

Please note: This paper was typed after Professor Green left for Uganda/Tanzania. You will see that one or two Notes were possibly misplaced, for example: Notes 34 through 36 on page 7.

THE CHURCHES AS MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES OF IDEAS?
The Case of CCPD's Political Economic Consultations

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You can teach us so much if together we could look for the secret of the maze-like muddle in which the world now finds itself.

- Archbishop Runcie,
Enthronement Address, 1980²

Churches, too, have had to change their ideas about development. Their goal now is "a just, participatory and sustainable society" ... striving for justice, participating in development and combatting underdevelopment are all central to their witness.

- Julio de Santa Ana,³
Director, CCPD, 1980

At every stage in history economic and political institutions and structures have been the instruments that have mediated the level of justice in a society. They are therefore the focus in the identification of key areas in the struggle for justice. Hence the importance for Christians of seeing that it is in history that the word of God, both to individual, and to structures is encountered and the tension between human obedience to the Gospel and human sin is encountered.

- "Political Economy,⁴ Ethics
and Theology", 1978

All valid arguments for support for self-reliance and for justice should be utilized ... To avoid all arguments relating to material concerns is certainly to limit one's practical effectiveness; but it is not at all evident that it has any countervailing theological merit. 'Man does not live by bread alone' asserts that he does live by it in part.

- Self Reliance And Solidarity, 1976⁵

Introduction

Whether Christianity and political economy interact may not be a very fruitful question. Fairly clearly they do - the questions of greater relevance are how, when, why, where. There are a number of traditions: spiritual salvation largely parallel to the material world with tacit or overt support to the secular authorities; assistance spiritually and materially to the victims of political economy struggles but not direct involvement in the struggles themselves; assistance to those involved in the struggles but without any self generated political economic reflection or their nature; a Christian commitment to political economic reflection as an aspect of the struggle for justice in history and an expression of the Church's prophetic role.

The World Council of Churches' (WCC) Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) has - at least during the 1976-80 period of the consultations studied⁶ - clearly adhered to the last form of interaction. That approach has posed problems for CCPD. There has not been a distinctively Christian body of political economy which was held in high professional repute by both political economists and theologians since the days of the Schoolmen.⁷ Nor since Adam Smith - a professor of moral philosophy - has it been at all common to have major economic treatises built on foundations fairly evidently and overtly drawn from theology. Indeed the question of the propriety of normative content in social sciences - and especially economic science/ political economy⁸ - is very much a live one. The conventional

wisdom of economists on balance was that values and analysis could be separated. The yet harder line of the rising Hayck-Von Mises-Friedman school is that they must be, economics is about efficiency and to raise any equity question is either to create a muddle or to move outside the economic domain.

The CCPD series of consultations represent a renewed quest to explore the Church's role as a multinational developer and communicator of ideas about the shaping and evaluating of the political economic aspects of the world. It is of course not the first - Archbishop Temple on unemployment in the 1930's immediately comes to mind. Nor does it stand alone, there are other WCC and CCPD initiatives, actions by Catholic church groups, national and local Church and Christian action group programmes. That, perhaps, makes the five 1976-80 CCPD "macro political economy" consultations more interesting - they can be viewed as an example, a case study not as an exotic oddity.

II.

Consultations, Consultators and Consulted

The five consultations considered here are:

1. "Self Reliance And Solidarity In The Quest For International Justice", Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, 1976;⁸
2. "Transnational Corporations", WCC, Geneva, 1977;⁹
3. "Political Economy, Ethics and Theology: Some Contemporary Challenges", Paulus-Akademie, Zurich, 1978;¹⁰

4. "The NIEO Debate", Oaxtepec, Mexico, 1979;¹¹
5. "Into The 1980's", Le Cenacle, Geneva, 1980.¹²

All were sponsored or cosponsored by CCPD. In total they included perhaps 250 different individuals - some participated in several and a few in all five. The majority in each case were practicing Christians and - except at "Self Reliance and Solidarity" - a majority were practicing professional social scientists (even if one excludes theologians from that category). Arguably several of the political economists were distinctly heterodox albeit the same might well be said of the theologians. On the other hand several were well known, e.g. the late Professor Samuel Parmar, Professor Jan Pronk- Dr. Jorge Bertini, Joel Darmstadter, Professor C.T. Kurien, Dr. Diogo de Gaspar, Drag Avramovic, Professor James Kuhn.

The World Council of Churches is in a real sense a multinational enterprise. Multinational not transnational in that a majority of the Christians of its member churches are in the Third World and only a little over a third in Europe. Multinational more particularly because by 1976 the Third World majority of Christians was increasingly represented in the thinking and the leadership of the WCC.

This was even truer of CCPD. Its Director, C.Y. Itty is an Indian now on loan from the WCC to ASCAP (ex ECAFE). The initiator of the macro-economic consultation initiatives was Diogo de Gaspar, sometime planning minister in Sao Paulo and Brazil who has moved from CCPD to be deputy director of the World Food Council. The

moderator of the Commission is Aron Tolan, a Cameroonian social scientist leading an ecumenical development action programme; the Deputy Moderator is Professor (ex Minister, ex Brandt Commission treasurer) Jan Pronk a long time WCC and CCPD figure.

CCPD has evolved¹³ from an initial emphasis on aid through direct solidarity with a network of church organisations in the development field to a more complex programme of network interaction and prophetic reflection/pronouncement on the poor,¹⁴ macro economic issues- intermediate technology, and development education.¹⁵ The process has not been without tensions and contradictions. Group to group small solidarity/aid projects may well be a reflection of intellectual concern on how a New International Economic Order can be struggled for but they are not necessarily so perceived. A similar process has characterized some of the "network" e.g. the Caribbean Conference of Churches/Christian Action for Development in the Caribbean.¹⁶

CCPD is rather self consciously a multinational of ideas. It has been clear that as a multinational it must be and be seen to be in solidarity with the third world partners,¹⁷ the victims¹⁸ of TNC's. Emphasis has been put on the Church's responsibility for existing injustices - if only by accepting the status quo¹⁹ - and the dangers of paternalism.²⁰ However, the global makeup of the consultation, the distribution of their reports to all WCC member churches and the - at times - rather magisterial tone of the statements indicates that CCPD does perceive of itself as being in the multinational knowledge enterprise business even if, it hopes, in a different way.

A problem in considering the reports is that they are neither exercises in pure theory nor detailed plans of action. Each clearly seeks to clarify and to advance thought through reflection linking theology and political economy in respect to selected issues. Each clearly is intended to point toward action conclusions and to inspire (or incite) readers to personal reflections leading to action in concrete situations. Thus they appear to fall into the category of applied prophetic writing which on the secular side includes the 1975 Dag Hammarskjold Report What Now : Another Development²¹ and most recently North-South : A Programme For Survival,²² the Report of the Brandt Commission.

In considering this body of reflection oriented to communication and further reflection/action it may be useful first to make a brief sketch of the contents of each consultation report, then to consider several themes common to them and also several discernible strands in their approach to political economic issues and struggles.

III.

Solidarity and Self Reliance

This consultation was somewhat different from the others in that its participants were predominantly concerned Christians from various walks of life meeting with a smaller band of "experts" rather than a consultation of diverse "experts". As a result its report²³ includes several formal papers presented to the consultation before the report of the participants.²⁴ However, this sketch is concerned with the report.

The report includes a sophisticated perceptive analysis of self reliance. This sees it as a process rather than a state and as an act of self respect/self expression rather than of autarchy.²⁶ A number of aspects at village, national and global level are treated.²⁷

The rejection of growth as an adequate end and of "catching up" as the nature of development are stressed.²⁸ The approach is clearly normative.²⁹

Self-reliance is centred on human beings. Its perception of man is one of man in community. Not only the possibility of material achievements but the possibility of human development is defined in terms of the inter action of human beings in communities, not as isolated, self-centred individuals.

The process of change is perceived as one of struggle.³⁰

Self reliance is a process of struggle. Neither material obstacles, the beneficiaries of dominance and exploitation nor the incompleteness of human consciousness can be overcome without struggle against things, others and self.

Social justice and economic growth are treated as having a problematic relationship - the latter is a desirable means to achieve the former but can be dangerously transmuted into an end which pushes out social justice.³¹

The case for solidarity is based on Christian love (from St. Paul's Faith, hope and love, these three abide, but the greatest of them is love), on the duty to stand together with all seeking justice and on the need to know oneself and one's own society.³² However,

in this report the solidarity is largely either that of Third World self reliance efforts or of Christians with them which last carries a hint of the maimed definition of charity with almsgiving which is elsewhere specifically decried.³³

While a number of ways to reach out for solidarity and several concrete proposals (including moving WCC's headquarters to Tanzania!)³⁴ these are clearly seen as illustrative and symbolic:³⁶

The letter of these specific suggestions is not very important. The will to move from analysis and resolutions to action is critical. Without such an affirmation of faith by deed as well as word the WCC can only sink into escapism.

IV.

Transnational Corporations

From the point of view of TNC executives - several of whom participated - the consultation report³⁷ and proposed programme of action (subsequently largely approved by the WCC Central Committee) is a highly critical, unfriendly document. At one point in the discussion a Metropolitan of an Asian church likened them to the many changes and commodity brokers Christ scourged from the Temple. At an earlier preliminary consultation a rapporteur began "There was a basic division in our group between those who saw TNC's as inherently subject to abuse and those who believed that TNC's were abuses". The report is self consciously prophetic in the biblical sense - "to discern structures that oppress and testify to God's demand for justice".³⁸ However, it is largely a reflective and analytical document rather than a piece of rodomontade.

It begins with a threefold theological statement:

- a. creation and economic activity as positively interpreted in the Bible;³⁹
- b. the importance of appropriate structures of society if the values of the Kingdom of God are to be realized and the duty of the churches to examine both structures and their relationships with them critically;⁴⁰
- c. the prophetic vocation of setting up a mirror to injustice to mobilize for struggle against it and to issue a rallying call of hope of an "acceptable year of the Lord" to give guidance in efforts to overcome injustice and erect more just structures.⁴¹

The theological call is for repentance, reflection, demythologizing (presenting TNC's as human made institutions subject to human control), action.⁴² The history - from the chartered companies - of TNC's is traced and their impact on North and South, wealthy and worker explored. The presence of concentrated power in hands not subject to effective social or political control is stressed.⁴³

A careful listing of main claims ("transfer of capital, technology and skills") and problems ("preference for capital intensive technology which aggravates the unemployment problem") follows.⁴⁴ This is, in fact, of a type and level fairly similar to a good deal of ILO TNC work.

The consultations own normative goals are listed as "social justice, desirable forms of economic growth, sharing rather than

competitive economics, freedom to organize and just returns for labour, mobilization of the people, community ownership of resources".⁴⁵ Not very surprisingly these are seen as being at best in tension with TNC principles and practice, but the consultation stops well short of advocating wholesale, immediate eradication of TNC's.⁴⁶ Like other critical analysts they accept that large scale organizations (structures) are necessary and call for analysis, new models toward altered structures, social control, information.⁴⁷

Programmatic recommendations primarily relate to information and to solidarity with "excluded, exploited, oppressed" groups seeking to know, to control or to struggle against TNC's.⁴⁸ The relevance of other WCC work - e.g. Programme to Combat Racism (TNC's in Southern Africa), Christian Medical Commission (Baby Food) is cited.⁴⁹

The issue of power is posed "entrenched power cannot be defeated or transcended except by a new counter power based on solidarity".⁵⁰ How to organise such power is left open to a degree because the consultation views WCC as serving churches, action groups, excluded exploited or oppressed rather than seeking to formulate plans for anti-TNC campaigns in Geneva.

V.

Political Economy, Ethics and Theology

The third consultation⁵¹ represents a shift of focus. Instead of developing its reflections around a third topic - e.g. agrarian reform - it moved to the level of paradigms or worldviews in

political economy.⁵² This approach was designed to lay a groundwork for a broader testing of issues and structures in future work.⁵³ At Zurich it meant that - except for sustainability⁵⁴ - the content on specific topics was less detailed than at any of the other consultations.

The vision of a global crisis - not one "out there" in the South with a few Northern repercussions and a large component of Northern guilt as in "Solidarity and Self Reliance" and "TNC's" - is clear in this consultation's report.⁵⁵ Four contributory issue clusters are cited:

1. ecology, resource limits, physical sustainability;
2. economic failure - stagnation, inflation, unemployment;
3. transnationalisation of capital and disintegration of national economics coming home to Europe and North America;
4. institutional and political factors "upsetting" previously viable economic management techniques.

Economic justice and its relation to production is the first criterion posed for political economic thought:⁵⁶

The striving for greater justice starts with the establishment of norms for production, distribution and consumption which regulate the economic machinery. Justice cannot be introduced only after production is completed.

Justice is related to biblical texts⁵⁷ and linked with participation (here in terms of decisions)⁵⁸ and sustainability.⁵⁹

Sustainability - or rather non sustainability - is seen to flow not merely (perhaps not basically) from consumerism but also (perhaps more integrally) from an unlimited, unchecked drive for accumulation. Rather tentatively a model for reconciling physical sustainability involving enforced ceilings (on income and consumption) as well as guaranteed minima is advanced.⁶⁰

The dominant political economic paradigm (overtly the neo-classical but in terms of many of the criticisms the orthodox Marxian as well) is very sharply criticized.⁶¹ The list is something of a grab bag but the main thrusts are against primacy for growth and accumulation,⁶² structural inequality nationally and internationally, reduction of human beings to economic automata (alienation) and absence of normative values.

The positive proposals are the inverse of the critique but by and large do not seem to fit the breadth of the previous vision.⁶³ They turn on a more holistic and more institutional approach, integration of factors present in early political economy but excised by economic science and returning to the human being oriented, normatively defined roots of political economy.

A series of questions for further exploration e.g.⁶⁴ "an institutional approach to justice and participation by devising social structures which will work towards (their) implementation". These appear to be intended as much to stimulate reflection and action as to elicit information or further global consultations. Zurich was, apparantly, well aware that its approach raised issues of power.⁶⁵

It is urgent to investigate how organized pressure can be brought to bear on the powerful (nationally and internationally) to modify their policies in favour of a more just situation: i.e. one in which there is less dominance/dependence. The task is to reach agreement on those common values which would be supported by an interrelated number of common interests.

VI.

The NIEO Debate - 1979

The Oaxtepec meeting was the first of the semi-permanent advisory group on economic matters. Held in April it was initially to speak with/to churches on the Manila UNCTAD. This, it was pointed out, was impracticable. Advice to WCC yes, but through it to its member churches let alone individual Christians was no longer practicable in respect to Manila because of the time factor. "Ecumenical Views On The NIEO Debate"⁶⁶ therefore strikes a slightly artificial balance between reviewing what is in fact the Manila UNCTAD agenda⁶⁷ and presenting a set of insights/raising a set of queries for longer term reflection.

This consultation achieved a higher level of political economic expertise in its report but arguably at too high a price. Apart from the opening citing of development in relation to ecumenicism,⁶⁸ there is little theological/social science interaction. Struggle, participation, and the poor remain⁶⁹ but in a way quite consistent with a secular presentation. Indeed the main body of the text reads rather like a "Like Minded" North country document in support of the Group of 77's Arusha Programme for Collective Self Reliance and negotiation.⁷⁰ As such it is an interesting and competent

document showing a clear grasp of the trends toward the acceleration of the New Protectionism⁷¹ and of how deep the multiple crises had become⁷² considerably earlier than either the financial press or most analysts.

"The urgency of other strategies, policies and models of development" is stressed⁷³ - clearly echoing the Zurich consultation⁷⁴ but probably only to a participant in it and certainly not to the general reader. A new theme - not for WCC but for the macro political economic consultation series - is "development for peace and cooperation"⁷⁵ raising the interaction of disarmament, resources and development but again without a clear theological approach and in this case - unlike commodities, debt, TNC's, protection, etc., - with little if any new political economic insight or proposals.

As a statement on the rise of the New International Economic Disorder and the case for NIEO by concerned Christian political economists to other Christians (or indeed to any concerned individual), and as a reasoned statement of solidarity with the Group of 77's efforts toward negotiated change, Oaxtepec is a success. As a CCPD consultation to build as well as transmit insights it is much more equivocal.

VII.

Into the 1980's

The second meeting of the Advisory Group on Economic Matters also began with a change of emphasis - initially it was to center on

Development Decade Three and the UN Special Session but in the end DD3 made only a token appearance and received very dismissive treatment indeed.⁷⁶ At first glance the "Challenge of Values and Structures"⁷⁷ looks rather like a supporting document for the Brandt Commission - some of the parallels in structure, tactics⁷⁸ and topics seem too close to be coincidental.⁷⁹

However, on closer inspection "Into The 1980's" is a much more ambitious and integrated document than "Thoughts on NIEO". As its summary (an innovation presumably necessitated by the sudden growth from 15 to 20 to 40 pages!) states:⁸⁰

It took as its points of departure the report of the Zurich Consultation, Political Economy, Ethics and Theology: Some Contemporary Challenges (1978) and its own Oaxtepec work. It sought to relate Zurich's call for a political economic paradigm centered on human beings to the specific political economic failures challenges and structures now confronting humanity. Equally it sought to broaden Oaxtepec's international political concerns which focussed on UNCTAD V to include the national and international changes in values and structures which the struggle for a just, participatory and sustainable society now requires.

There is a clear attempt to relate values and material forces, Christian concern and programmes of action:⁸¹

The challenge as we enter the 1980's is neither solely material nor simply one of values. Any proposal and any struggle for specific political economic institutional change is ultimately based on and must be tested against underlying values. However, to inform human life values ... must be embodied in structures and institutions as well as be articulated in a technically competent manner ... Christians as followers of the Christ and as members of the human family are now faced with universal challenges: the achievement of concrete progress toward basic human rights (including the right to an adequate diet) and basic human needs (including employment and participation)...

The structure of "Into The 1980's" is inclusive: the failure of

the present international order,⁸² the setting of the eighties,⁸³ scenarios and visions for the future,⁸⁴ structural changes in developing countries,⁸⁵ structural changes in industrialized countries,⁸⁶ toward international structural changes.⁸⁷ It does, on balance, synthesize Zurich and Oaxtepec.

Interestingly the Advisory Group decided that the general approach to development line of reflection had now been advanced as far as it could be for the short term and that consultations should proceed to explore selected topics in greater depth (returning in a sense to the model of the first two consultations. The Advisory Group's third consultation in the fall of 1980 therefore is an "TNC's and Technology".

As in the Zurich paper there is a clear statement that the issues raised affect the North - a much stronger one as the crisis is now greater and easier to demonstrate.⁸⁸ There is still relatively little on the Northeast - socialist industrial economies⁸⁴ - presumably because of weak participation albeit the form of the justice and peace section⁹⁰ reflects on the one hand a central European concern (Northeast and Northwest) that without peace in Europe there can be no just, sustainable or participatory economy at all and a South concern that peace not be used to deny the validity of struggle for liberating development e.g. in Southern Africa.

From a view of the 1980's as marked by the end of the old order, a rising demand for change by the excluded and cause for hope as well as foreboding the report turns to scenarios for change.⁹¹ The restoration of the old international economic order is incisively

dismissed on practical as well as ethical grounds.⁹² The bargained change, partial incorporations reformism of Interfutures' Facing The Future⁹³ is treated rather more respectfully. Its potential for advance over the old order or the new disorder is accepted but its narrow materialism, desire to limit reduction (not presence) of inequality and practical inability to mobilize support are underscored.⁹⁴ The scenario endorsed is survival⁹⁵ as the first step toward economic justice, achieving structural change and liberating people to meet their basic human needs.

The developing economies chapter's themes are: self reliance, structural change (toward balance and toward basic needs), creating a new national economic order (an analogue to NIEO but with a more human face), human rights and development as social and personal as well as economic liberation.⁹⁶ These changes require confronting and controlling - albeit not necessarily expelling TNC's.⁹⁷

The parallel industrial economies chapter focuses on North internal problems as well as consciousness of the South and the North's impact on it. The discussion on changes in values⁹⁹ is interesting albeit it suggests - perhaps accurately - that the changes are in all directions as earlier¹⁰⁰ the dominant shift cited was the rise of the new conservatism. The endorsement of a globally just, participatory and sustainable political economy is seen as entailing costs in the North - the discussion centers on minimizing and allocating them, not denying their existence.¹⁰¹

The global programme of priority areas¹⁰² for change is the most comprehensive between What Now and Programme For Survival. While rather short its coverage of food, energy, employment, production,

knowledge (technology and communication), trade, finance and money, participation, equity, justice, security (economic), adjustment, sustainability, transnationals and international commons (seabed, moon, Antarctica, etc.) is pithy. There is a coherent justice - participation - sustainability theme combined with capsule analysis/proposal of serious interest especially when taken as a whole.

"Into The 1980's" is not a totally gloomy presentation:¹⁰³

The problems of poverty, injustice, violence, militarism, exploitation, wars by proxy, security and massive misuse of vital resources ... will persist in the eighties. But so will the struggles of the poor and the oppressive. New solidarity among them and their movements will be forged. Current political and economic thought and strategies may not be able to provide guidance ... The ecumenical movement of the 1980's will be called upon to provide fresh insights for action not only in the perspective of the Christian faith but taking into account the whole range of human experience.

VIII.

Recurrent Themes

Six themes recur throughout the consultation series: the struggle for justice in history; the duty to be in solidarity with the poor; the ambiguity and dangerousness of power; the commitment to normative social science (all theology presumably is normative); the attempt to formulate a political economy for a Just, Sustainable and Participatory Society¹⁰⁴ and a sometimes somewhat hesitant endorsement of the value of mutual and material interests to reinforce ethical imperatives.

The struggle for justice in history is seen as the human demonstration

of creativity as well as response to moral imperatives.¹⁰⁵ The process is seen as unending - perfection is not expected in the secular world. But it is also seen as liberating, fulfilling and transcending. At some points - but not others - it is very close to the Marxian version of contradiction, struggle and synthesis.

The duty to be in solidarity with the poor is equally omnipresent.¹⁰⁶ "Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the earth" is a theme which has flowed from other CCPD work into the macro political economic consultations. But it has been internalized - the equity principles proposed owe little to romanticism.

Power is perceived as ambiguous and dangerous but potentially of promise.¹⁰⁷ If this sounds slightly ambiguous itself so are the reports. Collective self reliance, countervailing power, the "power of the powerless" (and the power of God) are all endorsed. But when confronted by the "powers and principalities of this world" it is not always clear whether concentrated power in and of itself or its misuse is the target. Difficulty with that problematic is of course hardly unique to CCPD.

The commitment to normative social science is very strong.¹⁰⁸ It is argued primarily on moral but also on intellectual grounds - value free social science either abstracts in a distorted fashion (thus failing to be operationally sound) or is a subliminal support of the status quo within which it is written (and thus mystifies). This is most clearly argued in a sustained attack on Friedmanism:¹⁰⁹

Advocates of the free market rarely make explicit and often appear not to recognize the normative framework underlying and informing their policy recommendations. Major proponents of market-centered economics and societies (e.g. Von Mises, Von Hayek, Friedman) deny the relevance of justice as a norm for testing economic policy of performance. Their case is that the market mechanism produces the maximum ... distributes in accordance with demand ... affords freedom ... That the "efficiency" relates to a specific pattern of income distribution and power is rarely made explicit, while the ways in which income and power distribution constrains (or denies) formal individual freedom are either ignored or justified as inevitable ... The normative values of those - including many Christians - who argue that distributive justice is a fundamental test of any social or economic system are fundamentally different. They, at least implicitly, deny that economic efficiency can be defined without reference to its interaction with distribution. From these values flow assertions of basic human rights to employment and participation, to food, education, health, to limits to inequality and freedom from oppression and exclusion. Necessarily these values lead to very different institutional, analytical, structural and policy proposals from those of the free market advocates.

In the case of these consultations they lead to the Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society.¹¹⁰ That term is peculiar to WCC - it is close to the radical variant of the Basic Human Needs approach which includes participation and non-material needs as well as social and political economic structures to serve the other needs.¹¹¹

Mutual interests are not perceived uniformly in the consultations.¹¹² Especially in the TWC consultation there is a tendency to view mutual material interests as a trap or a mystification which is absent from "Solidarity" and "Into The 1980's". These do not perceive mutual, overlapping interests as an adequate moral or mobilizing base by themselves; they do see them as a valid means to organizing and as potentially consistent with justice, participation, sustainability - and survival.

IX.

Consistent Approaches

It has been suggested - e.g. in The Reverent Dr. Norman's 1978 Reith Lectures - that these themes have no connection with Christianity. The participants, professional theologians as well as professional political economists clearly would deny that. The consultation reports - except, perhaps, Oaxtapec - go to considerable pains to demonstrate biblical and theological interaction.¹¹³

How successful many of the detailed attempts at synthesis are is open to considerable doubt. There are, however, four broader themes which do connect: the prophetic tradition (which included consultation and exhortation on the right way as well as denunciation of the wrong); the miracles of Jesus Christ (a significant number of which relate to basic needs including food, education, health and conviviality);¹¹⁴ the Jubilee Year tradition (an ordained but not practical total redistribution of wealth, power and prestige) on which Christ preached in the synagogue (Luke IV) taking as his text "the acceptable year of the Lord"; the Beatitudes.

These, evidently, do not mention TNC's or Just, Participatory and Sustainable Societies. But "principalities and powers" or "Dives" or the rich man, the camel and the Eye of the Needle appear far from irrelevant to the first and the Jubilee Year - Acceptable Year of the Lord the direct ancestors of the second.

The danger in this approach is that of narrow dogmatism. The

consultations certainly have a coherent political economic stance which is not conventional wisdom - neo-classical or Marxian. But they are on balance a good deal less doctrinaire and intolerant than many secular economic ideologues who preach that their dogmas are value free science. Further, the consultations have been real dialogues - TNC and trade union participants were at the TNC consultation, each consultation has included a range of political economists including at least one neo-classicist, most have had one or more conservative theologians who doubted the appropriateness of seeking modern political economic objective corollaries for the Gospel.

At one point "Political Economy, Ethics and Theology" warns very strongly against rigid doctrinaire positions:¹¹⁵

Some ... ideology is always necessary to provide a conceptual framework ... a prerequisite to unity ... But it can also lead to a polarisation of society which hampers the attainment, and even the formulation of common goals. As new models are developed ... they must not be regarded as absolute but rather as relative and provisional. Only then is open debate possible, and possible even where fundamental divergences exist ... It is possible for people and groups with differing ideological positions to agree on short-term goals without compromising their convictions. The argument here is against the rigid and dogmatic character ... which refuses to be self-critical and is unwilling to benefit from new insights.

There is in work like these consultations always a question - or questions - about audiences and results. In this case it seems clear that those participating felt their insights and understandings deepened - not necessarily a negligible point if it affected the communicating and acting of over 200 people who do communicate and influence action to varying degrees in a number of institutions and states. There have been a variety of WCC followers e.g. items in

the CCPD documents folder series¹¹⁶ and a quarterly bulletin in the TNC programme¹¹⁷ but these raise some of the same readership and impact.

National Councils of Churches have in some cases pursued similar lines of consultation. The case of the Caribbean Conference of Churches/CADEC has already been cited. In the North the British Council of Churches held a one day preliminary consultation on TNC's utilizing several WCC TNC consultation participants as resource persons and proposes another in 1980. It has also revived its Development Advisory Group along thematic lines which appear similar too - if more cautious than - WCC's.

Christian action group activity with some interaction with CCPD's consultations can also be cited. The Haslemere Group in the UK has been particularly active in respect to TNC's and Southern Africa.¹¹⁸ In Sri Lanka the Centre for Society and Religion has a series of village and slum action programmes, theological reflexions,¹¹⁹ seminar papers to start weekly political economic discussions,¹²⁰ and a journal Logos¹²¹ which seeks to link political economy and applied theology. CSR is a Catholic based body but at the level of Christian political economic reflection ecumenicism often unites WCC and Catholic inputs. The Catholic Institute for International Relations in the UK has a varied programme including reflections toward planning for a just society in an independent Zimbabwe¹²² and stimulating discussion on restructuring of British industry.¹²³

X.

Concluding Reflection

The CCPD political economic consultation series is hard to evaluate for several reasons:

1. it is a process and not a completed event;
2. as a result the presentation is evolving in somewhat problematic as well as positive directions (e.g. the strengthening of political economic content at Oaxtepec was at the expense of interaction with theology and human immediacy);
3. as with all or almost all disseminators of ideas CCPD has only the faintest idea who reads, reflects on and is influenced in action by the reports (apart from its own programmes which are at a practical level a very small mustard seed indeed and at an educational one are as hard to test empirically for results as the consultations on which they are in part based).

That said a number of points do appear to be demonstrated:

1. an intellectually respectable dialogue/consultation among social scientists and theologians is possible and from the point of view of the participants fruitful;
2. that dialogue can produce papers which do call upon the reader to look at major socio-political and political economic issues from new angles (whether he eventually accepts them or not);

3. the CCPD consultations have had a clear underlying set of normative themes and operational approaches which have been brought to bear across a wide spectrum of political economic issues;
4. the interaction of the social science and theology insites is highly uneven - often it is better when implicit or intuitive than in more elaborate efforts to spell it out;
5. CCPD in this series of consultations has been acting as a multinational enterprise of ideas and of communication albeit one committed to the cause of the poor and the exploited and oriented to secular and sacred goals rather different from corporate profit.

Notes

1. Reginald Herbold Green is a member of the CCPD-WCC Advisory Group on Economic Matters and participated in each of the five consultations covered. He is a professorial fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Over 1966-74 he was economic advisor to the Tanzania Treasury. He is a practicing political economist and a practicing Anglican. The views expressed are his personal responsibility and are not necessarily those of the WCC or CCPD.
2. Delivered 25-III-80, Times, 26-III-80.
3. "At the beginning of the 80's", ccpd network letter, No. 7, January 1980, p. 3.
4. Report of a Consultation, Church and Society, World Council of Churches, Geneva, October 1978, p. 8.
5. Report, WCC (Ecumenical Institute Bossey/CCPD), Celigny, 1977, p. 79.
6. Earlier it can be argued WCC and CCPD were uneasily balanced between the third and fourth. See Julio de Santa Ana, op cit; D. de Gaspar, "The search for an understanding of self-reliance from a historical WCC viewpoint", in Self-Reliance And Solidarity, op cit, pp. 3-15.
7. The comment is not sardonic. Aquinas and Antoninus on the "just price" had reached at least as far as the Common Fund background paper analysts several hundred years later.
8. op cit.
9. "Report Of The Geneva Consultation On A Proposed Action/Reflection Programme On Transnational Corporations", Justice and Service, WCC, Geneva, 1979.
10. op cit.
11. "Some Ecumenical Views On The NIEO Debate", CCPD, Geneva, 1979.
12. "Into The 1980's: Some Ecumenical Views On The Challenge Of Values And Structures", CCPD, Geneva, 1980.
13. cf de Gaspar, op cit.
14. See, e.g. Towards A Church In Solidarity With The Poor, Geneva, 1980.
15. See de Santa Ana, op cit.
16. Described and analyzed in detail in D.H.K. Davis, A Theological Interpretation Of The Development Programme Of The Caribbean Conference Of Churches Between 1971 And 1977, University of Sussex PhD Thesis, 1979, publication pending.
17. Solidarity ..., p. 77.
18. "Transnational ...", p. 12.

19. ibid, p. 4.
20. ibid, p. 12.
21. Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Uppsala, 1975.
22. Pan, London, 1980.
24. Solidarity ...
25. p. 57-70 (group reports), 71-82 (final report).
21. pp. 71-73.
22. pp. 71-72.
28. pp. 71-72.
29. p. 73.
30. p. 74.
31. pp. 75-76.
32. pp. 75-77.
33. e.g. 77.
34. pp. 74-75.
35. p. 82 - the present author was not the initiator of that proposal nor were the Tanzanian participants.
36. p. 82.
37. Transnationals ...
38. p. 3.
39. pp. 1-2.
40. pp. 2-3.
41. pp. 3-4.
42. p. 4.
43. pp. 5-7.
44. pp. 7-8.
45. p. 8.
46. pp. 9-10.
47. p. 10.
48. pp. 10-13.
49. p. 11.

50. p. 12.
51. "Political Economy, Ethics and Theology".
52. p. 3.
53. pp. 3-6.
54. pp. 9-10. This emphasis almost certainly related both to the near absence of sustainability in the first two consultations (despite heavy emphasis elsewhere in WCC) and the presence of Lar Daly and Joel Darmstadter.
55. e.g. pp. 4-5.
56. p. 5.
57. p. 7.
58. p. 8.
59. pp. 9-10.
60. p. 10. This was a hotly debated point since it was challenged both as too radical and as a piece of marginal tokenism dressed up as a major structural change.
61. p. 11.
62. p. 14.
63. pp. 12-13.
64. p. 15.
65. p. 15.
66. "NIEO Debate ..."
67. pp. 7-17.
68. pp. 1-3.
69. p. 18.
70. Arusha Programme for Collective Self-Reliance and Framework for Negotiations, (TD/236), UNCTAD, Geneva, 1979.
71. pp. 5, 6, 10-12.
72. pp. 17-18.
73. pp. 18-19.
74. "Political, Economy, Ethics and Theology".
75. p. 19.

76. pp. 29-30. As the Dube Commission working on DD3 has sunk without a trace with neither the Havana Non-Aligned, the New York Group of 77 nor intervening OECD meetings in the least interested this shows a certain realism if nothing else.
77. "Into The 1980's ..."
78. e.g. p. 32 on next two decades and just attainable now to reverse crisis division on goals and programmes.
79. The Chairman, Jan Pronk, was a Commission member and at least one other participant had seen near final drafts of Programme For Survival in the course of briefing two Commissioners.
80. Summary p. 1, see also text pp. 1-2.
81. Summary pp. 1-2.
82. pp. 1-3.
83. pp. 4-10.
84. pp. 11-17.
85. pp. 18-22.
86. pp. 23-28.
87. pp. 29-40.
88. p. 4, pp. 23-27.
89. but see p. 7.
90. pp. 8-9.
91. pp. 11 FF, Summary pp. 1-2.
92. Summary p. 1, 15.
93. OECD, Paris, 1979.
94. Summary p. 1, p. 17.
95. p. 17.
96. pp. 18-22.
97. p. 20.
98. pp. 23-24.
99. p. 25.
100. p. 9.
101. pp. 27-28.

102. pp. 30-39.
103. p. 9.
104. A major WCC theme over this period. Outside CCPD it appears to have run into serious formulation problems especially in terms of having a coherent and hard headed enough political economic base to be plausible.
105. See e.g. *Solidarity*, pp. 71, 75; TNC's, p. 3, 11, 12; *Political Economy*, p. 15; NIEO, p. 1; *Into The 1980's*, pp. S1, 4 ff, 39, 40.
106. See e.g. *Solidarity*, pp. 76-78; TNC's, p. 12; *Political Economy*, pp. 5, 6; NIEO, pp. 4, 5; *Into The 1980's*, pp. 4FF.
107. See e.g. *Solidarity*, p. 72; TNC's, pp. 2, 3, 7, 9; *Political Economy*, pp. 5-6; *Into The 1980's*, p. 6.
108. See e.g. *Solidarity*, p. 73; TNC's, p. 8; *Political Economy*, pp. 4, 5, 7-10, 13; *Into The 1980's*, pp. 51-2, 31-32.
109. *Into The 1980's*, p. 31 - drafted as it happens by a neo-classical US economist formerly associated with the Council of Economic Advisors (USA).
110. See e.g. *Solidarity*, pp. 71, 73, 74; TNC's, pp. 1, 3, 8; *Political Economy*, pp. 5, 7-10, 14, 16; NIEO, p. 6; *Into The 1980's*, pp. 52, 14, 20.
111. See e.g. R.H. Green "Basic human needs, collective self-reliance and development strategy" in *Solidarity ...*, pp. 16-30.
112. See e.g. *Solidarity*, p. 79; TNC's, pp 11-12; NIEO, passim; *Into The 1980's*, pp. 15-17, 27-28, 39-40.
113. In each case the introductory section and in all except Oaxtepec passim thereafter.
114. The wedding at Cana in which He turned water into wine. This can be read in terms of the dignity of marriage but the ceremony was over and what was at risk was the fellowship and conviviality of the reception.
115. p. 19. This is slightly ambiguous. Some participants clearly viewed Christianity as a sacral ideology while others - perhaps the majority - viewed ideologies as by definition secular.
116. # 15, *For A New International Economic Order*, 1979.
117. "Struggling For The Sharing Of Wealth And Power", *Bulletin*, quarterly.
118. e.g. Martin Bailey, *Shell and BP in South Africa*, Haslemere/ *Anti-Apartheid*, London, 1978.
119. e.g. *Towards A Relevant Theology*, Asian Theological Conference, CSR, Colombo, 1979.

120. e.g. No. 45 "Liberation of Tea", September 1978; No. 55 "Present Trends In Sri Lanka", September 1979.
121. e.g. "The Worker In Sri Lanka", Logos Vol. 17, No. 1, July 1978.
122. From Rhodesia To Zimbabwe series e.g. No. 1. R. Riddell, "Alternatives To Poverty", London, 1977.
123. A.R. Riddell, Restructuring British Industry: The Third World Dimension.