1957

The development of the concept of the responsible society: Stockholm to Evanston

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY: STOCKHOLM TO EVANSTON

by

Richard Duey Nesmith

(A.B., Nebraska Wesleyan University, 1950;

B.D., Garrett Biblical Institute, 1953)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

1957

APPROVED

by

First Reader Walter G. Muelder

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL ETHICS

Second Reader Nils Ehrenström

PROFESSOR OF ECUMENICS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. THE PROBLEM

This study will be an attempt to trace the development of the concept of the "responsible society" as it has arisen in the discussion of the Ecumenical Movement from the Stockholm Conference to the Evanston Assembly. The analysis will focus on the ecumenical discussions which give expression to the concept, in an effort to discern its development, its nature and content, and its usefulness as a norm or criterion for social analysis and development.

The hypothesis proposed is that the concept or idea of the "responsible society" has developed out of the ecumenical exchange and serves as a conceptual structure which embraces a basic polarity of life in society and as a medium for the evaluation and change of that social experience. The idea of the "responsible society" encompasses the polarity which arises between the claim for freedom on the part of the individual and the similar demand for freedom and rights on the part of others. Three areas constitute the working dimensions of the hypothesis:

1. The conceptualization of this polarity of interest provides a working frame of reference within which a reassessment

of the polar elements and their balance of interaction can be facilitated.

2. It is proposed that such a conception as that of the "responsible society" provides a dynamic and inclusive norm for society; an over-arching norm which may serve both as a goal to be realized and as a criterion for evaluation in the process of social development. This normative character offers an avenue of communication between theology and the social or philosophical sciences.

3. Finally, it is proposed that the idea of the "responsible society" serves as a working medium for unified action despite theological diversity and as a means through which to give expression to the ultimate ideals of the Christian faith in the concrete situation. This accommodates the recognition of the persistence of sin on the one hand and man's potentiality on the other.

B. DEFINITIONS

One aspect of the task of this writing will be to provide a more definitive understanding of the idea of the "responsible society" as a term and as a working concept. It is necessary, however, to have some working definitions. The idea of the "responsible society" was a product of the Post-World War II discussions and the preparatory work for the Amsterdam Assembly. It was developed for the purpose of giving expression to a middle way of political and economic action between the contending world

forces, Communism and Capitalism. This middle ground had been spoken of as the "third force" or the "third way." This idea was criticized because it suggested no more than the opposition to a first and second way. The newness of the idea of the "responsible society" allowed the projection of a vital and new content.[1]

The Amsterdam Assembly defined the "responsible society" as one

> where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[2]

This definition was augmented by the following passage, which lends clarity to the former definition:

> Man must never be made a mere means for political or economic ends. Man is not made for the State but the State for man. Man is not made for production, but production for man. For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticize, and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. It is required that economic justice and provision of opportunity be established for all the members of the society[3]

The Evanston Assembly added a further perspective to the definition:

> The Responsible Society is not an alternative social or political system, but a criterion by which we judge

---

1. World Council of Churches, The Responsible Society (Geneva: Study Department Document, 49E/207, 1949), p. 5.
2. World Council of Churches, Man's Disorder and God's Design (N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1948), III, 192.
3. Ibid., p. 192.

> all existing social orders, and at the same time a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make.[1]

This points to the functional role of the concept wherein it serves as a generalized composite norm which is capable of development and application in a variety of cultural situations.

The purpose for stating these definitions in such general terms will be discussed more fully under another heading; however, it is relevant to note here that the variety of economic and political problems in the world community necessitates such a flexible and generalized normative conceptual structure.

Ethical absolutism and ethical relativism represent the extreme poles in the field of possible approaches to the problem of ethics, according to Philip Wheelwright. Ethical absolutism assumes that "moral values are mixed and universally valid for all times, persons, and situations," and that the method of ethics will be primarily deductive.[2] In contrast, ethical relativism asserts "that there are no fixed values, there are only fluctuating human valuations."[3] The Christian who emphasizes the factor of transcendence, Biblical legalism, or a completely Christological approach to ethics would be illustrative of a tendency toward the absolutist position. On the other hand the position of the cultural relativist is illustrative of the approach of ethical relativism.

---

1. W.A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report (N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 113.
2. Philip Wheelwright, A Critical Introduction to Ethics (2d ed. rev.; New York: The Odyssey Press, 1949), p. 24.
3. Ibid., p. 36.

In contrast with ethical relativism and in similarity with ethical absolutism, the normative approach does presuppose a universally applicable ethical criterion. From this position the normative approach, unlike either ethical absolutism or relativism, seeks the transformation of the concrete situation and the realization of value within it. The ethical criteria of the normative approach may be derived from reflection upon and deduction from an assumed absolute or by inductive postulation from the relative situation. The central point which differentiates the normative approach from the position of the relativist is the recognition of universal values, while the point of differentiation from the absolutist is the concern for the transformation of the situation.

Various uses of a normative approach in the ecumenical discussions will be identified in the early stages of the research in an effort to discern the possible foundations upon which the idea of the responsible society was developed. The normative approach is characterized by the suggestion or usage of an idea as a goal or criterion for the purpose of indicating direction or action with reference to the social process.

C. EVIDENCE OF INTEREST

There is evidence in a number of spheres of a growing interest in the concept of the responsible society itself, and in the type of normative approach which it represents.

The social concern of the churches was expressed in and through the concept at the Amsterdam Assembly. Since that time it has become increasingly important in the discussions of clergy and laity alike. This significance is also indicated by the fact of the expanded usage of the idea of the "responsible society" in the work of the Evanston Assembly.

Support of this normative method was also given in the criticism by Dr. John Bennett in the chapter in the Amsterdam series on the "Strategy of the Church." Bennett commented,

> Dr. Patijn does not seem to me in this chapter quite to do justice to the place of the proximate norms that should guide the social strategy of the church.[1]

Dr. Bennett places considerable weight on the use of proximate norms in his Christian Ethics and Social Policy.

> The Christian ethic guides us in determining the goals which represent the purpose of God for our time. These are not absolute and all-inclusive goals but the next steps that our own generation must take. The Kingdom of God in its fullness lies beyond our best achievements in the world but God does have purposes for us that can be realized. To live for them is to live for the Kingdom now.[2]

Reinhold Niebuhr, writing from the theological position he assumed in 1937, pointed out that the genius of the gospel ethic was its absoluteness and its lack of any specific strategy for

---

1. World Council of Churches, Man's Disorder and God's Design, III, 152.
2. John Bennett, Christian Ethics and Social Policy (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), pp. 76, 77.

dealing with the problems of the sinful world. It therefore

> becomes necessary to supplement gospel ethics with some strategy for meeting the requirements, the day to day necessities of a world in which the anarchy of sin must be checked sufficiently to allow some degree of human cooperation.[1]

The idea of the "responsible society" as discussed below will be more than simply a social strategy; however, Niebuhr's concern for a social strategy indicates a type of interest in one level of application.

Reference was also made to the need for social strategy and analysis in the preliminary examination of the American scene written for the Fifth Annual Assembly of the Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches. It called for a more sensitive social analysis and psychological understanding in approaching the problem of the balance between freedom and restraint under the value system in the social order.[2]

David Bidney, in his work, Theoretical Anthropology, gives considerable thought to the normative sciences.

> The function of a normative science, is to investigate and suggest new modes of human conduct which may serve as norms for cultural experience and

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Christian Faith and the Common Life," The Christian Faith and the Common Life Nils Ehrenström et al (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938), p. 82.
2. Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches. Changing America: A Social Perspective for the Planning of the Churches in Their Christian Life and Work (N.Y.: Division of Christian Life and Work, National Council of Churches, 1955), p. 3.

> experimentation. . . . The objective of such a normative anthropology is not to discover 'laws' of cultural development, but rather to discover new cultural possibilities and potentialities which may be of practical significance in cultural invention and innovation.[1]

This points to the normative scientist as a culture builder who, through the use of the processes of thought, postulates norms such as "a responsible society" for the purpose of the general advancement of culture. Bidney speaks of this direction toward a normative anthropology as a meta-anthropology. It naturally leaves open the question of the transcendent ground which is fundamental for the development of Christian social thought.

Another sphere of activity which indicates an interest in the normative approach is that of sociological analysis. Concepts such as goals or norms and institutional restraints have become quite significant as tools for the social sciences. The work of the sociologist Robert Merton is an example of this approach and usage.[2]

D. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The previous research can be grouped under two headings, official expressions of the Ecumenical Movement and individual studies. The reports of the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies

---

1. David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology. (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1953), p. 417.
2. Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," American Sociological Review, III (October 1938), pp. 672-687.

provide some ongoing thought about the idea of the "responsible society" as a social norm, although the majority of the discussion centers on the application of the concept. The Study Department of the World Council of Churches has also been a center for research. It has issued a variety of pamphlets and documents whose purpose was to give a clearer understanding of the idea and to foster questions as to the usage and development of the norm in various cultural contexts.

Secondly, there are those individuals who have given thought to the idea of the "responsible society" as a conceptual norm. The concept was briefly discussed in the analysis of the social thought of the World Council of Churches made by Edward Duff.[1] There is a natural parallel in much of the source material used, but the focus of the research carried out by Dr. Duff is essentially different from that of this dissertation. Dr. John Bennett of Union Theological Seminary, who had utilized the normative approach through the use of middle axioms, has indicated the importance of the concept, although there is little published material which indicates the nature of his usage of the concept of the responsible society in itself.[2] Dr. Walter Muelder, Dean of the Boston University School of Theology, has made explicit use of the concept in the book Religion and

---

1. Edward Duff, The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956).
2. John Bennett, "The Responsible Society," Congregational Quarterly, XXVII (October, 1949), p. 327.

Economic Responsibility and in his Boston University Lecture entitled, The Idea of the Responsible Society. This study is deeply indebted to the brief lines of thought projected in the latter discourse.

E. THE METHOD AND SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

This study will be primarily limited to the official reports of the major conferences of the Life and Work Movement and the first two assemblies of the World Council of Churches. These are selected as the basic data in that they represent a culmination of the social concern and thought of the churches in each respective period. The nature of the concept indicates a further limitation. The idea of the responsible society is primarily a product of discussions in the economic and political spheres. These areas are also the main centers for the application of the idea as a conceptual tool. This study will concentrate more explicitly, therefore, on those sections in the conference reports which deal with the economic and political order. Reference to other data will be made insofar as it has relevance for the elucidation of the the development, nature, and functions of the idea of the "responsible society."

The method of the dissertation will be empirical, a gathering of data from the sources, and an appeal to rational coherence as the means of interrelating the data for the purpose of giving it interpretation and meaningful expression.

The data of the first section will be collected from the

conference reports with reference to two basic foci. First, data will be selected which is demonstrative of what has been defined as the normative approach. Secondly, the reports will be surveyed with reference to their content of the component elements which were later encompassed in the idea of the "responsible society." This phrase was not used officially until shortly before the Amsterdam Assembly; however, its structural dialectic of freedom and equality and the balance of the two was involved in earlier discussions.[1] These component elements will serve as the second center around which relevant data will be collected.

This raises the problem of the means by which the data will be critically weighed and correlated. There is the obvious possibility of establishing a criterion upon which an evaluation could be based. The nature of the material presents another possibility however. The Ecumenical Movement has been an ongoing process of internal criticism and growth. The second alternative would thus be to discern that internal process rather than simply to project an external criticism on the basis of an individual criterion. The latter method, which represents

---

1. Dr. C. L. Patijn notes the first use of the term "The Responsible Society" in an address before the Conference of Christian Politicians held at the Chateau de Bossey, 1948 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1948), p. 2.
"What we need is not a free society, but a responsible society. I remember very well how this word was found. We had a discussion in London, a few months ago about Dr. Oldham's paper on the Free Society, and Dr. Oldham himself did not agree with the title. He said what we needed was a humane society, but as that is untranslatable, after a long discussion it was decided to use the title 'A Responsible Society.'"

a more intrinsic approach, will be used in this study, an evolving coherence through which the study will seek to reveal the internal critique which lies within the data itself.

The final section of the dissertation will project a more explicit examination of the nature of the idea of the responsible society as made apparent in the data surveyed. The study will attempt to trace the development, nature, and function of the concept while maintaining a true correspondence with the nature of the specific data.

F. THE PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation will fall into two major sections. The first section will be a survey of the sources in an attempt to trace the development of the normative approach and the structural components of the concept of the responsible society. The first chapter will introduce the subject; indicate evidence of interest; and clarify the foundational problems of definition, scope, and method. The next four chapters will progressively deal with the major conferences of the Life and Work Movement and the World Council of Churches: Stockholm, Oxford, Amsterdam, and Evanston. In each of these chapters the context, the conference, and the response to the conference will be considered.

The second section will consist of an analysis of the concept itself in terms of its structural characteristics and its

---

1. Edgar S. Brightman, Nature and Values (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1945), pp. 106-107.

function and usefulness. This analysis will constitute chapters six and seven. Chapter eight will be the general conclusion in which the results of the research will be drawn together in a final discussion.

CHAPTER II

THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE

A. INTRODUCTION

The Stockholm Conference of 1925 provides the natural starting point for the consideration of the problem, in that this conference stands near the beginning of the Life and Work Movement. The scope of this chapter will be to view this fundamental period through the report of the Stockholm Conference.[1] The main purpose will be to analyze this report in an effort to discern the fundamental trends and events which contributed to the development of the concept of the responsible society.

The discussion of this conference will be structured around four procedural steps: first, a survey of the context within which the conference took place; secondly, an analysis of the report of the conference in accordance with the purposes mentioned above; third, a consideration of those events which followed in direct response to that conference; and finally, a concluding summation of the findings of the analysis.

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), p. 1.

This will lead quite naturally to a discussion of the Oxford Conference and the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies. The method of approach will be similar in these chapters to that established in the analysis of the Stockholm Conference.

B. THE SETTING OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The Socio-Political Setting

World War I provided the chief background for much of the thought of the stockholm Conference. The destruction which it wrought in practically every realm of life served as a continual reminder of the necessity for a reappraisal of the role of the church in relation to the world. There was not only the obvious destruction of life and material, but also the distortion of the trust upon which positive international relations could be built. The problem of the church was intensified by the fact that this distrust was also characteristic of the attitude of churchmen. The war presented a dual problem. The church not only had to come to terms with a rapidly changing world, it also had to heal its own internal wounds.

2. The Theological Setting

It is not possible within the scope of this study to present a detailed analysis of the spectrum of theological thought represented in the denominations and nationalities involved in such a conference. Nonetheless, it is possible to note the main currents of thought. One such stream was the liberal movement which had risen to its height in the period preceding the First World War.

The war crushed much of the optimism of this movement and Pietism reasserted itself as a second current constituting the theological setting for Stockholm.[1] Within and around these two streams there was a complex of many theological and social perspectives such as those of the Anglicans, the German Pietists, the "Copec" Movement, the Christian liberals of France and America, and the Orthodox Churches, but the differentiation between the liberal and the Pietistic movements provided the primary theological background for the conference as is evidenced by the tension which arose withing the conference.[2]

3. Organizational Foundations

The period immediately preceding World War I had witnessed the germination of a new concern for communication among the churches and for some form of organization between them. This not only gave rise to the development of interrelation and organization at the national level, but also led to an international conversation among churchmen. This conversation resulted in the Council of Constance, which was held in Switzerland, on the eve of the First World War, August 2, 1914. The imminence of war seriously limited the activity of the conference. However, mutual expression was given to the recognition of the inescapable duty of the churches to rise above their particular national orientation in an attempt to witness for the cause of peace. A continuation committee was appointed;

---

1. Andrew L. Drummond, German Protestantism Since Luther (London: Epworth Press, 1951), chaps. vi, vii.
2. W. Schweitzer (ed.), Eschatology and Ethics, trans. R.H. Fuller (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1951), p. 15.

and this group eventually associated themselves under the name of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches.[1]

With the coming of the First World War, many of these lines of communication were broken. Despite this fact, a group of Scandinavian churchmen, under the leadership of Archibishop Nathan Soderblom, pressed for a wartime conference of reconciliation. This action eventuated in the Neutral Church Conference in Uppsala in December of 1917.[2]

After the war, the afore-mentioned committee of the World Alliance sponsored a peace conference at Oud Wassenaar, Holland. At this conference Archbishop Soderblom outlined his plan for an international conference which would combine all the churches in one unified approach to the problems of the social order.

This idea moved toward realization in the inauguration of the Life and Work Movement at an international conference called for that purpose at Geneva, in 1920.[3] This body undertook the actual administrative action which culminated in the Stockholm Conference. With one notable exception the conferences during the years between Geneva and Stockholm were dedicated primarily to the task of structuring the Life and Work Movement and preparing for the Stockholm Conference itself. The exception

---

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), A History of the Ecumenical Movement (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 515.
2. Ibid., p. 527.
3. Ibid., p. 535.

was the Birmingham Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship, held in Birmingham, England, in April of 1941.[1] This conference, which was a unique outgrowth of the social concern of the English churches, served as a vital resource for the discussions at Stockholm. Against the background of a variety of theological and social factors these many strains of action and concern were combined as the foundation of the Stockholm Conference.

C. THE CONFERENCE

On August 19, 1925, more than five hundred delegates from thirty-seven countries assembled in the cathedral in Stockholm, Sweden, for the opening meeting of the conference.[2] In contrast with earlier conferences, the Stockholm Conference was developed on an official delegate basis. The letters of invitation requested that the national church bodies appoint delegates. This action, however, in no way bound the churches to any position assumed by the conference.[3]

For many the spirit of the conference was its most important quality.[4] Despite extreme differences in theological and political position, the delegates were united in a tremendous sense of oneness which trascended those divisions.

---

1. Will Reason (ed.), The Proceedings of the C.O.P.E.C. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924).
2. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), A History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 549.

The purpose of the conference was indicated by the Bishop of Winchester, F. T. Woods, in the opening address when he said, "Our concern is not a doctrine of the church, not the government of the church, but the establishment of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ through the whole range of human affairs."[1] This represented an attempt to approach the demanding problems of the world outside of the theological perspective, an attempt made necessary by the theological disagreement of the time.

The work of the conference was divided into six discussion areas: (1) The Purpose of God for Humanity and the Duty of the Church, (2) The Church and the Economic and Industrial Problems, (3) The Church and Social and Moral Problems, (4) The Church and Industrial Relations, (5) The Church and Christian Education, and (6) Methods of Co-operation and Federative Efforts by the Christian Communions. Three of these sections fall with the limits of this study.

1. The Purpose of God for Humanity and the Duty of the Church

The basic dispute in the conference arose in this section, with the problem of the nature of the Kingdom and man's relation to it. This issue not only crept in despite the attempt to eliminate theological discussion; it became a dominant thread which wove itself through the entire program.[2] The approach of

---

1. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), op. cit., p. 39.
2. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), op. cit., p. 547.

most of the German delegation was expressed by the Bishop of Saxony, Ludwig Ihmels, who commented:

> The Kingdom of God, however, means the Kingship of God . . . We learn from Holy Scripture, that the Church has only one task, which is to bear witness to Him who was and is and is to come. In Christ the Kingdom of God has become a reality in the world; in Him it is built up, in Him it is made complete. Nothing could be more mistaken or more disastrous than to suppose that we mortal men have to build up God's kingdom in the world.[1]

In contrast, an American delegate, Charles S. Wishart, indicated that the church in America

> is seeking to meet her responsibility for the fulfilment of God's great kingdom purpose by the development of an environment which will at once fit men for the Kingdom of God and stimulate their entrance into that Kingdom.[2]

The middle-ground was defined by a British delegate, A. E. Garvie:

> God fulfils the purpose for man, not apart from man, but by means of man . . . Man can hinder or help, delay or advance the fulfilment of God's purpose. In the endeavor to better the lot and the life of man this is a consideration which must never be lost sight of: it is not a human enterprise limited by human resources: but it is a divine intention that can command divine resources: and yet by its very nature as personal and concerned with persons it cannot be achieved by these divine resources without human co-operation . . . . God fulfils His purpose for man in intimate relations with man.[3]

---

1. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), op. cit., pp. 84-86.
2. Ibid., p. 82.
3. Ibid., p. 88.

The doctrine assumed by Dr. Ihmels expresses its social concern primarily through witness to the redemptive act of Christ, with little emphasis upon the transformation of the world through the efforts of men. Within Wishart's position, the Kingdom of God is thought of as being brought about by the activity of men in co-operation with God. A co-creative relationship is also characteristic of the mediating position assumed by Garvie; however, the emphasis is upon the purpose of God rather than the activity of man.

The very fact of this discussion is significant. The churches had approached Stockholm with the realization that they had to come to terms with the problems of the world whatever their theological orientation. They were awakening to the fact that they had responsibilities in the world even if they disagreed as to the theological implications of those responsibilities. This discussion pointed to the difficulty of isolating the consideration of social issues from the theological. This insight was fundamental in the eventual effort to correlate the activities of the Faith and Order Movement and the Life and Work Movement under a World Council of Churches. Finally, this discussion suggested the clearest internal criticism which was to arise out of the conference. An emphasis upon the Kingdom alone, failed to come to grips with the social problems, while on the other hand a purely social approach lacked the power which is based on confidence in the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom.

2. The Church and Economic and Industrial Problems

This section began its work with the recognition that the church had been driven out of many spheres of human life. The emphasis upon personal salvation with its lack of social concern and the self asserted autonomy of classical laissez faire economics were cited as two of the fundamental causes of this isolation of the church.[1] This led to the realization that salvation could no longer be discussed simply in individualistic terms. The church had to be responsive to the institutions of society as well as to the individual. There was, of course, a range of difference in the amount of weight given to this realization in general correlation with the position assumed on the question of the Kingdom.

It was a German delegate, however, who best summed up this recognition.

> If we look at this more closely and in the spirit of love, we shall find that it is by no means always a question of the sin and guilt of the individual, but much more frequently of the community. This guilt consists in the fact that the community has allowed conditions to arise in which men are bound to stumble and fall, to sink and be lost. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Is it not a Christian duty not only to hold out a helpful hand to those who have come to grief and to stoop to those who have sunk low in sin and sorrow, but also to feel the collective guilt and to wage war against those conditions that crush body and soul, mind and spirit, manners and morals, joy and

---

1. Ibid., p. 124.

> nobility of mind? Thus . . . to advance beyond helpfulness to individuals to comprehensive social and industrial reforms.[1]

But how was the church to meet this necessity? Was it to develop a particular economic and political program or was it to bear witness to an event and a Kingdom? Was united action possible without a similar theological unity? In the midst of these problems many of the delegates began to use a normative approach at the social issue level by their reference to the "human element" as a criterion. It was suggested that the social structure should be evaluated on the basis of contributions to personal welfare and that the church should champion this "human element" wherever there was the possibility of the production of personal values.[2]

> Thus in the sphere of economics we have declared that the soul is the supreme value, that it must not be subordinated to the rights of property or to the mechanism of industry, and that it may claim as its first right the right of salvation. Therefore we contend for the free and full development of the human personality.[3]

Such a norm as that of the "human element" served as a focus of appeal for unity of thought in the face of theological difference.

This norm was applied, for example, with reference to the problem of man and property. Elie Gounelle enlarged upon the use of the idea of the "human element" by citing several more

---

1. Ibid., pp. 133-135.
2. G.K.A.Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925 on Life and Work (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), p. 139.
3. Ibid., p. 712.

explicit normative ideas which in his opinion demonstrated the more rigorous demands of the Christian conscience on the property issue.[1] The Oxford Conference was to see this approach developed more explicitly under the name of "middle axioms."

A similar vein of thought was projected with reference to the problem of cooperation between industrial units within a nation. It was held that an industrial enterprise must increasingly be thought of as a social trust.[2] This was augmented with the imperative that industry should not exploit child labor and that unemployment should be prevented.[3]

This demand that industry and property be thought of as a social trust before God and the community, both in the discussions and in the final report at Stockholm has a close correlation with the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society as one "where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it."[4]

The question of the Kingdom, though evident, was not as pronounced as in the discussion of the first topic. The confrontation with the social dilemmas before the church tended to bring about some fusion of perspective though not a resolution of the problem.

---

1. Ibid., p. 170.
2. Ibid., p. 198.
3. Ibid., pp. 210, 216.
4. The World Council of Churches, Man's Disorder and God's Design (N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 192.

3. The Church and International Relations

The section on The Church and International Relations was exceptionally vital to the conference due to the urgency of the problems of the world community. There was a general rejection of war, race cleavages, suppression of minorities, and excessive nationalism as being contrary to the will of God and to the good of the world community. Likewise, it was affirmed that loyalty to God surpassed all other loyalties. When the deliberations moved beyond this analysis into the area of recommendation, however, the basic tension of the conference projected itself.

The course of the discussion denied the validity of war as a means of resolving world problems and acknowledged that the churches should make a persistent attack upon the causes of conflict.[1] The conflict within the economic sphere was identified as one such basic causal element of war in a number of the addresses.

> The premisses, on which competitive trade production has been built up, presuppose that, for purposes of financial gain, the human race are entitled to pursue an unchristian, self-seeking policy, unrestrained by a due observance of social or international duty. It was the wide support of the competitive system, pressed unduly, both in military equipment and in trade development, that, in the main, brought about the cataclysm of the Great War.[2]

---

1. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), op. cit., p. 531.
2. Ibid., p. 468.

Racial and national differences were also identified as causal factors. There was a deeper note of concern at this point, however, for the prevention of future wars than for a recognition of the past war. This was in part a product of the discussion within this section on the problem of the colonial or underdeveloped areas of the world and the fear that the growing unrest of the colonial empires might provide fuel for another war. This concern issued in an appeal for respect for the equality of all races.[1]

The use of international law was considered as a medium for maintaining the stability of the world community. This discussion did not include an analysis of the function and role of the state, but it was realistically cognizant of the conception of national sovereignty as a hindrance to the operation of any scheme of international law.[2]

It was recommended that a pattern of arbitration and reconciliation be fostered wherever possible in the relationships of nations, but it was acknowledged that the primary problem of the time lay in the realm of the spiritual or psychological. The greatest need of the hour was not for better international machinery, great as was that need, but rather for an attitude of cooperation and mutual respect among the nations of the world.[3]

---

1. Ibid., p. 498.
2. Ibid., p. 523.
3. Ibid., p. 523.

> The future bears in her bosom international difficulties for the adjustment of which neither the League of Nations, nor the new court of international justice, nor other possible situations, afford a reliable guarantee. However great importance may be attached to such situations, it must nevertheless be established that the centre of gravity of the cause of peace really lies on a different plane, the spiritual.
>
> The principal question is whether there is ground for hope that a spirit different from that which has hitherto in general governed international conditions may be developed in the nations, a spirit more germane to the lofty principles of Christianity.[1]

This same need for an international ethos had been raised in the discussion on economic conflict as a cause of war.[2]

The central issue in this entire discussion was once again affiliated with the problem of the Kingdom. What were the churches to do in the midst of the chaotic world conditions? The majority of the participants in the discussion suggested some kind of support for the League of Nations.[3] Dr. Kapler, of the German delegation, responded to this position in the name of his group:

> They acknowledge warmly and gratefully the efforts of the Commission which has endeavored, in such a peaceful mind, to find a means of solving the problems of war and of establishing an international organization that would insure peace. But they are unconvinced that their efforts would achieve these ends.[4]

---

1. Ibid., p. 523.
2. Ibid., p. 468.
3. Ibid., pp. 417, 474.
4. Ibid., p. 450.

Dr. Klingeman of Germany stated in his address:

> We cannot identify any state of temporal welfare with the Kingdom of God, nor can we believe that a state of things within our power may hasten the coming of the Kingdom. . . .Luther taught us four hundred years ago to separate the idea of God's Kingdom from all earthly endeavours on the ground of temporal welfare.[1]

From this perspective men could only bear witness to the nations, thereby calling them to repentance before God.

Shortly after these comments, the conference moved to its most climactic moment in the address of Elie Gounelle. He responded to the position of the German delegation:

> This Conference is deeply divided on the question of the meaning to be given to the scriptural idea, which inspires us all, of the Kingdom of God. Some are only willing to see in it a synonym for salvation by grace, or for forgiveness, others see in it a new material social order ruled by God. But whatever our explanation of the Kingdom of God may be, whether spiritual or material, individualist or social, is of little account after all! The relations between nations, as a practical matter, for all of us who are here, ought to be governed by the laws of this Kingdom, and we ought all in every way to wish that the will of God, the will of righteousness and peace, may be done on earth, assuming that we accept the programme of the Lord's Prayer. We must therefore believe and act in accordance therewith.[2]

This is to say that men must ever seek to realize in the world the kindgom to which they were called in Christ, regardless of their theological belief concerning the means through which the ultimate kingdom would be realized.

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), op. cit., p. 451.
2. Ibid., p. 453.

In commenting on this section, the final report of the conference asserted:

> We have not attempted to offer precise solutions, nor have we confirmed by a vote the results of our friendly discussions. This was due not only to our respect for the convictions of individuals or groups, but still more to the feeling that the mission of the Church is above all to state principles, and to assert the ideal, while leaving to individual consciences and to communities the duty of applying them with charity, wisdom and courage.[1]

This indicated the persistent division in the thought of this section and also the persistent problem for Christian ethics of the means by which to realize the ideal in the actual. It is the contention of this study that the normative approach was to develop as a useful means through which to deal with this problem.

The war had witnessed to the necessity of making national power internationally responsible; thus, the world was viewed as the unit of cooperation. There was little emphasis upon the responsibility for national power in itself, however, as expressed in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society. The problem of how to achieve world cooperation and the church's relation to that task remained unanswered in the face of the theological differences.

---

1. Ibid., p. 713.

D. THE POST-CONFERENCE PERIOD

In its concluding days the conference elected a continuation committee. This body was reconstituted as a permanent committee in 1930, under the title, The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. It served as the central administrative body for furthering the activity of the Life and Work Movement through to the Oxford Conference of 1937. Two activities of this Committee are particularly relevant to the present study: the establishment of The International Christian Social Institute, and the preparation for the Oxford Conference. The latter interest will more naturally fall within the boundaries of the chapter to follow.

The International Christian Social Institute was formally constituted by the Continuation Committee in 1927. Its scope of activity included seminars, research projects, a regular publication entitled Stockholm, and a general exchange of information between the churches. The London Conference of Christian Social Workers, The Basle Study Conference, and the Rengsdorf Study Conference were products of this activity. These conferences represented an attempt on the part of the churches to deal with the problems characteristic of those years of economic crisis.

There are two points at which these conferences contributed to the developing normative approach. First, there was a sharpening of the consciousness of the responsibility of the

church toward the social order. This intensified the quest for principles which might be utilized as a ground for social action.

> The Churches are concerned not only with the preaching of a specifically Christian ethic but also with the futherance of those broad principles of humanity on which the conscience and reason of the world at large are at one with the conscience and reason of Christianity itself.[1]

A unique element in this consideration was the attempt to correlate this normative approach with natural law.[2]

The second main stream following the pattern of Stockholm was the further development of principles or criteria as social norms. This was a factor both in the London Conference for Christian Social Workers and in the Rengsdorf Conference on the Church and the Problem of Social Order. The latter served as a culmination point for a group of study conferences on the basis for social action.[3] In the former, it was indicated that the systems of production, distribution, and consumption should be held in constant reference to the following principles:

> The spiritual value of all material things, and supremely the value of human personality: self-sacrifice: work as a service: the ownership of property as stewardship: and brotherhood.[4]

---

1. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1954), p. 21.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 580.
4. John Turnbull, op. cit., p. 23.

The report of the Rengsdorf Conference stated the following principles with reference to the economic order:

> Work as a duty of man; property as a loan entrusted to man by God, and as a stewardship of which account has to be given; economic activity as service to the community; and the subjection of economic life to the demands of justice.[1]

Such a pattern of principles was also used in the course of the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1928.

These norms, like those in the Stockholm discussions, are explicit expressions of the demand for responsibility registered in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society. The developing social thought of the Life and Work Movement was dealing with the component elements which were to be built into the polar structure of the idea of the responsible society.

The fact of a correlation between the development of social thought in an early period and the manner in which a social norm was postulated in a later period is an indication that the norm encompasses a portion of the structural problem, and one can trace the roots of the norm and its component parts because of the persistence of the problem.

The statements of these conferences recognized on the one hand the value of the personality with its freedom, and on the other hand the problem of orienting the individual to other

---

1. Ibid., p. 44.

individuals in the social sphere. This question of orientation led these conferences to point to the necessity of such concepts as "stewardship over property" and "ecnonmic activity as a service to the community" in an effort to achieve justice in the interaction of the individuals in the social order.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this section is to draw together the central factors in the Stockholm discussions and to make reference to those points which are relevant to the problem of this dissertation.

The conference acknowledged responsibilities of the church within and for the world. How this responsibility was to be fulfilled, however, was the basic conflict. This conflict permeated virtually the entire conference; the basic issue being the nature of God's Kingdom and the character of man's relationship toward it.

There was a general agreement on numerous social issues despite the theological differences, primarily because of the unifying power of the fellowship and the urgency of the problems. For example, there was agreement on the usage of social norms such as the "human element" as a specific criterion for Christian social thought. Similarly, the necessity of an underlying attitude of respect among the nations was recognized as the only ground for an international community.

The recognition of the church's responsibility for the world was particularly significant in that it necessitated consideration of ways through which to fulfill that responsibility. The concept of the responsible society is one eventual result of such a struggle. The theological disagreements presented a situation in which it was necessary to find avenues through which action could be fostered irrespective of the disagreements. The normative approach served as one such avenue, for the usage of such norms as the "human element" provided a foundation upon which more expansive concepts such as that of the responsible society were later built. Such norms were open to acceptance from a variety of different theological perspectives. They adapted themselves to action despite diversity. The sphere of theological differences might be spoken of as the horizontal plane. In addition, such norms provided a bridge for unifying elements in the vertical plane: the theological problem of the transcendent and the relative.[1] This latter point was not emphasized at Stockholm, although

---

1. Throughout the balance of this study the question of the relationship between the Kingdom and the world will be characterized as the vertical plane in comparison with the horizontal perspective which will have reference to the various differences and polarities within the world itself. The Kingdom will often be identified as the transcendent ideal in the discussions of the action of the normative approach as a medium of communication between the Kingdom and the world. This is not to suggest a denial of the given reality of the Kingdom within the world, but only to denote the nature of the conception of the Kingdom as it functions in relation to the world within the polarity of the vertical dimension.

Gounelle did move in this direction in his comments on property.

None of these conclusions can be directly related to the eventual postulations of the concept of the responsible society. These insights were rather like firm subsoil which provided nourishment and stability to the idea of the responsible society upon its conception at the Amsterdam Assembly as a norm for Christian social action.

CHAPTER III

THE OXFORD CONFERENCE

A. THE SITUATION

1. Organizational Background

The biennial meeting of the Universal Council of Life and Work at Fanø, Denmark, in 1934, stands out as the dividing point in the watershed of thought between the Stockholm and Oxford Conferences. The nature of world events had brought the issue of the state to the center of the church's concern. The Council grappled with this issue in two ways. First, "It solemnly resolved to throw its weight on the side of the Confessing Church in Germany against the so called Nazi regime."[1] Here, also, the Council ratified the theme of "Church, Community and State" for the conference to take place in 1937. This meeting was of importance in that it "brought the expanding programme on which the Council had been engaged over several years to a definite point of decision, and compelled the Churches . . . to recognize the Council as an indispensable instrument of their common life."[2]

---

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 583.
2. Ibid., p. 584.

2. The Socio-Political Setting

The years following the conclusion of the First World War bore testimony to a tremendous change in the attitude of layman and clergy toward the course of history. The early mood of optimism was deeply eroded by the currents of pessimism. The conditions which the war had created and left unanswered, stimulated a mood of insecurity which fostered a resurgent nationalism characterized by national animosities, growing rearmament, and an increasing fear of war. This mood was intensified by the sense of hopelessness which accompanied men's feelings that they were locked in the grips of economic depression. This hopelessness augmented the spirit of nationalism with its economic conviction that each nation was responsible for its own security and autonomy. The cohesiveness of the local and the world community was disintegrating. This signalled the rise of the all-inclusive state which sought to achieve social coherence through regimentation.[1]

3. The Theological Setting

The Stockholm Conference had, among other things, recognized the impossibility of considering Christian action apart from Christian theology. This consciousness was deepened in the period between the Stockholm and Oxford Conferences. The Life and Work Movement increasingly plotted a course which

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 151.

brought it into a more extensive interrelation with the Faith and Order Movement.[1] The doctrine of the Church was the issue around which this theological awareness evolved. The Church was viewed as being both trans-confessional and supra-national under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.[2]

This emergence of the doctrine of the Church was opposed by many of the liberal leaders of the Stockholm Movement as a return to ecclesiasticism. However, the darkening perplexities of world events tended to deny their faith in man and to sustain the emphasis of conservative theology and confessional neo-orthodoxy in their assertion that certainty lay only in the "last things" and that the "Word of God" was a judgment of God upon men and not a confirmation of man's highest ideals.[3]

B. THE CONFERENCE

1. Preparatory Activities

The task of preparation for the Conference was extensive and fruitful. Nearly 250 papers were produced and circulated among ecumenical groups and individuals for criticism and commentary.

> The preparatory studied developed into a venture of ecumenical thinking, which in thoroughness and range of co-operation has perhaps never been equalled by any previous Christian world gathering.

---

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), op. cit., p. 573.
2. Ibid., p. 574.
   See J. H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 21.
3. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 569.

> By giving definiteness to the Christian mind in face of the perils and opportunities of a changing world situation, it exercised a potent, though largely intangible, influence on the thought and polity of the Churches.[1]

Three of the published volumes of these preparatory papers are particularly relevant to this study: The Church and Its Function in Society;[2] The Christian Faith and the Common Life;[3] and, The Universal Church and the World of Nations.[4]

a. The Church and Its Function in Society.

The Church and Its Function in Society, by W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, served as one of the foundational documents in the preparatory studies. After a consideration of the various doctrinal conceptions of the Church and their expression in history the discussion moves to the question of the relation of the church to the world. A variety of views on this question are presented: the Biblical view; the Thomistic view; the orthodox conception of the deification of the world; the opposition between the church and the world characteristic of Lutheranism; and, the Calvinistic and Social Gospel conceptions

---

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), A History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 585.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J.H.Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1937).
3. Nils Ehrenstrom et al., Christian Faith and the Common Life (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938).
4. Philip Henry Kerr et al., The Universal Church and the World of Nations (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938).

of the rule of God.[1] This led naturally to an identification of the function of the church in society and the structural dimensions of the corporate life, for it was realized that "the Christian faith must express itself in the corporate life."[2]

> Faith in God is real only as it confronts the particulars of history. Only by acting in accordance with God's will in the concrete historical situation in which He had placed us can we, in the full reality of being, enter into fellowship with God.[3]

Two avenues of approach to the corporate life are discussed: first, the witness of the Christian layman within society; and secondly, the expression of the church as an institution. The task of the church in these two spheres is to remind men of the true end of their existence and to call them into a community of love.[4] The church must not usurp the moral responsibility of the person, but should give guidance to the fulfillment of that individual responsibility. The additional responsbility of the church to express corporate opinion is an effort to educate the church and to mould public opinion toward the achievement of the desired ends is also recognized.

> Hence between purely general statements of the ethical demands of the Gospel and the decisions that have to be made in concrete situations there is need for what may be described as middle axioms. It is these that give relevance and point to the

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, pp. 124 & f.
2. Ibid., p. 189.
3. Ibid., p. 189.
4. Ibid., p. 208.

> Christian ethic. They are an attempt to define the directions in which, in a particular state of society, Christian faith must express itself.[1]

It is affirmed that the church can act as a critic of the social order because it possesses a center beyond society--a transcendent point of reference.[2] The Christian ethic is viewed as an ethic of inspiration rather than an ethic of ends. Its primary focus is upon a living fellowship with God rather than a social goal or norm to be attained. The concern of the Christian ethic is centered in obedience to God; nonetheless, "if action is to be effective in the social sphere it is, of course, essential that there should be definite objects of attack and pursuit."[3] The author holds that reflection upon experience should be utilized, but that for the Christian the inspiration of the relationship with God provides the ultimate grounding.

> The more important a decision the more necessary it is that a man should bring to it his total experience. But each situation is new and calls for a venture into the unknown. And for the Christian that venture is a response to what he believes to be the will of God.[4]

This discussion recognized and accepted the social responsibilities of the church, citing the importance of action at both the individual and the corporate levels. The idea of the

---

1. Ibid., p. 210. For a discussion and history of the use of various axioms and norms in Roman Catholic social thought see Melvin J. Williams, Catholic Social Thought (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1950). See also Joseph N. Moody (ed.), Church and Society (New York: Arts, Inc., 1953).
2. Ibid., p. 235.
3. Ibid., p. 238.
4. Ibid., p. 249.

middle axiom was explored as a means for giving guidance to the individual Christian. This represented a direct usage of social norms in approaching the problems of the social order.

A further step in the development of the normative approach was also made in the assertion that the church should give corporate expression to its social ideals. This helped to prepare the way for such broad generalized norms as that of the responsible society. Finally, it is important to note the use of this approach by authors who characterize the Christian ethic as an ethic of inspiration. This points to the value of the approach as a medium through which to give more concrete expression to the absolutes of the Christian faith in the midst of the social complex.

b. The Christian Faith and the Common Life

In the introductory chapter, Dr. Nils Ehrenström discusses the disintegration of community life and the attempt to create a new center of unity through all-inclusive entities such as class or state. "The common life of mankind is increasingly being built up on a post-Christian basis. It is leaving Christianity behind it."[1] In the light of this situation he adds that it is essential for the church to "gain a clearer sense of the meaning of her own ethos, its central affirmations, main criteria, and practical implications, both for

---

1. Nils Ehrenström et al., Christian Faith and the Common Life, p. 5.

the ordinary pursuits of daily life and for the exercise of Christian responsibility toward the larger issues of a changing society."[1] But how was the church to accomplish this task and to determine the nature of each of these elements?

Martin Dibelius dealt with these problems in discussing the message of the New Testament and the orders of human society. He suggests that a person could never fulfill the requirements of the Kingdom, but that the requirements exist nonetheless as an ever vital demand upon the believer.[2] The Christian life is lived in a gulf between the demands of the Kingdom and the facts of the common life. The Christian fellowship is sustained in the midst of this tension primarily through its relationship to the Kingdom of God and not to the orders of society according to Dibelius.[3] He concludes that these orders of society provide stability and training for the process of communal life,[4] and that the dynamic of the Christian ethic may work through these orders or it may be called out beyond them.[5]

There is some similarity between this position and that assumed by Reinhold Niebuhr in his chapter which bears the same title as that of the book. In this chapter, Niebuhr

---

1. Ibid., pp. 8, 9.
2. Martin Dibelius, "The Message of the New Testament and the Order of Society," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenström et al. (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1938) p. 21.
3. Ibid., p. 33.
4. Ibid., p. 39.
5. Ibid., p. 35.

maintains that love is the absolute norm of life, an absolute which it is impossible to realize due to the persistence of sin.[1] Sin is expressed not only through making the self the center of the self, but through making the self the center of the universe.

He indicates that there is a valid place for reason in the structuring of social morality through the development of specific norms as goals and criteria for the task of realizing the impossible. He rejects a purely rationalistic ethic, however.[2]

> Since the very genius of the gospel ethic, is that it makes no compromise or offers no strategy, it becomes necessary to supplement the gospel ethic with strategies for meeting the day to day necessities.[3]

Orthodox Christianity was quite correct in developing justice as the relative expression of love, according to Niebuhr. He views equality as one of the norms for justice, for he believes that justice without a sense of equality becomes simply a sanctification of a given situation. Love serves as the ultimate norm against which equality is reflected in that it prevents a seeming equilibrium from being mistaken for the Kingdom.[4] Love is both relevant and transcendent to the problems of the common life.

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Christian Faith and the Common Life," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenström et al. (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1938) p. 76.
2. Ibid., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 82.
4. Ibid., p. 87.

Werner Wiesner, in the same volume acknowledges that reason as a relative tool is capable of setting up hypothetical norms in the process of achieving defined ends. The ends of reason, however, are essentially eudaemonistic and materialistic, according to Wiesner. Only the absolute love can give an ultimate end. Despite the realization of some value in the normative approach, the emphasis of Wiesner is not on the realization of the impossible absolute through more relative norms. The norm of love is central in importance. It was revealed in the progressive revelation of the Word.

> Only God's law as a call to himself and to one's neighbor tells a person what he had to do in his relations with his fellows. . . . To take objective commandments as of God and as absolute apart from a personal relation to God is to fall away from God's law into mere legalism.[1]

. . . . . .

> God's will is not concerned with any objective ideal social conditions, any organization of ends and means, but at our fellowship with one another in personal agape under Christ.[2]

The problem of determining a course of action in a specific situation can not be answered by law or social theory; but only by that love which rises out of the concrete situation through a revelation of the living Word, according to Wiesner.[3]

---

1. Werner Wiesner, "The New Nature and Social Institutions," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenström et al. (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co, 1938) pp. 111-112.
2. Ibid., p. 112.
3. Ibid., p. 119.

> There are, therefore, no timeless divine orders, but particular historical powers which are not as such more acceptable to God than anything else man can show as his work, but which have a mandate from God to bear rule, though this can be withdrawn from them again. . . .The only question for the Christian is: Who has the power and, therefore the divine authority? whether this is a king or a dictator, a national leader or a parlimentary majority. A Christian man must subject himself in freedom to the powers that be and yield them obedience through well-doing.[1]

Niebuhr, in commenting on a position similar to this, stated:

> In such an interpretation, Christian eschatology becomes a source of moral complacency. One accepts all the relative injustice of the world as justice, regarding it in the same breath as both God-ordained and as doomed to destruction.[2]

Wiesner stresses the interrelation of justice and love; justice can only be fulfilled by the power of love and love must fulfill the demands of justice to be itself.[3]

The task of the church, Wiesner asserted, is to witness to the Word. But what if the world does not listen to this revelation? Wiesner responded to his own question:

> Is not the church a voice crying in the wilderness? It is not the success or failure which attends the church's preaching, but truth only, that can be decisive for its content.[4]

---

1. Ibid., p. 125.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Christian Faith and the Common Life," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenström et al. (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1938) pp. 88-89.
3. Werner Wiesner, op. cit., p. 136.
4. Ibid., p. 142.

Herbert Farmer, in the discussion on "The Revelation in Christ and the Christian's Vocation," attempts to encompass the God-Man relationship and its implications in the idea of love. He affirms that Jesus Christ has revealed God's loving nature and at the same time placed man under the obligation to live a life of love. Man may become a partaker of the mind of Christ in his commitment to the vocation of love despite the ever present reality of sin. Farmer continues with a delineation of the personal nature and demand of love and the problem of its application. He places the problem of the wisdom and action in somewhat of a different perspective from Niebuhr and Wiesner, by suggesting that the moral judgment in the last resort is a matter of intuitional understanding: this understanding does not rest on deduction or revelation alone, but on the general spirit of the community by which the personality has been fashioned.[1] The Christian is under the obligation to examine his thought and action with reference to the widest experience possible and to share his thought within the company of the Christian fellowship in order to gain its collective insight. In contrast with Wiesner, he suggests the correctives of the searching mind and group thought in interpreting the revelation of God and the Christian's action.

---

1. Herbert Farmer, "Revelation in Christ and the Christian's Vocation," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenström et al. (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1938) p. 158.

In the final chapter, John Bennett points to the necessity for a precise analysis of the cause of social evil and the fact of sin. He recognizes distinctions between various types of sin and notes the kinds of subjective and objective factors which make sin such a reality within experience. In conclusion he advocates an analytical and multiple attack upon the problem of evil, which would recognize both man's limitations and his potentialities.

In this volume, as in the former, the fact of responsibility within the social order was generally accepted. This was accompanied by the recognition of the gulf between the Kingdom and the facts of existence. The central problem was that of the means through which the church was to bridge this gulf in accepting its responsibilities. This question stimulated the greatest difference of opinion. Werner Wiesner isolated himself from the main current of thought with his tendency to accept and sanctify the status quo while depending solely upon Christian revelation for direction in decision making. Nils Ehrenström and Reinhold Niebuhr defended the more generally accepted position in their reference to the need for normative or social strategies.

This latter position was compatible with the use of middle axioms by Dr. Oldham in the former volume. Each contributed to the growing usage of normative ideas as ethical tools for confronting the problems of the social order.

The structural characteristics of the idea of the

responsible society were also touched upon in Dr. Niebuhr's discussion of justice, equality, and love. This attempt to discern the interaction of forces in the social order and the means through which to bring the transcendent to bear upon the concrete, explicitly underlined the need for a realistic normative concept which could incorporate these various factors under a higher relative ideal. The Oxford Conference is remembered primarily for its development of specific axioms, although the conceptual structure was not to be formulated until the Amsterdam Assembly.

c. The Universal Church and the World of Nations

The central issue of this group of papers is the problem of the state. This question is approached through considering a number of affiliated factors: national sovereignty, war and peace, economic planning, and an international ethos.

The tension between church and state is viewed as being much more than a struggle for institutional power over the lives of men. It is a struggle over the assumptions as to the meaning of life and the end of human activity.

> The non-Christian forces of today are tending more and more to find embodiment in the all-powerful state, committed to a particular philosphy of life and seeking to organize the whole of life in accordance with a particular doctrine of the end of man's existence, and in an all-embracing community life which claims to be at once the source and the goal of all human activities: a state, that is to say, which aims at being also a church.[1]

---

1. Philip Henry Kerr et al. The Universal Church and the World of Nations, pp. vii-viii.

In these papers the concept of national sovereignty is identified as one of the basic defenses of this totalitarian development of the state. It is declared to be the justification given externally and the sentiment exploited internally in defense of economic nationalism and dictatorial government.[1] The only resolution given here for this problem, by Philip Henry Kerr, is the establishment of a supranational sovereign which would be the product of a pooling of a degree of sovereignty from each of the nations.[2] However it was pointed out by Dulles and others that the world is hardly ready for so drastic a step.[3]

War, according to Dulles, is the inevitable result of the concept of sovereignty which so solidifies the world community and prevents the release of national energies.[4] This appraisal of one of the causes of war was augmented by the analysis by V. A. Demant, which points out that "men are moved not so much by what they hope to get out of war, as by what they hope war will get them out of."[5] The boredom and economic failure of peace can create an actual fear of peace. Demant asserts that these problems have their root in the

---

1. Philip Henry Kerr, "The Economic Influence of National Sovereignty," The Universal Church and the World of Nations, Philip Henry Kerr et al., p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. John Foster Dulles, "The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World," The Universal Church and the World of Nations, Philip Henry Kerr et al., p. 157.
4. Ibid., pp. 154, 156.
5. V. A. Demant, "The Tragedy of War and the Hope of Peace," The Universal Church and the World of Nations, Philip Henry Kerr et al., p. 177.

ultimate secularization of life and that the only answer is for the church to assume its responsibilities.[1] Dulles suggests that a more immediate step would be to cut apertures through the sovereign boundaries in order to allow communication and the escape of the excess creative energy of a nation.[2]

The need for cautious and elastic planning is considered in these papers with reference to both the national and the international levels. It is noted that such planning should be based upon the sense of mutual responsibility on the part of the whole of mankind for the earth as a whole. The unit of consideration is seen at this time as increasingly becoming the whole world community.

The attempt to set the problem of the state in an inter-relational frame of reference was also pursued in the discussion of the problem of international law and international ethos. The former presupposes and is built upon the latter. This was expressed in the words of Max Huber when he said,

> Continuity and dignity are given to law only by something which transcends law and external circumstances, namely, the sense of obligation which is found in the conscience of the human being who is subject to law.[3]

---

1. Ibid., pp. 196, 201.
2. John Foster Dulles, op. cit., p. 157.
3. Max Huber, "Some Observations Upon the Christian Understanding of International Law," The Universal Church and the World of Nations, Philip Henry Kerr, et al., p. 133.

The relevance of this discussion lay in the fact that it dealt with one of the central affirmations in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society -- the responsibility for power. The main concern of most of the writers in the volume was to find a means through which the freedom of a nation as sovereign could be correlated with the similar freedom of other nations in a harmonious fashion. The issue was that of the responsibility of the part toward the whole.

This discussion, like its predecessor at the Stockholm Conference, continued to force the breadth of the problem of the social order out into its world dimensions. This inherently challenged the churches to find means of expressing their concern, which possessed supra-national and trans-cultural relevance.

2. The Report of the Conference

a. Introduction

The Oxford Conference was conceived and born in the midst of international turmoil. The four hundred and twenty-five delegates in attendance carried a deep awareness of the gravity of their times,[1] a fact of which they were continually reminded by the absence of the delegation from the German Evangelical Church.[2]

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 259 ff.

The Oxford Conference, like the Stockholm Conference, was characterized by both devotion and deliberation. There was a prevailing spirit of mystical communion despite the absence of a formal Holy Communion. The Conference served as another illustration of the power of fellowship together with God.

The conference deliberated in five main sections: Church and Community; Church and State; Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order; Church, Community and State in Relation to Education; and, The Universal Church and the World of Nations. The reports of three of these sections are particularly relevant to the present study.

Each of the sections had the preparatory papers and a preliminary draft of a report before them as they began their work. Much of this material was revised or discarded in the evolving process of creating the final report of the section.

b. Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order

The report begins with the fundamental problem of determining a basis for a Christian concern in this area. The primary basis cited is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which pointed to the glorification of God through love to Him and to one's neighbor as the highest end for man. Within this perspective, man's obligation to his neighbor is grounded not only in the neighbor's dignity as a person, but more basically in the separation of the neighbor from the purposes of God.[1]

---

1. Ibid., p. 75.

It was realized that sin is a reality in the world which stands in contradiction to the Kingdom.

> In so far as the kingdom of God is in conflict with the world and is therefore still to come, the Christian finds himself under the necessity of discovering the best available means of checking human sinfulness and of increasing the possibilities and opportunities of love within a sinful world.
>
> The relative and departmental standard for all the social arrangements and institutions, all the economic structures and political systems, by which the life of man is ordered is the principle of justice. Justice, as the ideal of a harmonious relation of life to life, obviously presupposes the sinful tendency of one life to take advantage of another. This sinful tendency it seeks to check by defining the rightful place and privileges which each life might have in the harmony of the whole and by assigning the duty of each to each.[1]

The laws which constitute the structure of justice in the world provide a positive stability for the realization of the ideals of the Kingdom on the one hand and a negative "dike against sin" on the other. Justice is the norm or standard developed by men in the effort to achieve order in the midst of a sinful world.[2]

The Christian commandment of love presents demands and possibilities which reach beyond the requirements of justice. Love is the fulfillment of the law, but never a substitute for it.

> Christianity becomes socially futile if it does not recognize that love must will justice and

---

1. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
2. It is important at this point to recognize that Oxford characterizes the idea of justice as the product of man's attempt to achieve order and the restraint of sin under the transcendent ideal of love. This stands in contrast with some theologians cited below who think of justice as being synonymous with the righteousness of God.

> that the Christian is under an obligation to secure the best possible social and economic structure, in so far as such structure is determined by human decisions.
>
> The relation of the commandment of love to the justice of political and economic systems is two-fold. It is an ideal which reaches beyond any possible achievements in the field of political relations, but it is nevertheless also a standard by which various schemes of justice may be judged.[1]

The report continues with an indication of the danger of either an extreme pessimism which makes ethical concerns futile or an optimism which equates a particular social system with the will of God.[2]

This introductory portion of the report of the section on the economic order recognized and developed aspects of the normative approach. The conception of justice as the "harmonious relation of life to life" constitutes a central working norm under the higher ideal of love in these deliberations.[3] This can be closely related to the character and function of the idea of the responsible society, as will be noted below.

The discussion which follows in the Oxford Report indicates four areas within the economic system where the Christian understanding of life is challenged: the enhancement of acquisitiveness; inequalities; irresponsible possession of economic power; and, the frustration of the sense of vocation.

---

1. J. H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 78.
2. Ibid., p. 79.
3. Ibid., p. 76.

Each of these areas of challenge is discussed in an effort to demonstrate the nature of the challenge when reflected against a Christian perspective. It is significant to note that this analysis was made in part through the usage of a variety of normative concepts which were used as representations of the Christian position. This can be illustrated, for example, in the case of the inequalities in the economic system. After discussing the nature of the inequalities, the Report states:

> any social arrangement which outrages the diginity of man by treating some men as ends and others as means, any institution which obscures the common humanity of men by emphasizing the external accidents of birth or wealth or social position, is ipso facto anti-Christian.[1]

Similar normative generalizations of a Christian social affirmation were used in the analysis and expression of the other three problem areas.

But how is the Christian to respond to these challenges. This became the concern of the next section. Three answers had been suggested in the economic sphere for the problems of the economic order: first, the exertion of a degree of control over, and the demand for a greater degree of responsibility from, the holders of economic power; secondly, the equalication of economic inequalities; and third, a policy that consisted of a twofold attack emphasizing a break-down of centralized economic power and a support of the smaller entities

---

1. Ibid., p. 89.

in the economic sphere.[1] It is important to note that each of these represents an attempt to make economic power more responsible. The report added that it is the responsibility of the Christian to evaluate such policies in the light of his faith and the doctrinal expression of that faith. Once again however, the central problem arose as to the means through which to move in the evaluative process from the varied theological presuppositions into the sphere of social or economic conceptions.

This problem of relating the transcendent to the concrete is the point at which the Oxford Conference gave its most specific expression to what has been termed the normative approach. This expression was made in the form of a group of norms which were referred to as "middle axioms" for Christian action in the economic sphere. The thought at the Oxford Conference provided a normative structure for the Christian ethic in itself and for its application in the social order. The end or standard, the situation, and the orientation or motivation of the person or persons were identified as structural dimensions of social action. The structure was normative for an ethic in that it delineated the breadth of focus necessary. An ethic would be inadequate which did not take each of these aspects of an act into account. This also had normative implications for the expression of an ethic concerning the action itself.

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 94-95.

The report stated:

> Christian teaching should deal with ends, in the sense of long-range goals, standards and principles in the light of which every concrete situation and every proposal for improveing it must be tested.[1]

This structural or methodological statement served as a norm for an ethic with its assertion that ethics must be concerned with ends and goals as standards or norms for the testing of the concrete situations. In the same sense this concern for ends and standards opened further the way for the use of agreeable generalizations of principle as points of focus for ecumenical social action.

These points of agreement on a generalized principle which stand between the ultimate presupposition and an action were called "middle axioms." It will be recalled that

> they were an attempt to define the direction in which, in a particular state of society, Christian faith must express itself. They are not binding for all time, but are provisional definitions of the type of behavior required of Christians at a given period and in given circumstances.[2]

The "middle axiom" was a more specific norm used in the normative approach in comparison with an inclusive generalized dialectical concept such as that of the "responsible society." These "middle axioms" were capable of functioning either as a goal or a criterion for social action. It is

---

1. Ibid., p. 98.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function for Society, p. 210.

important at this point to note the distinction between the "middle axiom" and the structural axiom for ethics mentioned above.

Under the structural axiom, which indicated that "Christian teaching should deal with ends," a group of such ends were suggested. These latter ends were the more typical type of "middle axiom" to be developed in the report. A group of five such ends or axioms were suggested:

a) Right fellowship between man and man being a condition of man's fellowship with God, every economic arrangement which frustrates or restricts it must be modified.

b) Every child and youth must have opportunities of education suitable for the full development of his particular capacities.

c) Persons disabled from economic activity, whether by sickness, infirmity or age, should not be economically penalized on account of their disability, but on the contrary should be the object of particular care.

d) Labor has intrinsic worth and dignity, since it is designed by God for man's welfare.

e) The resources of the earth, such as the soil and mineral wealth, should be recognized as gifts of God to the whole human race and used with due and balanced consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.[1]

The report also includes a group of directives concerning the problem of property since it is closely connected with the determination of ends or goals in the economic system. These are also illustrative of the development of "middle axioms."

---

1. J. H. Oldham, op. cit., pp. 98-100.

a) All human property rights are relative and contingent only, in virtue of the dependence of man upon God as the giver of all wealth.

b) The existing systems of property rights and the existing distribution of property must be criticized in the light of the largely nonmoral processes by which they have been developed . . . . every argument in defense of property rights which is valid for Christian thinking is also an argument for the widest possible distribution of these rights.

c) Individual property rights must never be maintained or exercised without regard to their social consequences or without regard to the contribution which the community makes in the production of all wealth.

d) It is very important to make clear distinction between various forms of property. The property which consists in personal possessions for use, such as the home, has behind it a clearer moral justification than property in the means of production and in land which gives the owners power over other persons.[1]

These axioms center primarily on the factors of property for use and accountability before God and the community.

The situation or the context of social action served as the focus for the second structural axiom for Christian ethics. The report states that "the message of Christianity should throw a searchlight on the actual facts of the existing situation, and in particular reveal the human consequences of present forms of economic behavior."[2]

This situational frame of reference, which necessitated a concern for the facts and consequences and correlated them

---

1. Ibid., pp. 100-101.
2. Ibid., p. 102.

to the end or standard, added the note of concreteness or specificity to the first structural axiom. This acted as a standard for ethical systems in themselves in that it required that the ethical system take the facts and human consequences in a situation into account. It did not indicate a particular course of action in the economic system, but a structural norm for the action of the ethical system in the economic sphere. This did have some specific ethical applicability however, through the demand for correlation between the ideal goal and the actual situation. From this latter perspective the axiom became normative not only for the ethical system, but also for the action of the individual within the system.

The third structural axiom points to the problem of motivation and interest, especially as they may provide an obstacle to justice.

> This searchlight of the Christian message can also make clear the obstacles to economic justice in the human heart, and especially those that are present in the hearts of people in the church.[1]

This adds the personal element through the recognition of the enacting power of the individual and the problem of self-interest or sin. It acts as a norm for the structure of the ethical system and at the same time as a directive for more

---

1. Ibid., p. 104.

specific ethical action. The latter is accomplished through the demand for a spirit of ethical introspection, a demand which is placed upon the individual.

> Christians must come to understand how far they really do see, in spite of all pretensions to the contrary, a world in which they and their group are on top, how far their opinions on economic issues are controlled by the interests of the group of class to which they belong.... Here, again the important activity is not to denounce, but to help people to that self-knowledge which comes from the perspective of the Christian emphasis upon sin, so that they will condemn themselves.[1]

The report concludes with a listing of some immediate points of Christian action.

This section came to grips with the problem of the basis for Christian social action, and the means through which that basis was to be expressed in the world. It postulated a normative structure for Christian ethics itself; and sought to offer an avenue through which the Christian ideals could be made more explicit as norms demanding actualization. These norms or "middle axioms" provide a level between the ultimate principles and the concrete situation at which communication and agreement is often possible. To the extent agreement is achieved at this level it may further communication with reference to the disagreement at either extreme and provide a medium for the expression of the ideal in the concrete situation.

---

1. Ibid., p. 104.

c. Report of the Section on Church and State.

The analysis of the preparatory papers identifies the regimentation within the totalitarian state as a response to the cultural breakdown. In fact, the totalitarian state was seeking eventually to become the church in terms of the ultimacy of its demands.

> The church is forced to recognize that the present situation, with all its suffering and its distress, with all its despairing attempts to create in its own strength a world apart from God, is a judgment upon itself.[1]

This led the group considering Church and State to attempt to distinguish and define the spheres of action and responsibility appropriate for the two institutions.

The state is viewed in these papers as having a justifiable arena of action within which the Christian community exists. The activity of the Church can be either promoted or hindered through the power vested in the State. On the other hand the State stands as a responsible agent before God.

> We recognize the existing states as historically given realities, each of which in the political sphere is the highest authority, but which, as it stands itself under the authority and the judgment of God, is bound by his will and has the God-given aim of upholding law and order, of ministering to the life of the people united within it or of the peoples or groups so united, and also of making its contribution to the common life of all peoples.[2]

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 232.
2. Ibid., p. 66.

The report indicates three contrasting areas of distinctive function for church and state. First, the task of the church is to witness to the ultimate reality of existence -- the will of God; while the task of the state is that of providing justice and order in the midst of a world of change and sin. Secondly, the community created by the church is grounded in the love of God through the appeal and witness of the fellowship of love, while the state uses a limited degree of coercion in order to maintain stability. Finally, the distinctive quality of the life of the fellowship of the church is seen by the group as freedom under divine grace and love while the state is observed to operate against the background of the power of restraint, even in its constructive activity.[1]

The responsibility of the church to the state is recognized primarily as that of being itself. This entails its prayer and its critical but constructive loyalty to the state within the bounds of Christian principles. The church rightfully expects the freedom to carry on its program responsibly in the ongoing life of the community. The report concludes by listing a series of tasks which were essential in that time.

d. The Universal Church and the World of Nations

The churches approached the problem of the world of nations from the perspective of an ecumenical fellowship which

---

1. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

had its ultimate root in the una sancta. One of the fundamental questions for this section was that of the development of international order under the Kingdom of God. The report states that "no international order which can be devised by human efforts may be equated with the Kingdom of God."[1] It was added that much of the disillusionment of the idealistic internationalists lay in the fact that they had virtually given a religious nature to their position.

The absence of a correlation of force and law is recognized in the report as one of the chief problems before the world community. This correlation should be based in two processes, "The observance and enforcement of the law and the constant and steady development of the law to conform to changing social needs."[2] The report asserts that these two factors were not at that period in a working relationship because of the conception of national sovereignty which viewed the individual state as the only unit of force and authority. This suggested to them the need for the development of a political structure within which the individual states would be subject to a larger federal unit. The federal world structure would of necessity be the supreme sovereign government with its correlated international law and police force. Such a structure, it was pointed out, was dependent upon the development of an ethos of community which would provide a moral force upon which a system of international law could be formulated and sustained.

---

1. Ibid., p. 156.
2. Ibid., pp. 156-157.

It was realized that the world community had to continue to create conditions which would foster peaceful change and to organize institutions which would further the development of an international order and structure. The church was not to identify its hopes totally with such attempts as previously indicated; nonetheless, the church did have the responsibility of seeking peace and reconcilliation.

The alternative to peaceful change was the continuation of war. The report recognized three basic positions characteristic of the churches on the war issue. These generalized positions were: first, those who viewed war as contrary to the will of God and therefore rejected any participation; secondly, those who limited their participation to just wars, defined as such on the basis of international law or Christian principles; and finally, those who felt that the divine appointment of the state required participation in the activities of the state except on those occasions where the individual felt that there was a direct contradiction with his understanding of the will of God. In spite of these differences the section stated its central affirmation quite explicitly.[1]

> Wars, the occasions of war, and all situations which conceal the fact of conflict under the guise of outward peace, are marks of a world to which the church is charged to proclaim the the gospel of redemption. War involves

---

1. Ibid., pp. 163-64.

> compulsory enmity, diabolical outrage against human personality, and a wanton distortion of the truth. War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and him crucified. No justification of war must be allowed to conceal or minimize this fact.[1]

World events were giving evidence of the horror of war even then in the Orient, and they were soon to be demonstrated on a world-wide scale exceeding the imagination of those who formulated the above statement. The report concluded by listing areas in which the church should strengthen its witness.

C. THE POST-CONFERENCE PERIOD

The Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Council, December, 1938, followed the lines of approach used at Oxford in the deliberation on economic and political matters.

An explicit analysis of its findings lies outside of the province of this study; however, it is significant to note the manner in which the inherited problem of the Kingdom was considered.

> The Kingdom of God is both present and future; both a growth and a final consummation by God. It is our task and our hope -- our task which we face with the power of Christ; our hope that the last word will be spoken by God and that that last word will be victory. The Kingdom

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 162.

> means both acceptance and action, a gift and a task. We work for it and we wait for it.
>
> As to whether we should centre upon individual conversion or upon social change to realize this Kingdom, we reply that we must do both.[1]

From this assumption the report moved beyond Oxford with a bold assertion of ideals which would be characteristic of a "new order of living."[2]

> This new life would work itself out into a new order of living:
>
> a) We would look on every man as a man.
>
> b) We would, therefore, make the unit of co-operation the human race.
>
> c) We would therefore demand equality of opportunity for every man for his complete development.
>
> d) Since economic means can purchase opportunity there can be no equality of opportunity without a re-distribution of the world's economic goods.
>
> e) Among the causes of war we recognize the present inequality of economic opportunity open to various nations which gives to some a privileged position in access to the world's raw materials, financial assistance and open areas which is denied to others.
>
> f) Since war is a violation of human personality and repugnant to the Christian conscience, we repudiate it as a means of settling international disputes.
>
> g) To a torn and distracted and sinful world, we offer God's offer -- the Kingdom of God.[3]

---

1. J. Merle Davis (ed.), The Economic Basis of the Church, Vol. V of The Madras Series, International Missionary Council (7 vols.: New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 556.
2. Ibid., p. 559.
3. Ibid., pp. 559-561.

This obviously represents the most liberal usage of normative ideals which as been discussed thus far. It illustrates the way in which social norms can be used as expressions of transcendent theological presuppositions. These norms acted as a bridge in the vertical plane between the transcendent ideal of the Kingdom and the social situation.

D. CONCLUSIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROBLEM

While the Stockholm Conference had been forced to debate upon whether or not Christians should concern themselves with seeking to realize on earth man's approximations of the Kingdom, the Oxford Conference openly accepted this social responsibility and proceeded with the question of how to fulfill its task. The importance of a social strategy and of social norms or relative ideals under the higher transcendent ideals of love and the Kingdom were recognized and exemplified in the usage of justice as the central norm. From this recognition the conference developed the normative approach in two directions: inclusive concrete ideals as norms for the whole of the social order, and specific directives or axioms for the individual.

The demand that such norms possess this breadth of applicability was continually pressed by the challenging problems in each sphere, the social and the individual. Further, it was understood that the part and the whole were fundamentall related in the job of correlating freedom and

responsibility either individually or within the group. The responsible use of economic or political power was prominent in all of the discussions. This correlation of responsibility and freedom or power was to become central in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society.

The normative approach was not only developing in itself; it was also directing constructive criticism upon the ethical systems under which it was operative. This approach, which had arisen in the ecumenical discussions in turn projected its own standards upon the discussion. This demonstrated the fertile possibilities of internal criticism in the Ecumenical Movement. Christians were forced to think in broader terms involving the consideration of goals, motivation, and the situation withing which the ideal of love was to be real ized. Oxford went so far in response to this demand as to reflect upon a number of explicit ends which should be sought in the social order.

This demonstrated a considerable step beyond Stockholm. The norms of the "human element" and the value of personality were used at the Stockholm Conference as means of gaining a unified sympathetic response toward problems, while at Oxford explicit norms were used more as standards leading toward the resolution of social problems.

The task of responsibly correlating law and force with economic or political power was central. Social norms were increasingly utilized as the means through which to achieve

the correlation. This realization of the polar nature of the social problem together with the use of social norms expressive of theological presuppositions, laid a foundation upon which the discussions of Christians in the "third force" and those preparing for the Amsterdam Assembly were to structure the concept of the responsible society.

CHAPTER IV

THE AMSTERDAM ASSEMBLY

A. THE TEN FORMATIVE YEARS

The period between the Oxford Conference and the Amsterdam Assembly is often referred to in ecumenical conversations as the "ten formative years." It was a time of international turmoil and tragedy that forced the churches to cut away many of their nonessentials.

> The war years have forced the Council as they forced the churches, to face the fundamental realities of the Church's plans and many seemingly indispensable elements of its life. It was forced to concentrate on its essential task, namely to be a token of the reality of the Church Universal.[2]

1. The Provisional Committee

The movement toward an organized World Council of Churches can be traced explicitly to the meeting called by Archbishop Temple at Bishopthrope in 1933, and to the later discussions at Westfield College, Hampstead, in 1937. These sessions recognized the growing affinity between the Faith and Order and Life and Work Movements and the necessity of a

---

1. World Council of Churches, Ten Formative Years (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1948).
2. Ibid., p. 7.

concrete unified organization of the churches in the world community. This resulted in action by the Life and Work Movement at Oxford, and the Faith and Order Movement at Edinburgh, leading toward the formation of a provisional committee. The task of this committee was to explore the path leading toward the actual formation of a World Council of Churches.[1]

The years of the war proved to be a time of trial. It appeared at first as though the divisive effects of the war would ultimately destroy the provisional structure and the lines of communication which had existed. The tide turned, however, as churchmen found themselves confronted with the spiritual needs created by the chaotic realities of the war.

> The struggle to be the Church which was essentially one and the same struggle in many countries, the common defence against the ideological attack on the Church Universal, the common suffering, the opportunity to serve war prisoners and refugees from other nations -- these proved more powerful factors in building ecumenical conviction than conferences, committees or journeys.[2]

The small staff in Geneva, Switzerland, became a communications center for churchmen of both warring camps especially on the problems of refugees and war prisoners. "Thus the Council received in those years far more than it lost. For the losses were merely in the realm of organization, but the gains were in the spiritual realm."[3]

---

1. Ibid., pp. 4ff.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The Council began the task of developing and expanding the avenues of communications immediately upon the close of the war. The first meeting of the Provisional Committee following the war revealed a deeper sense of oneness than had ever been known before. "As Bishop Berggrave put it, the surprise of that meeting was that it was no surprise to be together -- for the ties between those present had never been broken."[1] Events unfolded rapidly thereafter in the organizational process leading up to the Amsterdam Assembly.

The international struggle provided the practical center for the action of the Ecumenical Movement while also stimulating a deepening of thought on the nature and ethical reality of the Church. The Study Department pursued this study of the ethical reality of the church by fostering discussion and the exchange of papers between several small committees of American Scholars and Dr. Visser't Hooft and Dr. Emil Brunner. "Much of it /this particular discussion/ was carried on in terms of the concepts of Corpus Christianum and Corpus Christi."[2] The former refers to the harmonizing of the church and the social order in an attempt to create a Christian civilization while the latter is more conscious of the problem of evil and thus points toward what Visser't Hooft held to be the New Testament conception of the Church. Visser't

---

1. Ibid., p. 18.
2. John C. Bennett, Results of an Ecumenical Study (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 24E/44, 1944), p. 2.

Hooft and Brunner criticize the idea of a Christian civilization or nation as being an illusion. Their emphasis upon the Corpus Christi was not a denial of the church's responsibility in the world as much as it was a recognition of the persistence of the problem of evil. Many of the American contributers held a more hopeful view of the world while at the same time seeking to avoid the illusion of an over optimistic view of civilization.[1]

2. The Formation of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

The formation of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs at Cambridge, England, in 1946, witnessed to the acceptance by the church of a role of active participation in international affairs. This commission was set up jointly by the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. It consisted of twenty-eight members throughout the world, whose tasks were to maintain a contact with the pulse of the world community, to cooperate with the local authorities in the program of fostering the world community, and to participate in the activities of the Commission.[2] The responsibilities of the Commission were outlined as follows:

1. To call the attention of churches to international problems of particular Christian concern

---

1. Ibid., p. 3.
2. Roswell P. Barnes and Kenneth G. Grubb, "The Churchs' Approach to International Affairs," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 37-38.

. and suggest ways of effective national and international action.
2. To discover and declare Christian principles bearing on the inter-relations of nations.
3. To encourage the formation of organisms through which the consciences of Christians can be stirred and educated to their world responsibilities.
4. To gather and appraise materials on the relationship of the churches to public affairs and make possible inter-church exchange of such materials.
5. To study selected problems of international justice and world order.
6. To assign specific responsibilities to committees or special groups of experts.
7. To organize conferences of church leaders of different nations.[1]

B. THE SETTING OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. The Theological Setting

The growing concern for a better understanding of the nature and function of the church in the "ten formative years" had as its theological counterpart a deepening awareness of the early Christian idea of the Church as a "third race" and a rising emphasis upon the Word or Scripture as the revelation of the ultimate truth.[2] The latter emphasis was both evidenced and fostered by the impact of Karl Barth and neo-orthodox "crisis theology." It was a leaven, which had worked its way into the thought of many other theological perspectives including many of those who rejected neo-orthodoxy in principle both

---

1. Betty Thompson (ed.), Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (Geneva: Information Department of the World Council of Churches, n.d.), p. 1.
2. Karl Hartenstein, "Third Way; An Interpretation and Criticism of Amsterdam," International Review of Missions, XXXVIII (January, 1949), pp. 77-88.

on the Continent and in Anglo Saxon countries.[1] This concern for the Word was summed up by Haramannus Obendick in his comment:

> Theology can be nothing else than an attempt to understand and interpret Scripture. . . . All theology can do is to serve the Kerygma. To be a theologian means to be a teacher of Scripture, and that means first of all to be a student of Scripture.[2]

The emphasis upon the Word of God as the expression of God's design was another of the main ideas in the theological discussions preceeding the conference and during the conference.

This emphasis was not confined to particular geographic lines nor was it as pronounced in the less theologically oriented discussions of sections two, three, and four. Barth criticized the preparatory work of these sections for attempting to ascend from the analysis of man's disorder to God's design in the Kingdom when in fact

> what we can and ought to do here is simply this: we must give our churches and the world a proof "in spirit and in power" -- of how it is when a thousand Christians from all lands and peoples, of all tongues and confessions, gather together in one congregation under present conditions, stand by what they have so often heard and preached in their several positions and various styles: "Commit thy way unto the Lord and trust in him, and he will bring it to pass."[3]

---

1. Karl Barth, "Continental vs Anglo Saxon Theology," Christian Century, LXVI (February 1, 1949), p. 201.
2. Harmannus Obendick, "Protestant Theology in Germany During the Past Fifty Years," Scottish Journal of Theology, V (1952), p. 266.
3. Karl Barth, "No Christian Marshall Plan," Christian Century, LXV (December 8, 1948), p. 1131.

Reinhold Niebuhr responded after the conference with a criticism of Barth's position in that

> it fails to provide sufficient criteria of judgment and impulses to action in moments of life when a historic evil, not yet full-blown and not yet requiring some heroic witneass sneaks into the world upon the back of some unobtrusive error which when fully conceived may produce a monstrous evil.[1]

This recalls the tension within the Stocklhom Conference as to the nature of man's responsibility toward the realization of the Kingdom and the usefulness of normative approximations thereof. The stage was set for a significant decision by the Eucumenical Movement as to whether or not to affirm and advance beyond the thought of the Oxford Conference in the development of the normative approach.

2. The Socio-Political Setting

a. East and West

The world had recently celebrated the end of the war. Hardly had the noise of battle ended, however, before victor and vanquished alike awoke to the realization that peace had not followed the cessation of war. The resolution of the conflict between the Axis and the Allies revealed two newly opposed camps, Communism and Capitalism. Old allies became virtual enemies, and old enemies new allies. The trumpets of peace

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "An Answer to Karl Barth," Christian Century, LXVI (February 23, 1949), p. 236.

which had finally triumphed over the drums of war were muted by the sounds of a new kind of war, a "cold war."[1]

The words of the new contending powers sounded strangely alike. Each spoke of justice and freedom. Each believed that it alone followed the road of social progress. The Communists thought that they represented the creative new force in the dialectical process of history. They viewed Capitalism as a dying force in comparison with the energetic pursuit of social justice of Communism.

Similarly, the West affirmed the values of freedom and personality and viewed Capitalism as the natural economic expression of these values. The West criticized the East on the grounds of the means used more than on the basis of the goals sought. Each force lived in mutual fear of the other in a rising spiral of attitudes of hatred and military expenditures. The dove of peace could not seem to find an ark of hope upon which to land.

b. The Third Force Movement

There were those during the war who anticipated this division into two camps. They projected the idea of a third bloc which could prevent world conflict by counter-balancing

---

1. See Howard K. Smith, State of Europe (N.Y: Knopf Publishing Company, 1951).
See Dean McHenry, The Third Force in Canada (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1952).

the other two spheres -- Communism and Capitalism. These thinkers assumed a political and economic philosphy which could generally be characterized as Social Democratic. Their goal was to achieve a balance between the emphasis of the West on freedom and of the East on economic security.

Europe had seen the results of the excess of freedom in the industrial revolution and the results of an unbalanced thrust toward economic security in Fascist totalitarianism. The middle way was accepted by many Europeans as the only means through which to avoid the excesses of either extreme.[1] Similarly it appeared to many Asians as the only way to advance socially while maintaining a degree of political independence.[2]

The idea of a middle way became a center of conversation over much of Europe in a variety of different thought climates. This provided a broad range of approaches within the "third force," in that each such group developed its ideas from its own perspective. One such group even produced its own periodical, which was named The Third Force and later changed to World Liberalism.[3] National differences also contributed to

---

1. Alexander Werth, "Is the Third Force Defeated?" New Statesman and Nation, XXXVIII (September 3, 1949), pp. 235-6.
2. World Council of Churches, Christ the Hope of Asia (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953), p. 30.
   See Carsun Chang, Third Force in China (N.Y: Bookmen Associates, 1952).
3. The Third Force, III (Autumn, 1950), p. 8.

the breadth of the movement; thus the idea of a "third force" was viewed somewhat differently in Germany than in France, and again differently in France than in Britain or elsewhere.

This middle way found political expression in a variety of liberal and center parties which developed in Europe during that period. Great hope was placed in the Labour Party of Great Britain and later in the "third force" parties which arose as political Communism was subdued in Italy and France. Some thought was given to the possibility of a military "third force" standing between Russia and the United States.[1]

There was also the development of political thought as to the means through which the "third force" could be sustained in countries behind the "Iron Curtain." Most of this conversation was based upon the work of Otto Bauer and his book Le Illegal Parti.[2] He had suggested a cellular underground party system led by a well disciplined but disassociated Cadre. Their goal was to be that of winning the workers to the ideals of Social Democracy, and to a rejection of both Communism and Fascism, in an effort to create an underlying attitude which might in an opportune moment be translated into

---

1. Alexander Werth, "Is the Third Force Defeated?" New Statesman and Nation, XXXVIII (September 3, 1949), p. 235. See W. A. Visser't Hooft, "The Christian in World Affairs," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, IV (March, 1949), p. 7.
2. Otto Bauer, Le Illegal Parti (Paris: Editions Le Lutte Socialiste, 1939).

political action.[1]

The group supporting the publication of The Third Force were organized as the Liberal International. They stated their case as follows:

> The attack on our civilized values is represented in the language of politics as an attack from two sides, from the Right and from the Left. There is in fact only one attack, for these two extremes, mutually complementary and indispensable, use the same technique of offence and suppression; whichever succeeds the result is the same. Yet the political imagery portraying the defenders of civilization as the centre, will be useful if it serves to remind all friends of Liberty and Law that, when encircled and hard pressed, it is necessary to stand together. The Liberal International was founded in order to meet that need.[2]

Many of these hopes were soon to fade. The Labour and Liberal groups did not possess lasting political support and Western Europe was pressed into the western bloc through economic and military necessity as well as cultural affinity.[3]

But what of the church? Some churchmen tended to identify the political responsibility of the churches rather directly with the various social democrat programs.[4] Gradually,

---

1. H. Malcolm MacDonald, "Illegal Socialist Parties and Their Organization," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XXXIII (September, 1952), pp. 126 ff.
2. /Peter Calocoresse/, "Editorial," The Third Force, I (January, 1948), p. 3.
3. Adolf Stusmthal, The Tragedy of European Labor (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).
4. William Temple, Christianity and Social Order (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1942), pp. 101 ff.

however, there was the realization that the churches could not identify themselves directly with any particular economic or political system. This realization was combined with a rising rejection of both Communism and Capitalism.[1] Despite the fact that Communism often demonstrated a deeper sensitivity toward the demands of social justice, most West European churchmen rejected Communism because of its anti-Christian bent and its tendency to foster but another type of dictatorship.[2] There was a seeming acceptance of certain aspects of Communism by some east European Christians, though there was little clear expression of their position before Amsterdam.

Capitalism was likewise confronted with particularly sharp criticism directed at those forces which had assumed a negative anti-Communistic position. In this connection it was realized by many European churchmen that the church dare not continue to assume the role of sanctioning the status quo but must aid the quest for a more desirable social order.[3]

The above discussion represents simply a generalization of several strains of thought in the "third force." It must be realized that a variety of such positions were held with respect to the East-West tension.

---

1. C. L. Patijn, "The Strategy of the Church," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 170.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft, "The Christian in World Affairs," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, IV (March, 1949), pp. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 6.

The goal of the "third force" among churchmen was for a free church in a free Europe, according to comments by Karl Barth which were first published in 1949.

> The Christian Church can therefore stand neither against the West nor the East. It can only walk between the two--which only means that here in the West--may our brothers in the East do their share too--we must stand all the more emphatically for those things which might be overlooked and forgotten in the West, for those things, therefore, which it is necessary to say and to hear in the West. Its task must be to call men back to humanity, and that is its contribution to reconstruction. The Church can only be the Church if it remains free to fulfill that task. It can only stand for Europe: not for a Europe controlled by the West or the East, but for a free Europe going its own way, a third way. A free Church is perhaps the last chance for such a free Europe today.[1]

Social programs were not enough, nor was the task of the church simply that of providing soultions to social dilemmas, though there was no longer as much question as to the necessity for social sensitivity and responsibility on the part of the churches. This situation eventually led the churches to a new awareness of the need for the unique witness of the church to the will of God and the true end of man.[2]

World solidarity could be achieved only by the solution

---

1. Karl Barth, Against the Stream (N.Y: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 145.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft, op. cit., p. 11.
   See F. M. Van Asbeck, "The Church and the Disorder of International Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 68.

of the human problem of being our brother's keeper and not by political thought. The church was challenged to give direction to the resolution of that human problem.[1]

> These things happen when men have been set on fire with new overpowering insights into the truth of God concerning persons, and concerning human relations, and are ready to live and fight for these insights.[2]

> This then, is the first and foremost principle of Christian strategy in international affairs--not to accept as final the established fronts, but to create a new front, a front which seeks to cut across the existing fronts; not to accept the sterile dilemma of the present political situation, but to introduce into the situation God's creative challenge. . . .
>
> I realize that the Church can only speak thus if two miracles take place: the miracle of a real repentance, a turning round, which makes the Church deeply ashamed of its guilt, its acquiescence in intolerable injustice, its involvement in the great disorder, and its lack of prophetic vision; and the other miracle of the Church becoming once again the spokesman of the Holy God--speaking the work which is a two-edged sword, which is not merely a word of judgment and salvation for individuals, but for the nations.[3]

This concern on the part of the churches for the political sphere was given explicit expression within the Ecumenical Movement in this period through the sponsorship of a series of conferences for Christian politicians.

---

1. Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Unity of Christendom in the strife Between East and West," Eucumenical Review, I (Autumn 1918), p. 23.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft, "The Christian in World Affairs," Union Seminary Quarterly, IV (March, 1949), p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 9.

The report of the nineteen hundred and forty-eight conference provided a valuable resource for the work of the Amsterdam Assembly. It is significant to note the emphasis upon the importance of the recognition of man's freedom before God and man and its direct correlation with the demand for the responsible use of that freedom. A major portion of one section of this report is quoted below:

> 1. In the Bible man is always seen as a free being, responsible to God and his neighbour. In modern society the spiritual, political and social freedom of man is more endangered than ever before.
>
> 2. Any submission to totalitarian tendencies in state and society is a denial of the Christian conception of man, of God's intention for man and His work of salvation, since such tendencies deprive man of his responsiblity to answer freely God's love and call. On the other hand irresponsible liberty, which is employed by individuals or groups to reduce or destroy the liberty of fellow-men and the cohesion of the community, stands condemned in itself, as well as for driving its victim to totalitarial reactions.[1]
>
> 3. Any acceptance of a social and economic situation tending to deprive man of the possibility of acting responsible is a denial of the Christian conception of man. This tendency is present in centralized, bureaucratised organizations and this danger looms, therefore, in all actual societies, whether they are capitalist, socialist or communist.
>
> 4. a) We therefore condemn any attempt to limit the freedom of the Church to witness to its Lord and His design for mankind, for this freedom is implied in man's responsibility before God.
>
> b) We therefore condemn any attempt to deprive man of participation in the shaping of society, for

---

1. World Council of Churches, Conference of Christian Politicians, Report of Commission I on "A Responsible Society," Bossey, Switzerland, June, 1948 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1948), p. 1.

> this is a duty implied in man's responsibility towards his neighbour.
>
> c) We therefore condemn the present trend of our technological society to subject man to impersonal forces and alleged laws of economics and technics, for this denies the responsibility for this world which God has laid upon him. . . .
>
> 5. The Church must rethink its attitude to the work which fills the daily life of men in society.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 6. A sense of responsibility of the worker with respect to the means of production should be realised by a variety of measures for participation in ownership and in the policy of management.
>
> 7. Ways and means should be sought by which irresponsible power in society, which threatens the democratic process, either in the form of association of employers or of workers, can be called to account by the community itself.
>
> 8. The impersonal character of life in big cities and modern industry is an obstacle to direct and responsible relations between persons. We therefore request that special care should be given to building up smaller communities in neighbourhood and work. The task of rebuilding of those cities which have been destroyed curing the war presents a special opportunity for this task.[1]

Nearly all of these points were utilized in the Amsterdam deliberations. This illustrates the developmental process through which such problems as freedom, power, and political direction or determination were incorporated under the idea of the responsible society.

The "third force" movement, both in its analysis of the political and economic problems and in its approach to the human problem, provided the immediate context out of which the concept of the responsible society developed. The hope of the

---

1. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

"third force" for the achievement of a balance between the Western ideal of freedom and the Eastern desire for security revealed the same polarity as that encompassed in the idea of the responsible society. The "third force" for a time had used the slogan: the "free society." This was not fully accepted because of its particular association with the West. A better conceptual expression of the balance between freedom and security was needed.

The concept of the "responsible society" which arose out of the preparatory discussions for the Amsterdam Assembly can be correlated with roots of thought which run deep into the discussions of the Ecumenical Movement, but it was the peculiar European situation and the idea of the "third force" which provided the more immediate seed bed for its germination.

C. THE ASSEMBLY

> The opening service of the Assembly took place in the Nieuwe Kerk at Amsterdam on Sunday 22 August 1948. One hundred forty-seven Churches in forty-four countries were represented by three hundred and fifty-one official delegates.[1]

One of the great highlights of the Conference occurred the following morning when the World Council of Churches was officially formed by the acceptance of the resolution by Dr. Marc Boegner "that the formation of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and is hereby completed."[2] After

---

1. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (ed.), History of the Ecumenical Movement, p. 719.
2. Ibid., p. 720.

a moment of silent prayer, the chairman of the session, the Archbishop of Canterbury, led in spoken prayer:

> Almighty God, here we offer unto thee our thanksgiving and praise, that Thou hast brought us to this hour and this act in the faith of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. As Thou hast prospered those into whose labours we enter, so, we pray Thee, prosper us in this our undertaking by Thy most gracious favour, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee we may set forth Thy glory for the well being of Thy Holy Church and the salvation of all Thy people.[1]

The work of the conference was carried on in four sections: The Universal Church in God's Design; The Church's Witness to God's Design; The Church and the Disorder of Society; and, The Church and the International Disorder. The last two are particularly relevant for this discussion

1. The Section on the Church and the Disorder of Society

a. Preliminary Analysis

The first task in the preparatory work of The Section on the Church and the Disorder of Society" was that of making an analysis of the causes of the world disorder. The primary cause suggested was the rise of industry with its emphasis upon techniques. The introductory article in this section maintains that the machine, as a product of the technical attitude, has served both as a blessing and a curse. It has eliminated much of the drudgery of detailed performance, but in so doing it has also destroyed the fabric of personal relationships upon which the life of the community has been based.[2]

---

1. Ibid., p. 720.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr,"God's Design and the Present Disorder of Civilization," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 17.

Man has been able to postulate many rights, but remains unable to secure a just distribution of the benefit of his expanded power as a creative being. The chapter identifies this as a disjuncture between the possession of power and the responsibility for power. Three differing political philosophies are viewed as responses to this problem. Laissez faire economics assumed that a new balance between freedom, as the expression of economic power, and security, as the mutual benefit of all, would be automatically established.

> The laissez faire theory did not realize that human freedom expresses itself destructively as well as creatively, and that an increase in human freedom and power through the introduction of technics makes the achievement of justice more, rather than less, difficult than in non-technical civilizations.[1]

Similarly, Fascism and Communism had been projected as solutions for the breakdown of human relationships and the imbalance of freedom and justice.

> The one is morally cynical and the other morally sentimental and utopian. The one worships force and the other hopes to establish an anarchistic millennium by using revolutionary force to eliminate the need of force in a pure and classless society. The one worships a limited national community. The other hopes for world-wide international community.[2]

In summation the analysis challenges the churches to find means through which to foster the awareness of the responsi-

---

1. Ibid., p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 21.

bility of power and the necessity of determining a just balance between freedom and security.[1]

The diagnosis then is turned to a discussion of the conditions which existed at that time in various sections of the world community. Jacques Ellul in his discussion of "The Situation in Europe" characterizes the disorder in Europe as a disequilibrium between the traditional values of the European culture and the economic and political conditions.

> We see European civilisation breaking up into anarchy before our eyes, because the economic, social, and political forces have developed freely without regard for one another. The traditional values of civilisation are no longer moulding civilisation today; they are no longer taken into account. There is therefore, a serious lack of balance, and we have reached a definite crisis.[2]

Ellul notes that man has sought to deal with his crisis through the development of centralized controls in politics and economics. This system, which had been evolved in order to meet the disjuncture between the value system and the situation, is characterized as a totalistic involvement--a totalitarianism. It involves the whole man and seeks to unify the whole of his life through placing the instruments of action and thought entirely in the hands of a central institution. The church had failed to protect man and aid in the quest

---

1. Ibid., p. 22
2. Jacques Ellul, "The Situation in Europe," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 51.

for the realization of new values in the midst of this involvement.[1]

The analytical process then shifts to Asia. Rural poverty is cited as the basic Asian problem at this time by Bates and Thomas. This they correlate with the technical revolution of the West in that it was the impact of lower priced machine produced goods which broke down the home-industry-agricultural economy of Asia. This breakdown of the domestic union of agriculture and manufacturing has forced a return to an already over-populated agricultural pursuit.[2]

Thomas declares that there is no sense of tragedy in the way an Asian views his situation. One accepts the turn of history. There is little consciousness of responsibility for the change of history on the part of persons. Yet for Thomas man is thought of as responsible only as he is seen as a part of God's creation and in a sustaining relationship with God. Such an acknowledgment of the personal element had not existed in Asia prior to the impact of nationalism and the church. Despite the power of nationalism, Thomas asserts that the church was the great new fact in Asia, in that it proclaimed a gospel which confronted every man "with a responsible decision to repent and enter the historical community of the redeemed."[3]

---

1. Ibid., p. 58.
2. M. M. Thomas, "The Situation in Asia -- II," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 72.
3. Ibid., p. 76.

The situation in the United States is said to be comparable to the European scene with the reservation that classical economics still hold a greater sway ideologically in the United States than in Europe.[1]

The church is seen as a part of this disorder. It had involved and accommodated itself all too often to the demands of nationalism, the social hierarchy, and the economic powers. The net result of this involvement in Europe was that the "working people and the democratic forces in Europe came to believe that the church was against them."[2]

However, it is recognized that involvement is but the other side of responsibility:

> Either the Church will go out and win the nations and attempt to influence the institutions of society or it will seek to remain a very select body of committed Christians. In the first case it runs the risk of being overcome by the world that it seeks to win, and in the second case it is in danger of becoming a self-righteous sect that has lost opportunities to win souls and to raise the level of civilization.[3]

The church could give only one answer; it had to confront the crisis. J. H. Oldham pointed to four areas in which the church must make its impact felt: the revitalization of

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Situation in U.S.A.," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 80.
2. John C. Bennett, "The Involvement of the Church," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 96.
3. Ibid., 92.
   See John M. Yinger, Religion in the Struggle for Power (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1946).

communal living; the development of a Christian doctrine of work; the realization of a collective morality; and, the establishment of order in the political community.

J. H. Oldham's chapter reflects a familiarity with many of the discussions of the "third force," as it reiterates that a balance must be struck between the emphasis upon freedom in the West and equality in the East. He affirms that these two factors belong together and that the Christian must seek to realize a social order in which these factors are in equilibrium. This social order would be more than simply a free society for freedom might mean simply the freedom to exploit. Freedom must be tempered by social justice. The following elements are listed in J. H. Oldham's chapter on "A Responsible Society" as characteristics which such a social order should include.

1. The freedom of men to obey God and to act in accordance with their conscience.
2. Freedom to seek the truth, to speak the truth, to educate one another through a common search for the truth.[1]
3. Respect for man as man.[2]
4. The Christian will always attach a greater importance to the direct relation between persons than to the collective relationships.[3]

---

1. J. H. Oldham, "A Responsible Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 147.
2. Ibid., p. 149.
3. Ibid., p. 150.

5. Human sinfulness will impel Christians to set restraints on irresponsible power.[1]

6. The varied activities of man, religious, cultural, political and economic, should be given the maximum independence of one another.

7. It must be the aim of a just society. . . . to ensure that the material rewards of the common national enterprise are equitably distributed.[2]

8. Political Freedom.[3]

The society which seeks this balance of the freedom and equality of man under God is spoken of by Oldham as a "responsible society."

The necessity of the assumption of some strategy for the church is discussed by C. L. Patijn. He attempts to deal with the problem of maintaining the spiritual nature of the church grounded in the revelation of Jesus Christ while accepting the necessity of social involvement. John Bennett later made a criticism of Patijn for his failure to see the place of proximate norms. With respect to this problem Patijn also points to the necessity of a responsible acquaintance on the part of the church with technical problems and particularly with the moral elements involved even in a highly technical decision.

He recommends that the church act through such groups as those represented in the "third force" in an effort to bear as

---

1. Ibid., p. 151.
2. Ibid., p. 151.
3. Ibid., p. 152.

concrete a witness as possible without an actual identification with the group.

b. "The Church and the Disorder of Society"

The report of Section III on "The Church and the Disorder of Society" followed the thought of the preliminary analysis by identifying the failure of man to see and admit his responsibility to God, as the fundamental source of the social crisis. From this orientation it proceeds with an analysis similar to that of the preliminary documents in the descriptions of two factors contributing to the crisis: concentrations of political and economic power and domination of the social order by techniques.

Economic activity, which was originally free from social controls, has in recent times been brought under the control of the social order. This has been simply a recognition of the fact that justice "demands that economic activity be subordinated to social ends."[1] This fact has confronted the churches with the problem of the kinds of control applicable.

The report held that churchmen were obliged to indicate to those who would socialize property that it is man's use of the property that is the core of the problem. Further, it is affirmed before those who would hold to the status quo that ownership should be tempered by stewardship. "The coherent and purposeful ordering of society has now become a major

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 191.

necessity."[1] This ordering should seek to achieve a responsible society

> where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[2]

. . . . . .

> For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community.[3]

This position led the section to condemn any attempt to limit the freedom of the life of the church, to limit responsible participation in the direction of society, or to limit the search for truth and its expression.[4]

It is recognized in the "Report of Section III" that the appeal of Communism represents a judgment upon Christianity and its failure to witness fully to the gospel. A number of points of conflict between Christianity and Communism are indicated:

> (1) the communist promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history; (2) the belief that a particular class by virtue of its role as the bearer of a new order is

---

1. Ibid., p. 192.
2. Ibid., p. 192.
3. Ibid., p. 192.
4. Ibid., p. 193.

> free from the sins and ambiguities that Christians believe to be characteristic of all human existence; (3) the materialistic and deterministic teachings, however they may be qualified, that are incompatible with belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person, made in God's image and responsible to Him; (4) the ruthless methods of communists in dealing with their opponents; (5) the demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of communist dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life.[1]

The Capitalistic system is also criticised:

> (1) Capitalism tends to subordinate what should be the primary task of any economy--meeting of human needs--to the economic advantages of those who have most power over its institutions. (2) It tends to produce serious inequalities. (3) It has developed a practical form of materialism in Western nations in spite of their Christian background, for it has placed the greatest emphasis upon success in making money. (4) It has also kept the people of capitalist countries subject to a kind of fate which has taken the form of such social catastrophes as mass unemployment.[2]

The responsibility of the Christian is affirmed to be not only to raise constructive criticism, but further to seek new solutions which will achieve a balance between freedom and economic justice.

The Church is not to attempt to fulfill its responsibility through identifying itself directly with social programs. Its basic task in serving the social order is the renewal of

---

1. Ibid., p. 194.
2. Ibid., pp. 194-195.

its own faith and obedience, for the church becomes most effective as the living witness of Jesus Christ as expressed in the everyday life of the congregation.

The "third force" movement focused thought upon the necessity of finding a balance between the freedom ideal of the West and the emphasis upon equality of the East. This was not simply a European dilemma. The preliminary survey indicates the world dimensions of this issue in its varied stages of development. This socio-political problem is also characterized as a fundamental human problem, the problem of the individual's right in relation to the similar freedom or rights of others. For the Christian this freedom-equality tension was often essentially the task of being the brothers keeper. The preliminary survey, in wrestling with the issue, identifies this polarity between freedom and equality, and affirms the necessity of a dynamic balance between the two. John Oldham even suggests ideals which should be characteristic of this balance.[1] This represents a direct use of the normative approach.

The question then turns to that of how the church should deal with the problem of aiding the realization of this equilibrium. In Bennett's discussion of this point it is recognized that all too often the church has distorted its mission

---

1. J. H. Oldham, "A Responsible Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 147-153.

and witness by a false identification with particular interests. On the other hand, he feels that the identification was necessary if the church was to make an impact. In the chapter by Patijn and the comments by Bennett, it is agreed that the Christian revelation of love is the fundamental and ultimate norm. Beyond this however, Bennett points to the use of ideals or norms as expressions of the ultimate ideals of agape and the Kingdom, since the proximate norms could be more directly identified with the social sphere.

The report of this section assumed the diagnosis of the problem given in the survey and added the ideal of responsibility as the dynamic norm which would characterize the nature of the fullest positive interrelation between freedom and equality. When generalized into a larger perspective this became the concept of a responsible society in which the goal is a responsible balance between freedom and its expression in power. The report spelled this out in terms of a sociopolitical situation, by noting that a responsible society would be one where the use of freedom as power would always be held answerable before those who felt the impact of the use of this freedom. Political authority or economic power were viewed as being subject to criticism and change by those who were under that authority or power.

The ideal of responsibility also contained the transcendent dimension of responsibility before God for the Christian. This was indicated within the idea of the

responsible society in the affirmation that man in his exercise of freedom was held responsible before God as well as man. Upon this ground the report developed a critique of both Communism and Capitalism.

The idea of a responsible society was an inclusive conceptualization of the human problem of social existence as it expressed itself in that time with the addition of the ideal of responsibility as the proximate norm for behavior. This was then transposed into a goal or ideal for society in the conceptualization of the idea of a responsible society in which the use of power would be held accountable before God and man.

2. The Church and the International Disorder

a. Preliminary Analysis

The section on "The Church and International Disorder" developed a pattern similar to that of the previous section in that it began with an attempt to diagnose the disorder. It suggests that the state has arisen as the primary institution following the breakdown of the mediaeval synthesis. Self-interest has become the primary motif under which the sovereign states participate in any larger communal activity. This, of course, creates a condition of general disorder.

The nations have attempted to re-establish the lines of community in recent decades through the development of international institutions and law,

> but even in the most modern mechanism for general co-operation between states, the

> United Nations, the national so-called sovereign state forms the foundation. It would not be otherwise possible to erect such a superstructure; nevertheless the great central question for our generation remains this: What kind of relationships between member-states does this general organisation provide? And can this organisation meet the growing needs of an interdependent world?[1]

It is evident that no higher loyalty exists and that the nations are more deeply concerned with their own interest than with those of humanity.

This condition underlines the need for a bold but realistic approach to the questions of national sovereignty and self-interest. Efforts leading to the formation and strengthening of further world institutions based on common principles are viewed as an imperative. This is not to call an international Leviathan into existence, but rather to stimulate the movement from a confederate to a federate form of world government, according to Van Asbeck.

> The immediate possibility is to work for an international order based on a rule of law, limiting national sovereignties and providing procedures for peaceful changes. This means the development of international law from a contractual law between nations to a law above them.[2]

---

1. F. M. Van Asbeck, "The Church and the Disorder of International Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, pp. 54-55.
2. Kenneth Grubb, "Chairman's Introduction," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 15.

Realistically speaking however, such a law has to be undergirded by an attitude of mutual respect, a sense of obligation, and a common ethos among the nations. Despite its failures in the past the church is confronted with the task of fostering this international ethos through its world-wide fellowship.

The survey continues with the recognition that the church has to be sensitive and realistic before its tasks, for it alone can decisively confront men with the fact and the effects of their own self-interest. The church must give constructive criticism and encouragement to the institutions of the social order though it cannot assume that it is technically competent to make certain decisions; however, it must consider the moral implications involved in such decisions.

As a world-wide fellowship committed to Jesus Christ the church is capable of a positive international impact, but it has been handicapped by its minority status and the fact of its compromises with particular national and economic interests.

The church has begun to deal with the world disorder in a more concerted fashion in its formation of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in 1946. The continued support and development of this commission and its work of contact and education at both the international and the local levels are a necessity.

The general approach to the East-West conflict in the world community was considered by John Foster Dulles and Dr. Hromodka.

The thought of Dulles pivots on the issue of social change. Change is viewed as a political and social fact of existence. It is a positive factor in that it provides the opportunity for a better world and better persons through the process of growth. The need of the hour, according to Dulles, is for the development of world institutions and processes through which change can peacefully be brought about. He affirms that the free society in which there is a combination of freedom, discipline, and wisdom will continue to provide the best political ground for peaceful and adequate change. He recognizes that there is a correlation between West and the East in the realm of long term ends or goals but he raises a sharp criticism of the difference in the means sanctioned for the achievement of the ends.[1] He holds that the West must reject all forms of violent change while taking the offensive at the same time in the achievement of peaceful change.

Joseph Hromadka of the John Hus Theological Faculty of Prague, indicates that the East is fearful of the West and dubious as to the ability of the West to achieve its own values.

> Hence millions of European citizens are doubtful whether the "free democracies" of the West are qualified to meet the needs of the present era, and to organise effectively a new order on the basis of real social justice and equal opportunity. . . . Is not a material, economic interest on the

---

1. John Foster Dulles and Joseph L. Hromadka, "Christian Responsibility in Our Divided World," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 190.

> part of "big" industries and financial concerns looking behind all the high-sounding slogans of "a free democracy," behind all the efforts to protect "individual freedom," "free enterprise" against any control by government, society and state? The blind or bankrupt leniency of the liberal democratic governments towards the reactionary regimes which one by one swept away the political life of Europe and after 1920 reinstated the old, seemingly vanquished elements of feudal conservatism in their old positions has made the common man of Europe rather suspicious of the political tendencies prevailing at present in some leading Western states.[1]

The factor of import for the East European is not simply political freedom, but also a well-designed system within which freedom and social justice can both be realized within the frame work of the essential recognition of human dignity and peace, according to Hromadka. From this perspective Hromadka called upon the West to respect the quest of the East for social justice. He suggests that "Communism reflects, in a very secularized form, in spite of its materialism and dictatorship, the Christian longing for the fellowship of full and responsible love."[2]

The West, therefore, must not make the mistake of associating the fundamental situation in the East with pure totalitarianism or Communism. The distinction between people and party must be kept clearly in mind; further, it must be realized that the former may one day transform the latter. Hromadka

---

1. Ibid., pp. 122-123.
2. Ibid., p. 132.

did not seek to defend materialistic Communism, and he indicated weaknesses and inherent dangers in the situation in the East; nonetheless, he pleads for the West to express its values positively through a sensitive awareness of the passing events.

The preparatory volume concludes with a lengthy discussion on human rights and power. Rights are no longer thought of in the classical sense. This is illustrated in the emphasis upon the claim for economic justice as an inherent right of the person. Three roots for the Christian concern for human rights were suggested:

> 1. The Christian conception of man's freedom is derived from the faith that man is made in the image of God.
>
> 2. The dignity which is claimed for man is attested by the demonstration of God's love for him in Jesus Christ.
>
> 3. The right of every man to freedom is imperative in order that he may be in a position to respond to the calling wherewith God has called him.[1]

Upon this basis it is held that the church should work at both the local and international levels for the development of an international bill of rights.[2]

At this point the discussion drew upon the foundation of thought from the Oxford and Madras Conferences in denoting the

---

1. O. Frederick Nolde (ed.), "Freedom of Religion and Related Human Rights," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 147.
2. Ibid., p. 173.

meaning of religious liberty. The implications of these characteristics for the individual and the group are that the person should be free to determine his own beliefs, to enjoy the fruits of his beliefs, to fellowship with others of similar belief, and to express his beliefs.[1] Further, the church must encourage governmental institutions to assure all citizens freedom "from direct or indirect compulsion in matters of religion" and to "create conditions which are favorable to the freest development and expression of conscience consistent with the best interests of the entire community."[2]

The problem of power was surveyed briefly by Emil Brunner and Sir Kenneth Grubb. Brunner defines power as "The capacity of man to determine the life i.e., the doing and not doing of others by compulsion."[3] This desire to possess such means of compulsion is a perpetual problem because it is rooted in man's tendency toward self interest.

Historically the community has dealt with the problem of power by ordering it under law within the institution of the state. In the opinion of Brunner the state does not create the law, it guarantees it. The state is itself under the law with respect both to the legislative enactments and the rights of the citizens. Brunner maintains that the check and balance

---

1. Ibid., pp. 176-178.
2. Ibid., p. 183.
3. Emil Brunner and Kenneth Grubb, "Christian Responsibility in a World of Power," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 190.

system in the state provides a further restraint upon the institution of the state as the administrator of power under the law. All power is possessed under God as a responsibility over which the institution or individual serves as a steward, according to Brunner.

The growing complexity of the various economic and social orders in society has required that the state similarly expand in order to meet its responsibility as the instrument of restraint. This increase in the power of the state opened the way for the rise of totalitarianism. At this point Brunner disregarded the former problem of concentration of power in the orders of society and concentrated on the issue of totalitarianism. He rejects any totalistic institution, even a democratically operated one. In conclusion he asserts that the power struggles between states in the international community can best be resolved by the development of a federative system which is flexible enough to allow freedom and strong enough to demand responsibility.

Kenneth Grubb attempts to portray the more inclusive dimensions of the question. He emphasizes the fact that

> power in many of its different meanings is a necessary element in human affairs. It is the means of executing authority, and the source of technical progress. In the form of influence, the power of one mind over another, it has moved men to noble action and enduring example.[1]

---

1. Ibid., p. 200.

On the other hand Grubb indicates that the power which is generally the concern of international discussions is that concentration of power which enables "small groups of men to coerce the wills and limit the freedom of their fellows."[1]

Grubb maintains that the latter usage of power is not always the product of negative intentions. He points out that well intentioned ideas and programs have often led to concentrations of power which in the end have proven irresponsible. The problem is centered in the misuse of power whether accidental or otherwise. This is particularly relevant in the international sphere where the situation is intensified by conceptions of sovereignty and national honor.

Here, it is essentially a problem of war in that power becomes the ultimate means of resolving international tensions either through bluff or actual conflict.

Against this background Grubb recommends that the churches give considerable thought to their position on the issues of war and to their task in developing a sense of common obligation and interest between the nations.

b. Report of Section IV

The report developed by the section on "The Church and the International Disorder" began with a characterization of the tragic world situation and the necessity for repentance and renewal on the part of man. The body of the report centered in five main affirmations.

---

1. Ibid., p. 200.

There is a unanimous rejection of war in the belief that "war is contrary to the will of God."[1] Beyond this general rejection of war the section is divided into three opinion groups on the interpretation of the rejection. These differences are openly stated. First, there are those who hold that war can never by an act of justice, though on occasion it may be a Christian duty to participate. Secondly, some assume the position that in the absence of an international governmental structure and power the use of military action is essential for the maintenance of world order. Finally, the third group refused to participate in any type of military activity and proposed an absolute witness against war and for peace.[2] It was acknowledged in the report that in the event of war, the church must clearly delineate its position in order to prevent the use of the church's name as a sanction for a particular national position.

The second central concern of the report is that "peace requires an attack upon the causes of conflict."[3] The responsibility of the church is to raise constructive criticism against all sides and to be free of direct association with any national or economic outlook. The church should oppose tyranny and support the development of responsible self-government, for it is the duty of the church to lift men above their own particular national outlook.

---

1. "Report of Section IV," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 213.
2. Ibid., p. 218.
3. Ibid., p. 219.

Third, "the nations of the world must acknowledge the rule of law."[1]

> No state may claim absolute sovereignty, or make laws without regard to the commandments of God and the welfare of mankind. It must accept its responsibility under the governance of God, and its subordination to law, within the society of nations.[2]

The report continues with the recognition that the church has the responsbility of supporting institutions and lines of communication which will foster the development of a common moral foundation upon which the law of an international community can be structured.

The observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the fourth area of concentration in the report. It states that the church should act to achieve the recognition of these rights and freedoms in the world community. Freedom to obey God and its counterpart in equality before God are undeniable proclamations required of the church. This is balanced with the insight that freedom should always be directly correlated with responsibility.

Finally, it was affirmed that "the churches and all Christian people have obligations in the face of international disorder."[3] This places responsibilities upon individuals and churches alike to act through a variety of agencies and means

---

1. Ibid., p. 220.
2. Ibid., p. 220.
3. Ibid., p. 222.

in the witness to a higher order and the gradual realization of that order.

The report concludes with a declaration of religious liberty which lists the following points:

1. Every person has the right to determine his own faith and creed.[1]

2. Every person has the right to express his religious beliefs in worship, teaching and practice, and to proclaim the implications of his beliefs for relationships in a social or political community.[2]

3. Every person has the right to associate with others and to organise with them for religious purposes.[3]

4. Every religious organisation, formed or maintained by action in accordance with the rights of individual persons; has the right to determine its policies and practices for the accomplishment of its chosen purposes.[4]

This section was based on a more pragmatic approach. While the section of "The Church and the Disorder of Society" analyzed the situation and developed a general working norm, this section approached many of the actual international problems in an effort to resolve them.

This tactical approach resulted in a number of working conclusions with reference to specific problems such as peace and war, rights and responsibilities, and international law

---

1. Ibid., p. 226.
2. Ibid., p. 226.
3. Ibid., p. 227.
4. Ibid., p. 227.

and national sovereignty. It is significant to note the correlation between these practical conclusions and the developing idea of a responsible society. The Dulles-Hromadka discussions point to the polarity of freedom and equality under justice. Similarly, the concern for a commonly accepted international law raises the same ultimate question of responsibility.

This coherence between the rather practical accumulation of experience by the churches under the Christian ideal of history and the conceptual axioms under the idea of the responsible society served as a further indication of the validity of such a dynamic norm as that of the responsible society.

D. THE POST-AMSTERDAM PERIOD

The Study Department of the World Council of Churches at its meeting in the summer of 1949, chose the topic of "Christian Action in Society" as one of the themes to be studied in the period to follow. This subject was divided into two sections: the responsible society, and the meaning of work. This represented an effort to reach both the level of national economic and political decisions and the individual decisions of the Christian.[1]

These discussions by the Study Department were aimed

---

1. World Council of Churches, The Responsible Society (Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 1949), p. 3.

primarily at stimulating thought among the Churches concerning the actions at Amsterdam. They tended to draw the central issues into an incisive summation in order to fulfill their purpose. A Study Department pamphlet issued in this period provides one of the earliest attempts to deal with the idea of the responsibile society as a working concept.

The idea of the responsible society is viewed as a generalized ideal which can be given positive meaning that may be applicable for either political or economic life. The idea of responsibility also is significant in that it can encompass many of the values relevant for Christian ethics, according to the document.

The Study Department pamphlet continues by pointing out that the Amsterdam critique of Communism and laissez faire Capitalism is summed up in the recognition that these systems in their consistent form are one-sided in relation to the basic problem of finding the right balance between planning and freedom.[1] Capitalism is no longer feasible as has been indicated by the movement of Capitalistic economies into a mixed economic system. Likewise, collectivism tends to ignore the maintenance of economic and political freedom. The dilemma is to discover a means to achieve planning for security without too great a centralization of power. A responsible

---

1. Ibid., p. 6.

society is one in which this dilemma is resolved through the proper equilibrium of freedom and economic justice, according to the pamphlet.[1]

The Study Department pamphlet deals with two general approaches aimed toward the achievement of a responsible society. The first approach centers in the economic sphere, though it can not be considered apart from the political structure also. This is the experimental attack of the mixed economies, generally spoken of as Democratic Socialism. This position attempts to struggle directly with the tension between freedom and economic justice. This approach has been painful and slow because it has often necessitated the balancing of such seeming inconsistencies into one scheme as free trade and enterprise, full employment and security, and economic and social development of backward peoples.

The second approach is more closely related to the political realm in that it seeks a responsible society through the development of a political structure in which the people are able to control, to criticize and to change their government.[2] This is a question before the West as well as the East for often the political freedoms esteemed by the West are a facade behind which racial and economic exploitation

---

1. Ibid., p. 7.
2. "Report of Section III", "The Church and the Disorder of Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 192.

continue to run their own course. The actual realization of political freedom is held to be essential for the development of a responsible society in East or West and it must be fostered and expanded despite the risk of its provisions.

The Study Department underlines the fact that faith is the ultimate source of responsible action. This is a significant note in this discussion in that it points to the religious component in the idea of the responsible society. Just as a world ethos is foundational for an international law, so a deeply rooted attitude of responsibility is fundamental for the responsible functioning of the institutions of a social order. Such an attitude of responsibility ultimately requires a transcendent ideal point of reference if it is to survive.

> Faith is the only source of responsible actions which does not dry up in the face of guilt and the inescapable consequences of established fact, since it does not spring from human vitality but from the grace of God Himself. Where a man knows to Whom he is responsible even in the grip of circumstances not of his own making, he is able to take responsible action. He will enjoy the freedom of the children of God even when such circumstances leave him but little choice.[1]

The Study Department evaluation of the criticism leveled against the Amsterdam reports is also considered. The strongest criticism had come from conservative spokesmen in Switzerland and the United States on the one side and from the Journal of

---

1. World Council of Churches, op. cit., p. 11.

the Moscow Patriarchate on the other. Each criticized the reports for opposite reasons.[1]

It is recognized that the "Report on Section III" could have been more explicit in defining its criticism of laissez faire Capitalism as an ideology.[2] Likewise, it is indicated that the report had over-simplified the world political conflict in the two positions of Communism and Capitalism. This failed to give adequate regard to Socialism which has often been a sharper foe of Communism than Capitalism.

A number of facets of the problem of Communism and the West are discussed with the conclusion that there is a need for a deeper sense of constructive sympathy between Christians on both sides of the "Iron Curtain."[3]

The second subject under the topic "Christian Action in Society" is the question of "The Meaning of Work." Though deeply interrelated, this topic is developed in its own direction beyond the scope of this study.

E. CONCLUSIONS

The Amsterdam Assembly stood far beyond the Stockholm Conference and the Oxford Conference in the development and use of social norms. Stockholm saw several normative ideas used as a means for gaining agreement on the significance of

---

1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 18.

certain social problems and the direction toward their resolution. The Oxford Conference moved on beyond this position by developing "middle axioms" as a means through which to foster a social strategy centered in the idea of justice for the churches, but it failed to deal with the problem of how these "middle axioms" should be applied.

The Amsterdam Assembly represented a climax in this developmental process. The intense interrelation in the world community had focused attention upon one of the fundamental problems of social life, the relation of the freedom or equality of the one to the similar freedom or right of equality on the part of the many. The idea of the responsible society developed at Amsterdam possesses many characteristics similar to the Oxford ideal of justice; however, the idea of the responsible society is a more dynamic and inclusive norm capable of embracing the breadth of the social order. This idea was constructed around the pattern of the polarity for which it was to serve as a norm; thus its conceptual nature was that of a polarity between freedom and equality. Amsterdam applied the ideal of responsibility before God and man to this polarity and thereby created an ideal or norm which might be used either as a goal or as a criterion for an individual action or the development of society as a whole.

This norm of responsibility is basically dependent upon the deeper values of the person or society for the determination of its nature. The values assumed will determine what

being responsible means. This suggests the flexibility of the idea and the importance of the religious components correlated thereto. This flexibility allows the normative idea of the responsible society to serve many of the same functions identified with the normative approach in earlier discussions. In the horizontal plane it served as a focus for thought despite differences in presuppositions. This facilitated the critique of Communism and Capitalism and the discussion of such problems as that of property by Christians holding a variety of ethical positions. In the vertical dimension, the idea of the responsible society acted as a relevant expression of the ultimate ideal of the Kingdom; thereby facilitating the application of the ultimate ideal in the temporal order. Likewise, it served the functions of a criterion and goal against which the social process could be reflected. This was illustrated most clearly in the critique of Communism and Capitalism and the suggestion of a better direction in the idea of the responsible society.

There was some debate at Amsterdam as to whether the Assembly discussion had reversed the true order of ideas by identifying man's disorder before turning to God's design, but there was little question as to man's responsibility to discern God's design and to order man's design accordingly.[1]

---

1. Karl Barth, "No Christian Marshall Plan," Christian Century, LXV (December 8, 1948), p. 1131.

The disagreement expressed at Stockholm and in the thought of Wiesner at Oxford had been quieted by the critique of world events reflecting themselves through the ecumenical discussions. The acceptance of the idea of the responsible society by the variety of denominations and ethical approaches present at the First Assembly evidenced the increasing development and usefulness of the normative approach.

V. THE EVANSTON ASSEMBLY

A. INTRODUCTION

The period between the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies was characterized by an on going struggle in which the churches troubled over the problem of their action in society. It was a process of experimentation and questioning which led through a cross fertilization of insights and experience to a gradual crystalization of thought on matters of witness and action.[1] The Amsterdam and Evanston deliberations represent one continuous period. This process has been divided simply in order to the discussion.

The continuing world social revolution provided the background for Evanston.

> /It was/ marked by the decline of old social and economic ideologies and institutions, the social effects of continued rapid technical change, the complete shake-up of old patterns in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the increasing economic and political inter-dependence of nations, and the effects of the continuing struggle between the communist and noncommunist countries.[2]

---

1. World Council of Churches, The First Six Years (Geneva: Study Department of World Council of Churches, 1954), p. 28.
2. World Council of Churches, The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954) III, 3.

> Everywhere the victim is man. Often he is treated as no better than an object, or at best a tool, rather than as a responsible person. He hears much about peace, but for the sake of peace he is told either to hate or to rearm. He hears much about freedom, but in the name of freedom, he is in fact deprived of liberty sometimes even from his childhood. He hears much about human rights, but he lives in a world of exploitation, deportation, concentration camps, arbitrary barriers and total war.[1]

B. RELEVANT ACTIVITY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The purpose of this section will be to make reference to those activities of the World Council of Churches in this period which contributed to the development of the normative approach through the concept of the "responsible society." This makes no claim to be all inclusive, but seeks rather to indicate several of the main relevant strains in the process of thought and action between the two assemblies.

1. The Central Committee

The Toronto meeting of the Central Committee in July, 1950, is usually remembered for two pronouncements: the statement on "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches" and the statement on "The Korean Situation and the World Order." The latter statement marked the assumption of a new role by the Central Committee. They committed themselves

---

1. World Council of Churches, op. cit., p. 122.

to a specific position against North Korea within the working structure of the United Nations.[1] Further, they commended "the United Nations, as an instrument of world order, for its prompt decision to meet this aggression and for authorizing a police measure which every member nation could support."[2] The statement indicated that "we stand for a just peace under the rule of law and must seek peace by expanding justice and by attempting to reconcile contending world powers."[3]

The idea of the responsible society was not directly applied in this case; however, this situation illustrates an attempt to express an element inherent in the definition of the responsible society. The responsible use of power on the part of the nations of the world community.

The meeting of the Central Committee at Lucknow, India, January, 1953, also intensified many insights concerning the task of the church in working toward the goal of a responsible society. "The imperatives of social justice" were made explicit through the travel of the committee.[4]

> Our meeting has brought home to us the poverty and distress of these peoples as well as their efforts to grapple with their problems. They are demanding social conditions which are worthy of human beings. Churches all over the world must ask how

---

1. World Council of Churches, The First Six Years (Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 1954), p. 119.
2. Ibid., p. 119.
3. Ibid., p. 120.
4. Ibid., p. 131.

> they can help the people of Asia in their efforts to attain a standard of living which meets basic human needs, and in their search for a more just social and economic order.[1]

The religious rootage and component of the idea of the responsible society was also noted. It was recognized that the rising nations of the East would have to find cultural and religious foundations for their developing democratic political systems.

> In this situation the churches of Asia must continue to make clear that the fundamental rights of man will only be firmly grounded in so far as these are related to the Christian view of man as a child of God in Christ. Freedom can only be retained in a society which is based on the integrity of the individual.
>
> The Christian understanding of man is directly relevant to the search for new foundations for society.[2]

2. The Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation

The quest for a middle way between East and West by the "third force" continued after Amsterdam despite the fact that the West European nations had been drawn into a closer alliance with the United States. This position found expression with the Ecumenical Movement in the "Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation" established in June of 1950. The Commission was a totally independent group composed of two or three members from each of the countries of Western Europe and those who could attend from Eastern Europe. The Commission was composed essentially of laymen representative of the political or economic professions. It represented one more facet of the

---

1. Ibid., p. 131.
2. Ibid., p. 132.

evolving approach to Christian action in society.

> This group . . . . has helped to call attention to the many difficulties to be faced in achieving European unity, and at the same time has proposed a number of specific points at which Christians have a responsibility for concrete action in support of effective European integration.[1]

The findings of this group indicate that the European situation is such that it is no longer possible for each nation to deal with the problems present within the confines of their national boundaries. The situation demands a higher unit of cooperation and action. The conception of national sovereignty is challenged by the realization that a nation must always be aware of its responsibilities to itself, its neighbors, and the community of nations.

The group developed an approach similar to that of the "Third forcd" as the ground for its position concerning the East-West tension.

> Action is needed, that within the Atlantic Union a common European policy may be expressed and invested with the necessary authority. The constitution of a united Europe would enable Europe to play a decisive role in establishing a modus vivendi between East and West which would also contribute to the peaceful settlement of the differences which divide the continents today.[1]

---

1. Paul Abrecht, "The Churches and European Unity," Ecumenical Review IV (April, 1952), p. 296.
2. Paul Abrecht, "The Churches and European Unity," Ecumenical Review, IV (April, 1952), p. 301, quoting The Second Statement of the Ecumenical Commission of European Cooperation (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1951).

The responsibility laid before the churches by the commission were those of contributing "the right norms and the true spirit" as the sustaining foundations of such a European community.[1] The commission also held that it was the task of the church to provide vision for the future, realism for the analysis of present weaknesses, and reconciliation for the purpose of preventing political and communal separation.

The demand for the enlargement of the sense of responsibility for power within the European community and the use of norms as goals or criteria for the realization of that responsibility was common in the life of the commission. This served as an example of the use of the meaning and approach expressed in the idea of the "responsible society" in the process of determining the nature of Christian action in society.

3. The Asian Conferences

The same venture of determining the implications of the idea of a responsible society was carried out at the Bangkok Eastern Asia Conference, on "The Church in Social and Political Life," held in December, 1949. A variety of imperatives were indicated.

> It is the will of God that the Church should witness to his redeeming love

---

1. Paul Abrecht, op. cit., p. 300.

> through an active concern for human freedom and justice.[1]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The struggle for the attainment of political freedom has awakened the hitherto submerged peoples of East Asia to a new sense of dignity and historical mission.[2]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> /A recognition of the worth of/ the life of men in society and in the state, which no individual or government can disregard with impunity.[3]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Only that which transcends morals, namely, the knowledge of the ultimate accountability of man and society to God and of the grace of God by which men, being forgiven, forgive one another, can be the foundation of personal responsibility and responsible society.[4]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Christian Church must welcome the demand of the peoples for a fuller participation in the life of society at the level where power is exercised, since this is an expression of human dignity; and the rise of communism is a judgment on the churches for their failure to do so.[5]

"The Ecumenical Study Conference for East Asia," held in Lucknow, India, in December, 1952, served as a basic indication of the approach of the World Council of Churches to the

---

1. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents in Church and Society (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1954), p. 137.
2. Ibid., p. 138.
3. Ibid., p. 138.
4. Ibid., p. 139.
5. Ibid., p. 139.

problem of the responsible society in under developed countries.[1] The findings of this conference were divided into four areas: land reform; planning for production and raising of the standard of living; the effects of the world situation on social and economic reconstruction; and, the role of the church in political and social action. The findings represented a general consensus of opinion although the statement was not unanimously accepted throughout.[2]

The discussion sought to apply the idea of the responsible society pragmatically to the Asian scene. This provided somewhat of a test of the flexibility and applicability of the concept of the responsible society in various cultural contexts and also illustrated the manner in which it is given new meaning.

The problem of land reform is fundamental. It is not simply a problem of distributing land and justice to a land hungry peasantry, according to the findings of the conference. There is also the question of how to create social and legal conditions which will preserve the positive implications of a distribution of land. The following five principles bear upon the solution to both the issue of land tenure and rural development:

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ the Hope of Asia (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953).
2. Ibid., p. 27.

1. Abolition of the old feudal landlord system is necessary. There is in most cases no moral justification for compensation of the landlord, by the state or the cultivator. Justice for the peasant requires that he should not be burdened with new indebtedness due to compensation. (This does not mean a general endorsement of expropriation of property but relates solely to the situation here encountered).

2. Ownership by cultivators of farms in subsistence size is the goal.

3. Freedom from the money lender through making credit available to the peasant on cheap terms.

4. Utilization without delay of unutilized land.

5. Provision of land for the landless peasants and settlement of the homeless.[1]

This demonstrated the use of the idea of the responsible society as a structure for the reassessment of a situation and the development of relevant norms under the absolute ideal. The freedom and equality of the landholder and the landless peasant were internally re-evaluated before the norm of responsibility.

The development of industry is viewed as one of the ways of reducing the population pressure on the land. M. M. Thomas had discussed the reverse of this process at Amsterdam when he pointed out how the import of western goods had destroyed the home-industry-agriculture system of Asia. The present issue is that of the introduction of new industry in order to draw

---

1. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

some of the population off of the land again. Nationalization of basic industries appears to be the only means for achieving the accumulation and appropriation of capital essential to that end. Additional funds are greatly needed. This places a responsibility upon both the industrial and the under developed countries of the world community. It presents the challenge to invest in the situation, to the former, because of the human need involved, or at least because it is the best response to Communism and it places the latter under the responsibility of finding means through which to encourage and protect the flow of private foreign capital.[1] This suggests the breadth of potential use of a normative idea such as that of the responsible society. The idea of responsibility was used here to identify the interacting liabilities of nations in the world community as it had been in the discussions of the Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation.

The third section of the findings indicate that international tensions militate against advancements in social reconstruction. Numerous illustrations evidence the fact that armaments and international tensions usurp available resources and block cooperation.

But what was to be the role of the church in political and social action? This central question was raised with

---

1. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

specific reference to the Asian scene. The report sought to make explicit some of the implications of the idea of the responsible society as a foundation for this question.

> For us as Christians in East Asia a society is not responsible when --
>
> 1. human rights and freedoms are not effectively promoted for all,
> 2. social change and reform are promoted without respect for the integrity of the human person,
> 3. its people do not possess full political sovereignty over their own affairs,
> 4. men are discouraged or deterred by official action from freely accepting faith in Christ
>
> For us as Christians in East Asia a society is responsible where --
>
> 1. social justice is actively promoted,
> 2. full development of natural resources is pursued,
> 3. the fullest share possible of the national wealth is guaranteed to all,
> 4. human rights and freedoms are effectively guaranteed,
> 5. the people have full sovereignty for their own affairs,
> 6. the principles of social and political life are in accordance with the concept of man as a person called to responsible existence in community.[1]

These are subsidiary axioms which represent responsible action in the specific situation. This underlines the fruitfulness of the normative approach as a medium for correlating the ideal or goal and the situation. The idea of a responsible society is here used both as a higher goal and criterion.

---

1. Ibid., p. 31.

After laying down these subsidiary axioms under the concept of the responsible society the report turns to the task of the church. Christians are called upon to realize that social changes can best be brought about through political action. Christians "must be prepared to accept the necessity of political action as a means of promoting social justice."[1] This does not mean that Christians are to organize themselves into a party; rather, they are to seek to redeem the political parties of their idolatrous and utopian pretensions. It is in this sphere that the truly prophetic ministry of the Christian can be found. This points toward activity by the church on several levels: the development of schemes and techniques; the building up of cells of true community living; and, infusion of culture with a true understanding of the nature of man and God's creation.[2]

The Bangkok and Lucknow Conferences made extensive use of the idea of the responsible society. Its flexibility allowed utilization of the concept as a structure for reassessment, a working frame of reference for the expression of absolute ideas in specific terms, and as a goal or criterion. This increasing delineation and definition of the use of the idea of the responsible society served as an introduction to its expression at the Evanston Assembly.

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ the Hope of Asia, p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 32.

4. The Church in Communist Dominated Lands

The situation of the Christian in Communist dominated lands acted as another focal point of concern in the period between the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies. The character of the problem was defined by Wolfgang Schweitzer in his paper entitled, "The Church's Freedom and Its Responsibility in Eastern Europe and in the Western Orbit." He relates that once an individual has decided to stay in the country and to avoid active political resistance a degree of cooperation with the Communists becomes necessary. Thereafter the failure to follow the Party will be viewed as resistance. The question for the individual then becomes that of deciding whether or not to so resist when it will probably have no consequence, except that of cutting himself off from their society.[1]

In such climate the task of the church takes on even greater magnitude in its relation to society for "the Church is called to represent the element of responsibility in society."[2] Schweitzer held that the church can fulfill such a role through the freedom given in its transcendent point of reference. The church, from this perspective, is not to

---

1. Wolfgang Schweitzer, The Church's Freedom and Its Responsibility in Eastern Europe and in the Western Orbit (Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 1950), p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 9.

claim any ultimate authority for its social ideals or actions except as the prophetic function of the church is hindered; whereupon, the church should witness in protest and perhaps even in suffering.[1]

John Bennett responded to this position with the following comment:

> If a Christian or a Church must live for an indefinite period in a society that lacks these marks /marks of a good social structure/ completely or almost completely, there may be a temptation to accept these limits of action in a fatalistic spirit. Surely the Church should keep alive in the worst circumstances a vision of better possibilities. . . .But prophetic witness involves more than that. It must involve the mediation of God's judgment to the political powers themselves and this involves some of the norms suggested in the idea of a responsible society.[2]

Both Schweitzer and Bennett recognized the value of the ideal of responsibility. The difference lay in the emphasis upon the application of the ideal by the church as a social norm. Schweitzer chose to bear down on the factor of the uncertainty with which Christians approach any program. While Bennett affirmed the flexibility and validity of the ideal of responsibility as a starting place for Christian action in the midst of the uncertainty.[3]

---

1. Ibid., p. 11.
2. John C. Bennett, Comments on Dr. Schweitzer's Memorandum (Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 1950), p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 2.

Schweitzer's position accepted the vaildity of such an idea as that of responsibility, but viewed any of its social implications with uneasiness. This was a reserved acceptance of the idea of the responsible society in comparison with Bennett's use.

C. THE EVANSTON ASSEMBLY

At Amsterdam, the basic task had been to create the World Council of Churches. Evanston was faced with the task of evaluating the developments of the six years separating it from Amsterdam as a foundation for deliberations leading to the further growth of the Ecumenical Movement.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches accepted an invitation to hold the Second Assembly in the United States from the member churches of the United States at its Chichester Meeting in 1949. "The Christian Hope" was selected as the general area for the main theme in the following year at the Toronto Meeting of the Central Committee. The next four years saw this theme widely discussed.

> The discussion helped to clear the theological atmosphere by revealing that theological trends could not be so easily classified and labelled as popular assumption had supposed. Opposition between Anglo-Saxon and Continental theology was taken for granted, and it was initially supposed that of two parties, one, more Pelagian, humanistic and activistic would confront the other, more Augustinian, otherworldly and quietistic. The four-year discussion revealed a more complicated theme. . . . All variations of conviction were found everywhere, with the result that the theological situation was discovered to be less simple and compact, but much more fluid than had been assumed.[1]

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 6.

Further preparation was made in the development of a preliminary survey for each of the six sections. These surverys were augmented with sectional working papers which provided the final stimulus for the action of each section in the development of its official report. The surveys and reports of the sections concerned with the social and international orders constitute the primary resources for the analysis to follow.

1. Social Questions: The Responsible Society in a World Perspective

a. The Task of the Church

This preparatory section seeks to do three things: (1) to characterize the world situation of recent years, (2) to define the social problems which have confronted the churches, and (3) to indicate the nature of the response of the churches to the problems.[1]

The world situation is considered under the topic, "The World Social Revolution." According to this survey one social era is passing away while another is in the struggle of birth. Classical capitalism has declined in importance in most of the world as the economic sphere is increasingly subordinated to the needs of the community.[2] Socialism has likewise undergone extensive "de-Utopianizing" and "de-Marxizing" in the revisions of the approach to the questions of property,

---

1. World Council of Churches, The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church (N. Y.: Harper & Brother, 1954) III, p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 4.

progress, and economic determinism.[1] It is realized that these changes confront the churches with the task of redefining their functions in society in relation to the new situations.

> There is a search for a new Europe. What is being sought is a society which expresses through its institutions a concern for the individual man and which affords him both the security and the freedom for responsible living. Everything is being judged according to whether or not it serves these ends.[2]

The problems confronting the churches in the under-developed lands are known to be equally serious if not more so.

The old contrast between activism and quietism has now largely disappeared. The churches are seeking to be more responsible participants in the life of the world community.

> More and more today the arguments on the social witness of the Church is not, as in the past, whether the Church has a responsibility in society, but what precisely that responsibilty is, and how it can best be realized.[3]

This evidences the degree of change between Stockholm and Evanston.

The survey then turns to a discussion of the relevant issues in specific regions. The report on trends in Great Britain notes that the position of the political parties has

---

1. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Ibid., p. 11.

nearly converged. This indicates the need for the churches to stimulate a re-valuation of the social situation. This re-evaluation should be affiliated with an increasing emphasis upon the participation of the laity according to the survey. One of the insights which has arisen in the British conversations is the recognition that freedom and planning are not necessarily opposites. The two factors can be complementary.

In the planning survey the American situation is characterized by a shift toward the left accompanied by a deepening awareness of the dangers in the left. There has been a growing consciousness of the responsibility of individual groups toward the nation, the nation toward the world community, and the dangers of an irresponsible anti-Communism.[1]

The Continent is viewed as a scene of social awakening grounded in a biblio-basic theological renewal and the impact of the war. The issues of social justice in national life and the development of a European community between East and West are fundamental. The former issue raises the questions of the relation between the church and the welfare state on the one hand and the church and the worker on the other. Some of the main points to be considered in relation to the worker are as follows:

---

1. World Council of Churches, The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church, III, pp. 20-27.

1. the social responsibility of industrial management and owners, and the need for a wider distribution of property rights in industry;
2. the need for greater participation by workers in determining the structure of industrial relations and the issues involved in the various proposals for achieving this;
3. the role of the trade union, i.e., the problem of increasing trade union responsibility, the role of Christians in a trade union dominated by a secular ideology or a political party, etc;
4. the development of industrial planning and organization so as to avoid the mass character of life in industrial community.[1]

The concern for European unity was simply a reiteration of the position t aken by the Committee on Christian Responsibility for European Cooperation, formerly known as the Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation.

> The social changes taking place in Asia, Africa and Latin America confront the churches in these countries and throughout the world with the need for social thinking and action in an entirely new framework. The lives of people in these areas are being completely changed by movements for political independence and self-determination in economic matters, by industrialization and the organization of economic and social life on functional rather than on traditional lines, by the spread of new convictions about the nature of the universe and the meaning of human life and by the revolt against enslaving and exploiting institutions. There is a need for rapid change, and social developments which have taken centuries in the West have to be accomplished in decades in these areas and all at the same time. Competent observers agree in their description

---

1. Ibid., p. 38.

> of the chaos which threatens in consequence of the lack of an agreed basis for swift social improvement.[1]

It is recognized in the survey that there are new forces to give positive and concrete guidance to this process of change. This problem is intensified by the fact that the rising spirit of nationalism tends to bar foreign insights and help in the attempt to prevent any exploitative foreign intervention. This presents a situation which requires the discovery and development of internal intellectual and spiritual resources.

> The demands being made upon the spirit are overwhelming. In some countries within a generation or two people are making the transition from primitive seminomadic, pastoral and hunting communities to the complex life of modern industrial society.[2]

This situation has compelled the indigenous churches and missions to manifest a social awareness and a vital social service. The report continues with a discussion of some national and local approaches within this problem. This discussion might well have concluded with a quoted paragraph from the Lucknow findings:

> We are concerned with social justice, that is to say with the development of social conditions in which human dignity and freedom can find their expression as befits the nature and destiny of man as a child of God. Communism has awakened and challenged our conscience to see the need for action. It is not, however, primarily the fear of communism but our concern

---

1. Ibid., p. 41.
2. Ibid., p. 43.

> for our brother for whom Christ died, that should impel us to fulfill our social obligation. But a positive programme for social justice will help to meet the challenge of communism.[1]

The issue of Communism is considered independently with reference to the nature of the Christian witness to be made in Communist dominated countries. The discussion recognizes the challenge of the Communist ideology. Three totalistic claims are expressed by Communism:

> 1. The claim of a total ideology aimed at changing the population to correspond with the Marxist ideal.
>
> 2. The claim of total power by the state.
>
> 3. The total claim over the life of the individual and the tendency to treat the individual simply as a productive unit.[2]

The question of the nature of the Christian hope and the witness to be made within the Communist country are central in this discussion. Two views are expressed with regard to these questions. One position views Communism as a judgment upon pre-Communist society which is forcing Christianity to develop its social concern. The task of the Christian from this perspective is to accept and then gradually transform the social revolution in an attempt to bring it under

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ the Hope of Asia, p. 27.
2. World Council of Churches, The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church, III, p. 53.

a Christian frame of reference. The contrasting position held that the Christian should resist the Communist ideology in view of the opposition between Marxist materialism and Christian thought. Each position recognizes the necessity of a witness of hope and faith grounded in a personal devotional life of renewal. The former seeks to work within the revolution while the latter seeks to disassociate itself from Communism and to emphasize the parish fellowship of love and the witness of acts of love and hope. The former position is affirmed by Joseph Hromadka in a comment quoted in the report.

> We must meet . . . . the challenge of Marxism and what it represents. First of all, we have to understand the real effort of the Marxists to reconstruct our social order, to raise the working class to a level of active participation in the shaping of human conditions, to establish a society in which all class differences and injustices would disappear. We must understand why it is precisely the Marxists who have taken over the historic role of socializing our countries. Moreover, Marxism is a special challenge to the Christian churches because it is being taken seriously by its followers, while Christians are largely guilty of having no burning convictions. Many churches have degenerated into empty conventions and institutions.[1]

The conclusion begins with an evaluative backward glance when it states:

> To the extent to which the Church has learned to accept its responsibility for the conditions of

---

1. Ibid., p. 55, quoting J. L. Hromadka, "Social and Cultural Factors in Our Divisions," Ecumenical Review, V (October, 1952), p. 57.

> society, and to avoid identifying the Christian faith with particular economic and political institutions, it is possible to point to a great advance of Christian social thinking in the last twenty-five years and more particularly in the last ten years. Churches and Christian groups have made great progress in discovering the need for a Christian witness in relation to the spiritual and moral issues in political and economic life and for expressing this concern in the language of social and political thought and action.[1]

Inspite of such a hopeful evaluation the trend of world events continues to demonstrate considerable apathy on the part of the churches. The survey indicates that the roots of this apathy are the lack of a vital faith, the perplexity of the new social situation, and the world dimensions of the social problems.[2] The churches are challenged by world conditions to move forward and confront the vital issues of the time.

b. Report of Section III

The report of the third Section, "The Responsible Society in a World Perspective," begins with an indication of several of its presuppositions.

> Christian social responsibility is grounded in the mighty acts of God, who is revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.[3]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Responding to God's love in Christ, and being aware of his final judgment, Christians will act responsibly.[4]

---

1. Ibid., p. 61.
2. Ibid., p. 62.
3. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report (N.Y: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 112.
4. Ibid., p. 112.

The report quickly moves from these presuppositions into the dilemmas involved in fulfilling that responsibility. The discussion centers around three main topical areas: the meaning of the responsible society, the church in relation to the Communist-Non-Communist tension, and the problems in the economically under developed regions.

After relating the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society the report adds the following definitive comment:

> "Responsible society" is not an alternative social or political system, but a criterion by which we judge all existing social orders, and at the same time a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make.[1]

The content of the report deals primarily with large-scale institutions, but it is noted that, "the realization of a responsible society must be achieved in small groups as well as in large."[2] This suggests the range of applicability and impact of the idea of the responsible society.

The state is one of the larger institutions considered in the deliberations on the meaning of the responsible society. It is pointed out that the state is not the source, but the guarantor of justice. Within this perspective it is urged that "Christians should work for the embodiment of the responsible society in political institutions."[3] This represents a step toward the realization of the normative ideal in

---

1. Ibid., 113.
2. Ibid., 114.
3. Ibid., 115.

the relative situation. It also illustrates the action of a norm such as the responsible society as a working medium between the transcendent Christian ideals and the actual problem setting.

It is recognized that the state is capable of being either the enemy or the instrument of freedom and that the churches are thereby confronted with the task of acting as a conscience for the nation. The responsibility of the churches extends also into the sphere of interaction between the state and the economic order wherein so many of the economic and social problems of the time are being approached through new and evolving forms of political and economic organizations.

Once again the section moved beyond Amsterdam by giving added content or meaning to the idea of the responsible society. It was asserted that the church could not uncritically affirm any form of economic or political structure but that it should be aware of the moral implications of economic life in the new setting.

> Christians should work for the embodiment of the responsible society in political institutions by emphasizing the following:
>
> 1. Every person should be protected against arbitrary arrest or other interference with elementary human rights.
> 2. Every person should have the right to express his religious, moral and political convictions. This is especially important for those who belong to minorities.

3. Channels of political action must be developed by which the people can without recourse to violence change their governments.
4. Forms of association within society which have their own foundations and principles should be respected, and not controlled in their inner life by the state. Churches, families and universities are dissimilar examples of this non-political type of association.[1]

This section of the report contributed to the ongoing development of the idea of the responsible society by identifying it explicitly as a general criterion and by contributing new normative meanings applicable to the political and economic systems.

The Communist-Non-Communist tension necessitates the realization that, "Only as Christians work for social justice and political freedom for all, and rise above both fear and resentment, will they be fully able to meet the challenge of their conflict."[2] The task before the church is that of identifying danger points in the problem and calling Christians into a fellowship of brotherhood and prayer across all barriers. This approach is facilitated by two groups of penetrating questions which seek to suggest dangers and weaknesses apparent in each side of the tension.

The consideration of the under developed regions follows the lead of the Ecumenical Study Conference at Lucknow,

---

1. Ibid., pp. 115-116.
2. Ibid., p. 120.

India, by considering the following problems: development of political institutions; land reform and rural development; industrial development; population; and, independence and the responsibility of interdependence.

The report concludes:

> we are not called upon to shoulder the burden of this world, but to seek justice, freedom and peace to the best of our ability in the social order. The Church knows that in obedience and prayer our efforts will bear fruit. For God has called us unto liberty to serve one another by love. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."[1]

The preliminary survey and report of this section furthered the trend noted in the discussion of the Bangkok and Lucknow Conferences. They represent a continuing concern for the direction and content of Christion action in specific areas in the effort to achieve a more responsible society. This process contributed to the growing acceptance and usefulness of the normative approach as expressed in the idea of the responsible society.

2. International Affairs: Christians in the Struggle for World Community

a. Preparatory Analysis

The purpose of the preparatory analysis was to review the activity of the churches in the period between the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies. It begins with a chacterization of the world situation and the correlated areas of

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 126.

Christian responsibility in international affairs. The areas suggested are: The conditions of an effective witness; the responsibility of power; responsibility for peace; and, the contribution to an international ethos.[1]

The consideration then turns to a review of the convictions expressed by national and international Christian agencies in seven different areas during the inter-Conference period: international order; prevention of war; disarmament; refugees and migration; advancement of dependent peoples; economic and technical cooperation; and, human rights. The survey briefly notes the type of policy or action which has been used by these agencies in their approach to these areas. The breadth of this concern emphasizes the dimensions of the world problems against which the idea of the responsible society was being reflected. This portion of the survey, however, does not demonstrate a very direct use of the idea of the responsible society. Instead of a conscious reflection upon a normative ideal, this section worked through a rather pragmatic process of bringing together the datum on a problem and the recollection of past experience in dealing with similar problems. This gathering and correlation of experiences had been one of the main functions of the Commission of the Church on International Affairs. The work of this commission as evidenced in this preliminary survey provided a

---

1. World Council of Churches, The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church, IV, 5-8.

growing deposit of techniques and approaches in international relations.

This factor is significant for the idea of the responsible society in that this is one of the ways through which the idea is given specific direction, content and applicability. The gradual accumulation of experience from specific human rights ~~cases~~, for example, can eventually be woven into a generalized pattern which becomes normative content for the idea of the responsible society. This experience is developed and utilized in a two way process.

> The C.C.I.A. has fashioned a general procedure which may be described as a two-way line of communication. On the one hand, it maintains continuing relations with its world-wide constituency, securing advice and transmitting information through the members of the Commission itself, officers of National Commissions, leaders of the constituent Churches and Church Councils, and special correspondents. On the other, it maintains continuing contact with governments, receiving extensive documentation, attending important intergovernmental meetings, and conferring with delegates and secretariat.[1]

In those cases where there is an open disagreement among Christians the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs accepts the alternative of simply admitting the disagreement and stating the respective positions. This suggests another area of action, that of the need for stimulating and educating local and national groups toward a more positive role in working toward world community.

---

1. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Near the conclusion of the preparatory survey three ecumenical problems are suggested as areas of future activity. The first of these evidences the fact of the practical approach mentioned above.

> First, the C.C.I.A. itself is not a theological commission, consequently, little work has been done on the relationship between specific proposals in international affairs and the basic principles of world order. The difficulty of retaining a balance between Christian action for peace and justice and Christian judgment on the predicament of man and society has hardly been grappled with.[1]

The second task is the education for world community within which individuals can learn to consciously accept international responsibilities. The formation of active National Commissions on International Affairs is suggested as the third task.

b. Report of Section IV

The report of the fourth section on "International Affairs" reveals the intensity and sense of responsibility with which the Ecumenical Movement views the events in the life of the world community.

The report is organized around seven topics: the desire for peace and the fear of war, living together in a divided world, what nations owe to one another, the United Nations and world community, the protection of human rights, toward

---

1. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

an international ethos, and the churches and specific international tensions.

The commitment noted above is reiterated with reference to the problem of peace. Peace is characterized "positively by freedom, justice, truth and love;" and not just by the "absence of war."[1] Christians are called upon to "expose the deceit" of war, to remove its causes, and to seek a restriction upon armaments.[2]

> But even this is not enough. An international order of truth and peace would require: (1) Under effective international inspection and control and in such a way that no state would have cause to fear that its security was endangered, the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and all other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the reduction of all armaments to a minimum. (2) The development and acceptance of methods for peaceful change to rectify existing injustices.[3]

This quotation points up the kind of balance between freedom and restraint or order which the world situation demanded. It also contributed to the growing structural realism and content being given to the idea of the responsible society.

The section entitled, "Living Together in a Divided World," relates that we cannot accept a permanent state of tension, but that Christians must seek the reconciliation of men to God and to their fellowmen so that a responsible society grounded in truth and justice might be possible. The report

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 132.
2. Ibid., pp. 132-133.
3. Ibid., p. 133.

continues with the recognition of the new interdependence in the world community. The right of self determination is affirmed, along with the development of international responsibility as a substitute for the old colonialism. "In the new context of our age relations between peoples hitherto subject and ruling should be those of partnership and cooperation."[1] This partnership is viewed as possessing "mutual responsibilities and benefits" for those cooperating. Support and development of the United Nations and various regional groups are also urged as means through which to foster world community.

The recognition and protection of human rights are responsibilities which the love of God places before man in his relations with his fellowmen according to the report.

Beneath these more specific problems of the world community lies the basic need for a common ground of moral understanding. The need is for a common group of values to which all nations can and do give allegiance. This is necessary as a foundation for a working system of international law.

> In order to do this with authority Christians must be clear on their own understanding of the essential principles. This can be done only by sustained study. Tentatively, we advance the following considerations:
>
> 1. All power carries responsibility and all nations are trustees of power which should be used for the common good.

---

1. Ibid., pp. 137-138.

2. All nations are subject to moral law, and should strive to abide by the accepted principles of international law to develop this law and to enforce it through common actions.
3. All nations should honor their pledged word and international agreements into which they have entered.
4. No nation in an international dispute has the right to be the sole judge in its own cause or to resort to war to advance its policies, but should seek to settle disputes by direct negotiation or by submitting them to conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement.
5. All nations have a moral obligation to insure universal security and to this end should support measures designed to deny victory to a declared aggressor.
6. All nations should recognize and safeguard the inherent dignity, worth and essential rights of the human person, without distinctions as to race, sex, language or religion.
7. Each nation should recognize the rights of every other nation, which observes such standards, to live by and proclaim its own political and social beliefs, provided that it does not seek by coercion, threat, infiltration or deception to impose these on other nations.
8. All nations should recognize an obligation to share their scientific and technical skills with peoples in less developed regions, and to help the victims of disaster in other lands.
9. All nations should strive to develop cordial relations with their neighbors, encourage friendly cultural and commercial dealings, and join in creative international efforts for human welfare.[1]

Such considerations contribute to the growing actualization of normative meaning and content for the idea of the responsible society. The responsible correlation of freedom

---

1. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

and power as encompassed in the idea of the responsible society is fundamental to these points.

In conclusion it is noted that statements created in such an international gathering as an assembly are necessarily broad and general. This underlines the tasks before the local agencies and groups of giving specific content and action to generalized ideals.

> The Church must seek to be the kind of community which God wishes the world to become. By virtue of its calling it must act as a redemptive suffering fellowship in form and manner of the Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

D. CONCLUSIONS

Evanston presupposes the foundations of Amsterdam and builds thereon. Amsterdam analyzed the world situation and developed a conceptual structure which incorporated the dynamics of that problem under a normative ideal. Evanston assumed the task of relating that ideal of responsibility to a number of problem areas. This process contributed to the evidence of the usefulness of a normative idea such as the responsible society, by demonstrating its applicability to specific situations while still holding the orientation to the higher elements of the social whole and the transcendent ideal.

The developing usage and value of the normative approach and its expression in the idea of the responsible society as

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 142-143.

it has developed through the course of these four conferences from Stockholm to Evanston could be summed up under four categories.

First, the idea of the responsible society provided an overarching ideal which was useful as a goal for the social order and as a point of focus for discussion by groups such as the church. At this point it facilitated a unified approach by the churches which would have been impossible had they been forced to depend upon theological unity as a presupposition for unified social action. The idea of the responsible society and the normative approach provided spheres of agreement from which the churches could coherently act despite their theological diversity.

Secondly, the concept provided a point of reference between the absolute ethical presuppositions and the relative situation. This facilitated action in the vertical plane in contrast to the horizontal plane discussed in the first point. On the one hand this point of reference served as a central expression of the ultimate ideal and on the other it acted as a core from which more specific subsidiary norms could be developed. Within this perspective the idea of the responsible society acted as a medium for the actualization of relevant policy and activity under the transcendent ideal of the Kingdom.

Third, the structure of the idea of the responsible

society provided a conceptual tool for the discriminative analysis and reassessment of the situation and its equilibrium between freedom and equality.

Finally, the idea of the responsible society provided a criterion. This lay not only in the idea of responsibility in itself, but also in the assimilated meaning given to the idea of the responsible society in particular situations.[1] This meaning added specific applicability along with versatility to the use of the concept as a criterion.

---

1. The terms accountability or liability will be used synonymously with the term responsibility throughout the balance of this paper. It is recognized that accountability and particularly liability possess more of a legalistic connotation in comparison with the personal moral obligation characteristic of responsibility. This quality of moral obligation must also be associated with the terms accountability and liability if their intended use as a synonym for responsibility is to be fully understood.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER OF THE CONCEPT

A. STRUCTURE OF THE CONCEPT

In the previous discussions it has been noted that the world tensions have come to a head in the conflict between a power bloc which emphasizes freedom on the one hand and one which emphasizes equality on the other. The "third force" arose as a witness to the fact that neither extreme represented an adequate approach to the achievement of world order. This conclusion was also expressed at the Amsterdam Conference against a background of thought running back to the Stockholm and Oxford Conferences. This polarity between freedom and equality evidenced in the world power struggle points to the dialectical structure of social existence. This structure is not only characteristic of the international scene, it is the essential framework of social interaction in itself.

This dialectic or polar structure is simply the conceptual description of the social process in which the freedom of the individual is related to the equal demand for freedom on the part of the other individuals who constitute the particular unit of social interaction. These counter claims for freedom represent the demand for equality. Dr. Schilling has illustrated this polarity in the comment, "My

duties to others are their rights in relation to me, and their duties to me are my rights in relation to them."[1]

Eduard Heimann characterizes this polarity as one between freedom and order -- order in this case being simply social expression of the demand for a system within which equality would be respected in relation to friends. He points to the ever changing equilibrium between these factors in his comment, "The unending drama of man's attempts to reconcile freedom and order demands new creative solutions in every phase of history."[2]

David Bidney, in his work entitled Theoretical Anthropology, discusses this polarity from the perspective of cultural development.[3] He speaks of the polarity as one between freedom and authority rather than freedom and equality or order. He comments:

> Freedom and authority are complementary, polaristic requirements essential for the proper functioning of any sociocultural system. With the context of any culture, freedom and authority are complementary principles which mutually limit one another. Generally and positively, at its lowest common denominator the concept of freedom refers to the exercise of power; negatively,

---

1. S. Paul Schilling, "The Christian Basis of Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities," The Church and Social Responsibility, ed. J. Spann (N.Y: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953) p. 12.
2. Eduard Heimann, Freedom and Order (N.Y: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 227.
3. David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology (N.Y: Columbia University Press, 1953).

> freedom refers to any unrestrained or unimpeded activity. One may, however, distinguish three levels, or modes, of freedom, namely, psychological, cultural, and moral freedom. Similarly, the concept of authority involves two essential elements: first, sociocultural recognition of competence, or qualification, to govern and regulate conduct; second, effective power to regulate this conduct.[1]

This changing equilibrium and meaning in the relation of freedom and order or equality can be illustrated by a brief review of some of the sources cited above. The demand inherent within the claim for freedom or for equality and the balance between the two has changed in accordance with the circumstances confronting the time.

The message of the Stockholm Conference contended "for the free and full development of human personality."[2]

> The Church must contend not for the rights of the individuals as such, but for the rights of the moral personality, since all mankind is enriched by the full unfolding of even a single soul.[3]

The demand for equality was expressed in the affirmation "that industry should not be based solely on the desire for individual profit, but that it should be conducted for the service of the community."[4] Likewise, the community should accept the responsibility for the socially disinherited, the social outcasts.[5]

---

1. Ibid., p. 464.
2. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712.
3. Ibid., p. 712.
4. Ibid., p. 712.
5. Ibid., p. 712.

The discussions during the depression saw freedom considered particularly with reference to freedom of exchange as a means of alleviating some of the economic distress of that time.[1] Equality was demanded primarily in the name of distributive justice for the unemployed.[2]

The struggle for equality and order in the economic and political spheres had given rise to forms of totalitarianism by the time of the Oxford Conference. Oxford recognized these claims for equality expressed in the name of justice, but balanced this with the assertion of the primacy of the freedom of the church, the individual, and the culture, over against the power claims of the state.[3]

The Amsterdam Assembly tended to generalize this polarity, referring it to the East-West tension. Freedom and equality were most specifically considered in the discussion of the idea of the responsible society. The interaction and balance of these factors was noted in the following statements:

> Coherent and purposeful ordering of society has now become a major necessity. Here governments have responsibilities which they must not shirk. But centres of initiative in economic life must be so encouraged as to avoid placing too great a burden upon centralized judgment and decision. To achieve

---

1. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, pp. 34, 41.
   See Walter G. Muelder, The Idea of the Responsible Society (Boston: Boston University Press, 1955), pp. 15, 19.
2. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, pp. 27, 44.
3. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 48-49.

> religious, cultural, economic, social, and other ends is of vital importance that society should have a variety of smaller forms of community. . . . By such means it is possible to prevent an undue centralisation of power in modern technically organized communities, and thus escape the perils of tyranny while avoiding the dangers of anarchy.[1]

This idea was incorporated into the definition of the responsible society wherein freedom was correlated with public order and justice, and the necessity of the right to control, criticize, and change the government was reserved for the people governed.[2] Amsterdam recognized the primacy of the structure of the freedom-equality polarity, whether at the international or individual level, and added the ideal of responsibility as a working norm to aid in maintaining an equilibrium within the tension.

Evanston assumed a more practical approach to the polarity and concerned itself with the application of the ideal of the responsible society to a number of more specific areas.

The component elements, freedom, equality, and responsibility, in the idea of the responsible society function normatively in relation to each other in the internal dynamic structure of the responsible society. Equality demands that freedom be the possession of all and responsibility asks that freedom be used accountably. Likewise, freedom asks that

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
2. Ibid., p. 192.

equality not destroy individuality while responsibility points to the needs and demands not answered by equality. This refers directly to Reinhold Niebuhr's comment that love prevents a seeming equality from being accepted as a state of perfection.[1] Finally, freedom is a prerequisite to responsible action, and equality requires that the whole of the social unit involved in a situation be dealt with responsibly.

Eduard Heimann made a significant analysis of this interrelation.

> Always there must be order for men to live in society, but it will always be a preliminary order only, born of a limited view of society and history. Always, hence, there must be freedom to limit the order and prevent its becoming oppressive, to protect men against the inadequacy of the order and to help mend it. And always, again, freedom must be limited by order to prevent its becoming anarchic, irresponsible, and disruptive. . . . . The right proportions between the two, where order does not oppress freedom and freedom does not undermine order, even though accepting it only with qualifications, was called justice.[2]

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christian Faith and the Common Life," Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenstrom et al., p. 87.
2. Eduard Heimann, Freedom and Order, pp. 227-228. The work of Heimann, similar to that of Emil Brunner, portrays justice as a religious or divine concept patterned after the righteousness of God. This stands in contrast with the correlation of justice with the relative arrangements of the world at Oxford, the reference to its dynamic nature at Evanston, and the use of the idea of justice and equality in the discussion within this study. See Eduard Heimann, Freedom and Order, pp. 229, 322-335. See Emil Brunner, Justice and the Social Order, trans. Mary Hottinger (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), pp. 22-24.

The emphasis upon a particular component in this polar structure may differ in accordance with the situation. In one case there may be an emphasis upon the freedom and rights of the individual, while in another case an appeal may be made for the community over and against the individual in the name of equality. The determination of what constitutes a responsible balance between these forces may likewise vary, as indicated in the consideration of the land problem at Lucknow, where a policy of property expropriation was sanctioned by a majority of the delegates in the particular circumstance with due recognition that this position could not be universalized.[1]

The variation within this polar tension between freedom and equality may range from the emphasis upon freedom in theoretical laissez faire Capitalism to the equality envisioned in the Communistic ideal. The idea of the responsible society does not try to regiment this polarity under a particular pattern, such as a fusion of Capitalism and Communism into a variety of Socialism. The dynamic of the ideal of the responsible society seeks a just equilibrium between freedom and equality with reference to the particular situation. This allows considerable variation.

The structural character of the concept can simply be formulated as a dialectical interrelation of the counter

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ the Hope of Asia, p. 27.

claims of freedom and equality in the social unit, under the dynamic norm of responsibility.

But what of the ideal of responsibility in itself? None of the documents surveyed have indicated any particular grounds for the choice of this normative phrase. This study has noted the development and use of normative ideals, but there is little indication of a growing use of the word "responsible" in the discussions preceeding Amsterdam, save occasional mention at Oxford. Dr. Nils Ehrenstrom, who served on the staff of the Study Department of the Life and Work Movement and later the World Council of Churches through many of the years covered in this study, speaks of the choice of the word "responsible" and its connection with the developing normative approach of social problems in the thought of the Ecumenical Movement as more of a flash of inspiration than a logically planned development.[1]

The increasing use of the idea of the responsible society evidences the wisdom of this choice. This idea of responsibility has been valuable because of its relational implications and its ability to incorporate additional meaning into itself.

Responsibility denotes a relationship of accountability or liability between two factors. This relational structure

---

1. Interview with Dr. Nils Ehrenström, Professor at Boston University School of Theology, January 17, 1957.

makes the term particularly adjustable to a variety of social circumstances. It can be used equally to pose the relational balance between freedom and order in the community of nations or between the landlord and the landless peasant in the land problem of India. At this level the question is not the nature of the responsibility. The question here is the identification of the persons or factors involved in an accountable relationship. This provides a structure which may aid in the analysis or resolution of a problem, by more closely indicating the parties to the relationship. Thus the Evanston discussions may speak of the relationships of Christians in a Communist dominated land to the dominated government before determining the nature of a responsible relationship in the circumstance.

The idea of responsibility has also been valuable in that it can incorporate new meaning into itself. This flexibility approaches the problem of what it means to be responsible. The meaning or content of being "responsible" may thus vary from one situation and culture to another, within the ultimate principles assumed. It might, for example, be a responsible leadership which would impose taxes in order to secure funds for government investment in industry; in another portion of the world the activity of a responsible government might be much different. More basically, however, it allows the terms to be used in a greater variety of situations and thereby contributes to the breadth of possible use

of the idea of the responsible society. Some of the more significant content given to the concept will be discussed below.

Ultimately the meaning of "responsibility" will be determined by the presuppositions assumed by the person or persons involved in the responsible relationship. This introduces the second primary dimension in the dialectical structure of the concept, the vertical plane. The polarity in the horizontal structure exists between the various expressions of freedom and equality or order. The polarity in the vertical plane within the structure of the concept lies in the difference between the value content of the idea of responsibility and the practice of responsibility or irresponsibility in the concrete situation. This might also be characterized as the tension between the is of the situation and the ought of the idea of responsibility in that situation. The value of the phrase "the responsible society" at this point for Christian social thought is that it provides an applicable working structure which acknowledges the interacting demands of freedom and order while being open to meaning centering in the Christian absolute of love and the ideal of the Kingdom. This facilitates the development of the idea of the responsible society through the absorption of new meaning such as that characteristic of the ideals of love and the Kingdom.

B. RELIGIOUS COMPONENT OF THE IDEA OF THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY

The vertical polarity between the transcendent or ideal values and the concrete situation in the structure of the

concept has been directly associated with the problem of the relationship between the Kingdom and the world in the course of the ecumenical discussions. The problem inherent in this relationship has never been easily answered by Christians. Ernst Troeltsch discusses the fundamentals of this dilemma in the conclusion to his study of The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. He comments

> The Ethos of the Gospel is a combination of infinite sublimity and childlike intimacy. On the one hand, it demands the sanctification of the self for God by the practice of detachment from everything which disturbs inward communion with God, and by the exercise of everything which inwardly binds the soul with God's will. On the other hand, it demands that brotherly love, which overcomes in God all the tension and harshness of the struggle for existence, of law, and of the merely external order, while it unites souls in a deep spirit of mutual understanding, as well as in the most self-sacrificing love, which, even in its simplest expressions, gives a true hint of the nature of God Himself. This is an ideal which requires a new world if it is to be fully realized; it was this new world-order that Jesus proclaimed in His Message of the Kingdom of God. But it is an ideal which cannot be realized within this world apart from compromise. Therefore the history of the Christian Ethos becomes the story of a constantly renewed search for this compromise, and of fresh opposition to this spirit of compromise.[1]

Troeltsch's description of the problem is appropriate for the developments at Stockholm where some delegates sought to develop approximate ideals of the Kingdom while others rejected such approximations in the name of the same Kingdom.

---

1. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon (N.Y.: Macmillan Company, 1931) II, 999-1000.

> It is well known that the Stockholm Conference was considerably influenced by the various beliefs about the possibility of realising the Kingdom of God on earth. Stockholm was the climax of the conflict between the socially active theology of the Kingdom of God (social gospel, Christian pacifism, etc.) and the spiritual conception of the Kingdom. It is quite clear that the majority believed that the Kingdom of God would be realised on earth.[1]

The thought of the Oxford Converence followed this dominant trend of the Stockholm Conference by affirming the relevance of the Kingdom for the problems of the world. The understanding of the Kingdom-world dialectic was refined by the combination of the emphasis upon the given reality and the demand of the Kingdom with the recognition of responsibilities toward the world.

> The Kingdom of God, as proclaimed in the gospel, is the reign of God which both has come and is coming. It is an established reality in the coming of Christ and in the presence of his Spirit in the world. It is, however, still in conflict with a sinful world which crucified its Lord, and its ultimate triumph is still to come. In so far as it has come, the will of God as revealed in Christ (that is, the commandment of love) is the ultimate standard of Christian conduct. Standards drawn from the observation of human behavior are not only less complete than the commandment of love but frequently contain elements that contradict it. In so far as the kindgom of God is in conflict with the world and is therefore still to come, the Christian finds himself under the necessity of discovering the best available means of checking human sinfulness and of increasing the possibilities and opportunities of love within a sinful world.[2]

The struggle with the problem of the Kingdom and the world continued through the World Missionary Conference at Tambaram to the Ansterdam and Evanston Assemblies. The theological climate gradually changed in the period separating Stockholm and Amsterdam. There was still a concern for man's action within the

---

1. W. Schweitzer (ed.), Eschatology and Ethics, trans. R.H. Fuller (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1951), p. 15.
2. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 76.

world, but it was increasingly seen thru the larger framework of God's redemptive action within and beyond history. This is expressed in the "Report of Section III" at Amsterdam:

> The Christian Church approaches the disorder of our society with faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In Him God has established His Kingdom and its gates stand open for all who will enter. Their lives belong to God with a certainty that no disorder of society can destroy, and on them is laid the duty to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness.
>
> In the light of that Kingdom, with its judgment and mercy, Christians are conscious of the sins which corrupt human communities and institutions in every age, but they are also assured of the final victory over all sin and death through Christ. It is He who has bidden us pray that God's Kingdom may come and that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; and our obedience to that command requires that we seek in every age to overcome the specific disorders which aggravate the perennial evil in human society, and that we search out the means of securing their elimination or control.[1]

The Evanston Assembly evidenced a similar pattern in the dialectic between the Kingdom and the world. There is an emphasis upon the given present Kingdom much like that of Oxford.

> A new life had begun. And in His risen and ascended power, He has sent forth into the world a new community, bound together by His Spirit, sharing His divine life, and commissioned to make Him known throughout the world.[2]

There is also expectation and hope in the Evanston message as in the thought of Amsterdam.

> He will come again as Judge and King to bring all things to their consummation. Then we shall see Him as He is and know as we are known. Together with the whole creation we wait for this with eager hope, knowing that God is faithful and that even how He holds all things in His hand.[3]

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 189.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 1.

However, the presence and expectation of the Kingdom were not emphasized at the expense of man's responsibility within the world as had been characteristic of the Kingdom emphasis at the Stockholm Conference.

> Thus our Christian hope directs us towards our neighbor. It constrains us to pray daily, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and to act as we pray in every area of life.[1]

This period evidences a broadening of the understanding of the polarity between the Kingdom and the world from the disagreement of Stockholm to the later recognition that the Kingdom is both in the world and yet to come, realized, and to be realized both within and beyond history.

The vertical polarity between the Kingdom as a given reality and a commanding ideal and the world has been a constant theme in the four major conferences discussed in this study. This results naturally from the afore mentioned fact that the relationship of the Kingdom and the world is a fundamental problem of the Christian faith itself.

The idea of the responsible society is a dynamic moral structure which stands within this Kingdom-world polarity as a medium of interaction between the given reality and demands of the Kingdom and the complexities of the world. On the one hand the idea of the responsible society as developed in ecumenical literature incorporates the given reality and the directives of the Kingdom and on the other the recognition of the sin and conflict characteristic of the world. The reality of the Kingdom

---

1. Ibid., p. 2.

in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian fellowship is both a fact of man's existence in the Church and an abiding element of man's existence as a transcendent ideal.

While living in the midst of this Kingdom-World polarity man is called to a responsible relationship with God and his fellowmen. This is noted, for example, in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society.

> Man is created and called to be a free being, responsible to God and his neighbor. Any tendencies in State and society depriving man of the possibility of acting responsibly are a denial of God's intention for man and his work of salvation. A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[1]

The idea of accountability before God is prominent in many of the world's religions and is virtually universal in Christianity. It was expressed as a fundamental presupposition in the discussions of each of the conferences considered in this study from Stockholm through to Evanston. For example, the report of the Oxford Conference is a discussion of man responsibility before God, suggested that "the chief end of man is to glorify God, to honor and love him, in work and life as in worship."[2]

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
2. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 75.

The necessity of such an accountable response to God provides the ultimate ground for the demand for freedom and the respect for personality.

> Rights and responsibilities are derived primarily from man's relation to God as manifest in Christ: they are theogenetic. Man's true destiny lies in the service of God, and can be attained only if man is free to order his life in harmony with the divine purpose.[1]

The idea of a responsible society is dependent upon transcendent presuppositions. In the first place, the idea of being responsible in itself is a product of a self-transcending consideration. Further, as discussed above, the content of the idea of accountability is ultimately determined by the values held by the parties to the relationship or defined by the cultural or political context.

The point of reference for the idea of the responsible society for Christians is ultimately the Kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. This was emphasized in the pre-Oxford conversations. John Oldham held that

> only from a centre beyond society can it /the Church/ criticize society and help it to reach a new orientation. . . . The basis of the Christian ethic is faith in a living personal God who has disclosed His grace and His will in Jesus Christ.[2]

---

1. S. Paul Schilling, "The Christian Basis of Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities," The Church and Social Responsibility, ed., J. Spann, p. 19.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft and John H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 235.

A similar position was indicated by John Bennett in his footnote to the Amsterdam chapter on "The Strategy of the Church" by C. L. Patijn.

> He /Patijn/ is right in insisting that in the Christian revelation we have the criterion by which all human wisdom must be tested.[1]

The Bangkok Conference spoke quite directly to the point:

> Only that which transcends morals, namely, the knowledge of the ultimate accountability of man and society to God and the grace of God by which men, being forgiven, forgive one another, can be the foundation of personal responsibility and responsible society.[2]

The transcendent religious reference is central in importance in the religious component of the idea of the responsible society, for it is the source of security, direction, and power.

> Since his responsibility is to God, his basic security is in God and this frees him from seeking it primarily in the flux of circumstances. In the second place, it frees him from the anxious either-or of social pressures and allows him to transcend the conflict without retreating from it.[3]

The transcendent reference in the revelation of God and the

---

1. C. L. Patijn, "The Strategy of the Church," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, n. 157.
2. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, p. 139.
3. Walter C. Muelder, The Idea of the Responsible Society, pp. 11-12.

relationship with God provides the exemplification of the ultimate norm of love against which the norms of justice and responsibility must be measured.[1] Finally, the relationship with God provides the power for responsible living. Man can choose self-interest above the element of responsibility; this is in fact a strong possibility unless the ideal of responsibility is sustained by a deeper religious commitment.

> Faith is the only source of responsible action which does not dry up in the face of guilt and the inescapable consequences of established fact, since it does not spring from human vitality but from the grace of God himself. Where man knows to whom he is responsible even in the grip of circumstances not of his own making he is able to take responsible action. . . .the responsible society depends basically upon this freedom which breaks the chains forged by history.[2]

The Christian revelation calls men to a life of responsibility before God and their fellowmen and provides the direction and power for the fulfillment of that command when it is accepted in faith. This religious component is fundamental for the idea of the responsible society in that it provides the ultimate resources for responsible living.

On the other hand the religious component of the idea of the responsible society includes the recognition of the opposite pole in the dialectic between the Kingdom and the world in

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 78.
2. World Council of Churches, The Responsible Society (Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 49E/207 (1949), p. 11.

its acknowledgment of the fact of sin and disequilbrium in the world.

The awareness of the fact of sin has its deepest grounding in the experience of the relationship with God. The acknowledgment of the fact of sin and the necessity of its restraint lends a balancing realism to the idea of the responsible society. J. H. Oldham suggested this factor as a mark of a responsible society, in the preliminary survey for Amsterdam.

> Belief in the responsibility of men to God and the knowledge of human sinfulness will impel Christians to set restraints on irresponsible power and . . . . to work for the widest distribution of power, responsibility and initiative throughout the whole community.[1]

This became a central factor in the Amsterdam definition of the responsible society and it was presupposed in the idea the people must have "freedom to control, to criticise, and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole country."[2]

The issue of the Kingdom and the world has continued to raise the associated question of the relationship between revelation and natural reason or law. This has become a particularly pressing problem with the development of a concern for under development and non-Christian regions of the world. The normative

---

1. J. H. Oldham, "A Responsible Society," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 151.
2. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.

approach and the idea of the responsible society represent partial responses in themselves to the Kingdom-world dialectic as it is reflected in the question of revelation and reason in that they attempt to provide an avenue for communication and action.

The pattern of division characteristic of the Stockholm Conference was naturally evident on this fundamental issue. Nonetheless, many of the conclusions of the conference were affiliated with a natural law scheme a few years later at the Conference of Christian Social Workers held in London, in 1930. John Turnbull indicates that there

> was a plea for the recognition of certain minimum principles of universal justice which are so deeply embedded in the constitution of the world that they appeal directly to the conscience of mankind apart from the special revelation of Christianity and can be seen by reason to be essential to the stability and peace of social life.[1]

J. H. Oldham approached this problem in the Oxford volume on The Church and Its Function in Society. He affirms the value of the contribution of "settled convictions and tried teachings of experience" in aiding the process of reflection leading to decision. Each decision was to be made as an existential responsibility before God however.[2]

Similarly at Amsterdam and Evanston an expanding amount of material was incorporated into the normative approach, as used

---

1. John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, p. 23.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 249.

by the World Council of Churches and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, from the experience of the world. The churches appear to be pressing in the direction of accepting the usefulness of the rational principles derived from the experience of the world so long as they are held within the framework of the more fundamental insights of revelation. This approach was most clearly expressed by John Bennett in response to the position of C. L. Patijn in the preparatory work of the third section at Amsterdam.

> He /Patijn/ is right in insisting that in the Christian revelation we have the criterion by which all human wisdom must be tested. But there is more to be said than is suggested in this chapter for a spirit of openness to the wisdom of the world on the part of the Church, even to its theoretical systems. The use of 'natural law' by the Church may have been mistaken when it allowed too detailed elaboration of classical natural law to become part of its official teaching, but it is not a mistake for the Church to open its mind to the moral wisdom of the classical world so long as this wisdom is kept under the Christian criterion and so long as its transformation by the Spirit of Christ is also emphasized.[1]

More recently the necessity for some mutual approach was considered by H.D. Wendland in a paper read before the Working Committee on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches. He pointed to a responsibility and a possibility which lies before the churches in the cooperation of church and society.

> If we enquire into the bases for cooperation, we immediately come up against the unsolved problem of

---

1. C. L. Patijn, "The Strategy of the Church," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, n. III, 157.

> natural law. We must free ourselves from the false, rigid antitheses between an eschatological theology and a theology which thinks in terms of natural law. For if eschatology expresses expectation of the new creation and the new existence, it cannot lead to a negation of the "first" creation and of the gifts of God the Creator nor of His commandments for His creature. We need a critical Christian conception of natural law, which must be rediscovered, if man and society and God's commandments are seen in the perspective of expectation of God's Kingdom and a universal new creation. The same applies to the relation of Christology to natural law. It is only in the light of the Lordship of Christ that the limitations and the truth of the concepts of natural law become apparent; the same applies to the concepts of humanity, freedom and social justice.[1]

In conclusion, it has been noted that the Kingdom-world dialectic represents a continuing problem for the Christian faith. There has been a growing awareness of the interrelation of many factors within this polarity. This interrelation can only be expressed in combinations of thought. Through a semantic combination it is possible to suggest that the major trend of thought developing in the Ecumenical Movement in this period has recognized that the Kingdom is and is to be, is given and is to be realized.

There has been a similar combination and balancing of thought with reference to the foundation of the affirmed truths in these two spheres, revelation and rational principle. The primacy of the Christian revelation has been reiterated, but

---

1. H.D. Wendland, The Theological Basis for Social Action Today, a paper read before the Working Committee on Church and Society, July, 1955 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1955), p. 3.

not without an increasing acknowledgment of the value of and need for rational principles. There is evidence of an increasing understanding of the usefulness of rational principles or natural law so long as it is kept within a framework which takes the primacy of the Christian revelation and of personal responsibility into account. This provides an additional possibility for the usefulness of the idea of the responsible society in a non-Christian setting.

The idea of the responsible society has been utilized as a medium of interaction and communication within this Kingdom polarity. The idea recognizes the responsibility of men to God and their fellowmen characteristic of the Kingdom on the one hand and the realities of sin and conflict evident in the world on the other. The relationship with God is essential to the concept. It, the relationship with God, provides the source for the direction and power requisite for responsible living. Similarly it serves as a point of reference from which to sustain the fullest awareness of the problem of sin. These factors when drawn together substantiate the assertion that the religious component is fundamental in the idea of the responsible society.

C. CONTENT OR MEANING OF THE CONCEPT

The purpose of this section is to draw together the main streams of normative thought which have been suggested in the reports of the major conferences considered in this study. This will serve as a summation of the main ideas developed under the early normative approach and its later expression in the idea of the responsible society. These norms fall rather naturally under

five headings: persons, property, economic order, the state, and the international order.

Two fundamental norms are suggested in the official reports of the Stockholm and Oxford Conferences and the Amsterdam Assembly, with respect to persons. First, the primacy of the value of the human soul and personality and the necessity of the recognition of those rights and responsibilities requisite to the fulfillment of personality.[1] Second, the freedom of men to shape responsibly the social order toward the fullest realization of personality by all persons in the community.[2] The thought behind these points was incorporated in the inclusive statement from the Ecumenical Study Conference for East Asia, at Lucknow, India:

> For us as Christians in East Asia a society is responsible where the principles of social and political life are in accordance with the concept of man as a person called to responsible existence in community.[3]

The earlier conferences made the most pronounced statements on property, with the exception of the later Lucknow Conference, where the question of the landless peasant projected itself. The generalized norm which has arisen views property as a trust over which the possessor serves as a steward, before God and his fellowmen.[4]

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712. See also J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 89.
2. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
3. World Council of Churches, Christ -- The Hope of Asia, p. 31.
4. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712. See also John Turnbull, Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, p.

The Oxford Conference made the following normative statements:

> It should be reaffirmed without qualification that all human property rights are relative and contingent only, in virtue of the dependence of man upon God as the giver of all wealth and as the creator of man's capacities to develop the resources of nature. This fundamental Christian conviction must express itself both in the idea of stewardship or trusteeship and in the willingness of the Christian to examine accumulations of property in the light of their social consequences.
>
> The existing system of property rights and the existing distribution of property must be criticized in the light of the largely nonmoral processes by which they have been developed, and criticism must take account of the fact that every argument in defense of property rights which is valid for Christian thinking is also an argument for the widest possible distribution of these rights.
>
> It should further be affirmed that individual property rights must never be maintained or exercised without regard to their social consequences or without regard to the contribution which the community makes in the production of all wealth.
>
> It is very important to make clear distinction between various forms of property. The property which consists in personal possessions for use, such as the home, has behind it clearer moral justification than property in the means of production and in land which gives the owners power over other persons.[1]

More recently at Lucknow a statement was issued concerning the problem of distributing land to the landless peasantry and developing a financial system which would maintain that distribution.[2]

---

1. John H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 100-101.
2. World Council of Churches, Christ -- The Hope of Asia, p. 28.

The normative statements on the economic order could be summed up in the recognition that the productive enterprise should be viewed as a social trust within which social justice should be sought.[1] Such a view incorporates the factors of responsibility for economic power,[2] distributive justice, and the recognition that economic systems which distort positive human relations should be altered accordingly.[3]

The issue of the state came to the forefront in the discussions of the Oxford Conference. The freedom of the church and the basic institutions of the culture within the state were affirmed.[4] This was augmented by the Amsterdam statement which held the political order subject to control, criticism, and change by the citizenry, and responsible for political power before God and those governed.[5] Four additional norms were suggested at the Evanston Assembly.

> (1) Every person should be protected against arbitrary arrest or other interference with elementary human rights. (2) Every person should have the right to express his religious, moral and political convictions. This is especially important for those who belong to minorities. (3) Channels of political action must be developed by which people can without recourse to

---

1. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712. See W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 118-119.
2. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
3. John H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 99.
4. Ibid., pp. 72-73.
5. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.

> violence change their governments. (4) Forms of association within society which have their own foundations and principles should be respected, and not controlled in their inner life, by the state.[1]

The Stockholm Conference found it impossible to sanction any concrete proposals for international order such as the League of Nations, but it did reject excess nationalism and armed conflict as means for resolving the problems of the international order.[2] By the time of the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies, there was an affirmation of support of the United Nations and a general realization that international power must always be correlated with international responsibility.[3] This latter point was made explicit in the listing of specific principles or considerations as normative for the international order.[4]

D. CONCLUSION

The problem of the social order is primarily one of maintaining a balance between the counter claims of freedom and order. This is further evidenced inthe nature of the variety of issues, ranging from the rights of the individual to the maintenance of international order, which have been discussed by the Ecumenical Movement.

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 115-116.
2. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 713.
3. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 221.
4. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 142.

Structurally speaking, the idea of the responsible society incorporates this dialectical problem of social existence into a conceptual equilibrium which is determined by the norm of responsibility. This norm accommodates itself to the interrelated tensions of the social order under the idea of accountability. The nature of the liability has been partly determined by the transcendent point of reference inherent in the religious component attributed to the idea of responsibility in the course of the ecumenical discussions. Additional meaning has been attached to the idea of the responsible society on the basis of a pragmatic accumulation of experiences in dealing with certain problems areas. These have been drawn together to provide a rather broad pattern of norms which are subsidiary to the idea of the responsible society. This represents a further step in the process of bringing the absolute ideals of love and the Kingdom into a more concrete phase of applicability in relation to the problems of the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUNCTION AND USEFULNESS OF THE CONCEPT

A. INTRODUCTION

The task of this chapter is to identify the primary functions of the normative approach and the idea of the responsible society. This will serve as a summation of the way the normative approach has been used and the tasks it has performed. The fruitfulness of this approach and concept in the period viewed in this study will be used as the basis for the affirmation of their potential usefulness in the ecumenical discussions and the social action of the churches in the future. This affirmation will not rest entirely on the fact of the practical acceptance of the normative approach in the course of the ecumenical conversations, but will also be based upon an additional constructive analysis of each function identified.

B. PROVISION OF AN OVER-ARCHING IDEAL OR GOAL WHICH ACTS AS A POINT OF FOCUS FOR THE SOCIAL CONCERN OF THE CHURCHES

1. An Over-Arching Ideal or Goal

The Stockholm and Oxford Conferences arose out of the desire of churchmen for a unified attack upon the social problems of their time. Despite theological and denominational

differences there were a number of significant social pronouncements made at Stockholm and more particularly at Oxford. Neither conference, however, gave a central conceptual form to the developing normative system, with the exception of the use of the idea of justice at Oxford.

At the Amsterdam Assembly the evolving normative approach was incorporated in the dynamic structural symbol of the responsible society. This provided an over-arching ideal which in turn became a goal for social action. It gave a new focus to the conversation of the churches. Phrases such as "the Kingdom of God" or "the free society" were already laden with a variety of meanings peculiar to the cultural context in which they were used. The concept of the "responsible society" was a new idea which possessed the potentiality of acquiring a more universally acceptable meaning in the interchange of ideas within the Ecumenical Movement. The usefulness of the idea at this point lay in the fact that it provided a symbol which facilitated better communication. The various churches were still faced with their individual problems, but they possessed a common expression of their ideal for the social order in the idea of a responsible society. The importance of this semantic factor is evidenced by the extent of the use made of the phrase in the Evanston deliberations as the title and central working concept of one of the sections.

The process of communicating through a common conceptual expression gradually promoted the acceptance of that symbol as

a concrete goal. This acceptance as a goal was illustrated by the manner in which the definition of a responsible society developed at Amsterdam was applied and given more explicit normative meaning in the Lucknow Study Conference and the Evanston Assembly.

This development of the idea as a goal is particularly significant when related to the theory that man is a purposive creature with an intellect which facilitates the generalization of human experience and the postulation of goals aimed at the fulfillment of his needs. The ideas of responsibility and the responsible society can be accepted as both individual and social goals for the ordering of experience.

Dr. Gordon Allport, in his book entitled Personality--A Psychological Interpretation, suggests that man's goals and purposes can be created as well as modified.[1] This indicates the possibility of establishing the idea of a responsible society as a goal. Talcott Parsons, writing in Toward a General Theory of Action, follows the thought of Max Weber, by indicating the formative impact which these goals or ends may then have upon the social enterprise. Parsons has utilized the recognition of man's goal seeking orientation as a fundamental element in the development of his theory of social action.

> The theory of action is a conceptual scheme for the analysis of the behavior of living

---

1. Gordon W. Allport, Personality--A Psychological Interpretation (N. Y: Henry Holt and Company, 1937) p. 113.

> organisms. It conceives of this behavior as oriented to the attainment of ends in situations, by means of the normatively regulated expenditures of energy. There are four points to be noted in this conceptualization of behavior: (1) Behavior is oriented to the attainment of ends or goals or other anticipated states of affairs. (2) It takes place in situations. (3) It is normatively regulated. (4) It involves expenditure of energy or effort or motivation.[1]

It is significant to note in passing how the idea of the responsible society has relevance in each of the four dimensions listed by Dr. Parsons in his scheme for the conceptualization of behavior. The idea of the responsible society acts as a dynamic ideal transcending experience while providing a structural scheme and norm for the analysis and change of the concrete situation. With reference to the third factor, the concept of the responsible society is such a regulative norm. Finally, in the responsible relationship before God, man's action is potentially related to the deepest sources of freedom and energy in the love and power of God.

David Bidney, in his work Theoretical Anthropology, recognizes the dialectic between the ideal as a goal and the actual situation as one of the polar tensions inherent in the development of a culture. He points to the necessity for a more extensive use of the normative sciences in postulating

---

1. Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils (ed.), Towards A General Theory of Action (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 53.

goals which will give fuller direction and unity to men in their quest for world community.

> The practical, effective alternatives are not cultural absolutism versus cultural relativism, as contemporary ethnologists are inclined to maintain, but rather rational norms with a potentiality for universal acceptance and realization versus mythological absolutes destined to lead to perpetual crises and conflicting political policies. Far from resolving our international problems, cultural relativism leads to conflicting political and social mythologies. The only effective alternative to a mythical relative absolute is a better, more rational and more objective ideal of conduct and belief capable of overcoming the limitations of the former.[1]

Such comments by a variety of social scientists lend further weight to the assertion of the usefulness of the idea of the responsible society. Their thought affirms the fact that ideas such as the concept of the responsible society are capable of being expressed and accepted as a dynamic goal around which experience may be positively oriented in order to further the realization of harmony between men and nations.

2. A Point of Focus

It was noted in the preceding section that the idea of the responsible society became a conceptual symbol expressive of the relative social ideal of the churches in the Amsterdam-Evanston period. This concept centered concern on a

---

1. David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology, p. 427.

revelant ideal which was then transposed into a social goal. It also, in the same process, served as a point of focus for the unification of the social thought and action of the churches. It fostered a more coherent approach to the problems of the social order, despite the presence of theological disagreements.

> Moreover, the work of these three sections of the Evanston Assembly stood in contrast to some of the others because of its underlying assumption that man and the church are responsible for what can be accomplished to promote human welfare here and now. In none of these three sections was there any urge to push the decision into some speculative realm "beyond history." In none was there emphasis on the limitations of human effort when seeking to act in accord with the will of God. "Christian social responsibility," said the working paper with which the delegates in Section III began their labors, "must be seen in the light of the fact that to an extent unprecedented in history man holds the power today to be the master of his own social destiny." Men talking like that may not even be afraid of that tabooed word "progress." This was the animating spirit in all three of these sections. It is the unstated but unmistakable premise underlying their reports.[1]

Many factors combined to contribute to this deepened sense of responsibility. However, the normative approach and the idea of the responsible society aided in the process of discussion and action as expressions of that responsibility. At this point the concept of the responsible society functioned in

---

1. "Christian Witness to a Shaken World," Christian Century LXXI (September 22, 1954), pp. 1130-1131.

much the same manner as its normative predecessor, the middle axiom. In the pre-Oxford deliberations John Oldham commented,

> between purely general statements of the ethical demands of the Gospel and the decisions that have to be made in concrete situations there is need for what may be described as a middle axiom. They are an attempt to define the directions in which, in a particular state of society, Christian faith must express itself. They are not binding for all time, but are provisional definitions of the type of behavior required of Christians at a given period and in given circumstances.[1]

The middle axioms and the concept of the responsible society were developed to facilitate thought and action at a level between the ethical presupposition and the explicit social action; a level at which agreement is often more probable than at either extreme of the vertical polarity between the transcendent and the concrete. This has been evidenced in the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies where the churches have been able to discuss problems of the political and economic orders and to agree upon a general policy through the use of the idea of the responsible society and its subsidiary norms. This would not have been possible had theological or social unity been a pre-requisite to action. Likewise, at the other extreme, a general policy could not have been developed if agreement on all of the practical implications of that policy would have been necessary. The use of a middle ground of agreement

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, pp. 209-210.

as a base for unified action has been noted in the conclusions of several of the above chapters as the horizontal plane of the church's action as compared with the vertical polarity between the transcendent and the relative. The increasing use of the normative approach in achieving general agreement on social policy despite theological diversity justifies the assertion that the normative approach and the idea of the responsible society are useful tools for bringing the divisive religious and cultural differences represented in the horizontal plane to a point of focus from which a more unified attack can be made upon the problems of the social order.

C. PROVISION OF A POINT OF REFERENCE BETWEEN THE ABSOLUTE IDEAL AND THE RELATIVE SITUATION

1. Applicable Expression of the Transcendent Ideal

The participants in the Stockholm Conference agreed upon the primacy of the value of personality and developed several normative statements concerning such factors as industry or war, but they found it impossible to agree upon the significance of such ideas in relation to the ultimate ideals of the Kingdom.[1] This presented a deep tension which permeated many of the discussions of the conference, and led to the realization that the churches could not ultimately separate the theological and practical realms. The question of

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712.

the relationship between the transcendent ideal and relative actions and ideals became central by the time of the Oxford Conference.

In the discussions in the volume The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Reinhold Niebuhr holds that the genius of the gospel ethic is that it is an absolute ethic which necessitates a supplementary strategy for meeting the every day problems of a world in which sin is an ever present reality.[1] Werner Wiesner, in the same volume, followed Luther's concept of the "two realms." Wiesner conceives of a life of obedience which is inclined to sanction the status quo in the earthly realm coupled with a life of pietistic devotion in the spiritual realm. The only connecting link between these realms lies in the revelation of the Word in Scripture or through the Holy Spirit. This tends to rest most of the responsibility for decisions upon the perception of the direct revelation of the Word in the particular situation. The emphasis is upon preparation for the perception of the directive of the Holy Spirit rather than upon analysis and reflection upon experience in an effort to discern social strategies which approximate the revealed absolutes.[2]

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christian Faith and the Common Life," Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenstrom et al., p. 82.
2. Werner Wiesner, "The Law of Nature and Social Situations," The Christian Faith and the Common Life, Nils Ehrenstrom et al., pp. 120, 124, and 127.

A similar tension is evident in comparing the ideas of the Dean of St. Pauls and Emil Brunner as recorded in the introduction to the official report of the conference. John Oldham records the vein of thought of the former as follows:

> The Sermon on the Mount and the evangelical summary of the law are the principles of the kingdom of God. These principles cannot be applied directly to life in the actual world, since society is organized on principles which are largely at variance with the kingdom. Nonetheless the individual Christian has the duty of so adjusting his conduct that it approximates as closely as possible to that ideal conduct which is the norm of the kingdom.[1]

In contrast, Emil Brunner's position is characterized as holding that

> nothing is achieved by demanding that people love one another or by setting up a social program. What is needed is to give man power to achieve the good. Christian love is absolute union with the will of God and implies a fundamental freedom from all bondage to the world and to man -- freedom from all laws, schemes and programs.
>
> The Christian church has no right to lay down a social program, because it is not its business to establish any kind of system. A system means a law; that is, an attempt to establish timeless and abstract norms for the guidance of actual life. All legalistic systems ignore the person of the agent in his actual situation.[2]

These two types of approaches do not necessarily present incompatible positions. Each represents an emphasis which may be either compatible or mutually exclusive of the other

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 29.

positions in accordance with the will of the person holding the position. The Oldham and Visser't Hooft consideration of this problem in The Church and Its Function in Society represents one of the fullest attempts to draw many of these elements together. They suggest a Christo-centric ethic of inspiration which views the relationship with God through Christ as the ground for the power and direction of life, a position similar to some aspects of the positions held by Wiesner and Brunner.[1] This personal relationship of obedience provides a center beyond society from which society may be criticised or sustained. On the other hand,

> it is not for one moment suggested that the response of the Church to God's call should not issue in the adoption by the Church, or by groups within the Church, of particular policies for the redress of social evils. It has been already urged that the formulation of middle axioms, defining the forms in which at a given period and in given circumstances the Christian law of love can find most appropriate expression, is an urgent need at the present time.[2]

These axioms are but more explicit directives to guide the group or individual in making a personal response to a problem situation. "We are not responding to Him as a Person when we detach the law of love from His living will in the present and set it up as an abstract ideal," according to

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft and John H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 236.
2. Ibid., p. 238.

the authors.[1] The axiom may provide a specific and essential directive, but the purpose and power which undergird this concern are ultimately rooted in the personal relationship with God.

This combination of reflection upon experience and response to God in the existential situation is illustrated in the following paragraph by Oldham and Visser't Hooft:

> A right decision cannot be made in advance by a careful balancing of principles and consideration. It can be made only in the moment of decision itself. This does not mean that it may not and ought not to be preceded by a long period of reflection in which all the relevant factors are weighed and tested. Nor does it mean that there are not settled convictions and tried teachings of experience which for a good man are not open to question and which he would not dream of discarding. These are indeed the basis and condition of a right decision. The more important a decision the more necessary it is that a man should bring to it his total experience. But each situation is new and calls for a venture into the unknown. And for the Christian that venture is a response to what he believes to be the will of God.[2]

The section considering the economic order at the Oxford Conference, approached the problem of the transcendent and the relative through the distinction between love and justice. Love, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is the ultimate standard of life. However, the extent of human sin requires that the Christian find means of restraining that sin in order to increase the

---

1. Ibid., p. 243.
2. Ibid., p. 249.

possibilities for love in the world. The report continues by pointing out that justice is the principle by which man orders the systems and structures of life in the tension between the ideal of love and the fact of sin.

> Justice, as the idea of a harmonious relation of life to life, obviously presupposes the sinful tendency of one life to take advantage of another. This sinful tendency it seeks to check by defining the rightful place and privilege which each life must have in the harmony of the whole and by assigning the duty of each to each.[1]

Love represents an ideal which reaches beyond the possibilities of justice and is at the same time a standard for the evaluation of justice. The ideal of love furnishes the compulsion and the direction for the developing meaning of the idea of justice. The task of realizing and developing the meaning of justice under the norm of love provided one justification for the suggestion of a number of axioms in the course of the Oxford Conference.

The Oxford discussions drew many shades of the problem together in their spectrum of thought. It was recognized that the ultimate source of strength and guidance for the Christian life lay in the relationship with God. Similarly, it was understood that man was ultimately responsible to approach each situation confronting him under the imperative of attempting to discern and realize the will of God therein.

---

1. John H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 76.

From this perspective man was to find guidance in the revelation of God's will for him in the existential moment.

The corrective balance of internal criticism represented at Oxford did not allow this half of the issue to be mistaken for the whole, however. Man was also viewed as being capable of moral responsibility in himself. He is not only called upon to listen to the Word which God might speak, but must also reflect upon the full scope of his experience in an effort to discern the most valid course of action.

Love is viewed as the absolute of the Christian ethic, but often the fact of sin and the complexity of social problems make it difficult to determine the right choices or to feel certain of one's understanding of God's will. In view of this problem Oxford furthered the development of the normative approach through the use of the norm of justice and the suggestion of a number of axioms as relative directives for Christian action. These axioms were tools to help men make the fullest response to the will of God and the need of their neighbor in the task of relating the ideal of love to the actualities of life. This approach attempted to combine the values of an emphasis upon the existential obedience to God on the one hand, and the fullest use of man's rational capacity by man as a responsible moral agent on the other. Its approach represents one of the most inclusive attempts to grapple with the major aspects of the problem of relating the transcendent and the relative that is evident in the course

of the Ecumenical Movement within the period considered in this study.

The question of the means through which to relate the transcendent ideal to the world presented itself anew in the chapter on "The Strategy of the Church" in the Amsterdam preparatory work. The author, C. L. Patijn, indicates that the church may become so absorbed in its own spiritual resources that it forgets the world, but that on the other hand an even greater temptation is for the church to take upon itself "the skin of the social conditions."[1] He continues with a criticism of the tendency of the church to absorb the life of the world through such constructs as natural law, orders of society, or specific class interests.

Professor John Bennett responded by pointing out that Dr. Patijn

> makes much of the importance for the Church of technical knowledge but he fears the development of general principles, theories and philosophies because these come to be the expression of self-sufficient and pretentious human reason. He is right in insisting that in Christian revelation we have the criterion by which all human wisdom must be tested. But there is more to be said than is suggested in this chapter for a spirit of openness to the wisdom of the world on the part of the Church, even to its theoretical systems. The use of 'natural law' by the Church may have been mistaken when it allowed too detailed elaboration of classical natural law to become part of its official

---

1. C. L. Patijn, "The Strategy of the Churc," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 157.

> teaching, but it is not a mistake for the Church to open its mind to the moral wisdom of the classical world so long as this wisdom is kept under the Christian criterion and so long as its transformation by the Spirit of Christ is also emphasised.[1]

Patijn structures the dilemma by recognizing the relevance of the Christian ideal for the world, but also the perplexing problem of applying that ideal. Once again Bennett injected a comment suggesting that Patijn did not do justice to the role of the "middle axiom" or proximate norm as a means through which to give some guidance to the social strategy of the church.[2]

This issue was drawn into even sharper relief in the debate carried on by Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr in the period following the Amsterdam Conference. The core of Barth's position is expressed in the following reference:

> I do not wish to weaken the earnestness, the good will and the hopes that have brought us here, but only to base them on their proper foundation, when I say: we ought to give up, even on this first day of our deliberations, every thought that the care of the church, the care of the world, is our care. . . .What we can and ought to do here is simply this: we must give our churches and the world a proof "in spirit and in power" -- of how it is when a thousand Christians from all lands and peoples, of all tongues and confessions, gather together in one congregation under present conditions, stand by what they have so often

---

1. Ibid., n. 157.
2. Ibid., n. 159.

> heard and preached in their several positions and various styles: "Commit thy way unto the Lord and trust in him, and he will bring it to pass."[1]

Niebuhr responded in an article entitled "We Are Men and Not God." He suggests in this article that the essential weakness of this emphasis upon what man cannot do and what God has already done is that it tempts the Christian to desire the victory of the resurrection without the commitment and suffering of the crucifixion. His second criticism lies in the fact that Barth's position gives no direction or inspiration to the Christian for the day to day turn of events.

> Barth insists that we have no "systems of economic and political principles to offer the world." We can present it only "with a revolutionary hope." This emphasis has its limited validity. Christianity is too simply equated by many with some simple system of "Christian economics" or "Christian sociology." But Barth's teachings seem to mean that we can, as Christians dispense with the principles of justice which, however faulty, represent the cumulative experience of the race in dealing with the vexing problems of man's relations to his fellows.[2]

Despite the challenge by Barth, the Assembly affirmed the necessity and usefulness of the normative approach by its unanimous acceptance of the report of section three with its central idea of the responsible society. Evanston accepted

---

1. Karl Barth, "No Christian Marshall Plan," Christian Century, LXV (December 8, 1948), p. 1331.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, "We Are Men and Not God," Christian Century LXV (October 27, 1948) P. 1139.

the Amsterdam decision and moved more directly into the problem of developing the implications of the idea of the responsible society with reference to particular issues.

The Amsterdam debates reflected in the comments of Patijn and Bennett or Niebuhr and Barth evidence little insight that had not already been involved in the Oxford thought and action upon this problem of relating the transcendent and the relative. The emphasis may vary, but the discussions at Oxford, which supplemented the primary factor of obedience to the will of God with a responsible reflection upon experience, represent the fundamental position of the Ecumenical Movement. This provided a foundation which utilizes the value of the concept of the responsible society with its emphasis upon accountability before God and man and its suggestion of a normative structure to aid man in the realization of aspects of the ideal in the relative.

There are other factors within this function which suggest the usefulness and value of the normative approach and the conception of the responsible society. In an essay entitled "The Morality of Politics and the Politics of Morality," Max Weber has discussed this problem of the relationship between the ultimate ideal and the actual situation. In this article Weber identifies and contrasts two types of ethics, the ethic of ultimate ends and the ethic of responsibility. When an ethic of ultimate ends such as the absolute Christian ethic is confronted with the responsibility for the choice of

the means and the consequences Weber suggests that there are three possibilities. Two of these possibilities will result in practical failures. The ethic of ultimate ends will either dictate an uncompromising course of action which "leaves the results with the Lord" or it will break down on the problem of the justification of means by ends.[1]

> No ethics in the world can dodge the fact that in numerous instances the attainment of "good"ends is bound to the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at least dangerous ones--facing the possibility or even the probability of evil ramifications. From no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose "justifies" the ethically dangerous means and ramifications.[2]

The third alternative suggested by Weber represents his suggestion for a partial resolution of the problem, a combination of the ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility. This combination envisions the individual as being responsible for the consequences of his acts insofar as possible while living under the ends or ideals which he holds to be ultimate. Such an approach brings the two ethics together in a supplementary fashion in a responsible effort to realize ultimate ends in the midst of the relative situation.[3]

---

1. Max Weber, "The Morality of Politics and the Politics of Morality," From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, trans., ed., H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 122.
2. Ibid., p. 121.
3. Ibid., p. 127.

This analysis by Weber supports the increasing development and acceptance of the normative approach in the Ecumenical Movement in that the axioms of Oxford and the idea of the responsible society developed at Amsterdam represent channels through which this combination of the ultimate Christian ideals and the responsibilities of social life may be realized in the worship, the reflection, and the existential decision of the Christian.

The usefulness of the idea of the responsible society can also be seen in the potential inherent in the character of the concept as a medium through which to aid the expression of the transcendent ideal of love in the relative situation in a comprehensive form. In the previous chapter several characteristics of the idea of the responsible society were noted which underline the usefulness of the idea in this context: its relational structure; its demand for accountability; and, its ability to incorporate new normative meaning into itself.

The idea of the responsible society is structured around the polarity between freedom and equality; further, the idea of responsibility in itself entails accountability. This provides a structure which can incorporate many of the relationship problems for which the ultimate norm of love is particularly relevant. Secondly, the notion of accountability or responsibility helps to focus problems in a personal frame of reference in contrast to the tendency of legalistic systems to ignore the person as an actual agent of determination in a situation. Finally, the idea of the responsible society is a

useful medium for the expression of the transcendent ideal of love in that the meaning of the idea of responsibility can be supplemented by the content of the ideal of love.

There are certainly dangers or limitations with reference to the use of normative ideas as working media between the transcendent ideal and the relative situation. The danger or limitation lies essentially in the identification of the normative idea with either extreme of the vertical plane between the transcendent and the relative. Too close an identification of the normative idea with the transcendent ideal may either have the result of making the normative idea itself so transcendent as to reduce its constructive impact upon the relative situation or it may convert the transcendent ideal into a sanction for the acceptance of the status quo. On the other hand, too close an identification of the normative idea with the relative situation will make it useless as a medium for fostering the realization of the transcendent ideal. This will tend to sanction the present circumstances and to make the transcendent ideal seem irrelevant to the relative situation since the transcendent seems to be impossibly far beyond the relative.

The section on "The Economic Order" at Oxford dealt with this same problem with reference to the norm of justice and the ideal of love.

> In attempting to deal with political and economic problems, the Christian must therefore be specially on his guard against two errors.

> The one is to regard the realities of social justice incorporated in given systems and orders as so inferior to the law of love that the latter cannot be a principle of discrimination among them but only a principle of indiscriminate judgment upon them all. This error makes Christianity futile as a guide in all those decisions which Christians, like other people, must constantly be making in the political and economic sphere.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The other error is to identify some particular social system with the will of God or to equate it with the kingdom of God. When conservatives insist on such an identification in favor of the status quo, they impart to it a dangerous religious sanction which must drive those who challenge it into a secular revolt against religion itself.[1]

It is essential that these limitations upon the use of intermediate norms be recognized by those who attempt to use them. One of the values of the idea of the responsible society at this point is that its dynamic polarity and broad relational character work against the fixation of the concept at a particular point in either the vertical or horizontal planes.

This discussion suggests again the comparable normative nature of justice and responsibility. These two norms are similar in that each seeks on the basis of its given meaning to determine the nature of the accountability existing in a relationship. Justice was the basic norm in the deliberations of the Oxford Conference.

---

1. John H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 78-79.

> The relative and departmental standard for all the social arrangements and institutions, all the economic structures and political systems, by which the life of man is ordered is the principle of justice.[1]

The report on the "Responsible Society in a World Perspective" at the Evanston Assembly added the further comment, "True justice is dynamic and its forms must vary to meet changing needs."[2] The concept of the responsible society presupposes the norm of justice in fact as well as in the chronology of the Ecumenical Movement. Justice is the fundamental term for the relative sphere under the ideal of love. The meaning given to the idea of responsibility will largely be determined by the understanding of the ideal of love and the norm of justice.[3]

On the other hand the idea of the responsible society possesses qualities which make it in turn particularly useful in relation to the norm of justice. First, it is a new phase which is open to normative content relevant to the present. It may utilize, but need not be bound by past conceptions of the proper balance between freedom and equality. Secondly, the idea of the responsible society provides a normative structure which raises the question of responsibility against the background of the society as a whole. The use of society as a denominator for the sphere of responsibility is more consistent

---

1. Ibid., p. 76.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 125.
3. See Emil Brunner, Justice and the Social Order, trans. Mary Hottinger (N.Y: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1945).

with the increasing interdependence and size of the unit of social interaction. This discourages the tendency to determine justice from a personal frame of reference only by requiring that the problem be viewed from the perspective of the whole of the society as well.

The norm justice and the concept of the responsible society are compatible developments in the deliberations of the Ecumenical Movement. The idea of the responsible society incorporated the norm of justice. This does not lessen the significance of the norm of justice, but simply involves it in a newer, dynamic normative pattern.

The Ecumenical Movement has gradually affirmed an approach which attempts to hold the obedience to God's revelation and the development and use of normative insights in a dynamic supplementary relationship. In the opinion of Max Weber such a combination represents the only one in which an individual can responsibly adhere to absolute ideals such as those of the Christian faith.[1]

The concept of the responsible society provides a useful medium through which to approach this problem of relating the ideal and the relative. This usefulness can be distorted by a failure to recognize the limitations of the

---

1. Max Weber, "The Morality of Politics and the Politics of Morality," From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, trans., ed., H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, p. 127.

concept or its dependence upon higher norms. When these limitations are respected however, the idea of the responsible society serves as a constructive point of reference between the ultimate ideal and the relative situation.

2. Frame of Reference for Subsidiary Norms

The previous discussion has centered in the function of the concept of the responsible society as a working medium between the absolute and the relative, concentrating on the relationship of the intermediate norm to the absolute ideal. The present section is focused on the lower half of the vertical plane in the consideration of the relationship between the normative idea and the concrete subsidiary axiom for social action. This places the norm of justice and the concept of the responsible society in somewhat of a middle ground between the absolute ideals and the axioms for the relative situation.

The intermediate norm of justice or the concept of the responsible society serves in this case as a type of mediator which possesses greater applicability than the absolute while being more transcendent than a specific relative axiom. The reports of the various conferences and assemblies provide numerous illustrations of this function of mediation between the central norm of justice or responsibility and the subsidiary axiom. In the Oxford Conference, for example, there is the suggestion of a number of ends or standards under the

ideal of justice.[1] Similarly, a number of traits characteristic of a responsible society were mentioned in the Evanston conversations with the intention of urging their embodiment in the political order.[2]

The discussions on the international order at Amsterdam and Evanston give a rather concrete illustration of the manner in which these subsidiary axioms are developed under the higher norms of justice or responsibility. This process was characterized by three stages of action in response to a problem area: the consideration of the previous experiences of the churches in dealing with similar problems, the reflection upon the problems in the light of the Christian understanding of history and the ultimate norms for the fulfillment of God's will therein, and the development of a general policy through which to confront these issues. The last stage is the point at which the subsidiary axiom is formulated. Each of the first two stages is essential,

> wisdom is as essential as knowledge, and no amount of knowledge evaluated and analyzed within a pattern of reference of secular pragmatism can provide sound policy. A Christian understanding of history is fully as important as political science for understanding the behavior of people.[3]

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 98-99.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 115-116.
3. Roswell P. Barnes and Kenneth G. Grubb, "The Churches' Approach to International Affairs," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 33.

Often the subsidiary axioms do not develop out of a direct reflection upon the transcendent ideal or efforts to create a deductive system of axioms. In this case they will usually arise out of the attempt to work through to a practical policy or action which appears under the circumstances to be the most just and responsible policy among the possible alternatives. If, at this point, the policy appears to be compatible with the central norms and the transcendent ideals it will probably be thought of as an axiom and eventually recognized as such in the more formal course of a conference or assembly. On the other hand subsidiary axioms have been developed from the top or the ideal down to the situation in a direct attempt to find a more relevant and explicit expression of the meaning of the concept of the responsible society when applied to the specific problem area. Visser't Hooft and Oldham chose to emphasize the responsibility for an existential response to the will of God in a particular situation, but it is significant to note their correlated emphasis upon the rational process as a support for the moment of responsible decision. This emphasis upon direct obedience to God's will

> does not mean that it /the moment of decision/ may not and ought not to be preceded by a long period of reflection in which all the relevant factors are weighed and tested. Nor does it mean that there are not settled convictions and tried teachings of experience which for a good man are not open to question and which he would

> not dream of discarding. These are indeed the basis and condition of a right decision.[1]

The assumptions of this type of approach would seem to indicate that the method behind the development of the subsidiary axioms in the Oxford period was similar to that of Amsterdam and Evanston in the attempt to combine reflection and evaluation. Each of these periods attempted to postulate subsidiary axioms in response to the peculiar problems of the time on the basis of a coherent ordering of past experience in conjunction with the attempt to discern the implications of the ideals of love and the Kingdom as a ground for a personal response to God's will.

This method of developing subsidiary axioms provides the possibility for further usefulness for the normative approach in the potential relationship with the normative social sciences. Such a method utilizes the tools of synopsis and coherence characteristic of philosophy and provides a level at which two-way communication is possible and necessary. Dr. Walter Muelder pointed to this necessity in the following comment:

> There is no place today for disciplinary conceit or arrogance. The sciences, philosophy, religion and theology have much to learn from each other. They are not island universes. Each must be supplemented by the others in a dialectical whole. In the quest for a responsible world

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft and John H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 249.

> community they must be synthesized in the concrete unity of theory and practice. Responsibility is neither abstract moral and spiritual idealism nor expedient realism.[1]

The interaction of thought in the "dialectical whole" will not only provide new resources and tools for the rational aspect in the determination of social norms and actions, it may also furnish a variety of media through which to affirm the transcendent ideals of the Christian faith in a more positive level of understanding.

The necessity of the development of social norms or axioms capable of acceptance by the world community and the responsibility of the normative scientist in relation to the task were clearly asserted by Dr. Bidney.

> The spirit of normative science is a cultural universal which is applicable to any cultural discipline, regardless of its subject matter. But normative science is more than a disembodied spirit; it is also a body of knowledge carrying conviction through empirical evidence and rational demonstration. . . . Unless science can provide potentially universal cultural values capable of winning adherents, other methods will be found to fill this need, such as the mythological appeal to race, class, or nationality. The choice is between "contentious knowledge" of conflicting mythological ideologies and normative scientific, rational truths capable of producing a rational consensus among the peoples of the world. Only a cultural unity based upon a common core of rational values and brought into being by voluntary deliberate consent can endure indefinitely.[2]

---

1. Walter G. Muelder, Religion and Economic Responsibility (N.Y: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. xiii.
2. David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology, p. 432.

The normative approach developed in the course of the activities of the Ecumenical Movement furnishes a foundation which may be utilized in communication with the normative sciences. Likewise, following the thought of Bidney, the idea of the responsible society provides a conception which may be used and developed in the normative sciences and Christian ethics either individually or cooperatively as an ideal to which men might give assent in the effort to achieve greater fellowship and peace in the human community.

There were naturally questions and reservations with respect to the method of developing subsidiary axioms in the normative approach. Professor Torrance, for example in the deliberation upon the report of section three at Evanston commented, "The report did not show how the gospel itself was linked with the actual points later enumerated."[1] Similarly, others such as Karl Barth at Amsterdam criticized this method as an attempt to ascend from man's disorder to God's Kingdom. However, this criticism fails to recognize the value of the function of a mediating norm and the fact that such a norm necessitates the analysis of and reflection upon experience as a means through which to achieve the most explicit application of that norm. The ideals of love and the Kingdom are not presupposed less as a result of an attempted reflection upon experience. This, in fact, represents greater

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 127.

responsiveness to these ideals. Accountability before God is fundamental in the concept. Likewise, the ideal of love provides the deepest resources for the meaning of the norm of responsibility.

The usefulness of such a concept as the idea of the responsible society is that it does seek to come to grips with the relative experiences of men. The concept does not accomplish this through a system of casuistry under the Gospel for this would tend to rob the individual of his sense of responsibility for decisions. On the contrary, the norms developed under the concept of the responsible society seek to provide a general direction and the goal for the individual or a society under which the individual is still required to chose and act.

At this point, the purpose of this study is simply to indicate the usefulness of the normative approach and the manner in which it has been used in the course of the ecumenical conversations as a medium through which to bring the transcendent ideal to bear upon the relative, and not to consider the relative merits of particular schools of theological or epistemological thought.

D. PROVISION OF A STRUCTURE FOR DYNAMIC REASSESSMENT

The Ecumenical Movement has been characterized by an continuous process of critical exchange and reassessment. This has been a part of the struggle of growth. It is the contention of this section that the responsible society concept

furnishes a structure which exposes the nature of many of the problems of the social order, a structure which serves as a medium for the internalization of concern, and a structure for the reassessment and change of a specific situation.

The idea of a dynamic reassessment has been given fruitful consideration in the social and political works of R. M. MacIver. He deals explicitly with this problem in a book entitled Social Causation.[1] In this work his concern is to establish a system for the identification of the causal element in social change. His analysis of the reassessment process provides a helpful structural background against which to demonstrate the usefulness of the concept of the responsible society. The focus of his analysis represents but one portion of the social concern of the Ecumenical Movement which seeks not only to understand past changes, but also to foster the re-evaluation of the present circumstances in an effort to achieve the conservation of existing values and the realization of further values. MacIver's method for identifying the causal element in a past change is simply an empirical comparison of the changed situation with a similar unchanged situation in an effort to identify the element of differences between the changed and unchanged. He suggests the use of the tools of the empirical and statistical sciences in combination

---

1. R. M. MacIver, Social Causation (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1942).

with the process of imaginative reconstruction in the effort to determine the most probable cause.

> The process of causal investigation is a process of delimitation, a sifting out of irrelevant elements from the inclusive situation, a more accurate determination of the ways in which phenomena belong together. We pass from one approximation to a closer one and often our final conclusion must be still only an approximation.[1]

In analyzing the problem, MacIver divides creation into three realms: the physical realm, the organic realm, and the realm of conscious being. The realm of conscious being is distinguished from the realm of organic being essentially by the factor of conscious choice of means and ends. In this realm of conscious being, he cites three orders: the cultural order, the technical order, and the social order.[2]

> Our classification of systems, orders, and realms implies a ground of unity that still remains to be explored. For us here the problem is how the factors of the various categories are selectively unified in the processes of individual and group behavior. . . .For every person and group, at every moment of conscious action, there is a multiplicity of concordant and conflicting values; and there is a multiplicity of means and conditions. How is this multiplicity resolved in the dynamic moment?[3]

The problem confronting MacIver is that of determining the manner in which this multiplicity of means and ends is to be reassessed and brought into a new equilibrium. He describes

---

1. Ibid., p. 376.
2. Ibid., p. 272-273.
3. Ibid., p. 290

the process through which this is achieved as a dynamic reassessment. The key to this process, according to MacIver, is that the variety of elements involved in the conscious behavior are brought into a single order as if being factored by a common denominator.

> This is the unifying process that brings into one dynamic synthesis the inner or subjective order of urges, values, and effective goals and the outer orders of environmental reality. But the unity is achieved on the condition that the outer loses for this synthesis its sheer externality and <u>becomes the outer of the inner</u>.[1]

When the complex variety of factors are brought together in a moment of internal focus, the reassessment takes place as the factors are evaluated and reoriented under the value and ends scheme of the individual or myth and norm structure of the group. This reassessment also includes the appropriation of the techniques or means essential for the achievement of the new orientation and behavior. A change in ends, means, or situation necessitates a re-evaluation of the balance on the basis of the values of the individual or the norms of the society in relation to the means available for the establishment of a new equilibrium between the elements. A reassessment within a society as a whole may be the product of a random realignment of disconnected elements, a deliberate collective redistribution in the equilibrium, or a conjuncture through

---

1. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 388.

which even opposites may be blended in the dynamic process.[1]

The idea of the responsible society incorporates many of the elements cited by MacIver as components of the dynamic reassessment. The structure of the concept of the responsible society embraces the tension between the freedom and equality interests of the persons constituting the social order. This, of course, is closely related to the social order category suggested by MacIver. Further, the idea of responsibility incorporates much of the means-end relationship which MacIver correlates rather closely with the cultural and technical order. Responsibility entails an accountability for the expression of means or techniques as power under the direction of the values or ends which constitute the meaning of the idea of responsibility.

Of greater significance is the fact that the idea of responsibility aids the internalization of the problem of reassessment by raising the question of the personal involvement. This brings the elements involved in the reassessment into a personal frame of reference in which the individual or institutions in the social order can more easily comprehend their accountability for other persons and institutions in the society as a whole.

The idea of the responsible society is particularly useful in this context, partly because it helps to internalize

---

1. Ibid., p. 305.

the various factors in a social problem by raising the question of personal responsibility. Also, it provides a structure which illuminates the interrelations of freedom and equality and applies the normative content of the idea of responsibility to the means and ends relationship in the general reassessment of the structure and then attempts to achieve a new balance within the horizontal polarity. This might be illustrated by reference again to the relationship between the landlord and the landless peasant. A theoretical system of freedoms or rights would simply protect the property rights of the land holders. The evaluation becomes somewhat different, however, when the idea of responsibility within the whole social order is applied. This necessitates the inclusion of the balancing factor of equality. The achievement of a more responsible equality for the landless peasant may entail some restraint upon the freedom of the landlord.[1]

The idea of the responsible society provides a structure based on the polarity within the social order which facilitates the analysis of the problems of the social order by exposing the polar factors and then fostering the internalization in a process of re-evaluation and alignment leading toward a new equilibrium.

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ -- The Hope of Asia, p. 27.

E. PROVISION OF A CRITERION

The "Report of Section III" of the Evanston Assembly indicated that the

> "Responsible Society" is not an alternative social or political system, but a criterion by which we judge all existing social orders, and at the same time a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make.[1]

This function has been partially discussed above within the analysis of the religious component in the concept of the responsible society, and again in the discussion of its function as an ideal and goal for society.

The idea of the responsible society requires an accountable relationship between the various persons and institutions of the social order. The Amsterdam definition qualifies this as accountability before God and man; the accountability before man meaning that the use of freedom or power is in part subject to those who are the recipients of its expression.

The factor of responsibility or accountability is the point of focus for the normative function of the concept as a criterion. It sets a standard or requirement of responsibility in the midst of every relationship.

Further, as pointed out in the section above considering the meaning of the concept, the idea of the responsible society is open to the possibility of incorporating new meaning or content into its nature. This means simply that additional

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 113.

meaning can be attached as a definitive element in the delineation of what constitutes a responsible relationship. Such flexibility is extremely useful, for it makes it possible for the concept to accommodate itself as a norm to a wide variety of social and cultural differences, and provides more explicit direction on specific issues.

The meaning of the concept has been progressively expanded at the conferences and assemblies marking the growth and development of the Ecumenical Movement. Meaning was added to the concept in the various conferences and assemblies such as Lucknow and Evanston; the accumulation of experience in ecumenical social action by such groups as the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has expanded the concept, and the continuous interpretation by Christians of the ultimate ideals of love and the Kingdom has added further meaning. These areas of action, either individually or in combination, have provided meaning for the developing normative approach and the idea of the responsible society. This added content makes the concept potentially more explicit as a criterion for individual problems.

The Amsterdam Assembly gave content to the idea of the responsible society in its definition of the concept. Similarly, the Lucknow Study Conference postulated a number of ideas which the majority of the delegates felt to be characteristic of a society that was responsible, such as the norm

demanding the promotion of social justice.[1] These correlated definitions with their explicit relevance to the Asian scene were incorporated into the general normative content of the idea of the responsible society. Many of these ideas were then refined and enlarged in the work of the Evanston Assembly, as is evidenced in the section dealing with the problem of the under developed countries.[2] The result of this process is that the Asian Christian now possesses a central criterion and a related body of specific directives for Christian social action which have been recognized by the world-wide Ecumenical Movement, but which still possess local relevance. This simply demonstrates the process through which the concept of the responsible society is developed as a normative criterion.

In conclusion, this leads to the assertion that the idea of the responsible society acts as a normative criterion which is expansive enough to confront the entire social order, and specific enough for its potential correlated content to have relevance for quite individual problems. On this basis the concept may be used as a criterion upon which to evaluate the character of the social order or specific social problems for which it has relevance.

---

1. World Council of Churches, Christ -- The Hope of Asia, p. 31.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 123-126.

The concept as a criterion provides a point of reference for the normative analysis and evaluation of a situation. This function presupposes some acceptance of the idea of the responsible society as an idea or goal. As an idea the concept of the responsible society simply presented a symbol for the expression of a notion as to the proper ordering of society. When this idea and its expression in the phrase "the responsible society" were accepted by many of the participants in the Ecumenical Movement as an idea to be sought or realized, it then functioned as a goal. In the course of this process the idea of the responsible society has increasingly served such other functions as the provision of a point of focus for the social thought of the churches, a medium for the expression of the transcendent ideals of the Christian faith in a more concrete fashion, a structure for the reassessment and analysis of a situation, and a criterion. It is important to realize that these factors are delineated on the basis of the functions of the concept and not some definitive quality within it. Even in a functional analysis there is considerable duplication as has been suggested above. For example, the functioning of the concept as a goal or criterion makes it possible for it to also serve as a point of focus for the social thought of the churches.

The suggestion that the idea of the responsible society is comprehensive enough to provide a criterion for both the social order as a whole and the specific individual raises a further question. Is it possible to speak of a responsible society or can there only be responsible persons?

There certainly could not be a responsible society without responsible persons, but to then assume that it is inappropriate to think in terms of a responsible society is to miss the significance of the interrelation between freedom and order or the individual and his social or cultural orders. This issue has been touched upon in the ecumenical discussions and it constitutes a central problem in cultural anthropology. The development of thought on this question could be illustrated in the transition which has evidenced itself in the writings of the anthropologist A. L. Kroeber, but it is David Bidney who gives the fullest expression to a synthesis of the factors involved.

> According to the polaristic position adopted here, culture is to be understood primarily as a regulative process initiated by man for the development and organization of his determinate, substantive potentialities. Nevertheless, human nature is logically and genetically prior to culture, since we must postulate human agents with psychobiological powers and impulses capable of initiating the cultural process as a means of adjusting to their environment and as a form of symbolic expression. In other words, the determinate nature of man is manifested functionally through culture, but is not reducible to culture.[1]
>
> If one acknowledges the priority of man in society, as the author of his culture, one is logically bound to accept the ontological priority of social man to culture. Once begun, the process becomes cyclical, societies developing cultures, and the cultures in turn affecting their societies. There is no a priori logical necessity for setting up a linear, one-way cultural or societal determinism and to regard either culture or society as the primary determinant of the other. . . . There is, I maintain, a relation of polarity between social

---

1. David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology, p. 154.

> and cultural evolution which allows for a measure of independence, as well as mutual interdependence.[1]
>
> The polaristic theory of culture which I advocate implies that the unit of culture is the patterned behavior of man in society. Only by combining pattern and process as distinguishable but inseparable elements of cultural behavior will it be possible to discover and understand the "dynamic mechanisms."[2]

It is important to note the determinative impact which each element is capable of making upon the other. The freedom of the individual, though shaped by the determinative process of the society or culture, may nonetheless alter the pattern of the society or the culture.

This interrelation of individual freedom and the determinative power of the social unit has been noted frequently in the course of the ecumenical discussions. A German delegate at Stockholm commented:

> If we look at this more closely and in the spirit of love, we shall find that it is by no means always a question of the sin and guilt of the individual, but much more frequently of the community. This guilt consists in the fact that the community has allowed conditions to arise in which men are bound to stumble and fall, to sink and be lost.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It is not a Christian duty not only to hold out a helpful hand to those who have come to grief and to stoop to those who have sunk low in sin and sorrow, but also to feel the collective guilt and to wage war against those conditions that crush body and

---

1. Ibid., p. 104.
2. Ibid., p. 155.

> soul, mind and spirit, manners and morals, joy and nobility of mind? Thus . . . . to advance beyond helpfulness to individuals to comprehensive social and industrial reforms.[1]

Similarly, the report of the conference recognizes the importance of various social structures and applies such normative ideas as the suggestion that the industrial enterprises are a social trust.[2]

The concern over the relation between the individual and the social structure became even more explicit by the time of the Oxford Conference. The impact of the power of the state or the economic order upon the individual was a center of thought, as has been noted in the chapter dealing with the Oxford Conference. The trend was continued in the work of the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies where one of the sections was centered on the issues of the social order and another on the problems of the international order.

This developing trend evidences an increasing awareness of the interaction and interdependence of the individual and the social or cultural orders. The society or the culture are not metaphysical entities sui generis or a "group mind," but they do constitute the solidaristic element with its many supra-personal qualities.

Increasingly the thought of the Ecumenical Movement has

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, pp. 133-135.
2. Ibid., p. 712.

come to grips with the problem at the level of this recognition in an effort to transform these solidaristic processes of the society or the culture into as positive and responsible a nature as possible. This involves not only a concern for responsible persons but also for responsible social structures or orders; both of these dimensions are essential and both are related to the development of a responsible society.

The idea of the responsible society is an illustration of this in itself. The phrase, "where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order," incorporates the polarity between individual freedom and the order of the group.[1] The idea of the responsible society is focused upon the problem of making the solidaristic elements as responsible as possible. It seeks to achieve this by keeping the avenues open for criticism and control from the freedom side of the polarity between freedom and order.

> For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community.[2]

The conclusion to be drawn from these various factors indicate that it is appropriate to think in terms of a responsible society because of the presence of determinative

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
2. Ibid., III, 192.

solidaristic elements in the social dimension of life. Such elements can transmit or sustain both good and evil or a combination thereof. This presents the task of attempting to form these solidaristic elements so that they function as responsibly as possible in the polarity with the freedom of the individual and under the responsibility to God -- a responsible society.

F. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The normative approach and the use of an expansive concept such as the idea of the responsible society do not represent the only tenable resolution of the problems of relating the transcendent and the relative. However, the functions this approach performs through the concept of the responsible society and the manner in which it brings the ideal of existential obedience to God and man's relative responsibilities into a working relationship give evidence to its significance and usefulness.

The idea of the responsible society will also perform many of the same functions noted above in a non-Christian cultural situation. This will be possible to the extent of and in accordance with the degree or responsibility required by the value presuppositions which undergird the idea of responsibility on the one hand and the extent of the awareness of man's potentiality for good and/or evil evidenced in the structures of the freedom-equality dialectic on the other.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

A. THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC AND THE WORLD

The world was in perpetual chaos during the twenty-nine years between the Stockholm Conference and the Evanston Assembly. The ramifications of two world wars, a demoralizing world depression, and then a "cold war" marked the course of the years. They were also years which saw the contradiction between man's idealism as expressed in the formulation of two world organizations and his despair as expressed in the acceptance of totalitarianism and war as an alternative to the bread line.

The problem of the world has never been easily answered by Christians. The Kingdom, though partially given on the one hand, continues to confront the sinfulness of the world with its absolute demands on the other. The problem of how to respond to these absolute demands constitutes one of the central questions in the work of the Ecumenical Movement. The attempts to find a means through which to relate the Kingdom and the world and the rejection of such attempts provides a continuing point of conflict.

Portions of this study have dealt with two generalized

poles. These poles were not correlated with a particular confessional or theological perspective. They were differentiated on the basis of the use or rejection of social norms as approximations of the ideals of the Christian faith.

The position of those who rejected the normative approach was given its most explicit expression in some of the comments by members of the German delegation at the Stockholm Conference. On the other hand the normative approach received its most extensive formulation in the work of the Oxford period, and its most expansive form in the expression of the Amsterdam Assembly in the idea of the responsible society.

Those who rejected the normative approach were inclined to emphasize the sinfulness of man on the one hand and the victory of God on the other. This was expressed by Ludwig Ihmels at Stockholm when he said,

> In Christ the Kingdom of God has become a reality in the world; in Him it is built up, in Him it is made complete. Nothing could be more mistaken or more disastrous than to suppose that we mortal men have to build up God's Kingdom in the world.[1]

This represented a rejection of attempts by men to work toward their approximations of the ideal of the Kingdom. From this perspective the work of man was not of consequence except as a witness to what God had done and would do in the Kingdom. The result of this negation of the everyday work of man was

---

1. G. K. A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 85.

that little thought was given to the direction of man's activities under God in the complexities of that sphere. At this point man was primarily dependent for his guidance upon God's revelation of His will in a situation.

The normative approach did not stand at a totally opposite pole as in the typical polar structure. Most of those who were active in developing the normative approach paralleled the the position of the other pole in the affirmation of the primacy of the Kingdom; the variance occurred at the point of interpreting the nature of man's role in the Kingdom. For example, the report of the section on "The Economic Order" at Oxford stated:

> The nature and will of God as thus revealed /through Jesus Christ/ form the basis of human existence and the standard of human conduct. The chief end of man is to glorify God, to honor and love him, in work and life as in worship. This love involves the obligation to love our neighbors as ourselves, a second commandment which Jesus declared to be like unto the first.[1]

The emphasis in these assumptions had been given more explicit expression at the Stockholm Conference by A. E. Garvie when he said,

> God fulfills the purpose for man, not apart from man, but by means of man. . . . Man can hinder or help, delay or advance the fulfillment of God's purpose. . . . God fulfills his purpose for man in intimate relation with man.[2]

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 75.
2. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 88.

From this perspective the everyday work of man is particularly significant. However, the facts of sin and the complexity of the social order make it difficult for man to discover and fulfill the will of God in a life of love. This problem provided the central focus for those who participated in the development of the normative approach in the Ecumenical Movement.

In the Oxford period this approach was given its fullest formulation. The sinfulness of man issues in the necessity for the restraint of that sin through justice. Justice was viewed at Oxford as the central normative concept for the relative world. Under this a group of middle axioms was developed whose purpose was to "define the directions in which, in a particular state of society, Christian faith must express itself."[1] These were not binding for all time, but rather represented a directive for a more specific situation.

The position of those who rejected the normative approach, much like the absolute ethic considered by Max Weber in the essay mentioned above, tended to emphasize the ideal of righteousness without concern for consequences. In contrast the normative approach raised the question of consequences and sought to achieve the compromise in which the ideal may be most fully realized. The compromise struck at Oxford in the normative approach was not a casuistry which tends to reduce the

---

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 210.

actual responsibility of the individual in determining the best response to a situation or the obedience of the person to the will of God therein. The purpose of the "middle axiom" was to provide more explicit guidance to the Christian, guidance which the Christian must reflect upon rationally and meditate upon prayerfully in obedience to God's revelation before acting.

B. THE CONCEPT OF THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY

1. Chronological Development

The end of the Second World War witnessed the conclusion of one conflict and the introduction of another. Two new camps developed in the division between the Communistic East, centered in the Soviet Union, and the Capitalistic West, centered in the United States. The former placed its emphasis upon the break down of an old exploitative system and the development of a new structure of economic equality while the latter tended to value freedom.

Between these contending world powers a third bloc or force arose in an effort to strike a mediating balance which would off-set the East-West power struggle. This movement known as the "third force" sought an equilibrium between the freedom emphasis of the West and the equality emphasis of the East.

The equilibrium which was sought in the international order is characteristic of the essential problem of any human association in the social order, the problem of relating the interacting freedoms of the persons involved. This has been variously

characterized as the problem of freedom and order, freedom and equality, or freedom and power. The section considering the social order at Amsterdam recognized this polarity and structured it in a conceptual form under the ideal of responsibility. It defined a responsible society as one

> where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[1]

This conceptualization of the polarity between freedom and equality under the ideal of responsibility provided a dynamic new fundamental norm.

There was naturally some rejection of this approach. The world situation easily accommodated itself to those who emphasized the depravity of man and his inability to approximate his ideals of the Kingdom. It seems evident however, from the course followed by the Ecumenical Movement, that the impact of the world situation was also to awaken the churches to the realization that the salvation of the souls of men was closely connected to the transformation of the world in which they live.

The responsibility of the churches toward the world and the quest for a responsible society were among the central concerns of the Ecumenical Movement in the years between Amsterdam and Evanston. The normative approach and its expression in

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.

the idea of the responsible society were utilized as basic tools for the implementation of that concern. Similarly, the developing emphasis upon Christian eschatology added a balancing perspective and ground to the evolving normative approach. In the main however, the normative approach pursued its own path of development in the course of the Asian study conferences and the Evanston Assembly as a dynamic medium through which the Christian ideals were made more applicable for the complex responsibilities of Christians in the human community.

2. The Character of the Concept of the Responsible Society

It was mentioned in the preceding section that the polarity between freedom and equality, which is fundamental to the associations of social life, had been recognized and conceptually incorporated under the norm of responsibility in the idea of the responsible society. This points to the fact that the concept takes its basic polar form from the structure of human relationships in themselves. The counter claims of freedom and equality are the components of this polarity. Each necessitates the balance of the other in order to prevent its own distortion. The social process is characterized by a continuing effort to strike an equilibrium between the claims for freedom and equality made by each person in varying degrees in accordance with the circumstances.

The concept of the responsible society encompasses this polarity by its reference to the whole of society and applies

the ideal of responsibility as the norm for the determination of the equilibrium to be struck therein.

The idea of responsibility in itself suggests an accountability between two or more factors. In the idea of the responsible society this is expressed in the demand for an accountable interrelation between the elements of freedom and equality. This constitutes the horizontal dialectic in the structure of the concept. The demand for responsibility at this point is a dynamic claim in that the content or meaning of the term "responsibility" can be developed and expanded in accordance with the value presuppositions of the persons or culture involved. The tension between the ideal claim of responsibility and the actual practice constitutes the vertical dialectic in the structure of the concept.

Despite this developmental flexibility the concept does possess a core of meaning in its requirement under the Amsterdam definition of accountability before God and man. This accountability demonstrates the centrality of the religious component in the concept. The accountable relationship before God provides the transcendent point of reference which prevents the meaning of responsibility or justice from becoming a mere cultural relativism and the power in faith which keeps the responsibility alive in the face of adversity.

3. Usefulness of the Concept

The centrality of the religious component in the Amsterdam definition of the idea of the responsible society is essential

for the fullest usage of the concept as a norm for Christian social thought. The discussions of the Oxford period affirmed the primacy of obedience to the revelation of God's will characteristic of an ethic of inspiration and balanced this insight with the assertion that man must also use all of the knowledge and normative wisdom at his command in responding to the issues of life. Oxford developed the normative approach by structuring a number of normative ends as relative expressions of the central norm of justice and the ideal of love.

The idea of the responsible society assumes the Oxford combination of a structure of ends under an ethic of inspiration and similarly seeks to hold both of the approaches together in a creative balance. This combination which is reflected in the Oxford presuppositions of the concept is also incorporated in the concept itself in the idea of accountability before God.

This combination of insights from the Christo-centric ethic of inspiration and the more rational ethic of ends accounts in part for the usefulness of the concept. By assuming the primacy of the revelation in Christ and the ideals of love and the Kingdom the normative approach reduces the charge of mere ethical relativism by the more orthodox religious thinkers. On the other hand, by incorporating the normative tools of reason the normative approach does make contact with the world and its problems.

The concept and its use naturally possess their limitations.

The concept faces the danger of solidification or institutionalization. This represents a particularly difficult problem for such a normative concept which on the one hand seeks to have its meanings embodied in the structures of the social order while on the other the idea itself seeks to remain free in order to dynamically adjust to new problems. If the central religious component is lost from the idea of accountability or responsibility the normative structure may simply become a fixed system of casuistry. However, the polar nature of the concept and its incorporation of facets from an ethic of inspiration and an ethic of ends provides a dynamic structure whose internal tensions legislate against the fixation of the meaning of the concept. Nonetheless, this constitutes a limitation which must be borne in mind.[1]

Another limitation of the concept lies in the tendency to identify the concept too closely with the Kingdom on the one hand or the world on the other. Such a perversion at either extreme distorts the functioning of the concept. This does not evidence a weakness in the concept as much as the problem of man's potential misuse of it.

Despite the limitations of the concept and the possibility of its distortion through man's misuse, there is still considerable evidence of the usefulness of the idea of the responsible society as a working concept for Christian social thought.

---

1. See Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

The concept of the responsible society provided an overarching idea and goal which acted as a point of focus for the social concern of the churches. As an idea the concept provided a semantic symbol for the social ideal of the church for society. This idea was capable of acceptance as a goal both for the individuals and the structures in the social order. This accommodated man's goal seeking orientation. In this process of action as an idea and a goal the concept helped to bring the social thought of the churches to focus. It naturally did not dissolve all of the practical and theological differences, but it did provide a common center for discussion and action at a level where some agreement was possible. From this center or point of focus it has been and is possible for the churches of the Ecumenical Movement to develop general policies of social action despite considerable theological diversity.

The concept also provided a point of focus for action in the vertical plane between the transcendent ideals and the relative situation. The concepts of justice and responsibility occupied a middle position from which they facilitated the expression of the ideals of love and the Kingdom in the midst of the complexity and evil of the world.

A definite method was not recognized in the course of the ecumenical discussions for the development of the subsidiary axioms which in turn provided the more specific content and meaning for the idea of the responsible society. In fact

however, a general method of working coherence between the ultimate Christian ideals, the past experiences of the churches with reference to the issue, and the issue itself has evolved as the formulative process for subsidiary axioms. This process functioned in a dialectical fashion with some axioms developed from the ideal downward into the situation and others upward out of a pragmatic insight which was then incorporated under the ideal because of its coherence with it.

The subsidiary axioms developed under the central norms of justice and the responsible society are not necessarily binding for all time, but rather represent an attempt to determine the more specific implications of the idea of the responsible society for a particular situation. The ability of the concept to incorporate new meaning into itself is of particular value at this point. This allows for growth in the meaning of the idea of the responsible society under the higher ideal of the Kingdom.

The concept of the responsible society also provided a structure for the reassessment of various social problems. It accomplished this task by illuminating the combination of elements in the situation and bringing them together before the norm of responsibility before God and man. This helped to internalize the problem of responsibility in such a way as to foster the re-evaluation of a situation and the development of a new equilibrium between the component factors.

Finally, the concept served as a criterion. The idea of

accountability in itself constituted the basic standard. It was augmented by the requirement of responsibility before God and man. This basic evaluative structure of accountability served as the center around which the correlated axioms or ideals were woven. This structure acted as a dynamic moral pattern or standard for the analysis and evaluation of the social order and circumstances therein.

C. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, on the basis of the foregoing discussions it is asserted that the concept of the responsible society has developed primarily out of the thought and exchange of ideas in the Ecumenical Movement. It serves as a conceptual structure which embraces the fundamental social polarity of freedom and equality and incorporates it under the ideal of responsibility as a social norm which functions as a medium for the evaluation and change of future social experience.

It has demonstrated its usefulness in the following functional areas:

1. It provides a working frame of reference with which a reassessment of the polar elements and their balance of interaction can be facilitated.

2. It provides a dynamic and inclusive norm for society which serves both as a goal to be realized and as a criterion for evaluation in the process of social development.

3. It provides a working medium for unified action despite

theological diversity and as a means through which to give more concrete expression to the ultimate ideals of the Christian faith in the relative situation.

APPENDIX: A Compilation of the Central Normative Statements Possessing an Explicit Reference to Problems of the Social or International Orders.

The following section provides a quoted summation of the major normative statements projected in the messages or officially accepted reports of the conferences considered within the limitations of this study. This seeks to present a more explicit listing of the material summarized in the section of Chapter Six on the "Content or Meaning of the Concept." The appendix will be divided into five sections under the same topics used in the content summation give above. The statements are listed chronologically in the order of the conferences from the Stockholm to the Evanston Assembly.

A. PERSONS

1. The soul is the supreme value. . . . therefore we contend for the free and full development of human personality.[1]
2. The Church must contend not for the rights of the individual as such, but for the rights of the moral personality, since all mankind is enriched by the full unfolding of even a single soul.[2]

---

1. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712.
2. Ibid., p. 712.

3. Against racial pride or race antagonism the church must set its face implacably as rebellion against God.[1]
4. It is clearly the duty of Christians, therefore, to test by the canons of their faith not merely their individual conduct and the quality of their private lives, but also the institutional framework of organized society.[2]
5. A Declaration on Religious Liberty
   a. Every person has the right to determine his own faith and creed.[3]
   b. Every person has the right to express his religious beliefs in worship, teaching and practice, and to proclaim the implications of his beliefs for relationships in a social or political community.[4]
   c. Every person has the right to associate with others and to organize with them for religious purposes.[5]
   d. Every religious organization, formed or maintained by action in accordance with the rights of individual persons, has the right to determine its policies and practices for the accomplishment of its chosen purposes.[6]

B. PROPERTY

1. The soul is the supreme value. . . . it must not be subordinated to the rights of property.[7]
2. Property should be regarded as a stewardship for which an account must be given to God.[8]
3. It should be reaffirmed without qualification that all human property rights are relative and contingent only, in virtue of the dependence of man upon God as the giver of all wealth and as the creator of man's capacities to develop the

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 46.
2. Ibid., p. 92.
3. "Report of Section IV," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 226.
4. Ibid., IV, 226.
5. "Report of Section IV," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 227.
6. Ibid., IV, 227.
7. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712.
8. Ibid., p. 712.

resources of nature. This fundamental Christian conviction must express itself both in the idea of stewardship or trusteeship and in the willingness of the Christian to examine accumulations of property in the light of their social consequences.

4. The existing system of property rights and the existing distribution of property must be criticized in the light of the largely nonmoral processes by which they have been developed, and criticism must take account of the fact that for every argument in defense of property rights which is valid for Christian thinking is also an argument for the widest possible distribution of these rights.
5. It should further be affirmed that individual property rights must never be maintained or exercised without regard to their social consequences or without regard to the contribution which the community makes in the production of all wealth.
6. It is very important to make clear distinction between various forms of property. The property which consists in personal possessions for use, such as the home, has behind it a clearer moral justification than property in the means of production and in land which gives the owners power over other persons.[1]

C. ECONOMICS

1. Industry should not be based solely on the desire for individual profit . . . . but it should be conducted for the service of the community.[2]
2. In the economic sphere the first duty of the church is to insist that economic activities, like every other department of human life, stand under the judgment of Christ.[3]
3. Right fellowship between man and man being a condition of man's fellowship with God, every economic arrangement which frustrates or restricts it must be modified--and in particular such ordering of economic life as tends to divide the community into classes based upon differences of wealth and to occasion a sense of injustice among the poorer members of society.[4]
4. Persons disabled from economic activity, whether by sickness, infirmity or age, should not be economically

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, pp. 100-101.
2. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 712.
3. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 48.
4. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

penalized on account of their disability, but on the contrary should be the object of particular care. Here again the safeguarding of the family is involved.[1]

5. Labor has intrinsic worth and dignity, since it is designed by God for man's welfare. The duty and the right of men to work should therefore alike be emphasized.[2]
6. Justice . . . . demands that economic activities be subordinated to social ends.[3]
7. A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[4]
8. The state must do those things for the economy that private industry cannot do properly . . . . But state action needs to be decentralized, limited, and adaptable.[5]
9. Efficient production is important as well as fair distribution. Much Christian social thought in the past has tended to ignore the former and stress the latter. Laziness and waste are sins before God no less than selfishness and greed.[6]
10. The churches have been properly critical of monopolistic practices, and of the effects of many irresponsible business practices on people and society generally. But they also need to understand and lay stress on the valuable contribution which the skilled executive has to make to society irrespective of the form of ownership or organization.[7]
11. The churches must never fail to recognize that the worker should have a status in society which accords with his responsibilities and his human dignity.[8]
12. The churches should recognize the justice of the farmer's demand for a reasonable measure of security of income; but even as they advance their legitimate demands for justice, farmers must resist the temptations to exhaust the soil, to exploit those who work for them, or to take unfair advantages of the consumers.[9]

---

1. Ibid., p. 99.
2. Ibid., p. 100.
3. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 191.
4. Ibid., III, 192.
5. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, p. 118.
6. Ibid., p. 118.
7. Ibid., p. 118.
8. Ibid., p. 118.
9. Ibid., p. 119.

13. Serious problems arise from the great importance of organized groups, such as trade unions and associations of employers, farmers or professional people. Christians can bear witness that these groups must be responsible to the whole of society, that their leadership must be responsible to their members, and that the members must participate responsibly in the organization.[1]

D. THE STATE

1. We recognize the state as being in its own sphere the highest authority. It has the God-given aim in that sphere to uphold law and order and to minister to the life of its people. But as all authority is from God, the state stands under his judgment. God is himself the source of justice, of which the state is not lord but servant. The Christian can acknowledge no ultimate authority but God; his loyalty to the state is part of his loyalty to God and must never usurp the place of that primary and only absolute loyalty.[2]
2. Man is created and called to be a free being, responsible to God and his neighbour. Any tendencies in State and society depriving man of the possibility of acting responsibly are a denial of God's intention for man and His work of salvation.[3]
3. Man must never be made a mere means for political or economic ends. Man is not made for the State but the State for man.
4. For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community.[4]
5. The observance of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms should be encouraged by domestic and international action. . . . It is presumptuous for the state to assume that it can grant or deny fundamental rights. It is for the state to embody

---

1. Ibid., 119.
2. J.H.Oldham, The Oxford Report, p. 48.
3. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, III, 192.
4. Ibid., III, 192.

these rights in its own legal system and to ensure their observance in practice.[1]

6. Every person should be protected against arbitrary arrest or other interference with elementary human rights.[2]
7. Every person should have the right to express his religious, moral and political convictions.[3]
8. Channels of political action must be developed by which the people can without recourse to violence change their governments.
9. Forms of association within society which have their own foundations and principles should be respected, and not controlled in their inner life, by the state.[4]

E. THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

1. We summon the Churches to share with us our sense of the horror of war, and of its futility as a means of settling international disputes.[5]
2. The universal church . . . . must pronounce a condemnation of war unqualified and unrestricted.[6]
3. Christians must do all in their power to promote among the nations justice and peaceful cooperation, and the means of peaceful adjustment to altering conditions.[7]
4. The insistence upon justice must express itself in a demand for such mitigation of the sovereignty of national states as is involved in the abandonment by each of the claim to be judge in its own cause.[8]
5. Wars, the occasions of war, and all situations which conceal the fact of conflict under the guise of outward peace, are marks of a world to which the church is charged to proclaim the gospel of redemption. . . . War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and

---

1. Ibid., IV, 221-222.
2. W. A. Visser't Hooft, The Evanston Report, p. 115.
3. Ibid., pp. 115-116.
4. Ibid., p. 116.
5. G.K.A. Bell (ed.), The Stockholm Conference of 1925, p. 713.
6. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 47.
7. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
8. Ibid., p. 48.

him crucified. No justification of war must be allowed to conceal or minimize this fact.[1]

6. War is contrary to the will of God.[2]
7. The nations of the world must acknowledge the rule of law. . . . No states may claim absolute sovereignty, or make laws without regard to the commandments of God and the welfare of mankind. It must accept its responsibility under the governance of God, and its subordination to law, within the society of nations.[3]
8. All power carries responsibility and all nations are trustees of power which should be used for the common good.
9. All nations are subject to moral law, and should strive to abide by the accepted principles of international law to develop this law and to enforce it through common actions.
10. All nations should honor their pledged word and international agreements into which they have entered.
11. No nation in an international dispute has the right to be the sole judge in its own cause or to resort to war to advance its policies, but should seek to settle disputes by direct negotiation or by submitting them to conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement.
12. All nations have a moral obligation to insure universal security and to this end should support measures designed to deny victory to a declared aggressor.
13. All nations should recognize and safeguard the inherent dignity, worth and essential rights of the human person, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.
14. Each nation should recognize the rights of every other nation, which observes such standards, to live by and proclaim its own political and social beliefs, provided that it does not seek by coercion, threat, infiltration or deception to impose these on other nations.
15. All nations should recognize an obligation to share their scientific and technical skills with peoples in less developed regions, and to help the victims of disaster in other lands.

---

1. J. H. Oldham, The Oxford Conference, p. 162.
2. "Report of Section IV," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches, IV, 218.
3. Ibid., IV, 220.

16. All nations should strive to develop cordial relations with their neighbors, encourage friendly cultural and commercial dealings, and join in creative international efforts for human welfare.[1]

1. W. A. Visser't Hooft (ed.), The Evanston Report, pp. 141--142.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrecht, Paul.
"Christian Action in Society."
The Ecumenical Review, II
(Winter, 1950), 141-151.

_____.
"The Churches and European Unity."
The Ecumenical Review, III
April, 1952), 296-304.

_____.
"Social Questions -- The Responsible Society in a World Perspective."
The Ecumenical Review, VI
(October, 1953), 26-31.

Adams, J. L.
"Theological Basis of Social Action."
Journal of Religious Thought, VII,
No. 1 (1951), 6-21.

Anshen, Ruth N.
Beyond Victory.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943.

Anshen, Ruth N. (ed.).
Freedom: Its Meaning.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940.

Baker, A. E.
William Temple's Teaching.
London: James Clarke, 1949.

Banner, W. A.
"Fundamentals of Christian Social Order."
Journal of Religious Thought, VI,
No. 1 (1949), 6-17.

Barth, Karl.
Against the Stream. Edited and translated by Ronald G. Smith.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1954.

_____.
Church and State.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1939.

———.
"Continental vs. Angle-Saxon Theology."
The Christian Century, LXVI
(February 16, 1949), 201-204.

Bauer, Otto.
Le Illegal Parti.
Paris: Editions Le Lutte Socialiste, 1939.

Bell, G. K. A. (ed.).
Documents on Christian Unity.
Oxford: University Press, (First Series) 1924;
(Second Series) 1930: (Third Series) 1948.

———.
The Kingship of Christ.
Harmondsworth: Penguin Book, 1954.

———.
The Stockholm Conference of 1925.
London: Humphrey Milford, 1926.

Bennett, John C.
"Amsterdam and the Social Crisis."
Christian Century, LXV
(June 9, 1948), 569-571.

———.
"Capitalism and Communism at Amsterdam."
Christian Century, LXV
(December 15, 1948), 1362-1364.

———.
"Christian Ethics and Social Policy."
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.

———.
Christianity and Communism.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1949.

———.
Comments on Dr. Schweitzer's Memorandum.
Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches,
1950. (Mimeographed).

———.
"Responsible Society."
Congregational Quarterly, XXVII
(October 1949), 321-327.

———.
Results of an Ecumenical Study.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1944. (Mimeographed).

Berdyaev, Nicholas.
The Origin of Russian Communism.
London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937.

———.
"Unity of Christendom in the Strife Between East and West."
The Ecumenical Review, I
(Spring, 1949), 11-24.

Berggrav, Eivind Josef.
"The Responsibility of the Churches and the World Council in Times of Tension."
The Ecumenical Review, IV
(October, 1951), 1-11.

Bidney, David.
"The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology."
Anthropology Today. Edited by A. L. Kroeber.
Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953. pp. 682-699.

———.
Theoretical Anthropology.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1953.

Bilheimer, Robert S.
"Problems in Ecumenical Action."
The Ecumenical Review, IV
(July, 1952), 335-367.

Brady, Robert.
Business as a System of Power.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

Brightman, Edgar S.
A Philosophy of Religion.
New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945.

———.
Introduction to Philosophy. (rev.).
New York: Henry Holt and Co. (1925) 1951.

———.
Nature and Values.
Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945.

Brown, William Adams.
Toward a United Church.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.

Brunner, Emil.
Christianity and Civilization. 2 vols.
London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1948-1949.

_____.
Der Staat als Problem der Kirche.
Bern und Leipzig: Fotthlef-Verlag, 1923.

_____.
Justice and the Social Order. Translated by M. Hottinger.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945.

_____.
The Divine Imperative. Translated by Olive Wyon.
London: Lutterworth Press, 1937.

/Calocoresse, Peter/.
"Editorial."
The Third Force, I
(1948) 3.

Casserley, J. V. L.
Morals and Man in the Social Sciences.
London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951.

Chang, Carsun.
Third Force in China.
New York: Bookman Associates, 1952.

"Christian Witness to a Shaken World."
Christian Century, LXXI
(1954) 1130-1131.

Clarke, Fred, *et al*.
Church, Community and State in Relation to Education.
Vol. VI of the Oxford Conference Books.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938.

Clay, Lucius D.
Decision in Germany.
New York: Doubleday, 1950.

Culver, Elsie T. (ed.).
Evanston and Everywhere.
New York: World Council of Churches, 1954.

Dark, Sidney (ed.).
Toward a Christian Social Order.
London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1942.

Davis, J. Merle (ed.).
The Economic Basis of the Church.
Vol. V of The Madras Series, The International Missionary Council.
New York: The International Missionary Council, 1939.

Demant, V. A.
Religion and the Decline of Capitalism.
London: Faber and Faber, 1952.

_____.
Theology of Society.
London: Faber and Faber, 1947.

Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches.
"Changing America: A Social Perspective for the Planning of the Churches in Their Christian Life and Work."
New York: Division of Christian Life and Work, National Council of Churches, 1955.

Dodd, C. H., et al.
Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1952.

Douglas, H. Paul.
"Some American Reactions To Amsterdam."
The Ecumenical Review, I
(Spring, 1949) 285-294.

de Vries, E.
"The Churches and the Problems of Social and Economic Development in South and South East Asia."
The Ecumenical Review, V
(April, 1953), 233-243.

Drummond, Andrew L.
German Protestantism Since Luther.
London: Epworth Press, 1951.

Duff, Edward.
The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches.
London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956.

Ehrenström, Nils, et al.
Christian Faith and the Common Life.
Vol. IV of the Oxford Conference Books.
London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938.

_____.
Christian Faith and the Modern State.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1937.

———.
Personal interview with Dr. Ehrenström, January 17, 1957.

Eliot, T. S.
The Idea of a Christian Society.
London: Faber and Faber, 1939.

Fagley, Richard M.
"Our Heritage in Ecumenical Affairs."
The Ecumenical Review, VI
(October, 1953), 58-70.

Fenn, Eric.
That They Go Forward.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1938.

Fey, Harold E.
"Amsterdam Strikes Middle Way in Discussing Economic Order."
Christian Century, LXV
(September 22, 1948), 98.

———.
"Churches and Point IV."
Christian Century, LXVIII
(May 9, 1951), 511-513.

———.
"Protestant Leaders Discuss Church and Economic Order."
Christian Century, LXIV
(March 5, 1947), 308.

Flew, R. Newton (ed.).
The Nature of the Church.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1952.

Freytag, W.
"Impressions of the Evanston Assembly."
The Ecumenical Review, VII
(October 1954), 9-13.

Garrison, Winfred Ernest.
"The Church Faces Its World."
The Christian Century, LIV
(August 18, 1937) 1017-1019.

Gilby, T.
"Between Community and Society."
Revised by E. W. Geissman.
Commonweal, LVIII
(October 2, 1953), 35-36.

Grubb, Kenneth G.
"The Responsibility of the Churches in Politics."
The Ecumenical Review, III
(January, 1951), 113-120.

Hartenstein, Karl.
"Third Way: An Interpretation and Criticism of Amsterdam."
International Review of Missions,
XXXVII (1949), 77-88.

Hassinger, Howard H.
"Christian Hope and the Order of Society."
Anglican Theological Review,
(XXXVI (1954), 171-181.

Heimann, Eduard.
Freedom and Order.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947.

Herklots, Hugh.
Looking at Evanston.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1954.

High, Stanley.
"Amsterdam on Capitalism."
"The Christian Century, LXVI
(January 19, 1949), 74-76.

Holloway, Vernon H.
Religious Ethics and the Politics of Power.
New York: Church Peace Union, 1951.

Hopkins, Charles Howard.
The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism,
1865-1915.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Horton, Walter Marshall.
"Amsterdam 1948."
Religion in Life, XVIII,
No. 1 (1948), 48-57.

_____.
Contemporary Continental Theology.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936.

_____.
Contemporary English Theology.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936.

Hough, Lynn Harold.
"The Conference in Stockholm."
The Christian Century, XLII
(September 24, 1925), 1176-1178.

Hromadka, Josef L.
"The End of Western Supremacy."
The Christian Century, LXVI
(January 5, 1949), 10-11 (January 12, 1949), 44-45.

———.
"Social and Cultural Factors in Our Divisions."
The Ecumenical Review, V
(152), 52-58.

Hutchison, John A. (ed.).
Christian Faith and Social Action.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

Hyslop, Ralph Douglas.
Together Be His Witness
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953.

Jaeger, Hans.
"Der Gedanke der Dritten Kraft."
Deutsch Rundschau, LXXVI
(November 1950), 904-908.

Johnson, F. Ernest.
The Social Gospel Re-examined.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940.

Jessop, T. E., et al.
The Christian Understanding of Man.
Vol. II of the Oxford Conference Books.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938.

Kagi, Werner.
"International Affairs -- Christians in the Struggle for World Community."
The Ecumenical Review, VI
(October, 1953), 32-39.

Keller, Adolf.
Christian Europe Today.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942.

———.
Church and State on the European Continent.
London: Epworth Press, 1936.

———.
Five Minutes to Twelve.
Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1938.

———.
Karl Barth and Christian Unity.
London: Lutterworth Press, 1933.

———.
"Stockholm 1925 in the Light of 1950."
The Ecumenical Review, II
(Summer, 1950), 364-375.

———.
"Europe Weighs Oxford and Edinburgh."
The Christian Century, LXV
(November 17, 1937), 1420-1421.

Kennedy, James W.
Evanston Scrapbook.
Lebanon, Pennsylvania: Sowers Printing Company, 1954.

———.
Evanston Notebooks.
New York: Committee on Interpretation and Support of the United States Conference of the World Council of Churches, 1954.

Kerr, Philip Henry, *et al.*
The Universal Church and the World of Nations.
Vol. VII of the Oxford Conference Books.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938.

Kluckholm, Clyde, and Henry A. Murray.
Personality in Nature, Society and Culture.
New York: Alfred Knopf, 1949.

Konstantinidis, Chrysostomos.
"Impressions of the Evanston Assembly."
The Ecumenical Review, VII
(October, 1954), 14-20.

Kraemer, H.
The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World.
London: Edinburgh House Press, 1947.

Latourette, Kenneth S., *et al.*
Church and Community.
Vol. V of the Oxford Conference Books.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938.

Leiper, Henry Smith.
Christ's Way and the World's in Church, State and Society.
New York: Association Press, 1936.

———.
World Chaos or World Christianity.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1937.

MacDonald, H. M.
"Illegal Socialist Parties and Their Organization."
South Western Social Science Quarterly, XXXIII
(September, 1952), 126-134.

MacFarland, Charles S.
Steps Toward the World Council.
New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1938.

MacIver, R. M.
Social Causation.
Boston: Ginn and Company, 1942.

MacKinnon, D. M. (ed.).
Christian Faith and Communist Faith.
London: Macmillan Co., 1953.

MacMurray, John.
The Conditions of Freedom.
London: Faber and Faber, 1950.

Macy, Paul G.
The Story of the World Council of Churches.
New York: World Council of Churches, 1947.

Mannheim, Karl.
Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Mattson, Alvin D.
Christian Social Consciousness.
Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1953.

Maury, P.
"Quest for International Community: Issues Confronting the 1954 World Council Assembly."
The Christian Century, LXXI
(March 10, 1954), 297-298.

McConnachie, John.
The Barthian Theology and the Man of Today.
London: Hodder and Staughton, 1933.

McHenry, Dean.
The Third Force in Canada.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952.

Mechie, S.
"Amsterdam and the Churches' Former Teaching on Social Order."
Scottish Journal of Theology, III,
No. 1 (1950), 43-49.

Merton, Robert K.
"Social Structure and Anomie."
American Sociological Review, III
(October 1938) 672-682.

Mehl, Roger.
"Hope of the Marxist."
The Ecumenical Review, VI
(January, 1954), 124-128.

———.
"Is Political Action by the World Council of Churches Possible?"
The Ecumenical Review, III
(January, 1951), 137-145.

Meyer, A. G.
Marxism.
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955.

Moberly, Sir Walter.
Responsibility.
London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

Moody, Joseph W. (ed.).
Church and Society.
New York: Arts, Incorporated, 1953.

Morrison, Charles Clayton.
"An Ecumenical Voice."
The Christian Century, LIV
(August 11, 1937), 991-994.

———.
"Our Christianity Is True!"
The Christian Century, LVI
(August 4, 1937), 967-968.

Muelder, Walter G.
"Impressions of the Evanston Assembly."
The Ecumenical Review, VII
(October, 1954), 1-8.

———.
The Idea of the Responsible Society.
Boston: Boston University Press, 1955.

———.
Religion and Economic Responsibility.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

Munby, D. L.
"Toward a Responsible Society; Issues Confronting the 1954 World Council Assembly."
The Christian Century, LXXI
(May 19, 1954), 610-611.

Muste, A. J.
"War, Politics and Normative Principles."
The Ecumenical Review, VI
(April, 1954), 241-253.

Niebuhr, Reinhold.
Christianity and Power Politics.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

———.
Faith and History.
London: Nisbet Co., Ltd., 1949.

———.
Moral Man and Immoral Society.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

Neill, Stephen C.
The Christian Society.
London: Nisbet, 1952.

Nelson, J. Robert.
The Realm of Redemption.
London: Epworth Press, 1951.

Nichols, James Hastings.
Democracy and the Churches.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951.

———.
Evanston: An Interpretation.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955.

Nixon, Justin W.
Responsible Christianity.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950.

Nolde, O. Fredrick.
"Our World Peace Movement."
The Ecumenical Review, V
(April, 1953), 261-269.

Northcott, Cecil.
Answer from Amsterdam.
London: Independent Press, 1949.

———.
Evanston World Assembly; A Concise Interpretation.
London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.

Obendick, Harmannus.
"Protestant Theology in Germany During the Past Fifty Years."
Scottish Journal of Theology, V
(1952), 249-266.

Oldham, J. H.
The Oxford Conference.
The report of the Oxford Conference of 1937, on Church, Community and State.
Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937.

Oldham, J. H., and W. A. Visser't Hooft.
The Church and Its Function in Society.
Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1937.

Osusky, Stefan.
The Way of the Free.
New York: Dutton Publishing Co., 1951.

Palmer, Albert W.
"Bringing Oxford Home."
The Christian Century, LIV
(October 20, 1937), 1292-1293.

Parsons, Talcott, and Edward A. Shils (ed.).
Toward a General Theory of Action.
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Rauschenbusch, Walter.
Christianity and the Social Crisis.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911.

———.
Christianizing the Social Order.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.

Reason, Will (ed.).
Proceedings of C. O. P. E. C.
A Report of the Meetings of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship, Birmingham, April 5-12, 1924.
London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924.

Richardson, Alan, and W. Schweitzer (ed.).
Biblical Authority for Today.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1951.

Rouse, Ruth, and Stephen Neill (ed.).
A History of the Ecumenical Movement.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954.

Schilling, Paul.
"The Christian Basis of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities."
The Church and Social Responsibility. Edited by J. Spann.
Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953, pp. 11-24.

Schlink, Edmund, and Robert Calhoun.
"Christ -- The Hope of the World."
The Christian Century, LXXI
(August 25, 1954), 1002-1007, 1011.

Schweitzer, W., (ed.).
Eschatology and Ethics. Translated by R. H. Fuller.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1951.

Schweitzer, W.
The Church's Freedom and Its Responsibility in Eastern Europe and the Western Orbit.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1950.

Seton-Watson, Hugh.
The East European Revolution.
London: Methuen, 1950.

Shillito, Edward.
Life and Work.
London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926.

Silcox, C. E.
"Christian Attitude toward Capitalism and Socialism."
Christianity and Crisis, X,
No. 3 (1950), 18-20.

Smith, Howard.
State of Europe.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

Soper, David Wesley.
Major Voices in American Theology.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952.

Spann, John R. (ed.).
The Church and Social Responsibility.
Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953.

Stusmthal, Adolf.
The Tragedy of European Labor.
London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Taft, Charles P.
"How Can the Churches Speak Effectively About Crucial Issues?"
The Ecumenical Review, III (January, 1951), 133-136.

Tawney, R. H.
Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.
London: John Murray, 1926.

Temple, William.
Christianity and Social Order.
London: Penguin Books, 1942.

Ten Doornkaat, Hans.
Die oekumenischen Arbeiten zur sozialen Frage.
Zurish, Switzerland: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1954.

The Third Force, III (1950), 8.

Thomas, M. M., and David Macaughey.
The Christian in the World Struggle.
Geneva: World Student Christian Federation, 1951.

———.
"The Churches in the Political Struggle of Our Day."
The Ecumenical Review, III (January, 1951), 121-126.

Thompson, Betty (ed.).
Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.
Geneva: Information Department of the World Council of Churches, n.d.

Tillich, Paul.
"Beyond Religious Socialism."
The Christian Century, LXVI
(June 15, 1949), 732-733.

———.
The Protestant Era.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Tomkins, Oliver D. (ed.).
The Third World Conference on Faith and Order.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1953.

Troeltsch, Ernst.
The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. 2 vols.
Translated by Olin Wyon.
London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931.

Turnbull, John W. (ed.).
Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1954.

van Oyen, Hendrik.
"Justice Human and Divine."
The Ecumenical Review, II
(Summer, 1950), 354-364.

Visser't Hooft, W. A., and J. H. Oldham.
The Church and Its Function in Society.
Vol. I of the Oxford Conference Books.
London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937.

Visser't Hooft, W. A.
The Evanston Report.
Report of the Second Assembly of The World Council of Churches, Evanston, Illinois, 1954.

Visser't Hooft, W. A.
The Kingship of Christ.
London: S. C. M. Press, 1948.

Ward, A. Dudley (ed.).
Goals for Economic Life.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.

Weber, Max.
The Theory of Social and Economic Organization. Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.

Wendland, Hans-Dietrich.
"The Relevance of Eschatology for Social Ethics."
The Ecumenical Review, V
(July, 1953), 354-368.

———.
The Theological Basis for Social Action Today.
A paper read before the Working Committee on Church and Society, July, 1955.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1955.

Werth, Alexander.
"Is the Third Force Defeated?"
New Statesman and Nation, XXXVII (September 3, 1949), 235-236.

Wheelright, Philip.
A Critical Introduction to Ethics. 2nd ed. revised.
New York: The Odyssey Press (1935), 1949.

Williams, Melvin J.
Catholic Social Thought.
New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1950.

Wood, H. G., *et al.*
The Kingdom of God and History.
Vol. III of the Oxford Conference Books.
New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1938.

World Council of Churches.
Christian Action in Secular Society.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1949.

———.
Christ -- The Hope of Asia.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953.

———.
Detroit Conference on Church and Economic Life.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1950. (Mimeographed.)

———.
Man's Disorder and God's Design.
Preparatory studies and reports of the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Second Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Second meet- of the Central Committee, Chichester, England, July 9-15, 1949.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1949.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Third Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Third meeting of the Central Committee, Toronto, Canada, July 9-15, 1950.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1950.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Fourth meeting of the Central Committee, Rolle, Switzerland, August 4-11, 1951.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1951.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Fifth Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Fifth meeting of the World Council of Churches, Lucknow, India, December 31, 1952. January 8, 1953.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Seventh Meeting of the Central Committee. Seventh meeting of the Central Committee, Evanston, Illinois, United States of America, August 27, 31, September 1, 2, 1954.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1954.

———.
Minutes and Reports of the Eighth Meeting of the Central Committee. Eighth meeting of the Central Committee, Davos (Grisons), Switzerland, August 2-8, 1955.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1955.

———.
Conference of Christian Politicians.
Report of Commission I on "A Responsible Society."
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1948.

———.
Ten Formative Years, 1938-1948.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1948.

———.
The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954.

———.
The Christian Prospect in Eastern Asia. Papers and Minutes of the Eastern Asia Christian Conference, Bangkok, December 3-11, 1949.
New York: Friendship Press, 1950.

———.
The First Six Years.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1954.

———.
The Meaning of Work.
Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1950.

———.
The Responsible Society.
Geneva: Study Department of the World Council of Churches, 1949.

———.
"The Responsible Society in a World Perspective." Memorandum of the Preparatory Commission for the Evanston Assembly, based on discussions held in Begnins, Switzerland, August 11-19, 1953.
The Ecumenical Review, VI (October, 1953), 75-89.

Yinger, John M.
Religion in the Struggle for Power.
Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1946.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY: STOCKHOLM TO EVANSTON

Richard Duey Nesmith, Ph.D.
Boston University Graduate School, 1957

The central problem of this study is to trace the development of the idea of the responsible society in the discussions within the Ecumenical Movement and to analyze its nature, content, and usefulness.

The idea of the responsible society emerged following the Second World War in the discussions focused upon the search for a resolution of the problems of the social and international orders. The idea of the responsible society as formally conceptualized in the "Report of Section III" of the Amsterdam Assembly incorporates the polarity of the social order between freedom and equality under the normative ideal of responsibility.

> A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.[1]

The study is limited to an intrinsic survey of the relevant sections of the preparatory studies and reports of the Stockholm and Oxford Conferences and the first two Assemblies of the World Council of Churches since these events represent a

---

1. "Report of Section III," Man's Disorder and God's Design, World Council of Churches (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), III, 192.

point of culmination of each respective period in the evolving process characteristic of the Ecumenical Movement.

The question of the nature of the relationship between the reality and the demands of the Kingdom and the concrete issues of the social and political orders constitutes one of the central problems of the Christian faith and particularly of the Ecumenical Movement in this period.

The Stockholm Conference was divided on the Kingdom-world question between those who emphasized the value of man's attempts to approximate the ideals of the Kingdom in an effort to realize the Kingdom on earth, and a vocal minority who were convinced of the futility of man's efforts and held the establishment of the Kingdom to be in the power of God's action. Both of these dimensions were recognized in the attempt of the Oxford Conference to formulate "middle axioms" as guide-posts for the Christian life. The Amsterdam Assembly furthered this process by formally utilizing the concept of the responsible society as a central working norm for the social order. The Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies evidence an expanded use of the concept of the responsible society as a dynamic norm for society and an increased understanding of the relation of the Kingdom to the world.

The structure of the concept of the responsible society is characterized by a polarity between freedom and equality in the social order as the horizontal plane and a second

polarity in the vertical plane between the ideal values which give meaning to the idea of responsibility and the nature of the actual practice of responsibility or irresponsibility.

The final portion of the study dealt with the function and usefulness of the concept. This was summarized under four categories. First, the idea of the responsible society provided an over-arching ideal which then functioned as a goal for the social order and a point of focus for discussions among the churches. It fostered spheres of agreement from which a rather uniform social approach was possible, despite theological diversity. Secondly, the concept acted as a point of reference between the absolute ethical presuppositions of the Christian faith and the concrete situation. This point of reference served as a central expression of these ultimate ideals through the norm of responsibility and also as a core from which more specific subsidiary norms could be developed. The concept provided a medium for the actualization of relevant social activity under the transcendent or given ideals of the Kingdom. Third, the structure of the idea of the responsible society served as a conceptual tool for the analysis and reassessment of the concrete situation. Finally, the concept provided a criterion for evaluation and judgment within the social order. This normative function was grounded not only in the meaning of responsibility in itself, but also in the assimilated meaning acquired by the concept in the course of its utilization.

The concept and its use naturally possess certain limitations. The tendency to identify the concept too closely with either extreme in the vertical polarity between the Kingdom and the world is the foremost limitation. A second continuing tension is centered in the problem of solidification, for on the one hand the concept seeks to have its meanings embodied in the structures of the social order while on the other the idea itself must remain free in order to adjust dynamically to new problems.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Richard D. Nesmith was born in Belleville, Kansas 9, 1929, to Edith and Eugene Nesmith. He was educated in the local rural school system and the public high schools of Tustin, California, and Chester, Nebraska.

The A.B. degree was received from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1950, and the B.D. from Garrett Biblical Institute in 1953. The year which followed was invested in study at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches near Geneva, Switzerland, and in travel throughout Europe and the Middle East. Studies toward a Ph.D. in Social Ethics were pursued from the fall of 1954, until graduation in 1957, from the Graduate School of Boston University.

Nesmith was ordained in the Methodist ministry in 1953, and has served pastorates in Lincoln, Nebraska; Chicago, Illinois; and, Lynn, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Nesmith is the former Miss Barbara Ann Bowman of Phoenix, Arizona.