

*THE SITUATION:* This thinksheet addresses liberation theology vis-a-vis a peril and a possibility. The peril is the danger of captivity to an anti-theistic ideology, viz. Feuerbach/Marx dialectical materialism. (In crushing the French worker-priest movement, the Vatican included in its defense the fact of the conversion of priests to atheism.) The possibility is that process thinking may form a fresh bond between political radicalism, whose roots are primarily biblical, and personal theism, whose roots are almost exclusively biblical. The irritation and worry behind this thinksheet is my observation that most of the written "liberation theology"--black, female, hispanic, even gay, and red--uses God more than it serves him: the energy, vision, shape, the thrust are not, broadly, the movement of God the Liberator in nature and history, but, narrowly, within that movement, a powerful but perverse and self-canceling, because antihuman as well as prohuman, ideology, viz. "Marxism." My conviction is (1) that "the movements" need not be captive to this ideology, though they may and should sometimes make common cause with it, and (2) that we Christians should shape a liberation-theology evangelism for movement people, i.e., go aggressive for a more adequate, less constricted politics of liberation. Toward this end, below are comments on three books.

1. "Sinful men have lost the simple possibility of doing things which are wholly right" (112), says Alan Richardson in his *THE POLITICAL CHRIST* [Westminster/73]. 111: "In some politically backward countries no action other than armed revolt can bring about change, but elsewhere political initiatives are still possible." A beautifully balanced book on Jesus and violence, distinguishing (state) force and (antistate) violence, and dissociating Jesus from both conformism and zealotry.

2. Jose Miranda's *MARX AND THE BIBLE: A CRITIQUE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF OPPRESSION* [Orbis/74] is by one who says he's "Christian, not Marxist." We need--he says after a real go at the biblical commentaries--to learn to read the Bible with fresh eyes, freed from captivity to capitalism....I'd put it this way: Capitalism in its traditional Western form split God into angel [privatized religion, "piety"] and capitalist [sacred sanction for business-industrial-political realities]. The theological task is to cure God of this schizoid condition which has made him vulnerable vis-a-vis both the historical [viz., to atheism in its Feuerbach-Marxist form] and the transcendent [viz., the antihistorical Eastern philosophies which deny the Creator/creation relationship as substantive and blasphemously conclude that mind is all and "I am God"]. In short, I see the need for and a way to address, in the same action, the perverse theologies of militancy and the perverse theologies of mysticism.

3. And the third book is Joseph T. Culliton's *A PROGRESSIVE WORLD VIEW FOR PRAGMATIC CHRISTIANS* [Phil.Library/75]--a Canadian Catholic bringing Dewey and Teilhard (the author being fundamentally a Teilhardian) into fruitful confrontation. [If T. had not been, professionally, an earth-digger, and D. not a philosopher, I might call this a marriage of heaven--T.'s mystical-total transcendentalism--and earth--D.'s naturalistic pragmatism.] Bicentennial note: America may now, after the Watergate/Vietnam humbling-chastening, be ready to add to its go-go utilitarian-triumphalist self-understanding the tragic-transcendent notes of older cultures [in this case, Whitehead's essentially British "process," and Teilhard's essentially French-Catholic spirituality]. P.1: "Neither humanistic nor naturalistic thought necessarily imply the rejection of a personal God." Transcendent and natural faith can and should enrich each other, corresponding with our human dual nature. Each form of faith (I add), in alienation from the other, is sick and sinful [incurvatus, curved in on itself both by its imperial-comprehensive claims and by its consequent self-cancellation].