MUST THE CHURCH BECOME SECULAR?

by James H. Olthuis

Part One: THE DISCONERTING DILEMMA: "CHRIST" OR "CULTURE"

The most perplexing, and at the same time, the most vital question which faces the Christian community is her relation to the world. She may not flee the world — she is called to be "in" the world — neither may she accommodate to the world — it is her very nature to be "out" of the world. She may not be a "cultural pessimist", but then, neither may she be a "cultural optimist."

The people of God have faced this issue in every age, but today it urges itself upon the Christian community with a special intensity. Many factors play their role in this situation. Science and technology have pushed back farther and farther the frontiers ofman's knowledge. Man is intoxicated with his newly-won powers and the possibilities these afford for future conquests. At the same time, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Christian Church are declared to be for all intents and purposes irrelevant. "God", to cite D. Bonhoeffer's famous words in his letter from prison of July 16, 1944, "is no longer needed as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics or science... in religion or philosophy." Man has "come of age." In brief, the world considers itself untouched by the Gospel, and the Church finds herself out of touch with the world.

In this "time of trouble," the Christian community is the first to confess that she has talked too much and done too little. Now she vows that she will talk less and do more! New avenues must be paved, new trails blazed in order to restore lanes of communication with the world. And this is happening on every hand; clergy-led civil rights marches, ministerial-incited strikes, man-directed rather than worship-directed churches, ecclesiastical resolutions on political, social and economic matters. This surge towards contemporary relevance reached crest proportions in the World Council of Churches - sponsored Conference on Church and Society which brought to Geneva some 410 participants from 87 countries.

What is one to make of this movement for cultural involvement? Can a Christian approve it, or must he demur; must he join it, or must he fight it? These queries lead us back to the more basic question with which we began: how must the Christian community be present in the world?

One realizes that this is no light matter! For such has been the experience of the Body of Christ that when she ventured outside of the church-gates and mingled in the affairs of the market-place, she adjusted, compromised and even denied her Message; when, on the other hand, she was content to, or forced to remain within her walls, she failed to give concrete form to the Christian witness and discovered to her own consternation that she was "outside" of the world. This state of affairs forced the Christian Community to choose sides. One group within the Christian Church continued to press for Christian witness in the world, another group preferred to stay "pure" and limited her witness to the preaching of the Word. The latter group accused the former of forsaking the heritage of the fathers, of diluting and even polluting the Gospel, the former group charged that the "safe" policy of the latter was in

effect a surrender of day-to-day life to the forces of evil and a shackling of the Power of the Gospel.

One could put it this way: the make-up of the Christian Church has by and large been determined since her inception by her reactions to this appalling dilemma, Christ or Culture, the Church or the World. A.D. 1966 is no exception. The Body of Christ is still painfully divided into "The Left Bank," who, knowingly or unknowingly, trade the Gospel in exchange for a place and voice in the transactions of the market-place; "The Right Bank," who, by curtailing the Christian witness to the "inner life", abandon the "natural life" to its own devices; and the hard-to-map "middle-of-the streamers," who, in spite of admirable aims, are unable to escape the confines of their "banks" and formulate a new perspective for the Christian witness in the world.

THE WITNESS OF THE "LEFT BANK"

The issue is clear. Must the Christian Community accept this dilemma, or better, continue to accept it? Is there no perspective which would enable the Christian to live with full heart as Christian in the world? To begin our analysis, let us return to the contemporary scene. The present witness of the "liberal" wing of the Body of Christ has one undeniable quality, it is spectacular, it is the "stuff that makes news." At the same time, and this aspect is generally overlooked, it is just the extra-ordinary, out-standing, and spectacular element which underlines its basic shallowness and weakness. To understand this trend of thought one must begin from the fact that the Church's witness to the various sectors of life is almost without exception channelled through the institutional church and her agencies. It is the institutional church, herself, that becomes socially, economically and political involved. This implies, of course, that there are real limits to her degree of involvement, she may never — and still remain church — become a labor union, or a political party etc. This further implies that the Christian witness is of necessity and irrevocably external and extrinsic in nature. It comes from the "outside". It is not a witness born within the area of concern — and thus geared to this area's own structure — as an answer to the Word-Proclamation in the institutional church. In this case it would bear an intrinsic, integral character. As it is, the witness retains at all times a more or less ecclesiastical stamp. It remains essentially peripheral and tangental, it is always a testimony of the institutional church in which the church, as institute, involves herself in areas where she has no special competence and even assumes the prerogatives of these areas. Here lies the reason why something extra-ordinary is called for! Otherwise, the danger is only too real that the witness will be completely ignored by the groups concerned.

Try as they will, the "left wingers" are discovering to their great dismay that they are still unable to radically affect life within the central areas of human culture. They are still acting as "arms" of the institutional church, and as such, they are still standing on the outside looking in. This is one side of the story. There is another side. When the left wing has succeeded — in as far as that is possible as church — in adopting the fitting means for witness in a particular sector, it has found itself unable to describe in what way the Christian witness differs or should differ from that of a modern, socially concerned world-citizen. Apparently — so the reasoning goes — Christianity has no special message for economics as economics, or politics as politics; economics is the same for everyone isn't it?

On both sides, these Christians sit with hands in hair. But something must be done and it is the special feature of the present situation that initial efforts are being made to face up to the difficulties. On the one hand, in order to minimize the disadvantage of being an off-shoot of the institutional church, there is a growing tendency to de-emphasize the organized church. On the other hand, since Christianity appears to have no unique message or contribution for politics, or economics etc., all men of good-will are welcomed into the ranks to fight the "common enemies". From both sides there emerges an impulse to seek the "church" in other organizations than in the institutional church, and correspondingly, a welcoming of any respectable, concerned person into the fold. We are now breathing the air which generated the "secular meaning of the gospel".

The danger threatening this approach is crystal clear: the church is on the verge of capitulating to the world. The divinely-placed enmity between the "seed of the serpent" and the "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15) is toned down if not obliterated. The Biblical emphasis on man's sin and on his need for salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 3:23-25, Acts 4:12, Eph. 2:8) is eclipsed by an insistence on man's "maturity" and his "concern-for-others," rather than envisioning the latter as the natural out-growth of new life in Jesus Christ. The "left bank" only succeeds in compromising and distorting the Gospel. Once again the question returns to haunt us: must the "culturally-involved" Christian betray and even lose his faith?

THE DISASTROUS LIMITATION

The "liberal" or so-called "sophisticated" wing realizes — to its credit — the need for communal activity in the central non-ecclesiastical areas of life. But this communal action is channelled exclusively through the institutional church and/or her agencies. Why? In fact, it is this hidden presupposition that such action is the exclusive prerogative of the church which causes all the unsurmountable problems we have described. As long as she is a church-organization, she can not be a political party. But as long as she is not a political party, the Christian Community remains stranded in the church. True to its character as the "left wing," this segment of the Body of Christ throws itself into the world and chooses the "world=pole".

It is the burden of this article that the tendency to limit the communal activity of Christians to the institutional church and her agencies is a result of a widespread, conscious or unconscious, limitation of the Kingdom of God to the "realm of grace," the domain of the institutional church, and thus the confusion of the one with the other.

THE WITNESS OF THE "RIGHT BANK"

Much of what we have said, mutatis mutandis, holds for the "right" wing. This group operates with the same limitation and confusion. However, she makes the opposite choice, she chooses for the "gospel-pole." She prefers to remain safely within the confines of the area of"grace" and abandons the "natural worlds" of commerce, politics etc. to their own devices. But this choice is also fraught with difficulties. One cannot simply live out his life in the domain of grace under the "spires" of the insitutional church, one must involve himself in the affairs of other areas of life. This is a demand of man's situation as

a creature. Various reactions are possible: one can "flee" to the mission field in a futile effort to live consistently and avoid the world, one can seek to "justify" his worldly pursuits by fabricating various "theologies" of... economics, law, morality etc., or perhaps the most common, one simply! attempts to reconcile himself to living the "divided-life."

As is becoming more and more recognized, this right wing or "fundamentalistic" solution fails to do justice to the Scriptural givens. All power on heaven and earth has been given to the Risen Lord (Matt. 28:18). It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ all the fulness should dwell, and through Him to set all things right again, whether these things be upon the earth or in heaven (Colossians 1:19). "For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be the glory for ever. Amen." And then follow the stirring words which draw the conclusion for the members of the Body of Christ. "Therefore, brothers, I beseech you by the mercies of God to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind ..." (Romans 11:36-12:2). Man's total life — "inner and outer", in the organized church and in all other sectors which make up the world — must be subject and made subject to Jesus Christ.

THE "MIDDLE WAY"

"Christ" or "culture", "out" of the world or "of" the world, this is the dilemma which one unavoidably faces if he limits or tends to limit the Kingdom of God to the institutional church. Making a choice for the first pole is tantamount to locking the healing Power of the Gospel within the four walls of the church. Choosing the second pole amounts to placing the "church" in such a position that she no longer has a Message for the world. What a dilemma! It is not at all surprising that in every period of the Church's history there has been a large group which has halted between the two extreme positions and tried to effect some type of compromise. This middle-of-the road position does not reject the dilemma, rather it accepts it, or more often assumes it, to be true and valid. Its one concern is to avoid the "horns" and bring the extremes together. This being the case, viz., that the middle stance is thoroughly defined by its "banks", it is desirable and necessary that we give it our attention.

The "middle way" is a well-intentioned effort to be "in" the world without being "of" the world. One must be "in" the world, but not too much, for then, he is "of" the world; simultaneously, one must be "in" the church, but not too much, for then, he is "out" of the world. The trick is to keep the teeter-totter in balance.

Such attempts to keep the (always precarious) balance have come from both "ends". One group, recognizing the "autonomy" of the natural realm, regards its task to be one of complementation rather than transformation. The Christian witness in society is identified with the voice of the Institutional Church. The Church is the depository of grace. Roman Catholicism may be ragarded as the epitome of this position.

Another group, having experienced the alarming results of the right wing "non-intervention" attitude, having seen the dangers of the "let-the-institutional-church-do-it" approach, has developed what may

be termed the "individual approach". This stance, in recent years revitalized and suggested as a solution by leading figures in Evangelical Protestantism, advocated the conscientious activity of individual Christians in the non-ecclesiastical areas of life.

Since we have already examined the difficulties surrounding the societal witness of the institutional church, we shall confine our remarks to the individual approach.

THE "INDIVIDUAL APPROACH"

Does the individual approach really avoid the extremes and furnish the possibility of genuine Christian witness in the areas concerned? I fear not. In the central areas of culture it serves mainly as a holding-action, as a brake. It can perhaps check, modify, alter, but it is in no position to reverse the direction and thus re-direct and re-form the activity itself. Yet that is precisely what the Christian calling entails. For only then are believers able to present their lives, in all their fullness, to the Lord.

The fact that we consider individual witness to be insufficient stems largely from two factors. It springs from the recognition that cultural formation is a communal project and from the acknowledgment that life in these central sectors of our highly differentiated society involves complexes of organized groupings. In more concrete language: political and socio-economic life in the twentieth century is largely communal in nature. Acting in the way of politics, for example, demands acting in consort with others. This implies that a witness geared to the special nature of these regions ought to have a communal character. The Christian Community must act together — concretely expressing the unity she already has — in accordance with the structure of the areas concerned. To do anything less in the present situation is to condemn the People of God to, in this case, political irrelevance.

This almost self-evident need for communal activity in the central sectors of life leads me to conclude, that there is more at issue than first meets the eye in any reflection of the communal approach. Why does the Body of Christ act only as a community — which she always is — in the institutional church? Why is the Bond which ties believers together for united activity suddenly loosed when Christians leave the domain of "grace"? Here we must pause and take a deep breath — for this is the same question, be it in a slightly different form, which we discussed in relation to the extreme positions.

Not only has the same question emerged, but the same answer must be given. The middle position shares the same presupposition as the extreme groups: the Kingdom of God is identified or confused with realm of grace, considered to be (more or less) under the jurisdiction of the institutional church. Therefore, communal action can only characterize the functioning of the institutional church (and her agencies). On the one hand, this middle grouping can not utilize the communal approach. In that case she would be guilty of ecclesiastical domination, or she would be endangering the very existence of the institutional church herself. She would be making common cause with the Thomists or with the extreme "left". On the other hand, the "middlers" can not remain comfortably seated in the church and land up with the "right wing". In this way the middle group is "pressured" into adopting an individual approach.

In actual practice, this posture — and history bears eloquent witness — restrains, curtails, and, in general, paralyzes the Christian witness. Lacking a communal character which would gear it to the structures of the central areas, the middle witness is destined to be largely ineffective as well as superfluous. On the one hand, sensing (correctly) that there is more to the Biblical concept of reconciliation than the "saving of souls", one hesitates to cooperate in the enthusiastic efforts of evangelists who myopically limit the Christian witness to call to individual salvation and moral renewal. On the other hand, sensing (once again correctly) that, at best, the Christian witness does not come out into its own, not to say that it is buried, one is reluctant to join hands with people of every stripe in vanguards fighting for social, economic, and political reforms. In the world one feels disloyal to his Master, out of the world he feels disobedient to the Master and a traitor to mankind. See here the apathy, malaise, and frustration of (a large group in) the Christian community!

THE BIBLICAL WITNESS

As we have seen, the advocates of the center position are guilty of the same restriction and confusion as their more radical brothers. On every hand we are saddled with the dilemma: Christ or culture! Throughout our discussion it has gradually become clearer that we reject this dilemma because it is based on a false problematics, on an identification and/or confusion of the "realm of grace" (institutional church) and the Kingdom of God. It is now imperative that we discuss the confusion in more detail.

One things is very clear from the Scriptures: the Kingdom of God may not in any sense be limited to, or confused with one area of creation, not even if it is the domain of the institutional church. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). By the Word were all things made and without Him was not anything made (John 1:2). All things "hold together" (Ephesians 1:10) in Him. His Kingdom rules over all (Ps. 103:19), it is from everlasting to everlasting (Daniel 14:3). The Kingdom has cosmic dimensions. However, the institutional church as we know it today occupies only one of the spheres which reveal this Kingdom.

Christians, also Reformed Christians, have often unawares fallen prey to this illegitimate limitation because of ambiguity in the prevalent use of the term "church". Usually, the words Church, Body of Christ, Covenant Community, People of God are employed interchangeably as if they were synonyms. This is possible. However, if, as is customary, "church" has reference, at the same time, to the institute ordained by Christ to proclaim the Gospel on earth, one is entangled in the most serious confusion. Suddenly, often unintentionally, but nevertheless actually, the Kingdom of God is restricted to the institutional church.

This being the present situation it is mandatory that we consciously and clearly distinguish between the Church (with a capital "C"), as the Body of Christ, as the Elect of the Lord, as the Covenantal Community and the institutional church. (with a small "c"). This is not a devaluation of the institutional church, she continues to be the Church, the Body of Christ, but she does not exhaust the Kingdom of God or the Church. She is one (important) way in which the Church finds expression. The Church, as the Community of Believers, as the Citizens of

the Kingdom, embraces the total life and witness of the People of God in the world. Suddenly we have a perspective, a vision, which offers us escape from the frustrating but tenacious dilemma. As workers we have the opportunity to present aunited witness in the field of labor — a witness "free" from the tentacles of the institutional church, and at the same time "part and parcel" of the world of labor. As parents we have the privilege of establishng Christian schools — institutions for the training of children, just like any other kind of school, but schools driven and directed by the Spirit of Christ, which makes all the difference. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is thus present and must be present in the world in various ways, the form of the witness will differ as the structural make-up of the various sectors differ. Every sector of human life in its own way must take on the form of the Kingdom of God. In this way the Church witnesses to the world from within the world. She is enabled to speak concretely about the every-day affairs of the world without being "of" the world (secular).

PART TWO: THE BASIC EXPLANATION — A TWO REALM APRIORI

We can and ought to push our analysis farther. For one may (legitimately) raise a question at this point; if this limitation and confusion of which you speak is clearly against the Biblical witness, why does it return to plague us generation after generation? This query deserves an answer.

A complete answer, having of necessity many facets, would be extremely complex. Nevertheless in spite of this complexity, the heart of the matter can be stated in very clear terms. Such confusions are inevitable when one begins with the presupposition that the order of creation is split into two parts or "realms". For such a person it is an unquestioned apriori that two realms have legitimate and real existence within the cosmos — reality just is that way, period. This is his way-of-looking-at-things. No matter what he does, he does it within and from out of this "two-realm" view. This view becomes his "guide" in the creation. Not only does he begin with an apriori split of reality, he begins from such a split. It is his first principle (principium-beginning, foundation). Such a person, so to speak, wears rose-colored glasses without knowing it.

Since such a first principle controls all the activity of one under its grasp, it also gives order and meaning to his theoretical work. The theoretical out-working of the basic two-realm view has resulted in many two-realm theories. These theories have given in the course of history various names to the two realms: nature-supernature, nature-grace, creation-redemption, natural-spiritual, reason-faith, common grace-special grace, history-Kingdom of God, coram hominibus-coram Deo, body-soul, "inner life" - "outer life", man as man-man as Christian, state-church, etc.

Now it is not the fact that such a person wears glasses (everyone wears them, that is, everyone has an apriori principle which structures his doing) which causes the distortion, rather that he wears the wrong-colored glasses. As we have seen, the Biblical witness testifies to the cosmic dimensions of God's Kingdom. But — and this is the point — when one begins with and from the two-realm view, he has already, before-hand, restricted the Kingdom of God to one area of creation (man's faith-life). Or to turn it around, man's faith-life is

absolutized so that it encompasses the Kingdom of God. Beginning with the apriori split, one is henceforth unable to wrest himself free from its demands. He will and can account for the Biblical truths in countless ways, but a correct placement and interrelation of the givens is apriori excluded. A two-realm principium forced one- — his best Christian intentions notwithstanding — to re-arrange the state of affairs in reality. He is compelled — often without his knowledge — to reduce, deform, and distort the rich diversity of reality because he is no longer able to "see" the unity of creation. Perhaps one could put it this way: one imagines that he finds two legitimate realms in creation, but in actuality he is merely tracing round the (two-realm) frame through which he is looking at it. The result: in one fell stoke (executed at the very beginning, or accepted as "done") the total life of man before God — Religion — is reduced to man's faith-life in the institutional church. In this way all the non-ecclesiasticla areas of life are denied the character of religion, of direct service to God. The creation-order is "split" into two realms or regiments, a "spiritual" realm of the church, of grace, of faith, and a "wordly" realm of the rest, of the state, of commerce, etc.

There is a note of deep irony in this situation. After first separating the realm of grace (the institutional church) and the world, as the realm of nature, one tries to bring the two together again. However, that which is once split can never truly form a unity again! In our case, the previous limitation of the Kingdom to the area of grace (man's faith-life) excludes in principle the very possibility that the Kingdom can embrace the world. Having first tied, so to speak, the Bible and religion to the church, it is impossible to present a genuine Biblical witness in the other areas of life. Having accepted the two-realm view, one is forced to choose at every turn between the two-poles of false dilemmas.

STRUCTURE AND DIRECTION

Let us be more precise. All types of two-realm theories confuse what I prefer to call "structure" and "direction". There is one creation structure, restored and renewed to in redemption, which in its revelatory impinging character calls forth an answer from that which is subject to it — mankind and the rest of creation. The human answer to the Law-order results either in increased or arrested unfolding of the Meaning of the Law depending on whether it is an answer of Obedience to the Law or of Disobedience. There are thus three factors to be related: the one order of creation (structure) and the two directions which man may take in response to it (direction). Keeping the structure-direction distinction in mind, one does not give the antithesis a "structural" character, rather it retains its completely "directional" character. This further implies that the antithesis does not do away with the "Presence" of God (common grace) to all men. On the contrary, God is "present" to all men in that they remain subject to the renewed order of creation which continues to call them to repentance. The antithesis enters in because some men continue to respond negatively to God's call — they are anti-). In summary: mankind responds to the revelational order of creation in two ways or Directions, in Obedience (hampered by the still present falling into sin) or in Disobedience (limited in execution because God maintains His Law-order in Jesus Christ.)

A two-realm theory of whatever type is unable by its very nature to do justice to this state of affairs. To put it rather crudely (and certainly too simply), a two-realm theory must try to squeeze "three pegs" into "two holes". It just never works!

TYPES OF TWO-REALM THEORIES: THE EXTREME "TYPES"

This is not to say that the two-realm theories are of one type. Rather the contrary is the case, in spite of a sharing of the two-realm apriori, two theories can be each others polar opposite. This complicated state of affairs results from the necessity of emphasizing one element at the expense of other elements — the unpleasant lot of anyone who begins with a two-realm apriori. One theorist, under the influence of the "goodness" of the creation, considers the realm of nature to be (more or less) "good" in itself. Another theoriest, under the influence of the corrupting power of sin, conceives of the natural realm as (more or less) fallen. With a view to shedding more light on the problem with which we began this paper, it is instructive, more than that, revealing, to follow the main-lines through and see more exactly how first choices determine second choices and so on.

There are then two main types of two-realm theories. One type begins from the conviction that the realm of nature is largely "good", the other, from the conviction that nature is largely "evil". In other words, in the first type the structural element is emphasized in the natural realm, in the second the directional. This has direct consequences for the other realm of "grace". Since in a theory of the first type, the directional aspect is more or less bracketed in the natural realm, it receives the emphasis in the grace-realm. This means concretely that the emphasis is placed on man's responsibility to be obedient to his true nature and on his calling to live up to his divine potential for the life of "grace". The stress is not on the need for the regenerating Power of the Spirit, rather on the possibility of man to move in the right direction by himself. Since in a theory of the second type, the structural aspect was bracketed in the realm of nature, it receives the emphasis in the realm of grace. Grace cannot be seen as a re-creating, or as regenerating — there is no structure left to re-new, it is "fallen" — rather it must be seen as creating a new "structure", as an ex nihilo generation of faith.

In theories of the first type, since the Fall (and thus Redemption) are not conceived of as radical and total — the creation order remains in itself "good", the power and effect of sin is minimized or ignored — there is little room, actually no room, for God's Sovereign grace as the "gift" which is required before mankind can (once again) do that which is right. Grace shrinks into something more or less "extra", or worse, it is looked upon as some special "power" in man which must be actualized. In theories of the second type, since the Redemption is not seen as the radical restoration of the fallen order of creation — there can be no talk of a cosmic order, creation remains chaos, and sin acquires the status of a more or less independent power — grace, lacking the necessary reference to the creation-order, must create a new the "organ" of belief, (one of man's functions which gives him the capability of belief, true or false). Redemption, in the process, tends to become "other-wordly". It becomes extremely difficult to do justice to man's responsibility to turn to God. Grace as God's "gift" is so preeminent that man's "part"

is ignored or renounced as taking away from the sovereignty of God's grace. One could say that theories of the first type place a wedge between Creation and Fall-(Redemption), whereas theories of the second type place a wedge between (Creation)-Fall and Redemption.

In the first set of theories, since faith, at best, is merely something "more", the difference between belief and disbelief is relativized to one of degree — and the antithesis in its Biblical seriousness is toned down. In the second set of theories, since the Christian not only has a different direction but also a different structure than the unbeliever, it is difficult to explain the possibility of the existence of dis-belief (the unbeliever lacks the "organ" of believing). In the first instance, the Christian is more or less the same, or up to a point the same as an unbeliever. In the second instance, the Christian is a super-man of sorts, or, if just considered a man, the unbeliever is relegated to the subhuman. In the first complex of theories, there is no principal need for a Christian approach in the "non-religious" areas of life. The Christian contribution, if made, always bears an external, extrinsic nature. In the second complex, the intrinsic connection between faith and thought is broken and faith stands over against reason. As a result, there is no principlal possibility of a Christian approach in the so-called "non-religious" area.

THE MODERATE "TYPES"

These two sets of theories are the extremes. However, there are also many theories which attempt to avoid the dangers of extremism. These middle-type theories are also of two kinds. One such type, holding fast to the essential goodness of creation, admits that "something" was lost in the Fall. This being the case, man is no longer able to fulfill his destiny by himself; he needs a helping hand, he requires God's "gift" of grace in order to walk the last steps, to be complete. The other moderate type, a variation of the second type discussed above, just as the first moderate type is a variation of the first type, continues to emphasize the fallen state of creation. At the same time, however, it recognizes a "point of contact", a remnant of good, in nature. Consequently, grace is no longer, as with the extreme position, exclusively a "gift" of God — this still remains the main emphasis — but man is also called to do something for his salvation. Life in the natural orders need not be avoided, but it still bears the tain of the inferior. In any event it is unable to "touch" life in the realm of grace.

All together we have sketched the skeletons of four main types of two-realm theories. These types could be schematized as follows:

I	Nature = Creation---------- (sin)	Grace = Man's task (God's gift)
II	Nature = Creation (sin)----	Grace = Man's task (God's gift)
III	Nature = Sin (creation)----	Grace = God's gift (man's task)
IV	Nature = Sin (creation)------	Grace = God's gift (man's task)

It is well to note that I have been sketching the frameworks or outlines of various types of theories, rather than any specific theories. Nevertheless, lest the reader receive the impression that

skeletons described are constructions which are never fleshed-in, I shall give examples of theories or theologians which more or less consistently represent the four basic types. Different theories may be found in the same type, but their similar framework will betray the "family-resemblance":

I. Paul Tillich, Paul van Buren
II. Thomism and Neo-Thomism
III. The classic Lutheran two-realm theory
Emil Brunner
IV. Fundamentalism, Anabaptism
Karl Barth

THE "DILEMMA" RETURNS

Within the scope of this article it is impossible to continue our sketch of the various types of theories possible within the two-realm framework. We must, however, give some attention to the manner in which these types treat the complex relation church-world. In theories of the first type (radical and moderate), the Body of Christ is only relatively different from the world. At best, she is something "more" or "extra". In theories of the second type (radical as well as moderate), the Body of Christ is entirely different from the world. Returning to an earlier classification, theories of the first type choose the "Gospel-pole", and the moderate versions of each are the middle-of-the-road positions. The dilemma is back!

In all of the theories concerned the church is found in the realm of grace (the Kingdom of God). Nevertheless, depending on the type of theory involved, there can be many different doctrines of the church. In first-type theories, the church always has an external relation to the world. In order to overcome this "external-ness", the more radical theories tend to affirm that there really is no need for a separate church organization (that is, church institute). The Spiritual Community can also be found in other organizations. The end of the matter is to identify the "secular city" and the "kingdom of God". The moderate theories, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the institutional church as such, she is the Body of Christ. The extreme theories overcome the obstacle of externality at the cost of surrendering the Gospel, whereas the witness of the moderates remains external, having at best a complementing character. According to theories of the second type, the church has no real connection with the world. In the extreme versions, the Church, the Community of Faith, a unity "ordered" and "created" by the Word of God, stands over against the world. Here the Church's witness is extremely problematic — there is no real connection. The moderates realize that a Church without organization is impossible. But, because of their prejudice against external (legal) order as being "natural" and, as such, inferior, they devaluate the institutional church and sing the praises of the Church of Faith. It is just this prejudice against the natural and for the spiritual which under-cuts their often eloquent calls for world-witness. In the end the real Church (the community of faith) is out-of-this-world.

THE "SYNTHESIS-MIND"

We have discovered the real cause of the Christian Community's difficulty in determining how she ought to be present in the world. Too often she has been under the influence of thinkers who were in the grip of an unBiblical two-realm apriori. These thinkers endeavored to harmonize the Truth of the Word of God and some other total view of reality (by definition apostate). They tried to tie together two views which, because they are mutually exclusive, can only seek to destroy each other. The (often unnoticed) infiltration of this syn-thesis-mind into the Christian Church has more effectively than anything else torpedoed the frequently gallant efforts of the People of God to witness in the world. The Body of Christ shackled herself by accepting the synthesis-mind (two-realm apriori) for the simple reason that this way-of-looking-at-things is unreformed by the Power of the Gospel.

This then is the burden of the conclusion: the Christian Community has by and large and for too long a period been infected by a view foreign to the Scriptures and thus foreign to her nature as the Body of Christ. At the beginning of things, an unScriptural motive took root in the Church and undermined the possibility of the Biblical witness which she was to effect in the world.

The most disheartening feature of this painful state of affairs is the fact that the Body of Christ — with a few exceptions — does not recognize these chains when she sees them. She does not see that it is her own way-of-thinking that has at the outset compromised the Gospel. She does not see that it is this two-realm framework which must bear the blame for continually leading the Church down dead-ends. Until this situation is recognized for what it is, until that time, a "change" in the constellation of factors, or a "new" approach is only a re-arranging, a re-furbishing, a re-formulating within the basic two-realm framework. That is to say, there have been and still can be many alterations and modifications, but the fundamental structure remains unchanged. The same "motor", the two-realm motor, regardless of whether it is tuned, overhauled or even rebuilt, continues to drive and give shape to the various theories.

The Christian is commanded to work out in his "outer life" the new life which lives in his heart. It is just this "working-out" that is smothered, undermined, yes, sabotaged by the synthesis mentality and the resultant two-realm theories. This stifling has occurred so often — and the exception have been so few — that the Christian Church has more or less been brainwashed in the process. She considers the difficulties in principle insurmountable — the Church must simply make the best of it, which is often not too much. (This is not to underestimate the difficulty of making a Christian witness in the world. Sin still clings to us and works in the world. We are claiming that a Christian witness is in principle possible.) The consequence is deadly: in the crisis of our times, the Church is power-less.

There is a Way — but only one — out of the morass into which (much of) the Body of Christ has sunk. It is the Way lit up by the Light in all its revealing and saving brilliance. No longer may we arbitrarily limit the range and scope of the Light (and thus walk on certain paths in darkness, or at best, with an artificial light) or dim its brilliance (and thus walk with obscured or limited vision). As long as this spirit lives in the Church — the false spirit — her analysis of her task, and her subsequent witness, will continue to founder for lack of in-sight.

Only when the Christian Church throws off the unBiblical

Mind of Synthesis, only when she replaces the two-realm apriori by the Biblical apriori, only then will it be possible for the Christian community to be "present" in the world without being of the world. Wherever believers find themselves, that is, in every area of life, there one will find the beginnings of the Kingdom of God. And what the Body of Christ begins in imperfection will be perfected in that final day when God shall be all-in-all.