

ESSAY TITLE:

Examine the basis of liberation theology with reference to Gustavo Gutierrez.

Bulleted summary:

- Liberation theology began as a movement within the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s
- Gustavo Gutierrez was born in 1928 in Peru
- It is a political theology that interprets the teachings of Jesus Christ in terms of liberation from unjust economic, political, and social conditions
- Emphasis on authority of ordinary people
- Often seen as subversive and dangerous by both Church and state - radical approach in a continent where RC church has traditionally always defined theologies
- Liberation theology as it usually comes to us seems more indebted to Marx than to Moses
- Gutierrez was ordained a priest in 1959
- The Second Latin American Episcopal Conference was held in Colombia in 1968
- Gutierrez wrote the foundational text of liberation theology in 1971 (*A Theology of Liberation*)
- Liberation Theology began as a Roman Catholic movement, but it has spilled over in to Protestant theology.
- The Christian must be committed to act on behalf of the oppressed. It is then, from a position of active involvement, that he does his theology.
- To profess political neutrality is in fact to support the oppressive status quo.
- The church must be committed to the poor. It is not enough to talk about the church of the poor. The church must be a poor church.
- Gutierrez reinterpreted salvation in terms of political liberation.
- Liberation theology is intensely critical of capitalism and affirmative of socialism.

QUOTATIONS

- "If there is no friendship with the poor and no sharing of the life of the poor, then there is no authentic commitment to liberation, because love exists only among equals." (Gutierrez)
- "The denunciation of injustice implies the rejection of the use of Christianity to legitimise the established order." (Gutierrez)

- "The God of Exodus is the God of history and of political liberation more than he is the God of nature." (Gutierrez)
- "God is in the poor who cry out. And God is the one who listens to the cry and liberates, so that the poor no longer need to cry out." (Boff)
- "When I feed the poor, They call me a saint, but when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist." (Dom Helder Camara)
- "The poor are those who occupy the underside of history." (Gutierrez)
- "Theology does not produce pastoral activity – rather it reflects upon it." (Gutierrez)
- "Theology has to stop explaining the world, and start transforming it." (Bonino)