

Christians and Marxists. By Jose Miguez Bonino. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976. 158 pp. \$6.95.

For many reasons this is a frightening book.

The thesis is this: since social revolution is the principal goal and activity of the church, and since the dynamics of the social process and revolutionary program which Marxism has used are indispensable for revolutionary change, the church is obligated to use these Marxist insights (pp. 8, 122). The author, a well-known Latin theologian, Dean of Graduate Studies at the Higher Institute of Theological Studies, Buenos Aires, a Vice President of the World Council of Churches, "confesses Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour" (p. 7). The message of this book had its first hearing in a lectureship on contemporary Christianity, sponsored by the Langham Trust, London, with John Stott in the chair.

Since the author claims to be a theologian, rather than a politician or a sociologist, we shall examine the theological deficiencies of the book which in turn account for the untenable thesis.

First, the author fails to have an accurate biblical basis for his thought. The knowledge of God is defined as doing justice (pp. 31-35). The prophets' call to justice and concern for the poor is made the mandate of the church to be imposed on the whole world by revolutionary means. No mention is made of suffering unjustly (1 Pet. 2-3), and a biblical eschatological perspective is totally lacking.

Second, the author, as do all liberation theologians, emphasize man in community. Indeed, Bonino declares that individualistic conceptions of man are anti-biblical (p. 95). Sin and salvation are both community

matters.

Third, the author has missed the purpose of the church as clearly expressed in the great commission. To him political revolutionary activity is missionary activity.

To sum up: Latin liberation theology in an Internationale dress.

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