

Liberation Theology and Teilhard de Chardin

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In this study we will attempt to show how the evolutionary framework of Teilhard de Chardin might throw light on two vexing problems that critics of the Marxist-influenced Latin American theology of liberation find to be inadequately answered. The first is the criticism that in the effort to make the transcendence of the Faith, of God and of the salvation in Jesus Christ immanent in the world, these doctrines are not sufficiently safeguarded. Liberation theologians are accused of immanentism, of humanism and secularism, of politicization of the Faith and of reductionism.¹ In short, the relation between earthly progress and the Kingdom of God, or, to put it in more speculative language, the relation between immanence and transcendence is not sufficiently clarified. As one sympathetic commentator of liberation theology notes:

The role and significance of the transcendent remains a troubling issue for liberation theologians. . . . Where is God in all this? What has happened to the Lord of history? Is eschatology a strictly human enterprise? For example, . . . Rubem Alves accentuates the human and immanent so strongly in his later writings that he sounds like a secular humanist.

It is important for liberation theologians that the immanent and transcendent be understood as part of the same process. The crucial problem here is to find the kind of language that will not suggest a "two-realm" theory of reality yet will still allow for a sense of divine sovereignty and mystery in the larger scheme of things. Liberation theologians refuse to interpret the eschatological dimension as primarily

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