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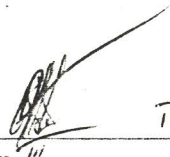
A CRITIQUE OF CANAAN BANANA'S THEOLOGY

BY

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of
Theology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
of Master of Theology

Approved:

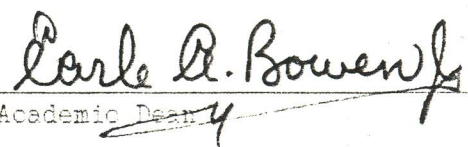


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DEDICATION

TO THE EXTENSION OF GOD'S KINGDOM IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

It is the writer's conviction that a comprehensive evangelical theology of social justice relevant to the contemporary African situation needs to be developed to deal with our problems. For instance, Africa continues to experience political upheavals, exploitation of the poor by the rich and powerful on the one hand, and exploitation as a continent by richer nations of the world through unfair trade imbalances. This is due to the fact that the continent lacks strong bargaining power and as a result, the prices of her exports are determined on the international markets by the developed nations. Consequently, this has continued to adversely affect our economies. It is interesting that due to the fall in coffee prices this year on the international market, Uganda is reported to have lost one hundred million dollars in revenue. Yet the price of imports from the developed nations is going up all the time. This demonstrates how the economies of Africa are vulnerable.

At home, there is the existence of the apartheid system in South Africa which is responsible for the enslavement of millions of Africans in their own country. Unfortunately, some of the white Christians continue to defend apartheid despite its dehumanizing effect. These are but a few of the problems confronting the church in Africa. These problems cannot be ignored and a biblical response is necessary. In order to withstand the opposing forces, the church in Africa must manifest maturity in theology and theologisation. What is needed is not just the re-affirming of our traditional theology, but a theological creativity relevant to the African challenge.

However, our theology must be rooted in the scriptures, hence the need to adopt proper exegetical methodologies.

Importance of the problem.

While it is highly commendable that Canaan Banana should address those issues raised by his context, he unfortunately refuses to abide by exegetical principles and instead of studying the ancient text in its context and applying the message to his situation he reads the scriptures from the perspective of the oppressed people during the years of colonial rule in Zimbabwe. He finds in the biblical account of Israel's Heilsgeschichte a parallel to the plight of the poor in Zimbabwe. For instance, he quotes Exodus 5:1 to justify the use of violence in the liberation struggle saying, "when Pharaoh failed to respond positively to the language of persuasion and arguments, God had no alternative but to use the language that Pharaoh himself spoke, the language of force and violence."¹ This argument presents a theological problem and the present writer deals with it in the thesis. In addition, Jesus is portrayed as a political liberator while God's kingdom is equated with socialism. Many of Banana's other claims are also not supported by the scriptures. He only quotes the scriptures to support his own political views without any regard to the ancient text. This is not the way to theologise. Referring to the task of the theologians, Cho rightly says:

They should go from the text to the context in order to avoid the danger of placing the context above the text. Lest relevance be of greater concern than the truth itself, theological contextualization must operate within the limits of sound biblical exegesis. After first seeking to understand the biblical text in its own context, the theologian should select those biblical themes which speak to the issues and questions in his context. The theological task, therefore, involves tension between obedience to the scriptures and relevance to the context.²

This may require us to offer biblical answers to the questions raised by our context. Unfortunately, western theology which is by and large rationalistic, preoccupied with intellectual concerns especially those having to do with relationship between faith and reason, has not prepared us for the task. All too often, it has reduced the christian faith to abstract concepts which may have answered the questions of the past but which fail to grapple with the issues of Africa today. If evangelical theology is to fulfil its task in Africa, it must be released from the captivity to individualism of western theology in order to allow the word of God to work with full power. It must also avoid the errors of liberation theology as exemplified in Banana's theology. There is a danger of reading our politico-economic vision in theology and absolutising our favourable system, whether socialism or capitalism. We must never force the biblical texts to endorse our prejudiced views. Unfortunately, this is what the liberation theologians are doing! The danger is that the popular respectability of these theological systems may make people think that they are compatible with biblical truth. There is a need therefore to challenge some of the issues raised by the exponents of the theologies of liberation in general and Banana in particular, while at the same time reinforcing those good things which we ought to learn from them. That is the task of this thesis.

Purpose of the study.

The primary task of this study is to critically and objectively analyse Banana's theology as expounded in his works. It is evident that he is influenced by the theologies of liberation, and for this reason, the present writer wants to alert the christian church in Africa to the dangers of compromising the gospel for the sake of seeing a just socio-politico-economic order instituted.

Having said that, there is also another danger of belonging to the church of the silent majority which consciously or unconsciously accepts the social economic and political status quo. In this regard, there is a lesson to learn from Canaan Banana and other liberation theologians. The church should never condone the institutionalised violence that deprives the majority of the population of the basic essentials for human life such as housing, health, education, employment, food etc. It should never be satisfied with a kind of religiosity that is self-centred, subjective and pietistic.

The issue at stake is how can one be of this world and yet not of the world! The present writer emphasises the need for relevance to our context while at the same time being faithful to the text. It is absolutely vital to maintain this tension.

Delineation of the study.

The subject of this thesis is self-explanatory as to its extent. Since it is a critique of Banana's theology the writer has studied the available published works by Banana with a view to determining his theological position. The areas covered include his view of God, christology, salvation, sin, kingdom, etc.

Since Banana seems to be influenced by the theologies of liberation, it has become necessary for the present writer to familiarise himself with the exponents of these theologies in order to make a better evaluation of his theological position. Fortunately, there is a lot of literature available on the subject today, originating mainly from Latin America, from the United States of America by black theologians and from South African theologians.

Organizational Approach to the Study.

The first chapter deals with the contradictions of socio-politico-economic problems prevailing in Zimbabwe before independence, and how they shaped Banana's theological views. The external influence such as the theologies of liberation are discussed here. In the following chapters, Banana's theology is closely examined and evaluated on the basis of the authoritative word of God. Similarly, the political and ethical issues that he raises are also discussed in the light of the teaching of the scriptures.

The role of the church within a state features predominantly especially in the fourth chapter. The present writer has suggested some guidelines on how christians can participate in national politics without violating biblical principles or compromising the gospel. The real issue here is to justify political participation as a valid obligation for christians.

In chapter five, the writer assesses the fulfilment or disappointments of some of Banana's dreams regarding independent socialist Zimbabwe which he associates with utopia. An attempt is made to investigate and determine whether socialism has lived up to its ideals.

Endnotes.

¹Canaan Banana, The Theology of Promise (Harare: The College Press, 1982), 21.

²Bong Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur, eds. The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts: An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology (Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1984), 79-80ff.

CHAPTER I

CANAAN BANANA'S THEOLOGICAL FORMATION

Biography.

Rev. Canaan Banana was born in Zimbabwe at Essexvale in Esigodini district on March 5, 1936. He received his primary education at Mzinyati mission, and his secondary education at Tegwani High school.

From 1960 to 1962, he attended Epworth Theological College near Harare. In 1973 until 1975, he was at the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC, U.S.A. where he obtained his Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree. In 1979, he got a Bachelor of Arts degree (Hons) in theology from the University of South Africa.

His career is varied and wide-ranging. From 1963 to 1966, Banana was a Methodist Schools Manager in the Wankie and Plum Tree areas and in 1965 he became principal at Matjinge boarding schools. From 1965 to 1975 he was visiting chaplain at Tegwani High School. During the years 1969 to 1971, Canaan Banana was chairman of the Bulawayo Council of Churches.

He was also chairman of the South Africa Content Group at the Urban/Industrial Mission of the All Africa Conference of Churches from 1970 to

1973. Since 1970, he has been a member of the Advisory Committee of the World Council of Churches.

His entry into politics began in 1971 when he became a founder member of the African National Council, a body established to mobilise African opinion against the oppressive measures of Ian Smith's government towards Africans. Banana was its first vice-president. The Rhodesian authorities constantly harassed him and, in 1972, they impounded his passport and prohibited him from entering police stations throughout the country on the grounds that he would bring undue political influence to bear on the forces.

Banana became chaplain at the American university in Washington DC, during the years 1973 to 1975. When he returned from America in 1975, he was arrested by the Rhodesian authorities and sentenced to three months hard labour for leaving the country without travel documents. In January 1976, he was released, but restricted to his home in Bulawayo. Later that year, he was released to attend the Geneva Conference as a member of bishop Muzorewa's delegation, but he crossed the floor to join Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

In the same year, he was elected public secretary of the People's Movement Internal Co-ordinating Committee of ZANU. In January 1977 following his return from the Geneva Conference, he was arrested for his political activities and detained at Kadoma prison. In May 1978, he was removed to Wha Wha Detention Camp. He was released on 26 November 1979.

Banana became the state president when Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 with Mr. Robert Mugabe as the prime minister.

Banana has travelled widely throughout the world. He has written a book entitled The Theology of Promise and some tracts on politics and religion and has also made contributions to several magazines and journals.

Banana is married to Janet and they have four children.

If Richard Wright is correct in his contention that "expression springs out of an environment", then we may conclude that Banana's theological expressions are inseparable from the Zimbabwean experience prior to independence in 1980. The fact that he has lived the Zimbabwean experience cannot be separated from his theological perspective. Some theologies are formed in libraries, seminaries or by private studies. In contrast, Banana's theology after ample exposure to all that, was reformed out of his involvement in combatting the oppression of the poor. Therefore in order to understand his theology we must start with a brief historical account of the people with whom he lived and worked. He must be positioned in the midst of the people to whose cause he has committed himself.

The Early History of Zimbabwe.

The first white men to reach most parts of the African continent were missionaries. They fostered an image of Africa which by the time of the Berlin conference of 1884-85 had provided an excuse to colonize Africa or, as the French described it, to embark on a civilising mission. Therefore, the European countries at the Berlin conference began to scramble for Africa under the guise of being liberators who ended the slave trade and brought peace. They used force in their conquering crusade and in the process destroyed African political, economic and cultural autonomy. In the case of Zimbabwe, "a politically and economically developed system existed."² The settlers had

mainly come for gold and it was only when they found that there was no gold that they turned to farming and in the process destroyed the African economic system.

The Land Issue.

The story of how Cecil Rhodes, who was founder of the British South African Company, worked out his scheme for the acquisition of Mashona-land (now Zimbabwe) is a classic example of the ruthlessness which the nineteenth-century Europeans employed in dispossessing Africans of their power, land rights and human freedom. The Ndebere Monarch, unaware of the true intentions of his white guests, made the false claim that he was the ruler of all Zambezi. It was accepted without question, not only by Rhodes but also by every one who was after trading rights. It is reported that, from that moment on, the king knew no peace. According to Vambe, "white men streamed to his kraal, telling all kinds of lies, and would not leave until they had got what they wanted."³ In the end king Lobengula signed what came to be called 'the Rudd concession', which gave legal respectability to Mr. Rhodes' grandiose schemes and everything else that has happened since in Zimbabwe. It is evident that Lobengula did not know the implication of the agreement and when he did discover latter that he had signed his rights away, he was shattered! As time passed, it became evident that on the piece of paper where he had put the implant of his thumb, he had sealed the fate of the Ndebele and Shona people. What for Lobengula was seen only as an agreement for the Company to mine gold, was interpreted by Rhodes as virtually turning over sovereignty to the British South African Company. In 1890, the famous pioneer column invaded the country, setting up its capital at Salisbury.

A war broke out between Lobengula and the British South African Company in 1893 in which the Ndebele were decisively defeated and forced to forfeit their lands. The overthrow of the Ndebele Monarch in 1893 was a turning point in the affairs of all the black people of Zimbabwe. This defeat served to unite the Ndebele and Shona who in time past had fought one another. They began to realize that they had common interests and that it was advantageous for them to unite and defend their country against the white invaders.

Meanwhile, the settlers who had occupied Zimbabwe were very insensitive to the needs of the native Africans. They forced them into reserves and then "expropriated their land, thereby creating a reservoir of cheap labour for settlers' farms, mines and developing urban centres."⁴ This move dispossessed the Africans making them poor and dependant. According to Martin, "by 1898 an estimated 38 per cent of the total population of Matabeleland had been forced into reserves."⁵ Martin further points out that:

Until 1918 the land purportedly belonged to the British South African Company by right of the Lippert concession and conquest. The Company distributed and sold the land as it saw fit, to settlers, Africans and Missionary organizations, the latter acquiring 400,000 acres over the years.⁶

It should not be surprising therefore that land was to become the central issue in nationalist politics leading up to and through the second war of liberation (Chimurenga II). Until 1914, Africans were allowed to remain on the land owned by the settlers but had to pay rent, either in kind as farm labourers or in cash for the privilege of continuing to occupy their ancestral homes. Martin's description of this arrangement is very revealing. He says:

The original idea of the Land Apportionment Act was that the cities, towns and commercial areas would be exclusively white domains with no Africans living in them. African Urban areas- sprawling townships where the poverty stood out in stark contrast to the conspicuous wealth of the white areas- were prescribed in an amendment to the Land Apportionment Act in 1941 which divided the

country into four areas: European, Native, Forest and Unreserved land.⁷

The land set aside for reserve was notable for its poor soil and rain-fall, often infested with tsetse flies and removed from lines of communication. It is reported in the New African Magazine that:

The industrial conciliation Act of 1934 banned Africans entering skilled employment. Thus Africans were forced to work for mere subsistence wages on white farms, mines, and factories in virtual servitude.⁸

The wage gap between whites and Africans was enormous:

Although Africans constituted 87% of the manufacturing sector work force, they received only 41% of the sector's wage bill. The disparity was greater in the mining sector where whites comprised only 6% of the labour force, yet received 40% of the wage bill. In agriculture the figure was even more staggering. Although Whites made up only 3.5% of agricultural labour force, they received almost 96% of the sector's wage bill. Income inequality in Rhodesia is the highest on the African continent, higher even than South Africa and is one of the highest in the world.⁹

The Deprivation of Educational Opportunities.

The strategy of oppression and exploitation also operated in institutions of learning such as schools. For example, the colonial administration deliberately limited educational opportunities for Africans to a minimum. The missionaries remained the only non-Africans contributing to African educational advancement. According to Martin:

In 1930 education was made compulsory for white children and eight years later this was extended to Asian and coloured children, but up until independence in April 1980 the same basic right never included Africans. The settler government feared the emergence of literate white-collar African proletariat, and emphasized technical skills rather than academic education for blacks, thereby limiting employment possibilities almost exclusively to manual labour and artisan fields.¹⁰

Between 1929 and 1943, there was a decline in the number of schools. This was obviously unfair especially given that "in 1930, when government expenditure for African education was 44,737 pounds, the African contribution to the

government revenue through direct taxation was eight times that amount."¹¹ In addition, higher school fees introduced in 1964 led to more pupils dropping out because their parents could not afford the fees. The number of teachers also fell, many of them having been detained.

According to Canaan Banana, education was inadequate even for those who were fortunate to attend schools. He says:

The corner stone of colonial education was the inculcation, upon the unwary recipient, of the idea that the colonizer was a superior being- an impression which became indelible through frequent application of the philosophy of the "master/servant" relationship.¹²

He points out that this type of educational system was damaging to the self-image of the colonised. He alleges that "it [educational system] was based on a concept of man derived from western culture which perceived man as naturally deformed, basically sinful, in need of redemption and continual support."¹³ According to him, "such a concept of man can easily explain why colonialists never provided mass education, believing as they did that the majority of men could never be educated."¹⁴

Banana is determined to ensure that this trend is reversed in the present Zimbabwe. He points out that "the concept of man propounded by our new system of education is that of a dynamic man, a growing man."¹⁵ He reveals that "during the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe an educational system was created. Its main characteristic was the recognition of man as a self-actualising being."¹⁶ He hopes that the new educational system would be geared to facilitate the growth of every Zimbabwean regardless of status, sex, race or age. He is optimistic that production will increase when the worker knows all he has to know about his profession and that he will also be satisfied with his work. He stresses that education should never start in the head-quarters of the ministry of education. Instead, "it starts in the most remote villages

of the less developed regions of Zimbabwe and from there it tells the government officials how it has to be planned and organized."¹⁷ This revolutionary step is necessarily a reaction against the colonial type of education. It is an attempt by Banana to rectify the imbalance of the past educational system and to make it available to the masses, while at the same time making it more relevant to their needs.

Economic and Cultural Exploitation.

Banana is concerned with international politics. He argues that "the economic relationship between the highly developed and the developing countries is one which creates more riches for the rich and more poverty for the poor."¹⁸ He maintains that it is that relationship which has to be changed, not only between particular countries when a developing country achieves independence, but also at all levels of international relations. He urges socialist developing countries, "to unite in order to oppose political economic and cultural domination by highly developed countries."¹⁹ According to him:

Economic dependence is secured through cultural dependence and cultural alienation of the masses, and both cultural and economic independence have to advance hand in hand reinforcing each other. People's economic power means peoples's power to decide the course of their destinies.²⁰

Banana declares that the poor and oppressed are emerging from their culture of silence to speak to the world that has long tried to deny their existence. Perhaps this explains why he has become an active champion of human freedom and justice. Describing his own theological endeavour, Banana says:

[It is] an attempt to interpret the Christian message within the context of experience of those who are victims of a hostile society; those who have been denied the development and the legitimate enjoyment of the fruits of our human and material resources; those who have been stripped of their humanity and reduced to the level of chattels, the prisoners of human-afflicted, pervasive poverty. It is an attempt to affirm the liberating hand of God through the willingness of the oppressed to revolt against those negative forces

around and within themselves, that keep them perpetual prisoners of circumstances. It affirms the need for the ghetto masses to become co-partners with God in His divine mission of moral, economic, political and social revolution.²¹

He points out that [the poor and oppressed] "have the elementary rights to think, to reflect on their own life and their own faith in God."²² Banana argues that the poor need not remain poor, lying in the dust being trampled under the feet of the oppressors. He urges the poor of the world to fight against the economic structural arrangements that keep them poor. According to him "the oppressed have the right to stand up and fight for their freedom with every means at their disposal."²³ He laments that western peoples tend to interpret the Third World's action according to their conception. He explains:

Because they never experienced the agony of colonial oppression and the basic need of departing from the oppressors, even by violent means, they can hardly understand our philosophy of life and our new perspectives.²⁴

He argues that political power is the only way for the poor in the third world to come out of their present desperation on their own. It is the oppressed themselves who are the proper subject of their own deliverance from oppression. For this reason, he defends the liberating war in Zimbabwe which brought to power the majority government:

When the people of Zimbabwe took up arms to fight the war for liberation, they did not do so in order to get rid of one ethnic group or race. They fought against an evil system; a system that denied them their basic human rights. The masses fought against an oppressive system that denied them their democratic and inalienable rights in the land of their birth; a system that regarded one section of the community as superior to the other and therefore, more equal than the other purely on the grounds of colour.²⁵

He points out that it was the oppressive colonial system which had made the blacks and whites irreconcilable and that its disappearance would make them reconcilable.

Banana, who advocates revolutions, argues that revolutions take place in a context of desperation and despair about humanly intolerable conditions which are not allowed to change. According to him:

There is a power situation behind each revolution, a power that controls the situation and resists change.... Because oppressive situations are embedded into a network of power and institutional violence, the essential characteristic of every revolution is aggressiveness. The enemy will try to protect himself and to protect his interests. He will never change by persuasion or by negotiations. The only possible means of reducing him to powerlessness is by the use of stronger power, that is the power of oppressed.²⁶

In his view, the poor of the Third World cannot live fully because the primary sources of life are threatened. He defines the poor as "the peasants without land, the labourers without work, the children without schools, and the sick without hospitals."²⁷ He stresses that this threat comes from historical causes. According to him, "if God wants all men to have fullness of life, he is the first revolutionary, continually calling us into the struggle."²⁸ Since he believes that it is the right of all people everywhere to live a decent life, he argues that this may require the oppressed people to fight for their freedom. Justifying the Zimbabwean struggle for independence, he says:

Our attack on the enemy was an expression of the wrath of God who is the God of the living... and who could not tolerate the oppression of his children in the times of Pharaoh.²⁹

Banana is very critical of the capitalist system which he blames for these social ills. He says:

The God of life, the creator of life, has been insulted because life is threatened and destroyed every day in the poverty of the rural areas,...in the commercial farms, in the noise and dust of the factories, in the darkness of the mines and, worse than that, in the despair of unemployment. God is not being insulted by the atheist who ignores him but respects life, but he is insulted by the believer who acknowledges him but is intent on destroying life.³⁰

He accuses western capitalist society of accepting a form of christianity in which an indifferent God is worshipped who is not concerned with justice. He stresses that "it is the task of revolutionary theology to recover the image of God that Jesus brought to us."³¹

Banana's Disillusionment with Western Theology.

Banana is critical of the theology originating from the west, which he accuses of being dogmatic and harbouring a sense of superiority with respect to other sources of knowledge. He points out that "this approach can never be accepted in countries where people have been previously dominated by colonial powers and have now discovered their hard-won freedom."³² According to him, "a static and analytical theology... tends to be deterministic... dictating from the analysis of old traditions and texts what man has to do today."³³ He points out that "the main tenets of revolutionary christianity, are that theology emanates from the people and never from a selected elite."³⁴ In his opinion, the great theologians of the Old Testament were peasants, the notable example being the prophet Amos. He says:

God does not speak through abstract pronouncement of ecclesiastical authorities but manifests himself continually in our daily lives. Any attempt to transform religion into bookish treatment of revelation is a departure from revelation itself.³⁵

The point he is making is that God is all powerful and is able to communicate to anyone in their own experience:

The experience of the local community is the new burning bush, burning with the intensity of the continual every day struggle for better life, for meaningful social change, for the total liberation of the poor all over the world. It is from that sacred burning historical eruption of the poor that the voice of God is once heard.³⁶

For him, Christianity must be based on the concrete situation and it should be a Christianity that emanates from the people. This is the kind of Christianity that he wants to see practised. It is his hope that:

The theology that would accompany such revolutionary christianity would derive its knowledge and explanations from the understanding of human realities and contexts, and would be very attentive to the expressions of the people themselves in their efforts to change their socio-economic environment.³⁷

Furthermore, it is his belief that authentic theology in context can only be realized in a socialist community in which every member is involved in social change searching for better human conditions, justice and equality for all.

THE THEOLOGICAL CURRENTS INFLUENCING THE AFRICAN SCENE

The Role of the Theologies of Liberation.

There is a need to do a survey study of the theological currents influencing the African scene in order to determine the degree to which Canaan Banana has been influenced. To use his analogy, "the river is better understood when its source and course through the mountains and plains can be traced."³⁸ Similarly, there is a need to ascertain the theological trends which have directed his thinking in order to understand and appreciate his contributions. It is the writer's contention that he is influenced by the theologies of liberation and this is reflected in his works. This is hardly surprising considering that all the theologies of liberation emerged in the context of oppression, poverty and exploitation similar to a degree to Banana's own context. It is natural therefore that he should build upon these historical similarities in order to collaborate theologically with other theologians in similar contexts. Banana is also concerned with a global understanding of the theological enterprise as it relates to the liberation of the victims of oppression, hence his interaction with other liberation theologians. For instance, he quotes quite extensively such well-known liberation theologians as Gutierrez, Assmann, Segundo, Cone and others. The main focus of these theologians is the poor and the oppressed which is the thing that concerns Banana. The fact that the theologies of liberation were already developed and circulating when Banana entered politics in 1971

strongly suggests that he had a prior knowledge of the works of liberation theologians. Apart from the fact that he quotes them in his works, there are other indicators to suggest that he was familiar with their thoughts. Like many liberation theologians, he also employs a dialectical analysis of society which examines conflicts and imbalances affecting the poor and calls for a reformulation of the social system to rectify the situation. The dialectical analysis methodology was first introduced by Karl Marx whom Banana praises saying that, "he was the man who saw the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and sought to solve their problem in a scientific way by seeking to discover the causes of the situation."³⁹

He urges that we should all "embark on a world-wide struggle against obsolete socio-economic systems which constrain future human developments."⁴⁰

According to him:

Religion and politics are two sides of the same coin in that both, in their true unadulterated nature, seek to guide man towards realization of his role in life and thus furnish man with the inspiration, the comforts and the needs for that journey towards the integrated realization."⁴¹

Banana is not saying anything radically different from what other liberation theologians have been saying. For instance, Gutierrez says.

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."⁴²

McAfee Brown also says that "the [struggle] is initiated by victims of oppression who want liberation, not as a theoretical concept, but as a condition of physical survival and full humanity."⁴³

As I have just shown, it was natural for Banana to take a keen interest in the works of liberation theologians because of a shared desire for the liberation of the victims of structural oppression. It is appropriate at this

point to give a brief description of those contexts which gave rise to the theologies of liberation elsewhere.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Latin America.

Liberation theology in Latin America arose in a context of oppression, poverty and excessive exploitation. McAfee Brown's description of this context is very revealing:

From the earliest invasions of the Spanish conquistadores, almost five centuries ago, Latin America has been the object of what is politely called "colonial rule", which less politely means being exploited and dominated by outsiders. Until recently the outsiders were Spaniards and Portuguese; now they are North Americans and northern Europeans. The early invaders treated the Indians ruthlessly,... who saw the exploitation of the Indians as a way to get rich quick.⁴⁴

In the nineteenth century there were nationalistic uprisings in Latin America that secured a measure of self-rule. Although the political control from Europe was overthrown, covert economic control replaced it - a shift which the liberation theologians call neo-colonialism. Economic manipulators abroad joined forces with small indigenous manipulators at home to continue the exploitation of the many by the few. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church through the centuries continued to identify with the rich and "to console the poor with promises of reward in an afterlife, provided the poor remained submissive to those whom an all-wise providence had placed over them."⁴⁵ However, there has been a shift in the church's position and although the oppression of the poor has continued, the complicity of the church in this oppression has diminished and in some quarters turned into outright

opposition. In fact, some priests actually are beginning to identify directly with the poor, sometimes leaving posh parishes to live in slums with the poor. This identification of certain priests with the poor and oppressed did not happen in a vacuum. For instance, a long history of social teaching through papal encyclicals or other documents began to converge, in the same direction. According to Gutierrez's description whom Brown quotes:

Beginning in 1891, a series of "social encyclicals" appeared over eighty years, in which the church's official teaching about political engagement underwent slow but startling change. Early on, there were routine condemnations of "atheistic communism", and criticism of Catholics who were soft on socialism. But the tone changed as it became clearer that workers in the modern world had a right to organize, to strike, to insist on a decent standard of living, and to assume more control over their lives - things that the economic and political system known as "capitalism" had a deeply ingrained habit of opposing, and did not propose to concede without a fight.⁴⁶

In 1971, it was acknowledged that socialism was an option Catholics could entertain.

At a meeting of Latin American Bishops in 1968 at Medellin, Colombia the document on 'peace' released after much deliberation insisted that, "violence does not begin only when a gun is fired, but is already present in the structural violence that condemns the great majority of Latin Americans to poverty, hunger, despair, and death."⁴⁷ It went further to state that the "true violence is found in structures so rigged that benefits for the few are purchased at the cost of destruction for the many."⁴⁸ According to Brown again:

It was because of such documents that Medellin is known as the conference at which the church opted positively for the oppressed, attacked the political and economic structures of Latin America as purveyors of injustice, pointed out the unjust dependency of Latin America on outside powers, and called for radical change across the continent. Medellin saw clearly that the present order of things guarantees that the rich will grow richer at the expense of the poor, with the inevitable result that the poor will grow poorer in relation to the rich. And the bishops refused any longer to bless such an order of things.⁴⁹

According to McAfee Brown's assessment:

Liberation theology is partly a product of Medellin, though foreshadowings of it were present before Medellin. But it is best understood as coming to Medellin and going from it by way of the comunidades de base out of whose ongoing experience it continues to be refined.⁵⁰

The Tenets of Liberation Theology.

In a way, liberation theology is a reactionary theology because it represents a disillusionment with all theologies which are considered to be inadequate when it comes to their attitude to politics. The concern of liberation theologians in Latin America and indeed elsewhere in the Third World countries is that theology should be experiential, it should place the concrete human situation in the fore-front of the church's thinking. Gutierrez, who is regarded as the father of liberation theology, points out that the poor are calling into question the political economy that oppresses them and he urges the church to participate in the process of liberation and to establish real solidarity with the oppressed, who are the chief victims. He argues his case as follows:

To proclaim the gospel from a situation of identification with the poor is to convene a church in solidarity with the popular masses of Latin America, in solidarity with their aspirations, with their struggles to have a place in their own history. It is a summons to the church to make a contribution, within the confines of its proper task-- the proclamation of the gospel--to the abolition of a society built by and for the few, and to the construction of a different, more just, and more humane social order for all.⁵¹

Gutierrez points out that any attempt to separate the love of God from the love of our neighbour is unbiblical. According to him the Exodus narratives which show God's intervention in the world to rescue the oppressed community provide us with a principle to follow. He argues that what was necessary in this situation was a political liberation through which Yahweh expressed his love for his people and the gift of total liberation was received. Man is

urged to exemplify this noble example by liberating himself. In this regard, he says:

By working, transforming the world, breaking out of servitude, building a just society, and assuming his destiny in history, man forges himself.⁵²

According to Gutierrez, the elimination of misery and exploitation is a sign of the coming Kingdom, and to place oneself in the perspective of the Kingdom means to participate in the struggle for the liberation of those oppressed by others. For him, to be converted is to commit oneself to the process of liberation of the poor and the oppressed. He emphasizes that the gospel urges people to take initiatives in defying those who profit from injustice. He urges the oppressed to fight for their rights in order to improve their situation and that of their neighbours. Gutierrez therefore provides a theological imperative for being actively involved in the political scene; he writes:

History, concrete history, is the place where God reveals the mystery of God's personhood. God's word comes to us in proportion to our involvement in historical becoming. But this history is a conflictual one, a history of conflicts of interest, of struggles for greater justice, a history of marginalization and exploitation of human beings, of aspirations for liberation. To make an option for the poor, for the exploited classes, to identify with their lot and share their fate, is to seek to make this history that of an authentic community of brothers and sisters. There is no other way to receive the free gift of filiation, of the status of children of God. It is an option for Christ's cross, in the hope of his resurrection. This is what we celebrate in Eucharist: we express our wish and intent to make our own the meaning Jesus Christ gave to his life, and to receive the spirit, the gift of loving as he loved.⁵³

For Gutierrez, an option for the poor means a new awareness of class confrontation and it means taking sides with the dispossessed. It means entering into the world of the exploited social class with its values and its cultural categories. He points out that it is within this context of active involvement in the struggles of the oppressed that God reveals himself.

According to him, God becomes especially manifest in the experience of the local community involved in an everyday struggle for a better life and meaningful social change. As we noted earlier, Canaan Banana also holds similar views. Most liberation theologians in their zeal to transform society tend to ignore the eschatological significance of the gospel message. They often give the impression that salvation is limited to the concrete and historical dimension. For instance Gutierrez says:

The theology of liberation is a theology of salvation in the concrete, historical, and political conditions of our day. These concrete, current, historical and political mediations possess their own validity, and they change our experience. Thereby also they change our reflection on "the message which was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and have now been revealed" (Col. 1:26; cf. Rom.16:25): namely, the Father's love and a fellowship of brothers and sisters.⁵⁴

The Weakness of Liberation Theology.

While it is true that the biblical language of salvation has a liberating aspect, e.g. the deliverance of the captives and of the oppressed people from their servitude, it is nevertheless an error to equate salvation with a human creation of utopia here on earth. The biblical message of salvation has a past aspect based on the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, a present reality where man can enjoy God's blessings of forgiveness of sins, and a future dimension where God's redemptive work will be fully consummated. Liberation theology has unfortunately obscured if not actually denied spiritual salvation through Jesus Christ. It is only God who can effect this kind of salvation because sin is beyond human correction and requires divine conquest. A radical disease requires a radical remedy. If human beings are sinners, they need a saviour. It is only Jesus Christ who can deal with human sin.

Liberation theology also places its hope in revolutions which would abolish the present unjust situation and build a free and more just society. The emphasis is on the destruction of political and economic structures regarded as citadels of sin. Consequently, the incarnation is seen as a manifestation of God's purpose to destroy all works of the devil whether personal, economic, social, political, or spiritual. However, if this is all that Jesus does, his work is limited to a socio-politico-economic realm. On the contrary, he is the saviour of the whole world, and his death is redemptive both of the oppressed and the oppressors from the power of sin.

While it is commendable that the exponents of liberation theology should focus their attention on the question of justice, they have nevertheless shown some deficiency in the areas of exegesis. Instead of properly exegeting the biblical passages which deal with the theme of justice, they employ a marxist analysis of society and the remedy offered is often purely humanistic. Most liberation theologians advocate a socialistic type of economy as a way of solving pressing economic problems. Socialism can be defined as a political regime in which the ownership of the means of production is removed from individuals and handed over to higher institutions whose concern is the higher good. This has a problem in that it puts faith in government officials. It is not certain that higher institutions will automatically practice concern for the higher good. Unfortunately, only a few liberation theologians concede that their own economic views may contain large proportions of error or that their opponents may in some measure be correct.

The recent economic crisis in socialist Poland exposes the fallacy of socialism and communism as the only systems capable of solving our contemporary politico-economic problems. Reporting on Poland's economic performance, Nagorski says:

Under successive Communist governments, the state of Polish economy went from bad to worse. Jaruzelski [The Prime Minister of Poland] repeatedly announced the introduction of new economic reforms, only to find that nothing worked. His reforms consisted largely of half measures, but even sweeping initiatives would have failed without a degree of popular support that he could not mobilize.⁵⁵

In East Germany, the centralized economy hasn't brought the expected results either. Incidentally, Honecker [The ex-East Germany leader] is reported to have boasted that he "built the communist world's most successful economy."⁵⁶ Despite this optimism, the cost of living continues to go up, factories are aging and fresh foods are getting scarce. It is not surprising therefore that many East Germans have recently taken refuge in the West. The Soviet Union has not fared any better either. Reviewing the book by Anders Aslund titled Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform, Adam Platt and John Barry cite the author as saying:

CIA estimates, long the measure of Soviet economic performance most relied on by Western analysts, have been "grossly over optimistic" for years. The country's GNP is smaller than previously thought - at most a third of the U.S. total - and the military burden far more crushing.⁵⁷

Ashud therefore concludes that "the Soviet leadership faces a bleak choice between a radical overhaul of their system, or continued decline. There is no middle way."⁵⁸ Fortunately, the process for economic reforms has already started in the Soviet Union. In Africa, Mozambique which after independence adopted a rigid centralized economy as devised by Stalin has also abandoned the system due to its ineffectiveness as a means of solving the country's economic problems.

Some of the liberation theologians also tend to project the view that those who are involved in social and political activities are related to the christian God whether they acknowledge Jesus Christ or not. This idea is at least implied in Segundo's statement. He says:

When we contemplate a force, a profundity, a being that transcends everything else, it is quite possible that we are not contemplating the christian God at all. On the other hand, when we or other

people dedicate our efforts and our lives to the work of fostering mutual respect and love and unity among men, the end product of all the justice, love and solidarity created by our world relates us infallibly to the christian God whether we are aware of it or not.⁵⁹

He further says that christians and atheists have more in common than most christians realize. According to him, more often than not the atheist is rejecting an outmoded view of God that christians too should reject. This should be a clear warning to those christians who are lulled into the conclusion that liberation theology is nothing more than traditional christianity with addition deep concern for the poor. Raymond Hundley is right when he says:

Liberation is not merely ardent social concern wedded to orthodox christian belief. It is a theological and doctrinal revolution that stands in opposition to the very foundations of tradition christian doctrine. It is the whole new way of looking at the christian faith that challenges all past ways of being christian.⁶⁰

However, liberation theology contains some good aspects which ought to enrich christianity and broaden its vision. We must not therefore condemn it entirely as heretical and worthless. Instead, we should incorporate those good aspects in our evangelical theology.

Contribution Of Liberation Theology.

The liberation theologians are to be commended for taking the issue of social justice very seriously and inspiring other christians to do the same. Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches and a former disciple of black consciousness leader Steve Biko rightly points out that "our spirituality cannot be separated from the real problems of the people."⁶¹ According to the New African, the position that Christianity is tied up with social action on behalf of the poor "has made liberation theology irresistible to the young generation in South Africa"⁶² Kwesi Dickson,

speaking of liberation theology, says that "it advocates a shift from orthodoxy to orthopraxis, because it proceeds on the basis of the conviction that faith divorced from practice is not worth the name of faith."⁶³ This is a welcome contribution and it conforms to the demands of the gospel. Our faith in Jesus Christ ought to motivate us to work for justice in our communities and in the world at large. It is a pity that some evangelical christians have perpetuated the idea that being a christian consists of saying prayers and going to church but very little else. They fail to appreciate the entirely different biblical perspective which puts emphasis not strictly on religion but upon obedience to God in everyday life. We read in Hosea 4:1 that where there is injustice there is no knowledge of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood very well the implications of the christian faith and this is what is said of him:

To Bonhoeffer, Christianity was not the concern of believing, pious soul who shuts himself up and keeps himself within the bounds of the sacramental sphere. No, according to him Christianity has its place in this world and the church as the body of Christ, and the fellowship in him can only be the visible Church. Man must follow him who has served and passed through this world as the living, the dying and the risen Lord.⁶⁴

The Roman Catholic Bishops of the Netherlands in their pastoral letter of 1973, also appear to be reacting against private religiosity when they say:

In opposition to those who want to put the centre of gravity of religion in sacred rites and in the sanctuary [the Bible] repeatedly and emphatically points out that liturgy is hypocritical and piety is reprehensible if they do not go hand in hand with active social justice.⁶⁵

They are referring especially to Isaiah 58 which condemns fasting when accompanied by oppression of the peasants and declares that true religious observance involves breaking every yoke and sharing bread with the hungry. This is what Christianity demands of us and if we love God we must also love our fellow men who are made in his image. It is most encouraging that liberation theologians more than any other people have recovered this biblical dimension.

The other brand of theology which appears to have influenced Canaan Banana and which deserves a brief description is Black theology of liberation. This theology appeared on the African scene probably before even Banana joined politics around 1971. Therefore we can only speculate that he was perhaps familiar with it and drew some inspiration from it because of its concern for the oppressed and the victims of racism. It is unlikely that Banana should have been ignorant of contemporary theological debate which focused on the oppression and injustice. We need to realize that Banana's context was similar in many ways to the contexts where black theology had been born. According to Wilmore and Cone, there existed a link early on between Afro-Americans and African theologians:

Black theologians' dialogue with African theologians began when the Board of Directors of the National Conference of Black Churchmen decided in May 1969 to take steps that would enhance relations between the two groups. NCBC representatives went to the All-Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in September 1969.⁶⁶

This process of dialogue between the two groups continued in the years that followed and was intensified. According to Wilmore and Cone again:

The first formal consultation between Black theologians and African theologians...occured in Dar es Salaam, August 22-28, 1971, under the joint sponsorship of the Tanzanian Council of Churches and the newly established African Commission of NCBC.⁶⁷

It is doubtful that Banana was unaware of these theological developments which were taking place in his own region - Southern Africa. The present writer is convinced that Banana took a keen interest in these theological developments particularly because Black theology of liberation was relevant to his own context for the purpose of Zimbabwean liberation. In order to determine the degree to which he has been influenced by the theologies of liberation, one needs to study his works. He does not seem to be saying anything different from other liberation theologians except that he has contextualized their ideas to suit his own context.

BLACK THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

Origin.

Black theology of liberation first appeared in North America and its origin stretches back to the period of slavery. However, it remained by and large non-academic and unwritten. It was only articulated in the sermons, music and prayers of the black worship experience. As black people searched the scriptures, a conversation between biblical content and the contemporary context ensued. In this contact between the biblical text and experience of oppression, they began to draw the conclusion that God meant them for freedom and identified with them in their struggle. Therefore, prior to the 1960s, black theology was articulated but not codified as a written theology. The situation has since changed and many books on black theology of liberation have been written. Consequently, its influence has also spread beyond North America. Like its counterpart, liberation theology from Latin America, black theology of liberation also emerged in the context of oppression and poverty. Cone's description of the blacks' context during the 1950s and '60s is very revealing:

White people did everything within their power to define black reality, to tell us what we were--and their definition, of course, extended no further than their social, political, and economic interests. They tried to make us believe that God created black people to be white people's servants. We blacks, therefore, were expected to enjoy plowing their fields, cleaning their houses, mowing their lawns, and working in their sawmills.⁶⁸

According to Cone again:

To be put in one's place, as defined by white society, was a terrible reality for blacks.... It meant being beaten by the town cop and spending an inordinate length of time in stinking jail. It meant attending "separate but equal" schools, going to the balcony when attending a movie, and drinking water from a "colored" fountain. It meant refusing to retaliate when called a nigger- unless you were prepared to leave town at the precise moment of your rebellion.⁶⁹

Black theology therefore emerges out of human suffering and anguish and it seeks to justify God and the ways of God to down-trodden and perplexed people so that they can be inspired to do something about their lot. It speaks out of and into a specific situation, in this case the situation of political oppression and injustice, of social and economic exploitation of a specific group. It seeks to make sense of their suffering. Black theology was understood by its creators to be a christian theological reflection upon the black struggle for justice and liberation. Black preachers and civil rights activists of 1960s initiated the development of black theology that rejected racism and affirmed the black struggle for liberation as consistent with the gospel of Jesus. The black clergy of North America contended that Black theology was truly christian theology precisely because it identified the gospel with the struggle for justice in society. They believed that the God of Moses and of Jesus is first and foremost the God of love and of justice who is ever present in time of trouble. According to Cone:

Black theology, ... is the story of black people's struggle for liberation in an extreme situation of oppression. Consequently there is no sharp distinction between thought and practice, worship and theology, because black theological reflections about God occurred in the black struggle of freedom.⁷⁰

Black theology has in recent years become very popular in South Africa because of its focus on the oppressed. It begins with specific people, with specific problems to face. In South Africa for instance, it starts with black people who are faced with the problem of oppression, fear, hunger, insults and dehumanization. It tries to understand who these people are, what their life experiences are and the nature and cause of their suffering. It grapples with suffering and oppression and believes that in Jesus Christ the total liberation of all people has come. According to Boesak:

Black theological reflection must take seriously precisely what Christian theology has hitherto ignored: the black situation. In its focus on the poor and the oppressed, the theology of liberation is not a new theology; it is simply the proclamation of the age-old

gospel, but now liberated from the deadly hold of the mighty and the powerful and made relevant to the situation of the oppressed and the poor.⁷¹

Boesak points out that "Black Theology is a situational theology. It is the black people's attempt to come to terms theologically with their black situation."⁷² However, he admits the influence of North America Black theology on South Africa. According to him:

All over the Third World the struggle for liberation created a new consciousness which took a specific form in every situation. In America this consciousness, having been dormant for decades, was awakened especially by the work of Malcom X and Martin Luther King, Jr. And it is not at all difficult to see why it so powerfully influenced black people in South Africa and all over the world. It has in common with all the struggles in the Third World the search for identity, genuine humanity, and a truly human life.⁷³

This idea of liberation is expounded by Desmond Tutu who points out that "for the victims of oppression and injustice it is important for them to hear that the God they worship is the liberator God of the Exodus who led a rabble of slaves out of bondage into glorious freedom."⁷⁴ Being a theology of liberation, black theology seeks to stress that the poor are not marginal people and to bring into their lives a new understanding of their liberation in Jesus Christ. Canaan Banana is even more hopeful when he says that "the experience of liberation would become a new force driving the people of God towards the attainment of more humane world and socio-economic order."⁷⁵ Black theology therefore confines itself to the socio-politico-economic arena, where race and class are real life issues. It parallels and reflects Latin American liberation theology in many ways. Certainly one of these is the position that God opposes oppression and has opted to side with and liberate the oppressed. The oppressed in South Africa are non-whites (Black, Coloured, Asians) who have been dehumanized, unjustly treated and evaluated according to the standard, "right life is white life." Thus the white oppressors now face the wrath of Yahweh, through and because of Christ.

The exponents of black theology call for blacks to love and liberate the whites from their oppressor mentality, towards genuine reconciliation. A total liberating praxis is called for. Christ is the catalyst for all this and the church is His witness. What is not made clear is precisely how the death and resurrection of Jesus is liberative, and how it is translated into the existence of the oppressed. In my opinion, it is a great omission that the exponents of black theology tend to explain the dying and rising of Jesus in liberation terms, with little or no discussion on Christ dying for sin as sin, of which oppression would merely be one of its ugly manifestations. However, black theology is contextual, being concerned with the existence and suffering of the oppressed poor.

The Tenets of Black Theology.

James Cone who is perhaps the most prominent exponent of black theology maintains that whatever else christian theology might be, it must take sides with the victims who are economically and politically oppressed. He says:

If theology does not take side with the victims of economic injustice, it cannot represent the victim, Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified because he was a threat to the political and religious structures of his time.⁷⁶

According to Cone, the purpose of theology is to show the significance of the oppressed's struggle against inhumane powers, relating the people's struggle to God's intention to set them free. He insists that the gospel cannot be separated from the concrete struggles for freedom among the oppressed of the land. Liberation is regarded as the focus of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which rejects the dichotomy between physical and spiritual and insists on their dialectical relationship. The advocates of this theology are intolerant of any perspective of christianity that fails to relate the gospel of Jesus

Christ to the economic and social conditions of the people. They contend that the gospel embraces the whole person in human society in work and play. This means that the gospel is inseparably connected with the bodily liberation of the poor. Cone is particularly critical of American churches for interpreting religion as something exclusively spiritual with no political content useful in the struggles of the poor for freedom. He is supported by other exponents of black theology particularly those in South Africa who also hold similar view.

It seems obvious that what concerns the advocates of black theology, namely socio-politico-economic justice should also be our christian concern, but of course not exclusively. There is a need to proclaim a holistic gospel, stressing the importance of meeting the physical and the spiritual needs of man. Unfortunately, black theology like other theologies of liberation is motivated by political and economic considerations which emphasize the material welfare of man at the expense of his spiritual need. This gap must be bridged if these theologies are to acquire universal authenticity and relevance.

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CHAPTER II

BANANA'S THEOLOGY OF GOD, MAN, AND HISTORY

Introduction.

Banana seems to be adopting a similar approach to the liberation theologians discussed in the preceding chapter. For instance, he deliberately selects biblical material which according to him, has particular relevance for the social realities of poverty, oppression and injustice. Describing the characteristics of liberation theologians Leonardo and Clodovis Boff say:

The theologian of liberation opts to see social reality from a point of departure in the reality of the poor- opts to analyze processes in the interests of the poor, and to act for liberation in concert with the poor. This is a political decision, for it defines the theologian as a social agent, occupying a determined place in a correlation of social forces: a place on the side of the poor and oppressed. At the same time it is an ethical option, because it rejects the status quo. It refuses to accept the situation as it is and experiences ethical indignation at the scandal of poverty and exploitation. It evinces an interest in the advancement of the poor, which can occur only in the presence of structural change in historical-social reality.¹

Banana seems to be optimistic when he asks thus; "what is it that impedes us from a resolute acceptance of the Zimbabwean revolution as the only possible salvation for our people and as the sign of the times for us today?"² What worries me about his theology is that it seems idealistic, almost utopian! The category of original sin and the reality of pervasive evil is recast in terms of political and economical emancipation of the poor peasants of Zimbabwe. He considers Heilsgeschichte (Salvation History) as the history of social liberation. Specific acts of liberation such as the Exodus and the current

struggles against oppression are perceived as marks of the kingdom. The present writer intends to respond to some of Banana's theological statements subjecting his views to the authoritative word of God.

Banana's Theology of God.

Banana's understanding of God differs radically from the traditional view. God for him is like a General issuing orders to his troops to fight on for their liberation and freedom. This is hardly surprising given the fact that he only discusses God within an oppressive socio-politico-economic context and with particular reference to the Zimbabwean situation. God is perceived as one involved in the liberation of the oppressed. It is interesting to note how Banana can turn a purely political issue into a theological one by equating his own political preference, namely socialism, with the gospel! However, he fails to give any proof for some of his claims. Banana wants a new theology, for his nation, a people's theology. The starting point for his theology is not the bible, but the everyday experience of the people. This experience alone is the locus of God's manifestation. Now we see why God does not reveal Himself in the Bible, but in the people, and an exclusive group at that, the poor and the oppressed. He says:

Arguments cannot prove anything; experience does. I am not going to adduce any authorities to show that I am right because proofs have to be found in reality itself, not outside it. The years of involvement in the struggle have shown me that the struggle does not need any justification because the struggle is concerned about man and man is above everything, even the Sabbath (Mark, 2:27)³

According to this statement, it would appear that Banana regards experience as the supreme source of knowledge through which God communicates His will to us. The weakness of this position is that it is subjective and open to abuses by some people who may want to use God as a rubber stamp by falsely claiming to have received divine revelation or instructions on certain matters. While it

is commendable that we should be theologically relevant to our contexts , we must nevertheless strive to be faithful to the word of God and avoid manipulating it. There is often the temptation to impose our point of view by asserting that our arguments are valid without any proofs. This can be avoided if we don't allow our personal convictions and prejudices to influence our interpretation of the word of God. God must be allowed to speak for Himself to us through His word.

Taking Exodus 5:1 as his text, Banana argues that God intervenes in the affairs of men through human agents for the purpose of guiding man. He points out that it was for this reason that God sent Moses with the message to Pharaoh "Let my people go"(Exodus 5:1). When Pharaoh failed to respond positively to the language of persuasion and argument, "God had no alternative but to use the language that Pharaoh himself spoke, the language of force and violence."⁴ In his view, this is taken as clear evidence that "God does vindicate the use of liberating violence."⁵ He equates taking up arms against the oppressors with a way of responding to God's call. Referring to John 10:10, he argues that "if God wants all men to have fullness of life, he is the first revolutionary, continually calling us into the struggle."⁶ This approach amounts to forcing the text to say something other than the intended message. The new life which John refers to is the life in Christ where men are delivered from the curse of sin and brought into the blessing of God. In consistency with his conclusion that God is revolutionary, Banana adds:

He [God] becomes especially manifest in the experience of the local community. This experience alone is the locus of God's manifestation. The experience of the local community is the new burning bush, burning with the intensity of the continual everyday struggle for a better life, for meaningful social change, for the total liberation of the poor all over the world. It is from that sacred burning historical eruption of the poor that the voice of God is once heard.⁷

Banana is in agreement at this point with another prominent liberation

theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez. He says:

The liberation of Israel is a political action. It is the breaking away from a situation of despoliation and misery and the beginning of the construction of a just and fraternal society. It is the suppression of disorder and the creation of a new order.⁸

For his part, Banana argues that:

In Zimbabwe we have also heard the call. We also experienced the agonies of oppression. Through the armed struggle we attained independence and started to move towards the promised land, a land where there would be equality and mutual understanding, cooperation, prosperity and a better life for all.⁹

Justifying the liberation war in his country where thousands of people perished during the struggle, Banana says:

Our attack on the enemy was an expression of the wrath of God who is the God of the living...and who could not tolerate the oppression of his children in the times of Pharaoh.¹⁰

This assertion is consistent with his understanding of God whom he defines as follows:

He[God] is not a God "before us". He is not a God "above us", he is a God ahead of us and yet he is the God among us. The God before us has been used to consecrate the past and to constitute the past as the only norm for the future. Educational, social and economic systems resort to God as a guarantee for their permanence as the only possible orders. The God above is being used to detain the present, to contain the initiative of the revolutionary forces of the world today. Those who resort to God above us will tell you exactly what is good and evil, which changes are "legitimate" and which are not and which changes are violent and which are not and that the peaceful ones will be accepted by God and the violent ones rejected. The God ahead of us, the God among us is the revolutionary God. He is the God of justice, the all-caring who grants us our equal rights to enjoy the world in which he placed us, alongside with the rest of mankind, both in the present and future.¹¹

What he is effectively saying is that God should not go out in front of us, because then we have to follow Him. He also should not as the sovereign law giver, stand above us, because then we would have to obey Him. If He wants to, He is welcome to assume the only little place remaining for Him, which is next to us -as a revolutionary God, a God whom we discover in the revolution only. However, Banana must be commended for pointing out that "the knowledge of the

true God is directly connected with justice. It is impossible to know him while practising oppression."¹² Banana is supported in part by Bishop Desmond Tutu who also argues that:

When we encounter God in worship then we must not be surprised at the consequences of that encounter. True worship does not permit us to remain in spiritual ghetto. It drives us out to engage the evil one. It is an extraordinary paradigm like that of Moses and the burning bush.¹³

It is evident from Banana's preceding argument that he tries to avoid any discussion about God, such as His attributes, divorced from His dealings with mankind. He is more interested in portraying God as a revolutionary agent intervening in the affairs of men. This is a one-sided perspective about God however, and the present writer intends to correct this misconception by giving a brief biblical account of the doctrine of God.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Revelation.

Adeyemo argues that "the God of the Bible is a self-revealing God."¹⁴ While human religions in general may be seen as the story of humankind seeking God, religion in the Bible is centred on God seeking us. It is not so much a question of discovery as revelation precisely because God takes the initiative to show us something about Himself or about His will. At the outset, God is the hidden God (Isa. 45:19), who cannot be known by us directly unless He makes Himself known. One of the key words which describe this reality is the Hebrew word - GALAH (to open, to uncover) and in Greek APOKALUPTAIN (to uncover, to unveil). There are two senses at which the term revelation can be taken, namely revelation as a process and as a content. Once

God acts in history, He reveals something of Himself and this He does in a process. This expresses the basic truth namely that God has closed the gap between heaven and earth and wishes to be near His people. As for the content, what God reveals in the Judeo-Christian tradition is Himself.

Banana is therefore right in his assertion that "God does not reveal himself in a moment of history for the future but accompanies man through history as if in continual dialogue, letting himself to be known a little more every time."¹⁵ This revelation is to be seen as coming about in distinct stages of increasing significance:

- I) Before Revelation - Silent transcendence
- II) Old Testament Revelation - God reveals Himself in word and deed
- III) New Testament Revelation - God reveals Himself in person
- IV) Final Revelation - God will reveal Himself in divinity, i.e face to face

Addressing the same issue, Berkhof says that "man does not elicit knowledge from God as he does from other objects of study, but God conveys knowledge of Himself to man, a knowledge which man can only accept and appropriate."¹⁶ Therefore, to explore the subject of theology in the Old Testament is to enter a dynamic realm of life where all things and relationships find their meaning in the God who has chosen to reveal Himself through the historical experience of Israel, beginning with the call of Abraham, and in the New Testament culminating in the coming of Jesus Christ. Judeo-Christian tradition finds expression in the testimony that the Lord of history and creation revealed Himself personally to Israel in the concrete episodes of her history and laid His covenant claim on her. Just as persons are known in the context of relationships, so God's self is also revealed in His historical relationships with His people. It is impossible to know God in

isolation. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not the God of speculative thought. He is known by what He has done, is doing and will do, i.e. in the events of history. Old Testament theology, therefore, is fundamentally historical theology. It is profoundly and radically historical for it rests upon the witness that God's revelation takes the form of a history. Israel's God was the Lord of history, the God who rescued Israel from Egyptian bondage, led his people through the wilderness and on to the land of the promise. This analysis would not have been radically different from Banana's doctrine of God if he had not introduced a dangerous aspect whereby he sees taking up arms against the oppressor as a way of responding to God's call. Such an argument is not supported by biblical evidence. For instance, the children of Israel did not take up arms to effect their liberation, it was God who fought for them. We are told that Moses urged the people to stand firm and see God's deliverance (Exodus 14:13). Salvation in the Bible is the act of God whether it is in the form of national deliverance as in the Exodus or personal redemption in Jesus Christ. Liberation belongs to the essential character of God and He is the one who takes the initiative. Therefore, the Exodus liberation did not arise out of Israel's active pursuit of freedom, for the Israelites were reluctant to leave Egypt and were complaining all the way. In fact, they were ready to exchange their new freedom under Moses for the oppressive tyranny in Egypt. Hence, the Exodus was not a matter of rebellion or a revolution. It was Yahweh who brought out the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. This is why Israel later ascribed her liberation solely to God and failure to do so often resulted in further oppression and punishment at the hands of her enemies. Conversely, when they put their trust in God, He always rescued them. For instance, when Sennacherib, king of Assyria invaded Judah, King Hezekiah of Judah reminded the people of the fact that God was with them to defend them (2 Chronicles 32:7-8). Then when Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah prayed and cried out to heaven, the Lord sent His angel who cut down

every mighty man of valour, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria (2 Chronicles 32:20-22).

The Rationale of Exodus.

Referring to Exodus 3,7 and 17, which deal with the delivering of Israelites, Banana says:

The reason given was not that their spiritual salvation was endangered, but because of the oppression and the slavery to which they were subjected.¹⁷

This assertion is biblically indefensible in the view of the available evidence. We need to remember that the Exodus had its roots not only in the cries of an oppressed people, but also in the gracious covenant of Yahweh which He made long before with Abraham in a non-oppressive context (Exodus 2:24). This was in line with God's gracious plan of restoring man who had rebelled against Him. Unfortunately, the human fall as recorded for us in Genesis 3, is completely ignored by Banana. To state as he does that God is prejudiced on the side of the poor and oppressed, over-looks the fact that according to God's standards of justice, no one, not even the poor and the oppressed are deserving any mercy. The truth of the matter is that God from purely self-determined motives announced His will to rescue Israel in order to form a people for Himself in accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant. What emerged after the Exodus was a unique alternative society, not one guided by democratic or utopian ideals, but one directed by the holy will of God, a truly theocratic society. The end result was not simply social freedom, but freedom to serve Yahweh as His redeemed sons and daughters (Exodus 4:23). Yahweh redeemed Israel so that the people might serve Him instead of Pharaoh. Israel became Yahweh's servant and lived under His direction and protection regardless of her social status (Leviticus 25:42). Therefore, the problem in Egypt was not exclusively political in nature as Banana stresses, but also

theological. We are told that Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the God of Israel and consequently incurred His wrath (Exodus 5:2).

Having said that, Banana must be commended for highlighting the fact that God is concerned with our material welfare as well. This being the case, it is easy to see God's relevance to the problems of social, political and economic liberation in Africa and elsewhere. Similarly, doing God's will for Christians may require them to be actively involved in politics in order to effect social changes that would ensure acceptable level of peace and justice for all.

Divine Revelation beyond Exodus.

God did not stop revealing Himself after the Exodus. He raised up David as a king for His people and called out the prophets to be His spokesmen. God also acted in the great international crises to accomplish his purpose. Therefore, the God whom we meet in the Scriptures establishes His identity in interaction with human beings. According to Patrick, "natural catastrophes- violent storms, droughts, plagues, pestilence- were generally considered to be of divine origin in Israel and in the ancient world in general."¹⁸

God has also shown Himself to be a moral being, one who is supremely concerned about right and wrong and whose dealing with men must be understood in moral terms. In this respect, Packer says:

The God of the Bible,...is a God who talks to men constantly: in visions, dreams, and theophanies; through the prophets, through Christ, through the Apostles, and through the written words of Holy Scripture. He talks of His past achievements in creation, judgement, and redemption; He talks of the plans He is currently executing, and of the climax to which He will bring history when the time is ripe; and He talks of human life, telling us what He thinks of the different ways in which men live it, what His own scale of values is, what He likes and what He hates. So, by being propositional, His self-revelation becomes truly personal.¹⁹

God has revealed His moral standards in deeds and the Scriptures and has shown each of His people what He expects of them. Therefore nobody can plead ignorance for violating God's law. For He discloses Himself to everyone of us as creator, law giver, and judge, through nature, providence and the working of our own mind or conscience. This is normally called general revelation. However, this general revelation is inadequate because it lacks redemptive content. Adeyemo's elaboration on this point is helpful:

Like the Mosaic law, general revelation could be termed a "school-master" commissioned with the task of pointing men and women to the existence of a holy and righteous God. As people behold the manifestation of the eternal power, glory, majesty, and splendour of God through His handiwork, they are confronted with the question of the Creator behind the creation, the law-giver behind the natural laws and orderliness of the cosmos. As the beautiful garden of Eden was to direct the attention of Adam and Eve to God, so also the general revelation should point man to his Creator. It was never meant to be redemptive, and it is not.²⁰

Referring to general revelation, Packer also has this to say:

It indicates that God punishes sin, but not that He pardons it. It shows forgiveness to be needed without showing it to be possible. It preaches the law without the gospel. It can condemn, but not save. Any unbelievers who rightly understood it would be driven to despair. However clearly the content of general revelation was grasped, it would by itself provide no adequate basis for fellowship with God.²¹

This is why the special revelation was necessary. According to Adeyemo's observation:

While the general revelation incorporates the manifestation of God communicated through nature and perceived by all intelligent creatures, special revelation is rooted in the redemptive plan of God, addressed to man as a sinner, properly understood and appropriated only by faith, and serves the purpose of securing the end for which man was created, in spite of the disturbance wrought by sin.²²

The role of the Old Testament Covenant in the Salvation of Mankind.

As pointed out earlier God chose to bring Israel into relationship with Himself. The Lord is the prime-mover and no reason is offered why He should choose to bring certain people into relationship with Himself. In the book of

Deuteronomy, we see that the covenant relationship established through Moses is emphasized and linked with God's compassion. According to Butterworth's observation:

The rest of the book under-lines and develops the same themes. Yahweh, the only God, Lord of Heaven and Earth has chosen Israel to be His unique and exclusive possession. It is not because of any special merit, neither her numbers nor her righteousness would have qualified her for special treatment (Deut. 7:7, 9:4-6). Other nations are sometimes singled out for judgement because of their exceptional wickedness, but stiffnecked Israel is often just as bad.²³

Here we see unmerited divine love being demonstrated in action. God's main purpose in dealing so graciously with a particular nation was ultimately to work out salvation for sinful man. In Isaiah 40-55, and in particular chapter 53, God's righteousness becomes almost synonymous with His salvation. It is righteous for God to save sinful people as indicated in Isaiah 53:5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities". Also Isaiah 46:13 stresses about how God will vindicate His people in that He will deliver them from the bondage of unrighteousness. From the time past, it was believed that there was a need for divine intervention and help if man was to attain righteousness. God eventually intervened in human affairs through Christ who restored fallen sinful man and reconciled him to God. This is a mystery because Jesus Himself was God. The New Testament definition of God is to be found in Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature. He is Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). In fact, the New Testament makes little effort to describe God except in terms of Christ.

It is a pity that Banana has completely ignored the salvation which God offers to mankind through Jesus Christ. This is mainly due to his artificial treatment of the doctrine of God and consequently he has watered down the significance of salvation, equating it with socio-politico-economic liberation. This is a serious misrepresentation of incarnation.

Banana's Theology of Man.

Banana is very optimistic about man and of what he can achieve given the opportunity and the motivation. It is this confidence in man which leads him to declare that "we conceive the whole of mankind moving towards the future, transforming itself into a new creation."²⁴ According to him, "the realization of this creation requires a revolutionary commitment to our fellow men, especially to coming generations."²⁵ Banana is very convinced that this is the only way of transforming the future into a perfect state and he is confident of the outcome because, according to him:

The future of man is the future of God. Those who have been deprived of their right to grow, those who have been shackled by obsolete social and economic systems and cannot move freely towards their future, all of us who in one way or another are victims of wrong sets of values imposed upon us, or slaves of paralytic institutions, are all co-partners with God in his divine mission of a total human transformation.²⁶

Banana is very sceptical of the traditional christian definition of man emanating from Western theology. He says:

Contrary to the western view a critical analysis of the gospel demonstrates that the Bible man is a man full of hope, a man in the making, transforming himself into "... the perfect man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself".²⁷

Having identified what he considers to be the problem, he offers a solution:

It is through the continuous struggle for liberation that man discovers himself and the man of the Bible becomes clearer in relation to the present. Socialist education has to release us from the concept of a desperate, tormented man who is condemned to wonder over the face of the earth, always retracing his steps without progress.²⁸

Banana puts the blame entirely on the Western world for this problem, saying:

The wider concept of human progress has been negated by the new technocrats who have constituted themselves into a race of their own, who say that the rest of mankind, the majority of men can never be salvaged from their stupidity and idleness, ignorance and misery. They should be left to procreate and to create the labour and the large mass of consumers for their products.²⁹

Banana accuses the colonialists of harbouring this concept of man and argues that this is why they never provided mass education, "believing as they did that the majority of men could never be educated."³⁰

He is also critical of western theology which according to him dichotomises man into body and soul. He singles out western missionaries for the blame saying:

They dichotomised life into two clean, unconnected compartments, the body versus the spirit, the material life versus spiritual life, the earth versus heaven, words versus deeds, worship versus living - a theology that severed the unity of life, of being, by putting an iron curtain between the search and fulfilment of physical life and the search for spiritual wholeness.³¹

In his view, "any theology that fails to embrace life in its totality condemns itself, fails to take root, withers and dries in brilliance of exuberant life".³² This is a valid argument because christianity should not only preach conversion from sin for the sake of eternal salvation, but should also pay attention to social realities e.g injustices and exploitation.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Origin of Man.

The Genesis account of creation accords to man a supreme place in cosmos. He is to rule over the whole creation and make it to serve him (Gen 1:27-2:3). The same witness to man's dominion and centrality in creation is given elsewhere (Amos 4:13; Psalms 8:5ff). Man is also presented as created in the image of God. This sets him above all the created beings. The image also involves stewardship and dominion (Genesis 1:27-28). The prohibition of murder in Genesis 9:6 is also dependant on man being made in the image of God.

This image is demonstrated in personal relationship with God, with one another and the material world. This explains why a right relationship with God cannot be experienced in isolation from other relationships.

As has been shown, man is unique and Banana's emphasis on man's worth is on the whole credible except that he exaggerates it, mainly because he does not acknowledge the reality of the fallen state of man.

The Fall and the Remedy.

The fall was caused by man's rebellion against God (Gen. 3). Consequently sin entered into the world and terminated that perfect relationship which had existed between God and man through Adam and Eve who are the representatives of mankind. The Apostle Paul recognizes a corporate wrongness as belonging to humanity and traces it to an act of sin by one man who represents humanity on the natural plane. According to him, men are bound together in an organic unity under a single head, Adam. Because of the totality of mankind, sin does not just affect a certain faculty of man, but rather his whole personality, including the aspirations of his heart and the actions of his life. According to Adeyemo, "all mankind was in Adam seminally. Through the seminal relationship all mankind sinned against God and the sin nature has since then been passed on from generation to generation to all born of man."³³ It is naive of Banana therefore to imagine that man is transformable through self effort. It is not totally true either that man's bondage can be explained in socio-economic terms, as if man's sinful nature could be conquered by external arrangements. The socialist state advocated by Banana offers no grounds for believing that it can produce a new uncorrupted caring man. The christian doctrine of sin is far more realistic than that. For instance, there are no institutions in history that human beings have not

corrupted. It is only after a man has been transformed by believing in Jesus Christ, and his sins are forgiven that he is able to transform his environment as well. Sin is essentially responsible for all types of oppression, and therefore oppressive socio-politico-economic systems are only symptoms of a deeper problem, namely the existence of sin. Genuine human transformation and liberation is attained when a man is delivered from the bondage of sin as Kato explains:

A person without Christ has not attained the ideal status God meant him to have. Man was made in the image of God. The image has been defaced and the unbelievers are considered dead and estranged from the living God (Eph. 2:1; Col. 1:21). Humanization comes only when one becomes a Christian. From that moment of encounter with Christ, the hell-bound person becomes truly man as he is "mystically" united with God-man, even Jesus the Christ of God.³⁴

Kato further makes another important observation:

The Christian may feed all the hungry people in the world, and pay all the bills of the liberation movements of the society. His primary task is not done. His primary task is preaching the gospel of soul salvation.³⁵

Therefore, any attempt to produce an ideal man conceived by Banana independent of Christ is a remote dream!

Banana's Theology of History.

According to Peter Kuzmic, "One's view of eschatology determines one's views of history. And one's view of the purpose and goal of history as pointing to the eschaton definitely modifies one's attitude toward the this-worldly historical realities."³⁶ There are many views about the purpose and the goal of history and it is not possible to discuss all of them here. One such view is the cyclic theory of history. According to this theory, historical events substantially repeat themselves, though the human beings involved and the circumstances are different. People who hold this view argue that the dogma of progress is an illusion since there is nothing permanent.

While Canaan Banana may disagree with this definition, he nevertheless does not ascribe to the biblical view of history either. He seems to be more heavily influenced by humanistic philosophy. Schaeffer defines humanism as follows:

The term humanism means man beginning from himself, with no knowledge except what he himself can discover and no standard outside himself. In this view Man is the measure of all things, as the Enlightenment expressed it. In other words, mankind can only look to itself for solutions to its problems and never looks to God either for salvation or for moral direction. Humanism can be seen, then, as the ultimate attempt to pull one's self up by one's own bootstraps.³⁷

If this definition is right, then there is no doubt that Banana has been influenced by humanistic philosophy. This influence is more noticeable in his concept of man as discussed earlier but has some bearing on his understanding of history also. According to him, history is the product of human beings who are able to determine its course. In view of such confidence that it is humanly possible to direct the course of history, Banana says:

The realization of this creation requires a revolutionary commitment to our fellow men especially to coming generations. It is against this background of more than a million years of undaunted human progress towards the promise of a better future that our national and christian priorities will be discussed. Socio-economic changes, political commitments, educational perspectives and christian alertness, will all be seen as necessary steps towards the future, a future which is already in the making.³⁸

Banana urges that, "we must all embark on a world-wide struggle against obsolete socio-economic systems which constrain future human developments."³⁹ Changing the world for him means opposing anything that hinders man's progress. It is not surprising therefore that he should explain history in confrontational terms. He argues that "while the powerful countries have decided to contain the process of history and secure domination by military force, the poor are more decided than ever in changing the present world socio-economic structures,"⁴⁰ Banana further states that, "for the poor of the world, politics means only one thing: total revolution to alter not just the political structures but also the economic causes of social injustice".⁴¹ He urges the church to hasten the process of human progress. He says:

It is my view in this matter that christianity is realized only in revolution. This means that christianity is essentially a revolutionary struggle which brings out of man all the potential that the creator is expecting from each one of us. Let us say that as a good father, God has invested great fortune in every one of his children out of love and would be disappointed if his children failed him. The possibilities to grow are there, the means to develop are also provided, since the whole meaning of creation is essentially to give man all he needs to become what he is expected to be. Christianity, seen in this perspective, has nothing to do with man waiting to see what God will do for him, rather christianity would be more the expectations of God, waiting to see what man can do for him.⁴²

This seems to be a marxist way of looking at history since he [Banana] deliberately excludes God's intervention in historical events. Man is enthroned while God is dethroned!

Biblical Concept of History.

The Biblical history is universal in nature, it traces man to his origin. It also ascribes events not to the wisdom of their human agents, but to the workings of providence, pre-ordaining their course. According to Collingwood, "providential history, ...treats history...as a play written by God, but a play wherein no character is the author's favourite character."⁴³ To be part of the world essentially entails contributing to the historical process which is directed by God. Nevertheless, the historical process does not depend on man but entirely on God who is the Lord of history. Collingwood's remark is helpful. He says:

History, as the will of God, orders itself, and does not depend for its orderliness...on the human agent's will to order it. Plans emerge, and get themselves carried into effect, which no human being has planned; and even men who think they are working against the emergence of these plans are in fact contributing to them.⁴⁴

Old Testament.

The purpose of history as recorded in the Old Testament is to declare God's dealing with His people. We see a succession of prophets being inspired to interpret the meaning of their contemporary situation in the light of what God had done, was doing and would do. According to Anderson, the history in the Old Testament is "essentially theological in character, for it is the medium of God's self revelation. For Israel to remember, to write, to recite and to live history was a confession of faith"⁴⁵ It is a covenant history, i.e. it is a history with Yahweh. It is not a meaningless succession of recurring cycles of events. It began with creation and it was under the control of Yahweh moving toward a purposed end. Freeman's elaboration on this point is helpful:

For the Bible, History and Eschatology are essentially one, Eschatology is the conclusion of history but it proceeds from historical occurrences and history is the setting for the eschaton.⁴⁶

He goes on to say:

From the time of Moses on history has an eschatological element, involved in the very notion of fulfilment. Every act of God aims at an ultimate fulfilment. So long as history continues, the final fulfilment has not taken place.⁴⁷

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament God is acknowledged as guiding the course of history for his people. However, while the covenant pattern with its detailed stipulation is largely limited to the relationship with Israel, the implications can be generalized; the response to the divine demand will determine the course and conclusion of human history. For instance, we cannot ignore God or disobey Him without incurring His wrath. The prophets saw the extinction of the Hebrew Kingdoms and the deportations of their peoples as punishment by God because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience. God is

recognized as executing judgement, using foreign powers. Toward the end of exile, Isaiah hailed the rise of another non-Israelite, this time a deliverer. He was Cyrus who is dignified by Yahweh with the title "my shepherd" (Isaiah 45:1).

New Testament.

Christ's incarnation is regarded as the climax of God's intervention in world history. It was through Jesus Christ that God personally visited our fallen world in order to redeem it. However, while this event was the climax, history is not yet concluded until Jesus returns to take His own in eternal glory. Meanwhile, God's purpose in history is to develop godly character and conduct in His people. This was the case for Abraham during the period he waited for the birth of Isaac, the son of promise. Likewise, Joseph spent many years in slavery and later in prison before he was raised to the position of second-in command in Egypt. Indeed the deliverance of the Israelites under Moses contrasted with the previous four hundred years of captivity. Similarly, if we persevere in our christian faith despite the obstacles, we shall eventually receive eternal reward at the conclusion of history. This is the message of the New Testament and indeed the whole of the scripture. In this respect Boice's remark is helpful. He says:

There is a revelation of God's overall plan in the scripture beginning with the creation of the race and continuing through the fall, the calling out of a special people through whom a redeemer would come, the appearance and work of Christ, the establishing of the church and the promise of Christ's eventual return.⁴⁸

This analysis of biblical data concerning history clearly shows that Banana's claims are not scripturally substantiated, and in fact they are sometimes in direct conflict with the word of God. For instance, his view of history limits eschatology to socio-politico-economic utopianism. He hardly

mentions anything about the life-after in his discussion on eschatology and this raises some doubts whether he actually believes in life after death. There is no mention of personal sin except in his reference to the oppressive economic structures and racism. All these things are indicators to the effect that Banana is introducing something of ideology in contrast to biblical theology.

¹⁷Banana, The Theology of Promise, 138.

¹⁸Dale Patrick, The Rendering of God in the Old Testament (New York: Fortress Press, 1981), 81.

¹⁹J.I.Packer, God has Spoken (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 52-3.

²⁰Adeyemo, Salvation in African Tradition, 24.

²¹J.I.Packer, God has Spoken (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 55.

²²Adeyemo, Salvation In African Tradition, 26-7.

²³Michael Butterworth, Here I Stand: Justification by Faith Alone (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 154.

²⁴Banana, The Theology of Promise, 15.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 57.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 57-8.

³⁰Ibid., 58.

³¹Canaan Banana, Towards a Socialist Ethos (Harare: The College Press, 1987), 19.

³²Ibid., 20.

³³Adeyemo, Salvation in African Tradition, 59- 60.

³⁴Byang Kato, Theological Pitfalls (Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1978), 179.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Bruce Nicholls ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1985), 136.

³⁷Francis Schaeffer, Who is for Peace? (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 13

³⁸Banana, The Theology of Promise, 15.

³⁹Ibid., 20.

⁴⁰Ibid., 45.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 106.

⁴³R. C. Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 50.

⁴⁴Ibid., 53.

⁴⁵George Buttrick, ed., Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), s.v. "Israel's knowledge of God," by M. H. Pope.

⁴⁶David Freedman, "History and Eschatology," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 14, no 2 (April 1960): 153.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸James Boice, Foundations of Christian Faith: God and History 4 (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1981), 38.

CHAPTER III

BANANA'S CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

Banana's Christology described.

Jesus is portrayed as a human rights activist and a political liberator of the poor and the oppressed. His death on the cross is accordingly attributed to his opposition to the ruling class of his day that oppressed the poor. Therefore, those who are fighting for justice in the socio-politico-economic realms are seen as his true followers in the sense that they are continuing the struggle which he initiated. Banana says:

Jesus was obviously involved in a form of liberation struggle which differed from our present struggle against capitalism, but which was nevertheless a complete revolution that cost him his life. He died because he threatened the authorities of his time.¹

Banana argues that "on the cross, Christ identified himself with the poor, the oppressed and the captives of all time."² According to him again:

The poor, only the poor, can understand the full meaning of the death of Christ. He saves them by giving them the certainty of future fulfilment when they are engaged in their struggle against the oppressor.³

This argument limits Jesus' soteriological role to one category of people and ignores the fact that He is the savior of mankind in general, embracing both the rich and the poor, the oppressed and the oppressors.

He is also critical of traditional Christology which he alleges confines the role of Christ to the spiritual sphere. He says:

The death of Jesus does not need to be spiritualised in order to make it redemptive. It only needs to be given additional, external meanings by those who have not experienced personally 'the agonies of the oppressed.'⁴

He further argues thus:

Before he [Jesus] was brought into the realm of the spiritual as its main supporter he was a supporter of human dignity and human liberation. He was a revolutionary in every way and this is the image of Jesus that the church of the proletariat is trying to recover, in order to do justice to the sacred memory that he left us.⁵

In Banana's view, "He [Christ] consecrated the struggle with his blood and many other fighters have followed his footsteps over the centuries."⁶ It follows that when a young man offers his life to fight for freedom, he is following Christ's example. He says:

Christian young people who offer their lives to fight for their country are bearing the cross. They are motivated by love of what is dear to them; they sacrifice their precious lives in order to eliminate the forces of evil, becoming the martyrs of our freedom and the saints of our time.⁷

Banana also argues that "his [Jesus'] message was for this world, a blueprint for human existence."⁸ According to his interpretation of Mark 6:34, "the shepherd needed was not a spiritual one, but one who could lead them to overcome the material impoverishment reached on account of Roman domination."⁹

Biblical Response.

It is evident that Banana is arbitrarily forcing the text to support his point of view when he says that the shepherd needed was not a spiritual one, but one who could lead them to overcome the material impoverishment reached

on account of the Roman domination (Mark 6:34). According to Lane, the "comparison of the people to sheep without a shepherd is an allusion to Numbers 27:17; Ezekiel 34:5."¹⁰ He points out that "in the context of both of these passages, Mark's statement belongs to the wilderness theme."¹¹ In Numbers 27:17, Moses prays that the Lord may appoint a leader to take up his place prior to his death in the wilderness lest the people be as sheep which have no shepherd. In Ezekiel 34, the shepherd image is also associated with the wilderness. The shepherd is promised in Ezekiel 34:23, 'I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them --- my servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.' It is within this context that Mark proclaims Jesus, the appointed one by God. He is God's servant who provides rest for his people in the wilderness. Lane is therefore right when he says:

The multitude who pursued Jesus and the disciples are representative of Israel once more in the wilderness. There they experience compassion of the Messiah, who teaches them at length concerning the kingdom of God.¹²

Therefore, the fact that Jesus satisfied the physical need of the multitude, namely their hunger, by providing food, should not be seen as an end in itself. The Markan narrative to which Banana refers, testifies that before Jesus provided food for the multitude, he met their spiritual needs by teaching them many things. This confirms the fact that Jesus regarded the real need of the multitudes to be the spiritual, while at the same time not ignoring their felt need which in this instance was the physical hunger. Unfortunately, Banana's interpretation of the text gives the impression that Jesus is only concerned with the physical needs of man.

Soteriological Role of Christ.

It is misleading to limit Jesus' soteriological role primarily to socio-politico-economic liberation of the poor and oppressed. Salvation embraces both the oppressors and the oppressed because all have sinned. In this respect, Kato's comment is helpful:

The Incarnation of our Lord is the assumption of humanity in general, and this includes both the rich and the poor, the oppressor and the oppressed, the black and the white. The classic passage on the incarnation (Philippians 2:5-11) indicates that Jesus Christ became man in general. The form of a servant does not depict only a section of humanity; it indicates the vicarious suffering of the servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12) on behalf of all members of the human race, since 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). The Incarnation has made all men savable, but a person is saved only when he puts his trust in the incarnate Christ who died and rose again in order to reconcile men to God (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).¹³

According to Kato again:

If Christ came only for the down-trodden, in the narrow sense of the physically oppressed, why did He have any dealings at all with the religious leaders, the Pharisees; or the aristocrats, the Sadducees; or wealthy businesswomen, like Mary and Martha; or well-to-do fishermen, like the sons of Zebedee; or successful civil servants, like Matthew and Zaccheus?... If Christ's mission was for political liberation, why did He not organize a gang resistance to the Roman oppressors instead of urging his followers to go the extra mile (Matthew 5:41)?¹⁴

Kato further warns that while New Testament christianity respects human dignity and calls for justice, "liberation in terms of what Christ came to do must be understood as meaning liberation primarily from man's fundamental dilemma, which is sin."¹⁵

It is quite significant that Jesus actually rejected the current Jewish conception of the Messiah. In this regard, Cullmann's insight is helpful.

Without totally refusing the title, if it had been emptied of its political connotations he could indeed have accepted it - he prefers to keep away from it. For this reason, he commands silence every time he is called Messiah.¹⁶

When asked by the High Priest if he was the Messiah, Jesus replied, 'you have said so', (Matthew 26:64). This answer is not directly negative but is evasive. Jesus also rejected the satanic suggestions that he should use his power to assume political Lordship over the Kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:5-8). He did not regard himself as a political Messiah but rather as the Son of Man. He was conscious of fulfilling in his person the mission of the suffering servant of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks. It is for this reason that he discouraged his disciples from the use of a sword (Luke 22: 49-51). Jesus calls his followers to the way of repentance and forgiveness and not violence as Banana claims (Luke 17:3-4). He calls for the things that make for peace and disregards those who come with swords as inappropriately responding to his ministry.

It is therefore regrettable that Banana should advocate the use of physical violence against the oppressors as the only way of eliminating injustice. He is of course right to praise the social role of the Old Testament prophets but wrong to equate them with the modern freedom fighters. He says that "the prophets were true revolutionaries like the guerrillas of our day. They could not tolerate any longer being continually hampered by those who were appointed as servants of the people."⁷ While we agree with this sentiment, it must be remembered that the transfer of political powers alone to the previously oppressed communities does not necessarily bring about the desired justice unless the human heart (which is essentially evil) is also changed. This requires a total conversion and obedience to Jesus Christ who is the true liberator. It is worth noting that the prophets to whom Banana refers, never preached revolutions but insisted that the nation should submit to the Lordship of Yahweh. The prophets were conscious of the fact that once the nation returned to God, socio-politico-economic justice was also possible.

Having said that, we must strive to ensure that justice reigns in our communities through legitimate channels open to us, such as voting etc.

The other thing which we perhaps ought to understand is that many people are oppressed and at the same time oppressors (Acts 10:38). Satanic oppression occurs not only on the level of economic class struggle, but in all areas of human life, e.g. families, in schools, etc. The poor working man oppresses his wife and children more often than we might care to believe. Therefore, the starting point in liberation is self-awareness. If we let pride and self-interest close our eyes to our own personal needs and faults, we will never be able to experience the liberation that Jesus offers. Commenting on the New Testament political situation, Yoder rightly says:

To replace a Roman oppressor with a Jewish oppressor might do little for the poor and powerless. What was needed was not the exchange of one ruling elite for another, but a transformation of the society. Jesus did not call for rebellion against the foreign oppression but his teachings to be practiced implicitly demand a real change of society at its grass-roots so that there can be just economics.¹⁸

While violence breeds violence and should never be an appropriate strategy for bringing about socio-politico-economic change, I am personally of the opinion that if nothing is achieved by means of legal channels (e.g. appeal to the government) something has to be done along the lines of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is a demonstrative action which deliberately breaks the law in order to try and bring about change in the measures taken by a government in a coercive, but in non-violent manner. It must be stressed however that although civil disobedience envisages non-violent action, it often culminates in violence. Precisely because this is an act of disobedience, the dividing line between non-violence and violence is often very vague. For instance, whoever disrupts traffic should not be surprised if it causes emotions to boil over, so that in the end cars are set on fire and shops are damaged. It must be pointed out that civil disobedience would only be possible under those

governments where an awareness of freedom and democracy has been attained. Under a dictatorship or a totalitarian government, it is impossible to disobey the laws of the land and remain alive. It is therefore very important that each government (for the sake of its subjects, but also for its own sake) leave open as many channels of peaceful protest as possible. Such channels provide an escape valve. A government which resolutely closes down all the channels of redress is looking for violent resistance against its rule, as this becomes the only recourse the citizens have.

The Cause for Jesus' Death.

It is rather speculative of Banana to claim that Jesus died because he threatened the authorities of his time. It is true that he suffered the Roman death penalty and his charge was of a political nature, namely that he claimed to be the King of the Jews. However, the gospels testify to the fact that it was a miscarriage of justice. According to Cullman, "a careful investigation of Jesus' attitude to the political questions of his day proves on the contrary, that his condemnation was the result of a judicial error."¹² The gospels unanimously report that Jesus withdrew from mass movements as for example when the people wanted to crown him King (John 6:15). He never once preached insurrection either against Herod who persecuted him or against the Emperor. He was completely removed from a revolt against the state. When asked by his opponents whether it was allowed to pay taxes to Caesar or not (Matthew 22:17), his answer was intentionally ambiguous. He told them to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21). Since this answer lies beyond a simple Yes or No, his enemies were able to distort it. According to the Lukan account in King James version of the bible, the Jews led Jesus to Pilate with the accusation that "we

found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." Luke 23:2).

Contrary to Banana's explanation regarding the causes of Jesus' death, this clearly shows that his death was the result of a Jewish authority, perhaps due to disappointment that he renounced their current conception of Messiah.

Banana's Theology of Salvation.

It is probable to say that Banana's view of salvation is heavily influenced by the World Council of Churches. It is quite significant that he has been on its Advisory Committee since 1970. The World Council of Churches is reputed for its liberal views which are echoed by Banana in his writings.

Kato is probably justified to lament that "there has never been an age of such a great confusion of the meaning of salvation in the history of Christianity."²⁰ He rightly points out that "the number one problem for not attaining the truth about salvation is the rejection of the authoritative word of God."²¹ He cites the example of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Bangkok in December, 1972, whose theme was 'Salvation Today.' According to Kato, "the ecumenics expected to come out with an answer without agreeing on the common source for that answer."²² Peter Beyerhaus, whom Kato quotes, evaluates Bangkok as follows:

The real reasons for the breakdown of the exegetical preparation for Bangkok was twofold. First, it once more revealed the depth of the hermeneutical crisis in the WCC [World Council of Churches]. There is no common conviction that the Bible is authoritative and reliable basis for christian faith and ministry. Scripture is seen by many as a collection of different documents, testifying to the experiences of salvation and understandings of the divine will at the time they were written....Second, these present-day experiences and quests now concern the ecumenical mind to so high a degree that even a witness of the Bible (when it is still consulted) is understood within the framework of the current political, social, cultural, religious, or psychological

problems....Scripture, therefore, was not allowed to play its majestic role in Bangkok.²³

In this respect, Kato rightly says:

Since the Bible is not the authoritative source of teaching on salvation, the ecumenics are left to devise their own concept of salvation. The basic concept of salvation which underlies practically all the terms employed by liberal ecumenics is social and economical liberation. Salvation is first and foremost a deliverance from the here and now oppression, and only secondarily and remotely, spiritual in the sense of life to come. Just as sin is a common evil, so salvation must be viewed in the same sense. To stress the idea of personal salvation and declare hell judgement for non-christians is considered eccentric and dehumanizing. The concerted effort is for universal deliverance of all people everywhere from any kind of oppression by fellow human beings.²⁴

This understanding of salvation by ecumenics is markedly noticeable in Banana's theology. For instance, he holds the view that salvation is realised when there is justice for all, and in a context of economic prosperity. He strongly condemns the dichotomizing of the material and the spiritual, saying:

If it was true that there were two worlds, the material, in which the majority of people live and the spiritual, which a few select, privileged people live, then certainly there would be a need for religious institutions, Persons, and rituals to have some kind of intermediate contact with the world of God. We all would be wretched, damned sinners, destined to eternal perdition unless the sacred few would intercede for us and obtain from God his pardon.²⁵

Speaking on the same point, he adds:

It is interesting to observe how such a conception of people and the world would suit a society in which exploitation and domination of the masses is practised. All you have to do is to convince the masses that they are completely wretched, and that they are totally unworthy. That society would need an image of God presented as furious judge, a dominating powerful being capable of condemning people for all eternity, a God that may consider suffering as food if it placates his fury.²⁶

In his view, "people are not condemnable but open to growth and all sorts of new experiences. The material world becomes God's own home and we are all his lovable children."²⁷ Banana's intention is clearly to limit salvation to this material world and he has deliberately avoided any reference to the afterlife as described in the scriptures.

In more specific terms, salvation for him is explained in terms of the revolutionary changes that have taken place in Zimbabwe since independence. He takes Luke 7:18-23 to show that salvation has been realised in Zimbabwe as a result of the transfer of political and economic power to the previously oppressed black Africans:

When the messengers come from the western countries asking about experience of liberation, the gospel is re-enacted and the words of Jesus can be heard again. The first question asked is the same as that asked by the messengers of John: "Is this the salvation that you were expecting or are we to wait another one?" Incidentally, the messengers from overseas arrived on the same day that children all over the country returned to school after the holidays to start a new school year. In Harare alone 13400 children were enrolled in secondary schools, hundreds of primary school class rooms were turned into secondary schools. Teachers were found to cope with the situation. Primary school children returning to school were seen everywhere. The national figure for 1981 had been close to 1.7 million, while four years before it was only 800000. Primary school education became free all over the country. Free medical services were also provided for more than 80% of the population and minimum wages established with increases of more than 60% for those workers who had been receiving salaries of less than £30 a month.²⁸

According to Banana, the messengers were given the following answer:

Go back and tell your masters in Europe and the United States what you have seen and heard; land is given to peasants so that they can plough and obtain their food from the earth; the sick are looked after and the ignorant are educated: co-operatives are formed so that people work together and can produce more for the whole country: those who were in prison before are now helping the people in reconstructing their new society: the hungry are filled with good things and the rich sent away empty. Happy are those who do not lose faith in God when they see his work among his people.²⁹

It is evident from these citations that for Banana, salvation is socio-political and economic liberation. This approach is similar to the one adopted by World Council of Churches at Bangkok in December 1972. Many theologians of liberation also take this approach as noted earlier. For instance, Cone defines salvation as "God's activity in history, setting people free from economic, political, and social bondage."³⁰ According to Banana this salvation is realized in revolution. He says that, "as for me, I am not ashamed of the revolution, for it is the power of the people unto salvation."³¹ He is even more radical when it comes to the question of who merits salvation:

Whoever defeats the enemy of the people in the bitter struggles of the world to secure the freedom and independence due to them...has eternal life. Whoever takes part in works of reconstruction and joins a co-operative or club to make his action more meaningful together with other people...has eternal life. Whoever denounces the evil manoeuvre of the oppressors who continually try to control the oppressed and prevail upon them...has eternal life. Whoever co-operates with the government of the people to maintain peace and prosperity ... has eternal life. Whoever takes part in programmes of health and education to ensure that each individual is capable of fulfilling his promise...has eternal life. Whoever abandons the false promises of capitalism and works to make possible the socialist promise...has eternal life.³²

This understanding of salvation which limits God's Soteriological role in Christ to the socio-politico-economic sphere is foreign to the biblical view of salvation which is wholistic, embracing every area of human need, especially the spiritual.

The Old Testament Doctrine of Salvation.

Sider and Packer identify five Old Testament words which express Salvation:

- I. Hayah used in the causative (pi'el and High'il) means 'to give a full and prosperous life' or 'to preserve, to keep alive.' The non-religious meaning of 'to spare the life of' predominates, but the word is used also to speak of the way God grants life and material prosperity to his people.
- II. Go'el is a familiar word used to refer to the performance of the duties of a kinsman. The kinsman purchases a family member from slavery as in Lev. 25:48f., or redeems property by a payment (Lev. 25:26,32) or revenges his blood (Josh. 20:3,9). As the kinsman of his people God is seen as the archtypical Go'el in the Old Testament.

- III. Padah means basically to get something by returning something in exchange. In Exodus 13:13 it is applied to the redemption of a life where one life is substituted for another. Substitution is a fundamental idea in padah. The septuagint almost always translated padah by lutroo (ransom). The costliness of salvation is conveyed by padah.
- IV. Kopher means 'ransom price.' In Exodus 21:28ff., and Job 36:18, etc., the word is used to indicate what a person must pay in order to be set free, rather than die. The word is used corporately of Israel in describing God's salvific activity in Isaiah 43:1-4.
- V. Yasha', Yeshu'a, and Yesha' are by far the most commonly used group of words to convey the idea of salvation in the Old Testament. These words convey the idea of 'being at one's ease, free to develop without hinderance' and 'bringing into a spacious environment'.³³

Salvation in the scriptures is always seen as the work of God and while He may use believers He is not dependent upon them (1 Samuel 9:16). The Exodus events symbolize the reality of God's salvation for his people in an oppressive historical setting (Exodus 14:30). It is not an exaggeration to say that this rescue from Egypt, the land of bitter bondage, under the threat of imminent death at the hands of harsh task-masters determined the whole future understanding of salvation. For Israel, God's single most important act of salvation was a concrete historical event.

The Israelites remembered this act of salvation in three great feasts of unleavened bread (Exodus 23:14f., 34:18., Leviticus 23:9f., 23:15f). The people were reminded at all these great feasts that they are a 'delivered' or 'saved' people. The God who brought them into being is a saviour God and the

historical event of Exodus is the confirming seal of their salvation. The Psalmist also portrays God as continuing his activity of salvation in delivering the people from a host of physical ills and human enemies, even death itself (Psalms 6:4-5; 22:21; 59:2; Deuteronomy 20:4; Isaiah 38:20).

However, the purpose of Yahweh's deliverance in the Old Testament is linked always to the praise, honour and obedience of the Lord (1Chronicles 16:35-36. Faith is the proper posture towards the saving God. Salvation is impossible without faith and can be forfeited by apostasy (Psalms 78:21ff).

Content of Salvation.

The two concepts of salvation and justice are linked together. For instance, the idea of salvation as vindication for the poor and oppressed runs throughout the passages that deal with administration of justice. The idea of vindication is also tied to the covenant idea and because of the covenant, God takes up the cause of His people. To experience salvation is to be brought into a sphere where there is protection from both physical and spiritual assaults on human beings (Psalms 116:13; Micah 4:10). Salvation in the Old Testament therefore involves wholeness of personhood, mind, body and spirit (Psalms 29:9). This point is reinforced by Sider and Packer:

God's salvation pertains to material prosperity, justice for the poor and needy in the judicial system, and the continued historical existence of the people of Israel. The very centre of God's saving activity in the Old Testament was the calling forth of a redeemed community, the people of Israel. At the same time the vertical dimension is everywhere present. God himself is the author of salvation. He took the initiative to effect salvation at the Exodus....The people of Israel continue to enjoy salvation only as they trust in Yahweh.³⁴

According to Sider and Packer again:

The Old Testament rarely, if ever, talks about the presence of God's salvation except in the context of the covenant community who trust Yahweh....The Old Testament does not speak of God's salvation as

present apart from his covenant with his chosen people where he is consciously confessed as Lord.³⁵

Unfortunately, Banana has not only generalized the beneficiaries of God's salvation, but has limited salvation to the socio-politico-economic liberation of the oppressed. He seems to give the impression that being poor is a virtue which merits salvation. Such a position lacks biblical backing, The statement by Dick France is helpful here:

The poor ('anawim) was an honoured title in the OT and in the later Jewish literature. It described not so much those who were materially deprived, but rather the pious, oppressed by the wicked but promised ultimate vindication by God. Their literal poverty was a result of their deliberate choice of the side of God against the godless order of society. They are also called 'the meek', a class distinguished by their attitude rather than by their material status alone.³⁶

He rightly points out that it is against this background that we must read Jesus' remarkable pronouncement to his disciples: 'Happy are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God' (Luke 6:20). France rightly points out that "it was their deliberate choice of discipleship which had resulted in their literal poverty, and it was that chosen poverty rather than the state of detitution as such which Jesus congratulated."³⁷

The New Testament Doctrine of Salvation.

In the teaching of Jesus, one finds the idea of salvation inseparably linked with the kingdom of God that Jesus inaugurated. Therefore, receiving salvation and entering the kingdom are virtually identical (Mark 10:17-26).

According to Sider and Packer:

Just as a new redeemed community was central to God's salvation in the Old Testament, so too Jesus called out a new community of disciples who received the salvation of the dawning kingdom and began to live out the Kingdom values of the new age. Experiencing the salvation of the Kingdom Jesus announced meant a total transformation of values, actions and relationships.³⁸

For instance, when Zaccheus repented of sin, he righted spoiled relationships and returned unjustly acquired money and gave it to the poor because his life had been transformed. Jesus commenting on what had happened to Zaccheus declared thus; 'salvation has come to this house' (Luke 19:9). According to Sider and Packer:

The salvation that happened was not just some vertical forgiveness of sin although it certainly included also that important component. Salvation in the story of Zaccheus included the new social relationships that grace made possible in the life of the repentant, forgiven Zaccheus. The salvation of Jesus' dawning kingdom is corporate and social as well as personal and individual.³⁹

It is evident that the concept of salvation in the Gospels includes the forgiveness of sins and more. The language about salvation is applied to more than what we normally think of as spiritual concerns only. According to Sider and Packer, "in almost one out of four times where Jesus' healings are recorded in the Synoptics, the word 'Save' is used to describe the physical healings."⁴⁰ The word 'save' is also used to describe physical rescue from danger which might have resulted in harm or death to the parties involved. For instance, Jesus saves the disciples from a storm (Matthew 8:25) and he rescues Peter from sinking in the water (Matthew 14:30).

Christ Our Saviour.

The Scriptures testify to the fact that salvation is accomplished at the cross where Jesus Christ bore the sins of mankind. According to the apostle Paul, salvation refers to the past, the present and future activity of God in Christ for humanity. Sider and Packer's elaboration is helpful:

It [salvation] includes the sacrifice of the cross, the experience of justification, regeneration and sanctification, the reality of Jesus' new community and the ultimate cosmic restoration of all things in Christ. As in the Gospels then, Salvation in Paul is individual and corporate, vertical and horizontal. And it is virtually always related to conscious confession of Christ.⁴¹

Salvation as a past and a present event focuses on the redeeming act of Christ on the cross. It means that Jesus the Lord now takes care of his people. Since he is now at the central and pivotal place of power in the universe, the believer is completely protected (1 Corinthians 15:24f; Philippians 2:9-11). Salvation in the New Testament also has a strong future aspect. It is a down payment of the complete inheritance which will be ours at the return of Christ (Ephesians 1:13; 14). It only takes place within the community of believers and it is wholistic in nature. The description by Sider and Packer is helpful:

Salvation... is individual and corporate, 'spiritual' and physical. Salvation in Christ does redeem the whole person. But all of this takes place within Jesus' new community of believers where people personally confess Christ as Lord and Saviour.⁴²

However, this is a partial experience compared to the glorification of believers at the end of the age. Sider and Packer's description of this imperfection clarifies the point:

When the church truly obeys all God's revealed word, extremely important, sweeping structural changes in secular society inevitably occur. But these changes even at their best are always so imperfect, partial and temporary that it is not appropriate to use the word Salvation with reference to them.⁴³

Unfortunately, Banana's interpretation of Salvation tends to focus primarily on the physical liberation of the poor and the oppressed. He hardly refers to Jesus Christ as the saviour of mankind in the universal sense, and one wonders if he actually does not hold the view that socio-politico-economic liberation coincides with salvation in Jesus Christ!

However, on the contrary, there is a difference between salvation in Jesus Christ and the historical liberation of the oppressed. Socio-politico-economic liberation is not the answer to the problems of mankind. In this regard, Kato's warning should be heeded:

The high rate of crime, the utter discontentment, and the emptiness prevalent in the industrialized nations of the world is a sad commentary on our Lord's words that 'man's life does not consist in

what he has'. Every inch of the African Continent may be liberated from foreign domination, every family may have two cars in the garage, and every African may be a college graduate, but that still will not save the African from his fundamental dilemma. These current ills will only be replaced with new and probably worse tragedies.⁴⁴

The root cause of all social problems is sin. Because Banana has ignored sin and its damaging impact, it follows that his concept of salvation is also defective. Contrary to his soteriological view, deliverance from physical bondage is not the sum total of salvation. According to the scriptures, salvation is obtained through the remission of sin which is possible only through Jesus Christ when men repent of their sins (Acts 2:38f). Unfortunately, Banana gives the impression that humanity's destiny is secure regardless of what a person believes:

The people of Zimbabwe are ready to express their faith in their own terms: to know who God is and how a human being relates to his creator. African culture and religion are rich in expressions and terms which up to now have not been allowed to appear as part of the christian treasure in Zimbabwe. Why should western culture and religion be the only possible channel of expression?⁴⁵

It is rather surprising that Banana does not refer to Jesus as the author and finisher of our salvation in the spiritual sense. One wonders if he believes that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. It needs stressing that the decision which people make here on earth determines their destiny. Those who deny Christ and refuse to acknowledge his Lordship will also be denied by him after this life. The judgement of individuals will be entirely christological. It is a biblical fact that he who believes not in the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36). Accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ here and now settles the question of eternity.

Banana's Theology of Sin.

Sin as alienation of man from God has been played down at the expense of socio-politico-economic structures. According to Banana, sin is rooted in socio-politico-economic structures and that is where it should be confronted, namely by eliminating oppressive systems. He is critical of traditional Christianity which he accuses of "preaching repentance of sins in order to save our souls, but the consequences of sin were left untouched."⁴⁶ According to him:

Such interpretation of the bible smacks of Phariseeism, precisely the doctrine and practice that Jesus condemned. God is presented as an indifferent master who is completely satisfied if each individual offers him enough compensation for his wrong doings. He would be a creator of life who would not care if life were endangered in every country of the Third World and threatened at every door where poor families have to survive without proper food, without a permanent job, without security, without education, without a future.⁴⁷

It is of course generally true that God is concerned with our physical welfare. However, He is more concerned with our eternal security. For instance, what would it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul (Matthew 16:16). Eternal life is aquirable upon believing in Jesus and having our sins forgiven (John 6:40). The main task of the church therefore, while incorporating the practical ministry to the materially poor, is primarily to proclaim the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 8:18f). Unfortunately, this dimension is lacking in Banana's treatment of sin.

The Old Testament Doctrine of Sin.

There is no single Hebrew word able to exhibit the Old Testament concept of sin fully. We therefore get many words from which the term sin is derived. Eichrodt's analysis of sin, which Adeyemo quotes, is helpful:

The root h-t-'is frequently used to designate both sinful conduct, the sin itself (Hatta't, het', hatta'a, or hatta'a, and the sinner (hatta', found only in the feminine singular and in the plural), has as its original meaning "go astray," "miss the mark," a univocal and easily understandable expression for the formal aspect of the concept of sin, presenting its failure with regard to the norm, an offence against a commandment or prohibition.⁴⁸

The Bible takes sin very seriously and God holds all men to account for their wrong doing, even the Gentiles (Genesis 19:13; Ezekiel 16:49-56). Sin is rooted in the rebellious heart, the seat of the will. It is basically an act of perverted freedom and hence man is always responsible for it. According to the scriptures, sin is a deviation from what is good and right indicating a deliberate breach of law or morality. Israel's sin is all the greater because they sin against God's covenant and against better knowledge. However, God does not want any sinner to suffer the consequences of sin and He urges sinners to repent and forsake their evil ways. Among all the prophetic appeals for repentance, the best is Ezekiel 33:1. The fact that man is warned against succumbing to sin and constantly urged to do good presupposes his entire responsibility.

However, sin also has a corporate dimension. For instance, we have the tragic reality before us of Israel's sin and of how the people suffered its consequences particularly in the events leading to exile. The concept of corporate guilt strikingly appears in the account of Achan's punishment (Joshua 7). Not only was the guilty man put to death, but all his goods, his flocks and his family also perished with him (vs.24). The corporate involvement of sin deeply impressed itself upon the people. For example, the prophets constantly proclaimed that it is not only a few wicked individuals but the whole nation that was laden with sin and its tragic consequences. According to Vrie:

Unlike many modern religionists who seek to find excuses for sin and to explain away its seriousness, most of the writers of the Bible had a keen awareness of its heinousness, culpability and tragedy. They looked upon it as no less than a condition of dreadful estrangement

from God, the sole source of well-being. They know that apart from God, man is a lost sinner unable to save himself or find true happiness.⁴⁹

The New Testament Doctrine of Sin.

The Greek word *harmatia* is used in the New Testament for *hatta'* and means "a missing of the mark". Other terms are also employed which include - *anomia*, "lawlessness", *adikia*, "unrighteousness", *asebeia*, "impiety", *parabasis*, "transgression", *partomia*, "a fall", indicating disruption of the right relationship to God. This clearly shows that the problem of sin is as much a part of the New Testament as the Old Testament. For instance, all the old terms and concepts for sin are present in the New Testament. However, they are deepened and transformed. The one factor which makes this great difference is the work of Jesus Christ. He provides something which the saints of the Old Testament yearned for but could never find, namely real and certain victory over sin.

Remedy for sin.

The first sin of Adam had a unique significance for the whole human race (Romans 5:12, 14-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22). There is a sustained emphasis here upon the one trespass of the one man as that by which sin, condemnation and death came to reign over the whole of mankind. The sin is identified with the transgression of Adam. This is to say that the sin of Adam is imputed to the whole of mankind. Adeyemo's remark is an appropriate summary of this reality:

Man is a sinner not because he sins, but man sins because he is a sinner by nature. The emphasis is not on the act or the external manifestation, but rather on the internal, the intrinsic nature and the essential condition of man. As an apple tree cannot produce anything less than apple fruit, neither can the natural man do anything less than sin.⁵⁰

However, man does not need to continue in sin because God has provided a solution to sin through Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:21, Romans 8:3-4). The Apostle Paul makes this clear in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians saying that a sinner is able to obtain justification before God through faith in Christ. This involves the regeneration and transformation of the sinner. The believing man is now a new man in Christ (Colosians 3:10-11). He is nothing less than a new creature (Corinthians 5:17), and it is no longer he who lives but Christ lives in him (Galatians 2:20).

- ²⁰Byang Kato, "A Critique of Incipient Universalism in Tropical Africa" (Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974), 232.
- ²¹Ibid.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Peter Beyerhaus, "Theology of Salvation in Bangkok," Christianity Today 13, no 5 (30 May 1973): 13.
- ²⁴Kato, "A Critique of Incipient Universalism in Tropical Africa," 233-34.
- ²⁵Banana, The Theology of Promise, 121.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Ibid., 122.
- ²⁸Ibid., 118-9.
- ²⁹Ibid., 119.
- ³⁰James Cone, "Cone Lectures," Havard Divinity Bulletin 3 (December, 1972): 3; Quoted in Byang Kato. "A Critique of Incipient Universalism in Tropical Africa," 234.
- ³¹Banana, The Gospel According to the Ghetto, 53.
- ³²Banana, The Theology of Promise, 120.
- ³³ Bruce Nicholls, ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1985), 89.
- ³⁴Ibid., 92.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Dick France, "Liberation in the New Testament," The Evangelical Quarterly, 58, (January 1986): 14.
- ³⁷Ibid., 14.
- ³⁸Bruce Nicholls, ed., In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility. 93.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 95.

⁴²Ibid., 98.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Kato, Biblical Christianity in Africa, 16.

⁴⁵Banana, The Theology of Promise, 112.

⁴⁶Ibid., 132.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament 2 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 380; Quoted in Tokunboh Adeyemo, Salvation in African Tradition (Nairobi: Evangel, 1979), 59.

⁴⁹George Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 4, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), s.v. "Sin, Sinners," by S.V.J. De Vries.

⁵⁰Adeyemo, Salvation in African Tradition, 60.

CHAPTER IV

BANANA'S THEOLOGY OF THE KINGDOM

God's Kingdom Secularized.

It is remarkable to see how the Kingdom of God is secularized! For instance, Banana writes that "the material welfare of the people had become a sign of the arrival of the kingdom"! He denies the distinction between earth and heaven (the abode of God). He says:

If heaven and earth can be retained as separate entities, heaven is proclaimed as superior... all that the earth has to do is to listen. In that way the authoritarian ruler and religious leader will become the absolute possessors of the religious means of production, and nobody would be allowed to challenge their authority.²

According to him, "people are not condemnable but open to growth and all sorts of new experiences."³ It would appear as if in the process the "heavenly part" got lost in the material world because "the material world becomes God's own home and we are all his lovable children."⁴ Since Christ united heaven and earth, a christian could of course be a communist.

If I have understood Banana well, then his concept of the kingdom is a socio-politico-economic utopia depicting a classless society without exploitaion of the poor by the rich.

God's Kingdom as Socialism.

He advocates the introduction of socialism, arguing that "the only possible way to attain wealth that does not create poverty is cooperative ownership of the means of production."⁵ He points out that "this is exactly what socialism stands for."⁶ Banana also seems to suggest that those who follow the path of socialism are in effect responding to Jesus' call:

Jesus came to save the world because he brought to us a way of life in which every man can realize himself sharing with others what he has. That way of life tells us of the Kingdom of God and of his goodness. The only possible answer and replica of the Kingdom of God is socialism.⁷

This assertion indicates that God's Kingdom is actualized in concrete historical events of socio-politico-economic system. Banana explains how this happens:

It is pretty obvious that what self-reliance means is nothing short of the struggle for liberation. It is a story that is essentially connected with the struggle for liberation in the Third World countries - with the struggle for self-actualization of the Third World man as a precondition for the actualization of God's Kingdom.⁸

According to him, A theology of promise [which he expounds in his book titled Theology of Promise] "is ... a theology of a revolution, it consists of describing how God's Kingdom takes shape on earth through historical events in which God manifests himself."⁹ According to this view, God's Kingdom is realized when the previously oppressed people become free through liberation and the setting up of a socialist society. Broadly speaking, this is also the Marxist view. Kung's remark in this respect is helpful:

[For Marx], the Socialist Society ... must be a Kingdom of freedom and of human self-realization, where - despite all individual peculiarities- there is in principle no inequality or oppression of human beings, classes and nations, where the exploitation of men by men has come to an end.¹⁰

Socialism as a system has many things to commend it. For instance, it takes seriously the fact that a person is an end in himself and not just a means for other purposes. He is not just a thing, but a being whose worth is

unconditionally grounded in his human existence. Because of this fundamental belief, socialism condemns every form of slavery. However, it would be a serious mistake to equate socialism with God's Kingdom. Contrary to Banana's claim, socialism as a socio-politico-economic system is not the same thing as God's Kingdom. There is no earthly system which can reflect God's Kingdom. For example, socialistic society is also made up of fallen and sinful men. Besides, the Kingdom which Jesus came to found was not necessarily a political one. Guthrie's approximation of the Kingdom conforms to the biblical description:

The New Testament is not a political manifesto. Indeed its Kingdom teaching is essentially spiritual. Instead of a pattern for Society based on the political programme, the New Testament concerns itself with a redeemed community whose characteristics appear idealistic to those outside the realm of christian faith.''

It is not possible therefore for the Kingdom of God to find complete expression in any form of human organization. This is partly because there will never be complete agreement, even among men of good will, concerning the form which the organization of society should take in order to conform to the will of God. It is also because any existing form of socialism and economic organization is very largely the fruit of the conflict of sectional and class interests, even when these interests are not recognized by those who advocate them and put them forward. We are all influenced more than we realize by ideas and interests reflecting our age, class and nation. Unfortunately, Banana does not seem to recognize this, or the fact that since human beings are finite (limited in understanding and fallible in will), it follows that all forms of human organization, however lofty their ideals, are similarly imperfect.

Banana's Concept of Politics.

Banana's political views are commendable! He is basically right to stress the importance of political involvement of all the citizens of any nation. According to him:

The people should not abandon their responsibility for a moment, that they should not surrender their power to control their destiny. When they elect their representatives and their government, they are delegating to them their power and they continue to ask from them the best performance in carrying out their duties.¹²

He refutes the traditional view that Christians should stay away from politics because Christianity is love and not power or domination. He says:

It is obvious that the real significance of power is not understood here. The division between power and love is similar to that between individual and citizen, as if the people could be cut into a private life where love would dominate and life as a citizen or public life where political relations exist. There is no division between power and love. There may be dialectical tension, a difficulty in bringing them together, but the solution to the problem does not lie in separating them, but in using power in the service of love. If power is repudiated on moral or religious reasons, how can the poor defend themselves? Can there be any greater love than to lay down one's life at the hands of the rich in the process of changing society? Can we not say that there is no love without politics and there is no politics without love?¹³

He is right in his assumption that "theology... while finding its base from the biblical text, must of necessity find expression within the context of the human situation."¹⁴ We should of course recognize our dual citizenship, and while our highest allegiance must always be to God we nevertheless have social and political responsibilities here and now. This was emphasised in the Lausanne Covenant, and part of the clause 5 reads as follows:

Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgement upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must

work not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. ¹⁵

This view is supported by Kirby who rightly argues that "we recognize that politics is an activity of time and not of eternity, but since on earth we are creatures of time, we must measure up to our responsibilities while we are here."¹⁶ If we do not participate in political process, we would have no way of influencing the final outcome, and as Banana rightly points out "we either influence change or are influenced by it."¹⁷

CHRISTIAN FAITH VERSUS POLITICS

Definition of the Word Politics.

John Stott defines politics as follows:

The words politics and political may be given either a broad or narrow definition. Broadly speaking, politics denotes the life of the (city) polis and responsibilities of the citizens polites. It is therefore concerned with the whole of our life in human society. Politics is the art of living together in a community. According to its narrow definition however, politics is the science of government. It is concerned with the development and adaption of specific policies with a view to their being enshrined in legislation. ¹⁸

If politics is the concern of all citizens as Stott argues, then Banana is right in his assumption that "political power and religion ... are not two contradictory terms, but one and the same reality reflecting the unity of creation."¹⁹ It is encouraging that many christians in Africa have taken politics very seriously and some of them hold the highest public offices. In his address to officially open the Tenth Plenary Assembly and Study Session, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, who professes to be a christian said:

The cooperation of the Church and State in the promotion of the common good and of the commonwealth of our nations, ought to be seen

as a cardinal principle, from which peace and prosperity can receive a stronger foundation and support.²⁰

Museveni reminded the church leaders present thus:

The struggle between good and evil cannot be explained, wholly in purely human terms; it is a struggle which is spiritual, and which begins in the subconscious. Your duty, as spiritual leaders, is to light the way to a better understanding, and therefore, to a better management of this aspect of our human life. A sane and wholesome spirit leads to a sane and wholesome mind and body; and the converse is also true.²¹

The president seems to appreciate the complementarity of the church to the government. Another christian Head of State, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, addresses the same issue (namely christian involvement in socio-political-economic spheres) in his speech, officially closing the 5th General Assembly of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) at Mulungushi Hall. Commenting on the theme of the AEAM 5th General Assembly which was 'Following Jesus in Africa', Kaunda said:

Your theme...reassures me that your approach to the christian enterprise is not another worldly one, but rather an approach that shares in the tangible compassion of Jesus that the world cries out for today. You in the evangelical grouping of christians have for a long time remained in the doldrums on social and political issues in Africa. Much as it is necessary for you to emphasize man's need for spiritual rebirth, you should not neglect man's other social and physical needs. You have to meet man's need in totality.²²

Kaunda stresses that "Christianity cares for man's total welfare, dealing with issues relating to both the spiritual and the physical aspects of man"²³ He reminded the church leaders attending the assembly that they "have a moral obligation to guide political leaders to carry out their duties to ensure social justice for all."²⁴ In this respect, Banana rightly points out that "for evil to triumph good must do nothing."²⁵ He laments that "Christians choose to be spectators on the battlefield of life when our christian calling requires us to be active participants."²⁶ Indeed, the distinction between material and spiritual, nature and grace is not biblical at all. The church should do more for the poor and the oppressed than just provide alms, education and health services. The nature and claim of christian love demands christians to be

involved in politics in order to insure that justice prevails in our society. We must show compassion towards our fellow men, particularly the under-privileged whose lives like our own, are strongly influenced for good or for ill by impersonal legal systems which are the proper concern of the christians. Hear what Graig says:

To render witness in the political realm means two things. Firstly that the christian as citizen or as statesman defends the personal christian virtues such as honesty, equity, incorruptability, and secondly that he seeks to evaluate the structures of society in the light of the gospel of Christ, to remove such structures as embody injustice and to work for a transformation of society so that men may be able to fulfil their entire calling as responsible creatures of whom Christ died.²⁷

Christianity is a radical religion because it confronts both individual and the society with the contrast between what is and what ought to be. The church should never become a clerical institution providing only what are sometimes called rites of passage (i.e. baptism, marriage or burial) and offering spiritual aids to those willing to seek them. The delegates attending the All Africa Conference of Churches' meeting held in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1958 are to be commended for their resolution, part of which reads as follows:

The church has a duty to bear witness, in humility, to its understanding of the will of God for man in organized society. For that reason it dare not assume a passive, indifferent or neutral attitude towards the crucial political and social issues of the times. It must uphold righteousness, champion the oppressed, and declare the sovereignty of God over all creation, including the institutions of man.²⁸

Christians must be motivated by the imperatives of the gospel denouncing evil in our society. As Tutu remarks:

The church in Africa is faced with the challenge of injustice, corruption, oppression and exploitation at home, and it has no option but to fulfil its prophetic vocation, or seriously call in question its claim to be the church of Christ.²⁹

The church in Africa ought to help produce a new man who will transcend these social ills which plague the African continent, and should join hands with all progressive forces of change which are countering such evils.

Biblical Basis for Christians' Involvement in Politics.

The scriptures stress that there is no dichotomy between the material and the spiritual or between secular and the sacred. These areas constitute a unity in God's plan and each of them concerns Him. We cannot therefore minister to man's spiritual needs with integrity while ignoring his material welfare. We must emulate the Old Testament prophets who rebuked kings when they seemed to go astray, and condemned the wealthy class who seemed to exploit and oppress the poor. For instance, Jeremiah confronted kings, princes and judges of his day, accusing them of oppressing the poor (Jeremiah 21: 11-22: 5). Amos was another active prophet who denounced the exploitation of the poor and other social evils that were rampant in his own society (Amos 2:7; 11:1). According to Isaiah 10: 1-3, those who decree oppressive decrees, who turn the needy from justice, and rob the poor are all condemned. The concern for the poor runs through the entire Bible, from the early Old Testament to the Epistle of James (James 1:27 - 2:7).

The church should cooperate with the established governments because governments alone among other societal institutions have the potential to make mandatory rulings that overturn evil structures. Banana is therefore justified to point out that "politics is a matter of life and death, and the suffering masses cannot leave such a matter in the hands of men who have made themselves owners of the people."³⁰ According to him again:

Political action ... cannot be separated from religious motivations since it is the same totality which embraces both dimensions. A man who is involved in the revolutionary struggle cannot cut himself off from his intimate convictions, neither can he pray to God leaving aside his commitment to other human beings in an effective political action. Religion and politics are two sides of the same coin in that both, in their true unadulterated nature, seek to guide man towards realisation of his role in life and thus furnish man with the

inspiration, the comforts and the needs for that journey towards the integrated realization.³¹

It is encouraging to note that some church leaders, both in Africa and beyond, have been in the fore-front addressing those issues of public concern. The good example is the courage demonstrated by the late Ugandan Anglican Archbishop, Janan Luwum, who took a moral stand against Idi Amin, the former president of Uganda. In 1977, the Ugandan Anglican Arch-bishop called the house of Bishops to discuss the deteriorating security situation in the country. They drafted a letter which they sent to Amin condemning the reign of terror in the country which had resulted in the death of thousands of innocent people. The letter was signed by all the Bishops and sent to Amin. He was enraged by the content of the letter and ordered the arrest of the Arch-bishop on the pretext that he supported the rebels who were engaged in subversion to overthrow his government. Within a few days following his arrest, he was announced dead, apparently in a motor-accident while he and his fellow prisoners attempted to overpower the driver of the car that was transferring them to another prison. This official explanation regarding the nature of his death has never convinced anyone. Perhaps the true circumstances of his death may never be known, but there is nobody today who doubts that his death was a result of his opposition to Amin's regime. This is the kind of price that we may sometimes have to pay if we are obedient to the command of the gospel. Andrew Kirk puts it rather vividly:

All that happened to Jesus is likely to happen to his followers. They will be rejected, treated with contempt, reviled, slandered, discriminated against, have their freedom taken away, falsely accused, physically abused or killed. Christians are signs of the new world precisely because they suffer this kind of treatment on account of the uncompromising stand they take against every type of regime which sows death and destruction.³²

This explains in part why some churches are often so slow to take a moral stand at a time when the word of God commands it. In most cases, it is the fear of being persecuted that restrains them. However, as the disciples of

Christ, we must be prepared to oppose unjust political systems, even if we suffer for our actions. The church should make every effort to fight all vices that facilitate the prevailing injustices. As Allan Boesak points out:

The church can do nothing other than be on the side of the poor and the dispossessed. It cannot but proclaim a message of liberation from misery, oppression, poverty, domination, exploitation, fear, that means it cannot but search and fight with all its might for justice, peace, reconciliation, human fulfilment. It has no choice but to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.³³

He further points out that "the church of Jesus Christ must have the courage and obedience to join with God in the struggle throughout history for the sake of justice"³⁴ This implies that where there is harshness and insecurity, the church must be compassionate and caring, and where selfishness exists, we must be a sharing community. We must not just speak about forgiveness and reconciliation, but must act on these principles. In this way, the church would be able to offer fellowship to all who are torn apart in our communities.

Ways of Political Involvement.

As christians who are concerned for justice, we must move beyond merely dealing with the symptoms of oppression and attack the evils themselves so that many people never become victims in the first place. It is quite disappointing that the church is often content with ministering to the victims of oppression such as giving charity to the poor but fails to attack those socio-economic structures which cause poverty on large scale. The church should not only be involved in relief work to improve the condition of the oppressed and the hungry, but should also seek to eliminate the causes of oppression and hunger in any given society by political action. It is evident that certain causes of need cannot be relieved at all without political action.

John Stott's remark reinforces this point:

If travellers on Jerusalem-Jericho road were habitually beaten up and habitually cared for by good Samaritans the need for better laws to eliminate armed robbery might well be overlooked. If road accidents

keep occurring at a particular cross-roads, it is not more ambulances that are needed but the installation of traffic lights to prevent accidents. It is always good to feed the hungry, it is better if possible to eradicate the causes of hunger. So, if we truly love our neighbours and want to serve them, our service may oblige us to take (or solicit) political action on their behalf.³⁵

Put differently, Kibble also says:

Our social concerns must take two forms. Firstly it must take the form of what we have in the past called charity; caring for the sick, aiding the poor, helping our next door neighbour and so on. But social concern must also take the form of structural or political charity. Just to care for the individual victims of a disease is not sufficient: the disease itself must be fought and destroyed. So with charity: --- it is not enough just to care for the casualties in our society; where society is less than fair and just, society must be changed--- the structures of society must themselves be altered to ensure that casualties are avoided. Thus it is not enough for the Christian in South Africa to care for the black community: structural charity demands that the whole system of apartheid be challenged; it is not enough for the Christian in South America to give money and goods to the poor: structural charity demands that the whole economic system be challenged.³⁶

If certain laws are not in line with the imperatives of the gospel, then christians should agitate for their repeal by all peaceful means. Speaking to a large crowd of worshippers at an open air service at Nairobi Uhuru park, Desmond Tutu appropriately advised that "the church must speak out against evils that emanate from injustice."³⁷ The church should be critical of all political systems, always testing them against gospel standards. The statement by Julius Nyerere the former president of Tanzania is appropriate.

He says:

Most of all, the church must be obviously and openly fighting all those institutions and power groups which contribute to the existence and maintenance of the physical and spiritual slums- regardless of the consequences to itself or its members.³⁸

Fortunately the active social involvement of the church over a period of time in different parts of the world, has continued to bear fruits. This should be an inspiration to us in Africa to be more active in our socio-politico-economic contexts. Take the example of the Australian government which in the '60s ignored the land rights of the Aborigines and later reversed

this policy due to church pressure which supported the granting of land titles to the Aborigines. John Edwards takes up the story:

Some church bodies were active in encouraging this support, and a statement issued by the Division of Mission of the Australian Council of Churches on the future of Aboriginal missions, October 1967, listed four rights, including "their right to ownership of the land and the minerals within it, on the basis of prior occupancy or natural right."³⁹

In order to ensure that justice was done, the church took leasehold of the land being contested. This was done with a view to the land being transferred to the Aborigines when they were ready to hold such titles. Other measures were also taken, and according to Edwards again:

In 1978, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace issued a Statement of Concern which contained the following: "The challenge represented by the just demands of Aborigines for Land Rights, for restitution of and compensation for land, is crucial both for Aborigines and for the rest of Australian Community... The Anglican and Uniting Churches made similar declarations. This advocacy assisted in gaining much public support for the measures. In critical times of the negotiations the churches also were able to lobby with and through their members who were members of the government."⁴⁰

The church should recognize the importance of lobbying as a strategy for social reforms. For instance, some individual church members are at the same time policy makers in the government. These people provide important venues by which the church can influence the formulation of just laws. It is the writer's contention that if church leaders regularly approached those christians holding high positions in civil service, prayed with them, advised them and let them know the stand of the church on the important public matters especially before the new bills are debated by the parliament, the chances are that the decisions taken would be more in line with the aspirations of the church. John Whitehead seems to recognize the importance of this approach. He says:

Short of running for office, a christian contact with local state and public officials is vital, they need input from the christian community before voting on legislation.⁴¹

Another approach is letter writing. The christians can voice their objections to or approval of government policies quite successfully using this approach. Such letters should be published in national newspapers, christian magazines and any other papers which enjoy wide circulation. Commenting on the letter writing, Whitehead says:

Letter writing is very important in voicing objection or approval concerning a piece of legislation. Christians within various churches can form political groups to co-ordinate letter writing. This means getting organized.⁴²

The formation of pressure groups is another effective way of influencing public opinion. These are groups of christians who devote their time, money and other resources for a particular cause in a community. The classic example of such a group is the anti-slavery group formed by William Wilberforce. He and his friends fought many legal battles for the abolition of slavery and the rights of the under-privileged.

The present writer will regard his efforts rewarded if this work in some measure, helps to motivate African christians to get involved in politics. We need more christian heads of states and civil servants who will exercise their authority in promotion of justice and peace. This is one of the ways the church can effectively silence critics like Banana who accuse it of being pre-occupied with the sacred leaving other people to deal with pressing socio-politico-economic problems.

It may be appropriate to describe briefly some of the political systems besides socialism discussed earlier in the thesis. This (I hope) would help us to determine the one that approximates more closely to God's ideal. It must be pointed out at the out-set however that all political systems are defective, and none of them can measure up to God's standards. This is to be expected considering that we live in a fallen world.

TYPES OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The oldest political system recorded in the scripture is theocracy. According to Szikszai, "the word is not biblical in its origin, but the idea was one of the main tenets of the Hebrew people during their historical existence."⁴³ The concept of theocracy involved the thought of God as the law-giver, judge and ruler of Israel. This is not surprising considering that much of the Old Testament is addressed to a people of God who were a political entity with political autonomy. The Old Testament is concerned with the ordering of Israel's political life, the conduct of political affairs, the formulation of policies and the responsibility of the rulers as well as subjects. There were three categories of theocracy in Israelite history as shown below.

Charismatic Theocracy: This period goes back to the time of the covenant at Sinai when God became the ruler and the king of Israel and the people became a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6). At Sinai, Israel entered into the covenant with Yahweh and this transformed her into a covenant nation. Consequently, the king of this politically unorganized people became the Lord Himself (Judges 8:23; 1Samuel 8:7). In time of national disaster, the spirit of the Lord occasionally came upon some elected hero and through the divine gift or grace he was able to perform the act of military deliverance. They fought Yahweh's wars and appeared as deliverers of his people (Judges 6:14; 8:22). These heroes, generally called Judges, were charismatic leaders who under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord served as His representatives and shaped the nation's history. They had an almost prophetic certainty concerning the will of the Lord as can clearly be perceived by their rallying proclamation;

'follow after me for the Lord has given your enemies in your hand' (Judges 3:28; 7:7).

Monarchical Theocracy: This was another type of government which is recorded in the scriptures. The introduction of a monarch appeared to some people as an apostasy. However, there was generally the conviction that the king was chosen by the Lord (1 Samuel 12:12-15). He was the representative of Yahweh's theocratic rule, hence the title, 'the Lord's anointed' (Psalms 2:2). He ruled over the Lord's heritage, for the people belonged to Yahweh.

Priestly Theocracy: In the early post-exilic period, Zechariah had envisioned equal roles for the king and the priest as the Lord's theocratic representatives (Zechariah 4:14;6:12-13). The absence of a Jewish monarch during the Persian occupation contributed to the priest's authority.

The unique thing about theocracy is that God is acknowledged as Lord over His people and every effort is made to obey Him. There were cases of disobedience of course, but the leaders were always rebuked in such circumstances by the prophets. This contrasts well with our modern secular political systems which on the whole seem to leave God out completely and at best just ignore Him.

Some of the Modern Political Systems

Absolutism: This is a political system by imposition. An absolutist government makes laws and enforces them without checks of constitution or consulting the citizens. This type of government arises from an entirely pessimistic view of human beings. The people are either thought to be too stupid to know what is good for them, or if they know, they cannot agree about

it. The logic of this argument is that the government has to tell them what is good for them and they have to conform. The justification in support of this system is that tight control is necessary for the sake of social order. Many marxist governments fall under this category.

Anarchy: This category of political system advocates the abolition of all governments and law. It arises from a naively optimistic view of human beings who are regarded as perfectly capable of governing themselves. According to this view, laws are not necessary to create a just society. John Stott is right to denounce both Absolutism and Anarchism as unsuitable political systems. He says:

Both are politically mistaken because both are theologically mistaken, being based on false doctrines of man. They are also disastrous in practice. Absolutism leads to tyranny not justice and Anarchy leads to chaos not utopia.⁴⁴

Democracy: As a political system, democracy is harder to pin down than either socialism or communism. For instance, while socialism and communism have found in Marxism an ideological matrix, or at least a point of reference, democracy has never become identified with a specific doctrinal source -it is rather a by-product of the entire development of western civilization. For example, the Greek democracy as practiced during the fourth Century B.C., was the closest approximation to the literal meaning of the term. According to Giovanni Sartori, "when the demos gathered, the Athenian system...operated as a 'town-meeting' democracy in which some thousands of citizens expressed their ayes and nays."⁴⁵ Modern democracy is based on the presentation and presupposes not direct exercise of power but delegation of power. This is logical considering that modern societies are large and the greater the number of the people involved, the less their participation can be effective and

meaningful. In a democracy, the role of the people is therefore to produce a government by electoral procedures. In the present writer's opinion, a democratic government is to be preferred to other alternatives since it seeks people's consent to rule and is more accountable to the citizens. This is not to say that democracy is a perfect political system. On the contrary, it also has deficiencies! For instance, it is wrong to assume that any policy which is supported by the majority of the people is automatically the right one. The majority could well be wrong on certain issues. There is also the danger (especially in pluralistic societies) for a democratic government to oppress minority groups because they are unable to influence government policy by votes because of their inferior number.

Therefore as christians, we must never equate western type of democracy with justice, but rather should strive to promote justice within a democratic frame-work. In Africa particularly, our task is to minimize arbitrary and tyrannical rule and to maximize a pattern of civility rooted in respect and justice for each individual. The methodology for achieving this goal was discussed earlier in this thesis.

Endnotes.

- ¹Canaan Banana, The Theology of Promise (Harare: The College Press, 1982), 119.
- ²Ibid., 120-21.
- ³Ibid., 122.
- ⁴Ibid., 131.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Ibid., 132.
- ⁸Canaan Banana, Towards a Socialist Ethos (Harare: The College Press, 1982), 47-48.
- ⁹Banana, The Theology of Promise, 116.
- ¹⁰Hans Küng, Does God Exist? (Oxford: The University Press, 1978), 247.
- ¹¹Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1981), 947.
- ¹²Banana, The Theology of Promise, 42-43.
- ¹³Ibid., 43.
- ¹⁴Canaan Banana, The Gospel According to the Ghetto (Gwelo, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1980), 95.
- ¹⁵Gilbert Kirby, Too Hot To Handle (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1978), 90.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 94.
- ¹⁷Banana, The Gospel According to the Ghetto, 50.
- ¹⁸John Stott, Issues Facing Christians Today (Basingstoke: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1987), 10-11.
- ¹⁹Banana, The Theology of Promise, 44.

²⁰Yoweri Museveni, "Address to officially open the Tenth AMECEA Plenary Assembly and Study Session," Afer 31 (August 1989): 199.

²¹Ibid. 208.

²²Kenneth Kaunda, "Speech Officially Closing the 5th General Assembly of the Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar at Mulugushi Hall," AEAM Bulletin 18 (September 1987): 2.

²³Ibid., 3.

²⁴Ibid., 6.

²⁵Banana, The Gospel According to the Ghetto, 123.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Robert Graig, Politics and Religion: A Christian View (Salisbury: University Press, 1972), 4.

²⁸Henry Okullu, Church and State (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1987), 71.

²⁹Desmond Tutu, Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 114.

³⁰Banana, Theology of Promise, 41.

³¹Ibid., 21.

³²Andrew Kirk, A New World Coming (Basingstoke, England: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1983), 135.

³³Allan Boesak, Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 166-67.

³⁴Ibid., 167.

³⁵John Stott, Issues Facing Christians Today (Basingstoke, England: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1987), 12.

³⁶David Kibble, "The Kingdom of God in Christian Politics," Themelios 7 (December, 1981): 25-26.

³⁷Desmond Tutu, "Human Rights," African Christian Challenge 15 (15 November 1988): 4.

³⁸Henry Okullu, Church and State, 59.

³⁹William Edwards, "The Church and Indigeneous Land Rights," Missiology 14 (October 1986): 481.

⁴⁰Ibid., 484.

⁴¹John Whitehead, "Christian Connection," Christianity Today, 12 November 1982, 32.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³George Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), s.v. "Theocracy," by S. Sziszai.

⁴⁴John Stott, Issues Facing Christians Today, 59.

⁴⁵David Sills, ed. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: The Macmillan Company and Free Press, 1968), s.v. "Democracy," by Giovanni Sartori.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Challenge Facing Evangelicals in Africa.

The reality of liberation theology in the African scene as manifested in Banana's views is a real threat to traditional christian doctrine, which evangelicals must not ignore. With so many of our pastors in Africa having no formal theological education at all, the few Bible colleges on the continent must do all they can to prepare as many church leaders as possible who are equipped to withstand the challenge presented by emerging theologies which continue to influence the African scene. This may not be an impossible task considering that the major issue which separates evangelical christianity from all other forms of christian faith is our belief in the unique, absolute, and final authority of the Bible for christian faith and practice. Therefore, it is easy to pin down any theology which is not rooted in the infallible word of God.

Contrary to Banana's approach, the christian faith is not some kind of blind leap in the dark, trying to guess at what God is doing in history and join Him. It is rather a life of obedience to God's will as He has revealed it in His inspired supernatural word. The role of the scriptures should be to inform and challenge our presuppositions and prejudices. Unfortunately, Banana uses the scriptures to validate his own ethical and political views without

seeking to know what the Bible says on such issues. It is hardly surprising therefore that the solutions he offers to the existing socio-politico-economic problems should be humanistic in nature and therefore inadequate! For instance, instead of tracing sin to the human heart as the scriptures testify, he locates it in socio-politico-economic structures. He argues that it should be confronted in structures by eliminating oppressive systems. Incidentally, structures are not the cause of sin, but rather the manifestation of sin. It may be better to say that human sin which originates from the heart, is actualized in socio-politico-economic structures. Therefore, any attempts to eliminate sin by transforming structures would inevitably have a limited success. The new structures may well manifest new types of injustices! To fight economic exploitation, oppression (though right and proper) is to deal with the symptoms, the root cause of these social vices is sin. It is only Jesus Christ who can deal with the problem of sin. Therefore, although the present writer appreciates the efforts made by those who are committed to building institutions which seek to curb abuses of human rights and exploitations, he nevertheless recognizes their limitations! Therefore, Banana's utopian approach to socialism is unwarranted.

The Limitation of Socialism in Zimbabwe.

Banana's failure to recognize the seriousness of human sin has made his dream of a new Zimbabwean society characterized by justice unrealisable. The pre-independence vices, such as exploitation of the poor and racial discrimination continue to persist despite the government's attempts to eliminate them. The nation is also currently experiencing a new crisis of corruption by top government officials despite their profession of socialism. New Vision takes up the story, "A number of cabinet ministers in Mugabe's

government are facing corruption charges, and these include the defence minister, Mr. Nkala and education minister, Mr. Mutumbuka."¹

It is quite disappointing that Mr. Mutumbuka, the man who strongly supports Banana's views should be one of those ministers at the centre of investigation for corruption! Introducing Banana's book, Theology of Promise, Mutumbuka says that "where socialism aims at the material and spiritual welfare of the people, this welfare of the people is also proof of the arrival of the kingdom of God."² It is hard to reconcile this argument with what has been taking place in Zimbabwe since independence! The existence of corruption and other social vices confirm the reality and the seriousness of sin. The solution to man's sinful nature lies therefore not in socialism or in any other socio-politico-economic systems, but in Jesus Christ who alone can set people free from the grip of sin, thereby enabling them to practise justice. This is not to despise the usefulness of ideologies, but a recognition of their limitations in solving the human problems. For instance, the ideologies are incapable of making people more honest or generous. If the politicians were to be honest, they would be the first to admit this. Some politicians even lack confidence in their professed ideologies when it comes to implementation. According to a newspaper report:

President Robert Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF Party is nominally committed to building a society on Marxist-Leninist principles. But its policies are capitalistic, and left wing critics say ZANU-PF pays lip-service to Marxism.³

The report goes on to say that "orthodox Marxists at the university of Zimbabwe who have criticised the government from the left have suffered arrest, expulsion and harrassment."⁴ This non-committal approach makes one wonder whether the government is actually sure about the effectiveness of its official policy. It is for this reason that in spite of Banana's optimism about the success of socialism in Zimbabwe, the march to ruin has started in Harare

. For instance, in early February 1989, the fiery editor of Zimbabwe's popular Bulawayo Chronicle, Geof Nyarota, unearthed some serious scandals involving a number of president Mugabe's ministers. These ministers were using their authority to monopolise the buying of new cars from the state owned Willo Valle motor industries, the only motor assembly plant in Zimbabwe and re-selling these cars to company executives at up to three times their value. Siso reports in the New African Magazine:

The Zimbabwe Government had authorized Government ministers to purchase one car per minister under a preferential government arrangement but the ministers are known to have abused this privilege and bought for themselves as many cars as their pockets could afford and resold them to company executives at triple their retail price.⁵

President Robert Mugabe has acknowledged this post-independence drift away from socialistic ideals. In a speech to the nation on Heroes Day, he "castigated those members of his own party and people who had betrayed their ideas and principles for a pot of gold at the cost of development of the country as a whole."⁶

The other area which might be a cause of embarrassment to Banana is the distribution of land which he envisaged in a socialist Zimbabwe. This has not happened at any significant level, and for many of the peasantry little has changed. Mackay in The New African reports:

At present 50% of the total arable land in Zimbabwe is owned by 5000 commercial farmers. The land these farmers control is the best agricultural land in the country, with good soils, adequate rainfall and easy access to lines of transport and communication. 4400 of these farmers are white and their position of economic leverage and control enshrined in Lancaster House Agreement has prevented the Zimbabwean Government from implementing policies of agrarian reform it wanted at independence.⁷

It is not only the peasants who continue to experience hardship but also the casual workers and household helpers. For instance, the treatment of domestics by employers of all skin colours has aroused considerable criticism. These domestics are under-paid, often are housed in appalling conditions and

yet are expected to work seven days a week. Mackay's account helps us to understand better how these people are still vulnerable to exploitation. He says:

The recent decision by the government to raise the minimum wage for domestics to Z\$100 (£33 per month) aroused considerable controversy among both black and white house holders who claimed that they couldn't afford to pay 'their servants' a rise of some 15 dollars. Some domestics found themselves out on the streets as a result.⁶

Therefore, contrary to Banana's optimism, it does not seem realistic that the introduction of socialism in Zimbabwe will completely solve the country's socio-politico-economic problems. The old problems continue to persist at a lesser degree despite the government's effort to eradicate them. Mackay again takes up the story of what has been happening:

In 1985 a labour relation Act was passed in Zimbabwean parliament calling for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in employment. Nevertheless a report released towards the end of 1987 by the Commercial Workers Union highlighted the discriminatory policies against blacks that exist in some sectors of Zimbabwean industry and singled out the insurance companies as major culprits.⁹

The report revealed that "insurance companies pay different salaries to blacks and whites for similar jobs."¹⁰

It is quite obvious therefore that the God's kingdom anticipated by Banana is still a remote reality. For instance, the majority rule has not succeeded in eliminating all social evils which were rampant during the previous regime. Unfortunately, Banana has not been condemning these social evils in the same way he condemned the excesses of Ian Smith's regime. If his theology is to be consistent and to have any relevancy, it would need to speak to all situations by avoiding all tendencies for double standards. Such a theology must denounce social evils wherever they are found regardless of who the offenders may be. Banana should therefore have the courage to criticise

his own government when the top civil servants are ruining the economy and the masses are still being exploited.

The existence of these social evils clearly shows that socialism which Banana equates with God's kingdom has not solved all the basic socio-economic and political problems of Zimbabwe.

The Answer To Man's Fundamental Dilemma.

It is unrealistic in the first place for Banana to think that political and economic changes, or even educational opportunities would by themselves release society as a whole from its destructive tendencies. The solution lies in going to the roots of the evil rather than dealing with the symptoms only. This requires a total revolution and it is only through Jesus Christ that we can break social barriers, bringing together people of different races, tribes, man and woman, rich and poor. It was no accident that on meeting with Jesus the rich Zaccheus gave half his goods to the poor (Luke 19:8), because God's revolutionary rule is not something affecting only the people's minds or their relationship with God, but also their life in society and their relationship with each other. The revolution of God entails the establishment of a revolutionary society. Apart from that, the humanistic revolution envisaged by Banana is a distant dream! While man may need ideologies to provide him with some form of direction, he essentially needs God to function properly in this world. It is only when we are right with God that we are reconciled to our fellow men and the environment.

Footnotes.

¹New Vision (Kampala), 24 March 1989, 6.

²Canaan Banana, The Theology of Promise (Harare: The College Press, 1982),

12.

³Daily Nation (Nairobi), 17 October 1989, 9.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Gift Sipho Siso, "Crusade against Corruption," New African, February 1989, 33.

⁶James Mackay, "Zimbabwe--Black and White, Poor and Rich," New African, January 1989, 53.

⁷Ibid., 52.

⁸Ibid., 51-2.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

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