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ON DOING THE TRUTH: ORTHOPRAXIS AND THE THEOLOGIAN

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ONE HOT spring day, some 15 years ago, I was sitting in my St. Louis apartment working on an especially murky segment of the history of adiaphorism (the 1550 Vestiarian Dispute), when I heard sounds of an angry crowd congregating in front of the Saint Louis University ROTC building, which then stood directly across the street from my apartment. The evening before, I had taken time out from my studies to accompany some friends to an anti-Vietnam War rally on campus, and as the students' cries of protest now drifted up to my third-floor apartment, I was again distracted enough to drop what I was doing and go to the window. I got there just in time to see some 25 policemen emerging from the ROTC building and beating back some of the more aggressive protestors. Although I abhorred the violence that had earlier resulted in the burning down of the Washington University ROTC building across town, my sympathies were basically with the students, and as I watched their protest, I was strongly tempted to go down to the street and make a stand alongside them. But after cheering them on for a few moments from my window perch, I returned instead to my books and Bishop Hooper's rather obtuse line of argument against the wearing of a surplice.

There were other occasions when I was not so successful in resisting the temptation to get involved in the current praxis or to take sides. When President Nixon came to town to defend his Vietnam policies before a national Jaycees convention, for example, I stood on a street corner for half a day in downtown St. Louis passing out antiwar leaflets. And when thousands of hardhats staged a march past our campus in support of Nixon's war policies, and some of them began beating up a small group of SLU philosophy students who were holding up a sign that read PEACE, I naively tried to get the police to come to their defense, and even more naively the next day filed a complaint against the police for not having done their job. But for most of the period from 1968–72—when antiwar protest was at its peak—I was off by myself, up in my apartment, or down in the "theological basement" of SLU's Pius XII Library, poring over less than timely tracts like Stephen Gardiner's *A Detection of the Devil's Sophistry wherewith he robbeth the unlearned people of the true bylief in the most blessed Sacrament of the Aulter.* Needless to say, I often asked myself whether I was on the right track.

It was not so much a question of courage, or lack thereof, as it was a question of whether my approach to theology, taken in itself, apart from any consideration of personal motivation, was consistent with the mission of a Christian theologian.

The question has taken on a new urgency in recent years with the rise of liberation theology. At its heart is the insistence on orthopraxis, or the "doing of the truth," as opposed to the mere proclamation of doctrine implied by the term "orthodoxy." In its broadest connotation, all this term means is that faith must be lived before it can make any kind of theological sense. But both Gustavo Gutiérrez and Juan Luis Segundo, major proponents of liberation theology, have used the notion of orthopraxis also to raise questions about what to their perception has been the tendency of traditional, academic theologians to remain aloof from the everyday struggles of mankind.[1]

As posed by these liberation theologians, the question at hand is twofold. In one sense, it is a question of theological judgment or evaluation, and deals with the question of whether theologians should take sides. In another sense, it is simply a question about the extent to which theologians should become involved.

CHOOSING SIDES

Underlying the first dimension of the question is Segundo's assumption that to stay alive, faith must always be applied to specific circumstances, times, and places. Such an application is precisely what he understands by "ideology." Ideology is simply a "historical system of means and ends"[2] by which the value system of one's faith is actualized.[3] When Segundo

[1] I will be following Segundo's writings for the most part. For similar remarks by Gutiérrez, see his *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973) 10 ff.

[2] In his *Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1982) Segundo repeatedly defines ideology as "a system of means and ends" (116, 154). In his later work, however, he plays up only the instrumental, functional character of ideologies: "I shall use the term 'ideology' for all systems of means, be they natural or artificial, that are used to attain some end or goal" (*Faith and Ideologies* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1984] 16, 27–28, 42, 121, 122), and concludes that any ideology, like Marxism, which also provides a scale of values (i.e., ends) is actually under the influence of anthropological faith, even though its proponents do not know it or will not admit it (ibid. 27, 130–45).

[3] In this paper "faith" will be used in the religious sense; but note that, for Segundo, religious faith is only a particular instance of what he calls "anthropological faith," by which all human beings, on the basis of "referential witnesses," accept one or another good as absolute, and subordinate all other values to it (ibid. 6–7, 24–26, 63 ff., 71 ff.). Anthropological faith becomes religious faith, he says, when people discern genuine transcendent data by way of their identity with a tradition (ibid. 75–76). It is important for the whole discussion here to note also that, according to Segundo, faith, while delivering a set of values, does not automatically provide the means for their attainment. Against Dom Helder Camara's remark that "One who has Jesus Christ does not need Marx," Segundo

states that faith without ideology is dead, therefore, he is simply trying to give expression to what the apostles Paul and James meant in describing faith as the process whereby human beings are set free to turn their creative powers into concrete, effective love.[4] A similar understanding of Christian faith as a power that enables one to act in a certain way by freeing one from the absolutization of the "instruments" of salvation was developed long ago in the theory of adiaphorism propounded by certain medieval theologians and by almost all the 16th-century Protestant Reformers.[5] The whole point of this theory was to clear the way for the actualization of faith in charity, or for "edification," as Paul and the Reformers liked to call it. Segundo's conclusions about the inseparability of faith and ideology are not, therefore, nearly so contrary to Lutheran solafideism or even traditional Roman Catholic thought as he seems to think.[6]

But Segundo does not stop with saying that faith without ideology is dead. He goes on to argue that the faithful, including theologians, must also take sides, choosing between one ideology and another. He severely criticizes Max Weber, e.g., for having clung to his "impartiality" to the extent of refusing to pass negative judgment (as Tawney would later do) on the "bad fruits" (i.e., capitalistic exploitation) of Calvinism.[7] "Is it not even more inhuman to perceive and comprehend that whole network of implication without judging it," Segundo asks about Weber's neutrality, "than to have created it [capitalism] in the first place in the belief that it was the only thing that fully and logically dovetailed with the fonts of divine revelation?"[8] He has also castigated "political theologians" like Johann Baptist Metz and Jürgen Moltmann for contriving to avoid partiality by rejecting any causal connection between the kingdom of God and social-political systems.[9] All their talk about "eschatological

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replies, e.g., that the Christian faith does not teach us "prefabricated things, recipes, or modes of conduct, i.e. ideologies" (ibid. 120, 130).

[4] Ibid. 126.

[5] See B. J. Verkamp, *The Indifferent Mean* (Athens and Detroit: Ohio and Wayne State University Presses, 1977) 115–31.

[6] Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 125–54; *Faith and Ideologies* 124. See also his response to Cardinal Ratzinger's 1984 *Libertatis nuntius* (*Theology and the Church: A Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church* [New York: Seabury, 1985]), in which he criticizes what he perceives to be the tendency of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to reduce Christianity to a purely spiritual, interior religion.

[7] Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 20–25.

[8] Ibid. 24.

[9] Segundo, "Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux," in *Liberation South, Liberation North*, ed. M. Novak (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1981) 12–14. Presumably, Segundo would find more palatable attempts by Michael Novak (*The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982]) or Robert Kress ("Die Kirche

reserve" or "the prevention of premature and inopportune anticipation of the kingdom of God" is, Segundo says, simply the result of a confusion of values by way of absolutizing the eschatological order at the expense of the political.[10] To that extent, their political theology is no different from other types of theology which have absolutized Church ritual and dogma, while relativizing the Church's "historical functionality," or, in other words, the work of liberation.[11] According to Segundo, this amounts to an inversion of the "evangelical order of values."[12] Jesus himself, he argues, did not hesitate to absolutize the historical present by opting against, if not the Roman Empire, the prevailing Judaic theocracy.[13] Against the Pharisees, who were always looking for salvation in "signs from heaven," Jesus, following the example of the Old Testament prophets and listening more to his heart than to cold reason, recognized "the arrival of God's kingdom" in the concrete liberation of the deaf, the lame, the sick, and the poor.[14] To be consistent with Jesus' own example, therefore, Segundo concludes, theologians must avoid any kind of "academicism which posits ideological neutrality as the ultimate criterion."[15] They cannot remain detached and "fly along a middle course equally above the political right and left."[16] They must be prepared to take sides. A choice will have to be made between, e.g., socialism and capitalism.[17]

Here Segundo's position obviously becomes more complex and controversial, hinging as it does on the difficult task of determining whether the ideology in question actually embodies evangelical values or not, or, in other words, whether it is good or bad[18] either in itself or concretely.

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in den Vereinigten Staaten," *Korrespondenzblatt des Canisianums* 1 [1986] 2–5), to the extent that, although they try to put Christianity on the side of capitalism, they do at least take a stand.

[10] Segundo, "Capitalism-Socialism" 12, 13.

[11] Ibid. 9–10.

[12] Ibid. 11.

[13] Ibid. 18, 20; Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 111–12.

[14] Segundo, "Capitalism-Socialism" 18–19; *Faith and Ideologies* 48.

[15] Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 25.

[16] Segundo, "Capitalism-Socialism" 22.

[17] Ibid. 8, 15.

[18] Contemporary theologians like Joseph Fuchs and Richard McCormick have emphasized the need to distinguish between the pairs "good-evil" and "right-wrong" (See R. McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology," *TS* 45 [1984] 81–82; *TS* 44 [1983] 79–80; *TS* 47 [1986] 78), suggesting that "the notion of good and evil concerns the person," while "right-wrong refers to one's conduct." I would agree that the distinction between the two moral categories is important, but would suggest that it could better be drawn in terms of what is of value (good-evil) and what is "in line" with the valuable (right-wrong), and that if it is, the association of the pairs with the "person" and the "person's conduct" will not be nearly so neat as Fuchs and McCormick seem to think. An act of friendship, e.g., might certainly

Traditionally, Christian thinkers have been inclined to classify something as good or bad in itself on the basis of the extent to which it does or does not accord with what is reasonable under the light of revelation.[19] Actions like theft and lying, e.g., were said to be so intrinsically contrary to divine command and right reason that they could never become good in the concrete, no matter what intention one might have in their regard, or what the consequences of the action might be.[20] According to such a traditional line of thought, one or another ideology, like Nazism, might be said to be bad in itself, to the extent that the thoughts and actions it brings into play are by their very nature contrary to divine positive and natural law. Even if the goals of Nazism had been good (which they were not), it could still have been condemned in and of itself, on the grounds that no end, however noble, could ever justify the kind of violent means it employed against innocent people.

Not all contemporary theologians, however, seem to subscribe to this traditional line of thought about intrinsic morality. And according to Cardinal Ratzinger at least, Segundo is in their number. Some proponents

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be analyzed morally from the viewpoint of its value as an intermediary goal, and at the same time be judged to be right or wrong to the extent that it serves as a means to some higher end, or greater good, as, e.g., the building up of community. In any event, I will generally limit my discussion here to the category of good-evil, cognizant all the while that not infrequently the category of right-wrong might also apply, especially since by Segundo's reckoning ideologies are principally concerned with means, not ends.

[19] When, as during New Testament times or the period of the Protestant Reformation, divine positive law received more attention that natural law, intrinsic good and evil often came to be defined simply as that which has been "commanded" or "prohibited" by Scripture, although never to the total neglect of the philosophical terminology which had been inherited from Stoicism (See Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 21–25). For further discussion on the role of reason in the realm of morality by contemporary theologians, see McCormick's "Notes," *TS* 45 (1984) 84-85; *TS* 41 (1983) 73 f.

[20] Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and a host of other medieval theologians, insisted upon this point against the view of the Stoics (and Abelard), who held that nothing is so good or bad in itself that its moral character cannot be changed in the concrete by the human intention (see Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 22–24). As recent debates have again illustrated, the medieval terminology used in this discussion of intrinsic morality can become very confusing (see J. R. Connery, "The Teleology of Proportionate Reason," *TS* 44 [1983] 489 ff.; Connery, "Catholic Ethics: Has the Norm for Rule-Making Changed?" *TS* 42 [1981] 235 ff.; P. Quay, "The Disvalue of Ontic Evil," *TS* 46 [1985] 263 ff.; R. McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology," *TS* 43 [1982] 85–87; *TS* 45 [1984] 88–90). It is significant that those things which medieval theologians from Augustine to Aquinas called *bona* or *mala ex objecto* or *ex officio* could still be classified as things indifferent *in se* in the sense that, like the Stoic "preferred" or "rejected" adiaphora, they were considered capable of becoming good or bad in the concrete. The thing indifferent was precisely "id quod potest bene vel male fieri," and something was thought to be intrinsically good or evil to the extent that it lacked such flexibility (see Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 22–23).

of liberation theology, Ratzinger has written (and he surely intended to include Segundo), are inclined to justify any kind of action, "including, if necessary, violence, homicide, or lying," for the sake of what they consider to be the "absolute good," namely, "the building up of a just (i.e. socialist) society."[21] At the root of such liberation theology, the Cardinal contends, is the "proportionalist methodology," which, as a variation of consequentialism, tends to make "the goodness of an act depend only on its end and foreseeable or calculable consequences."[22] Richard McCormick, a leading proponent of the proportionalist view, has denied the accuracy of Ratzinger's remarks in so far as they pertain to himself and other proportionalists. To say that the circumstances (including the end) "can so affect the generic character of an action . . . that they change its very object"[23] does not mean, McCormick claims, that the end justifies any means, or that there are no intrinsically evil actions. It only means that in the determination of such actions by way of the proportionate reason,[24] account must also be taken of their "total objectivity," of which the circumstances are an integral part.[25] Some of Segundo's own remarks could possibly be interpreted in such a proportionalist sense[26] and leave him, for better or worse, along with McCormick, outside the range of Ratzinger's criticism. Much of what Segundo has written, however, does seem to carry him beyond the proportionalist position and more in the

[21] As cited in McCormick, "Notes," *TS* 47 (1986) 71.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid. 77.

[24] It is their use of this principle which gives the proportionalists their label. It asks: "What is the fundamental reality found in the totality of the objective action? Is the doing of the action truly proportionate or coherent when all aspects of the action are considered? What is the *ratio* or defining meaning of the action?" (Philip S. Keane, "The Objective Moral Order: Reflections on Recent Research," *TS* 43 [1982] 267).

[25] McCormick, "Notes," *TS* 47 (1986) 76–77. McCormick observes elsewhere that this is precisely what earlier theologians were doing when they defined certain actions as being morally wrong *ex objecto*, namely, including in the object of the action not simply the *materia circa quam* but also elements beyond it which clearly exclude any possible justification of the action—e.g., defining murder as the killing of an *innocent* person ("Notes," *TS* 43 [1982] 85–86). Far from teaching anything novel, therefore, McCormick claims that the proportionalists are only trying to extend the same approach to actions like contraception, sterilization, masturbation, etc., which traditionally have been exempted from teleological assessment (ibid.).

[26] The whole debate over proportionalism suffers, I think, from a failure to distinguish adequately between abstract and concrete morality, and Segundo is guilty in this regard too, with the result that it is often difficult to tell which he is talking about. He comes closest to the proportionalist position when saying, e.g., that the "intended project" is the "sole criterion for spelling out what is good in itself" (*Faith and Ideologies* 44). But it would be hard to reconcile a proportionalist interpretation of such a remark with the remainder of his thought, which seems to reject the possibility of an action being intrinsically good or evil.

direction of situationalism, one of whose basic tenets has always been the conclusion that the end, and only the end, justifies the means.[27]

It is a "critical and decisive fact," Segundo has stated, that "our freedom, which consists precisely in our capacity to make absolutes, is triggered and starts to operate precisely insofar as the absolute is not inscribed in the things and events that we come across in reality."[28] "We must rid ourselves of the prejudices," he adds, "that we are most free when we have absolute values inscribed in things and events, and need only choose between good and evil."[29] It would be wrong, therefore, to conclude that means "possess a morality in themselves, a morality independent of the end that I could impose or understand."[30] There is no "more obvious moral maxim," he continues, than the principle that "the end justifies the means."[31] The very definition of the term "means" implies such a principle, he says. Precisely because it is a "means," it cannot have any justification in itself[32] but can "acquire its only possible justification from the ends or values that it serves."[33] We cannot, therefore, consider the means in the abstract, "wholly apart from their relationship to a concrete situation."[34] Their morality stems from their relationship to an end, "not from their intrinsic nature."[35]

Applied to the question at hand, this would mean that, according to Segundo, not only some (as the traditional line of thought would have it) but all ideologies are in and of themselves neither good, nor bad, but indifferent.[36] As means, and not ends, they "lack value or disvalue in

[27] Segundo himself recognizes this, and admits that with certain qualifications he would not reject the label (*Liberation of Theology* 173–75).

[28] Ibid. 176.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Faith and Ideologies* 258.

[31] Ibid.; *Liberation of Theology* 271 ff.

[32] *Liberation of Theology* 171.

[33] *Faith and Ideologies* 258.

[34] *Liberation of Theology* 172.

[35] Ibid. Segundo adds in this regard that he is not disturbed by the possibility that such a line of thought might "turn stealing or killing into licit actions" (ibid. 173). See also his remarks concerning adultery (*Faith and Ideologies* 45).

[36] It is worth noting here that Segundo does not, therefore, accept as exclusively definitive the "negative" Marxist understanding of ideology as the sum of cognitive mechanisms which disguise, excuse, and even sacralize the existing modes of production so as to benefit those who profit from that mode of production (ibid. 96–97). He admits that ideologies can be perverted in such wise, and occasionally accuses religions of being used in this way (ibid. 123), but does not see this perversion as being essential to the definition of ideology. Whether there is any room in Marxism for an understanding of ideology as being neutral in itself is another question, to which Segundo gives a weak affirmative on the grounds that Marx did sometimes use the word to refer to "everything that lies outside the precision of the sciences, to the suprascientific or the superstructural realm" (ibid. 96, 97). Gutiérrez,

themselves."[37] They can be judged to be good or bad only by "higher criteria that are valid in themselves."[38] The sole criterion of such sort, Segundo notes, is "the intended project of a human being toward his or her fellow humans,"[39] or, in other words, by "love"[40] or by "what the heart bids a person to do in the face of the needs of his or her fellow humans."[41] Such an "intended project" is the "only criterion for spelling out what is good in itself."[42] It alone can give the ideology a "moral dimension."[43] Segundo does at one point suggest that "not all ideologies are equally neutral,"[44] and one might think that he has in mind to introduce thereby something akin to the Stoic distinction between "preferred" and "rejected" adiaphora,[45] especially in view of his emphasis elsewhere upon an "analogy between the means and the ends."[46] But what he really means is that not every ideology is "equally efficacious,"[47] and that in trying to decide which ideology is the right means, one must therefore consider the "objective laws which ensure efficacy."[48] This is not a matter of deciding whether the means are intrinsically good or bad, but of "comparing the means with the end" and "deciding whether they are in harmony or not."[49] That one would conclude, e.g., that terrorist activity was not as "neutral" as, say, nonviolent civil disobedience, would not imply for Segundo that the former was in and of itself more evil than

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it may be noted, uses the term "ideology" almost exclusively in the negative Marxist sense, namely, as designating a process of "rationalizing and justifying a given social and ecclesial order" (*Theology of Liberation* 12, 234–35, 249 nn. 118, 119, 120, 121).

[37] *Faith and Ideologies* 42. Segundo's discussion in this passage, it should be noted, is about "religion." But as he understands it, religion, as distinguished from faith, belongs entirely to the "instrumental, functional" (i.e., ideological) level, so that what he says about religion generally pertains also to all ideologies, and vice versa (ibid. 41–44).

[38] Ibid. 43.

[39] Ibid. 44.

[40] "The means must be studied in the context of a given historical situation in order to determine which represent the richest and most promising possibilities of love" (*Liberation of Theology* 172–73).

[41] *Faith and Ideologies* 46.

[42] Ibid. 44.

[43] Ibid. 45.

[44] Ibid. 121.

[45] Against the Cynics, who because of their extreme emphasis upon self-sufficiency had designated all external actions absolutely devoid of value or disvalue, the Stoics argued that even though the interior disposition of "right reason" is supreme, and all externals are on that account indifferent by nature, some adiaphora are more or less in accord with right reason and to that extent are to be "preferred" or "rejected," or, in regard to actions, considered "appropriate" or "inappropriate" (Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 121).

[46] *Faith and Ideologies* 267–69.

[47] Ibid. 121.

[48] Ibid. 258.

[49] Ibid. 260.

the latter, but only that such terrorism is contextually (i.e., historically) counterproductive to the achievement of one's "intended project."[50] So long as any action is "efficacious," it might qualify as a suitable means.[51] Segundo admits that there is a danger here of "establishing means which have no likeness to the ends," but this is a risk, he says, which must sometimes be taken, and "the only means to the goal will [be] the one which is least analogous to the goal itself."[52]

One could argue, therefore, that Segundo does not perhaps adequately allow for the possibility of intrinsically evil ideologies, and that the choice between conflicting ideologies is not, as he seems to think, always a matter of merely judging their respective goals or practicality. So far as the great majority of particular ideologies are concerned, however, such criticism might be of little relevance, in that few traditionally-minded theologians would argue that most ideologies are actually in and of themselves so evil that they are beyond conversion to the good in the concrete. For them, no less than for Segundo, therefore, the question of making a moral choice between one or another particular ideology would also come down, more often than not, to a matter of deciding whether the ideology in question was good or bad in the concrete by virtue of the intentions of those implementing it, or in view of its actual consequences.[53] One would have to determine, in other words, whether the ideology is actually projected toward, and efficaciously instrumental in, the "concrete transformation of peoples' lives" (as Segundo puts it),[54] or, as the apostle Paul was wont to ask, whether it is "edifying" in its direction and consequences.[55] Socialism, e.g., could be judged to be concretely good if the transferral of ownership of the means of production from individuals to higher institutions whose concern is the common good[56] were done with the intention of liberating the masses from economic alienation, and actually resulted in some greater degree of

[50] Ibid. 258; *Liberation of Theology* 172–73.

[51] The *syllogismus practicus* Segundo has in mind here is clearly different from the "Marxist prophet's" emphasis upon "uninterrupted success," against which Albert Camus protested so vehemently (*The Rebel* [New York: Random House, 1956] 242).

[52] *Faith and Ideologies* 268. As an example, Segundo cites the case of someone having "to *fight* against those whose interests are opposed to the establishment of *peace*" (ibid.).

[53] Traditionally, most theologians have been inclined to conclude that to the extent that an action is genuinely human, i.e. free and deliberate, it is either good or bad in the concrete, and cannot qualify as being indifferent. Peter Martyr gave the classic expression of this position: "As touching these things that be indifferent, we must affirme, that onelie (according to their owne kind and nature) they have this indifferencie. But when we come unto election, there is nothing indifferent: for it is of necessitie that the same be either good or evil" (*Commonplaces* 2:164, 165, as cited in Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 117).

[54] "Capitalism-Socialism" 18.

[55] Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 117–18.

[56] See Segundo's definition of socialism ("Socialism-Capitalism" 15).

emancipation from their external bondage. On the other hand, it could be said to be concretely bad if individuals are relieved of private ownership for no other reason than to enhance the state's totalitarian power, or if, no matter what intentions are operative, the results of such socialization were such as to leave the masses worse off than they were before.

Now, in a case where an ideology is judged to be good or bad, either in itself or concretely, there would seem to be little room for tolerating neutrality. Had Weber, e.g., really been convinced of the inhuman character of Calvinistic capitalism, and still refrained from criticizing it, he would certainly have deserved Segundo's condemnation. Or were the fruits of capitalism and socialism as obviously bad and good respectively as Segundo seems to think they are, theologians would seem to have little reason to remain neutral. But how often are things so clear? How often does one really know what the proponents of one or another ideology are up to, especially since historically it has often been part and parcel of both socialistic and capitalistic strategies to conceal their real intentions.[57] How is one to know, then, what "intended project" is really underfoot? Or how is the theologian to judge the actual consequences of one or another socialist or capitalist program if economists themselves are so frequently divided over the measurement of such results?[58]

Segundo has ridiculed the kind of moral paralysis before the ambiguity and imperfection of historical reality that results from an excessive dependence on reason.[59] But such paralysis, as exemplified by the likes of a Larry Slade in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, or by a Father Yanaros in Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Fratricides*, can result just as easily from the play of one's feelings as from the use of one's reason.[60] Even with the most sensitive of hearts, therefore, it may still be impossible to tell exactly where the Spirit is working, or to know if one political

[57] As evidenced, on the socialist side, in Cuba and Nicaragua, e.g., or, on the capitalist side, in the implementation of Reaganomics, wherein all the talk about supply-side economics was, by the reckoning of one of its own chief architects (David Stockman), "a convenient illusion" or a mere disguise "to conceal a hoary old Republican doctrine," namely, the "trickle-down" theory, according to which the wealthiest individuals and largest enterprises get the tax breaks and cuts, on the assumption that the good effects will trickle down through the economy to reach everyone (William Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1981, 46–47).

[58] Vague impressions in this regard, such as Michael Novak's conclusion (based upon a highly debatable H. R. Trevor-Roper theory) that there is a causal relation between the wealth of North America and its Protestant/capitalistic orientation, or between the poverty of Latin America and its supposedly anticapitalistic, Roman Catholic traditions (*Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* 276 ff.), are of little help.

[59] "Capitalism-Socialism" 19. See also *Faith and Ideologies* 267.

[60] On the role of emotions in morality in general, see William C. Spohn, "The Reasoning Heart: An American Approach to Christian Discernment," *TS* 44 (1983) 30–52.

alternative is more conducive to the fulfilment of God's promise than another. And precipitate choices can lead to serious mistakes. When the French Revolution occurred in 1789, e.g., Immanuel Kant, by then 65 years old, was so overwhelmed with joy that he reportedly rushed up to a friend and with tears in his eyes exclaimed: "Now I can say, like Simeon, 'Lord, let now thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'"[61] Kant had seen in the French Revolution an unleashing of the human spirit which, through its enhancement of human equality and freedom, would contribute to a new international order of peace. This was a goal which struck him as being consistent with the pursuit of whatever notion of God's kingdom still lingered in his rationalistic mind. But first impressions can be deceiving, and although Kant himself might never have admitted it, later developments in the French Revolution, like the Reign of Terror, certainly called into question whether the liberation championed by the revolutionaries ever had anything in common with that defended by Jesus. Kant, in other words, may very well have been wrong in thinking that the French Revolution had anything to do with the "good news" proclaimed by Jesus, and it is conceivable that he did more harm than good by so blatantly showing his partiality for the Revolution. Far more grievous and harmful than Kant's mistake was the erroneous judgment shown by Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, and Emmanuel Hirsch (three of modern Germany's top Protestant theologians) in their early support of Hitler and Nazism.[62] To be sure, the possibility of erring may simply be, as Segundo has implied,[63] part of the risk one must take in the process of trying to put one's faith to work, and does not in itself undermine the need for partiality in cases where an ideology is judged to be good or bad. Still, is it not conceivable that on occasion such clarity of judgment will not be possible, and when it is not, might the theologian not do better to remain neutral? Consider, e.g., the case of Desiderius Erasmus in the 16th century.

The example of Erasmus is especially pertinent for several reasons. In the first place, Segundo builds his own argument upon what he supposes to have been Jesus' "political" option against Pharisaical theocracy (the fact of Jesus' not opposing the Roman Empire, therefore, being irrelevant).[64] But if this is accurate, as I think it is, one can just as well conclude that the "political" element of Erasmus' time was the medieval theocracy (and not the remnant of empire embodied by Charles V), and

[61] As cited in W. Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square, 1969) 282.

[62] See Robert P. Erickson, *Theologians under Hitler* (New Haven: Yale University, 1985), and my review of same in *TS* 47 (1986) 720–23.

[63] "Capitalism-Socialism" 21–22.

[64] Ibid. 18–19; *Liberation of Theology* 111–12.

that the choice facing Erasmus and other Christians of his time was, as it had been for Jesus, a choice between a "light" and an "intolerable" burden of law.[65] Secondly, it is a good example because Segundo and Erasmus both make their point of departure a Pauline appraisal of the Church and its ritual, ceremonies, laws, and dogmas. What both basically are saying is that the sum of religion lies in charity. Being a Platonic spiritualist of sorts, Erasmus was inclined to develop his vision in the direction of relativizing everything external in terms of its service to the ultimate goal of finding union with God,[66] while Segundo, being of a Marxist, materialistic bent, will seek to relativize everything spiritual in terms of its service to the ultimate goal of liberating all men and women.[67] Both have goals of charity, and although each seems to split the goals and concentrate on the love of the human person or the love of God, they do not in fact treat these ends as being mutually exclusive. Erasmus talked no less seriously about the liberation of man and woman than does Segundo about the love of God. It is just that they approach the practice of charity from two different angles. One tries to reach the human person through love of God; the other tries to reach God through a love of the human person. Their goals are basically the same, but their orientation is different. As a result, the strategies which interested Erasmus were those that would lead most immediately to spiritual union with God. While Segundo is faced with a choice between economic and political programs, Erasmus was faced with deciding between various "plans for salvation." To some extent this came down to a choice for Erasmus between the monastic life or the life of the layperson, or some middle way. Earlier, it might also have involved choosing between one or another Benedictine, Dominican, or Franciscan spirituality. But eventually it all came down for Erasmus to a decision between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

The Protestant Reformers themselves had little doubt about their being on the side of Christian liberty. In their view, the Roman Church had been overrun by the "Judaizers."[68] Having occasionally criticized the Roman Church along such lines himself,[69] Erasmus was not blind to the degree of truth in the Reformers' charges. Still, he went his whole life without ever having sided with either one or the other in any decisive manner. Some have accused him of pusillanimity and cowardice on that

[65] Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 10–11.

[66] Ibid. 36–37.

[67] Segundo has written that "human life in society, liberated as far as possible from alienations, constitutes the absolute value" ("Capitalism-Socialism" 9). See also *Faith and Ideologies* 61.

[68] Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 11–15.

[69] Ibid. 10–11.

account.[70] By hindsight, however, his neutrality might seem to have been a wise move. Had more 16th-century Christian theologians of a similar mind-set followed his example, it is conceivable that much of the subsequent warfare between various factions in the Christian community could have been avoided, and far more attention could have been given by the same community to the practice of charity, in which, according to Erasmus, the sum of religion consisted.[71] For all that Erasmus could tell, neither the Roman Church nor the Protestant Churches showed any infallible signs of being exclusively the true religion. If any group did impress him in this regard, it was probably the Anabaptists, who were persecuted viciously by both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of the 16th century.[72] But their sometimes fanatical bouts of iconoclasm and communitarian experiments also frightened Erasmus.[73] So he remained neutral, challenging all sides thereby to practice more effectively what they preached.

Might not a similar neutrality be justified in the face of the present choice between capitalism and socialism? Having written that "historical sensibility to hunger and illiteracy calls for a society where competition and profit will not be the law and where the provision of basic food and culture to an underdeveloped people will be regarded as liberation,"[74] Segundo himself obviously thinks the choice between capitalism and socialism clear enough for Christian theologians living today, and finds it hard to understand how they can remain impartial. But if indeed the "projected intention" of love and the "concrete transformation of peoples' lives" are to be the sole criteria of God's provident presence, then surely, even while respecting the concrete choices made by Segundo and other liberation theologians, one could still doubt honestly about which economic system is on God's side and, until the evidence is clearer about which system is actually delivering the goods to the people, either refrain from taking sides altogether or embrace a two-game approach such as that advocated by MIT economist Lester C. Thurow, which tries to tap both ideologies for what they have to offer.[75]

[70] Luther called Erasmus the "king of Amphibians" (R. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* [New York: Scribner's, 1969] 215). J. Lortz claimed that "Ambiguity is characteristic of Erasmus. He does not want to commit himself to be tied down" (*How the Reformation Came* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1964] 84).

[71] Verkamp, *Indifferent Mean* 36–37.

[72] What Erasmus found most attractive about the Anabaptists was their attempt to live the law of love in their daily lives, which is all the more interesting in view of his spiritualistic tendencies.

[73] Bainton, *Erasmus* 262.

[74] "Capitalism-Socialism" 20.

[75] Lester C. Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society* (New York: Penguin, 1980) 205. Segundo

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Whether to choose sides, however, is still only half the question about orthopraxis. Even if the theologian has decided on the value of one or another ideology, there will still be the question about how involved he or she ought to become in supporting or fighting the ideology that is perceived to be either good or bad. The liberation theologians seem to think that quite a lot of involvement is necessary.

The "politicizing function" of the gospel, whereby the conscience of oppressed peoples is brought alive by their hearing of the "good news," will occur, Gutiérrez claims, when the gospel is lived and announced "from within a commitment to liberation, only in concrete, effective solidarity with people, and exploited social classes."[76] "Only by participating in their struggles," he adds, "can we understand the implications of the Gospel message and make it have an impact on history."[77] Theology, according to Segundo, "cannot begin with certitudes deduced from revelation";[78] it is rather a "second step."[79] It should come, Gutiérrez says, only after engagement, in the same way that Hegel said that philosophy should "rise only at sundown."[80] It must be based upon a reading of the "signs of the times," which include not only "a call to

himself has expressed skepticism about the viability of "third-way alternatives," on the grounds that all such attempts in Latin America (e.g., Peronism) fell prey "to an ironclad system which they were unwilling or unable to replace" (*Faith and Ideologies* 279). Another option might be to conclude, with Raymond Aron, that in the face of the modern progress-oriented industrial Western civilization, which inevitably introduces impersonality into human labor, all ideologies are dead, and the opposition between socialism and capitalism is irrelevant, because both, in an industrial society, will ultimately force human beings to continue selling their labor as an impersonal commodity (ibid. 253–56). Segundo admits that Aron's thesis can shed some new light on this whole problem-complex, but argues also that more often than not it is used "by conservative factions to relativize the choice between capitalism and socialism," especially when voiced in underdeveloped countries "which are nowhere near the take-off point for large-scale industrialism" (ibid. 256, 257).

[76] *Theology of Liberation* 269: Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 83, 84.

[77] *Theology of Liberation* 269.

[78] *Liberation of Theology* 78.

[79] Ibid.; *Faith and Ideologies* 42.

[80] *Theology of Liberation* 11. Presumably, unless it is to be purely aesthetical or contemplative, this "reflection after sundown" would be done with an eye toward the next day's activity, and in that sense at least would still imply some priority of theory over praxis. On the primacy issue in conceptualizing the relation of theory and praxis, see J. Kroger, "Prophetic-Critical and Practical-Strategic Tasks of Theology: Habermas and Liberation," *TS* 46 (1985) 6–7. In general see J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston: Beacon, 1973); Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury, 1975); Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 47–98; Charles Davis, "Theology and Praxis," *Cross Currents* 23 (1973) 154–68.

intellectual analysis" but "above all, a call to pastoral activity, to commitment, and to service."[81] The theologian, therefore, will have to be, according to Gutiérrez, a new kind of "organic intellectual ... someone personally and vitally engaged in historical realities with specific times and places ... engaged where nations, social classes, people struggle to free themselves from domination and oppression by other nations, classes, and people."[82]

What all this seems to mean for individual theologians is, first of all, that the theological questions they pursue will have to be dictated by the current struggle for liberation within which they find themselves. In its broadest connotations, this in turn could simply imply the conclusion drawn long ago by Yves Congar and cited by Gutiérrez to the effect that "if the Church wishes to deal with real questions of the modern world ... it must open a new chapter of theological-pastoral epistemology ... [and] instead of using only revelation and tradition as starting points ... start with facts and questions derived from the world and from history."[83] In the more severe view of Segundo, however, it comes to mean that "not ... a single dogma can be studied under any other final criterion than that of its social impact on the praxis."[84]

Secondly, practicing theology "from within a commitment to liberation" would seem to mean for the liberation theologians the willingness and readiness to take the risk of putting one's body on the front line of the struggle for liberation. Segundo says that he can much better understand "those who refuse to do theology or to have anything to do with it, because they feel it has no meaning or value for the liberation process," than he can understand "those who practice it as an academic discipline in the security of some chamber immune to the risks of the liberation struggle."[85] Seminaries and universities have accustomed us, he says, to "the idea of considering theology as an academic discipline, as a degree program in the liberal arts."[86] But the "historical fact is," he continues, "that once upon a time, theologizing was a very different sort of activity, a dangerous one in fact. It certainly was not a 'liberal art' for men like the prophets and Jesus. They died before their time because of their theologizing, because of their specific way of interpreting the word of God and its implications for the liberation of the oppressed."[87] "Only academic theologians can talk about the 'death of God,'" Segundo con-

[81] *Theology of Liberation* 8; Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* 79.
[82] *Theology of Liberation* 13.
[83] Ibid. 12.
[84] "Capitalism-Socialism" 16. See also Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation* 11.
[85] *Liberation of Theology* 27.
[86] Ibid. 26.
[87] Ibid.

cludes, for "in the concrete struggle for liberation, the danger is not the death of God, but the death of the theologian, his interpreter."[88]

Couched as their remarks are in such general terms, it is difficult to determine exactly what the liberation theologians are suggesting here about the involvement of theologians. If all they are saying is that theologians must be courageous and sensitive to the times in which they live, or that theory must be "grounded" in the theologian's personal integrity,[89] their remarks have an obvious ring of truth. But if, as seems more likely, they are implying that theologians, to be true to their mission, must drop everything else they are doing and, even at great risk to their lives, address themselves to issues specially arising out of the crisis at hand, or engage themselves in one or another activist movement, they would seem to be asking for too much.

It may very well be that the Church as a whole has a responsibility to preach and teach what is practical, and to practice what it preaches and teaches, no matter what the price. It may also be an essential part of such ecclesial orthopraxis for the Church to speak up and act in behalf of those who are least capable of taking care of themselves. To that extent, the Church cannot do without theologians like Gutiérrez, Segundo, James Cone, Daniel Berrigan, or Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, who are willing and ready to take the risk of engaging themselves on the front lines of the war on poverty, violence, and discrimination.[90] If these theologians were not out there in the trenches, reflecting and acting upon the Word of God from "within the struggle for liberation," others would certainly have to be sent to do what they are now doing, even if it meant calling a theologian away from some other meaningful but less urgent theological project. For if talk about a "preferential option for the poor" means anything at all, it must imply at the very least that the Church itself will take up a position alongside the poor and other victims of injustice, and give top priority to championing their cause.

Does that mean, however, that every theologian must feel compelled to be out on the front lines, or to deal with only the most immediately relevant of questions? The Johannine passages upon which the notion of "doing the truth" is based would seem to suggest otherwise. As understood by John (Jn 3:21; 1 Jn 1:6), the "doing of the truth" was not

[88] Ibid.

[89] See, e.g., David Tracy's remarks about Bernard Lonergan's interpretation of the primacy of praxis over theory in the sense of theoretical truth being based upon the theoretician's personal transformation, "conversion" (*Analogical Imagination* 70) or "authenticity" (ibid. 69). The Johannine conception of "truth" will be seen to carry a similar implication (see nn. 93–95 below).

[90] For a brief review of the positive theological contributions of such thinkers, see Tracy, *Analogical Imagination* 390–98.

a matter of following one or another external model of behavior.[91] Rather, like the Pauline conception of Christian obedience,[92] the doing of the truth was conceived by John as an interior relation to the truth of God's mysterious plan of salvation as revealed in Christ.[93] "To do the truth" meant for John to be a "son of the truth," in the sense of living one's whole life under the dominion of Christ.[94] "Doing the truth" was for John what "keeping the law" was for the apostle Paul, i.e. an exercise in Christian liberty.[95] As obedience to an inner law of love, it could not be tied down absolutely to any one or other particular form of external behavior.[96] No specific activity, state of life, vocation, economic arrangement, or political order could be said to be in and of itself good or bad, true of false, commanded or prohibited.[97]

The liberation theologians have understood all this and, as we have seen, applied it (albeit too broadly perhaps) in their refusal to allow any of the "instruments" of salvation to be absolutized in themselves. But the truth of Christian liberty applies also to the doing of theology. Theology, after all, is itself an activity "extrinsic" to the interior dispo-

[91] Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982) 199–200.

[92] See R. Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966) 66–69; S. Lyonnet, "St. Paul: Liberty and Law," in *Readings in Biblical Morality*, ed. C. L. Salm (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966) 62–83.

[93] Brown, *Epistles of John* 200. Brown bases this conclusion upon his agreement with de la Potterie's rejection of the Dodd-Bultmann thesis of a Greek background for the Johannine notion of truth, whereby for John truth would be a quasi-Platonic heavenly reality, rather than God's mysterious plan of salvation (ibid. 199; R. Brown, *The Gospel according to John i–xii* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966] 499–500).

[94] Brown, *Epistles of John* 200. See also Walter J. Burghardt, *Tell The Next Generation* (New York: Paulist, 1980) 65–68.

[95] In its Semitic origins (Old Testament and Qumranic), the expression "doing the truth" often meant "keeping the faith," "following wisdom," or "doing the law" (Brown, *Epistles of John* 200; Brown, *Gospel according to John* 135). At its best, however, OT morality was already an interior affair of the heart (See Ingo Hermann, *The Experience of Faith* [New York: Kenedy, 1968] 52–72), and it was precisely this interiority of obedience which Jesus emphasized over against the legalistic externalism of the Pharisees, and upon which Paul based his doctrine of Christian liberty.

[96] Even the NT "instructions" (e.g., Mt 5:3–12, 21–26, 27–30) can be said to function "legally" only to the extent of being "guides" to the perception of the inner law of freedom and love, notwithstanding their remarkably authoritative tone (see Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching* 83–84; Lyonnet, *Liberty and Law* 74–76; B. Häring, *The Law of Christ* 1 [Cork: Mercier, 1963] 262–66; Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974] 560; also P. Lee, "Permanence of the Ten Commandments: St. Thomas and His Modern Commentators," *TS* 42 [1981] 422–43). To be consistent with the traditional line of Christian thought, as noted earlier, some allowance would have to be made here also for the possibility of some few "intrinsically evil" actions, ideologies, or even occupations (e.g., drug-trafficking).

[97] Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching* 110–21, 122, 235–47. See also n. 96 above.

sition of love, whether its object is speculative or practical,[98] and whether its goal is contemplative or activist. As such, it is as relative and flexible in itself as any other external activity, and can be judged to be good or bad in the final analysis only by the contribution it does or does not make to the process of liberation or "edification." What kind of theological activity will be genuinely constructive, therefore, cannot be determined beforehand in the abstract.[99] Rather, each theologian will have to discern existentially,[100] and in accordance with an honest appraisal of personal talents, what external form his or her pursuit of theology should take. Not every theologian will find in himself or herself the stomach, the stamina, the discipline, or the frame of mind necessary for one or another approach to theology. An honest appraisal of one's own self might also reveal that no one individual theologian can possibly satisfy all the needs of humankind in this regard. The notion of a Renaissance man was an intriguing conceit of an earlier rationalistic age, but it would seem to have little foundation in Christian morality. The assumption of the latter would seem rather to be that no one individual can, or need try to, do everything. Why? Mainly because, according to the apostle Paul at least, one is never alone in the project of doing the truth, but belongs to a community of believers each of whom, according to his or her own gifts, shares in the division of labor (1 Cor 12). Precisely because they belong to a church, therefore, theologians, it would seem according to Pauline doctrine, can enjoy a sense of shared creativity and responsibility. One theologian can carry his or her end of the burden, however removed and risk-free it might be or seem, without feeling intimidated by lack of time or talent for political engagement or for the writing of more timely tracts. Even while cheering on and supporting those theologians on the front line, he or she can get on with his or her own work, knowing that all are in the work of liberation together, and that it is only when all work together than the job will ever get done. The example set by three Christian theologians living in Germany and Austria during the late 1930s and early 1940s, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Josef Jungmann, and Karl Rahner, may serve to illustrate the point I am trying to make.

Early on, in 1933 already, Bonhoeffer had sided with the so-called "confessing Church" that was being championed by those German Protestants who wanted to maintain the independence of the church over against Nazi domination.[101] He spoke out very strongly against the

[98] See n. 80 above.

[99] See G. van Ackeren's comments in *NCE* 14 (1967) 47.

[100] See Karl Rahner's comments about the "perception of God's invitation in the concrete situation of politics and economy," and the development of an "existential ethics," as discussed in Spohn, "Reasoning Heart" 32–33.

[101] E. H. Robertson, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Richmond: John Knox, 1967) 7.

Führerprinzip and the anti-Semitism of Hitler. Later in the year, however, over the objections of Karl Barth and other theologians, he accepted a call to minister to two German-speaking congregations in London, on the assumption that he would be able to do more there for his people than back in Berlin, where he was already under suspicion. Early in 1935 he was recalled to Germany to lead a seminary for students in the confessing church. This seminary became the theological center of resistance until it was closed by the Nazis in 1937. It was during this period that Bonhoeffer wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*. In 1939 he was convinced by his friends to flee to America. As soon as it became clear that Germany would be involved in war, however, Bonhoeffer returned. "His thinking about ethics had convinced him," E. H. Robertson states, "of the need for involvement."[102] His task now became "clearly political," Robertson notes, "even though his essential concern was still theological,"[103] based as it was on his desire to rescue the "soul of Germany."[104] After several failed attempts to help clear the way for an alternative government in Germany, Bonhoeffer eventually became an accomplice in a plot to assassinate Hitler, was arrested in 1943, and was executed by the Nazis on April 8, 1945, but not before he had taken his time in prison to raise many provocative questions about the nature of a religionless Christianity that later found publication in the well-known volume entitled *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

The reaction of the great Austrian liturgist Josef Jungmann to the Nazi threat was quite different. When Hitler's henchmen closed down the University of Innsbruck's Jesuit College on October 12, 1939, and brought the teaching activity of its theological faculty to a halt, Jungmann quickly packed his bags and fled to a convent in Hainstetten, a tiny farming village close to the Danube between Linz and Vienna.[105] Here he spent the next six years of his life, doing some pastoral work but giving most of his time and energy to the writing of his classic treatise on the history of the Roman Catholic Mass. "In the midst of the noise of war . . . I was able to work with few worries as on an island of peace," Jungmann later reported.[106]

Karl Rahner was just beginning his theological career at the University of Innsbruck when its school of theology was shut down in 1939 by the Nazis. He had come to Innsbruck only a few years earlier in 1936, after having spent the two years from 1934–36 pursuing a doctorate in philos-

[102] Ibid. 10.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid. 7.

[105] See the author's Foreword to J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (New York: Benziger, 1959) n.p.

[106] Ibid.

ophy at the renowned university in his hometown of Freiburg, where Martin Heidegger was still a leading figure.[107] Driven out of Innsbruck, Rahner went to Vienna in 1939 and stayed there until the summer of 1944, all the while teaching theology to a group of Jesuits in Vienna and working at the Pastoral Institute in that city.[108] He spent the last year of the war in Lower Bavaria, helping out with ordinary parish ministry.[109] After the war he spent the years 1945–49 at Pullach (outside Munich) teaching what he himself called "an emergency theology."[110]

Given the situation at the time, one might, were one of Segundo's view, think that during the war period Rahner should have paid much more attention to questions about the relationship of Judaism and Christianity, or other urgent and relevant matters. By his own admission, however, Rahner made only an "insignificant contribution to the Jewish-Christian dialogue"[111] and, judging from the content of his earliest postwar publications, he had been thinking mainly about the more traditional questions of dogmatic theology.[112] Later Rahner would say that mainly because of his having been a Roman Catholic priest, he was not one of those who had been attracted and swayed by Hitler and Nazism.[113] He added,

[107] Heidegger, it may be noted, became rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933 under the Nazi regime and used the position to support the Nazi cause. He resigned the rector's seat in 1934 (see M. Heidegger, *Existence and Being* [Chicago: Regnery, 1965] 9). According to some, this resignation was prompted not so much by any repugnance for Hitler's ideology as by his disappointment "at the *Fuhrer's* failure to live up to Heidegger's ideals" (Ivan Strenski, "Heidegger Is No Hero," *Christian Century*, May 19, 1982, 601). However that may be, Heidegger later withdrew to the Black Forest mountains near Todtnau, lived in a ski-hut, dressed as a peasant, abandoning all political activity and devoting himself exclusively to the writing of philosophy (see *Existence and Being* ix). Stefan Schimanski notes that Heidegger wanted nothing else but to be left in peace to do his writing (ibid. x).—Because of his Catholic clerical status, Rahner says he found it more convenient to write his doctoral dissertation (*Geist im Welt*) under Martin Honecker, a Catholic who held a chair of Christian philosophy at Freiburg. Honecker flunked Rahner "for being too inspired by Heidegger," an action which, however embarrassing later in view of the renown Rahner's thesis was to gain, might have required some courage considering Heidegger's Nazi affiliations. In any event, Rahner had taken several seminars from Heidegger. On these and other matters relating to Rahner's study under Heidegger, see K. Rahner, *I Remember* (New York: Crossroad, 1985) 41–48.

[108] See L. J. O'Donovan, "Living into Mystery," *America*, March 10, 1979, 178; idem, "To Lead Us into the Mystery," *America*, June 16, 1984, 453; Rahner, *I Remember* 50.

[109] Ibid.

[110] O'Donovan, "To Lead Us" 453.

[111] See John M. Oesterreicher, "Profile of a Christian for Our Times," *America*, June 16, 1984, 459.

[112] Rahner's famous essay "*Theos* in the New Testament," e.g., was apparently delivered originally as a lecture to the small wartime group of Jesuits he was teaching in Vienna (see K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 1 [Baltimore: Helicon, 1961] 79, n. 1).

[113] Rahner, *I Remember* 52.

however, that "by and large, it is still true that we endured their madness rather passively."[114] "In retrospect," he said, "we must ask ourselves what in fact we should have done" and "why [we] didn't protest much more clearly and plainly."[115] What they could have done, however, is still, Rahner claimed, hard to say some 30 or 40 years after the war.[116] "Naturally, one can always say in retrospect that one acted cowardly," but before today's youth are too quick to condemn his generation, Rahner concluded, they should ask themselves whether they would be "that much more prescient, courageous, and willing to risk [their] lives" were they to go through similar times.[117]

All three of these theologians were opposed to the Nazi ideology. And knowing Jungmann and Rahner as I did, I am sure that had they been called upon to do so, both would have been no less ready to sacrifice their lives for the victims of Nazism than was their fellow theologian from Louvain Emile Mersch, who was killed on May 23, 1940, while ministering along the Douai highway in Belgium to victims of a furious German air attack.[118] Still, as opposed as they were to Nazism, and as willing as they may have been to sacrifice their lives, neither Jungmann nor Rahner ever followed Bonhoeffer's example of forgoing the more formal pursuit of theology for the sake of fighting Nazism head-on. Does this mean that their work was any less valid or valuable than Bonhoeffer's?

Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship* and his *Letters and Papers from Prison* are masterpieces of theology and could probably never have been written except "from within" his dangerous commitment to the liberation of the German soul from Nazi tyranny. But Jungmann's *Missarum sollemnia* was a masterpiece too, and it probably could not have been produced had he not found "an island of peace" amidst "the noise of war." So too were Rahner's early *Schriften.* Some of the essays in the first volume of Rahner's writings, like the aforementioned "*Theos* in the

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid. 53.

[117] Ibid. 51. It has been argued by Segundo and J. B. Metz that, given its "transcendental" thrust, Rahner's whole theological method is "insensitive to social problems and ineffectual in the realms of policy or social change" (see L. J. O'Donovan, "Orthopraxis and Theological Method in Karl Rahner," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 35 [1980] 48). O'Donovan claims, however, that such a critique one-sidely disregards Rahner's own recommendation for a "reciprocal interdependence of transcendental and historical reflection in theology" (ibid. 49) and his own practice of theology along such lines (49–52). That O'Donovan is right is further indicated by the fact that, like Bonhoeffer, Rahner came to view the modern process of "secularization" as a potentially positive sign of humanity's gradual self-fulfilment in accordance with divine providence (see Patrick J. Lynch, "Secularization Affirms the Sacred: Karl Rahner," *Thought* 61 [1986] 381–93).

[118] See Emile Mersch, *The Theology of the Mystical Body* (St. Louis: Herder, 1951) x.

New Testament," were surely worked out during the war period, and it is doubtful that Rahner could ever have produced such masterly material had he not kept some distance from the war's turmoil and held himself somewhat aloof from the active resistance to Nazism which other of his fellow German and Austrian Jesuits and friends, like Alfred Delp and Augustin Roesch, had undertaken.[119]

Carved as it was out of time and energy that might have been given to greater involvement in the everyday, concrete struggle for freedom, the wartime work of Jungmann and Rahner might, when viewed in isolation, be thought to be anything but an exercise in orthopraxis. The fact of the matter, however, is that they were not working in isolation. They were, in one sense, working in conjunction with Bonhoeffer and not a few other front-line theologians. To that extent, at least from the perspective of the Pauline notion of a division of labor in the Church, their individual efforts take on the character of complementing Bonhoeffer's outstanding work, and his theirs. The courage and brilliance shown by Bonhoeffer in the heat of battle need not detract from the discipline and concern Jungmann and Rahner must have had in order to sustain their theological interests at a time when the world seemed to be collapsing all around them. Together, they can be said to have helped make the Church present in a way that would meet the needs of the time, but also keep it in touch with the past, and prepare it for the future. Each did what he was needed to do, and what, given his unique character and talent, he alone was able to do. It is inconceivable, e.g., that a man like Jungmann could ever have conspired with anyone to have assassinated a Hitler, and it is hard to imagine Rahner ever having been an activist, no matter how much both men might have despised Nazism or regretted the horrible events of the Holocaust. It is equally hard to think of Bonhoeffer not doing what he did. All three, it would seem, "did the truth," and precisely to the extent of having allowed themselves to be driven by the Spirit to do it in their own ways, in accordance with their own unique talents, and in response to what each perceived to be the existential needs of the time.

Already some years ago David Tracy observed how the liberation theologians' "earlier style of pure confrontation towards all other forms of theology" seemed "now more willing to release its enraged grip and allow the real theological conflict of mutually respecting argument to occur."[120] If that means that some of the concerns expressed in this paper are passé, so much the better; for, as Tracy also noted, such a development can only promise "the real and liberating possibility of authentic conflict in the conversation among all forms of theology."[121]

[119] See Rahner, *I Remember* 40, 50, 52.
[120] Tracy, *Analogical Imagination* 397.
[121] Ibid.