



Mixology and Theology

Michael Coffey

Week Five: Margarita and Latin American Theology

Mixology: Margarita

The origins of the Margarita cocktail are in dispute. It seems to have first appeared in the 1930's in the Mexican border communities as U. S. travelers went there during Prohibition. It is likely based on a cocktail popular in the U. S. and Mexico called the Daisy, which used similar ingredients but with brandy instead of tequila. Brandy became unavailable during Prohibition, so tequila was the only spirit to use. "Margarita" is Spanish for "daisy."

There are various types of orange liqueurs used in Margaritas. Triple sec is a generic name for a type of orange liqueur originating in France. Many bottles of "triple sec" are low-cost and very sweet. Cointreau, one of the original French triple secs, is one of the premier brands and is the ingredient used in the International Bartender's Association (IBA) recipe, and is dry. Grand Marnier is an orange liqueur made with cognac instead of clear distilled spirits.

There are many recipes for Margaritas, with a wide variety of ratios of tequila: triple sec: lime juice. The IBA standard ratio is 10:4:3. Cointreau's "original Margarita" recipe uses 2:1:1. I'm using this recipe, with some added sweetener. This is a stronger drink than you might be used to in restaurants!

Margarita

2 oz	tequila	1 oz	Cointreau
1 oz	lime juice	2 tsp	simple syrup
Salt for the rim (optional)		lime wedge for garnish	

Put ice in a cocktail shaker. Add tequila, Cointreau, lime juice, and simple syrup. Shake for 30 seconds. Salt the rim of a Margarita or other style glass, if you like, by rubbing lime juice on the rim and dipping in the salt, shaking off excess salt. Put ice in the glass and strain the drink into the glass. Garnish with lime. If this is too strong for your taste, add a few ounces of water.

Margarita Mocktail

1 oz	lime juice	1 oz	orange juice
1/2 oz	simple syrup	2 dashes	orange bitters
4 to 6 oz	water or club soda	lime wedge to garnish	

Mix in a glass with ice and stir. Add lime wedge.

Theology: Latin American Theology

Latin America and the Roman Catholic Church

The history of the church in the Americas dates back to around 1500. In 1510 the Pope gave “colonial rights” to Spain and Portugal. The church played a significant role in the expansion of these colonial empires through forced conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity. Franciscan and Jesuit missionary efforts played a large role in the growth of the church, but also often spoke against the mistreatment of the indigenous peoples by the colonial powers.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is said to have appeared to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin in 1531. This important symbol to Mexican Catholicism blended the distinctive cultures of pre-colonial Mexico, affirming and maintaining them, while at the same time promoting the conversion of the indigenous peoples to Catholicism.

Much of the political power in Latin America has been strongly connected to the hierarchy of the church, which was the largest land owner in most countries. Resentment about the power given to clergy led to a widespread anti-clericalism which grew in the 19th century. Clergy were seen as a major block to social progress and generally affirmed a conservative politics of the status quo. Liberal reforms and movements in the 19th century led to changes in many laws and removed power and land from the church. Some of these reforms led to a few powerful individuals gaining the land the church once held. Much of the history is an continual struggle between power held by the church and the ruling classes, and power held by liberal democratic forms of government and the poor.

During the 1950's and 1960's various movements within the church began to speak out on behalf of the poor and on the church's role in pursuing social justice.

Gustavo Gutiérrez

Born in 1928 in Peru, Gutiérrez is a Dominican priest and theologian. He was the most prominent early voice in forming what is now called Liberation Theology. In 1968 he presented a paper at a church conference called "Towards a Theology of Liberation." In 1971 he wrote his groundbreaking book "A Theology of Liberation." (If you recall our look at Black Theology and James Cone, both theologians are writing their liberation theologies at the same time.) In the book, Gutiérrez explores how the church should pursue social justice, live out the Gospel through living a “preferential option for the poor.” Using biblical sources, Gutiérrez shows that the church must be concerned not only with individual spiritual concerns, but social concerns and structural forms of oppression. He says that because God loves all people, God has a preferential option for the poor and oppressed because they are suffering most under social injustice.

Gutiérrez speaks of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. He says that the church as elevated orthodoxy (correct praise or speech about God) over orthopraxy (right practice or living out of the faith), and that orthopraxy should be elevated. This orthopraxy is rooted in love of neighbor and must be worked out contex-

tually where ever the church finds itself facing injustice. Since poverty is a reality largely because of structural oppression, and because it leads to harm and robs people of life, the church is called to address the causes of poverty. A primary means of doing this is the church living in solidarity with the poor, being a church of the poor, and not merely a church of power doing charity for the poor.

Critics of Gutiérrez and other liberation theologies see it as being too influenced by Marxist class struggle and too political.

A few quotes from *A Theology of Liberation*:

The denunciation of injustice implies the rejection of the use of Christianity to legitimize the established order.

We take it for granted that Jesus was not interested in political life: his mission was purely religious. Indeed we have witnessed . . . the 'iconization' of the life of Jesus: 'This is a Jesus of hieratic, stereotyped gestures, all representing theological themes. In this way, the life of Jesus is no longer a human life, submerged in history, but a theological life -- an icon.

In the final analysis, poverty means death: lack of food and housing, the inability to attend properly to health and education needs, the exploitation of workers, permanent unemployment, the lack of respect for one's human dignity, and unjust limitations placed on personal freedom in the areas of self-expression, politics, and religion.

The praxis on which liberation theology reflects is a praxis of solidarity in the interests of liberation and is inspired by the gospel.

Leonardo Boff

Boff was born in Brazil in 1938 and became a Franciscan priest and then a professor of theology. In 1978 he wrote "Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology of Our Time." Facing similar criticism as Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians, Boff was seen as too closely tied to Marxism . In 1985 he was officially silenced for a year by the Catholic Church (under the leadership of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI). Facing a similar disciplinary action in 1992, Boff left the Franciscan order and the priesthood. Boff says about theology:

Among the many functions of theology today two are most urgent: how theology collaborates in the liberation of the oppressed, who are today's "crucified Christs," and how theology helps to preserve the memory of God so that we do not lose the sentiment and sacredness of human life which is threatened by a culture of superficiality, consumption and entertainment. We should always unite faith with justice, where a perspective of liberation is born, keeping the flame of our sacred lamp burning so that it can feed the hope for a better future for the Earth and all humanity.

Christian Base Communities

One of the key parts of liberation theology among the poor was the formation of base communities. These communities are local small groups led by the poor, with guidance from a priest or not, but led by the people themselves. They read the Bible together and interpret based on their experience, not on offi-

cial church doctrine or hierarchical thinking. They affirmed that God was with them as the poor and oppressed. One description of the base communities is this:

The content of Bible study courses rejects the church's traditional message, preached from the Conquest onward, that one should accept one's lot on earth and wait patiently for one's reward in heaven. Through the CEBs (in line with Medellín documents), the people receive a different message: that God, who is a God of justice, has acted throughout human history on behalf of the poor and oppressed; that it is not God's will that they be poor; that, before God, they are equal to the rich; that they have a basic human right to organize and take control of their own lives; and that the church has responsibility to "accompany" them in that journey.

The impact of this process is profound. More than one peasant has commented that when the priest or nun came to organize CEBs, it was the first time anyone had asked what she or he thought about anything. Nuns report observing their parishioners' traditional fatalism change over a few months to a new sociopolitical awareness: "It's 'God's will' when a child dies becomes 'The system caused this.'" Religious workers also report that CEB members change physically: "They walk upright, their heads high, with self-confidence," rather than shuffling along with heads bowed.

Óscar Romero (1917—1980)

Romero was a priest in El Salvador and became archbishop of El Salvador in 1977. Throughout much of his ministry Romero was a conservative. He criticized liberation theology as being too focused on material liberation only, and not on spiritual liberation. He rejected a class divide within the church. In 1977 his good friend Rutilio Grande, a Jesuit priest working with the poor, was assassinated by El Salvadoran security forces. Romero changed after this and became a much more vocal critic of the government. In a 1979 speech he said:

In less than three years, more than fifty priests have been attacked, threatened, calumniated. Six are already martyrs--they were murdered. Some have been tortured and others expelled [from the country]. Nuns have also been persecuted. The archdiocesan radio station and educational institutions that are Catholic or of a Christian inspiration have been attacked, threatened, intimidated, even bombed. Several parish communities have been raided. If all this has happened to persons who are the most evident representatives of the Church, you can guess what has happened to ordinary Christians, to the campesinos, catechists, lay ministers, and to the ecclesial base communities. There have been threats, arrests, tortures, murders, numbering in the hundreds and thousands.... But it is important to note why [the Church] has been persecuted. Not any and every priest has been persecuted, not any and every institution has been attacked. That part of the church has been attacked and persecuted that put itself on the side of the people and went to the people's defense. Here again we find the same key to understanding the persecution of the church: the poor.

Romero was assassinated after preaching a sermon calling on El Salvadoran soldiers to follow Christ rather than carry out the government's persecutions and violations of human rights. After he finished the sermon, a car pulled up and a gunman got out and shot and killed him. Over 250,000 attended his funeral, and some called this the largest protest demonstration in Latin American history. During the funeral smoke bombs exploded in the streets and gunman killed upwards of 50 people.

Pentecostalism in Latin America

During the period of the rise of liberation theology, another religious movement began to sweep across Latin America. Pentecostalism became a religious and spiritual movement that also liberated people from the power of the church, emphasized local leadership, and invited them to experience the freedom of living in the Spirit. This movement has largely been more conservative in regards to social and political reform, and focused more on the individual. It is the fastest growing religious movement in Latin America and now over 30% of the population is Pentecostal.

ELCA and Accompaniment Theology

Over the past two decades the ELCA has developed an approach to global mission called “accompaniment.” This approach is a rejection of previous mission efforts of the church over past centuries which largely supported and benefited from colonialism. The accompaniment model for mission was largely influenced by Latin American liberation theology and its emphasis on walking beside the poor in their struggle. It was developed in direct conversation with Latin American church leaders. The ELCA web site describes this approach this way:

Walking and working together, we seek to accompany our companions. Accompaniment is defined as walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality. The ELCA lives out accompaniment in relationships with global companions, striving to share God’s love and participate in God’s mission together:

Mutually: All of us have gifts to support God’s mission. There is no mission to, only mission with and among.

Inclusively: We seek to build relationships across boundaries that exclude and divide.

Vulnerably: Just as Jesus became vulnerable to us, we open ourselves to others.

Empowering: We seek to identify and correct imbalances of power, which may mean recognizing and letting go of our own.

Sustainably: To ensure local ministries last for a long time, we seek to embed mission in ongoing relationships and communities.

A helpful teaching document on the ELCA’s approach to global mission is available here:

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_\(full\).pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Accompaniment_(full).pdf)