

MISSIONS TRENDS NO. 4: Liberation Theologists in North America and

Europe. Edited by Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky. New York: Paulist Press and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979. 289 pp., \$3.45 pb.

Do we really need another book on liberation theology? Only the convenience of having these 26 essays, poems, open letters assembled between one set of book covers might justify this publication (since almost all the chapters have appeared in print previously). So to help overcome the ennui caused by reading the same "stuff" 26 more times, I decided to list some of the presuppositions of liberation theology as revealed in this compilation and then make some observations.

Here are some of the presuppositions. (1) Marx and Christ taught the same truth (p. 13) and there can be no systematic theology without an analysis of Marx (p. 34). (2) Practice must always precede theory in doing theology (p. 28, an assertion contradicted by the "therefore's" of Rom. 12:1 and Eph. 4:1, for example). (3) Sin is social more than personal, and becomes concrete in the social structures of society (p. 48). The basic problem in society is racism (p. 128), and racism and capitalism go together (p. 128). In relation to women's liberation, maternity is the root of female oppression (p. 185). (4) Church ethics are based on kingdom teachings, not the law of Christ, and Christians are "people of the beatitudes" (except the eighth and ninth ones!) (pp. 48, 70). (5) The Bible must be reinterpreted (p. 29), and Paul's exegesis shows vestiges of his rabbinic training (p. 224).

Some observations. (1) Such a presuppositional foundation hardly augurs for an orthodox superstructure. (2) The variety of authors who

are encamped together in this volume does augur for something rather startling. The list partially includes Jim Wallis, Moltmann, Pope Paul VI, Daniel Berrigan, James Cone, Andrew Young, William Pannell of Fuller Seminary, Virginia Mollenkott, and Cesar Chavez! Six years ago a student of mine in his thesis suggested that the Theology of Hope might become the basis of the theology of the ecumenical church of the end time. It was a daring suggestion then. But now . . . ?

C. C. Ryrie