

# TWO SIDES OF EVERY COIN



A Dialectic Formatting  
of Christian Thought

James A. Fowler

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## DEDICATION

In the early part of the twenty-first century it was my privilege to meet and befriend a fellow Christian teacher and author by the name of Bill Freeman. In our discussions we shared the necessity of seeing both sides of every issue in Christian thought. After one such discussion he sent me a little pamphlet by Robert Govett entitled *“The Two-sidedness of Divine Truth.”* Though limited in scope, the pamphlet was biblical and beneficial. Brother Bill Freeman has since graduated to glory, but I would certainly have enjoyed sharing the content of this volume with him, and I am confident that he would have enjoyed the ensuing discussion. Thank you Bill for your friendship. May you enjoy the opportunity to see all things as God sees them – for eternity!



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# *Introduction*



# INTRODUCTION

The referee in his black and white uniform strides toward the center of the football field, flanked by the captains of the two opposing football teams. In the middle of the field, he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a coin, and shows the team captains which side of the coin will to be designated as “heads” and the other side as “tails.” The captain of the visiting team is told to call “heads” or “tails” prior to the coin being tossed into the air. When the coin lands on the grass, they all lean over to see which side landed facing upward. If the visiting captain is correct in his call, he can make the choice of whether his team will receive the football or defer and kick the football to the other team on the initial kickoff, in anticipation of receiving the kickoff at the beginning of the second half of the game. The choice is made. The players from each team come on the field. Let the game begin!

This scenario is played out thousands of times every week during the Fall football season as youth teams, school teams (elementary, junior high, high school, college), and professional teams prepare to play their games. Each event is an example of the importance of identifying the two sides of the coin.

Not every coin has the image of a head on one side, nor the image of a tail on the other side. However, one side is always designated as the front side and the other as the backside. In the field of numismatics, those involved in the field of collecting and evaluating coins, the front side is referred to as the “obverse,” and the backside as the “reverse.” But whatever you call the two sides, there are two sides to every coin.

This initial illustration of flipping a coin and calling for “heads” or “tails” demonstrates an *either/or* determination of one side or the other of a coin. In Christian thought there are *either/or* contrasts of polarities and dichotomies of ideas and thoughts, that like the flipped coin will present themselves as an *either/or* wherein one side is observable and deemed important, while the other side is obstructed and/or

deemed inadmissible. The problem with these *either/or* dichotomies of Christian thought is that the solution is not as clear-cut as the tossing of a coin and the outcome of an obvious “heads” or “tails.” One Christian may adamantly argue that the side of the coin she has called is the only valid or viable side of the coin, while another may assert that the reverse side of the issue is the only proper and acceptable position. Both may be unwilling to consider that the other side is an acceptable expression of Christian thought.

Such has often been the interactions of Christians concerning different facets of Christian thought, leading to rancorous polemics and fracturing of doctrinal and denominational loyalties. Oh, if it were as simple as tossing a coin and exclaiming “heads” or “tails.” It’s just not that simple when it comes to how Christians think.

## IDEOLOGICAL CONTRASTS

Most readers will be familiar with and have used Roget's *Thesaurus*. Many logophiles (those fond of words) regard Roget's *Thesaurus* as one of the three most important books ever printed in the English language (the *Bible*, Webster's *Dictionary*, and Roget's *Thesaurus*). Those three books are on my desk at all times.

Dr. Peter Mark Roget (1779-1869) was a physician, scientist, and philologist who developed the *Thesaurus* early in his life (1805), but did not publish the book until forty-seven years later (1852). His objective was not just to identify synonyms and antonyms, but he sought to build a structure of all the categories of contrasts and opposites within the English language. Modern editions of Roget's *Thesaurus* have sometimes abandoned Roget's structure to simply put the synonyms and antonyms in dictionary form, but this sacrifices the foremost value of Roget's work. Roget's original structuring of English words into contrasted classification categories is a masterpiece of thought organization and will prove valuable to all who are

interested in the broad spectrum of contrasting human concepts.

By the way, the word *thesaurus* is the Greek word for “treasure,” and is the word used in II Cor. 4:7 – “we have this *treasure* in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the glory may be of God and not of ourselves.” What is the “treasure”? The treasure (the *thesaurus*) in our earthen vessels is Jesus Christ, who gives reality and meaning to our being. And I think it is possible to demonstrate that Jesus is the treasure that gives structure and meaning to all the contrasts of life.

Everything that exists is comprised of interactive contrastive elements – all things material and immaterial. The Triune God has the interactive persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The atoms that constitute every material thing have the interactive elements of neutrons, protons, and electrons. Not only is there such triplicity in all things, but there is also a dual element of interactivity in all things. Within God there is the opposing polarity of His transcendence in relation to His immanence; His three-ness in correlation with His oneness; His unknowability contrasted with

His knowability. In the material world we observe the dual existence of mass and motion (cf. Einstein's  $E=MC^2$ ), the positive and negative electrical fields, the pressures of expansion and contraction, attraction and repulsion, emission and absorption. Every action has its counter-action. Roget demonstrated that in the world of human thought every concept has a contrasting opposite (ex. hot and cold, light and dark, up and down, left and right, sweet and bitter, etc.), and this is likewise true in the realm of Christian thought as we contrast God and Satan, good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, love and selfishness, etc. (cf. *Addendum A*)

As soon as we open our Bibles to *Genesis*, to the "beginning," we begin to read of contrasts: The Uncreated God creates creation, comprised of heavens and earth. Order is formed out of disorder, as God creates light and darkness, night and day. The corporeal substance that comes from incorporeal spirit is both nonliving and living, and the living is divided into male and female, and the contrasted humans are placed into an idyllic garden where they confront two contrasting trees (the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of the contrast between good and evil). Faced with the

choice of obedience or disobedient rebellion, Adam and Eve face the consequences of life or death, and the contrasts of blessings or curses. True to life, even in the first three chapters, the Bible is replete with the counteraction of contrasts, as it is throughout.

## DEFINITIONS

Before we proceed in our study of the contrasts of Christian thought, we need to consider some differing definitions. The “law of opposites” has been a phrase used in physics, philosophy, physiology, as well as morality, magic, and computers. Such terms as binary, polarity, paradox and antinomy, as well as the terms dichotomy, dialectic and dualism have been utilized in many of these disciplines of thought. We are going to briefly note some of these terms, as it is important to define and compare them. (*cf. Addendum B*)

“Binary” is a familiar term popularized in the terminology of digital computing. It means “twofold,” and in digital computing refers to a mathematical “base two” usage of electronic polarity wherein two binary

digits or “bits” represent short-duration pulses of low (0) and high (1) direct current voltages. In its generic definition, “binary” just means that there is two of something, and the term is used in mathematics, chemistry, music and astronomy.

“Polarity” refers to divergent “poles” of contrasting objects, actions, or ideas. It is used in electronics, nuclear fusion, philosophy and politics to represent contrasting “poles.” Even psychology refers to a “bipolar disorder,” wherein a person experiences the poles of ecstasy and depression, peace and panic – a manic/depressive condition. “Polarity” means there are two opposite “poles,” and there are some contrasts in Christian thought that are best referred to as “diametric polarities:” ex. good and evil; God and Satan; righteousness and iniquity; etc. (*cf. Addendum A*)

“Paradox” is a term used early in Greek philosophy in the writings of Zeno of Elea. The word is derived from the Greek language: *para*=alongside and *dokein*=to appear. “Paradox” has reference to two ideas or statements that “appear alongside” of one another and appear to be contradictory or incongruous, but may

contain a unifying truth when considered together. An oxymoron is a paradox reduced to two contradictory words, such as a “wise fool,” or a “deafening silence.”

“Antinomy” is similar to “paradox,” but has to do with concepts that are “against the law” of reason (*anti*=against and *nomos*=law) because they are mutually incompatible or involve an irresolvable contradiction. Antinomies reveal the limitations of human reasoning in logical discontinuities, but do not help us to understand the contrasts.

“Dichotomy” means “to cut in two,” derived from two Greek words, *dicho*=two and *timnein*=to cut. The primary meaning is that of dissection or bifurcation, and it is usually employed to refer to two opposing or contradictory subclasses without any explanation of how the two parts relate to one another. Dichotomous contrasts are often popularly identified as dualisms, but a dualism has a more technical definition.

“Dualism,” simply refers to the separation or demarcation of two things from one another. In classical philosophical usage, however, it often has the specific

meaning of two mutually exclusive and absolute equal forces that oppose one another and cannot be brought together, remaining in a perpetual stalemate or stand-off. The Taoist dualism of *yin/yang* is an example of such. But the Christian either/or contrast of God and Satan (*cf. Addendum A*) is not a “dualism” in this absolute and classic sense because they are not co-equal eternal forces or powers. God is the sovereign and omnipotent Almighty God, and everything and everyone else is lesser than Him and will be overcome by Him

“Dialectic” comes from a Greek word, *dialectos*, (*dia*= through and *lecto*=to talk), meaning “to speak or converse through.” To talk through contrasting issues was the basis of Socratic dialogue. Plato refined the term in reference to rhetorical and forensic debate; and Aristotle used “dialectic” as the proper rules of syllogistic argumentation in formal logic. Hegel employed “dialectic” to refer to the triadic integration of thesis and antithesis in synthesis. Karl Marx’s “dialectical materialism” dealt with the class struggles that bring about supposed historical progression. Kierkegaard wrote of an “inverted dialectic” that was an internal, subjective and experiential (existential)

struggle of progressing towards God's objective. Karl Barth was known as a "dialectic theologian." The word "dialectic" has a long history of various meanings and requires careful definition and explanation if it is to be employed as a model for conceptual understanding.

If we wanted to "play it safe" in this present foray into philosophical theology it might be advisable to identify our study of Christian contrasts with a benign entitlement of "Christian contrarities," thus avoiding some of the inevitable problems with semantics and evolving definitions. We will, however, go "out on a limb" to identify the contrasts as "a dialectic formatting of Christian thought," as this book is subtitled. The skepticism that many have of the word "dialectic" is no doubt due to its long and diverse history of interpretation, and thus its many varied explanations.

## **AN HISTORICAL SURVEY**

A brief historical survey of thought contrasts and the use of the word "dialectic" with its many different

interpretations of meaning will serve as a foundation for the explanation of the dialectic of complementarity that will be used in this study.

Greek thought, foundational to Western thinking, had an underlying “contrast analysis” evident from the earliest extant writings. In the mystical philosophy of Greek Orphism, the soul, regarded as the divine element in man, was considered incarcerated or entombed in the human body. Thales (623-546 B.C.), regarded as the founder of Greek philosophy, at least the Milesian school, sought to dissuade any thought of godly immanence or intervention, regarding only the tangible and material objects that could be evaluated by empirical observation to be permanent and real.

The pendulum of human thought continued to swing back and forth. Heraclitus of Ephesus (530-470 B.C.) reacted against the Milesian philosophy, positing that change was the ultimate reality, and only in the perpetual flux of constant alteration via strife and opposition could any sense of stability be achieved. His philosophy is sometimes called “fluxism.”

Parmenides (c. 515-440 B.C.) reacted against the relativistic “flux theory” of Heraclitus, arguing that material things exist in themselves as part of a monistic material oneness. He argued that truth could only be associated with what could be empirically verified as contrasted with the illusion of trying to conceive or anything that cannot be perceived with the sense.

Back and forth went the argumentations of the early Greek philosophers, illustrating the continuous clash of contrasting human thought, and the constant discussion of human ideas and their priority.

Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.) focused on the art of discussion and cross-examination of contrasting ideas in order to face moral dilemmas. He believed that through the dialogue of conversational interaction in question and answer, men could derive definitions that were unequivocal in assertions that did not violate the law of non-contradiction. The objective of such interaction was to seek knowledge and do what is right, despite opposition.

Plato (c. 428-348 B.C.) was the first Greek philosopher to suggest a dialectic wherein two contrasting ideas could be unified. His “theory of ideas” was a synthesis of Heraclitus’ constant flux and Parmenides’ constant stasis. Whereas material things are regarded as fixed and stable, our opinions of what exists are always in flux. His contrast was between the *chora*, the material receptacle, and the “Idea.” He still maintained a metaphysical factor for he regarded the “forms” and “ideas” of the intelligible world to be eternal, separating the upper world of reason and intelligence from the lower world of belief and illusory opinions.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), a student of Plato, while essentially an empirical materialist, focused on developing proper rules of dialogical argumentation in order to derive a logical conclusion. He formulated the syllogism of inductive logic – two premises allowing for a conclusion; the three basic rules of logic – (1) the law of identity: “whatever is, is,” (2) the law of non-contradiction: “nothing can both be and not be,” and (3) the law of the excluded middle: “everything must either be or not be;” and the four causes: (1) material cause –

elements out of which object is created, (2) efficient cause – means by which it is created, (3) formal cause – expression of what it is, and (4) final cause – end for which it is created (teleology).

Evidences of these previous Greek philosophies can be observed in the Gnosticism that became prevalent in the second and third centuries A.D. The dualism of the pneumatic spirit needing to be set free from the imprisonment of the body certainly has elements of Orphistic thought. In Gnostic thought the soul (or spirit) of man was regarded as divine substance, whereas the body and material world were under the malign forces of the demiurge. Through Gnostic enlightenment a person could allegedly rise above the somatic and cosmic realm into divine knowledge and participation.

Proceeding to some European thinkers, Abelard (A.D. 1079-1142) was regarded as the greatest logician of the Middle Ages. He wrote works on *Logic* and *Dialectics*, believing that the Christian faith could be rationally accounted for, but human reason alone could not be the final arbiter of the faith. The extreme

rationalists he called pseudo-dialecticians, and the mystics he called anti-dialecticians, recognizing that the dialectic between God and the material world had to be maintained. His work, *Sic et Non*, literally *So and No*, was an attempt to reconcile contradictions between scripture and the church fathers.

The German priest, Nicholas of Cusa (A.D. 1401-1464), combined geometry and logic to formulate his thesis of *coincidentia oppositorum*, “the coincidence of opposites.” Though the angles of a polygon are increased indefinitely, they never become a circle, and likewise man’s finite attempts to explain God and His ways never adequately express the Infinite. Therefore, he concluded, the contrasting opposites in human thought must not be cast in static rigidity, but must be allowed to coincide by occupying the same space from the perspective of God’s Infinity.

Several centuries later, Immanuel Kant (A.D. 1724-1804) sought to show the limitations of human logic altogether. He regarded the logic of the ancient Greek philosophers to be the “logic of illusion,” arguing that formal logic could prove both the thesis and the

antithesis, thus creating an antinomy of contradiction. He suggested a “transcendental dialectic” wherein transcendental knowledge, which makes all human thought possible, allows human thought to go beyond formal reason to real moral decisions that pass beyond the limits of human experience. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he developed a moral philosophy that advocated a categorical imperative for human experience.

Also regarding formal logic as lifeless and monotonous, Georg W. F. Hegel (A.D. 1770- 1831) explained that there is no absolute truth, but ideas evolve into more complex and truer forms within the historical mobility of human thought. Using the triadic dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, Hegel’s reductionism suggested that individual experience along with social concern would eventually lead human thought to a harmonious reconciliation of all things in the consciousness of an “absolute” awareness of the “World-Spirit.” Hegel’s philosophy of “absolute idealism” was the first to use “dialectic” in terms of historical change.

Though Karl Marx (A.D. 1818-1883) criticized the Hegelian dialectic of “absolute idealism,” he used the dialectic of historical change as the basis of his “dialectical materialism.” Using the Hegelian paradigm of thesis, antithesis, and consequent synthesis, Marx formulated the belief that sociological conflicts and class struggles over material goods would progressively liberate the oppressed and produce materialistic egalitarianism and sociological utopianism. Thesis: common ownership + poverty = primitive communalism. Antithesis: private ownership + wealth = slavery, feudalism, capitalism. Synthesis: common ownership + wealth = socialistic communism. Historical supersessionism was the driving force of his theory of “dialectical materialism.”

The relatively obscure Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard (A.D. 1813-1855), reacted to Hegel’s theory of dialectic synthesis leading to absolute truth. He did not believe that God’s absolute Truth and human thought could ever be brought together in rational synthesis, for they formed an “absolute paradox.” Since God is “wholly other” than man, the need of humanity is to face the Unknown experientially and not seek to

make it knowable. Because of this absolute transcendence of God from all human categories, God's revelation must be accepted by an existential or experiential "leap of faith" in the human mind. Kierkegaard is often regarded as the father of existentialist philosophy. In Kierkegaard's own words, "Christianity entered into the world not to be understood but to be existed in" ... to be lived. This cannot be expressed more strongly than by the fact that Christianity proclaims itself to be a paradox/dialectic."

Twentieth century Swiss theologian, Karl Barth (A.D. 1886-1968) appreciated Kierkegaard's thought and seems to incorporate such (at least in his early writings) in his emphasis on the radical otherness and transcendence of God compared to man. The unknowability of God by human reason (*apophatic* theology) is contrasted with the fact that God can only be known through His Self-revelation of Himself in the Son (*cataphatic* theology). What is affirmed by God in His Self-revelation (the divine "Yes") is always countered by that which is contrary to God's character and will; that which He stands against (the divine "No").

These contrasts form the basis of the designation of Barth's thought as "Dialectic Theology."

French sociologist, Jacques Ellul (A.D. 1912-1994) briefly espoused Marx's conflict theory of "dialectical materialism," but rejected such in incorporating the thought of Kierkegaard and Barth. Ellul formulated a dialectic between sociology and theology, wherein the constantly conflicted demonic powers of the fallen world are in opposition to the ultimate divine power of God revealed in the intervention of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The necessity of technique and death in the world system is contrasted with the living freedom of the individual Christian living "in the world, but not of the world." In Ellul's words, "Dialectic, then, is not just a way of reasoning by question and answer. It is an intellectual way of grasping reality, which embraces the positive and the negatives .... It includes contradictory things that do not exclude one another, but co-exist. Hence a system of vigorous thought ought to take account of both premises without ruling out either, without choosing between, since every choice would exclude one part of reality." (Ellul, *What I Believe*, pg 31)

This brief historical review of some of the major thinkers (somewhat arbitrarily selected), and how their views of “contrast analysis” or dialectic contrasted one from the other, was necessitated to show the broad range of diversity throughout the history of human thought. It is quite evident that different thinkers analyzed the contrasts of thought in widely divergent categories, and their reactions to prior systems of thought created more contrasts.

## **DIALECTIC DIVERSITY**

Proceeding from the historical review, it will be instructive to compare a couple of the more modern dialectical models with the particular model that will be employed in this study. The two nineteenth century writers that have most influenced modern thought concerning dialectic are probably the German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel, and the Danish thinker, Soren Kierkegaard. A diagrammatic comparison of their dialectic models with the model we are proposing will serve to show the differences of their approach. (*cf. Addendum C*)

Georg Hegel's dialectic of "synthetic reductionism" is constructed by juxtaposing two contrasting concepts, a "thesis" and its "antithesis," which are then merged or consolidated together into a "synthesis." (cf. *Addendum D*) The blended and consolidated "synthesis," then becomes the next "thesis" which also has an opposing dialectic "antithesis," the two of which can become joined and united into another "synthesis," and so on. This process of progressive thought compression as proposed by Hegel was considered to be the "logical science" of objective thought categories, supposed to lead to an ultimate synthesis of objective human thought which could be considered "ultimate reality," "absolute Being," or "the Mind of God," the deification of human thought processes.

There is, however, another way of evaluating Hegel's "synthetic reductionism." Instead of reaching a pinnacle of the singular "ultimate ideal," the progressive thought progression of this dialectic model could represent the "law of diminishing returns" whereby human thought is continuously boiled down to the lowest common denominator leading to the smallest

grain of simplicity, able to be understood by the most challenged simpleton.

Soren Kierkegaard travelled to Germany to sit under the teaching of Georg Hegel who was regarded as the foremost thinker of his day. He did not stay long, for he rejected the objective idealism of Hegel's dialectic, opting instead for a "radical subjectivism" in the form of what he termed an "inverted dialectic." (*cf. Addendum E*).

The inversion of Kierkegaard's dialectic involves turning from objective to subjective categories, from mental ideology to personal and existential experience, and from static particulars to dynamic processes. Kierkegaard was convinced that objective mental processes alone were never going to lead human thinking to what was really true. Though his own personal relationships with other persons was as contorted as his own physical body, his philosophy proposed a personalism that countered the idealism that reigned in the popular thought of Hegel.

Arguing that “subjectivity is truth” and “truth is subjectivity,” Kierkegaard maintained that the experiential circumstances of life provide the milieu in which the individual must develop subjective attitudes to deal with the absurdity of the world around him. This existential process provides the subjective dialectic of dynamic movement from sorrow to joy, from weakness to strength, from doubt to hope, from darkness to light, from death to life, from defeat to victory, and from fleshliness to godliness. Divine character coming from above in Christ and operating within an individual can supersede and overcome the meaninglessness and pain of the world we live in.

Though Kierkegaard was a committed follower of Christ, the philosophers who picked up on his existentialist philosophy of the subjective reaction to the absurdity and despair of the world were mostly humanistic and atheistic. Examples include Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. It must be noted, however, that Christian thinkers such as Swiss theologian Karl Barth and French sociologist Jacques Ellul also owed much of the background of their dialectic thinking to Kierkegaard.

With these two diverse illustrative models in mind, we must now address the interactive dialectics proposed in this study. To illustrate this model of dialectic thought (*cf. Addendum F*), we commence with the divine pivot point of God's Self-revelation whereby all truth is known. This divine reality of divine Being, character, and revelation provides the stationary hinge for all human thinking. Contrary to Hegel's objective ideal to be sought by human dialectic thinking and designated as the ultimate (god), and contrary to Kierkegaard's subjective positing of an introspective awareness of God revealed Christologically and experienced existentially, this dialectic model hangs everything on the revelatory hinge of God in Christ and the written record of such in the inspired scriptures.

From the divine pivot point of God's revelation we discover numerous (perhaps innumerable) *both/and* themes, topics, tenets, and theses that form dynamic dialectics – what Nicolas of Cusa called *coincidentia oppositorum*. They may appear to be opposites, but they are not to be viewed as a contradictory paradox, an irrational antinomy, or even as the Hegelian contrast of thesis and antithesis. These

two statements or concepts, both consistent with God's revelation, must be regarded as truths that complement one another, rather than compete with one another seeking to negate the other. Consistent with the etymological meaning of "dialectic," these two tenets must "talk through" and dialogue with each other in a continual conversation of dynamic reciprocity that maintains a tensioned balance of the two thoughts.

These two ideas, concepts, or truth-statements serve as a counter-balance to each other, similar to the musical counterpoint where voices are dependent from one another while also interdependent upon the other for a complete expression. It will be observed that these contrasting dialectic tenets often juxtapose objective and subjective conceptual categories, and thus serve to balance Hegelian objectivity and Kierkegaardian subjectivity in a balanced perspective of God's revealed truth.

As the pendulum of thought swings back and forth between these contrasting themes, note that the failure to maintain a tensioned balance of dialectic complementarity of the two concepts simultaneously

results in a one-sided interpretation that is an extremist aberration of the fullness of divine perspective. The ...isms of man-made human thought, so evident in religious argumentation, are usually the result of denying, diminishing or neglecting one premise, or placing undue importance and dominance on one tenet over the other. (*cf. Addendum G*)

The *both/and* of the complementary dialectic soon becomes an *either/or* of dichotomous polarity when the extremes of one-sided interpretations collide in conflict with each other. Convinced that their one-sided interpretation is the absolute truth of proper and acceptable thought, they take sides across the chasm of misunderstanding, regarding their interpretation to be “right,” and the other “wrong.” Then, contrary to dialectic, the two sides engage in the *antilectic* of talking against one another in agitated debate and polemics.

Despite the possibility of the contested and extremist *either/or* positions, this model of a dialectic of interactive complementarity of contrasted *both/and* concepts certainly seems preferable over Hegel’s dialectic reductionism and Kierkegaard’s dialectic

existentialism. Hanging, as it does, on the pivot point of divine revelation, this dialectic allows for the dynamic interchange and interplay of differing conceptual ideas that should lead to balanced human thinking and harmonious relations between those with differing opinions.

## **ELUCIDATION OF INTERACTIVE DIALECTICS**

The tensioned interactivity of the *both/and* dialectic runs counter to the western mind-set that is based on an Aristotelian paradigm of linear logic and closed-ended conclusions. Aristotle's laws of human logic included the "law of non-contradiction," indicating that if two truths were opposite of one another, then they could not both be true, for truth cannot be contradictory. Coinciding with the "law of non-contradiction" was the "law of the excluded middle," indicating that genuine opposites could not allow for a middle-ground between the two, for they are diametrically opposed to each other with no common

ground. (Hegel apparently disregarded the rule of the excluded middle in his proposed synthesis of thesis and antithesis).

So, it must be admitted that the *both/and* interactive dialectic model being proposed in this study is counterintuitive to the western mind-set and way of thinking. Should that concern a Western Christian thinker? Not necessarily! The prophet, speaking on behalf of God said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, ... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8,9). The apostle Paul exclaimed, “Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable are His ways!” (Rom. 11:33). To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God. ... The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (I Cor. 1:21,24). God’s wisdom and God’s ways cannot be enveloped within or confined to finite Western thought patterns.

It is incumbent upon Western Christian thinkers to “think outside of the box” of their culturally accustomed postulates of finite human reasoning, and beyond the particular theological persuasions wherein they have found refuge. The “mystery” of divine revelation cannot be contained in static humanly-crafted thought boxes. The *either/or* paradigm of Western thought must give way to an expansive and comprehensive *both/and* consideration of the revealed mystery of Theologic and divine perspective.

One respondent objected to the *both/and* dialectic model proposed in this study, calling it a “horrid tool of the devil.” Another denied that there could be “opposing truths,” stating, “It is impossible to avoid going around in circles with people that believe in two opposing realities. They literally believe one thing and its opposite, so it is entirely impossible to resolve a matter.” What can one say to persons who are so entrenched in their Western thought patterns? Perhaps one could say, “It is impossible to convince a person that there are two sides of a coin, when the person adamantly insists and persists in looking at only one side. It reveals a one-dimensional perspective!”

We began this study by noting that there are two sides to every coin, and the two sides are popularly referred to as either “heads” or “tails.” Though a human observer cannot see both sides of a coin at the same time that does not mean that both sides of the coin do not exist simultaneously. Our human eyes, positioned as they are by divine creation, both look forward and cannot view both sides of the same coin at the same time. It might be possible, however, to place two mirrors at a ninety-degree angle to each other, placing a coin vertically between the two mirrors, and thus viewing both sides of the coin in the reflection of the mirrors. That would allow us to see two reflections of the same coin simultaneously, but technically not both sides of the same coin directly at the same time.

Such is the difficulty that our finite minds seem to have in viewing two contrasting ideas, concepts, tenets, or positions at the same time, and accepting that they have a “common ground” of veracity requiring that they be viewed, accepted and maintained in a mutual counterbalance. The objective is not to attempt to determine if one is more valid or accurate than the other, or if one supersedes or takes priority over the

other, but to see them stereoscopically at the same time, to see each truth together with the other synoptically. Someone might object by asking, “But how can you see double without being double-minded?” Did not James indicate, “a double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8)? The synchronous and simultaneous mental observation of two postulates does not make a person double-minded, anymore than viewing an object with two eyes that form a common focal point creates double-vision in human sight.

Many Western Christian thinkers are afraid of the “dialectic reciprocity” of the *both/and* categories. They are fearful that the dynamic interaction of seemingly contradictory concepts allows for a “wishy-washy,” unstable, hypocritical, or even bipolar form of Christian thinking – perhaps even double-entendre mind-games whereby one is allowed to speak out of both sides of one’s mouth. There is a collective paranoia about the inter-related themes of *both/and* contrasts.

Some have even charged that a *both/and* dialectic that maintains two tenets simultaneously is a form of relativism that is unwilling to formulate

absolutes. Is it our objective in Christian thought to formulate rigid, air-right propositional absolutes of information? Or are we willing to see that God is the divine and personal Absolute who has revealed His wisdom and His ways in contrasting themes that require counterbalancing interaction that allows each to interpret the other?

How difficult it seems to be for many Western thinkers to accept a synoptic perspective of synchronistic mutuality of contrasting ideas. Wanting everything absolutized in precise systematic explanations of ideological certainty, Western thinkers either try to synthesize the two concepts in Hegelian reductionism, or emphasize one premise to the neglect, diminishment, denial, or exclusion of the other in a one-sided extremism.

Western Christian thinkers tend to eschew the counter-tension of *both/and* dialectic thinking. They are uncomfortable with the indefinite tension of contrasts, and often attempt to take one premise and elevate it to supremacy over the other. Regarding this idea to be the “whole” of the truth of the matter, they eschew and

repudiate the other premise. They seek to dissect the premises of a *both/and* contrast and push them out into *either/or* polarities, with absolute definition in the defined “absolutes” of their particular belief-system.

The diagrams that we will be using in this study to illustrate the over-emphasis of one tenet or the other employ columns on each side representing the aberrant extremisms that result from such one-dimensional thinking that fails to maintain the dialectic tension. These might be represented as the thought-ditches that one tends to slide into when one veers off of the dual-lane road of the dialectic being considered.

## **AVOIDING THE DITCHES**

As we consider these various dialectics and the ditches that we can so easily slide into if we fail to maintain balanced thinking, we will all realize that we have slid into a few ditches in our thought processes. As the study progresses, we may find ourselves crawling out of a few ditches along the way, not wanting to get

stuck in the muddy muck and mire of misinformed thinking. (*cf. Addenda H*)

In fact, some of us have had so much difficulty staying on the two-lane road in some of these categories, that we may have been like a drunk, swerving from ditch to ditch – in and out of one and then into another. A balanced sense of sober perspective is difficult to maintain in some of these areas of thought on the Christian journey. Especially since religion seems to advocate that the safest place, in order to maintain a straight course, is to ride in one ditch or the other: “Follow the ditch-course; it’s far less risky that swerving back and forth on the unmarked dialectic highway.”

When I was learning to drive on the rural dirt roads of south-central Kansas in the mid-1960s, our driver’s education instructor informed us that the best way to drive the muddy country roads was to “stay in the double ruts, where you were less likely to slide into the ditches.” It worked most of the time, although I found myself in the ditch on several occasions (one time with a school bus full of children). The advice of the

driver's education instructor has some pertinence for traveling the roads of dialectic thought. "Keep your wheels in the double channels of the dialectic, where you will be less likely to slide into the ditches."

As we consider some dialectics of Christian thought do not be surprised when you discover that you have been (or perhaps presently are) traveling in a ditch, or maybe just steering and veering very close to a ditch. Do not fret; we have all been stuck a few times in a ditch, and the purpose of this study is to consider how to stay the course of balanced Christian thought.

## **ILLUSTRATING THE BOTH/AND DYNAMIC**

My mind has always sought to find reasonable balance. In my personal office I do not have religious icons or other such "holy hardware." Instead, I have a row of balance scales, and on another wall a bronze statue of the blind-folded Roman goddess, Lady Justice (Latin *Iustitia*), aka the Greek goddess *Themis* or *Dike*, holding a balance scale. More than one person has entered my office and asked if I was a lawyer. "No," I

respond, "I just seek balance in every category of human thought.

But the balance scale is an inadequate illustration for the dialectic we are considering because it is a static balance. The *both/and* dialectic being proposed in this study is more like a pendulum that involves a dynamic motion from side to side. Another example of dynamic balance can be seen in the exercise of learning to ride a bicycle. It is very difficult to balance a bicycle when it is static and not moving, but when there is forward motion the rider finds it easier to learn how to turn left and right to maintain dynamic balance.

My wife and I have four daughters who were all competitive gymnasts when they were young. The balance beam is perhaps the most difficult apparatus in women's gymnastics. On a four-inch wide leather-covered sixteen foot beam, four feet above the ground, the female gymnast performs stunts that require precise dynamic balance. It was the event where we as parents held our breath until the routine was completed.

Jean-Paul Sartre, a secular existentialist dialectician, likened the dynamic action of a dialectic to a woman's "wiggling bottom." There is no attempt to be sexist here, but a woman's anatomy seems to better illustrate the point. It's just the way God made them! Watching a walking woman from the backside, her posterior portion wiggles back and forth. It is not static, but quite dynamic. And the point being made here is that a *both/and* dialectic involves a reciprocity that goes from side to side, back and forth.

Perhaps the best illustration is that of a tree swing. We had a large pine tree in the backyard of our home. Placing two lengths of chain over a horizontal tree limb, I constructed a tree swing. This illustration is particularly apt since the pivot point for the swing is at the top, as in the *both/and* dialectic that we are proposing. The grandchildren were not content with the static equilibrium of just sitting on the seat while the ropes hung from the tree. They wanted the dynamic motion of swinging back and forth ... back and forth ... back and forth ... in a reciprocal action. They did not seem to tire of it. They were constantly hollering, "Push me again Papa ... higher ... harder ... faster ... again ..."

Just as the grandchildren were not content to sit on the seat and hang from the tree in the “dead center” position of the swing, neither should we be concerned or content with seeking a “dead center” synthesis or fusion of the two concepts of a *both/and* dialectic. We are not even concerned with attempting to develop a “middle” position of consensus or agreement between the two positions, wherein they “meet half way.” We only want to accept the full “posits” of the two positions, and maintain them both in a balanced tension, allowing neither to diminish the other, or to swallow up the other in any way.

An interactive dialectic accepts the dynamic interplay of the two concepts, as they bounce off of each other and provide definition, clarification, and limitation to each other in so doing. To the sounds of a syncopated counterpoint, the two concepts “dance around in the same space” perichoretically. The *both/and* conceptual contrasts are not meant to *compete* with each other, but to *complete* each other in a dynamic complementarity. In the back-and-forth balanced tension of dialectic reciprocity the two themes provide explication of the fullness of the Divine Mystery

in a manner that cannot be fully explained in singular postulates of finite reasoning within an *either/or* paradigm.

## **PHILOSOPHICAL DIALECTIC OF “BEING” AND “DOING”**

To set up the *both/and* dialectic charts prepared for this study, it will be helpful to go back to early Greek philosophical thought and consider what may be the foundational dialectic of human thinking. We are going to call it the *both/and* dialectic of “being” and “doing” (a.k.a. “essence” in contrast to “function”). In so doing we attempt to connect the history of human thought through the centuries to the initial dialectic charts that we will be employing.

In the classical Greek philosophers, whose thought underlies Western thought patterns, we can see that Plato and Aristotle seem to have an *either/or* distinction in their thought and methodology, which need not remain as a dichotomy, but can be formulated as a *both/and* dialectic. That is one of the

epiphenomenal traits of dialectic thought; an *either/or* dichotomy can become a *both/and* dialectic when viewed in another context.

One of the supreme objectives of the classical Greek thinkers was to describe and define “Being” (*cf. Addendum I*). They searched for and sought to articulate the “ideal idea” that was the supreme and real essence of “being” – the “really real,” the ultimate IS, the supreme substance, the universal Mind, the One (Τὸ Ἔν) Reality behind everything.

Plato used the *a priori* method of deductive logic whereby he posited and projected a singular ultimate “Being” (not necessarily personal) that constituted the essential essence of all that IS. This is not unlike Einstein’s search for the “unified field theory” that would explain all the workings of the universe!

But Plato’s pupil, Aristotle, was actually more in line with the methodology of Einstein, utilizing the *a posteriori* method of inductive logic whereby he sought to work backwards from what was observable evidence, to then explain the essential “Being” intrinsic to all that

exists. In Aristotle's approach the expressed result of the "doing" or outcome of the "being" was regarded as a means to lead human thought back to a more accurate explanation of the "Being." The observable evidence of the expression should lead to an understanding of the essence! This is the basis of what we call "the scientific method" today.

These classical methodological approaches for the acquisition of human knowledge have long been recognized as complementary parallel processes for a balanced *both/and* dialectic approach to human understanding. Deductive and inductive logical approaches both have their place in human reasoning.

Throughout the history of human thought it can be demonstrated how the categories of "being" and "doing" seem to be present time and again. Moving from Plato and Aristotle, we can proceed to the history of Christian theology by noting the contrasting approaches of Augustine, a neo-Platonist who approached Christian thought by postulating the "Being" of God in superlative substantialist categories, which can be and contrasted with Thomas Aquinas, who utilized the Aristotelian

approach of emphasizing the evidentiary “doing” side of the couplet in order to articulate his “proofs” for the existence of the “Being” of God.

By the time we move to the German philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we find Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel advocating objective logical dialectics of “being” in logical categories which can be synthesized (thesis, antithesis, synthesis). This was countered, for example, by the Danish philosopher-thinker, Soren Kierkegaard, who emphasized a subjective inverted dialectic that dealt with the experiential, personal and existential, and advocated that “being” was grounded in active relationality and personalism.

The interactive dialectic of recognizing both “being” and “doing” finds its origin in the contrast between Plato and Aristotle, but the philosophical foundations of these early thinkers must be applied to Christian categories. (*cf. Addendum J*)

The *both/and* interactive dialectics in the charts that follow represent the patterning by which I have

formatted my thinking for the past twenty years. I have learned much from Kierkegaard and Barth, but my dialectical thinking was most influenced by the writings of the French thinker, Jacques Ellul, who was himself influenced by Kierkegaard and Barth. Since the early 1990s, when I first read Ellul's writings, I have been jotting down contrastual *both/and* dialectic charts whenever they come to mind (often in the early hours of the morning when I am awakening). As I began to prepare for this study, I found over five hundred pages of dialectic rough drafts filed under "dialectics."

These dialectic charts are just the skeletal scaffolding of a comprehensive dialectic theology. They need to be filled in and fleshed out with more comprehensive explanation of each topic. That would create a massive volume of a very different kind of theology than is usually found in the academic theological textbooks. It would comprise a new paradigm of considering theology from a balanced dialectical format.

*Interactive*

*Both/And Dialectics:*

*Historic Contrast*

*of Being and Doing*



# GOD

*Dialectic - Both/And*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>←</b><br/>Extremism</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BEING</b></p> <p>Essence - IS</p> <p>Intrinsic Being - <i>a se</i><br/>- in and of Himself</p> <p>God IS who He IS, autonomously and independent of any other.</p> <p>God's BEING is not established by His DOING</p> <p>God's Being is understood in a Christian perspective only by the dynamic relationality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>God's BEING is fixed in absoluteness and eternity - immutable.</p> <p>His BEING who He IS, ie. LOVE, necessitates His DOING for others.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DOING</b><br/>→<br/>Extremism</p> <p>Energies, activity - DO</p> <p>Self-generating action<br/><i>ek autos</i> - out of Himself</p> <p>God DOES what He DOES because He IS who He IS.<br/>- never contingent on any one or anything else to function as He functions.</p> <p>God's Self-revelation in the Son, Jesus Christ, informs our understanding of the relationality of God's Being.</p> <p>God's active DOING is always permeated and empowered by the presence of His BEING.</p> <p>- God does not act at a distance by virtual reality.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>←</b><br/>Extremism</p> <p>Classic Theism</p> <p>- Platonism</p> <p>Substantialism</p> <p>- Attempting to determine God's Being as a composite of substantive concepts, ideas, or attributes.</p> <p>Augustinianism</p> <p>- Neoplatonic reversion to substantialist categories of determining and explaining God's Being.</p>  | <p>Pelagianism</p> <p>Arminianism?</p> <p>Humanism</p> <p>- posits that God's action is contingent on human action.</p> <p>Charismatics</p> <p>- sometimes indicate that God's action requires a supernatural display.</p> <p>Defining God's BEING on basis of His DOING; ie. God is loving, thus God is Love, then God is but logical product of His own action.</p>   |

# God

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism                           | Being   | Doing   | → Extremism                           |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <p>Ontologism</p> <p>Essentialism</p> | <p>Divine Being of God</p> <p>What God <i>is</i> only God <i>is</i>.</p> <p>Isa. 46:9 - “No one like Me”</p> <p>Deut. 6:4 - “Lord is one”</p> <p>Ps. 97:9 - “exalted far above all gods”</p> <p>Ps. 90:2 - “from everlasting to everlasting You are God</p> <p>Exod. 3:14 - “I AM...I AM”</p> <p>Jn. 10:30 - “I and the Father are one”</p> <p>I Tim. 1:17 - “King eternal, immortal, invisible...”</p> <p>I Cor. 1:9 - “God is faithful”</p> <p>Isa. 43:7 - “everything created for My glory”</p> <p>Gen. 17:1 - “God Almighty”</p> <p>I Pet. 1:16 - “I am holy”</p> <p>I Jn. 4:8,16 - “God is love”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– <b>“Ontological</b></p> | <p>God <i>does</i> what He <i>does</i>, because He <i>is</i> Who He <i>is</i>.</p> <p>Heb. 12:23 - “Judge of all”</p> <p>Ps. 115:3 - “He does what He pleases” (always in accord with His character)</p> <p>Jn. 3:16 - “God so loved the world that He gave Son”</p> <p>II Tim. 1:9,10 - “purpose and grace revealed by the appearing of the Savior”</p> <p>Eph. 3:11 - “purpose carried out in Jesus Christ”</p> <p>Rom. 5:5 - “love of God poured out by Holy Spirit”</p> <p>James 1:17 - “every good &amp; perfect gift from above”</p> <p>II Tim. 1:9 - “grace granted to us in Christ Jesus”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Dynamic” – GRACE</b></p> | <p>Dynamism</p> <p>Operationalism</p> |

# God

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | <b>Being</b>  | <b>Doing</b>  | Extremism →   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Substantialism</p> <p>Rationalism</p> <p>Deism</p> <p>Favoritism</p> <p>Nationalism</p> <p>Determinism</p> <p>Rationalism</p> <p>- God can be figured out</p> <p>Unjustifiable mercy</p> | <p>Greek perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Logically reasoned and conjectured attributes of a speculative supreme superlative.</li> </ul> <p>Hebrew perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevated supercessory Almighty Being who expected faithful nation of ethnic people.</li> </ul> <p>Reformed perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deterministic personal Being whose immutable and consistent ways can be systematized.</li> </ul> <p>Grace perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God of constant, unending love has reached out to mankind in the incarnation of His Son, to redemptively restore men.</li> </ul> | <p>Greek perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Superlative so far removed from matter, there is no “doing” that relates to the world.</li> </ul> <p>Hebrew perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God imposed legal covenant arrangements, yet remained contained in ark, tabernacle, temple.</li> </ul> <p>Reformed perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God acts sovereignly to implement His predetermined, proceduralized Plan and ways.</li> </ul> <p>Grace perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God’s grace action is always via the Son by the Spirit to freely express His relational love uniquely to receptive individuals.</li> </ul> | <p>Dualism</p> <p>Gnosticism</p> <p>Legalism</p> <p>Behaviorism</p> <p>“God in the box”</p> <p>Particularism</p> <p>Arbitrary imposition</p> <p>Universalism</p> <p>Personalism</p> |

# Satan

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Being

Extrinsic and derivative being of the Evil One.  
 - began as derivative creature, spirit-being, with freedom of choice to rebel and refuse intended purpose as Lucifer (light-bearer).

The derivative Being of the Evil One, with character contrary to the character of God is the conundrum of theodicy.

Evil - Jn. 17:15; II Th. 3:3  
 Sinful - I Jn. 3:8  
 Liar - Jn. 8:44; Acts 5:3  
 Murderer - I Jn. 3:12  
 Deceiver - Rev. 12:9; 20:2  
 Self-exalting - Isa. 14:14

Must avoid positing a dualism wherein the being of God and Satan are equal and neither is supreme over the other.

Neither do we discount or deny the “being” of Satan as an imaginative myth or metaphorical personification.

→ Extremism

## Doing

Derivative activity  
 - A derivative creature cannot self-generate character:  
 - not godly character  
 - not character contrary to the character of God.

How then does the Evil One tempt individuals to express evil character, and thus to sin against the character of God?

enlaves - II Tim 2:26  
 blinds minds - II Cor 4:4  
 death-dealer - Heb. 2:14  
 sin-source - I Jn. 3:8,10,12  
 tempts - I Th. 3:5; I Cor 7:5  
 accuses - Rev. 12:10  
 hinders - I Th. 2:18

God and Satan are not in a dualistic stalemate of power or ability whereby one cannot overcome the other.

Satan’s power has been overcome by the person and work of Jesus Christ, and Christians need not cower in fear of the devil.

# Humanity

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Being

## Doing

Humanism  
 - indicates that the being of humanity is independent and autonomous, thus positing the deification of humanity.

Humans are not little gods who are self-generative of their own character or activity. They are dependent and derivative.

Spiritual condition of "being" is derived from indwelling presence and function of spirit-person.

This necessitates recognition that human beings are choosing creatures having freedom of choice to make determinative decisions of receptivity.

Monism  
 Pantheism  
 - humans are essentially one with spirit-forces.

- Faith is our receptivity of God's activity.

Fall of man, with spiritual usurpation of Satan over/ in mankind, necessitated divine restoration of man.

II Cor. 3:5 - "not adequate to consider anything as coming from ourselves"

Jn. 15:5 - "Apart from Me you can do nothing"

Humanism  
 - implies that human initiative and potential are intrinsic ability of mankind.  
 - human "doing" determines human "being" of self-identity.  
 "I am what I do"

Pelagianism  
 - (religious humanism)  
 - indicates that human choice creates a necessary contingency that forces God to act.

# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic – Both/And*

←  
Extremism

**Being**

Evangelical Calvinism - attempts to extend the hypostatic union to encompass the entirety of humanity, utilizing the theological novelty of the “vicarious humanity” of Jesus Christ to indicate the replacement of all sinful humanness in the person and work of Jesus.

The hypostatic union of Jesus establishes His being as fully God and fully man. It is not unthinkable that the Messianic Savior could *be* God and *be* man at the same time.

Intrinsic Being (God) and extrinsic being (man) could be conjoined in the unique being of a divine-human God-man.

“The Word was made flesh” (Jn. 14:10).  
 “being made in the likeness of man, ...in appearance as a man” (Phil. 2:7,8).

**Doing**

The function of God and man, i.e. Self-generative vs. derived, are incapable of simultaneity. Jesus could not *behave* as God and *behave* as man at the same time.

The Son of God emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7) of the prerogative of divine function in order to function as derivative man.

“I do nothing of My own initiative; the Father abiding in Me does His works” (cf. Jn. 5:30; 8:28:42; 12:49; 14:10)

→  
Extremism

Evangelicalism - employs apologetic arguments attempting to prove the deity of Jesus by the the functionality of His “doing.” - ex. miracles are alleged to prove deity of Christ

Misinterpreted kenoticism

Passivism

# Holy Spirit

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Being

Relational Person within the Divine Being of the Triune Godhead.

- Spirit of God  
-Rom. 8:9 - “Spirit of God dwells in you”
- Spirit of Christ  
-Rom. 8:9 - “If any man does not have Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”
- Holy Spirit  
- Rom. 5:5 - “Holy Spirit has been given to us”.

Academic understanding of the Holy Spirit as “third person of the Godhead.”

Misunderstanding that “fruit” is produced by human effort of evangelism or behavior performance.

## Doing

Acts only by the Divine dynamic of the grace of the Triune God.

- Life-giving Spirit  
- I Cor. 15:45 - “Last Adam became life-giving Spirit”
- Pours out Love of God  
- Rom. 5:5 - “love of God poured into our hearts by Holy Spirit”
- Glorifies Christ  
- Jn. 16:14 - “glorify Me”

Gifts of the Spirit

-ministry within the Body of Christ, the Church, is accomplished by the activity of the Holy Spirit via the spiritual giftedness of Christian peoples.

Elevation of admiration for the action of the Holy Spirit, even above the divine Father and Son.

Pentecostalism

Charismaticism

Supernaturalism

# Christian

*Dialectic – Both/And*

## Being

← Extremism

Humanism  
- A human's being is intrinsic to him/her self.  
- For this reason every person is encouraged to "be all you can be!" "You can be anything you set your mind to be."

As all human "being" is extrinsic being and derived being, the Christian has spiritually exchanged the derivation of spiritual "being" (*exousia*) from Satan to God (Acts 26:18) in spiritual regeneration.

The contrast of this spiritual condition of "being:"  
death ... life  
darkness ... light  
natural ... spiritual  
child of devil ... child of God  
wrath nature ... divine nature  
iniquity ... righteousness  
sinner ... saint

## Doing

→ Extremism

As all functional expression of character and behavior in what humans do is derived from spiritual source, the activity of Christian behavior is expressive of the character of God or Satan.

The contrast of this behavior is explained by the conflict of the impetus of the "flesh" or the "Spirit" in Christian's behavior.  
- deeds of the flesh  
(Gal. 5:19-21)  
- fruit of the Spirit  
(Gal. 5:22,23)

Humanism  
- Human activity is regarded to be self-generative, so every person is encouraged to perform to the best of their ability, "for your success and destiny is entirely up to you."

Religious Humanism  
- most religion is humanistic God-talk.

# Church

*Dialectic – Both/And*

009

| ← Extremism   | Being  | Doing  | → Extremism   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Ecclesiasticism</p> <p>Institutionalism</p> <p>Perceptions of the Church as a building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- or as a denominational entity</li> <li>- or as public services of invigoration, education, or entertainment.</li> </ul> <p>Church conceived as “membership” in organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “joining the church”</li> </ul> | <p>Nature of the Church</p> <p>The “being” of the Church is the Person of the living Lord Jesus dwelling in Christians collectively.</p> <p>The “being” of the Church is defined in the designation of “the Body of Christ.” (cf. Rom. 12:2; I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 3:6; 4:12)</p> <p>This Body is likened to a living organism of which every Christian is to be a functional member. (cf. Rom. 12:4,5; I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 5:30)</p> | <p>Mission of the Church</p> <p>The Church is called to “do”/express the ministry of Christ via giftedness of the Spirit.</p> <p>“Apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:5)</p> <p>“it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)</p> <p>“May God ... equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight” (Heb. 13:21)</p> | <p>Programs</p> <p>Techniquism</p> <p>Evangelical Humanism</p> <p>Performance advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- commitment</li> <li>- dedication</li> <li>- consecration</li> </ul> <p>“Works”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “do this, do that”</li> <li>- “working for Jesus”</li> <li>- must serve Jesus (cf. Acts 17:25)</li> </ul> |



*Interactive*  
*Both/And Dialectics*  
*within Christian*  
*Doctrinal Thought*



# Trinitarian Monotheism

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | One Being  | Three Persons  | → Extremism  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Mathematical oneness - single integer of one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monadic monotheism:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jehovah (Jewish)</li> <li>- Allah (Islam)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>unextended unit of one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monistic monotheism - singular god extended into all things.</li> </ul> <p>Unitarianism</p> | <p>Unity, simplicity, singular</p> <p>One supreme God:</p> <p>Deut. 6:4; Mk. 12:29; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; I Tim. 2:5.</p> <p>Monotheism - one essence, nature and being.</p> <p>Council of Nicea (A.D.325)</p> <p>Plurality of persons are essentially &amp; consubstantially the same Being - <i>homoousion</i>.</p> <p>Gregory of Nazianzus</p> <p><i>perichoresis</i> - coinherence and interpenetration of the distinct triune persons.</p> <p>Jn. 14:10,11 - "I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me."</p> | <p>Multiple, plural, complex, distinction</p> <p>Father, Son, Holy Spirit co-equal, co-essential, co-eternal.</p> <p>Jn. 10:30 - "I and the Father are one."</p> <p>Jewish leaders considered this to be blasphemy.</p> <p>Christian obliged to explain Trinity.</p> <p>Tertullian - used Latin <i>trinitas</i> - triunity.</p> <p>Council of Nicea (AD 325)</p> <p>Greek - <i>hypotheses</i></p> <p>3 particulars, persons Latin - <i>personae</i></p> <p>3 persons</p> | <p>Tritheism</p> <p>- 3 gods polytheism</p> <p>Misunderstanding of threeness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subordinationism - Son &amp; Spirit subordinated to Father like 2nd-class citizens.</li> <li>• Arianism - Son and Spirit inferior demi-gods.</li> </ul> <p><i>anomoousion</i> - not same being.</p> <p><i>heteroousion</i> - different beings</p> <p><i>homoioousion</i> - like, similar being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modalism</li> </ul> |

# GOD

*Dialectic - Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Supremely Intentional

Augustinianism

Calvinism

Reformed theology

Divine determinism

Absolutism

Fatalism

Arbitrary imposition of God's intentions.

Misuse of term "sovereignty" in reference to God.

Irrelevancy of human choices.

Extremism  
→

## Self-limited

Can anyone limit God?

God can Self-limit Himself

God determined to Self-limit His action toward mankind, to allow human freedom of choice to enter into loving personal relationship by receptivity of faith.

God is relationally Triune.

- He desires faith/love relationship with human creatures.

- He does not impose His will, purpose, desires, love, grace, upon humans

God is always FOR us; not against us!

Mankind has freedom of choice to receive God's intentions in Jesus Christ

Pelagianism

Arminianism

Humanism

Individualism

Human potential.

"Man makes it happen."

God's actions are contingent on human actions.

The "elect" are those who select.

Irrelevancy of God's intentions.

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# GOD

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| <p>← Extremism</p> <p><b>Creator</b></p>  | <p><b>Sustainer</b></p> <p>→ Extremism</p>  |
|---|---|
| <p>Almighty, omnipotent God has brought all other things into being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- without necessity</li> <li>- <i>ek Theos; ex Deo</i></li> </ul> <p>Gen. 1:1 - “God created the heavens and the earth”</p> <p>Job 33:4 - “the Spirit of God has made me”</p> <p>Isa. 45:7 - “One forming light ... creating darkness”</p> <p>Jn. 1:3 - “apart from Him nothing came into being”</p> <p>Col. 1:16 - “by Him all things were created... through Him &amp; for Him”</p> <p>Heb. 1 1:3 - “worlds were prepared by word of God”</p> | <p>God wills and provides for continued existence and function of created order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providential preserves</li> <li>- continued relationship</li> </ul> <p>Ps. 119:116 - “Sustain me according to Your word”</p> <p>Heb. 1:3 - “He upholds all things by the word of His power.”</p> <p>Col. 1:17 - “in Him all things hold together”</p> <p>Creation dependent, contingent, derives from God for sustainability.</p> <p>Requires divine freedom to interact with creation as relational God.</p> |
| <p>Deism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the non-intervention and non-intervention of God in the world</li> </ul> <p>He has created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the world runs solely by “the laws of nature.”</li> </ul> <p>“God wound up the world like a clock, and sits back at a distance to observe how it runs.”</p>  | <p>Pantheism</p> <p>Monism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Created order sustained by the intrinsic presence of the divine comprising the essence of the material order.</li> </ul> <p>Anthropic Cosmological Principle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humanity sustains creation</li> <li>- ex. counters “global warming”</li> </ul>   |

# God's Presence

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Transcendent

Deism  
- distant, removed, separated.

God regarded as “wholly other”  
- “out there, up there”

God not in control of universe He created.

Gnosticism  
- God cannot come into contact with that which is lesser than His spiritual reality.

God above and beyond His creation, beyond space & time.  
In a class by Himself:  
Independent, autonomous  
Self-sufficient, Sovereign  
Infinite qualitative difference - God and man.

I Chron. 29:11 - “Yours is the dominion, O God”  
Ps. 113:5 - “our God enthroned on high”  
Isa. 57:15 - “high and exalted One”  
Jere. 23:23 - “a God who is near...and a God far off”

God is worthy subject of awe, reverence, worship.

→ Extremism

## Immanent

Pantheism  
Monism  
Immanism  
Mysticism

God is indistinguishable from the created order.  
- evil impossible

Humanization of God.  
Man becomes god or a God

Over-familiarization with God.  
- “God is my buddy”

God involved in & present in space/time creation.  
Nearness, closeness of God

- In creation - omnipresent

Col. 1:17 - “In Him all things consist”  
Ps. 139:7 - “where can I flee from Your presence”

- In new creation

Jn. 1:14 - “Word became flesh” - incarnation  
Col. 1:27 - “Christ in you”  
I Cor. 6:17 - “one spirit with Him” - union  
I Jn. 4:12,15,16 - “God abides in us”  
Gal. 4:6 - “Spirit of His Son in our hearts”

# GOD

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | UNCHANGEABLE  | CHANGEABLE   | Extremism →   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Fixed invariability of God - rigid, inflexible.</p> <p>Determinism</p> <p>Augustinian-Calvinism, Reformed</p> <p>God is predictable</p> <p>Can be figured out</p> <p>- Proceduralized into unchanging principles - static, mechanical.</p> <p>God is perfect - perfect does not change.</p> <p>Denial that God could Self-limit Himself without ceasing to be God.</p> | <p>Immutable - unchanging, fixed.</p> <p>Essential Being</p> <p>Sacrosanct constancy - consistent faithfulness</p> <p>God is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” - Heb. 13:8</p> <p>“I, the Lord, do not change” - Malachi 3:6</p> <p>“The Lord will not change His mind” - Ps. 110:4</p> <p>“Father of lights ... no variation or shifting shadow” James 1:17</p> | <p>Mutable - able to change, flexible</p> <p>Divine Activity - Doing</p> <p>Divine freedom to choose course of action</p> <p>God can repent, relent, &amp; accommodate Himself</p> <p>II Kings 20:5; Ps. 106:45; Jer. 26:3; 42:10</p> <p>Response to prayer - Exod. 32:9-14</p> <p>Incarnation - New covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8,13)</p> <p>God is novel in every Christian’s life.</p> | <p>Open Theism</p> <p>Process Theology</p> <p>God is Becoming - Evolving God</p> <p>Divine relativism</p> <p>God is fickle - unpredictable and variable</p> <p>Conditionalism - our choices and actions change God and His activity.</p> <p>Does this impinge on faithfulness of God?</p> |

# GOD

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## UNKNOWNABLE

Deism  
 - detach, inaccessibility of God

Since God is an unthinkable and incomprehensible mystery to the finite understanding of the human mind:  
 - the best a person can do is muddle through life to the best of one's ability  
 - stand in awe at the mysterious projection of an abstract deity-figure.

Extremism →

## KNOWABLE

Kataphatic Theology  
*kata*=according to  
*phemi*=to speak  
 The revealed God.  
 God can only be known as He reveals Himself.  
 God revealed Himself in the Son, Jesus Christ.  
 - not truth propositions of scripture.  
 Jn. 14:7 - "If you've known Me, you've known Father"  
 Jn. 17:3 - "eternal life, that they know You..."  
 If Jesus is God, then God is knowable!  
 Experiential, relational knowing of God in Christ.  
 -illuminating of Holy Spirit  
 EOC - experience energies of God

Empiricism  
 - to know about God: attributes, characteristics is to know God.

Ontologism - universal intuitive knowledge of God.

Mysticism - ethereal, esoteric, Gnostic knowing of God.

Union/oneness  
 knowledge of God  
 Diminishment of awe, reverence, worship.

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# God's Self-revelation

*Dialectic – Both/And*

016

| ← Extremism   | Historical   | Relational   | Extremism →  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Historicism   | Historical disclosure of Himself.  | Relational personal disclosure of Himself.   | Subjectivism   |
| Objectivism   | Jn. 3:16 - “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”  | Gal. 1:12 - “I received it by revelation of Jesus Christ”  | Existentialism   |
| Fundamentalism  | Jn. 1:1,14 - “Word was made flesh” - incarnation                           | Eph. 1:13 - “revelation in the knowledge of Him”   | Personalism  |
| “God in a box”  | I Tim. 2:5 - “one mediator between God and man..”                          | Phil. 3:15 - “God will reveal it to you.”  | Mysticism  |
| “God in a book”   | I Tim. 4:10 - “Savior of all men”  | Personal revelation of God to individuals.   | Experientialism  |
| “God in strait-jacket”  | Jn. 19:30 - “It is finished!”  | “Revelation is caught, not taught”   | Progressivism  |
| Proceduralism   | II Tim. 1:10 - “Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality...” | Divine relativity in His variable <i>modus operandi</i> of revealing Himself uniquely & novelly to the hearts of His people. | Relativism   |
| Unchangeableness of God can be used to construct fixed system of God's predetermined and prescribed action. | Historical revelation of God in Christ is singular and complete.           |  | “Everything subject to change – no absolutes.”           |
| - God's ways  |  |  | Process theology   |
| - <i>ordo salutis</i>   |  |  | God changes to correspond to each personal relationship. |
|   |  |  | Accommodationism   |

# God's Grace Action

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

**YES**

Positive action/*via positiva*

- II Cor. 1:19,20
- ..to invite mankind into participation/fellowship with Himself.
- ..to grace towards mankind
- ..to love the world via Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16)
- ..to the cross to effect death in order to grant life
- ..to raise Jesus from dead
- ..to give Jesus' resurrection life to receptive persons
- ..to salvation in Christ (Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:16)
- ..to reconciliation of God with mankind.
- ..to restoration of humanity
- ..to sufficiency of His grace for all Christian life.
- JESUS is the YES of God**

Extremism →

**NO**

Negative action/*via negativa*

- ..to victory and supremacy of Satan.
- ..to the power of sin over mankind
- ..to humanities being lost in the Fall
- ..to disordered, dysfunctional, abused, misused humanity
- ..to divine punishment or judgment after Fall.
- ..to natural law & religion
- ..to making the Law and human performance the way to God.
- ..to death consequences of sin as last word.
- JESUS took the NO on behalf of all humanity.**

Negative

- Religion
- ..focusing on the demonic as having power over mankind.
- ..focusing on sin-consciousness & alleged alienation from God.
- ..focusing on morality and human performance for relationship with God.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- The NO is for the sake of the YES, not its own sake.

# GOD

*Dialectic – Both/And*

←  
Extremism

←  
Extremism

## JUST

## MERCIFUL

God manifests His character fairly and reasonably.

God is merciful to deliver us from slavery to sin.

Legalism

Sentimentalism

God hates sin that is contrary to His character.  
- consequence  
- God is FOR us

Faithful to His character of Love (cf. I Jn. 4:8, 16), He delivers us by Son, Jesus.

Viewing God from law paradigm.

God's loving mercy cancels the just consequences of sin.

God projected as punitive  
- severe & rigid.

God's mercy is actively expressed in His grace  
- non-transactional  
- not performance-based

God's benevolent grace overlooks man's disobedience.

God acts fairly to make right what mankind cannot make right by himself, and make receptive persons righteous with His righteousness.

Heb. 4:16 - "receive mercy & find grace in need"

Forensic justice of God.

- Will objectively declare a person "righteous" without making said person righteous.

Universalism

Isa. 30:18 - "Lord is God of justice"

Ps. 89:14, 28 - "lovingkindness forever"

- automatic, wholesale eternal salvation for all mankind.

Ps. 89:14 - "righteousness and justice."

Ps. 145:9 - "His mercies are all over His works"  
Isa. 30:18 - "Lord longs to be gracious to you"

# God's Grace

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Ontological

Being of God

Provision  
- Personal Presence

“Grace is a Person”

- God's grace always involves His personal presence of “Being”

Triune Being of God in the relationality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Divine Being is always manifested in Triune divine action.

God in His Trinitarian fullness is fully invested in His every action.

Extremism →

## Dynamic

... in Action (doing)

Function  
- God at Work

Phil. 2:13 - “God is at work in you to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

Christological realization of God's action

- Jn. 1:17 - “grace and truth realized in Jesus Christ”

Dynamic of divine action cannot be separated from divine Being.

God *Does* what He *Does* because He *IS* who He *IS*

Alleged “benefits” of God apart from the Being of God.

“Virtual Reality” of divine action

“Means of Grace”  
- Eucharist  
- “disciplines”

Specified actions indicative of God

Deistic transcendence separates and detaches God from the happenings of the created world - separated concept of God in much religious thought.  
- God becomes an idealistic abstraction; a “no show” in the events of human lives.

# Satan

*Dialectic – Both/And*

↑  
Extremism

↓  
Extremism

## Derivative Creature

Lucifer, the Light-bearer, was designed to derive from the “God who is light, and in Whom there is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5).

As a choosing derivative creature he inexplicably chose to defy God with the dark character of selfishness.

- Isa. 14:14 - “I will make myself like the Most High”

Despite Satan’s selfish choice to make himself the Evil One and the source of all selfishness, contrary to God’s love, he is still derivative creature.

Reasoning from the supreme “sovereignty” of God and the derivativeness of Satan, some conclude:

- God is the source of evil character. cf. Isa. 45:7 (KJB); James 1:13

“Satan is just the backside of God”  
 “Satan is just God’s errand boy”  
 “Satan is just the left hand of God”

## Originator of Evil

Lucifer, by his choice to oppose God as adversary, became Satan, the devil. Still deriving from God, not an “independent self,” Satan distorts and reverses the good character of God, thus originating and becoming the source of the character of evil.

Acts 13:10 (to Elymas)

“you son of the devil, ... you make crooked the straight ways of God”

II Cor. 4:4 - “god of this world”

I Jn. 2:13,14; 3:12; 5:18 - “the Evil One”

Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Col. 1:13; I Pt. 2:9 - “darkness”

Dualism views Satan as Evil One equal in power to the goodness of God.

- regarded as a stalemate wherein neither can overcome the other.

Some emphases on spiritual warfare and deliverance elevate Satan’s power of evil, failing to understand the victory of Jesus.

# Satan

*Dialectic – Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Necessary

Satan is the necessary negative to God's Positive

For human beings to have genuine freedom of choice it was necessary that a genuine spiritual alternative be available.

This must not be construed to imply that God in His absolute goodness and righteousness is the author or source of evil or sin.

Neither is Satan to be regarded as merely the absence or privation of God and His character.

Extremism  
→

## Freely Self-chosen

Lucifer, the light-bearer, was a derivative angelic creature with freedom of choice.

Lucifer freely chose to defy and challenge God.

Isa. 14:14 - "I will be like the Most High God"

In so doing, Lucifer became Satan, the adversary, the Evil opposite of God, the "ruler of this world" (Jn. 12:31; 16:11), the "god of this age" (II Cor. 4:4), and the source of all self-oriented character and sinfulness.

Theodicy – the attempt to explain how evil entered God's righteous world.

Ultimate ingratitude of how derivative creature could choose a character other than God when there was no known spiritual source for such.

# Satan

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Limitation</b>   | <b>Extensivity</b>   | → Extremism   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Satan is defeated by Jesus Christ and totally impotent.</p> <p>devil is bound, chained, and locked up</p> <p>- cannot harm Christians in any manner.</p> <p>“Jesus put Satan in a strait-jacket”</p> <p>Satan is a toothless charlatan, and not a threat to anyone.</p> | <p>Satan (spirit-being) is not a god (divine-being), despite references to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “god of this age” I Cor 4:4</li> <li>- “ruler of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)</li> </ul> <p>Satan is not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- omnipotent - limitation of power.</li> <li>- omniscient - limitation of knowledge</li> <li>- omnipresent - limitation of presence; not infinite</li> </ul> <p>God - omnilocative</p> <p>Man - unilocative</p> <p>Satan - translocative</p> <p>Limitation of Satan by the redemptive work of Christ (Matt. 12:29; Rev. 20:2)</p> | <p>Satan (spirit-being) does not have the same limitations that mankind (human-beings) have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- humans are contextualized by space and time:</li> <li>- localized in space</li> <li>- temporalized in time</li> </ul> <p>As spirit-being, Satan is not temporalized in time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tempted Adam, Job, Jesus, us, across centuries.</li> </ul> <p>Satan not localized in space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tempts persons around the world simultaneously</li> </ul> <p>“prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2)</p> | <p>Devil regarded as so pervasive in fallen world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suspicious</li> <li>- paranoia</li> </ul> <p>“Satan is the back-side of God”</p> <p>“Satan is God’s errand boy”</p> <p>There are those who are suspiciously looking for the “devil/demons behind every bush”</p> |

# Humanity

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Derivative Being

Extrinsic being - derived outside of oneself.  
 Derived origin & function  
 - do not exist *a se*, in themselves  
 - do not function *ek autos* out of themselves.

Human function is dependent upon a spirit-source, either God or Satan (*ek Theos* or *ek diabolos*). From spirit-source humans derive character, identity, image and destiny by the receptivity of faith.

No human individual is an "independent self."

Extremism →

## Determinative Being

God's Self-limitation of Himself avoids absolute determinism, and provides for freely-chosen faith-love personal relationship between God and humans.

With "freedom of choice" humans are free to choose the derivational source of their spiritual, psychological and physiological function.

Humans have response-ability by which to respond to God's action to redeem/restore humanity in the Person/work of Jesus:  
 - Personal rejection  
 - Person reception

Human Autonomy  
 Humanistic premise of persons as independent, autonomous beings, capable of self-generating their own character and activity.  
 - Independent selves.

Premise of human sovereignty.  
 Theological form called Pelagianism or Arminianism.

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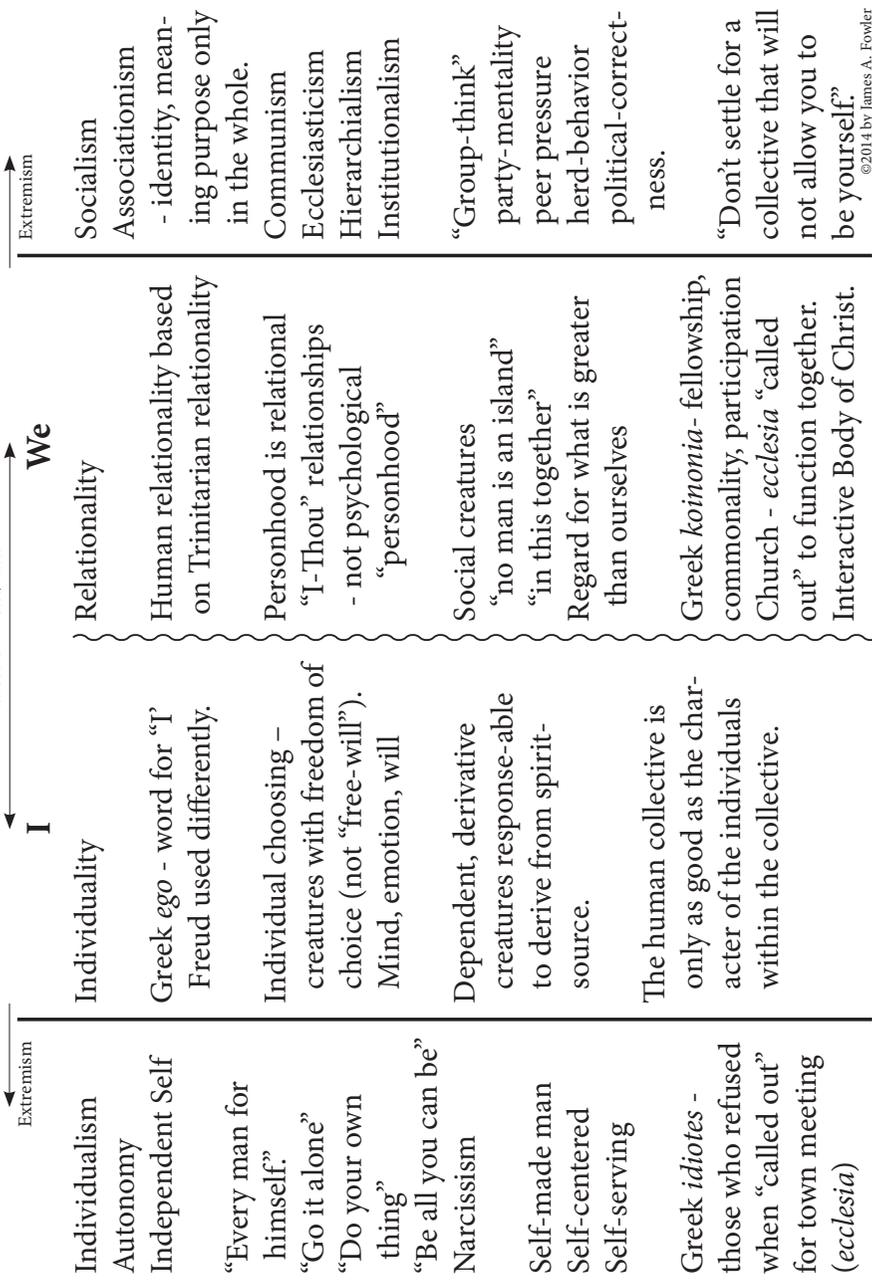
# Humanity

*Dialectic - Both/And*

|                        |  |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <p>←<br/>Extremism</p> | <p><b>Created in God's Image</b><br/>         Gen. 1:27 - "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him"<br/>         - does not imply there is something about man that is like God<br/>         - indicates that man created for visible expression of character of God.<br/>         In the Fall of man into sin, man lost image of God.<br/>         Restored to God's image by the presence and function of the divine Christ in the spirit of an individual.<br/>         Col. 3:10 - "put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"</p> | <p>→<br/>Extremism</p> | <p><b>Solidarity with Sin</b><br/>         Rom. 5:19 - "through the one man's (<i>Adam's</i>) disobedience the many were made sinners"<br/>         Rom. 3:23 - "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"<br/>         Solidarity with sin does not imply man has essential, inherent character of sin.<br/>         Man is not a devil!<br/>         - it does imply an association, identity with the Satanic source of sin.<br/>         -being "made sinners" indicates a spiritual identity whereby the "prince of the power of the air becomes the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience"<br/>         (Eph. 2:2,3)</p> |
| <p>←<br/>Extremism</p> | <p><b>Humanism</b><br/>         - undue elevation of humanity<br/>         God created "little gods" capable of independent and self-generative function.<br/>         - by free-will man determines his own character.<br/>         - by good choices man resembles, represents or reflects divine image/character.</p>   | <p>→<br/>Extremism</p> | <p><b>Augustinianism</b><br/>         - undue devaluation of humanity<br/>         Total depravity.<br/>         - totality of human being and function is degraded<br/>         - incapable of functioning as a human creature who can respond to God.<br/>         - vile, deficient, debased humanity<br/>         - "just an animal"</p>   |

# Human Personhood

Dialectic – Both/And



Extremism

Extremism

Individualism

Autonomy

Independent Self

“Every man for himself.”

“Go it alone”

“Do your own thing”

“Be all you can be”

Narcissism

Self-made man

Self-centered

Self-serving

Greek *idiotēs* -

those who refused when “called out” for town meeting

(*ecclesia*)

Individuality

Greek *ego* - word for “I”  
Freud used differently.

Individual choosing –  
creatures with freedom of  
choice (not “free-will”).  
Mind, emotion, will

Dependent, derivative  
creatures response-able  
to derive from spirit-  
source.

The human collective is  
only as good as the char-  
acter of the individuals  
within the collective.

Relationality

Human relationality based  
on Trinitarian relationality

Personhood is relational  
“I-Thou” relationships  
- not psychological  
“personhood”

Social creatures  
“no man is an island”  
“in this together”  
Regard for what is greater  
than ourselves

Greek *koinonia* - fellowship,  
commonality, participation  
Church - *ecclesia* “called  
out” to function together.  
Interactive Body of Christ.

Socialism

Associationism  
- identity, mean-  
ing purpose only  
in the whole.

Communism  
Ecclesiasticism  
Hierarchialism  
Institutionalism

“Group-think”  
party-mentality  
peer pressure  
herd-behavior  
political-correct-  
ness.

“Don’t settle for a  
collective that will  
not allow you to  
be yourself.”

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# Human Response

*Dialectic – Both/And*

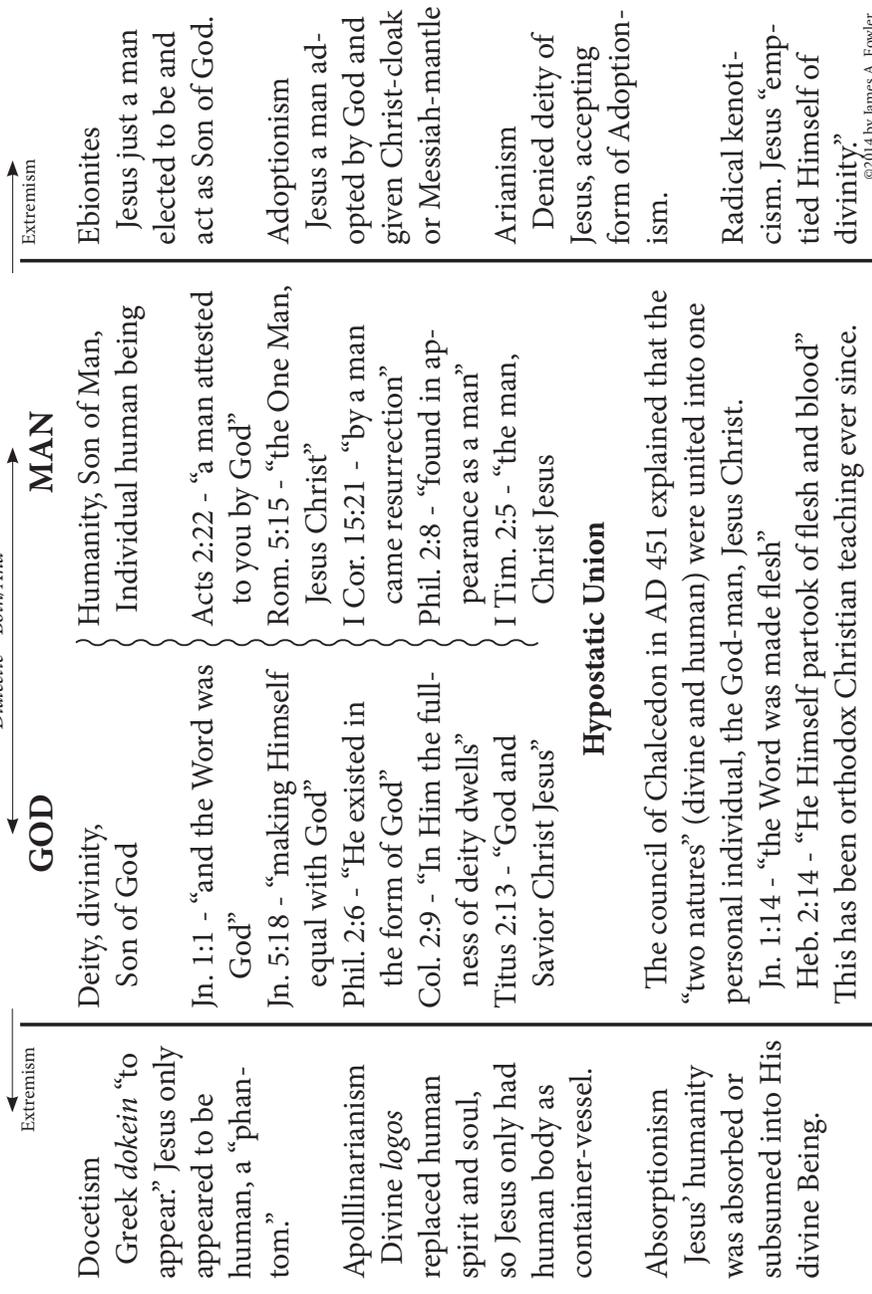
| ← Extremism  | Belief  | Faith   | Extremism →  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Epistemological belief systems</p> <p>Creedalism</p> <p>Fundamentalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- willing to fight and die for what is considered a correct order of beliefs.</li> <li>- self-justification</li> </ul> <p>Religionism</p> <p>Religion is built on rigidity and inflexibility of beliefs.</p> <p>Importance of apologetics</p> | <p>Assent, consent to facts</p> <p>Acts 16:30 - “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”</p> <p>Belief - creedal statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- coherence, consensus of thought - figured out</li> <li>- accomplishes certitude</li> </ul> <p>Belief is foundational!</p> <p>Belief is static!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rigid, inflexible, dead</li> </ul> <p>Belief seeks answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wallows in words</li> <li>- seeks definitive content</li> </ul> <p>Belief is informational</p> <p>Belief cannot tolerate doubt and uncertainty.</p> <p>Belief provides the building-blocks for religion.</p> <p>Belief responds to doctrine and reasoned teaching</p> <p>Belief is obstacle to faith.</p> | <p>Receptivity, availability, abandonment to God</p> <p>Jn. 1:12- “as many received”</p> <p>Gal. 3:1 - “received by hearing with faith.”</p> <p>Gal. 2:6 - “as received (by faith), so walk in Him”</p> <p>Faith is functional!</p> <p>Faith is dynamic!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in motion, alive</li> </ul> <p>Faith questions everything</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listens to God</li> <li>- seeks personal revelation</li> </ul> <p>Faith is incarnational</p> <p>Faith finds its springboard in questioning and doubt.</p> <p>Faith is the dead-end for all religion.</p> <p>Faith responds to the grace activity of the Triune God</p> <p>Faith seeks relationality.</p> | <p>Passivism</p> <p>Challenge fo all belief-systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “don’t tell me what to believe”</li> </ul> <p>Individualism</p> <p>Separatism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- non-conformity</li> </ul> <p>Anti-authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- anarchism</li> </ul> <p>Repudiation of apologetics and systematic theology.</p> |

# Human Relational Function

| <i>Dialectic - Both/And</i>  |   |
|--|---|
| ← Extremism  | → Extremism   |
| Spiritual Relativity   | Psychological Relativity  |
| <p>Spiritual</p> <p>Determinism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divine determinism.</li> <li>- Diabolic determinism</li> </ul> <p>Denial of human capability to participate in relational function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Augustinian premise of "total depravity"</li> <li>- Perfectionistic premise of "entire sanctification"</li> </ul> <p>Spiritualism</p>  | <p>Relationality based on human personality and individuality</p> <p>Personhood based on psychological function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- function of mind, emotion and will of individual is basis of personality</li> <li>- temperament patterns display differently. (Hippocrates - choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholy)</li> </ul> <p>Patterned desires of "Flesh"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuated patterns of selfishness and sinfulness in human desires, such as prejudices, biases, etc.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Spirit-based relationality that allows spirit-character to pervade human relational interactions.</p> <p>Personhood based on interpersonal relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cannot be a person in a vacuum without relationality.</li> <li>- Human beings designed by Triune God to participate in Trinitarian relationality of perfect love, community, fellowship..</li> </ul> <p>Adamic Fall of mankind into sin, allowed for diabolic relationality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- selfish and destructive sociological conflict.</li> </ul> | <p>Humanistic</p> <p>Behavioral</p> <p>Determinism</p> <p>Humanism denies spiritual relationality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- posits that man is "independent self" capable of self-generating own character.</li> <li>- personhood is intrinsic to one's own being.</li> </ul> <p>Psychologism</p> <p>Behavioralism</p>  |

# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic – Both/And*



# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic - Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Humiliation

Negativism

Inordinate emphasis on humiliation of Jesus can lead to macabre expressions. - *The Passion*

Evangelicalism has often emphasized death on cross over resurrection

Failure to see *Christus Victor* motif.

Undue emphasis on wretchedness, sin-consciousness.

Lowliness, debasement

Isa. 53 - “despised, forsaken, acquainted with grief”

- Birth
- Phil 2:7 - “emptied Himself, likeness of man”
- Gal. 4:4 - “born of woman (in stable) under the Law”
- Temptation
- Heb. 4:15 - “tempted in all points as we are”
- Washing disciples’ feet
- Cf.
- Suffering, pathos
- I Pet. 4:1 - “Christ suffered in the flesh”
- Crucifixion
- Phil 2:8 - “humbled Himself .. to point of death”
- Burial - bowels of earth
- I Cor. 15:4 - “...buried”

## Exaltation

Lifted up, elevated

Heb. 7:26 - “exalted above the heavens.”

- Resurrection
- Acts 10:40 - “God raised Him up on third day.”
- Rom. 1:4 - “declared Son of God with power by the resurrection from death”
- Ascension
- Acts 2:34 - “ascended”
- Glorification
- Jn. 13:31 - “Now is the Son of Man glorified.
- Coronation
- Heb. 12:2 - “sat down at right hand of throne of God.”
- Intercession
- Heb. 7:25 - “He always lives to make intercession”

→  
Extremism

Positivism

Triumphalism

Ecstaticism

Failure to recognize that exaltation comes via humiliation.

- the same is true still as Christ works in the life of the Christian.

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# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism                                   | <b>Prototype</b>   | <b>Provision</b>   | Extremism →   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Imitationism                                  | Model of the Christ-life.  | Modality of Christian life.  | Passivism   |
| Mimicry                                       | Exemplary  | Jn. 14:6 - 'I am the way.'   | Acquiescence  |
| Performance                                   | Jn. 13:15 - "I gave you an example that you should do as I did"                  | Jn. 15:5 - "Apart from Me, you can do nothing."  | Quietism  |
| "monkey see, monkey do."                      | Phil. 4:5 - "have this attitude which was in Christ Jesus"                       | Gal. 2:20 - "It is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me."                                 | "It's not what we do, but what Christ does."                                |
| Are we to "parrot" or "ape" Jesus?            | I Cor. 11:1 - "be imitators, as I am of Christ."                                 | Phil. 4: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."                                  | The greatest sin of Christians today is to try to live the Christian life." |
| <i>Imitation of Christ</i><br>Thomas A Kempis | Heb. 12:2 - "keep your eyes on Jesus, pioneer and perfector of faith"            | I Thess. 5:24 - "He will bring it to pass."  |   |
| <i>In His Steps</i><br>Charles Sheldon        | I Pet. 2:21 - "Christ left you an example for you to follow in His steps."       | Christ lives "as" us - we are the only epistles of Christ that some will ever see.                 | "Just go with the flow of the Jesus-life."                                  |
| WWJD - "What Would Jesus Do?"                 | Jesus lived out the Christ-life perfectly for every moment in time for 33 years. | Jesus wants to live that same life in you/me; to re-present Himself to the world in which we live. | "Let go, and let God"   |

# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

**Savior**

Easy-believism

Revivalism - get people “down the aisle to get saved”

Mental assent to

Jesus as deliverer - “off the hook” - “spiritual fire insurance policy” - salvation as “pass into heaven”

Emphasize “faith alone” without “works”

Views “Jesus is Lord” as assent to deity ... God

Extremism →

**Lord**

Authority over another

Matt. 28:18 - “All authority is given to Me in heaven and on earth”

Rom. 10:9 - “If you confess with you mouth Jesus as Lord, you will be saved”

Acts 2:36 - “God has made Him both Lord and Christ Phil. 2:11 - “every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”

II Pet. 3:18 - “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ”

Proper response to Jesus includes repentance.

Lordship Salvation

Ethical behavior-ism

Pietism that tends to demand expression of character-fruit in order to qualify as “Christian.” - become “fruit inspectors”

Tendency to demand performance assurance of “total commitment” & obedience

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# Jesus Christ

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | Physical Christ   | Pneumatic Christ  | Extremism →  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Jesus viewed only or primarily as physical person-age of history almost two millennia ago. | Historical Jesus<br>Incarnated Jesus<br>Jn. 1:14 - the Word became flesh"<br>Rom. 8:3 - "God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..."<br>I Tim. 3:16 - "He was revealed in the flesh, and vindicated in the Spirit"<br>Heb. 2:14 - "He Himself partook of flesh and blood<br>I John 1:1 - "we have seen with our eyes, touched with our hands, the Word of life." | Spiritual Jesus<br>Experiential Jesus<br>I Cor. 15:45 - "the Last Adam became the life-giving Spirit."<br>Rom. 1:4 - "Spirit of holiness, Jesus our Lord"<br>II Cor. 3:17 - "Lord is the Spirit"<br>I Cor. 6:17 - "joined to the Lord, one spirit with Him<br>Rom. 8:9 - "if do not have the Spirit of Christ, none of His"<br>Rom. 8:11 - "His Spirit dwells in you"<br>Gal. 4:6 - "God sent tSpirit of His Son into our hearts."<br>Phil. 1:19 - "the provision of the Spirit of Christ." | Jesus viewed primarily as Spirit-being who mystically relates to the spirit...<br>- of all mankind?<br>- of those human beings receptive to Him by faith.<br><br>Some indicate it is inconsequential whether Jesus ever lived as an historical person.<br><br>Where is Jesus?<br>- "Father's right hand"<br>Reabsorbed into God? |

# Sin

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Human actions

Common tendency among

religious persons to identify “sin” by particular human acts and behaviors

Human actions are only

sinful when pervaded and energized by the character of the Evil One.

No external action of a

human individual is to be regarded as intrinsically sin or sinful.

Jn. 3:19; 7:7 - “deeds are evil”

Gal. 5:19 - “deeds of the flesh”

Jude 15 - “ungodly deeds”

I Tim. 5:24 - “sins quite evident”

Religion has keyed

in on the exter-

nalities of various

behavioral ac-

tions, admonish-

ing people to:

“Do this;

Don’t do that!”

“Thou shalt;

Thou shalt not!”

This moralizing

focus on human

behavioralism

inevitably leads

to legalistic at-

tempts to regu-

late behavior.

Extremism →

## Spiritual character

Broadly and generally de-

defined, sin is any/all char-

acter contrary to the char-

acter of God’s perfection

and righteousness.

Such antithetical character

is energized by the Evil

One, Satan, the originator

of all evil character.

Human beings are incapa-

ble of self-generating evil

character in sinful actions

- I Jn. 3:8 - “one who prac-

tices sin is of the devil”

When a human individual

derives evil character “in

their behavioral actions

they commit “sins.”

Some will reason:

- “If an individ-

ual derives all

character and is

not the genera-

tive source of sin

or righteousness,

then our respon-

sibility is simply

to “let go and let

God” be and do

what He wants to

be and do in our

lives.”

Passivism

Acquiescence

# Sin

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Dialectic - Both/And  | Extremism →   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Diabolic</b></p> <p>Satan is the <i>prima causa peccati</i>, primary source of evil and sinful character in the world and in human behavior.</p> <p>I Jn. 3:8 - "one doing sin is of (<i>ek</i> - derives "out of") the devil"</p> <p>Matt. 16:23 - "Get thee behind Me, Satan"</p> <p>John 8:34 - "everyone who commits sin is slave of sin"</p> <p>Rom. 5:21 - "sin reigned in death"</p> <p>Rom. 6:17 - "you were slaves of sin"</p> <p>Sin is not equivalent to Satan, but is the character Satan originates.</p> | <p><b>Human Responsibility</b></p> <p>Human freedom of choice makes us responsible for the choice of being receptive to sinful character that is contrary to and misrepresentative of the character of Christ.</p> <p>Human choice to allow for sinful expression is the <i>causa secunda</i> (secondary cause) of sin in human behavior. It is the means by which we connect with the Satanic source of evil and sinful character.</p> <p>Rom. 6:14 - "sin shall not be master over you"</p> <p>Rom. 14:23 - "whatever is not of faith is sin"</p> | <p><b>Humanism</b></p> <p>- failure to recognize the Satanic source of sin, necessarily leads to the conclusion that a human being is an "independent self" who is capable of self-generating the character of sinfulness and selfishness.</p> <p>Evangelicalism has promulgated this humanistic idea of sin.</p> |
| <p><b>Diabolic</b></p> <p>Determinism</p> <p>- failure to take into account human responsibility of choice has led some to determinism.</p> <p>Flip Wilson comedy routine: "The Devil made me do it!"</p> <p>Contemporary culture has advocated removing the onus of any fault or responsibility of sin.</p>  |   |   |

# Sin

*Dialectic - Both/And*

↑  
Extremism

## Transgression

## Independence

↓  
Extremism

When sin is viewed only or primarily as transgression, trespass or lawlessness, it is being considered as an objective act outside of oneself.

Sin must necessarily be considered in contrast to the perfect character of God, and as a violation of the intended expression in human behavior.

Rom. 5:15-20 - "transgression/sin increased"  
Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13 - "dead in our transgressions"

Eph. 2:2 - "dead in your trespasses and sins"

Eph. 1:7 - "forgiveness of our trespasses"

Matt. 7:23 - "you who practice lawlessness."

I Jn. 3:4 - "one who practices sin practices lawlessness"

Man is not an "independent self," capable of manufacturing or producing any form of character - godly or sinful.

When duped by the diabolic deceiver the human individual can falsely believe in his/her alleged "independence."

The lie of the serpent offered such sinful independence - "you, too, can be like God" (Gen. 3:5), -  
- independent  
- autonomous  
- self-generative

Humanism is the fallacious lie of human independence and self-potential.

Evangelical humanism is rampant in American religion, advocating that the human being is the source of his/her own sinfulness.

# Atonement

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Analogic   | Christocentric  | Extremism →   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Throughout the history of Christian thought various redemptive and atonement theories have served as the springboards for theological systems that emphasize a particular facet of biblical truth, but fail to explain the fullness of Christ's Person and work.</p> | <p>Christian redemptive thought has often been based on analogies of the atoning action of Jesus Christ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberation concept</li> <li>Legal/Penal concept</li> <li>Purification concept</li> <li>Necrological concept</li> <li>Sacrificial concept</li> <li>Covenantal concept</li> <li>Economic concept</li> <li>Transactional concept</li> <li>Triumphal concept</li> <li>Vital concept</li> <li>Spiritual concept</li> <li>Functional concept</li> <li>Relational concept</li> <li>Ontological concept</li> </ul> | <p>The work of God in Christ is best explained by the Person of Jesus Christ, rather than by using illustrative analogies.</p> <p>Analogies tend to direct attention to the "benefits" of Christ's work, whereas Christocentric explanation focuses on the beneficence of the Being of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>All of His benefit is in His Being!</p> <p>All that He did and does is indicative and expressive of His Being. His every act is invested and energized by His very Being.</p> | <p>Evangelical Calvinism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emphasizes the Being of Christ as deity and humanity were united in the hypostatic union of the Person of Jesus.</li> <li>- Vicarious humanity of Jesus</li> <li>- Incarnational Atonement</li> </ul> |

# Salvation

037

| <i>Dialectic - Both/And</i>   |  |
|---|--|
| ← Extremism   | → Extremism  |
| ALL   | NOT ALL  |
| <p>Universalism</p> <p><i>General</i><br/>ALL humanity destined to spend eternity in heaven. This is not predicted on any human response.</p> <p><i>Determinist</i><br/>ALL humanity deterministically subsumed into incarnational life and ministry of Jesus. His vicarious humanity incorporates all human beings into Him for eternity.</p>  | <p>Particularism</p> <p><i>Objective</i><br/>ALL qualified to mean "all of God's predestined "elect." Salvation denied to "non-elect."</p> <p><i>Subjective</i><br/>ALL qualified to apply only to those who respond in faith according to particular religious procedures.</p>  |
| <p>Objective Universal - "Finished work" of Jesus makes salvation available to ALL mankind.</p> <p>ALL loved - Jn. 3:16</p> <p>ALL redeemed - Eph. 1:7</p> <p>ALL forgiven - Jn. 1:29</p> <p>All made righteous - Rom. 5:18,19</p> <p>ALL reconciled - Rom. 5:10,11</p> <p>ALL given life - Rom. 5:18</p> <p>ALL saved - Titus 2:11</p> <p>ALL blessed - Eph. 1:3</p> <p>ALL drawn to Christ - Jn. 12:32</p> <p>Objective realities are valid whether an individual believes it or not.</p> | <p>Subjective Particular - Not ALL receive living Lord Jesus. Some reject God's Grace.</p> <p>Human beings are choosing creatures with "freedom of choice." This choice has no merit!</p> <p>Faith is not a "work" nor a "gift of God," but is our receptivity of God's activity.</p> <p>Either-or particularization: Some receive; some reject</p> <p>Reception of divine indwelling presence of Trine God.</p> |

# Salvation

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Objective  | Subjective  | → Extremism  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Evangelical Calvinism emphasizes the <i>fait accompli</i> of objective salvation in the incarnation and crucifixion of the historical Jesus, while essentially denying that an individual can or should respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ</p> | <p>The Person and work of Jesus Christ is objectively efficacious for the salvation of all mankind. Everything necessary for the salvation of mankind was accomplished. All of humanity is “made safe” and delivered from the consequences of sin by the death of Jesus. I Tim. 4:10 - “living God is Savior of all men, especially believers” Titus 2:11 - “the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men” Jn. 3:17 - “God sent His Son into the world, that the world might be saved through Him.”</p> | <p>Subjective acceptance and receptivity of Christ particularizes an individual’s experience of salvation. Individual is “made safe” from death to live by the indwelling Jesus. Acts 16:30,31 - “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” Eph. 2:8,9 - “For by grace you have been saved through faith.” Rom. 10:8-10 - “confess with mouth, believe in heart, you will be saved.” I Cor. 1:21 - “God was well-pleased to save those who believe” Rom. 5:10 - “saved by His life”</p> | <p>Evangelicals often view salvation as a static personal event of conversion wherein an individual “gets saved” by the personal choice to receive Jesus. In so doing they ever so subtly imply that the individual contributes to their own salvation by their faithful action.</p> |

# Salvation

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Grace

Augustinianism  
Calvinism  
-ontological reductionism of fallen humanity, whereby humans are deemed defective and incapable of responding to God's divine initiative of grace.  
- grace is misconstrued as divine determinism whereby God sovereignly elects some for salvation and others to perdition.

Divine initiative

Eph. 2:5,8 - “for by grace you have been saved ...”

Grace is the divine dynamic of God's action via the Son Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 1:17), and by the Spirit.

Acts 15:11 - “saved through the grace of Lord Jesus”

Titus 2:11 - “the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men.”

II Tim. 1:9 - “saved us according to His own purpose and grace..”

I Pet. 1:10 - “this salvation, the prophets prophesied of the grace to come{

## Faith

Human response

Eph. 2:8 - “...saved through faith”

Faith is the human choice of receptivity of the activity of the Triune God, both initially and continually in the Christian life.

Acts 16:31 - “believe in the Lord Jesus... be saved”

II Tim. 3:15 - “salvation through faith in Christ”

II Thess. 2:13 - “chosen for salvation...through faith in the truth”

I Pt. 1:9 - “outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls”

→ Extremism

Pelagianism

- a human being's volitional choice determines and effects his/her participation in salvation.

Arminianism

- not as radically humanistic, but does emphasize human faith-

choice for human obedience and performance.

Evangelicalism

- tends to focus on human action and performance

# Salvation

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Faith  | Works  | → Extremism  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Fideism   | Human faith, receptivity of Christ's redemptive activity, cannot be supplemented by human activity or "works."<br>Rom. 3:28 - "justified by faith apart from works of the law."                                      | Human "works" and performance have no meritorious benefit towards personal salvation.<br>Eph. 2:8,9 - "by grace you have been saved through faith, ...not of works lest anyone should boast."  | Human performance  |
| Protestant repudiation of "good works" for justification spilled over to minimizing "good works" in Christian behavior. | Christian faith, receptivity of Christ's activity in the Christian life, is rendered meaningless and void if active outworking is not evident.<br>James 2:17 - "faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself" | Claim of Christian faith without the outworking of Christ's character and ministry is invalid.<br>James 2:20 - "faith without works is useless"<br>James 2:24 - "man is justified by works, and not by faith alone."<br>James 2:26 - "faith without works is dead" | Roman Catholic theology has tended toward humanistic potentialism and human contribution to God's favor. |
| "faith without works is dead, non-existent, impotent, vacuous, and does not qualify as faith.                           | James 2:20 - "faith without works is vacuous"  |  | "show me your works, and I'll show you that it could only be derived from the character of God.          |

# Salvation

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Security

“Eternal security” is a doctrine originating in the Augustinian/Calvinistic theological tradition.

Baptistic explanation of “once saved, always saved.”

Must differentiate between static and dynamic security.

- Divine preservation and human perseverance.

Latin word *securus*, “without care of anxiety”

Heb. 5:9 - “to all that obey Him, the source of eternal salvation”

I John 5:13 - “you may know that you have eternal life”

I Cor. 1:8 - “Jesus Christ shall confirm you to the end”

Phil. 1:6 - “He will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ”

Heb. 12:2 - “Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”

I Pet. 1:5 - “protected by the power of God.”

## Apostasy

Greek word *apostasia* - “to stand away from Jesus by renouncing Him”

I Tim. 4:1 - “some will fall away from the faith”

Heb. 3:12 - “falling away from the living God”

Heb. 6:4-6 - “tasted of heavenly gift and then fallen away”

John 15:6 - “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away..”

I Cor. 9:27 - “lest I should be disqualified”

Gal. 5:4 - “you have been severed from Christ... fallen from grace”

→ Extremism

Apostasy is a doctrine emphasized more by Arminians who place more emphasis on human choice.

“Once apostasized” (Heb. 6:6)

Calvinists deny that such persons were ever identified with Jesus and participating in salvation.

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# Regeneration

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Conversion

The conversion of regeneration involves the radical exchange from a condition of spiritual death to spiritual life.

- Matt. 18:3 - "unless converted, you will not enter kingdom of heaven"
- Jn. 3:3,7 - "must be born again...to see kingdom..."
- I Pt. 1:3 - "born again to a living hope..."
- Acts 26:18 - "to turn/convert them from darkness to light, from dominion of Satan to God...receive forgiveness of sins"
- Titus 3:5 - "saved us by the washing of regeneration"

- There is an "easy-believers" rampant in the Western churches that reduces becoming a Christian to merely:
- assent to facts
- raising hands
- walking an aisle
- confessing one's mistakes
- changing one's mind-set
- repeating a creed
- getting baptized
- joining a church
- promising to keep the rules

## Union

Eastern Orthodox concept of *Theosis*, requires indwelling presence of living Christ and energizing function of living Lord Jesus. Christians do not become the "essence" of Jesus, but do participate in the "energies" (functional empowering) of the living Christ.

- II Pt. 1:4 - "partakers of the divine nature"
- I Cor. 6:17 - "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."
- Heb. 3:14 - "partakers of Christ"
- Heb. 6:4 - "partakers of the Holy Spirit"

- Overly objectified concepts of "union with Christ" view union as an historical event or juridical declaration/transaction
- Some subjective emphases on "union life" have veered into:
  - pantheism
  - panentheism
  - monistic merging/mingling of Christian and Christ.
- Mysticism

# Adoption

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Objective

God the Father, through the divine-human Son, has eliminated all estrangement with fallen humanity and accomplished everything necessary to adopt the entire human race as sons and daughters into one big family of God.

Gal. 4:4-7 - “God sent forth His Son...that we might receive adoption as sons... no longer a slave, but a son.”

Eph. 1:4-8 - “predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ”

Individualism  
- some maintain that the human act of faith contributes to or effects an individual’s salvation.

Pelagianism  
Arminianism  
Evangelicalism

→ Extremism

## Subjective

The relational experience of functioning as an adopted child of God in fellowship with the Triune God is predicated on a personal response of faith receptivity to divine presence and activity.

Gal. 4:6 - “you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts”

Rom. 8:15 - “you have received a spirit of adoption as sons”

Gal. 3:7,26 - “sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”

Universalism  
- all humanity is adopted by God into the eternal and heavenly family of Christ

Denial of humanity’s capability or response-ability to make personal response to God’s action in Jesus Christ.

Evangelical  
Calvinism

# Sanctification

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Initial  | Continual  | → Extremism     |
|---|--|--|-----------------|
| Perfectionism   | Accomplished, complete, entire sanctification                                | Progressively expressed holy character   | Legalism        |
| Holiness movement: (Wesley) - emphasized  | Objectively made available by Christ; subjectively realized in regeneration. | Greek <i>hagiasmos</i> - the process by which the Holy character of the Triune God is allowed to be expressed in Christian behavior. | Pietism         |
| “entire sanctification” in a “second blessing” that imputes Christian                                     | Eph. 5:26 - “He gave Himself to sanctify her”                                | II Cor. 7:1 - “perfecting holiness in fear of God”   | Moralism        |
| with sinless perfection and holiness.   | Heb. 10:10 - “sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all”  | I Thess. 4:3 - “will of God, your sanctification”  | Experientialism |
| Christians have spiritual identity of being “saints” - holy ones, but are not essentially holy as God is. | I Cor. 1:2 - “those who are sanctified, saints ...”                          | I Thess. 5:23 - “may God of peace sanctify you entirely in spirit, soul, body”   | Behavioralism   |
|   | I Cor. 1:30 - “Jesus became to us sanctification”                            | Heb. 12:10 - “that we may share His holiness”  | Suppressionism  |
|   | I Cor. 6:11 - “you were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”     | Heb. 12:14 - “pursue holiness ... to see the Lord”   | Crucifixionism  |

# Righteousness

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Objective

Jesus Christ is the “Righteous One” (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; I Jn. 2:1)

Jesus’ voluntary and vicarious death on the cross was the “righteous act” whereby the “Righteous One endured death on our behalf, and made righteousness of life available to humanity.

Rom. 5:18 - “through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification (righteousness) of life to all men.”

Extremism →

## Subjective

Righteousness is divine, and when applied to human beings it is always derived from God.

The “Righteous One,” Jesus Christ indwells the Christian, and desires to live out His Righteous character in Christian lives.

I Cor. 1:30 - “Jesus became to us righteousness”

Rom. 8:10 - “the spirit is alive because of righteousness”

Rom. 5:19 - “many will be made righteous.”

II Cor. 5:19 - “we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Humanistic religion seeks to credit an individual for performance actions (faith? good works?) alleged to be righteous or to merit a righteousness from/before God.

Mystical religion moves from derived righteousness to essential righteousness of the believer.

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# Bible

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism | <b>Divine Action</b>  | <b>Human Action</b>  | Extremism →   |
|-------------|---|--|---|
|             | Bible is the "Word of God."<br>...answer for every question of man.<br>...all God wants man to know.<br>Christianity is the Book-religion.<br>Bible equated with Jesus.<br>- infallibility<br>- deification<br>- bibliolatry<br>Verbal plenary inspiration.<br>- dictation theory<br>Authority of God vested in Bible.<br>Literal interpretation of every word in the Bible | Divine revelation<br>God revealed Himself naturally & supernaturally by the Son.<br>The Bible is the record of God's revelation; not the revelation itself.<br><br>Divine inspiration - God breathed - I Tim. 3:16<br>Divine providential preservation of textual record.<br>Divine interpretation of Bible text by Holy Spirit.<br>- illumination, enlightenment, personal revelation (cf. Eph. 1:17; Phil. 3:15)<br><br>Bible is "word of God" in secondary sense. Jesus is "Word of God" - Jn. 1:1,14 | Bible is just man-made book.<br>Bible full of error and superstition<br>Bible inspired in same sense as Shakespeare.<br><br>Canonization was human process.<br><br>Bible needs to be scrutinized and sanitized by de-mythologization.<br>- Form criticism<br>- Source criticism<br>- Redaction crit.<br>ex. Jesus Seminar |

# Kingdom

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Realm

Ecclesiasticism  
 - some equate the visible church with the kingdom of God

Millennialism  
 - some eschatological interpretations defer the kingdom to the future millennial period & location

Denominationalism - there are denominations who have claimed to be “the kingdom of God on earth”

Extremism →

## Reign

The kingdom of God is the dynamic reign of the Personal Lord and King, Jesus Christ in Christians’ lives both individually and collectively wherever they might be.

Relationality of Person  
 Jn. 18:36 - “My kingdom is not of this world.”  
 I Cor. 15:50 - “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom”  
 Rom. 14:17 - “the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy”  
 Lk. 17:21 - “the kingdom of God is in your midst”  
 Col. 1:13 - “transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”

Abstractionism  
 Dynamism  
 Etherealism  
 Personalism

When some Christians recognize that they are participating in the kingdom reign of the risen Lord Jesus, they sometimes become “so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good.”

# Church

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Organization

## Organism

The church is a divine institution; divinely instituted by God.  
 Matt. 16:18 - "Upon this rock I will build My church"  
 A divine institution does not preclude the need for human organizational structure to implement practical functionality.  
 - ex. national government  
 Organizational polity may have diverse forms:  
 - hierarchical, papal  
 - plurality of elders, presbyterian, episcopal  
 - congregational democracy, popular vote

The church is unique from all other social institutions.  
 Identified as the "Body of Christ," the church is a living expression and conveyance of the presence, life and function of the risen and living Lord Jesus Christ.  
 Col. 1:18 - "Christ, the head of the Body the Church"  
 I Cor. 12:12 - "members of the one Body"  
 The physical incarnate Jesus died and rose again, and by Pentecostal outpouring indwells the collective Church as the "life-giving Spirit" (I Cor. 15:45)

Failure to understand the church as a spiritual organism has often led to a "business model" organization with the pastor serving as the C.E.O.

Many have argued that the church is an organism, not an organization. - oftentimes such people are rebels who do not want to submit to authority.  
 - or they may be idealists who are impractical.

When the church is just another business without divine presence and empowering, it becomes but a social irrelevancy

A church without organization will be like a formless jellyfish, and will result in social chaos.

# Church

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Visible

Corporeal  
 “Body of Christ” - the visible expression of the invisible reality of the living Lord Jesus.  
 All that is visible and called “church” may not be the Church of Jesus Christ.  
 The visible church takes form in congregations of functional “members” affirming common beliefs, relating to one another in love, structurally organized for missional purposes.  
 These congregations may, or may not have a building to assemble in, and may or may not hold public services.

Extremism →

## Invisible

Incorporeal  
 - every individual in every time and place where in Jesus Christ has and does live comprises the invisible Church.  
 The individual believers who comprise the Church are “called out” of the world and “called out” to be Christ-ones, Christians in the world.  
 Together they are the “holy catholic church,” joined in common-unity by the presence and function of the living Lord Jesus, the “life-giving Spirit.”  
 They are holy people “pre-served” and “built up...” in Christ. (Eph. 4:12)

Idealism  
 Etherealism  
 Ambiguous identification  
 - “No need to know who is, and who is not.”  
 Universal determination  
 - no need for seeking to preserve unity.  
 Relativism  
 - no basis for common core beliefs.

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# Church

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | <b>Collective</b>  | <b>Coinherence</b>   | Extremism →   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Collectivism  | Numerous individual parts collectively comprising a whole social unit.   | A unity of those in union with the living Lord Jesus Christ.   | Communalism<br>Socialism  |
| Church viewed as aggregation - like collection of marbles in a bag.                     | The whole unit is only as effective as the sum of its individual parts.  | A divinely established and enacted oneness of the one Body, the Church.  | Interfusionism  |
| Church viewed as conglomerate - as if glommed together with a spiritual adhesive        | The ecclesial collective transcends time and space<br>- the saints from past, present, and future.<br>- the saints from all races, regions, nations, gender. | We are in this together ... placed and put in HIM by the Grace of God.   | Co-mingling<br>Coalescence  |
| Church viewed as congregation - just separate persons coming together in same location. | The collective of all Christians ...<br>- redeemed blood-bought children of God<br>- regenerated by the life of Spirit of Christ.                            | Interrelational function derives from the relationality of the Triune God causing perichoretic function “as one” in same space.<br><br>Functional members of Body-organism; ear, eye, hand; singular function. | Important to recognize that the church involves persons in relationality. |

# Church

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Unity

Unity is illegitimately achieved by hierarchical authority that seeks to enforce commonality, and eject, disenfranchise or excommunicate those who do not conform in thought and practice.

Ecumenicalism  
 Unity is not uniformity.  
 “In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty, in all things love.”

Integral spiritual oneness of all Christian believers “in Christ.”

Nicene Creed - “one holy, catholic and apostolic Church”

I Cor 1:10 - “I exhort you.. to all agree, and there be no divisions among you”

I Cor. 12:12 - “the Body is one ... one Body...”

Eph. 4:3,4 - “preserve unity of Spirit ... one Body”

Phil. 2:2 - “be of same mind, ...united in Spirit”

→ Extremism

## Diversity

Christian individuals have differing personalities, talents, and opinions.

They tend to assemble with believers of like-minded theological opinions, worship styles, and church polity in denominationally diverse Christian groups.

I Cor. 12:4 - “varieties of gifts,...ministries,...effects”

I Cor. 12:27 - “you are Christ’s Body and individually members of it”

I Cor. 12:12 - “many members, and all members are one Body”

Diversity must not be allowed to degenerate in an epidemic of tolerance, where in essential creedal unity of Christian belief is sacrificed.

Diversity must not be allowed to degenerate into divisiveness over differing thought and practice.

“Christians must agree to disagree”

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# Artistic Expression in the Church

← Extremism  
Dialectic - Both/And  
→ Extremism

## Showcase the Artist

Temperament for  
egoism, pride,  
arrogance, narcissism, ego--  
trips, vanity,  
vain-glory  
- to be the center  
of attention, to  
want focus to be  
on them, to receive  
adulation, to  
seek fame.

Many Christian  
artists have become  
celebrities,  
superstars.  
Often view themselves  
as working for  
Jesus or the  
church

Talented individuals:  
- Musicians, dancers,  
painters, sculptors, theatrical  
actors, orators, etc.  
- Much time, effort, practice  
to develop quality of  
the art.

Those occupying the stage  
or producing the artistic  
expression will inevitably  
receive recognition, appreciation  
and accolades.

- must learn to exercise  
their talent in humiliation  
that recognizes divine  
source of their talent.

II Cor. 3:5 - "Not to consider  
anything as coming  
from ourselves"

## Glorify God

Willingness and desire to  
take the focus and attention  
off of oneself in order  
to glorify God

Genuine Christian ministry  
requires personal talent  
to be exercised within  
spiritual giftedness that  
allows spiritual empowerment  
that focuses on serving  
others both in and  
outside of the Church.

Requires the Christian  
artist to have intimate and  
mature relationship with  
the living Christ to allow  
the overflow of the life of  
Jesus unto others.

Some think they  
are called and  
gifted to minister  
via artistic  
expression, but  
lack artistic talent  
or adequate  
preparation.  
- dedication and  
zeal for glorifying  
God, but  
without talent.

Some attempt  
to orchestrate a  
contrived form  
of worship.  
- "planned spontaneity"

# Fellowship

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Truth</b>   | <b>Love</b>   | → Extremism  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Fundamentalism<br>- when Christian fellowship is centered around truth that is merely content of information and doctrine. | Christian fellowship is the <i>koinonia</i> of the interactive reality of the Triune God.<br><br>There are truth-tenets that are foundational to the Christian community.<br>Eph. 1:13 - “the message of truth, the gospel...”<br>Col. 1:5 - “word of truth, the gospel” | Christian fellowship is the <i>koinonia</i> of the interactive reality of Father, Son, & Holy Spirit<br><br>I Pet. 1:22 - “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.” | Sentimental expressions of love:<br>- feel-good love<br>- “ain’t it nice to be nice to nice people?”<br><br>Liberal activities alleged to be loving concern for others, often just to appease their own conscience and implement their own social agendas. |
| Accurate data storage and census without Christ’s relational love soon leads to divisive truth interpretations.            | The Truth-person essential to Christianity is Jesus:<br>Jn. 1:14,17 - “grace and truth realized in Christ”<br>Jn. 8:32,36 - “the truth/the Son shall set you free”<br>Jn 14:6 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life”  | God’s character of love is the relational lubrication of Christian fellowship.<br>I Jn. 4:8,16 - ”God is love”<br>Jn. 15:10 - “abide in My love”<br>Eph. 4:15 - “speaking the truth in love”  |  |
| II Jn. 1:3 - “truth and love”  |  |   |  |

# Biblical Covenants

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Continuity

Cov. Theology  
- law & grace as continuity.

Law, kingdom, church viewed as continuum of re-formation.

Fear discontinuity impinges on the immutability of God.

Continued efficacy of Law - legalism, theonomy.

Fails to see radical newness of new cov. of grace.

Promise - Fulfillment

- Cov. promises Abraham - Seed - Gen. 12:7; 13:5
- Nation - Gen. 12:2; 17:4,5
- Land - Gen. 12:7; 13:14
- Blessing - Gen. 12:2,3

- Fulfillment to Israel
- All promises fulfilled - Josh. 21:45; 23:14

- Fulfillment in Jesus
- All promises sp. fulfilled Rom. 15:8; II Cor. 1:20
- Jesus is "hope of Israel" Acts 26:6; 28:20
- Christians receive Abr. promises Gal. 3:18,29
- Spiritual Israel - Rom. 9:6; Gal.6:16

## Discontinuity

Old/New; Law/Grace

- Old cov. - Mosaic Law
- First cov. II Cor. 3:14
- Israel only Ex. 34:27
- Preliminary - Heb. 8:5
- Shadow - Heb. 9:9; 10:1
- No life - Gal. 3:21

- No righteousness - Rom 3:20; Gal. 2:16,21
- Abrogated - Heb. 8:13
- New Cov. Grace/Jesus

- Second cov. Heb. 8:7;10:9
- Better cov. Heb. 7:22; 8:6
- Eternal cov. Heb. 9:15;
- Cov. of life - II Cor. 3:6
- Righteous. - II Cor. 3:19
- End of law - Rom. 10:4
- Law in hearts - Heb. 8:10
- Christians not under law Rom. 6:14,15; Gal. 3:25

Dispensation-  
alist Theology

Continuity put on "hold" - resumed in future at 2nd coming for Israel

Church age never promised by God - "Plan B"

Fear continuity impinges on the promises to Israel and faithfulness of God.

Fails to see complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

# Eschatology – Last Things

Dialectic – Both/And

← Extremism

**Already**

Preterism - *praeter*  
 Historicism - God's  
 action past history  
 Contemporism -  
 the "new age" is  
 the "now age"  
 Activism - God's  
 theocracy today  
 Postmillennialism  
 Triumphalism -  
 "As good as it can  
 get"  
 No expectation of

**Not Yet**

"Last" - Jn. 6:39-44; I Cor.  
 15:26,52; I Pet. 1:5,11; II  
 Pet. 3:3; I Jn. 2:18  
 Anticipated, awaited,  
 longed for; not yet realized.  
 Jesus Christ is the begin-  
 ning and the end of God's  
 work. Second coming of  
 Christ is the consumma-  
 tion and completion of  
 His redemptive work.

→ Extremism

Utopianism  
 Apocalypticism  
 Millennarianism  
 Dispensationalism  
 - "parenthesis  
 theory" - Plan B  
 Pessimism - "why  
 polish brass on a  
 sinking ship."  
 Projectionism -  
 "pie in the sky  
 bye and bye"  
 First coming of  
 Jesus is dimin-  
 ished in antici-  
 pation of second.  
 Preoccupied with  
 "when" & "where"  
 of future coming.  
 Immortality in  
 future.

**Parousia**

I Thess. 2:9; 5:21

**Epiphany**

I Th. 2:8; Tit. 2:13

**Manifestation**

I Jn. 2:28; 32

**Revealing**

I Pet. 1:5,7

**Kingdom**

I Cor. 15:24,50

**Eternal life**

Jn. 6:40; Gal. 6:8

**Salvation**

Rom. 13:11

**Immortality**

I Cor. 15:53,54

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# Destiny

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | → Extremism  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Inevitable</b><br/>Universalsism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divine imposition of destiny</li> <li>- unconditional execution of divine plan to restore and reconcile all humanity in Christ</li> <li>- All go to heaven</li> <li>- No hell</li> <li>• Human “hope” of egalitarianism for all mankind.</li> <li>- no responsibility/accountability</li> <li>- unconditional</li> </ul> | <p><b>Intentioned Universality</b><br/>Divine intentions for mankind are always Christ-centric - “in Christ.”<br/>Jesus is the “Elect One,” identified universally with humanity in incarnation (Phil. 2:6-8), in redemptive death (cf. Heb. 2:9), &amp; fulfillment of all God’s promises (II Cor. 1:20).<br/>II Pt. 3:9 - “God not willing that any should perish”<br/>I Tim. 2:4 - “God desires all men to be saved.”<br/>Universal availability of heavenly destiny in Christ (Acts 10:34) and universal drawing of God’s grace.<br/>God’s determinative judgment is love “in Christ.”</p> |
|  | <p><b>Conditioned Distinction</b></p>  |
|  | <p>Volitional condition of reception or rejection, belief or unbelief.<br/>Response-ability via freedom of choice to be receptive to availability of God’s salvation in Christ.<br/>Faith-receptivity of union with living Christ allows one to be “elect” in the “Elect One,” Jesus Christ.<br/>Personal receptivity of faith (Jn. 3:16,36; 4:14; 11:25; Acts 10:43; I Jn 5:1).<br/>Distinct alternatives of spiritual identification and union with Christ or Satan, the perpetuity and continuity of which are heaven or hell.</p>  |
| <p><b>Necessary Dichotomy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divine determinism</li> <li>- double-predetermination of individuals to heaven or hell by capricious divine Judge.</li> <li>• Humanism</li> <li>- deems human beings to be independent selves with inherent power to make ultimate determinations.</li> </ul>   |  |

# Eternal

*Dialectic - Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Quality

The eternity of God's absolute character of love, justice, mercy, etc. is indicative of His unchanging Being.

Eternal life - God's life

- Eternal quality of the character of love and holiness

Rom. 1:20 - "eternal power"  
Eph. 3:11 - eternal purpose"  
II Cor. 4:17 - "eternal weight of glory"  
II Cor. 5:1 - "a house (body) eternal in heavens"  
II Thess. 2:16 - "eternal comfort and hope"  
Heb. 9:12 - "eternal redemption"  
Rev. 14:6 - "eternal gospel"

## Quantity

The eternity of God's Being and existence are everlasting.

Ps. 90:2 - "from everlasting to everlasting You are God

Eternal life - Extension, continuity, perpetuity of divine life.

Jn. 3:16,36 - "he who believes in the Son has eternal life" (cf. 5:24;6:47)

Rom. 6:23 - "free gift of God is eternal life"

*Aionios* applied to what is not divine, still conveys continuity, perpetuity of spiritual association.

Matt. 25:41 - "eternal fire"  
II Thess 1:9 - "eternal destruction"

→  
Extremism

Many have been taught that the meaning of "eternal" is "no beginning, and no end."

- such an open-ended extension of time is not intrinsic to the

Greek new covenant word for "eternal" (*aionios*), which means "unto the ages")

# Heaven

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism                                     | Place   | Person   | Extremism →  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Idealism  | Destination   | Destiny -  | Mysticism  |
| - clouds, harps, angels, pearly gates, mansions | Is heaven a place?<br>John 14:2,3 - “go to prepare a place for you” (Gk. <i>topos</i> ) | Consequential outcome of present reality.                                      | Etherealism  |
| Escapism -                                      | Jesus speaking of heaven?   | Perpetuity, continuity, extension of spiritual and eternal presence of Christ. | “pie in the sky, bye and bye”  |
| - seeking avoidance of present-world situation. | Geographical? gold streets Tangible? Physical?  | Eph. 1:3 - “every spiritual blessing in heavenly places”                       | For some there is a discontent with what they now have in Jesus Christ, and they may be disappointed that all God has to give is His Son, Jesus Christ – in this world and the next. |
| - “can’t wait ‘til I get to heaven”             | Ps. 18:23 - “set me in high places.”  | Heb. 3:1 - “partakers of a heavenly calling”                                   |  |
| Mercenary                                       | Gk <i>ouranos</i> - “raised up”   | Heb. 6:4 - tasted of heavenly gift”  |  |
| - biggest mansion                               | Discontinuity of worldly environ of experiencing Christ’s life in physical body.        | Matt. 10:7 - “kingdom of heaven is at hand”                                    |  |
| - stars in crown                                | Phil. 1:21 - “to die is gain”   | Immortality, eternal life II Tim. 1:10   |  |
| - rewards                                       | Rev. 21:4 - “no sorrow, pain, sickness, death”  | Perfection - eternity  |  |
| Self-oriented                                   | City of the living God - Rev. 21:2, 10, 19  | Rationality  |  |
| - what I get                                    |   | Community / fellowship   |  |
| - what <b>my</b> body will be like              |   |  |  |
| - I want more than I now have.                  |   |  |  |

# Hell

*Dialectic - Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Place

Judgmentalism

Some Christians seem to delight that some who have not performed as well as them are “going to fry in hell?”

Vindictive  
Vengeful

Hell has been misrepresented by the imagery that Dante employed in the *Inferno*.

Extremism  
→

## Person

Destiny - consequential outcome of present reality

Continuity, perpetuity, extension of spiritual condition, association, identification, union with Satan, the Evil One.

- participation in evil  
- “one having power of death” - Heb. 2:14

Is this forever, unending, everlasting? ...eternal?  
Jude 13 - “forever”

Dan. 12:2 - “everlasting contempt”

Is hell a retributory, condemnatory, sentence of guilt that incurs separation and wrath of God?  
Mt. 5:22 - “guilty .. to hell”  
Mt. 23:33 - “sentence of hell”

Denial of hell

- “ain’t no such place, and ain’t nobody going there.”

Annihilationism.

No after-life.  
After physical death, just termination and cessation of being.

Universalism -  
Every human will inevitably go to heaven.

Is hell a place of rehabilitation?

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# Judgment of God

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Already

Some have diminished or denied a future judgment of God - this to the detriment of advising other people that there will be consequences to their choices and actions.

Those selfishly content with their own relationship with God will be judged for their unloving concern for others.

God's judgment is God's critical determination (Greek *krisis*).  
 - God pre-determined that His judgment would be by Jesus Christ.  
 Jn. 5:27 - "Father gave the Son authority to execute judgment"  
 Jn. 8:16 - "My judgment is true; I do not do it alone"  
 Jn. 9:39 - "For judgment I came into the world"  
 Jn. 12:30 - "judgment is upon this world; ruler of this world cast out" (16:11)  
 Divine determination is already made for the believer who is "in Christ"  
 Jn. 3:18 - "one who believes in Him is not judged"

## Not Yet

Future final judgment of God based on His determination for all mankind in Jesus Christ.  
 - Christocentric judgment  
 Acts 10:42 - "the One appointed by God as Judge of the living and dead"  
 Acts 17:31 - He will judge the world in righteous through a Man..."  
 II Thess. 2:12 - all judged who did not believe in the Truth"  
 Rom. 2:16 - "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus;  
 Rev. 20:12,13 - "everyone judged according to their deeds"

Many fail to realize that God's determination for mankind is Christocentric, and that individual, subjective determination is made by one's reception or rejection of Jesus Christ.

There need be no fearful fretting about a future judgment except for those who reject Jesus.

# Holy Spirit

*Dialectic - Both/And*

## Fruit of the Spirit

←  
Extremism

### Character of Christ

Misunderstanding of the “fruit of the Spirit.”  
-not plural “fruits”  
-complete cluster of the character of Christ in every Christian by the indwelling of Jesus.

Some identify

“fruit” as the productivity of evangelism, rather than the character expression of Christ in the Christian.

## Gifts of the Spirit

→  
Extremism

### Ministry of Christ

Rom. 12:6-8 - “gifts that differ, prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing mercy...”

The provision by which the living Lord Jesus desires to express the “doing” of His ongoing ministry to others in the context of His Church.

Our functionality in the local Body of Christ will be determined by our particular spiritual giftedness, and the needs of the local congregation.

Misuse of spiritual gifts:  
- regarded as personal possessions  
- considered to be trophies of spirituality.

Emphasis on supernatural activity, rather than on the divine expression of Christ’s character.

# Christian Baptism

*Dialectic – Both/And*

062

| ← Extremism   | <b>External Act</b>   | <b>Internal Reality</b>   | → Extremism                                |
|---|---|---|--|
| Ritualism   | To overwhelm with water (various modes)   | Person's human spirit overwhelmed by the Spirit of the Triune God.              | Metaphysical                               |
| Proceduralism   | - visible, seen, tangible   | (Rom. 8:9,16; I Cor. 12:13)   | Mysticism                                  |
| Sacramentalism  | Divinely instituted action within context of Church (Matt. 28:19)                                 | - invisible, not seen   | - contact the blood of Jesus in the water? |
| Sacerdotalism   | Initiation or identification as Christian?  | What is the effect of water baptism on one's spiritual relationship with Jesus? | Spiritualism                               |
| - means of grace  | Rite of entrance into Church? ... joining the church?   | Does the act of baptism make a person a Christian?                              | Abstractionism                             |
| - Rite of baptism conveys, confers, causes, effects, creates or grants regeneration or salvation. | Mere act of obedience? Re-presents the imagery of the spirit overwhelmed.                         | Is baptism essential for salvation?   | Etherealism                                |
| Pentecostalism  | Sacrament - visible expression of invisible reality.  | - "baptized for the forgiveness of your sins"? (Acts 2:38)                      | Magical                                    |
| "Wet passport"  | Spirit baptism  | - "baptized into one Body" (I Cor. 12:13)                                       | Quietism                                   |
|   | - Tangible expression of overcoming of by the Spirit - tongues? slain in spirit? gifts of Spirit? |   | Pietism                                    |
|   |   |   | Quakers                                    |

# Lord's Supper

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## External Act

Ritualism  
 Proceduralism  
 Sacramentalism  
 - priestly consecration of the sacrament.  
 Sacerdotalism  
 - means of grace  
 - the act conveys, confers, creates, causes, grants, effects the spiritual significance.  
 Representative  
 Symbolism  
 "Memorial meal"  
 "Theatre / show"  
 Denial of real internal effect

Physical rite; seen, visible, tangible activity, outward expression  
 Divinely instituted/ordained activity the Church engages in repetitively.  
 "as oft as ye do it?" (1 Cor. 11:25)  
 "first day of week" (Acts 20:7)  
 "take eat," "drink this cup" (Matt. 26:26,27)  
 Physical elements of bread and fruit of the vine  
 Sacrament - visible expression of invisible reality.  
 Re-presents in visible form the common-union (communion) of Christ and Christian), *koinonia*, participation  
 Horizontal dimension

## Internal Reality

Spiritual significance, meaning &/or reality; not seen, invisible  
 "in remembrance" - (Lk. 22:19)  
 "proclaim the Lord's death" (1 Cor. 11:26)  
 "the new covenant in My blood" (1 Cor. 11:25)  
 "real presence of Christ"  
 "My body...My blood" (Mk. 14:21-23)  
 "eat My body, drink My blood" (In. 6:41-56; 1 Cor. 10:16)  
 "What you take takes you"  
 Mystical Body of Church  
 - "union with Christ" (1 Cor. 6:17)  
 Vertical dimension of worship. Mystery of participatory worship.

→ Extremism

Mysticism  
 Spiritualism  
 Metaphysicalism  
 Esoteric  
 Magical  
 Abstractionism  
 Etherealism  
 Internalism  
 - quietism,  
 Quakers  
 - pietism  
 Deny need of physical act

*Interactive*  
*Both/And Dialectics*  
*of*  
*Christian Praxis*



# Faith

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

← Extremism

## Initial

The initial response of faith sometimes called “saving faith” is the choice of an individual to receive the redemptive sufficiency of Christ and regenerative life of Jesus Christ. Acts 16:30 - “What must we do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” Jn. 3:15,36 - “whoever believes in Him has eternal life”

Acts 10:43 - “believes in Him... forgiveness of sins” Gal. 3:2 - “receive the Spirit by hearing with faith.” Gal. 3:6 - “sons of God through faith in Jesus” Eph. 2:8 - “for by grace are you saved through faith”

## Continual

The continuing “receptivity of Christ’s activity” within the Christian life, sometimes called “living faith,” is the response by which the dynamic of the living Lord Jesus’ life and ministry is expressed in Christian lives.

Col. 2:6 - “as you received Jesus so walk in Him” Gal. 2:20 - “I live by faith in the Son of God.” Gal. 3:11 - “the righteous man shall live by faith” II Cor. 5:7 - “we walk by faith, not sight.” Col. 1:23 - “continue in faith, firmly established” Rom. 14:23 - “whatever is not from faith is sin”

Some religious groups are so focused on the “spiritual life,” “deeper life,” “higher life,” “exchanged life,” “union life,” “word of faith,” etc., that they neglect sharing Christ with the unregenerate.

Some have such an elitist pride in their faith that it becomes “faith in faith.”

- or Gnostic

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# Christ-Life

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ←<br>Extremism   | <b>Condition</b>  | →<br>Extremism   |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>The receipt of Christ's life in spiritual regeneration, when the divine life of the Triune God comes to dwell in the spirit of a receptive individual.</p> <p>Rom. 8:9 - "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"</p> <p>Jn. 5:24 - "passed out of death into life."</p> <p>Rom. 6:24 - "walk in newness of life."</p> <p>Exchange spiritual condition</p> <p>Acts 26:18 - "to turn them from darkness to light..."</p> <p>Col. 1:13 - "transferred to the kingdom of His Son"</p> <p>Receiving Christ's life by faith.</p> | <p>Conscious awareness of the living Christ as my life in every facet of human life, and allowing Him to live as Lord of my life.</p> <p>Col. 3:4 - "Christ is our life"</p> <p>Phil. 1:21 - "for me to live is Christ."</p> <p>Rom. 5:10 - "saved by His life"</p> <p>What is your passion, focus, <i>raison d'être</i>? ...music, money, sports, family?</p> <p>Or can you honestly state, "The living Lord Jesus Christ is my <i>raison d'être</i>, my focus, my passion, my LIFE?"</p> <p>Living by the life of the One who is LIFE.</p> |
| <p>Receiving divine life often viewed as a passport to heaven.</p> <p>...as merely the deposit or down-payment for what is promised in the future</p> <p>...as an "end in itself," without ongoing present ramifications.</p> <p>It is possible to view the acquisition of Christ's life in selfish and mercenary way.</p> |   | <p>Some advocate that Christians should have "constant consciousness" of Jesus</p> <p>- that the thought of Jesus should be on the forefront of our mind every moment.</p> <p>It is possible to be "so heavenly-minded, that one is of no earthly good."</p>   |

# Christian Life

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Impossible

“You cannot live the Christian life...”  
 - despite any social or religious conformity.  
 - despite our best efforts to self-generate and perform Christian character according to laws.

## Possible

Only the risen Lord Jesus can live the Christian life.  
 - He lived out the Christian life perfectly once, and wants to do it again in us. Christian life is the re-presentation of the life and character of Jesus Christ.

Passivism

“It’s His job; let Him do it!”

“I am not responsible to live the Christian life, so why should I attempt to do so.”

- “Just going to sit back and twiddle my thumbs until God gets into action in me”

Acquiescence

Performance - what we do, our “works,” our rule-keeping in attempt to keep scriptural imperatives will not effect the Christian life.

John 15:5 - “apart from Me, you can do nothing”  
 I Thess. 5:24 - “He will bring it to pass”

Person of living Christ  
 - We live the Christian life by the life of Another!  
 We derive Christian being, identity, doing, behavior from the dynamic of the living Lord Jesus via the receptivity of faith.

II Cor. 4:10 - “manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies.”

Escapism  
 - attempt to escape from all responsibility in Christian life.

Perfectionism  
 - “everything Jesus is and does in me is perfect, despite how it may appear to you.”

# Christian Life

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Prescriptive

What does the Christian life look like? It looks like Jesus!

It is prescribed (divinely determined) by the character of Christ.

The “how tos” of Christian living are found in the imperative requisites of the New Testament.

This does not mean, however, that Christians are capable by their own self-effort and performance to accomplish and maintain the living of the Christian life.

Prescriptive parameters of what the Christian life should look like are often interpreted as behavioral conformity to external rules and regulations of an often authoritarian “Christian law” imposed and enforced by local church leaders.

Legalism  
Behaviorism

→ Extremism

## Spontaneous

When a Christian becomes a “new creature in Christ” (cf. II Cor. 5:17), that person is a unique Christ-one designed for spontaneous re-presentation of Jesus.

The indicative statements of the full provision of God’s grace in Christ are the basis for spontaneous Christ-expression.

Trust that you are who you are “in Christ,” and let Him BE all He wants to BE and DO in you. .

Enjoy the Freedom. BE the unique YOU that Christ is in you.

Some Christians interpret the freedom of being spontaneous to be a freedom to be self-serving and lawless. This can lead to a chaotic “free-for-all”

Antinomianism  
Licentiousness  
Libertinism

# Christian Life

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Striving

Although “works” of human effort have no meritorious benefit to one’s salvation, the outworking of the life of Jesus requires personal discipline.

Lk. 13:24 - “strive to enter through the narrow door”  
 I Tim. 4:7 - “discipline yourself unto godliness”  
 I Tim. 4:10 - “for this we labor and strive”

Phil. 2:12 - “work out your own salvation”  
 Col. 1:29 - “I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”  
 James 2:14,26 - “faith without works is dead”

Performance  
 - Christian religion tends to approach the Christian life with constant inculcations to “measure up” to God’s expectations to be holy and do right.

This “do-right” religion is allegedly effected by the self-effort of “good works” in legalistic conformity to behavioral laws

→ Extremism

## Resting

Christians can “rest” from the performance of trying to please or appease God; ceasing from all works by which they might attempt to gain or enact what they already have in spirit-union with Jesus Christ, and can experience by the receptivity of faith.

Matt. 11:28 - “Come to Me, and I will give you rest.”  
 Heb. 4:1 - “a promise remains of entering His rest”  
 Heb. 4:3 - “we who have believed enter that rest”  
 Heb. 4:9 - “a Sabbath rest for the people of God”  
 Heb. 4:11 - “be diligent to enter that rest”

Passivism  
 - some Christians have interpreted Christian rest to be a passive acquiescence that involves no responsibility or personal action.  
 - such a stance fails to recognize that faith is the “receptivity of divine activity,” allowing Christ’s life to be lived out in us.

Mysticism  
 Quietism

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# Christian Life

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Re-presentation

Christians are identified as “Christ-ones,” who have received the living Christ as their life (Col. 3:4).

The purpose of the Christian life is NOT to be a representative of Jesus, doing our best to adequately be like Him.

Rather, the living Lord Jesus in the Christian wants to re-present His life and character in the behavior of the Christian life.

II Cor. 4:10 - “life of Jesus manifested in our bodies”  
Gal. 2:20 - “no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”

Perfectionism

- “I am perfect in Christ”
- “the Christian life is what the living Jesus does in me, not what I do.”

Passivism

Acquiescence

Some have over

- emphasized identity in Christ to the point of declaring, “I am Christ.”
- blasphemy

Extremism →

## Misrepresentation

The re-presentation of the life and character of Jesus Christ necessitates the Christian’s faithful receptivity of Christ’s activity in the Christian life.

No Christian has allowed for a perfect behavioral expression of Christ.

I Jn. 1:8 - “if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves.”

Sin in the life of the Christian is a misrepresentation of one’s spiritual identity; who we have become “in Christ.”

- Sin-consciousness - to become too sin and Satan conscious is to fail to recognize the “finished work” and sufficiency of Jesus.
- where is our focus? on sin? or on Jesus?

Those who focus on their failure to “measure up” are focused on their own performance rather than on

Person of Jesus

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# Truth

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism ←

## Propositions

Aristotle - “a proposition is a statement that affirms or denies a predicate of a subject.”

Correspondence Theory of Truth: “A proposition is true if it corresponds with reality.”

- It then becomes a truth-bearing statement.

Epistemological-based philosophy, theology, science, etc.

The doctrine and dogma of the Church has often been cast only in the context of propositional truth.

## Person

In the metaphysics of Christian thought, truth is perceptually and spiritually invested in the divine Person of Jesus Christ.

John 14:6 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life”  
- (the Greek word *aleithia* can legitimately be translated both “truth” and/or “reality.”)

John 8:32 - “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”  
John 8:36 - “the Son makes you free”

The Truth of Jesus Christ affects people personally

Propositions alone are static, sterile, and stagnant.  
- their perceived accuracy and veracity soon devolve into arguments of orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and doctrinal purity.

The delimitation of reality to only naturalistic phenomenon necessarily delimits the parameters of accepted truth.

“Truth is a Person, Jesus Christ” is itself a propositional truth.

When detached from the corpus of historical and theological propositional Christian truth, it can degenerate into  
- subjectivism  
- experientialism  
- mysticism

# Christian Thought

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Objectivity

External history and theology

Protestant emphasis: “as if..” righteous, mere legal fiction

Threshold factor of Christianity.

Apologetics  
- “Happy Birthday Jesus.”

Salvation as eternal commodity

Church as old-fashioned institution

Extremism →

## Subjectivity

Internal “spiritual” experience

Righteousness - Christian “made righteous” (Rom. 5:21; II Cor. 5:21) in spiritual condition in Christ.

Grace - indwelling dynamic of Christ’s life

Jesus of experience. Christ in you. Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; II Cor. 13:5

Saving life of Christ overcoming sin inclinations.

Church - invisible reality of all Christ-indwelt persons in the “Body of Christ.”

Righteousness by correct opinion, attitudes, conformity.

Grace as booster of “infusion”

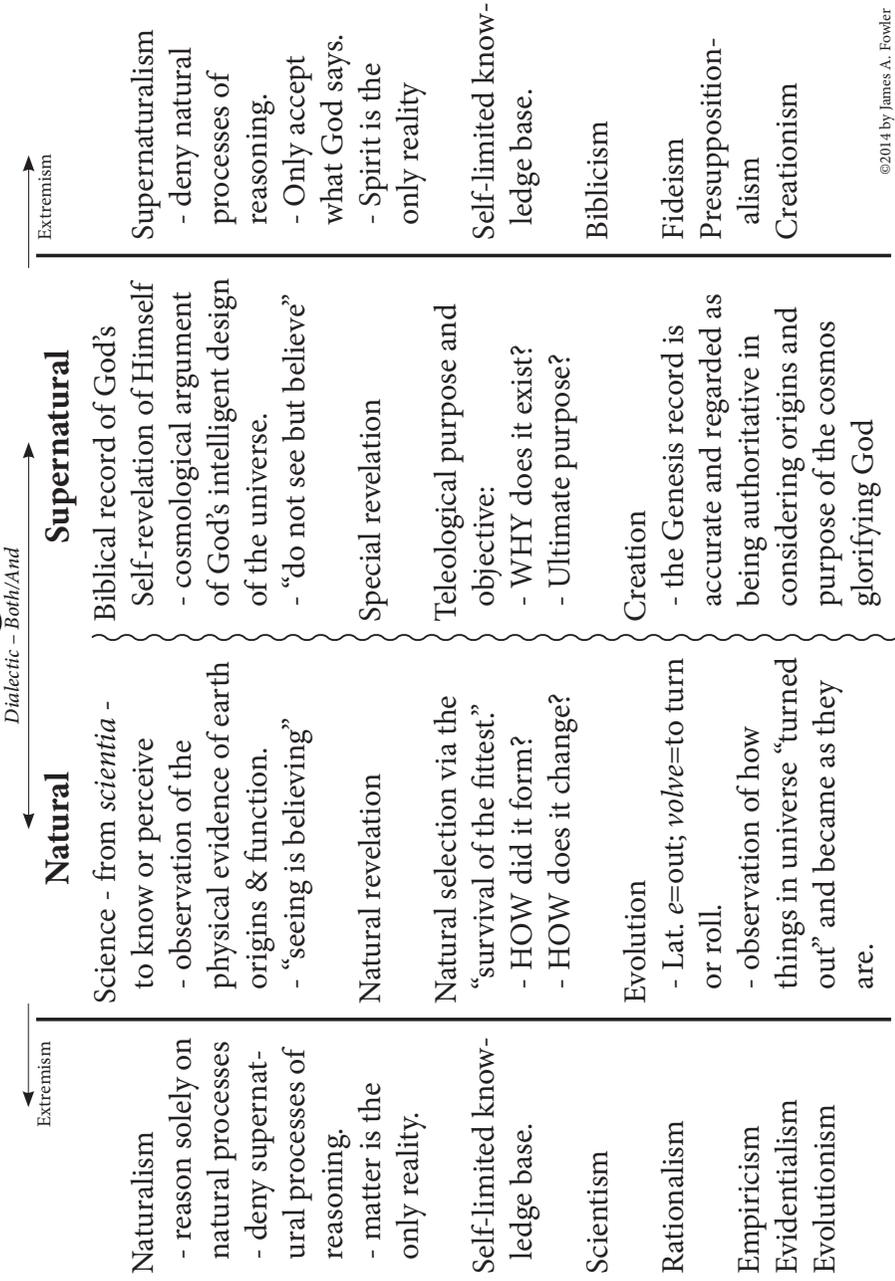
Postmodernism  
- the affect of the experience is all

Salvation as inner sense of wellbeing

“Whoever claims to be church is church.”

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# Human Knowledge of the Cosmos



# Knowledge

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Informational

Knowledge viewed from an epistemological perspective.

- this is where I take my stand and assert my belief-system.

A mental, rational, logical, academic, analytical approach to knowledge.

- Focuses on the content of information
- accuracy, veracity
- figured out in minds
- systematically organized
- consistent explanation

Col. 2:8 - “elementary principles of the world”

I Cor. 8:1 - “knowledges puffs people up with pride and makes them arrogant.”

Informational knowledge when not balanced with relational knowledge always drifts toward standardization, formalization and proceduralization.

- techniques and definitive determination.

Extremism →

## Relational

Knowledge formed by interactive discovery and interpersonal communion and intimacy.

- Gen. 4:1 - “Adam knew Eve and she conceived...”

Relational knowledge involves a person experientially and spiritually

- Eph. 3:19 - “to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.”
- Phil. 3:10 - “I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection”
- II Pet. 3:18 - “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior”

Relational knowledge when not balanced in the grounding of informational knowledge always drifts toward:

- subjectivism
- existentialism
- elitism
- individualism/communalism

# God's Law

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | ↔   | → Extremism  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Performance Requirements</b></p> <p>Divine prescription of performance requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- legal paradigm that conceives God as law-giver and Judge.</li> <li>- old covenant Mosaic Law expected obedient law-keeping with consequences of blessing or cursing.</li> </ul> <p>Prophecy - "I will put My law within them" (Jer 31:33)</p> <p>Are there new covenant performance requirements?</p> <p>Do these constitute a form of Christian law?</p> <p>New covenant literature has over 1000 imperatives.</p> | <p><b>Person of Christ</b></p> <p>Rom. 10:4 - "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness."</p> <p>Rom. 13:10 - "love is the fulfillment of the law" (cf. Gal. 5:14).</p> <p>Gal. 5:18 - "you are not under the Law"</p> <p>Jesus Christ is the new covenant living Torah</p> <p>Heb. 8:10 - "God's Law put in our minds, written in our hearts"</p> <p>Gal. 6:2 - "law of Christ"</p> <p>Rom. 8:2 - "law of Spirit"</p> <p>James 1:25; 2:12 - "perfect law of liberty"</p> <p>New covenant indicatives of grace provision.</p> | <p>Antinomianism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- without prescribed parameters of performance people tend to slide toward license and libertinism.</li> </ul> <p>To live only by the inner dynamic and barometer of God's grace requires the responsiveness of faith.</p> |
| <p><b>Legalism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- natural tendency of mankind to seek parameters of performance.</li> </ul> <p>Romans 7 may refer to Christians operating as if moral and ecclesiastical "law" is "Christian Law."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- they will suffer the same inability and frustration as attempts to keep the Mosaic Law.</li> </ul>   |   |  |

# Will of God

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Prescription

The “will of God” is viewed by many Christians as prescribed behaviors that God expects them to perform...  
 - or a particular personal course of action (ex. marriage, vocation, etc.)

Often viewed as:

- trying to hit bullseye
- finding way thru maze
- puzzle to be deciphered
- pleading with God to reveal His specific will

I Thess. 4:3 - “will of God, your sanctification”

I Pet. 4:6 - “live in the Spirit according to will of God”

All kinds of con-torted procedures have been prescribed for ascertaining the supposedly elusive “will of God”

Spiritual pride

leads some

Christians to

think they can

“play Holy Spirit” in others’ lives

and advise them

of God’s will for them

Extremism →

## Person

The ultimate “will of God,” predestined/prehORIZED in God’s intent for mankind, is each individual’s reception of the Son, Jesus Christ, and living by His life in all circumstances of life.

The “will of God” is always the life of the living Lord Jesus lived out in our behavior.

The details are determined by the obedience of “listening under” the voice of the Spirit of Christ.

Mk. 4:9 - “he who has ears to hear, let him hear”

Essentialism  
 “I am the will of God - whatever I do is the will of God for me.”

Augustine - “love God and do what you want.”

Spiritual pride

leads some to

think that they

know the perfect

will of God for all

things at all

times.

# Behavioral Acceptabilities

| <i>Dialectic – Both/And</i>  |  |
|--|--|
| ← Liberty  | Limitations →  |
| <p>Extremism ←</p> <p>Libertarianism</p> <p>Libertinism</p> <p>License</p> <p>Pride of liberty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- flaunt, show off</li> <li>- shame others</li> </ul> <p>for non-participation.</p> <p>Rom. 14:13,21;</p> <p>I Cor. 8:9,13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberty can become stumbling-block .</li> </ul> <p>I Pet. 2:16 - “Do not use freedom as covering for evil”</p> | <p>Respect for others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cultural differences</li> <li>- religious convictions</li> <li>- moral weakness</li> <li>- personal sensitivities</li> </ul> <p>Temperance</p> <p>Moderation</p> <p>I Cor. 8:10-13 - “Give no offense to brother”</p> <p>Rom. 14:20; I Cor. 8:12 - “If cause another to sin, we sin”</p> <p>Rom. 14:23 - “whatever is not of faith is sin”</p> <p>Rom. 14:13-23 - Attitudes of other Christians not infallible, but inviolable”</p> |
| <p>Legalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- behavioral and morality codes</li> <li>- prohibitions</li> <li>- “thou shalt; thou shalt not”</li> </ul> <p>Judgmentalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- intolerance</li> <li>- rejective</li> </ul> <p>“Take offense” at others’ liberty.</p> <p>Impose guilt of participation and violation of what is deemed unacceptable.</p>                         | <p>Extremism →</p>   |

# Christ and the Christian

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## “in Christ”

## “Christ in you”

← Extremism

The Christian is incorporated into, and in union with, the living Lord Jesus  
 I Cor. 1:30-“in Christ Jesus  
 II Cor. 5:17 - “in Christ, ... new creature”  
 All that Christ IS attributed to those “in Christ”

The Spirit of the living Lord Jesus enters into the spirit of receptive believer  
 Rom. 8:16 - “Spirit bears witness with our spirit”  
 Gal. 2:20 - “no longer I, but Christ lives in me.”

- life (Rom. 6:23)
- salvation (II Tim 3:15)
- righteous (Phil. 3:9)
- sanctified (I Cor. 1:2)
- grace (I Cor. 1:4)
- love (Rom. 8:29)
- liberty (Gal. 2:4)
- God’s will (I Thess 5:18)
- all needs (Phil. 4:19)
- complete (Col. 1:28)
- sp. blessing (Eph 1:3)
- triumph (II Cor. 2:14)
- heavenlies (Eph. 2:6)

- Col. 1:27 - “Christ in you, the hope of glory”
- II Cor. 13:5 - “Jesus Christ is in you, unless you believed in vain”
- Eph. 3:17 - “Christ dwells in your hearts”
- Rom. 8:10,11 - “Christ in you ... dwells in you”
- Not just indwelling location for personal benefit
- Christ in you as your life
- Christ in you as love for others

Overly objectified detachment and separation of Christ and Christian.

Overly subjectified immanence and identification of Christ and Christian.

Legal and forensic attribution of benefits of Christ to believer.

Monism  
 Pantheism  
 - inordinate merging or mingling or absorption of Christ and the Christian that fails to preserve distinction.

Such external transfer and legal imputation of Christ to the Christian diminishes the real actualization of Christ in us.

“I am Jesus Christ in my form”

# Christ and the Christian - Ontological Union

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| ← Extremism   | Dialectic - Both/And   | Extremism →  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Essential union of Christian &amp; Christ</p> <p>-absorbed, fused, equivalence, monistic merging.</p> <p>- Christian one with Christ</p> <p>-Christian deified</p> <p>Union is lost in "oneness"</p> <p>Humanity is de-personalized.</p> <p>- obliteration, annihilation, displacement, replacement</p> <p>- "I am no longer human.</p> <p>- "I am not; only He is."</p> | <p><b>Spirit-union of Being</b></p> <p>The Christian is joined in a one-spirit union with the Spirit of Christ.</p> <p>I Cor. 6:17 - "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."</p> <p>Gal. 2:20 - "no longer I live, but Christ lives in me"</p> <p>II Pt. 1:4 - "partaker of the divine nature"</p> <p>Col. 3:3,4 - "our life hid with Christ in God. Christ is our life"</p> <p>Eph. 1:3 - "every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."</p> <p>Eph. 2:6 - "seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"</p> | <p><b>Personal distinction</b></p> <p>Christ and the Christian individual remain distinct personages.</p> <p>Rom. 8:16 - "Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we're children of God</p> <p>Gal. 2:20 - "Christ lives in me ... the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith..."</p> <p>I Jn. 4:12-16 - "God in us"</p> <p>Col. 1:27 - "Christ in you"</p> <p>Rom. 8:11 - Holy Spirit in-dwells you"</p> <p>Distinction of "yourself"</p> <p>Rom. 6:11,13; II Tim 2:15</p> <p>We retain personal individuality and humanity.</p> |
| <p>Deistic detachment, separation from God.</p> <p>Transcendence; no immanence.</p> <p>- God's up in heaven; I am here on earth."</p> <p>Self-deprecating, self-denigrating view of humanity</p> <p>- "just a sinner saved by grace."</p> <p>Double-minded</p> <p>- schizophrenic concept of dual natures.</p>  |  |  |

# Christ and the Christian - Operational Union

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Union of doing</b>   | <b>Personal distinction</b>  | → Extremism  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Inevitable expression of Christ.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "All that I do is Christ in action."</li> <li>- "Christ is the new man in me; Christ cannot sin; I can't sin."</li> <li>- "Do what you will; for what you will is what He wills."</li> <li>- "God does not mean for man to have faith; just to be the God exp-<br/>resser that he is"</li> <li>- "just go with the flow"</li> </ul> | <p>Grace dynamic of divine activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jesus is the dynamic of all His demands.</li> </ul> <p>II Cor. 12:9 - "My grace is sufficient for you"</p> <p>II Cor. 9:8 - "God able to make all grace abound"</p> <p>Phil. 2:13 - "God is at work in us"</p> <p>I Thess. 5:24 - "He will bring it to pass"</p> <p>II Cor. 3:5 - "our adequacy is of God"</p> <p>II Cor. 4:10,11 - "life of Jesus manifested in us"</p> <p>Gal. 5:16,25 - "live / walk by the Spirit"</p> <p>Rom. 15:18 - "Christ accomplished through me"</p> | <p>Response-ability: Christians make faith choices of behavior.</p> <p>In. 15:5 - "Apart from Me, you can do nothing."</p> <p>Phil. 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ."</p> <p>Faith - our receptivity of His activity.</p> <p>Rom. 1:5 - "obedience of faith"</p> <p>James 2:12-26 - "faith without works is useless"</p> <p>Rom. 14:23 - "whatever is not of faith is sin"</p> <p>Phil. 2:12 - "work out your own salvation; God is at work in you."</p> | <p>False religious idea of self-generated righteous behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "God helps those who help themselves."</li> <li>- Do your best, and God will do the rest."</li> </ul> <p>Religious attempts at commitment and dedication to live Christian life</p> <p>Trying to "be like Jesus."</p> <p>-imitation, following His example.</p> |

# Christian

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Perfect  | Sinful   | → Extremism   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Perfectionism</p> <p>Holiness</p> <p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Entire Sanctification”</li> <li>- Christian is not sinful; has no sin</li> <li>- redefine sin as mistakes.</li> </ul> <p>“Made righteous” thought to mean: inherently and essentially righteous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “I am righteous” <i>a se</i>, in myself.</li> </ul> | <p>Spiritual condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- derived nature &amp; identity</li> </ul> <p>Perfect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heb. 10:14 - “perfected those sanctified”</li> <li>Holy - “saints - holy ones”</li> <li>Rom. 1:7 - “called saints”</li> </ul> <p>Righteous</p> <p>M. Luther - “<i>simul iustus et peccator</i>” - simultaneously justified and sinful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not just “declared righteous,” but “made righteous”</li> <li>- I Cor. 1:30 - “Christ became to us righteousness”</li> </ul> <p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gal. 6:1 - “you who are spiritual”</li> <li>Godly - II Pt. 2:9</li> </ul> | <p>Behavioral patterning in soul and body.</p> <p>I John 1:8 - “if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us”</p> <p>“Flesh” patterns of selfishness and sinfulness in the desires of our soul.</p> <p>Gal. 5:16 - “desires of the flesh”</p> <p>Gal. 5:17 - “flesh sets its desires against Spirit”</p> <p>Eph. 2:3 - “desires of the flesh”</p> <p>II Pt. 2:18 - “fleshly desires”</p> <p>Rom. 7:17,20 - “sin in-dwells me”</p> | <p>Perpetual sinful depravity of all human beings due to Fall of mankind in Adam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- humanity is inherently and essentially sinful</li> <li>- depraved, deficient, defective, damned.</li> </ul> <p>A Christian is just a “sinner saved by grace.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- saved by “alien righteousness” of Jesus.</li> </ul> |

# Christian Behavior

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Flesh

New covenant understanding of “flesh” recognizes the patterning of the desires of the soul into selfish and sinful propensities

Eph. 2:3 - “desires of the flesh”

II Pt. 2:10 - “the flesh with its corrupt desires.”

Gal. 5:17 - “the flesh sets its desires against the Spirit”

“Flesh” seeks to “act out” in expression of selfish character in our behavior.

Gal. 5:19-21 - “the deeds of the flesh are immorality, impurity, sensuality, strife, jealousy, anger ...

## Defeatism

- “Just a sinner, saved by grace”
- “Just a carnal (fleshly) Christian”
- “I can’t help but sin, I’m only human.”
- “It’s just my human nature.”

## Activism

- Attempts to live the Christian life by self-effort.
- trying to be “like Jesus.”
- Flesh attempts to imitate Jesus.

## Spirit

The Spirit of Christ dwells within the spirit of every Christian person.

Rom. 8:9 - “if any one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”

Rom. 8:16 - “the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Gal. 5:17 - “the Spirit sets its desires against the flesh”

The Spirit desires to express its fruit-character in Christian behavior.

Gal. 5:22,23 - “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ...”  
Phil. 1:11 - “fruit of righteousness”

Triumphalism  
- “Since the Spirit of Christ lives in me, and He does not sin, I don’t have to worry about sinning.”  
- “Whatever I do is Christ working in me.”

Perfectionism  
- “those of us who are ‘spiritual’ do not have to concern ourselves with the ‘deeds of the flesh.’”

→ Extremism

# Work of Christ in Christian

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*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism                               | Dealing with Sin   | Victory in Christ  | Extremism →                                 |
|---|--|--|---|
| Dealing with sin by religious self-effort | Indwelling sinfulness<br>- sin indwells - Rm 7:17-20<br>- not perfect - Phil. 3:12<br>- confess sins - I Jn. 1:8,9 | Indwelling Christ<br>- Christ in you - Col. 1:27<br>- More than conquerors in Christ - Rom. 8:27 | Claiming oneness with God, without sin      |
| “Just a sinner saved by grace”            | Christ as Savior   | Christ as Lord   | “Everything Christ is, I am”                |
| Activism                                  | Soul action<br>- “good that I would, I do not” - Rom. 7:16,19  | Spirit action<br>- “led by the Spirit” Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18                                      | Triumphalism<br>“What I do is what He does” |
| Moralism                                  | - “flesh” patterned desires against Spirit - Gal. 5:17   | - “Spirit sets its desires against flesh” - Gal. 5:17  | Perfectionism<br>“We do not sin”            |
| Legalism                                  |  |  | Mysticism                                   |
| “Do this, do that”                        | Process <i>negativa</i><br>- “be not conformed to this world” - Rom. 8:2   | Process <i>positiva</i><br>- conformed to the image of His Son” - Rom. 8:29                      | spiritual knowers<br>“we have arrived”      |
| Confessionalism                           | - Cross - (experiential)   | - Resurrection life  | Antinomianism                               |
| “So sorry, Lord”                          | - Repentance<br>“I can’t; only He can”   | - All sufficiency in God’s Grace - II Cor. 9:8   | - freedom pushed to extreme.                |
| Hypocrisy                                 |  |  |   |
| “Carnal Christian”                        |  |  |   |
| “Two natures” fallacy                     |  |  |   |

# “Inner Man” of Christian

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Spirit

Spiritual condition  
 - Spiritual exchange  
 Acts 26:18  
 - Indwelling Trinity  
 - Indwelling function of  
 Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Spiritually new-II Cor. 5:17  
 - New man - Eph. 4:24

Spiritual completeness  
 -All sp. blessings - Eph 1:3  
 -All things - I Co. 2:21-23

Spiritual union - I Cor 6:17  
 Spiritual nature - II Pt 1:4  
 Spiritual sufficiency  
 - Grace - II Cor. 9:8  
 - Strength - Eph. 3:16

Sp. perfection - Phil. 3:15  
 Mind of Christ - I Co. 2:16

Sp. Perfectionism  
 Full Sanctification  
 Sinlessness  
 Eradicationism

Supersessionism  
 - I am replaced by  
 Christ  
 - “Everything I do  
 is Christ in me”

Spiritual pride  
 Gnostic elitism  
 Union with Christ  
 taken to extreme  
 of essentialism.  
 - uni-naturism

Mysticism  
 Libertinism

## Soul

Behavioral function  
 - Choosing creatures  
 - Faith choice - Col 3:2  
 - Response-ability

Behavioral conflict  
 - Flesh & spirit - Gal. 5:17  
 - Desire to do good  
 - Sin indwells - Rom. 7:17

Behavioral imperfection  
 - Phil. 3:12

Behavioral inability  
 - no sufficiency- II Cor. 3:5  
 - can do nothing - Jn 15:5

Behavioral formation  
 - transformed - Rom. 12:2  
 - conformed - Rom. 8:29  
 - Christ formed - Gal 4:19

Behavioral salvation  
 -saved by His life -Rm. 5:10  
 Renew mind - Rom. 12:2

Sp. Positionalism  
 - legal declaration  
 of status w/ God  
 - adjudicated  
 righteousness

Two naturism  
 - schiophrenic  
 - paranoid  
 uncertainty

Suppressionism  
 - trying to sup-  
 press sin in order  
 to be righteous.

Legalism  
 Moralism  
 Performance-  
 oriented

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# Church Growth

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Quantitative

The Church is always concerned that others are introduced to life and hope in Jesus Christ, and thus added to the community of faith, the Church.

Acts 2:41 - “added about three thousand souls”

Acts 5:14 - “multitudes of men and women added”

The Church is the assembly of Christ-indwelt persons that is difficult to identify and quantify.

Those who profess faith and occupy a pew are not necessarily Christ-ones.

## Qualitative

Christian thought begins with the character of the Holy God and is directed toward the manifestation of divine character in the behavior of Christians.

A major objective of the Church is to explain the dynamic of God’s grace to express the character-“fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22,23)..

I Pet. 2:2 - “grow in respect to salvation”

II Pet. 3:18 - “grow in the grace and knowledge of Lord Jesus.”

Eph. 1:4 - “be holy”

← Extremism

Evangelism is inordinately emphasized by some as they seek to:

- build empires
- megachurches
- political power-bases

Church growth techniques:

- programs
- publicity
- fundraising

Numerical, statistical success factors:

- buildings
- budgets
- baptisms

Pietism

- an emphasis on external behavior that often leads people to become “fruit-inspectors” of one another’s behavior.

Some groups of Christians become in-grown, preoccupied with their own “spirituality”

- “faithful few”
- “Holy Club”
- remnant of the loyal

# Discipleship

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Instructional

Some regard the Church to be primarily an educational institution for the transmission of Christian information.

Knowledge, even Christian knowledge can foster arrogance (cf. I Cor. 8:1)

Christianity is not intended to be a mere “believe-right” religion.

Extremism →

## Relational

The relationality of the Triune Father, Son and Holy Spirit necessitates that we introduce Christians to an intimate relationality with God and with other Christians in the Church.

It seems best to meet a fellow believer where they are in life, and allow their questions to direct the relation and conversation.

- introducing them to the personal relationality of prayer, worship, and devotional life.
- encouraging them in the “one another” emphases of scripture.

It is possible to so emphasize the relationality of Christian “community” and fellowship that basic Christian instruction is neglected.

Relationality can become a fuzzy, feel-good comradery that fails to maintain any content or direction in building “disciple” of the living Lord Jesus.

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# Mission of the Church

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Truth   | Love   | Extremism →  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Evangelism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- popularly perceived as proceduralized techniques, formulas for sharing basic content of gospel.</li> <li>- 4 spiritual laws</li> </ul> | <p>Christocentric Truth</p> <p>Jn. 14:6 - "I AM ... Truth"</p> <p>The "truth of the gospel"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gal. 2:5,14; Eph. 1:13;</li> <li>Col. 1:5</li> <li>- gospel, <i>euaggellion</i>, "good news"</li> </ul> <p>Content of gospel</p> <p>St. Francis - "Share Christ wherever you go, and if necessary use words."</p> <p>Jesus Christ is the Truth, the reality, that every person needs to know.</p> <p>Eph. 4:15 - "speak the truth in love"</p> | <p>Christocentric Love</p> <p>I Jn. 4:8,16 - "God is love"</p> <p>Loving relational fellowship of Christian people should be attractive to those in rejective fallen world.</p> <p>Compassion for people</p> <p>"They'll know we are Christians by our love"</p> <p>Jesus Christ is present in every Christian for the purpose of expressing His LOVE to OTHERS.</p> <p>II Jn. 1:1 - "love in truth"</p> | <p>Socialism</p> <p>Communalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all-inclusive loving community</li> <li>- "all are welcome"</li> <li>- "it doesn't matter what you believe,"</li> <li>- "we love all"</li> </ul> <p>Relativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "everyone allowed to have their own truth"</li> </ul> <p>"Ain't it nice to be nice to nice people?"</p> |

# Identity

*Dialectic – Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Psychological

Identity often based on

- physical criteria:
- photographs
- fingerprints
- eye mapping

Personal sense of identity often based on:

- physical characteristics and abilities;
- ...beauty, intelligence, personality, athletic prowess, sexual prowess, musical ability, vocational career

- physical possessions; ...houses, cars, portfolios, clothing, furniture

- personal associations; ... sororities, fraternities, social organizations, church attended

Physicalism

Humanism

Performance

Materialism

Associationism

Religionism

→  
Extremism

## Spiritual

Internal and invisible sense of identity based on spiritual identification at the very core of our human being.

- either God or Satan  
I Jn. 3:10 - “children of God, children of devil obvious”

Spiritual identity is determined by our spiritual union with spirit-being, and thus a derived spiritual nature.

Derived spiritual identity. The basis of who I am is who He is!

Christian identity is not based on fleshly tendencies in one’s soul  
We are not just “sinners saved by grace.”

Abstractionism

Spiritual pride

Perfectionism.

Blasphemy of claiming to be who He alone is.

- “I am Jesus Christ...”
- “I am the Holy Spirit...”

# Freedom

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism      | FROM  | TO  | Extremism →   |
|------------------|---|---|---------------|
| License          | Freedom from sin<br>- Rom. 6:7, 18, 22; 8:2   | Free to “live by the Spirit”<br>- Rom. 8:2                | Spiritualism  |
| Libertinism      | Freedom from “flesh”<br>- Gal. 5:17           | Free to manifest “fruit of the Spirit”<br>- Gal. 5:22, 23 | Futurism      |
| Libertarianism   | Freedom from Law<br>- Rom. 7:3; 8:2, 3;       | Free to live in context of eternity - Phil. 3:20          | Escapism      |
| Antinomianism    | Gal. 5:1-13                                   | Free to live in hope<br>- Col. 1:27                       |               |
| Sinlessness      | Freedom from Death<br>- Rom. 8:2; Heb. 2:15   | Free to glorify God<br>- I Cor. 10:20                     |               |
| Anti-religionism | Freedom from Religion<br>- Col. 2:20-23       |   |               |
|                  | Free from guilt                               | Free to doubt   | Skepticism    |
|                  | Free from fear                                | Free to rest/relax  | Lethargy      |
|                  | Free from “trying to live the Christian life” | Free to live spontaneously                                | Individualism |
|                  | Free from correctness                         | Free to be your unique and different self                 |               |
|                  | Free from living by other’s expectation       | Free to live without demanding any “rights”               |               |
|                  | Free from habituated behavior patterns        | Free to be alone - with God                               | Monasticism   |
|                  |   | Free to live for others                                   |               |

← Extremism

## Spiritual Condition

When the “Holy One,” Jesus Christ (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 13:35), by the Spirit, indwells the spirit of a receptive individual, that person has a spiritual condition of holiness and is identified as a “holy one,” saint.

Eph. 1:4 - “holy and blameless before Him”  
 Col. 3:12 - “holy and beloved”  
 Eph. 4:24 - “new self ... created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”  
 Eph. 5:27 - “church ... holy and blameless”  
 Heb. 3:1 - “holy brethren”  
 I Pet. 2:9 - “holy nation”

Derived spiritual condition of saint or “holy one” does not imply essential holiness of character.

“God is holy” essentially holy *a se*, in Himself, but a Christian identified as a “holy one” is not essentially holy, but derives holy condition and expression from the holy character of God.

← Extremism

## Behavioral Expression

The indwelling presence of the Holy One is intended to progressively manifest His holy character in the behavior of His holy people.

I Pet. 1:16 - “be holy,...for I am holy”  
 II Cor. 1:12 - “in holiness and godly sincerity we have conducted ourselves.”  
 II Cor. 7:1 - “perfecting holiness in the fear of God”  
 II Pt. 3:11 - “holy conduct and godliness”  
 Heb. 12:10 - “that we might share in His holiness”  
 Heb. 12:14 - “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord”

Pietistic holiness - conformity to behavioral, clothing, worship patterns deemed to be “holy”

External holiness expressions do not create or constitute inter-spiritual condition of holiness.

Christian holiness (condition and expression) is always derived holiness.

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# Love

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| <p style="text-align: center;">← Extremism</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Personal Act</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>God's Character</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Extremism</p>  |
|---|---|
| <p>Activism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active gestures of compassionate benevolence, whether individual or collective, may be admirable, but if not derived out of the divine <i>agape</i> love of God's character, do not qualify as Christian love.</li> <li>- may be merely sentimentalism and affection.</li> </ul>   | <p>Passivism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No such reality as "passive love" - love is always actively expressed toward others.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Many imperatives calling on Christians to "love" in new covenant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "love one another" (Jn. 13:34,35; 15:12,17; Rom. 13:8)</li> <li>- "love neighbor" (Matt 22:39; Mk 12:31)</li> <li>- "love enemies" (Matt. 5:44; Lk 6:27,35)</li> <li>- "love wives" (Eph. 5:25,28; Col. 3:19)</li> <li>- "love husbands" (Titus 2:4)</li> </ul> | <p>I Jn. 4:8,16 - "God is love" - this is the indicative on which all imperatives for personal love action is predicated.</p> <p>Divine <i>agape</i> love can only be expressed in human behavior as it is spiritually derived from God.</p>  |
| <p>I Jn 4:12 - "if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us."</p>   | <p>Rom. 5:5 - "the love of God poured out in our hearts by Holy Spirit given to us.</p> <p>Rom. 15:30 - "love in the Spirit"</p> <p>Gal. 5:22 - "the fruit of the Spirit is love ..."</p> <p>I Jn. 4:20 - "the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."</p> |

# Sexuality

Dialectic – Both/And

← Extremism

## External Act

Perfervent sex  
 Mechanical sex  
 Casual sex

Focus on sexual performance or frequency.

Sexual immorality  
 - fornication  
 - adultery  
 - promiscuity  
 - prostitution  
 - rape, incest  
 - voyeurism  
 - sadism  
 - sexual abuse  
 - polygamy  
 - persons used as sex objects

“Sex” from Lat. *sexus* - “to divide.”  
 Gen. 1:27 - “male & female He created them”  
 Gen. 1:28 - “be fruitful and multiply”  
 Gen. 2:25 - “naked and not ashamed”  
 Gen. 2:24 - “be one flesh”  
 Intercourse between man and woman.  
 - Greek *koite* - get Eng. word “coitus”  
 Heb. 13:4 - “let marriage bed (*koite*) be undefiled”  
 Genital friction of male penis glans/female clitoris leading to climax.  
 Masturbation?  
 Homosexuality

## Internal Perspective

• Psychological – mental thought life is important component of human sexuality.  
 - emotional feelings are present in sexual acts  
 - volitional choices of sexual involvement.  
 • Spiritual – God created sexuality and sustains its beauty.  
 Gal. 3:28 - “male & female, one in Christ Jesus”  
 I Pt. 1:7 - “fellow heirs of grace of life”  
 Every act of Christian life, an act of worship.  
 Christ in Christian engages in sexual expression.  
 Character of Christ in every sexual action.

Sexual addiction, obsession, compulsion  
 - lust, fantasizing  
 - sexual fetishes

Pornography  
 - visual images used as substitute for physical act, or as virtual reality/vicarious experience.

Religious deification of sexual actions.  
 - Aphrodite  
 - Venus

# Marriage

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Union

- Essential Union
  - Union of partners pushed to point of fusion, absorption, or “couplism”
    - separate identity disallowed.
  - Other partner regarded as “my life.”
  - One regarded as extension of other.
  - Authoritarianism
  - Ownership or controlling of the other.
  - Disallowing of differences.
- Gen. 2:24 - “they become one flesh”  
 Mal. 2:15 - “God made one Matt. 19:6 - “what God has joined, let no man part asunder”  
 Two become one in spirit, soul and body.  
 Spiritual union - I Cor. 7:39  
 I Pet. 3:7  
 Covenant union - Mal. 2:14  
 Prov. 2:17  
 Legal union - divinely ordained institution  
 Love union - seeks highest good of the other  
 Relational union - mutual interdependence  
 Physical, sexual union - Heb. 13:4 - marriage bed

→ Extremism

## Distinction

- Unique personalities of husband and wife. They remain individuals, not lesser or superior to other.
  - Marriage designed for complementarity.
  - Love requires “other” to be love.
  - Interactive communication of ideas, values, interests.
  - - marital love involves enjoying the differences.
  - - working through situations in harmony and reconciliation.
  - Maintaining distinction requires respect of the other’s ideas and interests in transparency, honesty and integrity.
- Individualism  
 - selfish pursuits  
 Gender wars  
 - male chauvinism  
 - feminist agenda  
 Competition  
 Role-playing  
 Detachment  
 - co-habitants  
 - separation and divorce  
 Hidden secrets  
 - deceit, manipulation, addition, false accusations, sexual liaisons  
 Selfishness  
 - narcissism  
 - self-gratification

# Marriage

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Divine Order

Respect for God's design  
 Divine institution of marriage has order.  
 Matt. 19:5,6 - "leave father and mother, joined to wife as one flesh"  
 Eph. 5:22,25 - "wives be subject to husbands; husbands love your wives."  
 Col. 3:18 - "wives be subject to your husbands."  
 I Pet. 3:1 - "wives be submissive to own husbands"

## Mutual Deference

Respect for spouse  
 Love, honor, esteem allows one to trust & yield to other, not demanding our own agenda and interests.  
 Eph. 5:21 - "have deference for one another"  
 Phil. 2:3,4 - "Do nothing from selfishness ... regard the other as more important than yourselves; .."

Egalitarianism  
 Libertarianism  
 Laissez faire  
 - indifference  
 - dispassionate  
 - "whatever!"  
 - "who gives a damn?"

When a couple is overly deferential it produces disordered interpersonal relationship, with frustration and resentment.

← Extremism

Hierarchicalism  
 Authoritarianism  
 - husband not to be a dictator, boss  
 - wife not to be subservient slave.  
 "Control issues" in marriages.  
 Demand for submission evidences inequality.  
 No excuse for rudeness, selfishness, intimidation, fear  
 Biblical statements regarded as rules or role-playing.

# Marriage

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Work

Legalism  
 - “God’s rules for a happy marriage”  
 - “live by the Book and you will please God.”

Absolutism of thinking that one has marriage all figured out.  
 - “Religion has destroyed more marriages than it has helped.”

Hypocrisy of thinking marriage is accomplishment  
 - “marriage is what you make it”

Marriage takes more than love – it takes hard work!  
 Love is always active.  
 Marriage is responsibility.

Imperatives of marriage:  
 - “love your wives” - Eph. 5:25,28; Col. 3:19; I Pt 3:7  
 - love husbands” Tit. 2:4  
 - “wives submit to husbands” - Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18,19; I Pet. 3:1  
 - respect husband. Eph 5:33

Love is not something we can generate and enact.  
 Decision of faith to allow love to function in us  
 Role of husband - head  
 Role of wife - subservient

→ Extremism

## Grace

You cannot make your marriage work!  
 Marriage is impossible by our best self-effort.

Indicative of resource and provision for marriage:  
 - The grace-dynamic of the living Lord Jesus Christ  
 Gal 5:22,23 - Fruit of the Spirit

Love is the character of the Triune God.  
 “God is love” - I Jn. 4:8,16  
 “love of Christ controls us” - II Cor. 5:14  
 “faith thru love” - Gal 5:6  
 Christ in you as husband.  
 Christ in you as wife.

Defeatism  
 “If you can’t make it work, leave it and try another.

Abstractionism  
 - Can’t get a handle on grace”

Relativism -  
 Traffic on grace, by turning the provision of grace into narcissistic selfishness.

Passivism -  
 “Just go with the flow of grace”

# Family

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Social Unit

- Deification of family relationships and loyalty.
- Authority structures often become the primary format and dynamic of family interactions.
  - often leads to abuse of authority
- Gothard emphases
  - perpetual paternal authority
  - umbrella of authority
- Family is a divinely instituted microcosm of social community.
- Relational function of family based on Triune interrelations of love.
- Biblical model of family: Husband, wife, children
- Eph 5:24-33 - "husbands/wives (Col. 3:18,19)
- Eph. 6:1-4 - "children/parents" (Col. 3:20,21)
- Exod 20:12 - "honor your father and mother"
- Opportunities to learn:
  - how Trinity functions
  - how to fail, be accepted
  - basis of forgiveness.
  - that authority is intrinsic to all social units.
  - how to accept discipline

→ Extremism

## Individuals

- A family is comprised of individuals with differing ages, genders, and personalities.
- Each individual has unique "way he should go" (Prov. 22:6).
- Individuals must learn to relate to others in love and deference, with respect, honor and obedience for God-ordained authority.
  - such relations should not take advantage of others in ways that provoke, exasperate, or lead to "disputes, dissensions, or outbursts of anger" (Gal. 5:20).
  - Relationship of individuals supersedes authority.
- Individualism
  - "I don't need others to be who I am!"
- Absence of any sense of family loyalty.
- Excessive emphasis on personal independence.
- Undue emphasis on personal "rights" or privileges.

# Counseling

*Dialectic - Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Behavioral Advice</b>  | <b>Spirit-counsel</b>  | Extremism →  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Psychologism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unending stream of theories of how to live in one's own strength</li> <li>- psycho-therapy</li> </ul> <p>Humanism</p> <p>Behaviorism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- advocacy of self-effort techniques for self-regulation of one's behavior.</li> </ul> <p>Job's counselors:</p> <p>Job 26:3,4;<br/>Job 38:2;<br/>Job 42:9</p> | <p>Instruction and suggestion for regulation of human behavior.</p> <p>Such "counsel" includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- moral advice</li> <li>- psychological principles</li> <li>- biblical principles and imperatives (though often disconnected from indications of God's provision).</li> <li>- "how-to's" - avoid temptation, pray, read bible,</li> <li>- personal examples; sharing what has happened in one's own life</li> </ul> <p>Rom. 15:14 - "competent to counsel" (Jay Adams)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nouthetic counseling</li> <li>- cognitive counseling</li> <li>- behavioral counseling</li> </ul> | <p>The Spirit of Christ is the ultimate counselor:</p> <p>Isa. 9:6 - "Counselor..."</p> <p>Jn. 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7</p> <p>"send counselor, Spirit."</p> <p>I Cor. 3:18 - "the Lord, the Spirit.</p> <p>I Cor. 15:45 - "last Adam, life-giving Spirit"</p> <p>The pneumatic Christ is the Spirit-counselor.</p> <p>Spirit-counsel is sharing Christ in a way that another person can personally relate the living indwelling Christ to their situations of life.</p> <p>Eph. 1:11 - "the counsel of His will"</p> | <p>Spiritualism</p> <p>"spirituo-therapy" - principles and procedures of how the Spirit allegedly works in various situations.</p> <p>Some who think they have "gift of counseling," are just trying to "play Holy Spirit" in the lives of others.</p> |

# Forgiveness

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Divine Source

Claiming inability of natural forgiveness, saying, “Only God can forgive,” can be an avoidance of responsibility.

- unwilling to be the conduit of relational forgiveness.

The Church is the society of the forgiven, but must not be a cluster of “forgiven sinners” longing for heaven and failing to express forgiveness.

Extremism →

## Human Conduit

The relational forgiveness of others who might have wronged us is predicated on receiving God’s forgiveness.

The indwelling presence of the Divine Forgive provides the Christian with everything necessary to forgive others.

The Christian becomes the conduit of God’s divine forgiveness, allowing such forgiveness to flow to others despite how we might have been wronged, and without any residual resentment or bitterness.

Unforgiveness has consequences - Ps. 132:1-4

Non-acceptance of God’s forgiveness expressed by us places the onus on the one who has thus “taken offense.”

Failure to recognize the indwelling presence of the Divine Forgive in the Christian casts the believer into increased religious self-effort to muster up a forgiving attitude

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# Christian Giving

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Personal  | Extremism →   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Legalism</b><br/>                     II Cor. 9:7 - under compulsion”<br/>                     Legislated and mandated per-centages - tithing<br/>                     Ecclesiasticism<br/>                     Hitting people up for contributions for projects.<br/>                     Christian giving is NOT:<br/>                     - guilt-motivated<br/>                     - need-actuated<br/>                     - manipulated<br/>                     - to repay God<br/>                     - giving beyond our means<br/>                     - for prosperity<br/>                     - for glory of man<br/>                     - for tax purposes</p> | <p>Divine Giver (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) lives in the Christian.<br/>                     Intangible assets of God’s grace via Jesus Christ.<br/>                     - James 1:17 - “every good gift is from above.”<br/>                     - Rom. 8:32 - “freely gives us all things”<br/>                     God’s grace expressed in our givingness- II Cor. 8:1<br/>                     Freedom of choice to give<br/>                     II Cor. 8:3 - “our accord”<br/>                     II Cor. 9:7 - “as they pur-posed in their hearts”<br/>                     “God loves a cheerful/satis-fied giver” (II Cor 9:7)<br/>                     By obedience we “listen under” God’s direction to determine what/to whom He would have us to give.</p> | <p><b>Idealism</b><br/>                     - many pragmatic realists cannot conceive that giving by the grace-prompting of God’s Spirit will ever ade-quately finance the Church and what God might want to do in today’s world.<br/>                     “Just pie in the sky by and bye”</p> |

# Obedience

Dialectic - Both/And

Extremism

## Keeping commands

## Listening to God

Extremism

Particularly in the old covenant (Old Testament) obedience was conceptualized in terms of keeping the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law

- Deut. 27:10 - "obey God and do His commands"
- Judges 3:4 - "obey the commandments..."

The new covenant (New Testament) concept of obedience is based on the Greek *hupakouo* meaning "to listen under."

- relational *koινωνia* with Triune God.
- listen under God's voice to ascertain His direction of what He desires to do and be in our lives.

New Covenant advocates respect for authority

I Pt. 2:13 - "submit to every human institution ... one in authority."

Heb. 13:7 - "obey leaders"

I Pt. 3:6 - "Sarah obeyed Abraham"

Eph. 6:1 - "obey parents"

Obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26)

- listening under God, the Christian responds with receptivity to His activity.

I Pt. 1:2 - "to obey Jesus Christ"

Acts 5:29 - "obey God rather than man"

**Legalism**

- when obedience is conceived only as command-ment-keeping, it will inevitably be performance-based self-effort to keep religious or social laws.

**Passivism**

- to listen with no intent to respond to what one is told is but an exercise in futility.

The familiar hymn advocates that we "Trust and Obey"

- to affirm one's trust in God's love and faithfulness without consequent obedient listening is hypocrisy.

**Unquestioned obedience to authority allows tyranny to thrive.**

# Cross of Christ

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Historical Event</b>  | <b>Personal Implications</b>  | → Extremism  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Historicism  | Heinous travesty of justice when Jewish religious leaders and the Roman authorities acted in concert to orchestrate the murderous execution of an innocent individual. (cf. Acts 4:27; Objective - external, outside of ourselves.             | More than just a parochial execution, the death of Jesus on a Roman cross was God's means to overcome spiritual death and effect the death of the "old man" in those individuals who receive Jesus' life. Subjective - internal, inside of ourselves. | Experimentalism  |
| Evangelical Christianity has often emphasize the objective historical event to the neglect of the subjective personal and experiential implications. | I Cor. 15:3 - "Christ died for our sins"<br>Rom. 5:8 - "while yet sinners, Christ died for us"<br>I Cor. 1:23 - "we preach Christ crucified"<br>I Cor. 1:28 - "crucified the Lord of glory"<br>I Pt 3:18 - "Christ died for sins once for all" | Rom. 6:2 - "died to sin"<br>Rom. 6:6 - "old man has been crucified with Christ"<br>Gal. 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ..."<br>Col. 2:20 - "you have died with Christ"<br>II Tim. 2:11 - "if we died with Him, we also shall live with Him" | Although mortification of our sinful behaviors is part of Christian life, this is to be work of Spirit, not self-effort. |
| View Christianity - as historical society - as theological society   |  |   |  |

# Resurrection

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | <b>Event</b>  | <b>Dynamic</b>  | → Extremism  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Historicism  | Historical events are necessarily static.   | Risen and living Lord Jesus is dynamic.   | Experientialism  |
| The Christian faith is more than just an historical society to remember the events of Jesus' life.           | Individual physical Christ Jesus was put to death on the cross, and on the third day was raised from the dead.  | Risen Lord Jesus continues to live as the pneumatic Christ who raises spiritually dead individuals to newness of life.  | Esotericism<br>Spiritualism<br>Mysticism   |
| Theologism   | Information   | Transformation  | The assertion of experiential and spiritual newness of life, apart from the historical |
| The Christian faith is more than just a theological society to provide accurate explanation of those events. | John 20:1 - "stone rolled away from the tomb."<br>Lk. 24:12 - "Peter saw the linen wrappings"<br>I Cor. 15:4 - "He was raised on the third day..."<br>I Cor. 15:14 - "If Christ not raised, preaching/faith is vain." | Rom. 6:4 - "newness of life"<br>Phil. 3:10 - "know the power of the resurrection"<br>Rom. 1:4 - "Son of God w/ power by resurrection."<br>I Cor. 15:45 - "last Adam became life-giving Spirit"<br>I Pt 1:3 - "born again... through the resurrection" | grounding of Jesus' physical resurrection becomes unproven experientialism.            |

# Prayer

*Dialectic – Both/And*

|   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>← Extremism</p> <p><b>Verbal</b></p> | <p>Communication</p> <p>“when you pray, say ....” (Lk. 11:2)</p> <p>“Ask, and you will receive” (Jn. 16:24)</p> <p>“Spirit gave utterance” (Acts 2:4)</p> <p>audible / inaudible</p> <p>spoken / unspoken</p> <p>vocal / non-vocal</p> <p>oral / silent</p> <p>public / private</p> <p>planned / spontaneous</p> <p>Prayer that uses the conventions of grammar and the language the pray-er is familiar with.</p> <p>Liturgical prayer</p> <p>- traditions of church</p> | <p><b>Nonverbal</b></p> <p>→ Extremism</p> | <p>Communion</p> <p>“having ears to hear what the Spirit is saying...” (Rev. 2,3)</p> <p>“Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26)</p> <p><i>In the Garden</i> - “tells me I am His own”</p> <p>The heart’s true home</p> <p>- comfort in closeness</p> <p>- personal connection</p> <p>- the joy of union</p> <p>- going with flow of God’s grace.</p> <p>- inner affirmation</p> <p>- listening obedience</p> <p>Eucharistic lifestyle of enjoying God’s “good grace”</p> <p>Christ-consciousness</p> <p>- meditative, contemplative</p> | <p>Internal, subjective praying can become individualized and detached from the community of the saints, the Church.</p> <p>Mysticism</p> <p>Asceticism</p> <p>Quietism</p> <p>Subjectivism</p> |
|---|---|--|--|---|

# Prayer

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Prewritten

## Conversational

← Extremism

Reading of prewritten prayers, perhaps from *Prayer Book* or *Book of Common Worship*.

Spontaneity of unrehearsed conversational prayer with God - either private or public prayer.

**Mechanical**  
 - planned and organized recitation and repetition of prewritten prayers can be legitimate means to the end of communing with God, but must not be allowed to be an end in themselves.

**Relational**  
 - prayer is the privilege of the Christian to commune and fellowship in *koinonia* with the Triune God  
 - as “partakers (*koinonoi*) of the divine nature” (II Pt. 1:4), we share in the *koinonia* of the Triune God, and converse with Father, Son and Spirit.

Meaningless repetition  
 - Matt. 6:7 - “when you pray...do not use meaningless repetition”

Such spontaneous conversation may be in simple words or complex ideas.

Spontaneity of conversation should not be interpreted as unorganized and thoughtless prayer.

Conversational prayer can also be repetitious, as some use the same words over and over.

Some people have become so dependent on prewritten prayers that they have not developed a personal relationship with the Triune God.

Meaningless repetition of repeating prescribed prayers can become as much a ritual as the Buddhist “prayer wheel.”

# Prayer

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism ←

## Godward

## Inward

Is prayer of any benefit to the God who hears it?  
- doesn't need anything  
- knows all in advance

How does prayer benefit the pray-er?

Some have suggested that there is a divine "law of prayer" that inevitably works when the proper procedures are utilized.

The mystery of conversing with the Infinite God seems to restructure our thinking to see from His perspective.

There is "something understood" in the depths of our being, even if we are unaware of what God is saying or doing in us.

Phil. 4:6 - "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

This may involve awareness of fleshly tendencies and self-denial of such.

Our prayers of thanksgiving, praise, & confession surely bring joy to God's heart.

We are listening in the "obedience of faith"

It has been suggested that prayer is just a psychological process of auto-suggestion, whereby we hype ourselves into thinking that we know God and what He seeks to do in our lives.

- just wishful thinking that we are connecting with some One beyond ourselves

# Prayer

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Purposeful

Jesus gave His disciples a basic model for purposed prayer.

Matt. 6:9 - "Our Father, who art in heaven..."

Purposed procedures can be beneficial

- time (Quiet Time)

- place (Prayer Chamber)

Matt. 6:6 - "inner room"

- written list (Prayer List)

of person, situations one wants to remember.

I Tim. 2:1 - "I urge entreaties and prayers...be made on behalf of all men"

Liturgical prayers of the Church

- Prayer Book

- Public worship services

- Prayer partners

Proceduralism

Techniquism

- standardizing prayer into pre-set formulas.

Legalism of scheduling a "time of prayer"

- guilt for not spending enough time in prayer.

Liturgism

Ritualism

- unthinking repetition of merely "saying prayers."

Extremism →

## Spontaneous

One's heart is caught by surprise in act of prayer.

- driving, reading, working

Lk. 24:32 - "our hearts

burned within us"

Times when our inner being senses a closeness and oneness with God.

- transcends intellectual

and verbal communication.

- spontaneous pulse of

awe, reverence, worship

- Our "spirit-union" (I

Cor. 6:17) prompts communion with Triune God.

This can become "prayer

without ceasing" (I Thess.

5:17)

This has been called "the

prayer of the heart"

Spontaneity of

prayer must not

become an excuse

for neglecting

purposeful

individual prayer

and church involvement

in prayer.

Individuated

spontaneity of

prayer has been

touted as a form

of elitist spirituality.

# Christian Security

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

← Extremism

## Psychological

### Subjectivity

- Inner assurance
- I Jn 5:12- “you may know, and have confidence”
- II Tim. 1:12 - “I know ... and am convinced”
- Rom. 8:16 - Spirit bears witness with my spirit”
- Procedural basis:
  - secure that I have engaged in the right actions:
    - walked the aisle
    - repeated the creed
    - signed church covenant
- Epistemological basis:
  - secure that I have believed and assented to the right/correct tenets of Christian faith.

### Objectivity

- Security of relationship based beyond oneself in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ.
- based on the dynamic eternality and permanence of the very Being of the Triune God.
- Faithfulness of God in Christ by the Spirit
  - Jn. 6:37 - “not cast out”
  - Jn. 10:38 - “no one can snatch them out...”
  - Heb. 13:5 - “I will never desert you or forsake you”
  - I Cor. 1:8 - “confirm you to the end”
  - I Pt. 1:5 - “protected by the power of God”

## Christological

- Denial that subjective feelings have anything to do with relationship with Christ.
- Assertion that personal faithfulness has nothing to do with relationship with Christ.

# Worship

*Dialectic – Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Public

- Ritualism
- Liturgism
  - specified procedures performed by priests.
  - Clericalism
  - Programmed proceduralism
- Worship occurs only at a specific time and place.
  - church building
  - 11 am Sunday morning.
- Collective experience of entertainment or excitement.
  - Experientialism
  - “Happy, clappy” worship services

→  
Extremism

## Private

- Lifestyle worship
  - constant and spontaneous expression of worship by Christian individuals.
  - unique expression in individual Christians
- Expresses the worth-ship of the divine Being and character in the behavior of a Christian person.
  - Every act of the Christian life is to be an act of worship.
  - actuated by God’s grace
  - faithful receptivity of God’s activity.
- Christian worship must be Christ in action in us.
  - “Worship Him in Spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24)

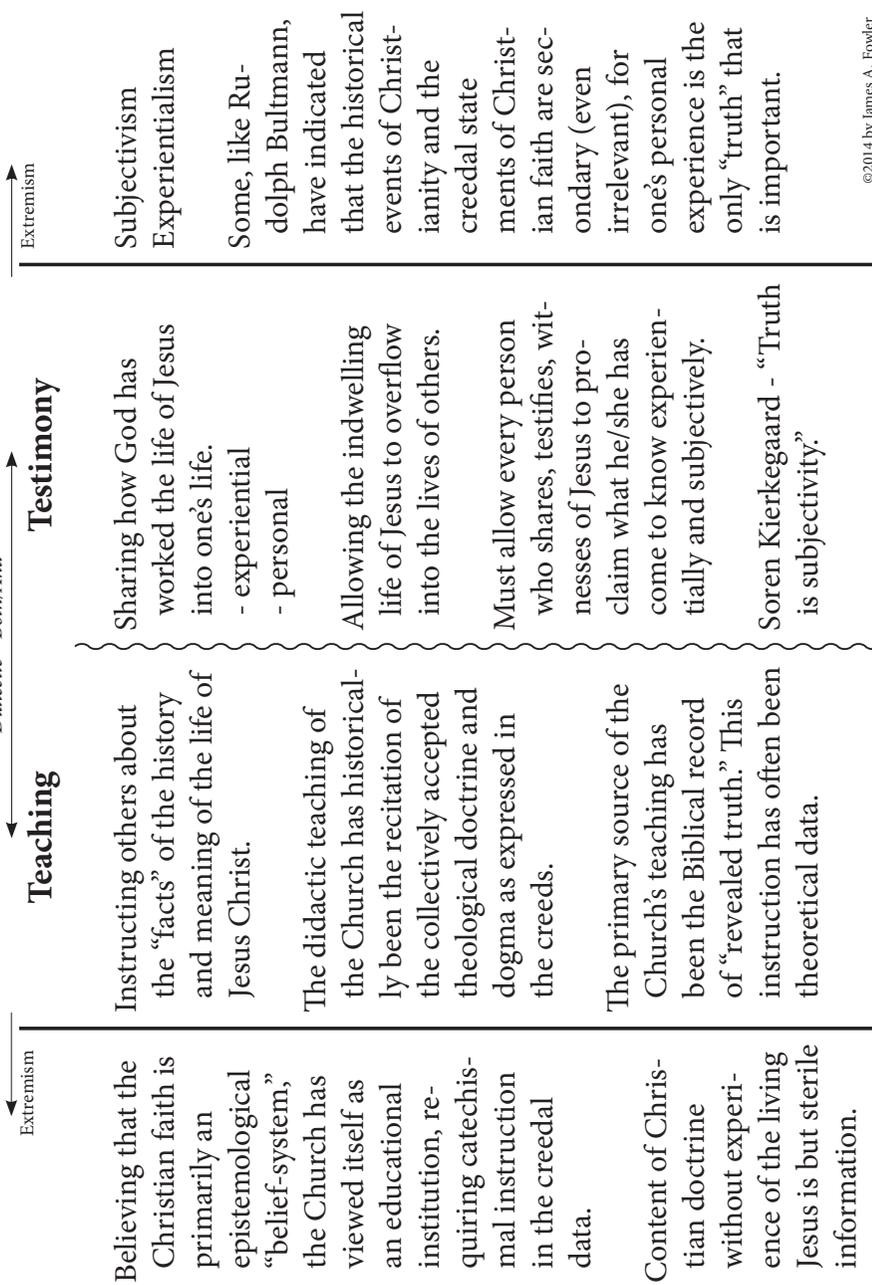
- Asceticism
- Monasticism
- Quietism
- Individualism
  - “do it yourself” worship.

Anthropocentric worship wherein the “blessing” of the worshipper is the objective.

Behaviorism  
- quality of worship determined by our outcomes.

# Sharing Christ

*Dialectic – Both/And*



← Extremism

Extremism →

## Teaching

## Testimony

Believing that the Christian faith is primarily an epistemological “belief-system,” the Church has viewed itself as an educational institution, requiring catechismal instruction in the creedal data.

Content of Christian doctrine without experience of the living Jesus is but sterile information.

Instructing others about the “facts” of the history and meaning of the life of Jesus Christ.

The didactic teaching of the Church has historically been the recitation of the collectively accepted theological doctrine and dogma as expressed in the creeds.

The primary source of the Church’s teaching has been the Biblical record of “revealed truth.” This instruction has often been theoretical data.

Sharing how God has worked the life of Jesus into one’s life.

- experiential
- personal

Allowing the indwelling life of Jesus to overflow into the lives of others.

Must allow every person who shares, testifies, witnesses of Jesus to proclaim what he/she has come to know experientially and subjectively.

Soren Kierkegaard - “Truth is subjectivity.”

Subjectivism  
Experientialism

Some, like Rudolph Bultmann, have indicated that the historical events of Christianity and the creedal state-ments of Christian faith are secondary (even irrelevant), for one’s personal experience is the only “truth” that is important.

# Ministry

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Particular

Christian ministry in the context of the Church requires ministerial leadership.

“Jesus appointed twelve” (Mk. 3:14,16)

“Lord appointed seventy others” (Lk. 10:1)

“appointed elders in every church” (Acts 14:23)

“I was appointed preacher, teacher, ...” (II Tim 1:11)

“fulfill your ministry” (II Tim. 4:5)

Leaders need to be theologically educated, and vocationally trained.

“Ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4)

Extremism →

## Inclusive

Christian ministry in the context of the Church involves participation of every believer.

Priesthood of all believers - (I Peter 2:5,9)

Ministry of all believers - (Eph. 4:12 - “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry”)

“God appointed in the church, apostles, prophets, teachers, ...” (I Cor. 12:28)

Every Christian has been spiritually gifted to function in the church in the ministry of Jesus.

Ministry is the overflow of the life of Jesus to others. “Serve one another” (Gal. 5:13)

The involvement of all Christians without the oversight of trained Christian leaders can result in - “zeal without knowledge” (Rom. 10:2) - spiritual pride of assuming positions of control.

Individualism  
Temperamentalism

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# Pastor

*Dialectic – Both/And*

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| ←<br>Extremism  | ←<br>Extremism   | →<br>Extremism  |
| <p><b>Spiritual Giftedness</b></p> <p>The word “pastor” in the New Testament is Greek word for “shepherd” (<i>poimen</i>)</p> <p>Eph. 4:11 - “God gave some as pastors and teachers”</p> <p>God gifts some individuals with spiritual wisdom and ability to shepherd the flock of God’s people, the Church.</p> <p>A pastor is but an under-shepherd of the “Great Shepherd,” Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 13:20)</p> <p>I Pet. 2:25 - “Shepherd and Guardian of our souls”</p> <p>Jn. 10:2-16-Good Shepherd Responsibility to “equip the saints” (Eph. 4:12) and “care for saints” (Acts 20)</p> | <p><b>Position in Church</b></p> <p>As the church developed organizationally into a hierarchical institution, pastoral position became prominent in local church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identified as parson, preacher, padre, priest, minister, reverend, clergy</li> </ul> <p>Questions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pastoral responsibility? preach, counsel, administer, worship leader</li> <li>- pastoral accountability? local church (employee?) denomination, God</li> <li>- pastoral authority? Is pastor authority over local church?</li> </ul> <p>I Pet. 5:3 - “not lording it over those allotted to your charge ....”</p> | <p>Contemporary pastoral position has often become - ecclesiastical office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professional career</li> <li>- vocational aspiration</li> </ul> <p>Clericalism and distinct clergy/laity separation.</p> <p>Required theological and administrative training, often with little or no emphasis on spiritual maturity.</p> |

# Healing

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Physical

Mistaken concepts of bodily healing: “God does not intend for anyone to die physically.” “Healing is in the atonement,” and all physical ailments are promised to be healed if one exercises faith in Christ’s redemptive death.”  
 Isa. 53:5 - “by His stripes we are healed” (1 Pet. 2:24; Matt 8:17)  
 Abuses of “faith-healing”

→ Extremism

## Whole Person

Christians expect the eventual total, eternal wellbeing of the entire person in the heavenly realm.  
 Rev. 21:4 - “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain...”  
 In this sense it can be said that physical death can be viewed as the ultimate healing of an individual.  
 - avoidance of physical death is not a Christian aspiration.  
 Phil. 1:23 - “desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better”

Some Christians believe that the supernatural sign gifts were only for the apostolic period, and that after the New Testament period supernatural physical healing is not to be expected.  
 Some have argued that the whole person is healed in regeneration, and all physical ailments are just an illusion.

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# Church History

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Perfection

The Christian Church is not essentially and intrinsically perfect in character, as only God is.

The Church has, however, evidenced perfection in the Greek sense of *teleiosis*, i.e. functioning in accord with the end and objective for which it was instituted by God.

Such “perfection” is evidenced when the “Body of Christ,” the Church allows for the individual and collective expression of the life and character of the living Lord Jesus.

The Church has often been elevated by the faithful to a place of being beyond criticism.

Basing their opinions on I Sam. 26:9-23, church leaders have often avoided critique for being “the Lord’s anointed.”

→ Extremism

## Perversion

The history of the Christian Church reveals that the Church has often failed to function as intended by God, and has often misrepresented Christ in sinful perversion and corruption.

Ecclesiastical perversions include, but not limited to:

- inquisitions, crusades
- witch hunts
- financial extortion
- indulgences
- pastoral immorality
- pedophilia
- excommunication abuse
- papal power-plays
- child/elder abuse

Ecclesiastical perversion often goes unchecked when a policy of “separation of church and state” forestalls legal accountability for otherwise illegal activities.

Also when ecclesiastical authorities protect their own and do not hold them accountable for moral turpitude

# The Christian and the World

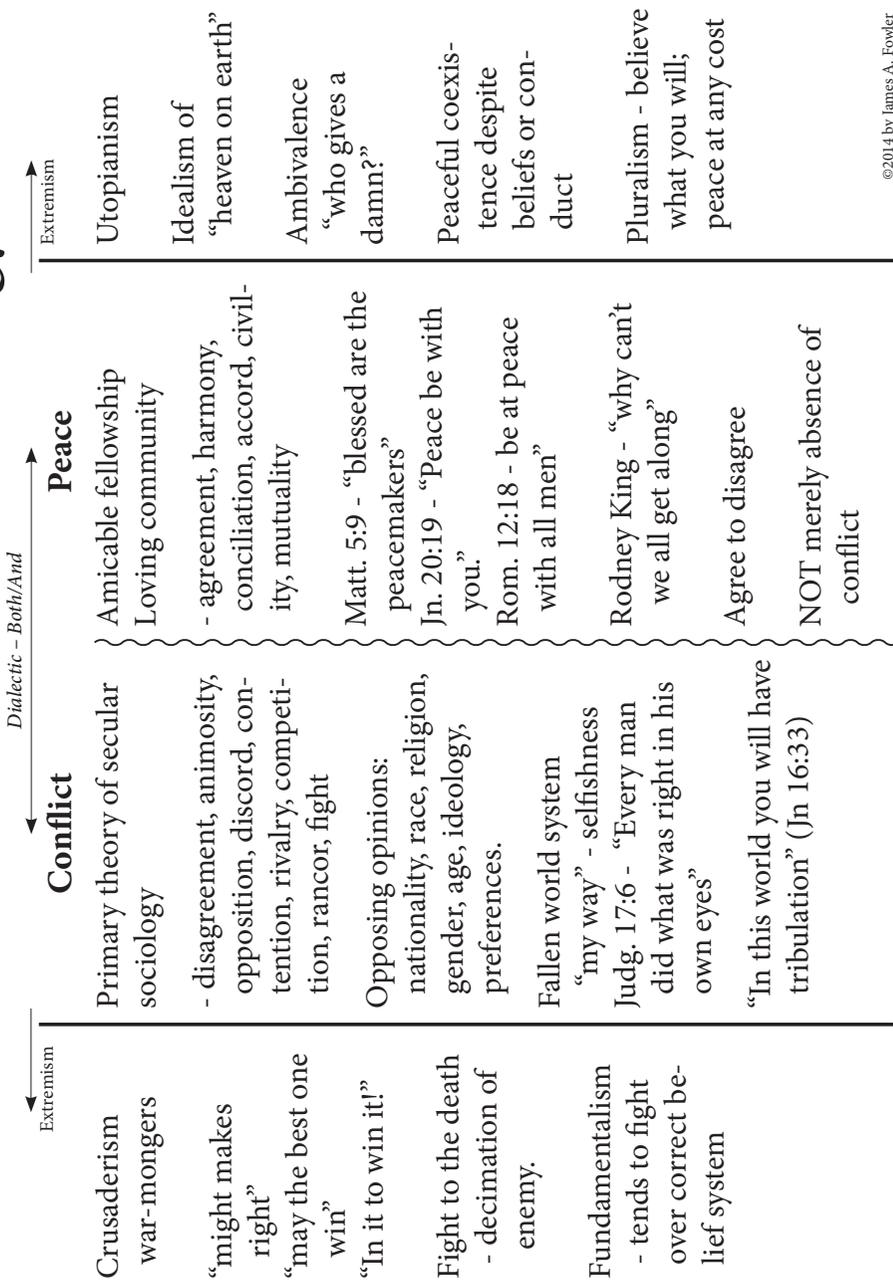
| <i>Dialectic - Both/And</i>  |   |
|--|---|
| ←<br>Extremism   | →<br>Extremism  |
| In the world   | Not of the world  |
| <p>Accommodationism</p> <p>Adaptationism</p> <p>Capitulation</p> <p>Compromise</p> <p>Acquiescence</p> <p>Appeasement</p> <p>Synthesize</p> <p>Submergionism</p> <p>Adopting the methods and techniques of the world.</p> <p>Attempts to change, reform, improve or “save the world.”</p> <p>Reconstruction-ism</p>                                | <p>Jn. 17:14 - “they (disciples of Jesus) are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”</p> <p>Jn. 17:16 - “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”</p> <p>Jn. 18:36 - “my kingdom is not of this world”</p> <p>II Cor. 6:14 - “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; ...”</p> <p>II Cor. 6:17 - “come out from their midst and be separate”</p> <p>I Pet. 2:11 - “strangers and aliens”</p> <p>Heb. 11:13 - “citizens of heaven”</p> <p><i>Ecclesia</i> - “called out”</p> |
| <p>Escapism</p> <p>Separationism</p> <p>Withdrawal</p> <p>Detachment</p> <p>Asceticism</p> <p>Monasticism</p> <p>Disengagement</p> <p>Uninvolved</p> <p>Avoidance</p> <p>Ghetto mentality</p> <p>Bombshelter mentality</p> <p>Christian sub-culture</p> <p>Become “Holy Huddle”</p> <p>Repudiation of the world</p> <p>Make war with the world</p> |   |

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*Interactive*  
*Both/And Dialectics*  
*dealing with*  
*Social Issues*



# Human Interactions/Sociology



# Institutions

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

Extremism →

## Divine

God-ordained institutions:

- Human volition
- Gen. 2:7-17 - God Self-limited Himself to create response-able choosing derivative creatures.
- Marriage
- Gen. 2:18-25 - God instituted the relational union of one man and one woman in marriage.
- Government
- Rom. 13:1-7 - “no governing authority except from God.” to provide order, rule, control...
- Church - *ecclesia*
- Matt. 16:18 - “I will build My church.”
- Jesus is Head of Church
- cf. Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18

## Human

Human institutions and organizations necessary for implementing form & structure of divine institutions.

Such institutions may be:

- ideological
- legal
- social
- cultural
- national
- community, public
- political
- moral
- economic
- educational
- athletic
- religious
- business
- benevolent
- medical

Humanism

Absolutism

Fundamentalism

Idealism

Proceduralism

Techniquism

Governmental

totalitarianism

- abuse of power

Ecclesiastical

imposition

Institutionalism

Structuralism

Formalism

Authoritarianism

Humanism

Making human

institutions sacrosanct.

- deifying one's

ideology, political

persuasions,

nationalism,

patriotism,

religionism.

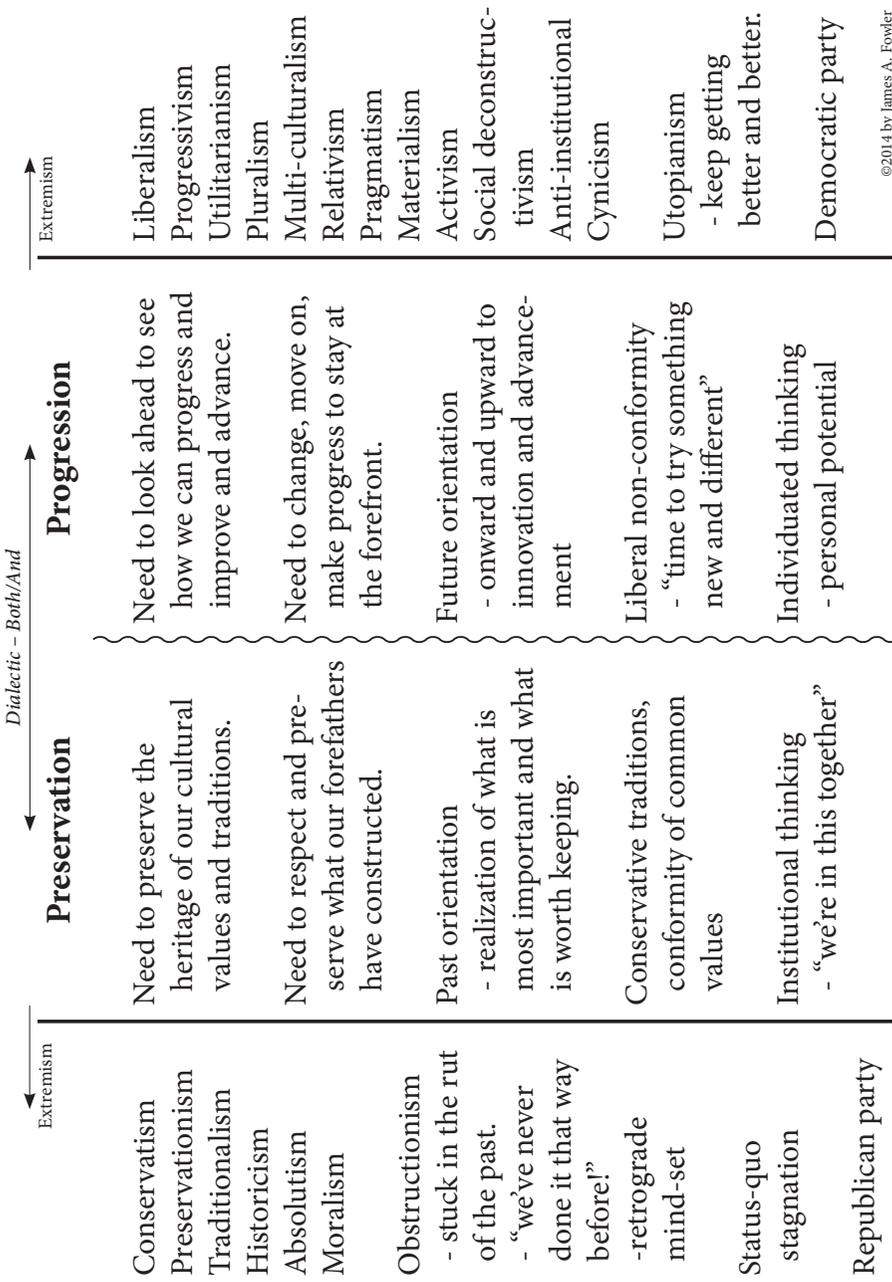
# Government

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | National Security   | Extremism →  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Personal Privacy Rights</b></p> <p>Uniqueness of our government with defined and amplified “Bill of Rights,” expressing individual rights and freedoms. right to personal safety and protection</p> <p>right to freedom of speech and press within context.</p> <p>right to freedom of religion and worship practice</p> <p>right to privacy of person (modesty) and personal information.</p> <p>right to earn money and spend as desired.</p> <p>right to protect property</p> <p>right to protect reputation against defamation</p> <p>right to pursuit of personal happiness</p> | <p>Individuals must recognize they are part of a greater whole, and that nation is responsible for the safety and protection of all.</p> <p>When the safety and preservation of the nation is at jeopardy, individual rights and liberties may have to be restricted or sacrificed to preserve existence and security of nation.</p> <p>Where will the individual rights and freedoms be if there is no nation to guarantee those rights?</p> <p>Democratic government must eschew despotism.</p> | <p><b>Collectivism</b></p> <p>The safety of the whole is more important than the rights of individuals.</p> <p>“Only the <i>idiotes</i> would ‘save their own butts,’ while watching the national ship sink.”</p> <p>“Those who would give up national security for the exercise of personal rights, deserve neither security or liberty.”</p> |

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# Politics – Social Governance



# Social Governance

*Dialectic - Both/And*

← Extremism

## Individual Freedom

Individual human beings have an intrinsic right for freedom to pursue their own happiness and objectives.

Personal freedom to seek meaning and purpose require personal character and responsibility.

American Constitutional "Bill of rights"

I Pet. 2:16 - "act as free men"

## Social Order

Societal laws are required to maintain order and safety for all in the social unit.

Social participation involves social responsibilities, duties, and contribution to the welfare of the whole.

I Pet. 2:13 - "submit to human institutions"

Heb. 13:14 - "obey your leaders and submit"

← Extremism

Individualism

Selfism

Persons become a

"law unto themselves"

- "did what was right in their own eyes" (Deut. 12:8)

Libertinism

Libertarianism

Anarchism

Those not interested in the whole - Gk. *idiotes*

Socialism

Authoritarianism  
Despotism

Governmentalism

Governmental intrusion  
- restriction of human rights

Oppressive laws

"Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there will be without." - Edward Burke

# Immigration

*Dialectic – Both/And*

← Extremism

## Government Protection of Citizenry

- Nationalism
- Protectionism
- Isolationism
- Utopianism
- Self-preservation
- Excuses:
  - social burden
  - economic threat
  - security threat
- Fear-based reactions
  - ambivalence,
  - “full; no vacancy; go home”
  - dehumanization of “others,” the “outsiders”
  - no tolerance for “illegals”

Extremism →

## Human Concern for Asylum-seekers

- Responsible, God-fearing citizens have obligation to protect displaced, asylum-seekers, refugees, and immigrants.
- Lev. 19:34 - “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself”
- Deut. 10:18 - “show love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.”
- Matt. 25:40 - “to the extent that you did it to the least of these you did it to Me”
- Heb. 13:2 - “do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers...”

- Humanitarianism
- “human rights”
- Sentimentalism
- “bleeding heart” sym/empathy
- presented as selfless altruism
- based on secularistic pluralism and multi-culturalism.
- Advocacy of “open borders” and amenity for all.
- Premise of abject victim-objects is terrible victimization and dehumanization.

# Citizenship and War

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism  | Earthly Nation   | Spiritual Kingdom   | Extremism →   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Nationalism</p> <p>Patriotism</p> <p>“our country, right or wrong”</p> <p>Militarism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- aggression</li> <li>- invasion</li> <li>- occupation</li> <li>- domination</li> <li>- Crusades</li> <li>- <i>jihad</i></li> </ul> | <p>Rom. 13:1 - “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities”</p> <p>I Pet. 2:13 - “Submit yourselves to every human institution.”</p> <p>Right of nation to protect itself and citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- armed defense</li> <li>- retributive justice</li> <li>- preserve human rights</li> </ul> <p>Responsibility of citizens to obey government, but not unreservedly or slavishly.</p> <p>Concept of “just war”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Augustine and Aquinas</li> </ul> | <p>Phil. 3:20 - “our citizenship is in heaven.”</p> <p>Matt. 5:9 - “blessed are the peacemakers”</p> <p>Matt. 26:52 - “those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.”</p> <p>Jn. 18:36 - “If My kingdom was of this world, then My servants would fight”</p> <p>Aversion &amp; resistance to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- world’s power-struggles</li> <li>- conflict and war</li> </ul> <p>Right of individual Christian to act on basis of conviction (Rom. 14:5) and conscience (Heb. 13:18; I Pet. 2:19)</p> | <p>Pacifism</p> <p>Idealism</p> <p>Passivism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- avoidance</li> <li>- non-involvement</li> </ul> <p>Isolationism</p> <p>Escapism</p> <p>Self-preservation</p> <p>Cowardice</p> |

# Conflict and War

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | <b>Confrontational</b>  | <b>Non-confrontational</b>  | Extremism →   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>War-mongers<br/>- Ps. 68:30 - those who delight in war</p> <p>Militarism</p> <p>Nationalism</p> <p>Patriotism</p> <p>Constantine<br/>“By this sign, conquer”</p> <p>Crusades<br/>- “God is on our side”<br/>- “Holy war” against infidels</p> <p>Power and force are the only solution</p> | <p>• Warrior God<br/>- Exod. 15:3 - Lord is warrior<br/>- Ps. 24:8 - “Lord strong in battle”</p> <p>• Time for war<br/>- Eccl. 3:8 - “a time for war”<br/>- Joel 3:9 - “prepare a war; plowshares into swords”</p> <p>• Offensive war<br/>- “Numb. 31:7 - “they made war, as Lord commanded</p> <p>• Defensive war<br/>- II Kgs 20:6 - “I will defend this city, for My sake”</p> <p>• Do justice<br/>- Ps. 82:1-4 - “do just to the afflicted; deliver from the wicked”</p> <p>• Governmental authority<br/>- I Pt 2:13-17 - “governors sent by God to punish...</p> | <p>• Messiah - God’s deliverer<br/>- Isa. 9:6 - “Prince of Peace”<br/>- Micah 4:3-5 - “beat swords into plowshares”</p> <p>• Peacemakers<br/>- Matt. 5:9-11 - “blessed are the peacemakers</p> <p>• New covenant love<br/>- Matt. 5:44 “love enemies”</p> <p>• Non-resistance<br/>- Matt. 5:39 - “do not resist him who is evil”</p> <p>• Non-retaliatory<br/>- Rom. 12:17-19 - “Never pay back evil for evil”</p> <p>• Non-hostile<br/>- Matt. 5:21 - “everyone who is angry is guilty”</p> <p>• Positive action<br/>- Rom. 12:20 - “if enemy is hungry, feed him....”</p> | <p>Passivism<br/>- acquiescence</p> <p>Non-involvement<br/>- Isolationism</p> <p>Idealism<br/>- “visualize peace, eliminate hate”<br/>- “make love, not war”<br/>- essential good of mankind will avoid war</p> <p>Ideological<br/>Legalism<br/>- “All war is wrong, immoral, unjust”</p> |

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# Social Progress

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism                              | Institutional  | Individual  | Extremism →                              |
|--|--|---|--|
| Socialism                                | Collective activity of social institutions to be concerned for the whole.      | Individual person freedom and incentive to “be all I can be.”   | Individualism                            |
| Communalism                              | Church, government, benevolence agencies.                                      | Human responsibility for moral propriety.   | - narcissism                             |
| Statism                                  | Preserve equal rights  | Promote equal opportunity   | - selfishness                            |
| Egalitarianism                           | - concern for less-fortunate, poor, disadvantaged, handicapped, hungry         | - personal success, prosperity, economic efficiency, innovation                                       | - “each person must do his best”         |
| Wealth redistribution                    | - social action, reform, stand against injustice via institutional improvement | - internal change of spiritual character, respect for others, self-sacrifice and personal improvement | Capitalism                               |
| Entitlement                              | Promotes giving, sharing, providing for others                                 | Promotes acquisition  | Plutocracy                               |
| - “I have a right to have what you have. | Takes into account basic collective concern for fairness and equity.           | Selfish aspirations can be spiritually exchanged for loving character of Christ.                      | Aversion to taxation                     |
| Big government social programs           |  |   | Conservatism                             |
| “Bleeding heart” altruism                |  |   | - “We’ve never done it that way before.” |
|  |  |   | Materialism                              |

# Human Existence - Life/Death

*Dialectic - Both/And*

←  
Extremism

## Divine Determination

Divine determination of life and death

Life and death are determined by and derived from spiritual source.  
 - "time to be born, time to die" - Eccl. 3:2  
 - Heb. 2:14 - "one having the power of death"  
 - Job 33:4 - "the Almighty gives me life"  
 - Jn 5:21 - "Father gives life ... Son gives life"  
 - Jn 6:63 - "Spirit gives life"

Divine determination of the dignity of human life and death.

## Human Determination

Human self-determination of life and death.

Human beings designed to live and die by the consequences of their choices.  
 - freedom of choice  
 - choosing creatures

Human beings can, and do, make choices to allow for

- physical life or death
- abortion
- euthanasia
- suicide, murder
- spiritual life or death
- rejection of life offer
- regeneration unto life in Christ Jesus
- apostasy

←  
Extremism

"Right to Life" movement opposes abortion and euthanasia on the grounds that human de-termination should not override Divine de-termination.

Divine Determinism  
 - "dignity of human life" can become a way of deifying human life.

"Right to Choose" movement often denies any legitimacy to divine determination in the realm of physical life or death.

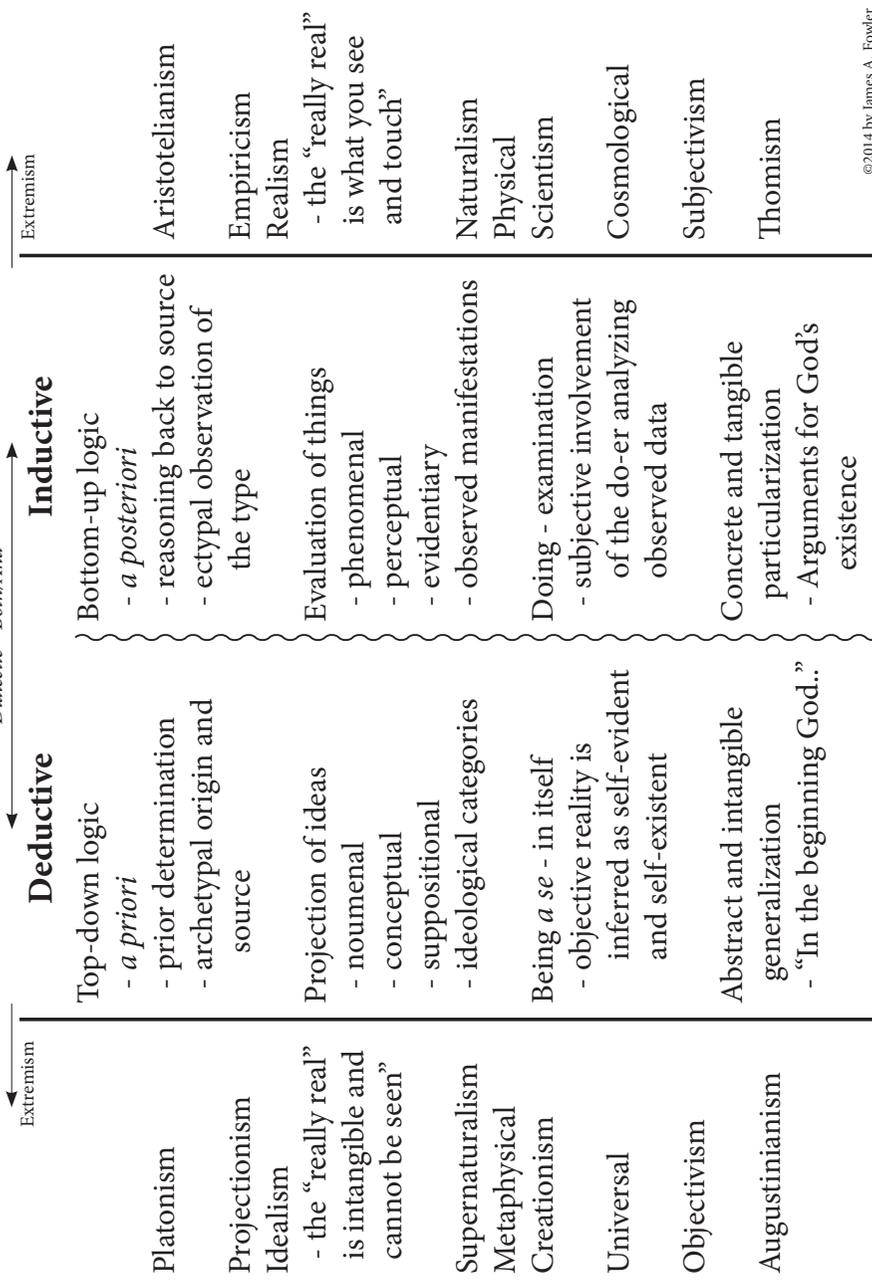
Humanism  
 - deification of human volition and the choice to make ultimate determinations of life and death.

# Determinations of Life and Death

| <i>Dialectic – Both/And</i>  |  |
|--|--|
| ←  | →  |
| Extremism  | Extremism  |
| <p><b>Conservatism</b></p> <p>Ideological Absolutism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God has determined absolutes</li> <li>- Civil laws legislate such</li> <li>- Vitalism - “right to life” preserved with no “right to choose quality.</li> </ul> <p>Inordinate respect for human life may become bio-idolatry.</p> <p>Fearful of medical technology manipulating life.</p> | <p><b>Dignity of Life</b></p> <p>Intrinsic worth, value, sanctity of human life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- determined by God’s order and structure.</li> <li>- mankind created as highest order of life.</li> </ul> <p>Distinct biological, ideological polarity between physical life and death.</p> <p>Intrinsic “right to life” inherent in created order.</p> <p>Society must respect as inviolable the individual’s right to live.</p> <p>Medical field honors dignity of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hippocratic oath</li> </ul> |
|  | <b>Quality of Life</b>   |
|  | <p>Human choices difficult in real-world situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- determined by man’s evaluation of acceptability</li> <li>- God created humans as choosing creatures.</li> </ul> <p>Spectrum of acceptability between “life lived to the fullest” - “mere existence”</p> <p>Created “right to choose” in human responsibility.</p> <p>Individual right to choose acceptable quality of life, or designate others to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Living Will” with “durable power of attorney/health proxy”</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Liberalism</p> <p>Ideological Relativism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual right to determination of quality of life and death.</li> <li>- Basic “right to death” by self-chosen means.</li> <li>- No “right to kill”</li> </ul> <p>Tolerance of choices may become defication of reason.</p> <p>Fearful of Theocratic tyranny.</p>                               |  |

# Human Reasoning

Dialectic – Both/And



# Rationality

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Human Logic  | Theologic   | Extremism →   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Rationalism</p> <p>Cognitivism</p> <p>Intellectualism</p> <p>Naturalism</p> <p>Empiricism</p> <p>Pseudo-absolutes</p> <p>Intellectual pride</p> <p>- I Cor 8:1-“knowledge makes arrogant”</p> <p>“It can’t be true if it doesn’t make sense to me”</p> <p>- Human mind is the final arbiter of truth</p> | <p>Finite human reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- noumenal; <i>nous</i>=mind</li> <li>- mental consideration</li> <li>- propositional truths</li> <li>- transferrable knowledge</li> </ul> <p>Enlightenment elevated empirical knowledge of physical world.</p> <p>I Cor. 3:19 - “wisdom of this world is foolishness</p> <p>I Cor. 1:21 - “wisdom of world does not know God</p> <p>I Cor. 2:14 - things of God are foolishness”</p> <p>I Cor. 2:14 - “does not understand spiritual things”</p> <p>“Learned ignorance” - Nicolas of Cusa</p> <p>Either/or dichotomies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “law of non-contradiction</li> <li>- “excluded middle?”</li> </ul> | <p>Infinite divine wisdom is made known by revelation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “knowing” beyond human explication</li> <li>- open-ended mystery</li> <li>- apophatic theology</li> <li>- faith supersedes reason</li> </ul> <p>I Co. 1:21 - “wisdom of God</p> <p>I Cor 2:7 - “Gods wisdom in a mystery”</p> <p>Isa. 55:8,9 - “My thoughts are not your thoughts...”</p> <p>I Cor. 2:13 - “taught by Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words”</p> <p>Spiritual discernment</p> <p>“Coincidence of opposites”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nicolas of Cusa</li> </ul> <p>Both/and dialectics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cf. Kierkegaard</li> </ul> | <p>Fideism</p> <p>Mysticism</p> <p>Spiritualism</p> <p>Irrationalism</p> <p>Anti-intellectualism</p> <p><i>Aporia</i> - doesn’t compute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- incomprehensible</li> <li>- perplexity</li> <li>- befuddlement</li> </ul> <p>“Don’t try to understand; just trust God”</p> |

# Prophecy

*Dialectic – Both/And*

| ← Extremism   | Foretell  | Forthtell  | Extremism →  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Futurism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- human beings preoccupied with space/time calculations.</li> <li>- perverse desire of fallen mankind to know what will come</li> <li>- often precludes faith.</li> <li>- often results in wild speculations</li> </ul> <p>Proceduralism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attempting to get God and His ways figured out.</li> <li>- want Divine Plan and agenda to self-determine.</li> </ul> | <p>Gk. <i>prophetes</i> - to speak before in terms of time.</p> <p>Prediction</p> <p>God knows the end from the beginning, but His primary intent is not the implementation of a prescribed agenda in time.</p> <p>Old Covenant prophecy (cf. II Peter 1:21) often had double entendre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- short term &amp; long term</li> <li>- Israel and Messiah</li> </ul> <p>New covenant “gift of prophecy” - cf. Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:10; 13:2,8; 14:1,6</p> | <p>Gk. <i>prophetes</i> - to speak before personal hearers.</p> <p>Proclamation</p> <p>The relational Triune God is concerned about having relationality with humans, by speaking into their hearts.</p> <p>New covenant obedience, <i>hupakouo</i>, is “to listen under” His speaking.</p> <p>Kerygma - to proclaim or herald in Christocentric evangelistic preaching</p> <p>Didache - to teach or train via Christocentric exposition and catechesis.</p> | <p>Gnosticism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- human beings preoccupied with wanting to know.</li> </ul> <p>Often becomes an informational priority with content of teaching, rather than personal relational priority of hearing what God desires to speak to our hearts.</p> |

# Apocalypse

*Dialectic – Both/And*

↑  
Extremism

↓  
Extremism

## Cryptic Vision

The symbolic imagery employed in the Apocalypse is consistent with that of apocalyptic literature from post-exilic Judaic history.

- cryptic imagery from mythological and cosmological traditions were used to illustrate and reveal hidden realities.

Variety of hermeneutic methods utilized to interpret these cryptic images throughout Christian history of thought.

- preterist (past)
- historicist
- futurist
- symbolist (triumphalist)

Some have judged the imagery of the revelation to be so cryptic as to be incapable of interpretation.

Some preoccupied with identifying the meaning of the images.

- preterists (Roman emperors)
- historicists (Roman church or world leaders)
- futurists (speculate on future nations or leader)

## Christus Victor

Important to approach the Apocalypse from a Christ-centered perspective.

- It is the revelation or unveiling of the living Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)

Conflict is the setting of the Apocalypse. There is a war going on!

There is no doubt that the victor of the conflict is Jesus Christ.

- Gustaf Aulén wrote *Christus Victor* in 1931.

Diverse identification of adversary in apocalypse:

- cf. Roman emperors, Roman church, religion...

Some have over-generalized and “spiritualized” the cryptic images in resigned obscurantism:

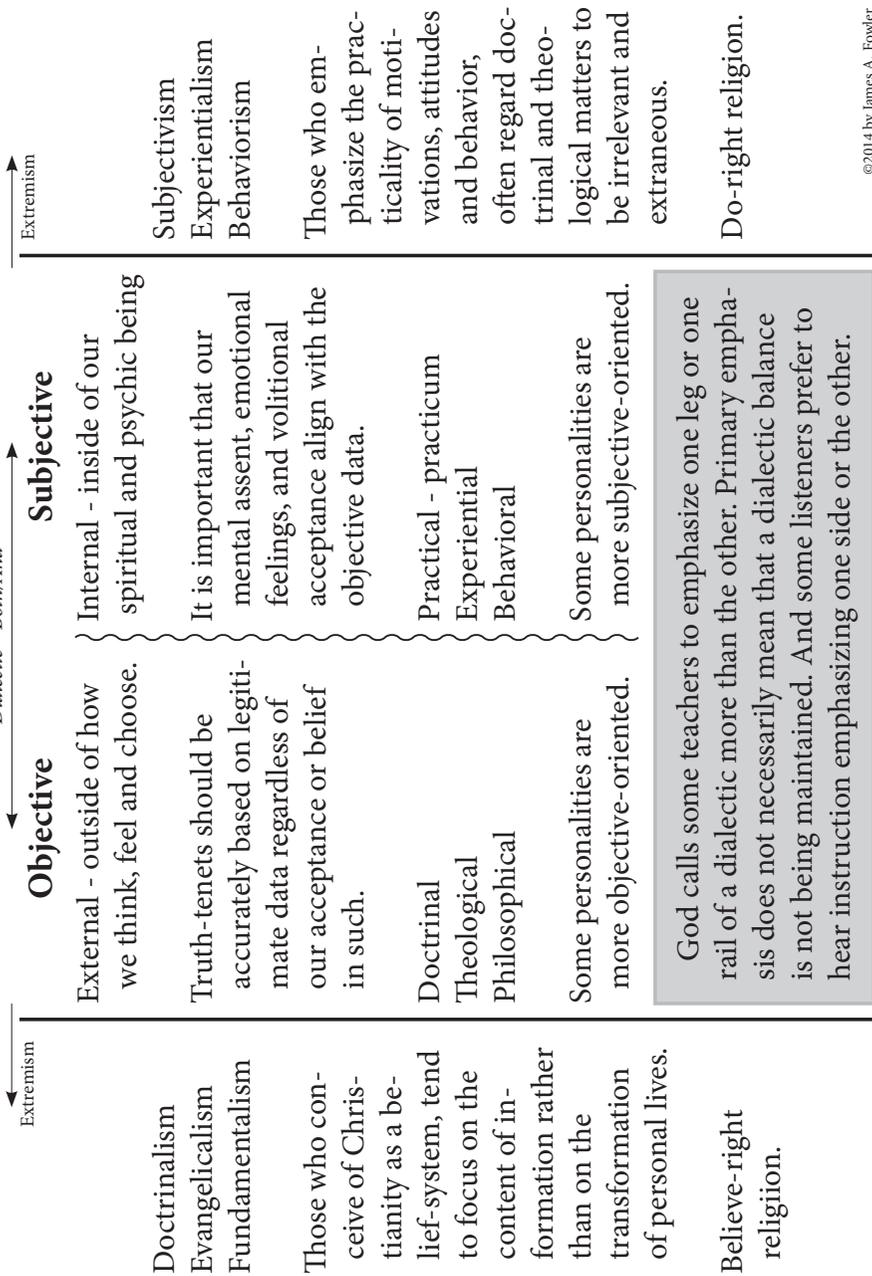
- “It doesn’t matter what the symbols mean; we know who wins in the end!”

## Triumphalism

- Some so confident of Christ’s ultimate victory they become passive & apathetic.

# Christian Dialectics

*Dialectic - Both/And*



# Christian Understanding

Dialectic - Both/And

← Extremism

← Extremism

## Dialectics

Dialecticism  
 - everything can be understood when put into a chart showing the contrasting perspectives of every category.  
 “An individual who cannot see both sides of an issue is destined to extremism.”  
 Objectivism

“The Dialectic Formatting of Christian Thought and Practice.”  
 “Every coin has two sides”  
 - Every issue in human and Christian thought has more than one perspective.  
 II Pet. 3:18 - “**both** now **and** to the day of eternity”  
 - Already / Not yet  
 Expanded horizons of thought allow for greater understanding and communicative interaction in the Christian community.

## Single Focus

The “single-eye” of Faith, focused on relationality with the living Lord Jesus. (cf. Matt. 6:22; Lk. 11:32)  
*Sola Christos* was the Reformation motto.  
 Lk. 10:42 - “one thing is necessary” (faith that listens to Jesus)  
 The singularity of Jesus Christ and the singularity of the Christian’s focused participation in Christ as their life.

Fideism  
 - one shouldn’t attempt to use their mind to see the broader perspective of Christian thinking.  
 - Just faith it!  
 Subjectivism  
 “dialectics is a form of relativism”  
 “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8)



# *Conclusion*



## CONCLUSION

The foregoing dialectic charts are but a few of the ever-growing, seemingly never-ending development of *both/and* dialectic charts that keep my mind going back and forth day after day. They keep waking me up early in the morning, and keep my wife shaking her head in disbelief at my bobble-head brain!

The foregoing sequence of charts is a formatting for Christian thought that attempts to keep a balanced perspective of various themes, while avoiding the extremes that have so often become *either/or* conflicts that have long dominated Christian thinking and interaction. This study could be developed into a unique form of balanced systematic theology, if someone had the time and inclination to flesh out these skeletal charts (others of their own making) with elaborated explanation and commentary.

In the midst of this study on “the dialectic formatting of Christian thought,” you may have

discovered that there were categories where you have tended to take a “one-sided perspective” that may have failed to take into consideration both sides of God’s revealed truths. It is sometimes difficult for our minds and ego-pride to allow for a readjustment of our thinking, to recognize and admit that there may be areas where we have slid off into an “...ism” ditch, rather than taking into account the “full counsel of God” (Acts 20:27 – KJB). It is always healthy to expand our horizons, and to become more accepting and appreciative of other perspectives and the people who hold those opinions. Part of the value of this study is that it can stretch our thinking, and cause us to realize that many of these subjects are broader than we may have realized.

Perhaps a caution is also in order concerning these dialectic charts. As we have shared these dialectic charts, one after another in category after category, it may appear that this creates clean, clear-cut diagrams, providing precise explanations of the contrasts of human and Christian thought, and the corresponding extremes of over-emphasis.

It is only fair that I caution you to beware. Dialectics can be a messy business! There are some slippery slopes, some melding crossovers that can cause your brain to get fuzzy and go mushy! One form of dialectic can be embedded inside of another dialectic. One side of a dialectic can be subdivided into numerous other dialectics. It is quite understandable why some people mistakenly regard dialectic thought as a form of “relativism” that refuses to construct any absolutes. And they even quote James’ statement, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). In dialectic theological thinking there is no doubt that the definitiveness and precision that theologians like to think they have figured out and can then assert as the “truth” is diminished; and Christian thinkers consequently have to be more honest about the finitude of their reasoning processes.

We certainly do not want to give the impression that by the use of these charts, or that by the dialectic thinking process one can get everything “figured out,” “cut-and-dried,” “nailed down,” or that this dialectic formatting should necessarily become a required exercise in the analysis and systematization of human

or Christian belief. We must beware that such a study as this might lead to an undue elevation or even a *deification* of the dialectic process. Yes, we must even give a warning against excessive dialecticizing!!

Perhaps this study of dialectics has stretched the parameters of your belief-system, provided there is enough elasticity and flexibility in your thinking, and your mind is not set in concrete. The reader may discover they have to do a re-think of some tenets they thought were valid. On the other hand, if this study fails to lead people into a deeper trusting faith in a personal relationship with the risen and living Lord Jesus, then it could conceivably be a detriment to some people's faith. Feel free to question and reject this formatting tool of dialectics.

There is no correct way to construct these diagrams of dialectic. Everyone will construct them differently. I have drawn hundreds of charts, and many of them incorporate elements of other charts. This is just a formatting procedure for "seeing two sides" of various themes. What we have proposed is just a

stereoscopic lens for looking at various Christian categories.

I have found that the dialectic formatting of Christian thought and practice gives me a sense of mental balance and helps me to avoid the extremes in the avoidance of fundamentalism, Gnosticism, fideism and several thousand other man-made ...isms of human formulation. For over two decades now, the dialectic perspective has become the infrastructure of my theological thinking. But, on the other hand, neither do I want to fall into an extremist ditch of dialectic*ism* as a procedural necessity of Christian thinking.

It is possible, as you can see in the final dialectic chart (#130), to place the concept of “dialectic” within a dialectic diagram. The objective process of the dialectic formatting of Christian thought and practice is juxtaposed with the subjective process of viewing God and His ways with the “single eye” of faith. Aberrant extremisms exist when either approach is emphasized to the denial, diminishment, or neglect of the other. It is possible to so focus on objective dialectic formatting to the neglect of a personal faith-focus, that one falls into

the ditch of dialecticism. On the other hand, some have so emphasized the subjective focus of faith that they have fallen into the ditch of fideism. Only when the objective and subjective elements of Christian faith are maintained in balanced equilibrium do we present the gospel honestly and with integrity.

By all means we want to avoid disparaging the “single eye” focus of faith on the singularity of the Savior, Jesus Christ, that allows individuals to participate personally and subjectively in Christ by receptivity in the divine life, love and reality of God in Christ by the Spirit. That is where all our ponderings should lead us, to a deep and intimate personal relationship with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

# *Addenda*



# Dichotomous Polarities

Either / Or

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| God             | Satan           |
| God             | Humanity        |
| Creator         | Creature        |
| Independent     | Dependent       |
| Good            | Evil            |
| Spirit of truth | Spirit of error |
| Holiness        | Sin             |
| Righteousness   | Iniquity        |
| Christ          | Adam            |
| Christian       | Natural man     |
| Grace           | Performance     |
| Spirit          | Flesh           |
| Heaven          | Hell            |

**NOT** Dialectics – i.e. Both / And  
**NOT** Dualisms – like Yin / Yang

## Addendum B

### Terminology

**Binary** – “twofold” – base-two digital computing

**Polarity** – Divergent poles of contrasting ideas or actions; bipolar

**Paradox** – two idea or statements that “appear alongside” of one another and appear to be contradictory or incongruous.

**Antinomy** – diverse concepts that are “against the law of reason;” they are mutually incompatible or involve an irresolvable contradiction.

**Dichotomy** – “cut in two” – dissection or bifurcation into two Parts

**Dualism** – demarcation of two opposites. Classical definition of two mutually exclusive and absolute equal forces in perpetual stalemate or stand-off

**Dialectic** – (*dia*=through; *lecto*=talk) “To speak or converse through” various contrasting issues or ideas. Divergent history:

Socrates – dialogue, discussion and cross-examination of ideas

Plato – “theory of ideas” allowing for mutual consensus

Aristotle – formal logic of syllogistic argumentation

Abelard – *Sic et Non* (So & No); pseudo and anti dialecticians

Nicolas of Cusa – “*coincidentia oppositorum*” – contrasting thoughts must be viewed from God’s perspective.

Hegel – triadic integration of thesis, antithesis into synthesis

Marx – “dialectical materialism” – progressively liberate oppressed peoples to produce materialistic egalitarianism.

Kierkegaard – experiential (existential) dialectic. “Absolute Paradox” of the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

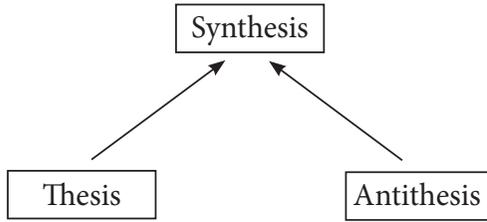
Jean-Paul Sartre – secular existentialist dialectic philosophy.

Karl Barth – “Dialectic Theology” – knowability of God through His Self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

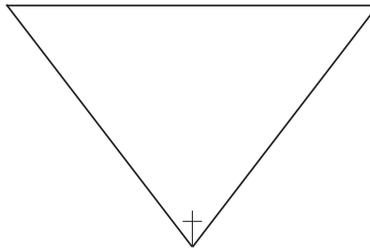
Jacques Ellul – dialectic of complementarity and reciprocity

# Dialectic Diversity

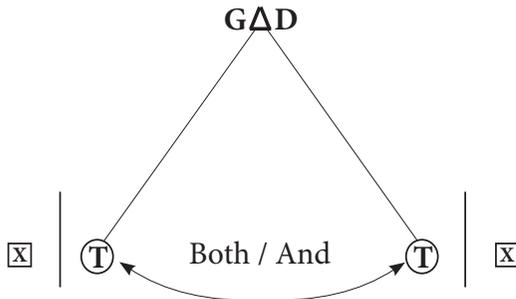
## Hegel's Synthetic Reductionism



## Kierkegaard's Inverted Existentialism



## Interactive Both/And Dialectics

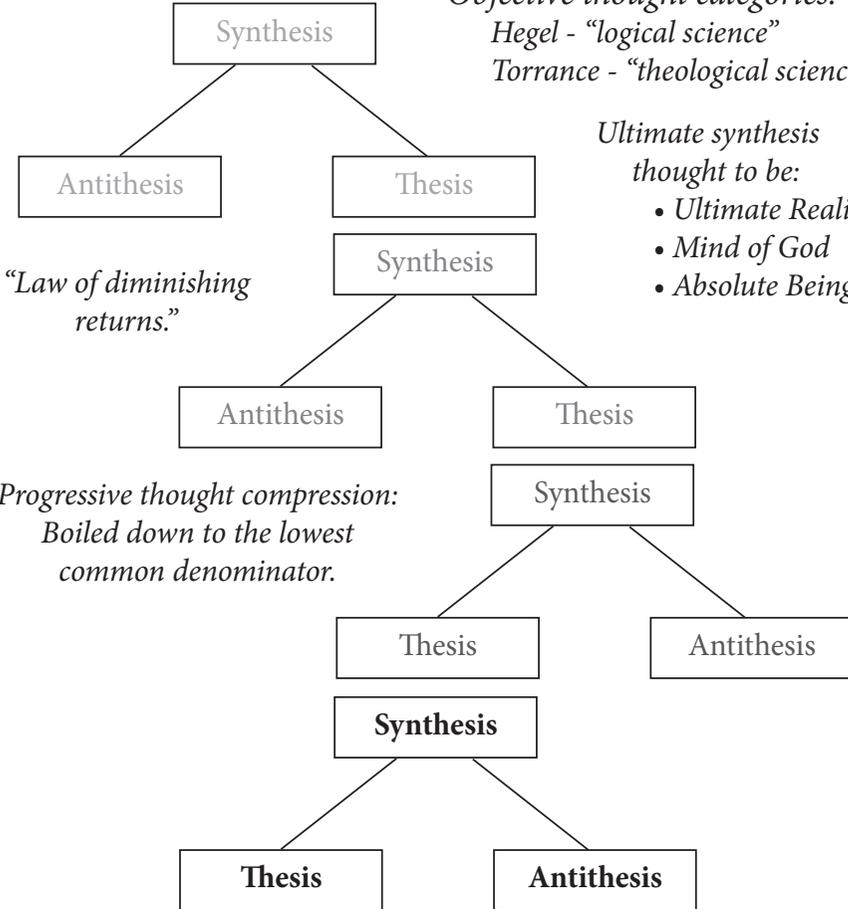


# Hegel's Synthetic Reductionism

*Objective thought categories.*  
Hegel - "logical science"  
Torrance - "theological science"

*Ultimate synthesis  
thought to be:*

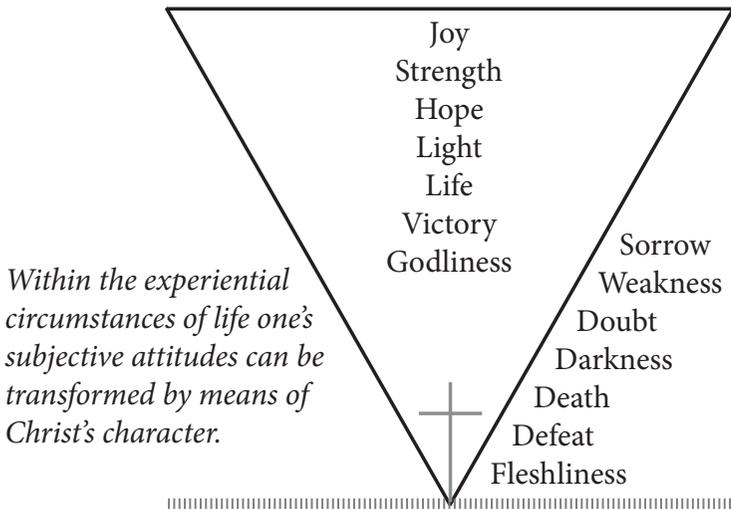
- *Ultimate Reality*
- *Mind of God*
- *Absolute Being*



# Kierkegaard's Inverted Existentialism

Soren Kierkegaard referred to his thinking as an “inverted dialectic”

- Inverted
- from objective to subjective categories
  - from mental ideology to personal & experiential
  - from static particulars to dynamic processes



“Truth is Subjectivity”

# Interactive Dialectics

God's Self-revelation  
Divine Pivot Point

G  $\Delta$  D

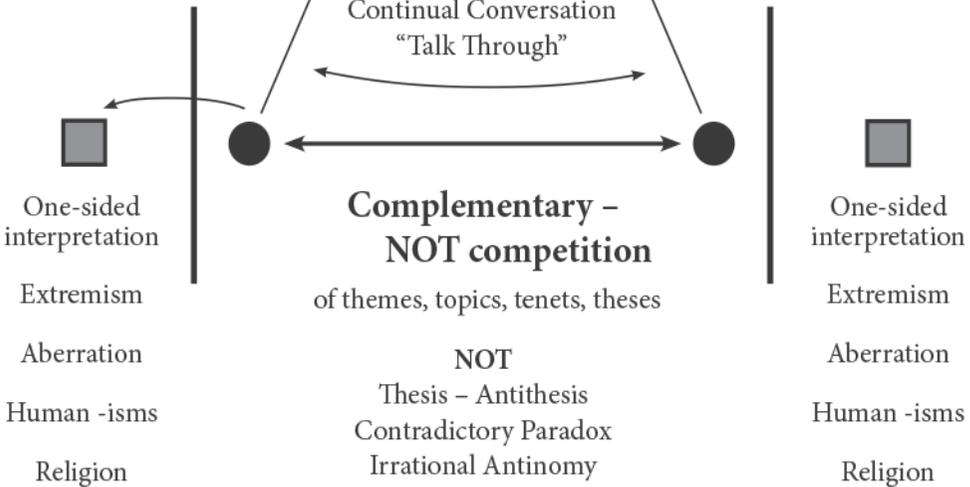
**BOTH / AND**  
Tensioned Balance  
Dynamic Reciprocity  
Continual Conversation  
"Talk Through"

**Complementary –  
NOT competition**

of themes, topics, tenets, theses

**NOT**

Thesis – Antithesis  
Contradictory Paradox  
Irrational Antinomy

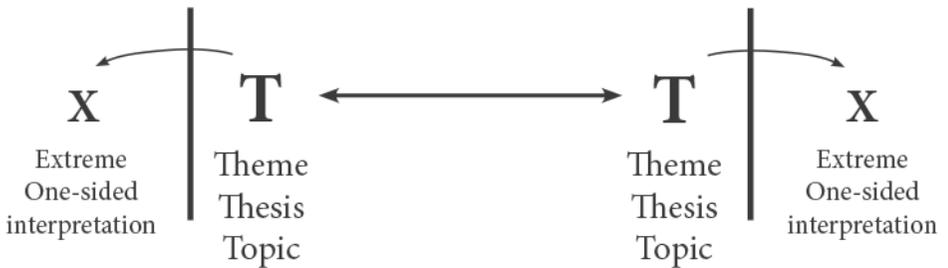


# BOTH / AND

Dialectic Charts

... the diminishment, denial  
of one, or undue dominance  
of one over the other.

... the diminishment, denial  
of one, or undue dominance  
of one over the other.



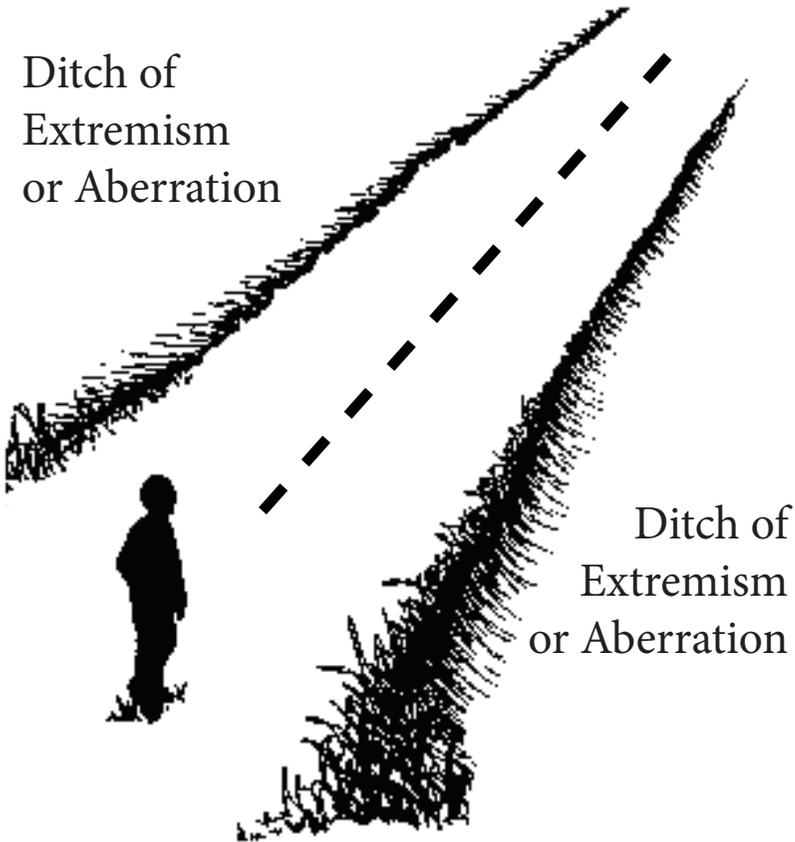
*Failure to maintain tensioned-balance  
of dialectic complementarity results in:*

## **EITHER / OR**

Dichotomy  
Polarity

Conflict  
Taking sides  
One right - One wrong  
"Both cannot be right"  
*Antilectic* - talk against one another

# AVOIDING THE DITCHES



Ditch of  
Extremism  
or Aberration

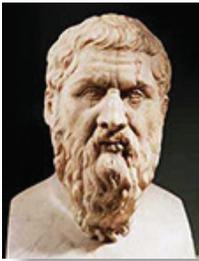
Ditch of  
Extremism  
or Aberration

Illustration by Carrie McDaniels  
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# Philosophical Foundations of Dialectic Thought

**Plato**

428–328 B.C.



Approach to knowledge  
*a priori*  
Prior to observation  
speculation - postulation

Noumena  
Conceptual / Mental

Objectivity  
External - detachment

Ideological dialectics  
rhetorical, forensic

**BEING**  
Essence

**Aristotle**

384–322 B.C.



Approach to knowledge  
*a posteriori*  
After observation  
observation - evaluation

Phenomena  
Perceptual / Experiential

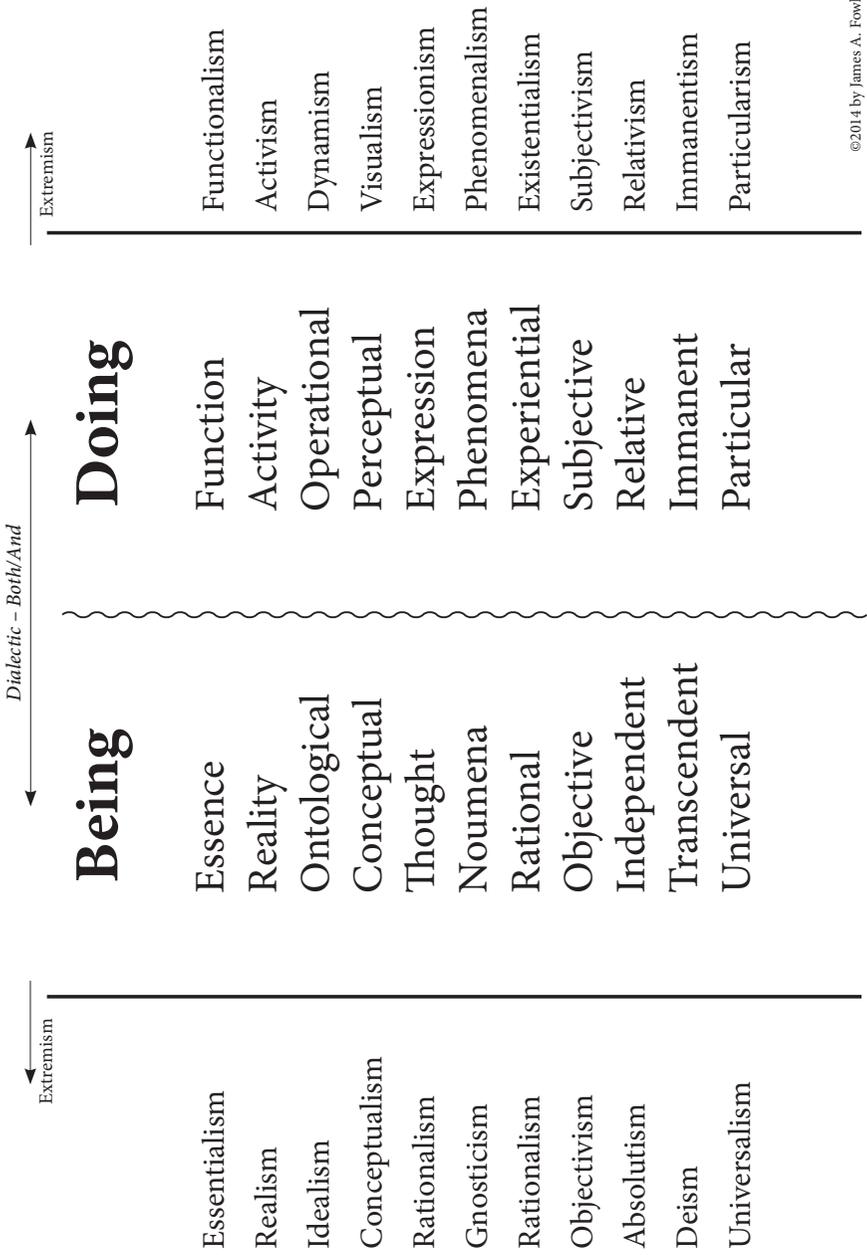
Subjectivity  
Internal - involvement

Syllogistic dialectics  
If...then...therefore

**DOING**  
Function

# Philosophical Foundations

Addendum J



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