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ELLEN G. WHITE AND GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ
ON CHRISTIANS AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

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SUMMARY

Ellen G. White and Gustavo Gutierrez make significant contributions on the issue of christians and involvement in politics. A knowledge of their backgrounds and theological orientations is helpful. White was born in 1827. She is accepted as a prophet in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Central to her theology is the sanctuary doctrine which also influences her views on politics. White holds that christians may participate in the "broad" but not the "narrow" aspect of politics.

A Roman Catholic priest, Gutierrez was born in 1928. Many regard him as the pioneer of liberation theology. The starting point for his theology is the situation of poverty in Latin America. This influences his views on politics. He also argues for christians' participation in the "broad" but not the "narrow" aspect of politics. White and Gutierrez have more points of agreement than disagreement. Comparing their views on politics provides useful insights on christians' participation in politics.

"I declare that: **ELLEN G. WHITE AND GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ ON CHRISTIANS AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".

Zvandasara

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to map out the way christians should relate to politics. To achieve this objective, Ellen G. White and Gustavo Gutierrez's views on christians and involvement in politics will be compared.

In Chapter 1, the platform will be given to Ellen G. White. After a brief look at her historical background, and her basic theological focus, attention will be directed to her stance on christians and participation in politics. Since politics has two major aspects, that is, the "broad" and the "narrow" components,¹ White's statements relating to either aspects will be analyzed. Her views on christians and the broad aspect of politics will be dealt with first, while her statements on the narrow dimension of politics will be discussed last.

Gustavo Gutierrez and christians involvement in politics occupies Chapter 2. Again, a brief historical background and his basic theological orientation will be dealt with first. After this, Gutierrez's views on christians on the "broad" aspect of politics will be discussed. This will be followed

¹Simon S. Maimela, Proclaim Freedom to my People. Johannesburg: Skotavile Publishers, 1987, pp. 1-3. Henceforth referred to as Maimela, Proclaim Freedom to my People. Here Maimela points out that politics, as currently understood within theological circles, has two major dimensions "the broad" which deals with the social and economic aspects of human existence, while "the narrow" pertains to partisan politics and the issue of voting.

by a section on his stance on christians and the "narrow" concept of politics.

It is in Chapter 3 that White and Gutierrez's positions on christians and politics will be compared. In order to place the comparison of their stances on politics in perspective a comparison of their historical backgrounds and theological orientations will be done. This chapter will highlight their points of agreement and disagreement.

Finally, Chapter 4 shall present the findings of this research as well as the recommendations. Salient discoveries will be articulated concerning the manner and extent to which christians should participate in politics. Recommendations which christians should consider in order for their presence in society to be beneficial will be outlined.

CHAPTER 1

ELLEN G. WHITE ON CHRISTIANS AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

1.1 A historical background of Ellen G. White

Ellen Gould Harmon was born at Gorham, Maine on the 26th of November, 1827. She and her twin sister Elizabeth were the youngest of the eight children born to Robert and Eunice Harmon.¹ Robert Harmon's occupation was hatmaking, a job he engaged in as soon as he and his family relocated from Gorham to the City of Portland.² The Harmon's were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.³

One day, while from school, Ellen was hit by a stone on the nose by a playmate and fell to the ground unconscious. After a few days she regained consciousness. The accident caused her health to continue to deteriorate.⁴ Eventually, she had to discontinue her formal education which "consisted of less than three full years of elementary school."⁵

¹Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol. 1., Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985, p. 17. Henceforth referred to as White, A.L. Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol. 1.

²Roger W. Coon, A Gift of Light, Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973, p. 22. Henceforth referred to as Coon, A Gift of Light.

³Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915, p. 17. Henceforth referred to as White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White.

⁴Ibid., p. 18.

⁵Ibid., p. 21.

Reflecting on her ill-health, she wrote, "It was the hardest struggle of my young life to yield to my feebleness, and decide that I must leave my studies and give up the hope of gaining an education".⁶

Ellen's personal conversion can be attributed to the revival meetings of William Miller in 1840.⁷ Miller, a Baptist preacher, came to Portland where Ellen, then 13 years, and her family lived. He preached a series of sermons on the Second Advent of Christ. The secret of his appeal was not so much in his oratorical skills than in his convincing explanations of the Bible prophecies.⁸

In 1842 William Miller returned to Portland. He conducted revival meetings which were a follow-up of the ones he had conducted in 1840. This time, there was so much demand for him as a guest speaker. Many churches opened their doors to him. They wanted him to explain more the prophecies concerning the impending return of Jesus Christ.⁹ It was during Miller's visit to Portland in 1842 that Ellen, then 15 years, had two important dreams. In the first dream she dreamt visiting the temple in heaven. In the second dream she dreamt being taken up some steps so that she could see Jesus.

⁶Ibid., p. 19.

⁷White, A.L, Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol.1. p. 34.

⁸Ibid.

⁹White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. p. 26.

These two dreams, among other things, inspired her to publicly testify of her joy in having Jesus as her personal saviour.¹⁰ Expressing her experience at that time she said, "...my heart was so overflowing with joy that I wanted to tell others how much the Lord had done for me".¹¹

As Ellen and the rest of the Harmon family increasingly identified with the message that Miller was preaching, the Methodist church became concerned. Consequently, the pastor of the Chestnut Methodist church, the church they attended, visited the Harmons. He conveyed to them that the church had voted to disfellowship the whole family.¹² After being dropped from the Methodist church, the Harmon family fully identified with the Adventist believers.¹³ These christians, also known as Millerites, accepted William Miller's prophetic interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Accepting and using the Year/Day principle,¹⁴ these believers agreed that the 2300 days began in 457 B.C. and were to end in 1844. They

¹⁰Ibid., p. 39.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.p.50.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴William H. Shea, Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation. Lincoln: College View Printers, 1982, pp. 66-79. He illustrates how the Year/Day principle was recognized in the Old Testament times. Shea points out that, "the year-day principle did not crop up suddenly in prophecy sui generis. When it came upon the scene of action, it was drawn from a more general relationship that was already a part of the Hebrew thought". The year-day principle asserts that prophetically speaking, a day may symbolize a year.

understood the "cleansing of the sanctuary" to mean the return of Jesus Christ to this world.¹⁵ Initially they expected christ to come on April 21, 1844. Jesus did not come on that day. They, furthermore, suggested October 22, 1844, with greater conviction. The Millerites sold everything in readiness for this "historic" event. Again Jesus did not come.¹⁶ The failure of Jesus to come on October 22, 1844 came to be known, by the Advent believers as the "Great Disappointment." Describing the aftermath of the 22nd of October, 1844, Hiram Edson, one of the Advent believers said:

Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced

¹⁵Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950, pp. 421-22. Henceforth referred to as White, The Great controversy. Ellen G. White points to the confusion the Advent believers had concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary. They thought that the cleansing of the sanctuary was to be followed immediately by the second coming of Christ in 1844. Explaining this she notes: "Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming." Ellen G. White explains that the "Cleansing of the Sanctuary" in the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation - a work of judgement. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people... [emphasis mine]

¹⁶White, A. L., Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol.1. pp. 50-53.

before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawn.¹⁷

Soon after the Great Disappointment in December of 1844, Ellen Harmon, then 17 years, had her first vision.¹⁸ The purpose of this vision was to comfort and assure the ex-Millerites, that God had not forsaken them since 22nd October, 1844.¹⁹ Ellen described the vision as follows:

It was not an exciting occasion. While I was praying the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I was wrapped in a vision of God's glory and seemed to be rising higher and higher from the earth and was shown something of the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City.²⁰

Of particular importance is the fact that just after Ellen Harmon had her first vision, she met Hazen Foss in Dorchester (now part of Boston), Massachusetts.²¹ Apparently, Hazen Foss and William Foy were the two men God had called to serve as prophets within the Advent Movement before calling Ellen.²² Both men are said to have declined the call.²³

¹⁷Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁹White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. p. 59.

²⁰Ellen G. White, Early Writings. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882, p.13. Henceforth referred to as White, Early Writings.

²¹White, A. L., Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol.1. p. 66.

²²Delbert W. Baker, "William Foy Messenger to the Advent Believers" Adventist Review, January, 4, 1988, p. 8.

Therefore, when Ellen was sharing with people, in Dorchester, what God had shown her in the vision, Hazen Foss made the following revealing confession to Ellen G. White saying:

I was proud; I was unreconciled to the disappointment. I murmured against God, and wished myself dead. Then I felt a strange feeling come over me. I shall be henceforth as one dead to spiritual things ... I believed the visions are taken from me, and given to you (Ellen). Do not refuse to obey God, for it will be at the peril of your soul. I am a lost man. You are chosen of God; be faithful in doing your work, and the crown I might have had, you will receive.²⁴

Ellen Harmon got married to James White, a 25-year-old Adventist preacher.²⁵ They were married by Charles Hurding, then justice of peace of Portland, Maine.²⁶ Shortly after their marriage they began "to keep the seventh-day Sabbath,

²³Ibid. However, Baker believes that William Foy did not decline to be a prophet as many Seventh-day Adventists have been made to believe. He argues that Foy's prophetic role was meant to complement that of Ellen G. White and not supplant it. Foy was a Black man in his early 20s who received visions in 1842. Most of the visions were similar to those Ellen G. White received. Baker points out that the mistake people make is to think that since Foy was accepted as a genuine prophet to the Advent movement (pre-Seventh-day Adventist), he must also be a prophet to the Seventh-day Adventist movement for all time remaining. Baker argues; William Foy's function was limited in scope and brief in duration. Ellen White's prophetic ministry lasted 70 years; Foy's covered approximately 2 years. Foy served prior to the Great Disappointment: Ellen White laboured for an extended period after the Great Disappointment.

²⁴White, A. L., Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol.1. p. 67.

²⁵White, Early Writings. p. 55.

²⁶Ibid., p. 250.

according to the fourth commandment."²⁷ Ellen and James White had four sons. The first, named Henry, was born in 1847 and died of pneumonia at 16 years of age. The youngest was John Herbert who was born in 1860. He also died of erysipelas only after a few months. Second, came James Edson who was born in 1849 and the third born was William C. who was born in 1854. Edson and William lived to old age.²⁸ Describing Ellen G. White during her stay at Battle Creek, Roger Coon says:

... five-foot-two-inch Mrs. White, with her brown hair and grey eyes, became a well-known figure on its (Battle Creek, Michigan) streets. Cheerful, unselfish, and somewhat of an extrovert, Mrs. White earned a reputation of a sensible buyer, a hospitable hostess, a forceful public speaker, and a careful housewife.²⁹

Ellen had yet another vision on the 3rd of April, 1847, which provided an explanation for the 2300 day prophecy of Daniel 4:18. She was shown that on October 22, 1844 Christ moved from the holy place to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. She saw God the Father and God the Son travel in a "flaming chariot" from the holy to the most holy place.³⁰ Therefore, contrary to being the year of Christ's Second Coming, 1844 was the time Jesus Christ began his ministry in the most holy place of the sanctuary in heaven.³¹

²⁷White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. p. 97.

²⁸Coon. A Gift of Light, p. 27.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰White, Early Writings. p. 55.

³¹Ibid., p. 250.

From 1851 to her death in 1915 Ellen G. White wrote numerous articles and books. Her writings cover a variety of subjects. She gave counsels on education, health, family, church governance, politics, to mention but a few. Some of her books outline the struggle between Christ and Satan "for the control of individuals and nations".³² She also had several other visions which further confirmed her work as a prophet.³³

Just before Ellen G. White's death in 1914, George Wharton James took note of her literary contribution saying that, "...this remarkable woman, although almost entirely self-educated, has written and published more books and in more languages which circulate to a greater extent than the written works of any woman in history."³⁴ Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was "the Lord's messenger".³⁵ Gary Land, an Adventist historian describes her

³²Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate, Comprehensive Index to the writings of Ellen G. White Vol.3. Mountain View: Pacific Publishing Association, 1963, pp. 3193-3210.

³³Roger Coon, "Ellen G. White's role in the development of SDA Doctrine", A Presentation at Andrews University, June 30, 1992. p.1. Henceforth referred to as Coon, "Ellen G. White's role in the development of SDA Doctrines".

³⁴Arthur L. White, The Human Interest Story. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972, p. 91.

³⁵The Ellen G. White Estate, "Was Ellen G. White a Plagiarist?" Reprint (September 1981): p. 4.

as "a charismatic figure who shaped the identity of Adventism".³⁶

1.2 Ellen G. White's basic theological orientation

The doctrine of the sanctuary can be viewed as the centre of Ellen G. White's theological beliefs. From her own personal testimony and that of various scholars within the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, the foregoing view gains much support. White points out that, "the correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith".³⁷ She also regards "the sanctuary in heaven as the very centre of Christ's work on behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth".³⁸

Furthermore, Ellen G. White highlights the pivotal role of the sanctuary doctrine in her theology when she says:

The scenes connected with the sanctuary above should make such impression upon the minds and hearts of all that they may be able to impress others. All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above. When the grand truth is seen and understood, those who hold it will work in harmony with Christ to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God, and their efforts will be successful. By study, contemplation and prayer, God's people will be elevated above common earthly thoughts and feelings and will be brought into harmony with Christ and

³⁶Gary Land, Adventism in America, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986, p. vii.

³⁷Ellen G. White, Evangelism. Washington D.C.; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946, p. 221. Henceforth referred to as White, Evangelism.

³⁸Ellen G. White, Review and Herald. November 9, 1905.

His great work of cleaning the sanctuary above from the sins of the people...".³⁹

Ellen G. White uses two metaphors, inter alia, to show the centrality of the sanctuary doctrine in her theology. The two metaphors are the "platform of truth"⁴⁰ and the "wagon-wheel".⁴¹ The platform of truth metaphor is supported by four key doctrines. The doctrine of the sanctuary is one of the four "pillar" doctrines. The other three are; the second coming of Christ, the Sabbath, and the "soul-sleep"... conditional immortality, also known as the state of the dead.⁴² See Figure 1. for the "platform of truth" metaphor.

³⁹Ellen G. White, Testimonies Vol.5. Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948, p. 575. Henceforth referred to as White, Testimonies Vol. 5.

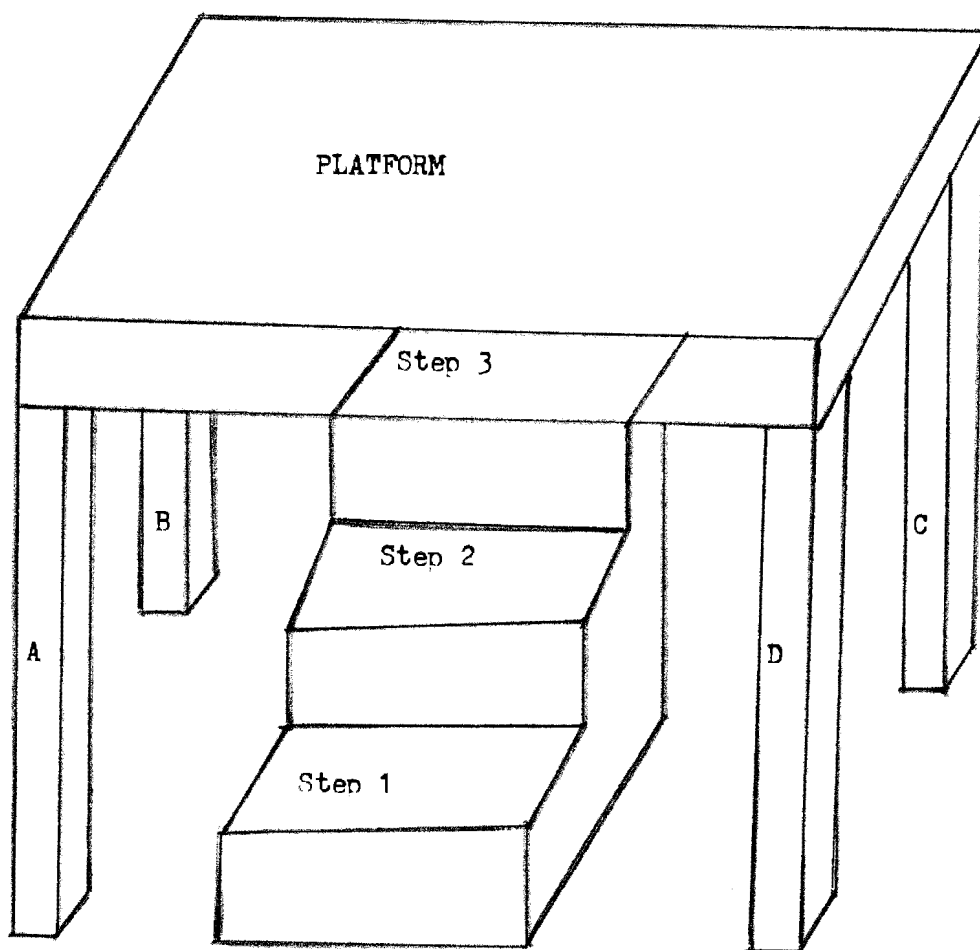
⁴⁰White, Early Writings. pp. 258, 259.

⁴¹Roger Coon, Ellen G. White and the S.D.A. "Sanctuary Message". A Presentation at Andrews University, February 12, 1992, p. 14.

⁴²White, Evangelism. p. 224.

Fig. 1. "THE PLATFORM OF TRUTH METAPHOR"

Note: This diagram is taken from Roger Coon's Presentation on Ellen G. White and the Sanctuary Message, Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1992.



"PLATFORM" = "the truth as it is in Jesus ."

"A" = "Soul sleep" -- conditional immortality (state of man in death)

"B" = Heavenly sanctuary (including Christ's heavenly high-priestly ministry).

"C" = Second coming of Christ.

"D" = Sabbath (in the framework of the 10-Commandment law of God).

"Steps" which lead to the platform = The Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:6-12.

In a vision which Ellen G. White received on March 14, 1858 at Lovett's Grove, Ohio, she confirms the veracity of the "platform of truth" metaphor by saying:

I was shown three steps - the first, second, and third angels' messages. My accompanying angel said, 'woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages'. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.⁴³

The second metaphor that Ellen G. White uses to show the centrality of the doctrine of the sanctuary is the "wagon-wheel", with its simple components of hub, spokes, and outer rim. In 1898, Ellen G. White noted that: "The atonement of Christ should be the great substance, the central truth in every school where the most simple theory of theology is taught".⁴⁴

Four years latter, in 1902, Ellen G. White writes a letter to Stephen N. Haskell and another Seventh-day Adventist evangelist preaching in New York saying:

Christ crucified as the atonement for sin is the great central truth of the gospel, round which all truths cluster. To this great truth all other truths are tributary. All truths rightly understood, derive their value and importance from their connection with this truth.⁴⁵

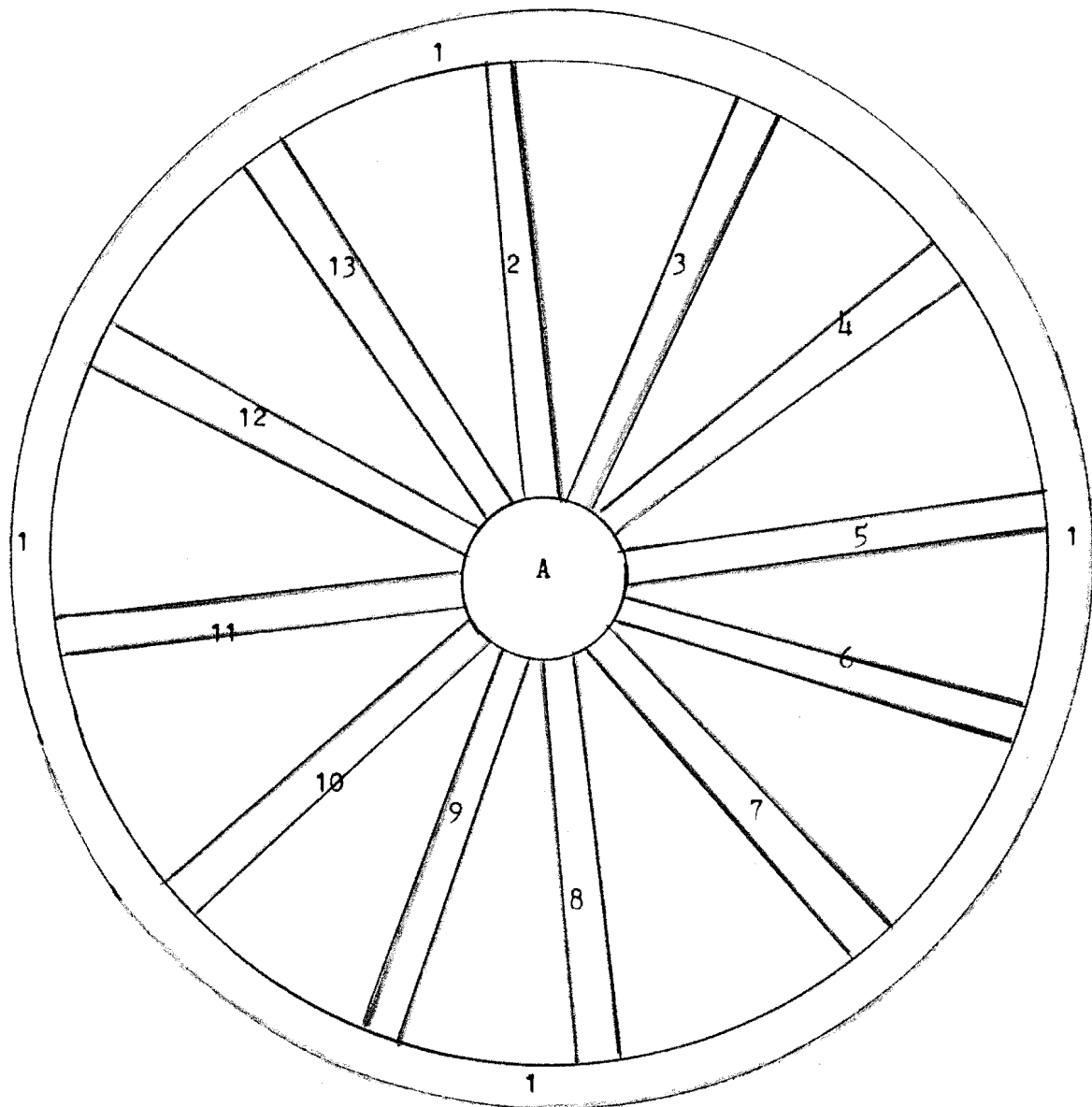
An interpretation of the "wagon-wheel" metaphor [See Figure 2. for the "wagon-wheel" metaphor] shows that the "hub"

⁴³White, Early Writings. pp. 258, 259.

⁴⁴White, Evangelism. p. 223.

⁴⁵Ellen G. White, Letter 39, March 12, 1902.

Fig. 2. "THE DOCTRINAL WHEEL METAPHOR"



- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 = The truth as it is in Jesus | 8 = Missiology |
| 2 = Law of God | 9 = Eschatology |
| 3 = "Soul Sleep" | 10 = Righteousness by Faith |
| 4 = Sabbath | 11 = Spirit of Prophecy |
| 5 = 3 Angels' Messages | 12 = Health Message |
| 6 = Pneumatology | 13 = Second Coming |
| 7 = Ecclesiology | |

Note: This diagram is taken from Roger Coon's Presentation on Ellen G. White and the Sanctuary Message, Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1992.

[A] represents the central doctrine of the atonement with its related scenarios of the heavenly sanctuary. Christ's high-priestly ministry is the central focus in the sanctuary in heaven. The "spokes" stand for the totality of all the doctrines that Ellen G. White believed. These radiate from the "central truth"; the sanctuary doctrine. The "outer rim" symbolizes the total doctrinal construct which binds all the doctrines together - the truth as it is found in Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

In the sanctuary doctrine Ellen G. White sees some theological and historical relevance for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Theologically, she notes that the sanctuary doctrine lies at the very core of the whole Seventh-day Adventist belief system.⁴⁷ The point being that one cannot understand Seventh-day Adventists theology without a correct understanding of this central doctrine.

Another theological implication of this doctrine of the sanctuary is that it sheds great light on the Seventh-day Adventists' present position and work.⁴⁸ Put differently, the stance that the Seventh-day Adventist takes on issues such as christians and politics, will not make sense without an

⁴⁶Roger Coon, Ellen G. White and the S.D.A "Sanctuary Message" A presentation at Andrews University, February 12, 1992, p. 14. Henceforth referred to as Coon, Ellen G. White and the SDA Sanctuary Message.

⁴⁷White, Evangelism. p. 223.

⁴⁸Ibid.

appreciation of the central place of the sanctuary doctrine in Seventh-day Adventist theology.

Historically, the sanctuary doctrine authenticated the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist church.⁴⁹ This doctrine provided the only adequate explanation of the 2300-day prophecy which began in 475 B.C. and ended in 1844 A.D. Ellen G. White points out that of all the "pillar" doctrines, the doctrine of the sanctuary was repeatedly and impressively validated by the Holy Spirit. She notes:

Preaching the Sanctuary Doctrine Endorsement by Holy Spirit - for more than half a century the different points of present truth have been questioned and opposed. ...As the great pillars of our faith have been presented, the Holy Spirit has borne witness to them, and especially is this so regarding the truths of the sanctuary question. Over and over again the Holy Spirit has in a marked manner endorsed the preaching of this doctrine.⁵⁰
[emphasis mine]

Ellen G. White is not alone in seeing the doctrine of the sanctuary as central to Adventist theology. There are Adventist scholars who share her conviction. In his book, Why Jesus Waits, Herbert E. Douglas points out that, Adventism regards the sanctuary doctrine as, "the centre of gravity for the plan of salvation, the hub of the theological wheel, which explains and connects all the Biblical truths that Christians

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 222.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 224.

hold dear, especially those truths that have been overlooked for centuries".⁵¹

Mervyn Maxwell echoes the centrality of the sanctuary doctrine within Ellen G. White's theology. He notes that the sanctuary doctrine illuminates the whole spectrum of the doctrines to which Ellen G. White adhered. He sees clear links between the sanctuary and the doctrines of the Sabbath, righteousness by faith, the Second coming, for example.⁵²

Woolsey also stresses the centrality of the sanctuary doctrine in Adventism when he says:

The sanctuary doctrine was the principal point that separated the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist movement from the remainder of the Millerite Adventists, who broke up into disillusionment or fanaticism. It gave a firm basis for maintaining the Advent hope, and at the same time gave an identity to those who held that the heavenly sanctuary played a part in man's salvation. It provided a cornerstone around which could be added other points of faith, as the Sabbath, conditional immortality, etc., Not only was it the point that initiated the separation from other Adventists, ... it became the foundation and existence for the new church.⁵³

Furthermore, Froom, a renowned Adventist scholar, regards the sanctuary doctrine as a "pivotal teaching that

⁵¹Herbert E. Douglas, Why Jesus Waits, Washington D.C.; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987, p. 24. Henceforth referred to as Douglas, Why Jesus Waits.

⁵²Mervyn Maxwell, 'Sanctuary and Atonement in SDA Theology: An Historical Survey' The Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, p. 516.

⁵³Woolsey R.H, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Sanctuary". Ellen G. White Research Center, File Copy, p. 1.

identifies... the Seventh-day Adventists".⁵⁴ In another book, From testifies to the special meaning that the sanctuary doctrine lends to the entire spectrum of the doctrines taught by Ellen G. White. Taking the doctrine of the Sabbath as an example, From says; "Only in the Sanctuary setting did it (the Sabbath) begin to grip hearts".⁵⁵

1.2.1 The Essence of the doctrine of the sanctuary

This section tries to answer two basic questions. These two questions are; Firstly, what is the Sanctuary doctrine? Secondly, how did it gain prominence in Ellen G. White's theology?

In 1887, Uriah Smith, one of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers published an article, which gives the historical understanding of the doctrine of the sanctuary. Smith highlighted the salient features of this doctrine to be:

1. That the sanctuary and priesthood of the Mosaic dispensation represent in shadow the sanctuary and priesthood of the present or christian dispensation. (Heb 8.5)
2. That this Sanctuary and priesthood are in heaven, resembling the former as nearly as heavenly things may resemble the earthly. (Heb 9:23, 24).
3. That the ministry of Christ, our great High Priest, in the heavenly sanctuary is composed of two great divisions, as in the type; first, in the

⁵⁴From L.E., Movement of Destiny. Washington D.C.: Review Herald Publishing Association, 1971. p. 541.

⁵⁵From L.E., The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers Vol. IV., Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954, p. 960.

first apartment, or holy place and secondly in the second apartment, or most holy place.

4. That the beginning of his ministry in the second apartment is marked by the great prophetic period of 2300 days (Daniel 8:14).

5. That the ministry he is now performing in the second apartment of the heavenly temple, is "the atonement" (Lev. 16:17), the "cleansing of the Sanctuary" (Daniel 8:14), "the investigative judgment" (Daniel 7:10), "the finishing of the mystery of God (Rev. 10:7; 11:15, 19), which will complete Christ's work as priest, consummate the plan of salvation, terminate human probation, decide every case for eternity, and bring Christ to his throne of eternal domination."⁵⁶

A careful look at Uriah Smith's summary of the doctrine of the sanctuary reveal various nuances imbedded in this doctrine. The seemingly inexhaustible aspects of the doctrine of the sanctuary continue to challenge and tax the minds of select scholars within the Seventh-day Adventist tradition.⁵⁷ While there is a lot that can be said about the sanctuary

⁵⁶Uriah Smith, "Question on the Sanctuary", Review and Herald, 14 June 1887, pp. 376, 377.

⁵⁷For a more detailed of the doctrine of the sanctuary, see; Roger W. Coon, The Great Visions of Ellen G. White, Vol.1. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1992; see Clifford Goldstein, 1844 Made Simple, Boise ID: Pacific Press, 1988; see Paul A. Gordon, The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1983; see Robert W. Olson, The Investigative Judgement in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Unpublished monograph. Washington, D.C.: White Estate, Feb. 25, 1980); see - 101 Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White, Washington D.C.: White Estate, March, 1981; see George E. Rice, The Priesthood of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews, Unpublished Monograph. Washington D.C.: White Estate, 1988.

doctrine, only the essence or core of this doctrine will be addressed.

Ellen G. White articulates that:

Christ crucified as the atonement for sin is the great central truth of the gospel, round which all truth cluster. To this great truth all other truths are tributary. All truths, rightly understood, derive their value and importance from their connection with this truth.⁵⁸

Etymologically, the term "atonement" is derived from an old English word "at-one-ment". This word stood for the complete restoration of a once broken relationship.⁵⁹ God abhors the separation which sin has caused between humanity and himself. This is why he says to Moses in Exodus 25:8, "Then have them make me a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them". The Hebrew word used for "to dwell" is "shakan"

⁵⁸Ellen G. White, letter 39, March 12, 1902.

⁵⁹Roger Coon, Ellen G. White and the S.D.A. "Sanctuary Message" A Presentation at Andrews University, February 12, 1992), 7. See Edward Heppenstall in Our High Priest pp. 29, where he notes that "At-one-ment is an expression of the divine intention to destroy sin that ruptured the universe. Restoration to oneness was not consummated at the cross. The sin problem has not yet been finally resolved. The cross is the supreme act of God for man's redemption. But that is only one aspect of Christ's work toward the final at-one-ment. Reconciliation is effected by the living Christ. It is not something that happened two thousand years ago. At-one-ment is experienced only as men daily live a life of trust and dependence on Him... "It may be that the failure to grasp the whole work of our Lord, both on the cross and from the heavenly sanctuary, leaves man with less than a complete knowledge of all the truth the Bible reveals as to the full meaning of the atonement... Both the triumph at the cross and the work of Christ as priest in heaven are the hope and pledge of final renewal and at-one-ment".

which means to "settle down".⁶⁰ The biblical concept of the God who wants to dwell with his children negates the picture which Aristotle paints about God because he viewed Divine thought as egocentric in that it thinks of itself throughout eternity.⁶¹

Although the doctrine of the sanctuary and Christ's work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary may be viewed as one and the same thing, there is a slight nuance between the two. Christ's work of atonement is not confined to the heavenly sanctuary because every phase of Christ's earthly ministry is a part of his work of atonement.⁶² The doctrine of the sanctuary, too, has many components one of which is Christ's work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary.⁶³ But the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary is not just another part of the sanctuary doctrine; it is the "heart" or the "core" of the sanctuary doctrine. The work of atonement by

⁶⁰John Baldwin, "Exegetical Basis for Radical Eschatology", Presentation at Andrews University, 1992. p. 1.

⁶¹Aristotle, Metaphysics. Book 12. Chapter 9.

⁶²Ellen G. White, Christ in His Sanctuary. Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1969, p. 126. See; Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy. Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing, p. 489. She says; "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross". The atonement, therefore, entail those components of Christ's ministry which are aimed at restoring the broken relationship between God and man.

⁶³Uriah Smith, "Questions on the Sanctuary", Review and Herald, 14 June 1887, pp. 376, 377.

Christ in Heaven, therefore, is "the cleansing of the sanctuary" which "involves a work of investigation - a work of judgment. ... in 1844 Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming".⁶⁴ To speak of "the essence of the sanctuary doctrine" is to speak of the work of atonement which Christ is doing in the heavenly sanctuary. In order, then, to understand the work of Christ's atonement in the heavenly sanctuary, we need to understand the ministrations in the earthly Mosaic sanctuary which was a replica of the heavenly sanctuary.

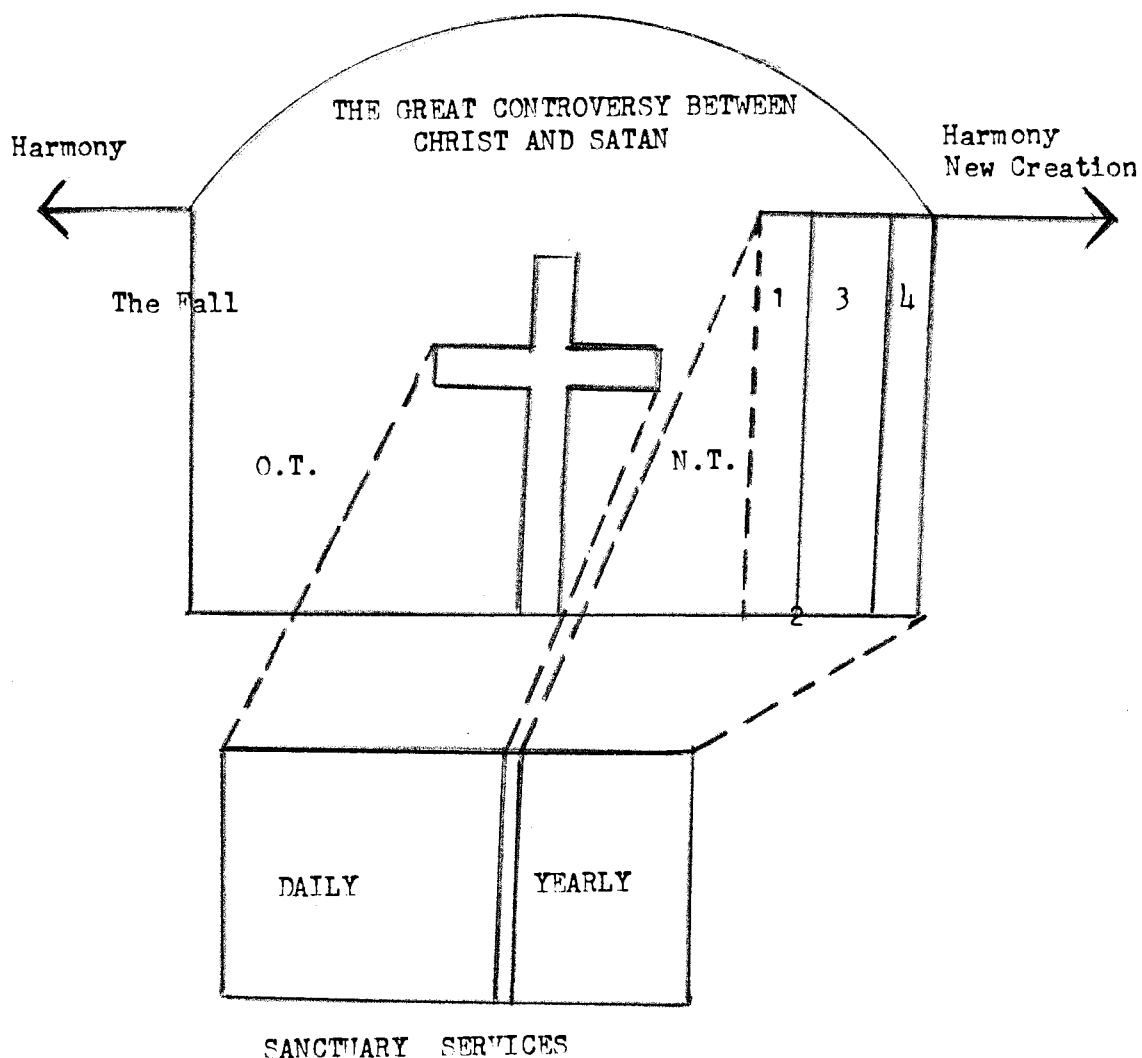
In addition to the sanctuary acting as God's dwelling among His people, Israel, it demonstrated vividly how God deals with sin.⁶⁵ The sanctuary services showed how the guilt of the sinner was transferred into the sanctuary through the daily service. The annual service, which was the day of atonement, transferred the accumulated guilt of all the individual sinners from the sanctuary to outside the camp of Israel.⁶⁶ See Figure 3. for The Daily and Yearly Services: The Two Comings of Christ Pre-figured.

⁶⁴White, The Great Controversy. p. 422.

⁶⁵White, Christ in His Sanctuary. pp. 31-39.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Fig. 3. THE DAILY AND YEARLY SERVICES: THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST
PRE-FIGURED



Daily Typifies the
1st Advent
The Kingdom of Grace

Yearly Typifies the 4 Major events
Which Close The Great Controversy:
The Kingdom of Glory

1. The Pre-Advent Judgment
2. The Parousia (2nd Advent)
3. The Millenium and Judicial Judgment
4. The White Throne Judgment or the final disposition of Sin and Sinners: Executive Judgment

Note: This diagram is taken from John Baldwin's Presentation on Eschatology, Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1992.

Every year the daily sanctuary services climaxed into the annual Day of Atonement.⁶⁷ There are four major things which took place on the Day of Atonement. Firstly, there was a preparousia judgement in type, on the Day of Atonement.⁶⁸ There was an intense heart-searching experience on the part of all the children of Israel. At issue was whether they (the Israelites) were right with God. While the daily sacrifices which the sinner offered assured the sinner of the forgiveness of his or her confessed sins, the daily sacrifices, however, only accomplished a part of the process of dealing with sins. The Day of Atonement refutes the concept that once a person is saved that person is always saved.⁶⁹ The Day of Atonement clearly vindicated the character of God in preserving human freedom. In spite of the accomplishments of the daily sacrifices in dealing with an individual's sins, any individual was at liberty to turn away from God on or just before the Day of Atonement. Therefore, on the Day of Atonement, the sanctuary was cleansed which means that the sins were finally removed from the sanctuary as the blood of the lamb was irrevocably applied.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁸White, The Great Controversy. p. 422.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 422.

Secondly, the Day of Atonement typified a parousia.⁷¹ When Aaron the priest was through with officiating in the most holy place of the sanctuary, he went to the waiting people outside the sanctuary. His coming out of the most holy place alive meant the accomplishment of the atonement. Ellen G. White saw the coming out of Aaron the priest to pre-figure the second coming of Christ when he shall complete officiating in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.⁷²

Thirdly, there was a millennium in type on the Day of Atonement.⁷³ The priest laid his hands on the scape-goat and confessed the sins of the people. The scape-goat did not die immediately because it did not bear the sins of the people redemptively.⁷⁴

Finally, in the Day of Atonement there was a final disposition of sin in type. "... the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Lev. 16:22). This event within the earthly day of atonement pointed forward to the time when Satan would be made to carry all the sins of the

⁷¹Ibid.

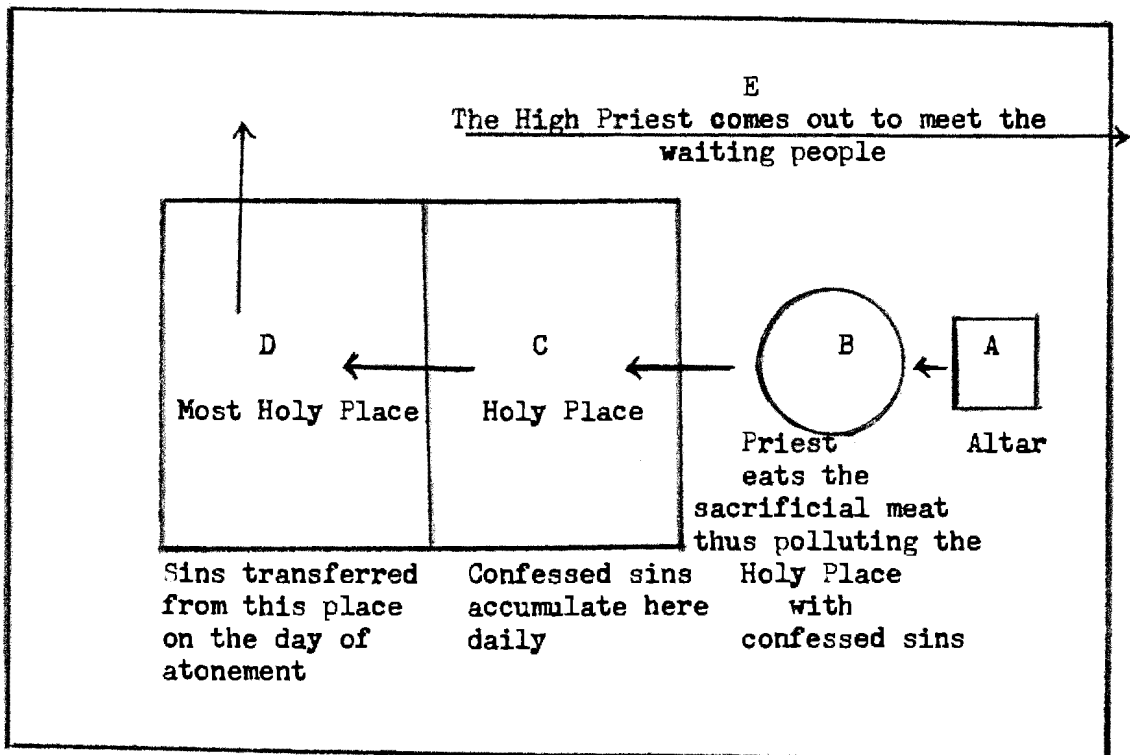
⁷²Ibid., p. 419.

⁷³Leviticus 16:2-22; Jer. 4:23-37; Isaiah 24:1,3,19-22; Rev. 20:3.

⁷⁴White, The Great controversy. p. 420.

people who will be finally saved.⁷⁵ See Figure 4. for The Daily and Yearly Services in the Earthly Sanctuary.

FIG. 4. THE DAILY AND YEARLY SERVICES IN THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY



Note: The diagram is taken from John Baldwin's Presentation on Eschatology, Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1992.

⁷⁵Ibid.

One of the greatest distinctions between historic Adventist theology (Seventh-day Adventist theology) and Protestant Christian theology in general is in their perception of the death of Christ on the cross. Ellen G. White does not see the ministry of Christ as ending in the crucifixion or even the resurrection. Instead, she sees a continuation of Christ's saving mission and ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Ellen G. White takes seriously the on-going heavenly phase of Christ's ministry. On the contrary, most of the Protestant denominations place the accent on Christ's death on the cross almost at the exclusion of his function in the heavenly sanctuary.⁷⁶

By way of summary, the sanctuary doctrine as understood by Ellen G. White and Seventh-day Adventists asserts, among other things, that Jesus Christ is in the anti-typical day of atonement since 1844.⁷⁷ He awaits all people to avail themselves of his atoning work in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (most holy place).⁷⁸ The implications are that now is probation time, therefore, all should confess and forsake their sins now.⁷⁹ The termination of Christ's priestly ministry will signal the close of probation. When probation closes, Jesus Christ will cease to be an advocate

⁷⁶Douglas, Why Jesus Waits. p. 28.

⁷⁷White, The Great Controversy. p. 422.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 430.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 428, 429.

for humanity. He will then become judge. Shortly after probation closes, Jesus will return to this planet. The purpose of his coming is to fulfil his desideratum, his deepest desire of being with his people eternally.⁸⁰ The sanctuary doctrine, therefore, highlights the solemnity of these crucial end times. The sanctuary doctrine is a constant reminder that time is of the essence. There is need for all people to prioritize their agenda for existence because now Christ is doing the work of atonement in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.⁸¹

With respect to the question: How did the sanctuary doctrine gain prominence in Ellen G. White's theology, a few observations should be made. Neither Ellen G. White nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church originated the sanctuary doctrine.⁸² Historically, the Christian tradition is known to have had considerable interest in this doctrine. Leslie Hardinge undertook a revealing study on the subject of the sanctuary. He researched on its history in the National Library of Scotland. Hardinge shows that from 1650 to 1700 A.D. there were few books that were published on the subject. The period between 1700 and 1775 saw a small increase in the number of books on the sanctuary doctrine. A few more books

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 489, 490.

⁸¹White, The Great Controversy. pp. 613, 614.

⁸²Coon, Ellen G. White and the S.D.A. "Sanctuary Message", p. 1.

appeared from 1775 to 1850. But from 1850 to 1900 there was an influx of books and articles on the subject of the sanctuary. However, after 1900 the interest in the subject began to wane as shown by the dwindling amount of books that were published on the subject. Today, the subject of the sanctuary seems to be a forgotten one, as far as the Christian Church is concerned.⁸³

Therefore, Seventh-day Adventists rediscovered the sanctuary doctrine in the 1840's.⁸⁴ From 1845 to 1850 the Seventh-day Adventists formulated the doctrinal framework of their church.⁸⁵ A series of meetings known as the Sabbath Conferences brought some of the ex-Millerites together in prayerful study of prophecies and the Bible in general. It was during these conferences that Ellen G. White had some visions. The visions she received were not the source of the sanctuary doctrine and all the other doctrines the Seventh-day Adventist believe.⁸⁶ On the contrary, the visions served to; (1) confirm and corroborate the doctrinal decisions emanating from the Sabbath Conferences (2) correct the participants in the Sabbath Conferences if they were going in the wrong direction. The role of Ellen G. White as a prophetess was not

⁸³Ibid. p. 2.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 2.

⁸⁶Ellen White, Selected Messages, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Association, 1958, Vol. 1: 207. Henceforth referred to as White, Selected Messages Vol. 1.

to act as a substitute for hard work, study, and prayer or individual initiative.⁸⁷ As the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were being formulated Ellen G. White did not take the lead. Commenting on this she said that "one of the greatest sorrows of my life was being unable to participate in the discussions when the formulation and development of the doctrines was in progress".⁸⁸

1.3 Ellen G. White and the "broad" concept of politics

There is probably no other book among Ellen G. White's books which reveal her commitment to the broad aspect of politics more than her book entitled: The Southern Work. This historic book is a compilation of "statements, articles, letters and excerpts from letters which White wrote between the years 1891 and 1899."⁸⁹ The theme of her book is straightforward. She appeals to the white Seventh-day Adventists in the North of the United States of America to minister to the former slaves located in the South of the United States of America.⁹⁰

Ellen G. White condemned the prejudice shown by the whites against the blacks in the United States during her

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. xxiii.

⁸⁹Ellen G. White, The Southern Work, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966, pp. 5-6. Henceforth referred to as White, The Southern Work.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 5.

time.⁹¹ Most white Seventh-day Adventists saw no need to preach the gospel to the "coloured people" in the South. In a very frank manner, Ellen G. White rebuked as evil the attitudes most whites showed towards the blacks. Rejecting their prejudice as unchristian, Ellen G. White affirmed the value of the black race in the sight of God. On numerous occasions, she reiterates that Christ paid the same price for the salvation of both whites and blacks.⁹²

Ellen G. White directs the minds of the white christians to the identification of Jesus Christ with the poor and oppressed. She points out that Christ's lowly birth at incarnation should evoke introspection among the rich and indifferent whites. The affluent whites should discover why Christ "the majesty of heaven, the King of glory humbled himself to accept humanity and then chose a life of poverty and toil."⁹³ White believes that a correct understanding of the incarnation of Christ will enable the whites to accept blacks as equals. Ellen G. White notes that the reason why Christ did not identify with the rich and elite was "to

⁹¹Ibid., p. 9.

⁹²Ibid. See also pp. 10, 11, 12, 13, 31. In these pages, Ellen G. White indicates that all humanity have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ. Because of this reason, there is no ground for anyone to regard themselves more superior or inferior to another race. God values all his children the same, whether black or white.

⁹³Ibid.

correct the world's false standard of judging the value of men."⁹⁴

In addition, Ellen G. White reminds the rich white christians of Christ's "statement of mission" at the beginning of his ministry. Christ declared:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.⁹⁵

The point which Ellen G. White makes to the white christians in United States of America is clear. She seems to be saying that if Christ "emptied" himself to save lost humanity, why cannot the whites selflessly commit themselves to the blacks.

There are important parallels that Ellen G. White draws between the Egyptian bondage and the slavery of blacks in America. Ellen G. White points out that the same God who heard the cry of the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage also heard the American slaves in their servitude.⁹⁶ Ellen G. White notes that wherever the oppressed cry from, God will hear them and come to their rescue. She comments on this point saying, "The Hebrew nation is not the only nation that has been in

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 41.

cruel bondage, and whose groanings have come to the ears of the Lord of hosts".⁹⁷

In answering the cry of his children in American slavery, God "moved the hearts of men to work in behalf of those who were so cruelly oppressed".⁹⁸ God wants the christians to represent him among the oppressed. However, if christians fail to respond to God's call, he raises up people who can fulfil his purposes. As the salt of the earth, christians should preserve society so that it does not decay morally. But if christians "lose their saltiness they are good for nothing and should be thrown away to be trodden underfoot by men".⁹⁹ Ellen G. White, therefore, shows that God does employ human agencies to effect political liberation for his oppressed people.

Not only does White commend those who spoke for the emancipation of slaves, she also praises those who sacrificed their lives on the battlefield to liberate the slaves. She writes, "The graves of American sons who had enlisted to deliver the oppressed race are thick in its soil. Many fell in death, giving their lives to proclaim liberty to the captives and opening the prison to them that are bound."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Matthew 5:13

¹⁰⁰White, The Southern Work, p. 42.

Again, Ellen G. White points out that after they were freed, the Egyptian slaves needed help to regain their lost human dignity. The same was true for the American slaves. Reflecting on the way God restored the Israelites' personhood, White observes some key points. she notes that the entire journey to Canaan from Egypt was designed to "educate, to refine and ennoble"¹⁰¹ those who had been degraded by slavery in Egypt. White shows that during the time when God was "re-educating" the Israelites he kept them from coming into contact with other nations. The reason was to have the children of Israel "develop" to a point they could correctly represent God's divine character among "heathen nations". Ellen G. White insists that "Those who study the history of the Israelites should also consider the history of the slaves in America, who suffered, who have been educated in crime, degraded, and oppressed, and left in ignorance to perish".¹⁰² White regrets the apathy the white christians show to the 'coloured race'. White laments saying, "We have been very neglectful of our coloured brethren, and are not yet prepared for the coming of our Lord".¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid. See also: 38, where Ellen G. White points out that "God weighs actions, and every one who has been unfaithful in his stewardship, who has failed to remedy evils which it was in his power to remedy, will be of no esteem in the courts of heaven. Those who are indifferent to the wants of the needy will be counted unfaithful stewards, and will be registered as enemies of God and man.... We are not to seek

Challenging the white Seventh-day Adventists to do something concrete for the blacks, Ellen G. White asks a searching question. She inquires saying, "But since the slaves of the South attained to freedom, what have we as christians done to bear any comparison to what was done for them by those who poured out their lives on the battlefield."¹⁰⁴ Ellen G. White rebuked Seventh-day Adventists for failing to complement the efforts of those who had fought for the abolition of slavery. White notes that the white Seventh-day Adventists have left the blacks "beaten, bruised, despised, and forsaken by the way".¹⁰⁵

This notwithstanding, Ellen G. White believes that the whites can experience conversion. She is confident that when the Word of God is obeyed "walls of separation" will fall as white christians display "supreme love to their Maker and impartial love to their neighbours".¹⁰⁶ White maintains that whites should sympathize with the situation of the blacks saying:

They have been kept at work in cotton fields, have been driven before the lash like brute beasts, and their children have received no enviable heritage. Many of the slaves had noble minds but the fact that their skin was dark, was sufficient reason for

to get rid of the responsibilities that connect us with our fellow men. [emphasis mine]

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

the whites to treat them as though they were beasts.¹⁰⁷

Ellen G. White points out that the whites have an obligation towards the "coloured people". She notes that, "The neglect of the coloured race by the American nation is charged against them (the whites).¹⁰⁸ Put differently, God expects the American nation to redress their mistakes committed towards the blacks. Although the scar of oppression that blacks incurred may never heal, whites should show true repentance for their inhumanity.

Ellen G. White further reminded the white Seventh-day Adventists that angels of God worked for the freedom of the oppressed.¹⁰⁹ The very fact that "unfallen angels" will human liberation should rebuke those who enjoy enslaving other people. Christians, of all people, should promote human freedom. Ellen G. White was disappointed by the lack of cooperation among the white christians. The neglect by the whites, to minister to the blacks in the South was tantamount to disobeying God. White observes; "After their (blacks) delivery from captivity how earnestly should every christian have cooperated with heavenly intelligences who were working for the deliverance of the downtrodden race".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 45.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

Making a concrete appeal on behalf of the oppressed, Ellen G. White points to the example of Christ. She notes that:

Jesus did not simply declare His good will toward perishing man, but humbled Himself, taking upon Himself the nature of man. For our sakes He became poor, that we might come into possession of an immortal inheritance, be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.¹¹¹

The foregoing survey of Ellen G. White's stance on the broad view of politics as it relates to former slaves in America is useful. From her specific reaction to the prejudice of the whites against the blacks we can learn a lot about Ellen G. White and her stance toward the involvement of christians in the broad aspect of politics. Her repugnance to the American oppression of slaves shows that she condemns oppression wherever it can be found. White is convinced that christians should have a part to play in uprooting oppression because God wants them to cooperate with angels who work for human freedom.

An analysis of the other writings of Ellen G. White, show that she is comfortable with the idea of christians participating in politics in its broad sense. It appears, however, that Ellen G. White wishes christians never to lose

¹¹¹Ibid.

sight of the sanctuary doctrine.¹¹² The sanctuary doctrine should influence the manner with which christians engage in "politics". Ellen G. White acutely senses the need for christians with a conscience for justice. She sees the need for christians who can fearlessly challenge sin wherever it may be found. Articulating this point she says:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men - men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, whose conscience is true to duty as the needle is to the pole, men who stand for right though the heavens fall...¹¹³

From the above quotation it is clear that Ellen G. White appeals for Christians who take their "prophetic role" seriously. She sees a great need for christians who will not succumb to bribes. It is because of the positive influence of

¹¹²Ibid., 38 White brings to the attention of the christians the fact that, there is an on-going judgment in the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore christians ought to know that all human deeds are evaluated ultimately in the heavenly sanctuary. Pointing to this fact Ellen G. White says; "Those who are heaping advantages upon advantages where there are already more than ample facilities, are not doing a work that will strengthen men in spirituality; and for neglecting destitute fields they are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and are found wanting". See also; p. 81. White again says; "The Lord God of heaven, by whom all actions are weighed in the golden balances of the sanctuary, looks upon the thousands of coloured people, our neighbours, who in their destitution are spreading their cases before the Giver of all mercies and blessings". [emphasis mine]

¹¹³Ellen G. White, Education, Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, p. 57. Henceforth referred to as White, Education.

such christians that the world can be transformed into a more humane place.

In addition to speaking against "sin", Ellen G. White is convinced that christians must actively shape society.¹¹⁴ She indicates that it is no crime for any christian to be concerned about their social environment. Christians are not insulated from the effects of the political or economic decisions that are made within their respective countries. Because of the reality of belonging to some society, christians should take pride in improving their environment. Addressing teachers and students of Battle Creek College on November 15, 1883, Ellen G. White shows that christians can make meaningful contributions in society when she says:

Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? Are you ambitious for education that you may have a name and a position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. You may everyone of you make your mark. You should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard... As disciples of Christ you are not debarred from engaging in temporal pursuits; but you should carry your religion with you... Balanced by religious principle, you may climb to any height you please.¹¹⁵ [emphasis mine]

¹¹⁴White, The Southern Work, p. 38.

¹¹⁵Ellen G. White, Fundamental of Christian Education. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1923, pp. 82, 83. Henceforth referred to as White, Fundamentals of Christian Education.

Furthermore, Ellen G. White's commentary on a Bible character like Daniel shows that a christian can participate in "politics" as statesman. White notes:

The experience of Daniel as a statesman in the kingdoms of Babylon and Medo-Persia reveals the truth that a business man is not necessarily a designing, policy man, but that he may be a man instructed by God at every step. Daniel the prime minister of the greatest of earthly kingdoms was at the same time a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. A man of like passions as ourselves, the pen of inspiration describes him as without fault...¹¹⁶ [emphasis mine]

In a more direct manner, Ellen G. White points out that, "The lawyer, the physician, the politician can and should be representatives of Jesus Christ".¹¹⁷ If Ellen G. White regards politicians whose profession is doing politics as co-workers with Christ, it is because she recognizes their potential to improve human life. Politicians who fear God can help correct or remove governments that are oppressive.

While Ellen G. White sees a place for christians in the political arena, she however, does not conceal the risk involved. She regards involvement in politics as a precarious venture for christians. There is the danger that

¹¹⁶Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings. Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1917, p. 545. Henceforth referred to as White, Prophets and Kings.

¹¹⁷Ellen G. White, Manuscript 70, 1989, p. 4. Henceforth referred to as White, Manuscripts 70.

some of those who engage in politics may lose their faith in God. In expressing this fear Ellen G. White says:

We have no more strength and grace given us than we can wisely appropriate. If God has a work for any of His commandment keeping people to do in regard to politics, reach for the position and do the work with your arm linked with the arm of Christ. The salvation of your souls should be your greatest study.¹¹⁸

Since engagement in politics usually entails challenging some of the Government policies, Ellen G. White appeals for caution. She reminds christians that their paramount task is to make people aware of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.¹¹⁹ Adequate and precise knowledge of what Christ is doing now should prescribe the manner with which christians engage in politics. Ellen G. White appeals for tact saying, "Our work is not to make a raid on Government but to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord. The fewer attacks we make on authorities and power the more work we will do for God".¹²⁰

Again Ellen G. White stresses the need for christians to be "as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove", when she says:

We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be

¹¹⁸Ellen G. White, "Counsels Concerning Adventists and Politics." Manuscript Releases. Vol. 8. p. 352.

¹¹⁹Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 428.

¹²⁰Ellen G. White, Manuscript 117a, 1901. See also White, Evangelism, p. 173.

carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ's name, advocating the truth committed to us.¹²¹

Furthermore, White maintains that christians should not be diverted from focusing on and proclaiming the sanctuary message.¹²² "Politics" should be subservient to the surpassing need to be right with God in view of his imminent return. In Ellen G. White's writings politics and the sanctuary doctrine seem to be important for the christian. The most important thing one can draw from the foregoing sections is that one may engage in "politics" as a christian. However, one should not allow a concentration on "politics" to eclipse the decisive ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

1.3.1 Christians and social responsibility

Within the "broad" concept of politics is the issue of poverty.¹²³ The reason why poverty will receive some

¹²¹Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911, pp. 68, 69. Henceforth referred to as White, Acts of the Apostles.

¹²²Ellen G. White Estate, Spirit of Prophecy Counsels Relating to Church-State Relationships, Washington D.C.: General Conference, 1964, p. 32.

¹²³Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Hope and Suffering. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing company, 1983, pp. 36,37. Henceforth referred to as Tutu, Hope and Suffering. He argues that when some christians consider the option of fighting to

attention is because it is one of the motivating factors for engagement in politics. The way Ellen G. White addresses poverty goes a long way to show the position that Christians should take in politics. In harmony with her theological outlook, White recommends a version of Christian social responsibility which puts in perspective the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. After trying to account for the causes of poverty, White prescribes a program of dealing with poverty.

Ellen G. White points out that "God has permitted some of the human family to be so rich and some so poor".¹²⁴ She notes that the reason this is so is that "there may be a constant exercise in the human heart of the attributes of mercy and love".¹²⁵ She argues that those who cannot discern the hand of providence will continue to be baffled by the inequalities in material possessions.¹²⁶

Although "providence" permits some people to be rich and others to be poor, poverty is not God ordained. White

liberate the poor and the oppressed they are motivated, among other things, by the urge to be socially responsible.

¹²⁴Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962, p. 280. Henceforth referred to as White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers.

¹²⁵Ellen G. White Welfare Ministry. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952, p. 17. Henceforth referred to as White, Welfare Ministry.

¹²⁶White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 280.

objects to the notion that God is the creator of poverty. In protest she says, "...but God never meant that this misery should exist. He never meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life while the children of others cry for bread. The Lord is a God of benevolence."¹²⁷

Ellen G. White attributes the occurrence of poverty to human selfishness because God created enough of life's necessities for everyone.¹²⁸ Due to the fact that the wealth that God gives has been hoarded instead of being distributed equitably to relieve the woes of the needy, God is dishonoured and his character misrepresented by Satan.¹²⁹ White argues that if men and women were to play their role as faithful stewards, there would be no poverty.¹³⁰

From another perspective, Ellen, G. White sees the presence of the poor in society as a blessing in disguise because it provides an opportunity through which christians may develop Christlike characters. Commenting on this point Ellen G. White says, "They (the poor) are Christ's legacy to His church, and they are to be cared for as He would care for them. In this way God takes away the dross and purifies the

¹²⁷Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church. Vol. 6., Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948, p. 273. Henceforth referred to as White, Testinmoines for the Church. Vol. 6.

¹²⁸White, Welfare Ministry. p. 16.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

gold, giving us that character which we need".¹³¹ In Ellen G. White's understanding, a loving God and the presence of poverty are compatible in a sense, because she sees poverty as an essential reminder of the love of God to humanity. In a very candid manner she states "Take away poverty, and we should have no way of understanding the mercy and love of God".¹³² In addition she remarks, "It would not be for the benefit of christianity for the Lord to remove poverty from the earth".¹³³ Yet, the reality of poverty should move christians to concrete action. White notes that christians should help the less fortunate. Addressing this concern she says, "All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow... it is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery".¹³⁴ Christians must take care of the blind, lame and afflicted, including widows and orphans.¹³⁵ Any neglect to alleviate the poverty and oppression, is registered in the books of heaven as shown to Christ in the person of His saints.¹³⁶ Christians should also provide homes for the homeless.¹³⁷

¹³¹Ibid., p. 18.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid., p. 177.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 20.

¹³⁵White, Welfare Ministry. p. 209.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 210.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 211.

Giving handouts to the poor is not enough. Christians should equip the poor with skills so that they can be self-reliant.¹³⁸ The poor should be encouraged to move from cities to rural areas, if they can't find employment in the cities. In the rural areas, the poor should be taught to till the land.¹³⁹ Effort should, however, be made to create more and more industries to provide employment to the poor.¹⁴⁰

God takes note of all the good things that christians do for the poor. Ellen G. White affirms that God recognizes all such works because he assigns angels to record all the things that christians do.¹⁴¹ Highlighting on the virtue of being responsible christians, White writes, "Those who will receive the most abundant reward will be those who have mingled with their activity the zeal, gracious, tender pity for the poor, the orphan, the oppressed, and the afflicted".¹⁴²

From the foregoing, it is clear that Ellen G. White recommends christians to do something about poverty. Christians should be foremost in caring for the poor but more than that christians should confront the structures that generate poverty. Although Ellen G. White does not specifically say how christians are to confront "the powers

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 194.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁴¹White, Testimonies Vol. 5. p. 611.

¹⁴²White, Welfare Ministry. p. 313.

that be", she does not rule out direct confrontation with oppressors. In keeping with her concept of the broad aspect of politics, Ellen G. White surely expects christians to speak against "man's inhumanity against man" which has brought about poverty, among other things.

1.4 Christians and the "narrow" concept of politics

Several comments that Ellen G. White made on politics fall under what may be called the "narrow" concept of politics. In the narrow concept of politics the focus is primarily on the issues of voting and party politics.¹⁴³ A study of the statements that Ellen G. White makes under the "narrow" concept of politics suggests that she was opposed to christians taking part in "politics."

1.4.1 Christians and party politics

Ellen G. White points out that, "there is danger, decided danger, for all who shall link themselves up with the political parties of the world".¹⁴⁴ Addressing workers within the Seventh-day Adventist church, she once said, they were not to engage in politics. Because of the nature of the doctrines they preach, Seventh-day Adventists should shun "political

¹⁴³Maimela, Proclaim Freedom to My People. pp. 1-3.

¹⁴⁴"Political controversy" General Conference Bulletin February 1987.

questions".¹⁴⁵ She also noted that "party spirit and contention" apart from dishonouring God,¹⁴⁶ are also divisive.¹⁴⁷

Again, Ellen G. White observes that there are some who profess to be christians but do not see anything wrong in participating in "politics". To such christians, Ellen G. White says that although their names may be on church records, but the truth is that they don't belong there.¹⁴⁸ She also cautions christians "against being absorbed in politics".¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, Ellen G. White argues that christians are to avoid taking sides in "politics" regardless of the biases they may have.¹⁵⁰ In a sense, she seems to be calling for neutrality on the issue of partisanship.

1.4.2 Christians and voting

Ellen G. White seems to strongly suggest that christians should not vote anyone into power.¹⁵¹ She actually says that

¹⁴⁵White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. p. 478.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 479.

¹⁴⁷Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915, p. 396. Henceforth referred to as White, Gospel Workers.

¹⁴⁸Ellen G. White, "Church and State Relationships". Manuscript Releases Vol. 3: p. 41 .

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵¹White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

christians, "must not vote for them (politicians) and with them (partisans).¹⁵² In accounting for the above stance on voting, Ellen G. White points out that christians have often, through their votes, placed corrupt and oppressive people into power. By installing wicked rulers into power christians become accomplices in whatever crimes the rulers perpetrate against the poor and defenseless.¹⁵³

A study of other statements that Ellen G. White makes on voting seem ambiguous. In letter 4 which she wrote in 1898, she advises, "keep your vote to yourself. Do not feel it your duty to urge everyone to do as you do".¹⁵⁴ This quotation may possibly imply that as long as one makes voting a personal and private affair, one may go ahead and vote. The problem that one is confronted with is how to reconcile Ellen G. White's apparently permissive statements for voting with her categorical statements against voting discussed in the preceding paragraph.

Ellen G. White encouraged Seventh-day Adventist christians to use their votes for the uplifting of "temperance and virtue" saying:

While we are in no wise to become involved in political questions, yet it is our privilege to make our stand decidedly on all questions relating

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Arthur L. White, "Seventh-day Adventists and voting". Review and Herald. August 1952: p.7. Henceforth referred to as White, A. L., "Seventh-day Adventists and Voting".

to temperance and reform...In our favoured land (America), every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side to temperance and virtue?¹⁵⁵

The above quotation proves that Ellen G. White, while opposed to the kind of voting that sees a politician into power, she however, urged people to vote for "temperance and virtue". Therefore Ellen G. White was not opposed to the act of voting per se.

It is clear that when she urges people to vote for "temperance" she meant voting for laws which would prohibit the use of liquor.¹⁵⁶ However, when she speaks of voting for "virtue" she seems to render herself a bit vague to some. A considerable number of people may puzzle over what she really meant by "virtue"! Could virtue possibly mean some of the "noble" promises and intentions which politicians pledge to do for the voters once they are voted into power? Religious liberty may be one of these promises. Therefore, if christians see a political contestant who espouses christian ideals, should they vote for him? Is it proper to cast one's vote for a politician who is empathetic with the welfare of the christians?

¹⁵⁵Ellen G. White, "Voting Against the Licence Law" The Adventist review and Sabbath Herald. October 1914: p. 4.

¹⁵⁶Ellen G. White, Temperance. Mountain View Pacific Publishing Association, 1949, pp. 253, 254. Henceforth referred to as White, Temperance.

This notwithstanding, it is important to note that Ellen G. White maintains that, "We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for."¹⁵⁷ Inability to read man's motives seems to warrant much caution in voting for political parties.

1.4.2.1 Ellen G. White and the General Conference resolution on voting

The political climate prevalent in America in the 1860s should have evoked some comments on voting from Ellen G. White. James White, the husband of Ellen G. White, hints that some Seventh-day Adventists actually voted Abraham Lincoln into power in 1860 but their church did not censure them for voting.¹⁵⁸ Since Ellen G. White played an advisory role as a prophetess to the Seventh-day church leadership, one would have hoped to hear her opinion on the resolution the General Conference¹⁵⁹ session took in 1865 on voting. Discomfort with the resolution should have moved Ellen G. White to oppose the

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 391.

¹⁵⁸White, A.L., "Seventh-day Adventists and voting". p. 5.

¹⁵⁹The Seventh-day Adventist church's organizational structure is as follows; a number of congregations (churches) form what is known as a Field, and a number of Fields form a Union, and a number of Unions form a Division and a number of Divisions form the General Conference. It is at the General Conference session that decisions that affect the Seventh-day Adventist work worldwide are made. In other words, the General Conference session is the highest decision-making body in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

resolution. The general conference adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that in our judgement, the act of voting when exercised in behalf of justice, humanity and right, it is itself blameless, and may be at some times highly proper; but the casting of any vote that shall strengthen the cause of such crimes as intemperance, insurrection, and slavery, we regard as highly criminal in the sight of heaven. But we would depreciate any participation in the spirit of party strife.¹⁶⁰

The implications emanating from Ellen G. White's not opposing the General Conference resolution are far-reaching. Among other things, it suggests that Ellen G. White was in consonance with the resolution. Her silence seems to justify voting "on behalf of justice, humanity and right". If the General Conference resolution accurately reflects Ellen G. White's stance on voting, then there is a problem. How does one reconcile her "anti-voting" statements with her stance which is mirrored in the General Conference resolutions?

A careful study of Ellen G. White, taking into account the varied contexts within which she wrote her counsels, brings one to a conviction that voting for a political party though done in a very private and personal capacity, is less desirable than not voting at all. This stance implicit in Ellen G. White, finds an explicit expression in F.M. Wilcox, a key representative of the Seventh-day church. He notes:

¹⁶⁰White, A.L, "Seventh-day Adventists and voting". p. 5.

...the Seventh-day Adventist church does not seek to dictate to its members as to how they shall vote at all. It is left for each one to act on his own judgment in the fear of God. We have been told by the servant of the Lord (Ellen G. White) that we should not link up with political parties, that we should not agitate political questions in our schools or institutions. On the other hand, we have been instructed by the same authority that when certain moral issues, such as prohibition, are involved, the advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example... by voice and pen and vote ... in favour of total abstinence. This instruction is not mandatory, it is still left for each one to determine for himself what he shall do. While an individual member of the church has a right, if he so likes, to cast his vote, the church as such should hold itself entirely aloof from politics. It is one thing for the individual members of the church to vote, and another thing for these same individuals in their church capacities to endeavour to influence political measures.¹⁶¹ [emphasis mine]

The issue this quotation raises is that of drawing a line between the church and the individual church member. Individual members are what constitutes a church. Put differently, to speak of a church is to speak of its members. If a member of a church has bad reputation the name of the church to which he/she belongs is tarnished. The opposite is also true. The church is praised if its members behave well. While it is true that there is such a thing as an official position of the church, even in matters like voting, the individual church members may endanger their church by the way they vote.

¹⁶¹Francis Mehellan Wilcox, "The Church and Politics" Review and Herald. Vol. 105 September 1929: p. 1.

1.4.3 The clergy and party politics

Ellen G. White points out that "Ministers should keep free from "politics".¹⁶² They "should not meddle with politics".¹⁶³ Repeating the same thing in different words she says that ministers "should not speak on politics".¹⁶⁴

The major reason why Ellen G. White dissuades ministers of the gospel from engagement in politics, among other reasons, is the preservation of unity within the church.¹⁶⁵ This argument on the part of Ellen G. White is understandable since most churches are composed of people with varying political preferences. Unity may, obviously, be sacrificed if the political biases of a minister within a congregation are overt. Put differently, the minister may consciously or unconsciously polarize the members of his congregation against one another and find it difficult to forge unity within his parish.

Ellen G. White recommends uncompromising disciplinary measures against ministers who engage in politics. Such ministers should be relieved of their duties. Since ministers are paid from tithes and offerings, she argues that no one should continue to be paid from tithe money while

¹⁶²White, Testimonies. Vo. 7. p. 252.

¹⁶³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. pp. 332, 333.

¹⁶⁴White, Fundamentals of Christian Education pp. 478.

¹⁶⁵White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

"speechifying on politics".¹⁶⁶ Such a minister, she points out, "dishonours God"¹⁶⁷ for he "mixes common fire with sacred fire".¹⁶⁸ Put differently, Ellen G. White draws a clear line between the clergy and politics.

Again, Ellen G. White warns church leaders not to enter into partnership with the world with the intention of securing means for propagation the gospel.¹⁶⁹ When the church, through its leadership, enters into partnership with the world it places itself in a precarious predicament. Sometimes the church may overtly declare separation from the state, while it covertly seek favours from politicians. Where such a situation obtains, the church risks its purity and high standards.

The time context in which Ellen G. White gave her counsels to Seventh-day ministers, was that of the 1890's. This was a time when there was much excitement about politics in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Remarking on this she says:

I was surprised, as I saw men who claim to believe the truth for this time, all excited in regard to matters ... which relate to the Lord Jesus and eternal interests? No; but they seemed to be wonderfully excited in regard to the currency. Some ministers were

¹⁶⁶White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. p. 477.

¹⁶⁷White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 337.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹White, Prophets and Kings. pp. 52-54.

distinguishing themselves by weaving these subjects into their discourses. They were excitable involving themselves, taking sides in regard to these questions, that the Lord did not lay upon them the burden to engage in.¹⁷⁰

1.5 Summary

The foregoing study throws some significant light on Ellen G. White's position on the issue of christians and involvement in politics. When politics is viewed from its broad perspective, one can safely say that Ellen G. White was for christians involvement in politics. However, Ellen G. White's stance on the manner and degree of christians' participation in the broad sense of politics is regulated by her basic theological focus, that is, the doctrine of the sanctuary. Put differently, the extent to which christians may engage in the economic, social, cultural or political concerns of their respective societies should be governed by the consciousness of the ongoing ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

In addition, the fact that the sanctuary doctrine defines and conditions the mode of participation christians should have in politics, illuminates further Ellen G. White's posture on politics. It shows that any kind of engagement that christians may have in politics should enhance rather than frustrate the christian's focus on the decisive priestly

¹⁷⁰White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 332.

ministry by Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Secondly, it calls for a cautious engagement in politics since the all-absorbing tendency of politics may likely eclipse a steady focus on the sanctuary doctrine.

It appears, therefore, that according to Ellen G. White, participation in politics in its broad sense cannot be for every christian. She seems to suggest that it should be left to those christians who are spiritually mature. Only those individuals who have the perspicacity to discriminate substance from trivia may engage in politics. These christians who possess tact in word and deed can, "balanced by principle", aspire to any height in political involvement.

On the contrary, Ellen G. White opposes christians involvement in "party politics". She shows that neither the clergy nor the parishioner is safe to engage in party politics. Apart from jeopardizing the christians' spirituality, participation in politics in the narrow sense divides the church constituency. On the issue of voting, although she generally is against voting for political parties, Ellen G. White does not totally prohibit christians from voting in favour of issues such as "temperance".

CHAPTER 2

GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ ON CHRISTIANS AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

2.1 A historical background of Gustavo Gutierrez

Gustavo Gutierrez was born on the 8th of June 1928.¹ A native of Lima, Peru, Gutierrez grew up in a caring family although his family was poor. His father was a "poor urban worker" and his mother had no formal education at all.² In his childhood, Gutierrez suffered from osteomyelitis (a bone infection). This illness kept him bed-ridden for a number of years, and "left him lame".³

Rising above his physical handicap, Gutierrez distinguished himself as a brilliant scholar. Gutierrez holds a licentiate in psychology from the University of Louvain and a doctorate in theology from the Catholic Institute of Lyons.⁴ After successfully defending his dissertation based on nine

¹Atilio Rene' Dupertuis, Liberation Theology: A Study in its Soteriology. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1982, p. 17. Henceforth referred to as Dupertuis, Liberation Theology.

²Curt Cadorette, From the Heart of the People, Oak Park: Meyer Stone Books, 1988, p. 2. Henceforth referred to as Cadorette, From the Heart of the People.

³Ibid.

⁴Claude Geffre and Gustavo Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith, New York: Herder and Herder, 1974, p.159. Henceforth referred to as Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith.

of his published books and a number of articles, Gutierrez was awarded the degree of Doctor of theology, summa cum laude, "the highest qualification possible and one that is given only when the jurors are in unanimous agreement".⁵ In May 1979 Gustavo Gutierrez received an honorary doctorate in theology and social sciences from the Catholic University of Nijmegen (Netherlands).⁶

Gutierrez refused to use his educational qualifications to enhance his economic status. His contact with two of his compatriots, namely, Jose Maria Arguedas and Jose Carlos Mariategui influenced him to take an interest in the plight of the poor and oppressed.⁷ Consequently, he dedicated himself to live and work among the poor in Rimac, a slum in Lima.⁸ Gutierrez was ordained to priesthood in the Roman Catholic church in 1959.⁹

Gutierrez has made a remarkable contribution in the area of theology. Some regard him as "the creator of liberation

⁵Gustavo Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free., Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990, p. 2. Henceforth referred to as Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free.

⁶Victorio Araya, God of the Poor, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987, p. 155. Henceforth referred to as Araya, God of the Poor.

⁷Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 67.

⁸Gustavo Gutierrez, On Job, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985, p. 139 (Back Cover). Henceforth referred to as Gutierrez, On Job.

⁹Ibid.

theology",¹⁰ while others call him "the pioneer of liberation theology in Latin America".¹¹ Robert McAfee Brown assigns to him the status of "an authority in liberation theology".¹² Manzanera sees Gustavo Gutierrez as the "best known, most representative, and most influential of the liberation theologians".¹³ Araya points out also that "His (Gutierrez's) name has been linked with the theology of liberation from its inception; he is the 'dean' of liberation theologians"¹⁴ Furthermore, Edward Schillebeeckx, a renowned European theologian sees Gutierrez as "the first person in modern history to reactivate the great themes of christian theology from a point of departure in the basic option for the poor".¹⁵

Currently, Gutierrez serves as the National adviser to the National Union of Catholic Students (UNEC) in Peru. He is also a professor in both the theology and social sciences departments of the University of Lima. Gutierrez is also consulting editor of Concillium and an active member of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).¹⁶

¹⁰Gustavo Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History, New York: Orbis Books, 1983, p. vii. Henceforth referred to as Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. viii.

¹³Araya, God of the Poor. p. 3.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 155.

He has published numerous scholarly books and articles on the theology of liberation.¹⁷

2.2 A theology from below: Gustavo Gutierrez's basic theological orientation

Gustavo Gutierrez basically approaches theology "from below".¹⁸ His theological method can be seen as one from below because of what it asserts. It holds that there is an "irruption of the poor in history".¹⁹ The downtrodden, marginalized, and oppressed are emerging from oblivion, as it were. Those that are regarded as nonpersons: "the poor, the exploited, those systematically and lawfully stripped of their human status, those who hardly know-what a human being is",²⁰ are forcing their presence in history. Gustavo's mode of theologizing, therefore, is a deliberate attempt to critically

¹⁷See Curt Cadorrette, From the Heart of the People. pp. 130-133. He gives at least forty three (43) books and articles that Gutierrez has published. Some of his writings have not been translated from Spanish into English as yet.

¹⁸Gutierrez approaches theology from below, because his theological methodology has the poor as its starting point. The use of the historical context of the poor and oppressed as a place to begin theological reflection makes Gutierrez's theological approach a distinctive contribution to christian theology.

¹⁹Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 7.

²⁰Ibid., p. 7.

reflect on God's word "from the underside of history".²¹

Affirming Gutierrez's theological method, Araya says that:

It is not so much that Gutierrez adds a new subject or a new chapter to the old theology, but that he introduces a new manner of doing theology: he does theology 'from the underside of history'.²²

In a trenchant manner, Gutierrez outlines his theological approach when he says:

Our only task is to live saturated with the christian message pure and simple, but in a determinate context- the context of a poor, politically and economically oppressed people. We seek to read the Bible and the whole tradition of Christian experience with the eyes of an enslaved population that has been deliberately kept in poverty for centuries.²³

In other words, in Gutierrez's theological approach there is a shift. Whereas modern theology generally has as its starting point the unbelieving mind,²⁴ Gutierrez's Latin American theology of liberation starts from a different point. In Gutierrez's theology, the poor provide a starting point.²⁵ The question that is asked in this theology is not: "How are

²¹Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. viii.

²²Araya, God of the Poor in History. p. 4.

²³Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. pp. 90-91.

²⁴Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 7.

²⁵Ibid. See also Araya, 1987, 21. He explains that "liberation theology is not a theology of the poor (as a new theme), or a theology for the poor (as addressed paternalistically to the poor), but a theology set in motion from a point of departure in the poor, the poor as interlocutors, as historical subject. See, Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. pp. 93-94.

we to talk of God in a world come of age? But how are we to proclaim God as Father in a nonhuman world"?²⁶

Gutierrez believes that there are two distinct "acts" that pertain to the theology of liberation, with particular reference to the Latin American scene.²⁷ He speaks of the "first act" in which the focus is on the individual striving to live a christian life. During this time there is a concerted effort to understand and to do God's will. Studying the Bible and fervent prayer characterize this important step. Then as divine will unfolds, the individual moves towards a commitment to and solidarity with the poor. This state of commitment and solidarity with the poor is a product of "silence before God". Elaborating on this Gutierrez notes: "Contemplation and commitment combine to form what may be called the phase of silence before God. Theological discourse, on the other hand, is speaking about God".²⁸

Furthermore, during the first "act" there are two principles that should be affirmed. The individual should, firstly, recognize Jesus Christ as "the great hermeneutical principle of faith".²⁹ One should accept and believe that Christ is "the revealer of the Father; in him all things have

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 103.

²⁸Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 3.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 3-4.

been created and redeemed (see Col. 1:15-20). The second principle to affirm is that the incarnation of the Son of God is the basis of the hermeneutical circle. Impressively Gutierrez traces the hermeneutical circle to move:

from human being to God and from God to human being, from history to faith and from faith to history, from human words to the word of the Lord and from the word of the Lord to human words, from love to our brothers and sisters to love of the father and from love of the father to love our brothers and sisters, from human justice to holiness of God to human justice. Christ, the Word of the Father, is the center of all theology, of all talk about God.³⁰ [emphasis mine]

Gutierrez sees the process of theological reflection to be the "second act". When Gutierrez discusses the "second act" he also gives a definition of theology. He notes that theology is "a critical reflection in the light of the divine word received in faith, on the presence of christians in the world".³¹ A critical reflection on the word of God brings forth perspectives that have been stifled throughout history. There is a painful realization that the Bible has been co-opted by the ruling class.³² This has led to a theology which bless or tolerate the oppression of Latin Americans by the

³⁰Ibid., p. 4.

³¹Ibid.

³²Simon S Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide THB302-Y, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1986, pp. 166-168. Henceforth referred to as Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide THB302-Y.

West.³³ There is also an awareness that the Bible should and can be re-read³⁴ from the vantage point of the poor. The fact of the incarnation³⁵ of Jesus Christ, his earthly ministry among the poor, and as a poor man lend dignity to the dehumanized whose dignity has been corroded by oppression.

Therefore, a critical reading and interpretation of the word of God "is unwilling to settle for being only a posteriori justification of what christians do".³⁶ The theology that emanates from such a reflection aids the church in its evangelistic endeavors because it contextualizes the word of God. In the "second act", theology cannot be

³³Ibid.

³⁴The Bible is always read and reread in the Christian community in light of the challenges its evangelizing work must meet at the particular historical moment. John Paul II said, in this regard: "The church has since its beginning continually mediated on these texts and messages, but it is conscious that it has still not plumbed them as it wants to (will it perhaps some day reach this goal?). In differing concrete situations it re-reads these texts and scrutinizes this message because it desires to make a new application of them". Homily at Salvador, Bahia, July 7, 1980, in Pronunciamentos do Papa no Brasil [Sao Paulo: Loyola, 1980]: 192). This is the meaning of the term "re-reading" that is often used in biblical studies, whence it was taken over by liberation theology.

³⁵Araya, God of the Poor. p. 167. He quotes; (L. Boff, Encarnacion, 11) who reflects the depth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ saying: The humanity of God did not remain closed up in indecipherable mystery, but emerged from inaccessible light and entered human darkness. God did not remain in everlasting almightiness, but penetrated the fragility of creation. God did not draw humanity godward, but designed to draw to the heart of humanity. God willed to come to what was different from the divine; God willed to become what, in all eternity God had not been.

³⁶Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 4.

"imported" or "exported" without consulting the context within which the target group exists.

Gutierrez's theology from below negates any kind of "reductionism"³⁷ It rejects on the one hand a "disincarnate spiritualism that emphasizes the religious side of a people without attending to the material conditions in which they live".³⁸ On the other hand, it opposes a "political activity that sets aside until later the requirements and possibilities of the christian faith, on the grounds that economic and social problems are more urgent."³⁹

A major characteristic of Gutierrez's theologizing is his recourse to the social sciences. Gutierrez uses certain elements of Marxist analysis. This, however, does not make him a Marxist. His "appeal to the sciences in the theology of liberation has for its primary purpose to promote a better understanding of the social reality of the Latin American people".⁴⁰ Furthermore, Gutierrez explains the relationship of the social sciences to his theological method. He says:

The presence of the social sciences in theology at the point when it is important to have a deeper understanding of the concrete world of human beings does not imply undue submission of theological reflection to something outside it. Theology must take into account the contribution of the social

³⁷Ibid., p. 9.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 12.

sciences but in its work it must always appeal to its own sources.⁴¹

Marx's analysis of society reveal to the Latin Americans that society can be changed. The poor and oppressed can and must be artisans of their own destiny.⁴² Since societal structures are man made, they should not be seen as fixed and unchangeable. The plight of the poor, therefore, can be reversed.⁴³

Gutierrez thus argues that since the situation of poverty is "social reality... the situation (of poverty) and its causes must be analyzed by means of the social sciences".⁴⁴ An examination of the causes of poverty is not motivated by sheer curiosity. Instead, it stems from the desire that christians in Latin America have. These christians wish to preach the gospel in such a way that it becomes relevant to the poor. Of necessity, then, is a reflective study of social classes. It is in the context of trying to understand society better that Marxist analysis of society is consulted together with other social theories which relate to society.⁴⁵ Gutierrez agrees

⁴¹Ibid., p. 67. See also Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 60.

⁴²Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973, p. 29-30. Henceforth referred to as Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation.

⁴³Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁴Gutierrez, The Turth Shall Make You Free. p. 37.

⁴⁵Ibid.

that while he makes use of Marxist analysis in his methodology, he however, notes that:

...we (Liberation theologians) do not attempt or claim, to make an exclusive and complete use of Marxists analysis in liberation theology; much less do we attempt a kind of synthesis of faith and Marxist analysis. Furthermore, it seems to me for many reasons such an attempt is meaningless. It goes without saying that the Marxist philosophy of the human person and of atheism has never played a part in liberation theology. On this point, my position is clear and emphatic.⁴⁶

2.3 Gustavo Gutierrez on the "broad" concept of politics

A careful analysis of the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez indicate that he sees christians' participation in the "broad" aspect of politics as both inevitable and imperative. A close examination of the reasons that account for Gutierrez's position on christians and involvement in the broad dimension of politics reveal several key points.

A major point to note is that Gutierrez is acutely aware of the indispensable role the church in Latin America can play in effecting liberation.⁴⁷ It would be unfortunate for the church to stand by and watch the poor and oppressed suffer.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimensions of the christian Faith. p. 71.

The church should act as a source of hope to the downtrodden.⁴⁸ The poor live in a social environment which has been economically, politically and ideologically conditioned to favour a minority at the expense of the majority.⁴⁹ Christians can aid the liberation process because they are custodian of the Gospel.⁵⁰ As such, they should proclaim the Gospel in its fullness, thereby unleashing its power to save completely. The Gospel should effect total human salvation. This salvation which the Gospel offers is comprehensive because it brings healing to the spiritual social, political aspects of human life.⁵¹ Gutierrez understands the Gospel to be "the good news of the Father's love for all men. To evangelize is to witness to that love and say it is revealed to us and made flesh in Christ".⁵²

Gutierrez calls on the contemporary church in Latin America to be a faithful steward of the Gospel because history shows that the christian church has not always been faithful

⁴⁸Gustavo Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis books, 1984, p. 124. Henceforth referred to as Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells.

⁴⁹Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 7.

⁵⁰Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 74.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 78.

⁵²Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the christian Faith. p. 57.

in this regard.⁵³ In the hands of selfish individuals, the Gospel has been co-opted to support the interests of the ruling class. Consequently, the ruling classes find justification for oppressing the lower classes from the Bible.⁵⁴ Gutierrez feels that this "high-jacking" of the Gospel has gone on for too long.⁵⁵ It seems that the more the Gospel has been misused, the more seared have become the consciences of those who misinterpret it. No wonder, one finds in the "most christian countries", like the United States of America, deeply ingrained racism.⁵⁶ It is unthinkable to suppose that traditional christian theology will retrace its steps towards conversion. It will not easily confess its co-optation of the Gospel.

However, Gutierrez is convinced that christians, particularly in Latin America, cannot ignore the irruption of the poor in history.⁵⁷ The poor and oppressed have been silenced for too long. They want to be heard. Any intermediary will not do because that may reduce the force of

⁵³Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide THB302-Y., p. 172.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 8.

⁵⁶Charles H Bayer, A Guide to Liberation Theology, St. Louis: CBP Press, 1986, p. 17.

⁵⁷Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 8.

their demands. Therefore, the underprivileged want to articulate their deep longings on their own.⁵⁸

This insatiable desire to gain visibility in history arises from several discoveries that the poor and oppressed are making. One key discovery is that the Gospel identifies with the poor and oppressed. A re-reading of the Bible reveals that the Trinity, that is, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are on the side of the poor. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is a clear demonstration of his identification with the poor.⁵⁹ Christ was born among the poor and oppressed. Jesus Christ did not choose to be born in a palace. Instead he chose to be born in a manger. Jesus grew up among the poor. He worked and toiled like any poor person of his day.⁶⁰ Enunciating his mission, Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 saying:

The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.⁶¹

As the poor who also happen to be Christian in Latin America realize that God is on their side, they become

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 192.

⁶⁰Simon S, Maimela "Bishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu: A revolutionary Political Priest or man of Peace?" p. 5.

⁶¹Luke 4:18 (New International Version).

convinced that God does not will their oppression.⁶² Therefore, as the poor engage in the removal of social structures that dehumanize them, they are assured that God is with them.⁶³ When God and the poor move and work together to end dehumanization, the church cannot afford to lag behind. Gutierrez points out that the church should forge solidarity with the poor and oppressed in their quest to establish a more humane society marked by equality.⁶⁴ The christians should commit themselves to "the process of liberation with all its political demands".⁶⁵

Gutierrez notes that christians must emulate what Christ did through the incarnation. He writes:

The praxis of liberation must lead one to become poor with the poor. For the christian committed to it, this will be a way of identifying oneself with Christ, who came into the world to proclaim the Gospel to the poor and liberate the oppressed.⁶⁶

Implicitly, Gutierrez suggests that christians ought to "weep with those who weep". For the church to empathize with the poor they should experience the pain of poverty just as did Christ.⁶⁷ This, the christians cannot do while insulated

⁶²Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 8.

⁶³Ibid., p. 133.

⁶⁴Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 67.

⁶⁵Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 64.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 142.

from the pangs of exploitation. Stressing the implications of solidarity and commitment to the poor Gutierrez writes:

Consequently, the witness of poverty lived as an authentic imitation of Christ, instead of separating us from the word, places us at the very heart of the situation of despoilment and oppression, and from there proclaims liberation and full communion with the Lord. spiritual poverty is proclaimed and lived as a way of being totally at God's disposal, as a spiritual childhood.⁶⁸

The church that is committed to the poor should be open to change.⁶⁹ In substantiating this assertion, Gutierrez points out two things the church must do. Firstly, the church should preach the Gospel decrying the injustices so that a more egalitarian society is established.⁷⁰ Secondly, the church should be willing to experiment "beyond all institutional rigidity".⁷¹ Gutierrez notes that christians should continually try to find ways of expressing a relevant presence among the poor. Emphasizing this point Gutierrez perceptively remarks:

There must be critical awareness of the social and cultural categories which imprison our way of living and proclaiming the Gospel, and make it alien to the world of dominated peoples, marginated

⁶⁸Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 64

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 76.

racess, exploited classes; and even contrary to their profound aspirations towards liberation.⁷²

Concretely, Gutierrez argues that it is a mistake to think that the Gospel has no political dimension.⁷³ The Gospel is not a segment of politics. Rather politics is an inseparable component of the Gospel. Therefore, a proclamation of the Gospel from the privileged position of the poor includes the political dimension. Commenting on the political aspect of the Gospel Gutierrez says:

"Moreover, the political dimension is accepted frankly and openly. Its precise extent has still to be defined, and any simplistic view of it must be avoided, but no claim to be outside politics can obscure an evident reality or weaken a conviction that is growing firmer all the time ... The proclamation of a God who loves all men equally must be given substance in history and must become history... That is why we said that the political dimension is inside the dynamism of a word which seeks to become incarnate in history."⁷⁴ [emphasis mine]

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 72.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 72-73. See also Arthur F Mc Govern, Marxism: An American Perspective, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1980, 188-97. He says: Liberation theology is frequently charged with reducing faith to politics, one-sidedly stressing politics and human activity in the Bible, and using theology to justify pre-established political positions. These charges are shown to derive largely from misunderstanding of critics who display their own reactionary position or from revolutionary groups who employ the rhetoric of liberation theology in a simplistic way. The central claims of liberation theology, which understand liberation as a broad process inclusive of but not exhausted by politics, are consistent both with the bible and the role of critical faith in the present oppressive situation in Latin America. [emphasis mine]

Furthermore, Gutierrez sees politics and the commitment by christians to liberate the poor as inseparable. As christians commit themselves to the poor they realize that politics cannot be regarded as peripheral but central to human existence.⁷⁵

Moreover, Gutierrez is convinced that "christians become politically involved because they have a responsibility to history. If their faith does not prod them to struggle for

⁷⁵Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells. p. 2. See: Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. pp. 46-47. Since the issue of politics perplex many christians - I believe that Gutierrez's comments can help to clear the confusion. I will therefore cite the comments, although it is a bit long.

For a longtime, the area of the political seemed an area apart, a sector of human existence substituting alongside of, but distinct from ones' family, professional, and recreational life. Political activity was something to be engaged in during the time left over from other occupations. Furthermore, it was thought, politics belonged to a particular sector of society specially called to this responsibility. But today, those who have made the option for commitment to liberation look upon the political as a dimension that embraces, and demandingly conditions, the entirety of human endeavours. Politics is the global condition, and the collective field of human accomplishment. Only from a standpoint of the perception of the Global character of politics, in a revolutionary perspective, can one adequately understand the legitimate narrower meaning of the term - orientation to political power. All human reality, then, has a political dimension. To speak in this way not only does not exclude, but positively implies, the multidimensionality of the human being. But this conception rejects all socially sterile sectarianism that diverts our attention from the concrete conditions in which human existence unfolds for it is within the context of the political that the human being rises up as a free and responsible being, as a truly human being, having a relationship with nature and with other human beings, as someone who takes up the reins of his or her destiny, and goes out and transforms history.

their oppressed sisters and brothers their faith is a useless abstraction".⁷⁶ Therefore, according to Gutierrez, one cannot be a responsible christian without taking an interest in human equality. For this reason, Gutierrez states that "the political activity of the christian community flows naturally from what it means to be church in an oppressive society".⁷⁷ Closely imitating Jesus christ, "the christian community incarnates a life-giving symbol, not outside history but within it".⁷⁸ Gutierrez argues that "the church should reflect Christ's ideals for it is a 'sacrament of history' just as Christ was".⁷⁹ Along this same line of reasoning Gutierrez regards the church as "the reflectively 'Christified' part of humanity which is moving toward the future promised by the Lord".⁸⁰ No wonder, in Gutierrez's view, "the church's primary role is to act as an ethical guide".⁸¹ As such, "it points at society's failings and calls for redoubled efforts to create a more liberated world...."⁸² The very fact that Gutierrez sees the church as an "ethical

⁷⁶Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 124.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 125.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 116.

⁷⁹Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 268.

⁸⁰Gutierrez, "Notes for a theology of Liberation", Theological Studies 31, 1970. p. 259.

⁸¹Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 125.

⁸²Ibid.

guide", gives the church a unique status because the church has a "prophetic mission".⁸³ This understanding of the church and its primary role, saves christians from conceptual blind alleys because the church cannot be totally submerged in politics.

There is a fine line that should be drawn between politics and the reign of God. Although the two are related, they are not synonymous. Gutierrez notes:

The reign of God stands above us. It judges our political action. We must keep in mind the relativity of politics and the absoluteness of God's coming reign. A clear distinction between these two saves us from "politico religious messianism" or "two-kingdom" type of split between political action and faith".⁸⁴

Gutierrez is also aware that liberation theology can be mistaken for (to use the words of Maimela) "political activism".⁸⁵ Cognizant of this possibility, Gutierrez tries to explain the distinction between politics and liberation theology. He notes:

It is not the function of liberation theology 'to offer strategic solutions or specifically political alternatives...In my opinion, the theology of revolution' set out on that path, but it seems to me that it was not a theologically sound course to follow; in addition, it ended up baptizing 'revolution - that is, it did not acknowledge the autonomy proper to the political sphere'.⁸⁶

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Simon S. Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide 407-X. p. 89.

⁸⁶Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 65.

Again, Gutierrez highlights the difference between the Gospel and politics. He says that "It is not possible, however, to deduce political programs or actions from the gospel or from reflection on the gospel. It is not possible, nor should we attempt it; the political sphere is something entirely different".⁸⁷ Gutierrez points out that "The theology of liberation seeks to provide a language for talking about God".⁸⁸ As such, this theology:

must be aware that the problem is not solved solely by economic social and political structures... A sociologist will never come to see that sin - the breaking of the relationship with God and therefore with others as well - is the very heart of any unjust situation.⁸⁹

It is clear that Gutierrez sees Christians' participation in politics in its broad perspective as both inevitable and imperative because the gospel which Christians are commissioned to preach has a political component.⁹⁰ To faithfully re-read the gospel from the point of view of the poor inevitably makes one to be engaged in the broad concept of politics because God is on the side of the poor. Therefore, an assurance that God is on their (Christians) side comes when they take their stand with the poor. Taking a

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 64.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 81.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 72.

stand with the poor and oppressed means that christians will seek to remove any form of oppression in order to establish a just society. But the removal of oppressive societal structures does not rule out political means.⁹¹

2.3.1 The clergy and politics

Gutierrez believes that there is a growing awareness among the clergy of the pivotal role they should play in the liberation process of the poor.⁹² To a great extent, the two historic conferences held in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) helped the bishops to map out ways of ministering effectively in situations of poverty. The Medellin conference grappled with issues of "Peace, Institutional violence, Latin American economic dependency and commitment to the cause of the oppressed".⁹³ Ten years latter, the Puebla convention of bishops pledged "a preferential option for the poor", as a goal toward which the church was to work in the subsequent decade.⁹⁴

In Latin America the bishops find pledging commitment to the poor to be the most logical thing to do for several reasons. Gutierrez sees the act of commitment to the poor to

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 120.

⁹³Ibid., p. ix.

⁹⁴Ibid.

emanates from an acceptance of the situation of poverty, as a starting point of doing theology.⁹⁵ Gutierrez argues that an authentic theological reflection should be rooted in "praxis".⁹⁶ With regard to the Latin American context, the poor should be the interlocutor and not the unbeliever.⁹⁷ In addition, Gutierrez points out that bishops are reading the Bible from the vantage point of the poor.⁹⁸ Bishops continue to unearth insights from the Bible which demonstrate that God is on the side of the poor. Even the most familiar gospel themes, such as, the "incarnation", are interpreted in ways that bring the poor into sharp focus.

Gutierrez, further notes that far from preventing the bishops from participating in "politics", the gospel makes it imperative for them to take part in "politics". The same gospel which empowers the bishops to forge solidarity with the poor and oppressed has within itself a political component.⁹⁹ This means that a faithful proclamation of the gospel by the clergy will inevitably offend the oppressors. The true gospel

⁹⁵Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells. p. 96.

⁹⁶Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 70.

⁹⁷Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make you Free. p. 7.

⁹⁸Gutierrez, We Drink From Our Own Wells. p. 123.

⁹⁹Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 72. Here Gutierrez mentions the fact that the gospel has a political component. He, however, confesses that the "precise extent" of the political dimension of the gospel still has to be determined.

will expose the wickedness of the status quo because it will condemn the way society has been structured to enrich a few at the expense of many. The gospel has the prerogative to address every facet of human life. After all, Christ is the Lord of creation. There is no inch of creation which Christ cannot claim as his own.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, when the gospel questions the manner God's creatures are handling or mishandling one another, it should be understood that the gospel is working within its rightful place.

Gutierrez, however, laments the fact that the gospel proclamation is being vitiated. The priests who proclaim the gospel without concealing its "political component", are being victimized. Gutierrez notes:

Frequently in Latin America today certain priests are considered 'subversive'. Many are under surveillance or are being sought by the police. Others are in prison, have been expelled from their countries (Brazil, bolivia, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, are significant examples) or have been murdered by terrorist anti-communist groups.¹⁰¹

The bishops in Latin America are resilient in spite of aggressive efforts to thwart and curb their drive to establish egalitarian societies. In Colombia, for example, a team of priests has categorically declared their position saying:

We forthrightly denounce neo-colonial capitalism, since it is incapable of solving the acute problems that confront our people. We are led to

¹⁰⁰John 1:3

¹⁰¹Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 106.

direct our efforts and actions toward the building of a socialist type of society that would allow us to eliminate all forms of man's exploitation of his fellowman, and that fits in with historical tendencies of our time and the distinctive character of Colombians.¹⁰²

Gutierrez has no sympathy for any clergy who cannot take a stand in political issues. He rejects as unfaithfulness to the proclamation of the gospel when bishops regard "politics as none of their business". He notes, "Any claim to noninvolvement in politics... is nothing but a subterfuge to keep things as they are. The mission of the church cannot be defined in the abstract".¹⁰³ Indeed, the Puebla Document stressed the need for bishops to engage in the "broad" aspect of politics by affirming that:

Far from despising political activity, the christian faith values it and holds it in high esteem... The need for the church's presence in the political arena flows from the very core of the christian faith.... Politics, 'in the broad sense', of seeking 'the common good on both the national and international plane'.... Its task is to spell out the fundamental values of every community... reconciling equality with freedom, public authority and participation of individual persons and groups... [Politics] is a way of paying worship to the one and only God.¹⁰⁴

It is clear, therefore, that Gutierrez believes that the clergy must participate in "politics" as seen from its broad perspective. Gutierrez, however, stresses the need for the

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁰⁴Bayer, A Guide to Liberation Theology. p. 89.

clergy to have a clear sense of direction as they engage in "politics". The clergy should be grounded in the historical praxis of liberation theology. They should always bear in mind that the truth about God comes from their critical reflection on God's Word within the context of the poor. Gutierrez explains this point by saying, "The theological discourse becomes truth (is verified) in its real, fecund insertion in the process of liberation."¹⁰⁵ Put differently, the clergy should maintain a continuous cyclical interchange between praxis and theory. Their praxis should inform theory as theory is enriched by praxis. What the clergy know about God should be critically applied to the situation of poverty in which they minister. In return, the experiential implementation (praxis) of what they know about God (theory) should further extend their knowledge about God.

Failure on the part of the clergy to be guided by "the historical of liberation" praxis may lead to some problems in their engagement in "politics". For this reason, Gutierrez insists that a line should be drawn between "the theology of liberation and what he calls 'theology of revolution'".¹⁰⁶ When the clergy lose sight of the historical praxis, their liberation theology runs the risk of being reduced to

¹⁰⁵Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 70.

¹⁰⁶Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. xiii.

"sociology, or politics or economics".¹⁰⁷ The clergy, therefore, need to show some maturity in their proclamation of a politically charged gospel so that they do not function as politicians per se. Gutierrez notes:

Only an appreciable degree of political maturity will enable us to get a real grasp of the political dimension of the gospel and keep us from reducing it into a system of social service, however, sophisticated, or to a simple task of 'human advocacy'. Such maturity will likewise enable us to avoid reducing the task of evangelization to some form of political activity, which has laws and exigencies of its own.¹⁰⁸

Speaking as one of the clergy in Latin America, Gutierrez says; "Only in aggressive, efficacious participation in the concrete historical process of liberation shall we be able to put our finger on the basic alienation present in all partial alienation."¹⁰⁹ Gutierrez, therefore, believes that the clergy who are faithful to God's word (gospel) and responsive to the poor, should participate in politics.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 63.

2.3.2. Christians and Social responsibility

One of the most concrete results of oppression is poverty.¹¹⁰ It is the situation of poverty which makes the poor in Latin America to ask questions of God's Fatherhood and justice.¹¹¹ The theology of liberation is a product of reflecting on God's word in the light of poverty and oppression. As noted earlier, Desmond Tutu is convinced that most people get involved in politics because they want to rise above poverty.¹¹² It is, therefore, important to understand how Gutierrez regards poverty in order to appreciate his methods of dealing with it. Responsible Christians, therefore, should effectively deal with the problem of poverty.

Gutierrez is aware of the ambiguity in the meaning of the word "poverty".¹¹³ He is cognizant of material poverty as

¹¹⁰Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 291. See; Araya God of the Poor. p. 13. He points out that Liberation Theology cannot be understood without an understanding of something previous and anterior to it: the awareness of the extreme poverty damning millions of our brothers and sisters on the Latin American continent, and the awareness that this poverty is not episodic, but epidemic [L. Boff, "Declaracion," in Cabestrero, Teologos, 70]. Araya, God of the Poor. p. 13. He also quotes Gutierrez who affirms that the situation of poverty is the "backbone" of liberation theology.

¹¹¹Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 7.

¹¹²Tutu, Hope and Suffering, pp. 36,37.

¹¹³Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 288.

well as spiritual poverty.¹¹⁴ He sees the former as a scandalous condition, a situation which because of its dehumanizing nature should be fought from every front.¹¹⁵ The latter, he sees as a spiritual childhood, a posture, where one is perceived as having the "ability to welcome God, an openness to God".¹¹⁶

Gutierrez contends that "poverty is not caused by fate". Rather, it is caused by some unscrupulous individuals bent on oppressing other people.¹¹⁷ Put in another way, Gutierrez sees the sinful man and societal structures as the root cause of poverty. The total spectrum of human existence has a potential for some to fall victim to the crafty and inconsiderate.

God's outlining of a program of dealing with poverty in the Old Testament shows his concern for the poor.¹¹⁸ Gutierrez is convinced that "poverty contradicts the very meaning of mosaic religion"¹¹⁹ and that "exploitation of the Jewish people in Egypt is against the mandate of Genesis

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 289.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 291.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 296.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 292.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 293.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 294.

(1:26; 2:15)" where man was told to "dominate the earth".¹²⁰ Above all, "poverty is an expression of sin, that is a negation of love."¹²¹

Gutierrez is, therefore, not flattered by those who may emphasize spiritual poverty characterized by an attitude of "interior detachment from goods of this world",¹²² without realizing that "its relationship to the use or ownership of economic goods is inescapable." Hence, Gutierrez challenges the church to emulate the example of Jesus saying:

Just as Jesus carried out the work of redemption in poverty and under oppression, so the church is called to follow the same path in communicating to men the fruits of salvation Thus, although the church needs human resources to carry out her mission, she is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim humility and self-sacrifice, even by her own example.¹²³

Therefore, Gutierrez suggests that for the church to empathize with the poor in their poverty, it must be a poor church as well. He underscores his argument by quoting Ricoeur who observes that "you cannot really be with the poor unless you are struggling against poverty."¹²⁴ What Gutierrez is appealing for is that the church should be a sharing

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 295.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid., p. 299.

¹²³Ibid., p. 300.

¹²⁴Ibid.

church, a place where material possessions are equitably distributed among all.¹²⁵

2.4 Gustavo Gutierrez and the "narrow" concept of politics

An analytical study of the works of Gutierrez show that he is opposed to the participation of christians in "party politics." He does not dwell much on this "narrow concept of politics," but the few comments he makes on it indicate his discomfort with the idea of christians engaging in this aspect of politics.

Gutierrez believes that the church has a "prophetic mission".¹²⁶ Hence, it cannot be involved in party politics because this will militate against its mission.¹²⁷ The church should not side with any political organization because "the reign of God points to the inherent inadequacies of all historical instances of liberation."¹²⁸ If the church aligns itself with a given party, it limits its influence over those who may belong to another party. Curt Cadorette perceptively explains this point when he says:

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 301.

¹²⁶Cadorette, From the Heart of the People, p. 123.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 129.

¹²⁸Gutierrez, "Liberation Movements and Theology," in Concilium 93, p. 144.

As a body of believers that both denounces and announces God's coming reign, the christian community does not make what Latin American call a 'party option'... It cannot link itself with any given political organization, be it that which resist the status quo or that which supports it. To do so would be to confuse the relative with the absolute and jeopardize the church's credibility as a symbol of God's coming reign. At the same time the christian community cannot be politically neutral, for that would be to act irresponsibly. If it countenances oppression, it contradicts its evangelical purpose. Thus the church, in a manner of speaking, is 'above' but not 'out' of politics. In Hegelian terms, it is in dialectical tension with the political sphere.¹²⁹ [emphasis mine]

However, Gutierrez observes that there are christians who belong to political parties in Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay, for example.¹³⁰ There are even some who resort to engage in armed struggle for the benefit of the oppressed like "Che" Guevara.¹³¹ While it is true that some christians are members of some political parties, Gutierrez does not seem to endorse their course of action as the norm.

The issue of christians and voting is an issue which Gutierrez does not seem to deal with specifically. In fact an extensive investigation in his writings show no direct reference to his position on "voting." The best one can do in order to ascertain his stance on the issue of voting is to evaluate his general trend of thought. Gutierrez is quite

¹²⁹Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. pp. 124-125.

¹³⁰Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 90.

¹³¹Ibid. See also Robert McAfee Brown, Theology in a New Key. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978, p. 51.

emphatic when it comes to the poor being artisans of their destiny.¹³² If the use of a vote by the poor or the christian can help the poor to shape their future so that a more humane society is realized, one would not conceive Gutierrez being opposed to this kind of voting. In other words, voting into power a government which tries to eradicate poverty can be seen as a way in which christians show their commitment to the poor. What Gutierrez rejects is "cosmetic change." If the vote will fail to effect radical change - the kind of change which uproots the causes of poverty and oppression in society, then the vote is useless. One would assume, therefore, that Gutierrez is not against christians voting per se but against the use of the vote as a substitute for more effective ways of bringing about radical change in society.

2.5 Summary

There are key points that can be deduced regarding Gustavo Gutierrez's position on christians and involvement in politics. Firstly, when politics is seen from its broad perspective, Gutierrez shows that participation in "politics" by christians is inevitable. This is so because the nature of the Gospel which christians preach is inclusive of the broad sense of politics. The Gospel has a political component and

¹³²Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p. 36.

as such christians who want to be faithful to the Gospel have to be engaged in "politics".

Secondly, Gutierrez is not in favor of christians participating in the narrow aspect of politics. Gutierrez rejects the idea of christians engagement in party politics. The reason he gives is that if christians become involved in party politics they lose sight of their "prophetic role."

CHAPTER 3

A COMPARISON OF WHITE AND GUTIERREZ ON CHRISTIANS AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

3.1 The historical backgrounds of Ellen G. White and Gustavo Gutierrez compared

There are striking similarities and differences between historical backgrounds of Ellen G. White and Gustavo Gutierrez. One of such similarities is that both experienced ill-health during their childhood. However, the causes and nature of their illnesses were different. For White, it was an accident in which a playmate hit her with a stone on the head. This tragic accident left White unconscious for several days. When she regained consciousness she could not continue with her education.¹ In Gutierrez's case, it was a bone infection which molested him for several years. Even after he recovered, the illness left him with a permanent limp in his leg.²

Another commonality between White and Gutierrez is that they both came from poor families. Gutierrez's father was a "poor urban worker".³ White's father was a hatmaker.⁴ In spite of the poverty which characterized their upbringing,

¹White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. p. 18.

²Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 2.

³Ibid.

⁴Coon, A Gift of Light. p.22.

both White and Gutierrez enjoyed the warmth of caring parents.⁵

Geographically, White and Gutierrez were born in different parts of the world. White, was born in the United States of America in the State of Maine at Gorham.⁶ Gutierrez, on the other hand, was born in Lima, Peru, South America.⁷ A period of about a hundred years stands between their birth dates. White was born on the 26th of November 1827,⁸ and Gutierrez on the 8th of June, 1928.⁹ White died in 1915¹⁰ but Gutierrez is still alive at the time of writing.¹¹ White is of Caucasian descent¹² while Gutierrez is a Mestizo.¹³

⁵See; Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p.2.; See also; White, A.L., Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol.1. p.17.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p.2.

⁸White, A.L., Ellen G. White: The Early Years Vol. 1. p. 17.

⁹Dupertius, Liberation Theology: A Study in its Soteriology. p. 17.

¹⁰Coon, A Gift of Light. p.1.

¹¹Dupertius, Liberation Theology: A Study in its Soteriology. p.17.

¹²David Olson, A Geneological Sketch of the Robert Harmon Family, Andrews University Serminary Term Paper, 1974. pp. 1-30.

¹³Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. xvii.

Furthermore, there is a great disparity between the formal education that White and Gutierrez attained. White received only three and half years of formal education,¹⁴ yet Gutierrez earned a doctorate in theology from the Catholic Institute of Lyons.¹⁵ He also holds a licentiate in psychology from the University of Louvain.¹⁶ Excelling above and beyond the confines of her limited formal education, White utilized every opportunity to educate herself. The fact that she wrote numerous scholarly books and articles is a clear testimony of her hard work in improving herself educationally.¹⁷ On the contrary, the volume of articles and books¹⁸ which Gutierrez has published can be justified by his high educational attainments.

An additional point of contrast is that while Gutierrez is an ordained priest in the Roman Catholic church,¹⁹ White,

¹⁴White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. p.21.

¹⁵Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the christian Faith.p.159.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Coon, A Gift of Light. p.21. He notes that White wrote 25 million words and 100,000 pages of handwritten manuscripts. Her most translated book, STEPS TO CHRIST, is translated into 117 languages. White is the fourth most translated author in history of literature, its most translated woman writer, and the most translated American author of either sex.

¹⁸Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. pp.130-33.

¹⁹Gutierrez, On Job. p.139.

is regarded as "prophetess" in the Seventh-day Adventist church.²⁰ She was not ordained.²¹

Furthermore, White was married.²² Gutierrez as a Roman Catholic priest is unmarried.²³ Married to James White, Ellen White became a mother of four sons. Unfortunately, two of her sons died in childhood.²⁴ Therefore, White and Gutierrez differ in their child rearing experience because one had a family of her own while the other does not.

The fact that both White and Gutierrez are widely travelled is indisputable. White visited Europe, Australia and most parts of the United states of America.²⁵ Gutierrez, also, has been to Europe, Africa, United States of America and most of South America.²⁶ Both have the kind of exposure one gets by coming into contact with other cultures.

²⁰Coon, A Gift of Light. p.27.

²¹During Ellen G. White's day the ordination of women was not an issue as it is nowadays. As a prophetess in the Seventh-day Adventist church she did not require ordination to function.

²² White, Early Writings. p.55.

²³Gutierrez, On Job. p.139.

²⁴Coon, A Gift of Light. p.27.

²⁵Ibid., p. 28.

²⁶Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p.159.

3.2 White and Gutierrez's basic theological orientations

We shall now examine the basic theological focus of White and Gutierrez. The main focus of White's theology, is on the sanctuary doctrine.²⁷ This theological approach influences her stance on politics and her entire theology. White believes that a proper understanding of the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary is imperative for every human being. A clear knowledge of the work of atonement which Christ is performing should, therefore, enable the christian to differentiate between the ephemeral and the eternal realities. According to White, the sanctuary doctrine should prescribe and condition all that a christian does and believes.

The sanctuary doctrine as White sees it, highlights the anti-typical work of atonement which Christ has been engaged in since 1844. Christ is currently in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary where he is interceding on behalf of all of mankind. Meanwhile, those christians who become aware of the crucial ministry of Jesus Christ in the sanctuary in heaven should alert the whole world (every kindred, nation and tongue) of what Jesus is doing. The sanctuary doctrine places the onus on christians to urgently proclaim the need for everyone to be right with God because their cases are passing under review in the heavenly sanctuary.²⁸

²⁷White, Evangelism. p.221. See also; White, Testimonies Vol. 5. p.575.

²⁸White, The Great controversy.pp.613, 614.

Gutierrez's theological approach is different from that of White. His theology has a different starting point. Gutierrez takes the experience of the poor as the starting point for his theology.²⁹ This theological starting point is different from the traditional theological approach which is theocentric. Gutierrez approaches theology from "below" because he asserts that there is an "irruption of the poor in history".³⁰ The poor, downtrodden, marginalized and oppressed are forcing their presence in history. This does not mean that they have been absent from history all along. Rather, the poor have always been part of history but they have been denied a voice to determine their own future and destiny. Gutierrez insists that a critical reflection on the plight of the poor is the most logical place to begin theology because in the act of incarnation, Jesus irrevocably and irreversibly identified himself with the poor.³¹ The Old Testament's record of the Egyptian slavery shows that God sided with the oppressed Israelites. He delivered them from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, thus fighting the oppressor.³²

²⁹Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.7.

³⁰Ibid., p. 9.

³¹Araya, God of the Poor. p.167.

³²Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation. p.295.

Unlike White, Gutierrez argues for a re-reading of the Bible from the vantage point of the poor.³³ He bases his argument on his realization of the fact that the Bible has been coopted by the ruling classes in order to justify their exploitation and oppression of the poor.³⁴ Gutierrez, therefore, does not see how Western theology or traditional theology can accurately represent every person in every land. He argues that history has shown that traditional theology tends to mirror the wishes of those people in the West more than it reflects God himself. James Cone puts it well when he says, "Theology is a subjective speech about God, a speech that tells us far more about the hopes and dreams of certain God-talkers than about the maker of heaven and earth".³⁵ Since theology is "inextricably linked to the goals and aspirations of a particular people",³⁶ a re-reading of the Bible which takes into account the situation of the poor is imperative.

In their theological methods, both White and Gutierrez accept the Bible as God's word. They take it to be the rule of faith and conduct for christians. White assigns her own writings to a subordinate role saying that none should quote

³³Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p.74.

³⁴Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.4.

³⁵James Cone, God of the Oppressed New York: The Seabury Press, Inc., 1975, 41.

³⁶Simon Maimela, Systematic Theology THB302-Y, p.172.

her writings until they are willing to obey the Bible.³⁷ What she means is that her writings should not be made to substitute the Bible because they are intended to provide a commentary of the Bible. Gutierrez, however, insists that the message of the Bible has been distorted by culprits bent on misapplying scripture to sanction their oppressive inclinations.³⁸ Therefore, Gutierrez believes that for the Word of God to truly reflect the true God who is Father and creator of all, the Bible must be unshackled from the fetters of "eisegesis" (misinterpretation).³⁹

Gutierrez's theological method sets great store by historical praxis and as such it seeks to redress the evils in society which negate the Fatherhood of God.⁴⁰ Every facet of his theology radiates from a reflection on God in the context of the poor and poverty. White's theological method prioritizes the sanctuary doctrine in which Christ's current heavenly ministry in the most holy place of the sanctuary is highlighted. This approach rivets much attention on the

³⁷Robert W. Olson, One Hundred and one Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White, Washington D.C.: Ellen G. Estate, 1981, p.46.

³⁸Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. pp.64-67.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 60.

heavenly sanctuary because therein are determined eternal destinies of all people.⁴¹

3.3 White and Gutierrez on the "broad" concept of politics

Unlike White, Gutierrez makes use of the social sciences in his quest to better understand society.⁴² Gutierrez, therefore, does not hesitate to employ some ideas from Marx's analysis of society. Gutierrez believes that Marx did a commendable job in describing society with its inherent class struggle or conflict. Impressed with Marx's perceptive analysis of social analysis, Gutierrez is convinced that what Marx pointed to can be witnessed in Latin America⁴³ and in most parts of the world.

Ellen G. White and Gustavo Gutierrez agree on the need for christians to participate in "politics" when politics is viewed from its broad perspective. Both the overt and covert statements on "politics" which White and Gutierrez make articulate the indispensable role that christians ought to play in making the world a more humane place in which people

⁴¹White, Early Writings. pp.358, 259.

⁴²Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. pp.58-60.

⁴³Ibid.

can peacefully co-exist. However, White and Gutierrez are not in total agreement on the manner in and the extent to which christians may take part in "politics". A careful comparison of their political statements indicate, that both White and Gutierrez have much in common with respect to their positions on christians and involvement in the broad view of politics.

3.3.1 A comparison of the general political stances of White and Gutierrez

It should be noted that both White and Gutierrez affirm the dignity and value of the poor and oppressed. White, for example, argues that the same blood which purchased salvation for the whites redeemed the blacks.⁴⁴ This proves that in God's eyes all people have the same value. Since all mankind are equal in the eyes of their creator, there is no justification, therefore, for any one race to look down upon another as inferior. If genuine mutual respect existed, no race would ever contemplate manipulating another. Brotherhood would prevail, overcoming all tendencies to oppress and exploit those whose skin colour, culture or geographic location may be different from one's own.

White believes that blacks lost much dignity due to slavery. Hence she argues that the blacks in the United States of America should reclaim their personhood.⁴⁵

⁴⁴White, The Southern Work. pp.10-13, 31.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Gutierrez too argues that the poor and oppressed of Latin America must recover their dignity. White addresses a different situation to the one which Gutierrez faces because she deals with segregated former slaves. Gutierrez rejects the abject poverty which the poor in Latin America suffer. He argues that their poverty is imbedded in the way society has been structured. According to Gutierrez society is structured in such a way that the minority benefits at the expense of the majority.⁴⁶ Gutierrez believes that such a state of affairs is an affront to the Fatherhood of God.⁴⁷

Gutierrez believes that christians, of all people, should champion the liberation of the oppressed because christians are custodians of the gospel.⁴⁸ The "gospel" which means "the good news" is a free gift to every person because it is within and through the gospel that God can effect total human salvation.⁴⁹ Gutierrez points that christians should allow the political component of the gospel to rebuke oppressive

⁴⁶Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.7.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p.74.

⁴⁹The word for "salvation" in the Greek is the word "SOZO", which denotes healing, inter alia. The gospel which is the good news of salvation should bring about healing into every facet of human existence, including the political aspect of life.

persons and structures.⁵⁰ He laments the way the gospel has been misapplied to serve the oppressors by interpreting it in ways that rationalize the exploitation of the poor.⁵¹

White and Gutierrez agree that a correct understanding of the incarnation of Jesus Christ should bring joy to the oppressed and provoke deep introspection on the part of the oppressors. Firstly, the downtrodden should rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus truly identified with them when he chose to become poor.⁵² In other words the act of incarnation which occurred in the context of poverty makes the situation of poverty 'special'. The acts of incarnation transformed poverty and dignified it. Secondly, the oppressors need to look at themselves. They should feel ashamed of all the wealth they hoard unto themselves while other people lack the barest necessities of life.⁵³ Instead, the rich must emulate the example of one who though "...being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness".⁵⁴

⁵⁰Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p.78.

⁵¹Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide THB302-Y. pp.166-168.

⁵²Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p.192. See also; White, The Southern Work. p.9.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Philippians 2:6, 7. (NIV).

Furthermore, White and Gutierrez are in harmony on the fact that christians should take the incarnation seriously. Instead of only giving a theoretical or mental assent to the purpose of the incarnation of Jesus, christians should concretely apply the insights from the incarnation to their practice of ministry among the poor.⁵⁵ Christians should engage in incarnational ministry: a ministry which takes for its model "the mind which was also in Christ Jesus".⁵⁶ The attitude of self-forgetfulness should dominate the christians as they strive to serve and liberate fellow human beings. In other words, the challenge of the incarnation should prod every christian to translate the desire to be like Christ into concrete action on behalf of the marginalized. Both White and Gutierrez agree that for Christians to be true to their name, they should be co-workers with Christ in saving mankind.

Strikingly, White and Gutierrez refer to the words that Jesus used to outline his mission as he began his ministry on earth. Both of them note that Jesus said"

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.⁵⁷

⁵⁵White, The Southern Work. pp.10-13.

⁵⁶Philippians 2:5 (NIV).

⁵⁷White, The Southern Work. p.9. See also; Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 14.

By quoting the above statement in their writings, both White and Gutierrez attest to the fact that Jesus preferentially opted for the poor. In explaining why Jesus would opt for the poor, White mentions that the poor and oppressed were a promising audience because they were teachable and willing to learn. The rich and elite, on the contrary, were self-sufficient and arrogant. This made most of them impervious to the teaching of Jesus Christ.⁵⁸

White elaborates on the parallels between the Egyptian bondage and black slavery in America. Gutierrez also draws parallels between God's desire to liberate the children of Israel from Egyptian servitude with God's desire to emancipate his children nowadays from various kinds of oppression. Both White and Gutierrez see the Exodus experience of the children of Israel as a historic moment in which God demonstrated his bias in favour of the oppressed. White refuses to limit God's response in emancipating the Israelites just to them alone. She argues that the same God who heard the cry of the Israelites in their degrading servitude also heard the cry of agony of the black slave in the United States of America. God responded by granting freedom to his oppressed children. White even goes on to say that the Hebrew nation is not the only nation which has raised its voice to God asking for freedom. There are many other nations which continue to cry for emancipation. The same God who heard the Hebrew nation,

⁵⁸White, The Southern Work. p. 10.

and the American slaves will hear and respond in deliverance to any other people under oppression.⁵⁹

Soon after the termination of slavery in the United States of America, White rebuked the white Seventh-day Adventist christians for their apathy toward the freed blacks. She challenged them to complement the efforts of the heroes who had laid down their lives while fighting for the emancipation of the slaves. In fact, White states that God had to raise some other people to effect the freedom of slaves because the Seventh-day Adventist christians were unwilling to take up the challenge to liberate the enslaved. Far from condemning, White praised those who sacrificed their lives for the emancipation of the blacks.⁶⁰

3.3.2 **The manner and extent of christians involvement in "politics"**

While it is true that White and Gutierrez basically agree on the need for christians to participate in the " broad aspect of politics", they differ on the manner in and extent to which christians may engage in politics. Gutierrez, is more radical because he argues for the replacement of the oppressive systems of government. As far as he is concerned, the status quo must go.⁶¹ On the other hand, White's

⁵⁹White, The Southern Work. p.41.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.7.

statements which sound politically radical seem to be tempered by the sanctuary doctrine which forms her basic theological orientation. A comprehensive analysis of White's comments on politics leaves one with the impression that she appeals for some caution as christian participate in politics. The cautious involvement in politics is in view of the imminent termination of Christ's atoning ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.⁶²

White envisions christians as being capable of exerting some influence on their respective social, economic and political environments.⁶³ Gutierrez's stance, goes beyond while it does not negate White's position because he opts for the displacement of oppressive structures.⁶⁴ From her perspective, White can be understood to be calling christians to participate in "politics" insofar as they influence positive change. If this notion is correct, she then can be seen to be quite optimistic concerning the capacity of christians to effect change. Put differently, according to White, the status quo does not necessarily have to be overthrown because it is not incurably wicked. The status quo can experience conversion. It can be renewed and reformed. Given the presence of "men who will not be bought or sold, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, whose

⁶²White, Testimonies Vol.5. p.575.

⁶³White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. pp.82, 83.

⁶⁴Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.7.

conscience is true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who stand for right though the heavens fall",⁶⁵ evil and oppression may be curbed in most societies.

Furthermore, White argues that with shining examples of statesman like Daniel in the Old Testament, christians can make contributions to society while in high government positions.⁶⁶ The illustration of Daniel, to which White points, is not an example of one who leads out in some political insurrection. Rather, it is a success story of a faithful and courageous (christian) statesman who stands for his convictions knowing that even when one person stands with God, that person is in the majority because truth will ultimately triumph.

Contrary to White, Gutierrez is very pessimistic concerning the capacity of oppressive structures to reform voluntarily or even under compulsion. He seems to see little room for radical change from within the oppressive structure which can give birth to human equality, justice and a classless society. Gutierrez does not foresee any self-initiated change on the part of the status quo. The principles and policies that support the oppressive structures are time-honored and deeply ingrained such that nothing short of a miracle can precipitate change in them. Gutierrez believes that even the best of rhetorical threats cannot

⁶⁵White, Education. p.57.

⁶⁶White, Prophets and Kings. p.545.

intimidate the ruling class to abandon their exclusive prerogatives to money and power.⁶⁷

Cognizant of the tenacity with which the oppressors will cling to power, Gutierrez argues that it is thinkable for some christians in Latin America to contemplate military action in order to overthrow the oppressive government.⁶⁸ However, in the use of force to effect liberation, Gutierrez can be seen as conservative when compared with some of the liberation theologians.⁶⁹ Gutierrez, therefore, believes that christians should denounce oppression in a way that leads to the replacement of the oppressive structures with those that are humane and egalitarian.

Gutierrez rejects any attempt to reduce the gospel down to the level of politics.⁷⁰ He, however, asserts the inescapable political reality in which all human beings find themselves. He notes that politics is one facet of the gospel. Gutierrez affirms that for a christian to be involved in politics within the confines of the gospel is "the highest

⁶⁷Gutierrez, Liberation Theology p.106. He observes that the oppressors will not voluntarily relinquish power. This realization has led many church leaders, in Latin America to make a commitment to the liberation of the poor.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 90.

⁶⁹Raymond C. Hundley, Radical Liberation Theology: An Evangelical Response, Wilmore: Bristol Books, 1987, p. 35-37.

⁷⁰Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells. p.xvi.

act of worship".⁷¹ When Gutierrez affirms this fact he implies that to engage in politics out of any other motivation other than that which is related to the gospel is not christian.

Again, in agreement with Gutierrez, White points out that "politicians" can be co-workers with Jesus Christ.⁷² As far as both Gutierrez and White are concerned it is mostly the politician who is also christian who can work together with Christ in the liberation process.⁷³ This, however, does not rule out the use God can make of politicians who may not be christians. Any co-operative politician is at God's disposal.

Participation in politics by christians is risky business. White and Gutierrez believe the foregoing point. White's advice to christians is; "you should carry your religion with you... Balanced by religious principle you may climb to any height you please."⁷⁴ In other words, White places a pre-condition for those who would venture to participate in politics. Those, who take part in politics, should continue to use the Bible as their guide. In addition, White gives another word of caution when she says "...if God

⁷¹Bayer, A Guide to Liberation theology. p.89. Here Bayer quotes the Puebla Document of 1979 in which Gutierrez together with many other bishops and priests of Latin America asserted that the participation of christians in politics is "the highest act of worship".

⁷²White, Manuscript 70, p. 4.

⁷³Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p.8.

⁷⁴White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. pp.82, 83.

has a work for any of his commandment keeping people to do in regard to politics, reach for the position and do the work, with your arm linked with the arm of Christ. The salvation of your soul should be your greatest study".⁷⁵

The foregoing statement by White shows the influence that her theological orientation exerts on her view of christians and politics. The ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary should regulate the degree and manner of christians participation in any political process.

According to White, human destiny is determined in the heavenly sanctuary. In this sense, White can be seen to be Christocentric and not anthropocentric because of her stress on what Christ is doing and not what man is capable of doing. If christians engage in politics while oblivious of the crucial ministry of Christ, their efforts to liberate mankind will ultimately be futile. White believes that christians should take their marching orders from Christ who is currently working for the ultimate salvation of humanity. Fully aware of the pivotal task of atonement which Christ is undertaking, christians should participate in politics in a manner which will not frustrate Christ's ultimate purpose to save man completely. Therefore, when Gutierrez asserts that man is the artisan of his own destiny, he differs from White who believes that human destiny is beyond man. It is decided by Christ's ministry of atonement. White's approach can be said

⁷⁵White, Manuscript Release Vol. 8. p.352.

to be more Christocentric, while that of Gutierrez tends to be humanistic.

Expressing the dilemma which some christians face when they participate in the liberation of the poor, Gutierrez points out that there are some christians who get confused when they discover that the church supports the oppressive structures. When the church takes sides with the oppressors, many-a-christian "lose their dynamic faith, and suffer the anguish of a dichotomy between being a christian and being committed to political action".⁷⁶ For it now appears that some cannot be true christians while they are at the same time committed to political action. Acknowledging the amount of pressures on those christians that choose to become involved in the liberation process, Gutierrez says:

They are vulnerable to romanticism, emotional tensions, and even ambiguous doctrinal stances, which can lead them to attitudes of exasperation-or even to a facile breach with christianity.⁷⁷

White argues that "Our work is not to make a raid on Government but to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord. The fewer attacks we make on authorities and power the more work we will do for God".⁷⁸ Deprived of the broader context of White's statements on politics, her foregoing quotation seems to suggest that christians should not rebuke

⁷⁶Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p.51.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸White, Manuscript Release 117a. p.1.

any government even when it is oppressive. White does not completely negate criticism of rulers. Rather, she believes that the zeal to correct Governments should not eclipse the need for christians to "prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord".⁷⁹ White, also notes that, "We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way".⁸⁰

Gutierrez, however, believes that the church should preach the Gospel decrying injustices so that a more egalitarian society can be established. This means that the church should take seriously its "prophetic mission". It should fearlessly challenge oppressive social structures. Although the church may become unpopular with the status quo, it should never be intimidated into silence. If it stands firm in its convictions, in the long run it will earn respect even from its worst opponents.

The position Gutierrez takes on the manner by which christians should address the status quo appears more confrontational than that of White. Gutierrez is convinced that persuasion will not work. The status quo will not relinquish power voluntarily. Without any compunction, the status quo may institutionalize violence in such a manner that to challenge the brutal acts of oppression becomes illegal. The oppressive Governments have structured their polices in such a way that if christians rebuke their sins of oppression,

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰White, Acts of the Apostles. pp. 68, 69.

the christian should feel guilty of not being "subject to authorities and rulers".⁸¹ The above points notwithstanding, Gutierrez feels that christians should commit themselves to liberating the poor and oppressed even if the method used may be conflictual.⁸²

White and Gutierrez agree that christians engagement in "politics" is not the primary mission of the church. According to White, the priority of christians should be the preaching of the sanctuary doctrine. According to her, the sanctuary doctrine should be proclaimed in conjunction with all the other doctrines which it illuminates. It should, however, be understood that when White argues that christians should participate in the broad aspect of politics, she does not see engagement in politics as primarily for christians. For White, when christians take part in politics they take it as a "call" to engage in a specific God-oppointed task. In other words, the "call" to participate in politics comes to some of those christians already working on the primary objective, that is, the proclamation of the sanctuary message. White notes that if any christian feels strongly impressed to engage in politics, he or she should go ahead to participate in politics, however, without losing his or her grip on Christ's hand. The point here is that White views participation in politics to be incidental for christians because engagement in

⁸¹Titus 3:1 (NIV).

⁸²Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p.63.

politics arises when christians are already pursuing their major objective.⁸³

Gutierrez, too, does not view politics as the "primary" object of christians' existence. The liberation process in which christians ought to be involved in is "a broad process inclusive but not exhausted by politics".⁸⁴ Gutierrez understands christians involvement in politics to be an inevitable engagement for christians once they embrace and proclaim the Gospel in its fulness. Hence, Gutierrez notes that the exact fraction of the political component within the Gospel has not yet been determined.⁸⁵

Therefore, both White and Gutierrez concur on the fact that participation in politics is not the fundamental goal of christians existence. Instead, it is something which christians attend to while already in pursuit of the primary objectives. White and Gutierrez believe that what makes christians concerned by the way oppressive structures perpetuate injustices is the christians' reference to the Word of God. If their concern should stem from anything less than God's Word, then they may easily be regarded as part and parcel of any revolutionary movement whose motive may be ulterior and interests selfish.

⁸³White, Manuscript Release Vol. 8. p.352.

⁸⁴Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p.125.

⁸⁵Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political dimension of the Christian Faith. pp.72-73.

3.3.3 White and Gutierrez on clergy participation in politics in it broad view

Gutierrez gives the clergy more visibility in participation in the broader aspect of politics than does White. White does not specifically outline the role that the clergy must play in the broad view of politics. She generally refers to christians without making a distinction between the clergy and the church members.⁸⁶ Gutierrez clearly shows the distinction between the leaders and the followers. The bishops or priests should lead the way by committing themselves to the poor and oppressed. In other words the clergy should lead by example. This would enhance what the clergy mean when they speak of the liberation process.

It was in major conferences such as Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) that the clergy in Latin America came together to address the issue of poverty.⁸⁷ The bishops became convinced that poverty in Latin America was a direct result of the economic policies instituted by oppressive Governments.⁸⁸

⁸⁶A look at most of Gutierrez's books show that he takes deliberate effort to treat, under specific headings, the issue of the clergy and christians participation in the "broad" aspect of politics. White does not clearly do this. Instead she only distinguishes the clergy from the church members when she deals with the "narrow" aspect of politics. See; White Gospel Workers. p. 391. See also; Gutierrez, The poor of the poor in History. pp. 25-152.

⁸⁷Gutierrez, The Poor of the Poor in History. pp. ix, 120.

⁸⁸Gutierrez, We Drink From Our Own Wells. p.96.

Because of this realization the Puebla convention of bishops pledged "a preferential option for the poor".⁸⁹ This shows the clergy were spearheading the liberation process. To them participation in "politics" was nothing to be ashamed of.

3.3.4 On christians and social responsibility

White and Gutierrez agree that christians should demonstrate that they are socially responsible in the way they relate to issues such as poverty. But when it comes to the underlying causes of poverty and how christians should deal with it, the two hold diverging views. This notwithstanding, their analysis on poverty reveal what political action christians should take in order to solve this issue.

Gutierrez on the one hand attributes the existence of poverty (particulary in Latin America) to man made structures bent on oppressing and improvershing certain individuals in society. Gutierrez rejects the idea that poverty is caused by fate. According to him the basic cause of poverty is not poor planning on the part of government, but an intentional result of human selfishness. When part of society regards another as less than human and it targets them for exploitation; poverty results.⁹⁰ In other words, Gutierrez is quite optimistic that if society was fairly ordered so that no level of society would take advantage of another, then, poverty would be

⁸⁹Ibid., p. ix.

⁹⁰Gutierrez, Liberation Theology, p.292.

absent. In such a harmonious society, cooperation would prevail resulting in equitable distribution of resources among all people.

On the other hand, White does not see the existence of poverty to necessarily lie in the way society has been structured. While she agrees that human selfishness has a part to play in the occurrence of poverty, she however, believes that "God has permitted some of the human family to be so rich and some so poor".⁹¹ White's argument seems to be based on the observation that even in a well structured society there will be the rich and the poor. God allows poverty because of the decisions the individuals make. However, White notes; God does not predestine some to be poor and others to be rich.⁹² White tries to explain the fact that while God permits some to be rich and others to be poor, he does not endorse poverty. White notes that "but God never meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life while the children of others cry for bread. The Lord is a God of benevolence".⁹³

A major point of contrast between White and Gutierrez can be noticed. White does not seem to confine the cause of poverty to oppressive structures alone. She gives room for

⁹¹White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 280.

⁹²White, Testimonies Vol.6. p.273.

⁹³Ibid.

the personal choices some people make which land them in poverty. Since God respects every person's freedom of choice, He does allow people to decide their destiny. Gutierrez, however, does not seem to intertain the notion that the poor may be responsible for their poverty. According to him, the poor are in their deplorable condition because of hostile policies and societal structures.⁹⁴

It is indisputable, however, that both White and Gutierrez regard human selfishness as a basic cause of inequality in the distribution of material goods among people. White explicitly states that "God created enough of life's necessities for everyone".⁹⁵ Gutierrez implicitly concurs with what White says because he condemns foreign policies in Latin America which siphon wealth to the already developed countries. Hence, Gutierrez protests saying that, "poverty is an expression of sin, that is a negation of love".⁹⁶ Yet, White asserts that the presence of poverty is a blessing in disguise.⁹⁷ When White assumes such a posture she argues that as christians practice charity toward the poor they develop Christlike characters.⁹⁸ It is doubtful to think that Gutierrez would label poverty "a blessing in disguise". It is

⁹⁴Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p.292.

⁹⁵White, Welfare Ministry. p.16.

⁹⁶Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p.295.

⁹⁷White, Welfare Ministry. p.18.

⁹⁸Ibid.

particularly unthinkable to imagine him say so in the light of his attitude towards poverty. He sees poverty as "a scandalous condition, a situation which because of its dehumanizing nature should be fought from every front".⁹⁹

Gutierrez even flatly rejects the tendency by some to take advantage of the ambiguity of the term "poverty". While he accepts that "poverty" denotes a spiritual disposition, Gutierrez however, acknowledges that it also implies a relationship to material possessions.¹⁰⁰ It appears irreconcilable for the same Gutierrez to both see "poverty" as dehumanizing and "a blessing in disguise" at the same time. Their difference is heightened by the fact that he categorically states that "poverty contradicts the very meaning of mosaic religion" and the "exploitation of the Jewish people in Egypt is against the mandate of Genesis (1:26; 2:15) where man was told to dominate the earth".¹⁰¹

In spite of his hatred of poverty Gutierrez concurs with White that Christians do benefit from extending charity to the poor. Gutierrez believes that as Christians imitate what Christ did in unselfishly sacrificing himself for the poor and oppressed, Christians will also capture the spirit of sacrifice and humility.¹⁰² Therefore, when Christians evince

⁹⁹Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p.291.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 289.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 295.

¹⁰²Ibid., 300.

attributes of humility and self-sacrifice, they become more like Christ. In this sense, Gutierrez and White are in consonance in that the presence of poverty provides an opportunity for the refinement of christian character.¹⁰³

Gutierrez, however, does not seem to take an extreme position which White does adopt on the necessity of poverty. The conclusions which White draws have no parallel in Gutierrez's stance. She categorically states, "Take away poverty, and we should have no way of understanding the mercy and love of God".¹⁰⁴ Putting it differently she states, "It would not be for the benefit of christianity for the Lord to remove poverty from the earth".¹⁰⁵ Gutierrez, instead, views poverty as something which should be fought and eradicated.¹⁰⁶ No one should celebrate its continued existence. Even when christians fight poverty, they do so in order to remove it totally. It is with this undying hope that, ultimately, poverty and oppression will be removed that Gutierrez envisions a future without the needy and oppressed.¹⁰⁷ But White argues that poverty and christianity should co-exist because poverty helps christians to cultivate Christlike virtues such as, sympathy, love and generosity.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴White, Welfare Ministry. p. 177.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 295.

¹⁰⁷White, Welfare Ministry. p. 177.

Another key contrast between White and Gutierrez is on how christians should relate to poverty. Both agree that christians should do something concrete to address poverty. Yet, White's approach seems to stress alleviation more than total eradication of human suffering. She notes, "All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow... it is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery".¹⁰⁸ [Emphasis mine] White sees the duty of christians toward the poor and oppressed as one of alleviating their plight. Because of this approach, White recommends that christians should "provide homes for the homeless", and impart skills to the poor so they become self-reliant.¹⁰⁹ She also suggests that the poor should be given employment opportunities.¹¹⁰ On the contrary, Gutierrez desires that christians should do something more far-reaching for the poor. Christians, according to him, must aim at the restructuring of society because oppressive structures "breed" poverty. While Gutierrez does not negate the value of philanthropic gestures which christians may extend towards the poor. He believes these are not enough.¹¹¹ The major problem with such gestures is that they tend to be erratic. As such, they lack consistency. Periodic handouts do not "radically" solve the

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 194.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 189.

¹¹¹Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 291.

problem of poverty because these, often well-intentioned gestures, do not address the root cause of poverty. Usually the causes of poverty lie within oppressive policies.

Gutierrez and White agreed that engagement in politics calls for political maturity on the part of christians. Gutierrez notes that "only an appreciable degree of political maturity will enable us to get a real grasp of the political dimension of the gospel and keep us from reducing it into a system of social service, however, sophisticated, or to a simple task of human advocacy".¹¹² White alludes to the need for christians to be politically mature when she calls on christians to balance their religious principle as they seek to make some contribution to society.¹¹³

3.4 White and Gutierrez on the narrow concept of politics

Both White and Gutierrez are generally against the idea of christians involvement in "party politics". The two agree that christians should not engage in politics because they have a "prophetic mission" in the world. As such, White and Gutierrez feel that participation by christians in the narrow dimension of politics would frustrate the prophetic mission. As far as White is concerned, christians should realize that party politics engenders "party spirit and contention" which

¹¹²Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p.68.

¹¹³White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. pp. 82, 83.

dishonour God.¹¹⁴ White argues that christians have a task to evangelize the whole world. Therefore, the divisive nature of party politics may definitely weaken the christians' effort should they become partisans. Gutierrez, in agreement with White, says that the church should not take sides with any political party.¹¹⁵ The reason he gives is that "the reign of God (which the church represents) points to the inherent inadequacies of all historical instances of liberation". In other words, what Gutierrez means is that when a church aligns itself with any given party, it restricts its locus of influence. The church may find it difficult to preach to those opposed to its political stance because of the negative attitude that may exist between political parties.

Unlike Gutierrez, White gives a detailed treatment of christians and voting. She strongly condemns the act of christians voting for political parties. The major reason why she is against voting is that human nature is unpredictable in that the rulers that are voted into power may become corrupt and oppressive.¹¹⁶ It is, therefore, unsafe for christians to vote anyone into power. She goes to the extent of saying that anyone who votes for a government which later becomes

¹¹⁴White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 377.

¹¹⁵Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 125. See also; White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

¹¹⁶White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

oppressive becomes an accomplice in the evils that the particular government perpetrates.¹¹⁷ Although there are a few statements which White makes which seem to encourage christians to vote, the majority of her statements are against voting for political parties. White indeed encouraged christians to vote for the enactment of laws on temperance in America. She says that christians should exercise their vote "in behalf of justice, humanity and right".¹¹⁸ However, a contextual study of her statements pertaining to voting reveal that she leaned more toward christians not voting than voting.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, White goes slightly beyond Gutierrez in explaining in detail the reason why the clergy should not participate in "party politics".¹²⁰ In strong terms White points out that ministers of the gospel should not "meddle with politics".¹²¹ She believes that when ministers engage in party politics their constituency becomes divided.¹²² Because of the damage a minister may cause by politically polarizing his church members, White recommends tough disciplinary

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹White, Temperance. p. 391.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 252.

¹²¹White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. pp. 332, 333.

¹²²White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

action against such a minister.¹²³ She suggests that such a minister should be relieved of his duties because he cannot continue to be paid from church money while "speechifying on politics".¹²⁴ White regards a minister who involves himself in party politics as one who "mixes common fire with sacred fire".¹²⁵

¹²³White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. p. 477.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. p. 337.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the objective of this chapter to articulate the findings resulting from a comparative study of White and Gutierrez's views on christians and involvement in politics. While the foregoing research has extensively analyzed diverse writings, this chapter will limit itself to what may be considered to be substantial aspects of the positions which White and Gutierrez adopt with respect to christians and involvement in politics. It is hoped, therefore, that these findings will help to map out the way christians may better participate in politics. To promote further dialogue between White and Gutierrez and the traditions they represent, some recommendations will be submitted.

4.1 Research Findings

4.1.1 Christians and the broad aspect of politics

One of the most significant discoveries resulting from this research is that White and Gutierrez basically agree that christians should participate in politics as it particularly relates to its broad perspective. Essentially, White and Gutierrez concur on the need for christians to work for justice and equality in their respective social and political

environments.¹ The two are united in arguing for the need for christians who are sensitive enough to see that the poor and oppressed are human beings who have been robbed of their dignity.² Hence, true christians should not accept the plight of the oppressed as God-ordained. Responsible christians should go beyond lip service by taking concrete steps to help the oppressed reclaim their human dignity. It is only when the oppressed are free that they can experience true self-worth.

The inference that White envisions christians as necessary participants in politics is drawn from a number of observations. First, it is from White's vitriolic attack on the white Seventh-day Adventists in the United States of America over their prejudice against the former black slaves that one catches a glimpse of her stand on the broad aspect of politics.³ Secondly, in no uncertain terms White shows that it is appropriate for christians to "fight" for the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited.⁴ In fact, White notes that God had to resort to using other people to liberate the black slaves in the United States of America after finding

¹White, The Southern Work. p. 5. See also; Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 300.

²Ibid.

³White, The Southern Work. pp. 10-13,31.

⁴Ibid., p. 42.

out that Seventh-day Adventist christians were reluctant to do the task.⁵

Basing one's argument on the above insightful observation by White that christians in 1800s let God down, one can note some clear parallels between what happened then and what is taking place nowadays. Could it be that even today there are some christians who disappoint God by not actively participating in freeing the oppressed thereby leading God to look elsewhere for people to bring about political liberation?

Gutierrez, too, comes to the conviction that christians ought to participate in the broad perspective of politics because of his reflection on the Latin American situation of poverty and oppression.⁶ Gutierrez notes that the deplorable circumstances of abject poverty in which most people in South America find themselves evoke serious questions about God. These questions precisely relate to the fatherhood of God and his justice. People ask how God can tolerate the disparity evident in the possession of material goods, between the rich and the poor? Indeed, Gutierrez seems to experience some cognitive dissonance because he finds it hard to reconcile the God who is just with the unjust God societal structures which perpetrate oppression.⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 43.

⁶Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 7.

⁷Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 103.

After establishing the fact that White and Gutierrez see the need for christians to participate in "politics", one should note that each of the two provides a different rationale for christians involvement in politics. Put differently, the reasons which Gutierrez gives for christians to engage in "politics" differ from those supplied by White. This research found out that Gutierrez, for example, believes that christians have an advantage for effecting the liberation of the oppressed.⁸ He notes that christians are custodians of the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁹ As such, they should take their stewardship of the gospel seriously. This means that christians should do justice to the gospel by proclaiming it as it should be. Christians should recognize the political aspect of the gospel. When they do so, they should not conceal it. Rather, christians should expose it. This exposure and articulation of the political component of the gospel allows the gospel to speak to the needs of those who may be politically oppressed. The oppressed begin to realize that the gospel does not endorse their exploitation. Instead, the oppressed realize that the gospel is on their side because it actually wills their freedom, dignity and well being.¹⁰

⁸Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 71.

⁹Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁰Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 4.

In addition, Gutierrez notes that christians should enlighten the oppressed on the correct understanding of the gospel because the gospel has been misinterpreted. The gospel has been co-opted by the ruling class who have made it a tool to justify the oppression of the poor. This means that by quoting from the Bible, oppressive regimes support their wicked oppression of the defenseless. The ruling class urge the oppressed to accept their situation of poverty as God's will.¹¹ It is in the light of this gross misinterpretation of the scriptures that Gutierrez argues that christians should lead out in re-reading of the Bible.¹² A re-reading of the Bible will show that the gospel, far from supporting the exploitation of the poor, the gospel condemns it. The gospel, in fact, favours the oppressed and poor. To reinforce his arguments, Gutierrez appeals to the fact of the incarnation of Christ which is a clear demonstration of Jesus Christ's taking sides with the poor and oppressed.¹³ Therefore, according to Gutierrez, christians will find engagement in "politics" inevitable if they proclaim the gospel in its fullness without mutilating its political dimension.¹⁴ In other words, if

¹¹Maimela, Systematic Theology: Study Guide THB302-Y. p. 89.

¹²Gutierrez, The Truth Shall Make You Free. p. 4.

¹³Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 192. See also; Araya, God of the Poor. p. 167.

¹⁴Geffre and Gutierrez, The Mystical and Political Dimension of the Christian Faith. p. 74.

christians were to interpret the gospel faithfully, then their participation in the broad aspect of politics will be inevitable.

White, on the contrary, does not state that the gospel has a political component which naturally leads christians to participate in "politics". Neither does she allege that the gospel has been co-opted to favour the oppressors at the detriment of the oppressed. White, however, seems to find the rationale for the participation of christians in politics mainly in the fact of the incarnation.¹⁵ On the fact of the incarnation White concurs with Gutierrez although they differ on other points. She notes that Christ went beyond rhetoric in redeeming fallen humanity because he actually became man in the act of incarnation.¹⁶ White, like Gutierrez, highlights the fact that Christ unequivocally identified with the poor and oppressed.¹⁷ The logic that White pursues is that christians who, by virtue of their name are followers of Christ, should emulate the example of Christ. In concrete terms, this means that christians of all the peoples should identify with the poor and suffering ones. But true identification with the poor will entail working for their freedom. As such, christians will find themselves involved in the broad aspect of politics.

¹⁵White, The Southern Work. p. 10.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁷Ibid.

Another significant finding which this study made was that White and Gutierrez differ on their perception of oppressive structures. On the one hand, White believes christians can influence political changes more by nonviolent means than by aggressive action.¹⁸ There is a shift in White's stance on the use of violence to effect political change. White does not seem to condemn the armed struggle which those who fought to liberate the oppressed black slaves in the United States of America. The impression one gets is that White seems to have covertly supported the "violence" which effected the eradication of slavery. However, what the rest of her writings suggest is different. The bulk of White's writings seem to point christians towards nonviolence in seeking to change society. One gets the impression, after carefully reading the writing of White, that christians should seek to reform society rather than overthrow the oppressive rulers. In other words, she suggests that the status quo should be given a chance to experience transformation. White seems to believe that if christians apply the right pressure at the right time change should occur.

¹⁸There seems to be some dialectical tension between White's position on the issue of violence to achieve political objectives. White's earlier position is somewhat different from her latter one. She seems to have endorsed the use of arms for the liberation of the oppressed black slaves. See; White, The Southern Work. p. 42. Yet, she also seems to oppose fighting governments because this may militate against the preaching of the sanctuary message.

On the other hand, Gutierrez insists that the status quo cannot be trusted to overhaul itself because it neither has the inclination nor the capacity to do so. The oppressive regimes need to be overthrown. If christians can, at least, set in motion forces that may lead to the toppling of oppressive government, then their presence in society can be said to be relevant.¹⁹

A further observation which this research made is that both White and Gutierrez acknowledge the risk involved in participating in "politics". However, White and Gutierrez view the risk from different perspective. Gutierrez notes that what really sets christians who participate in politics at risk is to discover that the church sides with the oppressors.²⁰ In such cases, these christians "suffer the anguish of a dichotomy between being a christian and being committed to political action". Upon discovering the double standards of the church, those christians who take part in politics become frustrated and they abandon christianity.²¹

Yet, White sees the risk that christians who participate in politics face to lie in their being engrossed with politics until what she calls "Bible principles" are lost sight of. White believes that "politics" has an absorbing influence which make it easy to relegate other important objectives of

¹⁹Bayer, A Guide to Liberation Theology. p. 89.

²⁰Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History. p. 51.

²¹Ibid.

christianity to oblivion. It is precisely because of the risk inherent in participation in politics that White suggests that engagement in politics require a considerable degree of maturity on the part of christians.²² In this regard, she appeals to christians to constantly be balanced by "principle" as they seek to influence positive change in society. By principle one would assume that White refers to the almost axiomatic christian values such as honesty, impartiality, humility and kindness, to mention but a few. But beyond these, White is possibly talking about the compatibility between the christian's values and beliefs with respect to the political challenges the christian faces. The important point to note is that White like Gutierrez appeals for christians who are mature enough, to balance what they know with what they do. In a sense, although she never uses the term "praxis", White does suggest some kind of praxis because she argues for balance between theory and practice. In other words, she seems comfortable with those christians who endeavour to shape or influence society through political means while maintaining their christian commitment. However, White hopes that those christians who take part in politics should do so within the parameters of sound Biblical principles.

In addition, this study observed that christians, particularly the clergy, should not entertain the notion of

²²Ibid.

political neutrality. If ever there is such a thing, Gutierrez feels it is more imaginary than real. Many-a-time when christians claim neutrality in politics they do not realize that their silence and passivity places them on the side of the status quo. In other words, by saying nothing in the face of political injustices, christians become guilty of the sin of "omission" because they neglect a necessary christian obligation.²³

This research also noted that although Gutierrez and White believe that christians have some part to play in the broad aspect of "politics", preoccupation with "politics" is not to be the christians' primary goal in life.²⁴ According to White, what really prompts christians to engage in politics is the desire to be socially responsible. In other words, participation in politics by christians is not the sole reason for the existence of the church. Gutierrez, also, feels that engagement in politics by christians comes about when christians proclaim the total gospel and then discover that the gospel has a political component.

²³Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 137. He actually rejects the idea that christians can claim neutrality in politics. They can only be either for or against the status quo or the poor. Silence in the face of oppression is tantamount to supporting the status quo. This tacit support of the status quo imply an omission of an obligation to bring about justice and freedom to the oppressed.

²⁴Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 125. See also; White, Manuscript Releases Vol.8. p. 352.

Politics is one among many other things that the church ought to attend to.

Nevertheless, given the striking contrasts in their approach to theology, one is impressed by the common stance White and Gutierrez take. Although White makes the sanctuary doctrine her theological focus and Gutierrez, the situation of poverty in Latin America as his theological starting point the two have much in common. This research discovered that, inspite of the more or less diametrically opposed theological foci,²⁵ both share a lot of similar concerns with respect to the christian's presence in a political milieu.

Another observation which this study made was that White does not provide a definition to the term "politics". She uses the term extensively in her writings but does not explain what the term means. This absence of a definition of what White understands "politics" to mean presents problems when one studies her writings. There is a tendency to "overtax" or strain the context in an effort to understand the meaning of "politics" as used in different contexts. What I mean is that, from the context alone one has to figure out whether the

²⁵A closer look at the theological systems of White and Gutierrez show that they are quite different because whereas White's is Christocentric, Gutierrez's is anthropocentric. This means that for White it is the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary which is the nucleus of her theology. But in Gutierrez's case, man in his situation of poverty is the center of focus. This notwithstanding, both believe that christians should have a positive political role in society.

reference made to "politics" is directed to either the broad or narrow aspect of politics.

Again, the prevailing confusion²⁶ within the Seventh-day Adventist church concerning their role as christians in a political world seems to have something to do with the absence of a clear definition of "politics" by White. In the face of ambiguous contexts some Seventh-day Adventist christians experience ambivalence because they are unclear as to what the contexts imply. Ignorant of the two-dimensional nature of politics, many Seventh-day Adventists confuse the broad aspect of politics with the narrow, hence they shun any kind of involvement in politics.

Furthermore, this research highlights the necessity of categorizing White's statements under the broad and narrow aspects. A careful analysis of her writings reveal that, indeed, it is possible to utilize the context to ascertain what she connotes by the term "politics". As noted earlier, it is true that some contexts can be ambiguous. A helpful way of getting out of such knotty situations is by constantly asking whether "politics", according to her usage in a given context, refers to the broad or the narrow view. The task of discriminating the broad from the narrow aspects of politics can be subjective. However, efforts should be made to let the

²⁶"Confusion" here simply points to the state which characterizes the Seventh-day Adventist church on the issue of christians and involvement in politics. Hence, the need to spell-out a clear position on this issue.

context lead one to the meaning of "politics" than for one to impose his or her own meaning on the term.

4.1.2 Christians and the narrow aspect of politics

Another key finding which this research made is that both White and Gutierrez generally agree that christians should not get involved in party politics.²⁷ The reasons which account for the positions which White and Gutierrez take on the narrow aspect of politics are basically the same. Gutierrez feels that christians who participate in party politics limit the church's sphere of influence.²⁸ This is so because the minute the church aligns itself with any given party it cannot effectively evangelize those who belong to another party. Moreover, christians are supposed to be representatives of God and as such the reign of God which the church seeks to establish points to the inherent inadequacies of all historical instances of liberation".²⁹ What Gutierrez says is that the church cannot be both partisan and prophetic at the same time. The church cannot rebuke and correct the political parties while it is taking sides with some political party.

On the issue of voting for political parties, Gutierrez does not say much. The little that he says on christians and voting does not provide sufficient guidelines for christians

²⁷Cadorette, From the Heart of the People. p. 129.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Gutierrez, Concillium 93. p. 144.

to follow.³⁰ Gutierrez's conscious or unconscious omission of christians and the issue of voting provides room for speculation. One may presume that he might be against voting since voting has partisan implications and Gutierrez like White would rather have christians rise above partisanship. But it is possible for one to assume that Gutierrez may accommodate voting especially if it is capable of displacing a wicked government so that one which is sensitive to the needs of the oppressed is elected to power. The tension of whether christians should or should not vote, as far as I know, remains unresolved in Gutierrez's writings.

After analyzing White's statements on christians and voting, this research comes to the conclusion that she leans more towards not voting than voting.³¹ White tries to avoid being the conscience of the christian. But White argues against voting so vehemently that very few people can mistake her position on this issue.

A difficult problem this research came across was to determine where a line can be drawn between the broad and narrow aspect of politics. At issue is the possibility of compartmentalizing the two aspects of politics so that they are watertight thereby leaving no room for any relationship between the two aspects whatsoever. Put differently, do the two dimensions of politics have no effect upon each other?

³⁰Gutierrez, Liberation Theology. p. 90.

³¹White, Gospel Workers. p. 391.

It is very important to ascertain the relationship of the broad view of politics to the narrow view of politics. On the one hand, suppose the two aspects have no connection with each other, then White and Gutierrez's positions on christians on either aspects of politics may become easy to understand. In other words, the fact that both generally are for christians' participation in the broad concept of politics and against christians involvement in the narrow dimension of politics would present no real problem since the two dimensions would be separate and independent.

On the other hand, a realization that, after all, the two aspects of politics are not that airtight because they impinge one upon the other would present some real problems. The difficulty that would arise immediately is how to reconcile the extreme positions which White and Gutierrez adopt on the two aspects of politics. How does one relate the fact that White and Gutierrez generally agree that christians should participate in the broad aspect of politics while they at the same time oppose christians' participation in the narrow dimension of politics. If it can be established that the two dimensions of politics are not independent one needs to grapple with how christians can really be involved in the broad aspect of politics while totally aloof from participating in the narrow perspective of politics.

The above problems notwithstanding, it should be stated that White and Gutierrez agree that christians should take

part in politics as it relates to its broad perspective. Both are also united in their opposing christians from becoming members of political parties. In other words, as far as the narrow aspect of politics is concerned White and Gutierrez appear to dissuade christians from participation in this component of politics.

4.2 Recommendations

It is quite significant to note that White and Gutierrez basically hold similar views concerning christians and involvement in politics: whether politics is seen from either the broad or narrow perspective. However, to establish or map out the ideal way christians should participate in politics there is need to encourage dialogue between White and Gutierrez. The purpose of an open and frank dialogue is to let the two learn from each other. Learning implies, among other things, two processes. It may deal with one's replacement of old information with the new. It may also entail the addition of new knowledge to the old. It is, therefore, hoped that a lively dialogue between White and Gutierrez, will stimulate a willingness of the traditions these two figures represent to adjust their stances in an effort to provide the "ideal" posture christians should have towards politics. The following recommendations, therefore, are meant to focus mainly on those nuances inherent in White's and Gutierrez's positions on christians and politics, which

may require some "fine tuning" in order to come up with the most balanced stance christians may adopt in participation in politics.

An important recommendation to make is that White and the theological tradition which she represents should try to come up with a definition of the term "politics". Because of the disparity in time frames between White and Gutierrez, it seems White's theological tradition or church has not formulated a definition of politics to match the current usage and meaning of the term politics within theological circles.

The issue of the Seventh-day Adventist church having to relate their understanding of politics to the contemporary dual-faceted concept of politics [that is, the "broad" and the "narrow" aspects] is urgent. This research may claim to be among the first to systematically analyze White's statements on politics under the broad and the narrow dimensions. It is precisely because this study does not claim to be exhaustive in its attempts to categorize White's political statements, that it recommends further studies to focus in this area. The sooner more research within Seventh-day Adventist circles is channelled in this direction, the better will the state of confusion be resolved concerning the role of christians in politics.

Another recommendation would be to encourage other christians, White and her tradition to learn from Gutierrez's use of Marx's analysis of society. A clear knowledge of the

fact that there is inherent class struggle within society is useful. Seventh-day Adventists should not just reject useful insights about society simply because they come from Karl Marx. The issue should receive detailed study. If White and Seventh-day Adventists embrace theological concepts which trace their origin from non-christians such as Plato and Aristotle,³² why should they reject Marx another non-christian without a fair hearing? The point here is that the Seventh-day Adventists should make use of the social sciences since these throw some light on the social environment within which people find themselves. By so doing the Seventh-day Adventist church may become more relevant in an aching world.

Furthermore, Gutierrez would do well to know something about White's theological orientation. Should Gutierrez understand the sanctuary doctrine as a basic theological focus of White's theology, this could make a change in his understanding of how christians may relate to politics. What this means is that an awareness of what Christ is doing in the heavenly sanctuary will also impinge on Gutierrez's quest to effect political change. In other words, the desire to effect human liberation from oppression will be conditioned by the work of atonement which is in progress in the heavenly sanctuary.

³²Theology as a discipline owes much to the philosophical categories of Plato and Aristotle. The two helped theology to assume its scientific character by offering it terminology. If Plato and Aristotle who were non-christian are accepted in theology, why is Marx rejected without a hearing.

The issue of whether christians should resort to violence in a bid to effect political change does not receive adequate attention in this research. One would suggest that the issue of christians and violence in politics should receive some detailed study. Of course, the issue of violence may have been addressed by various authors but nothing or little if any, has been done to compare views of White and Gutierrez on this issue with an eye to shaping a christian's stance in this regard. Should christians engage in armed struggle so as to overthrow oppressive Governments? Gutierrez notes that politics does not rule out violence. To what extent can violence be justified in the liberation process?

Gutierrez does not spell out his position on whether christians should vote for any political party or not. It is not clear why he does not discuss this issue. However, Gutierrez acknowledges that politics has two facets that is, the broad and narrow views. Therefore, in order for him to project a more comprehensive picture of politics he should, at least, have said something pertaining to christians and voting since that constitute a considerable portion of the narrow aspect of politics. The consideration of the subject of voting would bring about some necessary balance between his treatment of the broad view of politics with the narrow aspect. Because Gutierrez has not articulated his stance on christians and voting he leaves people to speculate what his position could be. One would, therefore, recommend Gutierrez

to deal with the issue of whether christians should exercise their right to vote as citizens of their given countries.

In addition, there should be more studies aimed at showing the "practical significance of the doctrine of the sanctuary"³³ to use the words of Gerhard van Wyk, a lecturer at the University of South Africa (UNISA). In other words the sanctuary doctrine, which forms White's basic theological focus, should help christians to confront contemporary challenges. In South Africa, for example, the doctrine of the sanctuary should enable Seventh-day Adventist christians to face and fight apartheid. The task of relating the sanctuary doctrine to situations of oppression, poverty and discrimination is a very important one because failure to do so may lead some to regard the sanctuary doctrine as a "theological relic".³⁴

³³Gerhard van Wyk, "Is Practical Theology Redundant?: the Quest for a Practical Theological Approach in Southern Africa." A Presentation at Andrews University, 1992, p. 17.

³⁴Ibid.

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