

Christ and Culture

Five Approaches to “Confronting the World”

“Culture” = Man’s efforts to order the cosmos & define effective and correct ways to live in it.
The “Cultural Mandate” - Gen 1:27-28 - Man was “to cultivate” the Garden.

Christ
against
Culture

(Antithesis)
PROTECTING

Christians must make a radical break from their culture.

These views see human culture as basically bad: sinful and evil - tends to despise God’s good Creation and to confuse Redemption as deliverance from worldly things and cultural practices.

Christ and
Culture
in Paradox

(Duelism)
UNCHANGING

Christians live in the sinful world, but are not of it - awaiting the coming of God’s “kingdom”.

Christ,
Transformer
of Culture

(Conversion)
INFLUENCING

Christians should endeavor to convert and redeem all man’s cultural life for the glory of God.

Man’s cultural pursuits are created good, but now affected by sin, so human culture needs redemption and restoration.

Christ
above
Culture

(Synthesis)
BATTLING

Christians live in both “realms” and tries to either bring them together, or assert Christ’s dominance over culture.

These views see human culture as basically (or partially) good - tends to deny the full effects of the fall, they tend towards recreating Christ into various cultural images.

Christ
of
Culture

(Equates)
ASSIMILATING

Christians find in Christ the high ideals for their cultural life and values.

It is important to consider how each position views the doctrines of:

Creation, Fall, Redemption

(See H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture; Jimmy Long, Generating Hope, Chapter 1)