

International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)
Bahir Dar- Ethiopia

Vol. 5(2), S/No 17, April, 2016:67-81

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v5i2.7>

**A Critical Review of Concepts in Liberation Theology: A
Recipe for Nation Building**

Allison, Charles S. Ph.D.

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State, Nigeria

E-mail: drcharlesallison@yahoo.com
+2348033167455

Abstract

Liberation theology as the name portends, has an undertone of freedom that is living on God. The word liberation, having its general and technical usage has now attached itself to movements, the theology of liberation from the 20th century. No abstract approach is needed in a complete study of this nature, because since humans are involved, aspects of social sciences and historical approach must apply in sourcing for solution. Equally important is the fact that doing a theology without recourse to God, is in itself not academic. Thus, a combination of approaches in doing theology and praises, is essential. An inevitable relationship between the church and society is paramount. While the church is supposed to maintain relevance to its geographical location; the society may not survive as an entity without the God, of the church striking the balance between these two poles in the pursuit of this study. Peaceful co-existence, political, development and modernization will emerge. The significance of liberation theology stands out clearly; on the grounds that the issues raised, become the fulcrum for nation building and nationhood.

Introduction

Freedom has been the cry of man from the fall of Adam till date. Man created and authorized to have dominion Genesis 1:26-29, suddenly became susceptible to bondage, and have since then remained in dire need of freedom and liberation. Contemporarily, Braaten (1969) in discussing the phenomenon of hope, says that the message of hope is that man is in distress and there is the possibility of rescue mission. Furthermore, in a small but scholarly work, *Jesus means freedom*, Kasemann (1970), decried the painful fact that Christianity is almost a closed religious society. He agreed that the voice of free men cannot be suppressed, it still cries from its graves because any theology of resurrection without a corresponding theology of freedom is mere religious mental exercise with little or no substance and value.

It is equally necessary to note that freedom becomes obvious within specific inhuman contexts. It is in recognition of this fact that Dyrness (1990) cited Rene Padilla, as saying that

The only theology that the Bible knows is a functional theology, that is to say, a theology in dialogue with the concrete reality, a theology in the service of praise. The only way to live an authentic Christian life is to take seriously Jesus Christ incarnation (in Torres in Fabella, eds., 1978, p. 213).

Williams Dyrness summarized it by saying that the concept of praxis has become a technical term which denotes the role that action plays in theology – not just any action, but action directed towards particular ends. Without mincing words, these are the issue handled in academic works like *Inside the third world; The third world tomorrow; How Europe Underdeveloped Africa and How Africa Underdeveloped Africa*, etc. Without side-lining the rudimentary definition of theology, as the systematic study of God in relation to the universe, we take the next step, to fully underscore what Liberation mean.

What is Liberation Theology?

Liberation Theology though a technical term, started as a movement – the theology of ‘liberation’, in mid – 60’s to 1970. With time, liberation theology crossed the geographical borders of its origin, having the aim to contribute to a new theology that can stem from the historical, social and religious context of any given people. It is the similarities and commonness of the struggle of humans in the universe that has eventually cemented and illicited various theological responses. Great exponents of liberation theology are Gustavo Gutierrez, James H. Cone, Martin Luther King Jnr., Juan L. Segundo, and Rubern Alves, to mention but a few. Harvie M. Conn (1976) in his “theologies of liberation: An overview and toward a common view”, has given a well-rounded view of liberation theology in all its ramifications: beginning with

Theology's Orientation as the liberation of the oppressed; to Theology's domain as the concrete situation; to Theology's new partner as the social sciences; and finally, to theology's method as reflection on praxis. Invariably, since the liberation of God's people is recorded in the scriptures (Exodus); liberation theologians reiterate the fact that oppression is contrary to the will of God.

Secondly, the intelligent and unavoidable question of the liberation theologians has been, what is the meaning of salvation in terms of contemporary racial, socio-economic, tribal and religious exploitation? The above, single question has always kept the liberation theologians, somewhat, in the right direction. This is because these are practical events in our World that demand utmost attention. It is thus, difficult for someone to believe in God in a society where the "poor" are crushed, the blacks are dehumanized, the led are disenfranchised and the less privileged are marginalized. Buttressing the above, one of the ring tones of MTN, where Martin Luther King Jnr. Comments: "I have a dream, that one day, my poor little children will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character, I have a dream..."

Where the above citation is correct, then it is obvious that every nation in the universe stand in need of doing a liberation theology relevant to their practical contexts. The foregoing explanation notwithstanding, Harvie Conn (1976) further highlighted aspects of liberation theology that:

1. The desire to serve human liberation was created by the realization that the Christian gospel is aimed at liberating human beings in a very real manner. Fore instance, Racial Discrimination.
2. Black theology is seen as the theology of black liberation which affirms the freedom and equality to black and white people, and, therefore, refutes white oppression absolutely. For instance, Apartheid.
3. Liberation theology emerged by the addition of a new dimension to its social and political undertone. For example, Oppression and marginalisation.

In essence, therefore, liberation theologians are objecting to a theoretical treatment of the Bible from above, and accepting a treatment from below committed to the poor and oppressed.

Liberation theologies are calling for an attention to the concreteness of our situation, seeking for the meaning of our salvation in terms of the contemporary experiences of racism and socio – economic exploitation. It is very necessary to note, that in developing nations of the World, like Nigeria, the presence of religious bigotry, tribal oppression and even cultic marginalization have joined the queue to elicit a Re-doing of Liberation theology to enhance Nation Building.

Concrete Concepts of Liberation Theology

A. SWEDEN: The Union of Christian Labor Members:

An alternative of evening prayers was opted for, by the Christian labor members, after an industrial action based on a cut down in wages. Formed in 1962, the labor members were between Christianity in middle – class morality or a non – spiritual labor movement that is purely economic. The aim was to participate in the struggle for socialism alongside peoples of other faiths and World views. Raised in a middle class setting, possible of higher academic research, the author, Frostine (1985), faced a dilemma of expressing the ills of the society but for the labour movement through which repressed feelings were blown out. Frostin realized the difficulty of the political neutrality of religion. It was that as a colossus, the Christian labour movement, between the church and the labour party, aimed at normalizing the imaginary language of biblical prophetic tradition and political praxis. An established pilot study committee, soon realized that theology will be meaningless, unless when it is manifested into political demands that are rooted into material reality. It was further realized that:

all systems – political concepts – idealism, capitalism, socialism, imperialism, as good as they may be, can be used aggressively when it ignores the concrete experiences of the people. Because, awareness of concrete experience of the people is of basic importance spiritually and politically.

The above concept of liberation theology when viewed critically, will make one wonders why there should be such social struggle in a civilized nation like Sweden in Europe. It follows therefore that what is expected to be the characteristic of the third World Country is now obtainable in the first World country. There is, therefore of no need categorizing the World into first and third World countries, with an omission of second world countries. It is hereby deduced that whether first, second, third or last world country, the fact remains that there is an element of suppression in every country of the World, at one given point or the other.

Secondly, there is a seeming displaced aggression on the word ‘language’ of the Bible as visionary or imaginary. Assuming the ‘language’ of the Bible has put Sweden under suppression, due to its imaginativeness; what has the word social system or language of socialism done in reliving the oppression? Socialism would, therefore, compound the issue already created by the missionary and imaginary language of the Bible.

Again, Frostin’s approach emerges from Hegel’s dialectic:

It is a situation where the church serves as thesis; the concrete experience of the people (Praxis) stands as the anti-thesis; and while

the end results of the Christian labour movement assumes the position of the synthesis. But the Christian labor movement has had the fear of failure, except it recruits younger workers. Now if a disintegration occurs in the synthesis, then dialectic materialism would become cyclical materialism; and when do we expect the end?

The above citation notwithstanding, Frostin made a laudable point when he inferred that all concepts, at their best, could be tools of oppression. This is where the relevance of liberation theologies cannot be sidelined.

B. CANADA: The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America.

As a Canadian Missionary (1968 – 1971), Frances Arbour met with the repression and dictatorship realities of Latin America; such that he felt like coming home to Canada as to change its policies and economic structures. It was a dream come true, when in the early 1970s, the Canadian churches saw the need for common action on social issues and thus formed the inter church committee on human rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA). It was the ICCHRLA, an outgrowth of the inter – church committee on Chile – ICC 1973, that worked on the Canadian government to shelter thousands of Refugees, and extended its humanitarian service to include both Latin and Central America. In his words, Arbour (1985) Says:

ICCHRLA... on human rights had an impact because it... began from responses to persecuted trade unionists, community workers, human rights advocates and their organizations. These responses made us to share in the painful experience of torture and death in the life of our Latin American brethren. This identification ensures life and dignity for the human person and community because it reflects the link between work for justice and defense of human rights.

This Inter-church committee on Human Rights in Latin America has revived the Canadian churches to Evangelization, Theological Reflection and changes in church institution.

Arbour further stated that:

The lesson is that the ICCHRLA is one of the several action bodies that both manifest and stimulate ecumenical cooperation at least for the past and present ... The ICCHRLA is one of the several national ecumenical gatherings in Canada created by Christian churches to address urgent social issues. It is made up of main Christian churches in Canada- Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, United and the Quakers.

Critically speaking, the above highlights and citation beats one's imagination that the whites colonize their fellow whites- a double tragedy. Equally important is the fact that Francis Arbour, by virtue of his position and call, as a missionary to Latin America, stands a better chance of becoming the advocate for our suffering Latin Americans rather than the ICCHRCA, who are no participant observers.

Again, the Christians' preferential option for the poor, results in the analysis of the causes of economic injustice and political repression. Now, if the causes have been exhumed, when will action be coordinated to change the oppressive structure? And this is the reason why the ecumenical gatherings, good and timely as they may be, should not be a meeting of deliberations only, without any concrete action and result, of eradicating societal ills in Latin America, talk less of the repressed peoples of the World.

On the other hand, the ICCHRLA demands a pat at the back for influencing the government towards some sanctions regarding refugees. These ecumenical gatherings, to a very large extent, are the men that matter, who make their impact felt in the annals of history. This form of liberation theology to pull down oppressive structure is a welcome development, not only to Latin America, but elsewhere in the world.

C – Reconceiving Theology in The Asian Context

Highlight of the above sub-title reveal that about half of the World's population are undoubtedly Asian, comprising of numerous peoples and cultural traditions of unbroken history. As the birth place of most religious traditions, they have the history of development and prosperity, as well as, the history of oppression emanating from colonialism – the gain-oriented move of the Western World. Rayan (1985) Speaks:

Another challenge of the Asian people is abject poverty, which is no longer new to them, though they were once a self-sufficient economy.... Religion and poverty, with its negative and positive poles meets in the Asian socialism - a bond of contradiction. Primitive socialism of the clan communities of peasants resulted in cosmic religiosity, while sophisticated socialism of the monastic communities resulted in meta-cosmic religiosity coupled with feudalism.

However, most countries in Asia were colonized and distorted from their history and culture. Also, an unstable Western Parliamentary System of colonialism gave rise to military regimes and dictatorship. This subsequently metamorphosed into a segmented society occasioned by dishonouring the poor, and humiliating women amidst fears and taboos. Rayan says: "These are challenges that theology should address itself as to discern God's presence in them."

On the other hand, the Asians have enormous human and material resources relevant to reconceiving theology. Moreover, Rayan upholds that the spiritual history of Asians, as the history of a relentless quest for truth, is one of the basic resources we have for the shaping of a relevant Asian Theology. In his words,

There are prospects because Asian theology will join God as He loves and works with Asian peoples, or God identifies with the poor and oppressed, Exodus 3:7-10; Psalm 103:6. ...God is with the poor in their history, life and concerns. God is therefore known and experienced in the practice of love and justice, (Jeremiah 22:16). Our theology is converted to the God who identifies with women, the landless, the untouchable, the unemployed, the bounded, the half-starved, and all the broken and humiliated of the vast Asian continent.

A critical review of Rayan's reshaping of Asian's theology, reveals salient points. The crux of the matter is who shapes theology? Is it God or man or both? For Asia to shape or reshape theology based on their context and without God will definitely culminate in more complex challenges to the Asians. Rayan in his excellent work, however, empathises with the Asian peoples, as that of a relentless quest for the truth. Indeed, God is included in the destiny of the world, for even the Christian scriptures do affirm God's concern for the oppressed and beggarly of all sorts and so would not allow the Asian to be an exception. The widows and orphans had a place in the economy of the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 10:18-19 and James 1:27 thus, the Asian quest of reconceiving theology to accommodate them is not out of place.

D. Black Theology

Harvie Conn (1976) has it that Black theology is seen as the theology of the Blacks, which affirms the freedom and equality to black and white people and, therefore, refutes white oppression absolutely. Indeed, Conn says that Martin Luther King Jr. became the catalyst for Black theology, much more than Washington's volume, Black Religion. The reference is that Black Theological context, showing that Black power is not only consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On a more serious note, Ferguson and Wright (1988) rightly uphold that:

To designate the gospel black and call Jesus black is simply to articulate this sense of freedom of black people who find in the Jesus of the black gospel the liberation which was denied them by white Christianity.

Black theology, therefore, could be looked upon as the academic milieu, where the blacks experience marginalization. It could be looked upon also as a clarion call for a new theologizing of the gospel of Jesus Christ to include all humanity, even the blacks.

In their specification, it is that the affinities with Blacks theology in South Africa are obvious; the political, social and economic conditions of black people under the apartheid system in South Africa made it inevitable that North American black theology should have an appeal. In respect to the foregoing, is the following citation:

Allan Boesak (b.1946), a leading exponent of South African black theology declares: following the direction pointed out to us by Martin Luther King Jnr. Black theology [in South Africa] takes Christian Love very seriously, opting for agape, which stands at the very centre of God's liberating actions for his people.

They further stated that Blackness doesn't designate skin colour, but a discovery, a state of mind, a conversion and an affirmation of being. They concretize their stance in this citation: "This makes 'blackness' equivalent also to Buthelezi's "wholeness" which results from the realization that "blackness, like whiteness, is a good natural face cream from God and not some cosmological curse".

Hence, the struggle for equality of the black, with their white counterparts. Inasmuch as Black theology is an integral part of liberation theology, the detailed analysis of bipolar nature of theological reflection and praxis, is beyond the scope of this article. Rather than dealing with orthodoxy, at the expense of orthopraxis, Grenz and Olson (1992), suggest that Liberation theology is bipolar. It involves two distinct but interdependent poles, between which it constantly moves: praxis and theory. But the primacy belongs to praxis.

A critical review of Black theology within their liberation movement is necessary. Black theologians, Grenz and Olson, say openly and assert that their task was properly limited to their own ethnic community. It was a theology by the Blacks and for Blacks. Secondly, it is that its methodology, rather than being the universal human experience, was the specific experience of the Black community described in terms of oppression. Black theology, therefore, has little or nothing to do with striking a balance between the immanence and Transcendence of God. On the contrary, Grenz and Olson confirm that:

...liberation has brought to the Christian world's attention the plight of the suffering poor... it has inspired hope and courage in the hearts of millions and prophetically denounced the apathy and injustices lying at the root of their plight... the church's attention... [is drawn to] the need for a new "social appropriation of the gospel" in a world of social and economic conflicts between entire nations of 'haves' and 'have nots'.

The above contribution to the oppressed and poor notwithstanding, Grenz and Olson (1992) uphold, among other theologians, that praxis ultimately depends on right theory.

It is the conscious reflection God's word in the light of a contemporary praxis of liberation that should be the approach. God should not, and must not, be known and encountered only within history but that He is also involved in the liberating action on behalf of the poor, oppressed or marginalized.

Indeed, theologizing must not be done in abstraction given the definition of theology. An objective theology must involve the man in the society, otherwise it ceases to be theology, in the real sense of the word. The place of man in objective and practical theologizing is as inevitable and irrevocable as it is in Nation Building.

Nation Building

The term Nation Building – a term employed in the United States of America, right after World War II, may not be fully grasped except when treated as a concept. Equally important is the fact that synonymous concepts could be brought to bear upon a working definition of the subject under review. Terms like, state-building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflicting reconstruction and peace-building, could be an enhancement to the wholistic approach of the understanding of Nation Building. The questions that come to mind is why does Nation Building matter? And who does the building- should it be Indigenous or Exogenous Actors?

However, beside the general dictionary definition for Nation, Isiramen (2010) says that:

A nation has as its purpose to establish justice and order; secure domestic tranquillity; provide common defence; provide general welfare and ensure liberty for all.

She further stated that a situation where development, peaceful co-existence and unity of purpose have deluded the people, though rightly called a country (nation), it appears to have fallen short of the qualities that characterized a nation. Her specific reference is that:

Nigeria is a stark reality of a nation on the brink of collapse or disintegration. Here and there are ignoble manifestations like embezzlement, nepotism, tribalism, greed, indolence, bribery and corruption, murder, robbery, kidnapping, militancy, drug addiction, incessant closure of citadels of learning, political violence and thuggery, electoral frauds and religious violence.

If the above are the vices not required for a nation, it follows, therefore, that the ingredients to build such an entity would not be far from eliminating same, within the constituents of the people that make up that nation. Nation building, on a serious note, appears to be a determination, *prima facie*, of its citizens. Hence, in a book edited by

Isiramen, Religion is therefore, projected to be central and of utmost importance in charting a positive path for Nigeria as a nation. For her, the phenomenon of religion is an all-encompassing one; touching on every aspect of life, especially with regard to the Nigerian nation.

In a more critical analysis in *Religion and the Nigerian Nation*, Igboin (2012) cited the Noble Laurett's Thesis; that Religion is an Enemy of Nationhood. It was in a lecture series titled "Between Nation space and Nationhood" on 3rd March 2009, Soyinka expounded on Awolowo's description of Nigeria as a mere "Geographical Expression". In other words, there are certain condiments that qualify for a people to be glued together before being referred to as a nation. Building on this premise, Soyinka canvassed that to build a nation, as a result, we need to work hard, exert our intelligence, be bonded by collective desire and also imbibe the ethics of inclusion. To be more specific in *the Guardian* of March 4, 2009 (p.9), Soyinka reverberates:

I have had cause to refer to the entity known as Nigeria as a nation space. It was for me a convenient way of avoiding a pointless debate that would distract attention from whatever concerns I was engaged upon at a time. Quite simply, 'nation space' renders palpable the notion by Nigeria, advances it from mere representation from the printed atlas and places it on 'terra firma'.

To a very large extent, the thesis is accurate in that geographical locations may be inhabited by any ethnic group like Yoruba ethnic nationality, Igbo nation, Hausa nation, Ijaw ethnic nationality, Edo ethnic nationality, etc, but does not mean they are a nation in the true sense of the word. Soyinka argued that the abstract projection of nationhood is antithetical to the reality of a true nationhood. Nations do not exist as mere abstractions, rather a nation is a national implantation, and the building block of that growth is the human entity. Thus, nation building would mean much more, than any society where acute and divisive tendencies of disintegration are at work, instead of the forces that build and bind them up together.

On a more serious note, in one of the chapters of the edited work of Okwueze (2004), Kanu has defined that nation building is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments, transforming them for their own good and that of humanity at large and be transformed in the process.

Kanu further stated that the aspects of nation build that are useful to man include his social, cultural, moral, religious, political and economic life. Thus nation building consists in all activities which bring positive improvement in the society. Positive improvement is in terms of material wealth that man needs to have a decent

livelihood in accordance with human dignity and God's design for man. Kanu, also cited Aristotle who said that the work of nation building must concern itself with more than mere temporal care of the individual. Kanu opined that 'nation building involves the building of the people that make up the society, that is the individuals themselves.... [It is that] Justice, love and peace, which are essential ingredients for nation building [are very integral] and as products of the human heart these qualities cannot be imposed by the force of arms. They cannot exist in the society if they do not, first and foremost, exist in the human hearts and minds. Conclusively, Kanu has said the three major religions in Nigeria, for instance, have been very helpful in nation building:

The three major religious in Nigeria are saying the same thing loud and clear, namely that religion is an indispensable recipe for building a happy and stable nation.

If scholars have proved the indispensable place of religion in nation building, much more can theology be found to be integral in Nation Building. Hence the relevance of the next paragraph.

Nexus Between Liberation theology and Nation Building

This section of the article is to show the relevance of key concept of liberation theology to Nation Building. The fact remains that if Religion and its theories has proved itself invaluable to societal development; than it follows that liberation theologies with its focus on praxis would be the inevitable, indispensable, unavoidable and irrevocable Recipe for Nation Building.

1. From the review of the union of the Christian labor movement in Sweden, it is obvious that oppression and marginalization of the people cannot make for nation building. It is a proven fact all concept at their best could be oppressive in nature and content. This is because all systems could be used aggressively when the praxis of the people are neglected. The point here is that human selfishness and greed would not allow the best of systems and concepts to work, hence the recruitment of younger workers from outside the Christian labor movement. This social struggle in a civilized nation like Sweden is indicative of suppression and exploitation that is inherent in humanity all over the globe. In this case, therefore, nation building will be a mirage in the face suppression and exploitation. Thus, element of suppression and exploitation must be eradicated for a nation to be built and nationhood experienced.
2. For Canada, it was, and still is unfortunate that Whites colonize their fellow whites. The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA) created by the cooperation of Christian churches was to address social issues. How and when do we change oppressive structures? How can societal ills be obliterated? Here the Latin Americans were colonized and

oppressed by political Canada. The obnoxious policies of Canada over Latin America needed to be changed. Thus, the ecumenical body of ICCHRLA demand commendation for influencing the Canadian government to have a rethink towards some sanctions regarding refugees. It is on this premise that Braaten (1969) says

Thus, the church could be seen as an operational unit of 'Basileia ton theo' on the platform of world history. The church having a future should then walk and work towards it committedly. The existence of the church means living a life of the future now.

Undoubtedly, since the church is looked upon as a prolepsis of the new world, she has that mandate to demand justice, freedom, peace, reconciliation and unity. Moreover, the above are the essential injunction for nation building, to be fostered by the God-factor of any given society.

3. A critical review of the Asian context necessitated the reconceiving of theology to address abject poverty to a hitherto resourceful people. It is on record that the relentless quest for truth of the Asians endear them to God who will ever show concern for the oppressed and beggarly of all sorts. Inasmuch as the western parliamentary system has raised military regimes and dictatorship, the Asians, no doubt, would require the rise of a Moses to see them out of the ruthless dictatorship and poverty. The means of meeting the needs of the Asian praxis are those equally advocated for nation building.
4. The connection between the features of black theology and requirements for nation building is obvious. Originating from the Americans and experienced in the African countries of South Africa, Nigeria etc, cases of racial prejudice, poverty, oppression, marginalization, ethnicity and tribalism are daily occurrences demanding a resurgence of black theology. The *sitz im Leben* that informed black theology appear to be a global undercurrent now. Hence, in line with the focus of liberation theology, Byang Khato (1975) classifies black theology, Ethiopic theology and the theology of decolonization as the pursuit of true Biblical religion which will save man from material and spiritual bondages.

For him

It is a call for the brand of Christianity that will place political–economic–sociological liberation on same par or even above spiritual freedom.

Though Byang Khato's concept of placing socio–economic and political freedom above spiritual may not be realistic, it is necessary for the praxis of a people

be considered. Nation building which involves the individual in his sane mind cannot be functional in a situation where the same is marginalized, impoverished, exploited and segregated.

In the *Vanguard News* of 22nd March 2016, it is that Former President Obasanjo blames African leaders for continents conflicts:

Addis Ababa: - some African leaders are responsible for the instability on the continent because they failed to manage diversity in their societies. Similarly, he noted that outside interference in Africa had been responsible for conflicts... the repercussion is now being felt in Mali, Nigeria and the Sahel.... Asked whether African leaders were to blame to the conflicts on the Continent, he said “yes and no” he said leaders were failing their people because they had not been able to prevent marginalization in their societies, prevent injustice, reduce unemployment, reduce poverty, adding that they had not embraced democracy and good governance.

The above citation from the *Vanguard News* buttresses the thesis of this article, that third world countries / Nations, like Nigeria, stand in dire need of liberation from poverty, unemployment, marginalization and injustice.

For instance, if Nigeria would ever be a nation, then the seeming ethnic cleansing carried on by cattle rearers in Benue State, which could result in reprisal attacks and counter attacks must be addressed immediately. Indeed, using Soyinka’s terminology, Nigeria as an entity could be addressed as a nation space, because she has not yet, and cannot for now enjoy the peace of nationhood. If and where the political life of a third world, or developing, country is neck deep in corruption and diversion of enormous resources meant for the poor masses, then that entity is at the brink of collapse. Jesus says, ‘if a house is divided against itself, it cannot stand, Matthew 12:25. Furthermore, the depth/level of impunity is quite alarming. The rampant political killings; the secret funding of Boko Haram; looting of the country’s treasury; the non – payment of salaries and wages; the insincere and incomplete dissemination of information to the public; intimidation of the press, religious bondage, slavery and religious bigotry, oppression of the led by the leaders, tribalism and poverty, make it difficult for any nation to be built. Soyinka even added by saying that “The greatest threat to freedom is the absence of criticism.” (In goo.gl/syibBk (received 9.43am on 10th March 2016 from Mtn News).

Therefore, the four cases of liberation theologies in Sweden, Canada – Latin America, Asia and South Africa that sought for a liberation from various forms of bondage; compared with the myriads of enslavement of the Nigerian populace, make these concepts of liberation theology a relevant recipe.

Conclusion

The question raised in the abstract and introduction that a critical review of key concepts in liberation theology, makes it pertinent a prescription for nation building. The building of a nation depends on the mindset of the citizens that make up the nation. Where the citizens are fractionalized by tribalism and nepotism, victimization, oppression, poverty, unemployment, it is capable for a nation that is already built up. Therefore, a pathetic conclusion is obvious to the third world countries especially in Africa where impunity is the order of the day for those in the corridors of power. There is no doubt that theologians will continue to theologize on the Nigerian praxis and may come up with concept like tribal theology, ethic theology, diversion theology, impunity theology, poverty theology and marginalization theology. There is a cry for a Neo-Exodus experience, not a change of political party, if a Nigeria nation is to be built. The prescription of key liberation theologies must be applied, if countries like Nigeria would ever think of being a nation tomorrow. Nigeria is yet distant away from nationhood. When concrete experiences (praxis) are sidelined, there can be no nation building. All party policies, at their best, could be essentially oppressive in the long run. The Jude.

Recommendations

- ❖ Nigeria should stress things that cohere rather than those that divide.
- ❖ Nigeria should seek to dialogue and reach a compromise rather militarization.
- ❖ Salaries should be paid as at when due.
- ❖ Looters of treasury should be made to paid and subsequent given summary dismissal
- ❖ Oppression, marginalization and tribalism should be practically espunged in the country.
- ❖ True democracy should be practiced rather God – fatherism.
- ❖ The God – factor of liberation theology should be relied upon, as in typical example of Israel’s exodus.
- ❖ Ethnic superiority should be avoided in all social structures and institutions.
- ❖ Oppressive structures should be dismantled
- ❖ The judiciary should be made and seen to dispense justice at all times.

References

- Braaten, C. E. (1969). *The Future of God: The revolutionary dynamics of hope*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Dobbins, J. (2003). Nation building: The inescapable responsibility of the world's only superpower. *Rand Review*, Summer 2003.
- Dryness, W. A. (1990). *Leaving about theology from the third world*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Ferguson, S. B. & Wright, D. F. (eds.) (1988). *New dictionary of theology*. England: Inter-
varsity Press.
- Grenz, S. J. & Olson, R. E. (1992). *20th century theology: God and the world in a transitional Age*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press.
- Gundry, S. & Johnson, A. (1976). *Tensions in contemporary theology*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Harrison, P. (1983). *The third world tomorrow*. 2nd edition, England: Penguin Books Ltd
- Harrison, P. (1984). *Inside the third world, the anatomy of poverty*. 2nd edition. England: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Igwe, S. C. (2012). *How African underdeveloped Africa*. Revised, Port Harcourt: Prime Print Ltd.
- Isiramen, C. O. et al. (eds) (2010). *Religion and the Nigerian nation some topical issues*. Ibadan, Nigeria: En-Joy Press and Books.
- Kasemann, E. (1970). *Jesus means freedom*. American Edition, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Kato, B. (1975). *Theological pitfall in Africa*. Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House.
- Michael, I. (2002). Nation-building lite. *New York Times Magazine*, 28 July.
- Okwueze, M. I. (ed.) (2004). *Religion and societal development: Contemporary Nigerian perspectives*. Isolo Lagos: Merit International Publication.
- Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle-C'ouventure Publication.