a revolution would be called for if it can accomplish what other methods cannot, while in others circumstances change may be brought about in other ways. Christianity also possesses the ability to spread the values that may make a populace more willing to embrace change.

Clearly both Segundo and Moltmann agree capitalism is a problem. Moreover, both see Christian churches serving as an intellectual vanguard class to further the struggle against capitalism. Segundo argues that capitalism must be replaced, and by a revolution if necessary, with a socialist system if the problems that are facing South America are to be

resolved. In the case of Moltmann, it is difficult to determine what he believes should be done. There is never a practical discussion of the practical problems of capitalism in a specific situation and one is left wondering how important the termination of capitalism is today. While it is true that he sees the future, historical kingdom of God as being a society in which the problems of capitalism have been resolved, it is not clear what he wants to do about the problem now. Certainly he is not advocating a world wide communist revolution and even though he does say in some circumstances a violent revolution may be necessary, he does not bother to tell us what those circumstances are. Moreover, Moltmann never offers any practical advice of how Christian churches might go about changing the world in which we live.

The issue of liberation most definitely demonstrates the different levels importance that these two theologians place on *praxis*. Segundo is not as concerned with developing a theological justification for liberating action in the world, as he is concerned with developing a response to the problems of South America. In contrast, Moltmann is very much concerned with re-exploring traditional themes of Christian theology and developing a new theology that is able to respond to the problems of this world, but does not actually provide a concrete response. It is sometimes dangerous to explain the content of a person's work by the context out of which they were writing but I believe that this best explains the difference between Moltmann and Segundo over the question of praxis. Segundo makes it very clear that while the methodology he is employing has universal implications, he is addressing the specific problems of South

America in his implementation of that methodology. And we may note that these problems are more pressing than the problems that are facing a theologian living and working in Western Europe. Moreover, Moltmann himself admits that he is addressing the problems that he is encountering in his own society and does not make any pretensions to speak for those, such as Christians in South America, whose situation is vastly different from his. As puts it:

my experiences of this new situation are European experiences, and my way of expressing them is shaped by Western and German traditions. So I have deliberately restrained myself and have said little about the situation of people in 'Third World' countries, not because I think that they are unimportant but because we can hear theologians from the 'Third World' speak on these questions themselves. But I am convinced that the community of theologians, Christians and human beings in this one but divided world is strongest when each begins from his or her own situation.³²²

Ultimately, the broad differences between Moltmann and Segundo that I have been discussing stem from their differences over philosophical anthropology. Segundo conceives of human beings as beings of faith and ideology. These anthropological categories are fundamentally oriented toward *praxis*. They are concerned with the setting and attaining of goals. Consequently, it should not surprise us that Segundo is interested in discussing the impediments to and the strategies to realize liberty in South America. Moltmann defines human beings as being made in the image of God. His conception of human beings is fundamentally theological. As a

³²² Moltmann, *Creating a Just Future. The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, translated by John Bowden, (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), pp. vii-viii.

result, he re-examines the traditional themes of theology and employs these themes in a metaphysical discussion of the problems of contemporary capitalism. Thus, it would seem that the general differences between Moltmann and Segundo are, as were the differences between each of these thinkers and Marx, a matter of conflicting anthropologies.

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