WORLD DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHURCH: A STUDY OF ECONOMIC STATEMENTS OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FROM GENEVA 1966 TO UPPSALA 1968

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ABSTRACT

WORLD DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHURCH: A STUDY OF ECONOMIC STATEMENTS OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FROM GENEVA 1966 TO UPPSALA 1968

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This dissertation examines statements on economics and "world development" in the proceedings and reports of the World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva 1966 and the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala 1968. The goal is to understand the reports of Geneva and Uppsala in the light of the genesis and structure of these two meetings and to evaluate and critique the methods they used to relate economic analyses and conclusions to themes and statements of Christian theology. The dissertation divides into three sections and each looks for changes and continuity between Geneva and Uppsala. Section I studies the structure and comprehensiveness of the economic discussions. Section II investigates the theological positions explicit or implicit in the responses recommended to Christians. Section III considers the methods used in producing reports and drawing conclusions.

The thesis concludes that Geneva was historically significant as a consciousness-raising event and that its

report is a pastoral document exhorting Christian concern for human conditions in the countries of the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. Uppsala, in spite of its heavy North Atlantic representation, succeeded in turning World Council thought towards Geneva's themes. However, both Geneva and Uppsala were overly optimistic in their selection of economic development possibilities. Ambiguities in economic and theological terminology (e.g. "development" and "church") and lack of methodological precision hampered the reports' ability to argue and communicate effectively.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Beirut, 1968	The Conference on World Cooperation for Development, Beirut, Lebanon, April 21-27, 1968. World Development. The Challenge to the Churches. Sponsored by the Exploratory Committee on Society, Development and Peace. The Official Report to the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, with a Foreword and a Summary of Recommendations. Geneva: Exploratory Committee on Society Development and Peace, 1968.
Bennett	Bennett, John C., ed. Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World. New York: Association Press, 1966.
CCIA	Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.
DICARWS	Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee, and World Service.
DWME	Division of World Mission and Evangelism.
FO	Faith and Order.
Geneva, 1966	World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966. Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of Our Time. World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, July 12-26, 1966. Official Report, with a Description of the Conference by M. M. Thomas and Paul Abrecht. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1967.
Geneva Handbook	World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966. Handbook. World Conference on Church and Society, July 12-26, 1966. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1966.
IMC	International Missionary Council.
LW	Life and Work.
Munby	Munby, Denys, ed. Economic Growth in World Perspective. New York: Association Press, 1966.

New Delhi to Uppsala	World Council of Churches, Central Committee. New Delhi to Uppsala 1961-1968. Report of the Central Committee to the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968.
Preston	Preston, Ronald H., ed. Technology and Social Justice: An International Symposium on the Social and Economic Teaching of the World Council of Churches from Geneva 1966 to Uppsala 1968. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1971.
Ramsey	Ramsey, Paul. Who Speaks for the Church? Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967.
SASP	Committee on Specialized Assistance to Social Projects.
SODEPAX	Committee on Society Development and Peace.
Uppsala, 1968	World Council of Churches, Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, 1968. The Uppsala Report 1968. Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, Sweden, July 4-20, 1968. Edited by N. Goodall. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968.
Uppsala: All Things New	World Council of Churches, Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, 1968. All Things New. Preparatory Booklet for the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, Sweden, July 4-20, 1968. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968.
Uppsala Drafts	World Council of Churches Executive Committee. Drafts for Sections. Prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968.
Uppsala: Unity of Mankind	World Council of Churches, Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, 1968. Unity of Mankind. Speeches from the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, Sweden, 1968. Edited by A. H. van den Heuvel. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1969.

WCC	World Council of Churches.
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation.
Zagorsk, 1968	"Theological Issues of Church and Society." Report of the Consultation between the Faith and Order Department and the Department of Church and Society of the World Council of Churches held at Zagorsk near Moscow, March, 1968. Study Encounter 4 (1968): 70-81.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines statements and policies concerning economics and "world development" that were formulated at two significant events of the World Council of Churches: the World Conference on Church and Society held at Geneva, Switzerland, July 12-26, 1966 and the Fourth Assembly of the World Council held at Uppsala, Sweden, July 4-20, 1968.[1] I look for changes that occurred in the way the reports of the two events discussed the issues and try to identify some of the factors that influenced these changes. As a structural framework for the thesis, my task is divided into three sections and in each section I discuss and compare the Geneva Conference and the Uppsala

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[1] Throughout this thesis I use the words "development," "developing," and "developed" in relation to countries and regions of the world. In section 2.2.1 (below) I discuss the meaning of the term "development" in greater detail and there I note that this meaning shifts throughout World Council documents. This change is often a cause for ambiguity and misleading implications and consequently, it is important to remember that wherever the term is used its meaning must be made clear. Unless I indicate otherwise I do <u>not</u> use the words "developed," "developing" or "development" to imply a qualitative progression of any sort. Rather, I employ the most general definition of "development" as set down by the economists Meier and Baldwin, "Economic development is a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time." G. M. Meier and R. E. Baldwin, <u>Economic Development</u> (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1959), p. 2.

Assembly. Section I examines the reports of the two events and asks how the authors viewed the world economic problems. Section II looks at the responses the authors recommended that Christians make to these problems. Section III discusses the methods used in producing the reports and drawing conclusions.

My overall aim in this thesis is not simply to analyse and catalogue material from the Geneva Conference, the Uppsala Assembly and from the secondary literature written about them. Rather, I evaluate and critique the content and method of the two events and their reports in the hope of providing directly or indirectly some direction for future ecumenical discussions in social ethics. To my knowledge a study of Geneva and Uppsala that examines economic issues with this aim in view has not been previously undertaken.

0.1 Historical Background to the WCC

The World Council of Churches, as it currently exists, is the product of a union of three international Christian movements: Life and Work, Faith and Order, and the International Missionary Council. Although the history of Protestant ecumenical activity reaches back more than four centuries, one can point, as does Edward Duff, to three historical factors that influenced the rise of

these three movements.[2] (1) By the end of the nineteenth century missionary activity in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres had sparked a vision of international Christianity among Protestant denominations engaged in mission and evangelization programs. The road towards seeing this vision realized involved cooperation among these denominations. Consequently, in 1910 the World Missionary Congress was staged in Edinburgh, Scotland, to discuss the forms that this cooperation might take. (2) In 1895 the World Student Christian Federation (abbreviated WSCF) was formed as an attempt on an international scale to organize and prepare Christian youth for the task of world mission and evangelization. The WSCF therefore had its roots in the Protestant missionary activity and continued to turn out leaders and ideas for this ecumenical movement. (3) Christian Social movements arose as a late nineteenth century reaction against what was felt to be a prevailing tendency towards over-privatization of religion and neglect of social responsibility among some Protestant Christians in the U.S. and Europe. Such figures as Nathan Söderblom and Walter

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[2]For a historical introduction to four centuries of Christian ecumenical activity, see R. Rouse and S. C. Neill, eds., A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967). The following background to FO, LW and IMC is drawn from E. Duff, The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), pp. 19-27.

Rauschenbusch were leaders in these social movements and their activities influenced the organization of various regional American and European Christian church councils (e.g., the U.S. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in 1908). Several of these councils met in 1919 near the Hague as the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

At Edinburgh in 1910 the World Missionary Congress focused on "unity of action" in mission and evangelization activities and consequently, the participants agreed to bypass doctrinal differences. The Edinburgh Conference led to the formation, in 1921, of a permanent council for the discussion of issues related to Christian mission and evangelism, the International Missionary Council (abbreviated IMC).

Meanwhile the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches was planning a conference to discuss the broader questions of Christian participation in social activity. This conference took place at Stockholm in 1925 as the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work and here was born the Life and Work movement (abbreviated LW). Life and Work retained the focus on "unity of action" from the Edinburgh Conference and continued to stay away from questions concerning doctrinal differences among the churches. However, Bishop Charles H. Brent of the Philippines was unhappy about

Edinburgh's reluctance to discuss doctrinal issues. He thus initiated efforts to call together "all Christians who confess Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" to a conference that would examine questions concerning the faith and constitution of the Church. In 1927 the first World Conference on Faith and Order was staged at Lausanne and here the Faith and Order movement (abbreviated FO) was born.

Both Faith and Order and Life and Work held a second conference in 1937 (Faith and Order's at Edinburgh and Life and Work's at Oxford). By this time both movements had realized that the questions of Christian social responsibility and Christian theology and ecclesiology could not be discussed in isolation. So, in 1938 a meeting between the two was held in Utrecht and here plans were drafted for the two groups to merge into a single World Council. After a delay necessitated by the outbreak of World War II, the World Council was officially constituted in Amsterdam in 1948 at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (abbreviated WCC). Within the new Council the two original movements retained their respective areas of concern as the Commission for Faith and Order and the Department of Church and Society.[3] Apart from the four subsequent World Council Assemblies (at Evanston 1954, New Delhi 1961, Uppsala 1968 and Nairobi 1975) each group has continued to stage its own

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[3]Ibid., pp. 28-40.

meetings and conferences (Faith and Order's at Lund 1952, Montréal 1963 and Louvain 1971 and Church and Society's at Geneva 1966).[4]

While these two groups were developing structures of cooperation the International Missionary Council continued to hold conferences at Jerusalem 1928, Madras 1938, Whitby 1947, Willingen 1952 and Ghana 1957.[5] While the IMC maintained indirect contacts with FO and LW, it was not until 1948 at the First WCC Assembly that direct collaboration began. Section IV of the Amsterdam Assembly, "The Church and International Disorder" was the work of the newly formed WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (abbreviated CCIA), the joint efforts of the WCC and the IMC.[6] In 1957 at the Ghana Conference plans were laid for the IMC to merge with the WCC and in 1961 at the New Delhi Assembly the merger became official.[7]

0.2 Background to the Social Thought of the WCC

Since this thesis will be concerned with economic matters and the Geneva Conference, a brief introduction is

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[4] R. McAfee Brown, The Ecumenical Revolution (Garden City, New York: Anchor-Image Book, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 416-17.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Duff, p. 28.

[7] Brown, pp. 416-17.

in order regarding the issues that have commanded the attention of the Life and Work arm of the World Council since 1925.

The theme of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm, 1925, was "The Church's Responsibility for the Total Life of Mankind."[8] The Conference sought to emphasize Christian social responsibility as a corrective for a growing trend towards pious individualism; the participants focused on questions concerning the nature of social responsibility in the light of Christian faith in the "Kingdom of God." A debate arose as to whether the immanence (Rauschenbusch) or transcendence (Barth) of God's Kingdom should provide the foundation for Christian social action. The Conference soon discovered that it lacked the time and resources to properly investigate the theological bases for social ethical statements.[9] The Conference concluded by: (1) emphasizing the state as guarantor of the social order, (2) affirming that the application of Christian ideals and principles must be left up to individual consciences, and (3) realizing that far more attention would have to be paid to the theological

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[8]Duff, p. 28.

[9]A. Dumas, "Evolution in the Social Ethic of the Ecumenical Council Since 1966," in The Manipulated Man, Concilium no. 65, ed. F. Böckle (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp. 109-110.

questions behind social issues.[10]

At the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937 the participants explored various ways of how to relate Christian theology to social ethics. Three positions were put forward. (1) A group from the Stockholm Conference affirmed that biblically derived principles and ideals must inform the decisions of individual Christian consciences. (2) Karl Barth and Emil Brunner challenged the view that rules and programmes could govern authentic Christian activity and proposed instead an ethic of inspiration based upon the individual's existential response to God's call. (3) William Temple provided a third alternative: an ethic of justice derived from the commandment to love. J. H. Oldham introduced the concept of "middle axioms" as guidelines that would operate within Temple's alternative to mediate between the ultimate Christian norms and the proximate situations. Although the Conference could not resolve the debate among the three alternatives the third prevailed as the Council's dominant methodology up to the 1948 Assembly and beyond.[11]

At the first World Council Assembly at Amsterdam in

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[10] P. Bock, In Search of a Responsible Society (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 33; Duff, p. 31; P. Abrecht, "The Social Thinking of the World Council of Churches," Ecumenical Review 17 (1965): 242-44.

[11] Abrecht, pp. 244-46; Bock, pp. 36-38.

1948 the east-west communism-capitalism debate prevailed through the discussions. The participants stressed that neither political-economic system could be absolutized and that no social order could be identified with the Kingdom of God. The theme "The Responsible Society" emerged as an attempt to describe a social order based on a Christian philosophy of man. This society would seek to maintain a balance of freedom, justice and order. In the years following Amsterdam the international crises surrounding the "cold war" and the rise of new nations presented the WCC with a real test of its ability to reason through social ethical issues. The Council made public statements on the "apartheid" policy in South Africa, the Korean war, the beginning of the nuclear arms race, the Berlin blockade, Soviet activity in Eastern Europe and the establishment of a people's republic in China. In addition the refugee aid programs of the various agencies of the WCC brought the Council into close touch with the people living through many of these crises.[12]

At the Second Assembly in Evanston, U.S.A., in 1954 the Council became aware of the Christian churches emerging in Africa, Asia and Latin America and began to appreciate the difficulties of drafting statements and policies

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[12]Bock, pp. 41-42; Duff, pp. 117-18, 40-54.

that would adequately represent their perspectives.[13] The Central Committee realized that much background information was needed on the social, political and economic details surrounding the living conditions of peoples in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres and so they authorized the Department of Church and Society to begin a Study on Rapid Social Change. After six years and an International Ecumenical Study Conference in Thessalonica, Greece, in 1959 the Study concluded that new political and social systems were needed to take the place of older colonial systems that were breaking down and that these new systems would have to support significant social, economic and political changes. The report focused on the biases and limitations of existing world structures that hindered these changes.[14]

By 1961 and the Third Assembly at New Delhi, the WCC had accepted twenty-three new member churches, most of these from the South and the East. The IMC, which previously had been the main point of contact between the WCC and the younger churches, merged with the WCC with the result that the 1961 Assembly occasioned the Council's first exposure to the growing polarity between the "advanced industrial nations" and the "third world" nations.

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[13]Bock, p. 42; Duff, pp. 59-60.

[14]Bock, pp. 43-44.

The addition of the Russian, Roumanian, Bulgarian and Polish Orthodox Churches to the membership roles served to further broaden the variety of theological perspectives within the World Council and the presence of Roman Catholic observers at the Assembly marked the beginning of a program of cooperation between the WCC (especially the Commission for Faith and Order) and the RCC; a program that would significantly increase the opportunities for mutual influence.[15]

At New Delhi the representatives of the new geographical and theological perspectives could not come to any agreement on the theological foundations for social ethics and consequently, the traditional North Atlantic ecumenical positions prevailed through the discussions, thereby preventing the Assembly from adequately dealing with the problems that faced two-thirds of the world.[16] The Central Committee recognized this problem and authorized the Department of Church and Society to organize the Geneva Conference. Unlike the Rapid Social Change Study and the Thessalonica Conference, Geneva was a World Conference on the scale of an Assembly in which experts in

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[15] Ibid., p. 45; Dumas, p. 111; V. T. Istavridis, "The Orthodox Churches in the Ecumenical Movement 1948-1968," in The Ecumenical Advance, A History of the Ecumenical Movement, vol. 2, 1948-1968, ed. H. E. Fey (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 305.

[16] Dumas, p. 111.

economics, politics, sociology, business, government and theology from the four corners of the world gathered in a public forum in an attempt to formulate some guidelines for Christian social ethical thought and action. Geneva marked a significant change in the social thought of the WCC. The discussions focused on international social and economic justice and global technological, social and political revolution in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. The general membership of the World Council became concerned with the issues raised at Geneva and for the first time the North-South debate between the wealthy North Atlantic countries and the poorer Southern and Eastern Hemisphere countries took precedence over the communism-capitalism debate.[17]

Geneva gave rise to three further events. In March, 1968 at Zagorsk near Moscow the WCC Departments of Faith and Order and Church and Society held a consultation on ecumenical social ethical method. The following month the Vatican Commission Justice and Peace and the WCC jointly formed an exploratory Committee on Society, Development and Peace (abbreviated SODEPAX) and staged a Conference on World Cooperation for Development in Beirut, Lebanon. And in 1967 Paul Ramsey published Who Speaks for the Church?

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[17] Ibid., pp. 111-12; Bock, pp. 46-7.

as a critique of the Geneva Conference's method.[18] In the light of these three factors the Fourth WCC Assembly at Uppsala in July, 1968 accepted the Geneva report and commended it to the Council's member churches.[19] However, Uppsala's own section reports contained subtle changes in perspective and method, changes that marked a further step along the course that had been charted by Geneva.

I have chosen to examine the Geneva Conference and the Uppsala Assembly because together they represent significant moments in WCC social thought. They begin an ecumenical social ethic that is truly global in scope and provide a forum within which major methodological questions have been raised, explored and debated. The analysis that follows is both an attempt to understand and appreciate the two events within their historical contexts and to point to areas where changes and improvements in the context and method of WCC social thought might better serve the continued efforts of the World Council.

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[18] P. Ramsey, Who Speaks For the Church? (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967) (hereafter cited as Ramsey).

[19] Bock, pp. 48-49.

SECTION ONE

THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 1

GENEVA: ECONOMIC GROWTH IN "ADVANCED" AND "DEVELOPING" COUNTRIES

1.0 Introduction

The World Conference on Church and Society at Geneva, 1966, was an effort on the part of lay Christian experts in economics, politics and the social sciences to address contemporary world problems from a technical perspective and to present a report to the World Council of Churches summarizing their assessments and conclusions. This chapter examines the world economic problems as they were summarized in the Conference's report, Geneva, 1966. The effort will be to: (1) present the important insights and contributions of Geneva, 1966 on economic matters; (2) critique Geneva, 1966's assessment by identifying the report's implicit responses to the following three questions:

(1) What are the possibilities for effecting solutions?
(2) Who are the responsible agents? (i.e. who can solve the problems?).
(3) What is the mode of solution? (e.g. reasonable discourse, natural evolution, revolution).

(3) Draw some conclusions regarding ambiguities, methodological problems, theological and ethical implications.

There will be no attempt here to enter into the debate among the proponents of the various economic theories of development. The attempt will be rather to identify the various alternative positions in the debate, to reveal what is at stake in each, to clarify the ethical implications of the various positions, and to suggest ways in which the Geneva Conference might have more clearly discussed the issues as theological and ethical questions.

1.1 The Insights and Contributions of "Geneva, 1966"

1.1.1 Economic Growth

One of the four section reports of Geneva, 1966 was devoted entirely to economic questions. The focus of Section I "Economic Development in a World Perspective" was the issue of "economic growth" or "economic development." The two terms "growth" and "development" were used interchangeably throughout the report to refer to the overall increase of wealth accrued to a nation or region as the result of increasing technology and/or earning capabilities. "Growth" was generally used in reference to countries that have already achieved some measure of economic advancement, and "development" was often used in discussing countries or regions that have yet to achieve a North American or Western European level of overall per

capita wealth.[1]

In general, economic growth was understood to be desirable.

> Economic growth means increase of income in terms of goods and services, more freedom from toil and drudgery, and continually expanding opportunities for men to use their skills in new ways.[2]

However, it was clearly understood that this growth is neither inevitable nor without its destructive side effects. The tendencies toward preoccupation with material wealth and enslavement to the economy were recognized as two of the pitfalls along the road to growth.[3] In discussing the "advanced countries," the authors were more careful in differentiating between economic growth and the various other elements required in effecting overall human well-being. Without such other objectives as full employment, distribution of income, price stability, balance of payments equilibrium, freedom of personal choice, improvement in the

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[1]World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966, Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time. World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, July 12-26, 1966. Official Report, with a Description of the Conference by M. M. Thomas and Paul Abrecht (Geneva: WCC, 1967), 55/11, 66/45, 6, 7 (hereafter cited as Geneva, 1966). Throughout this thesis, documents whose paragraphs are numbered will be cited in the following way. Both the page number and the paragraph number will be noted and the two numbers will be separated by an oblique stroke, e.g. Geneva, 1966, page 55, paragraph 11 is notated Geneva, 1966, 55/11.

[2]Ibid., 53/4.

[3]Ibid., 53/4, 137/71, 54/6.

quality of life, and a limitation of the insecurity and violence that often accompanies rapid economic change, the phenomenon of growth itself cannot be an accurate measure of a healthy economy.[4] However, throughout the report it was assumed that a growing or developing economy was the necessary context within which the various elements required for human well-being were secured. In treating "developing countries" it was assumed that economic development was the key means in achieving better living conditions for people.

> Economic development is essentially a process of change whose fundamental aim is to improve the living conditions of all the people in a country. Such change is brought about by measures to increase productivity, usually through increased investment, sustained over a period of time. From the Christian viewpoint this change is part of the effort to create a truly just social order.[5]

It should be noted that a major assumption underlies this particular perspective on economic growth. The assumption is that economic growth is necessary but not sufficient for securing human well-being. I will argue (see 1.2 below) that it is not a unanimous consensus among economists that economic growth is one such necessity. The debate among "growth" and "no-growth" economists will be discussed in the section which considers the question of "possible solutions," but let me observe at this point that the authors of

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[4] Ibid., 55/11.

[5] Ibid., 66/45.

Geneva, 1966 have taken a stand on economic growth; a stand that will tend to preclude consideration of certain alternatives in the economic analysis.

1.1.2 The "Human" as Criterion

Economic growth and development is discussed throughout the report in the wider context of a concern for a world whose referent is man. Technology and economic advancement are to be welcomed "as a gift from God" and must be made "to serve human purposes." The human must serve as the criterion for assessing the means and effects of economic growth, and economic development must be seen as a part of man's efforts to create a "truly just social order." Technological progress finds its value only inasmuch as it serves to eradicate human want and misery from the face of the earth.[6]

This wider context of concern serves to situate correctly world economic problems as ethical and theological concerns. Furthermore, there is a deliberate effort on the part of the authors of Geneva, 1966 to welcome the advances of technology and economics and to regard them as God's gifts. In this regard Edward Duff has drawn attention to the similarities between the documents of the Second Vatican Council, particularly Gaudium et spes, and Geneva, 1966. He

[6] Ibid., 52/1, 53/3, 66/45, 80/101, 137/71.

points to Gaudium et spes, no. 64, to show that in the Vatican II document technology is a rightful locus of human activity.[7] In fact, there is a two-fold parallel between Geneva, 1966 and Gaudium et spes. Both documents affirm that the Christian's legitimate concern is human activity in the world and both espouse the human as the norm of man's activity.[8] This theological perspective precludes any overly personalized Christian ethic which does not admit that economic, political and social issues are also religious issues. In other words, the authors of Geneva, 1966 recognized at the outset that when and where human well-being is at stake economic issues are ethical and theological issues.

1.1.3 Growth and Economic Systems

The authors of Geneva, 1966 succeeded in quickly precluding any uncritical identification of Christianity with any one particular economic model. All three alternative economic systems (free market, welfare state with mixed economy, and socialist centrally planned economy) were found to be compatible with Christian faith and capable of

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[7]E. Duff, "The Common Christian Concern," in Technology and Social Justice, ed. R. H. Preston (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1971), pp. 65-6 (hereafter this volume of collected essays will be cited as Preston).

[8]Vatican II, Gaudium et spes, in Vatican Council II, ed. A. Flannery (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1975), nos. 2, 3, 12, 35.

accommodating rapid economic growth and a wide distribution of income. All three were seen as means to an end rather than ends in themselves and all three must have man as the ultimate referent and criterion for acceptability.[9] The effect of this conclusion was: (1) to defuse the debate between the Eastern communist countries and the Western capitalist countries (discouraging the identification of socialist and Marxist theories with some diabolical oppenent to Christianity), and (2) to refocus attention on the significantly more important gap between the wealthy North Atlantic countries and the "third world" countries, largely characterized by poverty. As Samuel Parmar points out, the Geneva Conference was the first occasion for an ecumenical conference to escape from under the heavy limitations of a Western theological and economic perspective.

> The variegated group assembled at Geneva succeeded by and large in posing the problems of the 'third world' as seen, experienced and understood by them and not as these might appear to people from an external vantage point. We see development not merely as increased production through a process that generates larger resources but a struggle for economic equality, new property relations and the elimination of exploitation nationally and internationally.[10]

The fact that one of the three sub-sections of the first Section report was devoted entirely to aspects of economic

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[9] Geneva, 1966, 57/15 ff., 58/18.

[10] S. L. Parmar, "Reflections of a Lay Economist From a Developing Country," in Preston, pp. 127-8.

development as it relates to developing countries bears witness to new found concern for countries in the Southern Hemisphere.

André Dumas attributes this new emphasis to the presence of representatives from Latin America at the Geneva Conference. He suggests that Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Oceania were too busy wading through the complexities of their own particular problems to gain any sense of perspective. It took Latin America to identify the conquest of poverty and suffering with God's activity in Jesus Christ.[11] The result was an opportunity for Christians to take a second look at world economic relations and to break out of an outmoded capitalism-communism economic debate. (It is interesting to note that most of the issues discussed at Geneva had been discussed in greater depth in secular economic circles from as early as the beginning of the 1950's. As Samuel Parmar points out, we must not forget that we are latecomers to the development scene).[12]

1.1.4 The "Advanced" Countries

Since the "advanced" countries have already achieved

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[11] Dumas, pp. 112-13.

[12] Parmar, p. 128.

a certain potential for providing the material conditions required for human well-being, the discussions relating to advanced countries focused on issues whose implications and effects militate against the realization of this potential. I have grouped these issues into three general categories.

1.1.4.1 Consumption

The authors of Geneva, 1966 recognized that with high national income comes economic power and the ethical choice as to how to spend this income wisely. They considered it a consensus among economists that expenditure of this income on arms was not necessary to sustain the economy. The authors were aware that the mode of consumption is a collective decision involving both those in power and private consumers, and that there is therefore a religious and an ethical imperative for all to consider the needs of the poor and the developing countries in deciding how to consume.[13]

1.1.4.2 Distribution

I have included in the general phenomenon of distribution such things as inflation, unemployment, waste, income-level-disparity and welfare. Distribution was viewed generally as the problem of getting existing wealth in goods, services and income opportunities to the whole population in such a fashion that an adequate life style

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[13] Geneva, 1966, 59-60/23-4, 60/25-6.

is made possible for all. Inflation was considered a distribution problem in the temporal sense since current privileged groups are benefitting at the expense of others in future decades. The authors of Geneva, 1966 seemed to feel that the key to solving the distribution problems lies in the right income and price policies and that this must be mainly a concern for governments.[14]

1.1.4.3 Working and Living Conditions

Working and living conditions include such things as the interaction between workers' and employers' organizations, working conditions and job satisfaction, problems created by automation, the sociological effects of technological change, and the social stresses of urban and affluent societies. The focus throughout Geneva, 1966 was on collective cooperation towards the general welfare of all, concern for the worker as an individual, participation in decision-making, and encouraging a sense of mutual responsibility.[15] The authors discussed briefly the problems that might be involved in transferring industries from developed countries to developing regions. They felt that the whole community, including individuals involved in their respective industries, governments and social and labour organizations would have to cooperate to confront

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[14] Ibid., 60-2/27-32.

[15] Ibid., 62-4/34, 38-40, 65/44.

these problems. The churches are challenged to help in creating the sense of mutual responsibility needed for this combined effort.[16]

There is an awareness in this section that social and ethical values and a pervading sense of "hyper-acquisitiveness" might be the human elements in the economic and social phenomena related to working and living conditions in affluent societies. But it is not clear whether the authors consider these as underlying causes or as effects of socio-economic conditions.[17]

1.1.5 "Developing" Countries

The economic problems discussed in relation to "developing" countries were problems encountered in the mobilization of technological, industrial, agricultural, economic, social and political factors towards increased rated economic growth and development. The issues were grouped under three general headings.

1.1.5.1 Motivations

The authors of Geneva, 1966 recognized that a people's will to accept change, their desire to share in sacrifices, their prevailing attitudes toward work and material possessions, tribal or class loyalties, and excessive nationalism

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[16] Ibid., 64/39-40, 65/44.

[17] Ibid., 65/42, 44.

were major factors in securing a pattern of economic development. For the first time the report focused directly on the human cognitive structures that are required before development towards conditions of human well-being could proceed. Here the Christian concern for the needs of man and the biblical record of man's responses to God's call for social change are seen as essential contributing elements in the formation of the attitudes, beliefs and motivations required for the development of just social conditions.[18]

1.1.5.2 Resources

The authors of Geneva, 1966 focused on both physical and human resources and considered the indigenous structures which inhibit the development of these resources. In developing physical resources they saw that patterns of land holding, habits in consumption, savings and distribution of capital and attitudes towards industrial labour conditions prevailed as obstacles to development.[19] The question as to whether to mechanize or to promote "labour-intensive" manufacturing presented an apparent impasse in the efforts to balance the utilization of both human and physical resources. Only highly mechanized industries can produce goods at a low enough cost per unit to compete on world markets, but mechanization of industry leaves high

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[18] Ibid., 66-7/48-50.

[19] Ibid., 68/52, 69/58, 70/59-60.

percentages of the population unemployed. The alternative, highly "labour-intensive" operations, utilize larger percentages of the labour force but yield goods whose selling prices are too high to be competitive. And combinations of mechanized and "labour-intensive" industries in single countries or regions result in considerable disparity between income levels and a restricted circulation and distribution of capital.[20] An increase in the amount of foreign aid was recognized as a necessary contribution to the problem of capital availability although there was no attempt to explore how this capital might be used to simultaneously develop human and physical resources.[21]

The problem of human resources was viewed as a problem of education, overpopulation, urbanization and the imbalance of population concentration. It was considered throughout that an increase in communication and education could effect certain solutions to the problems of human resource development and that the responsibility rests in the hands of the developing countries themselves.[22]

1.1.5.3 Institutions

The conference members considered national and international economic structures to be inhibiting elements in

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[20] Ibid., 68-9/53-6.

[21] Ibid., 70/61.

[22] Ibid., 70-4/62-78.

the development of poor countries. International patterns of land ownership, international economic and trade policies, national and international agreements for price and quota stabilization, and lack of general economic integration within a nation were recognized as phenomena that often militate against the economic and industrial growth of nations. It was generally considered that a growth in international awareness and the mobilization of political will to legislate internationally the appropriate corrective measures would secure acceptable alterations to these international structures.[23] There was no awareness among the pages of Geneva, 1966 that perhaps the perpetuation of these structures might be deeply rooted in the very life-style and self-understanding of the people of developed countries and that they are built into the very structures of contemporary economic analysis. These perspectives were presented in the preparatory volume, Economic Growth in World Perspective, but they did not find their way into the report Geneva, 1966.[24]

1.1.6 World Economic Relations

The authors of Geneva, 1966 discussed the issue of

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[23] Ibid., 76-7/88-91, 79/96.

[24] R. Theobald, "New Possibilities in Modern Technology," in Economic Growth in World Perspective, ed. D. Munby (New York: Association Press, 1966), pp. 161-2 (hereafter this volume of collected essays will be cited as Munby).

world economic relations in the context of an optimistic view of technological possibility. "Technological progress gives mankind the possibility of eradicating want and misery from the face of the earth." The problem as viewed by the authors, was that there exists inequalities between rich and poor countries and that "growth of responsibility," transcendence of a "limited self-interest" and "international economic cooperation" now have a "moral imperative" in order that these inequalities can be eradicated.[25] The elements in this situation of inequality were described as four-fold:

(1) High productivity and its effects in advanced countries.
(2) Poverty and economic dependence of non-industrialized countries.
(3) The difference in power and independent decision-making capabilities between the two and the resulting dominance/dependence situation.
(4) The failure to devise structures which facilitate rapid economic and social development.[26]

The solution was envisioned as an "imposition" of "supra-national approaches" upon national efforts such that: (1) a new trade balance is found, (2) resources of developing countries are utilized, (3) aid policies assist capital flow, (4) developing countries industrialize, (5) agriculture, education, trade and services are developed, (6) world economic and trade patterns are restructured, and

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[25] Geneva, 1966, 80/101.

[26] Ibid., 80-1/102.

(7) developing countries gain greater political power and influence. The principle bottlenecks to this solution scheme were seen as the "trade gap" (the poor bargaining power of developing countries in international markets), the neo-colonial attitude of developed countries (the view that developing nations are simply suppliers of raw materials and markets for finished goods), the poor quality of international aid (tied aid and bilateral aid rather than unilateral or international aid), the inefficient use of aid by corrupt local governments and institutions, and the lack of continuity in education/training programs following technical assistance.[27]

The solutions were generally seen to involve the sending of aid, international legislation, a common world goal and plan, education, and the acceptance of "temporary dislocation" and "possible suffering" for groups in developed countries. The churches are therefore exhorted to present an ethic of altruism and justice which would make intelligible this dislocation and possible suffering.[28]

Such a picture might lead one to ask why solutions such as these had not been already attempted. There is a lack of willingness throughout Geneva, 1966 to carefully examine the effects of such a "fundamental restructuring of

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[27] Ibid., 81-2/103-4, 106-9, 84/113, 137-8/71a, 71c, 71e.

[28] Ibid., 84-5/119, 86/124.

the world economy" and the authors were reluctant to consider that perhaps the current international politicians were not simply selfish, ignorant or uninterested in the plight of developing countries. The next section of this chapter assembles the underlying assumptions, unasked questions and unexplored possibilities of Geneva, 1966. I attempt to reveal the possible alternatives and the ethical implications which were left unexplored or were precluded by Geneva, 1966.

1.2 Critique of "Geneva, 1966's" Assessment

1.2.1 The Possibilities For Effecting Solutions

The question concerning the possibilities for effecting solutions to world economic problems is one which asks "do we have the knowledge and the tools to solve the problems?" and "what are the costs?" The range of possible responses to these questions can be assembled in the following fashion:

(1) The problems are soluble and the solution is to the economic advantage of all.
(2) The problems are soluble with temporary moderate hardships.
(3) The problems are soluble with permanent moderate hardships.
(4) The problems are soluble with much temporary human suffering.
(5) The problems are soluble only with a permanent reversal of the roles of developing and advanced countries.
(6) The problems are insoluble because of lack of knowledge or techniques.

The point of the issue here is that if there is a serious

possibility that alternatives (5) or (6) might be true, then the whole ethical character of the question becomes changed. It is one thing to ask (as did Geneva, 1966) that a North American child forsake his or her electric toothbrush so a Latin American child could eat.[29] It is quite another to ask the two children permanently to change places or to implement programs that might result in both of them starving.

Geneva, 1966, for the most part, viewed the possible solutions as alternatives (1) or (2). The problems of economic growth were considered soluble "... through sustained research and the energetic pursuit of material progress."[30] It was acknowledged that the pitfalls along the road to growth (the loss of real values, damage to personalities, enslavement to economic processes) could be met by the churches' actions to "... awaken the conscience of those who are working in and for the economy."[31] The decisions as to how to consume wisely in advanced countries were considered real ethical decisions that can move the direction of society towards a more even world distribution of wealth, and the churches were exhorted to help influence these decisions. Governments' income and price policies were

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[29] Ibid., 191/10.

[30] Ibid., 53/4.

[31] Ibid., 54/6-7.

considered capable of effecting solutions to the problems of inflation, distribution and welfare and the human hardship encountered in the periods of technological and industrial transitions were considered moderate, short-lived and endurable.[32]

In developing countries many of the problems were considered soluble with education, and with new advancements in education techniques the problems could now be solved more rapidly.[33] The authors of Geneva, 1966 considered inter-governmental agencies and organizations to be a viable means for effecting a proper transfer of international aid, and good national and international planning was seen as "one of the most powerful means of achieving economic development." With technological progress man possesses "... the possibility of eradicating want and misery from the face of the earth." The only ingredient missing, in the eyes of the authors of Geneva, 1966, is "growth of responsibility." The imposition of "... supranational approaches upon national efforts" was considered quite possible and the "temporary dislocation and possible suffering for a large number of people" is the price for "the fundamental restructuring of the world economy."[34]

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[32] Ibid., 60/25-6, 62/32, 64/39-40.

[33] Ibid., 70-1/63-4.

[34] Ibid., 75-6/84-6, 79-80/100-1, 81/104, 86/124.

This optimistic consideration of possibility did not come out of a vacuum. A faith in "enlightened self-interest" prevailed throughout the articles in the preparatory volume Munby. The American delegate Roy Blough held that "Fortunately the economic goals of higher production, distributional justice and freedom of choice are largely consistent with one another." He felt that in the occasional circumstances where national policies of different countries conflict, international agencies can act correctively.[35] The Nigerian S. A. Aluko maintained that the attitude that people can improve their own conditions is the key to economic growth in developing countries. External factors such as technical personnel, aid, and trade policies are only secondary to the indigenous elements.[36] A. C. Espiritu from the Philippines considered the sacrifice in effecting economic growth a short-term sacrifice in the light of long-term goals, and P. Kuin of the Netherlands held that distribution of goods can be achieved either by increased national income or by radical change in

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[35] R. Blough, "World Economic Policy and Planning. An American Perspective," in Munby, pp. 252, 263-4.

[36] S. A. Aluko, "The Dynamics of Economic Growth in the Developing Countries," in Munby, pp. 65-6, 79-80.

distribution.[37]

Some of the authors in Munby were more cautious in identifying the level on which the problem must be approached. M. Sumiya looked to the value systems in changing cultural demographic patterns as obstacles to capital formation and R. Preston recommended a change in attitudes and a willingness to make social adjustments.[38] However, underlying these recommendations is a prevailing sense that values and attitudes are changeable by people themselves with little or only moderate difficulty.

The perspective of Charles Elliott (U.K.) presented a departure from the general tone of the preparatory documents. He revealed the possibility of a much deeper issue.

> It is an illusion that growth can be had cheaply or that economic growth and development is a painless and pleasurable experience. From this it follows that if economists, and more particularly Christian economists, put a high priority on economic growth they should be clear that they are advocating the payment of high costs.[39]

Participants at Geneva, critics of the WCC, and independent

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[37] A. C. Espiritu, "Economic Dependence and Independence as Seen From Southeast Asia," in Munby, p. 204; P. Kuin, "Economic Growth and Welfare in the Industrialized West," in Munby, pp. 36-7.

[38] M. Sumiya, "Social and Political Factors in Developing Societies," in Munby, pp. 97-8; R. Preston, "Christians and Economic Growth," in Munby, p. 117.

[39] C. Elliott, "Ethical Issues in the Dynamic of Economic Development," in Munby, p. 338.

economists have since criticized the tendency to understate the costs of development. Samuel Parmar, a participant at Geneva, disapproved of the Conference's overemphasis on the "welfare state" and "welfare world" approach to development and the "enlightened self-interest" standpoint toward solutions that it implies. While he viewed proposals for a world tax for development and multilateralization of foreign aid as helpful, he considered them grossly inadequate to deal with the fundamental problems of development.[40] D. Widener suggests that the trans-national effects on North American workers resulting from total economic reconstruction might be something more than moderate and transitional and that perhaps "total enslavement of populations in advanced and backward nations" might be the only way of effecting rapid global development.[41]

The point here is not to argue that one economic model or theory is or is not correct but to note that there is serious disagreement and that all the possible alternatives must be taken into account if the issue is to be treated as an ethical or theological one. The Club of Rome has presented an economic evaluation which concludes that

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[40] Parmar, pp. 137-8.

[41] D. Widener, "Gospel of Revolution: an Analysis of Official Documents of the World Council of Churches Issued at the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society," Christianity Today 11 (February 19, 1967): 501-2.

global development is neither possible nor desirable in the light of long-term conditions for human survival.[42] In a less pessimistic but nonetheless harsh analysis, D. Goulet concludes his analysis with the following statement:

> Development processes are both cruel and necessary. They are necessary because all societies must come to terms with new aspirations and irresistable social forces. Yet the choices they face are cruel because development benefits are obtained only at a great price and because, on balance, it is far from certain that achieving development's benefits makes men happier or freer. Moreover development has always been and remains a harsh process. Yet the options faced by today's low-income countries are even more cruel.[43]

The position expressed at Geneva then regarding the possibility and the stakes in economic growth represents only one of the various alternatives in the debate. The implications of this narrow perspective will be considered more carefully in the third section of this chapter.

1.2.2 The Responsible Agents

The question as to who can (and therefore ought to) act in solving development problems calls forth a range of five possible responses:

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[42] W. E. Schliesser, "The Club of Rome Model," in <u>The Economic Growth Controversy</u>, eds. A. Weintraub, E. Schwartz and J. R. Aronson (White Plains, N. Y.: International Arts and Science Press, Inc., 1973), pp. 228-9.

[43] D. Goulet, <u>The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development</u> (New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. 326.

(1) Politicians must act by legislating and negotiating at the national and international level.
(2) Corporate executives, trade union leaders and leaders of pressure groups must change corporate patterns of production, trade and investment.
(3) Local residents must participate in changing conditions in their own countries.
(4) The international population must collectively participate in effecting changes across international boundaries.
(5) The real problems are rooted in trans-national structures, values, and attitudes that are largely beyond the control of anyone.

Generally Geneva, 1966 considered that the responsibility for solving growth and development problems rested with: (1) governments, (2) corporations, and (3) local residents. There was some consideration that (4) the habits of people from advanced countries might present obstacles to development in Latin America or Asia, however, there was little feeling that (5) the responsibility for solutions might ultimately lie outside any of these persons or groups. The point here is that exhortations to specific ethical actions are at best irrelevant and at worst dangerous when directed towards agents who are largely incapable of responding.

The authors of Geneva, 1966 considered governments in advanced countries capable of stabilizing inflation, distribution and welfare. They held that mutual cooperation among business leaders, union and pressure group leaders, workers, and consumers was necessary for resolving problems of

consumption, work, and living conditions.[44] In developing countries the attitudes of the local residents and the patterns of education, population, and land ownership required both the efforts of local governments and the participation of citizens. Capital and resources development required aid from foreign governments and corporations and patterns of international trade required the cooperation of international governments and corporations.[45] On the international scale governments and corporations are seen as responsible for effecting solutions to trade, aid, exchange problems and to the problems of neo-colonialism and corruption in government.[46] In the "Conclusions and Recommendations" to the report of Section I the authors of Geneva, 1966 recognized "attitudes and motivations of people," "unsuitable economic power structures," "vested interests," and "the present structure of world economic relations" as significant elements in the problems, and the churches were urged to assist in changing these patterns.[47] But the way in which the solutions were proposed (changes in land

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[44] Geneva, 1966, 60/26, 62/32, 65/44.

[45] Ibid., 66-7/48, 69/58, 70-3/62-75, 74-5/79-81, 75-6/84-5, 77/90.

[46] Ibid., 81-3/104, 106, 109, 112.

[47] Ibid., 90-1/147-8, 151.

ownership, efficient use and development of resources, transfer of capital, skill and knowledge, changes in trade patterns, international taxation schemes, education) reveals a fundamental belief that the problems are largely in the hands of politicians and corporate executives who must be mobilized by the political process.[48]

One of the preparatory documents could have provided some support in broadening the scope for identifying the responsible agents or factors. Robert Theobald (U.S.A.) pointed to the structural flaw inherent in the scarcity-based, free market economic system of advanced countries as the major source of the development problem. He argued that only by breaking the job-income link and recognizing everyone's right to an income could the proper mode of international economic growth and distribution be allowed to emerge.[49] The barriers to this solution are the values, institutions, philosophies that make us cling to this outmoded economic model.

> The barrier to a better society ... no longer lies primarily in the economic sphere .... The barrier lies in our unwillingness to reconsider the shibboleths by which we live.[50]

Likewise, André Dumas has since pointed to Geneva, 1966's tendency to overemphasize the technical aspects of the

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[48] Ibid., 90-2/147, 150-1, 154, 156.

[49] Theobald, p. 162.

[50] Ibid., p. 171.

problems and to neglect the problem of their ideological grounding.

> Geneva's weakness was perhaps that it concentrated almost exclusively on economic, political and international problems without sufficiently exploring the void left by superficial ideologies as by technologies lacking ideologies to nourish them.[51]

Charles West identifies the source of the development problems as a "dynamic of evil" which operates in modern technology which "cannot be identified as a conspiracy of evil men."

> It is rather the resultant of the fearful and self-interested decisions of many holders of some power, none of whom are forced to take public responsibility for the whole implications of their acts which pollute our air and waters, accelerate the arms race, degenerate culture in the mass media, and allow our cities to decay.[52]

In this view the problem is the essential theological problem of idolatry and cannot be dealt with by economic, political and international manipulation or legislation. The scope of the problem is seen as trans-national and is rooted in the behaviour patterns of cultures. This is the (5) alternative that Geneva, 1966 failed to consider seriously.

1.2.3 The Mode of Solution

There are three general alternatives among the

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[51] Dumas, p. 117.

[52] C. C. West, "Status Quo, Evolution or Revolution?" in Preston, p. 338.

possible types of solutions:

(1) Natural evolution.
(2) Rational persuasion.
(3) Revolution.

(1) "Natural evolution" recognizes the existing structures as the context within which solutions can be effected. Things like tariff legislations, increased aid and industrialization would be examples of solutions by natural evolution.

(2) "Rational persuasion" recognizes that a restructuring of national and international economic, social and political patterns is required. But it holds that the processes of international and national political and economic bargaining and discussion are capable of yielding these structural changes.

(3) "Revolution" admits that nothing less than violent revolution on a small or grand scale can effect the necessary structural changes.

In spite of the fact that the other Section reports of Geneva, 1966 recognized revolution as a serious possibility for consideration in effecting structural transformations, the report of Section I only considered natural evolution and rational persuasion in its discussions.[53] The fact that Section I recommended collective cooperation and responsibility in decision-making, mobilization of

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[53] Geneva, 1966, 105-6/36-45, 206/41a.

political will, negotiating price, aid, and income policies, motivating the labour force, education, and encouraging an ethic of altruism reflects an assumption that revolutions are not required as modes of solutions.[54] C. Mendes de Almeida criticizes the "evolutionary" mode of change and maintains that the changes needed in colonial structures in Latin America require something more than "the mere addition of new variables which would create gradual change simply by interaction and combination." He argues that the nature of the "structural ambivalence" of Latin American society is such that it requires consideration of the question of revolution.[55] Similarly, Charles West identifies the elements of violence and revolution in the range of possibilities required to effect change. He maintains that both "small changes and piecemeal reforms" and "one basic upheaval [that] will liberate mankind and solve the problem of social justice" are "vain hopes." His proposal is that nothing less than the theological revolution of metanoia and justification is required to effect the "fundamental renunciation of self-centred rights and powers" that is necessary for any social change for the better.[56]

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[54] Ibid., 60/26, 65/44, 80/101, 66-7/48, 77/90, 62/32, 70/61, 69/58, 66/46, 70-2/62-8, 86/124.

[55] C. M. de Almeida, "The Structural Ambivalence of Latin America," in Preston, p. 363.

[56] West, p. 394.

The authors of Section I of Geneva, 1966 should have learned from Section II that revolution had to be considered as a serious alternative for economic structural change.[57] Whether the ethical debate can embrace revolution as an acceptable alternative or whether it must be positively rejected, the revolutionary mode of transition is a "real" alternative that must be dealt with.

1.3 Conclusion

The authors of Section I of Geneva, 1966 considered economic growth a desirable phenomenon, although not without its ambiguous implications. The discussion of growth was understood in the wider context of a legitimate Christian concern for activity in the world and an affirmation of the human as the norm and criterion for this activity. It was recognized that growth cannot be identified with any one particular economic model and the central issues of economic development concern the gap between the North Atlantic advanced countries and the poorer Southern Hemisphere developing countries.

The advanced countries were characterized by problems relating to consumption patterns, distribution of goods, services and income opportunities, and conditions of work and life. Developing countries were seen to

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[57] Geneva, 1966, 104-6/36-45.

experience problems motivating the population, developing resources and modifying institutions for the mobilization of forces conducive to increased rates of growth. At the international level trade structures, neo-colonial attitudes, quality and quantity of aid and trans-national cooperation were viewed as the critical issues.

The economists studying the issue of growth hold a wide range of views regarding the possibilities for effecting solutions to growth problems. The most pessimistic consider the problems insoluble while others allow possible solutions accompanied by high costs. The authors of Geneva, 1966 were optimistic in their estimation of possible solutions. When the costs of growth were mentioned they were considered to be moderate and short-term. Consequently, the focus throughout was on generating awareness of the problems and the will to respond.

In identifying the responsible agents the authors of Geneva, 1966 exhibited a similar optimism. They generally considered politicians and corporate leaders, in cooperation with local residents, capable of responding to the problems. In fact, a less hopeful analysis on the part of others suggests that perhaps the problems may be rooted in trans-national values, attitudes, and structures which are now largely beyond the control of any agent or group. Geneva's analysis and conclusions did not consider this alternative seriously.

Among the three possible modes of solutions: natural evolution (tariff legislations, aid, etc.), rational persuasion (changing of structures through the international political process) and revolution, the authors of Section I considered only the first two. Section II of the Geneva document presented the possibility of revolution as a real Christian alternative where other alternatives default. However, the authors of the first section, devoted to economics, did not include these considerations within the range of possibilities.

From an ethical point of view, an analysis of the problems that precludes or excludes possible alternate assessments can only yield flawed conclusions and recommendations for action. From the point of view of Christian theology, an incomplete consideration of the data could result in an over-hasty identification of God's work in the world with a particular economic assessment. Whereas an optimistic reading of the data tends to lead one quickly into conclusions and exhortations for specific action, a less hopeful analysis often leads to a more carefully formulated invitation to respond. Perhaps the examination of the scenario of possibilities might lead one to ask, as does André Dumas, whether the Christian social ethic must start only from socio-economic analyses.[58] The implications

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[58]Dumas, p. 117.

of this question, though, must be considered more thoroughly later in the treatment of methodology.

CHAPTER 2

UPPSALA: DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE

2.0 Introduction

Two years after the Geneva Conference the World Council held its Fourth General Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden. Two significant consultations had been staged in the interim (at Beirut, Lebanon and Zagorsk near Moscow) to consider the methods and recommendations of Geneva and a considerable amount of secondary literature had been generated both praising and criticizing the Conference. The largest of all WCC Assemblies, Uppsala faced the decision to either accept the Geneva report and integrate its recommendations into the general policies and procedures of the World Council or to shift attention away from the issues raised by the Conference with a qualified acceptance or a tacit rejection of the report. Uppsala both accepted Geneva, 1966 and made the concerns of the 1966 Conference its own.

2.1 Economic Discussions in "Uppsala, 1968"

Economic issues in the Uppsala Assembly report are concentrated in the report of Section III, "World Economic and Social Development." However, related issues are also

to be found in Section IV and in several of the reports presented to the Assembly by various WCC agencies. In this chapter I begin with Section III and then review points where the other reports contained new elements or a shift in focus.

The report of Section III has five parts. The first, "The Christian Concern for Development," introduces the central world economic problem as "... the gross inequalities between the peoples of different nations and different continents ...," and then establishes the theological basis for Christian concern.[1] The second part "The Dynamics of Development" recommends to the churches the report of the Geneva Conference, the encyclical Populorum progressio and the report of the SODEPAX exploratory Conference at Beirut, April 1968, as detailed analyses of world social and economic conditions. This part then outlines some of the recent problems that had been encountered in the quest for development and states that a new focus (a focus on world institutional and structural changes) must set the agenda for continued study and action.[2] Part III, "Political Conditions of World Development," outlines some

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[1]World Council of Churches Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, 1968, The Uppsala Report 1968, Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the WCC, Uppsala, July 4-20, 1968, ed. N. Goodall (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 45/1 (hereafter referred to as Uppsala, 1968).

[2]Ibid., 46-7/5-13.

of the structural changes that will have to occur in developing nations, developed nations, international political structures and public opinion in order for real progress in development to occur.[3] Part IV, "Some Human Issues in Development," establishes that the ways and means of development must always focus on human well-being and proceeds to outline three human elements that deserve consideration: discrimination, food and population, and employment.[4] Finally, Part V, "The Task of Christians, Churches and the World Council of Churches," outlines the pastoral-educational, service, prophetic-critical and political tasks of churches and goes on to describe the particular tasks of the WCC and the ways in which individual Christians can make contributions to world development.[5]

It becomes clear in the report of Section III that the improvement of economic and social conditions of people in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres of the world was the singular focus of the economic questions discussed at Uppsala. The message of the Uppsala Assembly asserts that the whole attention of the Assembly was directed towards the problems of international social justice:

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[3]Ibid., 47-9/14-19.

[4]Ibid., 49-51/20-28.

[5]Ibid., 51-5/29-48.

> We heard the cry of those who long for peace; of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice; of the victims of discrimination who claim human dignity; and of the increasing millions who seek for the meaning of life.[6]

And again:

> The ever widening gap between the rich and the poor, fostered by armament expenditure, is the crucial point of decision today.[7]

The point here is that while the Geneva Conference discussed the many and varied internal economic problems of richer countries (e.g. unemployment, labour relations, inflation, consumption, social conditions) the Uppsala Assembly only considered the economies of wealthy countries as they directly affected the poorer countries and regions. The paragraph entitled "Developed Nations" in the third part of the report of Section III is solely concerned with describing the changes that must occur in wealthy nations in order to allow poorer regions to increase their share of the world's wealth.

> Changes are needed in the existing political climate of all these developed countries to orientate national policies to world development as a moral and political priority of our times.[8]

The twofold concept of economic growth and development

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[6]Ibid., p. 5.

[7]Ibid., p. 5.

[8]Ibid., 48/17.

employed at the Geneva Conference is shortened in Uppsala, 1968 to highlight only the conditions of the world's poorer nations.

The effect of this shift in focus was to narrow considerably the range of questions addressed in Section III of the Uppsala report. The second sub-section, "The Dynamics of Development," treats the failure of the first Development Decade and the wealthy nations' reduction in financial and structural assistance to the poorer nations. The authors attribute this failure to the overly optimistic assumption that transfer of capital and techniques would automatioally generate self-sustaining economic growth. They conclude that social, economic and political changes to governments and institutions in poorer countries, patterns of production, investment, consumption and aid in richer nations and structures of international trade, investment and aid must all undergo significant changes in order for poor nations and regions to begin to see permanent improvements in human conditions.[9] The balance of Section III expands on this assessment and discusses the Christian's response.

The authors take the position that the responsibility for these structural changes in both rich and poor countries lies in the hands of the political leaders and institutions.

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[9]Ibid., 46-7/6-13.

However, they recognize that changes in the political structures may have to occur in order to effect change conducive to economic growth in poor regions.

> To create the essential conditions of development, developing countries need to reshape their political structures in ways which will enable them to mobilize the mass of the people to participate in political and economic life, to utilize efficiently all aids for the implementation of a national plan for development and to enter as partners in the competitive conditions in the international market.[10]

And also:

> Changes are needed in the existing political climate of all these developed countries to orientate national policies to world development as a moral and political priority of our times.[11]

These changes may at times require the use of violent revolution (although violence is recognized as morally ambiguous) and where widespread illiteracy and lack of adequate social consciousness prevails power may have to be concentrated in the hands of a few for a short time until a full democratic structure can be achieved.[12] Economic issues here are seen to be integrally related to political patterns and structures. International changes in trade and aid conditions are the measures that the economically powerful nations must take to allow the poor nations to participate

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[10] Ibid., 47/15.

[11] Ibid., 48/17.

[12] Ibid., 48/15-16.

in world markets.[13] And the mobilization of global awareness among people of the poor and the rich countries alike is recognized as a crucial step in generating the political pressure required for significant international structural change.[14]

The authors of Section III proceed to identify some of the conditions in economic injustice. They recognize that injustice is often sustained by religious, racial and cultural discrimination and also that the development process itself often increases discrimination. In the report, hunger, the ever-expanding population, and the problems of unemployment and underemployment are central features in global social and economic problems.[15] The concern throughout this aspect of the discussion is to emphasize that the process of development is not without ambiguities and that it must have as its object the improvement of conditions for human well-being.

The area of focus then throughout Section III is international economic injustices that are currently suffered by peoples in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. This injustice is a cause for concern because "... we have

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[13] Ibid., 48-9/18.

[14] Ibid., 49/19.

[15] Ibid., 50/24-6.

the technical ability to eradicate want and misery."[16] "For the first time we know that all men could share in the proper use of the world's resources."[17]

Section IV of the Uppsala Report, "Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs," discusses economic matters as they relate to the problem of justice and world order. The authors add nothing to the description of the problem. They restate the need for accelerated growth in poor nations, international structural changes among wealthy nations and changes in international consciousness and will. The "Report of the Assembly Committee on Church and Society" added that there is no agreement as to what kinds of structural changes could effect the accelerated development of poorer nations.

> In spite of the general agreement on the above mentioned statement [that radical changes in institutions and structures must occur in developed and developing countries and in the international economy] there is no clear understanding on the nature of these changes, their implications, and the means to achieve them.[18]

The report therefore proceeded to recommend a two-step study program which would try to answer this challenge. Similarly, this report recommended a study program to

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[16] Ibid., 46/10.

[17] Ibid., 45/1.

[18] Ibid., p. 242.

investigate the possibilities and problems in relating technological advancements to world development.[19] And a section of the Church and Society report asked about the role of law in international political and economic cooperation. The report recommended that a dialogue between theologians, jurists, political scientists and others investigate the problem of law in all its related complexities.[20]

The "Report of the Assembly Committee on the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service" (abbreviated DICARWS) included some interesting recommendations in their suggested criteria for development projects. Two of the criteria reflected a preference for projects that involved support of local initiatives for social change. And four of the criteria involved recommendations that new development projects be carried out in cooperation with existing local projects, government efforts, and projects involving other religions and community groups.[21] The effect of these six criteria is to emphasize that economic and social development is a process which requires mobilization of local, small-scale community resources (human and material)

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[19] Ibid., pp. 244-5.

[20] Ibid., p. 243.

[21] Ibid., pp. 258-9.

and which demands cooperation among all peoples and groups in a given region or community.

2.2 Changes in Economic Discussions From Geneva to Uppsala

2.2.1 Development and the Poor Nations

The first and most obvious change between Geneva, 1966 and Uppsala, 1968 was the more narrowed focus in the economic data. While Geneva, 1966 was structured such that one-third of the material in Section I was devoted to examining internal economic problems of the wealthy nations, Section III of Uppsala, 1968 focused entirely on the question of development in poor nations.[22] It is clear that the authors took seriously the questions of Dr. J. M. Lochman and Dr. Eugene Carson Blake concerning the task of Section III: "Will it say anything that will help us truly to identify ourselves with the poor and the handicapped, the 'also rans' and those who are discriminated against?"[23]

The influence of both the preparatory draft documents and the report of the Beirut Conference are visible here. In the Drafts for Sections a paragraph in the third section summarizes the topic of concern.

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[22] See 2.1 above.

[23] Uppsala, 1968, p. 43.

> As a result, world development lags, great human needs remain unmet, the menace of famine and hunger grows, and tensions between regions increase. Despite the obvious need for world solidarity and the interest of all regions in world cooperation, differences between the living conditions of men in the developed and in the developing countries are becoming even greater.[24]

In the report of the Beirut Conference the official statement lists seven priorities for political action that should head the agendas of developed countries. All seven of these items are actions designed to accelerate the economic and social advancement of poorer nations.[25] Perhaps the overall effect of the Geneva Conference was more strongly felt during the two years following the Conference than during the discussions of Geneva's Section I. In any case, the concern for the internal economic problems of the more wealthy nations seems to have been permanently dropped from the ecumenical agenda following Geneva.

An issue connected with this change in focus is the question of the meaning of the term "development." In Section I of Geneva, 1966 the term "development" was used

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[24] World Council of Churches Executive Committee, Drafts for Sections, Prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the WCC (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 52/2 (hereafter cited as Uppsala Drafts).

[25] Conference on World Cooperation for Development, Beirut, Lebanon, April 21-27, 1968, World Development. The Challenge to the Churches, Sponsored by the Exploratory Committee on Society, Development and Peace. The Official Report to the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, with a Foreword and a Summary of recommendations (Geneva: SODEPAX, 1968), pp. 10-11 (hereafter cited as Beirut, 1968).

in connection with the term "growth" and both terms had a predominantly technical meaning. They were used to describe the process in which both the wealthy and the poor nations increased their Gross National Product as a result of increasing production capabilities. At Uppsala the Assembly participants dropped the concern for growth in wealthy nations and directed their attention to the fact that the poor nations are not progressing in their efforts to eradicate poverty and to provide an adequate standard of living for the majority. It is significant that Section III in Uppsala, 1968 introduces the term "development" by pointing to the failure of the first Development Decade and the reduced commitment among wealthy nations towards the cause of the world's poor.[26] The term "development" began to refer to something more than the statistical rise in an economy's real national income. It became an umbrella concept that embraced the social and economic factors surrounding conditions of world poverty and the political aspirations of new nations seeking to break the bonds of "oppressive" structures. The authors of Section III began to look at development as a value-laden human phenomenon that must constitute the object of social, political and economic measures among poor nations, wealthy nations and international structures.

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[26] Uppsala, 1968, 46/6, 8.

The authors were aware that development has its ambiguities and that it must always serve human well-being. However, they tended to use the term to refer to a human state that God has ordained for all men and that men must strive to realize.

> The churches should use their resources for God's purpose of abundant life for all men. They should explore how international foundations could be set up through which endowments and other church funds may be responsibly invested for development.[27]

A problem arises when the meaning of the term "development" begins to become value-laden. As long as the term has a statistical or a technical meaning and its value in human and theological terms remains clearly ambiguous, it is acceptable to refer to countries of the world as "developed" and "developing." However, when Professor S. L. Parmar quotes the encyclical of Pope Paul VI, Populorum progressio, and states that "Development is the new name for peace,"[28] and when the authors of Section III refer to world development as a "moral and political priority of our times," then it becomes confusing and misleading to divide the nations of the world into the categories "developed" and "developing" as if one-third of the human race has achieved something towards which the balance of the world

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[27] Ibid., 49/20-1.

[28] Ibid., 52/34.

must continue to strive.[29]

2.2.2 Revolution

The second significant change from Geneva to Uppsala was the serious consideration of revolution as an alternative mode of resolving economic problems. Developing countries are urged to build "political structures suitable to national development" and this requires "revolutionary changes in social structures." While "revolution is not to be identified with violence," the authors of Section III admit that revolutionary change may take a violent form when existing ruling groups ...

> are oppressive or indifferent to the aspirations of the people, are ... supported by foreign interests, and seek to resist all changes by the use of coercive or violent measures, including "law and order" which may itself be a form of violence.[30]

It appears that here again we can see the influence of the whole Geneva Conference being felt on ecumenical thinking, an influence that did not find its way into the conclusions and recommendations of Section I of the Geneva Conference itself. The Drafts for Sections prepared for

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[29] Ibid., p. 42, cf. also Paul VI, Populorum progressio, in Renewing the Earth, eds. D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon (Garden City, N. Y.: Image Books, a Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 340; Uppsala 1968, 48/17.

[30] For a more thorough analysis of the problems encountered in defining the term "development," see R. D. N. Dickenson, Line and Plummet: The Churches and Development (Geneva: WCC, 1968), pp. 42-3. However, Dickenson continues to refer to countries as "developing" and "developed."

the Uppsala Assembly reflect a consideration of revolution.

> But the possibility should not be excluded that, in this dilemma, it may be an expression of Christian responsibility to take revolutionary action rather than to acquiesce in the indefinite continuation of an oppressive status quo.[31]

Similarly, the Beirut Conference considered that violence may be the last resort in situations where all other alternatives have failed to yield justice.

> All our efforts must be directed to change without violence. But if injustice is so embedded in the status quo and its supporters refuse to permit change, then as a last resort men's conscience may lead them in full and clear sighted responsibility without hate or rancour to engage in violent revolution.[32]

After the Geneva Conference, ecumenical thinkers came to understand more clearly that economics is inextricably related to politics.

2.2.3 Perspective and Scope

I have argued (Chap. I above) that the Geneva Conference overlooked the possibility that international economic problems may be sustained by trans-national values, attitudes and structures that lie beyond the control of political and corporate leaders. I will also argue (Chap. 5 below) that the methodological problem behind this oversight was Section I's (Geneva's) preoccupation with the technicalities of economic issues. Section III of the

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[31] Uppsala Drafts, 57/18.

[32] Beirut, 1968, 20/17.

Uppsala report made some progress in this regard. The authors recognized that part of the structural problem at the root of economic injustice was lack of perspective and scope. Christians who are aware of their responsibilities towards their geographically immediate neighbours do not perceive that their Christian commitment to neighbour extends to all people of the world.

> But few [Christians] have discovered that we now live in a world in which people in need in all parts of the world are our neighbours for whom we bear responsibility.[33]

Similarly, the paragraph entitled "Public Opinion" admits that central to the problem in mobilizing political machinery for change are the prevailing social structures and patterns of thinking that limit the growth of awareness.

> Social structures and thinking often impede the evolution of an enlightened, positive attitude to development.[34]

Here the authors are on the verge of considering the problem of "ethos"; the philosophical, social, economic and political factors that shape and limit the growth of certain attitudes and values. However, they go no farther than to state that some such "social structures" exist as obstacles to the mobilization of consciousness. The

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[33] Uppsala, 1968, 45/3.

[34] Ibid., 49/19.

authors do not begin to consider that the analysis of how structures and institutions operate to determine the shape and content of values might be critical to determining how to mobilize global public opinion. It is true that Christians and churches must speak and act to increase awareness and generate political pressure on behalf of the poor in the world. But Christians must also strive to be effective in their actions and this means looking at the human and institutional structures that stand in the way of hearing.

Richard Dickenson's essay prepared on behalf of the WCC agency SASP (Specialized Assistance for Social Projects), entitled Line and Plummet, could have added much to Uppsala's Section III in this regard. After outlining the factors in the global situation of economic disparity and preparing an operational definition of development, Dickenson asks about the liabilities that the churches must overcome if their efforts on behalf of the poorer nations can be effective. The theological tendency towards over-spiritualization and over-individualization among western Christians, the identification of Christian churches with the conservative elements in North Atlantic countries, the overwhelming concentration of Christians (particularly Protestants, 90 percent) in North America and Europe, the shortage of material and human resources and the organizational obstacles to effectively coordinated action are among

the factors Dickenson cites.[35] This analysis must now be extended to address the social and economic factors in North America and Europe that stand in the way of "conscientization": the social impact of a scarcity-based economic system, the value-creating activity of advertising and the communications media, the immobilizing effect of guilt and loss of self-respect, and the lack of adequate communal structures in western urban society (structures of community that are essential to the formation and sustaining of attitudes conducive to global cooperation). These are all elements that operate as barriers to the education and service activities of Christians and therefore must be considered important in an overall social action strategy.

2.3 Continuity Between Geneva and Uppsala

2.3.1 Optimistic Assessment of Costs

In spite of Uppsala Section III's emphasis that the first Development Decade was a "decade of disillusionment" and that "the optimism of the early sixties has given way to recrimination and frustration," the report retains Geneva's assessment that development is possible at only moderate costs.[36] The authors of Section III examine the cause of the failure of the first Development Decade and

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[35] Dickenson, pp. 53-60.

[36] Uppsala, 1968, 46/6, 10.

conclude that:

> Both developed and developing nations entered international economic cooperation with wrong presuppositions. They assumed that a mere transfer of capital and techniques would automatically generate self-sustained growth.[37]

The solution to the problem of feeding the poor lies in a new technical analysis of the problem, an analysis that places more emphasis on institutional and structural change.

> But effective world development requires radical changes in institutions and structures at three levels: within developing countries, within developed countries, and in the international economy. Precisely because such structural changes have not been promoted, we find that as a community of nations we are unable to do the good we would and efforts for international cooperation tend to be paralyzed.[38]

The Section report opens by stating that: "for the first time we know that all men could share in the proper use of the world's resources."[39] This knowledge rests on an assessment of current technological capabilities. "All this [the failure of the first Development Decade] is happening when we have the technical ability to eradicate want and misery."[40] The production of food for all in the world is considered a soluble problem. "New advances in

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[37] Ibid., 46/11.

[38] Ibid., 46/11.

[39] Ibid., 45/1.

[40] Ibid., 46/10.

agriculture hold the promise of freedom from hunger."[41] The key to the problem of getting this new technology to operate on behalf of the poor is the mobilization of political action.

> Since the struggle against world poverty and promotion of development involve government policies and changes in economic, social and legal institutions of nations, the creation of the political instruments of development becomes important. Since mankind is politically organized in nation-states, these instruments have to be related to the politics of sovereign nations.[42]

Therefore the authors of Section III recommend the following activities:

> the developed nations must also structure their aid and trade policies so that these do not become instruments of their own political, ideological and security interests, narrowly conceived;[43]

> Collective international action to improve conditions conducive to development is called for; e.g. creation of supra-national structures to deal with regional and world economic planning involving the stabilization of the world market;[44]

Nowhere in the report of Section III do the authors consider the possibility that the re-orientation of North Atlantic trade structures to accommodate developing nations might do serious damage to the economic and social

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[41] Ibid., 50/24.

[42] Ibid., 47/14.

[43] Ibid., 48/17.

[44] Ibid., 48/18.

structures which sustain and nourish present day technology; technology that may be crucial for the development of poorer nations. The point here is that in terms of the standards set by the developed countries, the "abundant life for all men" may be an impossibility at this point in history.

The best that the authors of Section III do in terms of recognizing that development may be a "Cruel Choice" is to admit: "The death of the old may cause pain to some."[45] Throughout the balance of the report the authors make no mention whatsoever of the costs involved in transforming world structures in favour of the world's poor. They can freely recommend that churches in industrialized countries influence their governments:

> to conclude agreements stabilizing and supporting at an acceptable level the prices of vulnerable primary products; and providing preferential access to developed markets for the manufactured products of the developing countries.[46]

They do not consider that this could very well mean large scale unemployment among textile workers in North America and Europe or a rapid increase in the cost of food. I am not trying to advocate that these measures not be adopted, but want simply to point out that the world economic system sits in a delicate balance and that the recommendation of certain measures without counting their costs is either

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[45] Ibid., 45/4.

[46] Ibid., 53/38.2.c.

naive or highly irresponsible.

2.3.2 Organizational and Institutional Structures

The "structures" considered in Section III of Uppsala, 1968 are still Geneva's organizational and institutional structures; structures that are "out there" and that are in the hands of political and corporate leaders. In developing countries the political structures are considered to be governments and ruling groups and social structures are conditions like illiteracy, lack of adequate social consciousness and oppressive power groups.[47] Among developed countries the structures are government legislating bodies, aid and trade policies, economic blockades and international trade agencies and institutions.[48] Only in paragraph 19 do the authors of Section III begin to consider thought structures and attitudes rooted in larger philosophic and cultural trends. However, they do not follow on this line of questioning; rather the authors return to "powerful political lobbies," "trade unions," and "political parties" as the structures that influence awareness and action.[49]

As I indicated in Chapter I the problem with this

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[47] Ibid., 47-8/15-16.

[48] Ibid., 48-9/17-18.

[49] Ibid., 49/19.

view of structures is that it leads to a simplistic view of who is responsible or who is capable of affecting solutions. The Uppsala authors urge Christians to "... promote social policies in which technological revolution will redress the balance between the poor and the rich rather than merely make the rich richer."[50] They tend to play down the deeper problem of human valuing and social "ethos". They assume that it is quite possible for large groups of North American Christians to step outside of their historical, cultural and social milieu and apply technical formulae for political pressure on their governing bodies and institutions; and that all this could happen without severe consequences. The structures of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 were still economic and sociological technicalities. They were not yet intensely human realities.

2.4 Conclusion

Economic issues in Uppsala, 1968 were concentrated in Section III but were also discussed in Section IV and in various Assembly committee reports. Throughout there was an exclusive focus on issues related to developing countries. Section III began by emphasizing the failure of the first UN Development Decade and continued by highlighting world economic injustices. The authors stressed

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[50] Ibid., 51/28.

that significant economic structural change is required on the part of rich and poor nations before development can occur. However, the report of the Church and Society Assembly Committee admitted that there was no agreement as to what these structural changes might entail. The Uppsala authors recognized that economic issues were inextricably related to politics, and the DICARWS Assembly Committee presented project criteria that emphasized local projects and cooperation with existing efforts.

There were some significant changes from the Geneva report. The exclusive focus on developing countries and the lack of any consideration for the internal economic problems of wealthy nations reflected an influence from the draft documents and Beirut, 1968 and revealed continuity with a trajectory expressed by the general concern of Geneva, 1966. Although Geneva's Section I did consider developed countries, the general thrust of the Geneva Conference was to identify Christian concern with the "two-thirds world" (see Chap. 5 below) and this effect was felt in Uppsala's Section III. The effect of this narrowed focus was to change the meaning of the word "development." The word began to include social and political factors as well as economic, and it was used to refer to a value-laden human phenomenon related to Christian faith. This caused a problem since the authors continued to refer to "developed" and "developing" countries. The effect was to suggest that

some North Atlantic countries had achieved a desirable human end that others still strived for.

Uppsala, Section III considered revolution as a possible mode of economic change whereas Geneva had not. And although Uppsala's Section III did not investigate the values and symbols that inform and sustain social structures, its authors did admit that such things deserve consideration. This in itself marked progression from Geneva.

Uppsala, 1968, Section III continued with Geneva's optimistic assessment of the costs of development measures. The structures were still ruling groups, trade policies and aid measures that were largely in the hands of corporate and political leaders. The proposed solutions still involved manipulation of things that were presumed to be in the hands of men. The authors continued to overlook the values, patterns and symbols that make social and economic structures resistant to change.

SECTION TWO

THE RESPONSE

CHAPTER 3

THE "TASKS" OF CHRISTIANS, CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH IN "GENEVA, 1966"

3.0 Introduction

The question of the Christian's response to world economic problems has a technical and a theological component. The technical component (the possibilities, means, costs and modes of solutions) has already been treated in Chapter I (above). The theological component inquires into the relationship between actions that implement these solutions and Christian faith. This is essentially a question as to the meaning of the theological concept "mission." However, because of the various cultural and historical connotations attached to the term "mission" I will use in its place the term "tasks."[1]

In this chapter I examine Geneva, 1966 in an effort

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[1]For a discussion of the historical changes in the meaning of the term "mission," see M. A. Fahey, "The Mission of the Church: To Divinize or Humanize?" Proceedings, Catholic Theological Society of America 31 (1976): 51-69, particularly pp. 53-57. Dr. Fahey suggests that to avoid implying an exaggerated parallel between trinitarian missions and ecclesial missions we should drop the word "mission" and use in its place the term "tasks."

to identify how the authors understood this concept "tasks" as it applies to individual and corporate Christian action and to the Church as a whole. Throughout, I will distinguish between the term "Church" with a capital "C" and "churches" with a small "c."[2] By the former I mean the Church as the whole people of God, including both the phenomenal or visible (institutional) churches of history and the noumenal or invisible (eschatalogical) community of salvation whose shape and membership never yield to identification or conceptualization.[3] Attributes and tasks that are applicable to the Church, in this sense, must be sufficiently universalizable as to be true of both dimensions of the Church and therefore must be compatible with the full range of themes in Christian theology. By the term "churches" I mean the particular, traditionally structured ecclesial communities that would satisfy the membership criteria of the World Council of Churches.

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[2]The English text of Geneva, 1966 makes a similar distinction between "Church" (large "C") and "Churches" (small "c") although nowhere do the authors clarify the meaning of either term.

[3]This distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal aspects of the Church is drawn from A. Dulles, "The Church, the Churches and the Catholic Church," Theological Studies 33 (1972). I use this terminology not because I think these two aspects unrelated or distinct. I am not accepting the "dualist" view of the Church. (Neither does Dulles accept this view): Rather, I want to emphasize that Church is more than the collection of historical churches. See also Fahey, pp. 57-61.

"Churches," in this second sense, are not to be confused with the various types of spontaneous communal organizations which either sustain Christians in fellowship and worship (but would not conform to the WCC membership criteria) or which serve social, economic or political functions and projects.

3.1 The Tasks

The authors of the Geneva Conference report generally operate on three levels. (1) They present technical, factual background material in an effort to clarify the economic, political and social questions. (2) They formulate general recommendations for individual and corporate Christian action in the social sector. (3) They attempt to carry out some of their own recommendations by addressing particular issues with condemnations and solutions. The statements made on the second level are generally understood to be statements of Christian ethics and ecclesiology and this chapter will concern itself with them.

3.1.1 The Tasks of Christians

It has been observed that throughout the Geneva document there was little awareness of the methodological and theological basis for the conclusions and recommendations. Edward Duff remarks: "There was little evidence that the perspectives supplied in one of the background

volumes of the Conference, Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World, were widely employed to focus discussion." He questions whether the daily Scripture readings were enough to provide a sound theological basis for the Conference's debates.[4] Similarly, Paul Ramsey, in defending his critique of the Conference against the attacks of R. L. Shinn and J. C. Bennett, recommends that the Conference's statements be more strongly based in Christian theology and that they be methodologically more sound.[5]

Nonetheless, the Conference's view of the Christian's task in the world is remarkably consistent throughout the report. It is based on a positive view of the phenomenon, "secularization."

> Secularization is a process whereby man becomes freed from the presuppositions of metaphysical and religious ideology and attempts to understand and live in the various realms of the world on their own terms. In contrast with the society in which a particular religious ideology sets limits to a genuine search for truth, the secular society not only permits the diversity of religious ideas but also encourages the pursuit of a sincere and open understanding of the factual reality of the universe.[6]

This view is shared by Hans Küng and others and it sets the scene for a view of "World" in which religions and

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[4]E. Duff, "The World Conference on Church and Society," Thought 42 (September 1967): 33.

[5]P. Ramsey, "Paul Ramsey Replies," Christianity and Crisis 27 (Nov. 27, 1967): 282.

[6]Geneva, 1966, 158/14, cf. also 199/14.

religious institutions are not set over against the "World" or distinct from it but as elements within it.[7]

> The secular society is not founded on a religious base that cannot be challenged, but rather religious institutions and ideas are one among many components of the social structure.[8]

What follows then (not so much in order of the report's pagination but in the structured sequence of ideas) is an affirmation that the "secular" activity of the "World" is good and worthwhile.

> These advances [technology and economic organization] lead to a growth in economic productivity and are to be welcomed as a gift from God who gives new powers to men and requires their use for the common good.[9]

The second working group whose goal it was to prepare a report on "Theological Issues in Social Ethics" made the astute observation that "nature ... has reference to the

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[7]H. Küng, On Being a Christian, trans. E. Quinn (London: Collins, 1977), pp. 26-7. For a list of the contributors to the discussion on "secularization," see Kung's note 1, p. 607.

[8]Geneva, 1966, 158/15. To admit this view of "secularization" is not to accept a total relativization of religious ideas and institutions. As Küng suggests, "the questions of [Christian] theology do not touch merely a part of what men are and do. They touch the most fundamental aspect of all that men are and do. From this one aspect theology examines all the strata of human life and action; from the one basic aspect everything can find expression, from this aspect the theologian must face all questions," Küng, pp. 87-8. Christian thought is neither an authoritarian paradigm that governs and limits other areas of thought, nor is it simply one area of thought among all others.

[9]Geneva, 1966, 52/1; cf. also 53/5, 97/4, 154/1, 188/1, 196/3.

realm of the psycho-physical phenomena of the world, in which God in his grace and judgement acts."[10] This observation has since been restated by J. B. Metz who notes that the "World" is not simply "mother nature" but the human, historical world in which man both acts and which he changes.[11] This precludes a false distinction between nature as God's good creation and man's action as fallen or corrupt. In the face of the tendency to become over-optimistic about human "secular" activity the report expressed a strong awareness ~~of the ambiguity of~~ technological, economic, social and political change.

> If this obedience [to God] is to be realized, the choices and changes presented to man by these new forces [technological and economic] must be kept under critical review, for left uncontrolled they accentuate the existing unbalance between rich and poor countries (and indeed within them), which is a scandal and offence to God and men. Technology must be made to serve human purposes and not be allowed to overwhelm them.[12]

In the light of this view of "World" the first task or role of the Christian, acting both individually and corporately, is to participate fully in the life of the world. "Christians have been called by God to fulfil a mission in the world, and obedience to this call means

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[10] Ibid., 196/3; cf. also 196-7/3-7.

[11] J. B. Metz, Theology of the World, trans. W. Glen-Doepel (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), pp. 53-5.

[12] Geneva, 1966, 52/1; cf. also 97/4, 154/1-3, 188-9/2-6.

full participation in the life of the world. This means that through participation of all Christians in their respective occupations, the Church acts in the contemporary economic and social issues.[13] It is the Christian's function as "steward" to utilize technology in service of his fellow man and to witness to his faith through individual and corporate activity on behalf of his brethren.[14] The criterion for this action is the "human." The Christian must seek to preserve what is truly human and to utilize economic and social tools to realize fuller possibilities of human life.[15] As we have seen in Chapter I, this view of the world and of Christian activity is remarkably close to that of the Vatican II text, Gaudium et spes.[16]

The second dimension of the Christian's task in the world is critical and catalytic. The Christian is called to bring about social change in the interest of justice. He must not only speak out against injustice but must also act in the light of his faith. In many cases to refuse or neglect to act is tacitly to perpetuate conditions or structures that cause injustices throughout the world. There are no illusions of an overly "personalized"

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[13] Ibid., 110/66; cf. also 113/77, 114/79, 57/16, 194/22.

[14] Ibid., 189/5, 207/1.

[15] Ibid., 53/3.

[16] Vatican II, Gaudium et spes, pars. 2, 3, 12, 34, 35.

Christian ethic that neglects social ills.[17] Neither are there illusions that the Christian proclamation can be identified with any one mode of social commitment or any one social, economic or ideological system.[18] The Christian must draw upon the resources of theology, biblical study and the social sciences for insights on how to act creatively and he is called upon to act and speak individually and corporately on issues where there is no unanimity in the whole Church. In fact it is through these actions and words that the wisdom and experience of the whole Church is advanced.[19] Christians must inform those in power of their responsibilities as human beings and must work to coordinate existing structures in the interests of human well-being.[20] The second working group concerned with "Theological Issues in Social Ethics" made it clear that social responsibility can in no way allow an uncritical identification of man's social activity with God's work in the world.[21]

The conclusions drawn by the working groups were

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[17] Geneva, 1966, 48/2, 49/6, 53/3, 110/66, 116-7/86, 143/90, 175/85-8, 200-1/20-1, 202/25.

[18] Ibid., 57/16, 203/28.

[19] Ibid., 111/67, 113/74-5, 201/23.

[20] Ibid., 53/3, 117/89, 201/22.

[21] Ibid., 201/21.

generally integrated into the statements made by the four section reports. Though little effort was made to provide theological justification for the statements, few of the claims made in regard to the tasks of Christians could be seriously challenged by contemporary theologians.

3.1.2 The Tasks of Christian Churches, Communities and Organizations

The tasks of Christian churches, communities, organizations and the World Council of Churches was almost as well presented as the foregoing. The authors of the Conference report understood that in order to be effective in their tasks Christians need to become organized for action and for mutual support and education. The churches as institutions have the primary task of preparing Christians for their involvement in their respective occupations. Newly formed structures in the scientific and technological communities must be the vehicle for this involvement. The report suggests that churches have the responsibility of using the best scientific knowledge to render their own structures most effective. The existing churches are only one of the many forms of corporate or institutional organizations available to Christians.[22]

The first mode of assistance that Christian groups can give is informative. They have the task of organizing,

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[22] Ibid., 87/129, 88/136, 194/22, 207-8/6.

studying, researching and dialoguing on technical issues, using experts from various fields in order to inform Christians of their responsibilities and of the issues that demand their attention.[23] There is an overwhelming weight of importance throughout the report placed on this need for informing Christians of the technical details of world issues. The Christian commitment must be related to the problems of world social justice and it is the job of the Christian churches, communities and organizations to provide the education in theological, economic, political and social affairs that will enable Christians to live out this commitment.[24] There is no attempt to claim, here, that Christian groups must bear the sole responsibility for all education nor that Christians should duplicate research that is being done by other organizations. Christian efforts should supplement existing research and relate the world issues to Christian faith with a view towards action. They can clarify the place of science and technology in the wider political and ethical sphere and can provide strength and inspiration for Christians.[25] Groups are urged to study the methodology of social ethics and to study the

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[23] Ibid., 58/19, 86/128, 87/132, 88/133, 126/19, 147/101, 144-5/92-3, 177/96, 194/23-4, 205/38-40, 206/41-3, 208/7e, 210/11.

[24] Ibid., 88/135-6, 136/68, 150/119, 159/19.

[25] Ibid., 52/2, 86-7/128-9, 89-90/143, 189/6.

history of the churches' actions in the public sector with a view towards more accurately determining the potentials and roles of corporate Christian action in public life.[26]

What is present in all of these recommendations is an awareness that: (1) the Christian commitment demands social action, (2) competent and responsible statements and actions cannot be made without a thorough and complete knowledge of the facts and the issues, and (3) part of the Christian responsibility is to individually and collectively acquire and proliferate awareness of the facts and issues on economic and social questions. However, there appears in places, the assumption that there are uniquely "Christian" attitudes or responses to the problems and that it is the duty of the churches to formulate them.[27] This suggests a lack of clarity in methodology and a lack of awareness as to what the relationship might be between the Christian gospel and social ethics. As Paul Ramsey points out, nowhere is there an attempt to answer the question: "What are the essential ingredients of Christian responsibility?"[28]

The second dimension of the tasks of Christian churches, communities and organizations is that of

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[26] Ibid., 89/139, 183/127, 205/38, 209/7h, 210/11.

[27] Ibid., 185/134e.

[28] Ramsey, p. 13.

informing the consciences of nations and speaking prophetically in the name of justice and human rights, with a bias for the powerless.[29] However, this prophetic-critical task must extend beyond words into action. Christians are called to do more than just condemn oppression and injustice, they must get involved in the struggle for change.[30] This involvement can take the form of dialogue with non-Christians, working in developing countries towards economic growth, recruiting skilled men and women for work in developing countries, contributing money to developing countries, working to build an international community that could constitute an alternative to the current arms race, or using existing power and influence on governments in favour of justice.[31] Whatever the measures, the Conference report recognizes that cooperation with existing groups will be essential, and it suggests that perhaps Christian organizations could coordinate the exchange of information among other groups working for justice and rights.[32] As international communities whose allegiances

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[29] Geneva, 1966, 54/7, 91/150, 89/136-40, 175/85, 194/24, 210/11.

[30] Ibid., 54/8, 88/134, 91/149-50, 129/31, 175/85-8, 176/89, 178/100, 184/131, 205/36, 206/43, 210/11.

[31] Ibid., 206/43, 210/11, 88/134, 91/150, 129/31, 176-7/89, 94.

[32] Ibid., 87/132, 88/134, 194/24, 208/7d, 210/11.

extend across international boundaries, the Christian churches could work to build up confidence between developing and developed nations and between groups with conflicting ideologies. The churches have the task of providing an example to the world that "an association of free people for a common goal can operate effectively and responsibly."[33]

The tasks of Christian churches, communities and organizations seems to be well related to the tasks of Christians. The community's pastoral function is to inform and support the individual in his daily tasks in the world and its prophetic-critical function is to effectively express and organize the individual's responsible actions for change in the social sector. Many differing structures may be required to adequately perform these functions and these new structures will continue to grow out of situations where and when they are needed.[34]

3.1.3 The Tasks of the Church

The tasks and roles of the Church are less carefully and consistently expressed. They reveal a lack of differentiation between tasks that can be attributed to the whole Church and specific tasks in relation to specific issues that are performed by individual Christian groups. In

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[33] Ibid., 86/128, 87/130, 126/19, 147/10, 159/19.

[34] Ibid., 89/136, 208-9/7g.

places the authors of the Geneva report use the term Church correctly. The Church's task is to be that community in which God's love for men is known and realized; to be the place where the world can discover itself and what it is called to do in the future; to be a witness to God's love for men and a servant to the world.[35] The Church is called to establish and maintain relationships across lines of conflict, and cannot be identified with any one social, economic or ideological system.[36] It acts most effectively through the participation of laymen in their respective occupations and does not act as "Church" when individual Christians participate directly in political life.[37] The Church is called to produce a change in motivation among peoples and governments of the world and to awaken and renew the social conscience of society.[38] All of these tasks correspond to the kerygmatic, diaconic and prophetic dimensions of the Church's "mission" in the world, and they can all be attributed to the whole Church.[39]

However, at times the authors refer to the Church

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[35] Ibid., 52/2, 55/10, 122/1, 180/112, 182/120, 123-6, 202/26.

[36] Ibid., 57/16, 182/120, 123-6.

[37] Ibid., 53/3, 112/71, 113/74, 194/22.

[38] Ibid., 53/3, 112/70.

[39] Ibid., 180/112.

when they are actually inviting churches or Christian organizations to certain particular modes of action in the public sector. The Church is asked to take a stand when human dignity and fellowship are clearly violated.[40] The authors here are referring to instances that are of sufficient gravity as to require a statement by institutional churches, theologians, or the World Council of Churches. The Church must re-organize to address human needs at all levels.[41] Again, the reference here is to the existing structures of institutional churches. In a series of texts clearly referring to the tasks of churches in the social sector, the Church is exhorted to "encourage its members," "remind its members" and "to assume responsibilities."[42] Any recommendations that hope to be carried out should be addressed to the person or persons for whom they are intended. Issuing a request to as elusive an entity as the Church is a sure way of seeing it ignored. The Church is asked to study, to speak out against nuclear war, to consult with experts in the social sciences and to refrain from withdrawing fellowship from those who engage in civil disobedience. The authors ask Christians and Church to

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[40] Ibid., 203-4/31.

[41] Ibid., 181/117, 207-8/6, 7g.

[42] Ibid., 49/5, 112/72, 113/76, 203/31, 208/7f.

cooperate with non-Christians for the promotion of social justice.[43]

While it can be said that in instances where Christians act individually and corporately there also the Church acts, it is inefficient and incorrect to ascribe tasks to the Church at large when they are meant for specific Christian groups. There are emerging many different forms of Christian and Christian-related groups, each with a specific series of capabilities. When each acts it could rightly be said that the Church is acting, however the various tasks of the whole Church could never be ascribed to any one group.

3.2 Paul Ramsey's Criticisms of Geneva

There are three major problems with an uncritical use of the term Church. (1) The identification of a statement or a recommended action with the Church precludes the possibility of alternative statements or actions and creates the illusion that there is a distinctly "Christian" position. In economic, social or political issues of world complexity there must be room for a plurality of viewpoints simply because we lack understanding of the technical and human dimensions of the problems. The Geneva report is insistent on this plurality.[44] (2) The

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[43] Ibid., 118-9/95-105, 129/31, 181/117f, 115/82, 118/94.

[44] Ibid., 115/82, 203/31.

indiscriminate attributing of responsibilities to the Church encourages a "They" mentality which blurs the truth as to who is doing what and encourages the shuffling off of personal and corporate responsibilities. (3) In order to gain credibility and effectiveness at this particular time in history Christians and Christian-related organizations must make every effort to dissociate themselves from an authoritarian and monolithic image of Christian institutions, an image that is now largely obsolete. They can do this by carefully identifying the author(s) of statements or actions by identifying the authority behind the author(s) and by indicating that alternatives do exist.[45]

Paul Ramsey's criticisms of Geneva are largely directed at problems resulting from the Conference's misuse of the term "Church." When Section III states that it is a declaration of the Church that "war is contrary to the will of God," this suggests there is a unanimous consensus in Christian theology.[46] In fact, as Ramsey points out, this is simply a reference to a statement made at the 1948 Assembly at Amsterdam and in no way does it express a Christian theological conclusion.[47] The recommendation that the Church "speak out on matters of legislation where

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[45] See also Ramsey, p. 34.

[46] Geneva, 1966, 129/31.

[47] Ramsey, p. 104 ff.

basic human relations are involved," suggests that there is a special status or correctness that Church statements have.[48] Here, reference to the Church instead of Christian groups creates a faulty perspective. The report suggests that "the Church should be concerned about the need for responsible parenthood as a means of promoting the well-being of the family, especially the health of mothers."[49] Again, the whole Church is identified with a particular perspective on birth control, an issue about which there is no theological consensus. And a task that could have been recommended for particular Christian groups in a way that embraced plurality, is attributed to the whole Church.

Even in cases where more care is taken in the use of the terms "Church" and "church," Paul Ramsey takes issue with the report's tendency to address specific issues with specific recommendations. He suggests that church conferences avoid this type of pronouncement as a "final corruption of the social teachings of world Christianity."[50] He would do well though to take his own advice and direct his criticism at the "moral species" of these pronouncements.[51]

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[48] Geneva, 1966, 112/72.

[49] Ibid., 168/61.

[50] Ramsey, p. 44.

[51] Ibid., p. 52.

These kinds of statements are not beyond the tasks of Christian groups. In fact, such groups should not shun taking specific stances if prepared competently. Statements must be firmly based in Christian theology and proceed according to a clearly defined methodology. They must do justice to all of the details and consequences of the social, political and economic situation and be formulated in a way that acknowledges alternatives and identifies authorship and relative authority. As Ramsey suggests:

> Even if these councils do not officially represent their participating denominations, we need to know that so far as humanly possible in their deliberations and pronouncements they nevertheless are in a real sense trying to be the church speaking.[52]

3:3 Conclusion

Throughout Geneva, 1966 the tasks of Christians in response to economic and social problems is presented consistently. These tasks are based upon a favourable view of the phenomenon "secularization," an affirmation of the intrinsic value of "World," an understanding that "World" is the historical world of men, and a recognition of the ambiguity of technological advancement. The Christian's tasks require participation in the life of the world as "steward" of God's creation and the criterion for action is human well-being. Christians must speak and act critically against injustice, drawing upon all the resources of

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[52] Ibid., pp. 43-4.

theology and the social sciences, and must take care not to identify any one position or theory with God's activity in the world.

The authors presented the tasks of Christian churches, communities and organizations as the mobilization of individual Christians into effective groups. This effective mobilization can begin with the traditional churches but will require the formation of new structures for community and for economic, social and political action. Christian groups have the task of informing individuals on theological, social, economic and political matters in order to generate awareness and provide background education. This will require cooperation with existing groups. Christian groups also act to inform global consciousness and to change conditions of human suffering at all levels. There was a tendency in places for the authors to uncritically presume some uniquely "Christian" attitudes or responses to social and economic problems.

The Geneva authors were less successful in their presentation of the tasks of the Church. In places they referred specific modes of social and political action to the whole Church rather than recommending them to specific Christian groups. The effect of this was to create the illusion of some uniquely "Christian" position on social issues, to confuse the truth as to who does and should act, and to perpetuate an alienating monolithic image of

Christian groups. When there is no unanimity in the whole Church on social issues no position can be identified with the Church at large. Rather, specific social tasks and projects can be presented as the responsibility of particular Christian churches, communities or organizations and as long as these are methodologically sound and well based in social, political and economic data, they are legitimate tasks.

CHAPTER 4

THE "TASKS" IN "UPPSALA, 1968"

4.0 Introduction

Section I of Uppsala, 1968, "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church," considers the theological grounding for the tasks of the Church and Section III elaborates these tasks in relation to economics and world development. In this chapter I examine Sections I and III in an effort to piece together the theological argumentation behind Uppsala's presentation of tasks, and to summarize the ways in which Uppsala was both similar and different from Geneva.

4.1 "Tasks" in "Uppsala, 1968"

The authors of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 devoted twenty out of forty-eight paragraphs to discussing the ways that Christians, churches and the World Council of Churches can respond to the problems of world economic and social justice (sub-section V of Section III). The structure of these paragraphs reveals that considerable care was taken to differentiate among tasks applicable to Christians, to churches, to the WCC and to theologians.

4.1.1 Structure

There are eight parts to sub-section V. In the first two paragraphs the authors affirm that social action is a task properly applicable to the whole Church.[1] This task requires cooperation among Christians from all churches and with "men of good will everywhere" whatever their religious or non-religious affiliations.[2] The second, third, fourth and fifth parts outline the various tasks of the churches ("The Pastoral and Educational Task," "The Service Task," "The Prophetic and Critical Task" and "The Political Task." These clearly address the member churches of the WCC and the English text uses the word "church" with a small "c."[3] The sixth part devotes three short paragraphs to outlining some particular contributions that the World Council of Churches can make. One of these emphasizes that "economic and social development" should be made a priority consideration in restructuring the WCC.[4] The seventh outlines nine dimensions of the individual Christian's task and the eighth and final part contains five short paragraphs addressed to the theologians.[5] The authors stress that the

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[1] Uppsala, 1968, 51/29.

[2] Ibid., 51/29-30.

[3] Ibid., 51-3/31-9.

[4] Ibid., 53-4/40-2.

[5] Ibid., 54/43.

current technological revolution presents a radically new historical situation that must be the focus of current theological attention.[6]

4.1.2 The Tasks of Christians

The background to the tasks of Christians begins in the opening paragraphs of Section III. The authors establish the basis on which they will build their proposals for Christians' individual and corporate action. They begin by affirming the unity of mankind; the fact that all peoples of the earth share the rights to the world's resources and that we have become aware of human conditions in all corners of the world and must therefore live in the light of a new global vision of man.

> We live in a new world of exciting prospects. For the first time in history we can see the oneness of mankind as a reality. For the first time we know that all men could share in the proper use of the world's resources. The new technological possibilities turn what were dreams into realities. Just as today we have the knowledge about the conditions of men throughout the earth, and the means, we are without excuse.[7]

This theme "unity of mankind" was a major prevailing theme throughout the whole Uppsala Assembly. The Message of the Assembly (the short concluding statement made on behalf of

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[6] Ibid., 54-5/44-8.

[7] Ibid., 45/1; see also Duff in Preston, p. 59. "The Uppsala report made its case for Christian involvement in the problems of development by invoking the oneness of mankind."

all the Uppsala participants) presents the following as the first resolution:

> All men have become neighbours to one another. Torn by diversities and tensions, we do not yet know how to live together. But God makes new. Christ wants his Church to foreshadow a renewed human community.
>
> Therefore we Christians will manifest our unity in Christ by entering into full fellowship with those of other races, classes, age, religious and political convictions, in the place where we live. Especially we shall seek to overcome racism wherever it appears.[8]

The opening sermon preached by Reverend D. T. Niles on the morning of Thursday, July 4 (the first day of the Assembly) emphasized that the Assembly's main theme, "Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5-6) is a Divine promise that addresses all of mankind.[9] Professor J. M. Lochman, the Chairman of Section III, in his introductory remarks to the section, considered the global scope of economic and social issues to be a primary concern of the WCC.

> Facing the problem of world economic and social justice we are confronted with a central ecumenical problem of our times, ecumenical in the broadest secular sense, that is, concerning the oikoumene of this inhabited earth.[10]

The affirmation that all men are one carries a special responsibility now that men possess the technology

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[8] Uppsala, 1968, p. 5.

[9] D. T. Niles, "Opening Sermon," in Unity of Mankind, speeches from the Fourth Assembly of the WCC, Uppsala, 1968, ed. A. H. van den Heuvel (Geneva: WCC, 1969), pp. 7-8. (This collection of Speeches is hereafter cited as Uppsala: Unity of Mankind).

[10] Uppsala, 1968, p. 39.

to eradicate misery on the earth.[11] The fact that all are created in God's image and that Christ died for all, presents Christians with the special task of utilizing this technology "... to overcome a provincial, narrow sense of solidarity and to create a sense of participation in a world-wide responsible society with justice for all."[12] The Christian's action must address the current world social problems that are (in the authors' view) partly the result of various nations' reluctance to consider this wider global perspective.[13] The Christian must, therefore, strive to reduce the inequalities in the world that are the result of this overly narrow scope of justice and he/she must "... participate in the struggle of millions of people for greater social justice and for world development."[14]

The Christian can act hopefully against human exploitation and injustice because he believes that God has entered the world in Christ, that He has been victorious over the structures of evil, and that ... "His Kingdom is coming with his judgement and mercy."[15]

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[11] Ibid., 45/1, 46/10, 50/24.

[12] Ibid., 45/3.

[13] Ibid., 45/3.

[14] Ibid., 45/4.

[15] Ibid., 45/2, 4.

The basis then for Christian action in the world, as outlined in the first four paragraphs of Uppsala, 1968, Section III, can be schematized as follows:

(1) All men are one (all are created in God's image; all are redeemed in Christ).
(2) Technology now allows us to possess this global vision of man and enables us to eradicate human suffering.
(3) The current social and economic suffering in the world must, therefore, not be allowed to continue.
(4) Christians' tasks are: prophetic (raise global awareness of the responsibilities implicit in this technological vision and possibility) and diaconic (act to eradicate human suffering and injustice).
(5) Christians can be hopeful in their actions because the world has been redeemed and the Kingdom is at hand.

Paragraph 43 of Section III proceeds to outline nine ways in which Christians can act out their prophetic and diaconic responsibilities. These nine ways can be summarized as follows: know the facts; pray; engage in dialogue and join with others in groups; urge educational authorities to include development in curricula; become involved in communal projects; exert political pressure; volunteer self-taxation; consider development projects in career choices; make a personal commitment.[16] These nine items serve as examples and they make no claim to being exhaustive. Theologically, there is little in these nine examples that would constitute material for heated debate.

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[16] Ibid., 54/43.

Technically, however, the economist could challenge the authors' assessment that development, as it is described in this report, must be the best and most effective program for combatting the needs of the world's poor. It is clear here that the authors are using the word "development" as a theological term rather than a technical term. However, the confusion caused by the alternate technical and theological meanings of the word causes problems in interpretation (see Chapter 2 above); problems that could have been avoided with a more careful choice of words.

4.1.3 The Tasks of Churches

The nine paragraphs which consider the tasks of churches are equally concerned with mobilizing Christian consciousness and action at the local level, in the light of this new global vision of human welfare. The authors discuss the churches' tasks under four headings: "The Pastoral and Educational Task," "The Service Task," "The Prophetic and Critical Task" and "The Political Task" and once again the "unity of mankind" is the central point of emphasis. The authors state that "all men" are heirs to the world's resources and that Christians must help to direct the economic, social and political efforts of every region and nation towards the well-being of people in all corners of the globe.

> Churches are called, in their preaching and teaching, including theological education, to set forth the biblical view of the God-given oneness of mankind and to point out its concrete implications for the world-wide solidarity of man and the stewardship of the resources of the earth.[17]

> The churches should use their resources for God's purpose of abundant life for all men.[18]

> They [the churches] should especially consider how the present economic structures in which national sovereignity plays a decisive role can be transformed into a structure in which decisions affecting the welfare of all are taken at the international level.[19]

The authors of Section III want to emphasize that participation of Christians at the local level in projects that utilize the talents and resources of local communities must be the route towards effecting global changes. This means that it must be up to the local Christian communities to translate the general tasks of education, service, prophetic criticism and political involvement into concrete projects and programs.

> Each church should determine and apply the concrete implications of these recommendations based on an analysis of its local, regional and national situation.[20]

However, Christians are urged to sacrifice their own conveniences in their programs for global human welfare and

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[17] Ibid., 51/31.

[18] Ibid., 52/34.

[19] Ibid., 52/36.

[20] Ibid., 51/31.

to add new projects without deleting existing ones.

> Every church should make available for development aid such proportion of its regular income as would entail sacrifice, this amount to be in addition to amounts spent on mission and other programmes.[21]

The pastoral and educational task of churches includes setting forth the theological and biblical bases of social activity, determining appropriate actions in the various concrete situations and teaching people how to be politically effective in accomplishing their desired aims and goals.[22] The service task of the churches includes mobilizing human and material resources for projects that assist the poorer countries in their efforts towards economic and social development.[23] The prophetic and critical task requires Christian churches to review critically and promote necessary changes in ecclesiastical, industrial, governmental and international structures according to the extent that they serve the interests of global human well-being.[24] And the political task of churches involves the corporate participation of Christians in various political processes in order to exert influence in favour of poorer

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[21] Ibid., 52/33.

[22] Ibid., 51/31.

[23] Ibid., 52/32-4.

[24] Ibid., 52/35-7.

countries.[25] In outlining the political task of churches the authors become quite explicit and recommend specific policy changes. These recommendations include the measures contained in the Charter of Algiers, the international stabilization of the price of primary products, tariff agreements that give preference in North Atlantic markets to the manufactured products of the developing countries, and the recommendations regarding the UN second Development Decade.[26] Again, the authors might have been wiser to state clearly that these measures are examples of possible courses of action and that careful analysis might reveal alternate programs and measures worthy of Christian commitment.

Throughout the discussions of the tasks of churches it is not always clear whether the authors of Section III are referring to the local church as the traditionally structured ecclesial community or whether they are using "church" to mean the various groups of Christians that might spontaneously organize and mobilize for particular political or social actions. On the one hand, the authors state that churches should integrate instruction on social and political responsibility into their preaching, teaching

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[25] Ibid., 52-3/38-9.

[26] Ibid., 52-3/38.2.

and theological education.[27] Here, the reference is clearly to the local institutional church. However, in another place the authors recommend that:

> The churches should:
> (1) help to ensure that all political parties make development a priority in their programmes;
> (2) urge and influence the governments of industrialized countries:
> a) to undertake development measures ... etc.[28]

It is not clear here whether the authors are asking that: (1) clergymen and women act as delegated representatives of institutional church memberships in political party meetings and in government legislative houses and pressure groups; or (2) clergymen and women should extoll from the pulpit the virtues of particular political candidates or urge the support of certain proposed legislative measures; or (3) laypersons should represent particular institutional churches at political party activities and encourage certain political policies and measures among the congregation; or (4) groups of Christians from within and among various traditional ecclesial institutions should gather together to exchange views on political issues and act corporately as Christian citizens in an effort to modify political party policies and influence legislative measures. I would suggest that the (4) alternative is probably what the

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[27] Ibid., 51/31.

[28] Ibid., 52/38.

authors had in mind. In all probability, the authors are hoping that any groups of Christians (or anyone at all for that matter) might be motivated to work either with or independent of traditional ecclesial structures to organize groups of people for political activity on behalf of the world's poor. The authors are using the word "church" here because they are speaking through the structure of the World Council of Churches as the voice of an Assembly to the members. Because of the constitutional makeup of the WCC the members of the WCC are "churches."[29]

The use of the word "church" is then a legal term related to the constitutional makeup of the World Council and not a theological term. The authors are not attributing a political task to the institutionally structured ecclesial communities per se. Rather, they are attributing the political task to groups of Christians organized for effective action in society. The authors address "churches" as constituted members of the WCC in order that through the "churches" Christians will be made aware of their political tasks.

The distinction between the legal and theological usage of the word "church" is important because it draws attention to the fact that different types of tasks will require the efforts of different types of organizations.

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[29] "Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches," in Uppsala, 1968, pp. 466-7, 471-2.

The traditional churches can often function as a clearing house for information, encouragement and for human and material resources, however new tasks related to political, social and economic problems will require new types of Christian groups that must be tailored both to the tasks and to the charisms of the local members.

The authors of Section III then would have been wise to have chosen their language more carefully. The present terminology is confusing and misleading, suggesting a return to clericalization or ecclesiastical domination of local politics. While considering the theological concept of "tasks" in relation to corporate and communal Christian activity the authors of Section III might have followed Geneva's example and challenged the "churches" as WCC members to encourage the development of new structures and organizations, at the local, national and international levels; structures in which Christians can act out their commitment to the world's poor.

4.1.4 The Tasks of the Church

The authors were much more careful in their use of the term "Church." In fact the word "Church" (with a capital "C") only appears twice throughout the entire report of Section III (except of course when it is used as a part of a proper name, e.g. Roman Catholic Church, or World Conference on Church and Society). In both cases the authors are attributing to the whole Church tasks

that are sufficiently universal in scope as to demand participation, in some measure, of all Christians.

> The Church must actively promote the redistribution of power, without discrimination of any kind, so that all men, women and young people may participate in the benefits of development.[30]

> The Church is called to work for a world-wide responsible society and to summon men and nations to repentance.[31]

Leaving aside for the moment a discussion of the content of the terms "development" and "responsible society," both of these statements are describing the universal scope of the Church's diaconic task. Paragraph 29 goes on to emphasize that at this time in history, the fulfilment of this task requires WCC cooperation with

> ... the Roman Catholic Church, with other non-member churches, with non-church organizations, adherents of other religions, men of no religion, indeed with men of good will everywhere.

The task of the Church here is a task in and with the whole world on behalf of all mankind. The authors are presupposing the intrinsic value of the "World" when they affirm: "To be complacent in the face of the world's need is to be guilty of practical heresy."[32] And the Church stands alongside "men of good will everywhere" in addressing the needs of the world.

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[30] Ibid., 50/23.

[31] Ibid., 51/29.

[32] Ibid., 51/29.

At the back of these statements lies something of Geneva, 1966's position on "secularization," "world" and "stewardship" (see Chapter 3.1.1 above). However, the authors of Section III made no effort to explore the theological intricacies of the "Church-World" problem. This was the task of Sections I and II at Uppsala. And the problems encountered in both Sections were enough to scare the authors of Section III away from everything but a few superficial introductory remarks on "Church and World."[33]

Although the participants of Section I spent much time wrestling with the Orthodox-Protestant divergencies on the "visibility" and the "invisibility" of the Church's "catholicity," they did manage to set some of the theological groundwork for Section III's discussion of tasks.[34] The "World" is described as the world of men and is the place of God's activity. Christian activity in the world is cooperation with this Divine action and is therefore good.[35] The Spirit of God equips the Church to act in favour of the "enrichment of human life" and towards the "renewal and unity of mankind."[36] And the "secularization"

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[33]John Weller comments that procedural difficulties and a lack of consensus on the aim of the Section almost brought Section I discussions to a halt; cf. ibid., p. 20.

[34]Ibid., p. 9.

[35]Ibid., 12/4.

[36]Ibid., 14/8.

of the world presupposes that the world can make its own intrinsically valuable contributions to the unity of mankind.[37] These statements affirm the intrinsic merit of "World," the theological notion of "stewardship," the criterion of the "human" as norm for social activity and a positive attitude towards "secularization." As in Section III, the text of Section I discusses these issues in the context of an overall emphasis on the question of unity in the Church and among men.[38]

4.1.5 The Tasks of the World Council of Churches

The tasks of the World Council of Churches and the tasks of theologians are the last two considerations in Section III. The WCC is an international agency through which Christians can cooperate with other Christians and with non-religious agencies to assist in helping the world's poor.

> The World Council of Churches must continue and increase its cooperation with United Nations agencies in the field of development.

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[37] Ibid., 17-18/20-1.

[38] See here ibid., 12/2-3. The fact that the title of the first Section report is "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church" and that four of the report's subtitles are "The Quest for Diversity," "The Quest for Continuity," "The Quest for the Unity of the Whole Church" and "The Quest for the Unity of Mankind" indicates clearly the locus of concern in the Section.

> ... the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, acting together, should enlist the influence of all Christians and men of good will in the world to diminish expenditures on armaments and to transfer the resulting savings to development.[39]

This task is clearly stated in principle, in the WCC's constitution.

> The functions of the World Council shall be:
>
> (i) to carry on the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work and of the International Missionary Council;
> (ii) to facilitate common action by the churches;
> (iii) to promote cooperation in study;
> (iv) to promote the growth of ecumenical and missionary consciousness in the members of all churches;
> (v) to support the churches in their world wide missionary and evangelistic task;
> (vi) to establish and maintain relations with national and regional councils, world confessional bodies and other ecumenical organizations;
> (vii) to call world conferences on specific subjects as occasion may require, such conferences being empowered to publish their own findings.[40]

The tasks of the WCC then are derived from the corporate tasks of Christians and as an international agency the WCC serves as a vehicle for Christian action and study rather than as a representative of it. Section III's statement that the WCC "cooperate," "enlist the influence of all Christians and men of goodwill" and restructure itself with an orientation towards development (the term "development" being used here not in its technical sense

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[39] Ibid., 53/40-1.

[40] Ibid., p. 467.

but as a theological term) is therefore a statement with a solid theological foundation in the corporate and individual tasks of Christians.

4.1.6 Theologians

Theologians are urged to study the impact of technology on the theological meaning of human and social justice. The authors urge that theologians carry out this study in dialogue with people in administration, industry and technology at all levels.[41]

4.2 Changes -- Geneva to Uppsala

4.2.1 A More Careful Use of the Term "Church"

The first significant change between Geneva and Uppsala was in the way the authors used the term "Church." While Geneva, 1966 tended to associate specific tasks related to concrete issues with the whole "Church," Section III of Uppsala, 1968 was hesitant to use the word Church at all. The result was that there was less of a tendency in Uppsala, 1968 to associate particular programs with some uniquely "Christian" social or economic policy.

4.2.2 The Unity of Mankind

The second change that occurred in the Uppsala report was the introduction of a new focus for the

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[41] Ibid., 54-5/44-8.

consideration of "tasks." "The unity of mankind" was the theological basis for Christian social responsibility. While Uppsala, 1968 continued to refer to the concepts "stewardship," "secularization," "human," and "Kingdom of God" (concepts that were discussed more widely in Geneva, 1966) the focus of attention at the fourth Assembly was the question of unity. This focus provided the content for the report of Section I and set the theological framework for the discussion of "tasks" in Section III.

4.2.3 The Careful Differentiation of Tasks

The authors of Section III at Uppsala took greater care to clarify to whom they addressed their presentation of the "tasks." The title of the fifth sub-section in the report of Section III clearly differentiates among tasks applicable to Christians, churches and the WCC. And the sub-titles and the terminology used in the paragraphs clearly identify whether the authors were discussing general theological tasks applicable to the whole Church or whether they were presenting the particular tasks of churches, Christians as individuals, theologians or the World Council.

4.2.4 The Uncritical Use of the Term "church"

The authors of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 used the word "church" whenever they designated a task that required local communal organized action. The problem

with this usage is that it tends to obscure the fact that different tasks require the mobilization of different types of Christian organizations and that the traditional ecclesial structures are often not the best vehicles for corporate Christian activity. In a WCC document the term "churches" is a legal term designating constituted WCC members. Alternates for this term should be used in a theological presentation of "tasks" so that the authors avoid making confusing and misleading implications when they recommend corporate Christian political involvement.

The authors of the Geneva report were clear that new Christian structures and organizations will be required to address social tasks and they tended to be more critical than the authors of Uppsala, 1968 in their use of the term "church." At Uppsala the word "church" was used to designate any kind of Christian group mobilized for social action.

4.3 Continuity -- Geneva and Uppsala

The authors of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 drew upon the theological concepts of "stewardship" and the "human" as criteria for Christian concern with development. In the report of Section I the authors reflected in their theological basis for Christian social action, a positive attitude toward "secularization," a respect for the intrinsic value of the "World" and a hope in the coming

"Kingdom of God." These were the theological concepts that were at the centre of Geneva, 1966's presentation of tasks.

SECTION THREE

THE METHOD

CHAPTER 5

GENEVA: STRUCTURE AND METHOD IN AN ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

5.0 Introduction

The word "method" can refer to two aspects of an ecumenical conference. The first usage refers to the method employed in organizing the conference and producing the final report. This includes the concept, mandate, the criteria for the selection of participants, the schedule of events and the steps involved in the production and redaction of the reports. The second usage relates to the method of theological and philosophical reasoning used in arriving at the conclusions and recommendations of the final report. This includes the technical models and theories employed, the modes of moral reasoning, the theological criteria appealed to and the literary genre and structure of the report. Here I do not attempt to present an exhaustive study in considering either aspect of method. Rather, I try to identify ways in which the concept and structure of the Geneva Conference affected the content of the final report, Geneva, 1966, and the ways in which the literary, theological and philosophic method employed in Section I shaped the authors' selection of data and formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Structure of the Geneva Conference

5.1.1 Concept

The Geneva Conference was conceived at the Paris meeting of the WCC Central Committee in 1962 as the third in a line of ecumenical world conferences concerned primarily with questions of Church and Society.[1] The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm, 1925, and the World Conference on Church, Community and State in Oxford, 1937, were the efforts of Life and Work, the movement that would merge with Faith and Order at Amsterdam in 1948 to form the World Council of Churches. The Geneva Conference followed on the WCC Department of Church and Society's six year study of the Common Christian Responsibility towards Areas of Rapid Social Change. The focus in this study was the current social, political and economic changes taking place in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Initiated at the Evanston Assembly in 1954, the Rapid Social Change project culminated in an International Ecumenical Study Conference at Thessalonica, Greece in 1959.[2] The analysis and conclusions of the study and of the Conference are contained in three volumes: the official report of the Thessalonica Conference, Dilemmas and Opportunities: Christian Action in Rapid Social Change (referred to here as Thessalonica, 1959), P. Abrecht, The

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[1] Geneva, 1966, p. 7.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

Church and Rapid Social Change and E. de Vries, Man in Rapid Social Change.[3] It is no coincidence that Paul Abrecht, one of the prime movers in the Rapid Social Change project, would become the Organizing Secretary and principal architect of the Geneva Conference. Roger Mehl has called the Geneva Conference the "climax" of this WCC study on Rapid Social Change.[4]

The Geneva Conference was originally conceived at the 1962 Central Committee meeting as an occasion for member church delegates to speak on behalf of the WCC to the churches and to the world.[5]

> The time has now come to look at the problems of society in the modern world from the perspective of God's call to man, and thus help to develop a body of theological and ethical insights which will assist the churches in their witness in contemporary history.[6]

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[3] WCC, Dep't. of Church and Society, International Ecumenical Study Conference, Thessalonica, Greece, 1959, Dilemmas and Opportunities: Christian Action in Rapid Social Change, Report of an International Ecumenical Study Conference, Thessalonica, Greece (Geneva: WCC, 1959); P. Abrecht, The Churches and Rapid Social Change (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961); E. de Vries, Man in Rapid Social Change (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961). (The report of the Thessalonica Conference is hereafter cited as Thessalonica, 1959).

[4] Roger Mehl, quoted in C. L. Patijn, "Collision," Frontier 10 (1967): 29.

[5] Geneva, 1966, pp. 8-9.

[6] Minutes and Reports of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Central Committee, WCC, Paris, Aug. 7-16, 1962, p. 141, cited in Geneva, 1966, p. 8.

However, at the Central Committee meeting in Enugu, Nigeria in January, 1965, the plans for the Conference were modified to allow a greater focus on technical issues and to question how changes in the contemporary world might affect the mode of Christian discipleship. Consequently, the concept of the Conference shifted from one in which an assembly of ecclesiastics would begin with theology and speak to the churches and to the world, to one in which representatives from the human, social, technical and theological sciences would speak to the WCC. According to the revised concept the participants would explore the realities of the contemporary world, try to understand their impact on human relationships and question their implications for Christian action in an effort to inform the WCC and the churches.[7] The Geneva Handbook, a booklet prepared for the participants' use during the Conference, emphasized the exploratory nature of the Conference. (1) The Conference would act in an "advisory" capacity to the WCC. (2) It would be a "dialogue" between theologians and lay persons to examine theological and ethical criteria for Christian social concern. (3) It would "study" the means for achieving world economic and social justice. (4) Its

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[7] Geneva, 1966, pp. 8-9.

report would "encourage continuing debate and discussion."[8]

As M. B. Gaine put it:

> The whole conference was planned in the context of a dialogue between the Churches and the World: here it was the turn of the World to speak to the Churches.[9]

5.1.2 Mandate

At Enugu the Central Committee charged the Geneva Conference with the following task:

> To bring together representatives of the human sciences and those involved in developing new forms of society in the contemporary world, as well as theologians:
>
> (1) to examine the following realities in the contemporary world and their implications for human relationships:
> - the accelerated technological development of our time;
> - the liberation of peoples from various kinds of dominance together with their new expectations of a fuller life;
> - the growing division between the rich and the poor countries;
> - the conflicting interests and consequent power struggles of the nations in an increasingly interdependent world.
>
> (2) to recognize the way in which these revolutionary changes have affected and continue to affect the Christian discipleship in the modern world.
>
> (3) to consider in the light of such recognition, the bearing of the Christian gospel on social thought and action:
> - to formulate, for consideration by the Churches,

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[8] World Conference on Church and Society, Handbook. World Conference on Church and Society, July 12-26, 1966 (Geneva: WCC, 1966), pp. 4-5 (hereafter cited as Geneva Handbook).

[9] M. B. Gaine, "The Christian in Society," Tablet [London] 221 (April 8, 1967): 382.

> proposals for the strengthening and renewal of their ministry by society;
> - to help the World Council of Churches in formulating policies which will give expression to a Christian concern for human solidarity, justice and freedom in a world of revolutionary change.[10]

The posture throughout the Conference, in the opinion of Edward Duff, was "... one of listening and learning."[11] And this was precisely what the Central Committee's statement of purpose called for. The motion at the presentation of each report was:

> ... that this report be received for inclusion in the general conference report; and that its conclusions be adopted by the conference and transmitted to the World Council of Churches and its member churches for their study, consideration and appropriate action.[12]

The fact that the Central Committee formulated the Conference's mandate as one of "bringing together," "examining," "recognizing," "considering" and "helping" reveals a key insight on their part. It is my conclusion that they realized the time had come for a shift in the thinking of the World Council and in the consciousness of the members. The Rapid Social Change Study had revealed an urgent need for greater interest in the economic welfare of people in the southern and eastern corners of the globe. The

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[10] Minutes and Reports of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Central Committee, WCC, Enugu, Nigeria, Jan. 12-21, 1965, pp. 82-3, cited in Geneva, 1966, pp. 8-9.

[11] Duff, in Thought, p. 30.

[12] Ibid.

Thessalonica Conference had pointed to the breakdown of old social systems in Asia, Africa and Latin America and to the emerging need for new political and social systems and new structures of world cooperation to support rapid social change and development.[13] The report identified theological themes that should shape world Christian attitudes towards these phenomena. The notion of "stewardship" and the criterion of the "human" were recognized as biblically based warrants for Christian concern and action in the interest of emerging nations. And cautions against sanctioning particular rates and modes of development, against illusions of utopian idealism, and against overly materialistic preoccupations were understood to be attitudes that were soundly based in Christian theology.[14]

The true color and shape of the conditions in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres might not have emerged in a conference after the style of a general assembly where ecclesiastics would be charged with issuing a theologically based statement to the world on behalf of the Christian Churches. The New Delhi General Assembly in 1961 had followed on the Thessalonica Conference. But in spite of a direct exposure to new "third world" member churches (23

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[13] Bock, pp. 43-4.

[14] Thessalonica, 1959, pp. 70-6, summarized in Abrecht, pp. 142-4.

of the new member Churches at New Delhi were from developing countries),[15] and the merger of the International Missionary Council with the WCC (the IMC had previously been the central point of contact between the younger churches and the work of the WCC),[16] New Delhi was unable to cope with the real issues that faced the emerging nations.[17] It appears that the WCC Central Committee feared that this experience might be duplicated. The Chairman and the Organizing Secretary for the Geneva Conference, M. M. Thomas and Paul Abrecht, in the Introduction to Geneva, 1966, summarize the reasons for rejecting a conference in the style of a General Assembly.

> First, this method of selecting delegates [appointment by the member churches] would weight the Conference too heavily in the direction of ecclesiastical leadership; second, delegate quotas based on the strength of member churches throughout the world would not represent the significance of the different regions in a world-wide discussion of social questions; third, a Conference made up in this way would not have the

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[15] Bock, p. 45.

[16] Ibid.

[17] André Dumas argues that the two central issues facing Geneva were: (1) Christian participation in economic and social revolutions, and (2) the norms and moral choices in technical and social revolutions. He concludes that because the New Delhi Assembly was preoccupied with the themes Kingdom of God, Church and State and the theological basis for Christian social responsibility, it could not adequately cope with these central issues. Dumas, p. 111.

> freedom to obtain the pioneering and creative thinking on the Church's responsibility in society which the original mandate had envisaged.[18]

The World Council of Churches sought to expose its membership and the world to the voice of the emerging nations so that Christian theology in the North Atlantic countries could begin to consider, on a large scale, the Christian warrants expressed in the Thessalonica report. The forum then had to be one of questioning, listening, considering and discussing rather than concluding, pronouncing, and proclaiming. In accordance with the revised mandate, the Geneva Conference established this forum by inviting a confrontation among economic models, political theories, social analyses and theological positions.

5.1.3 Selection of Participants

The final selection of participants was made in the light of the Central Committee's revised vision of the Conference's purpose. Of the 420 participants, 180 were lay persons, who were not professional theologians, 158 were theologians, 30 were youth participants and 53 were observers or guests. Of the lay persons, 78 were employed in positions as political leaders, civil servants, businessmen, industrialists, workers or trade union leaders while 92 were academically oriented professionals (economists, social scientists, natural scientists, professional

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[18] Geneva, 1966, p. 9.

persons). Of the 338 official conference participants, 57 percent or 191 were from North America, Europe, Australia or New Zealand while 147 were from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.[19] The participants were selected by the WCC from panels of names nominated by the churches and these selected names were then approved by the churches and National Councils. The occupational distribution of participants in favour of technically specialized lay persons, and the regional distribution which favoured a strong representation from the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres assured that the Conference would have the expertise and the freedom required to "... examine new positions on Christian social ethics and to suggest new possibilities."[20]

It is no accident that three of the articles published in the wake of the Conference bear the titles "Liberal Generations Clash in Geneva,"[21] "Revolutionary Challenge to Church and Theology"[22] and "Collision."[23] M. B. Gaine concluded in April, 1967, that the Geneva

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[19]These figures were compiled from Geneva, 1966, p. 10.

[20]Ibid., p. 9.

[21]W. S. Mooneyham, "Liberal Generations Clash in Geneva," Christianity Today 10 (Aug. 19, 1966): 42-3.

[22]R. Shaull, "Revolutionary Challenge to Church and Theology," Princeton Seminary Bulletin 60 (October 1966): 25-32.

[23]Patijn, pp. 29-32.

Conference organizing committee had recognized a growing gap between the social thinking of the Christian churches in affluent societies and in the developing countries.

> They deliberately engineered a confrontation between these diverging points of view. Many of the Western participants were startled to discover the readiness with which some of the representatives from the developing countries were prepared to justify or even demand revolution as the only Christian response in the circumstances of their own countries.[24]

The revised concept of the Geneva Conference, the statement of purpose and the selection of participants are three key structural elements that contributed to what would perhaps be the most important feature of the Geneva Conference: the Conference's public statement that North Atlantic Christian consciousness must be concerned with the human conditions in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres.

5.1.4 Schedule of Events

The schedule of Geneva Conference events was in keeping with its conception as an experience of listening and learning. Of the 14 days and 33 two-hour sessions of meetings and assemblies, the first 10 days and 24 sessions (73 percent of the session hours) were devoted to plenary addresses and section meetings in which the themes of the Conference were presented, discussed, debated, formulated, revised and assembled into preliminary draft reports. Only on Friday, July 22nd, 1966, the eleventh day of the

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[24]Gaine, p. 392.

Conference, were draft reports presented in plenary for final debate and revision.[25] While some critics have claimed that the lack of prepared draft documents seriously hindered the progress of the Conference, the organizers decided against this procedure in order to allow the greatest freedom for discussion in the sections.[26] M. M. Thomas and Paul Abrecht consider this to have been a good decision as it permitted the discussions and debates of the Conference (rather than preconceptions or positions formulated in prepared documents) to shape the final reports.[27]

The dialogical quality of the Conference was built into the schedule of events. In most of the Plenary Session addresses, presentations by participants from North Atlantic countries were coupled with presentations or responses by experts from the Southern and Eastern Hemisphere. The address of Professor André Philip (France) was followed by comments from Dr. Raúl Prebisch (Argentina) and Mr. 'Bola Ige (Nigeria). The speech of Bishop Sarkissian (Lebanon) received comments from Professor Richard Shaull (USA) and Archpriest Borovoi (USSR). Reverend Emilio Castro (Uruguay), Dr. Eduardo Mondlane (Tanzania), Dr. J. M. Lochman (Czechoslovakia) and Dr. E. C. Blake (USA) each

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[25] Geneva Handbook, pp. 10-11.

[26] Geneva, 1966, p. 28.

[27] See here Geneva, 1966, pp. 28-9.

presented addresses on Church and Society in one morning's Plenary Session. And M. Jean Rey (Belgium) and General Simatupang (Indonesia) delivered presentations on Government and Society.[28] The effect of this schedule on the discussions in Section I was to encourage a lively exchange of views on such topics as the application of technology to development, the relative merits of differing economic systems, their advantages for encouraging rapid growth, and the elements in international economic relations.[29]

While positions on issues differed considerably among participants, there was little occasion for discussion to move away from the central issues of the Conference. The first four Plenary Sessions established the Conference's central concern for revolutionary changes taking place in the world and their impact on new nations. The topics of these sessions were: "Potentialities of Scientific and Technological Revolutions," "Political and Economic Dynamics of Newly Awakened Peoples," "The Search for a New Ethos for New Societies" and "The Challenge and Relevance of Theology to the Social Revolutions of Our Time." The topics for these Plenary Sessions were selected to aid and direct the discussions in the sections and the working groups so that the participants might "... see their work

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[28] Geneva Handbook, pp. 12-20.

[29] Geneva, 1966, p. 29.

in the total context of contemporary social realities."[30]

The Conference participants were divided into four Sections of approximately 100 members each of which met in 13 two-hour sessions. Their topics and agendas were chosen at the planning committee meeting in Oxford in September, 1965, and were circulated for comments and suggestions during the following months. In April, 1966, all participants were sent notice of their Section assignments and the relevant readings in the preparatory volumes. The agendas were altered slightly in the early plenary sessions.[31] The four Sections topics were as follows:

(1) Economic Development in World Perspective.
(2) The Nature and Function of the State in a Revolutionary Age.
(3) Structures of International Cooperation -- Living Together in Peace in a Pluralistic World Society.
(4) Man and Community in Changing Societies.

C. L. Patijn has criticized the discussions in the Sections for being overloaded, not always to the point, poor in use of terminology (e.g. "revolution," "power"), poorly structured and too anti-American. However, he does conclude that Geneva provided an occasion for the awareness of problems of social justice.[32] His observations here

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[30] Ibid., p. 11.

[31] Ibid., p. 28.

[32] Patijn, pp. 29-32.

characterize the effect that the schedule of events had on the Section and Plenary discussions. The lack of prepared draft documents, the sheer bulk of data covered in the agendas, the structure of confrontation within which addresses were presented and received, and the controversial nature of the Conference's main theme all served to make impossible the formulation of careful consensus statements on specifically defined issues. Rather, the effect was to focus attention on issues of international social justice and to bring to the fore the many and various positions and theories which try to make sense of the data.

The Plenary Session whose theme was that of Section I, "Economic Relations Between Developed and Developing Nations," illustrates the way in which debate expanded on international economics. Professors J. Tinbergen (Netherlands) and T. Kurien (India) made the presentations and Professors R. Blough (USA), Claudio Williman (Uruguay) and G. Blardone (France) responded with comments. Professor Tinbergen discussed the possibility of development in poorer countries and affirmed the moral responsibilities of Western nations to assist this development. Dr. Kurien went on from this presentation and treated world trade systems and the means for the transfer of resources. Professor Blough countered the two speakers' positions with some criticisms expressed by American businessmen. They feel that internal problems in many poorer countries render foreign aid

ineffective and often constitute the most formidable obstacles to the mobilization of existing resources. Professor Villiman stressed the importance of the political element in economic development and emphasized the distinctive economic aims of Africa, Asia and Latin America. And Dr. Blardone highlighted the elements in world trade structures which serve to increase the dependence of developing countries on developed countries. Each speaker's concern was with a different aspect within the complex field of issues and so there was little occasion for consensus statements to emerge. However, the focus of attention throughout the discussions was on world economic development issues as they relate to the countries of the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres.[33]

The fact that the three working groups (whose task it was to consider some of the overarching issues of the Conference) had to find their own time to meet in between the closely scheduled items on the Conference agenda, did nothing to promote a consistent methodological and theological basis for the discussions. The three groups consisted of twenty members each, drawn from the general membership, and they sought to assess:

(1) The potentialities of the scientific and technological revolutions;
(2) The general theological basis for the reports and the themes;

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[33] See Geneva, 1966, pp. 29-31.

(3) The nature and direction of Christian action in society.[34]

The second working group whose goal, in another time and place, might have been to provide an overall methodological coherence sought rather to summarize methodological and theological problems encountered throughout the Conference and to suggest areas for further study and investigation.[35] The only methodological and theological guidance offered in the structure of the Conference was the daily, forty-five minute, workshop and bible-study sessions. Even the preparatory volume, Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World, devoted specifically to methodological and theological concerns, did little to establish a sound methodological basis for the discussions.[36] M. B. Gaine suggests that the preparatory volumes were not made available to the Conference participants early enough for them to have been effective in influencing discussions.[37]

The organization of the Conference's schedule

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[34]Duff, in Thought, p. 32.

[35]Geneva, 1966, p. 195. Working Group "B" outlined its task as "... preparing a report on the theological concerns raised in the meeting." The Working Group summarized and commented on the issues raised rather than setting out material to guide the Conference.

[36]Duff, in Thought, p. 33.

[37]Gaine, p. 382.

prepared for a meeting that would be characterized by questioning, exploration, investigation and confrontation. The amount of time allotted to discussion and preparation of reports, the lack of prepared drafts, the arrangement of diverging positions presented in Plenary addresses, the concentration on the theme of revolution in the initial Plenary Sessions, the dynamics of the Section discussions and the lack of methodological and theological guidance all served to diminish the possibilities for careful consensus and to open further debate and discussion.

5.1.5 Production of the Report of Section I

The material for the Section reports was assembled from the Plenary Sessions and Section meetings between Wednesday, July 13 and Thursday, July 21. Between Friday, July 22 and Monday, July 25 (the last working day of the Conference) the first drafts of the reports were presented to the Plenary by Section "rapporteurs." Recommendations for changes, additions and deletions were then forwarded by participants from the general Conference membership. The drafts were amended in the light of the changes agreed upon by the Conference and were then re-submitted to the editorial committee for publication in the final report. As was indicated above, the Conference planning committee had decided against the preparation of preliminary draft reports because of the expense involved in convening the

experts required. Even the preparation of the Section agendas provoked such considerable debate in the planning committee meetings that the members agreed to forego bringing together the large group of experts that would be required for preparing the drafts.[38]

The editorial committee for Section I, "Economic Development in World Perspective," was chaired by Egbert de Vries and he was assisted in preparing the Section report by Denys Munby, S. A. Aluko and C. T. Kurien. Of the 18 contributors to the preparatory volume, Economic Growth in World Perspective (referred to here as Munby) 16 were present at the Conference and most were active in the discussion of Section I.[39] At the Oxford planning committee meeting in September, 1965, it was recommended that the theme of Section I be considered in three parts:

(1) The changing economic pattern of the advanced countries;
(2) Problems of economic growth in the developing countries;
(3) The restructuring of the world economy for development and welfare.[40]

This threefold structure generally corresponds to the arrangement of the articles in the preparatory volume,

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[38] Geneva, 1966, pp. 28-9.

[39] See Geneva, 1966, Appendices I and II and p. 29.

[40] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Munby.[41] And the final report of Section I maintained this same organization. The fact that much of the discussions in the Section were shaped by the contributors to the preparatory volume may account for this similarity and for the relative clarity and consistency of the report. C. L. Patijn has remarked that the document ranks among the best of the products of the Conference.[42]

The time available for preparing Section reports did not allow the resolution of conflicting positions but only the collection of the divergent viewpoints. Roger Shinn has praised the general body of the Conference reports for not attempting to conceal the disagreements that arose in discussions. However, he does criticize some of the conclusions of Geneva, 1966 as more the product of fatigue and group dynamics than of authentic consensus. The pressure that arose in the struggles to meet the deadlines figured heavily in many of the conclusions, especially in Section II, and Professor Shinn suggests that many of that Section's formulations can only be understood in the light of the

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[41] See Munby, pp. 13-17. After a general introduction to the various aspects of the problem of "economic growth," Parts II, III and IV of Munby address issues that concern advanced countries, developing countries and world relations, respectively.

[42] See Patijn, p. 31 and Geneva, 1966, p. 31.

group's dynamics.[43]

The fact that most of those who made significant contributions to the final report of Section I were technically oriented laymen, partially accounts for the de-emphasis of theology in the report. However, the economists did not find much material from the theologians and ethicists that would be of help to them. At one point, Denys Munby, in responding to Professor Richard Shaull, asked the theologians for some methodological guidelines for determining when God is at work and when the devil is at work in the dynamic forces of society.[44] The events of the Conference were the only sources of material input for the editors of the Section reports and the Conference yielded few conclusions, theological or otherwise.

The impact of the Conference at large on the report of Section I can be observed in the amendments that were made to the first draft of the report after it was presented and discussed in plenary July 22. The changes do not reflect any attempt to sharpen the focus of the report's conclusions or to tighten up the method of argumentation. Rather, they are the addition of further perspectives and issues to a report which was already multifaceted and

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[43] R. L. Shinn, "Paul Ramsey's Challenge to Ecumenical Ethics," in Christianity and Crisis 27 (Oct. 30, 1967): 244.

[44] Geneva, 1966, p. 27.

open-ended. Three of the amendments represent attempts to point out that the current pattern of land ownership in some developing countries constitutes an obstacle to the proper development of human and material resources.[45] One amendment expressed the point that some measures of insurance to protect private investment should be provided by countries that wish to encourage inflow of private capital.[46] Five amendments added to the report insist that Christians participate in existing development programs rather than instituting their own.[47] Evidently some participants felt that the draft report was recommending too many new church projects and they wanted to caution against a tendency towards an overclericalization of development activities. One amendment, the addition of the biblical and theological material to paragraph 50 of the report, illustrates well the peripheral concern for theology among

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[45] "Report of Section I, 'Economic and Social Development in World Perspective', Corrections and Amendments to the Text as Mimeographed after the Plenary Session of July 22, 1966," Mimeographed Report from the World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966, pars. 150, 91, 151. (Note: the paragraph numbers cited in this mimeographed report do not correspond to the paragraph numbers of Section I in the final report as published in Geneva, 1966. The corresponding paragraph numbers in Section I of Geneva, 1966 are 147, 89 and 148, respectively).

[46] Ibid., par. 125e, corresponding to 85/120e in Geneva, 1966.

[47] Ibid., pars. 152, 35, 67, 103a and 139, corresponding to 91/149, 62/34, 71/65, 79/99 and 88/134 in Geneva, 1966.

the participants of Section I.[48] Paragraph 50 is the only one in the whole report of Section I that attempts to explore the relationship between the Bible and economic issues. And it was an addendum to the draft report after the presentation in plenary.

The process involved in the production of the report of Section I significantly affected the shape of the final product. The lack of preparatory drafts, the influence of the preparatory volume, Munby, the lack of time for systematic refinement of conclusions and the lack of influence from participants trained in theological and ethical methodology all helped to form the final character of the report.

5.1.6 Summary

The posture of the Geneva Conference was one of listening and learning rather than pronouncing. Its concern was with the technical and concrete aspects of issues related to the human conditions in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres and its intent was to make the statement that Christians in all corners of the globe, and particularly in the richer societies, must be concerned with improving these human conditions. The structural features of the Conference were such that the final report of Section I would not contain a careful and critical summary analysis

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[48] Ibid., par. 51, corresponding to 67/50 in Geneva, 1966.

of the economic issues and would not proceed to a concise recommendation of individual and corporate responses that would be grounded in Christian theology. Rather, the Conference's structure determined that the event would be an inconclusive, consciousness-raising event on a global scale. This was in fact the effect that the Conference had and it appears that this was the effect that the organizers had intended.

5.2 Literary, Theological and Philosophical Method in Section I of Geneva, 1966

5.2.1 Literary Genre

I have established in the discussions above that the Geneva Conference was essentially a consciousness-raising event. Its aim and stated purpose were:

> (1) to examine ... realities in the contemporary world and their implications for human relationships ....
> (2) to recognize the way in which these revolutionary changes have affected and continued to affect the Christian discipleship in the modern world;
> (3) to consider in the light of such recognition, the bearing of the Christian Gospel on social thought and action:
> - to formulate for consideration by the Churches proposals for the strengthening and renewal of their ministry by society;
> - to help the World Council of Churches in formulating policies which will give expression to a Christian concern for human solidarity, justice and freedom in a world of revolutionary change.[49]

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[49] Minutes of the Central Committee, Enugu, 1965, pp. 82-3, cited in Geneva, 1966, pp. 8-9.

The Conference was authorized to speak to the churches and the WCC in an advisory capacity and it appears that the Conference was an attempt to communicate to Christians of the North Atlantic countries the urgency of the problems raised in the report of the WCC study on Rapid Social Change, Thessalonica, 1959.

The structure of the events of the Conference suggests that the organizers tried to encourage confrontations among Christians from different corners of the globe on economic, political, social and theological issues so that information might be generated to aid action and reflections. The primary intent of the final report then would not have been to present a careful and authoritative ethical or theological discourse on specific issues. The Conference had not the time, the schedule nor the authorization to draft such a document. Rather, the report is a pastoral document exhorting Christian concern for conditions of human suffering in the world, describing in general terms the economic, social and political aspects of the situations and attempting to formulate some Christian theological criteria by which action can be judged and responses sought. It is important that this distinction between an ethical discourse and an exhortation to morality be drawn. While an ethical discourse may have as its purpose the careful analysis of issues and ethical principles, or perhaps the examination of values or symbols that inform

moral judgements, or even the advocacy of a particular position on an issue, an exhortation to morality is an attempt to raise consciousness of general patterns of events that demand human attention.[50] The hope is that moral discourse might begin among a wider group of people and that informed moral action might result. Both types of documents will include some conclusions and will recommend responses to issues. When they do both must argue competently and with a thorough analysis of the positions and data. However, the single element that differentiates an ethical discourse from an exhortation to morality is the intent. The former intends to present a fruitful analysis so that a particular method or direction of discourse and action might result. The latter intends to present an analysis so that discourse and action might begin or increase. Inevitably, an exhortation to morality includes suggestions as to how one might act morally. However, this is instrumental to the primary intent: to encourage and motivate reflection and action.

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[50]This threefold categorization of types of ethical discourses is based on my summary of the six articles published in The Journal of Religious Ethics 5 (Spring 1977). The authors are responding to Ralph Potter's article, "The Logic of Moral Argument," in Toward a Discipline of Social Ethics, ed. P. Deats (Boston: Boston University Press, 1972), pp. 93-114. While Potter views social ethics to be the analysis of issues, focusing on the mode of ethical reasoning, the respondents variously: (1) agree with Potter with conditions and reservations (Childress), (2) suggest a focus on ethos and social theory (Stassen, Winter-Pitcher, Everett) or (3) recommend advocacy on issues (Hough, Roach).

The language of Section I, "Economic Development in a World Perspective" in Geneva, 1966 is the language of a pastoral exhortation to morality. Following the general description of the economic conditions in advanced and developing countries, the document introduces the churches' and Christians' tasks with the following phrases: "The churches should welcome ...," "Churches must be concerned ...," "Christians must be sensitive ...," "The Church is challenged ...," "Christians should accept the challenge and the responsibility ...," "The Churches should witness ...."[51] Throughout the discussions on "World Economic Relations" and in the "Conclusions and Recommendations" of Section I, Christians are urged to study and mobilize for corporate action: "The churches should minister ...," "We, therefore, suggest that the World Council of Churches ..., should undertake a professional and technical study of the issues raised above ...," "... the churches are sharply challenged ...," "The Churches everywhere should understand ...," "The Churches in the developing countries should bear witness ...."[52] The effort throughout the document is primarily to identify Christian concern with world economic issues and encourage

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[51] Geneva, 1966, 53/5, 61/29, 61/30, 65/44, 71/66, 76/87.

[52] Ibid., 87/129, 87/132, 89/137, 90/147, 91/149.

continued study and action among the Christian churches. The introductory remarks to the Conference report, the "Message of the Conference," describes the effect of the Conference on the participants: "... we have come to a new awareness ...," "we have been reminded ...," "... our attention has been focused ...," "... Our discussions have revealed ...," "... we have been led to perceive ...."[53] The document is presented to Christians and churches of the world with the following words:

> In keeping with the spirit of this Conference, our final word to the Churches must be a call to repentence, and to the recognition of God's judgement upon us, and of the reality of the new humanity in Jesus Christ offered to us all. It is also an urgent appeal for more effective and vigorous action, as an expression of our witness to the Gospel in the world in which we are living. We realize that this is a difficult task and requires a long and arduous struggle. But we pray for strength, sustained by the promise of our Lord: "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."[54]

This is clearly the language of a pastoral document. The relationship between the empirical data and the recommendations and conclusions of Section I must now be examined to see whether the exhortation to reflection, discourse and action is based on sound criteria.

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[53] Ibid., 48/1, 2, 3, 49/7.

[54] Ibid., 50/9.

5.2.2 Structure of Section I

Section I of Geneva, 1966 has four structural parts. The first establishes a theological basis for Christian concern with economic questions and describes some of the criteria against which Christians can evaluate events in order to understand and act correctively. This part is largely a unit in the text and is the introduction, pp. 52-55, paragraphs 1 through 10. Throughout the text are also scattered further paragraphs and parts of paragraphs which either elaborate on the theological material presented in the introduction or restate it in a new context (e.g. 67/50, 80/101, 89/138-40).[55] The theological concept of "stewardship" (though the term is not expressly used at the beginning of Section I) establishes the validity of Christian concern for economic matters.

> These advances [technological and economic] lead to a growth in economic productivity and are to be welcomed as a gift from God, who gives new powers to men and requires their use for the common good.[56]

Men are "stewards" of God's creation and it is the Christian's responsibility to direct aspects of human endeavour towards the wise use of the things that God has

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[55] The notation here follows the format that I have used throughout the notes. Geneva, 1966, page 67, paragraph 50 is notated 67/50.

[56] Ibid., 52/1.

created. The criterion of the "human" is the bench mark against which Christians must evaluate economic and social changes in order to properly exercise their responsibility as "stewards." And the "responsible society" is the social dimension of this criterion. God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, as presented in the New Testament is the source of our knowledge of what it means to be human, and it is the responsibility of all Christians to work so that human well-being is maximized in all possible situations (see also Chapter 3 above).[57]

The second and third structural parts of Section I are not separated throughout the text. The second presents economic data and describes the conditions of world poverty. The third is the explicit or implicit application of theological criteria (from part one) to the economic analyses to identify the issues as worthy of Christian concern and to discuss possible solutions or policies that would be consistent with these criteria. These two component parts are generally presented together as each aspect of the world economic patterns are discussed, and they are concentrated in paragraphs 11 through 127 of Section I (pages 55 through 80). An example of parts two and three can be seen in paragraph 79 (page 74). The authors state that the world's population will expand and

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[57] Ibid., 52-3/2-3.

will require a fourfold increase in food over the next three decades. The application of the Christian criterion of the "human" requires that everyone cooperate so that this food be made available to all persons and requires that the mode of supplying food must seek to preserve human dignity.

The fourth structural part of Section I is the presentation of the tasks of Christians and churches in response to the conditions as described. This part largely occupies paragraphs 128 through to the last paragraph, 159 (pages 86-93) and has already been discussed in Chapter 3 above. The difference between parts three and four lie in the degree of specificity. While part three applies theological criteria to specific economic questions and patterns, part four discusses more general kinds of responses that Christians can make (e.g. education, service, prophetic criticism).

The general structure of Section I of Geneva, 1966 can be schematized as follows:

52/1-55/10 Part 1
- establishes theological basis for Christian concern with economics.
- outlines some criteria for evaluation and response.

55/11-86/127 Parts 2 and 3
- describes world economic patterns.
- applies Christian criteria to economic patterns

86/128-92/159 Part 4
- outlines tasks of Christians and churches

It is clear that the bulk of Section I (72 percent of the material) is devoted to presenting and analyzing

economic data. The intent at every point is to draw out the correlation between the economic data and human well-being in order to stress that the data is worthy of global Christian concern and that policies must seek to maximize human well-being. In the effort to stress that human well-being was at stake the authors of Section I tended to equate the economic data with the human problems rather than to look beyond the economics to social structures and ideologies that sustain and perpetuate the economic conditions. An example can be seen in paragraph 27 (page 60, Geneva, 1966).

(1) Presentation of economic analysis

Economic growth means rising incomes for almost all social groups but very few societies manage to combine rapid growth with stable prices. The process of industrial bargaining, with leap-frogging wage claims, seems to give rise inevitably to an increase in money income greater than the rise in national productivity.

(2) Identification of human problem

Privileged groups manage to keep ahead in the race and benefit accordingly, but everyone may suffer in the long run.

(3) Recommendation of a possible response that maximizes human well-being

The working out of policies which will avoid inflation without undue interference in the normal process of industrial bargaining is a major challenge in most highly industrialized countries.

The human problem is the suffering that results when people consume more than they produce. Rather than examining the value systems that grow out of and tend to sustain a consumer-oriented economic system, the authors identified

"an increase in money income greater than the rise in national productivity" as the cause of human suffering and therefore recommended "policies which will avoid inflation" as the solution.

The literary genre of Section I and the structure of the report contribute to the report's optimistic conclusions and recommendations. The report's intent was to raise Christian consciousness and it did so by identifying economic issues as questions of global human well-being. It was structured so that 72 percent of the report discussed the economic data and applied Christian theological criteria to draw out the human concerns. The authors tended to equate the human problems with the external data. This led to an inability to look past the data to the questions of value, symbol and ethos which reflect economic structures, question them and make them resistant to change. As a result the authors tended to limit themselves to considering conclusions and recommendations that were simplistic and optimistic in their estimation of possibilities for change.

5.2.3 Theological Criteria

The report of Section I of Geneva, 1966 appealed to theological criteria to support a "middle axioms" approach to world economic problems and possibilities. This approach is a characteristic of World Council social

thought and originated at the Oxford Conference in 1937. J. H. Oldham presented middle axioms as intermediate criteria between ultimate Christian norms (e.g. love thy neighbour as thyself) and the concrete situation. Such criteria as "non discrimination" or "stewardship over world resources" were set forward at Oxford as benchmarks against which situations should be measured and as guidelines for responsible action.[58] In this study I do not explicitly critique the middle axioms method. Rather, I examine the symbols and general norms that operate as a basis for the middle axioms and attempt to understand the way in which the authors handled the relationship between the general Christian norms, the middle axioms and the concrete situation. The effort will be to show that the authors drew upon theological themes whose content had not been systematically differentiated with the effect that these themes allowed and influenced an optimistic reading of the development alternatives.

As I outlined in 5.2.2 (above) the authors appealed to the concept of "stewardship" as the theological basis for Christian concern with economic matters.[59] They then presented the concept of "human" as the criterion for

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[58]See Bock, pp. 38, 62.

[59]See p. 142 (above); see also Geneva, 1966, 77/89, 91/151.

social change. This criterion derives from the Christian belief that God has revealed the true nature of man and God in the person of Jesus Christ. The WCC concept "responsible society" is considered here to embrace this "human" criterion, although the authors do not make it clear whether the "responsible society" is the ideal "human" society towards which we can only strive or whether it is the realizable reality that seeks to approach and only partially manifest the embodiment of the "human" ideal. In other words, it is not clear whether the "responsible society" is the Christian ideal or the proximate norm.[60] A footnote at the bottom of paragraph 2 of Section I makes clear that there was no agreement in the Conference as to the meaning of "humanity in Christ." However, in the "Introduction" to Section I the authors do highlight some of the elements in the relationships that could have been helpful had they considered the theological implications more carefully.

The Church is called to be a "fellowship" that

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[60]See Geneva, 1966, 52/2. For a more clarified understanding of the meaning of the term "responsible society," see H. D. Wendland, "The Theology of the Responsible Society," in Christian Ethics in a Changing World, ed. J. C. Bennett (New York: Association Press, 1966), pp. 135-52 (hereafter this collection of essays will be cited as Bennett). Wendland makes clear that the "responsible society" is secular and historical and that it does not have an "ultimate character." It is not a bridge or transition to the "Kingdom of God" nor is it the "Christian Society." The authors of Section I of Geneva, 1966 were not clear on this relationship between the ultimate and proximate norms.

should "... witness to what man's entire political and social ~~life~~ should express."[61] The words "witness" and "express" connote a symbolizing activity here and suggest that the activities of "fellowship" and "political and social life" stand in relation to the Christian ideal as a partial participation in the ideal and as a pointer towards it. I think that the terminology was chosen carefully by the authors here and that their intent was to express this symbolic relationship between the Church's action and the final realization of Koinonia in the Kingdom. Throughout the whole "Introduction" to Section I the authors stressed this incomplete and symbolic character of Christian participation in development. Christians are asked to "seek to realize fuller responsibilities ...," "to express the solidarity of mankind ...," "assist in the enormous task ...," "face uncertainties ...," "act on imperfect information ..." and "learn from experience."[62] The authors are clear that currently the efforts towards development can only partially succeed in securing anything like a "responsible society." However, the question still remains: What are the authors hoping for? Are they hoping that the incomplete and partial success that Christians might achieve in developing the World is itself a partial

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[61] Geneva, 1966, 52/2.

[62] Ibid., 53/3.

manifestation of the "Kingdom of God?" Are they hoping that God will then reward man's efforts in the eschaton by perfecting our work and completing "World Development?" Or are they clear that the Kingdom of God might be of a wholly different order, transcending the responsible society (perhaps often in conflict with development) sharing elements with the responsible society but elements that perhaps we cannot currently identify? An analysis of the balance of the document, I think, reveals that the authors confused the Christian symbol "Kingdom of God" with the middle axiom "responsible society," and the result was that they tended to hope for a perfection of a developed world in the eschaton.[63]

The first point where the confusion between the Kingdom of God and the responsible society can be seen is in

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[63]Central to any efforts to formulate a "Theology of Development" must be the consideration of the various Christian approaches to "poverty." For one such study, see N. Greinacher and A. Müller, eds., The Poor and the Church, Concilium series No. 104 (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977). The article by A. Muller, "The Poor and the Church: A Synthesis," pp. 112-117, makes a distinction between poverty as physical deprivation and misery and poverty "as the emptiness that would be filled by God." Müller notes that there must be two very different types of responses towards these two types of poverty but that neither type of response can have as its end wealth as an alternative to poverty or a welfare ideology as a solution to eradicating poverty. The Christian attitude towards poverty, in all cases, demands solidarity with the poor and when their poverty is of the first type, this means both cooperation in relieving the conditions of misery and sharing in poverty in order that the poor may learn poverty of the second type.

paragraph 10 of Section I (pg. 55, Geneva, 1966).

> We do not know how far the radical ethic of the Kingdom of God can be realized on earth. We do know that God appears to have set no limits to what may be achieved by our generation, if we understand our own problems aright and desire to obey in our circumstances.

The structure of this statement creates a parallel between "radical ethic of the Kingdom of God" and "what may be achieved by our generation." While there is no explicit statement that the former is equal to the latter, the intent of the authors is to present an empirical observation about current economic achievements that sheds light on the question raised about the Kingdom of God. The effect is to suggest that current technological and economic achievements are a partial disclosure of what the Kingdom of God looks like. According to the statement, what we really don't know about the Kingdom is simply how far God is prepared to let us go in "developing" the world into the Kingdom.

Another structural parallel in paragraphs 137-140 (pg. 89) creates a similar effect:

> ... it follows that they [the churches] are called to proclaim that:
> - God has created and redeemed the whole world. This implies a more just distribution not only of wealth but also of health, education, security, housing and opportunity.
> - Nations and governments are true to God's calling only if they cooperate in the search for this more equitable allocation. In so far as they hinder or are indifferent to it, they risk not only social and political disruption but also the judgment of God.
> - A diminution of national sovereignty on the basis of mutual concessions and equal rights may be necessary in order to execute policies framed to accomplish this re-allocation.

In this case the use of the word "implies" appears as an uncourageous attempt to conceal the fact that the Conference members had neither the time nor the expertise to explore the exact relationship between redemption and a just social order. Consequently, international cooperation in effecting a "more equitable allocation" is effectively equated with "a more just distribution ... of wealth ... health, education, security, housing and opportunity" and both stand in relation to creation and redemption as some partial manifestation of the perfection of the world. It did not occur to the authors that the redemption of the world might possibly mean freedom from and transcendence of a preoccupation with material wealth and security and that efforts to improve another's well-being may have as their primary end not the attainment of wealth but solidarity in poverty which is true fellowship in the Spirit. In other words, the authors of Section I of Geneva, 1966 did not consider the possibility that the truly "underdeveloped" nations of the world in terms of the "human" that is (in some way) disclosed in the person of Jesus Christ, might be the wealthy nations of the North Atlantic and not the materially poor countries of the South and the East. The point here is not to suggest that wealth and development are un-Christian but that the current age stands in true eschatological tension with the Kingdom of God and the nature of the Kingdom is not fully known. If the concept,

responsible society, is to be consistent with the whole of Christian theology, its relationship to Eschatology, Creation, Redemption, Church, World, Kingdom, Poverty and Wealth must be clearly and systematically differentiated. Until this is done the concept will simply serve to provide theological justification for a prevailing ideology (in spite of all cautions and warnings to the contrary).[64]

Throughout the report of Section I the undifferentiated relationship between the "Kingdom of God" and the "responsible society" tended to allow the authors to address the issues in the economic analysis with the optimistic hope that developing the world was an essential constitutive element in Christian discipleship.

> Christians must reject policies which involve more than the inescapable minimum of unemployment and the waste of human and other resources ...
> Churches can also encourage the formation by developing nations of regional economic groupings so they may offer larger markets and provide a better balanced economic spectrum than may be possible for a single nation.
> Only when the churches themselves understand the issues at stake in development and economic restructuring will they be able to discharge faithfully their duty to leaven the lump of world society.[65]

W. S. Mooneyham noted this theological problem as a characteristic not only of the Geneva Conference but indeed

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[64]See Geneva, 1966, 57/16.

[65]Ibid., 61/28, 78/92, 88/133.

of much discourse within the ecumenical movement.

> But if the conference could be commended for its idealism and forgiven for its lack of spiritual depth, it could hardly be excused for its incredible -- but characteristically ecumenical -- naiveté when dealing with human nature. It placed an enormous amount of faith in the social scientists to bring the Kingdom of God on earth.[66]

Here Mooneyham touches on all four of the flaws in economic discussions of the Geneva Conference.

(1) A naive optimism in assessing possibilities for development.
(2) A preoccupation with the technical dimensions of the problems.
(3) An inability to penetrate to the human dimension of the ethical questions.
(4) An unclear theological basis for a "middle axioms" approach.

Edward Duff suggests that perhaps a structural flaw in the World Council of Churches and an overly restrictive mandate for Faith and Order might have been a reason for the dearth of theological input.

> Because of a curious restriction of the function of the World Council's Department of Faith and Order to questions of church unity, the Conference on Church and Society was abandoned to its own theological resources with the result that some had the impression that Theology was marginal to the urgent issues being discussed.[67]

The report of the CCIA (Commission of the Churches on International Affairs) which was submitted to the Geneva

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[66] Mooneyham, p. 43.

[67] Duff, in <u>Thought</u>, p. 33.

Conference, could have provided some guidance in handling the ecclesiological problems at the root of social ethical method. Early in the report the authors raised questions about the relationships among God, the World, Cosmos, Secular History, Incarnation and Redemption. They stressed that clarity in the appeal to eschatology was a necessary starting point for a Christian response to social issues.

> Christians fall into foolish errors when they make a piecemeal approach to the Kingdom, and identify sin-infected improvements in the human condition with bringing in the Kingdom.[68]

Unfortunately, this aspect of the CCIA report exerted little influence on the discussions of Section I. Even the second working group of the Geneva Conference concerned with "Theological Issues in Social Ethics" was clear that judgement and destruction stand between world development and the Kingdom of God and that the work of building the human society is a "work of sober realism, undertaken in constant awareness of the destructive power of human selfishness."[69] However, these insights did not get incorporated into the methodological basis for the discussions of Section I.

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[68] WCC, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), "The Struggle for World Community and its Ethical Implications," a Report Prepared for the World Conference on Church and Society on Behalf of the Officers of the WCC, CCIA, by Dr. R. M. Fagley, Study Encounter 2 (1966): 26-7.

[69] Geneva, 1966, 201/21-22.

In the preparatory volume, Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World (referred to as Bennett) we can see a possible reason for the methodological confusion. Most of the contributing authors were concerned with establishing the validity of Christian involvement in social, political and economic matters. They sought to repudiate an overly individualistic approach to Christianity that relegated social concern to "secular" disciplines. Hans-Werner Bartsch attacked the traditional Lutheran separation of Church and State in an effort to establish a biblical basis for social ethics.[70] Richard Shaull sought a biblical and theological basis for social revolution.[71] Nicos Nissiotis affirmed the unity of Nature and Grace and of Church and World in an effort to establish that social ethics is the Orthodox Christian's faithful participation in God's activity in the world.[72] Bruce Reed affirmed the Bible's explicit concern for social ethics while Roger Mehl argued that post-biblical reflection on the Kingdom of God and

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[70] H. W. Bartsch, "A New Theological Approach to Christian Social Ethics," in Bennett, pp. 59-77.

[71] R. Shaull, "Revolutionary Change in Theological Perspective," in Bennett, pp. 23-43.

[72] N. Nissiotis, "Church and Society in Greek Orthodox Theology," in Bennett, pp. 78-104.

eschatology must yield norms for Christian social activity.[73] William Lazareth sought to rethink the Lutheran position on the "two realms" in order to re-establish social concern as a legitimate part of Lutheran thought.[74] The questions that the authors in Bennett were addressing were not primarily the "how" of Christian social ethics but the fact that social ethics can and must be Christian. Throughout the volume some authors frequently made appeals to the Kingdom of God as some sort of norm for social ethics (Mehl, Shaull, Lazareth) and others spoke of social action as requiring the discernment of and/or participation in God's creative and redemptive work in the world (Bartsch, Shaull, Nissiotis, Reed, Lazareth). Only H. D. Wendland specifically addressed the problem of the relationship between the responsible society concept and the Kingdom of God.[75] The authors in Bennett were concerned with the same set of questions that the Geneva Conference was designed to confront. The result was that other questions (those which seek to carefully articulate the way in which Christian faith statements relate to the method and content of

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[73] B. Reed, "Biblical Social Ethics: An Evangelical View," in Bennett, pp. 105-8; R. Mehl, "The Basis of Christian Social Ethics," in Bennett, pp. 44-58.

[74] W. H. Lazareth, "Luther's 'Two Kingdoms' Ethic Reconsidered," in Bennett, pp. 119-31.

[75] Wendland, pp. 135-52.

ethics) were set aside. The more urgent task of affirming Christians' responsibility for social affairs presented a immediate challenge. While Bennett may not have directly influenced Section I of Geneva, 1966, it illustrates the prevailing questions that ecumenical theologians and ethicists were asking. And these were the questions that shaped the concept, the structure and the content of the Geneva Conference.

5.2.4 Geneva and Paul Ramsey

Paul Ramsey in his book Who Speaks for the Church? criticizes the method employed in the discussions and the final report of the Geneva Conference. Ramsey's criticism is perhaps the most significant leveled against the World Conference. His critique applies to much of the prevailing ecumenical discussions on global political issues in the mid-sixties as well as to the Geneva Conference. His arguments focus especially on statements concerning the American Vietnam military involvement and the problem of nuclear warfare. Ramsey argues that the method used in arriving at and in formulating specific policy recommendations has three major flaws:

(1) It leads to a lack of clarity as to who is speaking and to whom.[76] Although the Conference's

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[76] Ramsey, p. 13.

discussions reveal diverging views on both problems and solutions conclusions tend to be viewed, in the public eye, as some sort of specifically Christian response to the problem. When there is ambiguity no such illusion can be allowed.[77] According to Ramsey the Church cannot become simply one more participant in a debate in which the experts disagree.[78]

(2) The competent formulation of specific responses to concrete issues demands a degree of technical specificity that is beyond the resources and self-understanding of the Church. Currently ecumenical statements are either balanced pairs of condemnations of both sides in an issue or they are specific condemnations of one side with the added recommendation that political leaders search for less grim solutions. Ramsey argues that the former amounts to no more than a pious exhortation against sin and the latter is an irresponsible judgement that the existing action is not in fact the least grim solution. To speak responsibly requires a full analysis of the issues in all their technical complexity and this Ramsey discards as beyond the task of the Church.[79]

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[77] Ibid., p. 34.

[78] Ibid., p. 31.

[79] Ibid., pp. 29, 44.

(3) The procedure which seeks to propose specific responses to particular issues avoids entirely the question: "What are the essential ingredients of Christian responsibility?"[80]

Ramsey's first criticism is directed at the mode of addressing issues that tends to identify certain policies with Christian faith. I have shown that the authors of Section I of Geneva, 1966 were selective in their consideration of alternatives in the development debate and that their ecclesiological assumptions influenced their choice of considered alternatives. The result was an uncritical identification of optimistic policies with Christian faith. Ramsey's criticism here is warranted. However, it is warranted not because the Conference participants were the Church wrongly participating in a technical debate. Rather, it is warranted because the theological and technical arguments and analyses were flawed.

Ramsey's second criticism raises the question of the tasks of Christians, churches and the Church. He argues that the only competent route towards addressing issues is closed to the WCC because the WCC speaks for the Church and the Church has neither the resources nor is it mandated to be thorough in this regard. In fact the World Council of Churches is not the Church nor is it a church. The WCC is

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[80] Ibid., p. 13.

an international Christian agency whose tasks properly belong to the tasks of Christians. As such it is quite permissible for the WCC to engage in study and research on technical matters, drawing on the resources of Christians around the world whose work brings them close to the realities of the issues. While Ramsey is correct in criticising that many statements of the Geneva Conference were incompetent, he cannot conclude that the formulation of competent statements is beyond the tasks of the WCC. He must insist that it is the mode of formulating statements that is at issue and not the right to address issues. Ramsey's assessment of the tasks of the WCC precludes the possibility of statements and reports whose purpose is to present technical data in an effort to raise Christian consciousness. This must be an incorrect assessment. Education is undoubtedly among the pastoral responsibilities of both churches and Christians.

As I have shown in section 5.2.3 (above), Ramsey's third criticism is surely a good one. A thorough theological reflection on the relationship between "Church," "World" and the "Kingdom" may yield conclusions that would alter our perspectives on "developed" and "developing" countries. It is clear from the discussions above that a preoccupation with the technical aspects of issues tended to blind the authors of Section I to the deeper human elements in the issues. In this sense Ramsey is correct in

advising against a preoccupation with "issues." However, his criticism cannot imply a total avoidance of the technical dimension of world questions. Apart from familiarity with both technical and the human complexities of any situation Christian individuals and groups are unqualified to offer a public response.

Ramsey's critique then has two parts: the first, ecclesiological and the second, social ethical. The ecclesiological part of his critique excludes from the tasks of the WCC the technical analysis of issues and the formulation of responses. This critique is based on a faulty identification of the WCC with the Church and this is theologically unjustifiable. The second is a critique of the social ethical method used by the WCC and employed at the Geneva Conference; a method which is preoccupied with technical data and tends uncritically to allow theological preferences to influence the analysis of the data. This must be a justifiable critique. However, in making this critique one must not be allowed to overlook the historical value of the Geneva Conference as a consciousness-raising event. Ramsey's book tends to reduce Geneva, 1966 to its "ethical discourse" component and to forget that its literary genre was an "exhortation to morality."

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined two aspects of

method with respect to the Geneva Conference. The first was the structure of the Conference itself; the concept of the Conference, its mandate, the means of selecting participants, the schedule of events and the steps involved in producing the final report of Section I. My conclusion in this first part was that a proper understanding of the report requires the acknowledgement that Geneva was conceived, planned and executed not as an attempt to conclusively analyse technical issues, but as an effort to raise global Christian consciousness towards human conditions in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. This conclusion is based on five observations. (1) The Conference's concept was changed by the WCC Central Committee to accommodate an exploratory posture. The influence of the ideas and the personnel of the WCC Rapid Social Change Study suggests that the Geneva Conference organizers wanted the content of this study explored in a global forum. (2) The mandate of the Geneva Conference was to speak <u>to</u> the WCC and the churches rather than <u>for</u> them. This allowed more freedom for exploratory analysis and confrontation. (3) The participants were selected by the organizers rather than by the member churches. The geographical and occupational distribution of participants was such that a confrontation among technical experts from the four corners of the globe was inevitable. (4) The schedule of events allocated the bulk of session hours to exploration and discussion. The

schedule allowed little time for methodological precision and the topics stressed revolution as the Conference's main theme. This invited heated discussion. The preparation of the final report of Section I allowed little time or occasion for anything other than the collection of various positions and theories on North-South economic relations.

The second aspect to Geneva's method considered the theological, philosophical and literary method employed in the report of Section I. The literary genre of the report, Geneva, 1966, the structure of the report of Section I, the theological criteria employed in the discussions and the methodological criticisms raised by Paul Ramsey all point to three conclusions. (1) Geneva, 1966 is a pastoral exhortation to morality rather than an ethical discourse. Its intention is in keeping with the concept of the Conference; to raise Christian consciousness towards conditions of human welfare in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres so that reflection, study and action might follow. In the effort to describe the economic aspects of the human problems the authors tended to identify the economic analyses with the problems. They became preoccupied with technicalities and neglected the problem of motivating human will. The result was an optimistic choice of alternatives in the development analysis and a naive assessment of the possible solutions. (2) The report of Section I employed a "middle axioms" approach to the social questions and drew upon the

notions of "stewardship" and the "human" and the "responsible society" as basis for concern with world development. An inability to differentiate clearly the relationships among the eschatological "Kingdom of God," the "responsible society" and the concrete economic analyses led to a tendency to identify specific positions on world development with God's ongoing manifestation of the Kingdom in the world. This reinforced a selective and optimistic consideration of development alternatives based on a naive hope that world development, according to their terms of analysis, is possible because it is God's will. (3) Paul Ramsey's criticism of the Geneva Conference has two parts to it. (a) He criticizes the Conference for addressing specific technical issues and insists that this must be beyond the task of the WCC. This is based on Ramsey's uncritical identification of the tasks of the WCC with the tasks of the Church and cannot be justified theologically. (b) Ramsey attacks the Conference's social ethical method; a method which is preoccupied with technicalities and tends to allow theological biases to influence the analysis. This criticism corresponds to the conclusions of this study. However, in my judgement, this must not be allowed to obscure the appreciation of the historical value of the Geneva Conference as a consciousness-raising event.

CHAPTER 6

UPPSALA: STRUCTURE AND METHOD -- THE ENDORSEMENT OF GENEVA

6.1 The Structure of the Uppsala Assembly

Uppsala and Geneva were both similar and different. Although structurally different from Geneva, Uppsala shared Geneva's preoccupation with social, political and economic justice and sought to arouse global Christian concern on behalf of people of the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. Like Geneva the structural features of Uppsala made it impossible for the Assembly to do anything other than to point out directions for Christian concern, action and study and these same structural features prohibited any kind of detailed economic, sociological, political analyses.

6.1.1 Concept

The constitutional definition of a WCC Assembly outlines its functions:

> The World Council shall discharge its functions through the following bodies:
> i) an Assembly which shall be the principal authority in the Council, and shall ordinarily meet every five years. The Assembly shall be composed of official

> representatives of the churches or groups of churches adhering to it and directly appointed by them.[1]

While an Assembly is the "principal authority in the Council" and therefore a "legislative body," the authority that an Assembly has is still limited to the constitutional authority of the World Council itself:

> The World Council shall offer counsel and provide opportunity of united action in matters of common interest.
> It may take action on behalf of constituent churches in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it.
> It shall have authority to call regional and world conferences on specific subjects as occasion may require.
> The World Council shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent churches.[2]

So even though the Uppsala Assembly is a legislative body it has power to legislate very little other than "counsel," "conferences" and specific projects on behalf of member churches.

As stated at the first WCC Assembly in Amsterdam, 1948:

> While it is certainly undesirable that the Council should issue such pronouncements often, and on many subjects, there will certainly be a clear obligation for the Council to speak out when vital issues

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[1] Uppsala, 1968, pp. 467-8.

[2] Ibid., p. 467.

> concerning all churches and the whole world are at stake. But such statements will have no authority save that which they carry by their own truth and wisdom.[3]

Statements of an Assembly are "received" and "approved" for circulation in the churches rather than "adopted." This means that the contents of an Assembly report invite comment, discussion and action rather than endorsement or obedience.[4] An Assembly is an occasion for Christian representatives from various theological, geographical and cultural backgrounds to enter into dialogue with each other and seek some basis for agreement on pressing theological, social, political and economic themes and issues. The effort is always to see world issues through the eyes of Christian faith and to ask whether within this faith can be found a response to issues that might be consistent with the various traditions. The Section reports of the Uppsala Assembly then are a series of consensus statements (or statements of non-consensus) following upon two weeks of discussion. They are an attempt to be as thorough and conclusive as the time, the participants and the issues permit. When an Assembly membership is largely

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[3]WCC, First Assembly, Man's Disorder and God's Design, the Amsterdam Assembly Series, 5 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), Vol. V: The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Official Report, ed. W. A. Visser't Hooft, p. 128, quoted in Bock, pp. 22-3.

[4]See Bock, p. 23.

homogeneous, when the issues are clear and when the time is ample, the report is conclusive. When membership is diversified, when the issues new and complex and the time short, the report is open-ended and exploratory.

Like Geneva then the Uppsala Assembly was acting in an advisory capacity to the member churches of the WCC. As W. A. Visser't Hooft stated in his address to the July 5 General Session of the Assembly, the success or failure of the Assembly rests on its capacity "... to speak a helpful word on the ... question of the task of the Church in the world."[5] The Assembly speaks for the member churches only insofar as the member churches make the statements and recommendations of the Assembly their own and incorporate them into their own worship, study and action programs.

6.112 Background

The WCC publication, New Delhi to Uppsala, outlines six significant areas in which the WCC changed in the seven years since 1961. (1) By 1963 nearly all the churches of the Eastern Orthodox tradition had become member churches of the WCC. Their presence introduced a new and foreign voice to the dialogue process and began "... the necessary corrective to the Western ethos still dominant in WCC

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[5] Uppsala, 1968, p. 314.

circles."[6] (2) The organization of regional ecumenical bodies in East Asia, Africa, the Near East, Europe and Latin America put channels of communication at the service of the WCC and made the World Council aware of the specific problems experienced in the various geographical areas.[7] (3) The presence of WCC observers at the Second Vatican Council and the creation of the Vatican Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (1960) began a process of collaboration between the World Council and the Roman Catholic Church whose impact was felt in many phases of WCC operation.[8] (4) The integration of the International Missionary Council into the WCC in 1961 put the WCC in closer touch with the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres of the world and opened up the membership of the WCC to twenty-three new churches from Africa, Asia and Latin America.[9] The effect of this new influence was to raise new questions on the meaning of "mission" and "evangelism"

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[6] WCC, Central Committee, New Delhi to Uppsala, 1961-1968, Report of the Central Committee to the Fourth Assembly of the WCC (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 7 (hereafter cited as New Delhi to Uppsala).

[7] Ibid., pp. 7, 11.

[8] Ibid., pp. 7-8, 12-13.

[9] Uppsala, 1968, p. 279.

in an increasingly secularized world.[10] (5) The increased activity of the various WCC committees, studies, conferences, commissions and divisions in concrete and practical international action moved the WCC closer to the heart of current social and political problems and provided information and perspectives for Central and Executive Committee statements.[11] (6) The input of new theological perspectives from the new member churches as well as the questioning of the traditional positions in the major WCC confessions, reopened debate on such central theological issues as appeal to the Scriptures, relationship between Church and World and the question of Church unity.[12]

Together the effect of these six factors was to challenge the traditional ecumenical formulations, increase the number and variety of social, political and theological positions within the World Council and focus the attention of the WCC on issues of social justice particularly in the countries of the "two-thirds world." A good illustration of the impact of these factors is the history of Section II of the Uppsala report, "Renewal in Mission." As a result of the activities of the newly-formed Division of World

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[10] New Delhi to Uppsala, p. 8.

[11] Ibid., p. 8.

[12] Ibid., p. 9.

Mission and Evangelism (DWME), (successor to the old International Missionary Conference) the understanding of the word "mission" had begun to change from an older, "vertical" emphasis on evangelization and conversion (i.e. membership in traditional Christian churches), to a "horizontal" emphasis on social activity as "Witness in Six Continents."[13] This shift in meaning was evident in the preparatory draft for Section II. The draft document presented "mission" as God's activity for the "renewal of mankind," an activity to which all men are called.[14] "Mission" occurs at points of tension in human affairs.

> These are the places of opportunity for today, the unresolved religious, social and political problems, the situations which deprive men of the hope of renewal and cry out for the good news of the new humanity.[15]

And the route to "mission" is now "dialogue."

> It is only by dialogue that, in an increasingly pluralistic world, Christians can affirm their common humanity with men of other faiths .... In encounter with Moslems and Hindus, Marxists and humanists, Christians are learning to look for the basis of a common understanding of man, which will lead to a fuller apprehension of truth.[16]

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[13] WCC, Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, All Things New, preparatory booklet for the Fourth Assembly of the WCC, Uppsala, Sweden, July 4-20, 1968 (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 43 (hereafter cited as Uppsala: All Things New).

[14] Uppsala Drafts, 28/1.

[15] Ibid., 30/7.

[16] Ibid., 30/9.

The effect of this draft document on some in the European and North American ecumenical communities was to elicit a cry of protest. No less than four alternate documents were hurriedly drafted by various ecumenical groups and a west coast American group mobilized a publicity program to promote the traditional forms of Protestant evangelization. Two of the alternate draft documents made it to the WCC Central Committee in time to be considered at the Uppsala Assembly: the draft prepared by a group of Scandinavian Lutherans and a document prepared by a German working group. The criticism raised by the protest groups was that the original draft so emphasized the "service" aspect of "mission" that it completely neglected the preaching of the Gospel.[17] The debate between the "vertical" and "horizontal" theological positions continued through the events of the Uppsala Assembly and can be seen in the final report of Section II.

Robert McAfee Brown notes that Section III of Uppsala, 1968 with its emphasis on social and economic issues and the human conditions in developing countries was "... probably the most important and characteristic report of the Uppsala Assembly" and that this emphasis was

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[17] J. L. Witte, "Fourth Assembly of the WCC, Uppsala, 4-19 July, 1968," Gregorianum 50 (1969): 82-3.

typical of the concern of the whole Assembly.[18] He attributes this concern to the patterns established at Geneva and Beirut and points to Geneva as the turning-point in ecumenical thought.

> My thesis is that the Geneva Conference of 1966 marks the beginning of a new era in ecumenism in which major attention is shifting from a preoccupation with Faith and Order to a preoccupation with Life and Work themes.[19]

The Geneva Conference appears to have crystallized the factors that had been operating to influence the World Council since 1961. Norman Goodall in his editorial introduction to the Uppsala report remarks that the Assembly's "most obvious" and "widely acknowledged" feature was its preoccupation with questions of social and economic justice, the poverty and deprivation in the world and the "revolutionary ferment of our times." These were the issues that Geneva sought to identify with ecumenical Christian concern. Goodall notes the Assembly participants' willingness to accept and respond to the world's agenda and argues that the world crisis in race relations, the mood of youth and

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[18] R. McAfee Brown, "Uppsala: An Informal Report," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 5 (1968): 643.

[19] Ibid., pp. 644, 637; see also C. Moeller, "A la veille de l'Assemblée d'Upsal," Irénikon 41 (1968): 206; K. McDonnell, "Uppsala, Anthropology, Evangelism and Revolution," Worship 43 (January 1969): 38-9; J. McLaughlin, "Making Things New," America 19 (Aug. 3, 1968): 70.

the political events in Nigeria/Biafra, Vietnam and the Middle East all made this atmosphere inevitable.[20] The historical forces surrounding the Uppsala Assembly in combination with the effect of the Geneva Conference itself served to predispose a larger ecumenical Assembly membership in favour of the same themes and topics that were the concern of Geneva.

6.1.3 Membership

Uppsala was the largest of the four WCC Assemblies. The Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 had 147 churches represented as members whereas Uppsala had 235 (including 11 churches as "associated" members, i.e. churches with less than 10,000 members). While Amsterdam had 351 delegates and 238 alternates, Uppsala had 704 voting delegates, over 400 other vocal participants and over 1,600 observers, guests, staff, stewards and press. The Central Committee revised the basis for the allocation of seats prior to the Assembly and this opened 27 new places for churches from Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, 10 new places were simultaneously opened for European churches in order to preserve "confessional balance."[21]

The geographical breakdown of the voting delegates

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[20] Uppsala, 1968, p. XVII.

[21] Ibid., p. XV; see also New Delhi to Uppsala, p. 16.

was as follows:

Europe	43%	Asia	15%
		Middle East	4%
North America	26%	Africa (sub-Sahara)	8%
		Latin America	4%
Total	69%	Total	31%[22]

The average age of the voting delegates was 51.7 years; 75% of these delegates were ordained and 91% were male.[23]

It is clear that the Assembly was still predominantly "Western" (i.e. North Atlantic), male, clerical and over 50. One hundred and twenty-five youth participants who were invited in cooperation with the WSCF, YMCA and YWCA made their presence felt and their criticisms known at the Assembly through applause in General Sessions, contributions to Section meetings and the news sheet Hot News, published every other day.[24] However, with no franchise to vote and little opportunity to speak, they were unable to affect directly the shape of the debates and reports.

Richard Dickenson made a statistical analysis of the Assembly's voting delegates and correlated such factors as age, denomination, occupation, Assembly status (e.g. Committee chairman, secretary, etc.), geographical region, section choice and committee choice. His findings showed

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[22] Brown, "Uppsala," p. 641.

[23] Ibid., pp. 641-2.

[24] Ibid., p. 648.

that age and church status were more critical factors in influencing the participant's interests than were denomination and geography and that, on the whole, the North Atlantic countries still exerted the greatest influence over the World Council.[25] In the light of such statistics Robert McAfee Brown asks whether the distribution of seats in the Assembly and in the committees, praesidium and staff, based upon numerical representation of the churches and upon "confessional balance" must be the best way of structuring an Assembly. He suggests that such a structure may well make impossible the adequate and effective representation of world youth, minority and racial groups.[26]

If the profile of the Uppsala Assembly's participants reveals a continuity with the traditional style of the World Council, the events of the Assembly therefore indicate that the historical influences since New Delhi must have had considerable effect in altering the awareness and concern in the North Atlantic member churches. While many commentators argue that the World Council needs to restructure to allow greater input from minority groups, few if any could say that Uppsala, with its concern for social, economic and political issues and the welfare of

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[25] R. D. N. Dickenson, "Human Profile of an Assembly," Ecumenical Review 21 (1969): 55-6.

[26] Brown, "Uppsala," pp. 847-49.

peoples in the "two-thirds world," did not mark a radical departure from New Delhi. Norman Goodall notes that in spite of the claims of some of the youth participants few present at Uppsala were not aware of the implications and the imperatives for Christian thought and action, in the current world crises. In his view the ambiguity, uncertainty or lack of unanimity at Uppsala did not occur when the question of Christian responsibility for action was raised. Rather, it occurred when the question was raised as to "the ultimate dimensions within which the world and the Christian involvement in it are to be seen."[27]

One factor related to membership that may account for the general consensus in favour of the "two-thirds world" and economic development is the fact that 75 percent of the voting delegates were ordained. Few were employed in positions where they might have felt deeply the impact of the measures that they were proposing. In fact only one percent of all participants at Uppsala were employed in business and commerce and only three percent were employed in government. This means that only four percent of Uppsala's participants would feel the immediate effect of the proposed "radical economic restructuring" and only this four percent had an intimate familiarity with the corporations and governments that were the objects of

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[27] Uppsala, 1968, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

Uppsala's criticisms. This occupational distribution partially explains the ease with which a predominately North Atlantic Assembly membership accepted Geneva's proposals for world development.

6.1.4 Events

H. A. Bosley notes that the word "dialogue" is too tame a word to describe the events of the Uppsala Assembly. He prefers the word "collision."[28] In view of the incredible speed at which the Assembly moved and the huge volume of material handled, it would have been a wonder if some collisions had not occurred. Many commentators have complained that the Assembly demanded too much material to be handled by too many people in too short a time. Norman Goodall regards as regrettable the fact that "the congested state of the agenda" and "the pressure of time" resulted in most reports of the Assembly Committees being passed without discussion in plenary. He raises a question about "the truly deliberative capacity" of a delegated assembly the size, setting and atmosphere of Uppsala.[29] The Orthodox theologian, T. Hopko remarks that the work in all six of the sections was "plagued with the same problems of lack of

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[28] H. Bosley, "The Churches, the World and Uppsala," Religion in Life 37 (1968): 454.

[29] Uppsala, 1968, pp. XIV-XV.

time for discussion and pressure of time for drafting."[30] Following the Assembly the participants of Section I were so annoyed at the lack of time available for the production of their report that they made the following protest to the Central Committee:

> Section I demands hereby that of no section of an Assembly ever again will be asked to compose a theological document as that of Uppsala, under conditions as those which ruled at the first four Assemblies. If a theological document is necessary, totally other methods have to be developed for the preparation, discussion, revision and acceptance.[31]

Indeed, the fifteen working days between the opening and closing ceremonies of the fourth Assembly of the WCC were filled with the events of an agenda that was immense by any standards. No less than 26 speakers delivered major addresses on 12 themes in 10 of the Assembly's General Sessions. In the six days between Monday, July 8 and Saturday, July 13 each of the Assembly's six Sections had to find at least 20 session hours for meetings in and amongst the week's 5 General Session presentations and 5 business and Assembly Committee Sessions. In these 20 hours of Section meetings each Section (each with an average of approximately 200 delegates and participants) had to discuss their themes, debate the issues and draft a Section

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[30] T. Hopko, "Uppsala 1968," St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly 12 (1968): 127.

[31] Witte, p. 81.

report. Between Monday, July 15 and Thursday, July 18 all six Section reports were presented, debated, revised and re-presented in the 1,300-member general Assembly.[32] At the same time no less than 25 Assembly Committees and sub-committees presented surveys of the previous seven years' activities of the Council's various Divisions, Departments, Secretariats, Commissions, etc., and each established the main policies and programs for the next five to seven years of WCC operation. In addition eight other Assembly Committees met at intervals to deal with such Assembly affairs as Nominations, Credentials, Press and Broadcasting, Assembly Business and the Assembly Message.[33] With this schedule it is clear that like Geneva, Uppsala had neither the time nor the resources to prepare careful theological or technical analyses of issues and to formulate clear and well-founded conclusions.

The topics for the six Sections covered a full range of ecclesiological, sociological, political, economic and liturgical themes. The Section titles were as follows:

(1) "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church"
(2) "Renewal in Mission"
(3) "World Economic and Social Development"
(4) "Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs".

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[32] These facts and figures are assembled from Uppsala, 1968, pp. 102-254.

[33] Uppsala, 1968, p. XIV.

(5) "Worship"
(6) "Towards New Styles of Living"[34]

It is interesting to note that only the first of these titles deals specifically with a Faith and Order theme. The other five either solely or predominately deal with themes related to Life and Work or Church and Society.[35] Similarly, eight of the twelve themes that were addressed by speakers in general sessions dealt with human rights, social, political or economic justice, technology or the "two-thirds world." Some of these themes were as follows:

"The Rich and Poor Nations"
"White Racism or World Community?"
"Human Rights"
"The Churches and Human Need"
"Issues Concerning the Life and Work of the Church in a Revolutionary World."[36]

Even the meetings and reports of the Assembly Committees generated statements on world political, social and economic issues. Apart from the reports presented by such service-oriented WCC agencies as Specialized Assistance to Social Projects (SASP), Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), Division of World Mission and Evangelism (DWME) and Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (DICARWS), the Assembly also adopted

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[34] Ibid., p. V.

[35] Brown, "Uppsala," p. 642.

[36] Uppsala, 1968, pp. VI-VII.

statements on such issues as "The Middle East," "Vietnam" and "Nigeria."[37] Like the Geneva Conference, the Uppsala Assembly had built right into its agenda a focus on social ethics and the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres.

Many personalities from Geneva had an impact on Uppsala. Emilio Castro, Barbara Ward, André Philip, Walter G. Muelder, Martin Niemöller, Samuel Parmar, Jan Lochman, M. M. Thomas and Paul Abrecht all made their presence felt not only in Section III but throughout the whole Uppsala Assembly.[38] Among the General Session addresses those of Barbara Ward, K. Kaunda and M. M. Thomas were most closely related to the themes of Section III. Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, emphasized the conditions of economic difficulty experienced in developing countries. He highlighted the failure of the first Development Decade and the obstacles created by wealthy countries, and painted a picture of the transformation of international relations that must precede any possibility for real development.[39] Barbara Ward set aside a prepared text and delivered a captivating impromptu address. She began by describing

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[37]See Ibid., pp. 189, 170-1, 157-8.

[38]H. Jack, "Section III: World Economic and Social Development," Christian Century 85 (Aug. 21, 1968): 1045; see also Uppsala, 1968, pp. 39-44.

[39]K. D. Kaunda, "Rich and Poor Nations," in Uppsala: Unity of Mankind, pp. 13-26.

the ineffective colonial structure of the current international economic system, proceeded to outline the elements in the process of relative equalization of incomes that occurred in western nations in the last 100 years and then argued that not economic factors but a global lack of scope and racism stand in the way of the same process occurring on an international scale.[40] M. M. Thomas addressed the problem of Christian faith and its traditional identification with the status quo. He tried to work out a view towards revolution that laboured for social change without collapsing into revolutionary ideology.[41]

Compared to Sections I and II the discussions in Section III proceeded quite smoothly. André Philip warned against the dangers of current attitudes that focus only on relief aid and emphasized that international structural change and transfer of resources will be necessary for real world development to occur. S. L. Parmar noted the current tendency toward neo-isolationism in the world, restated the UN's call for a "welfare world" and asserted that development means disorder.[42] The debates within Section III saw

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[40] Lady Jackson (Barbara Ward), "Rich and Poor Nations," in Uppsala: Unity of Mankind, pp. 27-32.

[41] M. M. Thomas, "Issues Concerning the Life and Work of the Church in a Revolutionary World," in Uppsala: Unity of Mankind, pp. 89-98.

[42] Uppsala, 1968, pp. 39-42; see also pp. 46-7.

little of the conflict that was experienced elsewhere. The first draft was rejected because the second part was too full of "well-balanced statements." And terms like "rich" and "poor," "developed," and "developing" and "underdeveloped" were questioned.[43] In the Assembly's General Session a question was raised in reference to the Charter of Algiers, another recommended stronger language and another questioned some theological implications.[44] On the whole the strongest pressure was to produce a detailed list of tasks and to agree to make a major commitment to development.[45]

Two things must be noted at this point. First, while the agenda of Geneva occasioned a "North-South" confrontation, Uppsala's did not. In fact, addresses, topics and themes at Uppsala focused solely on the South and the East. The report of Section III contained no consideration of the economic problems of wealthy nations, none of the addresses presented a "Western" perspective on international economics and none of the discussions reveal an economic position on behalf of the North Atlantic countries. Second, economics at Uppsala consistently begin by acknowledging the failure

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[43] Ibid., pp. 55-6.

[44] Ibid., pp. 43-4.

[45] Ibid., pp. 56, 44.

of current development efforts. Kenneth Kaunda and Barbara Ward stressed the obstacles to trade created by wealthy countries and a neo-colonial economic system. M. M. Thomas began with theology as status quo-oriented and repressive. André Philip and S. L. Parmar opened with the failures of aid-oriented development programs and growing tendencies towards world neo-isolationism. The report of Section III devotes the second section, "Dynamics of Development," to exploring the reasons for the failure of the first Development Decade.[46] While Geneva's presentations had various starting points there is a sense of urgency running through the speeches, discussions and reports of Uppsala's Section III that is related to a confession of failure and guilt. Even before the beginning of the Uppsala Assembly the structure of events and the content of economic themes had been established in favour of the "two-thirds world" with an admission of the failure of the North Atlantic countries. Even the preparatory draft for Section III begins with a confession of failure and guilt and excludes consideration of the economic problems of wealthy nations.[47] This is a departure from the Geneva Conference. It is evidence that by Uppsala the debate between the "North" and the "South"

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[46]See ibid., pp. 46-7.

[47]Uppsala Drafts, pp. 52-8.

centred on the degree to which the wealthy churches were prepared to commit themselves to action on behalf of the poorer countries. G. S. Cowan notes that throughout the work of Section III great stress was laid on the importance of presenting the detailed specific responsibilities of Christians for development.[48] When the revised report of Section III was presented in plenary considerable mention was made of the serious commitment involved in approving the report.[49] The structure and membership of the Uppsala Assembly precluded the possibility of a North Atlantic economic perspective on world development commitments. And a hasty identification of "Northern" guilt prompted a zealous commitment of North Atlantic church action on behalf of the East and South. The effect of these structural factors combined with the overloaded agenda of the Assembly and the lack of economic expertise among the members was to preclude altogether a careful and detailed analysis of the economic problems.

6.2 Method in Section III of Uppsala, 1968

6.2.1 Literary Genre

Like the Geneva report, Uppsala, 1968 is a pastoral

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[48] Uppsala, 1968, p. 56.

[49] Ibid., p. 44.

document urging Christians "to participate in the struggle of millions of people for greater social justice and for world development."[50] The presentation of the "Dynamics of Development," "Political Conditions of World Development" and "Some Human Issues of Development" in Section III contain largely background material leading up to "The Tasks of Christians, Churches and the World Council of Churches." In this fifth sub-section ... "The Church is called to work for a world-wide responsible society and to summon men and nations to repentance."[51] As well, the background material is well sprinkled with exhortations to study and action:

> We recommend these reports to the churches for their study.
> ... we are called to participate creatively in the building of political institutions ...
> The Church must actively promote the redistribution of power ...
> The churches must insist that food is a resource which belongs to God ...
> Christians should promote social policies in which the technological revolution will redress the balance between the poor and the rich ...[52]

This is clearly the language of a pastoral document.

The structural features of the Uppsala Assembly were such that the final report could hardly have been anything other than a pastoral document. The historical factors

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[50] Ibid., 45/5.

[51] Ibid., 51/29.

[52] Ibid., 46/5, 48/15, 50/23, 50/24, 51/28.

influencing the period between the third and fourth Assemblies had greatly increased the divergence of theological and technical positions on economic issues. The huge size of the Assembly and the amount of data on the two and a half week agenda made careful deliberation and conclusive analysis impossible. The lack of technical expertise among the membership precluded technical analyses of the data. And the constitutional definition of the WCC and its Assemblies allowed only that the contents of a final report be "... commended ... to the churches for study and appropriate action." The final report would, of necessity, be largely theological, exploratory and exhortatory.

Because of the nature of the Assembly (the wide range of issues treated, the lack of time for careful deliberation, the variety of theological positions and cultural contexts represented) Robert McAfee Brown raised the question as to whether an Assembly can say anything at all on one topic that will not have undesirable repercussions on another. He cited an example in which the Assembly was attempting to formulate a statement urging Americans to allow blacks to develop their own social and cultural identity in a predominately white society. This action was met with protest from the black South Africans who saw the statement as indirectly praising their own government's

"apartheid" policy.[53] He made the point that perhaps the structure of a WCC Assembly like Uppsala makes impossible the production of a report that is anything more than a series of heavily watered-down generalizations.

Another problem related to the structure of the Assembly and the literary genre of the report is raised by T. Hopko. He asks the question: With whom was the Assembly supposed to be communicating?

> Some thought that it was primarily speaking to the Christian community, to the member churches. Others contended that the words were meant for 'all men of good will', indeed for all of humanity. The failure to answer this question clearly and to follow the resolved decision to the end in a rigorous way is one of the main reasons for the ambiguous and varied styles and contents of the resulting assembly statements.[54]

At one point in Section III Hopko's "ambiguous and varied styles and contents" became obvious. The report urges that "developed nations must respond by a change in their pattern of production and investment."[55] Had the Assembly decided ahead of time that they were speaking to corporate and government policy makers in North Atlantic countries they may have accepted some of the responsibility for indicating how these changes might be carried out.

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[53]Brown, "Uppsala," pp. 646-47.

[54]Hopko, pp. 127-8.

[55]<u>Uppsala, 1968</u>, 47/13.

The literary genre of the Uppsala report is integrally related to the structure and events of the Assembly. At least five presentations related to Section III stressed the failure of past efforts towards development (see 6.1.4 above) and this had an effect on the tone of the report. The last five paragraphs emphasize "The New Theological Urgency" related to the technological revolution and the global demands for social justice.[56] The report is punctuated with guilt-creating accusations towards North Atlantic countries:

> The truth is that most of the developed nations are inclined to reduce their financial commitment to the developing nations.
> All this is happening at a time when we have the technical ability to eradicate want and misery.
> The political structures of developed nations must shed all tendencies to exploit economically or to dominate the poorer, and therefore weaker, economies of other nations.
> A selfish concentration on welfare within one nation or region is a denial of that calling /to solidarity and stewardship/.[57]

Both the Geneva and Uppsala reports were open-ended pastoral exhortations rather than theological or social ethical discourses or dissertations. While Geneva, 1966 was more concerned with raising consciousness and identifying, in technical terms, the need for Christian social ethical study and action, Uppsala, 1968 took the technical

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[56] Ibid., 54-5/44-8.

[57] Ibid., 46/8, 46/10, 48/17, 51/31.

data and the fact of Christian social responsibility for granted. Uppsala's report focused more on North Atlantic guilt for failure and on commitment for future action.

6.2.2 Structure

Section III of Uppsala, 1968 has five parts. The first establishes a basis for "Christian Concern for Development." The second emphasizes the failure of past development efforts and probes some reasons for this failure. The third outlines the changes that nations of the world will have to bring about in order to effect the conditions for development. The fourth identifies development as a human phenomenon and outlines the elements of discrimination, food, population and employment as factors in development. The fifth is twenty paragraphs long and discusses things that Christian churches, individuals, the WCC and theologians must do to promote development.[58]

The authors of Section III recommend the Geneva report, Pope Paul VI's encyclical Populorum progressio and the report of the Beirut Conference as the technical background to their presentations, and refer to the Charter of Algiers (a proposal drafted for the UN by seventy-seven developing nations) and its acceptance by developed nations as a basis for "hope for positive negotiations in the

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[58] Ibid., pp. 45-55.

future."[59] Unlike Geneva, no further technical data is presented throughout the report as a foundation for the conclusions and statements about trade patterns, structural changes, etc. No effort is made to briefly restate the arguments and positions developed in the Geneva and Beirut reports. Rather, the conclusions are simply stated in twenty-four paragraphs.[60]

Section III of Uppsala, 1968 can be grouped into three structural parts. The first four paragraphs plus paragraphs 20 and 21 establish a theological basis for discussing Christian response to development. The theme of "oneness of mankind" is followed by an affirmation of technological possibility. The existing world injustices are observed and judged inexcusable. Christians must therefore work towards arousing awareness of responsibility and eradicating human suffering. Christians can be hopeful in their work because the world has been redeemed and the Kingdom of God is at hand (see Chapter 2 above).[61]

Sub-sections II, III and IV (excluding paragraphs 20 and 21) comprise the second structural part and they correspond to Geneva's second and third structural parts.

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[59] Ibid., 46/5, 7.

[60] Ibid., 46-9/5-19.

[61] Ibid., 45/1-4, 49/20.

The lack of extensive technical data in Uppsala's Section III precludes a direct parallel to Geneva's second part. In the second structural part the Uppsala authors proceed according to the same methods used at Geneva. The economic analysis is presented, the human problem is identified and the responses are recommended in the light of "humanizing" criteria. Paragraphs 11-13 provide one example:

(1) Presentation of economic analysis

Both developed and developing nations entered international economic cooperation with wrong presuppositions. They assumed that a mere transfer of capital and techniques would automatically generate self-sustained growth.

(2) Identification of Human Problem

At all three levels it is necessary to instil social and economic processes with a new dynamic of human solidarity and justice.

(3) Recommendation of "humanizing" response

For their part, developed nations must respond by a change in their pattern of production and investment, encourage acceptance of a new international division of labour so that debtor nations find growing markets for their new exports.[62]

Again we see that the problem is the lack of "human solidarity and justice" in the "social and economic processes" and therefore the response is a manipulation of trade and investment policies. Again no effort is made to examine the values and cognitive structures that sustain the

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[62] Ibid., 46-7/11-13; see also 49-50/22-3, 50/24, 25, 50-1/26-8.

"social and economic processes." The problem is still "out there"; to be dealt with by political and technical manipulation.

The third of Section III's structural parts is the presentation of the "tasks." This section is considered fully in Chapter 4 (above).

Like Geneva, the authors of the Uppsala report continued an optimistic assessment of possibilities for development. Although the report of Uppsala's Section III was not so preoccupied with technical data as Geneva's Section I, the authors continued to equate the human problems with the external economic data and to neglect the values and symbols that reflect and sustain them.

6.2.3 Theological Criteria

The WCC Consultation at Zagorsk, USSR, March 17-23, 1968, drafted a series of memoranda entitled "Theological Issues of Church and Society" (referred to here as Zagorsk, 1968) that attempted to deal with some of the theological and methodological questions raised by the Geneva Conference. The memoranda are grouped into four sections entitled respectively: "Theological Reflections on the Method of Christian Social Ethics," "Some Questions for the Churches About Our Technological Society," "Reflections on Theology and Revolution Following the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva" and "Ecclesiology and Social Ethics." This discussion on theological

criteria will begin by considering the first of these sections.

The authors of the Zagorsk statement divide ecumenical social ethical discussions into two methodological groups: (1) "deductive" and (2) "inductive." The first, "deductive" method, according to their presentation, begins with "the biblical tradition" and emphasizes "eternal laws, permanently valid orders and basic principles for social life" that are in some way "derived" from the Bible.[63] The second, "inductive" method attempts "... to think through the will of God in the context of concrete experiences and new problems, i.e. to relate contemporary experiences to biblical-theological ones."[64] However, the authors of Zagorsk, 1968 are quick to point out that both methods must rely to some extent on the other. Biblically-derived "principles" must be examined in their own historical context in order to be properly understood and the process of applying these "principles" to a concrete situation requires intimate familiarity with the contemporary context in order to be legitimate. Similarly, "the biblical truth about God's will and acts cannot be derived solely from the

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[63] "Theological Issues of Church and Society," Report of the Consultation between the Faith and Order Dep't. and the Dep't. of Church and Society of the WCC, Held at Zagorsk, near Moscow, March, 1968, Study Encounter 4 (1968): 71 (hereafter cited as Zagorsk, 1968).

[64] Ibid., p. 72.

situation" and therefore the "inductive" method must require some appeal to the Biblically derived "basic structures with which to understand and interpret man's social situations."[65] The authors conclude that a third "Method of Dialectical Interaction" must be explored which would integrate the empirical details of the situation "... within a certain framework and direction manifest in Jesus Christ."[66]

The authors of Zagorsk, 1968 present in their analysis an observation that could shed light on the discussion of method. They state that "... the perennial principles employed in Christian social ethics have proved to be relative to their time and situation."[67] What this means is that even the so-called "deductive" method does not begin, in fact, with the Bible. Rather, this method begins with an interpretation of "the Biblical tradition" that is carried out in the context of a particular historical situation. In other words, even though one or even both methods include one step that involves the operation of deduction, the overall relationship between the Bible and the social ethical conclusions is never direct. Whatever perspectives or insights on human existence are

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

interpreted from the Bible, the operation of interpretation involves a complex interraction among the histories, cultures, politics and personalities surrounding the scriptural events, the authors, the reader and the various theological traditions which have sought to interpret the texts. The process of differentiating the elements and influences in this complex interraction, to the extent that it is competent and responsible, is carried out according to a rigorous hermeneutical and theological method. When "principles," "themes," "criteria," "laws," "inspirations" or "judgements" are "derived" from the Bible without differentiating these elements and influences according to strict method, the so-called "Biblically derived" material is, more accurately, a statement about something that is extra-Biblical and it may or may not bear any relation to the meaning of the Bible.

Often an analysis of political, social or economic data is carried out according to the interpretive principles belonging to that discipline and the conclusions are related to themes derived from a particular theological tradition's interpretation of a Biblical text or texts. In this case the empirical or ethical conclusions are expressed in the Biblical language peculiar to the themes of that tradition and the use of the Bible is rhetorical. The extent to which the conclusions are helpful depends on the extent to which the empirical analysis

is true to the data and proceeds according to the discipline's own criteria. The extent to which the conclusions are in any way related to the meaning of the Biblical text depends upon the accuracy with which the theological tradition interpreted the text and the extent to which the content of the interpreted text bears a resemblance to the human situation under analysis. In any case the authority of the conclusions still rests only on the competence of the empirical analysis.

I have argued in Chapter 2 (above) that the authors of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 accepted Geneva's economic analysis and continued to present an overly-optimistic assessment of development possibilities and costs. I have argued in Chapter 5 (above) that the Geneva document appealed to the theme of "Kingdom of God" as an expression of their hope for "World Development." This was clearly a rhetorical use of the Biblical theme "Kingdom of God." This theme had not been systematically differentiated against other theological and Biblical concepts and was not a complete interpretation of the meaning of the "Kingdom of God." The authors of Section III of Uppsala, 1968 frequently appealed to Biblical themes without differentiating their meaning and content and continued to rhetorically express the results of an overly-optimistic economic analysis in this theologically unclarified language. The effect of this procedure was to give the illusion that

this economic analysis was an imperative of Christian faith.

I have summarized the theological argument for Christian concern for development in section 6.2.2 (above). This theological presentation occupies four paragraphs on page 45 of the official report. In these four paragraphs six Biblical themes and three ecumenical theological themes are presented. The Biblical themes are: the oneness of mankind; the Kingdom of God with its judgement and mercy; responsibility for neighbour; man is created in God's image; Christ died for all; hope in him who makes all things new. The ecumenical theological themes are: the world-wide responsible society; social justice for all; world development. In addition, four other theological and Biblical themes are introduced throughout the report in paragraphs 20 and 31: the human as criterion; the release of God's children from bondage; the solidarity of all men; stewardship of the world's resources. The authors make no effort whatsoever to establish biblical or theological interpretations for any of these themes. Instead they are simply stated. It is presumed that the readers are familiar with their meaning or content.

When these themes are appealed to, directly or indirectly, throughout the report they assume a specific content.

> For the first time in history we can see the oneness of mankind as a reality. For the first time we know that all men could share in the proper use of the

> world's resources. The new technological possibilities turn what were dreams into realities.[68]

In this example the statements about the technological possibilities and the use of resources are being presented as empirical analyses. The introduction of the Biblical theme "oneness of mankind" is presumed to theologically confirm or illustrate the truth of this analysis. In fact, the theme says nothing about the Bible or Christian theology. It simply derives its content from the empirical analysis with which it is juxtaposed.

> Our hope is in him who makes all things new. He judges our structures of thought and action and renders them obsolete. If our false security in the old and our fear of revolutionary change tempt us to defend the status quo or to patch it up with half-hearted measures, we may all perish. The death of the old may cause pain to some, but failure to build up a new world community may bring death to all.[69]

The "structures of thought and action" here alludes to the structures discussed in the empirical analysis throughout the report. The effect of the authors' rhetorical technique is to identify God's "making all things new" with revolutionary change and the development measures being presented in the report. God's "judgement" is directed here towards those who reject "revolutionary" development measures and who do not participate in "building up the

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[68] Uppsala, 1968, 45/1.

[69] Ibid., 45/4.

new world community." Again the Biblical theme here says nothing about the Bible but only about the authors' attitude to revolutionary change. The authors would have done well to have heeded Metropolitan Hazim's main theme address.

> We shall not take this phrase ["behold I make all things new," Rev. 21:5] merely as a programme for study and action. That would lead us to an impasse (either in the established orders or in revolution) -- to mere moralizing.[70]

Another example:

> New advances in agriculture hold the promise of freedom from hunger. But today world hunger must be a fundamental concern. The churches must insist that food is a resource which belongs to God and that all forces be mobilized to ensure that the earth produce adequate food for all. Agricultural policies should give primary emphasis to the alleviation of hunger.[71]

Here the theological notion of "stewardship" over God's resources is coupled with the assessment that hunger could be alleviated. This is set against the fact that people still go hungry and effects a theologically based imperative in favour of particular political measures. Again the content of the Biblical theme is shaped by the empirical assessment of technological possibility but the fact that the theme is Biblical has the effect of validating the assessment.

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[70] Ibid., p. 293.

[71] Ibid., 50/24.

The Roman Catholic theologian, J. L. Witte has observed that a theological weakness in the six reports of Uppsala, 1968 has been the result of "a growing shift of interest from theological to sociological and economical categories."[72] He called for "a somewhat developed theology of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, in the light of the struggle for greater social justice and for world development."[73] J. R. Nelson expressed his disappointment in the fact that much of the theology in the reports and speeches of the Assembly "were in recognizable continuity with the kind of biblical theology which has predominated since 1948."[74] The effect of this shift in interest to sociological and economic categories and this lack of adequate Biblical theology was that the authors of Section III used Biblical themes purely rhetorically. Nowhere in the speeches or reports of the Assembly are these themes developed. It is simply assumed that their content is known. To actually critique the content of these themes would require a full Biblical and theological critique of such figures as Calvin and Luther. Their

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[72]Witte, p. 73.

[73]Ibid., p. 306.

[74]J. R. Nelson, "Relations With Roman Catholicism at Uppsala," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 5 (1968): 674-5.

theological and biblical interpretations pervade throughout ecumenical literature. As long as the content of the themes remains unstated in rigorous terms they will take their shape from and will serve to validate whatever empirical analysis with which they are juxtaposed.

6.3 Conclusion

In spite of the "legislative" nature of an Assembly, the constitutional definition of the WCC and its Assemblies allowed Uppsala, like Geneva, to assume an exploratory and advisory posture towards its member churches. The influence of the Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the African, Asian and Latin American regional ecumenical bodies, the increased contact with churches of the South and East, the concrete activity of WCC agencies and increased theological debate since New Delhi had the effect of members challenging traditional ecumenical formulations, increasing positions in the theological debates and turning ecumenical concern towards social ethical issues and the nations of the "two-thirds world." It is the opinion of many commentators that Geneva had the effect of crystallizing these historical influences and turning the direction of ecumenical thought towards Life and Work themes.

Although the membership of the Uppsala Assembly was largely male, clerical, over fifty and North Atlantic, the Assembly accepted Geneva's economic analysis and shared

Geneva's concern for social issues and the world's poor. In fact, only 4 percent of Uppsala's general membership were employed in business or government and 77 percent of the voting delegates were in pastoral or ecclesiastical administration positions. Unlike Geneva, the Uppsala Assembly had not the expertise to either challenge Geneva's analysis or to feel deeply the impact of their own recommendations.

The events of the Assembly shared Geneva's problems. Too much material had to be handled by too many people in too short a time. This precluded the possibility of careful and detailed analysis. As well the planned themes and topics of the Sections, speeches, and Assembly Committee reports all focused entirely on the perspectives of the Southern and Eastern countries. And many personalities of the Geneva Conference made their presence felt in Section III and throughout the Assembly.

The effect of this exploratory posture, this background, this membership and these events was to focus entirely on the countries of the "two-thirds world" and to begin with an admission of "Northern" guilt. Unlike Geneva, there was no "North-South" confrontation and no technical economic analysis. Rather, Uppsala began with a total identification with the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres and Section III proceeded to debate on the extent to which they could commit the Northern churches to

corrective action.

Like the Geneva Conference, the background and structure of the Uppsala Assembly were such that the final report was a pastoral document and not a theological or ethical discourse. The language of Uppsala, 1968 Section III bears this out. While Geneva, 1966 presented a technical background in order to raise Christian consciousness of social-ethical responsibility and the "two-thirds world," Uppsala, 1968 took Geneva's analysis and the fact of Christian responsibility as a starting point. Uppsala Section III argued from the failure of past development measures and exhorted greater commitment for action.

The third Section of the Uppsala report was structured in three parts. In the second of these parts the authors continued with Geneva's tendency to identify human problems with economic factors. As with Geneva, this influenced the Uppsala authors' optimistically assessing development possibilities and their neglecting the problem of values and symbols that inform and sustain the economic factors and structures.

The authors of Uppsala's Section III continued Geneva's use of Biblical and theological themes without having carefully differentiated their source or content. I have argued that the results of economic analyses were expressed in the language of these Biblical and theological themes and that these themes tended to derive their content

from the conclusions of the analyses rather than from their Biblical and theological sources. The effect of this rhetorical technique is that the themes tended to uncritically validate the economic analyses and to lend to them an aura of Biblical authority and imperative that they could not sustain.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most significant feature of the 1966 Geneva World Conference on Church and Society was that its official report was not only formally accepted by the general membership of the Uppsala Assembly (a membership that was predominantly male, clerical, over fifty and residing in the North Atlantic) but that its contents became the focus of the WCC's Fourth Assembly. While Geneva cannot assume total responsibility for the direction taken by ecumenical social thought since Uppsala, it does mark a moment when the whole World Council recognized the significance for Christian faith that the standard of living among two-thirds of the world's population stands below what the remaining one-third could consider acceptable.

Geneva approached world economic issues with a willingness to see technology and the process of economic growth as the worthwhile expression of man's God-given stewardship over the world's resources. The participants looked favourably upon the phenomenon of "secularization"; they viewed the "world" as intrinsically worthwhile and

considered economic and world development concerns to be necessary elements in the Christian's prophetic and diaconic tasks. At the same time, there was an awareness that the concepts of growth and development are not without ambiguities. Economic issues must be understood within a wider context of concern for global human well-being so that particular ideological themes or theoretical systems do not become identified with God's activity in the world.

While Section I of the Geneva report reviewed the internal economic problems experienced in both advanced and developing countries, the real focus of the Conference's attention was on the social, economic and political problems in the countries of the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres. The structural features of the Conference all point to the fact that Geneva was conceived, planned and executed as an attempt to explore the technical side of world conditions of poverty in order to mobilize global Christian consciousness on behalf of the "two-thirds world." Consequently, the Conference report was a pastoral document exhorting awareness and action rather than a systematic technical, moral or theological discourse.

Section I stated that major structural changes in international economic relations and in the policies and procedures of wealthy countries will be necessary before the poorer countries can change significantly their own economic performance. Participation towards effecting

these changes must be an imperative for Christians. And churches, communities, and organizations have the task of encouraging and coordinating individuals to act corporately in the service of development. The authors of Geneva, 1966 were aware that these tasks will require the spontaneous formation of new Christian structures and groups designed to efficiently address the new projects, and will demand considerable cooperation with existing programs.

In their efforts to raise global Christian consciousness on a wide range of issues the participants at the Geneva Conference could not help but sacrifice some methodological precision. The vast amount of material treated, the diversity of perspectives among the participants and the limited amount of time available prevented the Conference from analyzing comprehensively the economic issues. The result was that certain economic theories and theological themes emerged and prevailed throughout the Conference and the report without having been adequately challenged. In Section I the assessment of the possibilities and the costs of development were brief and optimistic and pointed to corporate and political leaders as capable of effecting the proposed structural changes. There is no attempt to explore how trans-national values, symbols and habits operate to reinforce existing economic structures and make them resistant to change. While Section II struggled to understand how revolutions could

be compatible with a Christian perspective on human liberation when all other efforts have failed to transform institutionalized violence, Section I formulated its conclusions and recommendations as if evolution and the due process of law could re-order world economic relations allowing world development to smoothly reach completion.

Two methodological observations are significant with regard to this optimism. (1) The participants of Section I were predominantly economists and technical experts and consequently, their discussions centred around economic data. In their efforts to affirm the human and religious imperative contained in this data, the authors made the mistake of identifying the moral problem with the economic analysis. The solution to the moral problem emerged as the economic theory which, in their view, would rectify the situation as described in the analysis. The problem was international economic structures and so the solution must be new structures. The question was not raised as to how human will comes into play to create, nourish and sustain these structures. (2) In the context of a "middle axioms" approach to the issues the authors of Section I were not clear about the relationships among the eschatalogical "Kingdom of God," the middle axioms and the concrete economic analysis. Their language reflected a hope that world development was some partial manifestation of God's Kingdom on earth (in spite of their own cautions to the contrary).

And their terms of analysis were therefore considered to be possible and desirable from the perspective of Christian faith. Their inability to carefully differentiate the various dimensions of the theme "Kingdom of God" resulted in this theme deriving its content from the optimistic analysis and inadvertently lending the authority of Christian faith to the economic conclusions.

A further series of problems arose as the authors of Geneva, 1966 attributed specific political and educational development activities to the "Church" at large. The usage of the term "Church" in these instances created the illusion that there were some uniquely "Christian" positions on economic issues which must be adopted by all who profess the faith. This confused the truth as to who does and who should act in the social sector and allowed a shuffling off of personal responsibility for action and decision onto an undefined corporate entity or an authoritarian magisterium. Furthermore, the uncritical use of the term "Church" tended to perpetuate an alienating, monolithic image of Christian groups and actions; an image that is no longer either historically true or theologically justifiable.

Paul Ramsey's famous response to the Geneva Conference, Who Speaks for the Church?, is correct in demanding methodological precision and in criticizing a preoccupation with technicalities. However, Ramsey's own terminological imprecision uncritically identified the Geneva Conference

with the "Church" and unduly precluded the legitimate insights of Geneva. Ramsey's criticisms must be heard but should not overshadow a proper understanding of the historical importance of Geneva as a consciousness-raising event.

The Uppsala Assembly took the Geneva report as a starting point and extended Geneva's focus on Life and Work themes. While Geneva explored internal problems experienced in the wealthy countries, Uppsala dropped this concern and treated only economic issues related to countries of the "two-thirds world." Section III emphasized the failure of current world development measures and stressed the need for major structural change, although the Church and Society Assembly Committee admitted that there was no agreement as to the nature of this structural change.

Like Geneva, Uppsala appealed to theological themes like "stewardship," the "human" as criterion, "secularization," the intrinsic value of "world," and the "Kingdom of God" as theological foundations for Christians' tasks. However, the framework for the elaboration of these tasks contained a new perspective. Affirming the "unity of mankind" and the capabilities of modern technology to eradicate suffering, the authors concluded that current economic injustices are therefore unacceptable in the eyes of God. Christians have a responsibility to correct these injustices by acting out their prophetic and diaconic

tasks in the world. Section III proceeded to list examples of ways in which these tasks could take concrete form.

Uppsala was more careful than Geneva in describing the tasks of the Church and took care not to identify specific projects with the whole Church. However, a confusion arose between a theological and a legal usage of the word "churches" (small "c"). As an Assembly report Uppsala, 1968 addressed the legally-constituted member churches of the World Council and therefore referred all the various political, social, educational and practical development recommendations to "churches." This tended to obscure the fact that new and varied types of groups need to mobilize for such activities. To ask that "churches" become involved in political parties suggests a return to "clericalized" or "ecclesiasticized" local politics; such a suggestion was surely not the intent of the Assembly delegates.

While Uppsala continued Geneva's optimistic assessment of development possibilities, Section III did reveal the impact of Geneva's Section II and the Beirut Conference and considered the possibility of revolution as an alternative solution (although not unambiguous) when all other options fail. However, the increased sense of urgency surrounding the report's call for world social, political and economic change resulted in a shift in the meaning of the term "development." Development became a

value-laden human condition that was related to Christian faith. Consequently, when the authors continued to refer to regions of the world as "developed" and "developing," they created the impression that one-third of the world had achieved something for which the rest must continue to strive.

Uppsala continued to appeal to theological themes without differentiating their content. The themes were juxtaposed with the technical analyses and tended to derive their content from these analyses. In fact this rhetorical use of themes only served to obscure their real theological content and to lend a false authority to an economic analysis that could very well fail the test of careful scrutiny according to the criteria of its own discipline. This method of relating economics to Christian theology can be misleading and alienating. Most of all it has the effect of obscuring and devaluating what is historically profound about the work of the WCC. The Council has laboured tirelessly towards describing and realizing structures of human cooperation that cut across political, cultural, religious and ideological boundaries; structures that represent a fully integrated social, economic, political and religious <u>koinonia</u>. Essential to these efforts is an ecumenical social ethical method that compromises neither the richness of the Christian understanding of ecclesial man nor the valuable data that is

available from the social, economic and political sciences.

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