

“Christian Enemy #1: Dualism Exposed & Destroyed”

“The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.” - Proverbs 1:7

“Christianity is not a realm of life; it’s a way of life for every realm”¹

Introduction

When I came to Dallas Baptist University I had a rather violent reaction to what I thought was a profound category mistake. Coming from the public school system, I had a deeply embedded idea of how “religious” claims ought to relate, or should I say, ought *not* to relate, with “worldly affairs.” To use a phrase that Os Guinness frequently uses, I thought that “religion might be privately engaging but publicly irrelevant.”² I was astonished at the unashamed integration of all these “religious” beliefs into other realms of life, even though I myself was a Christian. The key word for me was: unashamed. I thought to myself, “How could these people be so shameless in their biases?” My reaction to this Wholistic vision of life was so serious that I almost left the university to go get myself a “real” education, one where my schooling wouldn’t be polluted by all of these messy assumptions and presuppositions, even if they were Christian. My worldview lenses saw “education” as something totally separate from my “faith.” I was a model student of the American public school system, and like most other students, whether Christian or not, the separation of “church/state” and “faith/education” was only a small part of something much deeper and much more profound, the separation of my “faith” from the rest of my “life.” Our public schools are indoctrinating other students who have this same split-vision³, in which “faith” is a private thing, which is not to be integrated into the classroom. After all, this

¹ Phrase coined by Kenneth Hermonn.

² Os Guinness said this in a lecture delivered at Park Cities Presbyterian Church (Dallas, TX) Fall 2003.

³ Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Intervarsity Press, 1984). This “split-vision” phrase is used throughout their book, and I also use it numerously.

is a *public* school, isn't it? In many ways, the problem of Dualism can be summarized in the perversion of Jefferson's phrase: "separation of church and state" but that specifically will not be my subject here.⁴

Over the last few years, I have come to know that this split-vision of reality and life is not Biblical and is actually a sin. I would characterize my former self alongside most other Americans in that I was a methodological religious Dualist. In the "Introduction to Worldview" course at Dallas Baptist University, students are asked to interview someone, using James Sire's seven basic worldview questions (for example: What is ultimate reality? What is the meaning of human history?).⁵ I was surprised that during both of my required interviews, the person that I had chosen asked me, "Is it okay if I answer with my faith?" This is a perfect representation of methodological religious Dualism. The interviewee was really saying, "Can I use my faith (which is over there) to answer your question (which is over here)?" This is the exact separation of faith from the majority of life that this paper seeks to address. What is Christian Dualism, and why do so many Christians subscribe to it?

Firstly, let me define very generally what Christian Dualism is. Moreover, Dualism is the idea that all of life can be separated into two main categories: the sacred and the secular. This fragmented vision of reality puts "spiritual" things in the "sacred" category and "worldly" things in the "secular" category. This view creates a hierarchy where the only meaningful things in existence are those things that are in the "sacred" category. In his brief survey of the history of Western thinking, Francis Schaeffer outlines how the non-spiritual side of the dichotomy always

⁴ It seems that Jefferson wanted to protect the church from the state, not the other way around.

⁵ See James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalogue* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1997)

“ate-up” the spiritual side.⁶ Cutting up reality and life, will eventually lead to one side ruling over the other side, and it may or may not be the side that you, yourself, are prizing.

Dualism also leads to a hierarchy of callings. After all, doesn't it seem obvious that some jobs are more *holy* than others? If you were to ask the average Christian, “What would be the highest calling in life?”, he or she would invariably answer, “to be a missionary.” This prizing of the “spiritual” callings over the other allegedly “non-spiritual” callings is the result of Dualism. The bottom line with Dualism is this: Dualism falsely believes that some subjects are inconsequential and are not a part of the Christian life. Dualism says there are some realms of life where faith is off-limits. This fragmented vision of reality is not Biblical and makes “being salt and light” to the rest of the world totally impossible. This paper seeks to understand and critique Christian Dualism, especially Christian Religious Dualism.

What Is Meant By “Christian Dualism”

As mentioned above, people generally use the phrase “Christian Dualism” to refer to a number of different “split-vision” dichotomies. In order to better understand each of these specific dichotomies and their interrelatedness, we should first examine three basic meanings of the phrase. Sometimes the phrase “Christian Dualism” can lump all of these dichotomies together, but sometimes there are important differences and distinctions that need to be made. These are the three main dichotomies.

Christian Anthropological Dualism

This dichotomy is more than a mere duality, which in its own right would be acknowledged. It is the view that man is composed of two separate substances, one being a temporal/bad part and one being an eternal/good part. These substances are usually called “body” and “soul/spirit” respectively. The problem is that this duality has been absolutized into a

⁶ Francis A. Schaeffer repeatedly uses this illustration of the lower side “eating up” the higher side in “*Escape from Reason*” (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1968) p. 13

master/slave Dualism, in which the body is the rebellious slave of the soul and must be ruled as a subject is ruled by his king. **This describes how a Christian views the composition of man.**

Christian Metaphysical Dualism

This dichotomy is also more than a mere duality, which again, in its own right would be acknowledged. It is a view that makes “heaven” important and the “Earth” rather unimportant. Heaven is the “true light”, making the earth just a “shadow” of sorts. This Dualism is an absolutized duality, which results in a morbid obsession with all things “otherworldly” because “this world” is seen more or less as garbage. **This describes how a Christian sees reality.**

Christian Religious Dualism

This is the view that relegates faith to a small corner in life. It treats faith as something private, something having nothing to do with the majority of daily life. For the Dualist, “faith” is just one of the many containers in life. This Religious Dualism reduces the Christian faith to classical “religion.”⁷ This is pure non-integration of the Christian faith. If you view your faith as one slice of life’s pie (albeit an important one) you are a Christian Dualist. **This describes how a Christian uses his/her faith.** Again, critiquing this Dualism specifically will be my chief objective. But first let me describe Christian Wholism.

What Is Meant By “Christian Wholism”

As with “Christian Dualism”, “Christian Wholism” can actually refer to a number of different areas. These areas are the exact same as the Dualist’s, but with a thoroughly different perspective and emphasis. The Wholist refuses to prioritize one supposed “part” over another. Wholism is recognizing the profound singularity of persons (anthropology), reality (metaphysics), and life (life).

Christian Anthropological Wholism

This is the view that man should be seen as a “differentiated totality.”⁸ Wholism asserts that man should not be so viciously separated into two opposing substances, one of which is “important/redeemable” and one “useless/lost.” Wholism preserves and recognizes man as one cohesive whole. The *whole* man was created good, and the *whole* man is being redeemed. **This describes how a Christian views the composition of man.**

Christian Metaphysical Wholism

Metaphysically speaking, we are living in only one reality. This view acknowledges the duality between “Heaven” and “Earth”, but it fails to absolutize the former over the later. Wholism is a view that makes “heaven” and the “Earth” one cohesive whole, rather than two fragmented pieces. **This describes how a Christian sees reality.**

Christian Religious Wholism

This viewpoint stresses that life should be understood as one unified whole rather than a series of “containers” or “buckets.” This means that faith will have a hand in everything. It is not a “private affair” relegated to some miniscule corner of life. Faith should not be seen as a “realm of life”, but a “way of life” for every realm. The “sacred/secular” split is roundly condemned because *all* of life is sacred. **This describes how a Christian uses his/her faith.**

Two Illustrations of Christian Dualism

I went to visit a patient a few months ago at a Mesquite hospital. Her heart had stopped beating and she had to be resuscitated, so she had been moved to the ICU. On one of my visits that week, a deacon from her church was also there. As we waited in the lobby, he remarked, “Debby sure has been through a lot you know. If I were her, I would be ready to go. I’m ready to get on out of here. I’m ready to leave this old world.” This man meant well, but nestled within his good intentions and honest care for this woman was a deep theological *vision*, which belittled

⁷ By “religion” I mean viewing faith as something outside of mainstream life, as something left in the arena of *private preferences*.

“this” world as something “non-spiritual”- as something that we should be quick to “get rid of.” Many people have this view in part because of verses that at first glance, *with Dualistic lenses*, seem to indicate that we should have a “low” view of the Earth.

One such section is Philippians 1:21, 23 where Paul says, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” and “I desire to depart and be with Christ which is better by far.” Now, I would agree with Paul and with any person who would say that death is gain because in it we gain Christ in a real and tangible way - and this *is* what this passage teaches. But because of Dualism, this is not how most people interpret these verses. Death is gain for most Christians because *that* life is better than *this* life. *That* reality is better than *this* reality. Rooted in this “split-vision” language is the idea that “this” world is not a part of redemption; it is permanently lost. But is that what Paul is saying here? The key question that we have to answer is this: why is death *gain* to Paul? Death is gain to Paul not because he thinks that living in the redeemed Creation is a bad thing, but because he longs to *see* and *be with* Christ in a direct physical sense. The lenses of Dualism have made many Christians read this passage incorrectly. These verses do not denigrate “Earthly life” as something bad, rather, they prize “tangible Christ” as something to be cherished. This interpretation does not belittle Christ in any way. In fact, it is the most Christ-exalted reading of the text. Which is more Christ-exalting, the man who says: the Earth, this Earthly life, and the temporal are all good, but I would trade them in an instant if it meant gaining Christ in a tangible way, or the man who says: the Earth, this Earthly life, and the temporal are all bad, but I would trade *them* in an instant if it meant gaining Christ in a tangible way? Clearly the former makes much of Christ whereas the later sees Him merely as “something better than garbage”- an easy qualification to meet. Some sacrifice! If one sees the Earth, this Earthly life, and the temporal as all bad he/she might as well be saying: I am willing to lose my

⁸ Term coined by Dr. David Naugle, Dean of Philosophy at Dallas Baptist University (Dallas, TX).

“garbage” if it means gaining you. This not only belittles Christ as something “just better than garbage”; it also belittles the Creation that He came to redeem. Reading this text Dualistically makes Paul’s sacrifice ridiculous. This Earthly life is good, but tangible Christ *is* better. Paul is prizing Christ, he is not laying a foundation to denigrate the Earth.

A second illustration of Christian Dualism can be seen in the fact that the majority of believers are at a loss when they hear a worship leader talking about “comprehensive worship” or worshipping the Lord in everything that we do. The thoughts in most people’s minds are, “Does he really expect me to go to my work and lead my co-workers in a worship song? He knows I can’t sing.” “Oh, maybe he means that I should start a Bible study with my fellow co-workers.” “Surely he doesn’t mean that I should be sharing my faith with them. Well, what *does* he mean?” And so, most congregates are at a loss because they truly don’t know what “comprehensive worship” means. This is picture-perfect Dualism. The congregant cannot understand the concept of worshipping God through the *totality* of life because he/she has relegated “worship” to only the “spiritual” side of the equation. He/she has no *framework* for worshipping God through: work, music, eating, learning, driving, walking, observing, etc... As long as we acknowledge a “split-vision” of life, one that separates “spiritual” things from allegedly “non-spiritual” things, our vision of worship will always be “the singing that we do on Sunday.” Because of Dualism, no matter how hard we try, we will never understand what “comprehensive worship” really means. What we need is a *new framework*. Worshiping at work, for example, does not mean bringing those religious things (over there) into your work and daily life (over here) because this would still acknowledge a duality, which, in this context, is wrong.⁹ You only have one life, and who you are does not change from one “context/realm” to the next because there is only one context –

“life.” Separating life into two opposing camps also tends to foster a faith/works dichotomy that is roundly condemned in the Epistle of James.¹⁰

An Illustration of Christian Wholism at Its Best

Now, let me illustrate Christian Wholism. The best illustration of Christian Wholism is to imagine the Creation *before* the Fall. Imagine for a moment that the Fall of Creation had never occurred, and let us observe what Creation was intended to be. Contrary to most popular ideas, Adam and Eve were not sitting around “playing harps” in the Garden; they were working and cultivating the Earth. They were fulfilling their role as the Imago Dei by “filling and subduing the Earth.”¹¹ Work and culture-building have been an intentional part of God’s Creation ever since the beginning. We can easily see “Wholism” in how Adam and Eve view just these two things: work and culture. How might the first couple have viewed work in a Creation that never went awry? How would they view culture? Work in this kind of picture would clearly be a communal affair, one where each person received his/her personal calling from God. The work that each man did would be an act of worship and always done with a *communal* perspective. Culture-building, likewise, would be something glorious as humans multiply and use their God-given creativity to learn and explore the Creation. There would be one humanity, one Earth, and one God who rules over all. There is no where present in our imagination of this pristine Creation the idea of some robust dichotomy between the so-called “sacred” and the so-called “secular” realms. Dualism is wholly absent from everything that we can see in the pre-Fall Creation. This vision of Wholism is breathtaking because it flies in the face of such “split-vision” dichotomies that Dualism offers us.

⁹ This is exactly why we need to separate the different nuances of “Christian Dualism” because in Metaphysical Dualism there is a duality for sure, in Anthropological Dualism there may or may not be a duality, but in Religious Dualism there is no duality at all (at least from the Christian perspective).

¹⁰ James 2:26

¹¹ Genesis 1:28

Six Causes of Christian Religious Dualism

Christian religious Dualism, that is, our tendency to separate our faith from other realms of life is caused by a number of different factors all working together to make integration arduously difficult. My chief question is, “Why are so many Christians methodological religious Dualists?” For the sake of time, I will merely list these six causes (and the reasoning behind them), which support Religious Dualism.

Six Causes of Christian Religious Dualism or Compartmentalization

1. *Anthropological Dualism* – If there is a strong body/soul dualism, maybe life is composed similarly.
2. *Metaphysical Dualism* – If there is a strong temporal/eternal dualism, maybe life is composed similarly.
3. *Social Pressures of Pluralism and Tolerance* – In a multicultural society I can’t be expected to invoke my beliefs all of the time. If everyone did that, life would just get too messy. It’s best if we all just try to remain neutral, especially when it comes to the “Public Square.”
4. *Personal Lack of Faith* – Look, *you* believe whatever helps *you* get through life, and *I* will believe what helps *me*. I don’t want to be thinking about my faith all of the time. Be practical.
5. *A Gross Misunderstanding of Holiness* – Holiness always means spatial separation. I’m not supposed to have anything to do with the world. Extraction from the world is the “essence” of holiness.
6. *A Misguided Understanding of the Biblical Meta-narrative* – Jesus died to save souls from a collapsing and sin-wrecked creation. The highest calling I can have in life is being a full-time soul-winner, helping others to get suited-up before this plane comes crashing down. Jesus only wants to redeem a part of the Creation. You can’t *really* do everything to the glory of God.

This last cause, “A Misguided Understanding of the Biblical Meta-narrative”, is beyond question a major contributing factor to forming Christian Religious Dualism. In the following three sections we will address the differences in the overall Christian message as we compare the Christian Dualist’s story to the Christian Wholist’s story. For now, I will simply say this: Dualism fails to see: (1) the inherent goodness of “cosmic” Creation, (2) the “cosmic” restoration of Creation after the Fall, and (3) these two errors combined have led to a partial view of the actual Biblical meta-narrative, and in turn, justification for Christian Religious Dualism.

Four Major Realms of Life: Comparative Stories

Next, I would like to do some side-by-side comparisons of Dualism and Wholism to examine the radical perspectival differences between these two views. In many ways the two are

living in two different worlds, with two different faiths. My hope is to simply highlight these differences, clearly exposing the overall *attitude* with which both sides confront life. The four areas I would like to examine are: (1) worship, (2) education, (3) work, and (4) culture.¹² For the sake of simplicity I will let these charts stand on their own.

Worship (Dualist)

Done in songs
 Limited to “spiritual times”
 Done with a part of the body (regrettably)¹³
 An optional human endeavor
 Private

Worship (Wholist)

Done in all of Life
 Done all of the time
 Done with the whole body (proudly)
 A Creational responsibility
 Communal

Education (Dualist)

Separate from God’s plan
 Consumerist’s mentality¹⁴
 Worldly
 Not an ethical matter
 Negative
 Private

Education (Wholist)

God’s mandate
 To be a full human
 Worship
 Excellence expected
 Positive
 Communal

Work (Dualist)

Necessary evil – To each his own
 Bad
 Worldly
 Not an ethical matter
 Negative
 Private

Work (Wholist)

God’s calling
 Good
 Worship
 Excellence expected
 Positive
 Communal

Culture (Dualist)

Withdraw from It
 Separate from God’s Plan
 Not Spiritual
 Bad
 Worldly
 Not an ethical matter
 Negative

Culture (Wholist)

Transform It
 God’s mandate
 Very Spiritual
 Good
 Worship
 Excellence expected
 Positive

As you can tell, being a Christian Dualist or Christian Wholist has profound implications on how we view these four areas of life. It affects our posture toward worship, education, work, and

¹² Walsh & Middleton identify three main areas where Dualism reveals itself: how we view work, how we view culture, and how we read the Bible. I have taken their first two and added two additional “areas” where Dualism makes itself “obviously” known. See *The Transforming Vision* by Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton (Intervarsity Press, 1984).

¹³ Think for a moment at how much we use the supposed “physical” portions of the dichotomies in our “spiritual” endeavors. Look at the role of the “physical” in Communion, Vocal Praise, Lifting Hands, Kneeling, Reading, Thinking (Brain not Soul), Feasts, Fellowships, and Baptisms.

culture (and much more). Getting the Biblical perspective right is paramount because these two views carry such far-reaching consequences.

Understanding the “Cosmic-ness” of the Christian Story

The key to understanding the Christian story, and hence Wholism, lies in viewing the Biblical Meta-narrative in its “cosmic-ness.” We need to see just what original Creation consisted of in order to understand the subsequent Fall and Redemption properly. The following chart seeks to describe all that is enveloped in “Cosmic Creation.” It simply shows the multi-faceted nature and properties of what is meant by “Cosmic Creation.”

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Persons of Creation – | All of the living beings in Creation, especially man. What it means to be Imago Dei, man as God intended. Man in the highest and greatest sense of the term. |
| Places of Creation – | All of the many places in Creation, every space, every nook and cranny. |
| Things of Creation – | All of the things of Creation, whether natural or man-made. All of the many physical items that are in Creation. Trees, books, lamps, computers, buildings, mountains, etc... ¹⁵ |
| Ideas of Creation – | All of the inherent Institutions and Abstracts of Creation. Examples are: Science, History, Culture-Forming, Love, Beauty, Marriage, etc... All of the non-tangible, inherent parts or infrastructure of Creation existing by design. |
| Activities of Creation – | All of the activities that go on in Creation, especially human activities. Examples are: running, singing, dancing, learning, rotation and revolution of planets, etc... |

When someone says “Cosmic Creation” he/she is emphasizing the grandness and large-scale interrelatedness of *all* that Creation “IS.” It is cosmic; it is more than just “two people in a Garden.” Again, if we would simply imagine for one moment that the Fall had never occurred, it is easy to see this *multi-faceted interrelatedness*. It is obvious that we would still be doing much of what we are doing now. We would be building streets, laying pipelines, doing science experiments, practicing our various trades, reading, learning, growing, working, and the like. The only difference is that we would do these things with perfect Creational presuppositions.

Everything would have been done to the glory of God and always in a sense of worship. The

¹⁴ Consumerist education is viewing education as having value only in that it is a passport of sorts to other nicer things: the big boat, the big car, the big house, the early retirement, etc...

¹⁵ Some would argue here that these may not be an original part of Creation, but I would argue that much of what we have learned, built, and constructed would have been done, even if the Fall had not occurred. We would still be exploring the Creation and enjoying what God has made. We would still be fulfilling our role of “filling the Earth

doctrine to emphasize here is the doctrine of inherent Creational Goodness. Now that we're armed with a general sketch of what constitutes Creation, let us move, piece by piece, through the Biblical story.

Cosmic Creation

Creation is filled with inherent goodness. After all that God had made we read alas, "God saw all that He had made, and it was very, good."¹⁶ Creation as God intended it was inherently and comprehensively good. This means that all of the *persons* of Creation were good. All of the *places* of Creation were good. All of the *things* of Creation were good. All of the *ideas, institutions, and infrastructure* of Creation that are inherent to its design were good. These are things like: Biology, Astronomy, Carpentry, Poetry, Beauty, Love, and Culture-Building – these were all good. Lastly, all of the *activities* in Creation were good - all of the actions carried out in Creation¹⁷ were inherently good. Running, singing, writing, procreating, building, constructing, taming – all of these are a part of the Creation, and all of these were completely good. Understanding "Cosmic" Creation is simply understanding the large scale project of Creation; there is much more about Creation than simply "human beings in a garden."

Cosmic Fall

Next, we move to examine the "cosmic" Fall. After Adam and Eve's rebellion in Genesis three, we read, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life."¹⁸ When God cursed the ground, He cursed *all* of Creation because of what man had done. Man is a being who is able to affect change in history whether for the better or for the worse. This is a profound "re-ordering" of the entire universe. One man, one woman, one

and subduing it" (Genesis 1:28). Much of what we are doing would still be being done; it's just that it would be done in a perfect God-glorifying, theistic way.

¹⁶ Genesis 1:31

¹⁷ Obviously I don't mean "all" in the strictest sense of the word. God did forbid them to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Everything else (the realms of disintegration) is what I am focusing on; immoral actions are always going to be an exception.

¹⁸ Genesis 3:17

tree, one bite - and there was “cosmic” change. The Fall did not only affect Adam and Eve, it affected the totality of Creation. All of the *man* was lost. All of the *places* of Creation were lost. All of the *things* of Creation were lost. All of the deeply interwoven *ideas and institutions* of Creation were lost. All of the *activities* of Creation were lost. The Fall is “cosmic” because it affected *all* of Creation; there is much more about the Fall than simply “man’s loss of fellowship.”

Cosmic Redemption

Next comes the miracle. Because of what Christ has done, all of Creation is being redeemed. “Cosmic” redemption is God’s power to fully restore the Fall of Creation back into Creational Beauty. In Romans eight, Paul writes about how the totality of the Creation is eagerly longing for full redemption. In verse 22, we read, “We know that the whole Creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”¹⁹ With Christ’s ministry, the Kingdom of God has come. All of Creation, while not fully redeemed yet, *is being redeemed presently*. “By grace through faith in Christ”, all of the *man* is being redeemed. All of the *places* of Creation are being redeemed. All of the *things* of Creation are being redeemed. All of the inherent *institutions* and great *ideas* of Creation, that is, the very intangible infrastructure that is built into Creation are being redeemed. And lastly, all of the *activities* carried out in Creation are being redeemed. The redemption is “cosmic” because it is proportional to the Fall and affects the totality of Creation. Redemption is something much more profound than “God saving humans.” The account thus far has been from the Wholist’s perspective, but now we will turn to Dualism.

In Dualism, there is a radical change of perspective. Remember that Dualism is a “split-vision” of life that relegates faith to some small part of life and insists that some things are “non-spiritual” and either beyond redemption or irrelevant to living in Creation. In the Dualistic

¹⁹ Romans 8:22

version, only a part of the *person* of Creation is being redeemed, the other part is lost. Only a part of the *places* of Creation are being redeemed, the other parts are lost. Only a part of the *things* of Creation are being redeemed, the other parts are lost. Only a part of the great *ideas* of Creation are being redeemed, the other parts are lost. And lastly, only a part of the many *activities* of Creation are being redeemed, the other parts are lost. Dualism reduces God's redemptive activity to a small pile of non-cosmic activities. With all that is going on in Creation, God remains by and large, disinterested in the world that He has created and maintains. This fragmented perspective that Dualism presents is wrong. Wholism argues that no matter who you are, where you are, what things you have around you, what inherent institution or idea of Creation that you are using, and no matter what activity you find yourself doing, you are first and foremost living in the "being redeemed" Creation. Wholists, as you can see, deliberately sustain the doctrine of Creation in every realm of life, as they do also the subsequent doctrines of Fall and Redemption. For the Wholist, the Christian Story is *always* being told.

Additionally, a closer look at Dualism will reveal that the only real emphasis of Redemption is placed on the *person* of Creation, and that, only being the better half, i.e. the "soul." Christians must understand that the whole of man, all of the places, things, ideas, and activities of Creation are also being redeemed. The activities in Creation, like: running, singing, learning, planting, building, etc... were *all* lost in the Fall but are *all* recovered in Redemption.

Hence, Dualism is chiefly a profound misunderstanding of the "cosmic-ness" of the Biblical meta-narrative. It teaches that only a part of these areas of Creation are being redeemed. The two that are most under-emphasized are (1) the inherent *ideas and institutions* of Creation, like the human culture-building project, earth cultivation project, education, artistic expression,

etc...and (2) the many *activities* that are carried out in Creation. The following chart will show what happens when we leave out each specific piece of Redemption.

If Christian Redemption Leaves Out

A Part of the Person
A Part of the Places
A Part of the Things
A Part of the Ideas
A Part of the Activities

We Get

Anthropological Dualism
Metaphysical Dualism
Metaphysical Dualism
Religious Dualism
Religious Dualism

To correctly view the Biblical story, we must not merely say that “man” was lost and that “man” is being recovered, but rather that “all” was lost and that “all” is being recovered.

Cosmic or Non-Cosmic Redemption: Comparing Wholism to Dualism

Now I turn to look at the Biblical Story, not as a piece by piece analysis but as a quantitative whole. I want to ask the question: Is there a *problem* in viewing redemption as something “non-cosmic?” In what follows I will try to answer that question.

In the Biblical view of Redemption, we have the unfolding of the three main parts of the Christian Story that were previously outlined: “Cosmic Creation”, “Comic Fall”, and “Cosmic Redemption.” To illustrate this story figuratively, you might say that in the Biblical story, we have: ten ounces of Creation, ten ounces of Fall, and ten ounces of Redemption. But the Dualist’s perspective is different. According to Dualism, the story reads: ten ounces of Creation, ten ounces of Fall, but one ounce of Redemption. Dualism teaches that God is not able to fully restore the whole canvas of Creation to its original Creational beauty. It teaches that some areas of Creation and human life are beyond redemption and “off-limits” to our faith. But this view just doesn’t hold water.

The distorted view of Dualism implies that God gave *man* the ability to radically and “cosmically” reorganize all of Creation, hence the “cosmic-ness” of the Fall, but that *He, himself*, lacks such far-reaching “cosmic” power. God responds to 10 ounces of Fall with one ounce of redemption? Where’s the glory in that? Dualism belittles God’s power over the *totality* of

Creation. It also seems to be a radical arrogance of man's power over Creation, because man's actions affect cosmic significances, but God's actions allegedly affect little or no cosmic significances. Dualism is Christ-belittling because it imagines that He is unable to affect "cosmic" change.

The non-Cosmic nature of Dualism's Redemption should present obvious problems that even the Dualist will notice. Because of this problem, some Dualists respond at this point by saying, "But I don't believe in a 'cosmic' Fall, so Jesus doesn't have to be a 'cosmic' Redeemer." Essentially he/she is saying that, "I can hold to a non-Cosmic Redemption, because I am not convinced that there was a Cosmic Fall." This argument sounds clever, but as you will see, it cannot be right. For if the Fall of man is *not* cosmic, and it did not affect cosmic significances (which would *indeed* mean that Jesus doesn't have to be a Cosmic Redeemer), then the Earth, this Earthly life, the body, and the temporal are all still good, but that is precisely what Dualism insists is bad! If the realms of which the Dualist is complaining never fell, then on what grounds (whatsoever!) do we have a reason to withdraw from them? In that case we are straight back to perfect Wholism, everything is *now* as it *was* in the beginning. But this certainly isn't the Dualist's perspective! This absurdity leads us straight into a second rebuttal.

The Dualist is left with one final response. Rather than arguing that the Fall is not Cosmic, which would indeed mean that Jesus doesn't have to redeem every single realm of life, the Dualist might challenge that all of Creation is *NOT* built inherently good. This view would seek to allege that some parts of Creation were created as inherently "evil" or "wrong." In that case, the realms of which the Dualist remains withdrawn, are realms which *by their Creational order* are inherently evil. This would then mean that all of Creation was not good, and that God built some parts (either whole realms or a part of every realm) of Creation as inherently evil.

This view, however is simply ludicrous. Creation as God intended it was excellent. There is nothing in Genesis one and two that would indicate that God built a part of every realm as intrinsically evil. All of the persons, places, things, ideas/infrastructure, and activities in Pre-Fall Creation are all *good*.

In concluding these two rebuttals, let me offer this simple summary. To resort to the argument that some realms of life were created inherently evil is just ludicrous and does not fit well with Genesis 1-2. Likewise, to say that the Fall is not “cosmic”, (having in mind that this “non-cosmic ness” would then justify Jesus’ “non-cosmic” Redemption) only turns out to be equally absurd because in turn, it advocates Wholism.²⁰

The biblical message is that *all* is sacred, *all* has fallen, and *all* is being redeemed. In the resurrection of Christ, we may find a strong parallel to this paradigm. Jesus became a fully living and breathing human being.²¹ He lived as man and embraced all of what it means “to be man.” This corresponds to “a full view of Creation.” Next, Jesus died. His life was completely taken away from him; His death is complete. Christ’s death can be seen as “a full view of the Fall.” But here is where the Dualist’s perspective falls miserably short. According to the Gospels, what was fully *alive*, and fully *dead*, is now fully *restored*. Jesus’ resurrection is a beautiful statement of “a full view of Redemption.” The resurrection shows us that God did not give Jesus’ life a partial restoration but a comprehensive, “full restoration.” Jesus’ story parallels the Christian meta-narrative because it shows: ten ounces of life, ten ounces of death, and ten ounces of

²⁰ Dualism teaches that there are realms of Creation that are presently evil. In order to be presently “evil”, these realms must be either (1) created inherently evil or (2) affected in the Fall but presently beyond redemption. These are the only two options, and both of them can be refuted.

²¹ This statement has profound implications for Christian anthropological Dualism. What better affirmation of the good of the human body than “the Word becoming flesh?”

restoration/new life. Redemption is a cosmic affair. Everything is effected in the Fall, but everything is also effected in Christ's redemption.

Dualism leads us to a tragic but false conclusion. If it is true that man's actions carried cosmic significances, affecting everything in Creation, but Jesus' actions carried miniscule significances, redeeming only part of the person, places, things, institutions, and activities of Creation, why should the believer be inclined to *rejoice*? How can we rejoice in the sight of such loss? At a practical level, Dualism just seems to be wrong.

Two Absurdities for the Christian Dualist

The Incarnation

The incarnation of Jesus is the most "body-embracing", "this-life-exalting", "temporal-redeeming" affirmation that we could ever hope for. What better indication that the human body is good than the fact that the Second member of the Trinity became the Imago Dei Himself? As Dr. Nigel Cameron said, "Jesus didn't only *become* a man; He is *still* fully man right now."²² Jesus went through all of what it means to be a human. If the body were not so important why would Jesus have come in bodily form? The same can be said of the resurrection. If the body were not so God-honoring and God-glorifying, why would Jesus have had a bodily resurrection? The fact that Jesus: entered time, lived as a human, experienced all of human life, lost His body and received it back is a strong indication that the body is an inherently beautiful thing; it is not something to be ashamed of.

Physical Aspects of "Spiritual Activities"

Have you ever noticed how involved your body is in a typical worship service? It seems strange that while in the pursuit of such "higher" and better "spiritual" activities that we find it necessary to utilize our bodies constantly. Look at the role of the "physical" in: communion, vocal praise, lifting hands, kneeling, reading, thinking, feasts, fellowships, and baptisms. These

activities show that man and reality are one cohesive whole. Despite Dualism's attempts to divide man and reality into two opposing parts, we still exhibit profound cohesion and singularity. We cannot even ascend to those supposed "higher" things without the use of these "lower" things. Think also, for a moment, of how God dealt with Israel. He required worship, feasts, sacrifices, and rest days for His people. The Hebrew approach to life was very creaturely oriented. It did not denigrate the physical as something to be discarded. We should not be surprised that we cannot escape from our creatureliness, nor should we long to do so.

Two Stiff Challenges for Christian Religious Dualism

Salt of the Earth & Light of the World

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told His disciples, "You are the salt of the Earth. You are the light of the world."²³ Christian Religious Dualism has the idea of taking all of the salt of the Christian faith and dumping it into one small corner of life. If we suppose that there really *is* such a thing as the "sacred/secular" dichotomy, where "faith" remains diss-integrated from most areas of life, as the Dualist argues, then dumping that salt all into one place is just what Jesus intended for us to do. But this view does not fit well with the nature of "salt" and "light." Jesus' command clearly indicates that the disciples, carrying the Gospel message, are to *permeate* their culture just as salt would be used to permeate meat for preservation. This verse is a direct *challenge* to Christian religious Dualism because its visual picture is unmistakable. The Christian faith is something that is to thoroughly permeate every realm of life. This is the very reason Jesus says in verse 15, "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl." Being the salt of the Earth and light of the world is a picture of how the believer is to function. Dualism must be abandoned, because it *prohibits* the very integration of faith and life that Jesus commands.

²² Said by Dr. Nigel Cameron at The Friday Symposium lecture series in Spring, 2004 at Dallas Baptist University (Dallas, TX).

All Things to the Glory of God

Similarly, when he addressed the Corinthian believers, Paul said, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”²⁴ This clearly implies that one can do all things to the Glory of God.²⁵ Whether: eating, drinking, singing, or learning, we can glorify God in every realm of life. *All* has fallen but *all* is being redeemed. It is impossible to read these verses and have them make any sense if Dualism’s “split-vision” is right. Dualism wants to say just the opposite - that some realms of life are “holy” and other realms are “unholy.” Hence actions carried out in the “holy” realm can glorify God, but actions in the “profane” realm can’t. Christianity, in Paul’s view, is not a realm of life; it’s a way of life for every realm. All can be done to/for the Glory of God. Since it asserts just the opposite, Dualism must be abandoned.

The Lie of Worldview Neutrality

As I stated at the beginning of my paper, I would strongly characterize my former self as a *methodological Dualist*. Whether they realize it or not, most Christians are methodological Dualists, because most Christians have a practice of withholding their religious beliefs from certain other (usually public) realms of life. Many Christians have deluded themselves into thinking that they should not engage a particular “realm of life” with their Christian faith because in a culture of plurality it must remain “neutral.” This fatal assumption practically “hands over” the whole of life based on the naive idea of neutrality. Many Dualists are only comfortable leaving their “faith” out of a particular realm of life because they have a deep presupposition that these realms, of which their faith remains withdrawn, are by and large “neutral.” But the key question for the Dualist to ask is, are they? To put it another way, “If I don’t use my Christian worldview in being a physician, *what* or *whose* worldview will I use? And will it *really* be neutral?” The answer is no. It will not be neutral. Everyone has a worldview and someone’s

²³ Matthew 5:13-14

²⁴ I Corinthians 10:31

worldview will reign. If you do not use your Christian worldview, you will only resort to using the worldview of your surrounding culture, which in our case, is naturalism.

Walsh and Middleton discuss Dualism at length in their book *The Transforming Vision*. In their argument against Dualism, they paint the Biblical picture by answering four key questions: Who are we? Where are we? What went wrong? And what's the remedy? They present two implications of mankind's being made in the Image of God: (1) our dominion or rule over the Earth, and (2) our religious freedom to either serve God or serve idols.²⁶ We are responsible to serve God in every realm of life, and Dualism is a paradigm that allows us to worship idols in realms like politics, education, healthcare, legal institutions, and the family.²⁷ Walsh and Middleton go on to say, "But the most devastating effect of Dualism is that it necessitates a double allegiance. It forces us to serve two masters."²⁸ Every realm of life must have a king, and if Christians just "withdraw" from a particular realm thinking it to be purportedly "neutral" they have in truth erected an idol to be that realm's king. The following charts demonstrate this simple principle.

Two Allegiances Resulting from Christian Dualism

1. Allegiance to Christ in the Sacred (spiritual) Realm
2. Allegiance to Idols in the Secular (worldly) Realm

Two Ways of Behaving/Operating in Every Realm of Life

1. Worshiper in Every Realm----->Obedient----->Image of God----->Wise
2. Idolater in Every Realm----->Disobedient----->Image of Idols----->Foolish

As Walsh and Middleton affirm, when we live as Dualists, we betray Christ's lordship over *all* of life.²⁹ Most Americans are falsely entertaining the idea of "worldview neutrality." An important step in curbing Dualism lies in simply demonstrating that there is no such thing as "worldview

²⁵ Violating God's Moral Law would be an obvious exception.

²⁶ Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Intervarsity Press, 1984) p. 113

²⁷ Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Intervarsity Press, 1984) Chapter Two

²⁸ Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (Intervarsity Press, 1984) p. 113

²⁹ Brian J. Walsh & J. Richard Middleton *The Transforming Vision* (Intervarsity Press, 1984) p. 95

neutrality.” From my own personal experience I can tell you that it is much easier to see the error and danger of Dualistic thinking when you know full well that somebody’s assumptions and presuppositions will *have* to be used.

Concluding Exhortations

Ken Meyers used a phrase during his interview with Dr. Naugle³⁰ that I have used repeatedly throughout this paper because it describes quite perfectly what we are asking believers to do. The challenge that we face is “deliberately sustaining the Christian worldview in all that we do.” With so many internal and external forces opposing integration, the Christian must commit himself/herself to the hard task of deliberately integrating his/her faith in every realm of life. As believers, we are left with only two options concerning faith and life.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| We can... | <u>deliberately</u> | <u>sustain</u> | <u>the Christian worldview</u> | <u>in all that we do.</u> | (Wholism) |
| | | | OR | | |
| We can... | <u>subconsciously</u> | <u>suspend</u> | <u>the Christian worldview</u> | <u>in most that we do.</u> | (Dualism) |

If we ever hope to affect the reign of God in all of the Kingdoms of Creation, then we must commit ourselves to the difficult task of deliberately sustaining our beliefs. This is a nice phrase to commit to memory.

By now, I hope that it is obvious that Christian Dualism is both a lie and a heresy. As someone who has experienced the liberating freedom of a Wholistic Christian worldview, one that embraces *all* of life and *all* of what it means to be fully human, I can boldly say that there is no greater need in our churches than a comprehensive, Wholistic Biblical Christian Worldview.

Understanding Dualism’s far-reaching effects is something that takes several passes to really “understand.” The presuppositional framework of/for Dualism is deeply embedded in most believers’ minds. Freeing up my own mind to experience the “whole” Christian story has been the most liberating discovery of my life, short of my conversion experience. Taking this

³⁰ See “*Mars Hill Audio Journal*”, Jan./Feb. 2003

framework of Wholism to our brothers and sisters is a task for every compassionate Christian thinker. When you see the world as a Wholist, you just cannot help but “to speak about what you have seen and heard.”³¹ The following seven points summarize the arguments against Dualism which I have set forth in this paper. I encourage readers to utilize this outline in ministering to others who have Dualistic leanings.

1. Show the “Cosmic” inherent goodness of Creation (goodness in the: persons, places, things, ideas/institutions, and activities of Creation).
2. Show the “Cosmic” work of Redemption (redemption for the: persons³², places, things, ideas/institutions, and activities of Creation.).³³
3. Show logical absurdities inherent in Dualism (the Incarnation & “physical” elements in “spiritual” activities).
4. Show the command for Wholism in every realm of life (“Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World” & “All things to the Glory of God”).
5. Abolish worldview neutrality. There is no such thing as “neutral” or “non-view.”
6. Show the potential for obedience/disobedience in every realm of life. Every realm will have a king.
7. Exhort/teach the believer to “deliberately sustain his/her Christian Faith in all that they do.”

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³¹ Acts 4:20

³² I do not mean to imply universalism here at all. The point is not that everyone will be saved, but that all *kinds* of things will be saved.

³³ You will not have to work hard on a “Cosmic Fall” because Dualism already insists that most of reality is hopelessly evil and permanently lost.

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