

cal, economic, and social themes were so important to authors like Gutierrez in *A Theology of Liberation*. Only later were questions of ecclesiology, christology, and spirituality addressed. This means that to understand liberation theology's soteriology fully, as expressed by Gutierrez, for example, one would need to examine his recent works, particularly *Drinking from Our Own Wells*.

We are indebted to Dupertuis' contribution to the evangelical dialog with liberation theology and look forward to an updated volume that would take some of the above issues into consideration.

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Ellul, Jacques. *Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988. xvi + 187 pp. Paperback, \$12.95.

Jacques Ellul has been writing on the relationship between Christianity and revolution for half a century. *Jesus and Marx*, first published in French in 1979 as *L'idéologie marxiste chrétienne*, is a combination of previously published articles with some new material, forming a compact unit. To this reviewer, the last chapter, "Anarchism and Christianity," is the weakest link in an otherwise solid chain. That chapter does not pay enough attention to the overall biblical perspective, and especially to Paul's concept that "there is no authority except that which God has established."

Even though the book deals with several themes—politics, theology, freedom, poverty, etc.—its main thrust is to demonstrate the utter impossibility of mixing Christianity and Marxism in any meaningful way. And this Ellul does with unusual skill and meticulousity. He argues that contemporary Marxism is a conglomerate of scattered pieces of Marx's thought, that Marxism has lost its content and specificity and thus become an ideology in the worst sense of the term, and that Communism has become a mixture of all sorts of things, "a kind of ideological stew in which you can throw anything, as long as it agrees with the ideology of the clientele" (p. 18).

Ellul points out very forcefully that those who believe that Christians and Marxists can work together to achieve their goals have not paid close attention to the theoretical problem of the incompatibility of Marx's materialism with the affirmation of a transcendent God, and have at the same time been blind to Marxist practice, since "until now, without exception, in every country where it has been applied, Marxism has given birth to the worst sort of dictatorships, to strictly totalitarian regimes" (p. 13).

Furthermore, whenever Christians have followed this path, the result has been an adulteration of both faith and revelation. Scripture must be either twisted or ignored in order to accommodate the tenets of Marxism. Faith takes a back seat with respect to action, and soon political commitment and involvement become the entire Gospel without any special need of witnessing to Christ. The entire Gospel is reduced to a messianism of economic practice. In the pretended cooperation, the "non-Christian" is never led to recognize and confess Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Ellul's thesis is decisively strengthened as he deals with "service theology," especially as he critiques Fernando Belo's book, *A Materialistic Reading of the Gospel of Mark*.

A materialistic reading of the Gospel—one that denies or downplays the Spirit, the transcendent, and particularly a God who intervenes in history—is a virtual impossibility. The only way Belo can arrive at that conclusion, Ellul asserts, is by basing his argument on certain ideological presuppositions which he holds firmly but never demonstrates. The result is a manipulation of scripture, which includes a high degree of selectivity. Everything related to heaven or the spirit is "mythology" and is left out, while Belo treats very superficially those portions retained.

It is regrettable that Ellul, especially in the chapter in which he deals with Belo's book, becomes "personal" in his criticism. Expressions like "amazing ignorance," "incredibly superficial knowledge," "flagrant errors," "ridiculous," and "ignorant" appear so often that they detract from his otherwise excellent critique, especially when Ellul does not need this approach to get his job done.

Even when the book does not deal with the main exponents of liberation theologies—Ellul dialogues mainly with French authors—he has no difficulty in pointing an accusing finger at the main weakness of this new theological reflection, viz., the filtering of Christianity through Marxist presuppositions. The moment liberation theology relies on social sciences with a Marxist bent as a tool of analysis in its peculiar methodology, it finds it difficult to extricate itself from the materialistic *Weltanschauung* of this ideology. The entire project becomes mainly, if not exclusively, this-worldly: The meaning of life is found within history. God intervenes in history only through human hands; thus liberation—far removed from the central biblical affirmation of salvation as a free gift of God's grace—becomes a human affair (i.e., mankind must liberate itself). Service, even without receiving its dignity and value from Jesus, becomes all that matters.

Sin is located in the structures of society; and consequently, the solution sought—the overthrowing of the present sinful, oppressive systems to open up the way to a more humane and just society—will always remain merely utopian, because it is not radical enough. The real cause of mankind's predicament and slavery is sin lodged in the human heart. Dealing with the "effects" of sin as they manifest themselves in society is like

plucking the leaves off the tree while the ugly roots remain. That is why history will never bring about the kingdom of God. The yearning of the human heart—consciously or unconsciously—is for liberation, a liberation that is not limited to the temporal, but one that projects itself beyond history to when the God of history will make all things new.

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Fung, Ronald Y. K. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988. xxxiii + 342 pp. \$22.95.

The author, who wrote his dissertation on the relation between righteousness and faith in Paul's thought under the direction of F. F. Bruce at the University of Manchester, is Resident Scholar and Adjunct Lecturer at the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong. Though the printed biblical text is that of the New English Bible, the basis for the commentary is Nestle-Aland. This commentary replaces that of Herman N. Ridderbos (1953) in this series. It is rather significant that this is the first major commentary written by a third-world scholar. Its quality demonstrates that that part of the world can make significant contributions to the English-reading community.

While the introduction deals with the usual subjects treated under that heading, the major part of the discussion focuses on the question of the destination of the epistle—i.e., whether the letter was written to the churches in North Galatia or to those in South Galatia. Fung supports the latter view, thus dating the letter early, before the Jerusalem Council (ca. A.D. 48). He arrives at this more specific date because he equates Paul's visit of Galatians 2 with Acts 11:30-12:25—that is, to the relief visit, not to the Jerusalem Council, as many hold.

The commentary itself is characterized by conciseness, clarity, and clear logic. Fung sets forth the basic issues clearly, presenting the various options and giving his position with the reasons supporting it. The author is well read, knows the issues, and refers to previous writers without cluttering his style. The exegesis proper is free from lengthy discussion and thus makes for ease in following the train of thought. Fung reserves his more detailed discussions for "Additional Comments." One helpful feature, especially for those interested in linguistics, is his frequent treatment of syntactical matters where appropriate.

Having written his dissertation on the relationship between righteousness and faith, it is not surprising that the author deals with this subject in much detail wherever it appears in the text, including in the "Additional Comments" sections. For instance, he provides an additional comment on