

Antithesis CONCLUSION

Should Christians, if they are at all interested in politics, labor questions or educational matters, pursue their aims in separate organizations or take the route of individual witness and action? The validity of Christian organizations is still a subject of heated debate by some Christians, others ignore the issue altogether.

What do the antithesis and the Kingship of Christ mean for God's people today? Why has Christianity not been able to oppose the onslaught of secularism in modern society with its development of a godless culture? Has it compromised? Should Christians take the Jerry Falwell Moral Majority approach? This organization tries to build a "non-religious" political organization on a general moral basis. It also strongly supported President Ronald Reagan's reelection. Can it build a real majoritarian movement with all "pro-moral" Americans of every religious persuasion? Or should Christians fall in line with the Association of Public Justice (APJ)? This organization insists that everyone should have the right to organize themselves on their own different exclusive foundation. APJ believes that the antithesis is a matter of allegiance. Dr. James Skillen said at the 1983 Christian political conference at Wheaton College, "The ultimate divide or antithesis among people in America and around the world, we believe, is not between moral and immoral people, but between the justice of God's Kingdom and everything that stands against God's Kingdom. And this antithesis can be found everywhere. In all of us, including Christians. To acknowledge this antithesis means to accept with humility God's judgment of our sins as well as His judgment of others' sins. It means trying to build an association on exclusively biblical terms while at the same time not claiming too much for our efforts." In our pluralistic society there should be room for organizations founded on biblical principles. I believe that there are basically two reasons for such organizations.

Christian Separation

During the nineteenth-century revival in Holland, Abraham Kuyper, in the spirit of Groen Van Prinsterer, began to call Christians of Reformed persuasion to spiritual isolation (*geestelyk isolement*). Kuyper saw how Christians were affected by pagan factors, socialism, liberalism and other 'isms.' Why should Christians be members of organizations where Christ is not honored as King? If Christ is truly King, then His subjects must claim Him as their Lord, and acknowledge His Kingship not only on Sunday in church, but also during the week in their field of labor, the business of everyday work. If Christ is King, and the Bible the infallible Word of God for all of life, then Christians should submit themselves to His will and ways. Lord, what do you want us to do?

Secularism has made its deadening inroads; Christianity must exert its life-giving influence upon the world as Christ is the Life. God's people are called to develop a distinctively Christian lifestyle, for it is a life lived by faith in the Son of God.

The call to separation is clearly stated in Scripture (II Cor. 6:14, 14; cf. Rev. 18:4). Christians, organized in their own union or action group, seek together guidance from the

Word of God, join in prayer, encourage or admonish one another. A Christian organization does not give up on the world but tries to plant the signposts of the Kingdom, while eagerly awaiting the glorious return of the King. In social activities the Christian voice must be heard. We may not surrender everyday life to secularism. The antithesis can be given form through Christian organizations.

Neutrality

Can Christians be members of neutral organizations? Some Christians do distinguish between Christian, non-Christian and anti-Christian organizations. Is this possible? In our Reformed circles there is certainly no unanimity on this issue. Dr. H. Stob, professor emeritus of Calvin Theological Seminary, says in his book, *Ethical Reflections, Essays on Moral Themes*, that non-ideologically structured organizations do exist. They are neither Christian nor anti-Christian. They are simply non-Christian or neutral. He says, "There are many of these in North America, and indeed all over the world, and all of them are in principle open to the Christian." He finds untenable the position of those who believe that the necessity of separating from a non-Christian organization and of joining a Christian organization is based on eternal truth rather than on facts. Says he, "It reflects a principal thinking which I am bound to regard as simplistic and as a misreading of Scripture."

Dr. Henry Van Til says that neutrality is impossible. Scripture doesn't allow it. No one has the right to ignore God. Christ the King has absolute authority (Matt. 28:18). If this is true, how can anyone withdraw even an inch from Christ's domain? So-called neutral organizations are based on either humanistic or humanitarian ideals. They are man and not God centered. Van Til says in his book, *The Calvinist Concept of Culture*, "The silent hatred of the world against the Christ of God, which comes to expression in the neutrality concept as applied in the field of education, art, labor relations, journalism, etc., is the most destructive of all and the hardest to combat, since the opposition shrugs its shoulders and claims neutrality as its asylum of tolerance. And many believers still succumb to the blandishments of the enemy, when he puts up the camouflage of neutrality."

Is neutrality possible? Isn't the Spirit of Christ over against the spirit of the world? Living out of the antithesis means to differentiate between those who love God's law and those who don't.

We should take the consequences of the antithesis. However, we must be aware of the danger of intellectualizing the Christian faith. The deepest principle of the antithesis is God's electing grace in Christ. This is not the same as an ideology or a ready blueprint for Christian action. Antithesis means to test whatever happens to the Word of God. The antithesis principle calls for a close walk with the Lord. Without Him we can do nothing. Christians, convinced of the validity of Christian organizations, should not, in their attempt to win others, have a superior attitude. They too share in the sin of mankind and are in need of the cross, the redeeming grace of Christ.

Christian organizations? In our dying Western culture Christians should give them a careful hearing and prayerful consideration. As I see it, Abraham Kuyper's clarion call *Pro Rege* in every sphere of life is still as relevant as ever!

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