

METHOD IN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ

1. Theology as “critical reflection on historical praxis” (*A Theology of Liberation*, 1971, ch. 1). [One necessary *function* of theology.]

Theology is a second step; praxis is the first step.

- Praxis of the church
- Praxis outside the church

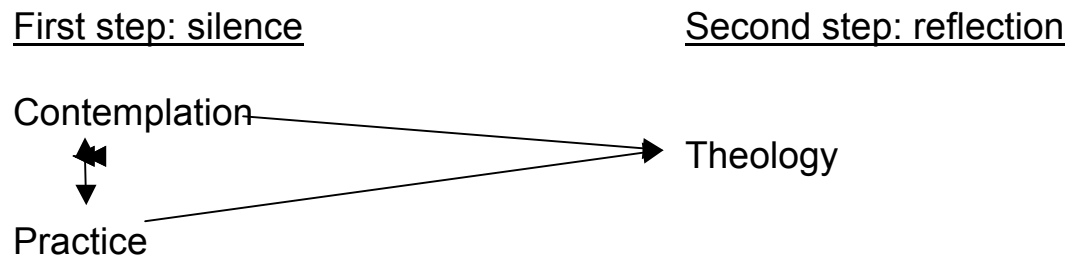
Causal factors: primacy of charity, lay spirituality, Vatican II and “signs of the times,” Blondel and Marx, eschatology (history opens out to God’s future), “orthopraxis” and not just orthodoxy.

2. Theology “*from* praxis” (post-1971)

The two “central intuitions” of TL, its “spinal column”:

- Theology follows commitment, praxis
- It requires entering into the world of the poor and adopting the perspective of the poor (“Theology from the Underside of History”)

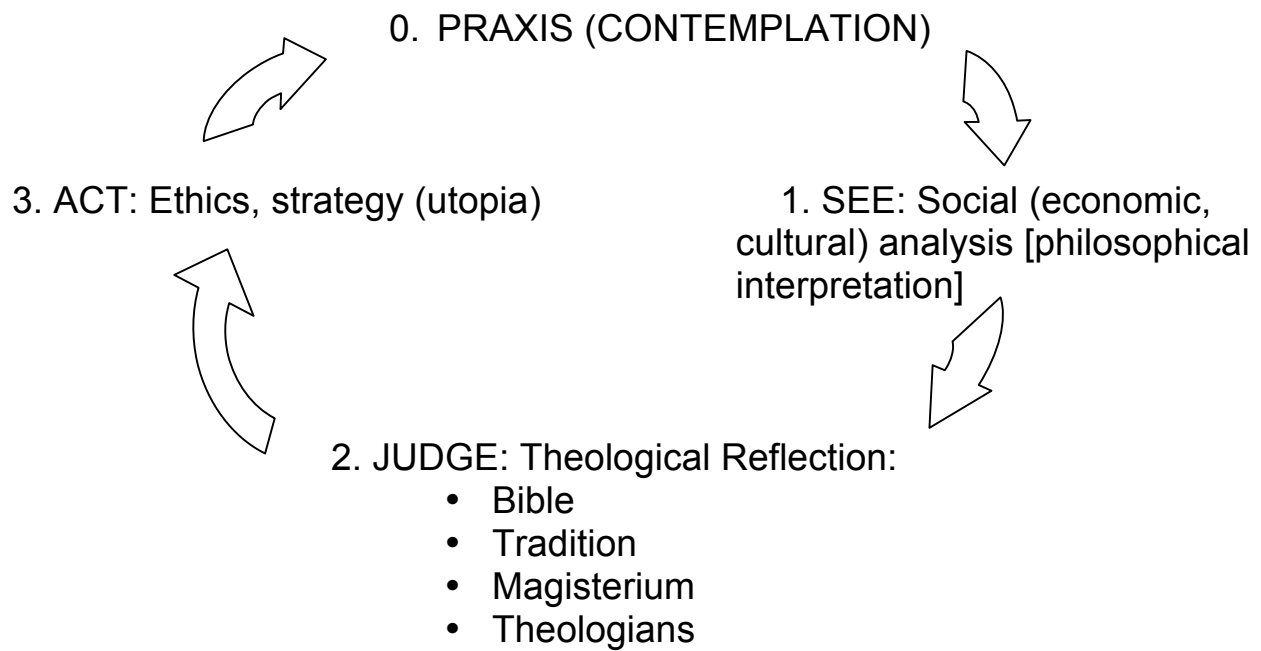
3. A different “interlocutor”: not the unbeliever but the *non-person*. (Ibid.)
4. The different *mediations* of truth (or tools for understanding): social science, philosophy and utopian imagination, and theological reflection in the strict sense.
5. The first step is *silence*: contemplation and action (*The God of Life*, 1982, pp. 6-9; *On Job*, 1986).



Method in Liberation Theology (cont.)

LEONARDO AND CLODOVIS BOFF

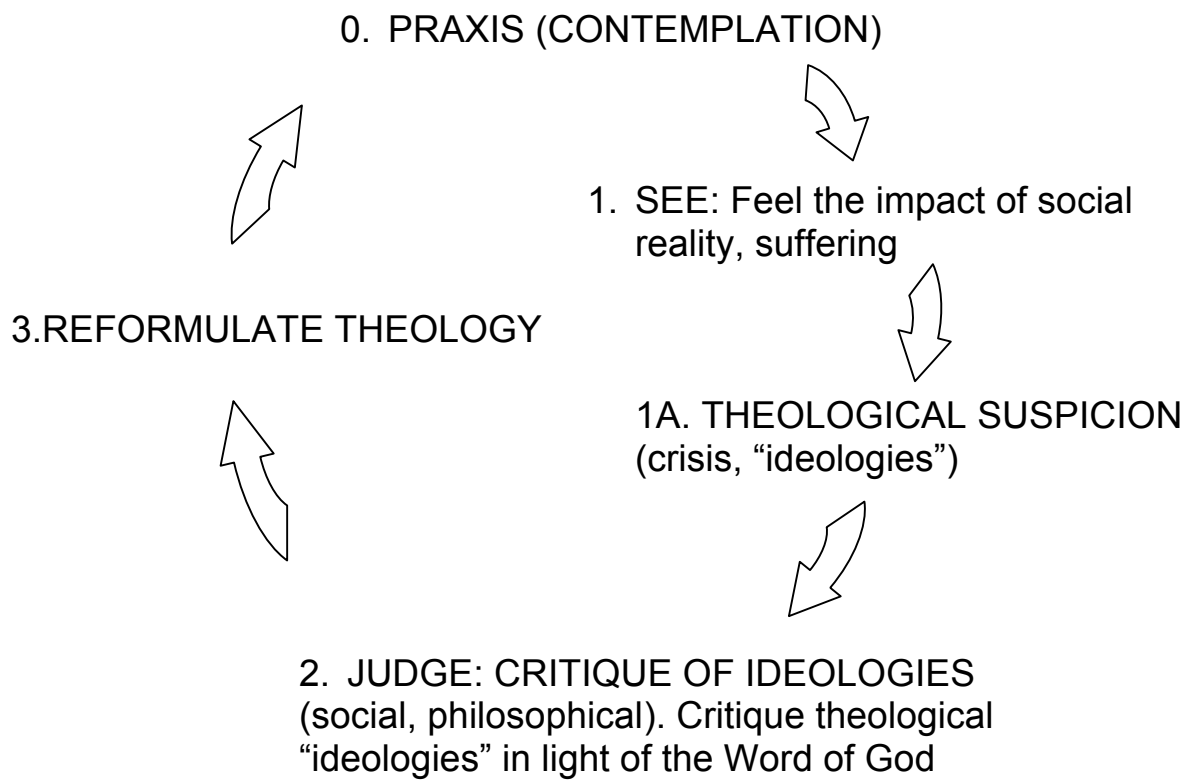
(Introducing Liberation Theology, 1986)



Method in Liberation Theology (cont.)

JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO

(The Liberation of Theology, 1976)



Method in Liberation Theology (cont.)

JON SOBRINO

- “Sacramental” signs of the times as a privileged source and guide for understanding the meaning of Scripture and doctrinal formulations today.
- The “crucified peoples” as the primary sign of the times today.
- Theology as *intellectus amoris* and as faith, hope and love seeking understanding.

From *Gaudium et spes*, Vatican II’s Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

3. . . . Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.

4. To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.

. . .

44. . . With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire People of God, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word, so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage.