

**June 7, 2003 – Plenary VII**

*Presenter: HE Karl Gustav Hammar, Archbishop of Sweden*

Your All Holiness, after the privilege of last year's participation in the Adriatic symposium, I would have liked also to be a part of this year's symposium. That was the planning, but unfortunately I was not able to arrive until yesterday morning. So I have not been a part of the process of this symposium, and when I listen to Neal Ascherson I really regret that, because of course it is very dangerous to say words at the end of the process, especially if you want to have some kind of intellectual stability. So I am too late in that process.

But I am also a bit too late in receiving this very stimulating speech by Neal Ascherson. I got it the same time all of you got it, so I have not been able to reflect too much upon it. English is not my language, so I cannot give you these very nice references to different parts of that culture. But I liked Neal's paper, and he tried to keep the middle road, so to speak, between fundamentalists and revolutionaries.

What I have been able to do is to reflect upon the title of this plenary, I mean the Western model of development. As a church leader I am not supposed to be a political person. I am very happy that I can only refer to what you said about the American model, because I would have liked to say that without being political. When we talk about Western models, of course we as Europeans say, 'Hello there, we think there are more than one Western model.' Often we also think there is more than one American Western model, and what we have seen the last two and a half years is an old or a new American model that many of us Europeans think destructive to the world and to humankind. But you mentioned that also, so I just refer to what you said, Neal, I need not say that myself. As a church leader I am not political. (I hope the irony is heard also in the printed text!)

Of course, you have to deliberate what is then the difference between these different models. What makes me a bit upset as a church leader and as a Christian person is of course that this latest American model refers more to God than previous models do. That is very challenging because if that is 'God', I do not believe in 'God'. That is a statement. That is important for a symposium as this one because we want to foster the dialogue between the theological traditions and the challenge of environment and all these scientific approaches and knowledges. Of course one way of doing that is to say that the goal of all human endeavors is God. When I speak as a theologian nothing else can be the goal, the end of the human life. But what does it mean? You cannot use the word 'God' just like that in political settings. You have to translate it. What does it mean? Then we could have an interesting dialogue, because if we translate what we mean by God and what God wants for human being and for the earth and for creation, and compare that with what other people want as the goal of our human endeavors, then we can see what is similar and what is different. Of course I want to challenge those mentioned claiming God to support their development model. When we translate 'God' into relationships you will see the differences, and that means that there will be very different ways of understanding 'God'. If 'God' translated into relationships means relationships of cooperation, interdependence, love, sacrifice, love that is prepared to sacrifice for the sake of the other. These are theological terms, but they could also be translated into political

terms. Or you say that 'God' means dependence, obedience, power and weakness, that some are powerful and some are weak, and this is the way it is, and some of us have got the role to exercise power, and others have not. So of course we could discuss a lot what we would like to see as the end of development and what we mean by 'God'.

Another way of approaching it from a theological point is of course to realize that all our development models are insufficient in the sense that they are not ends in themselves, they are instruments to achieve ends. If we do not agree on the ends, how could we agree on the instruments? Or the way to reach those goals? For example, if the end is to live in a humankind where we are related, interdependent, loving, sharing, that means something to the development model, compared to if we think that also in the end there will be inequality, even though the most poor segments of mankind will not be so poor as they are today, we will be able to relieve some of the poverty. Of course then you accept a different kind of economic development model, if you think that kind of end is inevitable, at least within history.

All development models are, of course, insufficient, and all development models, that is my historic statement, have created and creates inequality, because all development starts with using resources and there are more resources on some persons and less resources on other persons and if you want to develop and use resources, it is inevitable that those who have much will profit from all deals, all negotiations. Some of us rely a lot on free trade as the vehicle towards the future. Then we must ponder upon what freedom means. Free to use the resources you have in the negotiations that are there all the time, and unequal all the time. There is no such thing as free trade meaning trade without negotiations, meaning trade without two partners where there is a power relationship. There are no negotiations actually carried through where the powerful have lost power through that negotiation. Go through all the world trade organization relationships. Where do we find those examples where strong partners give up a part of their power and their economic strength in that negotiation because the end vision is a vision of interdependence, meaning also equal strength in relationships. That is where the theological language of sacrifice also in a way becomes a political challenge. It is the political way in a democratic setting to exercise sacrifice, in the sense that we accept that our group, our nation, our company will make a not so good deal with the other partner, but in the long run, the next generation will benefit from it. For example: "shareholders, take this loss now because your grandchildren will benefit from it". We realize that the problem is, of course, the human being. We also have a lot to say about that in the theological contexts. We could talk about sinful or selfish man. In political terms we can talk about greed, and we try to define what is greed. Is greed to get more than 10% back of your investment, or does greed start only at 20% or 30% in one year, and if you ask for less than that, it is then not greed anymore? So in that sense, the political question is, of course, how do we deal with a human being that is both an angel and a beast? Human being is not only a selfish person, it is also someone reflecting the glory of creation, and really longing to belong to the wholeness of being, to relate to others, to be a part of something more than what is mine. If we want to find political instruments to deal with human beings as we understand him or her, well then, we really need a discussion on that.

When Neal talked about the guilt of Western society, almost the self-punishing feeling of guilt, my reaction was, well, perhaps we who are here feel guilt, but perhaps not so many more. We have for one or two generations tried to talk about a value-free economic model, which I think is a response to this feeling of guilt. This is the fascinating thing about this neo-liberal economic model. It is supposed to be

value-free, and you cannot feel guilty if, with no value attached to it, it is like a natural law. You cannot feel guilty about gravitation, it is there. If your friend falls from the top to the bottom, if he is hurt, you cannot feel guilty, because it is gravitation. And if the economy works according to the neo-liberal model, it is supposed to be value-free, almost like a natural law. Of course, if you think along those lines, after a couple of generations there is no guilt left. Then, if you still feel a bit guilty, then you can take all the results as was done earlier during the symposium—I mean, nobody can deny that there are good results of the so-called Western economic model, when it comes to literacy, baby-survivals, availability of hospitals and education and all those things. Nobody can deny it, but it depends on why you use these figures. Will they be an excuse, a pretext, a proof that this economic model is the only one, that it is a natural law? Or is it to say, well, we need encouragement and it is changing in a better direction?

Well, you notice very well that I was not able to prepare a week ago. I and Neal, both of us, want to be challenged if we say that we defend this small step to step change of the capitalistic market model. That is how I understood Neal's presentation. We have two reasons: one is that we have experiences of upheavals, of revolutions trying to impose other economic models, other development models, and they have all led to catastrophes. That is one experience. The other reason is that we live in a democratic society, with human beings as human beings, which means that if you want to get support for change in a democratic setting, it means, as I understand it, (I am happy to be challenged), change of small steps when your consciousness widens in the sense that you realize that the challenge is to be able today to take what we could call sacrifices or less consuming because you want to give opportunities to the next generations, and you want to live in harmony with nature in such a way that you leave a world to the next generations which is livable and which is also a wonderful gift as it has been to us.

Which are these small steps? From the vision of what kind of world we want to live in, we take dimensions and put them into the instruments. The main thing is, of course, to challenge the present short-term economic system, where you can, in seconds, take economic decisions without being challenged by the consequences. We must find a way where economic decisions take into consideration the consequences, socially, environmentally, for the future in that sense, and that the whole area of consequences are there in the room where the decisions are taken. In the old national state system, the state took the responsibility of these long-term consequences and social consequences and in a way imposed the framework within which the economic decisions were taken. In the globalized world there is no corresponding state presenting this framework. We need the international institutions, but we need them in a changed way, in a transformed appearance, in the sense that they must not just reflect the existing economic realities, they must also reflect the vision we have of the future, how we could live together, and in that sense add dimensions to the economic decisions, consequences, analyses, also add them to all negotiations in the trade sector. Then there is of course a one more instrument, as we know that we live in a consumer society, and that is to raise the consciousness of consumers, and develop consumer power in that sense.

That is my invitation to discussion.