1980.10
(copy also in 1981 as 1981.6)

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

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Madison, N.J.

February, 1981

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Introductory Remarks:

First of all, I want to emphasize the importance of the order of the terms "Christian-Jewish" in my title. It is not my aim here to speak for the Jewish community in its relation to Christianity, but to deal with the way Christians understand and relate to Judaism.

Next, I wish to acknowledge Rosemary Ruether's statement in her essay "Latin American Theology of Liberation and the Birth of a Planetary Humanity"[1] to the effect that "Europeans and North Americans, who remain encompassed by their own status as beneficiaries of oppressive power, can only comment upon this theology from outside."

But granting my outsider status as to the situation that has produced Latin American Liberation Theology, I do not wish to concede that this automatically disqualifies my attempt to analyze and understand and criticize liberation theology. I ask to be judged by my praxis and not by what one might assume is my a priori point of departure. For like Paulo Freire and Martin Buber before him, I am committed to the view that dialogue across differences is genuine communication, rather than a conversation between two people whose refusal to acknowledge differences amounts to a strange kind of monologue that suggests a degree of ideological thought control.

Having said that, I must name the theologians of liberation whose works have demanded my response. In this I dissociate myself from Schubert Ogden's approach in his book Faith and Freedom in which he frankly speaks to, and criticizes, a certain "ideal type" of liberation theology insofar as, in his view, particular theologies of liberation "typically" fail to perform, or "typically" do perform, in certain ways.[2] Rather than engage particular works of liberation theologians at the point of their own specific intention, Ogden created a straw man with his "ideal type" and then proceeded to demonstrate its inadequacies. With his concluding proposition to the effect that the only radically free theology is one that is "free for all positions precisely because it is also free from all positions,"[3] Ogden took a stand in the posture of disengagement from which Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo, and Jose Miguez Bonino have radically dissociated themselves precisely as theologians of liberation.

Gutierrez's A Theology of Liberation appears to me to be the loci communes of Latin American liberation theology, while Bonino's Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation represents perhaps the most significant Protestant apology for it and Segundo's The Liberation of Theology the most important methodological account of it.

I propose first, to offer my view of the basic intention and the reflective intentionality, that is to say, the praxis and the rationale for, liberation theology as represented by these three theologians. Next, I shall discuss their use of

paradigms or models for the meaning of liberation that appear in their interpretation of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures as they seek to apply these scriptures to the task of Christian obedience, to orthopraxis, rather than to orthodoxy. In the course of this discussion I shall identify problematic elements in their hermeneutical performance as they interpret the Exodus event, the encounter of Jesus with the Pharisees as reported in the gospels, and as they view the history of salvation, praxis and the new humanity. Finally, I shall offer suggestions for a more fruitful hermeneutical procedure, one more commensurate with the basic intention of liberation theology while at the same time hopefully offering an opening from the side of Christianity to a possible meaningful dialogue with Jewish theology.

1. The Basic Intention/Intentionality of Liberation Theology

Liberation theology, as represented by Gutierrez, Bonino and Segundo is written as a reflection on the highly intentional, revolutionary activity of seeking justice in terms of basic human well-being for the poor of Latin America. It takes its departure from the horrendous brute facts of the lives of poor people. In his summary of a United Nations Report Bonino stressed the following items:

> Two-thirds, if not more, of the Latin American population are physically undernourished to the point of starvation . . . .
>
> Three-fourths of the population in several Latin American countries are illiterate; in the others, from 20 to 60 percent . . . .

> One-half of the Latin American population are suffering from infectious or deficiency diseases. . . .
>
> About one-third of the Latin American working population [particularly the great majority of the millions of Indian laborers] continue to remain outside the economic, social, and cultural pale of the Latin American community. The consuming power of the Latin American Indian is in many areas almost nil . . . .
>
> An overwhelming majority of the Latin American agricultural population is landless. Two-thirds, if not more, of the agricultural, forest, and livestock resources of Latin America are owned or controlled by a handful of native landlords and foreign corporations . . . .
>
> Most of the extractive industries in Latin America are owned or controlled by foreign corporate investment, a considerable portion of the profits being taken out of the various countries. In like fashion, many of the institutions of production and distribution in Latin America are controlled by absentee foreign capital. [American investment in L.A. between 1950-65 adds up to 3.8 billion dollars; benefits transferred to U.S.A. in that period 11.3 billion; deducting foreign aid in that period there is a net of 5 billion dollars favorable to the U.S.A. Lately also most banks and financial institutions in many countries have been bought by foreign banks] . . . .
>
> Living conditions for the bulk of the Latin American population are particularly unstable, being dependent on the fluctuations of the foreign market. Concentration on one extractive industry or on monocultural production . . .for foreign consumption . . . has brought many areas to the verge of economic ruin . . . .
>
> Intra- and inter-Latin American trade is largely undeveloped . . . .
>
> Except for Columbia, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, the percentage of 'active' or gainfully employed people is considerably lower in Latin America than in the U.S.A. and on the European continent . . . .

Bonino does not mention in this context the spiraling inflation that has literally wiped out the buying power of the masses of the poor in many Latin American countries. Neither do the

sentences of the U.N. report cited by him even begin to convey the horrorible realities of human suffering and anguish that they purport to symbolize. They represent the unacceptable reality of the human condition in Latin America, the exploitation and injustices harbored by a social system that keeps the land, the wealth, and the resources and means of production in the hands of a relatively few people.

To be confronted by these facts and at the same time to be made aware that they are not absolutely necessary is to be called to action. If one believes that a fundamental alteration of the social system could have a transforming impact on both the means of production and the decisions about what to produce to meet basic needs, that better health care, better nutrition through a healthier diet, that education for participation in the tasks of society and for assuming responsibility for one's own destiny as a people are real possibilities for the peoples of Latin America, then of course these obvious human needs and the Christian mandate put in the words of the Lord of the last judgment according to Matthew: "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me" converge in a call to change that life-destroying social system to a life-nurturing one. This is the basic intention of liberation theology.

Where the awareness of human needs and responsibility under the scriptural identification of the Lord of the universe with the hungry and the needy of this world occur in the same

consciousness there is an immediate impulse to action on behalf of the needy. That is the meaning of orthopraxis. On this issue there can be no neutrality, no disengagement that would not mean moral failure. If the Lord so identifies with these poor and is thus committed to the meeting of these basic needs, how dare we who name Jesus as the Christ and Our Lord not be so committed and so engaged? Thus faith means the practice of changing the fundamental conditions of human life for the poor of Latin America.

Theology is the critical reflection on this praxis. This is to say that it is the self-conscious intentionality that aims to meet these human needs through necessary structural changes in the very fabric of society. For these structural changes faith will seek the necessary cognitive tooks for re-conceiving and efficiently re-organizing the basic human social, economic and political relationships. For Bonino,[5] Segundo,[6] and Gutierrez[7] Marxism, not as a whole, but in significant ingredients such as the view of class struggle, belief in the necessity of force to remove the oppressive class structure, and the imperative to change reality offers ideological tools for the project of social revolution. Both Bonino[8] and Segundo[9] recognize the limitations of Marxism, but they are not about to deny the convergence of intentionality between the Marxist ideology of revolution and the basic imperative of Christian faith understood as orthopraxis. If St. Anselm could view theology as "faith seeking understanding," these theologians view it as faith seeking appropriate cognitive

tools for reconceiving and changing the basic life-world of humanity in Latin America.

In the following discussion I hope to make it plain that I stand with these theologians in their basic intention and that I am prepared to accept those fundamental changes in international and intra-national relations that would necessarily accompany the formation of socialist societies in Latin America with whom our government and our corporations will have to negotiate just as they now do with the socialist and communist governments of Europe and Asia. But I will beg to differ with them in their intentionality, that is to say, in their theological reflection on their basic intention. I believe that there are other cognitive and ideological tools and alternative germinal insights and understandings of sacred scripture as well as alternative actions to military violence that could be employed for the task of reconceiving and reconstituting human social institutions.

2. Paradigms or Models of Liberation Theology

Liberation theology is radical Christian theology, which is to say, theology that recognizes the necessity for reforming the received institutions of Christianity and reconceiving the Church's dogmatic structures and the assumptions for traditional praxis so that the Church can be an effective witness to redemption and agent of social renewal. As radical theology it makes the claim to appropriate the roots of the faith more authentically, because the radical questionability of the structures of

of injustice lends itself to a clearer understanding of the world-challenging character of the gospel.

The key paradigmatic ingredients furnishing the structure of plausibility for liberation theology are: (a) Biblical ideas and images of liberation; (b) the history of salvation understood as on one plane with all history; (c) praxis and (d) the new humanity.

(a) Biblical Ideas and Images of Liberation

1. Jesus and the Exodus as Paradigms of Liberation: Intention

Appropriately, Gutierrez's starting point for his discussion of the theological meaning of liberation is St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5, verse 1: "For freedom Christ has set us free." He affirms at the outset Jesus' character as liberator and thus liberation as the human ethical-political consequence of salvation.[10] Gutierrez then identifies what he calls "three reciprocally interpenetrating levels of meaning of the term 'liberation'."

First of all, he asserts that "liberation expresses the aspiration of oppressed peoples and social classes, emphasizing the conflictual aspect of the economic, social and political process which puts them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes"[11] . . .

He goes on to say that, "At a deeper level, liberation can be applied to an understanding of history. Man is seen as assuming conscious responsibility for his own destiny. This understanding provides a dynamic context and broadens the horizons of the desired social changes"[12] . . . .

A third approach leads to the Biblical sources in which "Christ is presented as the one who brings us liberation. Christ the savior liberates man from sin, which is the ultimate root of all disruption of friendship and of all injustice and oppression. Christ makes man truly free, that is to say, he enables man to live in communion with him; and this is the basis for all human brotherhood."[13]

But here a definite ambivalence appears in Gutierrez's discussion of the Biblical model for liberation. On the one hand, Christ is affirmed as the perfection of the liberating process, which seems to be his version of traditional Christian triumphalism, and on the other hand, the Exodus of Israel from Egypt is accorded the status of paradigmatic for the meaning of liberation. Of Christ, Gutierrez writes:

> In Christ the all-comprehensiveness of the liberating process reaches its fullest sense. His work encompasses the three levels of meaning which we mentioned above. A Latin American text on the missions seems to summarize this assertion accurately: 'All the dynamism of the cosmos and of human history, the movement towards the creation of a more just and fraternal world, the overcoming of social inequalities among men, the efforts so urgently needed on our continent, to liberate man from all that depersonalizes him--physical and moral misery, ignorance and hunger--as well as the awareness of human dignity (Gaudium et Spes, no. 22), all these originate, are transformed, and reach their perfection in the saving work of Christ.[14]

Here Gutierrez echoes in terms of liberation theology The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church from Vatican II where that document finds in Christ "a new and perfect covenant" which creates "the new people of God" and is related to the preparatory people Israel as imperishable seed to perishable

seed, as fulfillment to preparation, as spirit to flesh.[15] Thus the traditional supersessionist line of dogmatic thinking was reaffirmed at Vatican II and is apparently endorsed by Guttierez. But, unlike the Vatican II document, which went on to deal with New Testament images and meanings of the Church, Gutierrez double-backed to find in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt the primary Biblical paradigm for the meaning of liberation. As he put it:

> The Exodus experience is paradigmatic. It remains vital and contemporary due to similar historical experiences which the people of God undergo. As [André] Neher writes, it is characterized 'by the twofold sign of the overriding will of God and the free and conscious consent of men.' In Christ and through the Spirit, men are becoming one in the very heart of history, as they confront and struggle against all that divides and opposes them. But the true agents of this quest for unity are those who today are oppressed (economically, politically, culturally) and struggle to become free. Salvation--totally and freely given by God, the communion of men with God and among themselves--is the inner force and the fulness of this movement of man's self-generation which was initiated by the work of creation.[16]

This ambivalence of Gutierrez is true of other liberation theologians as well.

In his book Juan Segundo refers to "Christ as the supreme revelation of God" who "shows us a specific way of structuring our lives for the sake of love,"[17] but then proceeds to reinforce the paradigmatic status of the Exodus as follows:

> Insofar as content is concerned, liberation theology is known to have a preference and a partiality for the Old Testament in general, and for the Exodus event in particular. The reason for this is clear enough. The Old Testament, and the Exodus event in particular, show us two central elements completely fused into one: i.e. God, the liberator and the political process of liberation

> which leads the Israelites from bondage in Egypt to the promised land. In no other portion of scripture does God the liberator reveal himself in such close connection with the political plane of human existence.[18]

By comparison with the Exodus story, Segundo finds both Jesus and Paul and almost all the other writings of the New Testament seeming to focus on interpersonal relationships and forgetting "liberation vis a vis political oppression."[19] I find this stated preference for the Exodus event as paradigm rather remarkable in view of the fact that Segundo and Gutierrez have largely ignored the rabbinic tradition and contemporary Jewish understanding of the Exodus event, as Leon Klenicki pointed out in an unpublished paper on "Present Ideological Currents in the Catholic Church: The Theology of Liberation."

However one-sided Segundo might appear to Jewish scholars, he has indeed made a very significant confession of faith. In the Exodus the liberator God was revealed in a fashion that created a concrete historical community, which is to say that a people came to self-understanding as a people through the Exodus and confirmed that self-understanding by identifying the God of the Exodus with the God who both gave the Torah, (the commandments to be obeyed,) and the promise of the land; and this God of the Exodus, the Torah and the promise of the land was in turn identified with the Creator of heaven and earth, as the very structure of Psalm 136 so beautifully illustrates. The Hebrew roots of Christian faith could not therefore be more obvious. If Segundo really meant and still means what he wrote here, it seems to me that he finds both the substance and the

historical basis for liberation theology in the Hebrew scriptures, and, if he really takes it seriously, he should grant the spiritual and historical validity of the faithful self-understanding of the whole Jewish tradition which stands in unbroken historical connection with this event through its teaching, its call to personal commitment as in the passover seder and in its moments of communal worship.

If liberation theology were less ambivalent about Judaism and more consistent with its own premise in the Exodus event, it would give greater prominence in its hermeneutical efforts to those passages in the New Testament which cherish the Exodus event, and which specifically identify Jesus Christ with the Israel of the Exodus. It could then follow the lead of St. Paul who could say of Israelites, his kinsmen, "to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises;" (Romans 9:4). Here is a New Testament basis for recognizing the full validity of Jewish religion. Further, the Gospel of Matthew might be appreciated more in terms of the Hebrew meaning of sonship as the word of God to Moses put it in Exodus 4:22f.: "Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me.'" In this context, that is, in the faith of the Matthean community, Jesus was called "Son of God" because he embodied Israel, the first-born son of God, and as such was the servant messiah. See Matthew 2:15.

2. Jesus as a Model for Liberation Theology: Intentionality

The factor that lends special force to Segundo's ambivalence toward the Hebrew roots of Christian faith is his interpretation of the New Testament accounts of Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees as a Biblical model for liberation theology. In effect Jesus is portrayed as one whose teachings based on then present experience liberated his followers from the allegedly traditional past-oriented teachings of the Pharisees.[20] In Segundo's view the Pharisees placed the demands of theology before the urgent problems of the present and so they represent for him the obstructive, or counter-liberation theology of the status quo, which by-passes "the human entirely."[21] He finds European political theology pursuing the same strategy--namely deriving politics from theological sources, "whereas the theology of Jesus derives theology from the openness of the human heart to man's most urgent problems."[22] Karl Rahner is specifically named as one whose theological strategy repeats that of the Pharisees, as interpreted by Segundo,[23] so in the tradition of Martin Luther's dealing with Roman Catholic opponents in his day,[24] Segundo seeks to undercut the credibility of his opponents by pointing out how "Pharisaic" they are.

Segundo's interpretation of the theology of Jesus is offered as an illustration of his own conception of the "hermeneutical circle." According to Segundo there are two preconditions for such a circle:

> They are: (1) profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation; (2) a new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching. These two preconditions mean that there must in turn be four decisive factors in our circle. Firstly, there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. Secondly, there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. Thirdly, there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. Fourthly, we have our new hermeneutic, that is, our new way of interpreting the fountainhead of our faith (i.e., Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal.[25]

In the four steps of Segundo's hermeneutical circle one can discern the three levels of meaning of liberation according to Gutierrez as cited above.[26] The present experience and awareness of oppression in its various manifestations in the economic, social and political processes (level one) is then informed by a historical understanding of liberation that seeks to assume responsibility for one's own destiny (level two) and so (at level three) the Bible is approached for paradigms and models of liberation. Segundo takes these three interpenetrating levels of meaning and breaks them down into a four-step procedure that questions present reality for the purpose of gaining a new conception of reality, and in that a new way of interpreting the Bible for the sake of promoting the "new reality."

What is interesting is the way Segundo seeks to establish from the conflict stories of Jesus and the Pharisees a Biblical basis for his hermeneutical circle. Jesus was "something new" who did not fit into the "'theological' categories" of the

Pharisees.[27] The Pharisees' "theology" not only entirely by-passed the human, according to Segundo, it closed their minds and hearts to the revelation of God in the person of Jesus. In Segundo's own words:

> It is an historical fact that the people who were best informed about God's revelation in the Old Testament let Jesus pass by and failed to see in him the new and definitive divine revelation.[28]

It is impossible to escape the implication from this premise that Segundo believes that Pharisaic Jews could have recognized divine revelation in Jesus if it had not been for their theology. According to him the recognition of revelation depended upon the absence of the historically conditioned factor of theological commitment. The am ha aretz (incorrectly transcribed as one word, amaretz, by Segundo on p. 82) are identified as the mediators of the divine revelation in Jesus precisely because they were ignorant of the traditional theology. The import of Jesus' words was to question, and to create suspicion for, the theology represented by the Pharisees, so that in the proper sequence of theology according to liberation theologians, basic reality in terms of human experience can precede theology which becomes a second step, or reflection on reality.[29]

With Jesus identified as the bearer of divine revelation and the one whose questions open up present reality, rather than foreclose it with theology, Segundo proceeds in his hermeneutical treatment of Jesus to show how his apprehension of the "theological reality" of Jesus leads to a new and

significant interpretation of the Bible. This new interpretation renders the Bible a proper basis for the orthopraxis of promoting revolution by calling into question the prevalent interpretations of Jesus and his words that would inhibit the impulse to revolution.

So one must learn to distinguish the historical figure of Christ from its historical context.[30] We learn from Christ, "the supreme revelation of God,"[31] how to structure our lives for the sake of love. With this step of maturity we learn to abandon any particular content that derives from Jesus' historical context. That is to say, we learn to relativize Jesus' historical context.[32] And, having done that, one recognizes the proper distinction between faith as freedom for history--i.e., opening new options by calling into question oppressive structures,[33] and ideology as "a logical system of interconnected values"[34] which is always present with faith. The task of faith is to question and test ideology for the sake of liberation, thus no ideology is absolute, not even the ideologies that one may find in the Bible.

Proceeding on the premise that while a distinction between faith and ideology is necessary, Segundo observes that faith is never present, or presented, apart from ideology, so the issue is not whether to have an ideology, but which ideology promotes the cause of revolution.[35] In this context Segundo discloses his awareness of the legacy of historical-critical studies of the New Testament, where he writes:

> . . .it is impossible to get back to any certain picture of the historical Jesus, [and that] . . .the Gospels were not so much witnesses to who Jesus really was and what he really said as they were witnesses to the postpaschal faith of the primitive Christian community and how it saw and interpreted Jesus.[36]

Thus liberation theology is particularly suspicious of the "ideological elements that must certainly have influenced the first Christian community, the community that sought to interpret Jesus and gave us its version in the Gospels."[37] And so the words attributed to Jesus about "turning the other cheek" are immediately identified as one of those historically conditioned ideological elements and not necessarily binding on the oppressed today. Citing James Cone, Segundo agrees that

> . . .it is not at all certain that Jesus would have altered the Old Testament view and advised us to turn the other cheek if he had been confronted with the whole issue of Israelite slavery in Egypt.[38]

Further we are told,

> When Jesus talked about freely proferred love and nonresistance to evil, he was facing the same problem of filling the void between his conception of God (or perhaps that of the first Christian community) and the problems existing in his age. In short, we are dealing here with another ideology, not with the content of faith itself.[39]

Since for Segundo ". . .all the remarks we may find in the Bible about violence or nonviolence are ideologies--necessary, of course, since we will always be confronted with the task of filling the void between faith and concrete historical realities,"[40] he has no difficulty finding in words

attributed to Jesus traces of a nationalistic ideology and bias for Israel and against Gentiles, as in the commission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Mt. 10:5-6, and the story of the Phoenician woman, Mark 7:27. Jesus' open break with the Pharisees is cited as an example of breaking off dialogue and of impersonally lumping them together under the epithet "hypocrites,"[41] so Jesus himself was not a "human being dedicated to limitless love without a trace of resistance or violence" as the story of the cleansing of the temple would indicate (Mk. 11:15ff, and John 2:13ff).[42] In Segundo's hermeneutical circle the violence necessary for revolution is fully justified and subject only to a limit derived from his own ideology that combines love with the natural principle of the conservation of energy--namely that

> The dynamic of love, however, tends in the direction of reducing the quantum of violence required for efficacy to the lowest possible level.[43]

In Segundo's new hermeneutic of liberation theology the end indeed justifies the means,[44] and human beings have no choice but to live with the relativities and the inevitability of violence. In short, the theory and practice of non-violence as based on received interpretations of the Bible by such historic pacifists as Menno Simons and George Fox, who developed their teachings precisely as oppressed persons, and more recently by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King could not receive serious attention as viable options for the oppressed of Latin America. This radical left Christian theology is clearly as much in the thrall of militarism as the North American radical right Christian

theology of Protestant fundamentalists who have baptized capitalism with their interpretation. It bodes ill for the future if each of these militarisms will not question the morality of their means. Latin America might very well become a battle ground for two opposing forms of Christian militarism: one, the Latin American with its roots in the crusade temper of militant Catholicism; and the other with its roots in the militant Protestant ethos that would make the world safe for democracy. What really is the role of the ideology of militarism in any and all social and political oppression? Segundo avoids this question by a retreat to the intention of social justice which in his view can justify all means, and equally disqualify all means, by the virtue of the ends to which they are applied.[45]

The problem with Segundo's hermeneutical circle is that it is not sufficiently presentist, nor sufficiently historical, nor sufficiently critical to be genuinely profound and enriching. It is not sufficiently presentist because it reduces ideological and political options to those of extreme leftist Marxism. For example, the economic and political suggestions of E. F. Schumacher's Small Is Beautiful are foreclosed by the ideological reduction to Marxism. The issues of "human-sized technology" and "new patterns of ownership" of small scale enterprises within a region dedicated to self-sufficiency in meeting basic needs of food, shelter and clothing are posed by Schumacher with third-world societies in mind. At the very least they deserve some consideration as a

basis for the suspicion that ideological monism may be self-destructive ultimately, and that human survival might be in the direction of ideological pluralism in which common needs and limitations would be readily acknowledged as governing factors.[46]

Segundo's hermeneutical circle is not sufficiently historical, which is to say sufficiently historically-critical, in that Jesus' Aramaic-speaking, Galilean and charismatic Jewish milieu is not appropriately distinguished from that of the perhaps Jewish, but certainly culturally Hellenistic Christian groups that produced the texts of the New Testament. While Segundo does recognize the role of the "postpaschal faith" in the Biblical narratives of Jesus, his words, his ministry, and his crucifixion and resurrection, he appears to assume the historical facticity of the Biblical stories of the Pharisees, rather than to suspect, as his own presuppositions would suggest, that perhaps the Biblical portraits of Pharisees are the product of early Christian anti-Judaic ideology. Segundo certainly holds the Jewish religious leaders responsible for the condemnation of Jesus.[47] He does so against a strong vein of contemporary scholarship that questions the historicity of the Biblical narrative of the Jewish trial of Jesus on the grounds of the absence of any supportive evidence outside of the New Testament, and that the trial was contrary to Jewish law at so many points that the reader is obliged to believe that the Jewish leaders consistently violated their own laws and consciences in order to secure Jesus' condemnation. Jeffrey G. Sobosan's article on "The Trial of Jesus" summarizes recent Christian and Jewish

scholarship on this question. He comes to the opposite conclusion of Segundo--namely, that the trial in which Jesus was condemned to die can be judged to have been a Roman one by virtue of the fact that the sentence was carried out under Roman jurisdiction and by Roman officials.[48]

Further, as suggested by Samuel Sandmel in his book, Anti-Semitism in the New Testament, the violent response attributed to the Pharisees by the author of Mark's Gospel after Jesus, according to the text, had healed in a synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:1-6) is rather absurd from a Jewish point of view. Sandmel asks, "Why should the Pharisees want to destroy Jesus? For Sabbath violation?"[49]

But Segundo is not alone in this rather bizarre hermeneutical strategy of taking as historical fact the Biblical portrait of Pharisees while recognizing interpretation or ideology in other respects. Hans Küng followed this procedure in his book, On Being a Christian, where he wrote of the Pharisees:

> To incur the death penalty it was sufficient deliberately to break the Sabbath after a single warning in the presence of witnesses (this comes out early in Mark, where there is a warning after the first infringement of the Sabbath and plans to kill him immediately after the second.[50]

If one appropriately follows authentic historical-critical procedures, one would recognize that the Gospels as Hellenistic texts need to be understood within that context first, and that every statement attributed to Jesus and his opponents counts as historical hearsay, so that the burden of proof is on anyone who would identify a particular passage or saying as deriving from

Jesus himself or his immediate opponents. This is the common assumption of redaction criticism. Furthermore, in view of the great number of references to the Septuagint in all of the Gospel accounts of Jesus and his life, one cannot escape the conclusion that the Septuagint must be considered as much more than a source echoed by the oral tradition of Christianity which may have preceded the composition of the documents of the Gospels. It was very likely a text at hand as the writer's composed their own narratives.[51] So wherever Jews are portrayed in terms entirely inconsistent with their own law, faith and praxis, there is reason to suspect the ideological, anti-Judaic bent of the redactor before one must conclude that the account is a faithful transmission of historical facts.

Finally, Segundo's emptying of faith of all thematic content by identifying the latter as relativized ideology leaves him under the tyranny of his own ideological commitments. Without a clear sense of a trans-ideological content, without a sense of the faith that is believed, fides quae creditur, his own faith by which it is believed, fides qua creditur, becomes an exercise of criticizing everything except his own theological assumptions. There is no self-corrective procedure for questioning his questions such as one finds in the theological method of Bernard Lonergan.[52]

(b) The History of Salvation as One with All History

From the cornerstone of the Exodus event the historical horizon of liberation theology falls rather neatly into place.