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Germany. The horrifying reports of what had been perpetrated in the name of the German people in concentration camps and occupied countries now made inescapably clear to everyone the criminal nature of the German regime which had started this war and continued it without compassion to the bitter end. The world was appalled when it learned of the Jewish holocaust. How could all this have happened?...

A few months after the end of the war representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany met with representatives of the ecumenical movement in Stuttgart and declared:

'We accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently. Now a new beginning is to be made in our Churches.'

We were in fact able to make a fresh start, by God's grace. We have now been living in peace for 40 years. We have been able to rebuild our towns and villages and create new means of existence. We have been amazed to see signs of reconciliation appearing. Our relations with the neighbouring countries are marked by increasing confidence. 'Reconciliation over the graves' has become a reality and must not be called into question again. In the face of death every quarrel ceases and every conflict is void of meaning and justification. We remember with respect all those who died or were murdered during the war, both from other nations and from our own. May they rest in God's peace.

We often feel the barriers which still divide people from one another. There is still an urgent need for further steps of reconciliation, especially with the Eastern countries. I would like to give an example. When I visited the Christian churches in the Soviet Union with a delegation from our church in 1982, we were in Leningrad on 22nd June and looked back on that day in 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia and triggered off a horrendous war. We stood by the graves of 700,000 people who died during the siege of that city, which lasted over three years. And yet, in the evening, we took part in a service at St. Nicholas' Cathedral at which the bishop greeted us as Christian brothers and sisters and welcomed us into the fellowship of the congregation there. These are visible signs of reconciliation.

We have had peace for 40 years now. But we are all aware of the fact that peace is not secure. Years of a fresh start have been granted to us. But we know that the wounds of war are not yet healed. Our [p. 163](#) country is rent asunder by a border. For many of us it blocks the way that should lead to reconciliation with our neighbours in the East. It may even arouse a feeling of defiance, so that people only talk about the guilt of others and forget their own. Such ideas serve to erect walls of separation instead of breaking them down, and close our hardened hearts to others. But God's Word has given us a wonderful opportunity when it invites us, for Christ's sake, to 'be reconciled to God'. A new beginning is possible through his forgiveness ... [p. 164](#)

How Long O Lord? A sermon on the Gospel and Liberation

Ray Hundley

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Habakkuk.... This great prophet of the Old Testament lived in days similar to those that we are going through in Colombia and in all of Latin America right now. Days of difficulty, strife, and confusion. Somehow in the midst of all that, he received God's message for his day. I believe much of what he says is God's message for our day as well.

In chapter [1](#), verses [1-4](#), Habakkuk begins ... "The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. How long, O Lord, will I call for help, And Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, "Violence!" Yet Thou dost not save. Why dost Thou make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. Therefore, the law is ignored, And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, justice comes out perverted" (NASB).

These were difficult days in Judah. Habakkuk's lament seems so familiar to me. I can almost hear those same words being said with a Latin American accent ... 'How long, Lord, will we cry unto You and You will not hear us? How long will we have to see violence and strife and injustice and oppression? How long, O Lord, will we have to look on those things; the perversion of the law? the victory of those who oppress us and hurt us and ignore your teaching? How long, O Lord?'

That's the cry today in Latin America and perhaps throughout the third world. How long do we have to look on those things? I must be frank and tell you that Latin America and the suffering situation through which that continent is going is deep in my heart. It's difficult for me to go to Latin America and see children growing up in miserable conditions, with poverty and hunger and disease and lack of education; lacking health facilities, with suffering and squalor and misery all around them.

And I know that hurts the heart of our God as well. You'll notice as you read Habakkuk that God never reprimands him for this question because Habakkuk was actually saying, 'Lord, how can YOU stand to look on these things? You're a righteous God and all this unrighteousness is going on around us. How long?' God never says, 'Habakkuk, that's not a proper question to ask me. You must be quiet!' But rather, [p. 165](#) God answers Habakkuk and He says, 'I have a plan and I know what I'm going to do, and it's not going to be much longer.'

The Latin American world and the third world in general are facing tremendous crises. We are going to go in one way or the other in the next ten years in Latin America. If something isn't done to stop problems of oppression and injustice, misery and suffering, I have no doubt that within ten to fifteen years the whole continent will be a socialist, Marxist state. I believe revolution is coming in Latin America, and that revolution is going to turn upside down everything that's going on there today.

It seems to me that in God's Word are some clear principles about what we as Christians ought to do in the light of this kind of suffering. And I confess to you that I am a guilty missionary. At the beginning of my missionary career in Colombia I lived among poor people, and saw what was going on around me, but it never got through to me. It's possible to isolate yourself from these things, even living with the people. It's possible to live in your own little world and never think about people around you who are dying of starvation, who are going through life unable to learn because of lack of nutrition. It's easy to forget down there that the Colombian minimum daily wage is \$2.50, and that food and clothing in Colombia costs just about what it costs here. Add onto that the many Colombian families who have 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 children. Want to see what it's like to live in the rest of the world? Take \$2.50 and go to the market and buy everything your family is going to eat for that day.

I have had to come before the Lord in recent years and say I'm sorry. And the thing that has affected me is a theology in Latin America called Liberation Theology. I began reading it several years ago in Colombia and I rejected it immediately, mainly because I felt it was Marxist and I felt that anything that came from Marxism probably couldn't be very good. The last three years of my life I've spent eight hours a day, five days a week, reading Liberation Theology. And in the course of those three years God has done some remarkable things in my own life. One of the things He has done is to sensitize me to His view of the poor. God cares about them. He's concerned about their poverty and suffering and He's willing to do something about it.

All of this is to say that I believe we need to think seriously about the questions being asked by liberation theologians. Liberation Theology in its most radical form combines Marxism and Christianity. The movement began in the 1960s (in that decade of ferment, uproar, and student riots here in the States and around the world) with a group of Latin American Protestant theologians. They began to meet and asked [p. 166](#) one question: 'How can we apply the Word of God to the social problems of our continent? That is, what does God's Word have to say about the suffering of Latin America?'

As they met, they began to realize that in Latin America, development had never worked. Reform had never brought great progress. And so as they examined the problem, recognizing that development and reform weren't working in their setting, they reached one conclusion, that the only way to stop this problem, the only way to change the situation in Latin America, was through complete upheaval, turning upside down everything in their society. And the only way to do that was through a violent Marxist revolution. They committed themselves to Marxism and to the revolution, and they decided that as far as they were concerned, God's Word supported them in that commitment.

They began to read scripture in a revolutionary way. As they did, certain texts jumped out to them. One was the Exodus event when the Israelites, oppressed by the Egyptians in slavery and bondage, afforded their cruel taskmasters great financial gain from their labour and slavery. Latin American theologians saw that in a new light, saying 'That's where we are today. We are slaves. We are oppressed. We face the same kind of bondage the Israelites were under in Egypt.' And if they had to identify who Egypt was they always came up with one country, the United States of America.

During that process Latin theologians saw that God liberated the Israelites from Egypt. He had brought them out. Many liberation theologians believe that God had nothing to do with that, but actually the Israelites themselves fostered an insurrection, a revolution, a rebellion against the Egyptians. They had fought against them and won, escaped. And that later when the texts of scripture were written down, 'God language' was used to make it sound more important, as if God had done it, but the Israelites really did it themselves. And so they took that as the great model, the great example, of what needs to be done today to solve the problems of oppression and injustice. They didn't have to go very far before they found some passages in the New Testament; two of which are very significant, in the Gospel of Luke.

First is the Magnificat, the words of Mary, the mother of Jesus, when she says that 'God has filled the hungry and sent the rich away empty handed.' Many liberation theologians refer to Mary as the first guerrilla fighter ... in theory.

Then they go to [Luke 4](#). Jesus comes on the scene, with His first address, the first message He ever gives. Look at [Luke 4](#), verses [18](#) and [19](#). Jesus preaches His first sermon in Nazareth and He presents the [p. 167](#) outline of what His ministry is to be with these words, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind. To set free those who

are downtrodden [or oppressed]. To proclaim the favourable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and He sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him and He began to say to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." '

No doubt exists that the kind of emotional drive the liberation theologians have been able to generate with these passages is similar to the expectation that was there in the first century when Jesus came. Jews writhed under the heel of the Roman Empire, oppressed, exploited, and afflicted. They wanted liberation. They wanted God to raise up another judge who would destroy the Romans and restore their kingdom. And as Jesus came and surely as He read these words in the synagogue in Nazareth, many of the Jews in their own hearts concluded, 'He's here. This is God's Messiah. He's come to liberate us.'

But somehow the rest of Jesus' ministry doesn't quite fulfil that expectation, does it? And that's where the problem comes. Up to that point you can say that in the Old Testament God did all these things and God raised up men to save His people from oppression and affliction by destroying the enemies of God.

All of those things lead up to this final point when Jesus Christ comes on the scene. He announces His plan and says, 'I'm the one about whom these scriptures speak. I have come to proclaim good news to the poor.' And surely everyone sitting there thought to himself, 'This is it. He's going to liberate us from these exploiters.'

But God didn't; and Jesus didn't. And the only time Jesus uses these words in His ministry, the only time Jesus says that He's going to set men free is when he says, for example, in John chapter [8](#): 'If you abide in my words you will be my disciples. And you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' And the Jews answered him and said, 'What do you mean, free? We are slaves to no man.' And Jesus answered them 'I tell you truly, any man who commits sin is a slave to sin.' When Jesus Christ began to apply the teaching of [Luke 4:18](#) and [19](#) in His ministry, He didn't gather a group of men and say 'All right, gather your weapons, sharpen your swords, and get ready. We're going to destroy the Romans.' He didn't start an insurrection. Out by a quiet lake he called four fishermen and said to them, 'Follow me and I'll make you to become fishers of men.'

No one has ever seen the problem of man the way Jesus sees it. No one has ever felt the hurt of children suffering, at seeing men and [p. 168](#) women jailed unjustly, at injustice and the cruelty and the tyranny and the oppression that characterized the Roman Empire in those days. No one has ever felt that with the depth that Jesus Christ felt. It broke his heart.

But when Jesus looked out on a world oppressed, He never counselled revolution. He brought 12 men around Himself and He said to them, 'I'm going to make you fishers of men and you're going to receive power and when you do, you'll be my witnesses.'

Now no one has a better plan for changing this world than Jesus Christ. No one is more sensitive to the needs of the poor than Jesus was. No one understands the needs of suffering humanity more deeply than Jesus did. The plan Jesus left is still the greatest plan for turning this world upside down.

In Acts chapter [1](#), verses [1-8](#), Jesus begins to summarize His teaching to His disciples. They've seen His resurrection power and seeing that power, they come to one conclusion, 'wow! If He has that much power there's nothing He can't do ... He can certainly restore the kingdom to Israel.'

Listen to what they say, 'Gathering them together He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "You heard of from Me, for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." '

Their logical response to that would be, 'Oh, great Lord, finally we're going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and go out and win the world!' But that's not their reaction at all. They know only one model of what it means when the Holy Spirit comes upon a man. You'll find it repeated 12 times in the book of Judges. The Holy Spirit came upon so-and-so and he was used of God to liberate the people of Israel from their oppressors.

So they say to Him, 'Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' Now Lord, is this it? We've waited three years. Surely now, now is the time when you are going to use your power. We've seen it. You said the Holy Spirit is going to come upon us like the judges of old to free your people from oppression and slavery. Now Lord? Is this finally the time that you're going to destroy the Romans and give back the kingdom to Israel?

Jesus said, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth.' p. 169

The plan to change the world that Jesus Christ left us is not Marxist revolution. It is Holy Spirit-anointed witness. Jesus Christ sees man's oppression of man. I heard someone say just a few weeks ago that capitalism is the oppression of man by man, and socialism is just the opposite. Both systems are the oppression of man by man. Both systems contain grave problems. Both systems emphasize finance and economics as the final criteria of life.

They are wrong. Jesus Christ Himself said, and this is a message to you from the students of Latin America, 'Life does not consist in the abundance of the things that you possess.' If there's one message that needs to be delivered to the Church in the United States, it's that verse from Jesus Christ: 'Life does not consist in the abundance of the things that you possess.' Jesus Christ's plan for freeing the world has not changed in 2000 years. It's still the most powerful solution to the problems that we face.

Now in contrast to all of that, I close by sharing a glimpse into the world of Liberation Theology. I'm well aware that in the United States there's not been much dissemination of material about Liberation Theology. Most of it still needs to be translated from Spanish and Portuguese into English so that we can understand what these men are trying to say. But in 1972 in Santiago, Chile, liberation theologians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, met. I'd like to read to you three short passages from the document summarizing that meeting to give you an idea of the whole world out there that we know very little of in this country.

The opening paragraph of their document reads this way:

We wish to identify ourselves clearly as Christians who on the basis of the process of liberation in which our Latin American peoples live, and of our own practical and real commitment to the construction of a socialist society, think through our faith and revise our attitude of love for the oppressed.

Three important things are said in that paragraph: We as Christians want to identify ourselves clearly as those who think through their faith again in light of two things: the process of liberation in Latin America, and our own personal commitment to the construction of a socialist society.

They go on ...

As Christians, we do not wish to offer a Christian political alternative to the present revolutionary movement, but rather we wish to unite with it.

Later on they talk about this alliance between Christians and p. 170 Marxists and they say it in these terms: 'there is a growing realization of the need for a strategic alliance between Christians and Marxists in order to walk together in a common political action towards a historical project of liberation in Latin America.'

The final paragraph of the document sums up their position very clearly. These are the concluding words of the meeting:

Upon being separated from one another after this encounter to our tasks, with a renewed spirit of commitment, we make our own the well-known words of Ché Guevara. [Ché Guevara was the war commander of Fidel Castro in Cuba.] These words which these days we have in some way put into practice. 'When Christians dare to give an integral revolutionary testimony, the Latin American revolution will be invincible.'

These words challenge us because that's the reality of Latin America today. In Colombia, the world we face is one in which that is the dominant thought pattern. Chester Bitterman was killed in Colombia two years ago by Marxist guerrillas who felt that the best way to foster revolution in Colombia was by getting rid of all the missionaries, because, as they said in a newspaper article, 'these missionaries are the ones who are giving us the most trouble. They are influencing people to put their Christian faith first and their commitment to the revolution second or non-existent.'

I received a letter right after that article appeared from one of my former students who's now a guerrilla leader. He was with us in the seminary for less than a year, finally leaving in protest to join the guerrillas. He's something of a chaplain to them now. He wrote from southern Colombia to say, 'I have already included your name on a list given to the guerrilla leaders in Colombia, and if you ever come back to this country, you are going to be killed.'

Now I understand that I'm listed with the top 20 people. I trust that we can do enough good work to move ourselves up into the top 10 in that list before long.

If they think that there are missionaries in Colombia who oppose a violent Marxist revolutionary movement as the answer to the nation's problems, they are absolutely right ... and I happen to be one of them. Marxism is not the answer for Colombia nor for any country in Latin America. And I don't believe that because I'm a capitalist from the United States. I believe it because I'm a biblical Christian and I refuse to be united with an atheistic system that says that men are means to an end, and that anything goes as long as the revolution triumphs.

I'm concerned for the Latin American Church. The communists, if they succeed in the revolution in Latin America, will not be kind to the p. 171 Church. If it fails, the governments of Latin America will destroy the Church for supporting the revolution.

I'm concerned about seminary students all over Latin America who right now are being taught Liberation Theology so that they can go back to their congregations and day after day, Sunday after Sunday, preach the gospel of Marxist revolution to their people.

I went to the largest Catholic seminary in Colombia, sat down with students at a table, and asked them, 'What is your message for the people of Colombia now that you are about to graduate?' A young man said, 'Our message for Colombia is Marxist revolution!' and all those sitting around the table nodded their heads. I'm concerned.

I'm concerned about the identification card I carry which says that I'm a missionary with OMS International. And on the back it says, 'Policy in the event of kidnapping.' OMS will not pay any ransom to any group holding any of its personnel. And if they are captured for ransom, OMS will refuse to pay any ransom to have them released. I am concerned that we've come to the place in Latin America where every missionary now must carry

that card because of daily threat of being kidnapped so someone can make money, or frighten other missionaries into leaving the country. I'm concerned.

I'm concerned about my family. My wife has been stoned twice by communist students in Medellin. My children go to a school where already someone jumped over a fence, grabbed a child and tried to run off with him. He was tackled by a Colombian Christian and stopped. I'm concerned about that.

I'm concerned about the Wycliffe Bible Translators who live in constant fear. They receive phone calls almost daily from people who say, 'I know where your daughter goes to school. I know what street she walks down to catch the bus. Before she catches the bus this afternoon, I'm going to kill her.' I'm concerned that we've lost one half of the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Colombia in the last two years. I don't blame missionaries who leave. I understand.

But with God's help, we commit our lives to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Colombia and it could mean life or death. When Paul said, 'For me to live is Christ and to die is gain'; he meant it. So do I. And, frankly, any Christian today who doesn't mean it isn't much of a Christian.

A beautiful lady came up to me in Cambridge after I'd preached and said 'I don't believe you should go back there.'

'Why not?' I asked.

'Because it's dangerous. You might get hurt, and I'm concerned about you and your wife and your children.' [p. 172](#)

'I appreciate that,' I replied. 'I really thank you for your concern ... and I feel that concern myself. But there comes a time when you must decide what's worth living for and what's worth dying for. And frankly my family, including my children, have made that decision.'

I believe that Latin America stands at the brink of the greatest revival that continent has ever seen. When things reach their worst and people grow desperate, God's Holy Spirit can move in a way He can't in gentler times. He can sweep through a continent and ignite life after life after life with His transforming power, bringing revival to Latin America, a revival that they've never yet experienced.

Latin America's greatest need is young men and women trained to lead their own country. I don't know how many years we have left in Colombia. The American Embassy in Medellin has an evacuation plan ready. As soon as the revolution begins planes will fly into the Medellin airport to take us out of the country. I'm aware of all this, and I know that it is possible any day. And because of this, I believe that more than ever before, we need to be training Colombian men and women to reach their own people for Christ so that if anything happens, an army of Colombians will stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and for His gospel.

Chester Bitterman gave his life for the Colombian people. He knew the risks when he went there. We all know them now. Pray not just for missionaries and their families; pray with us for Colombians with whom we work every day, who expose themselves to constant danger just because they work with 'gringos' and because they believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One occurrence will show you what is happening in Latin America, and the hope we hold. Jaime Ortiz, president of the OMS-founded seminary in Colombia, is about five feet tall and I'm several inches over six feet. When Jaime and I walk downtown together, it's a circus. People stop their cars in the street just to look and I never know who they're laughing at, Jaime or me.

Jaime Ortiz, a strong believer in the authority of God's Word and the message of spiritual liberation, was invited by the accrediting association of seminaries in our area of

Latin America to participate in a debate between three Liberation Theologians ... and little Jaime Ortiz. Planners arranged the schedule so the several hours of debate would immediately precede election of officers for the accrediting association.

Jaime accepted the challenge and argued against his three opponents. In the course of Jaime's argument he began to show the intensity of his belief in the authority of God's Word, the priority of evangelism, and [p. 173](#) our responsibility to see that every man, woman, boy, and girl in Latin America has a chance to accept Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, experience His forgiveness and change in their lives.

When Jaime sat down, a man on the other side of the room said, 'The only reason you say that is because you've been bought with the dollars of the gringos.'

And Jaime pulled himself up to his full five foot stature and said, 'I say that not because I've been bought with the dollars of the gringos, but because I've been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ.'

Two hours later, Jaime Ortiz was elected president of the accrediting association of schools in the northern region of Latin America. Jaime has turned organization all the way around so that now it is being used to encourage evangelical scholarship in seminaries all over northern Latin America, to encourage young men and women to study the scriptures, to encourage professors to study God's Word and teach it boldly.

It can be done. Circumstances can change. The tide that's sweeping through Latin America can be stopped. Not just stopped, but can be turned. And that liberation movement that brings untold suffering to people throughout Latin America can be turned into blessing and power and joy and peace as the Holy Spirit of God sweeps through Latin America and establishes the kingdom of God in the hearts of men through conversion to Jesus Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit. Believe with us that God is not through with Latin America yet.

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Theological Education: Is it Out of Practice?

Brian V. Hill

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This article is based on a lecture delivered to the Faculty of Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India.

Theological education has a long pedigree reaching back through the centuries. It certainly pre-dates the development of studies into the teaching process as such, and may have something to learn from current educational theorizing and research. My thesis in this article will be that much theological education is 'out of this world', especially in the scant attention paid to experiences in the field. I will attribute this to some unfortunate