

On the homepage of [nopeacewithrome](#), I assert that

*The encroachments of Romanism are plainly evident in the doctrinal downgrade, charismatic chicanery, and ecumenical evisceration of Truth so prevalent in contemporary evangelicalism. But the retreat to Rome is not confined to areas of soteriology. Some may even hold to the biblical gospel and yet be thoroughly romish in their political and economic theory, Thomistic in their epistemology, compromising in their protology, and/or Jesuitical in their eschatology.*

After reading my claim that Romanism has had such a devastating influence on the Western World, one individual on [reddit](#) responded with the following:

*In what ways are they plainly evident? RCC and Evangelical Protestantism seem very distant to me. What doctrinal downgrade has occurred and in what way do ecumenical activities damage the truth? What is a “romish” political or economic theory? If my agreement with that political theory is founded in a proper understanding of the Gospel then why should I be ashamed to hold those “romish” beliefs. Catholicism can’t be wrong about absolutely everything, and if they are, we’re in trouble too.*

It is precisely this positive sentiment about ecumenism and ignorance concerning Rome’s destructive influence beyond “religious” matters which prompted the creation of [nopeacewithrome](#) in the first place. Demonstrating the large-scale impact romish thought has had on these various fields will take time, and I’ve only begun to scratch the surface. Thus far I’ve barely touched on Rome’s influence on epistemology, protology and eschatology, for example, since her influence on political and economic theory deserves the most urgent attention at this time. To help provide an answer to his questions, I recommended reading John Robbins’ *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*, and was subsequently booted from the forum.

To help us understand how the current enthusiasm for “democratic socialism”, communitarianism and other collectivist ideas cannot be “founded in a proper understanding of the Gospel”, what follows is the latest video by former Roman Catholic

Priest Richard Bennett along with his very helpful article on Roman Catholic Liberation Theology [Berean Beacon youtube channel and website]:

“The enslavement of a nation at the hands of Popery is a terrible thing. America, the shining city on a hill, stood as a beacon of hope as it upheld the ideals of the reformers and preserved liberty for all. The Vatican and its machinery of deceit has been chipping away at these great principles. Now the lion of socialism having been uncaged by **Roman Catholic Liberation Theology** and her promotion of social justice is in our streets. How much longer will God’s people remain in a slumber?

On August 1st, 1776 the great Samuel Adams spoke on the steps of the State House in Philadelphia proclaiming *“Our forefathers threw off the yoke of popery in religion: for you is reserved the honor of leveling the popery of politics. They opened the Bible to all, and maintained the capacity of every man to judge for himself religion.”*

In our newest video, Richard Bennett and Stuart Quint skillfully outline three dangerous Catholic traps used by the Roman Catholic Church to ensnare a nation and its precious souls.”

## Liberation Theology infused in Western Thinking, by Richard Bennett

Latin American liberation theology has for the most part been a movement identified with the Roman Catholic Church. It is in fact just the tip of the iceberg; the principles that it proclaims have affected western society. Much of the present welfare societies in the USA and in Europe are just different expressions of the same Catholic mentality seen in official statements of the Vatican.[1] The Politics of guilt and shame permeate our society. The Catholic Priests, Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, in *Introducing Liberation Theology* give a sample taste of what is proposed by Liberation theology.

“Every true theology springs from a spirituality – that is, from a true meeting with God in history. Liberation theology was born when faith confronted the injustice done to the poor. By ‘poor’ we do not really mean the poor individual who knocks on the door asking for alms. We mean a collective poor, the ‘popular classes,’ which is a much wider category than the

‘proletariat’ singled out by Karl Marx (it is a mistake to identify the poor of liberation theology with the proletariat, though many of its critics do): the poor are also the workers exploited by the capitalist system; the underemployed, those pushed aside by the production process – a reserve army always at hand to take the place of the employed; they are the laborers of the countryside, and migrant workers with only seasonal work.”[2]

Then in the chapter called “Claiming the Promised Land: A New Jubilee for a New World” they state,

“‘The profit of the earth is for all’ (Eccles. 5:9). The Old Testament ethic, to assure everyone the same natural opportunity, asserts that all people have an equal right to economic rent...”[3]

Liberation theology perhaps is the most visible form of a wide-ranging Roman Catholic social thought. As such, it serves as a window into the Economic and Political strategy of the Vatican that pervades Western society. It is quite informative to read the “*A Concise History of Liberation Theology*” by Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. In the last paragraph they state,

“The general tenor of the pronouncements of the magisterium, whether papal or coming from the Synod of Bishops, has been to recognize the positive aspects of liberation theology, especially with reference to the poor and the need for their liberation, as forming part of the universal heritage of Christian commitment to history.”[4]

## Roots of Liberation Theology

The theological roots of the movement go back to the most influential of all Catholic Theologians, Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas wrote,

“...whatever certain people have in superabundance is due, by natural law, to the purpose of succoring the poor... In cases of need, all things are common property, so that there would seem to be no sin in taking another’s property, for need has made it common. ...it is lawful for a man to succor his own need by means of another’s property by taking it either openly or secretly; nor is this, properly speaking, theft and robbery.... It is not theft, properly speaking, to take secretly and use another’s property in a case of extreme need; because that which he takes for the support of his life becomes his own property by reason of that

need.... In a case of a like need a man may also take secretly another's property in order to succor his neighbor in need."[5]

In Aquinas' philosophy, need is the criterion for what is right regarding the possession of property. Need can make another's goods one's own. This is simply a philosophical justification for theft. The Robin Hood principle of robbing the rich to feed the poor is also contained in Aquinas' reasoning. He stated,

"In a case of a like need a man may also take secretly another's property in order to succor his neighbor in need."[6]

This is plainly the Robin Hood principle and the basis for later Liberation Theology. From the time of the Industrial Revolution on, different Popes reiterated the principles of Aquinas. pope Leo XIII wrote that to be the owner of goods is a right "natural to man," but he makes the distinction that while property may be privately owned, it must be publicly used. He wrote:

"How ought man use his possessions, the Church replies without hesitation: 'As to this point, man ought not regard external goods as his own, but as common....'"[7]

A big part of the roots of Liberation Theology are found in the Catholic Vatican Council II held in Rome from 1962-1965. The council basically endorsed the principle of Aquinas that man legally possesses property that he may benefit not only himself but also others. The exact words of the Council are,

"God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner. Whatever the forms of property may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of peoples, according to diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods. In using them, therefore, man should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others. On the other hand, the right of having a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone."[8]

This Council elucidated the wide disparity between rich and poor nations, and endorsed

Aquinas' philosophical justification for theft. The official words of the Council are,

"The Fathers and Doctors of the Church held this opinion, teaching that men are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods. If one is in extreme necessity, he has the right to procure for himself what he needs out of the riches of others"[9]

Based on the Council's teachings, Catholic leaders proclaimed "a preferential option" for the poor. The Catholic Conference at Medellin 1968 denounced the extreme inequality among social classes as well as the unjust use of power and exploitation. Pope John Paul himself devoted much time trying to establish a policy of political activism that emphasized goods belonging to all. In 1987 pope John Paul II wrote,

"It is necessary to state once more the characteristic principle of Christian social doctrine: the goods of this world are originally meant for all. The right to private property is valid and necessary, but it does not nullify the value of this principle. Private property, in fact, is under a "social mortgage," which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of goods."[10]

This Papal teaching was implemented as,

"The magisterium of the church in Latin America has expressed itself primarily through the documents of two conferences. The second general conference of the episcopate of Latin America, held at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968, spoke of the church 'listening to the cry of the poor and becoming the interpreter of their anguish'; this was the first flowering of the theme of liberation, which began to be worked out systematically only after Medellin. The third general conference, held at Puebla, Mexico, in 1979, shows the theme of liberation running right through its final document. The liberation dimension is seen as an 'integral part' (§355, 1254, 1283) of the mission of the church, 'indispensable' (§§562, 1270), 'essential' (§1302). A large part of the document (§470-506) is devoted to evangelization, liberation, and human promotion, and a whole chapter (§1134-56) to the 'preferential option for the poor,' a central axis of liberation theology."[11]

Besides Catholic sources, other European writers, such as Jurgen Moltmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, were foundational to Liberation Theology. These writers intertwined theology with political movements and stressed that the hope of mankind was in a movement towards better political activity. Bonhoeffer, in Germany, redefined religion in a secular context. He

emphasized human responsibility and stressed the value of seeing the world from below. That view meant a preference for the poor and the oppressed. Marxism, of course, had a very big part to play in forming Liberation Theology. While some famous Liberation Theologians say that their work is not Marxist, one will see however the same principles in Liberation Theology as in Marxism.

## Liberation Theology: an Attraction into Catholicism

The Maryknoll and Jesuit orders began their support of Liberation Theologians by the building up of “base communities” in South America, Central America and the Philippines, back in the late ‘60’s and early ‘70’s. These Catholic orders continue to have members implementing the principles of Liberation Theology. In New York City we have the headquarters of the Maryknoll order; it is a dominant force for Liberation Theology in the Americas. And the Paulist Press, of the Catholic Missionary Society of St. Paul, also implements many principles of Liberation through the radical feminist theology movement. In San Antonio, Texas we have the Mexican-American Cultural Center promoting Liberation Theology.

The Catholic Church uses many different fronts to attract. The Catholic “Servol” socialist group in Trinidad, that I had been part of while I was Parish Priest in Pointe-a-Pierre, sent help to Robert Mugabe, in Zimbabwe, for his African Unity Party. The party over the years has issued official statements on Revolutionary Theology and their present takeover of white farmers land and giving them to “poor and oppressed black farmers,” is part of the whole theology of the Liberation Movement. In the Philippines, the Liberation Movement, with Priests and Nuns, supported the Marxist Movement that tried for many years to topple the Philippine democracy. There are still movements going on in nations such as Peru, where Gustavo Gutierrez began what was in many ways the whole South American version of Liberation Theology with his *Theology of Liberation* in 1971. From Lima, Gutierrez continues to have a worldwide influence and has come to the United States to show how Liberation Theology can work in other avenues for the lifting of oppression from those who are downcast. “Most students of Liberation Theology are familiar with the Jesuits, primarily because Gustavo Gutierrez, father of modern Catholic liberationism, comes from that order. The works of other Jesuit advocates widely read in the United States include Juan Luis Segundo’s five-volume “A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity” and Arthur F. McGovern’s, “Marxism: an American Perspective.” McGovern, a Jesuit professor at the University of Detroit, contends that much diversity exists among liberation advocates in regard to their commitment to Marxism. He does not, however, deny that they derive their

insights from overtly Marxist critiques of society.”[12]

## Personal Involvement in Liberation Theology

I have already told of the incident in my life where I nearly died, having been unconscious for three days. That was not my only “near encounter” with death. Another traumatic incident, which I will soon explain, happened while I was involved in contending for Liberation Theology.

In the first parish to which I was assigned, in Southeast Trinidad called Mayaro, I saw women working gathering coconuts for few dollars a day. Some of them explained to me that their condition was worse than that of their forefathers under slavery. They said that they did not have enough money to provide food for themselves and their children. I was reading at the time the quite famous book by Jose Miranda, *“Marx and the Bible”* outlining the great sins of the rich against the poor. I took this as just one of many examples of the oppression of the poor, and I decided that I would do something for the cause of the poor. I began preaching on the cause of the poor and underprivileged. I moralized in sermons to estate owners, and the wealthy merchants from the principle cities of Port of Spain and San Fernando, who came to their holiday homes on the beach in Mayaro for the weekends. I used such passages as Isaiah 58:6-7 preaching, *“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”*[13] I proclaimed that if they were to be truly Christian they must pay fair wages and thus let the oppressed go free. I announced that the poor had a right to a fair share of the community goods. I quoted such Scripture passages the end of Matthew chapter 25 saying that at the last day, men will be judged on how they have treated the poor and the needy. I preached to sound the alarm that we needed to do something to lift the oppression from off the poor peoples’ back. The majority of my congregation was in fact the working classes and they quite liked what I said. Estate owners and merchants did not, invitations to dinner do longer came my way, most however continued to attend as there was just one Catholic church in the area, and they were obliged under pain of mortal sin to attend.

My own living what I preached was seen it the case that I brought against the local doctor, for cruelty to a child. The doctor would not treat the child at the local hospital, where the government paid for all visits, unless the mother of the child paid an additional bribe. The mother came and told me of the cruelty done to her child and I prepared to take judicial action against the doctor. At the same time I was asked for a bribe myself to get plans

approved for a building in one of the smaller villages. I threatened a judicial action against the minister in charge of that section of government.

It was while considering these two judicial processes, that I was attacked in my parish house. Just after sunset one evening three men came to the back door, one carrying a machete, the other a revolver, the third a knife. I did not realize till later that a fourth man had come in the front door, which was not locked at the time. They looked intent on killing me. I lectured them on my holiness as a Catholic priest, and how the wrath of God would be on them as a curse for the rest of their lives, if they put one finger on me! I told them that they could have all the money in the safe, and that they could take whatever they liked in the house. But I told them that if they put one hand on me, that the blight of God would be on them, and that their lives would be eaten up with disasters. The men were for the most part Indian, and maybe Hindus. They listened to me as I continued to preach on the wrath, fury, and rage of God that would be on them, and they contented themselves with what money could find in the house. After tying my hands and feet to my bed they departed.

That incident did not bring an end to my desire to see the poor liberated; rather I got even more determined. I reported the incident to the local *Express Newspaper* and it carried the headline, "LET'S STOP THIS 'BOBOL' SAYS ROBBED PRIEST." (A local term for corruption, the article told of my efforts to free the poor from destitution and oppression. See the insert below of a scan of the newspaper.)

The "Black Power" movement worked together with Liberation Theology in Trinidad. I consulted with one of the leaders of the "Black Power" movement and gave the movement all the support I could muster in preaching at Mass. The Black Power coup d'état did not succeed in Trinidad, in curfews imposed after the aborted revolution, much hatred and strife broke out. In Mayaro, some of the homes of the white estate owners were burned down. I feared for my own life as gangs of black youth threw poles of burning pitch, called "flambos" into white homes at night. I prayed to God that the black youth would remember which side of the conflict that I was on. I was in Mayaro for more than six years, the last two and a half being the most dramatic. Nothing much came out of all my work and turmoil. Even an automotive Trade school that I had started in the small village of Mafeking had to close down because of a lack of interest of those that I was trying to assist. I was emotionally very drained when in 1971 I left for an extended vacation to Ireland.

The whole idea of winning people through revolution, instead of the Gospel, is part and parcel of Liberation Theology. It had major successes in Nicaragua and San Salvador. In



Brazil there are an estimated 80,000 Basic Christian Community cells advocating the principles of Liberation Theology. This type of theology attracts many people. When, as a Priest, I was involved, we invited people into our Basic Christian Groups, telling them that we would together do whatever was needed in a community, so as to bring equality into that community. With some of us Priests in Trinidad the rule was that we would not speak about anything regarding religion for two years, until we had people involved in social projects. Afterwards of course when we did speak about religion, it was about the Catholic religion and how a person could be received into the Catholic Church. As I was getting disillusioned with the Liberation Theology movement in the early '80's, I had the opportunity to visit the island of Grenada, which is quite close to Trinidad. It was there that Maurice Bishop had succeeded in a revolution with the aide of Castro and other Communist powers. I saw with my own eyes the oppression of the very poor people that were supposed to be liberated. I saw the huge jail where people opposed to the movement were confined and tortured. Even on street corners young military personnel harassed people in show of their power, rifle butts and curse words were what the populace had to endure. On return to Trinidad I renounced Liberation Theology because I thought it did not work. Now I see that it brings people into servitude and Catholicism and away from the Gospel. I see that the very principles of liberation are totally untrue, and liberation that is in the Gospel of Christ Jesus is keep from the poor.

## Christ Jesus the Redeemer and Liberator

In Liberation Theology, Christ is made to look as if He were a revolutionary. He is presented as one who liberates from existing political and social structures. People are told that the Lord wishes them to be able to be free from slavery and that they would come into a state in which they are free to exercise their God given rights. They say that Christ Jesus completely committed Himself to the destruction of poverty, and that it is His will that we should have a classless society. They show Christ as a hero in the struggle against oppression, to free the victims of the Bourgeoisie.

When we study the historical Biblical accounts of Christ Jesus we find a totally different picture. Christ Jesus said *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."*[14] Christ Jesus strongly rebuked violence and proclaimed peace and forgiveness. *"Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."*[15] Moreover, Christ Jesus taught good, wise stewardship and investment (Matthew 25:14-28). The Lord Himself spoke of the Eternal unchangeable God and His unalterable Word of God and did

not advocate a mobile, fluctuating, theology as Gutierrez's, but a theology that is consistent with the mind of God, expressed in His written Word. Christ Jesus mixed freely and gave His message to every social class including government workers. Most of all Christ Jesus spoke of "spiritual hunger," *"blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*[16] Christ Jesus the Lord gave His life freely for an atonement of sin. Sin, for Christ Jesus and His written Word, is an offence against God. Sin that brings all evil and catastrophe upon man is personal sin, and that must be repented of. Christ Jesus clearly taught that one must repent and believe the Gospel. Christ Jesus did not differentiate those who were oppressed or who had suffered, from all other types of people, all must repent and believe. Christ Jesus' message to you and to me is *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"*[17] His message is to repent of our personal sinfulness, to repent of looking to any theology or church for salvation, and to look to Him alone.

Christ Jesus' purpose and His intent was and is to save His people from their sin. He did indeed speak of "being set free" the means, however, is the truth. *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*[18] When the Jews of His own day did not understand His words, He explained them, *"whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*[19] Christ Jesus also spoke strongly against tradition contradicting and making void the Biblical truth of the Word. This is exactly what Liberation Theology does. The New Testament Word of God teaches that the believer must obey legitimate governing authorities. *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."*[20] *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."*[21]

## Social Fruits from the Gospel

The failure of Liberation Theology is admitted even among those who persist in trying to implement its fantasies. "The revolutionary fervor of the 1980s has not abolished the grueling poverty that some now call an economic holocaust for the poor in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and, more recently, Costa Rica. So this new generation of Latin American theologians is 'rereading the Bible,' searching for words to describe what Christians have traditionally called the 'new creation' – a transformation that ultimately

alters the political and economic spheres, though it does not begin there. Realizing that political and economic power is too easily corrupted and that it too readily ignores the needs of the poor, these new liberationists look first for a pastoral response to the suffering all around them.”[22]

It is quite interesting when we see that where the true Gospel has gone forth throughout the world, there has been a freedom from sin, and there has followed better social conditions. It is most interesting that after the Reformation, there came the whole economical structure of the western world whereby we have finance, credit, bank accounts, title deeds to land and property and such. These things came about by an understanding of imputation; that is, things being credited to someone. Because men were freed from sin against God, they were set free to live better social and political lives. By the Gospel man is free before God and free also to serve God and to live a better human life.

The founding fathers of the United States were for the most part Christian, and the very principles behind the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are principles that show the depravity of man and the need to separate judicial, legislative, and executive power. These have meant a stable form of political and social life for the United States. Even though many of the founding principals are no longer predominant in the United States, there is still a solid base because of the biblical understanding of the founding fathers.

Correct understanding of the Bible is to see man as a sinner, utterly destitute in sin. To see his personal need of salvation before God, and then as he trusts on Christ, and Christ alone, he knows the true freedom in peace that comes with salvation and thus he becomes a responsible citizen. This is the Good News, and Liberation Theology is a curse because it subordinates the Gospel and Biblical evangelism to a secular ideology. Liberation Theology, acclaimed by many Catholic theologians, has been allowed to grow wildly in South America, Central America and other Catholic nations, bringing with it increased destitution, poverty, and most of all spiritual death.

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[1] Documented in *Ecclesiastical Megomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church* by John Robbins. Available from [www.bereanbeacon.org](http://www.bereanbeacon.org)

[2] *How to Be Christians in a World of Destitution* From the book *Introducing Liberation Theology* by Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff. <http://www.landreform.org/reading0.htm> 7/1/03

[3] Ibid., <http://www.landreform.org/reading0.htm> 01/07/03

[4] Ibid., <http://www.landreform.org/boff2.htm>, <http://www.landreform.org/boff2.htm> 7/1/03

[5] *Summa Theologiae*, 11-11, 7th article

[6] *Summa Theologiae*, 11-11, 7th article

[7] Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* 1891 36

[8]  
[www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) Para 697/4/03

[9] Ibid., Para 69

[10] *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, On Social Concern* section 42

[11] *A Concise History Liberation Theology* [www.landreform.org/boff2.htm](http://www.landreform.org/boff2.htm) 7/4/03

[12] *Liberation Theology on the Move in the United States* By Bill McIlhany  
[www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Senate/1777/libtheo.htm](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Senate/1777/libtheo.htm) 7/4/03

[13] Isaiah 58:6

[14] Matthew 22:21

[15] Luke 6:27-28

[16] Matthew 5:3

[17] Luke 13:5

[18] John 8:32

[19] John 8:34-36

[20] Romans 13:1-2

[21] 1 Peter 2:13-14

[22] [www.villagelife.org/church/archives/pres\\_latinoamerican.html](http://www.villagelife.org/church/archives/pres_latinoamerican.html) 7/4/03

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