Title: The Christian and political liberation movements: a Naga Adventist perspective

Author: Paoring L. Ragui

Date completed: October 1990

Granting Institution: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS)

Description: Unpublished Thesis (PhD): 258 pages

Abstract:

In several Asian countries there is a struggle for political liberation. In the process, the Christian finds himself asking the question, is it right for Christians to join in political liberation movements?

This study proposed to find the answer to this question both from the Christian Adventist tradition and from the teachings of the Scriptures. The research was based on a case in which a Christian was asked to join the Naga (India) liberation struggle. The procedure of the study includes four main parts: (1) description, (2) analysis, (3) interpretation, and (4) pastoral action.

The writings of Asian Christian authors discussing the Christian and political liberation were reviewed. Specific attention was paid to the following questions: (1) what is political oppression? (2) Who are the oppressed and the oppressors? And (3) how are the politically oppressed liberated?

The analysis looked into the historical, socio-cultural, religious, and political dynamic of the case. It was found that the Nagas are: (1) community-oriented, (2) religious and god-fearing, and (3) freedom-loving people. These factors, especially love for freedom and independence, contributed to the Nagas’ struggle for independence.
The positions of four major Christian groups on the Christian’s involvement in political liberation movements are studied. It was found that all four groups are in favor of involvement to bring about political liberation. However, the support for a given method of involvement to achieve liberation varied. The Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, and the Committee for World Evangelization are in agreement that such participation should through non-violent means. Liberation theologians, on the other hand, believe that non-violent means should be the way but, should that fail, the use of violent means is acceptable.

A study of both Old and New Testament showed that Bible writers did not support the engagement of God’s people in political struggle to being about liberation and change authority through violent means. The bible advocates speaking against oppression and denouncing its evils. The Bible consistently supports liberation from, both for the oppressed and the oppressors. God has reserved for himself vengeance and change of authority.