ABSTRACT

Catholic Liberation Theology and Islamic *Jihadism*:
A Comparative Analysis

Benjamin Toll, M.A.

Mentor: Daniel Payne, Ph.D.

This thesis compares Catholic liberation theology which gained notoriety in the late 1960s and early 1970s as popularized by the works of Gustavo Gutierrez with modern Islamic *Jihadism*, which was ideologically driven by Sayyid Qutb in the 1950s and 1960s. Supporters of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* believe they are a remnant group attempting to call a wayward people back to true religion and against rampant Western colonialism and capitalism. This will lead to the building of the Kingdom of God here on Earth. The thesis ends with a suggestion that the American response to Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* shares similar characteristics which makes any lasting compromise unlikely outside of a shared understanding that no one can know all of God's plans in the world.

Catholic Liberation Theology and Islamic *Jihadism*:
A Comparative Analysis


by

Benjamin Toll, B.A.

A Thesis

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Christopher Marsh, Ph.D., Director

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Approved by the Thesis Committee

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Daniel Payne, Ph.D., Chairperson

_____

Christopher Marsh, Ph.D.

_____

Charles A. McDaniel, Ph.D.

_____

Christian van Gorder, Ph.D.




Accepted by the Graduate School
August 2010

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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On September 11, 2001 the average American awoke from ignorance concerning

global religious extremism.  The attack on the World Trade Center, and Washington,

D.C., forced the public to engage religiously inspired terrorism, although the academy

had been researching the phenomenon for decades.[1]  Global Islamic *Jihadism*[2] is now a

pervasive issue in the mind of the average Westerner.  Individuals involved in politics or

religion must determine the difference between religious expression and religious

extremism.  Global Islamic *Jihadism* is a movement[3] seen by most Americans as heretical

and counter to the ideals of freedom and democracy that Americans hold dear.  Any

individual seeking elected office in the United States must respond to national security

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[1] The best example of this discussion is the Fundamentalism Project that was led by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby.  The series consisted of six volumes dedicated to the topic of fundamentalist religion throughout the world and published between the years of 1993 and 2004.  See: Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Appleby, *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[2] In using the term global Islamic *Jihadism* I refer to the entirety of groups that constitute *Jihadist* ideology.  I am not speaking of only the group Islamic *Jihad,* rather I refer to all groups that share an ideology built on principles of Islamic *Jihadism.*  These principles include, but are not limited to, wanting the United States out of the Middle East, wanting the government of Israel severely limited if not entirely eradicated, a return to the Shari'a as law in the Middle East, and a government built on Islamically based principles.

[3] I do not wish to imply that these groups are entirely homogenous in style or substance.  Rather, as I will indicate, these groups share characteristics that allows one to highlight similarities.  Thus, for the purposes of the thesis I will label different groups, and individuals, as part of the larger movement of global Islamic *Jihadism* and Catholic liberation theology.

concerns that rise out of global religious extremism.  In the present, these national

security issues inevitably refer to the global Islamic *Jihad* movement.

While the phenomenon of global Islamic *Jihadism* is a new issue in the West,

national security concerns rising from movements antithetical to American ideals is not.

Recently the main national security concern was Communism, rather than global Islamic

*Jihadism.*  Communism is an ideology which is also seen as counter to the American

ideals of freedom and democracy.  Throughout the Cold War, the United States employed

a foreign policy of containment in the Western Hemisphere aimed at not allowing the

establishment of Communist regimes for fear of the domino effect.[4]  Due to this policy—

real or perceived—Communist influence in the politics of Latin America played a central

role in the national security concerns of the United States.

Rising out of Communist Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the work of Catholic

liberation theology became well known in the early 1970s.  Essentially, Catholic

liberation theology is a religious movement using an ideology which is heretical to the

American mind.  The movement of Catholic liberation theology helped to inspire the

Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.  Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, movements in

Latin America regularly grew out of Catholic liberation theology.

Outside of the fact that both Catholic liberation theology and global Islamic

*Jihadism* are movements which necessitate an American response, there appears to be

very little congruence.  Catholic liberation theology is no longer a movement that

concerns the average American, if it ever did.  The government of the United States

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[4] For a discussion on the domino effect theory pertaining specifically to Central America see: Jerome Slater, "Dominos in Central America: Will They Fall? Does It Matter?" *International Security* 12, no. 2 (Autumn, 1987): 105-34.

rarely concerned itself specifically with liberation theology.[5]  Furthermore, the movement of Catholic liberation theology largely stayed in Latin America, only intersecting with American interests in that region.  Liberation theology encouraged violent tendencies, but the violence remained in Latin America.  Catholic liberation theology was largely seen as a movement in theological error that did not harm or scare the average American.  In essence, while Catholics and some concerned politicians engaged Catholic liberation theology heavily, it rarely entered public debate.

Islamic *Jihadism*, on the other hand, concerns Americans greatly.  It is a movement that does not confine itself in the Middle East.  Different groups, which adhere to *Jihadist* principles, use terrorism in most of the modern world in an attempt to reach their goals.[6]  More importantly, to the American, there have been numerous attacks on citizens of the United States.  Terrorist attacks by global Islamic *Jihadist* organizations concern Americans, and Westerners, because of the many killed.  As stated above, the attack of September 11 on the World Trade Center, Washington, D.C., and the flight which was downed in Pennsylvania, awakened Americans to the violence of Islamic *Jihadism.*  Furthermore, Islamic *Jihad* concerns Westerners because of its apparent complete lack of concern for anything other than building a government on Shari'a law.

These movements, Catholic liberation theology and global Islamic *Jihadism*, do not appear to have any similarities in how their faiths are practiced.  To the American,

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[5] The United States Congress only had one hearing regarding liberation theology.  See: Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, Committee on Judiciary, *Marxism and Christianity in Revolutionary Central America*, 98th Cong., 1st sess., 18-19 October 1983.

[6] One can find many lists online of different terrorist attacks that have taken place throughout the world in the recent past.  One website which lists attacks throughout the world from 1968-2004 is: Exton1, "Chronological List of Islamic Terrorist Attacks, 1968 - 2004," The Free Republic, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1993321/posts (accessed July 6, 2010).

Catholic liberation theology seeks a peaceful transition to a socialist society, while Islamic *Jihadism* seeks to violently build a government based on laws from the 7th century. Indeed, there are very real differences between the movements, which must be discussed. The violence of Islamic *Jihad* is, in the opinion of the author, an unmitigated evil.

However, it is the contention of this thesis that there are similarities between the movements of Catholic liberation theology and global Islamic *Jihadism*, which helps one to understand Islamic *Jihad* in a different light. It is the goal of this thesis to view the theory behind the ideals of both Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihad* in a favorable manner. While the practice of Islamic *Jihad* is at times inexcusable, it is imperative to attempt to understand why they behave in the way they do. In essence, I argue that when viewed favorably, as a follower would, there are similarities between Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* that can help Westerners begin to understand Islamic *Jihadism* in a more clear light. Because Catholic liberation theology is seen as a benign movement, it is important to highlight similarities in order to begin understanding how an Islamic *Jihadist* views the world. Both of these movements seek liberation from things which bind them and freedom to attain the religion that they desire.[7]

Hence, it is important to begin this process by outlining the basic beliefs of any liberation theology in order to clarify the exigency for Catholic liberation theology. Catholic liberationists and other similar liberation-minded groups help to clarify the field of liberation theology. In their writing, liberation theologians address those in other

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[7] My definition of liberation comes from: Manochehr Dorraj, "The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism: A Comparative Study of Islamic Fundamentalism, Jewish Fundamentalism, and Liberation Theology," *Social Compass* 46, no. 2 (June, 1999): 232.

liberationist movements, in order to more clearly define the struggle in which they all participate.[8]  In other words, liberation theologians are comfortable interacting with other groups focused on liberation, as well as writing about the same issues, because they share similar characteristics.  In reality, this interaction between liberation theologies allows one to outline what these movements hold as central to their social and religious positions.

First, liberation theologies place praxis as a central component in bringing true faith into the world.  One must act, rather than only theorize about the world.[9]  Second, liberation theologies argue that true faith fights poverty, oppression, and structural sin; these theologies believe in a "union of politics and spirituality in the social world in order to achieve human liberation."[10]  Liberation theologians believe that economic and political marginalization is anti-religious.  God is on the side of the oppressed, and promises liberation in this world.[11]  Third, those who disagree with liberation theology accuse these movements of focusing on earthly work rather than God.  Finally, a set of common traits that liberation theologians share are:

> The reality of poverty, the negative remnants of colonization and slavery, the present negative effects of globalization, the dividing forces of ethnicity and racism, the experience of living with several

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[8] John H. Yoder, "The Wider Setting of "Liberation Theology," *The Review of Politics* 52, no. 2 (Spring, 1990): 290.

[9] Ann-Cahtrin Jarl, "Feminist Liberation Theology from a Swedish Perspective," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 18, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 93.

[10] Christopher L. Chiappari, "Toward a Maya Theology of Liberation: The Reformulation of a 'Traditional' Religion in the Global Context," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (Mar., 2002): 48-49.

[11] Corwin E. Smidt, Kevin R. Den Dulk, Bryan T. Froehle, James M. Penning, Stephen V. Monsma, and Douglas L. Koopman, *The Disappearing God Gap? Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 97.

religions at the same time.  Most of them experience violence or war daily.[12]

Many movements outside of Latin America label themselves as liberation theologies, and it is important to recognize how these groups see themselves as fellow liberation theologies.[13]  Three important theoretical principles are evident when surveying other movements which define themselves as liberation theologies.  First, liberation theologies define their theologies as the expression of an oppressed people due to their status at birth, and not because of sin the oppressed have committed.  In other words, liberation theologies believe in the innocence of their distinctive people groups.  Second, liberation theologies believe that the powerful in the world continue this oppressive system in order to maintain power.  As a result, liberation theologies influence revolutionary groups because of their concern for the oppressed against those in power.[14]  Finally, each liberation theology believes that through the liberation of their people

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[12] Lieve Troch, "A Feminist Dream: Toward a Multicultural, Multireligious Feminist Liberation Theology," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 18, no. 2 (Fall, 2002): 118.

[13] For a discussion of Feminist liberation theology see: Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Future of Feminist Theology in the Academy," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Dec., 1985); Eugene C. Bianchi and Rosemary R. Ruether, *From Machismo to Mutuality: Essays on Sexism and Woman-Man Liberation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman/new earth: Sexist Iideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); and Jarl, "Feminist Liberation Theology,". For a discussion on Black liberation theology see: James H. Cone, "Black Theology in American Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Dec., 1985); James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury, 1969); James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970); James H. Cone, "Black Liberation Theology and Black Catholics: A Critical Conversation," *Theological Studies* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 2000); and H. Wayne House, "An Investigation of Black Liberation Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 554 (Ap.-Je., 1982).  For a discussion of Jewish liberation theology see: Marc H. Ellis, "Jewish Theology and the Palestinians," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 3 (Spring, 1990); and Marc H. Ellis "Critical Thought and Messianic Trust: Reflections on Jewish Theology of Liberation," in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez* ed. Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).  Finally, for a Palestinian Christian liberation theology see: Naim Stifan Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theory of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

[14] Jeffrey L. Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists: Liberation Theology, 1968-1988," *The Americas* 46, no. 1 (Jul., 1988): 14.

group, the eventual liberation of the whole world will follow, including the current oppressors.[15] Thus, liberation theologies seek to build transnational movements that begin in a specific context and people group.

While there are differences between the movements of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihad*, there are also similarities to be discussed throughout the thesis. Islamic *Jihadism* places praxis as central to its faith; contends that true Islam fights oppression, injustice, and poverty; and assents that Islam should be the political system so that mankind can achieve complete liberation. Furthermore, Islamic *Jihadism* highlights the innocence of its faith, and argues that Muslims are unfairly oppressed in the modern world. Islamic *Jihadism* believes this oppression is a direct result of the powerful countries in the world attempting to keep their power. Finally, similar to Catholic liberation theology, Islamic *Jihadism* is a transnational movement that begins with the liberation of the Arabian Peninsula and other core Islamic areas, which will expand to the entire world.

This thesis links Islamic *Jihadism* with the Catholic liberation theology of Latin America in an attempt to understand the causes, consequences, and reasons for these groups' attitudes and practices toward Western nations. The chapters which focus on the similarities between the two movements begin with a discussion of the core differences. It must be stated that these movements are not the same, simply, one can begin to understand Islamic *Jihad* in a more clear light when viewed beside Catholic liberation theology. When one looks at the two movements from a Western perspective these

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[15] Chiappari, "Toward a Maya Theology of Liberation," 50-51. See also: Glen R. Bucher, "Toward a Liberation Theology for the "Oppressor"," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44, no. 3 (Sep., 1976): 522-523 and 529-530.

movements are entirely different, and it is important to highlight these differences. However, I believe that when one looks at liberation theology and Islamic *Jihad* in the same manner a follower does, the similarities are evident. Catholic liberation theology is a movement of ideas studied extensively in academic circles, although many believe that it is no longer useful to study.[16] Essentially, this thesis contends that the understanding of oppressed societies one can gain from a proper knowledge of Catholic liberation theology helps explain Islamic *Jihadism*.

To begin with, I believe that both Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* are neo-traditional movements that respond to modernity. Peter Berger states that neo-traditionalists have chosen their worldview and the level of orthodoxy they desire as a response to the pluralistic society. These individuals strongly affirm their chosen path as being the most correct and believe that the rest of the world needs to share their worldview.[17] They want to return to a time in which religion is the center of the world. For Catholic liberationists this does not mean returning to the Church as the all-powerful institution that it once was. Rather, the goal is to return to what they read about the early Church's concern for one another in community.[18] The creation of Base Communities is the way in which Catholic liberationists sought to build community as separate from the institution of the Church. For Islamic *Jihadists*, the goal is to return to the earliest generation of their religion. Modernity has caused this reaction from both

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[16] Anthony Gill, "The Study of Liberation Theology: What Next?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 88.

[17] Peter Berger, "The Pluralistic Situation and the Coming Dialogue Between the World Religions," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 1, (1981): 35.

[18] James Tunstead Burtchaell, "How Authentically Christian is Liberation Theology?" *The Review of Politics* 50, no. 2 (Spring, 1988): 268-270.

groups. They both believe that modernization and secularization have made a deleterious impact on the world, and specifically, their world. Both seek to return to a time in which their religion was pure from defects by building the Kingdom of God on earth. Essentially, they desire a return to a time in which the world was free from evil and was just.

The primary critique of these two movements is that these worldviews have been hurt by the neo-traditionalism which these movements argue will make the world stronger.[19] The argument is that they are guilty of becoming a co-opted religion speaking to political freedom because they lose the ability to bring freedom because of their absolutizing response to modernity. Furthermore, both argue against aspects of modernity, while taking advantage of the parts of modernity that lead to success. Adherents of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* use media to build their numbers, even though both believe that the world has become more secular as a result of modernity. In reality though, it is impossible to return to a pre-modern world, and those who hold to these political theologies refuse to believe that is the case.[20]

The thesis must begin with a conceptual framework with which to work, but there are three initial points of clarification. First, there is not one single individual who can entirely represent either Catholic liberation theology or Islamic *Jihadism*. Gustavo Gutierrez, often mentioned as the leader of Catholic liberation theology due to his

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[19] For Catholic liberation theology, see: Stanley Hauwerwas, "Some Theological Reflections on Gutierrez's Use of 'Liberation' As A Theological Concept," *Modern Theology* 3, no. 1 (Oct., 1986): 67-76. For Islamic liberation theology, see: Christina Hellmich, "Terrorists, Hypocrites, Fundamentalists? The View from Within," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 The Politics of Naming: Rebels, Terrorists, Criminals, Bandits and Subversives (2005): 39-54.

[20] Daniel Payne, "Orthodoxy, Islam and the 'Problem' of the West: a Comparison of the Liberation Theologies of Christos Yannaras and Sayyid Qutb," *Religion, State and Society* 36, no. 4 (2008): 437-438.

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landmark book, has a different outlook than Leonardo Boff, and these are just two

examples of Catholic liberation theologians.[21]  The second chapter focuses on Gutierrez

because of his seminal work in the field of Catholic liberation theology.  It is the work of

Gutierrez, more than any other, one reads to begin to understand this movement.  For

Islamic *Jihadists* there is also not a representative individual.[22]  While al-Qaeda is the

most well known Islamic *Jihadist* group to the average American there are many others

attempting to bring liberation to the Islamic world.  Furthermore, there is disagreement

over the approach to be taken by these groups.[23]  Sayyid Qutb Shaheed is the

representative case in the second chapter because of his influence on current *Jihadists*

such as Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.  Furthermore, Qutb's theoretical work

is among the most complete of the modern writers in declaring a need for liberation from

the current oppression.  Similarly, it is the work of Qutb that one reads to begin

understanding the theories behind Islamic *Jihad.*[24]  Qutb's works are bestsellers

throughout the Middle East, and among groups that seek an Islamically based

government.  The third chapter will widen the scope of inquiry into the two movements

as a whole, in an effort to determine their overall points of agreement.

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[21] Gutierrez receives a glowing, if not challenged, foreword from Henri Nouwen which puts his work at the center of Catholic liberation theology in 1984. See: Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).  Boff however received a less than glowing review on his landmark book from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.  The editor's note in the book explains the response from the institutional hierarchy.  See: Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power, Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985).

[22] Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 3-4.

[23] Ibid., 156. See Also: David Aaaron, *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2008), 1-8.

[24] As will be discussed in Chapter 2, there are those who argue that Qutb gets his philosophy from Hassan al-Banna (the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood) or Syed Abul A'ala Mawdudi (a Pakistani Islamic *Jihadist*).

The second point of clarification is that the scope with which Catholic liberationists view violence as justifiable is much narrower than the view of Islamic *Jihadists*. There are Catholic liberationists supporting revolutionary violence against the state, or at least condoning a conversation on the topic.[25] For Catholic liberationists, poverty is a form of violence which must be fought with comparable zeal as exhibited by those who are exploiting the poor.[26] Gutierrez proclaims that entering into a fallen political arena means entering into conflict, which entails a certain level of violence.[27] For Islamic liberationists, violence is a more justified solution. Qutb is the writer who expanded the justification for violence aimed at the perceived oppressors when allowing the attack of civilians. However, there remains debate among different Islamic *Jihadist* groups about the targeting of civilians and other Muslims.

The final clarification is one of definition. Islamic *Jihadists* are often labeled as fundamentalists, which is a term that has had varying meanings.[28] There are several definitions for fundamentalism, and efficacy of the word itself is debated. R. Scott Appleby states:

> The word fundamentalism, therefore, aptly describes the basic
> method of the modern religious leader who reaches into the sacred
> past, selects and develops politically useful (if sometimes obscure)
> teachings or traditions, and builds around these so-called

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[25] Boff, Church: Charism and Power, 55. For a more in depth conversation on the topic of violence in Catholic liberationists, particularly that there is not a monolithic voice of support for either violence or the repudiation of violence see: Daniel M. Bell Jr., "The Violence of Love: Latin American Liberationists in Defense of the Tradition of Revolutionary Violence," *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies* 8, no. 1 (1997): 17-36.

[26] Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A view from the victims*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 5.

[27] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, 15th Anniversary Edition., trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 31.

[28] It should be noted that very few people label Catholic liberation theologians as fundamentalists. This shows a distinction between the perceptions of both groups in the West.

fundamentals an ideology and a program of action.  What we mean by fundamentalism, in other words, is the blending of traditional religion and its politicized, ideological defense.[29]

In *Strong Religion*, Appleby states that fundamentalism, "refers to a discernible pattern of religious militance by which self-styled 'true believers' attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors."[30]  There are more definitions of fundamentalism, and if the term has debate surrounding it, the term itself is very likely un-useful.  Furthermore, with the genesis of the term "fundamentalism" being completely different from its current use,[31] one must make the attempt to not use the term "fundamentalism" when describing any religious movement, let alone movements focused on liberation and self-categorization.[32]  Therefore, I will refer to these groups as they define themselves.  Catholic groups define themselves as a liberation theology and as liberation theologians.  Islamic groups define themselves as *Jihadists*.  It is important to attempt to understand how these groups view themselves, and more importantly to view these movements as they view themselves.

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[29] R. Scott Appleby, *Spokesmen For The Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 4.

[30] Almond et al, *Strong Religion*, 17.

[31] Gabriel A. Almond, Emmanuel Sivan, and R. Scott Appleby, "Fundamentalism: Genus and Species," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 403.

[32] In particular, I am troubled by the term when discussing American evangelicals for whom the term was invented when they are not militant.  Furthermore, the term itself has entered the popular lexicon and therefore has become even more ambivalent in its meaning.  If one is to use the term, I would argue that they must develop a very carefully nuanced definition.  In lieu of doing that, I prefer to name these groups liberationists in an effort to portray them as they would portray themselves.  While there are many more things that can be said in relation to the merits of using the term fundamentalism in writing, for the purposes of this thesis it should be left at that.

*Conceptual Framework*

Four authors need to be mentioned before a further discussion of Catholic

liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* themselves takes place. It is important to place their

theoretical views beside each other in order to frame the balance of the thesis in the

proper way, and at the end, an attempt will be made to place the four authors in the

perspective of lessons learned. Use of these authors does not connote agreement with

their theories; rather it places them as making declarative theoretical principles in their

work that highlights aspects of this thesis. Hamid Dabashi discusses Islamic liberation

movements; Daniel M. Bell Jr. writes on Catholic liberation movements; and Mark

Juergensmeyer writes on global liberation movements. The fourth, Peter Berger,

responds to any religious group arguing from the absolute. It is only in doubt, for Berger,

that religion can have a true and lasting social impact.

Dabashi[33] writes from a Shi'a perspective; furthermore, he is writing from New

York as a professor at Columbia University and is an outspoken critic of the American

presence in the Middle East. His central tenet is that "Militant Islamism emerged from

the early 19th century in response to European colonialism, gradually mutating a

medieval faith into a solitary site of ideological resistance to colonial modernity."[34]

When European colonialism ended, it was the American empire that took its place as the

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[33] It must be stated that Dabashi receives a large amount of criticism for his work. Dabashi is seen by many as an individual that attempts to shock more than contribute to academic discussion. A review of his most recent book is: Stephen Schwartz, "Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire," *Middle East Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Winter, 2009): 84-85. Furthermore, there are many reviews of his work that can be found. For further reviews see: Mehran Kamrava, "Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran by Hamid Dabashi," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 534, Strategies for Immigration Control: An International Comparison (Jul., 1994): 185-186; and Ervand Abrahamian, "Untitled," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 2 (May, 1996): 299-300.

[34] Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3.

ruler of the world, and the object of Islamic liberationists' scorn.[35] America is now

failing as the sole superpower, because the global capitalist system tears down boundaries

between societies.[36]

The main theoretical point of Dabashi's book is that the dualistic worldview of

Islam and the West, as held by Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington,[37] is an outdated

model. The attack on 9/11 cemented the death of the dualistic worldview.[38] Essentially

global capitalism won the war against the binary construction of Islam and the West,

even if some continue to maintain this position.[39] In fact, as Dabashi sees it, there is no

difference between Milton Friedman, an individual who favors an unfettered global

capitalism, and Osama Bin Laden, who advocates another form of predatory violence.[40]

Dabashi states that an Islamic liberation theology must lose its absolutist terms,[41] and it

must cross cultural, gender, and religious boundaries.[42] For any liberation theology to

succeed, it must not desire political power, because it loses its social power when it

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[35] Ibid., 56.

[36] Ibid., 244.

[37] See: Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

[38] Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology,* 53.

[39] Ibid, 199-200.

[40] Ibid., 112, 264.

[41] Ibid., 234-5, 255.

[42] Ibid., 21.

becomes part of the governmental institution.[43]  Finally, Dabashi suggests that Catholic and Islamic liberation theologians can learn from conversations with each other.[44]

Daniel M. Bell,[45] writing from a Christian perspective, uses a study of Catholic liberationists to determine the problems of the Western acceptance of compatibility between Christianity and capitalism.  The real issue in his mind is the battle for supremacy of desire between capitalism and faith, in this instance Christianity.[46] Capitalism has now outgrown the state,[47] and Christians must revolt by taking desire from capitalism and returning it to God.[48]  For Bell, it seems that desire is a god. Whatever a human desires, he or she will serve; thus, if Christianity can liberate humanity's desire from capitalism back to God it will be successful.  Bell argues that Christians need to retreat from a dualistic world view,[49] and to truly regain power, the Church must reject the state as a possible avenue of power, and become a true community.  The only way to defeat capitalism is to allow God's gift of forgiveness to liberate desire from capitalism.[50]

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[43] Ibid., 235.  Dabashi argues that in the case of Iran, the liberation movement has lost its cultural power as a result of taking control of the government.

[44] Ibid., 43-50, 96-8, 115, 251.

[45] For reviews of this book see: Roberto S. Goizueta, "Liberation Theology after the end of History: The Refusal to Cease Suffering," *Pro Ecclesia* 13, no. 1 (Wint., 2004): 113-115; and Mark D. Chapman, "Liberation Theology after the end of history: the refusal to cease suffering," *Journal of Theological Studies* 54, no. 2 (Oct., 2003): 855-858.

[46] Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Liberation Theology After the End of History: The refusal to cease suffering* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 15-7.

[47] Ibid., 27.

[48] Ibid., 31-3.

[49] Ibid., 71.

[50] Ibid., 144.

Christians must do the same toward capitalism, to forgive it for its sin, because continuing in the cycle that is temporal power will yield no results.[51] Capitalism is not guilty of sin simply for what it does to the poor; but more importantly, it is guilty of sin because it "fractures the friendship of humanity in God."[52] Bell understands that capitalism will not stop if Christians no longer participate in the system. He believes that Christians must forgive capitalism because it would not know how to respond.[53] It is only through the gift of God that forgiveness of capitalism can occur.[54] He ends by stating, "Forgiveness, in other words, is a wager on God."[55] In other words, Christians must choose to place their desire with God rather than capitalism, for this is the ultimate act of faith.

In contrast, for Juergensmeyer,[56] it is secular nationalism that is creating tension between religious individuals and the world order.[57] Secular nationalism, and not religion, fails the world.[58] Juergensmeyer proposes a dualistic worldview with secular

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[51] Ibid., 148-9. Bell does not clearly define what he means by stating Christians must forgive capitalism. The author believes that it means to actively forgive those who are seeking to further their own interests while allowing others to be impoverished. It is actively seeking to forgive the state and actors that keep some oppressed.

[52] Ibid., 151.

[53] Ibid., 153.

[54] Ibid., 189.

[55] Ibid., 195.

[56] For reviews of this book see: James Peacock, "Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeada- By Mark Juergensmeyer," *Historian* 72, no. 2 (Summer, 2010): 498-499; and Paul D. Numrich, "Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda," *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 4 (Jun., 2009): 483-484.

[57] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular state, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 17-21

[58] Ibid., 3.

nationalism battling religion. He believes that secularism has had a far greater effect on Western society than either Peter Berger or Rodney Stark would admit, because secular nationalism—and not religion—is now the paradigm by which events are judged.[59]

In Catholic and Islamic liberation movements, religion, as opposed to secularity, defines nationalism.[60] Religious language on either side of the War on Terrorism is problematic in his mind, because religion "brought more to conflict than simply a repository of symbols and the aura of divine support. It problematized the conflict through its abiding absolutism, its justification of violence, and its images of warfare that demonize opponents and cast the conflict in transhistorical terms."[61] This is an example of religious nationalism that has a harmful effect on the world. In conclusion, he asserts that secular nationalism in our Western society makes true religious language unacceptable. He states, "If religion were a more vital force in Western societies in ways that were seen as facilitating public life and promoting the common welfare, perhaps it would be easier to accept religion's public presence in other parts of the world."[62] In

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[59] Ibid., 26.

[60] Ibid., 99, 165-8, 192. On page 99, Juergensmeyer states, "National identities are linked to particular forms of religious identities" when speaking of Islam. On page 166, he looks at how religion affected the Sandinista revolution and regime in Nicaragua in a nationalist mindset. Suggesting that, "One of the reasons the revolution had such a religious character-and a specifically Catholic one at that-is that the Nicaraguan national identity has always in some measure been linked with the church." Finally, on page 192, Juergensmeyer even shows that American Christian religious activists argue that Western Secular Nationalism is ruining the world when he states, "In the Christian Identity view of the world, the struggle is a secret war between colossal evil forces allied with the United nations, the United States, and other government powers, and a small band of the enlightened few recognized these invisible enemies for what the Identity followers thought they were-satanic powers, in their view-and were sufficiently courageous to battle them."

[61] Ibid., 257.

[62] Ibid., 261.

essence, nationalism of any variant makes it impossible for true religious language to be acceptable in today's society.

Peter Berger's most recent book argues against fanaticism anywhere in the world in the name of religion. He argues that the Secularization Thesis, which he once championed, is no longer valid.[63] Berger once thought that modernity would secularize people; now rather, modernity pluralizes. In reality, the world is intensely religious, while only a small portion of the world is secular.[64] People now choose how, much or little, they will behave in a religious manner, as opposed to it being their fate. For plurality to be successful in this way there must be peace and interaction between religions.[65] Humans do not enjoy cognitive dissonance, so they actively seek to avoid whatever causes their worldview to be unstable.[66] Essentially, humans try to end the relativization and choice that comes with modernity, which leads to the modern response of attempting to regain the absolute in neo-traditionalism.[67]

Berger and Zijderveld add that relativistic ideologies claiming to have an absolute knowledge are lacking intellectual credibility. Movements claiming to build a just

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[63] Peter L. Berger and Anton C. Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions Without Becoming a Fanatic* (New York: HarperOne, 2009). See also Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger, Jonathan Sacks, David Martin, Tu Weiming, George Weigel, Grace Davie, and Abd Allah Ahmad Naim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2-4.

[64] Berger and Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt*, 6-7. See also Peter L. Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2008).

[65] Berger, and Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt*, 8-12.

[66] Ibid., 32-3.

[67] Ibid., 42-7. Here, Berger and Zijderveld argue that humans have even attempted to absolutize relativism. This would be their response to the idea of fundamentalism, that it is simply an attempt to regain the absolute of the world, which is a safer alternative than having to deal with relativism.

society on behalf of the poor—without actually consulting them—led to many bloody and corrupt governments.[68] They end by arguing that fundamentalism is a reactive, modern phenomenon. It is an attempt to restore "the taken-for-grantedness of a tradition, typically understood as a return to a (real or imagined) pristine past of the tradition."[69] In essence, fundamentalists seek to explain away the doubts of the world, and become enemies of freedom.[70] In reality, the world must allow doubt to counteract those seeking to create absolutes.[71] Berger and Zijderveld end by arguing that doubt will become the middle ground which allows moderation to succeed without fundamentalism continuing to gain ground in the world.[72] There is strength in this argument, as I believe that the world must allow doubt, without falling into complete relativization, in order to stop the spread of neo-traditionalism. In other words, a pluralized society encourages doubt so that absolutist ideologies cannot gain traction with a large portion of society.

## Outline of Thesis

In the second chapter of the thesis I argue that Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb share many philosophical traits. However, it is important to begin the second chapter with a discussion of the differences between Gutierrez and Qutb. Second, their histories have a similar trajectory in that neither was interested in pursuing a life in politics. Both, however, attended universities in Western nations, and upon returning to their homelands

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[68] Ibid., 57-62. They joyfully add that Marx would have had to be a proletarian by adoption due to his status as a well-educated middle class individual. They argue this in the case of Marxist and Catholic liberation theology, but it can also move out to Islamic *Jihadism* and even the American civil religion, as I argue.

[69] Ibid., 73.

[70] Ibid., 85-6.

[71] Ibid., 103.

[72] Ibid., 156.

saw injustice as inherent to the system. Third, their writing inspires many to follow in their footsteps, while others condemn them for their words.

Gutierrez and Qutb share similar theoretical positions. They believe that humanity has a right to interpret scripture, and as a result, humanity will seek God when allowed. However, for both, humankind will necessarily interpret scripture in the proper way, which leads to a paradox. The Western world, and capitalism, greatly interfere with Latin America and Egypt, which causes a loss of religious vitality. As a result of this, these regions have a multitude of structurally supported sins which cause mankind to cry out for relief. Gutierrez and Qutb believe there are three stages to a completely liberated mankind. Finally, each believes that all humanity has the responsibility to build the Kingdom of God on earth.

The third chapter of the thesis discusses the similarities between the overall Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*, once again beginning with a discussion of the primary differences. While Gutierrez and Qutb are representative members of their movements, they are not the only ones writing. The history of the movements once again shares similarities. One is that both Christianity and Islam have historical religious traditions calling for reform in an attempt to more accurately follow true faith.

Both movements resent being told how to do theology. Catholic liberationists resent that Europe is the center of Catholic thought, and argue that it should be among the poor and outcast of society. Islamic *Jihadists* argue that governments and other individuals have no legitimacy, and the experience of true believers should define faith. Both are against the complacent faith they see as widespread. Catholicism in Latin

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America and Islam in the Middle East are the dominant religions in their region, and these liberation movements argue that faith is now dormant. The main shared grievance is with the Western world and capitalism in particular. Catholic liberationists argue that socialism alone allows man to have equality, while Islamic *Jihadists* argue that only a system built on the Divine Path of God brings liberation from oppression.

Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadist* movements share a marked ambivalence about how religion and politics should interact. Each believes they have found the true meaning of faith; hence their movements are the true center of faith. In reality, both hold that a transnational and resurgent faith will result from people of their regions following their ideas. Social justice is the most important aspect of faith for these movements. Outside of their faith, any claim to justice is inherently lacking because it does not have God at the center. Essentially, these movements only succeed when they create the Kingdom of God on earth.

In the fourth and concluding chapter, I begin by discussing the similarities between the two movements, in view of the differences. I argue that while there are very real differences, however, when one views both movements in a favorable light, the similarities allows one to view Islamic *Jihadism* in a different way. I also suggest that there are similarities in the way that the United States responded to both Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism.* All three attempt to bring political and economic freedom to the world. First, Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadist* movements and the American response believe they alone can bring freedom, justice, and true economic prosperity to the world. All three use dualistic language in order to demonize the other side. These groups argue that God wants them to act on what is right

for the world.  All three believe that human action—praxis—is an important part of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth.  Finally, all three need warfare (whether it be spiritual, social, or military) for their ideology to be justified.

I also return to the conceptual framework found in the introduction to further clarify the similarities between Catholic and Islamic liberation movements and the American response.  While the differences between the movements makes it impossible to argue that the movements are the same, the similarities allows one to understand Islamic *Jihadism.*  I will end by discussing the strength behind the argument of Berger and Zijderveld that the world must make room for doubt, without falling into relativization.  In light of this study, one will be left with the continued importance of the recognition that humans are not, and can never allow themselves to become God.

CHAPTER TWO

The Theological and Social Positions of Gutierrez and Qutb

*Introduction*

Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb are the seminal figures in Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*. Knowledge of both movements increases through understanding the work of both Gutierrez and Qutb. Even though the leadership of these movements is widely disparate in personal, political, religious, and social goals, Gutierrez and Qutb are characteristic examples with which to begin understanding the movements themselves. For Gutierrez, the paramount concern is the lack of justice for all of God's children as displayed by the overwhelming poverty in the undeveloped world. Injustice anywhere is an affront to God and challenges the presence of the true gospel of Christ. Qutb's concern is for social injustice and the complete lack of true Islam throughout the world. Each holds that real faith is not present, and only living in complete communion with God brings the just world they desire.

In this chapter I suggest that Gutierrez and Qutb share similarities in how they perceive the world. When one views Gutierrez and Qutb in the way that their followers do, one sees similarities in their theories. Both respond to modernization and what they perceive as a decline in religion. The Western dominated world invades life and religion in Latin America and the Muslim world so that original cultures are lost. Essentially, the capitalistic system preached by Western nations is sinful because it dehumanizes the entire world. Gutierrez and Qutb believe that lasting liberation has three stages.

23

Ultimately both religions, Christianity for Gutierrez and Islam for Qutb, aim to reestablish a transnational religion where the modern nation-state is no longer the object of devotion. Gutierrez and Qutb challenge the dualistic worldview outlined by Samuel Huntington instead arguing that all humanity is capable of sharing in the divine system ordained by God.[1]

The chapter begins by discussing the different western perceptions of both Gutierrez and Qutb. Followers of both Gutierrez and Qutb label them as among the best theologians challenging a corrupt system. Detractors argue that Gutierrez and Qutb are either inadequate theologians, or worse, dedicated to the destruction of the world we currently live in. It is important to explore how the academic and theological world receives Gutierrez and Qutb. Second, it is important to know the biography of both men and how they came to believe that Western culture is no longer able to lead the world. Finally, their theologies share many of the same signs of consonance between the two movements, and as a result the writing of Gutierrez and Qutb became hallmarks within their movements. After an explanation of Gutierrez's theories, the similarities in Qutb's thoughts will be discussed. The differences between the two will be highlighted with an attempt to suggest that there remains similarity. Thus, the goal of this chapter is that one learns much about the movements of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* by a detailed study of these two authors.[2]

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[1] For more on transnational religion see Susanne H. Rudolph and James Piscatori, *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

[2] See for Qutb: Hamid Algar, "Preface," in Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, trans. Rami David (North Haledon, NJ: Islamic Publications International, 2006). For negative opinions of Gutierrez and Liberation Theology see: Michael Landon, "The Social Presuppositions of Early Liberation Theology," *Restoration Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2005): 13-31. For positive opinions see: Robert McAfee Brown, "Spirituality and Liberation: The Case for Gustavo Gutierrez," *Worship* 58, no. 5 (1984): 395-404.

*Scholarly and Western Opinions of the Work of Gutierrez and Qutb*

There are many who regard the work of Gutierrez and Qutb favorably, while many believe that Gutierrez and Qutb are in error on their theological and social positions.[3] Both Gutierrez and Qutb stand accused of inciting violence in the name of their God. The biggest complaint is that neither has accurately portrayed the religion that they claim to speak for. Those who defend Gutierrez and Qutb argue that their reinterpretation of faith has at its core the idea of social justice. These defenders also believe that Gutierrez and Qutb have re-imagined faith in a way that not only makes Christianity and Islam better, respectively; it makes the world better in that true and lasting peace will be present when the world that Gutierrez and Qutb desire appears. Furthermore, it is important to outline the differences in how Gutierrez and Qutb are perceived in the West. Gutierrez receives a more favorable review from Western sources than does Qutb, largely because of what followers of the two have done.

*Scholarly Opinions of Gustavo Gutierrez*

The work of Gustavo Gutierrez receives much discussion throughout the Catholic Church and among academics interested in liberation theology. Some, such as Christian Smith, feel that Gutierrez encourages fruitful dialogue, while others, including Stanley Hauerwas, believe that Gutierrez is guilty of misleading his followers. Regardless of their opinions on his writing, there are very few scholars that will challenge the importance that Gutierrez has in Latin American Catholicism or the movement of

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[3] The work of Robert McAfee Brown and Hamid Algar are good examples of those who have favorable reviews, while Stanley Hauerwas and Mary Habeck are examples of those who decry the impact of Gutierrez and Qutb on their respective cultures.

liberation theology.[4]  T. Howland Sanks states that, "It is too early in the history of the Latin American liberation theologies to say who is the outstanding or most influential of all the theologians in that group, but it is fair to say that Gutierrez is at least representative."[5]  Phillip Lemasters summarizes, "Gustavo Gutierrez is surely one of the most influential theologians of the second half of the twentieth century."[6]  In essence, scholars highlight that Gutierrez is representative while also being a luminary figure in liberation theology.

Detractors of Gutierrez claim that he does not distinguish between salvation in the Christian sense and liberation in the social sense.[7]  They argue that Gutierrez wants to build a church-state relationship built on liberationist principles.  Essentially, Gutierrez re-politicizes faith, directly circumventing the process taking place in the modern world of minimizing faith in the culture.[8]  They argue that Gutierrez lacks a systematic theology in comparison to the Church.[9]  Detractors also see Gutierrez as guilty of making Christianity a horizontal religion as opposed to vertical.[10]  The deepest critique is from

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[4] Anthony Gill, "The Study of Liberation Theology: What Next?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 87.

[5] T. Howland Sanks, "Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel: Variations on a Theme," *Theological Studies* 41, no. 4 (1980): 669.

[6] Philip Lemasters, "Theology from the Underside of History as a Critical Theory of Theology," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 19, no. 1 (1992): 39.

[7] Joyce Murray, "Liberation for Communion in the Soteriology of Gustavo Gutierrez," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (1998): 52.

[8] Miroslav Volf, "Liberation Theology After The End Of History: An Exchange," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 2 (April 2003): 263.

[9] James B. Nickoloff, "Church Of The Poor: The Ecclesiology Of Gustavo Gutierrez," *Theological Studies* 54, (1993): 512.   The argument is that Gutierrez has no formal theology that is consistent.  Those in the Catholic Church see this as a necessity in order to make sure one has a proper understanding of faith.

[10] Brown, "The Case for Gustavo Gutierrez," 395.

Stanley Hauerwas who believes that Gutierrez unknowingly places his theology opposite

of the gospel in the Bible.  Liberation theology, as understood by Hauerwas, suggests that

servitude, hardship, and most importantly, sin are emptied; and this is not how the

gospels interpret faith.  Hauerwas instead argues that, "it is only by serving that we

discover the freedom offered by God."[11]

Another major challenger to Gutierrez is the Catholic Church itself.  Pope

Benedict XVI sent messages to the Church in Latin America directed at liberationists in

the mid 1980s.  The Pope believes that God takes the side of the poor.  However, in using

Marxist-Dependency Theory to determine the poor, the Christian element becomes lost in

the writings of Gutierrez.  Furthermore, for Pope Benedict XVI, the Eucharist becomes a

political sign of liberation, the Exodus story becomes the salvation story, and Gutierrez is

guilty of making the resurrection of Christ an elementary, human action.[12]

Christian Smith, on the other hand, believes that Gutierrez challenges the Church

to action in ways that it would not be doing without his work.  In fact, Gutierrez

represents the truest form of universal theology available and is the leading light of the

movement.[13]  Furthermore, Smith believes that Gutierrez finds in Bartolome De Las

Casas, the ability to show that liberation theology does not require Marxism and

dependency theory.  Rather, only a shared existence among the poor of Latin America is

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[11] Stanley Hauerwas, "Some Theological Reflections On Gutierrez's Use Of 'Liberation' As A Theological Concept," *Modern Theology* 3, no. 1 (1986): 69-70.

[12] See: Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Liberation Theology," http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/ratzinger/liberationtheol.htm  accessed 1/14/10.

[13] Christian Smith, "Las Casas as Theological Counteroffensive: An Interpretation of Gustavo Gutierrez's Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 69-70.

required.[14]  Smith concludes that instead of allowing liberation theology to recede into the sunset, Gutierrez launched a major theological counteroffensive against the Church.[15]

Thomas Schubeck believes that Gutierrez's theology has three important aspects. First, the emphasis on praxis eliminates dehumanizing relationships while employing freedom and justice.  Second, theology should be done from the location where oppression is taking place.[16]  Third, the end of history, and ultimate utopian goal, for Gutierrez is not a Marxist classless society but instead, "the integral liberation of all people in Christ."[17]  Gutierrez reinterprets the importance of Christian community in the lives of individuals and society.[18]  In other words, Gutierrez attempts to take theology out of the hands of 'learned' individuals and "give it back to the people."[19]  Finally, Gutierrez has the ability to remind oppressors of the fact that it was the empty tomb of Christ that enables Christians to know the power of God over death.[20]  For Gutierrez, it is only when humanity is liberated from servitude to others in the capitalistic system that man is capable of true communion with God and others.

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[14] Ibid., 71.

[15] Ibid., 72.

[16] Gutierrez argues that theology must be done amidst those who are suffering, as opposed to about those who are suffering.  This is his response to the Second Vatican Council which published on attempting to transform the widespread injustice throughout the world. Instead of speaking about them and building a theology of development, Gutierrez sought to speak with the oppressed and to allow them the ability to build theology themselves.

[17] Thomas Schubeck, S.J. "The Reconstruction of Natural Law Reasoning: Liberation Theology as a Case Study," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 20, no. 1 (1992): 160.

[18] Murray, "Liberation for Communion," 59.

[19] Michael L. Cook, "Jesus from the other side of history: Christology in Latin America," *Theological Studies* 44, no. 2 (1983): 260.

[20] Ibid., 286.

There is no doubt that Gutierrez is a contentious figure in the Western world. Detractors argue that Gutierrez's use of Marxist-Dependency theory highlights the fact that his theology is in the wrong. Followers of Gutierrez and liberation theology built base communities, and actively seek to create a nation built on the principles of liberation theology. However, Gutierrez remains an individual that does not encourage violence from his followers. Furthermore, Gutierrez seeks to create a society in which all individuals are equal. While those in the West disagree with his theology due to a Marxist philosophy, many do not see him as a violent individual that should concern individuals in the West.

*Scholarly Opinions of Sayyid Qutb*

The way one interprets the Qur'an as well as Qutb's theology affects how one views Sayyid Qutb. Those who speak highly of Qutb argue that he unites a disparate audience, but detractors of Qutb believe he only unites them for violence. Very few, if any, attempt to minimize his importance on Islamic culture in the last fifty years, due to the fact that Qutb was the main theoretician for the Muslim Brotherhood[21] during the 1950s and 1960s while also being the most complete Islamic *Jihadist* in the modern Arab world.[22] Both those who admire Qutb, and those who challenge him, point out that he

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[21] The Muslim Brotherhood is the first modern Islamic *Jihadist* organization. It was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt as an organization dedicated to the introduction of a complete and total Muslim society. For the Muslim Brotherhood this entails a return to the Shari'a law, and eventually a return to the Caliphate as an encompassing government. The Muslim Brotherhood is no longer solely an Egyptian movement, as the organization has expanded into several countries.

[22] There are many scholars who suggest that Qutb was the main ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1950s and 1960s. For examples see: Ana Belen Soage, "Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb: Continuity or Rupture," *Muslim World* 99, no. 2 (Apr., 2009): 294; Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', "Discourse, power, and ideology in modern Islamic revivalist thought : Sayyid Qutb," *Muslim World* 81, no. 3-4 (Jl-O., 1991): 285; Robert F. Shedinger, "Roger Williams Meets Sayyid Qutb: When the Quest for Religious Liberty Becomes a Force for Global Injustice," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 2 (Sum., 2005): 152-153; Thameem Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb: Myth and Reality,"

was not a scholar of Islam. It must also be stated that Qutb, although his career was brief, had many contradictory points in his writing.

Detractors see the fact that Qutb lacks formal training in the Qu'ran as a sign that he has no expert knowledge of the religion and is one whose opinions should be disregarded.[23] For those who speak against Qutb, the easiest connection one can make is with terrorism. Bassam Tibi places Qutb as an intellectual precursor to Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda.[24] Among the evidence used is that Qutb's works are bestsellers in Islamic extremist circles.[25] Almost immediately after the 9/11 attack, Qutb began to be placed as the philosophical leader of the movement of Islamic *Jihadism*. The 9/11 Commission points specifically at Qutb for being an inspiration to Osama Bin Laden. Even more, some argue that the ideas of Nazism heavily influence Qutb.[26] Materialism and social inequities are rampant, and only through a theocracy is the Islamic world delivered.[27] Moreover, detractors accuse Qutb of using the Qur'an to justify his own ambitions rather

*Intellectual Discourse* 15, no. 2 (2007): 167; Farhana Ali, and Jerrold Post, "The History and Evolution of Martyrdom in the Service of Defensive Jihad: An Analysis of Suicide Bombers in Current Conflicts," *Social Research* 75, no. 2 (Summer, 2008): 622; and Hendrik Hansen, and Peter Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology: a Comparison of Sayyid Qutb's Islamism with Marxism and National Socialism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1 (Mar., 2007): 57.

[23] Ibid., viii-ix.

[24] Bassam Tibi, "Jihadism And Intercivilizational Conflict: Conflicting Images Of the Self And Of The Other," in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, and Fethi Mansouri (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2007), 52.

[25] Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35.

[26] Algar, "Preface" in *Sayyid Qutb, Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, xii-xiv.

[27] David Aaaron, *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2008), 59.

than allowing the Qur'an to dictate his theology.[28] Asma Afsaruddin accuses Qutb of inaccurately representing *jahiliyyah*.[29]

Qutb proposes that man needs no intermediary between he and God, and that freedom of conscience is an absolute necessity for life. William Shepard believes that the desire Qutb holds for balancing a true Islamic faith and justice is evident in his writings.[30] Qutb's view is that leaders claiming to be Muslims may in fact not be true Muslims if they do not act justly. If they are not true Muslims, it is one's duty to challenge them, and for this theory alone, Islamic liberationists point to Qutb as a luminary figure.[31] For Qutb, Islam is not looking backward; it is an attempt to continually fight for progress against colonialism and Zionism.[32]

For those who admire him, Qutb's lack of formal training enabled him to engage the Qur'an directly and without interference. Hamid Algar believes that Qutb's characteristics make him an author who impacts many generations. First, Qutb's Islamic concept was the chief aim of his life.[33] This allowed Qutb to face the torture and

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[28] Christina Hellmich, "Terrorists, Hypocrites, Fundamentalists? The View from Within," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 The Politics of Naming: Rebels, Terrorists, Criminals, Bandits and Subversives (2005): 41-42.

[29] Asma Afsaruddin, "The "Islamic" State: Genealogy, Facts, and Myths," *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 1 (Wint., 2006): 164.

[30] William Shepard, "The Development of Thought of Sayyid Qutb as Reflected in Earlier and Later Editions of 'Social Justice in Islam,'" *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series 32, nr. 2 (1992): 198.

[31] David Zeiden, "A Comparative Study of Selected Themes in Christian and Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 1 (May, 2003): 76.

[32] Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Qur'anic Justification for an Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb," *Middle East Journal* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1983): 22-25.

[33] His Islamic concept, which will be discussed in detail later, simply states that humanity needs to be released from serving anyone other than God. As a result of humankind's service to others, it is in a state of ignorance, out of which it is impossible to see the beauty of an Islamically governed society that Qutb believes will lead to true and lasting peace.

imprisonment from the government as nothing more than a minor irritant.  Secondly,

Qutb was a man of his time.  It was a time of religious upheaval in the Islamic world, and

it was not uncommon for individuals to write on the proper role of Islam in public life.[34]

In essence, Qutb wrote at the perfect time for his work to become important in Islamic

liberation theology.  Finally, Algar defends Qutb in stating: "Neither Sayyid Qutb or his

brother advocated at any point the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, nor are the

intellectual, cultural and social concerns Sayyid Qutb manifested in many of his works

reflected in the published communiqués of al-Qa'ida."[35]

The Western perception of Sayyid Qutb is that a large responsibility for current

Islamic *Jihadist* attacks on Western countries should be placed on him.  Most of his

theories are not entirely new,[36] but there are some very important distinctions Qutb made

which made global Islamic *Jihadism* more justified for his followers.  The two biggest

changes are the reinterpretation of *jahiliyyah*,[37] and who is able to be targeted for

violence.[38]  In the West, Qutb is viewed as an individual who desires nothing but a return

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[34] Algar, "Preface" in *Sayyid Qutb, Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, viii-xi.

[35] Ibid., xii.

[36] Scholars argue that Qutb gets parts of his philosophy from others.  One example of this is Syed Abul A'ala Mawdudi.  Qutb is deeply influenced by the work of Mawdudi, and takes an idea for a revolutionary vanguard to bring an Islamic society from Mawdudi.  See: Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb," 173 and 184.  Ali and Post suggest that Qutb's reinterpretation of *jahiliyyah* is drawn from, but not taken, Mawdudi.  See: Ali and Post, "Evolution of Martyrdom," 623.  See also: Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 297.  Some scholars dispute this claim.  Abu-Rabi' states that talk of Qutb's reliance on Mawdudi is overstated by some authors.  See: Abu-Rabi', "Discourse, Power, and Ideology," 292.  Soage advances the idea that Qutb actually takes much of his philosophy from al-Banna.  See: Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 295 and 304-305.

[37] Ali and Post highlight this change in the interpretation of *jahiliyyah*.  Before Qutb, the term spoke of the time immediately preceding the introduction of Islam in the world.  Qutb declares that the present world was also in a state of *jahiliyya*.  This allows Islamic *Jihadists* to assert themselves as the true heirs of God's divine path, and violently attack those who perpetuate this ignorant system.

[38] Because the world is in a state of *jahiliyyah* the true Muslim and vanguard community must fight the system.  *Jihad* is now an active demand by Qutb.  Furthermore, innocent civilians are able to be

to the time in which Islam had more power.  He seeks to imprison women in the house

permanently, make humankind submit to the laws of the Shari'a, and kill anyone who

fights his interpretation of the law.  Essentially, Qutb is the man responsible for Islamic

*Jihadism* to most westerners.  Furthermore, Qutb is the man who influences many current

Islamic *Jihadists.*  Some of this is perhaps due to the fact that Qutb is seen as a martyr at

the hands of the Egyptian government.[39]  What is known is that the Muslim Brotherhood

distributes Qutb's most famous work, *Milestones,* to groups seeking an Islamic

liberation.[40]  Also, Ushama lists several of the individuals and groups, Qutb influences

with his work.[41]  Essentially, many of the current Islamic *Jihadist* individuals and groups

have a strong ideological affinity for Qutb.[42]

However, the goal of this chapter is to present continuity between the thought of

Gutierrez and Qutb.  These similarities are only seen through a favorable view of Qutb

that a follower would have.  While it is difficult to do this because of Qutb's lack of

concern for those who disagree with him, I believe that this study can potentially help

those in the West to begin to understand what followers of Qutb see.

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attacked because they support the system that keeps them in shackles.  See Hansen and Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology," 62-63.

[39]Abu-Rabi', "Discourse, Power, and Ideology," 292.

[40] Farid Esack, "Three Islamic Strands in the South African Struggle For Justice," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 Islam & Politics (Apr., 1988): 479.

[41] Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb," 169.

[42] Ali and Post, "Evolution of Martyrdom," 623-624.

*Biography of Gustavo Gutierrez*

Gustavo Gutierrez, born in June 1928, was part of a mestizo family in Lima, Peru; and grew up as an outcast in a society on the verge of modernization. He was politically active in college, but he planned on a quiet career of theological work.[43] Due to the promise that Gutierrez showed in seminary, he was sent to Europe to study theology. While in Europe, Gutierrez built friendships with those studying from throughout Latin America, many of whom became fellow liberationists, some of whom became much more radical than Gutierrez. Upon his return to Lima he began to teach at the Catholic University where he saw "the reality of poverty, hopelessness, and misery in the lives of the people of Peru, and the predictable 'professional career' started to go in unpredicted directions."[44]

The 1960s were formative years on the theology of Gutierrez. His views of the overarching poverty in Latin America helped him replace the theology he learned in Europe with a Marxist view of class theory helping to inspire what became known as liberation theology. At the time, the Catholic Church was attempting to respond to the modernization of the world in the Second Vatican Council. Priests in Latin America felt that the work of the Second Vatican Council was an important first step. However, the Church saw this as the complete response. In Latin America, meetings began in 1964 with pastors discussing the meaning of faith in their specific, non-Western context. In

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[43] For biographical information on Gutierrez see: Robert McAfee Brown, *Makers Of Contemporary Theology: Gustavo Gutierrez* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 20-28.

[44] Ibid., 22. It was not until Gutierrez returned from Europe that the inherent injustice throughout Peruvian and Latin American society were known to Gutierrez. His turn to a theology of liberation replaced his European training as the overall framework to Gutierrez's life.

1968, two conferences took place in which Gutierrez began to outline his theology of liberation which, after a few years of refinement and more advice at conferences, became his well known book *A Theology of Liberation*.

From the time of its publication in 1971 through today, Gutierrez continues to be recognized as one of the founders of Catholic liberation theology. He lectured throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States and is a prolific writer with over a dozen books published. He is currently on the faculty at the University of Notre Dame in the Department of Theology. The time Gutierrez spent working with the poor affected his work, making him an outcast with the government of Peru. Gutierrez continues to challenge the Western notion of the compatibility of capitalism and Christianity, arguing instead that the Church has neglected humans for power. What was a predictable and successful career as a European trained theologian became one that caused much controversy. Worldwide discussion about the relation between Christianity and social life is the result of his body of work.

## Biography of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb is a widely known author whose works have contributed to Pan-Arab Islamism in the last fifty years.[45] There are many details of his life that remain unverifiable,[46] but there is similarity between the lives of Qutb and Gutierrez. Born in 1906, Qutb memorized the Qur'an by the age of 10. His father was a delegate in the

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[45] Hamid Algar, "Preface," vii.

[46] Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), 26.

National Party of Egypt.  Albert Bergen states that Qutb became politically aware at a young age because of the many anti-Western nationalistic meetings in his home.[47]

Although there was much political discussion in his early life, Qutb studied literature and poetry in college as opposed to politics.  From 1940 through 1948 he worked for the government in the Ministry of Public Instruction, while increasingly writing about political events in Egypt.  Due to his promise as a government employee, the government of Egypt sent Qutb to the United States to pursue a graduate education.  Before Qutb arrived in the United States, he admired the American culture and educational system.  He grew to resent American culture and desired a 'return' to Islam because he believed it to be the only worldview that could solve the problems of the world.[48]  His time in the Western world intended to help him become more Westernized, but instead served as the genesis for a move against the pervasiveness of Western culture.  Qutb wrote of the decadence of American culture and its contribution to dehumanization through a system that relies on man not God for ultimate guidance.

Sayyid Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood after his return to Egypt in 1951 from the United States.  After Nasser and the Free Officers came to power in 1952, Qutb was the only civilian on the revolutionary council.[49]  The Muslim Brotherhood and Nasser's party shared similar beliefs of anti-Westernism and a duty to pan-Arabism.  The

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[47] A more detailed biography of the life of Qutb can be found at: Albert J. Bergen, *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3-31.

[48] Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations*, 26.  Many indications suggest that a dance held at a church in Greeley, Colorado was a final turning point in his disdain for the American culture.  Algar argues against the dance as having much merit in his eventual denial of American culture, but many suggest this is the case.  At this dance, it is reported that women were acting in a sexually seductive way toward the men, and that it made a deleterious impression on Qutb.  Perhaps the greatest problem that Qutb would have with Western culture was the perceived double standard with how Americans treated the Palestinian issue.  There was much prejudice directed at Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular, and the United States was a strong ally of the bourgeoning state of Israel while he was in the United States.

[49] Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 296.

movements parted ways because the Brotherhood did not support the socialist reforms

adopted by Nasser, and in many ways it was advantageous for Nasser to not be overly

comfortable with the Muslim Brotherhood.[50]  After the attempted assassination of Nasser

in October 1954 by the Muslim Brotherhood, many of the leading Brothers went to jail.

Qutb, who was then the editor of the weekly newspaper, was no exception.[51]  Throughout

Qutb's time in prison, the government tortured him severely, which led to his further

radicalization against un-Islamically based governments.  Qutb wrote his most radical

work, *Milestones*, from prison, which led to his execution in 1966.  Qutb's writings, of

which there are over 20 books, remain popular in the Arab world.  For many Islamic

*Jihadists* Qutb is a martyr who was persecuted and manipulated by a blind government

because the Egyptian state falsely claimed adherence to Islamic principles.  Qutb's

reinterpretation of *jihad* alone makes him a glorified figure in Islamic liberation theology.

The similarities between the lives of Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb are not

simply that both eschewed politics early and returned to it later in life.  Because of their

promise, they pursued higher learning in the Western academic world.  While Gutierrez

went to Europe to study under theologians, he came back to Latin America seeking

another theology to create peace.  Qutb went to the United States to study the educational

system and came back believing that only a truly Islamic conception of society would

create peace.  Furthermore, both became active in politics through their writings, which

led them to become pariahs in their own nations.  Most importantly, living as pariahs

helped them continue as leaders in their movements.  Gutierrez believes that only among

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[50] Abu-Rabi', "Discourse, Power, and Ideology," 294.

[51] Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 296.

the poor is proper theology being done,[52] and Qutb saw atrocities in prison that made him

believe the Egyptian government, while professing Islamic belief, was truly ignorant of

Islamic teaching.[53]  For Gutierrez and Qutb, their histories allowed them to see more

clearly a situation in their regions which needed to change.  The dominance of Western

culture and the lack of respect for God's authority led both men to the recognition that

their lives must be about changing the world for the better.

*The Theoretical Similarities Between Gutierrez and Qutb*

Gutierrez and Qutb hold ideologies that are distinctive, and yet very similar to the

movements with which they belong.  Their roles allow them to speak directly to large

groups of people.  Furthermore, both Gutierrez and Qutb are the leading writers of the

movements that would follow.[54]  Both believe the liberation of mankind from the

bondage that keeps one from truly serving God is necessary.  Gutierrez and Qutb have

inconsistencies in their theologies: Qutb believes that all should have freedom of

conscience to choose their own religion, but speaks of the need for all to turn from their

false religion toward Islam and the Shari'a; and Gutierrez believes Christianity and

Marxism can coexist, while many Western theologians challenge this concept.  The most

important difference between Gutierrez and Qutb is that Gutierrez believes those in

power are well aware of the structural injustice they maintain in the world.  Qutb believes

that men live in a state of *jahiliyyah*—ignorance—and do not know how to live due to

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[52] Brown, *Gustavo Gutierrez*, 35.

[53] Bergsten, *The Sayyid Qutb Reader*, 4.

[54] John Howard Yoder states that Gutierrez "is to be celebrated as the founder" of Catholic Liberation Theology.  See John H. Yoder, "The Wider Setting of "Liberation Theology"," *The Review of Politics* 52, no. 2 (Spring, 1990): 285.  Paul Breman states that Qutb is "the intellectual hero of every one of the groups that eventually went into Al Qaeda, their Karl Marx (to put it that way), their guide."  See Paul Breman, "The Philosopher of Islamic Terror," *New York Times*, March 23, 2003.

their lack of a relationship with God.[55]  The overarching similarity between Gutierrez and

Qutb is the importance of the individual to determine what one believes about theology.

Men must interpret scripture themselves, and not allow others to tell them what to

believe.[56]  For Gutierrez, the importance of interpretation falls under base communities

and individuals living together, sharing life and theology.[57]  For Qutb this means that

governments claiming to be Islamic, but not following the Shari'a are not to be listened

to.  Essentially, mankind is free within the bounds of Islamic law.

Gutierrez and Qutb wrote in a period of social upheaval throughout the world;[58]

there was a debate between capitalism and Marxism regarding who owned the legitimacy

to define the world.  Gutierrez and Qutb use a class-based vocabulary borrowed from

Marxism to challenge injustice, colonialism, and the Western belief in capitalism as an

economic system.[59]  Furthermore, Gutierrez and Qutb argue that society needs to awaken

to the suffering of the poor, and throw off the chains that bind them into poverty and

ignorance.[60]  Most importantly, they see their work as building that vanguard capable of

educating the world for its own salvation.[61]  Neither self-define as Marxists because of its

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[55] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 58.

[56] Ibid., 61.

[57] Nickoloff, "The Ecclesiology of Gustavo Gutierrez," 530.

[58] Abu-Rabi', "Discourse, Power, and Ideology," 288.

[59] Qutb uses class-based language when discussing the evils of America.  He argues that Islam, when correctly lived is free from the class, race, and gender barriers that encapsulate Western culture. Qutb, similar to Gutierrez, believes that his path alone releases mankind from the bonds of a class-based view of the world. See Shedinger, "Roger Williams Meets Sayyid Qutb," 158.

[60] For Qutb, evil unbelievers are working to oppress those who live out true Islam.  The Western world must get ready for the battle between good (Islam) and evil (the West).  See Hansen and Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology," 66.

[61] Daniel Payne, "Orthodoxy, Islam and the 'Problem' of the West: a Comparison of the Liberation Theologies of Christos Yannaras and Sayyid Qutb," *Religion, State and Society* 36, no. 4 (2008):

anti-religious language.  Ultimately, Gutierrez believes that socialism is a just economic

system; and Qutb does not see the full implementation of socialism anywhere in the

world, and thus dismisses socialism as a just economic system.[62]

There are several theological similarities between Gutierrez and Qutb.  First,

Gutierrez and Qutb believe that the West and capitalism interfere in their region (Latin

America and the Muslim world) to an unacceptable level, and religious people must fight

further erosion of faith.  Second, real faith is deficient in their respective religions and sin

is rampant.  Third, both believe that there is a three stage process for the complete

liberation of mankind.  Finally, the movement that Gutierrez and Qutb promote is not

simply a regional movement.  Once it gains strength, in Latin America for Gutierrez and

the Arab world for Qutb, a liberation movement follows that necessitates true religion

and justice throughout the world.

## Antipathy Toward the West and Capitalism

Gutierrez highlights the problem of development for Latin America.  Many who

believed in the Western developmental policies of the 1950s and 60s began to see that

this created more wealth for the rich nations and more poverty for the poor nations.

Gutierrez states, "The dynamics of the capitalist economy lead to the establishment of a

center and periphery, simultaneously generating progress and growing wealth for the few

and social imbalances, political tensions, and poverty for the many."[63]  Gutierrez argues

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440.  See also Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 303; and Hansen and Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology," 58.

[62] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Damascus: Dar al-Ilm, 1990), 7.

[63] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, 15th Anniversary Edition., trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 51.

that these developmental policies further exploited the poor of the world.  The United

States and a small number of other countries came to control the economic, financial,

military, technological, commercial, and alimentary power of the world.[64]  Gutierrez

believes that the capitalist system has elements that are at its core antihuman because

capitalism only desires the creation of more wealth for those who are already rich.[65]

Poor nations see through the developmental theory because they understand that

structural injustice causes the continuation of their poverty.[66]  The bishops of the most

impoverished areas first began to understand the structural causes of poverty and injustice

in the world.  They began to fight against these structures and the political powers

condemned them for doing so.[67]  The growing gap between rich and poor countries is a

situation that cries out to heaven for a remedy.[68]  For Gutierrez, the West can no longer

be the center of theology, because it is the bourgeois theologians who are aiding the

oppression of the poor in Latin America, and indeed, the poor of the world.[69]

Injustice is a problem that must concern man because it is a problem that concerns

God.  Those on the side of God will be on the side of the poor and fight against the

powerful who exploit the poor.[70]  God wants justice in the world, but cannot impose it on

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[64] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 84.

[65] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 66.

[66] Ibid., 14.

[67] Ibid., 62.

[68] Ibid., 23.

[69] Cook, "Christology in Latin America," 259.

[70] Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 16.

humans because God gives mankind free will. Thus, for Gutierrez, humans must fight

for justice.[71] Finally, Gutierrez challenges the United States and its policies in Latin

America. He states, "There can be authentic development for Latin America only if there

is liberation from the domination exercised by the great capitalist countries, and

especially by the most powerful, the United States of America."[72] People can only

become fully human when Latin America recalculates the role of the United States in

their region.[73] Gutierrez sees the United States, and the capitalist system it supports, as

the primary reason for the injustice and poverty occurring in Latin America.

Sayyid Qutb states that in the United States, and other wealthy nations, there is no

spiritual satisfaction and peace. These Western nations make great strides in science,

medicine, and technological production, but do not understand human existence. Qutb

states, "For example in America new gods are worshipped, which are thought to be the

aim of human existence-the god of property, the god of pleasure, the god of fame, the god

of productivity! Thus it is that in America men cannot find themselves, for they cannot

find the purpose of their existence."[74] Capitalism only serves the interest of the few who

get wealthy, but there is not a difference between capitalism and socialism in that both

are materialistic systems which make mankind an animal.[75]

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[71] Ibid., 77.

[72] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 54.

[73] Ibid., 54-6.

[74] Sayyid Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, trans. "ISLAMDUST" (Palo Alto: al-Manar Press, 1967): 25-6.

[75] Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 302.

For Qutb, intelligent humans are beginning to understand the destruction that comes with a human-made system which brings nothing but pain.[76] True religion is lost as a result of the Western world perverting humanity.[77] Humanity is in servitude to laws, other humans, and traditions as opposed to serving God only.[78] Even worse, Western nations make it difficult to practice true Islam. Essentially, the Western world denies freedom to Muslims, while claiming that it is the savior of freedom.[79]

Qutb believes that every society, even those claiming Islam, is living in *jahiliyyah* because they are not following the divine path of God.[80] Humanity's ignorance regresses humankind into a wilderness.[81] This means that the leadership of the Western world is in decline because it is unable to present values that can guide humankind.[82] In other words, Qutb argues that unending development of the economic sphere contradicts the principles on which humanity was created. Hence, this gives humanity a license to do whatever he wishes, and as a result there is no place from which humanity derives rights.[83] Western nations and the United States in particular, are guilty of losing sight of

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[76] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 37.

[77] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 7.

[78] Qutb, *Milestones*, 73.

[79] Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb,' 170.

[80] Qutb, *Milestones*, 80-2.

[81] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 16.

[82] Qutb, *Milestones*, 7.

[83] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 79.

these principles and live in complete ignorance of God.  A stagnant will and corrupt soul afflict nations that live in luxury.[84]

Qutb argues that God commands Muslims to treat all humans with justice, even those whom they hate.[85]  This does not mean the justice desired in the West.  For Qutb, God will judge all humans, and those who persecute Muslims will be dealt with severely. The world is similar to what was occurring before Islam came to humankind, and Muslims will defeat the current system just as the earliest generation of Muslims defeated the popular system of that era.[86]  The imperializing West and Zionist groups herald the system of usury.  The uncivilized societies of the West, regardless of progress in industry and science, give ascendance to physical desires and animalistic morals.[87]  Usury, which reigned throughout the world and fell in the Islamic world, has a similar fate in the future.[88]  Islam will end the exploitation of individuals by usury which harms individual liberty.

Qutb believes that humanity's weakness in spiritual matters leads to grouping individuals according to family, tribe, nation, and race.[89]  Instead Qutb suggests Islamic law should order society; where there will be private ownership, free choice of where to work and live, no hereditary class structure, and an individual can rise or fall based on his

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[84] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 9.

[85] Ibid., 20.

[86] Ibid., 47.

[87] Qutb, *Milestones*, 98.

[88] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 61-2.

[89] Qutb, *Milestones,* 125.

or her choices in life.[90]  Qutb believes that true freedom is in a society where the sovereignty belongs to God only.  He argues that in a society where some are "lords who legislate and some others are slaves who obey them, then there is no freedom in the real sense, nor dignity for each and every individual."[91]

For Qutb, the Christian Church uses culture and religion to oppress the entire world.[92]  The doctrines of the Western Church never truly represented Christianity. Rather it became fused with paganism to the point that the religion was lost.[93] Christianity and the Western world "became embroiled in political, racial and sectarian disputes, and steeped in pagan myths and philosophical concepts."[94]

Humanity is searching for a reason to live, and in reality, it is throwing away its most precious possession of life itself.  The state is complicit in this, as it uses humanity as a tool in its scheme of development, and allows humankind to continue searching blindly for reasons to live.[95]  There are many modern marvels occurring due to technological and scientific breakthroughs;  however, the world is lost because Western imperialist nations only care about development and the further production of their own personal wealth.

Gutierrez and Qutb challenge the notion that Western capitalism is the correct structure for society to flourish.  For Gutierrez, the world is only able to shake the bonds

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[90] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 71.

[91] Qutb, *Milestones*, 94.

[92] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 97.

[93] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 9.

[94] Ibid., 28.

[95] Ibid., 78.

of injustice if a socialist economic system is put into place. Gutierrez seeks for the Church to embrace the world in order to find truth, while also believing that only a system built on liberation theology can truly release humankind from servitude. For Qutb, a system built only on the divine laws of God will suffice. It is only through the reintroduction of the Shari'a that humankind can overcome the ignorance that it currently lives in. However, both recognize that the capitalistic system only continues the decline of human civilization into something other than God's plan.

*The Sinful Situation of Western Cultural Dominance*

The second theological agreement between Gutierrez and Qutb is that the world is full of structurally supported sin. It is sin that causes oppression; Gutierrez states, "Sin-a breach of friendship with God and others-is according to the Bible the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, and the oppression in which persons live."[96] Any injustice is a loss of friendship with God, and therefore, sin.[97] Sin is not a new phenomenon, but what is new is that those who are poor are beginning to grasp the structural causes of their poverty and recognize this as a form of sin.[98] The liberation of humankind from sin, in the form of oppression, injustice, and poverty, only occurs through the work of Christ.[99] To walk with the Holy Spirit, for Gutierrez, means that one rejects a life of death. This means one

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[96] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 24.

[97] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY, 1990), 15. See also Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 113 and 139; and Gutierrez, *On Job*, 97.

[98] Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 20.

[99] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 25 and 90.

must reject: selfishness, contempt for others, covetousness, and idolatry; and it means that one embraces life, love, peace, and justice.[100]

Gutierrez states, "Theologically, this situation of injustice and oppression is characterized as a 'sinful situation' because 'where this social peace does not exist, there we will find social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities, there we will find the rejection of the peace of the Lord, and a rejection of the Lord Himself.'"[101]  He argues that the justice is inconsequential to the Church, but it is an accomplice with those keeping the unjust system alive.  The Church must realize its historical relationship with those in power.  This relationship hurts the gospel message because of the alignment with the powerful against the poor.[102]  Gutierrez believes that one of the core missions of the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God and combat the idolatry of injustice to the poor.[103]  Any religious organization claiming that the Church should not be involved in politics is "nothing but a subterfuge to keep things as they are."[104]  To remain passive when basic human rights are at risk is neither ethical nor Christian.   Gutierrez suggests that the universality of Christian love must be incompatible with the exclusion of any individual from rights.[105]  To refuse to do this would mean that the Church is "denying

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[100] Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells*, 70-1.

[101] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 64.

[102] Ibid., 68-71.

[103] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 159.

[104] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* 151.

[105] Ibid., 159-160.

that it is a gathered people animated by the power of the Spirit."[106]  In conclusion, for

Gutierrez, the very essence of the Church and its mission in the world is at stake.

Sayyid Qutb argues that a society based on the idea of constant development has

no stable system upon which to rely.[107]  The current system is sinful in that it allows—

and even encourages—humanity to worship things other than God.[108]  It is paradoxical

for humanity to claim that God is sovereign while allowing other humans to dictate what

laws one should follow.  Evil penetrates every structure of the ignorant society[109] because

humankind drifted away from the truth found in the Qur'an.[110]  Without a system built on

God, humanity is incapable of governing, and the system will be full of sin.[111]  Therefore,

a true Muslim must seek first to follow the path ordained by God through the prophet

Muhammad.[112]  The human soul cannot live apart from the order of the universe ordained

by God.[113]

It is impossible for any human to legislate without allowing his own selfish

desires to enter the law, which causes conflict and highlights our collective need for God

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[106] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 160.

[107] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 87.

[108] Qutb, *Milestones*, 11.

[109] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 19.

[110] Ibid., 6.

[111] Ibid., 65.

[112] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 16.

[113] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 78.

to rule.[114]  Qutb believes that the Arab World follows the leadership of the West and

entered despair and depravity because it left true Islam behind.[115]  He states:

> Present-day humanity is afflicted with misery, anxiety, bewilderment
> and confusion; it flees from its true self by taking recourse to opium,
> hashish and alcohol, to a craze for speed, to idiotic adventures.  All
> this despite material prosperity, high productivity and a life of ease
> with abundant leisure.  In fact, this emptiness and confusion increase
> in proportion to material prosperity and convenience.  This bitter
> emptiness pursues man like a fearsome ghost.  He flees from it, but
> inevitably it overtakes him.[116]

Qutb argues that Muslims have lived in a state of sin and ignorance since 1924

when the Caliphate was abolished.  Islam cannot find peace until the Caliphate is

restored.[117]  Western powers encouraged this state of *jahiliyyah* when Ataturk declared

the Caliphate abolished.  Qutb was the first to suggest that *jihad*[118] is applicable to

believers and nonbelievers alike in order to restore the desperately needed Caliphate.[119]

God does not want Muslims to simply assert authority over other humans, and through

*Jihad,* Muslims can create a just system.[120]  Furthermore, true Muslims do not force

people to embrace Islam.  *Jihad* allows Muslims to fight the *jahiliyyah* system that forces

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[114] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 19. See also: Qutb, *Milestones,* 91.

[115] Qutb, *Milestones*, 136.

[116] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 24-5.

[117] Habeck, *Knowing the enemy*, 11.

[118] *Jihad* can be defined as a Holy War waged on behalf of God by Muslims.  Fazlur Rahman
argues that it is an offensive war, but can in no way be construed as a pillar of the faith.  See Fazlur
Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

[119] Ibid., 36.

[120] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 89.

humans to serve others as lords rather than God.[121]  In essence, Islam does not force

others to become a Muslim as long as they follow the Shari'a.

Islam expects justice, and the exploitation of the poor is antithetical to justice.  An

individual should not expect rewards in heaven because people are deserving of what

they earn in life.[122]  Qutb believes that charity is a release from covetousness and greed

which liberates humanity from serving its own self interest.  The divine path of God is

the only thing which can release the human soul from sin and vice.[123]  In other words,

this world is sinful because it is ignorant of the truth of God.  Building a system that

serves God alone is the sole solution to the problem of *jahiliyyah*.

The goal for both men in their lives is to liberate humankind from the sinful

situation in which it lives.  Gutierrez argues that Christ liberates humans from the sinful

situation of injustice just as he liberates Christians from the sin in their lives.  The

realistic way for Gutierrez is to fight against any system that perpetuates injustice

anywhere in the world.  Qutb believes that God liberates humanity from the ignorance we

live in, which causes all of humankind to worship things other than God.  Qutb believes

that it is the work of all true Muslims to use *Jihad* against the *jahiliyyah* structure

rampant throughout the world.[124]  Here the chief difference between the two emerges.

Gutierrez sees this sinful situation as a willful act of negligence by those who are in

power and the Church knowingly acquiesces to the demands of the powerful.  Qutb

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[121] Qutb, *Milestones*, 55.

[122] Habeck, *Knowing the enemy*, 16.

[123] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 31.

[124] See Hansen and Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology," 68; Ali and Post, "Evolution of Martyrdom," 623; and Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb," 186.

argues that the *jahiliyyah* system makes mankind ignorant to the cause of sin.  For both however, the goal is to bring an end to a system that corrupts the powerless in society, whether they are poor or Muslim.

### The Three Stages to Total Liberation

The third point of similarity is that Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb propose a three part process in which society experiences true and full liberation; thus causing communion with God and justice among humans.   Both agree that death and injustice are not the final words of history because God will reign supreme in the world one day.[125] While structural change is important and indeed essential, it cannot be everything. Human freedom is absolutely paramount in any process seeking to liberate the world from sin.[126]

For Gutierrez, the first step is "Liberation from social situations of oppression and marginalization that force many to live in conditions contrary to God's will for their life." Second, "A personal transformation by which we live with profound inner freedom in the face of every kind of servitude."  The third step is "Liberation from sin."[127]  The social system must change for the possibility of true and lasting faith.  Then the individual transforms into inner freedom.  Finally, when society and the individual are free from injustice there is liberation from sin, and thus, complete communion with God.

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[125] Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells*, 1.

[126] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 130.  Qutb even asserts that humankind will be free to choose its faith when Islam takes control.  No one will be forced to accept Islam, only to live by its rules. While this is a qualified freedom in the West, for Qutb, it is freedom because he believes that Muslims are not free to practice their religion anywhere while being forced to follow other's laws.  See Ushama, "Extremism in the Discourse of Sayyid Qutb," 172.

[127] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*,  xxxviii.

Many other Catholic liberation theologians and scholars highlight the importance of this three-part process of liberation as outlined by Gutierrez.  Thomas Lewis states, "Though the conception of the three levels functions largely to account for the salvific import of worldly political events, it simultaneously illustrates the centrality of expressivism to his thought…While each level must initially be analyzed on its own, their significance within Gutierrez's thought derives above all from their interrelationship."[128] Henri Nouwen states that there are three characteristics of Gutierrez's spirit of liberation. First, "it touches every dimension of life;" second, "it is Christ-centered;" third, "it is inductive in character, that is, it draws on the daily, concrete experiences of its practitioners."[129]

James Nickoloff suggests that the strength of Gutierrez's model "lies in the unity he claims for the threefold process of liberation."  Furthermore, Gutierrez rejects a "causal and a chronological relationship among them."[130]  Nickoloff continues, "God's saving activity (third level) alone unifies the threefold liberation process, and thus grounds authentically Christian political praxis (first level).  But it is the 'humblest' (second) level-utopia-which correctly and fruitfully mediates the relationship of political praxis and redemption from sin."  This allows humans to "expand our understanding of the liberation process, and how the political praxis of liberation deepens our understanding of Christian faith."[131]

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[128] Thomas A. Lewis, "Actions as the Ties That Bind: Love, Praxis, and Community in the thought of Gustavo Gutierrez," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 33, no. 3 (2005): 547.

[129] Brown, "Spirituality and Liberation," 399.

[130] Nickoloff, "Ecclesiology of Gustavo Gutierrez," 514.

[131] Ibid., 515.

Even Stanley Hauerwas, who criticizes liberation theology, speaks of the

interconnectedness of the three phases when he states:

> These three levels mutually affect each other, but they are not the
> same. One is not present without the others, but they are distinct:
> they are all part of a single, all-encompassing salvific process, but
> they are to be found at different levels. Not only is the growth of the
> Kingdom not reduced to temporal progress; because of the Word
> accepted in faith, we see that the fundamental obstacle to the
> Kingdom, which is sin, is also the root of all misery and injustice; we
> see that the very meaning of the growth of the Kingdom is also the
> ultimate precondition for a just society and a new man. One reaches
> this root and this ultimate precondition only through the acceptance
> of the liberating gift of Christ, which surpasses all expectations.[132]

For Qutb, the first step is "Absolute liberation of the inward soul." The second

step is "Complete human equality." The concluding step is "Firm social solidarity."[133]

Qutb explains his three part process in stating:

> Complete social justice will not be achieved, and its implementation
> and permanence will not be assured unless it can rely on a feeling
> within the soul that the individual deserves it and that the community
> needs it and on a conviction that it leads to obedience to God and to
> a better human situation, and unless it can likewise rely on a material
> situation which encourages the individual to hold firmly to it, to
> fulfill its requirements and to defend it. Legislation will not lead the
> individual to claim it until he feels his right to it and has the practical
> ability to maintain that feeling. Even if there is legislation, the
> community will not obey it unless there is a conviction that supports
> it from within and practical possibilities that support it from without.
> This is what Islam has kept in view both in its moral exhortation and
> in its legislation.[134]

The divine path of Islam is only available when humans act—use praxis—on the

will of God. Qutb believes if one is acting on the divine path of God, it is evident in his

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[132] Hauerwas, "Some Theological Reflections," 68.

[133] William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1996), 40.

[134] Ibid., 41.

or her life.[135]  God leaves the divine path for humans, and he helps those who are truly

seeking the path in their praxis.[136]  Essentially, Qutb argues that justice comes through

serving only God, and any system which does not understand the weakness of humanity

is ignorant of this fact.[137]

The greatest generation of Muslims arose out of a poverty of natural, economic,

and scientific resources.  This first generation built a system divinely ordained by God,

and for Qutb, no man-made system replicates this divine path.[138]  For this greatest

generation, praxis became easy; they held a faith that was not hidden in books, but truly

liberating.  When a human being came to Islam, God liberated him from previous

hindrances, thus allowing him to fulfill the path of Islam.[139]  Qutb argues, "The society

was freed from all oppression, and the Islamic system was established in which justice

was God's justice and in which weighing was by God's balance.  The banner of social

justice was raised in the name of One God, and the name of the banner was Islam."[140]

There must be action, as Islam is not simply a philosophy; rather it must motivate humans

to follow the divine plan of God.[141]  Islam is not a theoretical religion, it is tied to

praxis.[142]  In essence, humanity must liberate itself from servitude of any system other

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[135] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 6-7.

[136] Ibid., 8 and 11.

[137] Ibid., 22-3.

[138] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 43-5.

[139] Qutb, *Milestones*, 19.

[140] Ibid., 30.

[141] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 6.

[142] Qutb, *Milestones*, 33.

than Islam, then humankind can deliver the equality of all,[143] and finally, the solidarity that both Gutierrez and Qutb seek will be found.

In essence, both men believe that the world can recover from the current system of injustice. For Gutierrez, the social structure must change, a personal transformation must take place, and then sin will recede. For Qutb, humankind must recognize the sovereignty of God, there will be equality between the believers, and then social solidarity will occur. Both seek social solidarity, and both argue that humanity must act in order to bring about this solidarity.

*Humanity Must Build the Kingdom of God*

Both Gutierrez and Qutb place a large emphasis on the role of society in the faith of the believer. It is impossible to have true faith simply as an individual, because the community must help by not forcing one to serve anything other than God. Both emphasize the individual's liberation from social structures that cause sin, while also involving his or herself in structures that completely serve God. The most interesting point of agreement is the three-step process to individual and societal liberation from the sin that entangles daily life. For both, the society can live in peace and harmony with each other and God when the individual is free without structural restraints. More importantly, both agree that praxis is a central theme of religion. The ultimate goal for both is a society to receive a claim to faith based on action by liberationists. The final point of agreement between Gutierrez and Qutb is that individuals have a role in building the Kingdom of God here on earth.

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[143] It must be stated that equality comes only for the believers. There is a radical inequality between believers and unbelievers. See Hansen and Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology," 70. In Islam, living in submission to God is to work an egalitarian society, for believers. See Shedinger, "Roger Williams Meets Sayyid Qutb," 151.

The poor must defend themselves against corrupt governments that take away

their freedom and livelihood, and fight for a peace that will last beyond governments by

creating the Kingdom of God on earth.[144]  This call for the Kingdom of God is not

predicated simply on temporal progress for Gutierrez; rather, the obstacle for both is

sin.[145]  Gutierrez believes that this movement, beginning in Latin America, leads to the

recognition of what it truly means to be human.  The movement led by liberation

theologians toward economic, political, and social liberation is the first step toward a new

society.  In this new society humans live in justice with each other and have better

communion with God.  God created humankind for freedom, and liberationists believe

they must work to free themselves from servitude to others.[146]

Gutierrez believes that politics can no longer be a hobby of Christians; rather,

Christians must make it a priority to build a just society.[147]  He states, "Hunger and

justice are not just economic and social questions.  They are global and human questions,

and they challenge our way of living the faith in its very roots."[148]  In other words, the

only way to truly live out the faith professed by Christians is to fight injustice anywhere

in the world.  He states flatly, "The kingdom and social injustice are incompatible (cf.

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[144] Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells*, 11. See also: Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xxi.

[145] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 103.

[146] Ibid., 55-6.

[147] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 46-7.

[148] Ibid., 207.

Isa. 29:18-19 and Matt. 11:5; Lev. 25:10f. and Luke 4:16-21).”[149]  It is impossible for

Christians and the Church to remain neutral.[150]

Gutierrez suggests that it is only through liberation that God is known in the

world: “To know Yahweh, which in Biblical language is equivalent to saying to love

Yahweh, is to establish just relationships among persons, it is to recognize the rights of

the poor. The God of Biblical revelation is known through antihuman justice. When

justice does not exist, God is not known; God is absent.”[151]  Essentially, the liberation

that Jesus offers is universal; “it transcends national boundaries, attacks the foundation of

injustice and exploitation, and eliminates politico-religious confusions.”[152]  There is no

exception to God’s command to love and defend all humans.[153]  For Gutierrez, there is no

other path available; to know God, at the core, means to work for justice.[154]

The Catholic Church must become a Church of, and with, the poor.  Gutierrez

believes the poor are whom religion has come for.[155]  The only way to truly follow Jesus

is to liberate humanity from oppression.[156]  Liberating faith in Christ transforms history

by giving hope to the believer in poverty.[157]  In essence, a Christian must fight for the

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[149] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 97.

[150] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 76.

[151] Ibid., 109.

[152] Ibid., 132.

[153] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 69.

[154] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 156.

[155] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make you Free*, 165.

[156] Cook, “Christology in Latin America,” 271.

[157] Ibid., 285.

poor because of God's love; and ignoring this command rejects God.[158]  Because it is

only through God and the undeserved gift of grace, that liberation can come at all.[159]

Gutierrez believes that, "The task of the Church is to proclaim the kingdom of God and

thus combat the idolatry that consists in separating God from the reign of God.  One part

of its mission that it cannot evade is to point to the absence of God when justice is not

done to the poor."[160]  Gutierrez concludes:

> In a word, the existence of poverty represents a sundering both of
> solidarity among persons and also of communion with God. Poverty
> is an expression of a sin, that is, of a negation of love. It is therefore
> incompatible with the coming of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of
> love and justice. Poverty is an evil, a scandalous condition, which in
> our times has taken on enormous proportions. To eliminate it is to
> bring close the moment of seeing God face to face, in union with
> other persons.[161]

Qutb believes that true and lasting peace only occurs if an Islamic system is

spread internationally because there can be no peace without pervasive Islam.[162]  Since

Islam is God's Divine Path, Islam has the right to take the initiative to bring about an

Islamic system throughout the world.[163]  Qutb states, "We call for a restoration of Islamic

life in an Islamic society governed by the Islamic creed and the Islamic conception as

well as by the Islamic Sharia's and the Islamic system."[164]  The path of God allows

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[158] Gutierrez, *On Job*, 94.

[159] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 34.

[160] Ibid., 157.

[161] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 168.

[162] Tibi, "Jihadism and Intercivilizational Conflict: Conflicting Images of the Self and of the Other," 52.

[163] Qutb, *Milestones*, 75.

[164] Qutb in Shepard, *Social Justice in Islam*, 277.

humanity to live much happier and peaceful lives, as opposed to when they are sinful and live for themselves.[165] Islam, and the path of Muhammad, is the only way to release humankind from servitude to others. Indeed, it is the only path that will truly liberates.[166]

Qutb states that God "knew that true social justice can come to a society only after all affairs have been submitted to the laws of God and the society as a whole is willing to accept the just division of wealth prescribed by Him."[167] Qutb continues, "Islam aspires to lead human society in order to bring into being circumstances and conditions which will liberate the individual from perversions that have latched onto his essential nature."[168] Any system not based on Islam and the divine path, is short lived and ultimately fails.[169]

The most important duty of Islam is to take ignorant leaders out of their positions and replace them with Muslim rulers.[170] Qutb reasons, "Islam is a realistic system, and it therefore supposes that the people who live according to its path will be living in an Islamically governed society."[171] The history of man-made systems is one of failure and human suffering. No man-made system can stand up against God's divine path.[172] Christianity and Buddhism present partial truths in "that the liberation of the inward soul

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[165] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 2-4.

[166] Ibid., 16-7.

[167] Ibid., 27.

[168] Ibid., 31.

[169] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 20.

[170] Qutb, *Milestones*, 131.

[171] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 32.

[172] Ibid., 32-5.

from the pleasures and passions of life and turning toward the heavenly kingdom of the Lord and despising worldly life will guarantee man his freedom and the soul its blessedness."[173] Christianity is full of debris which makes it a man-made system as opposed to a religion, and Qutb is thankful that Islam is free from the errors with Christianity.[174]

Any human deserves the right of self-determination because dignity is a right in Islam. Liberation from social class, race, gender, and any other form of servitude only comes through Islam.[175] Islam alone brings humankind out of darkness and into the light of God's divine path.[176] Liberation from servitude only comes for humankind through a believing group of Muslims; therefore, Muslims must press on and build this kingdom of God's divine path.[177] Unfortunately, at the current time, there are governments who call themselves Islamic, and live in a state of *jahiliyyah*. Islam must lead one society[178] and when they see the peace of Islam, those living in darkness will desire a similar system.[179] Only Islam allows humankind to live within its potential.[180] Muslims must be thankful

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[173] Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, 41.

[174] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 71.

[175] Qutb, *This Religion of Islam*, 80-4.

[176] Ibid., 50.

[177] Ibid., 97-8.

[178] Qutb, *Milestones*, 8.

[179] Ibid., 140.

[180] Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, 52.

that God grants them the divine path and protects them from the ignorance that rests upon the West.[181]

Islam brings a virtuous society into the world, even if that means *jihad*.[182] A true Muslim does not seek violence, but in an effort to protect humankind from the *jahiliyyah* system that oppresses it, violence is necessary. This is because the European crusaders poison the mind of the average Westerner against true Islam.[183] Qutb argues, "Islam came to provide man with a special and unique concept, and a distinctive way of life conforming to God's straight path."[184] Qutb concludes, "The Islamic society became an open and all-inclusive community in which people of various races, nations, languages and colors were members, there remaining no trace of these low animalistic traits."[185]

Gutierrez and Qutb hold that humankind must bring the Kingdom of God to earth. For Gutierrez this means that liberation theology is beginning to transform society from servitude to freedom. It is the responsibility of Christians to be involved in the political system, actively attempting to bring liberation to humanity, and if one refuses to help build the Kingdom, they are not a true Christian. For Qutb, the goal is to build an Islamic system in the world, because that is the only way to bring peace into the world. Humankind is ignorant of what it wants, which is why the Shari'a must be implemented so that humanity can see the beauty of that system.

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[181] Ibid., 90.

[182] Ibid., 12-3.

[183] Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, 283.

[184] Ibid., 16.

[185] Qutb, *Milestones*, 49.

*Conclusion*

Both Gutierrez and Qutb believe that our world is vastly corrupt and unjust, as the current Western system of production and rampant capitalism at any cost is nothing but corrupt and sinful. They both hold to a three part process that liberates the human mind, as well as society from the things which bind it. Praxis is a characteristic of true faith for both men. If an individual is not willing to work for a just system, they are not a deeply religious person. Finally, God, for both Gutierrez and Qutb, is willing to bring true justice to earth, but only if humans are willing to live according to the precepts he lays out and work themselves for justice. It is not only Gutierrez and Qutb who share theological and social similarities. The thesis will now turn to what similarities the movements of Catholic and Islamic liberation theology as a whole have with each other.

Gutierrez believes that using the political system in place is the only way to build the Kingdom of God. Gutierrez seeks to engage the broader world and show it the merits of a socialist system. Ultimately though, his attempts are more than utopian, as many priests took up arms fighting for a real and lasting change in the world. Qutb, on the other hand, believes strongly in the realistic approach of returning solely to the Shari'a as a source of law. Qutb does not desire to use any current system in place, rather he wants to build an Islamic government. This government is an idealistic model based on the first generation of Muslims.[186] Essentially, Gutierrez and Qutb both attempt realism, while falling into idealism.

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[186] Soage, "Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb," 300.

CHAPTER THREE

The Similarities Between Catholic Liberation Theology and Islamic *Jihadism*

*Introduction*

Some suggest that Catholic liberation theology is in an intellectual,

ecclesiological, and political crisis because a few influential figures moderated their work

such as Hugo Assman or resigned from the priesthood such as Leonardo Boff.[1]  The mid

1980s brought an intensive effort by the Catholic Church to quiet some of the more

outspoken liberationists such as Boff.[2]  The ending of state socialism as a viable

alternative to capitalism, as well as the development of Protestant groups in Latin

America, caused further concern for the continued health of liberation theology.[3]  Also

affecting the strength of Catholic liberation theology was the fact that base communities,

formed on liberationist principles,[4] did not grow at the expected rate.[5]  Furthermore, Pope

John Paul II distanced himself from groups that claimed to be strongly influenced by

liberation theology.  In the case of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua the Pope publicly

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[1] Christian Smith, "Las Casas as Theological Counteroffensive: An Interpretation of Gustavo Gutierrez's Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 69.  Michael Novak, Richard John Neuhaus, and many other scholars suggested following the end of the Soviet Union that Catholic liberationists would have to significantly change their behavior if they wished to have lasting impact.

[2] Anthony Gill, "The Study of Liberation Theology: What Next?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 87.

[3] Thomas A. Lewis, "Actions as the Ties That Bind: Love, Praxis, and Community in the thought of Gustavo Gutierrez," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 33, no. 3 (2005): 539.

[4] James B. Nickoloff, "Church of the Poor: The Ecclesiology of Gustavo Gutierrez," *Theological Studies* 54, no. 3 (1993): 530.

[5] Gill, "Study of Liberation Theology," 87.

derided members of the clergy that participated in the government because of their belief in liberation theology.[6]

Liberation theology was in a precarious situation near the end of the 1980s. Thomas Lewis states that liberation theologians were discussing a social and political situation that no longer existed and that sympathizers now alternatively discuss social justice.[7] The perceived current situation of Catholic liberationists does not take into account the significant role it played in Latin American society. Furthermore, the above view does not give proper credence to the argument that, "Since the 1960s, Latin American liberationists have been among a handful of thinkers who have boldly proclaimed that Jesus Christ, and the body of Christ that is the Church of the poor, is about the work of liberating desire from the clutches of capitalism."[8]

I suggest that one can begin to understand how sympathizers of Islamic *Jihadism* view the world from the highly studied Catholic liberation movement in Latin America. Thus, the discussion of the death of liberation theology is premature, especially considering the current *Jihadist* movement of Islam in the Middle East. The work of Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb has important similarities in theory, despite their differences in approach. In this chapter I suggest that the broader movements of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* have further theoretical similarities. Once again, there are differences in how these groups attempt to change the societies in which

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Lewis, "Actions," 539-540.

[8] Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Liberation Theology After the End of History: The Refusal to Cease Suffering* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 35.

they live.  However, one who is a follower of Catholic liberation theology might be surprised by the amount of similarity in theory with Islamic *Jihadism.*

In order to suggest this, the chapter will begin with a discussion of the history of the two movements, and also the way in which the West perceives Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism.*  Second, the chapter will highlight theoretical similarity in what both movements are against.  Finally, the chapter will discuss similarities in what Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* fight for.

## *History of These Movements*

### *History of Catholic Liberation Theology*

The second Vatican Council which met from 1962 to 1965 is well known as the moment when the Catholic Church began to accept modernity.  The Church began to understand that it was no longer in the position to direct governments on their actions. The Christendom approach, favored by the Papacy for centuries, led to many errors on the part of the Church whose real mission is to be a sign of the Kingdom of God.[9]  Juan Segundo suggests that before the Vatican II Council there was a long pause in Church-world conversation.[10]  Some argue that the Council created a spontaneous collection of groups campaigning for solidarity with those whose experiences kept them outside of the Catholic Church.[11]  The Vatican II Council itself had this to say:

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[9] Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View From the Victims*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 287.

[10] Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., *The Community Called Church*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 118.

[11] Michael Raske, Ludwig Rutti, and Klaus Schafer, "Attempts to Realize Human Rights within the Church," in *Perspectives of a Political Ecclesiology*, ed. Johannes B. Metz (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 110.

Christians should cooperate willingly and wholeheartedly in establishing an international order that includes a genuine respect for all freedoms and amicable brotherhood between all. This is all the more pressing since the greater part of the world is still suffering from so much poverty that it is as if Christ Himself were crying out in these poor to beg the charity of the disciples. Do not let men, then, be scandalized because some countries with a majority of citizens who are counted as Christians have an abundance of wealth, whereas others are deprived of the necessities of life and are tormented with hunger, disease, and every kind of misery. The spirit of poverty and charity are the glory and witness of the Church of Christ.[12]

The Council helped the formation of a movement that would challenge the Church's legitimacy as a hierarchical institution in liberation theology. The first meeting of like-minded bishops occurred in 1964 in Brazil. At this meeting Gustavo Gutierrez spoke of frustration at the timidity of the Catholic Church to respond to the growing revolutionary movements.[13] A few years later, in July 1968, liberation theology received its name, and a few months later the Medellin Conference of CELAM helped bring more formality to the fledgling movement. In 1971 Gutierrez published the landmark book *A Theology of Liberation*. This book paved the way for more theologians to write essays and books in favor of liberation theology. Gutierrez compares Vatican II to Medellin:

Vatican II speaks of the underdevelopment of peoples, of the developed countries and what they can and should do about this underdevelopment; Medellin tries to deal with the problem from the standpoint of the poor countries, characterizing them as subjected to a new kind of colonialism. Vatican II talks about a Church in the world and describes the relationship in a way which tends to neutralize the conflicts; Medellin demonstrates that the world in which the Latin American Church ought to be present is in full revolution. Vatican II sketches a general outline for Church

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[12] Vatican website, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium Et Spes*, available from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html; internet; accessed August 3, 2009.

[13] Robert McAfee Brown, *Makers Of Contemporary Theology: Gustavo Gutierrez* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 25.

renewal; Medellin provides guidelines for a transformation of the
Church in terms of its presence on a continent of misery and
injustice.[14]

For Catholic liberationists the most important aspect is building a true community

of faith that dedicates itself to the cause of the poor. One must commit his or herself to

ending the social and economic oppression that faces the poor in Latin America.[15] A

second important aspect is the role of praxis in Catholic liberationist circles. For

liberationists, it is not enough to know theological principles; one must pair it with action

so that knowledge becomes real in a Christian.[16] The third aspect is experience ought to

be more central to theology for Catholic liberationists. Latin Americans struggle for

justice while living with love and deep faith, and for a Catholic liberationist, their faith is

pure.[17]

Many priests took up arms against repressive governments and died as a result of

their actions.[18] There were also priests who did not take up arms, such as Archbishop

Oscar Romero, who were assassinated for their political activism.[19] The movement

continued growing, even being credited with helping form the Sandinista revolution that

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[14] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, 15th Anniversary Edition., trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 73.

[15] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY, 1990), 3.

[16] Clodovis Boff O.S.M., *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 17-19.

[17] Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 4.

[18] One can think of many individuals for this instance. One example is Camilo Torres, a wealthy Colombian that became radicalized because of the abject poverty he witnessed. It should be noted that Torres became a friend of Gustavo Gutierrez while they were studying in Europe. See Brown, *Gustavo Gutierrez*, 22.

[19] Timothy Shortell, "Radicalization of Religious Discourse in El Salvador: The Case of Oscar A. Romero," *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 1 (2001): 88.

took control of Nicaragua in 1979.[20]  The Catholic Church fought zealously against the

Sandinistas and its sympathizers.[21]  In Catholic circles, liberation theology's importance

decreased recently with the ascension to the Papacy by one of its biggest detractors,

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who has become Pope Benedict XVI), but it still maintains a

solid base of support.[22]

This was not the first movement calling for a radical reinterpretation of how

Christianity should interact with politics.  There are many historical examples of groups

challenging the Catholic Church.  The period leading directly up to the Protestant

Reformation saw Church and state battling for supremacy regularly.  There have been

many individuals who helped pave the way for the later movements.  Often the Church

responded that the legitimacy of the body itself was at stake in each of these instances

where it was challenged.[23]

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[20] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular state, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 166. See also Michael Dodson, "The Politics of Religion in Revolutionary Nicaragua," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 483, Religion and the State: The Struggle for Legitimacy and Power (Jan., 1986): 36-49 and Phillip Williams, "The Catholic Hierarchy in the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 17, no. 2 (Nov., 1985): 341-369.

[21] John Kirk, "John Paul II and the Exorcism of Liberation Theology: A Retrospective Look at the pope in Nicaragua," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 4, no. 1 (1985): 33-47. See also: Ronald T. Libby, "Listen to the Bishops," *Foreign Policy* 52, (Autumn, 1983): 79-80. Finally, read Cardinal Ratzinger's response to Liberation Theology in 1984, Vatican Website, *INSTRUCTION ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE "THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION";* available from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html; internet; accessed August 3, 2009.

[22] One need to only look at the continuance of Base Communities in Brazil, or the fact that as recent as the past ten years new books are being written by liberation theologians (Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, published 1999, translated 2001).

[23] This very rough interpretation of movements leading up to the Reformation, could include groups after the Reformation as well.  The Christian tradition, much like the Muslim tradition is replete with groups who have challenged the efficacy of an organization to decide what God dictates.  For further conversation on this topic see: Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550: An Intellectual And Religious History Of Late Medieval And Reformation Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

Liberation theology is a movement that many in the West do not fully understand. Conservative bishops challenge the legitimacy of its theology, while liberal bishops find common cause with liberation theology. The only revolution expressly involving liberation theology was the Sandinista revolution. While the United States, during the Reagan administration, fought to get rid of the Sandinistas, it was not a large concern for many Americans. Ultimately, liberation theology is seen as a largely innocuous movement to many in the West.

## History of Islamic Jihadism

The history of Islamic *Jihadism* is more complex.[24] Since Islam's founding, statecraft concerns Islam more than Christianity, although Christianity used statecraft as a means for its aims on many occasions. However, social and economic justice concerned Islam, dating back to its inception.[25] Fazlur Rahman suggests that it was not simply Islam's monotheism, but also its commands against usury and the demands of *zakat* (charity) that made Islam unacceptable to Meccans because they implemented usury as a form of economic development.[26] From its beginning Islam was a liberating religious movement. Rahman points to many pre-Modern reform movements such as Wahhabism of which he states, "It was a violent reaction at the moral degradation into which the

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[24] Nikki Keddie argues that Islamist reformist and liberation movements from 1700 to the present period are largely in response to the Western colonial and capitalist system. For Keddie's detailed analysis see Nikki R. Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (Jul., 1994): 463-4.

[25] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 12.

[26] Ibid., 15.

Community had allowed itself to fall gradually over the centuries during which popular

Sufism had become the overwhelming factor."[27]

While there were pre-modern versions attempting to call unrepentant believers

back into community, the genuinely liberating theologies of Islam did not begin until

after 1924. For many centuries, in the minds of Islamic *Jihadists*, Western colonial

forces attempted to wrest control of Middle Eastern lands from their proper Muslim

rulers. In 1924, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk abolished the Caliphate, and European laws

replaced the Shari'a, the Western Crusaders finally won.[28] Mary Habeck continues, "The

West used "nationalism," on the other hand, to split up the community on racial or ethnic

grounds and thus weaken the entire Islamic world."[29] She believes that Islam becomes a

liberation theology when it seeks to replace the rule of the oppressive other, with the rule

of God.[30]

As a result of the abolition of the Caliphate, Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim

Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. The Muslim Brotherhood began the modern Islamic

*Jihadist* insistence on the discontinuation of European hegemony in the Middle East. By

the 1940s the Muslim Brotherhood expanded to other countries and more directly

engaged in political activities.[31] Banna argues:

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[27] Ibid., 199.

[28] Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 94.

[29] Ibid., 101.

[30] Ibid., 120.

[31] David Aaaron, *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2008), 52.

All that western life could offer him was material pleasure: an excess of wealth, sex and other corrupted vices, with which he temporarily indulges himself, only to find that he is not satisfied. With the decline of family values and the rise of individualism, the modern man, along with the 'modernized' one, felt his soul crying out for freedom from this material prison, searching for a release into the vastness of faith and spiritual light.[32]

There are many Islamic *Jihadist* or liberation-minded leaders in the time following Sayyid Qutb; such as Ayatollah Khomeini, who became the religious leader of the Iranian revolution; Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Ali Shariati,[33] Syed Abul A'ala Mawdudi,[34] and Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani.[35] All Islamic *Jihadists* want an end to Western colonialist rule, the statehood of Israel, and the reintroduction of Shari'a. It is also imperative for Islamic *Jihadists* to bring social justice through the rule of Islam, although this version of social justice is different from Catholic liberation theologians.[36] Islamic *Jihadists* are increasingly disenchanted with the United States due to its close relationship with Israel. Furthermore, many believe that the United States defiled Islam by having the American army in Saudi Arabia during the first Persian Gulf War.[37] Bin

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[32] Ibid., 53.

[33] Mehbi Abedi and Mehdi Abedi, "Ali Shariati: The Architect of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran," *Iranian Studies* 19, no. 3/4 (Summer-Autumn, 1986): 229-234. See also Steven R. Benson, "Islam and social change in the writings of 'Alī Sharī'atī : his hajj as a mystical handbook for revolutionaries," *Muslim World* 81, no. 1 (Ja., 1991): 9-26.

[34] See Abdul Rashid Moten, "Mawdudi and the Transformation of Jama'at-e-Islami in Pakistan," *Muslim World* 93, no. 3/4 (Jul/Oct., 2003): 391-413; and Sajjad Idris, "Reflections on Mawdudi and Human Rights," *Muslim World* 93, no. 3/4 (Jul/Oct., 2003): 547-561.

[35] He founded the Islamic Liberation Party in Palestine after a split with the Muslim Brotherhood in 1952. See David Commins, "Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," *Muslim World* 81, no. 3-4 (Jl-O., 1991): 194.

[36] William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1996), 296.

[37] Jerry M. Long, *Saddam's War of Words: Politics, Religion, and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 39-43.

Laden believes that the government of Saudi Arabia proved itself to not be a truly Islamic government by allowing the United States Army to enter their holy territory. David Aaron categorically asserts that "*Jihadism* is utopian."[38] Habeck concludes, "In concrete terms *jihadis* believe that their mission is to implement their version of Islam, including the imperative to carry out warfare against the unbelievers, and all the troubles of the Islamic world will disappear."[39]

Those in the West view Islamic *Jihadism* with great disdain. Some point out that their theories are not correct Islam.[40] Moreover, the targeting of innocent civilians that is common among Islamic *Jihadists* is seen as antithetical to a movement that supposedly seeks freedom. The attacks on innocent civilians throughout the Middle East, Israel, Madrid, London, and the United States are an inexcusable offense for individuals in the West. In short, Islamic *Jihadism* is counterintuitive to those in the West, and very few are concerned with attempting to understand why Islamic *Jihadists* are the way they are.

## What These Movements are Against

The history of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* helps to explain the core issues that they fight against. Furthermore, there are similarities in what both movements have disdain for. In reality, what these movements stand against is as important as what they stand for. First, Catholic liberation theologians and Islamic *Jihadists* are against being told how to do theology. Second, Catholic liberation theologians and Islamic *Jihadists* believe that the masses are complacent in their faith.

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[38] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 4.

[39] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 15.

[40] Asma Afsaruddin, "The "Islamic" State: Genealogy, Facts, and Myths," *Journal of Church and State* 48, no. 1 (Wint., 2006): 162-163, and 173.

Third, Catholic and Islamic liberationists see the outgrowth of capitalism as a sinful man-made system.

### An Improper Theology

Catholic liberationists are against a blind commitment to European theology, and they do not believe that those in Europe have any more reason to do theology than those in underdeveloped nations. For the first time in centuries, for Gutierrez, theology is done outside of Europe.[41] Clodovis Boff accuses the European church of theological ethnocentrism and of ignorance to its own identity as part of the European colonial enterprise.[42] Because of liberation theology, it is not necessary to simply repeat what became a set of abstract principles in European theology.[43] For liberationists, the expected obedience to European theology takes away from the catholicity (universality) of the Church, and harms its ability to truly be the Church.[44] Many Catholic liberationists believe that if the Church can build solidarity with the poor, the affects of secularization will not occur in Latin America.[45]

Leonardo Boff suggests that, "The Church emerges, fundamentally, as mater et magistra, mother and teacher: it has an answer to every question taken from the deposit of faith, formed by Scripture, tradition, the magisterial teachings, and a specific

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[41] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xix.

[42] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 40.

[43] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xxviii.

[44] Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power, Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 98.

[45] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make you Free*, 26.

understanding of natural law."[46]  The argument is one of frustration from centuries of being told how to practice theology that does not accurately portray life for a Latin American.  Catholic liberationists make the claim that the Church is hurting itself by not allowing different experiences to play a role in theology.  Furthermore, these liberationists are simply attempting to awaken the Church which ultimately profits from this experience.

For Islamic *Jihadists* there is a similar sensitivity about being required to do theology in a certain way.  Aaron states, "*Jihadis* are extremely sensitive to criticism from other Muslims and obsessive about justifying their actions by referring to the Qur'an and *Hadith*.  They slander and threaten each other over issues as *takfir* (excommunication), al-wala' wa al-bara' (loyalty and disavowal)."[47]  Islamic *Jihadists* brand those who disagree with them as infidels.[48]  Some Islamic *Jihadists* suggest that the American war on terror would not be possible without the help of the infidel leadership of Saudi Arabia.[49]  Bin Laden argues, similarly to Qutb, that Islam is non-existent because there are no true Muslim leaders in positions of power; and that governments in the Middle East are full of infidels.[50]

Therefore, Islamic *Jihadists* attempt to awaken Islam due to the fact that leaders are infidels who are guilty of not preaching a proper religion, and are furthermore,

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[46] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 4.

[47] Aaron, *In Their own Words*, 302.

[48] Ibid., 86.

[49] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 156.

[50] Osama Bin Laden, *Messages To The World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005), 226.  Bin Laden and Qutb suggest that wherever a true *ummah* is formed a true Islam is present.  The best example of this is in the first generation of Muslims.

expecting the individual to participate in this infidelity.  A large factor contributing to the

Islamic revolution in Iran was that Iranians were being told how to practice Islam in a

way that Iranians disagreed with.[51]

Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* are against being dictated to about

faith by anyone.  Manochehr Dorraj believes that one of the main similarities between

Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadism* is that both challenge religious and secular

authorities.[52]  One of the main ways in which these movements challenge authority is by

creating separate institutions that help to build society in the way that these movements

desire.[53]  Catholic liberationists form base communities for groups to share in their

experience, and learn about faith together.  For Islamic *Jihadists,* it is simply that the

wrong theology is preached.  Current culture does not allow God to be placed at the

center of life, and that is the necessary thing for faith to reawaken.  True followers of

these movements must challenge religious and governmental leaders who expect blind

devotion to their decrees.

### The Complacent Faith of the Masses

Second, both Catholic liberation theologians and Islamic *Jihadists* are against

complacent faith.  Both groups are minorities in a geographical area where their faith is a

dominant majority.  For each group, the complacency of the masses compromises true

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[51] Daniel Brumberg, "Khomeini's Legacy: Islamic Rule and Islamic Social Justice," in *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East*, ed. R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 16-43.

[52] Manochehr Dorraj, "The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism: A Comparative Study of Islamic Fundamentalism, Jewish Fundamentalism, and Liberation Theology," *Social Compass* 46, no. 2 (June, 1999): 230.

[53]Ibid., 232 and 238.

religion. Gutierrez states, "The poor who are irrupting into our history are a people both oppressed and Christian. Latin America is in fact the only constituent part of the so-called Third World that has a majority of Christians. This makes the situation especially painful and constitutes a major challenge to the Christian faith and to the church."[54]

Gutierrez indicts the Church stating that the majority of the Church is an accomplice—knowingly or not—in the dependency of Latin American people.[55] The Church will need to be a non-repressive institution in order for Latin Americans to be liberated from exploitation.[56] Leonardo Boff challenges the Church to be more forceful in standing against oppression, stating that "the servility and silence that characterize Catholic culture is not to be admired."[57] For Catholic liberationists the Church often does not resist evil in an attempt to garner the favor of those in power.[58] The Church lost its ability to preach the gospel effectively because it lost sight of true faith in search of temporal power. While there are many inside the Catholic Church who are men of great personal character, the main complaint of liberationists is in what the Church allows itself to do to maintain political power.

For Islamic *Jihadists* the situation of being a minority within the majority also proves problematic. Riaz Hassan explains that there is a large percentage of Muslims that he labels Islamists: they are "sympathetic to reestablishing the purity of their faith by following its practice during the Prophet's time," and "also believe in the establishment

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[54] Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make you Free*, 8.

[55] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 77.

[56] Ibid., 128.

[57] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 36.

[58] Segundo, *The Community Called Church*, 83.

of an Islamic state based on Islamic law and in strengthening the concept of *ummah*." A

small minority, however, that he labels as *Jihadis* combine those beliefs with an anti-

imperial warrior mindset and a duty to combat enemies.[59] Habeck further erodes the

percentage of Islamic *Jihadists* when she states:

> As the religion of over a billion people, Islam does not present a
> united face, and it is practiced in a variety of ways: syncretistic
> forms in Indonesia and Africa; traditional beliefs in rural areas of
> Central Asia, Egypt, Iran, and North Africa; secularized variants in
> Tunisia, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey; and mystical Sufi sects, which
> dominate large swathes of the Muslim world. None of these
> versions of Islam-which encompass the vast majority of the
> world's Muslims-have called for a war against the United States.[60]

Islamic *Jihadists* believe that Islam is under attack by both Western and infidel

Middle Eastern forces. Bin Laden argues that true Muslims—Islamic *Jihadists*—have

God as a master, while the United States has no master.[61] The current international

system of laws bases itself on a desire to further weaken a sense of Islamic law within

Muslim communities.[62] Religious freedom should be non-existent as there is only one

true religion.[63] Bin Laden argues that once true faith in Islam appears there is nothing

that can stop the spread of Islam throughout the world.[64] The Center for Islamic Studies

and Research discusses being a minority in the midst of apostate regimes:

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[59] Riaz Hassan, "Conceptions of Jihad and Conflict Resolution in Muslim Societies," in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, and Fethi Mansouri (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2007), 137.

[60] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 3.

[61] Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 244.

[62] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 74. See also *Bin Laden, Messages to the World*, 67.

[63] Ibid., 79.

[64] Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 226.

They (apostate regimes) govern by ungodly laws, pay allegiance to the United States and the Crusader countries, turn for justice to the international body in all their cases, embrace the infidels and help them against the Muslims, turn against the religion, pursue the mujahidin, spread evil and atheism and defend them with troops and laws, and participate with the United States and the Crusader countries in their way against the honors, religion, people, and country.[65]

Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* represent a minority of individuals who believe that they must challenge the majority to understand faith in a new way. It is often in times of social upheaval that movements such as these gain legitimacy within their regions.[66] Essentially, both feel that their regions are in danger of becoming more Westernized, and secular, than is healthy. The most important grievance these groups share, which continues to lead them into dialogue with each other,[67] is that both have a passionate discontent with capitalism and Western Imperialism. They both see it as an attempt of secularism, or more benignly, misguided faith attempting to bring 'development' when in reality it brings nothing more than oppression.

### The Sinfulness of Rampant Capitalism

Capitalism is unable to correct the sin of injustice and poverty, and for Catholic liberationists socialism is the alternative.[68] Daniel M. Bell Jr. states, "Latin American liberationists denounce global capitalism as a brutal and oppressive force responsible for

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[65] Center for Islamic Studies and Research, 2003 in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 173.

[66] Dorraj, "The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revival," 228 and 236.

[67] In this I mean the continued conversation between religious leaders that challenge American hegemony and the situation of capitalism. An example of this is the work of Hamid Dabashi, Daniel M. Bell, and Mark Juergensmeyer, all of whom were discussed in the introduction.

[68] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 65.

the misery and premature death of much of the world's population."[69] Capitalism is an

impediment to the Church in its attempt to be universal with the gospel reaching all

people, not just the rich.[70]

Johannes Metz suggests that the Catholic Church is so weak in societal influence

that it is no longer seen as an organization even worthy of being challenged by militant

communists.[71]  Some European theologians understand that Western theology ignore the

evil effects of success.[72]  Leonardo Boff critiques Western capitalism:

> Despite having continued the pagan form of power, Christianity
> marked first the West and then the entire world.  The history of the
> world can never be told without mentioning the presence of
> Christianity.  Yet there can be no illusions as to the quality of
> Christianity present in Western cultures: it was superficial and
> contained profoundly anti-Christian elements.  Atheism as a
> cultural phenomenon came from Christianity; the Western world
> gave rise to the great totalitarian ideologies of Nazism, Capitalism,
> Marxism, Colonialism, and slavery, with all of their offshoots such
> as oppression, unjust wars, and colonial rule.[73]

For Islamic *Jihadists* there is an acrimonious relationship with capitalism and the

Western world.  Secularism is to blame for democracy and capitalism in the world.

Through secularism and Western rule, mankind transforms from a base animal as

opposed to a servant of God.[74]  Hamid Dabashi asserts that the effects of Hurricane

Katrina and the Iraq War on Baghdad are similar situations.  It becomes recognizable that

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[69] Bell, *Liberation Theology at the end of History*, 10.

[70] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 122.

[71] Johannes B. Metz, *Perspectives of a Political Ecclesiology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 11.

[72] Christian Fuqua in Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make you Free*, 19.

[73] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 57.

[74] al-Ayerri, 2003 in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 144.

money is more important than people to those leading Western countries.[75] Even as a non-violent thinker, Dabashi believes that capitalism is a force that must be fought by any means necessary. Dabashi further asserts that there is no difference in scope of evil between capitalism and Bin Laden.[76] Nikki Keddie adds that many of the recent Islamist reform minded movements have been in response to the evils of capitalism.[77] For Nabhani, capitalism is a system that separates religion from every day life.[78]

However, it is not capitalism that is inherently evil for Islamic *Jihadists*, socialism is as well. Evil is any system that is not passed down from Muhammad, or as part of the *Hadith*.[79] Qutb asserts that the proper Islamic system of governance is not capitalistic, because any system outside of the Shari'a is unacceptable.[80] Some even conclude that the Islamic republic of Iran, while opposing both capitalism and socialism, runs a market-based economy.[81] Habeck proclaims that there is a battle between Islamic *Jihadists* who view "democracy, liberals, and capitalism as evil; their belief that international institutions (including the U.N.) are centers of a conspiracy aimed at destroying Islam; and their medieval notions of the social position of women and minorities—all will come

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[75] Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 25-29.

[76] Ibid., 112.

[77] Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam," 471.

[78] Commins, "Islamic Liberation Party," 197.

[79] Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, xxxviii.

[80] Sayed Khatab, ""Hakimiyyah" and "Jahiliyyah" in the Thought of Sayyid Qutb," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 3 (Jul., 2002): 163.

[81] Hamid Hosseini, "From Buchanan to Khomeini: Can Neoclassical Economics Explain the "Ideal" Islamic State of Iran's Despotic Ayatollah?" *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 49, no. 2 (Apr., 1990): 169 and 182-4.

to dominate the Islamic world."[82]  Essentially, Islamic *Jihadists* believe that man-made

systems such as capitalism and nationalism only serve to divide oppressed people

throughout the world.[83]

Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* use the story of Cain and Abel

to discuss the differences between classes, and the problem of poverty and abundant

wealth.[84]  Dorraj argues that both movements speak to the oppressed and poor of society,

and see themselves as a voice for these people.[85]  Catholic liberation theologians believe

that a socialist economic system is the proper avenue to fix the excesses of capitalism,

while Islamic *Jihadists* believe that any system outside of God's divine path is unable to

truly fix the problems in the world.

Catholic liberation theologians and Islamic *Jihadists* share a common disdain for

being told what to think about theology.  Catholic liberationists challenge old European

stereotypes, and Islamic *Jihadists* argue against those who tell them how to practice their

faith.  The second shared characteristic is that these movements are a minority calling

their societies to a renewal of faith, and against the complacent majority.  Finally, both

are against the excesses that come with Western colonial capitalism which steals an

individual's ability to serve God alone.

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[82] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 53.

[83] Mohammad Yadegari, "Liberation Theology and Islamic Revivalism," *Journal of Religious Thought* 43, no. 2 (Fall 86/Winter 87): 47.

[84] Ibid., 42-43.

[85] Dorraj, "The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism," 231.

It is convenient for one to believe that Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* only share anger at the same issues. Rather, there are also convergences in what both groups believe in fighting for. However, it is important to discuss a similarity in the religions first. There is ambivalence about the role of religion in social affairs in both the Qur'an and in the Bible. Both groups identify a theology they fundamentally attempt to ground to their scripture. Just as one could look into the history of Christianity and find arguments about the proper interpretation of the Bible,[86] the same is said of Islam and the Qur'an.[87] As a result of its lack of historical leadership, Islam had many movements itself that claim to know what true faith is and what it is not.

It is simple to look at the well known verses of the Bible on political issues and believe the matter closed.[88] However, this discussion is at the core of Catholic liberation theology, as they argue that the conception must expand for true faith to take root. Catholic liberationists hold that European theology neglects anyone outside of that specific context when doing theology, and as a result, Christians must renew the discussion concerning the totality of the Bible and society.

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[86] There are many places one can find this. An early example is with Pelagianism, and a well known later example with Ockhamism, down through the current time in Christianity.

[87] Rahman, *Islam*, 81-3.

[88] By well known verses I mean: Matthew 22:21- "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." Also Romans 13:1-4- "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer."

For Muslims, there is a battle about how involved religion must be in a society. James Piscatori says that ambivalence "is embedded in Muslim self-understandings of Muslim political solidarity. On the one hand, as we have seen, the political unity of all Muslims acquires the force of dogma in some circles, even though it is not clear how to attain or organize it. On the other hand, the political mission of Islam is best represented in the national enterprise, even though the national guardians routinely invoke wider standards of legitimacy."[89]

A further reason for ambivalence, according to Habeck, is that in the beginning of Islam, Muhammad, while he was in Mecca, focused more on similarities with Christians and Jews. When Muhammad was in Medina, a city where he enjoyed more control, the Prophet was able to call to arms all Muslims against the polytheists. For Islamic liberationists, the argument is that the most recent statements are the most applicable because Islam was at peace.[90] Rahman concludes, "Indeed, it is quite true to say that whatever views Muslims have wanted to project and advocate have taken the form of Qur'anic commentaries."[91]

It is an important aspect that there is ambivalence in either religion when using only scripture to discuss social behavior. For both movements the core issue relates to how much the Bible and Qur'an speak to social behavior, and how applicable these themes are in a modern society. First, Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* believe they have found the real truth of religion, and it should be at the center of social

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[89] James Piscatori, "Imagining Pan-Islam," in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, and Fethi Mansouri (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2007), 32.

[90] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 44.

[91] Rahman, *Islam*, 41.

life.  Once religion is placed in the center of life, humankind sees the need for social justice.  Finally, humanity must build the Kingdom of God.

### *The Centrality of Religion in Social Life*

Catholic liberationists challenge the idea that only the Church knows truth. Instead, they argue that the Church should place its center outside itself by placing itself with those who have traditionally been outcasts of society.[92]  Instead of doing this, the Church became a group of mediocre individuals more concerned with their own image than with the "truth of the gospel, than with love for all people, and for the poor for whom Christ risked everything."[93]  Catholic liberationists found absolute truth, and it is impossible to accept the Church which claims ultimate truth while not fighting for justice.[94]  Jon Sobrino asserts that Latin American Christians have proclaimed the "only Lordship of Christ...through truth and justice and the measures that seem most appropriate."[95]

Catholic liberationists, call for a radically different kind of Church.  Boff states, "It will have to be loyally disobedient. It will have to seek a profound loyalty to the demands of the gospel; it will also have to listen to the old Church's questioning of the truth of its interpretation of the gospels."[96]  This absolute truth is inclusive in that anyone

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[92] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 144-7.

[93] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 162.

[94] Ibid., 42.

[95] Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 168.

[96] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 63.

who accepts the love of God gains ultimate truth.[97]  The Church, for Catholic

liberationists, forgets its first mission of preaching the gospel of Christ.[98]  There is a

liberating faith in God which can only be found in the truth of Catholic liberation

theology.

Furthermore, Catholic liberationists share a transnational view of Christianity

because they desire a less structured religion.  Through the formation of Base

Communities, the goal of this new Church is to build community, as a response to the

Catholic hierarchy.[99]  Bell suggests that "many poor Christian communities in Latin

America are living Christianity not as an apolitical repository of values but as a fully

social and political presence that counters capitalist discipline."[100]  It is this focus on the

transnational issue of exploitation of the poor that creates the theological approach of

Catholic liberation in Latin America.[101]

Islamic *Jihadists* also believe they found absolute truth through their shared

experience.  A return to the Qur'an and *Hadith* allows people to revive their community

and find true faith once again.[102]  Western imperialists humiliate the *ummah*—community

of believers—since the abolition of the Caliphate.[103]  It is essential that Islam has a leader

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[97] Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, 5th edition, trans. James W. Leitch (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 224.

[98] Ibid., 188.

[99] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 119.

[100] Bell, *Liberation Theology after the end of History*, 145.

[101] Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 11.

[102] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy,* 42.

[103] Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 104. Regardless of the fact that Mustafa Kemal was the true culprit, Bin Laden senses that the abolition would not have occurred without the help of Western nations.

85

who rules within Islamic law.  Islamic liberationists see through narratives in the Qur'an about Abraham, Moses, and others, a recurring theme that God's people must act. Furthermore, when God's people act, as in the stories, there will be a day when unbelievers are defeated.[104]

For Qutb, there is no middle ground.  Either a society is living under Islamic principles, or it is in a state of *jahiliyyah*.[105]  Ultimately, for Qutb, true and lasting knowledge can only be found in Islam.[106]  Shariati believes that the Qur'an speaks to all aspects of life, and that modern problems can be dealt with through the Qur'an.[107]

Islamic *Jihadists* call for their own transnational faith through a reintroduction of the Caliphate and a well-formed *ummah*.  Western nationalism corrupts the *ummah*. Islam became a private religion, and this was not the intention of God.[108]  For both groups, a transnational faith is a necessity.  However, because of capitalism and hyper-nationalism there is no ability for this true religion to appear.  Both groups are comfortable using the globalized media to further their aim of this transnational religion.[109]  As Scott Appleby asserts, the desire of both groups to form a transnational—

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[104] Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 49.

[105] Ana Belen Soage, "Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb: Continuity or Rupture," *Muslim World* 99, no. 2 (Apr., 2009): 297.

[106] Ibid., 300.

[107] Yadegari, "Liberation Theology and Islamic Revivalism," 41.

[108] Rahman, *Islam*, 227.

[109] Michael Humphrey, "From Diaspora Islam To Globalized Islam," in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh, and Fethi Mansouri (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2007), 116.

universal—community increases with the ability to reach people around the world through technology.[110]

It is not only a transnational, or universal community, that these movements desire. It is one of their own theology, which requires going back to the totality of their holy book. It is not simply a cultural decision to be a Christian or a Muslim for these thinkers. Rather, faith must be the central aspect of any individual's life. One should only worship and serve God, and when one is serving humanity, one is not serving God. In summary, the individual must choose involvement in this group of believers attempting to liberate the world. As praxis was important for both Gutierrez and Qutb, the same is the case for the overall movements as well.[111] The individual must decide that he or she will work to bring about social justice in the world by building the Kingdom of God.

## Social Justice is the Chief Aim of Humanity

The most important similarity between Catholic and Islamic liberation theology is that both believe very strongly in the idea of arriving at social justice. In the social justice outlined by these groups there is a balance between community and individual.[112] Both arrive at their view of social justice through the totality of scriptures. It is important to mention that the social justice arrived at by Catholic liberationists is purely in the

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[110] R. Scott Appleby, "Conclusion: The Measure of a Fundamentalist Leader," in *Spokesmen For The Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East*, ed. R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 411.

[111] Shariati believes that the people should be the prime factor for social change and development. See: Yadegari, "Liberation Theology and Islamic Revivalism," 44.

[112] Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion*, 240.

economic sphere.  While for Islamic *Jihadists*, social justice can only come through the rule of the Shari'a.

For Catholic liberationists the Bible is a story of rejecting oppression and injustice in its entirety.  God brought Moses forth to lead Israel out of Egypt, and Christ was brought forth to bring us into true communion with God.[113]  Gutierrez states, "God does justice to the poor; that is why those who oppress the poor turn their backs on God and understand so little of God's ways-that is, of the conduct that God requires of believers. Mistreatment of the poor causes them to cry out to God, and their cry is heard."[114]  In this liberationist theology, sin is the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, and oppression.[115]  It is the role of the true Church to stand against this injustice, by refusing to legitimize any structural organization that stands for injustice.[116]

While the Catholic Church claims to be the Church of the poor, Catholic liberationists desire to be the Church for the poor.[117]  Jurgen Moltmann argues that it is not the evil one does which condemns; rather, it is the good left undone that defines an individual.  Hence, if one is not building peace and justice they are not living with the hope of Christ's resurrection, and are in reality, rejecting the hope of His resurrection.[118] Gerard Phillips challenges the Church to fight for justice: "If God in Christian preaching is a God of justice and charity, the Christian Church cannot be indifferent when

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[113] Gutierrez, *On Job*, 34 and 103.

[114] Ibid., 47.

[115] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 24.

[116] Ibid., 68-9.

[117] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 4.

[118] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 23.

confronted with human misery.  The Samaritan of the parable does not ask the wounded man picked up by the wayside for a declaration of orthodoxy: he comforts him, cares for him and tries to heal him without ulterior or self-centered motives."[119]

For Islamic *Jihadists* there is an equally strong desire for social justice. God is the arbiter of social justice, in that God alone can create a just and egalitarian system.[120] Rahman argues that social and economic justice is much more compatible with Islam than with any other religion.[121]  The belief of Islamic *Jihadists*, for Qutb, is that they represent the only way to have a comprehensive and humane social justice; because Western society is "a purely materialistic civilization, a civilization of killing, fighting, domination and struggle!"[122]  In other words, social justice is only possible through the implementation of Islamic life on all levels.[123]  In fact, Steven Simon believes that a great deal of al-Qaeda's anger toward the West is a result of the social injustice that comes with capitalism.[124]  Shedinger holds that Islamic *Jihadists* believe that an Islam which makes personal spirituality, ritual and ceremony as more important than building society ceases to be true Islam.[125]

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[119] Gerard Philips, "The Church in the Modern World," in *The Church and the World*, Vol. 6, ed. Johannes B. Metz (New York: Paulist Press, 1965), 8.

[120]  Robert F. Shedinger, "Roger Williams Meets Sayyid Qutb: When the Quest for Religious Liberty Becomes a Force for Global Injustice," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 2 (Sum., 2005): 152.

[121] Rahman, *Islam*, 12.

[122] Qutb in Shepard, *Social Justice in Islam*, 216.

[123] Ibid., 296.

[124] Steven Simon, "The New Terrorism: Securing the Nation Against a Messianic Foe," *The Brookings Review* 21, no. 1 (Winter, 2003): 20.

[125] Shedinger, "Roger Williams Meets Sayyid Qutb," 155.

Bin Laden condemns the United States saying, "Continually practicing a double standard, the US sows terror and then calls whoever resists its injustice a terrorist."[126] Qutb adds that there should not only be regulations about economic justice, but also the human conscience should direct others to desire justice.[127] It is not in the fear of other humans which brings justice for Muslims, but the fear of God.[128] In other words, at first humankind needs law, and then humanity's conscience leads it to desire justice. However, it is not only in recent Islamic circles that social justice is seen as only possible through Islam. The medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya believed that Islam alone provides social justice, even without the help of an Islamic state due to the Mongol invasion.[129] For Michael Doran, al-Qaeda and other groups see the United States as a neo-Mongol nation intent on disallowing social justice.[130]

While these groups may have divergent views of what social justice is, the fact remains it is the integral social aspect of faith for Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists*. For them, true religion necessitates social justice because one must seek to serve God who desires social justice. Since in both theologies there is an understanding of the sinfulness of the world, one may rightfully ask how is there to be social justice in the world?

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[126] Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 44. In this instance, Bin Laden is an example of one who is an ideological heir of Sayyid Qutb. Therefore, the role that social justice plays in the theory of Bin Laden is an important aspect.

[127] Qutb in Shepard, *Social Justice in Islam*, 85.

[128] Ibid., 120.

[129] Paul L. Heck, "Jihad Revisited," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 1 (Spring, 2004): 121.

[130] Michael Doran, "The Pragmatic Fanaticism of al Qaeda: An Anatomy of Extremism in Middle Eastern Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (Summer, 2002): 183.

*Building the Kingdom of God*

These groups believe the way to bring true social justice in the world is in building the Kingdom of God. This is because, "Salvation in Christ does not exempt us from personal responsibility for our world. Rather, it is a challenge to us to follow Jesus in His service of the kingdom, thus mediating his salvific love in and through concrete praxis."[131] Essentially for Catholic liberation theology, true understanding of faith does not come from theology, scripture, or tradition; rather, it is the experience of praxis in people's lives.[132] The same can be said of Islamic liberationists, as it is only through building the Kingdom of God that true justice will take hold in society.

Gutierrez believes that to work at building a just society is a salvific work.[133] The Old Testament prophets spoke of a kingdom of peace which can only come through justice. Therefore, the Kingdom of God and injustice are incompatible.[134] For a Catholic liberationist it is incomprehensible to view poverty and injustice as anything but scandalous to the Kingdom of God, because Christ preached a gospel that included liberation for the poor.[135]

Furthermore, "There is, then, a correlation between resurrection and the crucified analogous to the correlation between the Kingdom of God and the poor."[136] Sobrino

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[131] Michael L. Cook, "Jesus from the other side of history: Christology in Latin America," *Theological Studies* 44, no. 2 (1983): 274.

[132] Ibid., 276-7.

[133] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 46.

[134] Ibid., 97.

[135] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 59.

[136] Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 43.

states that the Kingdom of God concerns itself with the actions of Christians.[137]  For the

victims and poor of society, the Church lost its original message and neglects the

centrality of the Kingdom of God to its faith.[138] Many critique Catholic liberationists by

arguing that they are only concerned with temporal progress.  Gutierrez responds that

building the Kingdom of God and temporal progress are related, but distinct.[139]  Sobrino

asserts that our world today will allow a certain level of utopia in 'the end of history' and

globalization, but cannot fathom a Kingdom of God built upon peace, justice, and love.[140]

Leonardo Boff states that, "The Church does not speak politically about politics

but rather speaks evangelically, understanding that politics and the struggle for justice

anticipate and make real the Kingdom of God; it transcends politics but at the same time

penetrates and assumes it."[141]  It is not the goal of the Church to build a temporal power;

rather, it is to build the Kingdom of God.[142]  It is the goal of the Christian faith "that

God's will may be 'done on earth as it is in heaven.'"[143]

For Islamic *Jihadists* an equally large weight rests on the role of the individual,

and the community, in building the just Kingdom of God.  The reimplementation of the

Shari'a and Caliphate is necessary for the appearance of the Kingdom of God.  The

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[137] Ibid., 45.

[138] Ibid., 254.

[139] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 99.

[140] Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 336.

[141] Boff, *Church: Charism and Power*, 25.

[142] Bell, *Liberation Theology after the end of History*, 72.

[143] Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 203.

Shari'a is seen as the wisdom and command of God for Islamic liberationists.[144] The Shari'a is the constitution of the Muslim community,[145] and is the comprehensive principle of how to live life in legal and social dedication to God.[146] Aaron suggests that one of the more perplexing aspects of Islamic political and social ideology is that there is an unclear attitude beyond the reintroduction of the Shari'a. He continues, "The election slogan of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, 'Islam is the answer' seems to suffice for *jihadis*.[147]

It is nothing but idolatry that humans desire to replace the Shari'a with man-made laws.[148] Islamic *Jihadists* argue that it is not a requirement to convert to Islam, rather, the Kingdom of God will be present through Islamic governance and the Shari'a.[149] Government is simply an instrument for the implementation of the Shari'a.[150] Some even suggest they use democratic institutions to take over one area at a time and reintroduce the Shari'a. When one government turns to Shari'a, it becomes the envy of every other government, and soon the entire world will desire to be under the Shari'a.[151]

Dorraj discusses Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*, and states, "They perceive themselves as divine instruments of righteousness and justice with a

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[144] Rahman, *Islam*, 114.

[145] Ibid., 1.

[146] Ibid., 101.

[147] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 109.

[148] Ibid., 23.

[149] Ibid., 116.

[150] Commins, "Islamic Liberation Party," 198.

[151] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 147.

mission of salvation and deliverance."[152]  It is imperative for both movements for

humankind to serve God by trying to build His kingdom on earth.  Catholic liberationists

and Islamic *Jihadists* understand the ambivalence of how to interpret the scriptures

regarding social life.  More importantly, both groups found the proper balance of how

religion interacts with social life.  Religion must be at the center, and the byproduct is a

fruitful and just social life.  Furthermore, this emphasis on religion as the center of life

rejects a nationalistic interpretation of the world, and instead supports a transnational

global community of believers.  If true faith exists, social justice is present.  In this, the

poor in society receives their just dues.  Essentially, the Christian (for Catholic

liberationists) and the Muslim (for Islamic *Jihadists*) must work to create the Kingdom of

God in their communities and eventually the entire world.

## Conclusion

There are differences between Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*,

the first of which is the scope of justified violence.  Catholic liberationists are not wholly

against the use of violence, but only supportive in resisting an oppressive state.  For some

Islamic *Jihadists*, there is no problem in attacking civilians, and even those considered,

by Westerners, as innocent individuals.  Those attacked on 9/11, in Madrid, and London

were not innocent civilians due to their support of governments that are actively fighting

Islam.[153]  Therefore, for Islamic *Jihadists*, just as for Catholic liberationists, violence is

self-defense.  While those in the West may not agree or understand how this is logically

supported, clearly these groups believe that it is only in defense that they attack Western

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[152] Dorraj, "The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism," 230.

[153] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 105.

powers and peoples.  The scope of violence remains different between the two, as Islamic *Jihadists* support violence against repressive states and the individuals that support them. Catholic liberationists, on the other hand, only fight in a guerilla war scenario against governments they believe to be actively repressing people.  It remains the case however, that the government of Nicaragua, founded on liberationist principles, became a highly repressive regime to maintain power.

The second difference between Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadism* is that Catholic liberationists have a Church hierarchy that limits what liberationists say.  The Vatican concerns itself with the direction that Catholic liberation takes.  Liberation theologians support for a Marxist interpretation of the world prompted a response from Cardinal Ratzinger in 1984.  Islamic *Jihadists*, on the other hand, have no structure that can control them beyond the policing of themselves.  This structure provides a tempering force on Catholic liberationists, which many scholars suggest could help in the case of Islamic *Jihadists*.  Aaron believes that one of the best ways to challenge Islamic *Jihadism* is to support moderate Muslims to be more involved in the political structure.[154]

The third difference is in the approach that these groups take in bringing about the society they desire.  Catholic liberationists seek to engage culture in an attempt to redo theology from the cause of the poor.  Catholics desire to build a socialist system because they believe that will bring true and lasting peace.  Islamic *Jihadists* seek to institute the Shari'a in an attempt to show people how to live a live dedicated to serving God.  It is only through a well formed *ummah* that true faith is present.

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[154] Ibid., 304-5.

95

These dissimilarities are important, but there are similarities which help one to understand Islamic *Jihadism* as a follower would. More importantly, these groups formed in a time of political rebellion. The 1950s-1970s was a time period where social movements occurred in most places around the world. Most societies had groups trying to build a more equitable system in which all humans were liberated. Both of these movements are no different. While they have differences in how to attain these free and equal systems, they have no difference in that as their desire. Essentially, both of these liberating movements believe that the West fails in leading the world. The world in which we live is full of sinfully supported systems, and these movements seek to liberate humankind from these systems. In essence, Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* must build the Kingdom of God on earth as a response to the sinful Western imperial nations.

Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists* are against those who attempt to dictate how to have a theological outlook on life and are sensitive to those who challenge them as outside of the faith. Catholic liberationists have a structure in the Papacy that challenges their beliefs, while Islamic *Jihadists* have governments and other religious leaders to challenge them. Both live in a society where their religion is the majority, and they feel that the majority has become complacent in their faith. Catholic liberationists view the secularization occurring in the Western world as a sign that people are not happy with the current system that continues to reward the rich while oppressing the poor. Islamic *Jihadists* argue that Mustafa Kemal destroyed Islam as a faith when he abolished the Caliphate in 1924. While the Western world tells Latin Americans and people of the Arabian Peninsula to shirk religion, these movements argue that only

96

through a return to real faith will their regions begin to awaken to the sin in which they live.

Not surprisingly then, both of these groups are against Western colonial capitalism, because it corrupts the world and makes communion with, and service of, God impossible. Catholic liberationists argue that capitalism is a sinful situation that dehumanizes people, and Islamic *Jihadists* believe that any system outside of God's plan is sinful. For both, the system perpetuated by the current world leaders in the West is sinful. Both of these groups believe that religion should be at the center of public life, and social justice will be a result of this role that religion plays. Furthermore, when religion is at the center of all life, a trans-nationalist religion takes the place of nationalism. For these groups, an individual must play a part in building the Kingdom of God on earth by increasing justice. Religion is the beginning of the social system for these movements and is in direct competition with what Juergensmeyer labels 'secular nationalism.'

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

*Introduction*

Both Gustavo Gutierrez and Sayyid Qutb believe that the world is corrupt because

of rampant capitalism and the colonialism which the Western world, and in particular, the

United States forces on the undeveloped world. They argue that these conjoined forces

result in poverty and injustice everywhere in their regions. They both hold to a three-part

process that liberates the human mind, as well as society, from the sinful situation which

binds humankind. For both men, praxis is a characteristic of true faith. In essence, if

individuals are not willing to work for a just system, they are not truly religious. This

world is currently living in ignorance for both men, but there is hope. God, for both

Gutierrez and Qutb, is willing to bring true justice to earth, but only if humans are willing

to live according to the precepts he lays out and if humankind genuinely works for

justice.

Social movements were increasingly idealistic and contentious during the 1950s-

1970s.[1] Most societies produced groups of people that attempted to build more equitable

systems to liberate humankind. Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadism* are no different.

While the movements differ in how to attain these free and equal systems, their desires

are the same. Essentially, these movements believe that the West fails in leading the

world. The world in which we live is full of sinful systems, and these movements seek to

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[1] There were social movements throughout the world during this time period. In the United States
there was a growing disenchantment concerning the Vietnam War as well as the Civil Rights Movement.
Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* are examples of idealistic and contentious movements
during that time.

liberate humankind from these systems. In other words, they desire to build the Kingdom of God on earth against the sinful Western imperial nations.

These movements are against those who would dictate a particular theological outlook on life and are sensitive to those challengers who label them as outside their faith traditions. Catholic liberation and Islamic *Jihadists* live in a society where their religion is the majority, and they feel that the majority is complacent in their faith. Catholic liberationists view the secularization occurring in the Western world as a sign that people are not happy with the current system that continues to reward the rich while not paying attention to the poor. Islamic *Jihadists* argue that Kemal Ataturk ended, with the abolition of the Caliphate, real Islam as a faith. Islamic *Jihadists* concern themselves with the growing secularism in the world. While the world around encourages believers to leave religion and join modernity, these movements argue that only a return to true faith will awaken humankind to the sin in which it lives.

Not surprisingly then, both of these groups are against what they perceive as Western colonial capitalism because it corrupts the world and makes communion with, and service of, God impossible. Catholic liberationists argue that capitalism is a sinful situation that dehumanizes people, and Islamic *Jihadists* believe that any system outside of God's plan is sinful, which implies that the system perpetuated by the current world leaders in the West is sinful. Both of these groups believe that religion should be at the center of public life and that social justice is the result from the role that religion plays. Furthermore, when religion is at the center of all life, humankind rejects a nationalistic mindset. For these movements, an individual must play a part in building the Kingdom of God on earth and feel a need to increase justice on earth through a building up of the

Kingdom. In essence, religion is the beginning of the social system for these movements and is in direct competition with what Juergensmeyer calls 'secular nationalism.'

## *The American Response*

Contrary to the opinion of Catholic liberationists and Islamic *Jihadists*, the United States is one of the most religious nations in the developed world, and religion plays an important role in how Americans view the world.[2] The United States' foreign policy directly responds to instances of Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*. Furthermore, the response to both movements comes from the American civil religion developed throughout the nation's history. This section will begin with a discussion of the growth and transition of American civil religion. The section will end with a discussion of the similarities between the American response to Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* and the movements themselves.

Robert Bellah believes that from the beginning of our republic, Americans held a nonsectarian and partially Christian civil religion. This civil religion is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals,[3] and is a place where Americans unite in spite of their religious differences.[4] Presidents invoke the name of God in order to motivate Americans toward constructive measures and away from efforts that are destructive to the unity of the nation.[5] Indeed, Bellah argues that for many Americans the problem is not

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[2] Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *American Civil Religion,* ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 28.

[3] Ibid., 29.

[4] Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny,* 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

[5] Elwyn A. Smith, "The Civil Religion: Is It A Viable Concept?," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 14, no. 4 (Fall, 1977): 118.

that a civil religion exists, but it is that civil religion replaces real religion and makes

Christianity in the United States moralistic and activist rather than theological and

spiritual.[6]

In reality, for Conrad Cherry, the nation's religious organizations cede the

universality of their belief to the nation.[7]  Essentially, government defines and enforces

correct doctrine, especially against those whose views are detrimental to national unity.[8]

Bellah suggests that civil religion shares many characteristics with Christianity but that

America has its own heroes and mythic events.  Cherry quotes W.H. Auden who says,

"words like Communism, Capitalism, Imperialism, Peace, Freedom, Democracy, have

ceased to be words the meaning of which can be inquired into and discussed, and have

become right or wrong noises to which the response is as involuntary as a knee reflex."[9]

In other words, American Civil Religion expects one to hold a distinctly American

theology of the world.

Robert Linder suggests that leaders throughout history sought to use religion in

the same way American leaders do now, and that is to secure the loyalty of the people to

the national cause.[10]  It is our political leaders who are responsible for the continuation of

civil religion.  American civil religion adopts characteristics from the British perspective,

which links politics, morality, and religion.  Christian truth transcends and controls the

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[6] Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 34.

[7] Cherry, *God's New Israel,* 12.

[8] Smith, "The Civil Religion: Is It a Viable Concept?," 121.

[9] Cherry, *God's New Israel,* 17.

[10] Robert D. Linder, "Civil Religion in Historical Perspective: The Reality That Underlies the Concept," *Journal of Church and State* 17, no. 3 (Autumn, 1975): 409.

world of politics so that every political decision becomes a moral and religious issue.[11]
The American Civil Religion is nonsectarian, historical, and is an all encompassing
worldview.

One aspect of American Civil Religion is that Americans believe they are a nation
chosen by God. From the nation's founding, Americans believed that God destined the
nation for great power and wealth if the nation served God. The most persistent myth of
America is that America is a new Israel,[12] and God interests himself in the actions of
Americans.[13] In the beginning of the American experiment, John Winthrop proposed that
God offers America a covenant, and if the nation keeps this covenant He bestows
immeasurable success, while the penalty for failure is hardship.[14] Cherry states that
chosenness now means "in theological terms the God who smiles innocuously on
American undertakings is a sentimental Deity whose wrath has ceased to burn toward
national sins."[15] In essence, Americans alone are the true heirs of God's promise to
humans.

Another aspect of American Civil Religion is that America has a distinct role to
play in the Kingdom of God. For Jonathan Edwards, the American continent is free from
the defilement of Europe, and as a result God begins building his kingdom here in

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[11] Ibid., 413.

[12] Ezra Stiles, "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honour," in *God's New Israel,* ed. Conrad Cherry 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 83. See also: Richard T. Hughes, *Myths America Lives By* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2004), 19.

[13] Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 28.

[14] Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," 40.

[15] Cherry, *God's New Israel,* 17.

America.[16]  At the time of the founding, Americans believed that the American

democratic system, along with religious freedom, would spread throughout the world

because the purity of the American people pleases God.  Indeed, the American system

rests on the principles that God supplied the founding generation with, for the realization

of his plan.[17]  It is this Christian-American government that is responsible for the spread

of republican ideals throughout the world, relying solely on the strength of this new

nation as given by God.[18]  However, at the time of the revolution one change occurred in

this belief.  No longer was it simply God who has sovereignty in the affairs of men.

Americans now had unalienable rights, liberty and self-democratic government, which

quickly became the sovereign for Americans.[19] As a result of the American belief in its

timeless truth, history, and tradition; respect for other cultures' history and tradition, in

many cases, are unnecessary burdens when challenged by this light of truth.[20]

The final characteristic of American Civil Religion is that Americans believe

capitalism is inherently just.  Americans developed a belief throughout the 19th century

that America offered everyone an equal opportunity and that God ordained capitalism.

Therefore, each individual is responsible for his or her own wealth.  Anyone who is not

wealthy does not deserve the riches that the market gives.[21]  This is because Americans

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[16] Jonathan Edwards, "The Latter-Day Glory Is Probably to Begin in America," in *God's New Israel*, ed. Conrad Cherry 2nd. edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 54-8.

[17] Stiles, "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honour," 90-1.

[18] Samuel Langdon, "The Republic of the Israelites an Example to the American States," in *God's New Israel* ed. Conrad Cherry 2nd. edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 95-103.

[19] Hughes, *Myths America Lives By*, 105.

[20] Ibid., 56.

[21] Ibid., 128.

are a people that remove whatever obstacles are in their way to prosperity; America, in essence, is the destiny for a rebirth of civilization based on individualism and capitalism.[22] A simple, impoverished culture was not one which God blessed, but rather, God built America to recreate the world in prosperity. Americans are incapable of challenging the plan of God, and those who complain are the ones unable to succeed in the market.[23] The fundamental assumption of this aspect of civil religion is:

> The righteousness of a single individual will win God's favor in the form of material blessings, while laziness, drunkenness, and immorality on the part of a single individual will earn God's curse in the form of poverty.[24]

The American political establishment responds to Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* with much apprehension because of these ideals of American civil religion.[25] Jimmy Carter oscillated between concern for human rights and concern for supremacy of American desires.[26] The defense of freedom against tyranny was the core aspect of President Reagan's administration. Reagan believed that Catholic liberation theologians and Islamic *Jihadists* were nothing more than terrorists.[27] President George

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[22] Isaac M. Wise, "Our Country's Place in History," in *God's New Israel,* ed. Conrad Cherry 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 232.

[23] Henry Ward Beecher, "The Tendencies of American Progress," in *God's New Israel,* ed. Conrad Cherry 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 238-245.

[24] Hughes, *Myths America Lives By,* 130.

[25] Another important aspect of this response to Islamic *Jihadism* is the fact that elements within that movement have attacked the United States. This is not the case with Catholic liberation theology. As a result, there is a deeper resentment of Islamic *Jihadism* than there is of Catholic liberation theology.

[26] Svenja Blanke, "Civic Foreign Policy: Human Rights, Faith-Based Groups and U.S.-Salvadoran Relations in the 1970s," *The Americas* 61, no. 2 (Oct., 2004): 235-243. See also Martha L. Cottam, "The Carter Administration's Policy toward Nicaragua: Images, Goals, and Tactics," *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (Spring, 1992): 123-4.

[27] Betty Glad, "Black-and-White Thinking: Ronald Reagan's Approach to Foreign Policy," *Political Psychology* 4, no. 1 (Mar., 1983): 43-4. See also Carol Winkler, "Revisiting The Cold War Narrative To Encompass Terrorist Threats: Vietnam and Beyond," in *The Prospect of Presidential*

H.W. Bush argued that there is a battle between good and evil in the world. Americans

must act on the side of God.[28] President Bill Clinton suggested that the United States has

a distinct role in bringing peace to the earth.[29] Finally, the administration of George W.

Bush argued that the United States serves God, and through dualistic language challenged

the morality of those opposed to America.[30] While some religious leaders challenge the

political response,[31] an equally large amount of religious leaders use religious language to

challenge Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism*.[32]

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*Rhetoric,* ed. James Arnt Aune and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 189-190; and Chester Pach, "The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 Presidential Doctrines (Mar., 2006): 88.

[28] Wade Clark Roof, "American Presidential Rhetoric from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush: Another Look at Civil Religion," *Social Compass* 56, no. 2 (2009): 291-2. See also Martin J. Medhurst, "Not Easily Led: The Presidency of George H.W. Bush," *Review of Communication* 2, no. 2 (Apr., 2002): 199.

[29] Steve Niva, "Between Clash and Co-optation: US Foreign Policy and the Specter of Islam," *Middle East Report* 208, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Critical Assessments (Autumn, 1998): 26-9. See also William J. Clinton, "Remarks on the Attack of the U.S.S. Cole and the Situation in the Middle East," *The University of California Santa Barbara- The American Presidency Project,* October 12, 2000, site accessed: February 15, 2010. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=73957&st=Cole&st1=; and Marilyn J. Young, "Of Allies and Enemies: Old Wine in New Bottles or New Wine in an Old Jug?" in *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric,* ed. James Arnt Aune and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 172.

[30] John M. Murphy, ""Our Mission and Our Moment": George W. Bush and September 11th," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2003): 622. See also George W. Bush, *"We Will Prevail": President George W. Bush on War, Terrorism, and Freedom,* ed. National Review (New York: Continuum: 2003), 9; D. Jason Berggren and Nicol C. Rae, "Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush; Faith, Foreign Policy and an Evangelical Presidential Style," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (Dec., 2006): 621; Jim Wallis, "Dangerous Religion: George W. Bush's Theology of Empire," *Mississippi Review* 32, no. 3 (Fall, 2004): 60-72; and David Domke, *God Willing?: Political Fundamentalism in the White House, the "War on Terror," and the Echoing Press* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 91-2.

[31] Smith, "The Civil Religion: Is It a Viable Concept?," 121. See also Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 40; Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," 147; Charles Austin, "Ecumenical Group Aiding the Latins," *New York Times*, December 5, 1982; Edward T. Brett, *The U.S. Catholic Press on Central America: From Cold War Anticommunism to Social Justice* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 52; Michael Ryan and Les Switzer, *God in the Corridors of Power: Christian Conservatives, the Media, and Politics in America* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 365; David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times* November 2, 2003; and Robert Jewett, and John Shelton Lawrence, *Captain America and the Crusade against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

In reality, there are similarities that Catholic liberation theology and Islamic

*Jihadism* share with the response of the American political establishment to these

liberation-minded movements.  These similarities include: believing they alone can bring

freedom, justice, and true economic prosperity to the world; using dualistic language in

order to demonize the other side, because their cause is righteous; arguing that God chose

them, and therefore each group knows what is right for the world; believing that human

action—praxis—is an important part of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth; and

finally, relying on warfare (whether it be spiritual, social, or military) for their ideology

to be justified.

For Catholic liberationists, the world is full of structurally supported sin void of

freedom and economic justice.  Many Catholic liberationists argue that a socialist system

based on equality is the only way for true freedom to be present in the world.  Islamic

*Jihadists* also believe the world is full of sin because it expects humans to serve things

other than God, and true freedom and justice occurs in the world only when humans serve

God alone.  The American Civil Religion believes that God appoints America to

challenge evil in the world.  God blessed the United States, and as a result, America has

the responsibility to bring freedom into the world.  American political leaders attempt to

bring the gift of democracy and freedom to nations around the world.

All three movements use dualistic language in order to demonize the other

because their cause is righteous and just.  Catholic liberationists argue that anyone who

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[32] Richard John Neuhaus, "Democratic Morality: A Possibility and an Imperative," in *Evangelicals and Foreign Policy: Four Perspectives,* ed. Michael Cromartie (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1989), 3.  See also Michael Novak, "Liberation Theology—what's left," *First Things* 14, (Je-Jl, 1991): 10-12; Ryan and Switzer, *God in the Corridors of Power,* 389; Jody C. Baumgartner, Peter L. Francia, and Jonathan S. Morris, "A Clash of Civilizations?: The Influence of Religion on Public Opinion of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East," *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (Jun., 2008): 173; and George Weigel, *Faith, Reason, and The War Against Jihadism: A Call to Action* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 7-8.

refuses to fight for justice and equality is fighting on the side of the devil.  Islamic

*Jihadists* suggest that many are living in a state of ignorance to the divine path of God,

and that the small remnant of true faith in the world must rise up to secure the just world

we all crave.  Finally, the American Civil Religion believes in a sense of innocence in

that the actions of Americans aim at freedom and justice.  Presidents Ronald Reagan and

George W. Bush are characteristic examples of binary language which classifies the

United States as good and the other as evil.

All three argue that God chose them and, therefore that, they know what is right

for the world.  Catholic liberationists argue that God shows them the meaning of true

theology, which is to live in community with all humans.  Theology can no longer be

done in the ivory towers of Europe.  Islamic *Jihadists* suggest that God gave them a

special knowledge of his divine path, and it is their duty to bring this into the world.  The

American Civil Religion continually argues that America is a chosen nation by God

destined to bring freedom and justice into the world.  Therefore, since it is chosen by

God, America is innocent in its actions throughout the world.  Robert Jewett and John

Shelton Lawrence argue that anyone who believes that they are ultimately innocent and

only are responsible for bringing the Kingdom of God to earth will have an element of

escapism built into their religion.[33]  Just as Americans believe they cannot be defeated, so

do members of al-Qaeda, for God is on their side, against the evils of this world.[34]

All three believe that human action—praxis—is an important part of bringing the

Kingdom of God to earth.  One should actively seek, and fight for, the Kingdom of God

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[33] Jewett and Lawrence, *Captain America and the Crusade against Evil,* 143.

[34] Ibid., 154.

on earth.  Catholic liberationists argue that praxis is the best indicator of the veracity of religion.  For Islamic *Jihadists*, they believe that those who are members of the *ummah—* body of believers—must widen this community until it reaches the entire world. Americans also share a view that one cannot simply want the world to have democracy; the Cold War indicated that the United States desires freedom and justice for the entire world.  In a way, all three movements believe they are a vanguard trying to enlighten the world as to what it really wants.  All three believe that if the world listens to them, and tries their system, it is inevitable for humankind to follow them.

Finally, as a result of these beliefs, all three need warfare (whether it be spiritual, social, or military) to justify their ideology.  Catholic liberationists, in order to maintain their theology, need to continue fighting with capitalism and unjust social structures. Islamic *Jihadists* need the ignorant system to fight against.  Michael Ryan and Les Switzer argue that terrorists use violence because they cannot "win military, legal, cultural, personal, environmental, or electoral victories."[35]  In essence, Islamic *Jihadists* perceive themselves as powerless to fight the powerful.  Ryan and Switzer argue that terrorists understand it is impossible to succeed if the media does not report widely on their violent acts, and the American media plays into this effort of terrorists.[36]  Also, Americans need someone to fight against for the Civil Religion to remain strong.  George W. Bush eagerly reintroduced a binary world after the September 11th attack, because this makes an evangelical zeal for democracy, capitalism, freedom, and liberty more acceptable to other Americans and the world.

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[35] Ryan and Switzer, *God in the Corridors of Power*, 367.

[36] Ibid., 371-2.

All three of these groups need a fight to continue the legitimacy of their belief. They attempt to return to a time in which the world was more pure, and want to recreate the entire world as pure. They all see themselves as a small prophetic remnant fighting for true faith, freedom, justice, and liberty throughout the world. Hence, only their ideologies bring the fulfillment of natural human desires. Unfortunately, in the quest for human liberation the groups lose the ability to truly grant freedom. As John Murphy argues, "The president spoke. Others obeyed. This was not a mind that regarded the slow and messy process of democratic deliberation, diplomacy, and compromise as useful tasks."[37] In other words, America lost the democracy it seeks to bring to the world in its ever reaching quest for the evangelization of freedom.

## Conclusion

Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* have many differences, but there are similarities in how both movements view the world. The main point of this thesis is that one can learn some of the reasons why Islamic *Jihadists* act the way they do through an exploration of the similarities between Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism.* These movements are in no ways the same, but further research should be done in order to determine if there are more similarities.

The authors discussed in the introduction challenge the notion of absolutist religion and ideology. Mark Juergensmeyer outlines a world where religion cedes ultimate power to nationalist ideologies. For him, it is secular nationalism that creates modern movements dedicated to its own destruction. In essence, for Juergensmeyer all

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[37] John M. Murphy, ""Our Mission and Our Moment": George W. Bush and September 11th," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2003): 617.

three groups are religious organizations challenging the current structure of the nation-state.[38]  Hamid Dabashi adds that the modern world we live in makes the use of binary language outdated.  There is just as much oppression, poverty, and injustice in the United States as there is in Iraq.[39]  The main points for Dabashi are that capitalism won, but liberation theologies need to lose the absolutist rhetoric if they want converts.[40]  Daniel M. Bell states that capitalism won the battle, but what Christians, and those seeking liberation from oppression must do, is to begin forgiving the system the world currently lives in.  To truly be radical, one cannot fight the system, but rather give in.  The world will be more challenged by the forgiveness of rampant capitalism than by the violent challenge of capitalism.  To truly give one's desires to God, as opposed to consumption, causes the world to question its motives far more than one fighting for temporal power similar to the rest of mankind.[41]

Peter Berger adds to this that the world needs a healthy dose of doubt in this pluralistic world in order to fight absolutism.  For Berger and Anton Zijderveld, absolutist rhetoric does not succeed.  Simply put, these movements seek to re-create a society built around their own version of absolute.  Pluralism makes it difficult for these groups to re-create this society.  To claim to speak for God allows no room for compromise and ultimately leads to failure.  In essence, doubt is the true friend of any

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[38] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[39] He compares the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina and Baghdad.  Furthermore, he sees no difference between Osama Bin Laden and Milton Friedman.

[40] Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[41] Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Liberation Theology After the End of History: The refusal to cease suffering* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

group dedicated to changing the world.[42]  Only through the recognition that the group, itself, is not God, will Catholic liberation theology and Islamic *Jihadism* begin to see what it is they desperately desire.  The desire for these movements is to bring freedom and liberty to the world, but refusing to allow anyone else the opportunity to be right proves that there is no true freedom or liberty in these systems.  These battles may continue, but the basic understanding of the paradox between desiring freedom and disallowing others freedom must occur in order for progress to take place anywhere these movements reside.

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[42] Peter Berger and Anton Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions Without Becoming a Fanatic* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

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