

education, the quota system, and mass unemployment are all limits to the educational and economic rights of parents.

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c. David Regan **CSSP CHURCH FOR LIBERATION—A PASTORAL PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH IN BRAZIL**  
**Dublin:** (DOMINICAN PUBLICATIONS): 1987 238 PAGES.

Contextualisation of christian faith has been part and parcel of the mission of the church. If christianity has practically survived, it is not only because it is the will of God, but also because men and women of every age are able to identify its voice addressing the specifics of their history. Latin America with its "burden of history" has given the global church a paradigm shift in pastoral and theological enterprises.

In this book, David Regan, an Irish Spiritan and a missionary for that matter, treats us to the liberation project which has become foremost in the mission of the church in Brazil. The author attempts to convince his readers as to how and why Brazil, the flagship of the Latin American church, has become the focus of admiration and study in the area of the church's salvific mission in our age.

Renewals are not a bolt from the blue. The author rightly asserts time and time again that pastoral and theological revolution in Brazil are very much inspired by Vatican II, Puebla and Medellin and, rather interestingly, the Cuban revolution. The renewal in Brazil is unique, having its own lineaments which characterise and mark it out. For this and other reasons, the author calls the book a pastoral "portrait".

As a means to an end, the author divides the book into 8 interesting chapters making 238 pages excluding a stimulating introduction, an all embracing epilogue and copious bibliographical notes.

The inaugural chapter looks at the "process of conversion" in the Brazilian church and the author sees it as both statistical and qualitative. The evangelical thrust of this conversion is option for the poor, calling for a renewed ecclesiology - the church as people of God where there is communion and participation. This model of church questions "the exercise of authority style ministry... and pastoral structures like the parish". On the human level, the author asserts that it calls for a hierarchy in visible contact with reality of their people's life.

Chapter 2 explores the concept of Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEB) which the author identifies as effective organs to bring into concrete realisation the liberation project at the local level. With its pedagogy of "seeing, judging and acting" the CEB seeks to deepen the faith of converts, re-evangelise christians, transform the society by the force of the gospel and show multiplicity in charism and diversity in functions. In chapter 3, the author illustrates with classical examples the salvific theme of the Bible as it reflects on the liturgy of CEB and comes out with this conclusion: The CEB liturgy "embracing the full scope of this revealed action of God in the world, celebrates at once all of creation, Israel's entire history, Christ's redemptive work and the interventions which make CEB history today salvific" (p.102).

In chapter 4 lies the crust of the study "Option For the Poor". David Regan had no difficulty in illustrating with practical examples that poverty is caused by institutionalised violence and that preferential option involves a concerted effort to show solidarity with the economically poor and the politically marginalised by working to build a more just and fraternal society. This project involves the use of social analysis, christian social ethics and, on the more practical level, prophetic pastoral action.

Most revolutions are orchestrated from the base but our author insists time without number and in more details in Chapter 5 that the Episcopal Conference, aided by its far-sighted, dynamic theologians and lay experts, and with its effective prophetic pastoral programmes, has been the cog in the wheel of the progress of the church's salvific mission. Regan explains that "it is today an example of how one of the new church structures which found official acceptance and encouragement

in Vatican II can be a splendid instrument for the church's mission in changing and critical times" (p.15).

Having explained the project of liberation on the practical level, the author devotes the last two chapters analysing liberation theology and its political implications. He finds the term "Christian Liberation" more appropriate than theology of "Option for the Poor". He explains: "Liberation has more a political and revolutionary ring about it, which is missing from option for the poor... and the adjective christian is intended to avoid misunderstanding while marking the novelty" (p. 176). Theology of Liberation is a critical reflection over pastoral action and in spite of criticism from the office of Ratzinger, it falls on marxism to understand and address the social question. This theological enterprise implies a political action. In the process, the gospel values are made to challenge the socio-political-economic status quo. Proponents of christian liberation theology are often the butt of the scorn of political and economic powers.

This book is another manual of liberation theology but unlike others, it is an Irish man's hermeneutics of the liberating praxis in Brazil. His predicament notwithstanding, the author gives us a stimulating and resourceful book and reading it makes no difference from reading a manual from the Boffs, Segundos, Torres and the Gutierrez. His methodology is worth commending. Starting from the concrete to the abstract, the book is clearly written and propositions are clarified with abundant factual details. This gives Regan's book a special value. However, the more-than-adequate factual details can make a reader lose the track of the author's arguments. All said and done, this book deserves a place in the library of all those propagating the social gospel. Certainly our African theologians and clergymen who are involved in the preparatory process of the proposed African synod will find this book very resourceful.

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