

Drew University

College of Liberal Arts

Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice

Through Christian Social Movements

A Thesis in Economics

by

Kelly Hartwick

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Bachelor in Arts

With Specialized Honors in Economics

May 2020

## **Abstract**

I want to examine the political and economic connections between Christianity and social justice as they appear today in contemporary social movements such as Poor People's Campaign: A Moral Revival, as well as important past movements such as the Social Gospel Movement in the early twentieth century and the later twentieth century's Liberation Theology movement (especially as it appeared in Sandinista politics in Nicaragua). What I seek to do is to draw out the lines of commonality amongst all these combinations of Christianity and social justice to show how they focus on structural rather than individual critique and solutions. I will establish a history of capitalism parallel to the emergence of these social movements. I will read carefully the foundational texts of all of these social movements, to demonstrate that Christianity and social justice are indeed compatible. Furthermore, the social movements working in that intersection between Christianity and socialism today are worth paying attention to because they move us beyond a peculiar deadlock in American politics whereby faith is correlated with conservatism, and social justice with secularism.

Keywords: Christianity and social justice, Poor People's Campaign, Liberation Theology, Social Gospel Movement, Structural Inequality

## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction..... 1

Chapter 2: Social Gospel Movement, 1880-1918 ..... 14

Chapter 3: Liberation Theology, 1967-1979 ..... 30

Chapter 4: Poor People's Campaign: A Moral Revival, 2018 ..... 48

Chapter 5: Conclusion ..... 66

## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Chapter 1: Introduction

There is an ongoing war on religion. Not the war on religion that the 2012 Republican Platform referred to when criticizing then-Obama Administration for its attempts “to compel faith-related institutions, as well as believing individuals, to contravene their deeply held religious, moral, or ethical beliefs” (Claassen, 1). Instead, it is a war against Christianity, that was initially led by the Christian right during the Cold War<sup>1</sup> and has been upheld by Republicans, Democrats, and news media alike. In this war, the public has been “led to believe that the fault line in American politics is between the Godless and the pious” (Claassen, 6). But this divide is forced by narrow and single political issues, such as abortion and homosexuality, based on the premise that if a Christian opposes these issues, he is motivated by faith. Conservative media commentators uphold this binary: Bill O’Reilly refers to these Christians as “culture warriors” and anyone who has concerns about social or economic justice as “secular progressives” (Claassen, 13). Glenn Beck supports O’Reilly, suggesting “that concern for social and economic justice cannot derive from religious belief” (Claassen, 13). The popular press and even academic writing emphasize and reproduce this divide by omitting any serious attention to progressive Christians, and they instead sharpen critique

---

<sup>1</sup> Fear of secular communist nations in the Cold War, the focus on maintaining Christianity and capitalism became intertwined. “American propaganda cast the Cold War as one of history’s great religious wars, between the godless and the God-fearing, between good and evil” (Kirby, 2017).

of “the rise and dominance of the religious right” over “the last several decades” (Snarr, 33).

Yet this belief that Christians, if motivated by faith, only vote Republican is simply untrue. Instead of focusing on abortion or gay rights, the “Christian left” as it were, is united by fighting economic injustice, and “for most progressive religious activists, eliminating poverty is the unifying mission” (Snarr, 34). In the United States religion is a personal and private affair, while the economy is one we all participate in. Thus, religious conservatism adopts either an attitude where their kingdom is not of this world and therefore believe Christianity has no influence on economics or economic policy. Or, at most the religious right supports capitalism and a free market economy, as the protestant work ethic and the American dream have melded into one nationalist ideal. This thesis investigates and seeks to recuperate that which is largely invisible because of the Christian Right: that the history of Christianity is full of rich social movements that highlight economic and social justice, often from radically left positions. I choose to focus on three important Christian social movements: the Social Gospel movement of the early twentieth century, the Liberation Theology movement of the 1960s to 1990s, and the post 2000 social movement known as The Poor People’s Campaign. Each can be considered a social movement that foregrounded fundamental demands around economic justice.

Social Movements, and particularly those that advocate for anti-poverty policies like the ones studied here, face unique obstacles, such as those described in Frances Fox

Piven and Richard A. Cloward's book, *Poor People's Movements*. Piven and Cloward conclude that social movements' opportunities and limitations "are shaped by social conditions." (Piven and Cloward, 36) Since social movements must be understood in terms of the context in which they arose, I seek to examine the context for each of these three movements. This thesis's first chapter provides the context for the Social Gospel movement by describing the relevant rise of industrialization, globalization, and financialization as distinct periods of economic development. The development of a capitalist economy in the United States came about through the Industrial Revolution in the 1870s, but also created mass unemployment and poverty by 1900. The United States economy would not recover until the end of World War I, and would not attain economic stability until after World War II. By the 1960s, the United States was focused less on national development, and more on the role of international trade and development, which leads us to the context for the third chapter, the emergence of the Liberation Theology movement. Globalization forced agrarian nations, particularly those in Latin America, onto an international stage their economies were not developed for. This, combined with a history of poor land distribution through the legacy of colonialism led to high levels of rural poverty. Meanwhile in the United States, the context was set for the final social movement I analyze (the Poor People's Campaign in chapter four) with the rise of neoliberalism in the United States. Neoliberalism meant a slow loss of worker protection in the 1970s, deregulation in the 1980s, and welfare reform in the 1990s, all of

which led to the 2008 financial crisis, resulting in the highest numbers of unemployment since the Great Depression.

In each chapter, I want to examine how Christian movements emerged to address issues of economic inequality. The Social Gospel Movement began in the early 1900s and was a movement focused around addressing injustice against workers, motivated through the belief they were building the kingdom of God on earth for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Liberation Theology grew out of transnational Catholic concern in the early 1970s to poverty in Latin America. It used Christian theology as a way of addressing social issues, specifically economic inequality, and viewed scriptural interpretation as a “praxis.” Finally, the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is a current social movement, meant to pick up Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s work in 1968, and addresses today’s current economic inequality through a racial and class lens.

In each social movement, the emergence of a social movement is tightly linked to the particular social settings producing mass discontent. Emergence is a particularly important phase in Christian social movements, because of an intense combination of anger and religious fervor. Social Gospel and Liberation Theology both displayed “a sense of urgency and of prophecy” (Sanks, 680) and therefore led to their fast spread and popularity. Returning to Piven and Cloward, they similarly argue for the importance of emergence and social setting in creating the power of a social movement, and the fervor of the phase. They write, “Elites are not actually responding to the organizations, they are

responding to the force of insurgency” but acknowledge that “insurgency is always short-lived” (Piven and Cloward, xi).

For Dr. Reverend William J. Barber II, the organizer of the Poor People’s Campaign, the first phase of a social movement is one of the most crucial parts of determining the strength of the movement to make structural change. His work, *The Third Reconstruction*, outlines fourteen steps for social movements, that he refers to as “Fourteen Steps Forward Together” (Barber, 127). His first step focuses on creating a movement of the people, one that spreads through “indigenously led grassroots organizing” (Barber, 127). Barber emphasizes the role of the movement spreading through the common people, rather than him singularly leading the movement.

I treat each social movement in each of the three separate chapters, and borrow heavily from Piven and Cloward in thinking about them as social movements. So in each chapter I examine the general context that motivated the moral outrage of Christians, then I examine key texts in each social movement to see how they addressed themes of social justice and economic justice.

### **Social and Economic Justice**

For the earlier social movements, Social Gospel and Liberation Theology, there is an understanding that “the pursuit of social justice” is at the very root of the kingdom of God “and can only be brought about by striving for righteousness in this world” (Sanks, 679-680). For Walter Rauschenbusch -- the key leader of Social Gospel Movement --



social justice, which he referred to simply as “justice,” was at the essence of Christianity, “Christ’s commandment of love presupposes the world’s commandment of justice. Justice is the foundation on which love can build its temple. Unless that foundation is there, the walls will crack” (Rauchenbusch, 191). Similarly, Liberation Theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez argued that liberation from sin was our ultimate purpose as Christians, and saw that there was an “integral relationship” between this form of liberation “and political, social, and economic liberation” (Sanks, 671). In *A Theology of Liberation* he writes that God’s kingdom is “the end of domination of man over man; it is a kingdom of contradiction to the established powers and on behalf of man” (Gutiérrez, 231).

In the same vein, but writing today, Reverend Barber and his co-authors of *Revive Us Again* write “the deepest public concerns of our faith traditions are with how our society treats the poor, those on the margins” (Barber, Theoharis, and Lowery, XVI). But Barber takes this understanding of social justice one step further, arguing that social injustice and economic injustice are interlinked. He writes, “you can’t talk about race without talking about economics, and you can’t talk about economics without talking about race” (Barber, 207). Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, while it focuses on social movements advocating for economic justice, it includes Poor People’s Campaign to highlight the interconnectedness of social justice issues like race alongside class.

To provide some context to the social-justice-oriented economic policies advocated for by Social Gospel, Liberation Theology, and the Poor People’s Campaign, we must understand the creation of economic injustice through the growth of a market

society. Specifically, the market's impact on people is felt through labor. Karl Polanyi explains this issue in *The Great Transformation*, referring to labor (as well as land and money) as a "fictitious commodity" in a market society. That is, while labor is clearly a pivotal part of the economic system, it does not fall within the definition of a commodity, "that anything that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale" and is instead "only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself" (Polanyi, 72). Therefore, labor has a complicated position within the market. As a commodity, even fictitious, "the organization of labor would change concurrently with the organization of the market system" (Polanyi, 75). The organization of labor, specifically wages and employment, is dependent on the basic supply and demand changes in the market. However, because labor is also connected to the common people, "the development of the market system would be accompanied by a change in the organization of society itself" (Polanyi, 75). This connection between workers' role in society and workers' role as a commodity made it so "human society had become an accessory of the economic system" (Polanyi, 75). The result of this effect of the market on labor without regulation Polanyi describes vividly,

In disposing of a man's labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity 'man' attached to that tag. Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as

the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. (Polanyi, 73)

However, it is not just economists who acknowledge this role of labor as a fictitious commodity. In 1986, the United States Catholic Bishops produced “Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy” a document that claimed that Christians have “both opportunities and responsibilities” as they “measure this economy, not by what it produces but also by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person” (United States Catholic Bishops, vi). This is because, as they capture neatly, “Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of justice in our land” (United States Catholic Bishops).

Polanyi explains organization of the market further in terms of “freedom” as well, describing how upper classes view deregulation of the market as freedom and that they “enjoy the freedom provided by leisure in security; they are naturally less anxious to extend freedom in society than those whose lack of income must rest content with a maximum of it” (Polanyi, 254). That is, because they benefit from deregulation, or freedom they assume freedom in the market is beneficial to all. Those with a “lack of income” are predominantly the workers, who know that this freedom will not necessarily lead to a better life. Instead, because workers are dependent on their wage and employment within the market as a fictitious commodity, the more freedom within the

market, the greater unpredictability they will not be “disposed” as Polanyi writes. In comparison, Polanyi claims that regulation provides true freedom, “not only for the few, but for all” (Polanyi, 256). However, regulation initially appears as a lack of freedom for the wealthy, and therefore is rejected by those who already benefit from deregulation in the market; this specific group also tends to be a part of the political elite, and can maintain this economic system through their political power.

Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology both support this thinking and advocate for regulation of the market society through workers’ protection or some workers’ control of the means of production. In this way, both movements were “obviously anticapitalist” (Sanks, 680) as they criticized their economies’ exploitation of the working class. To some extent, these movements were also “pro-socialist” in that “the Social Gospel theology speaks of economic ‘co-operation’ and sometimes of ‘socialism,’ and the liberation theologians are willing to adopt some form of Marxist socialism” (Sanks, 680). However, analysis of these movements will focus more on their criticism of capitalism.

Still, this understanding of freedom and deregulation as Polanyi outlines has had a large influence on the cultural understanding of poverty, leading to a social acceptance of “individualism” (Miller, 289). Believing that everyone benefits in a free market, it became inconceivable that there might be obstacles to growing wealth besides individual effort, and there became an understanding “of justice as the requital of desert” (Miller, 291). Poverty was included in this version of justice -- giving one their due -- however,

there were “deserving” poor and “undeserving” poor. Those who were poor but deserving, “although displaying meritorious personal qualities, had been reduced to poverty by accidental circumstances beyond their control” (Miller, 294). In comparison, the “undeserving” poor had “personal failings such as drunkenness, idleness, etc” (Miller, 294). For those who hold onto a deeply individualist outlook, regulation and social welfare are not necessary to solve poverty, instead all that is needed is temporary charity, limiting it just enough “to set the individual back on his feet again” (Miller, 294) as this would be all the “deserving” poor would need. However, for those who are “undeserving” there is no charity, only “encouraging the undeserving to become deserving” (Miller, 294).

Social Gospel, Liberation Theology, and Poor People’s Campaign reject this “excessive individualism” (Sanks, 679) that the market society creates. Instead, they “comprehend poverty as the result of an unjust and oppressive social system and of certain mechanisms pervaded with materialism rather than a genuine humanism” (Gayerre, 40). Therefore, they support government reform that would create a structural change.

### **Social Movements**

Given the structural challenges that face these social movements, Piven and Cloward, and John Gaventa, author of *Power and Powerlessness*, argue that the political elites are the greatest danger for the decline of social movements; that is, the political

backlash to progressive advocacy. Because of the “closed society” that is maintained, as Polanyi describes, by the wealthy and politically powerful, “the powerless are highly dependent... ‘the dependent society is by definition a silent society’” (Gaventa, 18). In order to break that silence, the powerless cannot go through the traditional mechanisms of change, like relying on “the norms governing the electoral-representative system” and instead, must use “protest tactics which defied political norms” even if these tactics are seen as “the recourse of troublemakers and fools. [Because] for the poor, they were the only recourse” (Piven and Cloward, 3). However, this makes it very easy for political elites to discredit the anger of these groups (Gaventa, 254).

Barber also believes that a social movement cannot fight social injustice without creating public and social disturbances. His third step in *The Third Reconstruction* is that the movement “demonstrates a commitment to civil disobedience” because only through civil disobedience can movement members “change the public conversation and consciousness” (Barber, 128). Consciousness is also done through Barber’s eleventh step, to “engage in voter registration and education” (Barber, 130). For all three of these social movements, they educate the public on their social justice policy through key texts and movement literature.

Finally, the last of Barber’s steps include a focus on not being caught up in the political response to the movement. He writes specifically that movements must build “transformative, long-term coalition relationships rooted in a clear agenda that doesn’t measure success just by electoral outcomes and that destroys the myth of extremism”

(Barber, 129). Or in sum, the movement must resist “the ‘one moment mentality.’ We are building a movement!” (Barber, 130). Similarly to Barber’s thinking, both Social Gospel and Liberation Theology repeated this theme, because these social movements “feel that time is on their side, that ultimately their views will prevail, that their theologies are the wave of the future” (Sanks, 680) and therefore, there is little fear of “decline.” In some ways, it might be argued that members of Social Gospel and Liberation Theology were correct in this assumption of time being on their side; as the lines of commonality of all three movements will be considered as they address different social economic issues through Christian reform and radical response.

This thesis is composed of five chapters, with key chapters Two, Three, and Four focused on Christian social movements, respectively, Social Gospel, then Liberation Theology, and Poor People’s Campaign. These chapters first establish the emergence and economic setting of the Christian social movement; and for all three of these movements, this economic and social setting also includes not only mass discontent towards the economic system, but a critique of Christianity’s role in supporting that system. I want to emphasize that these movements, while transformative, seem to emerge from not only God’s call to answer the poor and needy, but also due to a loss of political power. These chapters also include a discourse analysis of these movements’ understanding of social justice, done through examining the movement leaders’ key texts and written work. This discourse analysis focuses on each movements’ theological view of injustice, and critique of capitalism. Each chapter concludes with the movements’ advocacy work and the

political response to the movements. And in the final chapter, I seek to examine what we can draw together as threads of commonality across these different social movements spread out over time and space.

Together, these movements provide a history of Christianity that does not align with neoliberalism, nor promote a vision of local churches as being about mitigating poverty on an individual level. This is not to say that the religious right is wrong, rather this thesis aims to shed light on the multiple ways that Christianity connects to economics and social justice. This thesis might help us break the all-too-easy equivalence between Christianity and conservatism that has pigeonholed Christianity. Instead, if we can recuperate this ignored history, we could light the way towards a more progressive future for Christianity. If we can recuperate this parallel history, we might be able to make more visible the ways that religious groups might be seen as allies in contemporary struggles for economic justice.



## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Chapter 2: Social Gospel Movement, 1880-1918

#### **Emergence: The Industrial Revolution**

The Industrial Revolution of the 1800s was a catalyst for the future economic system that Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel Movement would later critique in the early 20th century. The rise of factories in cities drew many to recently developed urban centers, giving rise to modern capitalism and profit. Rauschenbusch even emphasized the importance of this revolution to propel America into the modern age; he wrote in his work *Christianizing the Social Order* that “the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century began the democratizing of property. For let us not forget that Capitalism in its youth raised the battle cry of freedom” (Rauschenbusch, 355).

The Industrial Revolution began around 1870, following the end of the Civil War. By the 1900s, the United States went from a primarily agrarian society to an international economic powerhouse. It was a period of huge development in manufacturing centered around cities, which were connected these cities across the country through newly built railroads and highways. This development however, happened rapidly and therefore required drastic labor supply growth. “The demands of industry brought millions from the farms and from the old world to the new and crowded cities, expanding the working classes fivefold” (Hopkins, 80). Government policy encouraged many to move from rural towns and suburbs to these urban centers, like Chicago, Boston, and New York. Still, “in 1880... almost one-half of the American workers were still farmers and only one in seven

workers (less than 15%) worked in manufacturing” (Hirschman and Mogford, 898). Moreover, the development of industrial economies in Europe allowed for easier movement between countries, not only encouraging but demanding European immigrants move to the United States. This demand was answered: “In 1900, about three-quarters of the populations of many large cities were composed of immigrants and their children” (Hirschman and Mogford, 898).

However, immigration to the United States did not slow after 1900. “Between 1900 and 1915, more than 13 million immigrants arrived in the United States” (Rodgers, 2011). Consequently, by 1900 these urban centers were overpopulated and under resourced to provide for their workers. Cities became “characterized by the rise of large-scale production units that drew together vast proletarian populations in hastily built, overcrowded cities” (Sanks, 673). This was due to “technological unemployment, immigration, and other factors combined by 1900 to create a standing army of a million unemployed” (Sanks, 673).

Further, this new economic system came without any rules or regulations. Working conditions were poor: there were no standards for working with dangerous machinery: getting hurt on the job was common, and came with little compensation. Factory buildings were built cheaply and quickly, and were at risk for structural issues and fires. Workers often worked long hours with little pay, leading to wealth consolidation and a growing wealth gap. While the economic growth had increased national wealth drastically “from sixteen to seventy-eight and one half billions of

dollars...between 1860 and 1890” over fifty percent of this wealth was only held by “one third of one percent of the population” (Sanks, 673). This was due to a lack of fair wages, particularly for the working class. From 1870-80 real wages “had declined from an average of \$400 to \$300 annually” (Sanks, 674).

All of this not only created a new “industrial society,” it also had an effect on the workers’ household. A lack of income and the high cost of living forced children and women out of the house and into the workforce. This put child workers at risk for injury, and strained household resources on household services often provided freely by women. Many working families lived in tenements and poor-quality apartments with low-grade ventilation and inadequate plumbing creating a health hazard. The new society also created a load of social issues. These industrialized cities, particularly New York City, “were struggling with lawlessness and crime, tenements, crooked politics, delinquency, sanitation, traffic, inadequate religious resources” (Hopkins, 99). The “gilded age” that followed the industrial revolution in the 1900s resulted in “the most embittered class wars and the most glaring social contrasts modern times had seen” (Sanks, 674).

Mass discontent amongst the working class began in the late 1870s, with the growth in unionization to protect themselves from exploitation, and to respond to industrialists through strikes. First was “the great railroad strike” in 1877, in response to lowered wages, and resulted in ten worker deaths (PBS, 1996). Strikes such as this, primarily in manufacturing, continued through the late 1800s and into the early 1900s until the first world war. There would be 12 more strikes from 1886 until 1913 (PBS,

1996). They often ended in bloodshed and government intervention; in 1894 in response to the national railroad strike, “President Cleveland had dispatched federal troops to break the strike” (Rodgers, 2011). These responses implied that the government either did not know or want to resolve the social issues at the root of the strikes.

While not as violent, there was also a frustration within the working class aimed at Christianity. Many congregations lost their working class members; not because of a loss of faith in Christianity, but due to the practices of churches. A poll in 1885 by Reverend Amory H. Bradford conducted among labor groups found that many workers held a belief that “‘ministers of the gospel do not practice what they preach’ and Christians do not ‘possess what they profess, or at least manifest it in their lives and conduct’” (Hopkins, 84). There was a general view of Christian churches as “‘more of a relic than a power’” and a feeling that the poor were not “‘as welcome as the wealthy in the churches’” (Hopkins, 83). Another study done by Washington Gladden, an early leader of the Social Gospel Movement, found a general reason given by laborers for a lack of church attendance: workers “‘assumed that ‘the churches are chiefly attended and controlled by the capitalist and the employing classes’” (Hopkins, 85).

Christian clergy response to these social issues was primarily in major cities, growing as mass discontent grew. One of the first religious leaders to speak out on economic inequalities was Bishop Henry Codman Potter of New York in 1886, who addressed the Polanyi understanding of labor as a fictitious commodity, explaining it as a concept in the market society, but unacceptable in the religious world. He wrote,

Capitalists and employers of labor have forever dismissed the fallacy, which may be true enough in the domain of political economy, but is essentially false in the domain of religion, that labor and the laborer are alike a commodity, to be bought and sold, employed or dismissed, paid or underpaid as the market shall decree. (Hopkins, 93)

Following Bishop Potter and other Catholic leaders, many Protestant clergymen in these industrial centers became proponents of social justice for the working class “partly as an attempt to expand the appeal of the Protestant church in cities, where the Roman Catholic church was especially popular among the large immigrant population” (PBS, 2003). However, this thinking, and the protestant Social Gospel Movement that followed, should be considered radical, as the idea that Christianity “has a social mission to transform the structures of society in the direction of equality, freedom, and community was something new in Christian history” (Dorrien, 60).

The Social Gospel Movement originally emerged through religious thinkers like Francis Greenwood Peabody and, particularly, Washington Gladden (Dorn, 1993). Gladden was a pastor in Columbus, Ohio, and wrote prolifically on social justice, and in sum, “simply wanted a political economy that provided ‘equal opportunities for all and special privileges for none’... ‘Surely,’ Gladden wrote, ‘Christianity demands nothing less than this’” (Dorn, 88).

The first social justice public policy made by Protestant leadership was outlined in the Social Creed of the Churches, advocating for “abolition of child labor, safe working conditions, special provisions for female workers, a living wage in every industry, old age insurance, and equitable distribution of wealth” (Dorrien, 98). These policies would be repeated by the Social Gospel Movement, and by 1908 “virtually all the mainline Protestant churches formally adopted the Social Creed of the Churches” (Bateman and Kapstein, 255).

**Discourse: Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, *The Righteousness of the Kingdom*, and *Christianizing the Social Order***

Walter Rauschenbusch became involved in the Social Gospel Movement during its emergence in the 1890s to the early 1900s. From 1890-91, he partnered with Leighton Williams to produce a newspaper section titled “For the Right,” writing on a type of Christianity that they referred to as “Christian Socialists.”<sup>2</sup> Williams and Rauschenbusch emphasized the role of Christians was to embody the name “Social Gospel” and to specifically follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as outlined in the Gospels in the Bible, ““so that our industrial relationships may be humanized, our economic system moralized, justice pervade legislation, and the State grown into a true commonwealth”” (Dorrien, 89).

---

<sup>2</sup> A general note that must be made about Rauschenbusch’s works in the analysis section of this paper is his varying use of the word “communism” and “socialism.” For Rauschenbusch “in 1907 ‘communism’ was interchangeable with ‘communalism’ or socialism” (Dorrien, 97).

The Social Gospel Movement would only reach a national level after the publication of Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in 1907. The work "called for a politics of the cooperative commonwealth that steered America in the direction of democratic socialism" (Dorrien, 96) however, it lacked concrete policy or economic theory. Still, it acknowledged the social issues of the United States that readers personally experienced day to day. Further, it was digestible for readers unfamiliar with Christian theology, creating consciousness amongst the working class and national conversation. The chapters were broken down to establish a history of Christianity, as well as a history of social issues in the United States, culminating in his final three chapters, "The Present Crisis," "The Stake of the Church in the Social Movement," and "What to Do." In this final chapter, he writes that questions specifying social changes in a religious reorganization of society "exceed the scope of this book" (Rauschenbusch, 281). Instead, the book was meant to leave readers with how "the moral forces latent in Christian society can be aroused and mobilized for the progressive regeneration of social life" (Rauschenbusch, 281-2). In other words, Rauschenbusch's main goal for the book was to grow religious fervor, and the beginning of a movement.

*Christianity and the Social Crisis* claimed that the "social crisis" of the book's title was the "capitalist civilization" that dominated workers' daily lives as well as created an individualist style of thinking. However, the book was ultimately positive, believing that awareness of this social crisis "was an opportunity to recover the lost kingdom of ideal Jesus" (Dorrien, 96). The book was pivotal as it established itself as a

key text by emphasizing the two parts of Christian movements: creating religious fervor and a lack of fear of decline, and thus was pivotal in creating national consciousness.

In sum, Rauschenbusch's leadership of Social Gospel Movement did not adhere to social justice policy and then use the Bible to justify his politics, but rather, he had an inherent belief in building the kingdom of God on earth, and attached economic and political theory to what would best bring about this kingdom (Dorrien, 86). This was an important concept throughout the movement. In fact, members of the movement never aimed "to christianize the socialists, but confined themselves to doing socialist propaganda among the Christians -- not the propaganda of a diluted socialism, but the same straight, uncompromising socialism for which the socialist party stood" (Spargo, 18). Rauschenbusch pursued these policies not because they aligned with his political views, but rather, they would be Christ's political views if he were to walk the earth in the early 1900s. Rauschenbusch claimed that Christianity had to fit the social needs of the time, claiming that "the social aims of Jesus were comprehensible only if one interpreted Jesus in relation to his historical context" (Dorrien, 95).

Rauschenbusch's theology focused heavily on injustice and the unacceptable injustice that was prevalent in New York City, where he preached to predominantly poor European immigrants. Because he witnessed such high levels of poverty, for Rauschenbusch, "politics became unavoidable. If people suffered because of politics and economics, gospel preaching had to deal with politics and economics" (Dorrien, 88). This is emphasized in *The Righteousness of the Kingdom*, a collection of Rauschenbusch's



writings that were never officially published until Stackhouse's collection in 1999.<sup>3</sup> For Rauschenbusch, poverty is a structural issue, not individual. He criticized the way the church mitigates poverty issues through charity, as "society dumps its moral offal of pauperism and crime upon the church and says: 'Here, take these and care for them.' And the church works and moans about the unceasing flood of evil and the hopelessness of the task" (Rauschenbusch and Stackhouse, 189). Instead, he asked, "What creates pauperism? ...Surely it takes only a slight acquaintance with history and economics to discern some of the chief causes" (Rauschenbusch and Stackhouse, 189).

He based his critique of wealth inequality on Jesus Christ's understanding of inequality. He writes that inequality cannot exist in the kingdom of God on earth, "He [Jesus Christ] denounces the effort to create inequality as hostile to the nature of the Kingdom of God on earth" (Rauschenbusch and Stackhouse, 204). And he pinpointed wealth consolidation as one of the key creators of inequality in the modern economy. Further, wealth consolidation is linked with injustice, "it is not possible to get great wealth except by offending against justice" (Rauschenbusch and Stackhouse, 212). Therefore, he claimed that "Christ forbids the citizens of his kingdom to pile up wealth, and where it is already piled up, he commands them to disperse it" (Rauschenbusch and Stackhouse, 209). Rauschenbusch would not outline how this equality would be achieved until the publication of his second book.

---

<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the writings are included in understanding Rauschenbusch's theology, but acknowledge that the literal writings had no effect on the greater population as they were never published publicly in Rauschenbusch's time.

*Christianizing the Social Order* was Rauschenbusch's follow-up to *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in 1913. While its focus was to outline the policies Social Gospel Movement members should advocate for, it justified each of its chapters with an explanation as to why the topic was a Biblical topic, starting first with Christian theology and then actual political and economic theory. First, the concept of christianizing the social order was "bringing it [the social order] into harmony with the ethical convictions which we identify with Christ" (Rauschenbusch, 125). The focus of these ethical convictions is community created through Jesus Christ, which he outlines in *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. He argued that the current economic system prohibits community and forces individualism: "Christianity teaches the unity and solidarity of men; Capitalism reduces that teaching to a harmless expression of sentiment by splitting society into two antagonistic sections" (Rauschenbusch, 321). His criticism of the current capitalist system he witnessed was not his own, but Christ's, as he explained that "the ownership and control of a relatively small class of men... must lead to injustice, to inequality, and to the frustration of the Christian conception of human fellowship" (Rauschenbusch, 163). And he believed that if this system was to remain, there would not be a second coming of Christ. He wrote, "God's reign will not come until the Profit of all shall support the Life of all" (Rauschenbusch, 251).

Walter Rauschenbusch saw the upper classes, particularly those in charge of industrial corporations, as controlling the current political system. Therefore, he sought to take political action to regulate the economic system in order to create "economic

democracy.” His theory most followed that of John Stuart Mill, focusing heavily on Mill’s view on unions and associations (Dorrien, 103). In 1864, Mill believed that the industrial revolution that was happening around him would naturally lead to “collective contributions of large numbers; establishments like those known by the technical name of joint-stock companies, or the associations less formally constituted” (Mill, 276). But this natural mass association never took place.

Instead, in his 1913 work, Rauschenbusch lauded early capitalism in a similar manner to Mill’s work, writing that “the development of the factory is a necessary stage in the evolution of any cooperative system which the future may have in store” (Rauschenbusch, 236). He also quoted Mill when defining his view of economic democracy, looking at Mill’s “industrial democracy” as “...the association of the laborers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves” (Rauschenbusch, 357). In his chapter titled “Economic Democracy” in his fifth section, “The Direction of Progress,” Rauschenbusch defined “economic democracy” as “more than the right of the organized workers to control their own industry...It means the power to cut all monopoly prices out of business and to base prices solely on service rendered” (Rauschenbusch, 361).

Seeing that corporations were only owned by small groups of wealthy capitalists, he argued that this small interest group had stronger political power than the much larger working class, and could therefore easily protect its own interests. Further, he criticized

how they supported policies that might “antagonize the common good and threaten the very stability of the State as the organ of the common welfare” (Rauschenbusch, 274). And so, he wrote beyond the role of unions and shared ownership of corporations by also discussing socializing property for the betterment of the community. He defined social property as “made to serve the public good, either by the service its uses render to the public welfare, or by the income it brings to the public treasury” (Rauschenbusch, 420). He emphasized the creation of fraternity within communities, in opposition to the individualism he saw prevalent in cities. He focused primarily on making so that the community has control of rent and profit, in order to “make commerce and industry honest, and at the same time increase the public wealth available for the protection of life, for the education of the young, and for the enrichment of culture and civilization” (Rauschenbusch, 429). This “resocializing of property” he saw as “an essential part of the christianizing of the social order” (Rauschenbusch, 429).

### **Political Response: Labor Laws and World War I**

When it came to advocacy work, the movement “focused on issues as varied as poverty, unemployment, civil rights, pollution, drug addiction, political corruption, and gun control” (PBS, 2003). Specifically, Rauschenbusch and his followers advocated for “socialization of the railroads, municipal ownership of utilities, a city-owned underground transit system, the single tax, separation of church and state, government regulation of trusts and monopolies, ballot reform, and workplace safety” (Dorrien, 89).

The movement also supported legislation that protected children from child labor, (Evans, 2017) an eight-hour maximum work day, and a “workless Sunday” (Rauschenbusch, 453).

Alongside social protection for workers, Rauschenbusch supported gender equality. He wrote of women’s right to vote, ““The suffrage will abolish one of the last remnants of patriarchal autocracy by giving women a direct relation to the political organism of society, instead of allowing man to exercise her political rights for her”” (Dorrien, 100).

Female members of the Social Gospel Movement, specifically from many upper and middle-class families, established settlement houses in cities like Boston, New York, and Chicago, “designed to alleviate the sufferings of immigrants... Their mission was to draw attention to the problems of poverty and inequality – especially in America’s growing cities” (Evans, 2017). They worked as a public center in low-income communities, providing services such as childcare, meals and clothing, as well as advice in finance and health. These settlement houses also served as a place for Social Gospel members to meet, and to lobby and advocate from.

Most famous of these was Jane Addams’s Hull House in Chicago. The Hull House was also where many young women first came to work with Addams, before establishing settlement houses in their respective cities. Florence Kelley was one of these young women, returning to New York in 1899 to reside and volunteer at “the Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side” (Rothbard, 217). While there, she also

“founded the National Consumers League, and was the chief lobbyist for the federal Children’s Bureau and for Sheppard-Towner” (Rothbard, 217). She lobbied for women’s workers’ rights, minimum wage laws, and an eight-hour work day. She also “fought for an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, and was a founding member of the NAACP” (Rothbard, 217). Similar to Kelley was Mary Melinda Kingsbury Simkhovitch, who was the daughter of a Republican merchant, niece of the executive of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and cousin of the head of Standard Oil of California (Rothbard, 217). She resided at the Greenwich House, and “joined the New York Consumers League and Women’s Trade Union League” while lobbying “for government old-age pensions and public housing” (Rothbard, 218).

What most emphasizes the influence of Rauschenbusch’s theology was the establishment of the Progressive Party as a permanent organization in 1913, the same year Rauschenbusch published *Christianizing the Social Order*. This was a group made up by many members of Social Gospel Movement, including many of those who established settlement houses and protestant ministers. But the Party was also organized by many politically educated members. Broken up into multiple branches in order to effectively lobby and advocate, it had members like New York social worker, attorney, and sociologist Frances A. Kellor heading the Progressive Science branch, along with Chicago pro-union labor lawyer Donald Richberg, director of its Legislative Reference Bureau. Jane Addams headed the Department of Social and Industrial Justice, while “the

Social Security Insurance committee was headed by Paul Kellogg, editor of the leading social work magazine, *Survey*” (Rothbard, 222).

The group’s effect during the zenith of the Social Gospel Movement was limited. While legislation like the Keating–Owen Act (1916), which protected children from child labor, was introduced, little legislation was actually concrete enough to protect workers until the 1930s.

In all, the Social Gospel Movement would be an incredibly short-lived social movement. The Social Gospel Movement peaked just at the start of the First World War (Maimela, 22). Against the movement and the Socialists’ party wants, the United States would join World War 1 in 1917. Social Gospel Movement held on, but weakly, and would die out just after Rauschenbusch’s death in 1918, mostly due to nationalism in the United States and an improved economy.

However, Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel Movement would have lasting effects on workers’ rights in the United States. There is no question that early social justice advocacy throughout the early 1900s by the Social Gospel Movement and other organizations also had an impact on President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, seen particularly through programs and agencies that supported the poor and unemployed, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Civil Works Administration, and the National Industry Act of 1933.

In 1934, Rauschenbusch’s son, Paul, was asked by United States Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins “to draft a bill for Social Security which became the basis for

further discussions in the Committee on Economic Security” (Rothbard, 231). Further, Paul Rauschenbusch was the American Association for Labor Legislation Washington lobbyist, an organization that “was also closely associated with Florence Kelley’s National Consumers League” (Rothbard, 231). Paul Rauschenbusch married Elizabeth Brandeis, who was also connected with early Social Gospel Movement members, and “helped write the Wisconsin unemployment compensation law” (Rothbard, 231). Both personally emphasized the legacy that the Social Gospel Movement had throughout the twentieth century.

Walter Rauschenbusch’s writings would continue to influence and help in developing the religious left through the twentieth century; “several religious leaders expanded upon his ideas to address issues of economic justice, racism, and militarism” (Evans, 2017) including Martin Luther King Jr. and the Poor People’s Campaign.

Further, the Social Gospel Movement provides an example of one of the first American movements of Protestant clergy and followers fighting for economic equality through social justice policies. It redefined the role of the Christian church as one that was politically active rather than passively charitable. And it introduced radical Christian reform to the United States, with Rauschenbusch’s focus on the creation of a community and economic democracy upheld by justice, which required systematic transformation.



## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Chapter 3: Liberation Theology 1967-1979

#### **Emergence: Imperialism and Development in Latin America**

The 1950s and 60s in Latin America was a period of radical change. Old governments were overthrown by populist governments that were often unstable due to political unrest. These governments had the challenge of solving rural poverty and underdevelopment issues left over from their conservative predecessors. Similar to the emergence of Social Gospel, Liberation Theology grew out of a discontent amongst those negatively affected by development; however, throughout Latin America it was rural communities that were largely displaced in the growing global market.

Prior to the 1950s and 60s, there were high levels of rural poverty throughout Latin America due to agricultural stagnation. This poverty also had colonial roots; much of the rural farm land had been unequally distributed during the colonial period (Zoomers, 62). This unequal land distribution meant that “most of the Latin American countryside was extensively exploited by a small number of *latifundistas* (large landholders), while the majority of the population were *minifundistas* (small landholders) with access to small parcels of land” (Zoomers, 62). Further, this unequal distribution also had racial impacts: “indigenous groups often had to deal with feudal relations, and many ex-slaves were excluded from the land” (Zoomers, 62).

In the 1950s and 60s then came “the green revolution” (Zoomers, 63) a form of agricultural development through modernization. Farmers were pushed to invest in more

modern farming technology, while governments would often promise to improve infrastructure. This modernization was supported internationally, with “the US government, the Rockefeller foundation and private investors” (Zoomers, 63) financing this agricultural development. But this development did not have the intended effects. Instead of reducing rural poverty, it widened the wealth gap, as it was soon evident that “the benefits of the green revolution were mainly enjoyed by a small group of large farmers who had sufficient land and capital to make the necessary investments” (Zoomers, 63). Further, this development was also “environmentally and economically unsustainable” (Zoomers, 63).

This agricultural development did allow Latin America to join the global market. Global trade pushed many Latin American countries to export goods “like food products, lumber and minerals to the Global North” (Schmidt, 2018). However, these same Latin American countries would “re-import manufactured products” made of the same raw materials that had been exported (Schmidt, 2018). Further, this global trading was unbalanced; because the “re-imported” goods were “manufactured commodities” they had more value than the natural resources that had been exported, and therefore, the trading “generated profit for northern countries while maintaining Latin American countries in a perpetual trade deficit” (Schmidt, 2018).

This relationship between majority and minority countries<sup>4</sup> created an understanding that poverty in these majority countries was due to a dependency on the industrialization of the minority countries (Vuola, 24). This theory, generally referred to as “dependency theory,” was first analyzed in the 1950s because of the economic poverty in Latin America. Raul Prebisch, director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1950s is credited with developing dependency theory, that is, that “developing nations” have been exploited by “developed nations,” used as resources by these nations, whether it be cheap labor or natural resources (Ferraro, 62). Further, dependency theory argued that the “diversion of resources over time” (Ferraro, 62) is not simply led by “dominant nations,” but also maintained by the elites in the “dependent nations.” This was because often minority nations had political influence in majority countries.

In Nicaragua, for example, the “Somoza Dynasty” that led the nation from 1936 to 1979 was supported by the United States economically and politically (Betances, 77). Nicaragua would also be a place of mass upset due to economic inequality. Following the first Somoza, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, his two sons, Luis Somoza Debayle and Anastasio Somoza Debayle, would lead the government in 1956. They put an end to their father’s populist approach to political domination, but continued restrictions on civil

---

<sup>4</sup> The terms “minority” and “majority” are used here in comparison to Ferraro’s “dominant” and “dependent,” “developing,” or “poorer” terms to explain the relationship between Latin American countries and Western nations. Firstly, it was chosen to avoid controversial connotations that terms “dominant,” “developing” and “poorer” have. Secondly, it emphasizes the imbalance in control of production that Gustavo Gutiérrez and Walter Rauschenbusch critique.

liberties and corruption was still wide-spread. This led to political protest and in 1961 the Sandinista National Liberation Front, a secret socialist group, was established. In 1967, there was a rally called by the Conservative Party, and the government responded with a massacre of the 300+ rallyers (Betances, 77). The formation of the Front and the response to the rally highlighted the inefficiencies of this internationally propped up government. The Somozas could never properly respond to the economic and social injustices in Nicaragua when they were financed and supported by the United States to uphold the economy that created these injustices.

Due to the global dependence on minority countries, populist governments in the 1950s and 60s, specifically in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, became focused on “nationalist consciousness” and attempted to substitute imports internally (Boff, 66). Unfortunately, this had a similar effect as the industrial revolution had in the United States. While “significant industrial development” did benefit “the middle classes and urban proletariat” it “threw huge sectors of the peasantry into deeper rural marginalization” (Boff, 66). Many in poverty also moved from rural areas to urban centers, and there they suffered in “sprawling urban shantytowns” (Boff, 67). This increased mass discontent, and “led to the creation of strong popular movements seeking profound changes in the socio-economic structure of their countries” (Boff, 67). This public discontent amongst rural areas saw the whole social order in Latin American countries to be “laden with ‘structural’ obstacles to change. Thus, poverty was less a function of individual failure than ‘systemic’ failure” (Dodson, 52).

Latin America not only suffered from a more recent dependence on minority nations, but also had a historical religious dependence on these nations. Latin America was considered to occupy “a unique place in the history of Christianity, representing a new kind of Christianity: colonial or dependent Christianity” (Vuola, 18). Catholicism was brought to Latin America during European imperialism in the 16th century, and therefore Catholicism present in Latin America always aligned with traditional Catholicism of the Vatican City in Europe. While poverty in Latin America was clearly due to a structural failure of global trade, “Traditional Catholicism views poverty as an individual failure; hence, charity and job training are stressed” (Foroohar, 50). Further, Catholicism in Latin America also protected political elites that maintained this economic system, because they had been intertwined for so long. When leadership in Latin American countries was primarily conservative, and the Church had more public influence, “conservatives protected the church and helped it exert its control over the education system, social welfare, baptisms, burials, and morality” (Betances, 19). Therefore, the Church “legitimized the authority of conservative governments, regardless of how oppressive conservatives were” (Betances, 19). However, with the overthrow of these old governments, the Catholic church was left without its political foothold, changing the role the Catholic church might play in communities. European Catholicism was also changing, with the formation of the Second Vatican Council that attempted to address how Catholicism would best fit in the “modern world.” The council “produced a theological atmosphere characterized by great freedom and creativity” and gave Latin

American theologians “the courage to think for themselves about pastoral problems affecting their countries” (Boff, 69).

The combination of a loss of a political foothold in government and a modernizing Vatican Council inspired the formation and first meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM). Priests and clergy members within this conference “found it necessary to revise both their theology and their ministry in terms of the ancient prophetic tradition in order to struggle against ‘structural sin’” (Dodson, 52). These members would become a part of the Medellín Conference in 1968, producing the Medellín Documents on poverty, and this theological revision would be fully realized in Gutiérrez’s Liberation Theology.

**Discourse: Medellín 1968 Document, Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation and Essential Writings***

In 1968 CELAM held its first conference in Medellín, Columbia, with 130 bishops in attendance. It produced a document on justice, peace, and poverty<sup>5</sup>, and marked the emergence of Liberation Theology thinking across the continent. The document referred to the social crisis, stating that the current “operation of economic systems... do not regard the human being as the center of society” because of a “economic, technological, political, and cultural dependence” on “multinational conglomerates that often look after only their own interests at the expense of the welfare

---

<sup>5</sup> This document can be referred to as the “Medellín 1968 Document” or “Medellín 1968 Statement.” Each section on justice, peace, and poverty were separate “documents” within the full piece, and the document specifically on poverty was called “Poverty of the Church.”

of the country that welcomes them in” (Betances, 54). The Medellín 1968 document also argued that widespread poverty was due to a government failure, “a lack of structural reforms in agriculture that adequately deal with specific realities and decisively attack the grave social and economic problems of the peasantry” (Betances, 54).

And therefore, the Medellín 1968 document concluded with a commitment by CELAM members “to the poor and oppressed” (Williams, 349). It also claimed that “the solution” to this economic and social crisis “was not only individual charity but a profound change in social structure” (Foroohar, 50). The way to bring about this social change was through *concientización* (Williams, 349) by a new form of education

More in conformity with the integral development that we are seeking in our continent. We could call it “liberating education,” that is, that which converts the student into the subject of his own development. Education is actually the key instrument for liberating the masses from all servitude and for causing them to ascend ‘from less human to a more human condition.

(Betances, 51)

Perhaps most importantly, however, it inspired Gustavo Gutiérrez’s understanding of “Liberation Theology.” His response to the Medellín Document of 1968 was ““only with this approach will theology be a serious discourse, aware of itself, in full possession of its conceptual elements”” (Betances, 52). And it provided “a clear and critical attitude regarding economic and socio-cultural issues in the life and reflection of the Christian Community”” (Betances, 52).

Gustavo Gutiérrez was called to write and preach for the poor similarly to Walter Rauschenbusch. When Gutiérrez “discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people were a class [and could organize], it became crystal-clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action” (Martin, 71). Following the Medellín Document of 1968, Gustavo Gutiérrez would publish *A Theology of Liberation* in 1971, establishing the theology he saw within the Medellín 1968 Document. This theology at its most basic focused on poverty as an injustice. In *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez argued that “the class struggle is a fact that Christians cannot dodge and in the face of which the demands of the gospel must be clearly state” (Gutiérrez, 157) -- an argument reminiscent of Walter Rauschenbusch and Social Gospel. Just as Rauschenbusch established that the only way to understand Jesus was through historical context, Gutiérrez wrote, “Theologians will be personally and vitally engaged in historical realities with specific times and places. They will be engaged where nations, social classes, and peoples struggle to free themselves from domination and oppression by other nations, classes, and peoples” (Gutiérrez, 10). However, Gutiérrez’s theology was even more similar to Marxism, focusing on understanding Liberation Theology “as a *social theory*, a theory of a definite praxis” (Vuola, 44). The best way to follow this social theory, as it were, was through a combination of religious texts and traditions, and “social-scientific sources.” These “social-scientific sources” focused on “especially the ‘situation of dependency’” (Vuola, 30-31). Gutiérrez wrote on dependency theory, explaining that it was becoming common knowledge among “the



poor countries... that their underdevelopment is only the by-product of the development of other countries” (Gutiérrez, 17). Further, he argued that development in Latin America “will come about only with a struggle to break the domination of the rich countries” (Gutiérrez, 17). This was not a radical argument: he wrote in *A Theology of Liberation* how many of those in Latin America had become aware of the need to break from the independent nations.

This idea of anti-imperialism would later determine much of general Liberation Theology thinking. This was repeated amongst liberation theologians, who ““have been mostly concerned with raising the rhetoric of victimization against patriarchal Western society”” (Comsa and Munteanu, 14). More generally, Liberation Theology believed that sin existed in the “social dimension wherein multiple actors collaborate within a group or an institution to use workers unjustly for their own selfish aims” (Schubeck, 71). That is, Liberation Theology saw unjust treatment towards workers, which often manifested as poverty, to be a structural issue, created through wealthy private interests protected by government or other institutions. Therefore, Liberation Theology argued that “poverty is not going to disappear with charity but through structural (that is, political and economic) changes” (Vuola, 31). Gutiérrez justified this thinking through his understanding of Jesus Christ. Unlike Rauschenbusch, who saw Jesus as someone who believed in fraternity and community, Gutiérrez argued that Jesus was a politically-active radical. He opposed “the rich and powerful,” and provided “a radical option for the poor” (Gutiérrez, 132).

Further, because “Jesus attacks the roots of an unjust order” (Gutiérrez, 134) then so must Christians.

The most controversial aspect to Liberation Theology was its seeming connection to Marxism. Gutiérrez was never explicit on the influence of Marxism on his theology; however it was clear that Liberation Theology did “combine a Marxist-inspired empirical analysis in economic matters with moral theological reflection in a normative social theory” (Comsa and Munteanu, 12). This was due to “the experience of Latin America” as “an accusation against the intrinsically -- and irretrievably -- evil nature of capitalism” and how Marxism “established a true method of transcending it [capitalism]” (Gayarre, 41). Therefore, “TL [Liberation Theology] looked to that part of Marxism that explains the mechanisms of capitalist exploitation, which proposes a different economic system with its own political system” (Gayarre, 41). Liberation Theology did “approve of and support the genuinely revolutionary Marxist movements” (Gayarre, 42). These are movements that “are concerned with denouncing the oppressions of the capitalist system and when they attempt to effectively overcome the many types of misery suffered in the world” (Gayarre, 42). This was because Latin America had experienced injustice and inequality in capitalism, but had a “limited experience of socialism and its evils” and therefore, aimed “to reform socialism rather than try to reform capitalism” (Gayarre, 42). Liberation Theology did have to reform Marxism due to Liberation Theology’s primary aim of “reinforcement of the faith in the popular masses” and “to strengthen the

contribution of the Christian faith to social change without subordinating such faith to any political authority” (Gayarre, 42).

Another key focus of Liberation Theology was on who would lead such a social movement. Gutiérrez and other religious leaders within Liberation Theology believed that the movement had to be carried by those in poverty, and the oppressed. The general public was “the sector chosen by God to bring into history a total liberation that goes far beyond a mere political possibility” (Gayarre, 42). Gutiérrez wrote in *A Theology of Liberation*, “in order for this liberation to be authentic and complete, it has to be undertaken by the oppressed themselves and so must stem from the value proper to them” (Gutiérrez, 57). That is, the poor and oppressed had to be consciously involved “in the social and political struggle to change the structure of oppression” (Foroohar, 42).

Finally, the change that Gutiérrez saw occurring across Latin America was radical. He emphasized that it was not one that would only take place locally, such as at the national level in Peru, his home, but “that the revolutionary process ought to embrace the whole continent. There is little chance of success for attempts limited to a national scope” (Gutiérrez, 55). This was because of the vision Gutiérrez had for Liberation Theology. He believed, very similar to Social Gospel Movement, in creating something akin to “Kingdom of God on Earth” as Rauschenbusch wrote of. Gutiérrez wrote, “The Hope of the people of God is not to return to the mythological primitive garden, to regain paradise lost, but to march forward towards a new city, a human and comradely city whose heart is Christ” (Gutiérrez, 89). This vision was often referred to as a “utopia,” a

phrase Gutiérrez used himself: “if utopia humanizes economic, social, and political liberation, this humanness -- in the light of the Gospel -- reveals God” (Gutiérrez, 139). In other words, this utopia was ultimate liberation, “liberation from every form of oppression and liberation for all people” and further, “a shared freedom” (Schubeck, 81). And, like Social Gospel, Gutiérrez saw that it was the role of the Catholic Church to bring this vision to life, not God’s. He believed “the Gospel does not provide a utopia for us; this is human work” (Gutiérrez, 139). This belief had severe consequences; it implied “that the church enters into conflict with those who wield power” (Vuola, 31) and further, that the present injustices that Gutiérrez witnessed in Latin America implied that the Catholic Church had to reject “the use of Christianity to legitimize the established order” (Vuola, 31).

While *A Theology of Liberation* established the need for a radical social change, it lacked concrete policy recommendations for its followers to advocate for. Following its publication, Gutiérrez would publish other works and addresses making his ideal economic system more clear. Through the 1980s and early 1990s, he spoke to the maintained poor economic state of Latin America, and what there was to be done. Speaking in 1991 to an audience at the International St. John of the Cross Congress in Spain, he identified the poverty and health risks across the continent, noting that “more than 60% of the population lives in a situation which experts call ‘poverty’ or ‘extreme poverty’ or destitution” (Gutiérrez, 324). And in Peru specifically,

Where 120 of every 1000 children die before reaching five years of age; a country where 2 of every 1000 people suffer from tuberculosis, a disease which has already been eliminated by medicine; a country where cholera has this year affected 300,000 people, of whom 3000 have died... But the poor suffer from it [cholera] because they lack the economic means to boil water or to prepare food in sanitary conditions. I come from a country in which approximately 25,000 people have died as victims of different kinds of violence and where 8 priests and religious have been assassinated, three of them in recent weeks. They all worked in poor regions of my country. (Gutiérrez, 324)

Gutiérrez also made it more clear that he supported “a mixed economy with state, collective, and private ownership” (Burns, 503). He was also not the only Liberation Theologian who supported some mixture of socialism, focusing mostly on “some form of direct workers’ control” (Burns, 505).

### **Political Response: Catholic Hierarchy and the Nicaraguan Revolution**

In Nicaragua in 1978, the Sandinista National Liberation Front led an effective violent campaign against Somoza Debayle, leading to control of the government in 1979. This was only possible because “something happened in Nicaragua that had never happened anywhere else: radical Christians, lay people as well as clergy... took an active part in the revolt against Somoza” (Löwy 38). The Nicaragua Episcopal Conference even

published a pastoral letter greeting the new government and revolution, “recognizing the valor and legitimacy of the triumphant insurrection, discussing the construction of a new man, declaring the legitimacy of socialism, recognizing the mission of the FSLN, and supporting the ‘preferential option for the poor’” (Betances, 84). The Front responded in kind; acknowledging the role of these radical Christians in the “Declaration on Religion” in 1980, the Front wrote, “‘Christians have been an integral part of our revolutionary history at a level unprecedented... Our experience has proven that it is possible to be a believer and at the same time a dedicated revolutionary and that there is no contradiction between the two’” (Löwy 39). Further, many of the Christians and Liberation Theologians who participated in the revolution “also assumed key responsibilities in the new revolutionary government” (Löwy 38). One such Liberation Theologian was Father Ernesto Cardenal, who was the minister of culture from 1979-1987. He embraced the idea that Liberation Theology was Marxist. He claimed that “‘Christians are not only able to be Marxists but, on the contrary, to be authentically Christian, they ought to be Marxist’” (Hayward, 2015).

The policies of the Sandinista National Liberation Front showed what a country governed by Liberation Theology might look like: the movement was primarily nonviolent post-revolution, the government “abolished the death penalty and became the first modern revolutionary movement since 1789 not to use the guillotine or perform executions after its victory” (Löwy 39). The new government also pursued a new economic system and political freedoms; “it was essential to develop an alternative

hegemony within the context of the international nonalignment, a mixed economy, internal pluralism, and participatory democracy” (Wright, 113). The Front intended to pursue a mixed economy to emphasize a future more radical and permanent “intervention of the state in the economic order. The idea was to use state control of the economic heights as a fundamental element of social transition” (Wright, 114). This economy would include “the nationalization of the banks and of foreign trade” (Wright, 114). As well as land reform, which occurred in 1979, “land was redistributed as production cooperatives and/or state farms” (Zoomers, 64). Further, where production by private owners did continue, “most marketing of agricultural goods was to be centralized in state hands and there was to be a system that guaranteed good prices to rural producers and a supply of basic commodities at low prices for urban consumers” (Wright, 120). This new economy would also establish “minimum wages and the development of a ‘social wage’ through provision of education and health services by the state” (Wright, 120).

However, through this period of Sandinista control of Nicaragua, the Vatican was very critical: Pope John II spoke against the Sandinista government, calling it “godless communism” (Bochenski, 264). Many within the Catholic hierarchy “strongly condemned...Liberation Theology as Marxist, incompatible with the Christian faith and the tradition of the church” (Vuola, 33). The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith would publish “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation.’” The document was sympathetic to the audience of Liberation Theology, those in poverty and oppression; however, it warned against “the deviations, and risk of deviation,

damaging to the faith and to Christian living” that could be caused by “borrowing...various currents of Marxist thought” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1984). The critique of the seeming connection between Liberation Theology and Marxism was due to “atheism and the denial of the human person, his liberty and rights... at the core of the Marxist theory” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1984).

Politically, the Sandinista National Liberation Front pursued a pluralist government that “was to be united with participatory democracy through the development of mass organizations that would play a substantial role in policy making and implementation, thus representing the ‘majorities’ in different forms” (Wright, 114). The Sandinistas’ fight with the Contras beginning in 1981, however, made it challenging for this pluralist style of government to be upheld. In 1982 “several of the traditional political parties” including the Movement for Nicaraguan Democracy and Superior Counsel for Private Enterprise (COSEP) called for elections to be held, and attempted to protest in the streets (Wright, 122). When they were “prevented from doing so, COSEP...accused the FSLN of ‘having deviated from its original governing program’” and claimed that the elections were not held so “the FSLN had time to consolidate its control” through “serious restrictions on democratic liberties” (Wright, 122-123).

And while the Sandinista National Liberation Front gained political power and held it, other nations influenced by Liberation Theology were not as successful.<sup>6</sup> In Brazil, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, “many groups and theologians were expecting to

---

<sup>6</sup> This is generalizing that the Sandinista National Liberation Front is still influenced by Liberation Theology.



see power coming from poor people's movements. Enthusiasm was great, and there were many cooperative efforts by popular movements hoping for real and lasting change" (de Oliveira Ribeiro, 310-11). This not only did not happen, the situation in Brazil has gotten worse: "the power of neoliberalism has brought a feeling of powerlessness, weakness and despair among the poor as the possibilities of social changes have not been realized" (de Oliveira Ribeiro, 310-11). Further, internationally Liberation Theology was not well-received by those who accused it of being connected to Marxism and, particularly in the Cold War era, connected the theology to the Soviet Union's attempt to spread communism internationally. In Nicaragua, the Contras, the opposition to the Sandinista National Liberation Front, were supported by the United States. As vice president in 1983, George H.W. Bush even criticized the Vatican for its lack of response to nations in Latin America, claiming to be "unable to understand how priests can reconcile their faith with Marxist ideas and tactics" (Goshko, 1983). However, Liberation Theology in general, "has always remained a minority voice in the church and in theology as well as in Latin American societies" (Vuola, 28).

Liberation Theology has had a lasting impact through other parts of the world: "In the 1990s, the 'option for the poor' has been rearticulated within black and indigenous communities and in gender struggles. The concepts of solidarity and 'otherness' have become stronger" (de Oliveira Ribeiro, 310). Larger movements influenced by Liberation Theology include Black Theology, focused on injustices such as segregation in America, and apartheid in South Africa. Liberation Theology should not even be considered as a

dissolved or declined social movement: Pope Francis recently implied that some of Liberation Theology may be finally approved by the Vatican, with his call “for ‘a poor church for the poor’” (Speciale, 2013).

In all, Liberation Theology is a movement that emerged in incredibly unique settings, in comparison to the other two movements studied here. It was a movement that updated the Catholic Church in Latin America, just the same way the conservative governments were overthrown. Liberation Theology emerged amongst those in rural poverty, frustrated with the government, frustrated with the old Catholic Church, and in the context of Vatican II. Further, its mission makes it not only a movement from the 1960s and 70s, but also a flexible theology that can be, and has been adopted by those fighting for liberation and justice.

## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Chapter 4: Poor People's Campaign: A Moral Revival, 2018

#### **Emergence: Rise of Neoliberalism and Wealth Inequality**

The Poor People's Campaign: A Moral Revival, unlike Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology, is not an immediate response to an economic crisis. It is the result of growing dissent amongst the lower and oppressed classes in the United States, over years of corporate interest overriding people's interests, due to a slow build of neoliberalism. This would result in the loss of workers' rights and welfare, deregulation in the 1980s through the 1990s, and a culture around economics where poverty is an individual mistake.

The roots of neoliberalism began as early as the 1970s, redefining the role of the government in workers' lives, starting with a roll back on "labor regulations protecting workers" as well as a decline in "funding for education and public programs" (Nadasen, 2017). "Reaganomics" of the 1980s was extremely neoliberal focusing on corporate growth as a means to decrease poverty, supporting "supply-side economics" or "trickle-down economics" through tax cuts and deregulation. Culturally, the Cold War at the same time created a world-wide ideological split between communism and capitalism. This split not only increased American nationalism, but defined American identity as free -- focusing on individuality and small government, and therefore a capitalist economy. This national identity also affected Christianity; as many communist nations like the

Soviet Union were also secular, it seemed that Christianity was compatible with American capitalism and not at all with communism.

Capitalism and individuality has thus become embedded in American culture and Christianity. It cannot even be considered only conservative policy; even the Clinton administration adopted individualism, signing into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; the bill reformed social welfare, replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. It also limited welfare recipients to “poor single parents with children” and required recipients to have some “personal responsibility,” i.e., “a lifetime limit of five years of assistance and mandatory work requirements” (Nadasen, 2017).

The result of neoliberal policies became apparent in 2007 with the “housing bubble burst.” Not only did many homes go into foreclosure, but the banking failure caused a national and global recession. Unemployment was at 9.5% in 2007 and would increase to 13.2% in 2008 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). The financial crisis also revealed to many the risk in deregulation, and further, how corporate interest -- not people's -- was more represented by government. Anger intensified due to the government response to the crisis. Concluding that these massive banks that had seemingly caused the crisis in the first place were “too big to fail” the United States government would help “bail out” the banks, lending around \$431 billion through the Troubled Asset Relief Program to these major banks to buy up their toxic assets

(Congressional Budget Office, 2). But those who lost their homes or jobs saw no “bail out” or welfare support.

This consciousness and anger towards corporate interest protected by the government hit a turning point in 2011, three years after the great recession. The Occupy Wall Street was a national movement that quickly became an international movement in only a few weeks. The focus of the movement was in response to economic inequality prevalent in the United States; its key slogan “We are the 99” came from the demand that “the 99% [of the United States population] that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1%” (Gautney, 2011). They were specifically protesting that “the top 1 percent of households in the United States own somewhere between 30 to 40 percent of all privately held wealth” (Gautney, 2011). The influence of the three month presence was limited; while it did produce conversation around inequality within the United States in ways that had never been so comprehensive, it seems little has changed since the movement.

Around the same time as the emergence of Occupy Wall Street, Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II also began a state-level protest, holding “Monday-afternoon gatherings at the statehouse to bear what it called ‘moral witness’ to the legislature’s actions” (Purdy, 2017). One of the leaders of the movement and head of the North Carolina NAACP, Anthony Spearman, described the protestors as coming “‘out of a womb of oppression’ to resist and push back” (Blythe, 2018). This oppression had occurred through “laws overturned that created the racial and partisan gerrymandering”

that made “it more likely that lawmakers are selecting their voters rather than voters choosing who they want to represent them in the lawmaking process” (Blythe, 2018). The movement was not focused on singular issues, rather it would quickly morph depending on the needs of the people and response of the state legislature. The movement grew from Barber and “dozens of ministers and activists to hundreds and, by mid-summer, as many as five thousand people” (Purdy, 2017).

Barber then reorganized the protests and began calling the movement “Forward Together” and referring to the gatherings at the Raleigh statehouse as “Moral Marches.” The following year, the Moral March in February 2014 “drew a crowd estimated at between fifty thousand and eighty thousand people” (Purdy, 2017). By 2017, the movement had held its eleventh annual march, and “organizers claimed that more than eighty thousand marchers had attended” (Purdy, 2017). This march “surpassed the crowd at the 2014 march, which was then the largest civil-rights gathering in the South since the era of Selma and Birmingham” (Purdy, 2017). For Barber, the Moral Marches “offer a universalist response” in comparison to “North Carolina’s right wing’s practice of a divisive form of identity politics” (Purdy, 2017).

Still, the country faces nation-wide inequality and poverty; currently “forty million Americans live in poverty, nearly half in deep poverty” and further, “the United States has the highest child poverty rates — 25%— in the developed world” (Nadasen, 2017). Inequality has also not changed much in the last five years as “the top 1% earn 81 times more than the bottom 50%” (Nadasen, 2017). Further, inequality is specifically an

issue that has gotten drastically worse in the 21st century: “In 1981, the top 1% of adults earned on average 27 times more than the bottom 50% of adults” (Nadasen, 2017). Issues of poverty and income inequality are even worse when considering race in the United States. In 2008, the unemployment rate was worse for men and women of color; for Black and Hispanic men, it was 20.5% and 18.7%, respectively, in comparison to 13.9% for white men (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008).

Thus, in 2018, Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1968 Poor People’s Campaign was revived (hence the name, Poor People’s Campaign: A Moral Revival) offering a universalist response to poverty, attempting to unite rather than divide, just as its predecessor did 50 years ago, “The original 1968 Poor People’s Campaign was King’s vision to take the civil rights fight beyond injustices rooted in Jim Crow and to expand them to fight indignities of poverty suffered across racial lines” (Booker, 2018). The campaign takes the most radical issues of its predecessor’s work, fighting for structural solutions to poverty.

**Discourse: Higher Ground Moral Declaration, William J. Barber II, *The Third Reconstruction and Revive Us Again***

The Poor People’s Campaign initially emerged within the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, led by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in 1967. The aim of the original movement was to create a “‘revolution of values’ in America” and aimed to be a campaign “that could unite poor and impacted communities across the country” (Poor

People's Campaign, 2020). The campaign was fully formed to have demands, advocating for "full employment, a guaranteed basic income, and access to capital for small and minority businesses" (Cobb, 2018). However, the Poor People's Campaign quickly dissolved following King's assassination in 1968.

The original Poor People's Campaign was based on earlier Christian social movement theology. King describes how he was inspired by Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*; the book "left an indelible imprint on my thinking by giving me a theological basis for the social concern which had already grown up in me as a result of my early experiences" (Ramsay, 31). Interestingly, King did not entirely agree with Rauschenbusch. He writes that he felt that Rauschenbusch "had fallen victim to the nineteenth century 'cult of inevitable progress'" (Ramsay, 31) and further, "he came perilously close to identifying the Kingdom of God with a particular social and economic system" (Ramsay, 31). However, King ultimately supported Rauschenbusch's focus on Christianity's role in responding to economic injustice. King claims, "any religion which professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried" (Ramsay, 31).

Similar to King, Barber was called to nonviolent protest at a young age, outlined in his first book, *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*. The book's purpose was to inspire, but also acts as a means of telling Barber's personal experience in protest work. Born to a religious family with a



father who was a pastor, Barber also intended to be a pastor. As an adult, however, he realized “if I were going to do this work of pastoring, I had to join the fight” (Barber, 17). His work has always stayed local, believing that he should not lead a movement, but instead be amongst it. His “first fight,” the second chapter in his book, outlines his first post-college pastor position in Martinsville, Virginia, where he fought for workers’ rights to unionize. He writes realistically, explaining that in his personal experience in Virginia, “faith-based notions of justice and mercy could not motivate ‘moral man’ to engage in political issues” (Barber, 20). However, this protest was not to give him experience in successfully advocating for workers, but instead, the importance of compromise, emphasizing “that ‘immoral society’ would always require those seeking justice in this world to compromise and calculate their political effectiveness” (Barber, 20). This “compromise” is not one of reducing demands and accepting whatever political response the protest receives, but instead acknowledging that the protest cannot be done alone. In Barber’s words, “In the struggle for justice, we always need all the friends we can get,” (Barber, 26) stressing the importance of universalism in a social movement.

The focus of *The Third Reconstruction* is to outline Barber’s Forward Together Moral Movement. Barber opens the section on the Moral Monday protests referring to Dr. King’s letter from Birmingham jail, emphasizing a thread between the Christian peaceful protests Barber leads, and earlier Christian peaceful protests, like King’s leadership in the Civil Rights movement (Barber, 100). Further, he connects the movement to even older history, describing the energy of the protests being like “a new

kind of revival... reminiscent of the camp meetings... in the late nineteenth century, when evangelical preachers made a direct connection between personal salvation and social justice” (Barber, 103). This religious revival he is referring to is the 1850s Third Great Awakening in the United States, which gave foundation for the Social Gospel Movement.

Barber also stresses the importance of making a movement intersectional from its very foundation; he describes the “small experiment” of the protests, for example, in Wake County Board of Education meetings, “it mattered what we looked like...together, our group presented a vivid image of the kind of diverse schools we were arguing for” (Barber, 78).

*The Third Reconstruction* gives origin to terms used by the Poor People’s Campaign of 2018. In the “Higher Ground Moral Agenda” terms like “higher ground” and “moral” come from the Moral Monday protests. “Moral” is an “insistence that, at its heart, our movement has a moral framework” (Barber, 105). Further, it was meant to not be affiliated with a specific religion; while it was led by a Christian preacher, it was an interfaith movement, and “moral” allowed for the movement to have a more universal vision of defending “the deepest shared values of our faith traditions” and “how those values are embedded in our state constitution” (Barber, 106). The term “higher ground” came from an anecdote Barber’s son told him: in mountainous terrain, geographers refer to a “snake line” above which, snakes cannot live. Barber compares the unjust legislation he sees occurring in the North Carolina General Assembly to snakes, referring to

“extremism of venomous politics” and therefore, the need for the movement “to hold out the hope of higher ground” (Barber, 106).

When it came to developing a second Poor People’s Campaign, Barber was drawn to acting religiously political, but in the way he believed Christians were called to be, not what was being publicly portrayed on the right: “We challenge the position that the preeminent moral issues today are about prayer in public schools, abortion, and homosexuality” (Barber, xvi). The aim of the campaign was therefore “to change the political conversation around poverty” (Cobb, 2018) and, instead, Barber believes that “the deepest public concerns of our faith traditions are how our society treats the poor, those on the margins, the least of these” (Barber, xvi).

This belief is repeated on the second page of “Higher Ground Moral Agenda” written verbatim (*Repairers of the Breach*, 2). This moral agenda was written by the Repairers of the Breach, a nonprofit organization, of which Barber is a part. This is unique in contrast to Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology, where the Social Creed of Churches and the Medellín 1968 document, respectively, were both written before the starts of these movements and influenced both Walter Rauschenbusch and Gustavo Gutiérrez. The “Higher Ground Moral Agenda” is very reminiscent of the Moral Mondays, focusing on a variety of social issues prevalent in the United States, and is even more comprehensive than the Social Creed of Churches and the Medellín 1968 document, addressing more than poverty issues.

The agenda also includes an initial section, “A Moral Grounding in Scripture and Our Founding Creed” referring to Christian theology as well as the United States Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The document begins with five key points that are “the most sacred moral principles of our faith and constitutional values” and members of the campaign must “lift up and defend” these principles and values (*Repairers of the Breach*, 2). The first point includes all forms of economic justice, supporting issues such as labor protection and anti-poverty in forms of living wages, affordable housing, and direct cash transfers, as well as highlighting how class issues are also intersectional, emphasizing anti-racist policies and fair policies for immigrants (*Repairers of the Breach*, 2).

The agenda contains two sections that are particularly important for this analysis of the campaign. First, the agenda includes “Economic Justice,” and establishes the “moral and constitutional foundation” referring to Bible verses,<sup>7</sup> and quotes the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> *Isaiah 10:1-2*: “Doom to you who legislate evil, who make laws that make victims—laws that make misery for the poor, that rob my destitute people of dignity, exploiting defenseless widows, taking advantage of homeless children.”

*Micah 2:1-3*: “Doom to those who plot evil, who go to bed dreaming up crimes! As soon as it’s morning, they’re off, full of energy, doing what they’ve planned. They covet fields and grab them, find homes and take them. They bully the neighbor and his family, see people only for what they can get out of them. God has had enough.”

<sup>8</sup> “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (Declaration of Independence).

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America” (Preamble of the Constitution of the United States).

The agenda also establishes the current economic social issues, such as unemployment, infrastructure, and homelessness (*Repairers of the Breach*, 6). The agenda takes an intersectional approach to poverty, highlighting how “nearly 1 in 3 Native Americans (29.2%), over 1 in 4 African Americans (27.2%), 1 in 4 Hispanic/Latinos (23.5%), 1 in 10 Asians (10.5%) and 1 in 10 non-Hispanic whites (9.6%) live below the federal poverty line” (*Repairers of the Breach*, 6). The agenda also includes a gender split in poverty, as “more than half of all children below the poverty line live in families headed by women” (*Repairers of the Breach*, 6).

The agenda then outlines solutions to issues of poverty and unemployment, emphasizing the government’s role in protecting the unemployed, homeless, and poor. *Repairers of the Breach* advocates for policies such as a “guaranteed annual income” for those who are unemployed or underemployed, as well as government investment to create more jobs. Further, *Repairers of the Breach* opposes the criminalization of homelessness and poverty, such as demolishing homeless encampments.

The agenda repeats this pattern with a section “on Labor Rights” by referring to the Bible,<sup>9</sup> the Constitution of the United States,<sup>10</sup> and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King,

---

<sup>9</sup> *James 5:4*: “All the workers you’ve exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of God.”

<sup>10</sup> “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (Constitution of the United States, 14 Amendment, Section 1).

Jr.<sup>11</sup> The agenda, much like this analysis of the movement, establishes the setting for the need for labor rights, emphasizing that income inequality has increased due to a decline in real wages since the 1970s, and a direct relationship between declining wages and a decline of unionization (*Repairers of the Breach*, 7). Further, the agenda addresses that income inequality and unemployment is racially affected, with “medium wages for workers of color are slightly more than half of white workers” and “unemployment rates for these workers is consistently more than double that of white workers” (*Repairers of the Breach*, 7). This section concludes with public policy points, repeating similar policy as seen in the earlier two movements: first, building from what Social Gospel established, a higher minimum wage, and the right of workers to collectively bargain (*Repairers of the Breach*, 7). It also includes global trade requirements, repeating similar themes of Liberation Theology’s anti-imperialism and confronting dependency theory. The agenda focuses on fair trade policy, arguing that this “will end the global ‘race to the bottom’ for workers, promote employment and high wages at home and abroad, and share the great wealth of our global economy fairly” (*Repairers of the Breach*, 7).

Most interestingly, *Repairers of the Breach* does not describe the policy positions outlined in the agenda as “liberal.” Instead, the nonprofit claims “the positions are neither left nor right; neither conservative nor liberal. Rather, they are morally defensible, constitutionally consistent, and economically sound” (*Repairers of the Breach*, 2019).

---

<sup>11</sup> “If a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists” (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

The campaign also aims “to create a climate in which it is impossible for any candidate or party to continue ignoring the subject” (Cobb, 2018).

Alongside the agenda of the Poor People’s Campaign, Barber wrote *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing* in conjunction with Liz Theoharis and Rick Lowery, other religious leaders of the Poor People’s Campaign. The book was a collection of essays and sermons they had given, focusing on establishing the current poverty crisis and how to respond. In one of Barber’s initial sections, he is critical of the market economy, arguing that it causes “domination” (Barber, 23). Therefore, he criticizes “the contemporary church” claiming that it “has become so accommodative of capitalism that its theology is often viewed as a justification of economic injustice” (Barber, 23).

He also writes on “attentional violence against the poor and working poor” (Barber, 112). That is, that poverty is ignored culturally in the United States, but also in “economic philosophy and economic conscience” (Barber, 112). However, he argues that this cannot stand, that “if you ignore the poor, one day the whole system will implode and collapse” (Barber, 112). And thus, in one of his sermons, he instructs his congregation to “touch your neighbor and say, ‘We are called to address economic injustice and poverty’” (Barber, 201). In his last chapter of the book, he refers back to King and intersectionality in how the Poor People’s Campaign and all social movements similar to the campaign must “change the narrative and force this country to deal with the issue of race and

poverty. That is the only way. Dr. King said it's the only thing -- when you can get poor black and whites and others to come together" (Barber, 208).

### **Political Response: Protests and 2020 Presidential Candidates**

The focus of Barber's work as a social movement leader has been getting others to come together, and further, pushing local and national government to acknowledge the issues of poverty and the needs of those in poverty. In Barber's *The Third Reconstruction*, he describes conservative political response to the Moral Mondays. On the first Monday, as Barber and others were escorted out of the state house by security, he described hearing "Speaker Tillis telling a reporter he would be happy to meet with anyone who treated *his* house with respect" (Barber, 80). He writes on how this was exactly the intended political response of the movement, "his reaction was already reflecting the overreach we had hoped to expose. This was, after all, the people's house. Hubris made it difficult for Speaker Tillis to remember that he had been elected to serve us" (Barber, 80).

Barber also describes in *The Third Reconstruction* how different corporations that aligned with the conservative government in power in North Carolina referred to the policies advocated by Forward Together. He writes, "only now, their [foundations and media corporations] buzzwords were 'entitlements,' 'big government,' and 'the undeserving poor'" (Barber, 68). These terms are typical in individualist discourse to discredit welfare policy: those who receive welfare are "undeserving" and "entitled," and



‘big government’ relies on old American fears of big government established in the Reagan era.

In the summer of 2018, the Poor People’s Campaign officially began, with “poor people and moral witnesses in 40 states” participating in “a series of rallies and actions, a new organism of state-based movements” (Poor People’s Campaign, 2020). This resulted in “the most expansive wave of nonviolent civil disobedience in the 21st century United States” (Poor People’s Campaign). These rallies and protests were not ignored in Washington D.C. In the middle of the summer’s protests, “Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) led a two-hour hearing on Capitol Hill to examine the effects of poverty in America” (Burton, 2018).

The campaign also received support from Senator Bernie Sanders because he agreed with Barber’s view of how movements must be organized. Sanders said of Barber, ““What he understands is that real change never takes place from the top on down... It is always from the bottom on up, and that’s what he is trying to do and what he understands and what he preaches”” (Cobb, 2018). Both Barber and Sanders focus on creating inclusiveness through social policy, and Barber takes this concept one step further by emphasizing being amongst the movement rather than creating it or leading it.

The next summer in 2019, the campaign “convened over 1,000 community leaders in Washington, D.C. for the Poor People’s Moral Action Congress” (Poor People’s Campaign, 2020). This congress produced “the release of our Poor People’s Moral Budget, and a hearing before the House Budget Committee on the issues facing the

140 million poor and low-income people in the nation” as well as held “the largest presidential candidates’ forum of the pre-debate season” (Poor People’s Campaign, 2020).

Barber had criticized the Democrat party in the past, arguing that poverty issues have been inexplicably removed from Democrat discourse, “I don’t understand how you come from the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson and now you’re scared of addressing the issue of poverty. Their consultants or whoever has told them, ‘Don’t say the word poverty’” (Jones, 2019). Therefore, presidential candidates present at the 2019 forum held by the Poor People’s Campaign were given questions on policy issues that affect lower-income people. Of the four candidates attending, three spoke specifically on policy, including Senator Sanders, Senator Kamala Harris, and Senator Warren. “Sanders reiterated his call for voting rights for incarcerated people... Harris spoke of changing the cash bail system and providing relief to renters... Warren outlined her plan to create a wealth tax and use the proceeds to pay for programs like universal child care” (Kaplan, 2019). One candidate who did not attend the forum even felt a social push to address the Poor People’s Campaign and poverty issues: “Pete Buttigieg, spoke at Barber’s Goldsboro, North Carolina, church in recent days” (Jones, 2019).

Currently, Poor People’s Campaign has begun preparation for an even larger event in the summer of 2020. In December 2019 the campaign began “a 25-state We Must Do M.O.R.E. Tour” (Poor People’s Campaign, 2020). MORE stands for “mobilize, organize, register, and educate” focusing on creating consciousness in low-income

communities across the United States (Poor People's Campaign, 2020). They emphasize that "a moral fusion movement is necessary to revive and advance our most precious Constitutional and moral values" but argue that "this can only happen if those who are impacted link up with other moral leaders and people of conscience to break through the silos of our work and the divisions that have been wrought in our communities" (Poor People's Campaign, 2020).

The campaign "intends to organize a march in Washington, D.C., to coincide with its first ever Poor People's Assembly, which will train the nation's attention on poverty and related issues ahead of the presidential election" (Jones, 2019). And like past summers, the march and the assembly will "serve the campaign's principal goals: to force a more honest conversation about the state of inequality in America, and to make sure that conversation leads to substantive political change" (Jones, 2019). The Poor People's Campaign writes that it aims with this 2020 summer to "demonstrate the power of poor people to be agents of change in not just one election, but at the very heart of this democracy." (Poor People's Campaign, 2020).

The challenge for this analysis on Poor People's Campaign: A Moral Revival is that it is a current, and young campaign. The campaign is also rather different than its Christian predecessors, because it is the result of long-held suffering and anger. Like Liberation Theology, however, it seems that the Poor People's Campaign has emerged in a culture that is warming to larger government and social welfare policy. The question

still remains: what will the result of the campaign's growing influence on national politics be?

## Analyzing Christianity and Social Justice through Christian Social Movements

### Chapter 5: Conclusion

Along with the birth and development of capitalism, there are Christian social movements that argue that Christianity does not play a private role in our lives, but is a lens to critique the capitalist system. Thus, the movements analyzed in this thesis show a pattern of Christianity rising to the occasion in particular settings to defend social justice policy. They are important in the history of Christianity as they are of a type of Christianity often ignored, particularly in the United States.

### **Poor People's Movements**

The analysis of Social Gospel Movement, Liberation Theology and Poor People's Campaign is purposeful; they also align with periods of key economic change for the United States and the development of capitalism in the 20th and 21st centuries. Periods of high development, including those seen in the industrial revolution, globalization, and financialization, cause high inequality. When we look at these movements as simply social movements, we must consider social context, and how that affects their emergence. Times of economic crisis and inequality lead to public outrage. Without economic inequality and anger, there would be no religious fervor that would give birth to the emergence of these movements.

Anger is important for social movements, particularly those that are "poor people's" movements fighting against poverty and economic inequality. Cultural

understanding of why people are poor, and why people are rich, specifically in market-based economies, supports deregulation (Polanyi, 254) and individual charity (Miller, 294). Thus a social movement is not only challenged in fighting for structural change, it is challenging ideology that even “the poor are led to believe” and possibly even accepting “that their destitution is deserved, and that the riches and power that others command are also deserved” (Piven and Cloward, 6). Further, believing that poverty is deserved and therefore shameful drives many low-income households to believe they are simply not poor or in poverty. But, because of the “pressure theory” as Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward refer to, economic change -- such as, industrialization, globalization, and financialization -- is “a precondition for civil disorder” (Piven and Cloward, 8). In this civil disorder, anger and frustration develop under the pressure of exploitation and inequality. Further, in this civil disorder, “the structures of daily life weaken, the regulatory capacities of these structures too, are weakened” providing no other alternative but for those in power to respond (Piven and Cloward, 11).

Still, there is an awareness among these movements that anger and religious fervor are not sustainable. It is short lived, and depending on the movement to accomplish structural change on passion alone is futile. Thus, for these movements to be effective, consciousness is also important. Consciousness, or conscientization, occurs when “the powerless” are “able to explore their grievances openly, with others similarly

situated” and to “develop their own notions of interest and actions, and themselves as actors” (Gaventa, 257).

This was a focus for all three movements, done through literature publication, as well as relying on an online presence for the youngest, Poor People’s Campaign. For Social Gospel Movement, it was the popularity of Walter Rauschenbusch’s *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, a book that “enthralled a huge audience with its graceful flow of short, clear sentences, its charming metaphors and its vigorous pace” (Dorrien, 17). And so, the “book was a supercharger for a movement. It went through 13 printings in five years, sold 50,000 copies and set a new standard for political theology” (Dorrien, 2007). Gustavo Gutiérrez’s *A Theology of Liberation* had a similar effect for Liberation Theology, not only giving the movement its name, but also popularizing the phrase “a preferential option for the poor” that was adopted by the movement. In the case of the Poor People’s Campaign, consciousness and education are intrinsic steps William J. Barber suggests for a social movement, starting with “changing the public conversation and consciousness” as well as using “social media coordination in all forms” to spread awareness (Barber, 128).

Consciousness amongst those affected -- the poor and oppressed -- is particularly important, as they often can have the greatest effect. Those who are exploited play a central role in the system of exploitation, and therefore, “protest is more likely to have a seriously disruptive impact... and it is more likely to evoke wider political reverberations when powerful groups have large stakes in the disrupted institution” (Piven and Cloward,

24). Thus, movements cannot just create consciousness and awareness, but they must also be organized and led by the oppressed and exploited. This was a key belief of Liberation Theology: Gutiérrez wrote in *A Theology of Liberation*, “in order for this liberation to be authentic and complete, it has to be undertaken by the oppressed themselves and so must stem from the value proper to them” (Gutiérrez, 57). This is similar for the Poor People’s Campaign: Barber’s first step focuses on creating a movement of the people, one that spreads through “indigenously led grassroots organizing” (Barber, 127).

Social Gospel Movement was less focused on its organization, but instead on structural change to give control to the powerless. The movement pushed for “economic democracy” where workers would own the means of production, putting an end to monopolies, and basing “prices solely on service rendered” (Rauschenbusch, 361). Thus, these movements had the ability to fight for policy that would change the entire system, with solutions that were “not just for the emergency” and responding to anger, “but to emerge a new society” (Barber, 2020).

### **Traces through Discourse**

Another key characteristic of these three social movements is that they are Christian, and as such, complicate the typical social movement life cycle. In a typical social movement life cycle, the movement emerges, organizes itself and advocates for its interests, and then ends, and is either adopted into the mainstream culture, or dies from either confrontation or decline. This is not necessarily the case with Christian



movements. For these movements, even failure and decline is not death. Believing that they are doing God's work, they may dissolve but the mission will not.

For both Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology, it would be more accurate to consider these movements as "phases" of Christianity, as T. Howland Sanks does. Sanks describes Liberation Theology as "a *phase* in the life of Latin American Christianity, as the Social Gospel movement was a phase in the history of North American Christianity" and argues further that these phases "had some long-lasting consequences" (Sanks, 682). One of these consequences is literal and obvious; the effect Social Gospel Movement has had on the Poor People's Campaign. Not only was Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., leader of the original 1968 Poor People's Campaign, influenced directly by Walter Rauschenbusch,<sup>12</sup> but William Barber has also referred to Social Gospel Movement leaders. Barber connects current democratic socialism to these early 20th century leaders, writing, "if you throw away democratic socialism, you also throw out Jane Addams, Eugene Debs, Florence Kelley, John Dewey, Upton Sinclair, Helen Keller, W.E.B. DuBois, Albert Einstein, A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Walter Reuther" (Barber, 2020).

---

<sup>12</sup> "I came early to Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, which left an indelible imprint on my thinking by giving me a theological basis for the social concern which had already grown up in me as a result of my early experiences. Of course there were points at which I differed with Rauschenbusch. I felt that he had fallen victim to the nineteenth century "cult of inevitable progress" which led him to a superficial optimism concerning man's nature. Moreover, he came perilously close to identifying the Kingdom of God with a particular social and economic system... But in spite of these shortcomings Rauschenbusch had done a great service for the Christian Church by insisting that the gospel deals with the whole man, not only his soul but his body; not only his spiritual well-being but his material well-being. It has been my conviction ever since reading Rauschenbusch that any religion which professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried" (Ramsay, 31).

More subliminally, looking at the missions of these movements we can see overlapping themes, emphasizing this idea that the movements show traces of each other, even across continents and centuries. All three movements are critical of a capitalist economic system in how it creates individualism and competition, and therefore inequality and injustice. In this criticism, they also judge the role of the church in the economic system, one that is often localized and focused on charity.

Walter Rauschenbusch emphasized that community is the focus of Christianity, writing that “Christianity desires to bind humanity together” but that economic inequality challenges this community, “difference in wealth cuts it [community] asunder” (Rauschenbusch, 224). Both Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology “share the rejection of a spiritualized understanding of the gospel, a rejection of excessive individualism, a conviction that salvation is necessarily a social matter” (Sanks, 680). Liberation Theology therefore “shifts the focus of poverty onto the social structures that produce oppression and call followers to provide justice, not just charity” (Snarr, 54-55). And while Poor People’s Campaign does not directly use the term “individualism,” it does distinctly see poverty as a structural issue, rather than an individual one. This is clear in the campaign’s “Higher Ground Moral Declaration,” which focuses on the role that government must take on to respond to poverty.

Though all three movements share criticism of capitalism, and view structural change as necessary, they disagree on how to create this economic and political change. Liberation Theology takes a much more radical approach, and sees “the need for some

form of revolution (not necessarily violent, as [Richard] Bennett says) rather than a gradual evolution or development through the economic and political system already operative” (Sanks, 680). Interestingly, while Social Gospel Movement never acted or supported this type of radical action, Walter Rauschenbusch did write on the role of the church in a similarly radical way. In his work *The Righteousness of the Kingdom*, a collection of Rauschenbusch’s work that was never published until 1993, he argues that the church’s attitude towards government should be “passive resistance and public protest against compulsory participation in the wrong-doing; and establishment of a new genuine state when the previous one becomes a fraud, a class pretending to be a state” (Rauschenbusch, 249-250).

### **Role of Power**

A final important characteristic of these movements is the churches’ position of power, specifically lack thereof during the movements’ emergences. It seems that when the church lacks political and cultural influence, more progressive and social justice thinking can emerge. Social Gospel Movement of the early 1900s emerged not only due to an economic crisis and Rauschenbusch’s passion for justice, but also a loss of power. In New York City where Rauschenbusch preached, the large waves of immigrants from Europe did not attend Protestant churches, but instead Roman Catholic churches. Thus, Rauschenbusch and other “Protestant clergymen became interested in securing social justice for the poor, partly as an attempt to expand the appeal of the Protestant church in

cities” (PBS, 2003). Liberation Theology also emerged during a period where the Catholic church had lost its political foothold throughout Latin American nations. Because the Catholic church had “legitimized the authority of conservative governments, regardless of how oppressive conservatives were” in the 1940s and 1950s, it had little influence with new populist governments that had overthrown the conservative governments in the 1960s (Betances, 19). This loss of power, however, gave these movements the ability to be radical without fear of consequences; such as a shrinking congregation or loss of political influence.

For the Poor People’s Campaign, however, there is not a loss of Christian power. The evangelical right seems to have more power than ever, being an important voting block for Republican candidates. And the evangelical right has not been subtle about maintaining this power; instead, “in defiance of almost all previously existing Christian theology” the evangelical right has “enthusiastically embraced the doctrine of ‘supply-side economics,’ that creating money and effectively giving it to the rich is the most Biblically appropriate way to bring about national prosperity” (Graeber, 377). The Poor People’s Campaign thus has a unique position in comparison to the Social Gospel Movement and Liberation Theology -- much of its grassroots organizing is located in the south -- in attempting to create anger and civil disobedience within communities who identify with the evangelical right, and therefore feel like they have political power and influence, even though they are also areas of rural poverty.

## Conclusion

It is easy to find God in times of struggle. It is not surprising that many become faithful when all they have left is faith. The same is also seen with the passing of social justice legislation. In times of struggle, “social programs expand in the United States... to pacify the population and undermine the revolutionary potential of shared experiences of oppression” (INCITE!, xvi). In crises, particularly economic crises, we cry out to God and to our government for saving, and a way to assure ourselves this will never happen again.

In these times, such as the industrial revolution or globalization in Latin America, structural issues become clearer, and the need for legislation as opposed to individual charity is more widely accepted. This is why these specific movements were able to have lasting influence and create political change. Social Gospel Movement was one of the first American movements of Protestant clergy and followers fighting for economic equality through social justice policies, and thus redefined the role of the Christian church. While it did not have an immediate effect on policy, many Social Gospel Movement leaders were involved in legislation passed in the 1930s, such as social security (Rothbard, 231).

In comparison, Liberation Theology inspired national revolutions, including the Nicaraguan Revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front in 1979. Liberation Theologians were not only members of the Front, but the Sandinista National Liberation Front acknowledged the Catholic church in Nicaragua, and pursued policies

supported by Liberation Theology, such as nationalization of the banks (Wright, 114), and redistribution of land (Zoomers, 64).

And while this influence must be appreciated, it does raise the question as to what extent Christianity and social justice naturally overlap. The Poor People's Campaign appears to argue that this overlap cannot only occur in times of economic disparity, but even in times when churches are not lacking power or strength. Christianity's role in bringing about economic and social justice cannot be determined by its relationship with the government. It should instead be determined by its theological values; in the case of these three social movements, those are community and justice.

More optimistically, if we see these movements as part of a larger history of Christianity and Christian social movements, perhaps Christian social movements are evolving to better respond to poverty and economic injustice. While Social Gospel Movement redefined the role of the Protestant church in the United States, it lacked racial inclusion, and only had middle class leadership. Liberation Theology did include a racial component and a focus on grassroots organization, but only emerged under specific settings, and without the Second Vatican Council, it is unlikely the movement would have emerged. The Poor People's Campaign has built on these past two movements, acting as an intersectional grassroots movement that emerged in a strong economy and under a government that is politically influenced by the conservative Protestant church.

In all, these movements show that Christianity can have a role in bringing about social justice policy, and economic justice, should Christian churches choose to accept

this mission. To conclude, Walter Rauschenbusch implies that this focus on community and justice is natural for the church, as much as it is for secular government: ““When the Church implants religious impulses towards righteousness and trains moral convictions of people, it cooperates with the State by creating the most delicate and valuable elements of welfare progress... Together they serve what is greater than either: humanity”” (Snarr, 53).

## Movement Literature

Barber, William J. II (RevDrBarber). “If you throw away democratic socialism, you also throw out Jane Addams, Eugene Debs, Florence Kelley, John Dewey, Upton Sinclair, Helen Keller, W.E.B. DuBois, Albert Einstein, A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Walter Reuther.” 8 February, 2020. Tweet.

Barber, William J. II, and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2016.

Barber, William J. II. “The Call to Greatness in a Grave Situation.” Greenleaf Christian Church, NC, 2020.

Barber, William J. II, Theoharis, Liz, and Rick Lowery. *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *Essential Writings*. Edited by James B. Nickoloff. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.

“Higher Ground Moral Declaration.” *Repairers of the Breach*, 2016.

“Medellín Document: Poverty of the Church.” *Latin American Bishops*, 1968.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. London: MacMillian & Co, Ltd., 1913.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *Christianizing the Social Order*. New York: MacMillian & Co, Ltd., 1912.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. “The New Law.” *The Righteousness of the Kingdom*. Edited by Max L. Stackhouse. Edwin Mellin Press, 1999.



## Bibliography

“Acts 2” in *New International Version*. Biblica, 2011.

Bateman, Bradley W., and Ethan B. Kapstein. “Retrospectives: Between God and the Market: The Religious Roots of the American Economic Association.” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1999, pp. 249-58.

Betances, Emelio. *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective*. Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

Blythe, Anne. “‘We will continue to resist.’ 5 years after first Moral Monday, their fight continues.” *The News and Observer*, 2018.

Bochenski, Michael Ian. *Transforming Faith Communities*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.

Booker, Brakkton. “The Poor People’s Campaign Seeks To Complete Martin Luther King’s Final Dream.” *National Public Radio*, 2018.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Work-experience unemployment rate, 2008.” *U.S. Department of Labor*, 2008.

Burns, P. “The Problem of Socialism in Liberation Theology.” *Theological Studies*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1992, pp. 493–516.

Burton, Tara Isabella. “Poor People’s Campaign rally revives Martin Luther King Jr.’s mission.” *Vox*, 2018.

Christiansen, Jonathan. “Four Stages of Social Movements.” *EBSCO Research Starters*, 2009, pp. 1-7.

Claassen, Ryan L. *Godless Democrats and Pious Republicans?: Party Activists, Party Capture, and the “God Gap.”* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Cobb, Jelani. "William Barber Takes on Poverty and Race in the Age of Trump." *The New Yorker*, 2018.

Comsa, Petre, and Costea Munteanu. "Economics and Religion - a Personalist Perspective." *The Journal of Philosophical Economics*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2009, pp. 5-33.

Dawsey, James M. "Liberation Theology and Economic Development." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 60, no. 5, 2001, pp. 203-12.

de Oliveira Ribeiro, Claudio. "Has Liberation Theology died? Reflections on the relationship between community life and the globalization of the economic system." *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, 1999, pp. 304-314.

Dodson, Michael. "The Christian Left in Latin American Politics." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1979, pp. 45-68.

Dorn, Jacob H. "The Social Gospel and Socialism: A Comparison of the Thought of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch." *Church History*, vol. 62, no. 1, 1993, pp. 82-100.

Dorrien, Gary. "Kingdom coming: Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis." *The Christian Century*, 2007.

Dorrien, Gary. *Social Ethics in the Making: Interpreting an American Tradition*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2011.

Dorrien, Gary. *Economy, Difference, Empire: Social Ethics for Social Justice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Evans, Christopher H. "How the social gospel movement explains the roots of today's religious left." *The Conversation*, 2017.

Feuerherd, Peter. "When Christian Evangelicals Loved Socialism." *JSTOR*, 2019.

Forroohar, Manzar. "Liberation Theology: The Response of Latin American Catholics to Socioeconomic Problems." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 1986, pp. 37–57.

Gautney, Heather. "What is Occupy Wall Street? The history of leaderless movements." *The Washington Post*, 2011.

Gaventa, John. *Power and Powerlessness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Gayarre, José Larrea. "The Challenges of Liberation Theology to Neoliberal Economic Policies." *Social Justice*, vol. 21, no. 4 (58), 1994, pp. 34–45.

Goshko, John M. Catholic Aid To Marxists Puzzles Bush. *The Washington Post*, 1983.

Graeber, David. "(1971-The Beginning of Something Yet to Be Determined)" in *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. New York: Melville House Publishing, 2011.

Hayward, Steven F. "How is 'Liberation Theology' Still A Thing?" *Forbes*, 2015.

Hirschman, Charles, and Elizabeth Mogford. "Immigration and the American Industrial Revolution from 1880 to 1920." *Social Science Research*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2009, pp. 897-920.

Hopkins, Charles Howard. *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915*. New Haven: Yale University, 1940.

Jones, Sarah. "Rev. William Barber on the Political Power of Poor People: 'We Have to Change Our Whole Narrative.'" *Intelligencer*, 2019.

Kaplan, Thomas. "2020 Democrats Address Poverty and Systemic Racism at Presidential Forum." *The New York Times*, 2019.

Kirby, Dianne. "The Cold War and American Religion." *Oxford University Press*, 2017.

Löwy, Michael. "Marxism and Christianity in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1993, pp. 28-42.

- Maimela, SS. "Christian Socialism as Precursor of Liberation Theology." *Black Theology Project*, 1989, pp. 14-27.
- Martin, Edward J. "Liberation Theology, Sustainable Development, and Postmodern Public Administration." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2003, pp. 69–91.
- Miller, David. *Social Justice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
- Mills, John Stuart. "Book IV: Influence of the Progress of Society on Production and Distribution. Chapter 1, General Characteristics of a Progressive State of Wealth." *Principles of Political Economy*. New York: Appleton & Company, 1864.
- Nadasen, Premilla. "Extreme Poverty Returns to America." *The Washington Post*, 2017.
- Nelson, Janet R. "Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel: A Hopeful Theology for the Twenty-First Century Economy." *Cross Currents*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2009, pp. 442-456.
- Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward. *Poor People's Movements*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977
- Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.
- Purdy, Jedediah. "North Carolina's Long Moral March and Its Lessons for the Trump Resistance." *The New Yorker*, 2017.
- Restrepo, Castrillón and José Fernando. "Liberation Theology and its Utopian Crisis." *Theologica Xaveriana*, vol. 68, no. 186, 2018, pp. 20-45.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. "The Progressive Era to the New Era, 1900–1929." *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2011.
- Rothbard, Murray N. "Origins of the Welfare State in America." *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1996, pp. 193-232.

- Sanks, T. Howland. "Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel: Variations on a theme." *Theological Studies*, vol. 41, no. 4, 1980, pp. 668-682.
- Schmidt, Steven. "Latin American Dependency Theory." *Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South*, 2018.
- Schubeck, Thomas. "Liberation Theology and Economics: God's Reign and a New Society" in James M. Dean and A.M.C. Waterman (eds.) *Religion and Economics: Normative Social Theory*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.
- Snarr, Melissa C. *All That You Labor: Religion and Ethics in the Living Wage Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2011.
- Spargo, John. "Christian Socialism in America." *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1909, pp. 16-20.
- Speciale, Alessandro. "Liberation theology finds new welcome in Pope Francis' Vatican." *National Catholic Reporter*, 2013.
- West, Cornel. *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982.
- Wright, Bruce E. *Theory in the Practice of the Nicaraguan Revolution*. New York: Latin American Studies, 1995.
- Zoomers, Annelies. "Rural Development Policy in Latin America: The Future of the Countryside." *Social Scientist*, vol. 30, no. 11/12, 2002, pp. 61-84.