

EXODUS AND EXILE: THE TWO FACES OF LIBERATION

"Liberation" and "Revolution" are no longer the dominant slogans in the with-it culture that they were two years ago. If our concern were to join—or to resist—a fad, we would need to test in which churches and cultures the theme is still lively, and to develop a theological critique of faddism. That would not be an unworthy activity, especially since "Peace" is also one of the words recently cheapened in the marketplace.

Yet for now my focus is more perennial. The fad may *formulate* our agenda and sensitize our ears, but the right answer will have to be as old as Israel. The fad may fade or it may bounce back—in Latin America in any case it is not waning—the question is perennial and so must the answer be.

In preparation for the Assembly of the Commission on World Missions and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, which has since been held in Bangkok, a collection of documents was circulated in March, 1972 under the heading *Salvation Today and Contemporary Experience*. In the Introduction to the collection, written by Thomas Wieser, we read:

... the contemporary quest for liberation, whether political, economic, cultural or personal, has for many Christians become the context for the Church's mission and its proclamation of salvation. The biblical story, too, especially in the Old Testament, is to a large extent a story of liberation. A number of interpreters see in this affinity a direct scriptural support for the present quest, contending that the biblical meaning of liberation must not be allowed to be "spiritualized". Others, however, warn that the Bible cannot be used to support what they believe to be a mere temporary political struggle.

The purpose of the following remarks is to foster critical thought in a context of ecumenical conversation where the statistical observation, "many Christians believe . . ." often takes the place of theological dis-

course about what Christians *ought* to believe. My good friend Tom Wieser is right; the dominant vogue of “with-it” theology since the late 1960’s has been centered on liberation as the purpose of God. It seemed self-evident to many that the dominant biblical image is that of Exodus and that by taking off from the event of Exodus it would be possible in some broad sense to have a “Biblical Basis” for an especially committed Christian involvement in the political struggles of our age.

There have been a few thinkers asking careful questions about this very popular approach. Jose Miguez Bonino for instance has asked why it should be so obvious that out of the total biblical heritage it should be dominantly or even exclusively the picture of Exodus which becomes illuminating and motivating, without equal reference to exile, captivity, cross, the giving of the law, the taking of the land, the scattering of the faithful or other major themes of the biblical witness. To this observation our meditations shall return.

Another set of critics, thinking on the level of the methodology of proper theology, have expressed doubts about whether this approach was not a new and questionable form of natural theology, in the sense that the theologian tags after cultural styles trying to accredit his theology by proving that it can say what other people are saying anyway. Is not the relevance of a transcendent critique greater than the “search for relevance” of echoing contemporary styles?

Still another set of critics have been unconvinced about the clarity and solidity of liberation language when tested for its own sake. Do we really know what that liberating action is in which we should participate if we were to follow the mandate of Exodus? Are those particular guerrilla efforts which call themselves liberation fronts really liberated or liberating? Or are they a new form of cultural colonialism, imposing upon oppressed peoples yet another no less alien, no less self-righteous, no less violent form of minority rule in the name of a Marxist or a nationalist vision of independence? Have liberal democratic, or Marxist, or one-party nationalist movements demonstrated sufficient capacity to liberate that it should be the business of Christians to sanctify those programs by reverberating to them in theological idiom?

But all three of these criticisms—that on the level of biblical selectivity, that on the level of theological method, and the internal critique of the political ideology—have been expressed less sweepingly and less publicly than the liberation rhetoric, with the end result that it still seems useful to face that liberation language in its own right and to test the legitimacy of its claim to be echoing a biblical message.

Since that approach seems to get the most mileage by taking off homiletically from the story of Exodus, my invitation is to honesty in rhetoric. I am not doubting at all the propriety or the fruitfulness of leaping from the biblical language to the present; I am only asking that in that leap there be honesty and there not be unjustified selectivity.

We may take as expressive of the quintessence of the approach of

which we speak a fragment of an address delivered by Mr. Poikail John George to the United States Conference for the World Council of Churches at Toledo, Ohio, in May, 1972, on the theme, "Whence and Whither World Council Studies?" This particular quotation is picked out not because it is unique or original but because it is representative, not only of a wide stream of thought and communication but also of an effort to encapsule that stream of thought in an interpretation of the work of the best known interchurch agency for thinking about these matters.

The cries of God's people everywhere, the continents of Africa and Asia particularly, as well as those around us here at home, have reached the ears of the Lord when he tells us first of all to go and tell the Pharaohs of this world 'Let my people go'. Exodus must come before Mt. Sinai, liberation of God's people must come before communion with God.

The same centering upon the paradigm of Exodus is typical of the "liberation theology" of Latin America; Ruben Alvez or Gustavo Gutierrez show the same selectivity. The following sample from Alvez will suffice:

The Exodus was the generating experience of the conscience of the people of Israel. It constituted the structural center which determined their way of organizing their time and space. Observation: note that I am not simply saying that the Exodus is part of the content and conscience of the people of Israel. If it were that, the Exodus would be some information among much other. More than information it is the structural center because it determines the integrating logic, the basis of organization and the interpretation of the facts of the historical experience. Thus the Exodus does not go down as a past experience which took place at some well-defined time and space. It really becomes a paradigm for the interpretation of all of space and all of time.

Our respectfully critical response shall lead us in two directions: First, by staying with the mosaic model itself, we shall test the appropriateness of its application by extension to the revolutionary rhetoric of our day; and secondly, we shall return to the question of Dr. Miguez Bonino; what of the other models?

Our first concern then is with the story itself. Assuming Exodus to be the valid model our authorities say it is, what does it say? What kind of "Revolution" does it represent?

First observation: the Exodus was not a program but a miracle.

The exodus experience is of a piece with the ancient Hebrew vision of Holy War. The wars of JHWH were certainly lethal, but they were

not rationally planned and pragmatically executed military operations; they were miracles. In some of them (and the Red Sea is such a case), the Israelites, according to the record, did not even use arms. The combatant was not a liberation front or terrorist commando but JHWH himself.

The legitimate lesson of the wars of JHWH for contemporary ethics is not that "war must not be sin because God commanded it", but rather that because God declared and won it entering a war was not a matter of human strategizing and winning it was not an effect of preponderant human power. The Red Sea event is for the whole Old Testament the symbol of the confession that the Israelites do not lift a hand to save themselves. They only trust, and venture out. What the wars of JHWH point to in their fulfillment in Christ is not righteous bloodshed but non-violent non-conformity.

Second observation: The Exodus was not a takeover but a withdrawal.

The model of revolution most currently called "liberation" in our time is for subject peoples (or more accurately for a minority group acting in their name) to seize sovereignty within the land within which they are oppressed, taking that sovereignty away from a foreign power or from a feudal minority in their own society. This is very strikingly *not* what the Exodus did. Even though the princely figure of Moses would not have made unthinkable an effort to rise up and take over Egypt, as minority groups of invaders and infiltrators did many times in the history of the ancient Near East, this never is suggested as the story is told. Liberation means literally *Exodus*: going out. The only reason there must be plagues and ultimately death is that the hardness of Pharaoh's heart would not permit the Exodus to be peaceful.

It thus appears that if the appeal to the model of Exodus were to be taken seriously as a model rather than whimsically as a slogan, it would point far more clearly to the creative construction of relatively independent counter communities, and less to a seizure of power in the existing society. This countercommunity would be built with the sober expectation that it would call forth a violent reaction by the powers in control, and that in this violent reaction the powers might expose themselves to their own destruction. But the way it is done is very different. Moses was no Bonhoeffer. The old tyranny is destroyed not by beating it at its own game of intrigue and assassination, but by the way the presence of the independent counter community (and its withdrawal) provokes Pharaoh to overreach himself.

Third observation: The Exodus was not a beginning but a culmination.

There would never have been a Red Sea experience if there had

not previously been the willingness to follow Moses out of Goshen. This was a leap of faith, made in common by the Hebrew people, not on the basis of any calculation of their capacity to destroy the Egyptians, but fully trusting in the transcendent intervention of Yahweh.

Before that there was the fostering of a sense of communal solidarity and vocation as the Israelites had survived through the plagues as an experience of their distinct identity as objects of God's care. There had already been a series of smaller experiences of liberation as a minority people.

Before the experience of preservation through the plagues, there had to be proclamation: preaching of the liberating purpose of God, addressed to both the oppressed and the oppressor, by the preacher Moses who had come from outside the situation with a message from God. That preaching involved a need to accredit (by signs) the status of the prophet; it did *not* involve planning processes to engineer liberation, or predicting either a possible or a utopian design for the liberated state. Its insistence was upon the identity and the saving purpose of JHWH.

Even before there could be a Moses and a people to hear him, there had to be an oppressed community affirming its identity by talking about the Fathers and the God of the Fathers. Moses would not have recognized his mandate, and his brethren would not have heard him, if there had not been a prior common history of recital amidst and despite the bondage. *Goshen is prior to Exodus*. The identity of the people, and even in a serious sense the identity of the liberating God himself were dependent upon the confessing community. The God of their Fathers could not have called them to the Red Sea if they had not already been a people under the whips. Peoplehood is the presupposition, not the product of Exodus.

The tragedy of many "liberation fronts" in our time is that the minority which claims to have the right to establish the new order leaps to righteous violence without passing through the experience of creating a supportive people that gives them the right of spokespersonship, or creating a coherent ethos that will permit their own leadership team to work together without recurrent new divisions. To say it another way, to be oppressed together is not sufficient to constitute a people. Nor being a people yet sufficient to be the people of God. Exodus is not a paradigm for all kinds of groups with all kinds of values to attain all kinds of salvation. Exodus is a particular form of withdrawal into insecurity.

Before there could be that preaching there was the overwhelming and solitary experience of the calling of the prophet at Horeb, which in the tradition merges with Sinai.

Before that there was the unique cultural experience that produced the man Moses, in his own personality an amalgam of three cultures, that of the Israelite slaves, the Egyptian court and the desert. As in

the New Testament story the bi-cultural identity of the hellenists and of Paul was the key to the missionary opening of the church, so in this case the tricultural identity of Moses is the prerequisite for the idea and the implementation of the Exodus.

Recent experience demonstrates equally well the dependence of valid freedom movements upon distinctive personal charisma or vocations. In fact such experiences are so tied to the personality of a Gandhi, a King, a Dolci, a Chavez, that mainstream churchmen and ethicists are prone to interpret that personal quality as an argument against either the ethics or the objectives of the movements. Yet both such current experiences and the model of Moses would lead us to affirm that dimension of distinct personal creativity and focus. To take it seriously would mean that both ecumenical administrators and academic ethicists should put their discussion of decision-making processes and their intellectual competence into a framework with more room for the distinct contemporary divine intervention which brings into the scene a man with a catalytic message.

The cultural uniqueness of a Moses reminds us of one dimension where the interpreters of current social change are conscious of the issue but the advocates of legitimate revolutionary violence are usually not. Gandhi was not a Hindu alone but also had a British and South African education and experience. Martin Luther King was not only a representative southern Black Baptist, he also had a doctorate from a liberal Methodist New England school. Whereas liberation movements, especially after the loss of a leader, may gladly appeal to national or tribal or racial identities to provide an audience or even a rationale for revolution, the possibility of true liberation would seem to be dependent upon a leader who is *not* simply the incarnation of distinct tribal cultural drive but who at the same time has been beyond that culture, can project a vision of liberation which includes the wider world, and can communicate the legitimacy of that liberation in a way that the power centers of the wider world cannot permanently close their ears to it. If we are, then, interested in fostering genuine liberation of oppressed peoples, our concern should be less to reiterate the classic moral legitimations of seditious violence, and more to facilitate trans-cultural educational experiences for leaders who *at the same time* would remain identified with their people and become mature and confident participants in the wider world.

Even before Moses, before his vocation could be conceivable and its implementation feasible, there was the memory of the slaves who knew that they were the children of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, who in their time had been in conversation with their own God, so that "the God of the Fathers" was known to them as a living memory in their past.

At this point we must note that Mr. George, in the quotation above, seems to equate indiscriminately the phrase "people of God" with any and all subject peoples. This is certainly counter to the meaning of Exodus, which is the experience of one oppressed and wandering minority, not of any and all suffering peoples. "The people of God" is not everybody.

Not only is "the people of God" not to be equated with any or every nation or any oppressed portion of any nation; it is equally illegitimate in Jewish or Christian theology to talk about "the people of God" at all outside the context of historical relationship to the calling of Abraham. The people of God is an elect people chosen by sovereign divine initiative from among many nations not because of any particular merit (not even because of any particular suffering), only because it pleased the Lord to demonstrate His goodness in that visible way. To transpose the motif of liberation out of that distinct historical framework and thereby also away from the distinct historical identity of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, into some kind of general theistic affirmation of liberation, is to separate the biblical message from its foundation. There exists a liberation message only because of the particularity of the God of the fathers; Jews and Christians cannot talk confidently about liberation except in that connection.

Thus peoplehood is not the product of liberation; peoplehood with a history and a trust in the God who has led the fathers is prior to liberation. This has implications for contemporary thinking.

- A. One is the awareness that what really makes liberation possible is the cultural fruit of generations prior to liberation which developed in the fiber of their cultural personalities a sense of those values which could then lead them together into new liberating engagement. Several generations of ex-slaves singing Black spirituals are the presupposition of a Martin Luther King. If you want to help liberate the people, it is not a service to tell them that violence is justified; it is a service to help them develop their spirituals.
- B. A more negative conclusion to draw from the above observation is that there are times and places where no liberation is possible because no peoplehood has been formed. There are slums and *favelas*, there are perhaps whole racial groups and especially there are refugee cultures who have no songs, no historical self-understanding even as oppressed peoples. In such a context there is no base for liberating change either violent or non-violent. But in such cases the argument for violence is even less fitting. There is no possibility of constructing a new people on the other side of the Sea if peoplehood does not exist in Goshen.

Fourth observation: Exodus is only the beginning.

The slogan "Exodus before Sinai" presupposes that "liberation" is a single and final event; that is the claim that justifies treating its violence as a legitimate ethical exception. Yet Sinai was to become the place of a new bondage. Exodus leads not to the promised land but to the desert, and in that desert Sinai is the place of a new enslavement motivated partly by loyalty to the values of Egypt.

What happened at Sinai was thus first the fall of Israel, unwilling despite the liberation just experienced to be patient in awaiting the Word of God from the mountain, preferring under Aaron's leading to take things into their own hands. If this has any relation to the question how we take the initiative in the combat against injustice it would hardly be in the direction of fostering the authority of any human community to define autonomously and implement violently its own liberation.

Let this reminder of the golden calf point us to the awareness that after slavery was left behind everything was yet to be done.

Mr. George in the text I quoted referred to Sinai as the symbol of the "communion with God" that can come only after liberation. Yet what happened at Sinai was not "communion with God" in any such "religious" sense, but rather the formal constitution of Israel as a community under the law. This consolidation of the community is part of the meaning of liberation. Not only the divinely chiseled tablets of Torah, but also the common-sensical borrowing from Moses' father-in-law of a model of grassroots government was needed for the mixed multitude to become a people. Exodus was the leap of faith but Sinai was its landing. Historically Exodus was the prerequisite of Sinai, but morally it is the other way 'round. Liberation is *from* bondage and *for* covenant, and *what for* matters more than *what from*.

If Exodus was the prerequisite of Sinai, in terms of movement, Sinai was the prerequisite of Exodus in terms of motive. It was the reason given to the Egyptians (Ex. 8:2, 20, 26f, etc.). Even before the arrival at Sinai, the column of fiery cloud was a symbol of Sinai leading them. Liberation after the model of Exodus issues in the reconstitution of community around the liberator. This is then another point at which to take the contemporary rhetoric seriously. Can the various "fronts" and "movements" which today call themselves "liberation" point us with any confidence, on the basis of experiences elsewhere or of the inherent quality of their vision, to a constitutive event *following* the "exodus" that will give substance to their separate existence? Or is not what is today called "liberation" sparked and justified only by the wrongness of the oppression it denounces, while sharing with the oppressor many of his ethical assumptions about how to deal with dissent, about the use of violence, about the political vocation of a liberating elite?

So liberation has its post-requisites as well as its prerequisites. It is

not a revolution but only a threshold linking two phases of pilgrim peoplehood.

In giving this degree of attention to the fuller dimensions of the Exodus story I am not merely pressing a parable beyond its limits into allegory; I am unfolding the meaning of “story”, as illumination of how we understand a God who works among men for their salvation. The primary resources for the Exodus are not located in the money or the weapons or the strategems brought to bear at a particular point to destroy some tyrant. They are rather the prior developments of an identity, a common story, a sense of community and purpose and a set of expectations as to the shape of the divine initiative, without which the story of the Red Sea would have no frame and no point. It is not too much to suggest that as Christians talk about Exodus and liberation there is still need for the awareness of similar prerequisite dimensions. Clarifying the identity and mission of minorities might then be a better guide even today than efforts to take over the pagan society from above and make it a good.

Parallel to the alternative Exodus/Sinai Mr. George placed the pair liberation/communion. This is to suggest, as we noted, a distinct (and secondary) place for “communion with God”, and thereby a replay of the polemic, frequent in World Council circles, against “pietism”. But since Sinai is the formation of a community, the polarization in the phrase of Mr. George does not serve for the argumentative purpose which he intends. In order to speak to the present polarity represented by “pietism” on one hand and “social action relevance” on the other, Mr. George has made Sinai something it never was, namely “communion with God” in a “religious” sense. Or to reverse the parable, he has also made piety something it never was. It is a misreading of history to see in the worship patterns of pietism, or of any other group of real cultic concern, an idea of distance from the world that seeks authenticity through heightened separateness. Pietism—and valid sacramental worship for that matter too—celebrates the working of God within history in the creation of community; it is not a self-contemplating mystical exercise.

Fifth observation: Exodus is an exception.

I noted before in an introductory way that the preference of modern preachers for the model of Exodus can be challenged as an unexplained and arbitrary selectivity. Why is there not some broader review of all the great events which Scripture puts in the light of the Word of God at work: the taking of Canaan, the pluralism of the age of the judges, the rise and fall of Kingdom, the dividing of the Kingdom, exile . . . (to stay with the Old Testament)? But the point here to be made is

much more than that by concentrating on Exodus something or other is omitted; it is that the elements omitted are *relevant*. Israel's experience with trying Kingship and even empire, and ultimately abandoning them, is part of the lesson of the biblical witness; exile and the abandoning of nationhood as the form of peoplehood are prophetically interpreted as the way of JHWH. Ezra and Nehemiah reestablish the community precisely *without* national sovereignty.

Most relevant to the "oppressed people" theme, and most in tension with the juxtaposition of exodus language with modern guerrilla theology, is the fact that over against the paradigm of leaving Egypt and destroying Pharaoh on the way we find in the Old Testament, more often, another model of how to live under a pagan oppressor. It is the way of Diaspora. This is the model taken over by the New Testament Church, and the model as well of two millenia of rabbinic Judaism.

These are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. . . . Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream, for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord (Jeremiah 29:1, 5-9).

The exile of Judah had begun, with the move to Babylon of the King, the Queen mother, the temple treasurer, the artisans, and the priests and prophets.

But young Zedekiah, left in Jerusalem to rule the rest, got ideas of liberation. Prophets like Shemaiah encouraged him to believe that Judah was still where the action was. "Don't settle down in Babylon, you'll soon be back". "Jerusalem will again be free". These are the deceiving diviners Jeremiah denounces; these are the lying dreams.

"You'll be in Babylon a long time. Seek the peace of *that* city. Identify your welfare with theirs. Abandon the vision of statehood".

There is only one Exodus in the history of Israel; but on the other hand there are several samples of the way a moral minority can "seek the welfare of the city". This advice of Jeremiah was given in the age of the exile after the defeat of Josiah: but we have the same stance taken by Joseph in Egypt, by Daniel under Nebuchadnezzar, and by Mordecai in Persia and even in a sense by Jonah in Nineveh. Far from destroying the pagan oppressor, the function of the insightful Hebrew

is to improve that pagan order so as to make it a resource of protection for the people and viable as a government. He does this in ways which force the pagan power to renounce its self-mythologizing religious claims and to recognize the higher sovereignty that is proclaimed by the Hebrew Monotheist. This Joseph/Daniel/Mordecai model is so characteristic in the Hebrew Bible that we have to claim that this kind of elite contribution to the reforming of the existing order is more often the fitting contribution to the pagan community than any theocratic takeover. The complement to the Exodus of the counter community is not a *coup d'état* by the righteous oppressed, but rather the saving message of the resident minority.

Closing the Circle

Let us return to the last words of our opening quotation from Thomas Wieser. Some want to identify “the contemporary quest for liberation” with biblically understood “salvation in contemporary experience”, to ward off “spiritualization”. Others don’t want the Bible to be used to support a “mere temporary political struggle”. We have not been testing the latter position, though it may be pointed out on the basis of our parable that to object that salvation should not be “temporary” is not an argument. According to most other definitions salvation in the form which can be experienced today is also temporary. It would be a more serious reproach that it is “temporal”; i.e., lacking in or denying transcendent depth which goes beyond the present power struggle. This is what Mr. George was trying to safeguard by retaining “Sinai” as symbol of “communion with God” subsequent to “Exodus” as liberation. I personally doubt that either way of safeguarding transcendence above the temporal is adequate or Biblical; either Mr. George’s two-step dialectic or Wieser’s critique of the “merely temporal”.

More important in our present concern, however, is that Wieser’s phrasing misframes the criticism of the “liberation” focus as “spiritualizing” or as avoidance of the “political”. It will be visible from the above that that is not my criticism at all. It is rather that the “many Christians” in question have borrowed from the Bible an imagery or *language* of liberation, but have avoided learning from the biblical story anything about the meaning of liberation.¹

The *form* of liberation in the biblical witness is not the guerrilla campaign against an oppressor culminating in his assassination and military defeat, but the creation of a confessing community which is viable with-

¹Elsewhere Wieser, like Rubem Alvez, shows sympathetic insight into the “people-in-exile” alternative. The “typical” quotations used here should not be seen as representative of their authors’ best wisdom.

out or against the force of the state, and does not glorify that power structure even by the effort to topple it.

The *content* of liberation in the biblical witness is not the “nation-state” brotherhood engineered after the take-over but the covenant-peoplehood already existing because God has given it, and sure of its future because of the Name (“identity”) of God, not because of a coming campaign.

The *means* of liberation in the biblical witness is not prudentially justified violence but “mighty Acts” which may come through the destruction at the Red Sea—but may also come when the King is moved to be gracious to Esther, or to Daniel, or to Nehemiah.

From the “Believers’ Church” perspective, the “neo-constantinian” approach that blesses a going political movement, and the “spiritualist” approach that downgrades the “temporal” are mirror images. Both use biblical imagery more for window dressing than for content, both avoid seriously dealing with the way in which *pilgrim peoplehood* is projected by the Bible as the shape of salvation in any age.

So let us abandon the spiritual/secular polarity and ask what *kind* of spiritual historicity reflects the shape of liberating grace.

We will be farthest along if instead of following only the pattern of going out into the wilderness—which the Exodus taken alone really was—and instead of dreaming of a theocratic takeover of the land of bondage by the brickmakers—which ideological exegesis has sought to do with the Exodus imagery—we seek more creatively to describe what can best be done by creative minorities in a society they don’t control. Let us observe:

- Jesus and his movement;
- Christians in the second century Roman Empire;
- the Jews in medieval Europe;
- the Pennsylvania Dutch in colonial America;
- the Indians in East Africa;
- the Chinese in South Asia;
- the unmeltable ethnics in contemporary America.

The line runs from the ten good men who could have saved Sodom through Paul in his boat saving his captors on the way to Rome.

You know the famous description in the (second century?) *Letter to Diognetus*:

They reside in their respective countries, but only as aliens. They take part in everything as citizens and put up with everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their home, and every home a foreign land. . . . They spend their days on earth, but hold citizenship in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their private lives they rise above the laws. They love all men, but are persecuted by all. . . . They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted and render honor. Doing good, they are penalized

as evildoers; . . . and those who hate them are at a loss to explain their hatred.

In a word: what the soul is in the body, that the Christians are in the world.

We need not bother debating the questionable metaphysics of body/soul dualism to confirm the writer's point about the church/society dualism. What the world most needs is not a new Caesar but a new style. A style is created, updated, projected, not by a nation or a government, but by a people. This is what moral minorities can do—what they have done time and again.

Liberation is not a new King; we've tried that. Liberation is the presence of a new option, and only a non-conformed, covenanted people of God can offer that. Liberation is the pressure of the presence of a new alternative so valid, so coherent, that it can live without the props of power and against the stream of statesmanship. To *be* that option is to be free indeed.

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