

# JESUS FROM THE EDGES

## *Doing Theology from the Margins and the Open Future of Christianity*

“According to Leviticus 11:38 if water is poured upon seed it becomes unclean. The passage, however, does not distinguish between seed planted in the soil and seed detached from the soil . . . In years of poor harvests, a frequent occurrence owing to poor soil, drought, warfare, locust plagues and poor methods of farming, this text was a source of dispute. Why? During such lean years, grain was imported from Egypt. But the Egyptians irrigated their fields (putting water on seed) so that their grain was suspect, perhaps even unclean. The Sadducees judged that such grain was unclean and anyone consuming it also became unclean. They were quite willing to pay skyrocketing prices commanded by scarce domestic grain because they could afford it. . . . One senses economic advance being sanctioned, since the Sadducees were often the large landowners whose crops increased in value during such times. By contrast the Pharisees argued that the Pentateuchal ordinance applied only to seed detached from the soil; therefore . . . one could be observant and still purchase Egyptian grain.” (Ched Myers; *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*, p. 76)

**Luke 5.30**—But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

**Leviticus 11.37-38**—If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, they remain clean. But if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.

**Matthew 9.13**—But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

**Luke 14.13**—But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind . . .

**Matthew 11.19**—The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

**Mark 2.15-16**—While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

**Luke 5.30**—But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

**Luke 19.7**—All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

**Gustavo Gutierrez**—“Black, Hispanic, and Amerindian theologies in the United States, theologies arising in the complex contexts of Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific, and the especially fruitful thinking of those who have adopted the feminist perspective—all these have meant that for the first time in many centuries theology is being done outside the customary European and North American centers. The result in the so-called First World has been a new kind of dialogue between

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Various Theologies

Theology versus “Insert Adjective” Theology

Tables that Exclude

Extermination  
End Date

Tables that Include

Future is not Fixed  
Hope for the Future, not of

Christianity, but of our very Humanity itself.

traditional thinking and *new thinking* . . . These considerations should not make us forget, however, that we are not dealing here solely with an intellectual pursuit. Behind liberation theology are Christian communities, religious groups, and peoples, who are becoming increasingly conscious that the oppression and neglect from which they suffer are incompatible with their faith in Jesus Christ (or, speaking more generally, with their religious faith). (A Theology of Liberation: 15th Anniversary Edition, emphasis added.)

**Jacquelyn Grant**—“Theology as developed in Europe and America is limited when it approaches the majority of human beings.” (White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus)

**Jacquelyn Grant**—“Liberation theologies including Christian feminists, charge that the experience out of which Christian theology has emerged is not universal experience but the experience of the dominant culture . . . liberationists therefore, propose that theology must emerge out of particular experiences of the oppressed people of God.” (White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus)

**Aboriginal Elder Lilla Watson**—“If you have come to help me, please go home. But if you have come because your liberation is somehow bound with mine, then we may work together.” (Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970’s)

**Matthew 20.8, 16**—“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ . . . So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

