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Bakalářská práce

**American Communal Movements and Liberation Theology  
in the 19th and 20th Centuries**

**Americká komunitní hnutí a teologie osvobození v 19. a 20. století**

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## **Abstract**

The topic of this bachelor thesis is the American communal movements and liberation theology in 19th a 20th centuries. The aim of the theses is an introduction of three specific cases of socialistic and Christian efforts for a more just society, which fall into American history. It discusses the experimental communities inspired by Robert Owen, then the protagonist of *The Catholic Worker Movement*, Dorothy Day, and the whole subject is completed with the theology of liberation originally coming from Latin America.

## **Anotace**

Tématem této bakalářské práce jsou americká komunitní hnutí a teologie osvobození v 19. a 20. století. Cílem práce je představení konkrétních příkladů socialistického a křesťanského úsilí o spravedlivější společnost, patřících do moderní americké historie. Jedná se o experimentální komunity inspirované Robertem Owenem, dále o vedoucí osobnost Katolického dělnického hnutí, Dorothy Day, a o teologii osvobození pocházející z Latinské Ameriky, která celé téma završuje.

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## 1. Introduction

With the commencement of a modern industrialized society, people began to feel more heavily the unfair economic order. The exploitation of workers, unemployment, and consequent poverty have become major issues. These days, such problems have shifted mainly to the Third World. I wondered what are the possible solutions or attempts to tackle poverty in America where there is a strong religious tradition of charity work in social affairs. What are the pros and cons of religious attitudes when dealing with misery in one's surroundings?

The topic of this bachelor thesis is the American communal movements and liberation theology in 19th and 20th centuries. The aim of the theses is an introduction of three specific cases of socialist and Christian efforts for a more just society, which fall into American history. It discusses the experimental communities inspired by Robert Owen, then the protagonist of the Catholic voice raised in favour of workers' rights, Dorothy Day, and the whole subject is completed with the theology of liberation originally coming from Latin America.

The earliest attempts to remedy the social evils of the industrialized society such as the dehumanized work and unhealthy living conditions, may be ascribed to the utopian socialist Robert Owen. The chapter dedicated to the Owenite communal movement presents its theoretical background stemming from Owen's principles based on a successful communal experiment of his, and a broader application of these principles in Owen's plan for a new moral world consisting in practical suggestions for life in co-operative villages. The chapter also describes the formation and dissolution of the experimental communities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century America. Special attention is paid to reminiscences of Brook Farm residents and to Nathaniel Hawthorne's criticism of communitarianism implied from his fictional prose *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). At the end of the chapter, the significance of these community experiments and their continuation in the 20th century is outlined.

The middle chapter focuses on life and especially the social activism of American journalist Dorothy Day, the founder of *The Catholic Worker Movement*. Based on her autobiography *The Long Loneliness* (1952), we can investigate the moments that led her to not just talk about social justice and peace, but to put her hand to the plough and perform the deeds of love. The main events of her life include her conversion to Catholicism, and the consequent long-lasting tension between her radical Communist background and Christian faith which created an

original combination of these two worlds in her charitable and journalistic work. Last but not least, Dorothy Day's legacy and the possibility of her canonization are mentioned.

In the penultimate chapter, I searched for the foundations of the liberation theology, which has been followed by many supporters since the 1970s not only in the United States. For this part I studied the principal work of the movement written by a Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), and also selected parts of the Scripture. Firstly, the meaning of theological reflection of Christian praxis is explained, namely the reflection of the active involvement in the effort to liberate their neighbours from oppression, poverty and injustice. The next subchapter describes the situation in Latin America, in which liberation efforts have culminated since the 1960s. The core of the whole chapter explains the connection between the historical emancipation of mankind and the salvation promised by God. Using the appropriate quotations from the Bible, the right form of a Christian mission in the world of misery and injustice is illustrated. The Church should accept the spirituality of the poor and live in communion with them, it should act in favour of the oppressed and criticize the powerful, in Biblical terms, it should strive for the approximation to the Kingdom of God with hope that liberation is given in Christ to all.

The concluding chapter compares and contrasts the starting points, religious attitudes, and suggested practical solutions of these three personalities: Robert Owen, Dorothy Day and Gustavo Gutierrez. The actual impact of their endeavours to change the society is taken into consideration too.

## 2. Robert Owen and Communities

The utopian social theory of Robert Owen, presented in his four essays a *New View of Society*, gave rise to the communal movements of the 1820's and 1840's in rural America. Robert Owen envisioned an ideal state of society attainable through the practical application of his *principle of the formation of the human character*. It was through the example of the experimental communities and thanks to the goodwill of the enlightened rulers, that the amelioration of human lives should have happened.<sup>1</sup> Owen's reformatory efforts and his influential writings on social affairs brought him the title, "*Father of British Socialism*".<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1. Principles

Owen offers his principles as a promising response to the clearly observable, unsatisfactory reality of the social order of his time which did not lead to happiness. The vast majority of population are poor and working classes who do not have access to education and proper guidance. Their environment shapes their characters so that they live dissolutely and act criminally, which leads to their punishment by those who govern the present irrational social system. He emphasises that if conditions of those who possess power and the poor had been interchanged, the former would have been called to account for their crimes and the latter would have judged them, maybe with no trouble sentenced them to death, because the system is based on such principles. The rest of the population has been educated, but on the basis of erroneous principles that ignore the true human nature. Owen considers the fundamental assumption of society that an individual is fully responsible for his character, feelings and habits, a false belief. This assumption leads to rewards and punishment on which religions, governments and other social institutions are built. He sees this mistaken supposition as the root of evil that causes ignorance, hatred and hostility among people who could otherwise be friends. Accordingly, the consequences of the ignorant concept of individual responsibility are, in Owen's view, poverty and misery.<sup>3</sup>

He believed, however, that after the introduction of true principles, the knowledge of the existing errors will spread and the supremacy of ignorance will disappear. Owen's first and most important principle reflects human nature as follows:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), pp. 1-35.

<sup>2</sup> Miliband, Ralph. "The Politics of Robert Owen" In: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15:2 (April 1954), p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 10-56.

<sup>4</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 17-18.



Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men.<sup>5</sup>

From this principle it follows, that individuals cannot be responsible for their defects which were formed for them by their parents, their predecessors, educators and by their surroundings. Therefore, society should not punish crimes which would be a fruitless effort anyway, but prevent them by surrounding individuals with right circumstances which would increase happiness in people's lives, because it is society which forms human characters. To help distinguish good motives for a fruitful action, Owen offers his second principle:<sup>6</sup>

... the happiness of self, clearly understood and uniformly practised, [...] can only be attained by conduct that must promote the happiness of the community.<sup>7</sup>

In order to achieve happiness, which all people naturally desire from birth, one must acknowledge that happiness stems from making other people happy. These principles are true, says Owen, because they were derived from the examination of human nature, and thus they cannot fail to succeed. Individuals need to be trained to think rationally to be able to assess facts existing around them and to recognize the truth. One of the true principles describes the reality of forming human character. The second principle says that private good is closely linked to public good. If these principles are properly put into practice, then misery and evil caused by people's ignorance will certainly disappear from the world.<sup>8</sup>

If only all understood that behaviour was formed by society, then aggression, cruelty, and selfishness would be replaced by kindness, sympathy and charity.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2. Successful Enterprise

Owen was not a mere social theorist, his visions, presented in his essays a *New View of Society*, originated from his long-time successful experiment in New Lanark, an industrial Scottish village. He became the owner of the local cotton mills and there began his educational efforts to improve the character of his workers and their families. He was thus enabling them to live happily. He also arranged reasonable and healthy working and living conditions for the two thousand labourers, including five hundred children apprentices older than eight years of age, in his factory.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 10-18.

<sup>7</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 37-62.

<sup>9</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. xxiv.

<sup>10</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. ix-xi.

Despite their initial prejudices that the new owner would abuse them in order to gain as much profit as possible, Owen with his philanthropic intentions to increase their welfare, his kindness and just treatment, finally gained the New Lanark workers' confidence. He focused on the elimination of bad habits, such as theft, drunkenness, dishonesty, deceit, conflicts and quarrels, all of which was widespread in the community. As he identified the causes of these social vices in "*distrust, disorder and disunion,*" it only strengthened his decision to set the conditions that would enhance "*confidence, regularity and harmony.*"<sup>11</sup> The remedy for the crimes was carried out through patient explanations of evils caused by vicious practices and benefits following from honest conduct, through regulations and checks serving for prevention, and through the experience of pleasure from the result.<sup>12</sup>

Workers were advised to make each other happy and if misdemeanours occurred, they were denounced firmly but kindly, without punishment. Owen also paid attention to the comfort of all villagers by provision of quality goods for low prices and by the improvement of their streets and houses. a community support fund for the sick and the old was established, to which both men and women contributed equally. Children aged five to ten, instead of being employed as usual, attended the village school to learn reading, writing and mathematics. As for religion, they were not trained in one particular religious creed, but in virtues leading to tolerance and desire to do good to all people, which is the essence of religion acceptable across all denominations. This system of training in kindness under the supervision but without punishment, in well-organized surroundings, bore its fruit in form of the change in the general character of the villagers into more active, moral, temperate, healthy and happy.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3.Owen's Plan: a New Moral World

Owen believed that since he succeeded with his principles in the *New Lanark* community, it was possible everywhere in the world to apply these principles which would remedy the flaws of society. He developed plans for a progressive transformation of any society and its members who could live "*without idleness, without poverty, without crime, ...*"<sup>14</sup> and without all the other outcomes of ignorance.<sup>15</sup>

On one hand, Owen supposed, maybe naively, that the conversion of the established order into a new moral world would be headed naturally by wise, intelligent and benevolent rulers

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<sup>11</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 27-29.

<sup>13</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 30-34.

<sup>14</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 35-37.

or legislators.<sup>16</sup> He thought of a *national system for the formation of character* through which governments would provide inclusive, rational education to all, the poor and the ill-taught; honest employments, including public commissions; and other necessary means that would correspond with the true nature of their citizens, which would improve their lives and characters and thus would lead to their happiness.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, he imagined the path towards the welfare of society leading through a development of emancipated, co-operative, rural communities where agriculture, combined with manufacturing, would offer ideal settings for raising a new moral generation correspondingly with the right principles. a facility for this purpose, called the *New Institution*, comprised of a playground, exercise rooms, school, lecture room and church, should be built in the centre of every communal village.<sup>18</sup>

Children from the age of two will be trained to acquire rational wishes and desires to become valuable community members, therefore already the playground precept says to a child “*that he must endeavour to make his companions happy.*”<sup>19</sup> Exercise rooms serve to strengthen the physical fitness and health of the children, because health contributes to fitness for work, activeness and happiness. As for school and religious education, Owen stressed the importance of instructing children to think rationally, “*to distinguish truth from error.*”<sup>20</sup> He was utterly against forcing them only to believe.<sup>21</sup>

The emancipation of the adult mind would be realized thanks to lectures on the true principles of the formation of character, in accordance with facts existing around us. People trained according to the true principles would understand differences among people and the reasons of everyone else’s behaviour. If such behaviour is destructive, the well-instructed individuals would feel pity for their ill-formed companions and will aspire actively to eliminate the wretched circumstances which cause the distress. Thanks to their kind and helpful endeavour, which corresponds with all moral and religious teaching, they will experience pleasure. False ideas instilled to everyone by the old system have led to enmity and criminal behaviour causing misery. True knowledge would guide human desire for happiness in the right direction, so that virtues and actions beneficial for humans would prevail. Rationality will

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<sup>16</sup> Miliband, Ralph. “The Politics of Robert Owen” In: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15:2 (April 1954), p. 234.

<sup>17</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991). pp. xxv, 38-57.

<sup>19</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 54.

replace misery; actions of promoting happiness of other people would replace the harmful, selfish interests.<sup>22</sup>

The Church will not serve to any sect. Only a pure and vital religion, freed from intolerance, which proclaims charity for all, can bring peace and happiness to mankind. Therefore, religious groups would have to tolerate each other in the New Institution and seek the truth together.<sup>23</sup>

The inhabitants would also be trained in social and practical domestic habits, such as keeping households clean, cooking healthy food, economising and training children properly. Meals would be prepared and enjoyed in public kitchens. Private dwellings should be airy and suitable for recreation. Gardens with public walks should invite people to innocently amuse themselves and enjoy the pleasure from natural beauty. Gardens would be also pleasant meeting places for both, the active and retired workers. a fund for the workers should be established, so that they could secure themselves financially for old age.<sup>24</sup>

Later, Owen's theoretical system of community life became more elaborate in terms of common interest in common good and mutuality among the community members. He proclaimed the need for united labour with no competition and no division between the worker and the investor, the sharing of produce in common, and equal responsibilities and privileges of all according to their age, irrespective of their sex or profession. Competition deserves rejection, under Owen's perspective, because it causes hostility among people and selfish individualism based on the principle of *buying cheap and selling dear*.<sup>25</sup> Owen considered also marriage and families unnatural and harmful institutions, enhancing selfishness in the form of greater love for some people than for others.<sup>26</sup> By contrast the community life promises to its members "*to exchange their poverty for wealth, their ignorance for knowledge, their anger for kindness, their divisions for union.*"<sup>27</sup>

These essays, in Owen's words, are not intended for speculation or amusement of an "*idle visionary who thinks in his closet, and never acts in the world;*"<sup>28</sup> but to "*those individuals of every rank and class and denomination of society, who have become in some degree conscious of the errors in which they exist, [...] who are ardently desirous of discovering and*

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<sup>22</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 19-20.

<sup>23</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 29, 50, 56.

<sup>24</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 38-41, 58.

<sup>25</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. xxv-xxvi.

<sup>26</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 323-332.

<sup>27</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 307.

<sup>28</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 17.

*following the truth,*"<sup>29</sup> and who are willing to contribute through the universal activity to the creation of a new moral world.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.4. Experimental Communities in America

The experimental communities were supposed to find and show the way to carry out a gradual change into the poor living conditions and problematic interpersonal relations of the whole world. Owenite communitarianism attracted people of various social backgrounds and became an outstanding social movement owing to its inspiring initiator who spent his life and wealth trying his theories out in real life. Owen gained credibility especially thanks to his twenty-year long successful experiment in New Lanark, Scotland.<sup>31</sup>

Communities, the main Owenite institutions, were based on *the principle of union and mutual co-operation*. They represented a good means for their purpose provided that the characters of people would improve only if their surroundings were suitably adjusted. The objectives of Owenites could be realized only in a community designed to provide the right circumstances capable of making only wholesome impressions on characters of the new generation. In such a community, Owen promised, one may attain the hoped-for results: unity, equality, abundance of supplies and peace. It includes an elimination of the principle of individual interest and abolition of all institutions that divide people, such as criminal prosecution, division of labour, cities, marriage and family.<sup>32</sup> An Owenite Hymn reflects the beneficial effects of the community life:

Community does all possess  
That can to man be given;  
Community is happiness,  
Community is heaven.<sup>33</sup>

Owen's first and most ambitious<sup>34</sup> community on the American soil, *New Harmony* in Indiana, started in 1825 and attracted around 800 members who then lived in this communitarian settlement previously owned by a religious sect. The Owenites in New

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<sup>29</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), pp. 10-13.

<sup>32</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), pp. 17-18. Details in: Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. 274-278, 284-298.

<sup>33</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Harrison, John, *Robert Owen and the Communities*, at: [www.robert-owen-museum.org.uk/pdf/Harrison.pdf](http://www.robert-owen-museum.org.uk/pdf/Harrison.pdf), accessed on April 11, 2018.

Harmony were told by Owen that education will make it possible for the whole community to get rid of the errors and corruptions of the world, and thus to become new people.<sup>35</sup> Simultaneously, Owen was writing articles for a newspaper in New Harmony, in which he gave advice to parents about healthy and beneficial upbringing; he instructed mothers in hygiene, clothing and nourishment, he advised parents to send their two-year old children to nursery school, and he urged both parents and educators to treat children as equals, to be their guides who explain things, neither ignore them nor be slaves to them. Besides the usual disciplines such as arithmetic, schooling concentrated on practical skills for work; boys learned crafts and farming while girls learned cooking, weaving and housekeeping. The New Harmony experiment was in its time the centre of modern, progressive education in America.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, within two years, New Harmony split into smaller groups and broke up completely in 1828. The general problems were: the engagement of enthusiasts with disparate opinions and goals, many of them were teachers and scientists who considered themselves *rational and well-intentioned* enough, but did not possess the necessary skills for manufacturing and agriculture; therefore, the community produce did not cover the costs of supplies and the experiment financially ruined its founders.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the individualistic aims prevailed and the attempt to co-operate in unity failed. Other Owenite communities of 1820's inspired by New Harmony, founded by American philanthropists ended similarly soon after, namely *Wanborough*, Illinois (1825), *Yellow Springs*, Ohio (1825), *Blue Spring*, Indiana (1826), *Kendal*, Ohio (1826), *Valley Forge*, Pennsylvania (1826), and *Nashoba*, Tennessee (1825).<sup>38</sup>

During 1840's another wave of communitarianism appeared partially inspired by Owen in America. Owen's writings and lectures were spread widely by his new organization called *Rational Society* at that time.<sup>39</sup> As an example of these socialist communitarian attempts, an American community named *Brook Farm* is presented in the next chapter.

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<sup>35</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Farrell, Emma L. "The New Harmony Experiment, an Origin of Progressive Education" In: *Peabody Journal of Education* 15:6 (May 1938), pp. 357-361.

<sup>37</sup> Claeys, Gregory "Introduction" In: Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. xvi.

<sup>38</sup> Harrison, John, *Robert Owen and the Communities*, at: [www.robert-owen-museum.org.uk/pdf/Harrison.pdf](http://www.robert-owen-museum.org.uk/pdf/Harrison.pdf), accessed on April 11, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Claeys, Gregory "Introduction" In: Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), pp. xvii-xx.

## 2.5. Brook Farm

As a concrete example of the communitarian endeavours, Brook Farm, founded in 1841 by a transcendentalist<sup>40</sup> George Ripley, will serve us. According to its constitution, Brook Farm was intended to be “*a voluntary Association, The Institute of Agriculture and Education.*”<sup>41</sup> The Associates contributed to the farm with their money and labour. Initially, the emphasis was put on the School, because studying was a way of approaching God who could be found in nature and in people themselves, according to the transcendentalists. Children were led to work outside as well as in the household by the example of adults.<sup>42</sup>

A few dozen people occupied the farm in the first two years, later there were around a hundred associates, among them Rebecca Codman, a young girl back then, whose memories helps us to imagine what life at Brook Farm looked like. When she and her parents moved in, the Association was adopting the Fourierist<sup>43</sup> structure of work groups, which she describes as efficient, attractive and satisfactory. She also praises her fellows for their willingness to perform any kind of labour to the benefit of the Institute.<sup>44</sup>

The first building in the farm, where a visitor could enter, was a large old farmhouse with a leaky roof, serving as reception and dormitory, providing a kitchen and dining room, shed and washrooms. Behind the farmhouse, there was a barn. Another important building situated in the farm was the workshop, used for carpentry, shoe making, printing a socialist paper, and for other crafts. Then there were three other buildings, one served as school and library, one as dormitory and the last one, called Pilgrim House, served for meetings.<sup>45</sup>

According to Rebecca Codman, everything in the farm, furnishings as well as food, was plain, but neat or nicely prepared and pleasant. She describes members as willing to give up their

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<sup>40</sup> Definition of Transcendentalism: “*An idealistic philosophical and social movement which developed in New England around 1836 in reaction to rationalism. Influenced by romanticism, Platonism, and Kantian philosophy, it taught that divinity pervades all nature and humanity, and its members held progressive views on feminism and communal living. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were central figures.*” Quoted from: *English Oxford Dictionaries*, at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transcendentalism>, accessed on April 14, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Myerson, Joel. “Rebecca Codman Butterfield’s Reminiscences of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), p. 607.

<sup>42</sup> Wilson, J. B., “The Antecedents of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly*, 15:2 (June 1942), pp. 321-329.

<sup>43</sup> Definition of Fourierism: “*A system for the reorganization of society into self-sufficient cooperatives, in accordance with the principles of the French socialist Charles Fourier (1772–1837).*” Quoted from: *English Oxford Dictionaries*, at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Fourierism>, accessed on April 14, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Myerson, Joel. “Rebecca Codman Butterfield’s Reminiscences of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), pp. 611, 614.

<sup>45</sup> Myerson, Joel. “Rebecca Codman Butterfield’s Reminiscences of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), p. 613.

comfort and live really simply to make their experiment succeed. Everybody wore the clothes which they liked, but it was usually plain and low-cost work clothes, no one showed off their fashion. Instead of wasting time with dressing up, they could concentrate on cultivating their intellectual qualities.<sup>46</sup>

She gives a detailed description of the daily routine at the farm. At five o'clock those people woke up who belonged to the groups responsible for taking care of animals and preparing breakfast for all. At seven o'clock, all inhabitants gathered for breakfast in the dining room. After breakfast, everybody got busy, working around eight to ten hours a day. Teachers and students left for school, but in the afternoon, they were also involved in running the farm. Others worked in diverse groups, comprised of people of different ages, of workers and intellectuals together, some of both sexes together. This mingling made work at Brook Farm appealing and gave it a social character. Men were performing the work that required strength, namely water carrying, crafts in the workshop, farming in the fields and working in the woods, in the barn or stables. Women were engaged more in household chores: laundry, cooking, cleaning, or nursery. Who was finished with his task then joined another group when necessary.<sup>47</sup>

Lunch at half past twelve and supper at six were kind of entertaining social events, since all the associates gathered for meals in one dining room. Generally, the social life in the community was rich. In the evenings people enjoyed their time together in group meetings, lectures, walks, games, improvised concerts, theatre or dances. On special occasions, they organised cheerful festivals. As for religion, on Sundays everybody rested in the way that pleased them, for service attendance was absolutely voluntary. Still, however, the Christian ideals of co-operation and unity predominated among the visionaries, whatever attitude towards the religion they may have had.<sup>48</sup>

As it happens, the unfortunate fate of bankruptcy also met Brook Farm, when the fire of the main building which was supposed to serve as accommodation for the whole community burst out. When economic problems, such as the infertility of the soil and debts, are added to it, it is clear that enthusiasm and faith did not suffice and the Brook Farm had to be dissolved in 1847 too.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Myerson, Joel. "Rebecca Codman Butterfield's Reminiscences of Brook Farm" In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), pp. 616-622.

<sup>47</sup> Myerson, Joel. "Rebecca Codman Butterfield's Reminiscences of Brook Farm" In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), pp. 615-617, 621-624.

<sup>48</sup> Myerson, Joel. "Rebecca Codman Butterfield's Reminiscences of Brook Farm" In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), pp. 620-621, 623-624, 627.

<sup>49</sup> Clark, Christopher: "Review of Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia by Sterling F. Delano" In: *The New England Quarterly*, 77:3 (September 2004), pp. 513-515.



## 2.6. *The Blithedale Romance*

One of the famous residents, signed under the Brook Farm constitution among its founding members, was the world famous American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).<sup>50</sup> It means he invested a thousand dollars to support and participate in this experiment,<sup>51</sup> registered as a joint-stock company.<sup>52</sup> His experience, lasting several months, inspired him to write a novel, *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), in which he portrays a farm called Blithedale, similar to the one “occupied and cultivated by a company of socialists,”<sup>53</sup> including himself. Hawthorne called this period of his life the most romantic and Brook Farm his old, beloved home. In the Preface, he claims that the four protagonists of his novel “are entirely fictitious.”<sup>54</sup>

The novel is narrated from the first-person perspective of a young poet Miles Coverdale. He describes everything from the initial enthusiasm, over the difficult manual labour, due to which he sobered up quickly after finding out that the physically demanding tasks and intellectual activities are not compatible with each other. With a spade in his hand, he did not reveal any spiritual ideas turning the earth in the field.<sup>55</sup> Hawthorne possibly inserted some of his own ideas into Coverdale’s thoughts and comments. The novel implies criticism of the blind pursuit of perfection, the uncompromising intention to purify the world of crime or any other evil. Several times, Coverdale thinks of Puritans, their predecessors, and recognizes the inconspicuous continuation of their tradition in communitarianism.<sup>56</sup> People who fled their original society disgusted and dissatisfied tried to form a new community on the basis of rejection of the old one where they lacked freedom or human brotherhood.<sup>57</sup> He does not really doubt, however, the values of “brotherhood of love and mutual sympathy,”<sup>58</sup> which are foundational for the Blithedale community. Rather he contests the means of the agricultural co-operative in which only, they believe, good life is possible, and more distinctly he criticises the insincere, selfish and superficial motives of some members.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Myerson, Joel. “Rebecca Codman Butterfield’s Reminiscences of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), p. 608.

<sup>51</sup> Kaul, A. N., *Hawthorne: a collection of critical essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 154.

<sup>52</sup> Myerson, Joel. “Rebecca Codman Butterfield’s Reminiscences of Brook Farm” In: *The New England Quarterly* 65:4 (December 1992), p. 615.

<sup>53</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *A Blithedale Romance* (Berlin: Internationale Bibliothek, 1921), p. v.

<sup>54</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *A Blithedale Romance* (Berlin: Internationale Bibliothek, 1921), p. vi.

<sup>55</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *A Blithedale Romance* (Berlin: Internationale Bibliothek, 1921), p. 64.

<sup>56</sup> Kaul, A. N., *Hawthorne: a collection of critical essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 153.

<sup>57</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *A Blithedale Romance* (Berlin: Internationale Bibliothek, 1921), pp. 60-61.

<sup>58</sup> Kaul, A. N., *Hawthorne: a collection of critical essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 159.

<sup>59</sup> Kaul, A. N., *Hawthorne: a collection of critical essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 159.

## 2.7. Owen's Significance

The fall of the multitude of experimental communities do not necessarily mean failure of the Owenite theory. Not only were the failures dependent on the wealth and will of their sponsors, but they were more or less expected as an unhappy closing part of the experiments.<sup>60</sup> Owen, as well as Coverdale in Hawthorne's novel, anticipates the failure and hopes of the communal attempts.<sup>61</sup> Coverdale appreciates the *Blithedale* trial for bringing him "*the experience which makes men wise.*"<sup>62</sup> The contribution of all these failed trials consists in showing society that it can set out for a different journey, an alternative to the predatory, capitalist, industrial one. Through these experiments people continue to discover and discern the right and false directions toward a healthy and harmonious life in society. The practical attempts shape the theory, through them people acquire knowledge and maybe a *transfiguring experience* which may help them daily in their social intercourse.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that the ideal is unattainable in reality can be seen as regrettable or taken as an opportunity to constantly attempt to move closer to perfection. People make attempts all the time, the communitarian idea re-appeared in the 1960's communes and in the ecology movement, or in the third-world societies seeking way between socialism and capitalism in the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> New Brook Farm is run by a group of Boston citizens who try sustainable farming and community education on the original site.<sup>65</sup> Various themes by Owen has been perceived as contemporary up to now, for instance his feminist or green ideas, his emphasis on infant schooling, or his project of co-operative business.<sup>66</sup> "*His demand for humane treatment of labour force has never lost its relevance,*"<sup>67</sup> states Gregory Claeys in the preface of a recent edition of Owen's *New View of Society*.

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<sup>60</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), p. 19.

<sup>61</sup> Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. 294.

<sup>62</sup> Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *A Blithedale Romance* (Berlin: Internationale Bibliothek, 1921), p. 61.

<sup>63</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), pp. 21-24.

<sup>64</sup> Kumar, Krishan, "Utopian Thought and Communal Practice: Robert Owen and Owenite Communities" In: *Theory and Society* 19:1 (February 1990), p. 22.

<sup>65</sup> "New Brook Farm" website (2018). Accessed on April 24, 2018. Available at: <http://newbrookfarm.org/>.

<sup>66</sup> Claeys, Gregory "Introduction" In: Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. xxxi.

<sup>67</sup> Claeys, Gregory "Introduction" In: Owen, Robert *A New View of Society and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1991), p. xxxi.

### 3. Dorothy Day and The Catholic Worker Movement

A few decades later, the successor of the early socialists, Dorothy Day, was humbler in her work for social justice. She did not think she was or ought to be perfect, nor did she play at brotherhood or sisterhood in a group remote from the actual society, because she really lived it, in the midst of the exploited workers, the unemployed, the beggars, whom she sincerely took as her brothers. Dorothy Day was an incredibly strong and a strongly devoted woman. The following lines are dedicated to her, the lifelong activist and journalist, co-founder of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper and houses of hospitality, an anti-war and anti-abortion campaigner, a loving mother and later grandmother of nine grandchildren, all in all, an outstanding Catholic convert who is a strong hopeful for officially becoming a Saint.

#### 3.1. Dorothy Day's Life

Dorothy was born on 8 November 1897 as the third of five children to the sports writer John Day and his wife Grace Satterlee. One of the Dorothy's earliest memories relates to the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, particularly "*the human warmth and kindness*" of her mother and other people helping the refugees, all of them "*united in Christian solidarity*".<sup>68</sup> Since her childhood, she loved reading and gradually got to know all the works of Dostoevsky, her favourite author, whose books influenced her way of thinking.<sup>69</sup>

She believed in God but refused the Church when she was a student in college. There Dorothy also began her journalistic career and continued in this line professionally at the age of eighteen, after her family moved to New York. She joined a socialist newspaper, *New York Call*, where she reported on protests, strikes, unemployment, and other related topics, among the people who were trying to make a change in society. Later she worked for *The Masses*.<sup>70</sup>

In 1917, she was arrested and jailed for the first time in her life for participating in a suffragist demonstration. She led a bohemian lifestyle. She lived with a man she was in love with when she was twenty-two years old. Worrying that he would leave her, she decided to abort her first

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<sup>68</sup> Day, Dorothy, *From Union Square to Rome, Chapter 2*, p. 3. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/202.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> Day, Dorothy, *From Union Square to Rome, Chapter 2*, p. 1. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/202.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Allaire, J., Broughton, R.: *Life and Spirituality of Dorothy Day*. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/life-and-spirituality.html>.

pregnancy. Sadly, he left her anyway. During these years she was committed to social justice issues, but at the same time her spiritual part was searching for God.<sup>71</sup>

She decided to move to a cottage located on Staten Island when she was twenty-seven. She fell in love with an anarchist, with whom she experienced a period of happiness and closeness to nature. This peaceful and beautiful life helped her faith to grow. Dorothy prayed while working in the garden and she even began attending Sunday Mass. The turning point in her life was the birth of her daughter Tamar on March 4, 1926. This time she gave priority to her child and her decision to be baptized in the Catholic Church despite the oppositional will of her mate.<sup>72</sup>

At the time of the Great Depression, Dorothy met Peter Maurin with whom she started *The Catholic Worker* newspaper in 1933. They published it from Dorothy's apartment and sold it on the streets for a cent, so it was affordable to the poor. They introduced Peter's vision "of a society where it is easier for men to be good,"<sup>73</sup> which included a plan for the round-table discussions, houses of hospitality and farming communes. Dorothy concentrated on covering the workers' issues from her radical Christian point of view.<sup>74</sup> They were also trying to present the Catholic social teaching. Besides the newspaper, they started almost immediately real works of mercy by opening the houses of hospitality. They were *feeding the hungry* and *clothing the naked*, and *comforting the afflicted* by providing the poor with soup and shelter<sup>75</sup> and by supporting the striking workers.<sup>76</sup> They preferred mutual help within a community that gave people a sense of responsibility to the state relief that made people passive and dependent. Soon, *The Catholic Worker* circulated throughout the whole nation, volunteers distributed it in public, and the most zealous ones started even the houses of hospitality in their cities, so that in a few years there were more than thirty of such communities around the country.<sup>77</sup>

During World War II, Dorothy and *The Catholic Worker* experienced a lot of difficulties. Not everybody supported Dorothy's utter pacifism. In addition, the war demanded labour forces or military services, which resulted in reducing the number of the Catholic houses and

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<sup>71</sup> Allaire, J., Broughton, R.: *Life and Spirituality of Dorothy Day*. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/life-and-spirituality.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Allaire, J., Broughton, R.: *Life and Spirituality of Dorothy Day*. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/life-and-spirituality.html>.

<sup>73</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 181.

<sup>74</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 181.

<sup>75</sup> Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly: *The Life of Dorothy Day: Robert Ellsberg Extended Interview*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YviTrmrI0hM>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 220.

<sup>77</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 182, 185.

supporters.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, she did not give up, not even after Peter's decease in 1949. She visited the Catholic houses across the United States, she wrote articles and protested against the use of nuclear weapons in the 1950's. She supported the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, of course she opposed the war in Vietnam in the 1970's and she was invited to the Vatican Council II to speak about nonviolence. She worked, travelled and lectured tirelessly until the end of her life. She died in 1980 surrounded by her family.<sup>79</sup>

Besides publishing over one thousand articles in magazines and journals, most of them in *Catholic Worker* newspaper, Dorothy also authored eight books. *The Eleventh Virgin* (1924) is an autobiographical novel of her pre-conversion years. However, she herself later rejected it as a bad book.<sup>80</sup> Instead, she would recommend her later autobiography written as a letter to her brother, called *From the Union Square to Rome* (1938), showing her shift from Communism to Catholicism.<sup>81</sup> One year later, *House of Hospitality* (1939) was published. She recapitulated the first five years of *The Catholic Worker*, including details about its very beginning, describing how she met Peter with his vision of the social order change, right after the Communist Hunger March in Washington, after which she prayed "*to find a way to work for the poor and the oppressed.*"<sup>82</sup> In her last autobiographical testament *Long Loneliness* (1952) she reflected on her life by dividing it into three parts: *Searching, Natural Happiness* and *Love is the Measure*.<sup>83</sup>

Dorothy Day was so much devoted to her fight for peace and social justice that she last went in jail at the age of seventy-six because of joining a peaceful protest of the Union Farm Workers. She was devoted to Christ so much that after her conversion, she spread his love and mercy for the rest of her life, lived in voluntary poverty, and finally she was devoted to every single day: "*The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart. a revolution which must start with each one of us.*"<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Allaire, J., Broughton, R.: *Life and Spirituality of Dorothy Day*. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/life-and-spirituality.html>

<sup>79</sup> Allaire, J., Broughton, R.: *Life and Spirituality of Dorothy Day*. Accessed on April 17, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/life-and-spirituality.html>

<sup>80</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Eleventh Virgin*. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/1.html>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Day, Dorothy, *From Union Square to Rome*. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/2.html>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.

<sup>82</sup> Day, Dorothy, *House of Hospitality*. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/435.html>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952).

<sup>84</sup> The Catholic Worker Movement. Available at: [www.catholicworker.org](http://www.catholicworker.org). Accessed on April 18, 2018.

### 3.2. Social Activism

How did she get to the point that she actually began to act, to do things instead of talking about them only? What was the cause of the fact that she became a social activist?

On the practical level, Dorothy was raised in a Protestant family where she could experience “*joy of doing good.*”<sup>85</sup> She discovered the enjoyable aspect of work, especially when accomplishing a task well. In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, she recalls washing the dishes cheerfully at the age of eight, as well as admiring her older friend, twelve-year-old Mary, who came from a poorer Catholic family and had to work hard in the household so she took care of her younger siblings. Mary also made Dorothy enthusiastic about the lives of some saints. In spite of despising her own proud adolescent piety and desire to be perfect and extolled as the saints, Dorothy got the basis for seeking inspiration and encouragement in writings of St. Therese of Avila or St. John of the Cross in difficult times of her later life.<sup>86</sup>

On the intellectual plane, she was always interested in social problems and wondered why the problems, which were constantly remedied, were not prevented. When reading Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) about the poor conditions of slaughter house workers in her city, Chicago, she felt a connection to these people and she felt that promoting their interests would become the mission in her life. As a fifteen-year-old adolescent, she imagined that the misery all around would disappear and love would prevail, if everyone treated each other kindly. She believed that it was possible, because she felt that God intended his creation to be happy.<sup>87</sup>

At the age of sixteen, however, when she left home for university, she felt strongly the conflict between radicalism and religion, especially between their reactions to poverty. Dorothy knew about poverty from books by Upton Sinclair, Jack London, from newspapers and from her walks to a migrant quarter in Chicago. It seemed to her that religion preaching peace, meekness and joy is not at all an adequate response to the injustice and destitution in the world.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, she gave priority to the radicality of Communism enthusiastically, for she wanted to join “*those who raised their hands against oppression.*”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 21.

<sup>86</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 21-24.

<sup>87</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 37-39.

<sup>88</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 41-45.

<sup>89</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 46.

There was the constant tension between Christianity and Communism in her life. Thanks to her decision to take path of a journalist, she got in touch with Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, and commenced living in a slum in New York. The first impulse to do things occurred amidst these surroundings. With her comrades and colleagues, they were talking all nights about theory of revolution in taverns and their apartments, which was the opportunity for taking homeless people in for nights. She got closer to God during a hunger strike in jail. She asked for a Bible and she found comfort in reading Psalms. However, she defied that she should humble herself before God and let Him lead her.<sup>90</sup>

As a consequence of the war, Dorothy quit her protest way of life and became a nurse in a hospital for about a year. The motive was the tragedy of life she witnessed, which caused her to leave her wavering period of life. Direct action in favour of those who suffered meant more for her than pacifistic theorizing.<sup>91</sup> Besides, she did not consider nursing as contrary to her ideals of peace. Although she loved nursing “*which delights every woman’s heart*”<sup>92</sup> she gave it up to the benefit of journalism because she felt drawn to writing strongly.<sup>93</sup>

Later, when she decided to become a Catholic, she felt separated from her radical Communist friends who fought for justice in the world and participated in the struggle of their fellow workers. She was yearning for a Catholic way of engagement in the labour movement. Unfortunately, Catholics did not show much care for social justice, for the interests of their poor brothers, the unemployed, the evicted families. They did not raise their voice against oppressive and discriminating social order. Dorothy could easily liken the endeavour of radicals and Communists who helped the workers directly to Christ’s mission, they were closer to Jesus who had driven the money changers out of the temple than the church bound to the property.<sup>94</sup>

Throughout her whole life, Dorothy perceived and felt strongly the importance of a community. Dorothy remembers an example of a functioning community when her mother together with their neighbours helped those who lost their homes because of the earthquake.<sup>95</sup> In her youth she lived in the radical community of anarchists and communists. Finally, when she became a Catholic she needed to meet Peter Maurin who opened up a way for her to use her talent and capacities within a Christian community where they could practise social

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<sup>90</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 69, 80-85.

<sup>91</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 87.

<sup>92</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 88.

<sup>93</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 93-94.

<sup>94</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 149, 165.

<sup>95</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 22.

morality, where they felt responsible for their brothers and strived for a personal charity. Thus, she succeeded to make a synthesis of her radicalism and her Catholic faith. *The Catholic Worker* enabled them to use *the weapons of journalism* as well as to practise both the spiritual and corporal *works of mercy*. In this way they could serve the needy besides arousing the conscience of Catholics who were lacking social and political consciousness. Dorothy Day sees the joy of community life as something enduring, so it can be experienced by newcomers permanently.<sup>96</sup> Community gives her the “*answer to the long loneliness*.”<sup>97</sup>

Last but not least, the driving force of her devotion was her gratitude for becoming a mother of her only daughter and of the great Catholic Worker family. Family meant fulfilment and a *piece of heaven* to her, even though it was inseparable from the cross and suffering.<sup>98</sup> In the first chapter of her last autobiography, *Confession*, she wrote: “*if you love, you want to give yourself*.”<sup>99</sup>

The strongest motives of her social activism were compassion with the destitute and her longing for a community of Love which makes human loneliness bearable.

### 3.3. Inspiration

In these times when social concerns are so important, I cannot fail to mention the Servant of God Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints. (Pope Francis' address to the U. S. Congress)<sup>100</sup>

In 2000 the Church officially began the process of Dorothy Day's canonization. In spite of that, some opponents claim that her canonization would be against her own wishes. This can be implied also from her famous quote, used as the title of a documentary which was shot about her, “*Don't call me a saint*.”<sup>101</sup> She is pictured on the movie's poster as smoking a cigarette. Nevertheless, Dorothy Day herself, responding the needs of her day, was inspired by the saints such as St. Francis, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Joseph and St. John of the Cross. Of course, she did not regard herself being superior than other people and not at all her life being a model to be imitated. According to the Scripture, all are called to be saints, St. Paul says: “put off the old person and put on Christ” (cf. Ephesians 4:22, Romans 13:14). Dorothy

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<sup>96</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), pp. 179-181, 186.

<sup>97</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 224.

<sup>98</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 236.

<sup>99</sup> Day, Dorothy, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: HarperOne, 1952), p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> Government Publishing Office: *Congressional Record* 161:138 (Thursday, September 24, 2015), pp. H6191-H6194. Available at: <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2015/09/24/CREC-2015-09-24-pt1-PgH6191-8.pdf>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.

<sup>101</sup> Larson, Claudia: *Dorothy Day: Don't Call Me a Saint*. Available at: <http://www.dorothydaydoc.com/>. Accessed on April 18, 2018.



mentioned this call several times in her articles. “*Yet, as a layperson, as a woman, as an unmarried mother,*”<sup>102</sup> she already is a significant example of following Christ for our time.<sup>103</sup>

Although it is questionable, whether it is possible for everybody to follow Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount literally, as Dorothy Day was trying to, to give everything one has, not to revenge but love one’s enemies, to rely on God completely; The Catholic Worker Movement members show that it is not impossible in their lives. However, it is rather an unending struggle. The 240 Catholic Worker Communities, serving homeless and discriminated people in need until now,<sup>104</sup> are a good example of what this attitude is good for. One must be very humble and trust God that He will take care of His children, it means, one cannot depend on material things, but must accept the difficulties of life and refresh oneself often by dwelling in God’s loving presence, which can be experienced in prayer, in communion, in nature, in community, and wherever one is ready to open his heart to God’s grace.

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<sup>102</sup> Ellsberg, Robert: “All Are Called To Be Saints” In: *The Catholic Worker* (May 2015). Accessed on April 18, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/pages/ellsberg-called-saints.html>.

<sup>103</sup> Ellsberg, Robert: “All Are Called To Be Saints” In: *The Catholic Worker* (May 2015). Accessed on April 18, 2018. Available at: <http://www.catholicworker.org/pages/ellsberg-called-saints.html>.

<sup>104</sup> The Catholic Worker Movement. Available at: [www.catholicworker.org](http://www.catholicworker.org). Accessed on April 18, 2018.

## 4. Gustavo Gutierrez and Theology of Liberation

Theology of liberation reflects the Christian praxis in the situation of exploitation in Latin America in the 1960's and 1970's. This reflection, proceeding from the Word of God, joins the liberation from sin with the total liberation of people from all misery and injustice in society. The emphasis is put on the awareness and raising the voices of the oppressed themselves. The purpose of liberation theology will be fulfilled if it supports the commitment of Christians to the process of liberation and if it changes the Church's approach to the situation of the oppressed classes and people to their own benefit.<sup>105</sup> After all, Gutierrez states that all kinds of theologies are not worth one act of love and true solidarity "*committed in active participation to liberate man from everything that dehumanizes him and prevents him from living according to the will of the Father.*"<sup>106</sup>

### 4.1. What is Theology?

In the first part of *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), Gustavo Gutierrez presents theological reflection as an effort to understand faith which can be carried out by all believers. The original task of *theology as wisdom* was linked to the spiritual life and growth through meditations on the Bible. Due to Platonism and Neoplatonism's influence, the early Church adopted terms such as 'higher world' or 'transcendence of an absolute' and actual life on earth was not valued sufficiently. Later Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) introduced theology, according to Aristotelian categories, as 'subaltern science' – an intellectual discipline where reason meets faith, in Gutiérrez's words *theology as rational knowledge*. The wisdom originating in the Charity which connects man to God was not forgotten either. Finally, theology is presented also as *critical reflection on Christian praxis*. Gutiérrez suggests that mankind's both present and historical struggle to become freer should be reflected in the light of the Word of the Lord. Christ sacrificed Himself to enable all the people to live in communion with God. Thus, Christian faith must be accompanied by concrete action in service to others, of building up brotherhood among people. These observations create a *new way to do theology*.<sup>107</sup> Liberation theology tries to be active in transforming the world to a new, just and fraternal society. In other words, it is "*open to the gift of the Kingdom of God*".<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 307.

<sup>106</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 308.

<sup>107</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988). pp. 3-15.

<sup>108</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 15.

## 4.2. What is Liberation?

The term liberation is introduced in three interdependent levels of meaning. Firstly, liberation stands for the aspirations of the oppressed to overcome poverty and gain more human society. *The concept of development* does not suffice here. The support for development in poor countries of Latin America in the 1950s failed, because it did not attack the root causes of the problems. *Liberation*, on the other hand, includes a *radical change* that would break the economic, social, political and cultural dependence of the dominated countries and classes upon others. This break would make allowance for the change to a *new, socialist society*. Therefore, the term liberation appears to bring a more *humanistic perspective*, necessary for the development viewed as a *total social process*. Secondly, adopting Hegelian dialectical thinking, Gutierrez takes into consideration the dynamic process of man's gradual liberation throughout history. Next to the Marxist vision of the socialistic mode that would free people from the exterior pressures, Gutierrez points out the need to free people from alienation and exploitation on a personal and psychological level.<sup>109</sup>

The goal is not only better living conditions, a radical change of structures, a social revolution; it is much more: [...] In other words, [...] it is rather the conquest of new, qualitatively different ways of being a man in order to achieve an ever more total and complete fulfilment of the individual in solidarity with all mankind.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, the meaning of liberation becomes full in realization of it being Christ's gift of communion with God and other people.<sup>111</sup>

## 4.3. Problem: Theological Reflection of Christian Praxis

Gutierrez continues by *Posing the Problem* in the second part of his book. The theological reflection of the complex liberation process results from the *presence and action of Christians*, from their *solidarity with others*. In Latin America, it concerns the participation in the process of liberation. This theology looks for an answer to the question: "*What relation is there between salvation and the historical process of the liberation of man?*"<sup>112</sup> The official Church attitudes expressed in the post-Vatican II council document *Gaudium et spes* remain on a very general plane. By contrast, Gutierrez can see a sort of radicalization in the social praxis, particularly in the revolutionary situations present in the Third World. The present order there requires to be abolished with its status quo in order to make the challenge of

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<sup>109</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 21-37.

<sup>110</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 32-33.

<sup>111</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 36.

<sup>112</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 45.

liberating oppressed people possible. Unfortunately, the Church did not allow for the political and conflictual dimension of the social reality but rather insists on *personal and conciliatory aspects of the Gospel message*. However, social praxis is the arena, in which Christians should struggle for building a just and peaceful society without any domination of countries, classes or people by others.<sup>113</sup>

Here he gets to a fundamental theological question: “*What does it mean to be a Christian?*”<sup>114</sup> The Church responded to what is the relationship between faith and temporal life in different ways throughout history. In modern history, there was a sharp distinction between the Church and the world, whereby the temporal society gained its autonomy. Contemporaneously, the pastoral activities were prevented from intervening directly in the temporal order. Nevertheless, especially among youth lay apostolic movements a political radicalization took place. Besides, the awareness of the misery, in which people in the world live, have spread due to globalization in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today we face the autonomous secularized world on one hand, but on the other hand theologians returned to the old Pauline idea of the universal Christianity. That is to say that there is no more exclusive ownership of salvation in the Church, there is no more dualism of the temporal and the supernatural. All people are called to communion with God, their spirit seeks completeness, they desire to meet God. This possibility of a personal relationship with the Lord links all people to one community. Thanks to this call to salvation uniting all people, *religious value* can be given to *the action of man in history*. Therefore, Gutierrez says that *the participation in the process of liberation* is a kind of *salvific work*.<sup>115</sup>

However, Gutierrez stated that the Latin American Church had never been divided from the existing social order. Furthermore, the Church in Latin America is bound to the exploiting classes and implicitly supports the established order. In revolutionary struggle, Latin Americans are freeing themselves from an alienating religion which legitimizes dictatorship and oppression by staying silent and friendly to such governments. This participation of Latin Americans in their own liberation should be as well reflected theologically.<sup>116</sup>

To be a Christian is to accept and to live – in solidarity, faith, hope and charity – the meaning that the Word of the Lord and our encounter with him give to the historical becoming of mankind on the way toward total communion.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 45-49.

<sup>114</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 50.

<sup>115</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 53-72.

<sup>116</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 65-66.

<sup>117</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 49-50.

#### 4.4. Latin American Reality

In the third part of the book, the situation bringing about the new rising theology is presented. Gutiérrez illustrates his theological views by showing the Latin American reality. After the decade of the optimistic yet fruitless *developmentalist policies* in the 1950s, the gap between the wealthy, developed countries and the poor, developing ones widened even more. The causes of the underdevelopment are explained as the results of the international capitalist economy which necessarily creates the relationships of dependence. Within this international capitalist system, the autonomous development of Latin American countries is doomed as an impossibility. The dominated and oppressed continent can free itself from domination through a social revolution, which would change the unfavourable conditions.<sup>118</sup>

The oppressed people across the continent feel it: “*the untenable circumstances of poverty, alienation and exploitation in which the greater part of the people of Latin America live urgently demand that we find a path toward economic, social and political liberation.*”<sup>119</sup> Most people committed to the process of liberation in Latin America consider socialism to be the right and fruitful alternative to the existing order. Of course, liberation of the Latin Americans does not mean just a mere overcoming of economic and political dependence. The oppressed people themselves should raise their voices and participate in the creation of a new society in which they will be artisans of their own destinies, free from any kind of servitude. To enable people to become aware of their own possibilities, Paulo Freire brought a pedagogy of the oppressed to the continent.<sup>120</sup>

Gutiérrez observed that the number of active participants in the process of liberation was slowly growing. Nevertheless, these committed people who were aware of the necessity of breaking with the current status quo comprised just a little fraction of the whole Latin American Christian community. The development of the Church in Latin America occurred in a critical point in the 1960-1970s when *A Theology of Liberation* was written. On one hand, not only individuals but also the whole groups of laymen, priests and even bishops reflected on the unjust situation of the Latin American peoples and committed themselves to the oppressed and to the struggle for their liberation through not only various official statements but through concrete actions as well. On the other hand, unfortunately, the rest of the Church remained closely tied to the unjust social order. The dissident priests who were considered

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<sup>118</sup> Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 79-84.

<sup>119</sup> Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 89.

<sup>120</sup> Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 88-91.

subversive due to their commitment were being prosecuted by police, expelled from their countries or even murdered<sup>121</sup> by anti-communist terrorist groups. Bishops had to confront the powerful groups in their countries and face accusations of interfering in affairs beyond their competences and of accepting Marxist ideas. In 1968, the Episcopal Conference took place at Medellín, where the most important text about the need of transformation of the Latin American reality and the Church's presence in it has been drawn up. As well as other statements published by different Christian groups, Medellín advocates solidarity with the poor, provision of liberating education, transformation of the existing structures, socialistic path for Latin American countries and active participation of the oppressed. According to the Medellín document, the Church must acknowledge its responsibility in the current situation. Its prophetic task demanded by the Gospel is to denounce social injustices in spite of entering into conflict with the powerful political authorities. It means to break with the evil order and to unite with the exploited People of God in poverty, to express solidarity as well as protest.<sup>122</sup>

This new situation brings about important but unanswered theological and pastoral questions. The fourth part of Gutierrez's book considers the meaning of the liberation process in the light of faith, which leads to the consideration of the very meaning of Christianity and the Church's mission in the world.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4.5. Faith Perspective on Christian Commitment to Liberation

The motivation of Christians who act in an effort to liberate *oppressed peoples and exploited social classes* can spring from their faith in evangelical demands, radically incompatible with *an unjust and alienating society*. Theology should support the commitment to liberation by highlighting the values of faith, hope and charity. Through the struggle against misery, the struggle for justice in the world, the life of faith moves toward its goal, namely *the creation of a new man*<sup>124</sup>. Faith also enables people to become aware of their need for self-liberation, because no one is completely fulfilled and everyone lives in an alienated society.<sup>125</sup> According to Gutierrez, this awareness is "*essential for the correct understanding of the*

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<sup>121</sup> A well-known case is the assassination of Oscar Romero. Find out more here: Anon. *Who was Archbishop Oscar Romero?* In: The Archbishop Romero Trust (2017). Accessed on April 24, 2018. Available at: <http://www.romerotruster.org.uk/who-was-archbishop-oscar-romero>.

<sup>122</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 101-119.

<sup>123</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 143-144.

<sup>124</sup> Gutierrez refers to the Bible: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

<sup>125</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 145-146.

*liberation process. [...] And thus, one can identify radically and militantly with those – the people and the social class – who bear the brunt of oppression.”*<sup>126</sup>

The notion of salvation is presented as the state of “*the communion of men with God and the communion of men among themselves*”<sup>127</sup>. Such a state is perceived as the fulfilment of history. Even before creation, God had chosen us to be saved and His salvific will is universal. He wants to give salvation to all people. From the beginning, history is God’s *salvific adventure* which underlies all human struggle and existence.<sup>128</sup>

In Jewish history, after creation, another salvific act plays an important role. Exodus, the political liberation of Israel from Egypt, shows Yahweh as the Liberator who saves His people from slavery and oppression. He accomplishes it in cooperation with Moses and Aron. He calls the Israelis to establish a just society free from misery and alienation. After being rescued, Israel sets out on a long march towards the promised land. Exodus shows the break with a situation of despoliation and disorder, the break in which man’s active participation is needed. The reception of God’s gift of Love, the gift of total liberation, is accompanied by the work of man.<sup>129</sup>

In Genesis, God invites people to continue creation through their labour.<sup>130</sup> Gutierrez comments that the domination of the earth is worthy only if it is done for neighbour’s good, in solidarity with all, and if it contributes to liberation of man. Man fulfils himself by working on his self-creation:

To work, to transform this world, is to become a man and to build the human community; it is also to save. Likewise, to struggle against misery and exploitation and to build a just society is already to be part of the saving action, which is moving toward its complete fulfilment.<sup>131</sup>

This fullness of creation, its full meaning, can be attained thanks to the salvific work of Christ. Christ has brought us forgiveness of our sins, in other words, in Him, we can be reconciled with God. This redemption includes also liberation from all consequences of sin:

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<sup>126</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 146.

<sup>127</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 152.

<sup>128</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 150-154.

<sup>129</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 155-158.

<sup>130</sup> “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’” (Gen 1:28)

<sup>131</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp 159.

hatred, injustice and despoliation. Thus, the Son of God forms the new creation and salvation of all the humanity is completed in him.<sup>132</sup>

Eschatology<sup>133</sup> looks up to the future – it is concerned with promises of a new action of God. From the Abraham and Yahweh’s Covenant, it follows that God’s people are promised to be *the heirs of the world*. In the New Testament, Christ proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, shifting the Old Testament promise to the spiritual plane. In Christ, the promise comes into its full realization. Simultaneously, humanity heads towards its fullness, being lead, inspired and fortified by the promise which is awaited also in material reality. The Old Testament prophets are characteristic with their concerned attitude for the present earthly reality and their focus on the future salvific action of God at the same time, due to which they consider it necessary to break with the past full of unacceptable sins. From their example, it follows that “*it is only in the temporal, earthly, historical event that we can open up to the future of complete fulfilment.*”<sup>134</sup> God shows His love for His people faithfully in the course of history, therefore His past saving acts give basis for the hope for His future acts. Historical human steps towards liberation signify the promised future salvation, and conversely “*the attraction of ‘what is to come’ is the driving force of history.*”<sup>135</sup> Eschatological promises become partially realized in history, hence it means human work toward a just society.<sup>136</sup>

The effort to create a just society is considered by Gutierrez to be “*a part of salvation history*”<sup>137</sup> as well as a part of liberation with which Christ embraces all humanity. Nevertheless, there is a consensus in the Church that *the growth of the Kingdom transcends temporal progress*. According to *Populorum progressio*, however, the ultimate goal of the integral development is not something supernatural but more human. In the enumeration of more humane conditions, it proceeds from material security and acquisition of knowledge, through respect for human dignity and will for common good, to faith and communion of love with God and His children.<sup>138</sup>

When considering temporal, political liberation, Gutierrez points out that human activity is needed but it continues God’s work of creation “*only if it is not alienated by unjust socio-*

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<sup>132</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 158.

<sup>133</sup> Eschatology is a branch of theology, concerned with what is to come at the end of time.

<sup>134</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 167.

<sup>135</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 164.

<sup>136</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 160-167.

<sup>137</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 168.

<sup>138</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 168-172.



*economic structures.*<sup>139</sup> Theologians in Third World countries are concerned with human society in terms of social justice and liberation versus oppression. The unjust and dehumanizing situation in underdeveloped countries leads one to reject the existing order and thus produces “*a will to revolution.*”<sup>140</sup> Gutierrez says that the goal of human effort “*must in the first place be enlightened by faith.*”<sup>141</sup> The Bible makes Christians aware of a history full of confrontations and stories of injustice and oppression. However, for those who struggle for liberation in the light of *faith* there is also *hope*.<sup>142</sup>

Humans hold responsibility for the world’s injustice – evidently, the oppressive structures emerge from sin. Sin is not just a mere blemish of the soul, it is *negation of love* and the cause of hostility and broken relationships, and it results in whole sinful systems of exploitation, injustice and misery. Such a situation calls for a *radical liberation*. Only God can fully remedy this situation which is rooted in sin so deeply. Jesus Christ offers the solution in the gift of salvation. Thanks to His death and resurrection, people are liberated from sin as well as from its consequences, in other words, from all that alienates and harms them. Christ’s radical liberation from sin “*necessarily implies a political liberation.*”<sup>143</sup> In their lives, Christians are supposed to pass over from dehumanized to human, from sin to grace which means to let the Holy Spirit introduce them into the communion with God and with all people. Evil is conquered by Christ. Nevertheless, the Kingdom is also an invitation to work for the establishment of a just society, and thus to participate in the salvific process and try to overcome selfishness together with *Christ the Liberator*.<sup>144</sup>

Gutierrez asks, what does the option of *creating a new man* mean for people? He finds the answer in human history, through which the encounter with God is mediated for every man.<sup>145</sup>

Step by step, humanity finds out that God is present actively among His people. In the Old Testament, God reveals Himself as a Spirit dwelling in heaven, but also, He promises through His prophets to put His Spirit into our hearts (cf. Ezek 36:26-27). Since the incarnation of Jesus, God has become closer to His people and more universal.<sup>146</sup> Jesus says, “*Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our*

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<sup>139</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 173.

<sup>140</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 174.

<sup>141</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 174.

<sup>142</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 173-174.

<sup>143</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 176.

<sup>144</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp.175-178.

<sup>145</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 189.

<sup>146</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 190-194.

*home with them*” (J 14:23). St. Paul writes to Corinthians, “*Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?*” (1 Cor 3:16). Humanity, every man, is then “*the living temple of God.*”<sup>147</sup>

From this awareness, it follows that we can meet God through our encounter with other people. The Book of Proverbs notes, “*those who despise their neighbours are sinners*” (Prov. 14:21) and “*those who oppress the poor insult their Maker*” (Prov. 14:31). Thus, the Old Testament shows the close relationship of God and neighbour. In Isaiah, the Lord says to His people that He will not listen to them because their hands are full of blood. Then He commands, “*cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow*” (Isa 1:15-17). Later, this commandment is repeated and widened. The Lord would answer to His people’s call for help, if their fast consisted in loosening the bonds of injustice, letting the oppressed go free, sharing bread with the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless poor, helping their own relatives (cf. Isa 58:6-9). Gutierrez concludes: “*We love God by loving our neighbour.*”<sup>148</sup> In Biblical language, the verb “to love” is included in the meaning of the verb “to know”. According to the prophets Jeremiah and Hosea, Gutierrez claims, “*To know God is to do justice.*”<sup>149</sup> God is present where just relationships exist and where the rights of the poor are respected. He, Himself, sets justice for the oppressed, feeds the hungry, looks after strangers, supports orphans and widows and loves the righteous (cf. Ps. 146:7-10). Therefore, man who is just to others knows God and loves him.<sup>150</sup>

An even deeper and more explicit identification of God with one’s neighbour is accomplished by Jesus Christ, Himself. The main source of this assertion is represented in The Judgment of Nations in Matthew (25:31-45). Firstly, the parable implies that the definitive meaning of human life is love which serves to the least and thus to God. Gutierrez says that being saved means reaching fullness of love and that the base for brotherhood is acceptance. When the nations reject acceptance of their brothers and to serve them, they sin, in other words, they refuse love – the very meaning of their own existence. St. Paul says that without love human actions are empty (cf. 1 Cor 13) and from Matthew’s text, it follows that people will be judged by their love. Secondly, the King in the parable stresses that the love must be carried

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<sup>147</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 194.

<sup>148</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 196.

<sup>149</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 194.

<sup>150</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 194-196.

out in concrete acts<sup>151</sup>. This is confirmed by several other texts in the Bible, for instance in the parable of the Good Samaritan who came close to the wounded man, took care of him and thus “made him his neighbour.”<sup>152</sup> Most explicitly it is said in James: “Faith apart from works is barren” (2:20). Moreover, we can discover God’s love for men in the concrete human acts of charity. Thirdly, the parable suggests that to love our brothers is essential for reaching the Lord. To encounter Christ, who is present in the neighbour, one must truly love one’s neighbours for their own sake, not to take them as an occasion (or an instrument) to approach God. When serving the poor and marginalized ones, people can meet and welcome the Lord. Love for Christ and neighbour is unavoidably joined (cf. 1 John 4:20). Gutierrez follows by warning us against an individualistic concept of charity. Our neighbour is nowadays seen not as a separate individual, but as integrated in the net of socio-economic relationships – the exploited social class is also ‘our neighbour’. Since “to offer food or drink in our day is a political action,”<sup>153</sup> charity poses a challenge to transform the unjust capitalist society. Gutierrez likens the marginal groups to the description of an unsightly, despised and rejected man in Isaiah<sup>154</sup>, and from James<sup>155</sup>, he derives that they are the heirs of the Kingdom and, through love to them, the salvation of humanity comes. *Christ in the neighbour* brings to light the fact that our commitment to the poor equates our attitude to *the will of the Father*.<sup>156</sup>

Christians committed to the process of liberation on the Latin American continent need more than theological categories that would meet the requirements arising from the new problems, such as oppression and exploitation. The whole Church lacks a vital attitude inspired by the Spirit, which would lead it the right way to liberation, because “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Cor 3:17) The new *spirituality of liberation* consists in imitating Jesus’ lifestyle, which includes an active and committed conversion to the neighbour in his socio-economic condition of oppression, springing from a gratuitous love experienced in the prayer, in the union with His Father. It has been said already that this union with the Lord is inseparable from the encounter with people. The gratuitous love of the Lord enables the

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<sup>151</sup> The King welcomes the righteous in his kingdom, “...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (Mt 25:35-36)

<sup>152</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp 198.

<sup>153</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp 202.

<sup>154</sup> “...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.” (Isa 53:2-3)

<sup>155</sup> “Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?” (James 2:5)

<sup>156</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 197-203.

human love and communion to reach fullness. The love of God given for free brings about joy which heartens Christians to take on the cross. This humble and joyful attitude is beautifully expressed in Magnificat, “*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, [...] he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away,*” (Lk 1:46-53). The spirituality of liberation is based on the spirituality of the poor and humble who hope for God’s saving action. The community support is necessary for the poor and exploited, living this spirituality in their own work of true liberation.<sup>157</sup>

The ideal revolutionary attitude of exploited people should comprise of a critical approach to the established order, awareness of the conflictual nature of the struggle for emancipation and confidence in the future driven by faith and eschatological hope.<sup>158</sup>

The one who wants to approach the future, that is Christ’s resurrection, openly, must “*account for the hope.*”<sup>159</sup> The struggle for liberation must deal, however, with the unjust present reality. Hope for the future will help Christians to encounter others despite the injustice, it will hearten their commitment to fight against the injustice and to liberate their brothers from enslavement.<sup>160</sup> Hope means “*openness to God who is to come.*”<sup>161</sup> Gutierrez attributes the influence on the theology of hope partly to Marxist thought which also proceeds from an approach to history “*with eyes fixed on the future and with real action in the present.*”<sup>162</sup>

Gutierrez opposes the privatized faith which prevents the Church from becoming interested in politics, and therefore suits the secularized, technologically advanced society. In dependent and dominated countries, however, the public and political aspect of faith must be brought to life, but not as it has been so far, that the Church has supported the current order. It should be led by Jesus’ critical and liberating message which promises freedom, peace and justice, and thus emphasizes the temporary nature of every social organization in historical reality. The Church

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<sup>157</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 203-208.

<sup>158</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 213-215.

<sup>159</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 215.

<sup>160</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 215-220.

<sup>161</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 219.

<sup>162</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 220.

ought to be critical to social reality, it must become a non-oppressive institution itself. It will thereby be able to practise its liberating function responding to the topical and exigent issues.<sup>163</sup>

In order to understand the political environment in which Jesus lived, it is necessary to mention Roman domination, Jewish authorities and the resistance movement of Zealots<sup>164</sup>. Jesus brought salvation to all, not only to the Jewish nation and not by means of taking power as a political Messiah, whom Zealots hoped for. What Jesus was preaching did not match the interests of Jewish leaders and their stress on the external religious manifestations. By calling to personal conversion which should be manifested in the concrete social context of the person<sup>165</sup> and by preaching reconciliation<sup>166</sup> and compassion for sinners, He endangered their powerful position. Finally, Jesus was condemned to death by Roman political authority at the instigation of the powerful Jews. However, Jesus' legacy and the revolution of the Gospel prevail in history and apply to the very essence "*of human existence: the relationship with God in solidarity with other men.*"<sup>167</sup> There occurs a permanent search for a deep, human and social transformation based on the liberation from the acknowledged sinful situation that causes misery. What Jesus preached was the universal love of God which demands going against all injustice, privilege and oppression – hence the radical, public and political character of Jesus' witness and message.<sup>168</sup>

For political liberation, Gutierrez seeks inspiration not only in faith, which leads to liberation on the level of relationship with God and other people, but also in the utopian thought that offers a vision of a new society of more solidarity. He sees the benefit of utopian thought in the fact that it not only creates ideas of a new social order with better living conditions, but is primarily a means of understanding the reality of oppression that needs to be rejected. In today's world, a revolutionary utopia should be devised by the oppressed themselves. Gutierrez speaks about a *cultural revolution*. Believing in God, who invites to charity, and hoping for the fulfilment of God's promise, Christians are aware that a perfectly just society is not achievable by human efforts. However, through human love and will to help others, to liberate them economically, socially and politically, God is revealed. Political liberation, the attempts at

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<sup>163</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 220-225.

<sup>164</sup> Zealots "loved the Law, were strong nationalists who opposed Roman domination and who ardently awaited the impending arrival of the Kingdom." Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 227.

<sup>165</sup> We refer again to Matthew 25, 31-45, where Jesus calls for merciful acts.

<sup>166</sup> Gutierrez refers to Matthew 5, 23-24, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

<sup>167</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 231.

<sup>168</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 225-232.

brotherhood, manifests the way towards the all-embracing encounter with God. The social praxis of Christians can spring from their hope of a future completed in Christ.<sup>169</sup>

#### 4.6. Mission of the Christian Community

The Church needs to recover from the moral failure of supporting the established unjust order and find its new true meaning and mission in the world. It needs courage to carry out radical changes. *“At stake in all this is the Church’s faithfulness to its Lord.”*<sup>170</sup> The following analysis comes up with some important aspects of and conditions for that mission.

Although the mission of the Church in the world has a meaning primarily in relation to salvation, the Church must realize that salvation is attainable also beyond the Church itself. The action of the Holy Spirit and the salvation, which is open to all in Christ, are pivotal. Christ is at the same time the foundation of the Church. Only in confidence in His will to save all, the Church will find and will be able to accept its role of service to people in their encounter with God. The Second Vatican Council has emphasized that human dignity, not membership of a religion, is the basis for the service to people. The Church is considered to be a *sacrament*, that is to say a visible *sign of grace* – in this case it serves as a revelation of the gift of salvation. Sacrament invites people to communion and unity with God. It also provides a space for meeting God, for entering into the God’s presence. In fulfilling its task, the Church cannot do without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so it is necessary to perceive the presence and activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the world. Thus, the Church can identify itself with all the people who follow the Word of God. If we want the significance of the Church to truly reside in the unity and liberation of humanity, we need new ecclesial structures of which the *“only support should be the Word which liberates.”*<sup>171</sup> To ensure that the Church’s preaching of love will be trustworthy and effective in the world of Latin American social revolution, the Church must fulfil its task – *“be the visible sign of the presence of the Lord”*<sup>172</sup> – within the world’s struggle for a more human society. Gutierrez sums up the ecclesial task as follows: *“The point is not to survive, but to serve. The rest will be given.”*<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 232-239

<sup>170</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 252.

<sup>171</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 261.

<sup>172</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 262.

<sup>173</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 262.

To put the mission of the Church as the sacrament of salvation more concretely, first of all, the Church is supposed to celebrate Christ's sacrifice and create human brotherhood. The Eucharist reminds us that Jesus gives Himself totally to others. It also invites us to accept Jesus' gift and to create a deep human fraternity. In the Eucharist, we celebrate with joy the separation from sin and the acceptance of grace. In the cenacle, Christ washed the feet of His disciples and thus proved to them the brotherly service of love. Another important aspect of the Lord's Supper consists in the sharing of bread and wine in community, which manifests the "*God's will to give the foods of this earth to all people so that they might build a more human world.*"<sup>174</sup> To participate in the communion with God, one must become reconciled with their brothers first (cf. Matt 5: 23-24). The communion excludes relationships disrupted by unjust treatment, exploitation and other vices which divide people.<sup>175</sup>

Without a real commitment against exploitation and alienation and for a society of solidarity and justice, the Eucharistic celebration is an empty action.<sup>176</sup>

The second task of the Church is connected with its social influence in Latin America. First of all, a denunciation of the unjust and dehumanizing social situation is needed. Apart from freeing itself from the prestigious and powerful groups in this established order of oppressive structures, the Church ought to put its own present role to a critique. Gutierrez believes that the most successful way to achieve the emancipation from power is "*by resolutely casting our lot with the oppressed and the exploited in the struggle for a more just society.*"<sup>177</sup> He suggests that the current situation in Latin America poses concrete challenges for the mission of the Church. He hopes that the Church will pledge itself to a "*genuine service to the oppressed.*"<sup>178</sup> Secondly, the task of the Church is to announce the Gospel and be faithful to its message. This will serve as a revelation of the roots of the unjust situation which is incompatible with the Kingdom of God. Thus, the Church will function as a *conscientizing* and *politicizing* element. This means that the Good News of a total gift of love will make the oppressed people aware of their subhuman conditions. The Church should give them a voice and let them "*be the agents of their own pastoral activity.*"<sup>179</sup> To avoid the danger of presenting the Gospel as an ideology of revolution, the Christian community needs a living

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<sup>174</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 263.

<sup>175</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 262-265.

<sup>176</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 265.

<sup>177</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 266.

<sup>178</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 267.

<sup>179</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 271.

spirituality.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, the Gospel annunciation “*by affirming that brotherhood among men is possible and that it will indeed be achieved, [...] will inspire and radicalize the commitment of the Christian in history.*”<sup>181</sup>

*Christian brotherhood* is based on the fact that all people are sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. Unfortunately, the brotherhood is being challenged by today’s conflictual and divided society where there are the oppressed against the oppressors. How does one of the most serious problems of today’s world – *the class struggle* – match the unity of Christian community and the universality of Christian love? Participating actively and consciously in the class struggle goes together with the will to establish a more just, free and human socialist society which will not suffer from antagonism between the owners and the dispossessed. Loving all people means committing oneself to the struggle of the exploited person to live humanly. This way the universal charity will be made concrete and authentic – in dedication to class solidarity. The commandment to love one’s enemies will be fulfilled by liberating the oppressors “*from their inhuman condition*”<sup>182</sup> as powerful, ambitious and selfish oppressors. The unity of Christian community can be attained thanks to God as a gift. Nevertheless, the Church must be active in this process of surmounting all divisions among people. When participating in the process of liberation together with the oppressed and exploited, the Church becomes a *sign of brotherhood* and becomes united with those in the world who also act according to the Father’s will.<sup>183</sup>

The chapter *Poverty: Solidarity and Protest* looks for an answer to the question of an authentic Christian witness of poverty. Unfortunately, in today’s world obsessed with wealth which entails exploitation and plunder of the great parts of the world, the Church focuses on the spiritual poverty which consists in meditating and identifying oneself with the poor Christ. However, this identification does not lead to any true imitation of Christ’s actual poverty. On the one hand, the Church tends to declare poverty, meaning the indifference to material things, to be “*an ideal of Christian life*”<sup>184</sup> and that the poor, those who lack means to satisfy their most basic necessities, need our mercy. On the other hand, the contemporary society rejects material poverty as a degrading, subhuman situation. Gutierrez specifies it: “*Concretely, to be poor means to die of hunger, to be illiterate, to be exploited by others, not*

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<sup>180</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 266-272.

<sup>181</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 272.

<sup>182</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 275.

<sup>183</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 272-279.

<sup>184</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 289.



to know that you are being exploited, not to know that you are a person.”<sup>185</sup> He does not agree with the spiritualistic perspective of the Church, nor with its tendency to sanctify poverty, which is against human dignity. What is then the meaning of evangelical poverty? Why ever should spiritual poverty be incarnated in material poverty, if it is considered subhuman by human conscience?<sup>186</sup>

The Bible provides quite a complex view of poverty, as a social situation, poverty in the interpersonal relationships or in the spiritual attitudes.<sup>187</sup> Even in the Bible we can follow two lines: poverty as “*a scandalous condition*”<sup>188</sup> versus poverty as “*an attitude of openness to God.*”<sup>189</sup>

In particular, the prophets reject vigorously every degrading living conditions in which some people are forced to live because of the unjust actions of others, the oppressors, which the prophets condemn (cf. Amos 2:6-7, Isaiah 10:1-2). Besides the denunciation of poverty, Leviticus and Deuteronomy bring some concrete, positive advice to deal with and prevent poverty. For instance, letting the poor glean the crops remaining in the fields, the tithe for the needy, the Sabbath as the day of rest for workers, then the so-called “jubilee year” which commands one to free slaves, pardon debts and leave fields to provide the poor with food every seven years. Gutierrez finds three other crucial biblical reasons for rejecting poverty. First, he states that the belief in Yahweh who liberates His people from servitude does not coincide with coming to terms with poverty and unjust conditions. The second reason stems from the story of creation, where man is called to continue the creative work, which is in contradiction to the alienated work, implicit in poverty, that dehumanizes man. Finally, the oppression of the poor means offending God Himself, because He identifies Himself with the least (cf. Matthew 25:45). Hence the conclusion that poverty is a consequence or *expression* of a sin, which prevents people from living in communion with God and in solidarity with one another.<sup>190</sup>

However, there occurs another point of view in Zephaniah and Psalms where the term ‘poor’ means ‘humble’ as the opposite of “proud” (cf. Ps 10:2). The term poverty here gains a spiritual content because it expresses the religious attitude of faith and trust in God (cf. Zeph 2:3). The Beatitude in Matthew 5:3, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*” suggests that spiritual poverty denotes an openness to the Lord and His Kingdom. Whereas in Luke 6:20, Jesus

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<sup>185</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 289.

<sup>186</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 287-290.

<sup>187</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 291.

<sup>188</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 291.

<sup>189</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 299.

<sup>190</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp.291-295.

speaks simply of the “poor” and pronounces them blessed because the Kingdom is theirs. Gutierrez explains that the materially poor are blessed thanks to the coming of the Kingdom<sup>191</sup>, in other words, the coming of brotherhood which will end their poverty because: “poverty is an evil [...] incompatible with the Kingdom of God.”<sup>192</sup>

Since Gutierrez identified the two meanings of poverty in Scripture, he can make a synthesis which would express accurately *the Christian witness of poverty*. Thus, he infers the third sense of it: “poverty as a commitment of solidarity and protest.”<sup>193</sup> To form this synthesis we can look at Jesus Christ whose example<sup>194</sup> teaches us that taking on the material poverty makes sense only if you do so being at total disposition of God and because of love for your neighbour. In such a commitment, one reacts to the witness of evil, resulting from sin, by living in solidarity with the poor and thus protesting against the evil – “*the selfishness and everything that divides men*”<sup>195</sup> – and against its consequence, in this case poverty. In essence, becoming poor and humiliated voluntarily as Christ “*is an act of love and liberation.*”<sup>196</sup> Moreover, this act of solidarity and protest can make the poor and exploited aware of their unjust situation and motivate them to seek liberation from oppression. Gutierrez reminds us what this new way of living poverty in solidarity and protest meant in Latin America in his times. Because of having expressed solidarity with the poor<sup>197</sup> and thus having participated in the revolutionary process, many Christians risked losing their lives. Such commitment has “*an inevitable political character.*”<sup>198</sup> The Church’s mission can acquire its authenticity only if the Church makes itself poor in order to live in solidarity with the poor and protest against poverty. Then its prophetic function – the denunciation of every evil against man – can be faithfully fulfilled. Only this living witness will make the Church’s preaching of liberation, brotherhood and spiritual poverty credible and genuine.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 296-299.

<sup>192</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 299.

<sup>193</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 299.

<sup>194</sup> “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” (2 Cor 8:9)

<sup>195</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 300.

<sup>196</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 300.

<sup>197</sup> Gutierrez specifies: “The ‘poor’ person today is the oppressed one, the one marginated from society, the member of proletariat struggling for his most basic rights; he is the exploited and plundered social class, the country struggling for its liberation.” In: Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 301.

<sup>198</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 301.

<sup>199</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 299-302.

#### 4.7. Continuation of Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology arises from the Latin American reality but at the same time aspires to explain the historical advancement towards liberation of all humanity. Therefore, it occurred as a reflection of the political and social struggle of various groups of people experiencing oppression all around the world. In the United States, liberation theologies emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely Black Theology, Hispanic Theology, Asian American Theology, Native American Theology, Gay and Lesbian Theology and Feminist Theology. In these, religion serves as a foundation for criticism of the unjust social order which is often supported or not negated by the official ecclesial organizations.<sup>200</sup>

After the initial refusal on the part of the Roman Catholic Church which was justified on the basis of the ideological link between liberation theology and Marxism, nowadays the Catholics accept this theological movement better. The current pope comes from Latin America, it means from the environment of striving for liberation, and he incorporates liberation theology views in his messages to the world. Pope Francis, in other words, has a deep concern for the oppressed nations, migrants, and minorities. An exceptional act of announcing the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016 illustrates well the Pope's focus on the active participation of Christians in the world who must not pass indifferently the least of their brethren.

Liberation theology serves as a fruitful source for the current charity work. When considering the question "Who is my neighbour? Who should I help?" theology of liberation points out correctly the turn of perspective in the Parable of the Merciful Samaritan. It means that the charity workers ought to ask more: "Who can I be neighbour to?" and make themselves neighbours to anyone who is left behind by and without attention of the majority. Another important concept is the one of empowerment, which is a leading principle of the current social work. It says that it is the people in need who should raise their voices and become the agents of the change in their lives.

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<sup>200</sup> Floyd-Thomas, Stacey, *Liberation theologies in the United States – An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. 1-6.

## 5. Conclusion

The bachelor thesis focused on analysis of the three selected stages in the American history of Christian-socialist attempts to create a more just society. The thesis examined Robert Owen's theory put into practice, Dorothy Day's motives for her social activism, and Gustavo Gutierrez's views on the theology of liberation. The analysed literary works include *A New View of Society* (1816) by Robert Owen, *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Long Loneliness* (1952) by Dorothy Day, and *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) by Gustavo Gutierrez. To conclude, let us compare and contrast the three protagonists of communal and liberation movements.

Their common base is the fact that they were all concerned with poverty. Nevertheless, they set up different ways of approaching and tackling the problem. A prophetic aspect is a distinct common feature in their witnesses and outlooks, fulfilling its role in an insistent criticism of injustice in the world governed by selfish capitalist interests. They were all striving for an ideal state of relations among people in the world, where there would be no division but a brotherly unity. Owen anticipates what he calls a new moral world and believes that the ideal society is attainable through the proper collective education provided for all individuals, whereas Gutierrez fixes his eyes on the promised coming of the Kingdom of God which is only partly realizable by human efforts in this temporal reality. Day prepares the way for the coming of the Kingdom through carrying out the works of mercy.

Owen pursues his utopian intention by means of a withdrawal from the corrupt society to the experimental agricultural villages. In contrast, Day lived in a voluntary poverty among her neighbours in the real unsatisfactory conditions of the city of New York and Chicago, and she fought for workers' rights directly by participating in strikes with them. Gutierrez calls for such a commitment, for an identification with the oppressed, for a life in poverty expressing solidarity and protest. Christian task is, according to Gutierrez, the abolition of the current status quo by means of revolutionary struggle in order to break with the unjust order and to unite with the poor.

In addition, they are all more or less dealing with religion in their works too. Owen judges religion from the morality point of view, he says that he would accept religion which would preach rational principles of common good and made people independent and rational beings. However, we can identify a Christian ethos in his ideals of tolerance, co-operation and unity,

and in his opinion that poverty and misery can be avoided if people are trained to contribute to common good and happiness of the others in the world. Day appreciates the spiritual heartening and soothing effect in the act of worship, which she had been gaining strength from even before she became a Catholic. On the other hand, Day do not hesitate to express her disappointment with the lack of Catholic leadership in the labour movement. Both, Day and Gutierrez, denounce the Church's link with property and believe in universal Christianity of those who help the needy and do not proclaim themselves Christians. Gutierrez draws a new spirituality of liberation from the study of Jesus' life and preaching, which consists in an active and radical struggle for liberation of the oppressed. Therefore, he criticizes the Church for not being involved politically enough and for betraying their mission of approaching God and neighbour by staying silent in front of the world's injustice.

As for religious or ideological struggles for the improvement of society, Hawthorne displays selfish and insincere motives rather than the intents to do good to other people. Above all, he warns against the blind pursuit of an ideal which makes other people suffer.

They all likewise emphasise the importance of community in life and in the struggle against misery and oppression. Owen appreciates the experimental communities as a tool for discovering possible ways of mutual coexistence. Day enjoys community because it helps her to overcome loneliness and fulfils her heart with joy similarly as the act of worship. Gutierrez demands community support for the poor and exploited brothers. Furthermore, he sees the ultimate goal of human lives in communion with each other and with God.

Finally, all these movements continue in different shapes to the present days. I would like to point out the timeless challenges posed by them, specifically Owen's plea for vocational education which would enhance also critical thinking and virtues, Day's sense of human dignity, and Gutierrez's liberation theology concept of empowerment. These challenges constitute an unending struggle for better society.

## Czech Summary

Tématem této bakalářské práce jsou americká komunitní hnutí a teologie osvobození v 19. a 20. století. Cílem práce je představení konkrétních příkladů socialistického a křesťanského úsilí o spravedlivější společnost, patřících do moderní americké historie. Jedná se o experimentální komunity inspirované Robertem Owenem, dále o Dorothy Day, vedoucí osobnost boje za práva dělníků v rámci laického katolického hnutí, a konečně o teologii osvobození pocházející z Latinské Ameriky, která celé téma završuje.

Úvodní kapitola zasazuje vybraná hnutí do kontextu celospolečenského vývoje moderních industrializovaných společností a pokládá otázku, jak na problémy, jako jsou nezaměstnanost, chudoba a vykořisťování pracujících, odpovídali v nedávné historii angažovaní Američané ovlivnění křesťanskou tradicí. V úvodu je také nastíněna struktura práce, jsou představeny jednotlivé kapitoly a zpracovávaná literatura.

Rané pokusy o nápravu společenských problémů přicházejících s industrializací, zejména nezaměstnaností a nelidskými pracovními podmínkami, nacházíme v díle utopického socialisty Roberta Owena. Kapitola věnovaná Owenovu komunitnímu hnutí představuje nejprve teoretický základ vycházející z Owenových principů založených na jeho úspěšné komunitní práci ve vesnici New Lanark, dále širší uplatnění těchto principů v Owenově plánu „nového morálního světa“, který sestává z praktických návrhů na život v družstevních osadách. Tato kapitola dále popisuje vznik a zánik amerických komunit inspirovaných Owenem ve dvacátých a čtyřicátých letech 19. století. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována vzpomínkám obyvatel farmy Brook. Mezi nimi Nathanielu Hawthornovi, z jehož satirického románu *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) zaznívá kritický hlas ke komunitnímu soužití. Na konci kapitoly je nastíněn význam těchto komunitních pokusů a jejich pokračování ve 20. století.

Následující kapitola je věnována životu a zejména společenskému aktivismu americké novinářky a zakladatelky Katolického dělnického hnutí, Dorothy Day. Na základě její autobiografie *The Long Loneliness* (1952) lze nalézt odpověď na otázku, které momenty ji vedly k tomu, aby místo pouhého mluvení o sociální spravedlnosti a míru sama přiložila ruku k dílu a konala skutky lásky. Mezi hlavní události v jejím životě patří konverze ke katolické víře a následné dlouhotrvající napětí mezi její radikální komunistickou minulostí a křesťanskou vírou, které vede k originálnímu propojení těchto dvou světů v její charitativní a novinářské práci. V neposlední řadě je zmíněn její inspirativní odkaz a možnost jejího svatořečení.

Předposlední kapitola objasňuje teoretické základy teologie osvobození, která nachází své příznivce od 70. let 20. století nejen ve Spojených státech. Hlavním podkladem pro tuto část je kniha *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), napsaná teologem Gustavem Gutierrezem. Nejprve je vysvětlován význam teologické reflexe křesťanské praxe, konkrétně jednání těch křesťanů, kteří se aktivně zapojují do úsilí o osvobození bližních od útlatku, chudoby a nespravedlnosti. Dále je popsána bezútesná revoluční situace v Latinské Americe, ve které snahy o osvobození kulminují od 60. let. Stěžejní část této kapitoly vysvětluje spojení mezi historickou emancipací lidstva a Bohem přislíbenou spásou, z čehož plynou zpětně důsledky pro křesťanskou praxi. Pomocí vhodných citací z Bible je ilustrována podoba křesťanského poslání ve světě bídy a nespravedlnosti. Církev by měla přijmout spiritualitu chudých a tvořit s nimi společenství, měla by jednat ve prospěch utlačovaných a kritizovat mocné, slovy Bible, měla by se snažit přiblížit se Božímu Království s nadějí, že osvobození je v Kristu darováno všem.

Závěrečná kapitola srovnává tři výše zmíněné osobnosti: Roberta Owena, Dorothy Day a Gustava Gutierreze, jejich východiska, náboženské postoje, jimi navrhované praktické postupy ke změně nespravedlivého společenského uspořádání, a skutečný dopad jejich myšlenek a činností na společnost. Zajímavostí je náboženská ambivalence těchto tří protagonistů. Ačkoliv Day a Gutierrez představují katolický hlas, jsou oba vůči církvi kritičtí kvůli nedostatečnému zájmu o trpící a kvůli spojení církve s majetkem a mocí. Z podobného důvodu odmítá všechny konfese své doby i Owen, protože nenachází náboženství, které by vedlo ke svobodě a přátelství. Přesto v jeho práci můžeme vysledovat křesťanský étos.

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