

## THE CHALLENGE OF JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO

The publication in English of Juan Luis Segundo's latest book appears to offer abundant possibilities for the deepening of the world theological dialogue. On the one hand, *The Liberation of Theology*<sup>1</sup> bridges a lacuna in the understanding of the Uruguayan Jesuit's work, since it synthesizes ideas which he has published in Spanish over the past fifteen years but which have been generally unobtainable in libraries in the United States. At the same time, the book makes available the latest developments in his thought in a much more systematic and closely reasoned manner than was evident in his *Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*.<sup>2</sup>

I shall analyze the book's major theses, refer to other publications in Spanish where the author's ideas are developed in greater depth, and present some of my own responses to his thought. It should be strongly emphasized that the work is conflictive: it poses a sharp challenge to what he calls "academic" or "classical" theology (theology as it is commonly produced in the West). Segundo is aware of a certain scorn for Latin American theology in the world centers of theological learning and bluntly states his intention in this work of moving to the attack. He adds, however, that the challenge is intended to be properly and constructively theological, aiming at a more profound level of dialogue than has thus far been achieved.

The book's dominant thesis is clearly the detailed elaboration of a distinctive *methodology* of liberation theology, which the author believes is applicable to any truly liberating theology in any part of the world. Another key focus of interest concerns the crucial problem of the relation of *faith and ideologies*, which leads to the analysis of a number of related issues. Lastly, he discusses the theological and pastoral importance of clarifying a post-Constantinian *ecclesiology*, a theme that is pervasive throughout his published work.

### I

It appears to me that Segundo has been employing the same basic

<sup>1</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., *The Liberation of Theology*. Translated by John Drury. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1976. Pp. 241. \$10.95; \$6.95 paper. The original work is *Liberación de la teología* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1975) and is a revised version of lectures given at the Harvard Divinity School in the spring semester of 1974. Page references in this article will be to the translation.

<sup>2</sup> *Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, tr. John Drury (5 vols.; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973-74). The dialogue format adopted in this series accounts for the less systematic treatment. The Spanish original is entitled *Teología abierta para un laico adulto* (5 vols.; Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1968-72).

theological methodology over the past decade and a half;<sup>3</sup> the advance in *The Liberation of Theology* thus lies in the conscious and fully developed articulation of the approach. Its importance for him may be grasped from his statements that "the one and only thing that can maintain the liberative character of any theology is not its content but its methodology" and that this "offers the best hope for the future of theology" (pp. 39-40).

The central methodological tool in his approach is the "hermeneutic circle." This term has been applied in the past to the exegetical approach of Bultmann, but Segundo believes that his method corresponds better to the strict sense of the circle. On its most fundamental level, the method entails "the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal." If the present reality is to change, one must be dissatisfied with it, seek to change it, and thus raise questions concerning it that are "rich enough, general enough, and basic enough to force us to change our customary conceptions of life, death, knowledge, society, politics, and the world in general" (p. 8). And once these new and more profound questions are posed to the scriptural texts, it is essential that our interpretation of the texts change also; otherwise the new questions would either receive no answers or answers that are conservative and useless.

In this respect, a major disagreement of Segundo with academic theology is that it utilizes the sciences of the past (form criticism, archeology, cultural anthropology, etc.) to achieve a better understanding of the scriptural texts; at the same time, it seeks to preserve its autonomy from the sciences of the present, such as the social sciences, which could enrich it with new and more profound questions for the interrogation of the texts. In contradistinction to this, liberation theology "does not allow theologians to set aside the great problems of today on the pretext that they belong to other fields or disciplines. Instead it forces them to confront the major problems of history, biology, evolution, social change, and so forth" (p. 237).

Another key divergence is related to the partiality of the theologian. It has already been noted that such partiality is considered essential for the proper use of the hermeneutic circle, i.e., the circle presumes a commitment to change reality and a consequent commitment to change theology.<sup>4</sup> The liberation theologian acknowledges the necessity for

<sup>3</sup> For example, the "hermeneutic circle" described in the book is readily apparent in such early works as *Etapas precristianas de la fe: Evolución de la idea de Dios en el Antiguo Testamento* (Montevideo: Cursos de Complementación Cristiana, 1962) and *Concepción cristiana del hombre* (Montevideo: Mimeográfica "Luz," 1964).

<sup>4</sup> Segundo further clarifies the meaning of the hermeneutic circle through a detailed

commitment consciously and explicitly. On the other hand, Segundo asserts, "academic theology may well be unaware of its unconscious partiality, but the very fact that it poses as something impartial is a sign of its conservative partiality from the very start" (p. 13).

It may be noted here that the continuing refinement of a distinctive methodology is not confined to Segundo's work, but is a characteristic of all of recent Latin American theology. In the past few years, international conferences at Mexico City and at El Escorial in Spain were dominated by this theme, which the Brazilian Leonardo Boff has referred to as "a true methodological revolution."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, even specialized works in areas such as Christology and spirituality have been careful to enunciate the distinctive methodological principles adopted.<sup>6</sup> An extraordinarily lucid summary of the divergences in method between European and Latin American theologians may be found in the address at Mexico City of Jon Sobrino;<sup>7</sup> this presentation deserves a careful scrutiny and response from Western theologians.<sup>8</sup>

analysis of works by Harvey Cox, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and James Cone. His conclusion is that Cone is the only one of the four who has successfully completed the circle.

<sup>5</sup> The proceedings of the meeting at El Escorial were published in *Fe cristiana y cambio social en América Latina: Encuentro de El Escorial, 1972* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1973). The presentations of Segundo in this meeting include "Las élites latinoamericanas: Problemática humana y cristiana ante el cambio social," pp. 203-12, and "Teología y ciencias sociales," pp. 285-95. The Mexico City conference is described in *Liberación y cautiverio: Debates en torno al método de la teología en América Latina* (Mexico City: Comité Organizador, 1975). Segundo's major address at this meeting was entitled "Condicionamientos actuales de la reflexión teológica en Latinoamérica," pp. 91-101. See also Raul Vidales, *Cuestiones en torno al método en la teología de la liberación* (Lima: Secretariado Latinoamericano, 1974) and Ignacio Ellacuría, "Posibilidad, necesidad, y sentido de una teología latinoamericana," in *Christus* 40 (February 1975) 12-16, and *ibid.* 40 (March 1975) 17-23. The quotation from Boff is from *Liberación y cautiverio*, p. 131. A young Franciscan, Boff has published a number of books in German and Portuguese, is editor of the leading theological journal in Brazil, and gives every indication of being one of the outstanding international theologians of the next few decades.

<sup>6</sup> The best-known Christological work in Latin America is clearly Boff's *Jesucristo el liberador* (Buenos Aires: Latinoamérica Libros, 1975). His five methodological principles are described on pp. 59-61 of this work, which is a Spanish translation of the third Portuguese edition. See also the methodological principles enunciated by Segundo Galilea in his *Espiritualidad de la liberación* (Santiago: Ediciones ISPAJ, 1973) pp. 7-10.

<sup>7</sup> Jon Sobrino, "El conocimiento teológico en la teología europea y latinoamericana," in *Liberación y cautiverio*, pp. 177-207. These ideas are thoroughly integrated into Sobrino's latest work *Cristología desde América Latina: Esbozo a partir del seguimiento del Jesús histórico* (Mexico City: Ediciones CRT, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> The divergences that surfaced concerning the approach of Bernard Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) are also deserving of careful attention. For example, in *Liberación y cautiverio* José Comblin states flatly: "creo que

In my view, the primary contribution of all these works to world theology consists in their clarification of the relationship between Christianity and the quest for justice. The past fifteen years have witnessed an unparalleled development in magisterial teaching on this issue in the Catholic Church. And if, as the 1971 Synod of Bishops asserted, action for justice now appears as a "constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel,"<sup>9</sup> then I believe this must have a much more profound impact on every area of theological understanding, including methodology, than has yet been attempted in the West. In this task Segundo and his colleagues have articulated the correct *Fragestellung*, that is, they have carefully delineated the correct issues, problems, and choices that are involved. Segundo's circle, for example, appears to be essential if theology is to come to grips with the change that is the necessary concomitant of action for justice. There must be rigorous criticism, of course, but I believe the only ultimate refutation of Segundo's method would be the articulation and implementation of an even more effective approach with regard to social, cultural, and political change.

## II

Another major project of *The Liberation of Theology* is a radical deideologizing, which goes far beyond Bultmann's earlier attempts at demythologizing. The partiality of a commitment to the oppressed functions as a "social preunderstanding" for the interrogation of biblical texts, thus achieving a much broader perspective than Bultmann's existential preunderstanding had attained previously. As a result, the book contains a number of somewhat startling suggestions regarding the influence on present theology of the ideologies of dominant groups in society. For example, the question is raised whether certain ahistorical emphases in current sacramental theology actually serve the interests of the *status quo*.<sup>10</sup> In this and other suggestions Segundo acknowledges

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ninguno de los teólogos medievales ni otro cualquiera hubiera dedicado ni siguiera un cuarto de hora a hacer teología si ésta fuera lo que dice el P. Lonergan que es, es decir, el estudio de un sistema de significados para pasar a otro sistema de significados" (p. 518). In the same work Hugo Assmann asserts that "personalmente, no me situó en el esquema lonerganiano: ha sido mi profesor de cristología y de Santísima Trinidad, pero creo haber percibido que su teología no lleva a la historia . . ." (p. 296). I hope to survey this literature in a future article.

<sup>9</sup> *Justice in the World: Synod of Bishops, Second General Assembly*, no. 6; Joseph Gremillion, *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Thought since Pope John* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1975), p. 514. English-speaking theologians are in Gremillion's debt for this much-needed collection of recent magisterial documents, as well as for his perceptive introductory essays.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. especially "The Ideological Infiltration of Dogma," pp. 40-47. The same trenchant critique is applied to the meaning of "unity" in the Church and to our operative

a seeming irreverence, but he believes such a heuristic device is necessary to waken the discipline of theology from its present ideological slumber.

Paradoxically, however, a parallel aim of the book is to justify the necessity of ideologies; for, aside from the pejorative sense of ideology as a sacralization of vested interests, the author also alludes to a more neutral conception: ideology as a person's basic system of goals and values, plus the concrete means selected to achieve them. On the phenomenological level, he sees a strong similarity in practice between a faith, such as Christianity, and an ideology, such as Marxism.<sup>11</sup> Thus, everyone embraces some system of means and ends, that is, some ideology; without the latter any effective action in history would be impossible.

A number of issues related to this are treated at length, such as eschatology, the problem of violence, and a proposed reconciliation of the basic disputes of the Reformation. Of singular importance is the question of the use of Scripture. For Segundo, the God revealed in the two Testaments is always known through a series of responses to different historical events; thus the unchangeable faith is always incarnated in changeable ideologies, which constitute "a bridge between our conception of God and the real-life problems of history" (p. 116). In one specific set of circumstances, then, God was understood as calling for the slaying of neighboring peoples; in another and different historical situation, his message was one of nonresistance to evil.

What, then, is the relation of the Bible to contemporary situations, such as the phenomenon of massive human suffering in Latin America? One method of answering this would involve searching the Scriptures for the paradigmatic situations which most closely resemble contemporary events, and accepting these as the correct faith responses for today. But such a procedure appears antiscientific and unreal, inasmuch as "there seems to be less and less sense in trying to look for similar situations in cultural milieus dating back thirty-five centuries, particularly since the pace of history seems to be accelerating every day" (pp. 117-18).

In clarifying his own position, Segundo utilizes the concepts of communications theory. He distinguishes between simple learning (proto-

understanding of the reality of God. On the latter topic, a fuller development may be found in *Nuestra idea de Dios* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1970). Segundo's ideas on sacramental theology are amplified in *Los sacramentos hoy* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> A preliminary sketch of these ideas appeared in "Fe e ideología," *Perspectivas de diálogo* 9 (1974) 227-33. Segundo had earlier published a series of articles on this and related topics in 1968 and 1969 in the same journal. A clear summary of his approach may be found in "Del ateísmo a la fe," *ibid.* 3 (1968) 44-47.

learning), which involves the acquisition of additional information, and learning how to learn (deuterolearning), which would enable one to multiply knowledge in new situations. From this perspective he holds that the ideologies contained in Scripture belong to the first level; on the other hand, faith is "the total process to which man submits, a process of learning in and through ideologies how to create the ideologies needed to handle new and unforeseen situations in history."<sup>12</sup>

For Segundo, then, faith without ideologies is a dead faith, that is, it is incapable of incarnation in history and thus totally impractical. This view undergirds a fundamental divergence he has from current European political theology;<sup>13</sup> for while the latter is also critical of existing alliances with the ideologies of the *status quo*, its posture of "eschatological reserve" tends to quench the needed enthusiasm for the creation of new and more efficacious ideologies.

In my opinion, a major advantage of Segundo's analysis of ideologies is that it confronts directly one of the most pressing issues in the development of Catholic social and political thought. We may recall the assertions of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* that faith "directs the mind to solutions that are fully human" and that Christians are joined with others in the search "for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals and from social relationships."<sup>14</sup> Although the term "ideology" is not employed here, the need for ideologies is logically implicit in the texts; for it is clear that only such specific systems of goals and means can ever make an effective contribution to the attainment of "solutions that are fully human."

The same necessity is evident in the more recent apostolic letter *Octogesima adveniens*. In that document Pope Paul VI discusses the ambiguity of all sociopolitical ideologies (nos. 26-29); he also advances a penetrating critique of socialist or Marxist ideologies (nos. 31-34) as well as of the ideology of liberal capitalism (no. 35). At the same time, Pope Paul stresses with regard to the individual Christian that "going beyond

<sup>12</sup> *The Liberation of Theology*, p. 120. Key elements of this view appeared previously in "Teología: Mensaje y proceso," *Perspectivas de diálogo* 9 (1974) 259-70. They are also evident in a talk delivered in the United States, "On a Missionary Awareness of One's Own Culture," *Jesuit Missions Newsletter* 33 (May 1974) 1-6. Jon Sobrino adopts a similar position, as in his assertion that "aunque el cristianismo no es una ideología, es fuente de ideologías parciales y funcionales . . ." (*Cristología desde América Latina*, p. 183).

<sup>13</sup> Another key difference from the Europeans lies in Segundo's insistence on the real causality of human efforts in the construction of the kingdom of God. He argues this position forcefully in "Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux," *Concilium* 96: *The Mystical and Political Dimensions of the Christian Faith* (ed. Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutiérrez; New York: Herder and Herder, 1974) esp. pp. 110-14 and 120-23.

<sup>14</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 11 and 16 (Gremillion, *op. cit.*, pp. 252 and 255).

every system, without however failing to commit himself concretely to serving his brothers, he will assert, in the very midst of his options, the specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of society." Again, at the conclusion of the letter, he declares with regard to Christian organizations that "they have to express, in their own way and rising above their particular nature, the concrete demands of the Christian faith for a just, and consequently necessary, transformation of society."<sup>15</sup> Thus, in addition to the criticism of existing ideological systems, Christians are here exhorted to concrete commitments to justice and its concomitant social change ("transformation" in the citations). And obviously, if these commitments are to transcend an empty voluntarism, they must involve the creation of specific plans and strategies for change; in a word, they must lead to new and better systems of goals and means, that is, to new and better ideologies.

### III

A last area of critical importance for Segundo's theology is ecclesiology, where he believes the Church has faced an unresolved dilemma for the entire twenty centuries of its existence. The problem is succinctly phrased as follows: "Was the original Christian message aimed at masses as such, so that it must be thought out and propagated in those terms; or was it rather aimed at minorities who were destined to play an essential role in the transformation and liberation of the masses?" (p. 209). The choice of one or other of these options entails enormous practical implications; for it will determine whether the Church's main energies and resources will be allotted to institutional expansion and preservation or to the transformation of the world, that is, to the construction of the kingdom. Basing his case on exegetical and metaphysical arguments, Segundo opts unreservedly for the second position.

The necessity for such a decisive choice has been a central theme in Segundo's theology ever since his first published work.<sup>16</sup> Critical to his theory is an understanding of "mass" and "minority" behavior, which he believes underlies the dynamics of world history, as well as the entire process of evolution. In *The Liberation of Theology* these ideas are expressed in very summary form, which may open them to facile misunderstanding and rejection; it would be well, therefore, to consult other works where he has elaborated his ideas in a much more detailed and

<sup>15</sup> *Octogesima adveniens*, nos. 36 and 51 (Gremillion, *op. cit.*, pp. 501 and 511).

<sup>16</sup> The question is the dominant one in *Función de la Iglesia en la realidad rioplatense* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1962).

profound manner.<sup>17</sup> This is especially true of the concept of "mass" existence or behavior. Because of the "economy of energy," which the author understands as basic to evolution on all levels, "mass" behavior is viewed as part of every human existence, cutting across all lines of status, education, or role in society and differing from what we ordinarily understand as "the masses." Indeed, without such a condition there would exist no foundation for the hypotheses and conclusions of the social sciences.

The Church is understood, then, as a creative minority within this dialectical process. Transcending the mass tendency to simplification, that is, to superficial and short-range solutions, it seeks to generate hypotheses for human evolution that are more profound and complex, as well as long-range in their efficacy; thus it would function as a genuine leaven in human history.<sup>18</sup> In my view, these ideas comprise the matrix for Segundo's choice of a socialist political system and for the decisive importance he has assigned to this choice.<sup>19</sup>

Again, the elaboration and defense of his ecclesiology is much more nuanced than the above summary indicates. I believe, however, that the theory has important implications for the Church in its present stage of transition. By now it is a theological cliché that the Constantinian era of the Church has ended, but this should not blind us to the relics and remnants of Christendom that blend with other elements as the new Church struggles in its chrysalis. Moreover, it is clear all over the world that the social structures that contributed to mass Catholicism in the past are everywhere disappearing, and that a process of profound, personal choice and conversion provides the only alternative for adher-

<sup>17</sup> Recent works of Segundo developing these ideas include *Acción pastoral latinoamericana: Sus motivos ocultos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Búsqueda, 1972) and *Masas y minorías en la dialéctica divina de la liberación* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Aurora, 1973). The metaphysical and exegetical principles underlying the position are developed in depth in a two-volume work entitled *¿La cristianidad, una utopía? 1: Los hechos; 2: Los principios* (Montevideo: Mimeográfica "Luz," 1964). This was Segundo's doctoral thesis under the direction of Paul Ricoeur, and it has not yet appeared in printed form.

<sup>18</sup> A more lengthy development of this thesis may be found in *Evolución y culpa* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1972) and *Esa comunidad llamada Iglesia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1968). An interesting comparison with the evolutionary theories of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is presented in "La Iglesia en la evolución de un continente," *De la sociedad a la teología* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohlé, 1970) pp. 155-73.

<sup>19</sup> See the article cited in n. 13 above. The importance of the socialist option for Segundo is indicated by the fact that he chose it for his topic in this liberation-theology issue of the influential *Concilium* series. Other articles on this issue include "¿Hacia una Iglesia de la izquierda?" *Perspectivas de diálogo* 4 (1969) 35-39, and a three-part series in the Uruguayan weekly *Marcha* entitled "La Iglesia chilena ante el socialismo," Aug. 27, Sept. 4, and Sept. 11, 1971.

ence to the Church. If one considers also the huge commercial propaganda machine that today molds all human consciousness in what has been called the "global shopping center," it is difficult to perceive any other ecclesial possibility but that of a creative minority as proposed by Segundo.<sup>20</sup> It is also plausible that a clearer picture of the lineaments of this future Church must await the deliberations of the next ecumenical council; in that case, a deepening of the preparatory theological dialogue on the issue raised by Segundo assumes even greater importance at the present time.

The principal objection to Segundo's ecclesiology is clearly that of "elitism," a charge which he vigorously rejects.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps this objection would be mitigated somewhat if Segundo devoted greater emphasis to the stages of personal growth involved in the understanding and practice of the Christian ideal, as well as to the reality of human sinfulness. But that does not imply that the ideal itself should be reduced to a minimum for mass acceptance; discipleship still involves the following of Christ in a life of self-sacrificing love, even unto death. If the Church did not strive to embody this in its teaching and practice, it would lose its credibility as a sign of God's plan for humanity, substituting the quest for individual security in place of a summons to creative responsibility.

Furthermore, this position is not peculiar to Latin America. The North American ecclesialist Richard P. McBrien has noted that the Church makes no sense apart from the kingdom, and that today most theologians hold this position in one form or other. Basically, this view "regards history as in process of becoming the kingdom of God, and the Church as sign, instrument, and herald of this ongoing reality."<sup>22</sup> I would suggest that the merit of Segundo's contribution lies in moving

<sup>20</sup> Robert Bellah has presented some sombre reflections in this area throughout his recent *The Broken Covenant*. For example, referring to the institution of advertising, he observes: "That happiness is to be attained through limitless material acquisition is denied by every religion and philosophy known to man but is preached incessantly by every American television set. . . . Few societies could imagine themselves surviving very long when one of their central institutions was advocating unrestrained greed. Are we so different from all other societies?" (*The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* [New York: Seabury, 1975] p. 134).

<sup>21</sup> Patrick J. Burns touches on this point in "Elitist Tendencies and Consumer Pressures in American Society," *Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention* (New York: Manhattan College, 1973) pp. 47-69, and esp. p. 65, n. 25.

<sup>22</sup> Richard P. McBrien, *Church: The Continuing Quest* (New York: Newman, 1970) p. 68. Besides its exposition of McBrien's own position, this brief but important work contains an excellent survey of the competing ecclesiologies of Vatican II (pp. 23-41) and of key developments since then (pp. 43-65).

the discussion to a more profound level, by pointing out more specifically and in greater depth precisely how the Church is meant to function as a creative minority committed to the service of mankind in the process of history. In a competitive, consumer society this position will usually be comprehended as either unrealistic or absurd; at any rate, it shows little prospect of becoming a mass phenomenon.

## IV

This review is admittedly selective, and I have consciously tried to be positive in my evaluation.<sup>23</sup> Segundo does not adhere to the rigid separation of disciplines in Western theology, wherein one person does systematic theology, another moral theology, another scriptural exegesis, and so forth. Each of the specialists in these disciplines and their myriad subdivisions could well respond to him in their own areas of expertise, although I would hope that they strive to keep some significant relation to the total thrust of his theology and to be wary of attempts at co-optation. And it is perhaps best to let Segundo himself reply to the recent statement of David Tracy that "anyone attempting to perform all these tasks on his own is either the most startling genius to appear since Leibnitz or seriously deluded."<sup>24</sup>

Finally, a participant in the 1975 conference with Latin American theologians in Detroit concluded an article on that meeting with the assertion that the Latin movement represents "the most serious, sustained and theologically informed challenge the Western, dominant Christian paradigm has so far received." I would agree with this statement of Beverly Wildung Harrison, while adding that a challenge is not necessarily devastating to the opponent; my own hope is that the challenge from the periphery can unlock a new fruitfulness and creativity in the centers of theological learning.<sup>25</sup> Still another participant at Detroit,

<sup>23</sup> For examples of negative estimates of liberation theology, see Roger Vekemans, "Panorámica actual de la teología de la liberación en América Latina: Evaluación crítica," *Tierra nueva* 5, no. 17 (April 1976) 5-33, and H. Lepargneur, "Théologies de la libération et théologie tout court," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 108 (1976) 126-69. Although he is one of the most vigorous opponents of liberation theology, Vekemans does admit that "la adopción de una proyección más positiva sería igualmente legítima" (*art. cit.*, p. 6).

<sup>24</sup> David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1975) p. 257, n. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Beverly Wildung Harrison, "Challenging the Western Paradigm: The 'Theology in the Americas' Conference," *Christianity and Crisis* 35 (1975) 254. The most detailed analysis of the meeting is that of Gregory Baum, "The Christian Left at Detroit," *Ecumenist* 13 (1975) 81-100. I believe that views very similar to mine have been well expressed by Claude Geffré in his excellent introduction to the *Concilium* 96 volume: "The 'theologies of liberation' certainly represent an opportunity for the universal Church. And what the theology of the western world might well be tempted to disregard as an 'anti-theology' could become the condition of its own renewal" (*op. cit.*, p. 16).

Robert McAfee Brown, has stated flatly that "leadership in the future, theological or otherwise, is not going to come from Europeans and North Americans, but from Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans."<sup>26</sup> Whether Brown's prophecy will be fulfilled must be left for the moment to the verdict of history; in the meantime an excellent focus on the problems that will occupy any future leadership may be found in *The Liberation of Theology*.

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<sup>26</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, *Is Faith Obsolete?* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) p. 132.