

## **Traditional Christian Objections to Politics**

### **Talk Given at Hillcrest High School**

**Jos, Nigeria**

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#### **Two Major Objections**

##### **A. Dualism**

**The Christian Church has long been plagued by a kind of dualism that is rooted in some strands of Greek philosophy. It looks like this:**

<b>Grace</b>	<b>Revelation</b>	<b>Spirit</b>	<b>Soul</b>	<b>Theology</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Nature</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Matter</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Low</b>

**I have explained this diagramme in other publications of mine.**

**(See especially Vol. 5 in the series *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations*, endnote 19, p. 122 as well as all of Chapter 5; *Missions: Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?*, pp. 132-137; *Christians and Mobilization*, pp. 11-13. All of these publications are found on this very website page.)**

**The word “dualism” has a variety of meanings, depending on the context. The dualism I have in mind here has its origin in pre-Reformation history, and is especially associated by many scholars with and a result of Thomas Aquinas’s synthesis of Christian thought**

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<sup>1</sup> This document is merely the framework of a speech that became complete only during the delivery. The real and complete talk was the oral one and that, unfortunately, cannot be retrieved after so many years (2016).

**with Pagan Greek philosophy. For our present purposes it is sufficient to summarize the following main features of dualism as it eventually filtered down through the years into the Evangelical community and its missionaries; into the minds of your parents. This is how most of them think and this is what most Hillcrest teachers will teach you as the common sense of Christians:**

**(1) Reality is divided into the spheres of the material and the spiritual.**

**(2) God is said to be more interested in the spiritual than the material. There is thus a hierarchical relationship between the two, with the spiritual taking priority.**

**(3) One needs divine revelation, e.g., the bible, to understand the spiritual world, the world of the church and theology. Here human reasoning is insufficient.**

**(4) For the affairs of the world, human reason is a sufficient source of information.**

**(5) Working in the spiritual area is often called “the work of God,” while working in the world is not really service to Him.**

**Alternatively, working in the spiritual means one is working “fulltime” for God, while working in the world constitutes at best “halftime” service.**

**With the above points in mind, it is possible to understand H.R. Rookmaker’s description of dualism: This world is good, but yet has autonomy of its own. The world of faith, of grace, of religion is the higher one, a world for which we have need of God’s revelation. This is where our aims and affections should be set. But the lower world, the world of men and the world of “nature,” can be understood by reason alone, and here in fact reason reigns. It is as such non-religious, secular. Here there is no difference between the Christian and the non-**

**Christian, as both act according to the “natural” and “neutral” laws of thought and action.**

**This dualism has long been the *official* dogma of both the Roman Catholic Church and the various Lutheran churches. It is also the *unofficially* accepted but often unconsciously-held dogma of Baptist churches and all others that accept only believer’s baptism. It is only the Reformed who mostly reject this dualism, except in so far as they have subconsciously been influenced by this tradition. Otherwise, the Reformed have resolutely rejected this scheme of things.**

#### **B. Premillennialism**

**Premillennialism is a rather pessimistic view of the world, for it sees creation as under satan. That being the case, its adherents have little hope that politics can accomplish anything positive or useful in this world. Hence, most “Premills” tend to be negative with respect to politics. It’s basically a waste of time.**

#### **Objections to the Objections—Politics Is Inevitable, Inescapable**

**--Wherever human beings organize their societies, they cannot escape politics. It is part of running a society.**

**--Denial of politics ends up in selective participation in politics, usually on the negative side.**

**--Conscious rejection leads to subconscious, stupid and wrong participation and leads to negative results.**