

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that a “conspiratorial folly” of Liberation Theology and Autonomous Marxism contributes to the building of “Hope” for marginalised people. Firstly, the research proceeds by analysing key elements of Hope, Liberation Theology and Autonomous Marxism. The research then investigates the interplay of Liberation Theology and Autonomous Marxism and the manner in which this interplay contributes to the development of “Hope”.

The thesis proposes - using insights from Žižek, Benjamin, Badiou and adopting a neo-Marxist lens - that the practice of faith toward hope is subversive of what is conventionally taken to be reality. This proposition will be exemplified by analysing the claim that the pursuit of the kingdom of God is a revolt against the very notion of kingdom and the powers that are associated with kingdoms.

This thesis argues that, to paraphrase Thesis VI of Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, “despite these days being shrunken and small of stature, theology will nevertheless play a covert and decisive role in the struggle for liberation”. Through an adversarial and Liberationist reading of Scripture and theology, this thesis offers three research outcomes:

1. It argues that a hermeneutic of theopolitical subversion finds expression when comments are repudiated, such as those made by the Australian Minister for Immigration in early 2016: “Churches provide a lot of assistance to refugees and they feel very strongly

about these issues, I understand that. In the end people have to abide by Australian law, no matter who you are”.

2. It subjects to examination the soteriology of the state and the reigning myth of the state as savior through the sanctioned practice of democratic violence and argues that salvation from such a source is “folly”.
3. It concludes by proposing how the church might move from its assigned apolitical space as a provider of values, or a compassionate interested organization and into the modern democratic state, to find a heretical place with the poor and marginalized via an adversarial position vis-à-vis the democratic market-state

These outcomes present a challenge for the Church as it considers its role in contemporary Western society. Although this study arises out of a pastoral situation it is not a study in pastoral theology. Rather it takes up the perspective of Liberation Theology in that theology is written out of the intersection of faith communities and their lived context. Thus the thesis seeks to confront the Church with Žižek’s comment on the first page of his “The Puppet and the Dwarf” (2003). There he asserts that the church today has two possible roles; one, as helping people to cope in the existing order; the other to provide space for the articulation and practice of discontent. The thesis suggests that the Church, notwithstanding traditional perspectives, is involved in a battle that acts on behalf and along with the casualties of the market state visible around us. Once again as it was at its beginning in early Jewish society

of the first century of the Christian era and Imperial Roman hegemony prior to the declaration of Constantine, it is proposed that the Church is to be understood as a heresy in the now established Western society.