

THE CRITIQUE OF ROBBS' BOOK, THE BETRAYAL OF THE CHURCH AND ARAZU'S INSIGHT ON RELIGION IN RELATION TO LIBERATION THEOLOGY

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Abstract

The paper focuses on poor living condition of the people of Nicaragua, North America and the human effort towards liberation theology. The Betrayal of the church is an alarming story of how the leaders of the mainline denominations have abandoned the gospel in favour of the religious and political ideology of the left-wing. Its message of Apostasy and the possibility of renewal in the mainline churches is of vital concern for every Christian in America. Concerned Methodist is a 'Renewal' organization working within the United Methodist Church, urging it to greater biblical faithfulness to its Wesleyan heritage and standing firmly on the Judeo-Christian ethic which extends back for over 6,000 years. Arazu, a humanist and a priest of the Catholic Church lays much emphasis on the practical and oneness of all people and religion. He was concerned with lots of external shackles weighing man down in life and organized religion happens to be one of those things that make man prisoner of himself. He brought religion closer to the people by employing and blending the traditional practices with the Christian liturgy for accessibility and indeed for assimilation.

Introduction

The Christians believe that the task of the church is, above all, the proclaiming of the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ and the discipline of those who answer the call. Their concern is that some of the clergy (from local to episcopate) of the United Methodist church may not share this commitment and have, in some ways, substituted secular causes and beliefs for the gospel. Robb and Robb (1986) perceive this as a misplacement of priorities which they drive to correct. They vision that it is the responsibility of every Christian to effectively witness to non-believers and to do everything within his power to bring them to a saving knowledge of our lord Jesus Christ. They contend that the Bible is an inspired word of God, without error, fully applicable in solving problems in today's world as it was during the time of Christ.

The sixth chapter of Robbs' book, captioned, "*Liberation Theology: What it is and what it does*", has already set an idea on what to expect from the work. In Robbs' argument, the church has been betrayed and is being distracted with a lot of ephemeral issues to the detriment of the apostolate to which she is called to evangelize. The degrading condition affecting many people in Latin-America pictured poverty, hunger, unemployment, homelessness and exploitation as part of the challenges and worries of the people.

In response to this prevalence of poverty, injustice exploitation and oppression, a new theology was born- the theology of liberation. It was one of the powerful statements of bishops in Latin America over and above the inhuman condition issued in Puebla, Mexico in 1979. It grew from a particular context and now has expanded to different places. Schineller (1990) asserts that liberation theology is an excellent example of a local theology that offers new possibilities, challenges, and hopes not only to those situations in which it is formulated and lived, but also to the universal church which now become a leaven and source of renewal for all theology and churches. Other countries who have undergone such experience adopted the theology- from

South Africa to America where it is known as black theology and further to Nicaragua where the regard for basic human rights were undermined.

How It All Started in Nicaragua

Nicaragua is predominantly catholic and the church was close to Somosas. At a point it distanced itself from politics after many abuses were attributed to dictatorship. The church were supporting the Sandinistas (members of the National Liberation Front, a left-wing political party in Nicaragua) after Somosa's ouster, but parted ways due to ideological differences. When the protest eventually erupted, Ortega (the succeeding president) asked the church to serve as mediator in peace talks. He was disappointed with the church's action as they failed him.

From thence, the Nicaraguan church began to be sympathetic towards the protesting masses and their cause. Some church leaders were outspoken rejecting violence, and rejecting the political decision that might harm the masses. When some of the church leaders were transferred to the Vatican city, it was a jubilation for the political Sandinistas class while the opposition lamented. The president of Nicaragua had accused some of the bishops of being part of the plot to over throw him and calling them "terrorists". Some of the radio stations supporting the masses were shut down which, police accused them of "organizing violent group".

This theology gradually garnered the political spirits, which include, violent revolution in getting the message across. It was backed up by biblical spirituality of struggle for liberation. Reference was made of the Jewish experience in Egypt. Allusion was made to the verse in Isaiah which came to its fulfillment in the testament by Jesus - the spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim release to the captives... liberty to the oppressed. (Lk. 4:18-19). Edmund and Julia (1986) were not comfortable with this and avow that the proponents of liberation theology are now many and offer varied interpretations based on their faith and background. Guatavo Gutierrez was the precursor of liberation theology. He argued that liberation theology is a science- an intellectual discipline born out of the meeting of faith and reason. Reason for him is found in social science i.e., in the study of man, and not in the study of God or scriptures. He was prejudiced by Marxism who claims that humanity can make heaven on earth, and asserts that universal salvation has been accepted as a fact and claim that real salvation is in this life. Marxism denies the Christian belief in atonement for sin and Christ subsequent resurrection, maintaining that one is not truly a Christian until one works for social and political revolution. Liberation theologians believe that truth cannot be understood in the spiritual sense because of its idealistic nature but can only be realized in history through praxis. This means according to some theologians that any theology that is not, socially and politically oriented and motivated is condemned as unreal or as a vehicle to maintain the oppressors in power.

The approach established by liberation theologians in the Christian base communities all over Nicaragua yielded positive results. The community members were usually the poor masses and were taught the Bible as a story of the oppressed and story of liberation. The oppressed who were the majority have anticipated for practical liberation for so long. These communities soon produced enough political organizations that lead to conflict between parishioners and the government. Having collaborated with the Sandinistas, they were considered as revolutionary themselves. The church leaders, clergy, and religious left the church and took up arms for the sole purpose of liberating the oppressed masses. This gave enough encouragement to the Sandinistas and created an unfavorable situation for the Somosa regime.

According to Robb and Robb (1986) “it is ironic that liberation theology should present itself as a legitimate interpretation of Christian faith. It might be a theology, but not a Christian theology. Its claim to be a new Christian social teaching is an absurdity. They perceive it as an activist humanism based on Marxist theory which seeks to completely change the focus and the meaning of traditional Christianity: it replaces faith in Christ and hope of resurrection with the justification and sanctification of political revolution. As such liberation is considered extremely dangerous. Liberation theology serves as an excuse for much of the radical politics of the American mainline church; it has affected the whole orders of Roman Catholicism. Liberation theologians greatly assisted the Sandinistas triumph in Nicaragua, which had a terrible impact on the Nicaraguan people. The ‘betrayal of the church’ was a call on the alarming challenges faced by the Church, and how leaders of the mainland denominations have abandoned the straight gospel in favour of the religious and political ideology of the left. Its message of apostasy and the possibility of the renewal in the mainline churches should be of vital concern to every Christian in America.

The clergy, leaders of the church were not left out as most of them left their vocation and took up arms to join the activist’s movement. In the words of Robb and Robb (1986), some priests and nuns who were undoubtedly, practitioners of liberation theology fought with the Sandinistas- the guerilla movement with the sole aim of raising the low standard of the poor. Robb maintain that it is ironical to consider liberation theology as a legitimate interpretation of Christian faith. Having observed the attitude of the so called liberation movement, they prefer to call it simple “theology” rather than “Christian theology”.

Arazu’s Perception on Religion and Liberation Theology

The poor condition of the masses in the Christian sense has been interpreted to mean the hoi polloi (proletariat) by Raymond Chukwunyerugwu Arazu (a priest of the Catholic church in the Order of Holy ghost Fathers) which ought to be given desired attention. The concept of liberation theology according to Arazu (2008) is given a new interpretation following the basic principles of life – Love, Truth, Peace, Right-Conduct and Non-Violence in line with the core teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as he guided his followers towards a life of compassion, humility for the spiritual growth and oneness of all humanity. Arazu transcends religious boundaries as he embraced all religious practices. He toed the psychosomatic (social and spiritual) path of Jesus as an activist who came to bring freedom to captives and the poor liberation.

Just like most scholars have not agreed on a particular definition of religion, Arazu believes that religion highlights the transcendence of God and tries to come to some form of man’s relationship with God. Having a deep knowledge of the traditional Igbo religion he sees religion as the summing up of man’s experience of the universe which is the deepest dimension of all human experience. From the historical point of view religion has always formed part and parcel of ancient cultures made for lasting cohesion in social interaction among the people.

Understanding the reason for undisputed backing towards liberation theology, he considered animism as a religion of the Igbo. Animism is a religion based on the belief that personal and invisible powers exist in and around us. The term “animism” is coined from the Latin word *anima* which means soul. An animist is one who recognizes and worships invisible powers manifesting their presence in nature. Every natural phenomenon is thus believed to have soul (an *anima*) or spirit that explains its existence and power. For instance, the sky has a soul called *Chukwu* or *Chineke* and given the title *Anyanwu n’ezenu*; rivers have souls or spirit labelled by the same appellation given to the visible river. The earth on which we stand (*ana/ala*) has a

soul or spirit worshiped as (*aja-ana*). Groves or gigantic trees are the abode of powerful souls or spirits. These animistic belief has guided him in his interrelationship with the community he founds himself. He believes that liberation theology entails being all things to all men, a total commitment of oneself for the emancipation of the *anima*. Having armed himself with empathy and deference to the poor around him, providing for them the basic necessities of life- shelter, food, health, water etc. while at the same time carrying out his dedicated religious apostolate. He simply has no reason to undermine social and political equity. For him politics is a good game, but played by corrupt people.

Olikenyi in Arazu (2016) reflected on his option for the poor thus:

Jesus message of human salvation is a holistic message. In other words, Jesus, by calling people back to God did not concentrate only on the spiritual aspect, but also on all aspects that affect human life. Fr. Arazu comprehend this in Jesus ministry and reflects it in his own ministry as a religious missionary. What he calls his second vocation as a traditional medicine man (a doctor), started out of his experience of many people dying during the Nigeria civil war... due to lack of doctors and conventional medicine. As one who strongly believes in God's gift of nature and whose ancestors were herbalists, he began to see the wood/bush as medicine stores (pharmacy). Combining his natural talents with herbs and experiences, he started preparing different medicine with herbs for different ailments... he sank a borehole that supplies water to his neighbourhood and students of Unizik, Awka close to his residence. (p. x).

Certain people in life are presented to be bridge builders in a challenging and changing world. They are born to fill certain gaps that have been of challenge to humanity by resolving some of the shackles weighing man down as they soar in life in search for political, social, economic answer spiritual fulfilment. Jesus of history was one of such major actors that played key revolutionary role referred to as "the gospel of liberation". Arazu toed the line of music, spirituality, medicine, education, music to render their message of liberation and hope in every community he found himself. As a missionary, Arazu played this liberative role, a spiritual revolutionist, a traditionalist, great thinker and trado-medicine healer. He maintains that Religion has failed the adherents and no longer perform the work for which it was set out to do.

According to Holzer (1971), part of the problem of liberation theology is because "religion in the traditional sense no longer provides spiritual guidance and sustenance in times of trouble as it used to do when the church was really potent; these days, people get divorced and people pray and get no answers and people are hurt by other people and the churches stand by and say well, there's nothing you can do really, it's part of God's will". May be it is, but to those seeking practical and effective help, it provides a reason to get out. And they leave their church for a more proactive new religious movement.

His slogan is always, "my spirit-soul will continue to live even when the noise making is over". In one of his interviews by the Spiritan scholasticates, Arazu was cited as saying, "if being a traditional religionist is a sin, God committed it first". Arazu is always stating the obvious when it comes to religious matters. He believes that religion is one. Jesus was a Jew. He performed and practiced his Jewish traditional religion and since all religionists pay allegiance to the one Supreme Being, it is believed that Supreme being cannot in any way be duplicated into having a Supreme being for each religion. That may be a religious fallacy of over generalization. There could be multiplicity of nomenclature of gods as domiciled in every religion but not multiplicity of Supreme Being.

The above statement arose based on the people's alleged perception that he was a traditionalist and as such he has no locus to perform his priestly role as some ignorantly argue that he has been banned from performing the catholic liturgical rituals. He simply smiled at such contentions and unfounded statements as he humorously did the day a Judge confronted him for not wearing his cassock in the court of law. He softly replied, does a Judge wear a wig in the market place? Arazu always refers people to the instance of Jesus who was misrepresented by the people; and always think of how Jesus would react if confronted with a challenging situation. He was not bothered about what people say about him. His only worry is how to impact positively on people's lives and devotion to his priestly vocation.

Arazu's Perception About God

He perceives God as the creator of the universe. Esoterically, he says that God does not create, rather he visualizes, reverberates and everything came to be. Thus, the world is the imagination of God. Rather than say, God is in everything, Arazu would rather say that 'every created thing is in God'. Everything exists in God; Nothing exists outside God. God for him cannot be grasped through the intellect but through esoteric/ mystical means. He perceives God from the created things as good: *Omne ens in quantum ens bonum est*- every existing thing (in so far as it exists is good) (Arazu, 2008). "God is so difficult to visualize and He made it easy for us by becoming man so that we will not be looking for him in the skies" (p.127). He does not believe that there is anything like evil (*malum*), the way man conceives it. Evil for him is not a thing but the absence of a thing. The Latin phrase has it thus: *malum est carentia bonitatis debita*-evil is the absence of the good that should be there (which is missing). Every action is an action of God and is good. Shooting is an action created by God which is good but shooting an innocent person- the 'wrong person that was shot' makes it unpleasant. For instance, to urinate is a good thing but when it is done in the unauthorized place like the church, it becomes evil. What is wrong here is not the action but the place. The absence of that good it was designed for is what makes it immoral. When God is pervasive (Omnipresent), how could there be anything bad? From the worldly perception, things might appear bad (through external vision), but when one enquires deep (internally), one would realize the good aspect of the action. The carcass of a rotten dog was being avoided by passersby, sputtering as they made their way through another pathway. A guru came around and started admiring the creative work of nature in the dentition of the rotten dog. "Every action is the will of God in some fashion and cannot take place at all unless God permits it. The evil comes from the defect caused by defective will power of man"(Arazu, 2008).

Arazu's perception about religion is not unconnected with his background and early childhood. He believes so much in the oneness of all religions. For him all religion is one. Man grew up to find himself in a particular family that worshipped in a particular pattern and to say that a particular religion is superior than the other is duplicating the supreme God as being inferior to Himself. Every religion carries in it certain level of values for which it was established. No matter how deceptive a religion might appear, the fact remains that it possesses certain merits. Those values are the aspect one should look out for rather than chasing the wind.

The mystery of any religion is not to be grasped by uninitiated members of a given society. He is of the opinion that man cannot speak inexhaustibly about God because of man's limited mortal nature. Arazu studied at the period when God is perceived as an old silvered bearded man (ancient of days) sitting on a golden chair up in the supposed sky where heaven was assumed to be located. Any contrary idea to this dogma is heresy and attracts the hammer of excommunication. His ideas were being opposed by some Christian theologians who sees religion from one straight jacket angle. Man conceives God based on one's particular culture

and background. Culture therefore, has a lot of influence on the perceptibility of God by different people. His is worried about some errors committed by men of God. He observed that, some preachers of the word have edged God out of their supposed ministry- placing God too high to the people while enthroning themselves as representatives of God. Some even play the supposed role of God. For these group of preachers, liberation theology is off their way. The priest is a man set aside by the people or by the divinity or even by both to officiate in sacred matters for the people. The fact of being set aside is done in accordance to the traditions of the people concerned. The religious institutions of some cultures manifest this phenomenon called the priesthood (Arazu, 2008).

According to him,

“The priestly vocation very often degenerate into what is call priest-craft, a situation in which crafty human being usurp position of God for their contemporaries and exert psychological torture on others in order to enhance their personal ego and maintain dominance in a society. Simply because God is not accessible to the material senses of man, the priest can easily edge God out of the psychology of his followers and in a very subtle but invisible way, himself become the subject of worship, obedience, loyalty and adoration.” (Arazu, 2008).

When this happens his followers become priest-oriented and no longer God-oriented. Believing rather in the god of X or the god of Y. This happens when priests of any religion compromise material goods, power, prestige to spirituality and total dedication to God’s work. The priest-crafts exists in both organized and unorganized religions – in Hinduism/Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, African Traditional Religion etc. Some religions have what is called disciplic succession or guru parampara – the line of spiritual teachers that have transmitted their teaching until this present day in an unaltered form. Succession is traceable to one historic man like Jesus to St Peter the Apostle and to the popes for the Catholic institution; Krishna to Arjuna to Brahma, for the Vedic order etc.

Another error in religion is the understanding of God using human descriptors. In other words, the perception of divine beings in human form or the recognition of human qualities in these beings. This is known as of anthropomorphism. In effect, God is given all manner of human characteristics as well perceived in human form. God, thus, is believed to eat, sleep, work, rest, God has feet, he breathes, strolls, hear, sit in heaven, he can get angry at every little provocation by man and repents etc. anthropomorphism tend to suggest the limitations of God following the human qualities as man determines the mood and emotion of God at every point in time. If man wants God to get angry, he will indulge in sinful acts; and if they want him happy, they will equally avoid wrong doings. Arazu believes that such God with such human attributes has some limitations based on his physical nature and cannot be omnipotent and omniscience. But rather God transcends all that existed and transcends the grasp of anthropomorphism and definition of theological and philosophical investigation.

Arazu and The Missionary Mishandling of The Concept of Supreme God in Igbo Tradition

The European evangelizers who brought the gospel message to Igbo land had a heavy dose of prejudice which their missionaries came with. According Isichei (1970), The Founder of the Holy Ghost fathers Igbo mission warned his nephew that all those who go to Africa must be thoroughly penetrated with the thought that the Dark Continent is a cursed land, almost entirely in the power of the devil”. Arazu in analyzing the above letter said, the mentality created by the letter was responsible for most of the damages done to Igbo traditional religion and culture by Christian missionaries. In other words, this particular statement formed part of the identifiable negative elements of colonial mission in Africa.

In his comparative study of religion and science, Arazu (2008) says, Science and religion are in conflict as they struggle to control man's intellect. The result of the conflict leads to what he refers to as superstition. Superstition thus became the operative term with which the protagonists in this conflict described their opponents. The religion of one creed, at times was regarded as superstitions by another creed. The reality of today could end up being superstition in future. Pyke (1967) opines that the essence of science is to challenge tradition and to doubt accepted dogma and to challenge the devout notion such that epidemics, natural disasters and bad administration are sent to punish cities and citizens for their sins. Science evaluates the logic and usefulness of such devotional activities as praying for the recovery of sick people rather than treating them with vaccines (p.164). Arazu (personal communication; April 12, 2004) avers that "the belief of today becomes a superstition of the future generation".

For Arazu (2008) the Latin *superstitio* is translated superstition in English but *aberglaube* in German, which helped him to put it into Igbo language as *okwukwe-fulu-uzo* (faith that wanders about). It is faith according to him but *terminus ad quem*, the target is not definite. It is faith for is scattered all over the spirit and magical world. Relating superstition to African traditional religion, it was not only superstition but of demonic origin: "All those who go to Africa as missionaries must be thoroughly penetrated with the thought that the dark continent is a cursed land, almost entirely in the power of the devil." The same Christianity which the missionaries brought to us is now being saddled with superstition. Superstition has degenerated across diverse cultures and religions into crafts (witch-crafts, priest-crafts, ezenwanyi-craft). Prior to the advent of Christianity, religion plays a pervasive role in the whole of Igbo life of African people. The pervasiveness alone does not exhaust all that may be said of religion in African societies. Religion binds man to an unseen powers and helps him form right relationship with these non-human powers as it influences man's attitude towards his fellow human beings (Opoku: 1978). Arazu believes that in as much as religion glues African societies together and rounds up the totality of African culture, it therefore becomes worrisome and a source of concern based on the inference that Africans were immersed in crippling superstition with no abiding values in their religion. The earliest literature on African religion as written by mostly non-Africans were not well represented and articulated. There is no doubt about the bias and false image representation of African culture as portrayed in their essays and writings. Our people have been influenced and lured into accepting their writings to be real to the detriment of their own lived experiences. In the words of Opoku (1978), "the writers who were mainly European explorers, missionaries or anthropologists, all brought to bear on their subject the European preconceptions about the non-European world... it was also not uncommon to deny that there was anything like religion in Africa". He cites Moffat, a nineteenth century missionary who worked among the Bechuanas, Hottentots and bushmen in South Africa as saying and believing that "Satan had erased every vestige of religious impression from their minds". These type of impressions leave a lot of questions unanswered about African tradition which is rooted in religion. Arazu (2008) will always respond to these assumptions by appreciating the values brought about by the missionaries as well condemned as unfortunate the attitude of "unripe" followers: Colonizers and missionaries brought us modern education... the discoveries of science are available to our people here in Africa. But education is expensive and time consuming. On this note, so many drop-outs have taken refuge in Christianity they were not equipped to study thoroughly and have replaced the old fortune telling and divining by setting up consultancy chapels where they, predict calamities to individuals and families, claim of discovering hidden objects, detection of presence of charms buried on the ground, organized Crusades (with "prayer warriors"), mention names of relations who must be avoided because they are responsible for one's misfortune and prescription of all kinds of remedies for the cure or avoidance of personal and social ills. Our religion is gradually becoming

superstition. Our politics exploitative. These two ills are interdependent. Liberation theology cannot thrive amidst these ills and gaps. For liberation to be genuine in Africa, the African world view must be put into consideration. There cannot be genuine liberation theology when the religion of the Africans are undermined and demonized. In Africa and Nigeria in particular, superstition, which could become another name for religion has so dulled the minds and sensibility of the masses that they have accepted man-made structures that cause endemic poverty as “the will of God”. The apathy and gullibility of our people have allowed the rich to get richer and the poor poorer. Superstitious religion does not stir the moral consciousness (conscience) to act and demand for liberation. (Arazu: 2008).

Arazu’s Perception of The Cosmic Beings; The Missing Link

In spite of their tremendous success in the area of health-care and education. The discovery of the Supreme God among the Igbo pantheon by the missionaries dismissed the other deities as demons, the likes of *Ekwensu Anaku*- the powerful deity of war. The Igbo “*chukwu*” had no entourage in the thinking of the missionaries. They conceived *chukwu* as the only good spirit in the Igbo world of spirits. Since the Igbo ancestors were not baptized and no one was supposed to come to the Father (God) except through Christ, the Igbo were presumed to have no representatives in heaven. This is debatable lacuna in Igbo religion; a grave contentious issue. Arazu has found a severe gap in Igbo world view in his study of Igbo traditional religion. He had established that, the idea of common terminology “god” has no equivalent in the Igbo vocabularies. Just like in Yoruba, *orisha* is a generic name for all the deities as each possess its proper name. The missionaries were ignorant of this fact. Rather, they were in a hurry to implore or adopt the personal proper name for one of the worshipped deities *chukwu* and made it stand as the generic term for god (with small ‘g’) while at the same time stand for proper name for the Christian Hebrew and Muslim name for the Supreme Being. The search for the Igbo generic name for “god”- a common name that will stand for all the other deities in Igbo pantheon continues and it is recommended that that gap be filled for an enduring and equitable liberation. Arazu refers to this cavity as one of those ‘monumental mistake’ by the European missionaries which has impoverished Igbo religious thought to the point where the doctrine of the Trinity in Igbo language is beset with theological errors. (Arazu: 2008). It takes only a genius to identify such a phenomenal omission in the ontology of the Igbo pantheon. Arazu (2005) in his book **Our Religion Past and Present** says, a generic term for “god” in Igbo is absolutely necessary if we are to steer clear of some of the heresies implicit in our present position. We can no longer afford to use the proper name of divinity in the “Nicene Creed”. He went further to elaborate that Divinity is considered as a thing or an abstraction because that is its nature. *Chukwu* (a proper name) is a person in the Igbo traditional religion. He was never regarded as the nature of the divinity. If he were so regarded, every other worshipped spirit would have been called *Chukwu* which would thus be a generic term applicable to all beings of the same genus (pl. genera). *Ani* is a God in Igbo traditional religion but is never called by the name *chukwu*. The same is applicable to *Agwunsi*, to *Ekwensu* or any other worshipped spirit in the locality. Therefore, the Igbo catechism that questions “*chukwu one di?*” is an aberration and involves the logical fallacy of ‘petition principii’ (begging the question). It is obvious that there has never been more than one *chukwu* in Igbo thought, culture or religion. The significant point Arazu raised here was that, there is no such word as “god” (Nature of divinity) in Igbo tradition. *Chukwu* or *chineke* is a divine person with divine nature but is not divine nature. He had observed carefully the mistranslation of the first and second Decalogue (ten commandments) into Igbo language, which says, “I am the Lord your God... you shall have “no other gods” before me”. Translating this literally in Igbo would suggest: *Abum Nna Chukwu ngi, gi enwena chukwu ozo bere som*. This particular translation has further exposed the gap in the Igbo language about the contentious concept “god”. Based on the gap for divine

nature in *chukwu*, (“No other gods”) cannot be translated into Igbo language because there is no such word for “god” in the Igbo tongue. *Chukwu* is not a generic name for “gods” or “god”. It is a proper name for God.

If one continues to worship *Ani* or any of other gods in Igbo tradition, he/she is not worshipping *chukwu ozo*. He is worried that the gap created by this singular missing word in traditional religion of the Igbo may have contributed to the shallow rooted faith among the Igbo people as they move from one church to another in search of miracle and liberation only to end up at night in the *dibia*'s shrine sacrificing to *Ani*, or *Agwu-nsi* or any other god in the Igbo pantheon without breaking any commandment as far as Igbo language, religion and culture are concerned. The person in question has not committed any sin by worshipping these other gods (*chukwu ozo*) as these other gods are not *chukwu* which is a name proper to only one divinity in Igbo pantheon. “*Chukwu ozo*” does not mean anything in Igbo religio- cultural society. And by continuing to employ the expression *chukwu ozo*, the Igbo Christians are constantly using the sacred name of *chukwu* in vain. This could be part of the reasons some prayers are not answered. It is even more liberating and more self-contentment driving home this gap limiting our direct contact with the cosmic realities.

Robb and Robb (1986) deny the claim that liberation theology is a Christian social movement. He rather maintains that it is activist humanism because its principle is based on Marxist theory which aim at complete change of focus and the meaning of traditional Christianity. For him liberation theology tries to replace the faith in Christ and hope for resurrection with the justification and sanctification of political revolution. They perceive liberation theology as dangerous movement, allegedly, that liberation theology serves as an excuse for much of the radical-politics of some country and that of American mainland church. Having influenced the missionaries to act radically in churches. Arazu as an activist differs on this belief. For he combines religious, social and political life styles towards his liberation concerns. He never carried arms in his liberation activism nor advocated carrying of arms in this struggle. He maintained the non-violence approach as the positive way to achieving enduring theological liberation. He emphasized that it is not the activists- liberation theology that are responsible for religious differences among the people. Why would an activist accept the fact of divided Christianity by mere fact of fighting for liberation of the exploited poor in the society. Liberationist has every right to say that religion should not be a hinderance to the activism of liberation.

The Betrayal of The Church: A Critique of Robbs

Robb and Robb (1986) avow that one of the greatest danger in liberation theology is its link with Marxism. In the Philippines, an approximation of 12 hundred priests and nuns joined this movement as of 1987 following Marxist's Influence. Their study of liberation theology exposes the social alienation of man by his fellow man. Man suffer exploitation, oppression, enslavement, inequality, frustration and other forms of dehumanization. For them, Marxism aims at a total transformation of the world and subsequently elevates history as a narrative of class struggle which will continue until the underclass triumph over the upper-class. The triumph of class over class. Marxism had so much influence on the principles and policies of liberation theology. Liberation theologians see in it lively force or the solid ground on which they are to build upon. The Marxist idea of history they claim is for them an authentic revelation. This is with the view that the religious revelation is not practicable, and being impracticable they held on to it as the real interpreter of the Bible and the determinant. The struggle and emancipation of the oppressed and the transformation of the entire society become

the objective of this movement. They form guerrilla warfare, organized political communities which would liaise with the pressure group to fight the government or the oppressors.

Robb and Robb (1986) in their presentation exposed the issue of liberation theology which for them is a good idea to liberate the captives and free those who are oppressed. Their first objection was the use of Marxist analysis, or Marxist concepts in their interpretation of the scriptures. For Robb, it is ironic that liberation theology should present itself as a legitimate interpretation of the Christian faith. At this they deny the aspect of the claim that it is a Christian social teaching and Christian theology. Liberation theology does not believe that Christ return is the aim of history, rather, it is triumph of class over class. They place emphasis on the poor such that they infer others cannot be redeemed. They cite Comblin thus: “the gospel has the same message for all; to the poor it announces liberation and the rich deprivation”. Having referred to the movement as extremely dangerous, Robb and Robb (1986) asserts that the greatest danger in the movement is that it shares Marxist ideology, its adherent often identify fidelity to their beliefs with fidelity to a Marxist-Leninist political organization. At this Robbs calls it a form of logical madness. Ratzinger, an arch enemy of liberation theology was not mad when he attributes the rise of political religion that is, the idea of social transformation to event within the Catholic Church. Ratzinger points out that after Vatican II many in the church began to believe that the existing theological structure was no longer applicable and acceptable and therefore has to be changed. With this type of exposition from the church, where is Robbs’ claim that the Christian faith has been relegated to the background in the bid to transform the society.

In trying to present Ratzinger’s bid to contradict liberation theology, Robbs land themselves in a tight corner. They quoted Ratzinger thus, “it is illusionary to and dangerous to accept Marxist analysis while failing to see the sort of totalitarian society to which this process leads”. It is only at the point when the church’s faith is at stake that they will pretend to keep side with the people, while autocracy and hierarchy were the order of the day, it never perturbs them”. He continues “the core of Marxist praxis is atheism and the desire of liberty and human rights. And to integrate into Christian theology and analysis which depends on an atheistic premise is to involve oneself in a terrible contradiction”.

Who then is practicing this atheistic principle? The one who devote his time and energy for the emancipation of the poor and transformation of the corrupt society or the one who adopt the principle of theoretical heavenly reward through the quotation of the scripture and the verbal consoling phrases like put your trust in God, that is how God wills it, God will provide etc. an equilibrated mind will prefer the former. The president of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega said that the best argument the Sandinistas had urging the people to take up revolutionary struggle were Christian arguments. Robbs at a point agreed with the actions of the liberation theologians where they (Robb and Robb) condemn the action of Somoza and gave credit to the positive reactions of the bishops towards liberation.

Having acknowledged this fact, they once again reverted and said that the above support does not mean that clergy practice violence but nonviolence should be the watch word. For Robbs, violent revolution rarely bring about the positive change they seek. They believe that in as much as it is true that violence may be necessary for a people in order to get rid of abusive, corrupt, oppressive government, it is not the churches place to encourage it. In this case, which should the church encourage, the abusive government or the people trying to get rid of her? The Jesuits were once in opposition to slavery in the new world. In their effort to protect the Indians from the slave-barons in Latin America, they earned the violent and “everlasting

hatred” of these classes. One should remember that in the 16th century after losing about thirty thousand of the villagers to abduction and death, the Jesuits armed themselves against the incursion of the slave hunters. Thus, the use of arm by Jesuits to protect themselves is often used as a modern justification for the use of violence by liberation theologians. When pushed to the wall, the next thing is reaction. Throw a tennis ball on the wall, it bounces back. It’s only the living that recounts history. The reason for resorting to violence in liberation theology is because the oppressors, the bullies have often refused to shift their ground. Such wretched condition results to protest and doing everything possible to end the inhuman treatment. Arazu, a humanist and an activist clergy did not take arms and did not resign as a religious and moral theologian for the sole purpose of liberating the poor. He adopted compassion, principles of love, truth, peace, nonviolence and right conduct approach in his struggle for liberation, with these he was able to achieve a lot among the poor in his neighborhood. He went into alternative health care, provided water for the people and established an esoteric / occult philosophy and life lecture. That does not mean that he never supported or acted violently when such need arises.

Robbs bring up other cases of priests in Philippines that have joined the movement yet the bishops rarely say anything regarding the horrible atrocities committed by the new people’s Army as they were called. Often, we do not go into finding out the reasons for certain actions, we only apportion blame on the immediate action. Having laid complaints for so long for a change and no answer or mandate was reached instead the situation got worse, then the only alternative left is to join force and fight the corrupt structure.

Conclusion

Robbs' position at rejecting liberation theology as unacceptable does not mean that the Christian church should fold their hands and sit aloof from social issues. The church should lead the drive for social justice. If Christ has stood aloof in his days, there would not have been liberation for humanity. What is the best human way of attaining social justice? Arazu was active believing that through dialogue and non-violence, endearing liberation is achievable. If we should follow Christ’s injunction to love our neighbours as ourselves, then where would the hatred, oppression, dehumanization and other vices come. The problem is that man have lost the five basic human values, based on truth, love, peace, right conduct, and nonviolence. Because our animal instincts (ego) have taken over the spirit then we don't see the essence of our human nature. The oppressors do not realize this deeper life teachings of the sages to love even our enemies and fellow persons as ourselves; and to get it into our heads that the physical world is not our home and actually not existence. Not until we liberate ourselves and others from these material attachment of power, wealth, ego, the masses will keep carrying arms and there will be no end in sight for triumph of class over class or class protest over class.

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