A critical appraisal of typologies of religious orientation in the theology and ethics of Ernst Troeltsch and H. Richard Niebuhr

Thesis

UNRESTRICTED

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A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF TYPOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION IN THE THEOLOGY AND ETHICS OF ERNST TROELTSCH AND H.RICHARD NIEBUHR.

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ABSTRACT.

The thesis begins with the contention that the categories which are used to interpret Christian ethics, which are generally derived from Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies, are far too restrictive to be useful in establishing responses to contemporary moral problems. Troeltsch and Niebuhr polarise the options in Christian ethics allowing only a choice between being culturally effective but compromising the Gospel or being faithful to the Gospel but becoming socially irrelevant.

The thesis proceeds to show how the central themes in Troeltsch and Niebuhr's thought become the evaluative criteria behind their typologies. In Troeltsch's case this was the idea of compromise or synthesis in which Christian values may be combined with secular values. This approach is embodied in Troeltsch's church-type and is the standard by which he evaluates all his other types. Niebuhr adopted much of Troeltsch's thinking and methods with the difference that for him 'compromise' was a negative rather than a positive principle. In his later work, however, Niebuhr abandoned Troeltsch's synthetic approach entirely and sought, instead, the conversion or transformation of culture on the basis of 'radical faith'. Conversion or transformation became the organising criterion of the typology of Christ and Culture. All the five types in this work were evaluated with regard to their ability to transform culture. Different approaches to Christian ethics are thus evaluated by a principle that is no part of their own agenda and which presents them in a limiting and distorting light.

In addition to these distorting effects both Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies are based upon dualistic frameworks which falsely polarise options in Christian ethics.

In conclusion the thesis does not reject typological approaches entirely but makes a plea for a more open-ended approach to Christian ethics based upon the eschatological duality of Christianity.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS.

0.1.1. Most recent thinking about social ethics and the relation of Christianity to culture and society has been deeply influenced by the categories that Troeltsch and Niebuhr developed in their typologies of religious orientation. (Long 1967:164-167). These categories have largely determined how Christian social ethics have been approached in Western Protestantism over the last fifty years, and while they have produced many insights they have also brought great difficulties in their wake. John Howard Yoder describes the chief of these difficulties:

> In the tradition of Ernst Troeltsch Western theological ethics assumes that the choice of options is fixed in logic, and for all times and places by the way the Constantinian heritage dealt with the question of social ethics. Either one accepts, without serious qualification, the responsibility of politics, i.e. that of governing with whatever means that takes, or one chooses a withdrawn position of either personal-monastic-vocational or sectarian character which is 'apolitical'. (Yoder 1972: 110).

0.1.2. Yoder adds that this dichotomous approach to ethics has gained such a following through the work of the Niebuhr brothers that it has become difficult for Protestant ethicists to put the problem in other terms(1). H. R. Niebuhr's Christ and Culture presupposes it and his trinitarian language reinforces and propagates it. P. Ramsey's Basic Christian Ethics, Yoder says, uses this formulation of the problem for his outline. (Yoder 1972: 110).

0.1.3. This is an undesirable situation as it narrows down and misrepresents the options for Christian approaches to social ethics. It implies that if the Church is to be socially responsible it must engage the world on the world's terms and leave the radical ethics of the Kingdom of God, the ethics of Jesus, behind. Whereas if it desires to seek a Kingdom lifestyle, then it condemns itself to social irrelevance.

0.1.4. The purpose of this thesis is to challenge this dichotomy by offering a rigorous critique of Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's typologies of religious orientation, and the theologies that lie behind them. These typologies and theologies propagate a dichotomous approach to Christian Ethics. Criticism of this approach will establish that the possibilities for Christian social ethics are far more open and varied than Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies will allow.

0.1.5. It is not intended to develop an alternative approach to that of Troeltsch and Niebuhr in this thesis, but to demonstrate that such a dichotomous approach to Christian ethics is by no means necessary. In fact, it will be shown that it is destructive and obscurantist rather than liberating or illuminating. It is hoped that this will pave the way for a far more open ended approach to Christian ethics in which 'unorthodox' or 'novel' options in Christian ethics will not be dogmatically excluded or dismissed by being defined out of existence by too strict a typological classification, or by being misrepresented within the typology.

TYPOLOGIES AND IDEAL TYPES.

0.2.1. A type is merely a representation or depiction of a number of similar cases all of which have certain important features in common. Not all the cases may possess the common features in quite the same way but there will be sufficient resemblance between the cases to indicate that they are of the same general category. They are intellectual representations of reality. A typology is the organisation of such types along a logical continuum for the sake of comparison and analysis. Defined in these terms types and typologies have been in use in intellectual history from the time of Plato onwards as an important tool of rational investigation both in the human and natural sciences. There is thus nothing epistemologically novel about them; they are simply heuristic tools used to describe and order reality (Tiryakian 1968: 177-184).

0.2.2. Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies attempt to express and clarify different religious orientations to culture and society. They identify and classify such orientations in terms of their subject's response to culture, and the way in which they relate Christianity to culture. Their classification thus has two focal points: the subject's understanding of Christianity, and their corresponding view of the world. (2)

0.2.3. Troeltsch and Niebuhr both use Weber's ideal type methodology in the construction of their typologies. Weber developed his 'Ideal Type' against the background of the discussion in his time of the epistemology of the social sciences. There were, broadly speaking, two schools of thought; firstly the subjectivists who held that the social sciences dealt only with subjective human motives and meanings; secondly the objectivists who held that the social sciences should adopt the methodology of the natural sciences. Weber believed that the truth was to be found in a synthesis of both approaches. This was a belief he shared with Windelbrant and Rickert who had already attempted such a synthesis. Like most of the Neo-Kantians Weber believed that all knowledge had to be conceptually abstracted from the "flux" of experience, the distinction lay not in their subject matter between the social and natural sciences but in their method. However Weber disagreed with Rickert's definition of that method. Rickert had argued that the social sciences had an individualising method, and that both natural and social sciences were based on the scientist's selection of the most common features of a particular group of subjects. Weber disagreed with this on two counts: firstly, the scientist's selection of material was based on the scientist's interests rather than the common features given in the subjects, and secondly, the social scientist sought out those features which had a wide "cultural significance". These were accentuated and formed into a synthesis by being logically ordered - hence the ideal type (Hekman 1983: 18-26; Hamilton 1974: 89-86).

0.2.4. In an early work on the methodology of sociology Weber described, in some detail, the nature of ideal types and the process by

which they were formed (Weber 1904). For Weber ideal types were conceptual tools which were epistemologically necessary because of the nature of knowledge and experience. Knowledge had to be wrested from the flux of experience or phenomena by organising it into coherent and comprehensible patterns. These are formed by the investigator selecting the culturally significant or distinguishing features of the instances of social behaviour that he/she is investigating(3). He/she then exaggerates those features to their logical extremes and synthesises them by establishing logically coherent relationships between them. The result is what Weber calls a 'utopia' or limiting case in which the tendencies of a type, such as a free market economy or a sect, are developed to their full logical conclusion. Here the idea is that the features of a type are most clearly seen when writ large or set in stark contrast. The type, thus defined, is then compared with social reality to see if there are any cases in which the traits of the ideal type may be recognised. The type is also used in a comparative way alongside other types, as in typologies. As described here Weber's type is ideal in two senses: it expresses the utopian or ideal form of certain patterns of social behaviour if allowed to develop to their fullest extent, and secondly because no actual instance of social behaviour fully conforms to it; the type itself is never totally expressed in reality. For this reason Weber maintains that the ideal type is not a hypothesis but is a tool to aid the development of a hypothesis. Accordingly it cannot be tested and falsified like a scientific hypothesis. The only ways in which an ideal type can be evaluated is a) if it presents a plausible account of the motivation of social behaviour, b) if it is 'objectively possible' in the sense that it could occur in reality, and c) if it is adequate as an explanation of the motivational causes of social behaviour and organisation. Weber warns, however, that these types are not to be made into real objects or forces; they are only ideal constructs, not descriptions of reality, nor should there be any attempt to squeeze history into the strict categories of the ideal types. Most importantly they are not to be made the basis of moral evaluations of a particular form of behaviour of a particular society or culture. Ideal types are ideal in a logical sense only. Ideal types are merely necessary heuristic devices and should

never be made more than that. (Weber 1904: 63-67; Andreski 1964: 78-79; 1971: 426-455; Aron 1970: 202-207; Fallding 1968: 501-506; Hekman 1983: 26-38).

0.2.5. Weber worked with two kinds of ideal types in his sociological investigations. The first was the historical type which was formed basically by the process described above, in which Weber would identify and accentuate the features of an historically specific pattern of social behaviour such as the Mediaeval city state, or early modern capitalism. These types being historically unique are confined to one culture. The second kind of ideal type has been termed by later commentators as his 'general' type. Weber defines this type as the attribution of a rational purpose to a hypothetical and real individual's observable action. Weber called this attributive model a 'pure type'; a whole abstract construct such as that of the 'Free Market'. This type is culturally transferable, especially as Weber abandoned his accentuation of the feature of such rational, goal-centred behaviour. Instead Weber prefered to examine the logic of ideal typical behaviour in itself (Weber 1922: 129-131). The historical ideal type belongs to Weber's early methodological reflections in The Methodology of the Social Sciences in 1904 while the second is exemplified in his cross-cultural work on religion, economy, social structure and bureaucracy, and is spelt out in his later work, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisations (Weber 1922). (Andreski 1971: 455-456; Aron 1970: 208-10; Watkins 1973: 82-93).

0.2.6. Weber's first type has been subjected to serious criticism by modern sociologists and social theorists. Its accentuated nature makes it more of a caricature than a representation of social behaviour, and as such there is no way that it can be tested as being viable let alone falsified (Rex 1961: 172-3). The fact that Weber's historical ideal type cannot be tested or falsified has also, in the minds of many social philosophers and sociologists, undermined its value as a rational or scientific concept (Runciman 1972: 33-37). The historical ideal type is also based on a 'holistic' understanding of society which is quite at odds with Weber's own methodological assumptions and as such is

confusing because it is not viable as a holistic type but only as a type which depicts individual motives for social behaviour (Watkins 1973: 82-92). Lastly Weber's historical ideal type is too specific for the work of comparative social analysis which was his real genius (14) (Lockwood 1964: 312ff: Rex 1961: 172-3).

0.2.7. The evaluation of Weber's general type, however, is much more positive. It is not a caricature and so is open to falsification. It seeks to explain patterns of social behaviour in terms of individual motivation and is applicable cross-culturally. As such it is a usable tool in sociological investigation. (Andreski 1984: 41-50; Rex 1973 192-211; Watkins 1973: 92-3).

0.2.8. Troeltsch, writing in the nineteen hundreds, used Weber's historical type in the formation of his church-sect-mysticism typology and so ran into the difficulties of caricaturing and over-specificallity which were endemic to Weber's early type. Niebuhr, however, in his later work produced something like Weber's general type on which he based his five-fold typology of Christ and culture. In doing this Niebuhr avoided many of the pitfalls into which Troeltsch had stumbled. However, both made the fundamental mistakes, against which Weber had warned; firstly of making their typologies into procrustean beds into which they squeezed phenomena and secondly of then using these too rigidly defined types in an evaluative manner. In addition to this it will also be seen that both Troeltsch and Niebuhr imported hidden theological criteria into the definition of their types which tended to obscure the empirical data which Weber had insisted was the proper material out of which ideal types should be formed.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS.

0.3.1. It is not possible to discuss Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies apart from their respective theologies as the latter forms the hidden criteria and presuppositions for the formation of the former. For this reason in this work Troeltsch and Niebuhr's theology and ethics are

extensively discussed and analysed so that it might be possible to see clearly how these have influenced the development of their typologies and the conclusions which, in turn, they draw from these typologies. (5) There is a continuity of thought between Troeltsch and Niebuhr's ethics and typologies. Troeltsch's ethics are expressed in his typology of religious orientation in the types he develops and Niebuhr takes the starting point for both his ethics and typology in Troeltsch's thought. In fact in his early years Niebuhr's thought is simply a refined echo of the thought of Troeltsch. He adopts Troeltsch's approach to the formation of ethical and social values, and readapts Troeltsch's typology of religious orientation which embodies his approach to a value formation. It is only later that Niebuhr sees the shortcomings of Troeltsch's approach and begins to form his own independent approach. However even Niebuhr's new approach takes place solidly within the agenda and framework set by Troeltsch. For this reason both the continuities and distinctions between Troeltsch and Niebuhr's thought will be studied carefully in this thesis.

0.3.2. Consequently in chapter one, the thesis begins, with a discussion of Ernst Troeltsch's theology and ethics which is then related to his typology of religious orientation in chapter two. A similar pattern is followed in chapters three and four with regard to H. Richard Niebuhr. The difference being that the links between his theology, ethics, and typology of religious orientation and those of Troeltsch are considered in some detail. In the course of the discussion both Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's theological ethics and typological approaches will be seen to be inadequate for the purpose of contemporary Christian social ethics since they are found to be too undefinable, dichotomous and reified to be of real use in Christian social ethical decision making. This critique of Troeltsch and Niebuhr is brought to a head in chapter five - the conclusion - in which the weaknesses of Troeltsch and Niebuhr's theories, both in their original and revised forms, and their historical dualism (which stands at the back of their whole approach to the problem of Christianity and society) is identified, analysed and rejected.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION.

1. However Stanley Hauerwas using a narrative approach, and following Yoder's lead in many places, has broken this mould and has sought to develop a Christian ethic which takes its point of departure from the Kingdom of God and focuses upon the nature of the Christian church as a disciple community under the formative power of the 'story' of Jesus and the church. (Hauerwas 1984).

2. It will also be discovered that there is a third hidden focus, in the thought of both Troeltsch and Niebuhr, namely the orientations of their different types to their theologies of culture and their social ethics.

3. Ideal types also reflected Weber's presupposition of methodological individualism which holds that the primary units of social action are individuals and that all matters of social behaviour are to be understood in terms of individual motivations and goals. For this reason Weber does not accept the existence of sociological wholes - only individuals acting in concert. (Andreski 1964: 76-77; Hamilton 1974: 86-96).

4. Hekman's defence of Weber against these criticisms, however, should also be noted. She also contends that Weber used the same method of ideal type formation for all his types. (Hekman 1983 38-60).

5. These conclusions will, in retrospect, be seen to have been reached prior to the typological investigations in Troeltsch and Niebuhr's theologies and ethical approaches.

CHAPTER ONE

VALUE THROUGH SYNTHESIS: THE ETHICAL ORIENTATION OF THE THOUGHT OF ERNST TROELTSCH.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1.1. The thought of Ernst Troeltsch was fragmented and constantly changing with the result that he never produced a theological or philosophical system. Nevertheless it was systematic in the sense that the different aspects and concerns in his thought were interdependent, interrelated, and moved along parallel lines to one another. A shift in one area would mean adjustment in all the others. (H.R. Niebuhr 1924:84-91)

1.1.2. For this reason no element within Troeltsch's thought can be approached in isolation. Every distinct aspect has to be seen in the light of the whole to be meaningful. Consequently it would be highly inappropriate to attempt to study Troeltsch's treatment of types of religious orientation without relating them to their wider context within Troeltsch's theology and philosophy.

1.1.3. The wider context in which typologies of religious orientation are located is Troeltsch's thinking about the nature of history and culture, ethics, and religion. Troeltsch found these areas subject to both internal and external tensions which arose from various opposites that were endemic to their nature, and from the uniqueness and autonomy of these areas over against one another. (Clayton 1979: 83-88). He subsequently developed his method of synthesis to reconcile these tensions. This consisted in the drawing together of the different elements within a situation and arranging them in a temporary reconciliation on the basis of those ideas and values which show the most promise or potential for future development. (Ogletree 1975 225-8).

1.1.4. This method is present from a very early stage within Troeltsch's thought (Reist 1966: 156-159) but did not come into its own until Troeltsch's historical emphasis dominated the other areas of his thought following his discovery of sociology through Max Weber. (Chamberlain 1976: 372-398).

1.1.5. Troeltsch's thought developed through a series of stages in which a different emphasis predominated over the other elements in his philosophy and theology, and acted as a focus for them. In Troeltsch's early years as a scholar he was drawn to the pyschology of religion as represented by William James. This became his major concern in his approach to religion as he believed that it was necessary to stress the empirical nature and the diversity of religious phenomena. (Clayton 1979: 70-77). This concern may also be reflected in his emphasis on concrete individuality in history at this time. Troeltsch found this position too relativistic and too vulnerable to reductionism, and so he turned his attention to Neo-Kantian epistemology and sought to base the independence of different areas of life upon apriori concepts. It is at this point that Troeltsch's notorious idea of the religious apriori enters upon the scene. (Niebuhr 1924: 70-77) However Troeltsch found this approach too rationalistic and so he looked instead to history to provide a point of unity for his thought. Religion, ethics and culture were, in this last stage of Troeltsch's thought, to be understood through their historical development, and their logic and meaning were to be discovered through a synthesis of the different elements within their interrelated process of development.

1.1.6. Although history had always been a central concern of Troeltsch's thought, his historical phase began when he discovered the contextual nature of ethics and religion through Weber's analysis of the relation of the cultural superstructure to the social and economic substructure. Troeltsch thus came to believe that ethical and religious ideas are influenced by social and economic situations and arrangements. Consequently they cannot be understood as ideal realities, as in the apriori, but only as they have developed in actual social and economic positions in history. This reorientation took place in Troeltsch's later

years in Heidelberg (from about 1909 onwards) during which time he shared a house with Weber.

1.1.7. Central to Troeltsch's historicism was his method of synthesis which he developed first of all in his historical studies as a way of overcoming the historical and moral relativism which was a product of the 'modern' world as it had developed out of the Enlightenment. His approach was to combine the cultural values of the past with the rising values of the present and so maintain a continuity in ethics which was open to development. Subsequently Troeltsch applied it to ethics in an attempt to reconcile the values of autonomous ethics and the values of mundane secular life which were the product of the Enlightenment, and to overcome the ethical relativism of the Enlightenment. Troeltsch then extended his ethical synthesis to Christian ethics in an attempt to relate them to the secular culture of the modern world. Finally Troeltsch applied this method to religion firstly as a means of showing the superiority of Christianity over and against other religions and then as a way of defining the centre of Christianity in relation to its differing contexts.

1.1.8. When it was applied to all of these areas synthesis became more than a method; it became a metaphysical principle (Niebuhr 1924:39-54) through which human reality was brought into a temporary unity, while the Absolute and Infinite was revealed in a relative and finite context.

1.1.9. The method of synthesis culminated in 'compromise'. This was not a negative concept for Troeltsch but was a creative principle whereby the different elements within the synthesis were accommodated to each other and took on each other's characteristics. The end of this process was that the synthesis was given unity and the elements within it were mutually enriched by each other. The idea of compromise was thus the basic mediating principle between the various elements in Troeltsch's thought. Compromise tied these sometimes disparate elements together. It also became one of the main criteria that distinguished church and sect types and was basic to his account of the formation of the church type.

1.1.10. The main concern of this chapter will be the historical phase of Troeltsch's thought and its antecedents and methodological results in religion and ethics outlined above. This will receive fuller treatment and discussion in the rest of this chapter.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN WORLD.

The Rise Of Historicism

1.2.1.1. Troeltsch identified three influences which issued from the Enlightenment which he felt had profoundly transformed modern thought. The first of these was the modern conception of nature which had 'dissolved' the Aristotelian view of nature and the Biblical cosmology which was based upon the 'mathematico-mechanical method'(1). Secondly, the new interpretation of history which has changed our views of the past and future by seeing the present as a link in the whole process of things. Third the modern 'ethics of humanity' which besides 'unworldly' values of love of God and Neighbour has emphasised the values of art and science making them indispensable ideals. (Antoni 1962:73). The second of these influences, the Enlightenment view of history, will be considered in detail here because of its importance to Troeltsch's thought.

1.2.1.2. Troeltsch considered the discovery of history and the concept of historicism as parallel to the discovery of 'nature' in physical science and the rise of naturalism in the modern world (Troeltsch 1910c: 716-18). As such he felt that it was one of the great breakthroughs of modern knowledge. However Troeltsch's view of the development of historicism is complex as he gives different accounts in different places in his writings of the rise of historicism. However it is still possible to draw together a cohesive picture of Troeltsch's understanding of historicism from his work.

1.2.1.3. For Troeltsch, the modern view of history had its genesis in the Renaissance revival of the Greek psychological approach to history. In the Enlightenment this was given a rationalistic and analytical direction in

the idea of a universal approach to history which would disclose the universal norms common to all mankind. In the German Romantic movement this rationalism and universalism was rejected in favour of a mysticism which saw the individual as the product of powerful spiritual forces at work within history to which he was subject and organically related. This view was finally complemented by advances in evolutionary theory and philology which tended to reinforce the Romantic view of history as being both individual and organic. It was individual in the sense that the role of the individual was the representation of spiritual forces and realities greater than himself, or which were beyond any single event. This view of history was also organic in the sense that the 'real' forces in history were supraindividual.(2) (Troeltsch 1897: 143-144: 1910c 1776-18: 1900 438-40: Rand 1964: 501-18)

1.2.1.4. By Troeltsch's time this conception of history had led to a sceptical and reductionistic relativism which he called 'wretched historicism'. (Rand 1964: 510-515). It is not difficult to conjecture how this occurred; on the one side the historical method levelled all events down to the same status so that none could claim any uniqueness or independence from all other historical events. On the other side all events were seen as the unique and particular products of their context and time and so limited by situational condition. This made it possible to conceive of all events as the products of their natural or social and economic circumstances. Since all events were so conditioned the values they represented were relative; one set of cultural circumstances created one particular system of values and another quite a different system. Moral and cultural values, then, were seen as changing from age to age, and culture to culture. The philosopher Dilthey, who through his books, exerted a great influence over Troeltsch, welcomed this outcome of the "anarchy of values" on the grounds that it set each age free to create its own values. (Dyson 1974:3-32). However it left many other historians and thinkers profoundly sceptical about any values whatsoever. In the end, though, this kind of historicism led to positivism, (Dyson 1968: 48-52), and so back into the arms of Enlightenment rationalism.

1.2.1.5. Troeltsch himself understood historicism in two senses. To begin with there was the negative sense described above which led to relativism and reductionism and so had to be overcome. Secondly Troeltsch thought of historicism in a more positive and constructive light. (Dyson 1968:152-54). From the perspective of his positive viewing Troeltsch embraced historicism both as a world view and a method. However Troeltsch did not separate these two stresses as he felt that the closest unity between them would be the best defence against the negative aspects of historicism. (Dyson 1968:xxxi).

1.2.1.6. As a method historicism consists of the elements of analogy, criticism and correlation which are to be rigorously applied to all historical phenomena in the light of their uniqueness and relatedness. (3) (Rand 1964:506-15).

1.2.1.7. Historicism as a general world view is the application of the concepts of the historical method to the whole of experience; it is a perspective or direction of thought rather than an exact philosophy. (Rand 1964:505). Troeltsch thus defined historicism as a world view as the

> "... general historicising of our entire knowing and experiencing of the spiritual world..." (Dyson 1974:30-31)

As a world view, then, Troeltsch's historicism seeks to place all human life within its historical contexts, which he believes can be defined by the historical method. In this sense Troeltsch welcomes historicism and sees it as a positive contribution to human life. It was in this sense that Troeltsch sought to apply the method and concepts of historicism to all areas of his work. Indeed, he felt that this was obligatory for every thinker of his age.

The Consequences of the Rise of the Modern World for Faith and Ethics.

1.2.2.1. It is now possible to give an overview of what Troeltsch believed were the consequences of the Enlightenment for faith and ethics as a whole. The first and most crucial development is that ethics and faith were

separated as mundane goals which gained ascendancy over religious goals. The supernaturalism from which religious goals drew their authority was severely questioned and challenged both by natural science and by the new historicist method which together denied any realities outside of the scope of their own scientific investigations.

1.2.2.2. In the second place both religion and ethics became subject to relativism born both of individualistic rationalism and historicism. As a result of this the traditional claims of Christianity to finality and superiority over all other religions were questioned. (Troeltsch 1898:396; 1910b:121-3). At the same time ethics and morality were seen as the products of time and circumstance with the result that a search commenced for a universal and common basis for ethics and religion drawn from natural law. By the late eighteenth century, however, it became apparent that this search had failed. (Antoni 1962:73-75).

1.2.2.3. This situation led to Dilthey's 'anarchy of values' and the cultural task which he set each generation to create its own values for its society. (This is to be distinguished from existentialism in that these values are to be formulated on a collective and not on an individual basis.)

1.2.2.4. Troeltsch felt that he lived in a time when Western civilisation was in crisis, having lost touch with all of its values. (Reist 1966: 60-61). Furthermore secure foundations were needed. Consequently Troeltsch undertook to provide a new basis for values in Western civilisation. (Little 1966:350-351). Troeltsch's whole work in ethics, history and theology arises out of his sense of responsibility to European culture and was strongly <u>ethical</u> as a programme and task. It is this author's contention that Troeltsch is first of all an ethical thinker who is searching for a new basis of values for Western culture within the limits of a historicist worldview. Thus Troeltsch takes an ethical approach to history, developing his method of synthesis in order to establish a basis for values in history. He then extends this method to include both theology and ethics.

SECTION THREE: HISTORY OVERCOMING HISTORY: HISTORY AS A SOURCE OF VALUES.

The Legacy Of History.

1.3.1.1. As was indicated in section two, Troeltsch was deeply concerned about the results of 'wretched historicism' which produced a reductionism, on the one hand, and a relativism which saw all values as the products of particular social and historical circumstances on the other. Clearly this relativism is partly a result of levelling down the causes of historical action to natural necessity.

1.3.1.2. Troeltsch wanted to overcome these consequences and accepted that these results were, to some extent, the product of the historical method of analogy, criticism and correlation. Troeltsch however was unwilling to abandon this method because to do so, he believed, would have been obscurantist, reactionary, and would have entailed a rejection of modern learning, science and culture. Troeltsch believed in the Enlightenment and its values and was in no way prepared to reject them. For similar reasons Troeltsch also refused to look for a basis for values outside of history which could 'save' human action and value from being levelled down and becoming anarchic for similar reasons. He was determined to work within the parameters of the historical world view which was so characteristic of the modern world as he understood it.

1.3.1.3. The problems of relativism and reductionism, then, for Troeltsch, had to be overcome from within history; one has to use the tools of history to resolve the problems of historicism. "History", Troeltsch says, "must overcome history". (Dyson 1968:152-56). Troeltsch sought to do this in two steps: firstly through his 'formal logic of history', which is his analysis of the concepts implied in the working and flow of history, and in its investigation; secondly through his 'material philosophy of history' which is concerned with interpreting history and establishing its meaning and direction. (Dyson 1968:156-58).

1.3.1.4. Troeltsch believed that the proper task and duty of the historian was to identify values in history. History, Troeltsch argues, should be used to provide an adequate understanding of, and values for, the present, as well as guidance for the future. In fact, he claims, these concerns should guide historical research. According to Troeltsch all historiography which does not take this approach either reflects a simple antiquarian interest in history or is mistaken in regarding historical phenomena as superfluous. (Ogletree 1965:21-23).

1.3.1.5. Troeltsch identifies the essential elements of his 'logic of history' as 'individuality' and the concept which arises from it, 'development'. These, for Troeltsch, are the phenomenologically basic qualities of history (Little 1966:350-351) and as such the concepts which the historian must use to identify historical values. Individuality indicates the historical object, on the one hand, and development of the historical process of becoming on the other. In discussing individuality Troeltsch argues that history is characterised by uniqueness; there are no repeated essences, only individualities. These individualities, however, are totalities or wholes, such as epochs, cultures and institutions which are subject to, and joined together by, the process of historical becoming. Thus while Troeltsch's theory may emphasise the particular it is not atomistic. Furthermore what is individual. for Troeltsch, is also contingent or accidental; it does not arise out of necessity. Troeltsch uses this to emphasise historical uniqueness and the role of human freedom. (Troeltsch 1910c 720-21). Thus for Troeltsch the idea of development is implied by that of the individual totality which is in a state of continual internal becoming or development. (Little 1966: 353-4).

1.3.1.6 It is in the identification of the leading ideas or 'essences' of historical individualities that values emerge from history. These essences are similar to Weber's ideal types (4) (Niebuhr 1924:241) and are crucial to Troeltsch's historical analysis. It is the essence which gives an individual totality its unity and distinguishes it from other individualities. Through the use of concept of essence Troeltsch believes that the historian is enabled to separate and identify different periods, epochs, institutions and movements in history. (Sykes 1976:146-154). Thus

the historian has to make a limited selection from historical phenomena of those accents which are most symbolically representative of specific individualities or unities of significance. The historian's selection and representation will, itself, however, be a product of a specific historical individuality and will be subject to the judgement of history and as such is provisional. (Stackhouse 1961:223-5). But this does not mean that the essence is merely a product of the historian's viewpoint; it arises out of values inherent to the individual totality which give it its unity and meaning. Troeltsch does believe, however, that the recognition of values on the part of the historian depends upon his own consciousness as a value former. This, though, is influenced by the historian's culture, and with a new world view, a new system of values will arise. This means that past historical totalities will be approached differently in different ages. Yet they will continue to be 'things-in-themselves' and not simply objects for future cultures. The integrity of historical totalities, is secured, according to Troeltsch, by the fact that the formation of their essences is not a psychological affair but an a priori and logical one based upon a logical intuition which emerges from the synthetic logic of history. (Niebuhr 1924:241-8).

The Cultural Synthesis

1.3.2.1. The next stage in Troeltsch's historical method is his 'material philosophy of history' which is based upon the 'logic of history'. The purpose of historical research based upon this logic is to identify values in history and bring them into a 'unity' for the present. (Troeltsch 1902:100-6).

1.3.2.2. The material philosophy of history has an ethical task; it must provide values for the present. This ethical concern is inseparable from history since history itself, Troeltsch would claim, raises the question of the relation of historical aggregates to the values of a culture or a period. Moreover it is ever necessary to pass judgement on the developments of past history. The problem that besets this activity is an anarchy of values in which history is interpreted differently from many points of view; politics, jurisprudence, ethics and religion. The only

solution to this problem, Troeltsch feels, is to draw these different valuations together in a complete system of values by which it will be possible to judge various historical entities.(5). Troeltsch's view of ethics thus entails a logical circle in which it judges history by values drawn from history. This, he claims, is inevitable and unavoidable, (Troeltsch 1910 721-22).

> ...the difficulty can only be solved by the thinkers own conviction and certainty that amid the facts of history (the historians) has really recognised the tendencies that make for ethical ideals and that he has truly discerned the dynamic movement and progressive tendency, of the historical process. (Troeltsch 1902:721-2).

1.3.2.3. From the perspective of this ethical system historical progress appears as an approximation to a complete 'harmony of ethical values'. Troeltsch states that this is more a question of faith since actual historical development shows no uniform progress in history. However, says Troeltsch, ethical systems do seem to move toward this harmony, but its realisation will never be achieved in his life (Troeltsch strikes an eschatological note here). This brings Troeltsch full circle back to his concept of individualisation in which the ideal of the system of values is reflected in different ways in history, it is not a fixed standard. This gives all historical phenomena a double character. On the one side it is an individualisation of the absolute, which history is moving toward. On the other it is only an approximation to a harmony of values (the absolute) and its individual aspects can be criticised as such.(Troeltsch 1910:722-3).

1.3.2.4. The immediate task which lies before the historian is to discern what kind of approximation to the 'harmony of values' is possible in the present and then to draw values from past history that are compatible with the approximation and which can undergird it. This is an interpretative act since it links past values with the present, ascribing continuity to them as having led to the formation of present cultural values. The historian must also act in the light of the future and select those values which, he feels, are able to carry his culture forward into the future. In all of this the historian has to be sensitive to the nature of his time and

contribute to the formation of a course for his society that will ensure its continued survival. (Reist 1966:62-6). This is not a coldly logical task but is creative, even spontaneous, but it is not subjective since it relies on the great skill of the historian. (Reist 1966:66-7). Troeltsch calls this activity the 'cultural synthesis' as in it the different elements and values of a culture are brought into a new, vital relationship or synthesis with new or novel factors in history. (Reist 1966:67-68).

1.3.2.5. The final result of the cultural synthesis, then, is a contingent ethic which is a combination of the different values present in a society as it has been formed by history, nature, and sociological forces. This does not mean that any contingent ethic is totally subjective; rather, Troeltsch argues, these ethical values have an a priori nature being rationally necessary for that situation.

1.3.2.6. This synthesis may be influenced by positive ideals which are also a priori but based upon an act of the will. The ultimate authority, however, of the cultural synthesis rests upon faith. (Niebuhr 1924:249-55). As H. Richard Niebuhr writes:

> ...The ultimate secret of the synthesis of values.....is..an intuitive participation which.....cannot be construed apriori nor rationalised a posteriori but which presents itself at a given point with a feeling of given certainty and clearness. (Niebuhr 1924:254-5).

1.3.2.7. Troeltsch describes the values of the cultural synthesis as 'relative a prioris'. They are absolutely binding within their historical and cultural context but have no authority outside of it. They are also 'objective' in that they offer an adequate point of departure for ethics and a 'presentment' of the whole historical process behind which lays the 'harmony of values'. (Niebuhr 1924:255-58).

1.3.2.8. On the surface, then, Troeltsch is able to root ethical values in history and so overcome historical relativism on the basis of his method of syntheses. However, Troeltsch proceeds to do this through a number of questionable assumptions. Firstly it is far from clear that the method of cultural syntheses is actually the way in which historical transformation

in history takes place. Troeltsch even suggests himself in different places in his work that new cultural syntheses are actually formed unconsciously. (Reist 1966:249ff). This is rather at odds with the kind of responsibility and skill he requires of the historian, though perhaps this is still needed in identifying the synthesis as it emerges. Secondly Troeltsch only limits historical relativism, he does not really overcome it. He may secure a basis for absolutely binding values for persons of a particular time and place, but values still remain relative from culture to culture and age to age. (Reist 1966:76-78). The result of this was that in his later career Troeltsch's historical perspective narrowed until it became solely concerned with European civilisation. (Pye 1977:63-5). But Troeltsch may well have been content with this since he would have felt that it was enough to have a basis for values within one's own time and place. Lastly Troeltsch based his ethics on an absolute which exists above and behind history which historical ethics or values reflect. (6) This is a massive metaphysical assumption which is inconsistent with a purely historical approach alone.

Troeltsch's Failure To Overcome Historicism.

1.3.3.1. In these ways, then, Troeltsch seeks to use history to overcome the worst aspects of historicism. He may have succeeded, within his own terms, in removing the threat of historical reductionism by making ethical values both autonomous within, yet necessary to, the historical process. However Troeltsch limits historicism through his historical method. While a set of values may be binding within a particular culture and time they will have no value outside of their context. As the historical contexts change so will ethical values and the manifestation of the absolute upon which they are based. Thus there is only a temporary stability of values. Outside of this there is only a plurality and anarchy of values. Moreover if all cultures are in transition as Troeltsch insists, how is it possible to judge the currency of any particular values? Even in his own terms Troeltsch does not and cannot overcome history.

civilisation which will produce an adequate orientation for the future. Troeltsch uses this method in history out of the conviction that it is the medium of the revelation or manifestation of the absolute. In the cultural synthesis the absolute is disclosed.

ETHICS, CULTURE AND RELIGION

Troeltsch's Assimilation Of The Ethical Legacy Of The Enlightenment.

1.4.1.1. The Enlightenment left behind two lasting consequences for ethics; the first was the priority it gave to mundane and 'this-worldly' values stressing the importance of culture, art, science, economics and politics as ends in themselves. The second was the search for an autonomous non-dogmatic basis for morality and religion. This was linked to a metaphysics of the personality which emphasised individual value. (Dyson 1968:63-5).

1.4.1.2. Troeltsch accepted both sides of the ethical emphasis of the Enlightenment and sought to incorporate them into his thinking. This is seen from his book on the foundation of ethics, Grundeproblem der Ethik (1902) (Von Hugel translates this title as The Fundamental Problems of Ethics. (Von Hugel 1921:145-7)).

1.4.1.3. Troeltsch agreed with Kant that ethics had an a priori basis but he preferred to understand this as establishing goals through reason rather than in terms of law. Out of the concept of 'ideally necessary ends', which Troeltsch argued followed from this, there developed a distinction between individual and social goals which in turn led to the individual morality of personal character development and social morality which

> ....presuppose each other and mutually determine each other. (Pannenberg 1981:90).

Troeltsch further distinguished between these two sets of values in the following terms:

> ....in the reality of the moral life we distinguish between the Subjective values which spring entirely from the bearing of subjects (eg. Truthfulness, Thoughtfulness, Courage, Benevolence, Justice, Loyalty) and the claims, which are ever upon us to treasure and to aspire after, the Objective values (the Family, State, Society, Art, Religion). We certainly recognise also in these latter complexes something valuable, not simply for selfish or sensual reason, but ideally and objectively; something to be striven for, even with the greatest sacrifices. And in these Objective ethical values we recognise, as in the Subjective, two sides of both the individual and the social value, in our devotion to these objective values we singly acquire a personal worth, which is always closely bound up with our recognition and promotion of the same personal worth in others. (Von Hugel 1921:153-4).

1.4.1.4. In this manner Troeltsch embraced the mundane values to which the Enlightenment gave priority. These cultural values, or objective goods, as Troeltsch describes them, emerge in the course of historical development in specific institutions. While they may detach themselves from their original contexts they still have to be interpreted by their own particular history. Thus no single vision of the absolute or 'Ideal' can be said to be at work in history, but only a system of interpreted and articulated values. This leaves Troeltsch with the question that for him is the central problem of ethics. (Von Hugel 1921:153-4). Ethics, for Troeltsch, becomes the interpretation of the moral meanings of social institutions and different aspects of culture in their interrelationships in a given social-historical setting. Troeltsch makes ethics into philosophy of culture. (7). (Little 1968:209-10).

1.4.1.5. These 'Objective values' resemble Troeltsch's historical essences. Like the essences they have emerged in history and give a moral direction to historical phenomena and give its totalities a continuing life. (Stackhouse 1961:223-5). They are thus vital historical forces like the essences. Moreover when giving examples of individual totalities and cultural values Troeltsch frequently identifies the same institutions: the state, the family, science, nation, culture. (Reist 1966:56; Von Hugel

1921:153-4). The essences of the historian, it would seem, are the same as the cultural values of the ethicist, and the historian's task is to rediscover past cultural values and rehabilitate them for the present.

1.4.1.6. While Troeltsch does distinguish 'objective' and 'subjective' values, these two areas of ethical life, are mutually necessary to one another. Troeltsch argues that neither a purely formal, nor a purely pragmatic ethic is possible by itself. In the first place the formal a priori needs to be made real in history through the Objective values, (Little 1968:211,214), and so made subject to historical change. In the second place the Objective values need Subjective ethics to elevate them above a purely pragmatic level. (Sleigh 1923:140-4), (Von Hugel 1921:625).

1.4.1.7. While Troeltsch thus makes a great contrast between subjective and objective ethics he still seeks unity in his thought which he seeks to ground in the ethical a priori or idea of the 'good'. Both subjective and objective ethics are founded, for Troeltsch, in the idea of the 'Good'. So, the objective values are more than products of nature - they are natural instincts transformed by the ideal of the ethical good. (Von Hugel 1921:625).

1.4.1.8. Troeltsch bases his idea of the 'ethical good' on the natural ethical sense which he believes all human beings possess. The ideal of the ethically good is, it seems, simply another version of the moral a priori, namely the moral and ethical category of human consciousness. Thus while Troeltsch wants to get away from, or modify, a priori ethics, the idealist habit is far too hard for him to break and he sneaks a version of the a priori in through the back door.

1.4.1.9. Troeltsch returned to this scheme of ethics in an attempt to use it as a way of overcoming and limiting the worst consequences of historical relativism as it affects morality. (Little 1968:216, Troeltsch 1923). To begin with he sought to anchor ethical values as a whole in 'subjective ethical values' which he now called 'the morality of personality and conscience'. Troeltsch held that this morality laboured to give fuller development to the human personality. As such its values were universal

and not specific to any one place or time. The ethics of personality, to Troeltsch's mind, consequently represented the values of the absolute. This, Troeltsch believed, formed a barrier against both relativism and naturalistic reductionism in ethics. In the first place the ethics of personality could provide a standard which could, at least, limit historical relativism. In the second place these ethics provided an alternative source for ethical values, (in the quest for the development of human personality apart from natural desire or historical circumstances). (Troeltsch 1923:49-65).

1.4.1.10. The ethics of personality, like the subjective values have no historical power or reality, they are dependent upon the objective or 'cultural values', as Troeltsch now calls them to give them historical embodiment. Troeltsch sees the cultural values as principles which arise in history as part of the development of culture. They are a second source of values which lie alongside the ethics of personality. The ethics of personality raise the cultural values above their merely natural and historical origins to give them a greater nobility. Yet if put under pressure by covering historical forces the influence of personal values on culture can easily be reversed while the cultural values will endure. (Troeltsch 1923:71-87).

1.4.1.11. The most pressing question, for Troeltsch, though, is that of how the personal and cultural values are to be brought into a relationship of unity which will provide moral guidelines and a framework for life in the present and the future. This cannot, says Troeltsch, be brought about by theoretical work alone, but evolves slowly in 'practical life' under the influence of geography, environment and great personalities. This leads once more to the cultural synthesis which in ethics is to be based upon an intuitive interpretation of European history as it has developed through chance, necessity and human action. (This has already been considered in greater detail above). Within the cultural synthesis the morality of the personality is to be related to the cultural values as these have been brought into a new harmony through the historical decision that lies behind the synthesis. The purpose of this is to unite and strengthen these different values. This too, notes Troeltsch, is a matter of individual

judgement because there is no strict logic whereby the two ethics are to be related. (Pennenber 1981:100-102).

1.4.1.12. In all of this it emerges that the cultural values take the leading role in the cultural synthesis. It is these values which have greater historical reality and power, and these values which express the particular norms or values of a civilisation. It is clear, then, that in the decision involved in framing the cultural synthesis the cultural values function as organising principles, and in fact become the criterion for the cultural synthesis. (Little 1968:217-18; Niebuhr 1924:249-55).

1.4.1.13. Troeltsch sought to affirm both the Enlightenment's ethics of autonomy and its mundane values and tried to overcome the relativism which the Enlightenment produced, by bringing these ethics into a common framework in which they could interpret and augment one another. This project, however, is undermined by the emphasis Troeltsch gave to individuality in his later thought. By the time Troeltsch wrote the essays which make up Christian Thought he had relinquished the idea of the a priori and all the concepts of generality and universality that it implied. The result of this is that Troeltsch's formal ethics of the personality are made subject to individuality. In the first place they were to develop and emerge in history; in the second they have to be given historical realisation. By themselves the ethics of the personality are purely logical and ahistorical. Troeltsch proposes that these ethics should 'limit', 'strengthen' and 'elevate' the cultural values. But how this is to be achieved is difficult to see since the ethics of the personality have, according to Troeltsch, no historical influence and are in any case dependent upon the cultural values for their realisation in the world. It seems that the net effect of Troeltsch's ethics is that nature and the cultural values overwhelm the ethics of personality in the cultural synthesis where the primary factor is historical individuality. The end result of this is that Troeltsch has subordinated the Enlightenment valuation of the personality (which he stresses has Christian roots) to the mundane values of the Enlightenment, (which are entirely secular in nature). (8)

1.4.1.14. The second result of this movement away from universality is that Troeltsch's ethics have no centre. While he stresses that the cultural values are based on the absolute, the absolute itself is impossible to define and identify since it is only ever partially realised in the world. All that there is, is a variety of individual values each of which claim some kind of ultimacy. It is inevitable because of this that Troeltsch's ethics should collapse into particularity. Troeltsch's reply to this would be to say that the unity of ethical values is the main problem for ethics and not its starting point. Each generation, he would argue, must create a unity of values for itself. The difficulty with this is that such a unity will always be based on the individual and particular as the leading elements of the cultural values set the stage for the cultural synthesis and thus order the other values in the synthesis accordingly. Where the unity of ethics is based on such contingent factors which are totally irrational and accidental, how can Troeltsch appeal to any ideal value behind history and thereby distinguish his ethics from a cultural form of pragmatism?

1.4.2. Christian Ethics and Culture.

1.4.2.1. While wholeheartedly embracing the ethical legacy of the Enlightenment, Troeltsch also wanted to affirm the place of Christian ethics in the modern world with the result that he tries to relate the ethical heritage of Christianity, understood through the critical assumptions of the Enlightenment, to the 'Modern World'. (Pannenberg 1981:107, von Hugel 1971: 115 ff)

1.4.2.2. The logical place to begin an account of Troeltsch's view of Christian ethics is with his understanding of the ethics of Jesus. While Jesus, says Troeltsch, contended for the autonomy of ethics against the Pharisees, his ethic is not one of universal validity but of religious contents and ends: namely those of theistic personalism and the Kingdom of God. The final aim of these is to create a community of persons who live in mutual love and service. Jesus expected the imminent end of the world, Troeltsch says, and so social institutions and 'natural' ethics are forced

into the background, while work and property are seen as dangers if they go beyond the needs of the day. The poor are a special object of love for Jesus, but his ethics do not change their social position. (Von Hugel 1921: 156ff; (Sleigh 1923:144-9). Troeltsch takes the content of Jesus's preaching and combines:

> ...the ethical monotheism of Israel with the optimism of its belief in creation, and the eschatology of late Judaism, with the pessimism of belief in redemption, ... religious and ethical individualism with the seeds of humanitarian thought all flow into the preaching of Jesus. All these different elements develop with multiple tensions and oppositions, but they also involve further appropriations of related and conciliatory demands.

1.4.2.3. For Troeltsch, then, the ethics of Jesus are complex and open to development in different directions. Basically, however, they are personal and individual and as such asocial and even antagonistic towards the world, largely because of their eschatological content. Troeltsch is therefore ambivalent concerning their applicability in the modern world. On the one side Troeltsch maintained that the eschatological End of Jesus' ethics could be relevant in the modern world since it is still possible to work for the religious community of love which is the goal of the Kingdom of God, provided that the natural world is given its due. Even so Troeltsch still saw difficulties in uniting the ethics of Jesus with a positive valuation of the world, possibly because of an accepted contrast, to which this led, between a heroic and a domestic ethic. (von Hugel 1921:154-161).

1.4.2.4. This equivocal attitude to the ethics of Jesus might explain Troeltsch's attitude to Christian ethics as a whole. Unlike Herrmann and Kant, Troeltsch felt that there was a specifically Christian contribution and content for ethics, above and beyond simple moral strengthening and encouragement. (Pannenberg 1981: 92-3). However Troeltsch defines Christianity as a religion of 'inwardness', possibly on the basis of Jesus' 'ethics'. His religious ethics have gained the greatest degree of independence from economic and social conditions, (although no religion is totally free from these). As such Christianity has no direct relation with the world, and no direct principles, not even its ethics, which can operate

within the world and influence it. Thus it is dependent on forming an alliance with forces most congenial to it in the economic and social situation.

> In order to grasp and fix rational or accidental forms of regulation over the struggle for survival, religion must rely on forces within that struggle that are favourable to, and compatible with religion. It will always be a question of compromise with, and adjustment to, the actualities of life. (Troeltsch 1913: 197ff).

Troeltsch, consequently, argues that all Christian ethics are relative to a particular economic and social background and so are not timeless but relative. Troeltsch also maintained that because of its autonomous and inward character Christianity only affects societies through its institutions.

> Despite the fact that a direct and purely ideological influence is constantly being asserted, the main impact of the Christian idea does not obtain through the ethical demand itself, but rather indirectly through the forms of religious community created by this idea. These forms of community are based on dogmatic.....and purley religious ideas; they are never developed with a view to social goals. This is why they possess an organising and binding power that is shared by no purely rationalistic social structure. (Troeltsch 1913b 203-4).

1.4.2.5. Christian ethics and values are thus in the same position as subjective values, or values of personality; in themselves religious ethics have no social or cultural influence; they are dependent, like autonomous personal ethics, on the cultural values for their realisation in the world(9). Religious ethics, thus, have to form alliances with those cultural values which are compatible with religious values. Examples of this would be the early and Mediaeval Churches use of natural law and the transformation of the mundane values of humanism into a mundane asceticism in Calvinism.

1.4.2.6. These alliances can only be formed through religious institutions which for Troeltsch are sociological expressions of religious ideas.

These, through their adoption of specific cultural values, form mediating channels between a religious ethic and culture and society.

1.4.2.7. As with subjective values, then, religious values are also dependent upon cultural values to the extent that their form, content and influence in the world will, to a large extent, be determined by these values. Thus cultural values also overwhelm religious values in Troeltsch's ethics.

1.4.2.8. Troeltsch undertakes to relate the history of the development of the cultural values of Western civilisation. Jesus' ethics were non acultural and centred on the Kindgom of God. Under the influence of Paul, however, the early Christian community made Jesus, and not the Kingdom, the centre of hope and faith, and stressed present salvation. Troeltsch felt that this introduced a circular dualism into the heart of the gospel which made it both this worldly and other worldly. (Troeltsch 1903b 145). This shift moved the stress of Christian ethics from the content of the ethic of Jesus to the authority of His commands and the power of salvation. The content of Christian ethics itself becomes interpreted as a universal ethic in this later, more 'churchly' emphasis, which, Troeltsch states, persisted from Paul to Kant. This identification of Christian ethics made by Christianity through its churchly institutions took a variety of forms in history.

1.4.2.9. Two of these are of major importance to Troeltsch, the mediaeval synthesis of a Sacred society and Free Church Calvinism. The Mediaeval Catholic Church from Gregory the Great onwards formed a harmony between religious and cultural values by making religious values the end of fulfilment of cultural values. This was done by first distinguishing between the Lex Dei (the Law of God as given in the Law of Moses and in the teaching of Jesus) and the Lex Naturae, (the moral requirements of ordinary life) and then by identifying them. The two laws were distinguished by the supernatural origin of the former which could be known only by revelation and then identified by arguing that before the fall the two were essentially the same and even now stand in continuity; however, the natural law could only find its proper direction and fulfilment in the divine law.

Thus reason could only properly be reason on the basis of revelation and nature could only be nature on the basis of supranature. This established the rationale and structure for the ecclesiastical direction of secular and cultural life in Europe, (von Hugel 1921: 93-97, 161-171; Troeltsch 1906b:9-20).

1.4.2.10. The Mediaeval Catholic synthesis was disrupted by the combined forces of nationalism, capitalism and Protestantism which shattered the social unity of Europe and produced new social structures and ideologies. Early Protestantism, according to Troeltsch, represented a continuation, in a redefined form of the Mediaeval Catholic synthesis. The authority of the Bible replaced that of the church's hierarchy and individual conscience assumed the function of ecclesiastical power.(Troeltsch 1906b: 42-8). However, in the guise of Free Church Calvinism (10) Protestantism soon organised a new and more powerful synthesis with the forces of nationalism, capitalism and humanism which helped it to prominence. It did this by making the values which these cultural forces promoted the means or channels by which religious values were to be realised. It consequently set about organising mundane values for the sake of religious ends. Mundane values were never seen as ends in themselves but as means by which 'heavenly' goals were realised. As such they were given a high, though not absolute, value and they were diligently sought.(Troeltsch 1906b: 58-88).

1.4.2.11. With the rise of the modern world the old identification of natural law and divine law was dissolved, largely through natural law becoming an autonomous and critical principle. Moreover the mundane values came to be seen as ends in themselves and as such could no longer be subjected to religious ends. This led to both the demise of the natural law synthesis which lay behind both Mediaeval Catholicism and Protestantism and the vocational ethic of Calvinism. This resulted in the crisis of Christian ethics in the modern world, with Christianity needing to form a new synthesis with culture. Western culture, in turn, is left without any religious foundations, mundane values lacking any transcendent orientation. (Niebuhr 1923: 31-3).

1.4.2.12. Any new synthesis will have to be made from the side of religious ethics, according to Troeltsch, because it alone is in touch with the infinite and eternal end of man. Cultural values, by themselves, have no overall direction, and so are both insufficient to provide a basis for a new synthesis, and inadequate as they do not aspire to the absolute. Objective ethics by themselves only cause men to search for ever higher ends. Troeltsch notes that the Christian ethic has been most successful in history when the insufficiency of worldly ends has been realised, as in the Graeco-Roman world. Troeltsch sees the reconciliation of these two ends as a difficult individual task. Religious or worldly ends will predominate in the lives of different people according to their situation in life: religious factors will be pre-eminent in the lives of clergy, missionaries and nurses, while the worldly values will have first place for statesmen and workers. Troeltsch recognises that this is similar to Catholic ethics, but he finds the Protestant attempt to create a morality in which religious and worldly ends are reconciled in the life of the individuals far too simple, failing to take into account the situation and maturity of each of the individuals. (Von Hugel 1921:164-9).

1.4.2.13. Troeltsch's answer is once again that of synthesis, but this time between mundane values and supramundane values or goals representing the eternal and infinite. These supramundane values refer to the Kingdom of God. This gives Troeltsch's ethics an eschatological orientation which allows him to stress religious values by relativising mundane values. However the supramundane, religious values represent something which remains ever future for Troeltsch, in effect leaving mundane values autonomous in the present. (Pannenberg 1981: 93-111).(11)

1.4.2.14. All of this is to be achieved by a synthesis resulting in a compromise, but it is unclear on what basis this should take place. On the one hand Troeltsch argues that the synthesis has to be formed on the basis of predominant cultural values with which religious values must then be allied. On the other hand, Troeltsch maintains that only religion can provide an adequate basis for giving unity to values. In practice, however, it would seem to be the cultural values which carry the day since they give a pragmatic and practical unity to values. Religious values,

they have any influence. In actuality, then, the cultural values are autonomous, and, while Troeltsch searches desperately for ways to relate personal and religious values to them, they remain the major powers in culture and history. In previous ages cultural values were attuned to religious ends, in the modern world, however, for Troeltsch, they have become wholly secular and therefore antagonistic to religious values. The world has for Troeltsch 'come of age' and no longer seeks the transcendent. Many of Troeltsch's difficulties here, though, arise from his initial definition of religious ethics as other worldly and ahistorical, but this is a consequence of his desire to preserve the autonomy of religion (as will be seen in the following section).

1.4.2.15. In conclusion it should be said that, in the first place, Troeltsch is concerned to assimilate the ethical legacy of the Enlightenment, especially its emphasis on mundane values. In the second place, Troeltsch wants to use those ethical values to put a limit on historical relativism. It is questionable, however, to what degree he succeeds. Thirdly, Troeltsch wants to use Christian ethics as a resource for the modern world and so he seeks to relate transcendent ends to mundane ends. The method that Troeltsch uses in each of these three instances is synthesis based upon creative selection and resulting in compromise.

CULTURE AND RELIGION

The Implications of Historicism for Theology.

1.5.1.1. Troeltsch held that the relativising consequences of historicism, identified above, had to be accepted by Christian theology as much as any other academic discipline; it could claim no privileged status. The historical method and worldview would have to be embraced by theology which would then have to work within the constraints placed upon it by

historicism, and so replace its 'dogmatic' method with the historical method. This was the theme of some of Troeltsch's earliest works. (Morgan 1977:9-11).

1.5.1.2. The rejection of the dogmatic method meant that theology would have to abandon what Troeltsch called its 'supernaturalism'. This was the basing of faith and dogmatics upon a supernatural miracle, whether the 'external' miracle of the incarnation, or the 'internal' miracle of faith and conversion. This event was then taken as being the focus of revelation. To accept such a miraculous event as a point of departure was to refer to a suprahistorical authority and to isolate one particular event from all others and to invest it with especial importance. (Troeltsch 1902:43-49; Dyson 1968:216-19). Troeltsch found fault with this on two counts: firstly a historical worldview could not admit such a suprahistorical authority. Secondly, the historical method would not allow one event to be isolated from all others. The doctrines of analogy and correlation in history required that all events be similar and interconnected. Thus there could be no events which possessed an extrahistorical form of causality and so were significantly different from all other historical events, or without antecedents and consequents in other historical events. (Troeltsch 1902:49-57; Dyson 1968:219-25). For this reason no single event could be accepted as giving meaning for all others. So to accept supernaturalism was to rupture the fabric of history; this could not be permitted in historicism.

1.5.1.3. Troeltsch maintained that the only manner in which it was possible to arrive at any conclusions about religion that were compatible with history was to base those conclusions upon the concrete phenomena of religion within history. It was only through surveying the whole course of empirical history, or the particular material of the history of religions, that any religious truth could be discerned. For Troeltsch the Absolute was manifest within history. For this reason Troeltsch called himself an 'inclusive supernaturalist'. To draw religious truth from history was thus rather like drawing the cream off the top of the milk. It was this alternative approach to religious truth which Troeltsch called the 'historical method' in theology. (Troeltsch 1902:90-100). (12)

The Search for Christianity's Essence.

1.5.2.1. As in his ethics and approach to history, Troeltsch, in his latter period at Heidelberg moved away from his emphasis on the a priori towards a greater stress on the philosophy of history which he hoped would be able to do what the a priori had failed to do in identifying the central characteristics of religion. Troeltsch thus elevated the historical aspect of his thought, arguing that the true character of religion in general, and Christianity in particular, was to be known through its manifestations in history and through the subsequent identification of its essence. (Dyson 1968:259-278).

1.5.2.2. A religion's 'essence', that is to say, its central ideal and driving force, was to be formed in the light of its history as a whole and not just on the basis of its normative period. Christianity's essence, then, could not be established by merely pointing to the New Testament period. However, being formulative, this period did have major importance and one ought "to set one's compass by it". (Allen 1980:46-50).

1.5.2.3. To define Christianity's essence it was necessary to survey and draw upon the whole history of Christian faith and base any typification of Christianity on the broad sweep of its life and not just a small part. (Troeltsch 1903b:137-45).

1.5.2.4. Any study of Christian history will reveal, argues Troeltsch, that Christianity itself is a manifold phenomenon, having many forms in different ages which are relative to the time and place in which they existed. This leads Troeltsch to the conclusion that Christianity has no single, uniform and unifying essence but many essences which change from time to time and place to place. These various essences have arisen from Christianity's interrelationships in history.

1.5.2.5. The essence of Christianity in any epoch and culture is based upon the synthesis or composite it reaches with its host culture, in which the host culture is Christianised and the church assimilates the value and

worldview of the host culture. (Clayton 1979:97-104). It is out of such patterns of assimilations that Troeltsch's Church type arises. Troeltsch points to the fusion of divine and natural law which characterised the Mediaeval Catholic church, and to the combination of election, vocation, mundane asceticism and mundane values in Calvinism as the supreme examples of such compromises. (Chamberlain 1976:310-17).

1.5.2.6. The compromises which Catholicism and Calvinism achieved, however, have run past their time, and have either collapsed or become antiquated. Contemporary theology's task, then, is to find the modern essence of Christianity by defining its meaning in the present. This definition must be made in the light of the history of Christianity and of contemporary culture with which Christianity seeks to establish a new relationship. The modern theologian thus has a twofold task; he must find ways of Christianising culture, and so provide his culture with more profound religious values. But to do this he must first orientate Christianity to its host culture so that it accepts its worldview and values and may thus become involved within it. (Dyson 1968:310-317). The question remains, however, as to which partner in this relationship predominates, Christianity or culture?

Culture and Religion: Conclusion.

1.5.3.1. Troeltsch makes Christian theology dependent upon history, both the particular history of Christianity, and the wider history of religions in general, and contemporary culture. In doing this he also uses his familiar technique of synthesis which was later to become Troeltsch's basis for formulating his church-type.

1.5.3.2. The triumph of the cultural values may also be discerned in Troeltsch's conclusion concerning the 'essence' of Christianity and the fact that the form and content of its teaching must correspond to the values of these cultural forces if it is to influence them or Christianise them in anyway. In the 'compromise' relationship, the cultural values

always have the greater sway and potency, thus the likely outcome of any compromise or synthesis will be that Christianity is transformed more than its host culture.

THE CONCEPT OF COMPROMISE.

1.6.1. So far this study has revealed how Troeltsch applied his method of synthesis, developed in his philosophy of history, to ethics and religion. This has revealed that this method requires a compromise between the various elements in the synthesis. Because these elements are metaphysically unique and autonomous, each having their own ground in the absolute, they cannot easily be harmonised. Rather they co-exist in a limited tension within the synthesis; the weaker elements accommodating themselves to the more powerful.

1.6.2. The reason for this, H. Richard Niebuhr believes, is rooted in Troeltsch's character. Troeltsch took a broad and charitable view of different intellectual positions, entertaining the claims of all, being opposed to absolutist claims in either philosophy or religion. As a result of this Troeltsch opposed systematizers who sought to rationalistically tie down every philosophic and theological detail. But despite these antirationalistic tendencies, Niebuhr notes, Troeltsch was also a rationalist and this fact introduced a tension into his thought which accounts for the constant changes in his thinking as he moved on to new positions. This tension, says Niebuhr, was not resolved by synthesis but only by the compromise, in which the synthesis resulted, of the different elements within the synthesis. (Niebuhr 1924:3-5).

"The whole of Troeltsch's thought", concludes Niebuhr, "is thus.....

> .....shot through with this antithetical character and the final result was a philosophy of religion in which he combined a strong feeling for any appreciation of personal religious life, of mysticism, even, with a thoroughly scientific and rationalistic interest. In the philosophy of knowledge he sought a formula to express both his sense for the given and the individual and his interest in the valid

> and the universal. In ethics his understanding for the loftiness and absoluteness of the demands of the Sermon-On-The-Mount was paralleled by his appreciation for the intra-mundane values of the state, the economic life, aesthetics and science; but he found a synthesis impossible; between Christianity and civilisation, he concluded, there could only be compromise. In politics, international idealism vied for his allegiance with the claims of political necessity and patriotism and here, also, he recommended compromise as the practical solution. Hence he regarded himself as both a conservative and a liberal, both a rationalist and an irrationalist. (Niebuhr 1924:5-6).

1.6.3. This reveals the breath of application of Troeltsch's concept of compromise. He uses it in ethics and religion especially, but he even applies it to international relations, arguing for a compromise between German culture and that of Western Europe, (Troeltsch 1922:213-222), and to domestic politics in a compromise between conservatism and communism which would result in a democratic and individualistic socialism. (Troeltsch 1920: 170-72). Troeltsch's broad use of the concept of compromise, however, tends to make its meaning very vague. (Pannenberg 1981:208).

1.6.4. J.P. Clayton, in the light of this, has made an analysis of Troeltsch's use of the concept (Clayton 1979: 93-144). Clayton identifies four main uses of 'compromise' in Troeltsch's writings: a) in the sense of a political compromise between groups or institutions in society, for instance between the Catholic church and sects or monasticism, or between Church and state, b) intellectual compromises within the Christian tradition, c) compromises between theology and science, revelation and reason, faith and culture, d) the task of mediating between Christianity and secular culture in ethics. This last application of 'compromise' divides into two further sub-categories: firstly the compromise between an ideal ethics, such as that represented by the kingdom of God, and secular society and human nature; secondly the compromise between two ethical systems, one religious and one secular. (Clayton 1979: 97).

1.6.5. As applied to religion and ethics, then, the idea of compromise is basically a mediating principle by which the ideal or transcendent is related to and infused with the actual.

1.6.6. In ethics, then, compromise between ideal values and nature and culture is necessary to give ideal values a positive influence in historical situation, to give moral dimension to the 'struggle for existence', and to elevate the cultural values to higher goals. However, in order to achieve such effects ideal values must be compromised. This was not a negative affair for Troeltsch; in order to be realised in historical contexts the ideal values had to be compromised. The ideal values thus became historically contextualised and historically relative with the result that they become subject to their own critique.

1.6.7. In regard to religion and culture compromise, as a mediating principle, plays a double role, firstly relating religious ethics to worldly ethics, and secondly reconciling religious thought to secular culture.

1.6.8. Initially religious ethics, as ideal values, are to be reconciled, through compromise, with nature and culture in the same manner as formal or subjective ethics. But Troeltsch realised that this was too individualistic an approach to have any profound social impact so he stressed that the ethical compromise which Christianity reached with worldly culture had to be institutionally embodied in the Church. As an institutional force the Christian ethos could successfully hold its own with the other cultural forces and values present within society, and so influence them. To be embodied within a society, the Christian institution would have to adopt some of the characteristics and worldview of its host culture so that it could be intelligible and indigenous to its context. This was necessary in order that Christian values might be appropriately addressed to, and received by, the host culture.

1.6.9. The compromise between Christian thought and secular thought and science follows on from this ethical-institutional compromise and, in a sense, is an aspect of it. The 'essence' of Christianity is to be defined by the historical theologian in terms of the compromise which Christianity has reached, or ideally needs to reach, with its context. This definition of the heart of Christianity will therefore be a description of Christianity as it has been brought into a relationship of compromise with

its host culture. It is this essence that dogmatic theology will then seek to exposit being careful to relate the religious ideas contained within this essence to the intellectual values, climate, and science of the time. Christian doctrine will therefore be a theological articulation of the compromise which Christianity has reached with culture in a given time and place. In a sense there is here a double compromise, firstly as the formation of the 'essence' itself and secondly in the exposition of the essence which is conducted in the light of 'modern thought'.

1.6.10. By the means of 'compromise', then, Troeltsch attempts to relate Christianity to its context. Contextualisation, it is true, is necessary, in order that Christ's Lordship, the abiding centre of Christian faith, may be established over a new situation. Troeltsch's compromise approach seems to go much further than this as he seeks to redefine the centre or heart of Christianity in the light of its new cultural context. While his purpose was to establish a bridgehead for Christian values in non-Christian culture, the result appears to be the opposite. Christianity is redefined in terms of its host culture, rather than the host culture being penetrated and changed by Christian values. Thus in the theory of compromise Christianity is inculturated rather than culture Christianised.

1.6.11. This final outcome, according to Pannenberg, was contrary to some of Troeltsch's own best insights into eschatology, the Kingdom of God and the goodness of creation. On the one side, the eschatological values of the Kingdon demand a re-orientating of worldly goals, and on the other a good creation does not need to be the subject of compromise. (Pannenberg 1981:108-9). Pannenberg concludes that 'compromise' was a failure since no transformation of society is achieved. (Pannenberg 1981:209).

1.6.12. The concept of compromise is crucial to Troeltsch's whole theological and philosophical approach, having a high profile in all areas of his thought. This is especially true with regard to the background to his religious typology in the Social Teachings as will be made clear in the next chapter.

1.6.13. The concept itself is designed to bring unity in Troeltsch's thought but in effect it only brings temporary resolution to the tension between the various conflicting forces in Troeltsch's philosophy and theology, especially between religion, ideal values, and culture. Moreover, the integrity of some elements within Troeltsch's compromises are actually undermined as they are accommodated to the culturally stronger, predominant ideas of the compromise. The result of this is that a method (that of synthesis) which was intended to preserve the integrity of ethics and religion against naturalism and sociological reduction is actually destructive of that which it seeks to preserve in that it surrenders the integrity of ethics and religion to predominant cultural values.

1.6.14. The result of this, as Ogletree has noted is that the cultural synthesis favours dominant cultural tendencies, making Troeltsch the defender of the status quo. The future of a culture, Troeltsch feels, lies with these dominant tendencies, and not with the various protesting voices. To heed their calls would lead to the fragmentation of culture. (Ogletree 1965:45-47).

1.6.15. This tendency is particularly evident in the way Troeltsch handles religion. In the cultural synthesis he wants to align Christianity with the most powerful forces within the culture of the time. This means that Christianity ends up serving history, or at least the future of Western civilisation, with the result that theology ceases to be an independent discipline and becomes dependent upon the cultural synthesis for determining its content. (Ogletree 1968:57-64, 74-77). This consequence will also be evident in the way that Troeltsch approaches religious typologies in the Social Teachings.

1.6.16. All in all, then, Troeltsch thought that the principle of compromise was a creative force for the development of both religion and culture. In fact it is the point where his attempt to overcome the basic dualism of his thought breaks down. At the end of the day the forces of history and culture subdue and assimilate all contrary influences. Historicism overcomes, rather than being overcome, in 'compromise'.

CONCLUSION.

1.7.0. Troeltsch was a divergent thinker stressing the individuality and autonomy of historical, ethical and religious phenomena. This leads Troeltsch to pose a series of dualisms, between culture and history, superstructure and sub structure, religion and culture, ideal ethical values and cultural values, freedom and necessity, and rationalism and anti-rationalism.

1.7.1. The danger of this dualistic worldview, while it did resist reductionism, was that it could easily become fragmentary and relativistic in an anarchistic sense. Troeltsch consequently sought to bring these various elements in his worldview into an operational unity through his method of synthesis, with the result that they were reconciled through a compromise.

1.7.3. In this compromise, however, the various elements forming the synthesis are transformed and accommodated to the leading ideas of the synthesis. This undermines their uniqueness and autonomy, since they are subordinated to the characteristics of their cultural setting. This was illustrated in the case of formal ethics and Christian faith.

1.7.4. This, in fact, is an operational reductionism in which religion and ethics are reduced to aspects of the dominant cultural forces in the historical situation in which they are located. Thus the result of Troeltsch's method of synthesis is the very outcome which he employed it to avoid.

1.7.5. This also means that the synthesis fails as an ethical enterprise since all it succeeds in doing is giving greater strength to prevailing historical and cultural values, whether they be good or evil. Such values are always the most potent elements within the synthesis and the rival and critical ethical demands of ideal ethics and religion are given a subservient position to those forces. Troeltsch thus runs the risk of giving religion and ethics a purely ideological role in relation to culture.

1.7.6. Despite the weaknesses of this method Troeltsch uses it as an analytical tool in his studies in the history of Christian social ethics in the Social Teachings. Troeltsch used his method of synthesis to produce his typology of religious orientation of Church, Sect and Mysticism. This typology shares the same weaknesses as his method of synthesis as it leans upon Troeltsch's concept of compromise.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Within this context there was a reaction to religious orthodoxy which was perceived as being burdensome and divisive and the cause of religious wars. Moreover the established religious creeds were felt to be ineffective for guaranteeing morality. This led to the search for a non-theological basis for ethics and later for religion itself, noted by Troeltsch, based upon refutations of original sin and the limitations of the human intellect. This resulted in a quest for an autonomous norm that would serve as a criterion of truth between competing religious and moral dogmas. (Troeltsch 1897:144). The rationalistic and scientific inclination of the Enlightenment tended to gravitate towards sensualism and a morality based upon the empirical psychology of Hobbes and Locke. (Troeltsch 1897:146).

   Having gained their independence from ecclesiastical and theological tutelage, politics and ethics became orientated towards mundane ends rather than supramundane ends. Mankind's secular salvation was to become their main concern rather than the redemption of the soul. As a result economic prosperity, the freedom and rights of the individual, political and social equality, the rational reform of society, and the futherance of education, culture and science all became objective ends or values in themselves which required no justification with reference to religion or man's eternal destiny. These values accorded with reason and contributed to human well being and this, by itself, was enough. (Troeltsch 1906: 9-20).

   The final and combined result of these forces, in Troeltsch's mind, was the creation of a cultural world in which the Church struggled like a beached whale. On the one side individualistic rationalism led to an epistemological relativism as it emphasised individualistic reason and the right of each person to decide matters according to his own rational faculties. In this situation the authority of the church was rejected, as was the organic society which it created. In place of faith and authority scepticism and tolerance became the predominant characteristics of the modern world. (Troeltsch 1906: 20-28).

   On the other side the pre-eminence of religious ends that the Church had established in mediaeval society had now been eclipsed by the secular goals of both the state and the individual of political freedom and equality and economic prosperity. (Deist 1966: 100-3).

   Thus the claims of religion were met with scepticism as they were found to be incompatible with a relativistic rationalism. The redemptive or other worldly goals of religion were thus regarded as, at best, of only secondary importance. In such a situation the Churches were reduced to the voluntaristic status of the sect-type, and had to accept the toleration of all confessions alongside their own because of the relativism of opinion and conviction which rationalism had produced, and the minor importance ascribed to religion. Confessional controversy was simply viewed as being a waste of time, and a source of diverting energies from more urgent secular tasks. The state had become 'disinterested', 'non-sectarian' and

secular with its own matters to which it had to attend. (Troeltsch 1906: 20-28)

Troeltsch saw the Churches as anachronisms in the modern world; he argued that the Catholic Church exists as an intrusion and an anomaly in the present world, while other churches, their dogmas and ethics outmoded, clung to the remnants of ecclesiastical structure and authority while having no real influence. Troeltsch's conclusion is that the Church's influence in the modern world has been solely religious and individual in character, leaving vast areas of life untouched. (Troeltsch 1910c: 716).

2. The Romantic Movement stressed both the organic nature of reality, in a metaphysical sense, and the importance of the individual person or phenomenon as a representation of the whole. Within this framework of understanding, history could take on a more cohesive and 'mystical' character. Instead of merely being the narration of events and movements and the analysis of their causes, history becomes a spiritual affair in which hidden forces and reason work themselves out in reality to give ideal values ever more complete expression. Thus individual events and phenomena become harbingers of the greater reality of the Spirit to which they are organically connected. It is little wonder that the term 'Historismus' (historicism) should come to describe this phenomena. (Troeltsch 1910c: 716-18).

3. At this point Troeltsch introduces his understanding of the historical method of analogy, criticism and correlation as it had developed since the Enlightenment and through these stages of development in the following passage.

> On the analogy of events known to us we seek by conjecture and sympathic understanding to explain and reconstruct the past. From this point, again, we advance to the criticism of extant traditions and to the correction of generally accepted historical representations. Since we discern the same process of phenomena in operation in the past as in the present, and see, there as here, the various cycles of human life influencing and intersecting one another, we gain at length the idea of an integral continuity or correlation balanced in its changes, never at rest and ever moving towards incalculable issues. The causal explanation of all that happens, the setting of the individual life in its true relations, the interpretation of events in the most intricate interconnection, the placing of mankind in a rounded system of ceaseless change - these constitute the essential function and result of historical reflection. The latter viewed as a whole forms a new scientific mode of representing man and his development, and, as such shows at all points an absolute contrast to the Biblico-theological views of later antiquity. (Troeltsch 1913/14b:718).

4. Troeltsch is here clearly using Weber's earlier historical model of the ideal type which is subjectively sifted out of history by the historian. The difference between Weber's historically defined ideal

type and Troeltsch's essence is that the former remains a heuristic model for interpreting historical events while the latter is a quasi-historical or even metaphysical force.

5. Troeltsch states that he is using the term 'ethics' in this connection in the ancient sense as a description of essential qualities and goods, (as defined by Schleiermacher).

6. There have already been several hints of the role that metaphysics plays in Troeltsch's thought. Troeltsch tends to work on two levels. On one level he seeks to embrace the sheer diversity of historical and religious phenomena and bring them into a unity through its own inherent values. On a second level, however, he is aware that the unity he seeks, and the values he identifies in history will not stand on their own, they need support. It is here that Troeltsch employs metaphysics, and in so doing makes it the centre of his system, albeit a hidden one. (Niebuhr 1924:84).

Troeltsch's metaphysics is basically dualist in character as he identifies a number of antitheses in reality: 'absolute and relative', 'rational and irrational', 'infinite and finite', 'necessary and contingent', 'universal and particular', 'nature and spirit'. Troeltsch uses these various dualisms to avoid the various forms of reductionism which rationalistic positivism and idealistic monism threaten. The first of these would reduce everything to the unity of the spirit. Troeltsch however, wants to maintain the uniqueness and diversity of phenomena, especially of religion and personality (Troeltsch 1910a:89; Anton 1962:45).

The danger that Troeltsch runs here is that of being left with an unlimited and anarchistic metaphysical pluralism of autonomous individual phenomena which has no centre. Troeltsch, subsequently, searches for a way of bringing unity to the manifold phenomena of his worldview in such a way that will not undermine their autonomy or threaten their integrity. He finds this in a modified form of monadology, drawn from Leibniz and Malebranche (Morgan 1977:26-7), in which all individual 'monads' share in, and manifest, the life of the Absolute Spirit so that the Absolute is revealed in the relative and the Infinite in the finite. Further, because each individual monad participates in the Absolute it contains the universe within itself and so parallels all other phenomena without having any formal relationship to them. (Niebuhr 1924:264-70).

Troeltsch regards historical individual totalities and their developments as monads, with the result that he sees these individualities and processes of development as manifestations of the divine or absolute. Troeltsch can even generalise and argue that each and every culture is a partial realisation of the Absolute (Dyson 1968:132-46). Troeltsch is thus able to speak of each culture as standing in a direct relationship to God (Lyman 1932:465).

This also means that the cultural values which are produced by historical individualities and cultures should likewise be regarded as manifestations and approximations of absolute value; they are to be

respected, and are obligatory because they express ultimate values, albeit in a limited and fragmentary way (Dyson 1968:172-3).

Religion also played a central unifying role in Troeltsch's metaphysics since he saw it as the channel through which all monads, whether personal or historical were united with the Absolute. Religion was consequently vital in Troeltsch's mind for any culture or civilisation since it united the various elements of a culture with their divine ground, and in so doing gave them a deeper sensitivity, humanity, and vitality. Without the influence of religion any civilisation would come adrift from its roots and die (Niebuhr 1924:264-70). This brings the discussion back to the historical-cultural synthesis in which the various strains of Troeltsch's metaphysics converge.

Troeltsch describes human beings, on the basis of his monadology as 'microcosms' containing the universe within themselves. This gives them the capacity to understand various 'alien' religions and historical values and individualities because all historical values are, in principle, already embraced within the human consciousness in its relationship with the infinite. This also gives them the capacity to draw these values together into a new unity. Human individuals are therefore the agents of synthesis (Troeltsch 1902:88-9). (This is also a further underpinning for the doctrine of analogy which Troeltsch also takes as a kind of proof for his metaphysics).

Indeed the synthesis is a task for every new generation which finds itself confronted with a plethora of dualisms it must seek to reconcile them on the basis of their mutual relationship with the divine, and in so doing produce a new compromise between various opposites. (Antoni 1962:46).

A new synthesis will arise out of this quest in which historically and culturally relative phenomena are brought into a new synthesis, with religion as its unifying force, and will be joined with the divine in a new way. As such it is a new manifestation of the divine. It is thus through human historical intuition, religious instinct and ethical decision that the various individual monads present within a culture are brought into a new unity and expression of the infinite (Reist 1966:84-6, Niebuhr 1924:249-258).

Troeltsch seems to speak of both human individuals and historical totalities as 'monads'. This would appear to imply a confusion but this is only so on the surface since the different monads are all brought into existence by human decision and action and thus share in the monadic characteristics of the human consciousness or spirit.

Having said this it should be added that Troeltsch ascribes an independent life to these historical/cultural monads which have their own relationship with the divine. One is subsequently left wondering how it could be that cultural objects or realities could have any relationship with the divine except through the human beings who created them. Is it to be assumed that Troeltsch's monadology has a Platonic character giving some kind of abstract reality to ideas?

In any event, Troeltsch's metaphysics clearly provides the background for his method of synthesis. In as far as all phenomena, while being unique and autonomous, presuppose each other through their mutual connection with the infinite there is a mandate, or rather a duty, to reconcile them in ever differing ways so that the absolute might be brought to ever fuller expression in human culture.

But this metaphysical resolution of plurality leaves Troeltsch with two questions that he never really faces: firstly is not the autonomy and identity of individual phenomena, which Troeltsch worked so hard to preserve on a philosophical level, undermined by being brought into such a synthesis? In the synthesis individual phenomena are subordinated to the whole and thereby transformed so as to conform to the whole cultural system. The result of this subordination is that individual phenomena are no longer as self contained and self defined by their own essences as Troeltsch suggests in his metaphysics. They are redefined by external historical forces and so may no longer be regarded as autonomous.

This pattern is most plainly seen in Troeltsch's treatment of Christianity. The various elements in the synthesis, including that of religion, are subjugated to the predominant values of the synthesis, namely those of secular culture.

This leads to a second problem; the question of whether God is manifested in cultures in the way that Troeltsch suggests, especially in totalitarian cultures. In Troeltsch's metaphysics the predominant tendencies of society have divine authority behind them which morally requires that all opposition give way before them. A more critical principle is required for Christian social ethics than the one which Troeltsch offers in his theory of synthesis.

7. These 'Objective Values' resemble Troeltsch's historical essences. Like the essences they have emerged in history and give a moral direction to historical phenomena and give its totalities a continuing life. (Stackhouse 1961:223-5). They are thus vital historic forces like the essences. Moreover when giving examples of individual totalities and cultural values Troeltsch frequently identifies the same institutions; the state, the family, sciences, the nation, culture. (Reist 1966:56, von Hugel 1921:153-4). The essences of the historian, it would seem, are the same as the cultural values of the ethicist. The historian's task is to rediscover past cultural values and rehabilitate them for the present.

8. In making this shift Troeltsch has abandoned the a priori stance he took in 1906. Instead he claims that following Plato and Kant he has a deontological ethic (Troeltsch 1423: 39-49). Troeltsch's ethics of the personality seem to rest on an idealist inspired quest to develop the full spiritual potential of the human personality. This excessive personalism may also have its roots in Troeltsch's metaphysics in which each human personality is a monad which is related directly to the absolute.

9. Troeltsch never explicitly equates religious ethics with 'subjective ethics' but the similarities between the two are great. Both aspire to 'Supramundane' ends, both seek the full development of the personality, both seek the human community of absolute love and fraternity and both are historically and culturally impotent. The difference between the two is that 'subjective ethics' or the 'ethics of personal value' have a 'universalistic' orientation in attempting to define the moral law for all times and places in a Kantian manner, while religious ethics are concerned soley with religiously defined contents and ends. What is clear, however, is that they have to be given historical substance according to the same model. Both need to seek an alliance with powerful cultural values which find an expression in institutional forms, such as the family, economic life, the state and the nation. One of the roots of Troeltsch's Church-sect distinction lies here. The church type represents a religious ethic which has successfully penetrated society through an alliance with the state and culture and so has become historically power. The sect, on the other hand, has isolated itself from culture out of a desire to preserve the purity of its aims. As such it is historically impotent. Troeltsch's doubtful contender that the sect is socially ineffective thus rests upon the dualistic structure of his ethics which is open to severe criticism.

10. Calvinism, rather than Lutheranism, became the most potent force in Protestantism for a variety of reasons in Troeltsch's analysis. Firstly, it was more culturally and socially dynamic than Lutheranism, (Troeltsch 1906b:52). Calvinism was also to secure the independence of the Church from the State whereas in Lutheranism the Church remained subservient. Calvinism was far more pragmatic and adaptable than Lutheranism which was static (Troeltsch 1906b: 72-4). Lastly Calvinism was able to give mundane values an instrumental worth for religious life whereas Lutheranism could only forbear them and treat them warily. (Troeltsch 1906b: 79-85).

11. A similar pattern thus occurs in Troeltsch's attempts to reconcile religious values with cultural values as occurred in his attempt to reconcile personal values with cultural values. Troeltsch conceives of religious values as being orientated towards the transcendent and to some extent unconditioned by mundane cultural forces. The result of this is that religious values are often disinterested in or opposed to, culture. However, to have any historical or cultural significance, religious values must reach an accommodation with cultural values in order to modify, elevate them and give them more profound significance and thus influence history and society.

12. Troeltsch sought to base not just theology but a 'science of religion' upon his historical method in theology. He felt that the scope of theology had to be broadened to include not just the particular history of Christianity, but the universal history and scope of religion, hence Troeltsch preferred to talk of a science of religion which was prior to theology. Theology as such was to be based upon the history of religions. (Dyson 1968: 219-25).

Troeltsch's science of religion was composed of several disciplines: the psychology of religion, the history of religions, the philosophy of history, the epistemology of religion, and religious metaphysics. (Troeltsch 1903: 114-20)

The psychology of religion is not, for Troeltsch, the inner, mental acts or states associated with religious experience, but concrete religious experience itself. This was the study of empirical religious forms and practices, much in the way that William James had studied it in his Varieties of Religious Experience. This discipline would today be called the phenomenology of religion (Troeltsch 1903b: 114-20).

The history of religions for Troeltsch was the comparative study of the traditions and development of the great religions. The task of the history of religions was to identify and examine the individual totalities of religion. However it was not enough merely to rest with these empirical disciplines; the phenomena of religion raised epistemological and metaphysical questions which demanded copnsideration. This leads to the more philosophical disciplines of Troeltsch's science of religion; epistemology, philosophy of history and metaphysics.

The epistemology of religion, then, was concerned with the status of religious concepts within the field of human knowledge. In Troeltsch's mind it had two concerns. The first was to establish the independence of religion as a dimension of human experience apart from pure psychology and sociological determination. The second task of the epistemology of religion was to define the exact nature and place of religion within human consciousness. Troeltsch used the concept of the religious a proiri in both of these areas.

The philosophy of history, according to Troeltsch, was to see to what degree the various 'essences' of the different religions expressed the categorical nature of religion in its various manifestations, as a form of the human consciousness.

Troeltsch's epistemology of religion and philosophy of history were concerned with the nature of religious experience in history, but not with its object and truth. In Troeltsch's approach one must turn to religious metaphysics which considers the relationship of the Absolute and the infinite to the relative and finite to answer this question. This discipline will consider the different ways in which the divine might be manifested and encountered in religious experience and the history of religions. It remains, however, a highly speculative discipline.

While Troeltsch envisioned the disciplines within the science of religion working together in a complementary and harmonious manner he did, at different times, give one or other of these disciplines pre-eminence over the others and use it as the organising principle of all the elements of his science and religion. (Dyson 1968: 240-1). In his very early thought the psychology of religion came to the fore under the impact of James, but then in order to compensate for the

positivistic aspects of this approach he stressed the epistemology of religion in his middle period. Finally with the studies he made in preparation for the Social Teachings the historical aspect began to predominate in Troeltsch's religious thought as he realised the limitations of an a priori approach to religion.

CHAPTER TWO

TROELTSCH'S APPROACH TO TYPES OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION.

2.1.1. All too often in any discussion of Troeltsch's types of religious orientation, whether by sociologists or theologians, all that is achieved is a confused, or at best limited understanding of Troeltsch's types (c.f. Hill 1973:51-57, Robertson 1970:115-117). The reason for this is that only one or other of the summary definitions of the types of church, sect, and mysticism that Troeltsch gives in the Social Teaching are examined, and these are taken in isolation and treated as if they were Troeltsch's full and final treatment of the matter. In fact each of these summaries only defines one particular aspect or dimension of Troeltsch's typology. To gain a full picture these summaries must be taken together and placed within the context of Troeltsch's treatment of the types within the Social Teaching. This is the approach followed here.

2.1.2. This also means that the individual types cannot be discussed apart from their counterparts in Troeltsch's typology, thus Church, Sect and mystical types all have to be discussed together. It is important to understand that Troeltsch's typology of religious association is a complex and interrelated whole and must be approached as such, and needs itself to be placed in context.

2.1.3. Firstly, the evolution of Troeltsch's typology in his writings needs to be traced. This is necessary in order to gain an insight into its different components, and into the functions which Troeltsch intended it should perform, as he used and developed it in different settings in his work.

2.1.4. Secondly Troeltsch's typology cannot be considered apart from the history of church-sect typologising prior to Troeltsch. Troeltsch stands within this history, both adopting the framework, categories and concepts

which it had developed, and reacting to them in redefining and in resituating them within a new framework.

2.1.5. In the light of these considerations the approach and contents of this chapter become very clear. It will begin with a survey of pre-Troeltschian church-sect typologies. This will be followed by a consideration of the ethical concerns, particularly in Troeltsch's programme of 'compromise', which lies behind the typology. This then leads into a discussion of the method Troeltsch employed in his typology. Both these areas are then illustrated in two substantive treatments of Church and Sect, in Troeltsch's writings prior to the Social Teaching and then in the Social Teaching itself. A final summary and analysis will then be made of Troeltsch's types of church and sect in the light of this discussion. The chapter will conclude with a final consideration of the role of 'compromise' in Troeltsch's typology.

PRE-TROELTSCHIAN APPROACHES TO CHURCH AND SECT.

2.2.1. The identification of some sociological groups within Christianity as 'sects' and of some others as 'churches' did not begin with Troeltsch. It has a long and nefarious history within ecclesiastical polemics from Gregory the Great to Ritschl. It was part of the baggage of Church history and theology which Weber and Troeltsch inherited and put to sociological use (Swatos 1976:129-30, Steerman 1975:182-183).

2.2.2. Hegel seems to have been the first to give these terms any systematic application, and he set the tone for Weber and Troeltsch's subsequent discussions. Hegel interpreted polarities in the light of religious history and he discussed the problem of church and sect in relation to the question of the relationship of the individual to society. Consequently he speaks of the 'triumph of ecclesiastical statutes' over the sense of religious freedom. He is preoccupied with such themes as the rationality of different forms of religion, the relationship between religion and freedom, the significance of asceticism in mediating between

church and state, and functioning as a means of social control. Hegel discusses sects in the light of these themes (Robertson 1975:242-244).

2.2.3. Further, Hegel

> .....depicted the church-sect motif in terms of the encapsulation of Christianity in a vicious circle of accommodations. The sects try to break out of the compromises of the church, but quickly are enmeshed in these same ecclesiastical compromises - and so the process continues. (Robertson 1975:244-246). (1)

2.2.4. Hegel's proposed solution to this was an attempt to overcome the Kantian distinctions between morality and impulse, reason and passion, and so on, which he saw behind the cycle of accommodations, through a pantheism of love. Thus Hegel attempts to bridge the church-sect dilemma through a collective mysticism: Hegel here attempts a mystical reconciliation of subjectivity and objectivity, which is a theme recurring throughout his work.

2.2.5. This leads Robertson to conclude that the church-sect problem is linked to a 'subjectivity-objectivity problem' which is a major theme in sociological thought.

> On this view sectarianism constitutes a form of socially organised subjectivity, while churchism constitutes a form of socially organised objectivity. (Robertson 1975:245).

2.2.6. Weber added some methodological rigour to the discussion of the church-sect motif with his theory of ideal types. (2) Weber used those ideal types in his comparative method whereby he sought to identify those social forces which have led to the development of the modern world. Both church and sect types, according to Weber, have played a role in this process (Swatos 1976:130-133).

2.2.7. Weber noted the church-sect dichotomy first in <u>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</u>. The church in his view was

> .....a sort of trust foundation for supernatural ends, an institution which necessarilly included both the just and the unjust.

While the sect is a

> .....believer's church and sees itself solely as a community of personal believers, and of the reborn...(Rogers, quoted in Hill 1973:47-48).

2.2.8. Weber arrived at this distinction in the context of a discussion of the Anabaptists, Mennonites and Quakers. He stressed the principle of voluntary membership as the chief characteristic of the sects, especially where it was expressed in believer's baptism. The chief characteristic of the church, conversely, was compulsory or birthright membership expressed in infant baptism (Hill 1973:48). (Hegel's objective-subjective polarity is echoed in these definitions).

2.2.9. Weber also identified a number of secondary characteristics of the sect: an emphasis on charisma as opposed to authority; charismatic qualifications for membership; strict discipline; and regulation of members relations with society. (Hill 1973:48-51).

2.2.10. Sects also played a crucial role in Weber's analysis of the rise of capitalism, for while Calvinism may have provided the ideological grounding for Ascetic Protestantism, (which was to create the ethical conditions conducive to the development of capitalism), it was the sect-type which operated as a mediating structure inculcating the values of Ascetic Protestantism into broad masses of people. Hence it was the sect-type which was actually the dynamic force which promoted the rise of an ethic which allowed the development of capitalism. Such a social organisation as the sect was necessary, in Weber's analysis, to overcome the dominant values or traditionalism of sixteenth and seventeenth century cosity which were opposed to the spirit of capitalism (Berger 1971:485-99).

2.2.11. Weber also saw in the sects' demand for religious freedom the basis of all other human rights culminating in the Enlightenment concept of individual reason. Thus for Weber the sect-type was in fact at the cutting edge of social change (Nelson 1975:229-238).

TROELTSCH'S ETHICAL CONCERNS IN HIS WORK ON CHURCH AND SECT.

2.3.1. Whereas Weber was concerned to analyse those forces which had produced the modern world, Troeltsch's interests were quite different. His approach to church and sect was determined by his concern for the application of Christian ethics to society. This gives Troeltsch's project in the Social Teachings and elsewhere a very specific orientation.

2.3.2. Troeltsch states that his research did not begin with those of Weber, but had quite independent origins.

> Externally they were caused by the task which I was entrusted of reviewing.....the book by Nathusios: Die Mitarbeit der Kirche an der Losung der Sozialen Frage.....When I was engaged in this task I found that there were no books in existence which could serve as a basis for the study of such a question, and I then began to try to lay the foundations for such a study myself. This book was the result of my endeavour. When I began this work, however, I found that all the interests of my research contributed to it: the sociological phenomena connected with the conception and nature of the church, which were based on the familiar doctrine of Rothe..... interests which concern the history of the Christian ethic.....and, above all, my researches into the meaning of the Lex Naturae..... Finally the book embodied the programme which in 1901 I outlined in my review of Seeberg's Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschlicte (1901). (Troeltsch 1912:987, Niebuhr 1960b: 7-9).

2.3.3. In his review of Seeberg's book Troeltsch had criticised the latter's static conception of Christian doctrine in which it developed quite independently of all social forces and argued instead that the modern historical method had

> placed in the foreground the great cultural and institutional contexts on which depends the actual, definite sphere of governing religious structures of thought. (Troeltsch, quoted in Riest 1966: 37-38).

2.3.4. Troeltsch therefore concluded that the only correct way to understand Christian thought is in the light of its historical and social contexts. Troeltsch does this in the Social Teaching with regard to the social ethics of Christianity. In the process he brings together his historical and ethical concerns.

2.3.5. Troeltsch's main interest in the Social Teaching is the relationship of Christianity to what he calls the "social problem". This Troeltsch defined as the ordering and integration of the various groups within society into a harmonious whole (in fact a synthesis). This was the particular task of the political community which had to give the social realm a concrete meaning. Christianity contributed to this through its teaching of how social reality, including its own institutions, were to be related to the state. Troeltsch thus asserted that the 'scientific' analysis of social thought would deal with the thinking produced by Christianity about the relationship of wider socal life to political life. In saying this Troeltsch assumed the relationship between Christianity and society takes place within a context not formed by Christianity and to some extent beyond its control. The corallary of this is that Christian involvement in society, in whatever form it takes, is only one force among many in the social realm (Troeltsch 1931:23-25; Reist 1966:29-30).

2.3.6. In the Social Teaching, then, Troeltsch gives Christian ethics a thoroughly sociological orientation, or rather he uses the tools of sociology to explicate Christian ethics. Troeltsch's primary interest in this area is always Christian ethics and the contribution they make to the formation of a unity of life (or a cultural synthesis). The sociology of religion, for Troeltsch, is simply a vehicle whereby the results of Christian ethics can be explored. But this use of sociology still influences Troeltsch's approach to the history of Christian ethics. He is not as interested in specific ethical issues as he is in the structural orientations produced by ethical positons to secular society. It is within this context that Troeltsch's use and transformation of Weber's ideal types of church and sect may best be understood.

2.3.7. Whereas Weber sought to give a sociological definition to the types of church and sect, Troeltsch, in line with his interests, gives the types an ethical definition. He then uses them to indicate the social orientations of different groups. (Berger 1971:486ff; Reece 1975:75-76). As A.W. Eister writes:

> Troeltsch was primarily concerned with Christian ethics and this has a very important bearing on the latter's conceptions of

> church and sect ..... Troeltsch chose to emphasise as the central characteristic of the church its "acceptance" of the secular order, at least to a "certain" extent, in order to "dominate the masses". And he implied that this is what the church desired and intended to do. (Eister 1967:87).

2.3.8. Troeltsch thus defined the church-type, and conversely the sect-type, by their orientation to the "social problem" or the various structures of society and their values. The church-type accepted the values of the different structures of society and would seek to co-operate in integrating them into a coherent and meaningful unity. The sect on the other hand rejects both the values of society and the task of integration which the church adopts.

2.3.9. Clearly there is a meeting point here between Troeltsch's work on Christian ethics and his philosophy of history and culture. The church-type is defined by its acceptance of the 'objective' or 'cultural' values as from God and by its willingness to participate in the cultural synthesis. The sect is defined by its withdrawal from this task in protest against the secular orientation of the cultural values.

2.3.10. The result of this was that Troeltsch transformed Weber's types. Troeltsch was a theologian attempting to relate types of religious experience to varieties of social teachings with which they could be correlated. This meant that Troeltsch departed from Weber in shifting the emphasis of the types from organisational behaviour, which had been primary for Weber, to ethical behaviour, which had only been a secondary characteristic in Weber's scheme. (3)

2.3.11. Troeltsch used the types of church and sect in order to understand the ethical stances of groups within Christian history. Indeed the manner in which he applied the types was very specific, perhaps too specific. He saw the Mediaeval church as the prime example of the church-type in history, and, according to T.M. Steerman, the sixteenth and seventeenth century sects as the full development of the sect-type within history (Steerman 1975:181-204). The result of this was that Troeltsch's definition of the types was severely limited and could not be applied to

other groups outside of Christian history, or even Christian groups in later period or cultural settings from the ones that Troeltsch studies. This was of no consequence to Troeltsch, however, as he only intended to use the church-sect typology to identify different currents in social ethics in the history of Christian thought in the West. The church-sect typology was, for Troeltsch, a heuristic device. (Johnson 1971:124-125; Nelson 1975:229-128).

TROELTSCH'S METHODOLOGY IN DISTINGUISHING CHURCH AND SECT: COMPROMISE REVISITED.

2.4.1. Troeltsch's ethical concerns, in his work on church and sect, then, stand in continuity with his concerns in the cultural synthesis. In fact the philosophy of history in Der Historismus develops from Troeltsch's work in the Social Teaching. Just as the theory of compromise is central to Troeltsch's treatment of ethics in the cultural synthesis, so too it is central in his work on church and sect. (Little 1968:222-224).

2.4.2. The basic premise of the theory of compromise, as Troeltsch applies it to religious ethics, is that to be socially effective such ethics have to enter a relationship of mutual interpenetration with cultural values. Apart from this religious ethics are impotent because of their ahistorical, transcendental orientation. (Little 1968:220).

2.4.3. Troeltsch believed that this had happened again and again in Christian history and so set out in the Social Teaching to study the various compromises Christianity had made with Western culture. 'Compromise' became the basic methodological principle of this work as Troeltsch used it to identify, explain and evaluate the different groups as they sought to relate to the stuctures of society. (Chamberlain 1976:377ff; Little 1968:220-222; Pannenberg 1981:106-108).

2.4.4. Troeltsch's theory of compromise also lay at the basis of his redefinition of church and sect types. The church-type represented that tendency within Christian ethics which formed 'compromises' with culture by

seeking to embrace social structures and their values in order that it might dominate society and enforce its spiritual principles upon it. The sect-type, according to Troeltsch, represents that tradition within Christian ethics which reacts against such compromises seeing them as a corruption and secularisation of gospel values. Groups of this tradition reject existing social structures and either withdraw from them or seek to overthrow them (Reist 1966:161-165).(4)

2.4.5. The means by which these compromises with secular society have been effected in Christian history, in Troeltsch's account, was the Stoic idea of natural law. This was the ideal of a morality which was eternally valid, universally recognised, and so operative in non-Christian cultures. Natural law was not anti-Christian but simply pre-Christian and so Christian ethics could be added to it. The content of this law was differentiated by a distinction between the state of humanity before and after the Fall. "The Stoics", says Bainton,

> had posited a golden age without war, without slavery, and without property, and then an age of iron in which these three institutions had come to prevail.(Bainton 1951:75).

2.4.6. The early Christians adopted this theory, Troeltsch argues, early in the career of Christian thought and equated the Stoic's golden age with Eden, and the Law of Nature of the present age, the "age of iron", with man's fallen state and the Decalogue (Bainton 1951:70). Whereas in the golden age all men were equal, and all things were held in common and there was no war, poverty, suffering, or law, in the present fallen state of mankind men are unequal - some being rulers and others their subjects; private property exists with extremes of wealth and poverty; there is war, slavery, suffering, with the law enforced by the state to maintain order in the world.

2.4.7. In the former order of the golden age the absolute Law of Nature prevailed and so there was strict equality, communism, and harmony amongst men. In the present order of the 'Fall' or 'Age of Iron', this absolute Law is relativised by the sinful state of mankind and the institution of property, the state, and slavery. In the Christian application of this

theory, inequality, private property, slavery, law and the state were all seen as instituted by God partly as a restraint upon sin and partly as punishment for sin. On account of this Christians were to accept them as God's will for humanity in the present age. (Reist 1966:158-160; Pannenberg 1981:107-108).

2.4.8. Troeltsch used the natural Law theory as another means of distinguishing church and sect types on the basis of compromise. The church-type, he argued, accepted relativised natural law and acquiesced in favour of existing social conditions and structures and their values. It also sought to add spiritual values to them and orientate the institutions of relative natural law to spiritual ends. The church itself represented absolute natural law and so had the authority to complement and direct the world in this manner. The sect-type, on the other hand, rejected the relative natural law of the 'world' entirely and insisted upon the Absolute law of nature of the primitive state. Consequently the sect-type would either withdraw from the world in order to realise the absolute law of nature in its own community, or make war upon the existing structures of the world in order to institute the order of the absolute law of nature in their place. (Chamberlain 1976:78-80).

2.4.9. The church-type, through its theory of relative natural law, achieved two great compromises in Christian history in Troeltsch's analysis. The first was the great Mediaeval Catholic synthesis of nature with grace, reason with revelation, and absolute natural law with relative natural law which culminated with Saint Thomas. The second was that of Ascetic Protestantism in which neo-Calvinism and the sects effectively raised the level of relative natural law to form an intra-mundane asceticism which affirmed the values of the world and so opened the way for modern secular society (Little 1968:221). Both these compromises have now, according to Troeltsch, lost their influence and so a new compromise is needed for Christianity in the modern world. (Reist 1966:160).

2.4.10. But this necessity for a new compromise is nothing new in the history of Christian ethics:

> The ethos of the Gospel ..... is an ideal which demands for its full realisation a new world. Accordingly Jesus had proclaimed the Kingdom of God. But it is an ideal which is not realizable in a continuing earthly world without compromise. Therefore the history of the Christian Ethos becomes the history of an always new search for this compromise, and an always new oppositions to the compromise way of thinking. (Troeltsch 1912:999-1000). (5)

CHURCH AND SECT IN TROELTSCH'S WRITINGS PRIOR TO THE SOCIAL TEACHING.

2.5.1. The Church-sect typology has a long history in Troeltsch's writings; he was working with these concepts for a decade before the publication in German of the Social Teaching in 1912. During this time Troeltsch developed these types as categories by which to analyse the various ethical orientations within Christianity. Without doubt Troeltsch borrowed the typology from his close friend and colleague at Heidelberg, Max Weber (Reist 1966:106-113). However he refined the typology in his own terms and extended it adding mysticism to the types.

2.5.2. Troeltsch discusses church, sect and mystical types as early as 1902 in his Grundprobleme der Ethik (GS II 552-672). Troeltsch first considers types from the perspective of the objectivity of doctrine and the subjectivity of ethics in both Catholic and Protestant Churches. In Protestantism, as in Catholicism,

> ..... Ethics ..... still belong to the domain of the subjective and of the application; Religion to the domain of the alone simply objective, to authoritative revelation. To attack the problem of Christianity from the ethical side had, in these circumstances, no meaning; and no one here came to think of doing so except the sectaries who, just because of their endeavours were contemptuously expelled, as despisers of the objective Revelation of grace as independent of subjective effort, and of the church as objectively administering these treasures. (559-560 quoted in Von Hugel 1921:150-151).

2.5.3. In this passage Troeltsch clearly sees the church as an 'objective' institution and the sect as a 'subjective' institution in the Hegelian sense discussed above. The church stresses the 'objective' sphere of doctrine, revelation, grace and salvation while the sect-type is orientated to the 'subjective' sphere of ethics and practical life.

2.5.4. Later in this work Troeltsch discusses all three types in relation to the question of whether the moral power of Christian ethics lay in the bestowal of moral power or in redemption. For Troeltsch the answer to this is relative to the different sociological and ethical types of Christianity. Jesus' ethics, Troeltsch says, demand true justice, and while redemption lay ahead, Jesus teaching was so fused with joy, the certainty of God, and the forgiveness of sins that it was received as power and not as law. Troeltsch contrasts this with the later church-type ethic which combines redemption worked by Christ with a universal human ethic. According to Troeltsch this shift took place in Paul and John when greater emphasis is placed upon the mystical Christ and his cultus than on Jesus' message of the Kingdom. With this the church's ethical stress moved from the content of the Christian ethic to the authority of the commands of the ecclesiastical institution and the power of the sacraments. The content of the ethic itself becomes interpreted as a universal ethic. Faith now venerates Christ and sees the church as a 'great foundation of redemptive grace'. This 'church-scheme', according to Troeltsch, persists from Paul to Kant, and he places his other two types of sect and mysticism along side it (Von Hugel 1921:111-112).

> The sect-type rejects the Church and all the dogmas specifically connected with ecclesiasticism, and emphasises, instead, the content of the Christian Ethic, the Sermon-on-the-Mount, doubtless in a mostly somewhat narrow, literal legal sense, and collects small, voluntary communities of efficiently earnest souls, which manifest themselves as such by adult Baptism. Gentle retired saints and violent ethical reformers, ... exclusive communities and rational ethical individuals have proceeded from this spirit, Kierkegaard and Tolstoi have sprung from hence. (GS II 643 quoted in Von Hugel 1921:163).

2.5.5. The mystical type internalises the Kingdom of God and rejects all external laws and seeks union with God. Since the world continues to exist

mysticism sees the internal sense of the Kingdom as the revelation of its presence in the world and not of its future advent. As a result of this, mysticism moves towards pantheism but still claims a relationship to the person and teaching of Jesus. Troeltsch argues, in this context, that through the insight offered by Biblical criticism and the sect and mystical types Christian ethics have been placed more under the influence of Jesus and less under the influence of dogma. In the light of this Troeltsch states that redemption must now take second place in Christian ethics and that the doctrine of original sin should also be rejected. (von Hugel 1921:162-165).

2.5.6. Troeltsch divides his types on the basis of objectivism and subjectivism, the sect-type in this instance representing an external subjectivism. In addition to this, the idea of compromise is also implicit in Troeltsch's definition of the types. The church-type in altering the content of Christian ethics to develop a 'universal human ethic' is in fact 'compromising' the Christian ethic to accommodate it to human needs and human society. The sect rejects such a compromise and the universal ethic and doctrines of objective salvation which are its correlates. By way of reaction the sect emphasises, in a rigorous and legalistic way, the content of the Christian ethic and either separates itself from the church and the world, or violently opposes them, in order to practise this ethic. The mystical type rejects both the external compromise of the church and the legalistic purity of the sect in favour of a purely spiritual and "free" ethic which is neither compromised or legalistic.

2.5.7. In the following year (1903) Troeltsch returned to this topic in 'What does "Essence of Christianity" mean?' (Troeltsch 1903b: 124-179) in the context of discussing the 'essence' of Christianity as a changing developmental principle. Troeltsch argued in this essay that there was a complex dualism at the heart of the original gospel which is both this-worldly and other-worldly. This polarity is also circular so that the different polar points are also united.

2.5.8. Troeltsch linked this dualism to his church-sect typology:

> Christianity is an ethic of redemption whose world-view combines optimism and pessimism, transcendence and immanence, an abrupt polarisation of the world and God and the inward linking of the two, a dualism in principle, which is abrogated again and again in faith and action. It is a purely religious ethic which refers man brusquely and onesidedly to the values of the inner life, and yet again it is a human ethic which forms and transfigures nature, overcoming the struggle with her through love. Sometimes one is more apparent and sometimes the other, but neither may be completely lacking if the Christian idea is to be preserved. This inner differentiation finds expression especially in the sociological and cultic formations. As a comprehensive church and medium of grace for mankind it attempts to unify the two sides by setting up graded demands for the believers while the possession of salvation remains of fundamental importance. In the sects, which always make themselves felt alongside, the heroic, future believing, ascetic indifference to the world is emphasised as a demand made on all believers equally, while ready made salvation and cult are left in the background. (Troeltsch 1903b: 154-155).

2.5.9. Once more, it should be noted, Troeltsch's concept of 'compromise' is implicit in his distinction between the church and sect types, (it is the basic method Troeltsch employs in this essay). Here the church and sect types are presented as related and united principles within Christianity. The church-type represents optimistic, immanent, and world affirming aspect of Christianity, while the sect represents the pessimistic, transcendent, and world denying aspect. This distinction is, in the first place, neither sociological or ethical; it is theological involving different doctrines of sin, redemption, creation, man and God. The ethical and liturgical characteristics which Troeltsch lists here are basicaly the outworkings of two prior theological positions. Both, in Troeltsch's estimate, are equally Christian. One is basically optimistic about the world and the other basically pessimistic about the world. The former, consequently will stress immanence of God within the world and His affirmation of its goodness, while the latter will stress God's transcendence over the world in holiness and His judgement upon a wholly sinful world.

2.5.10. From 1900 onwards Troeltsch made a study of relationship between Christianity's adoption of Stoic natural law theory and its various compromises with Western civilisation (Reist 1966: 156-161; von Hugel 1921:

passim; Troeltsch 1921: passim). However, Troeltsch did not connect natural law theory with his church-sect distinction, despite the fact that he frequently discussed both themes in the same works, until 1910. In that year the German Sociological Society held its first meeting at Frankfurt. As part of the proceedings a colloquy was held on the sociology of religion in which Max Weber, Ferdinant Toennies, George Simmel and Ernst Troeltsch participated. Troeltsch opened the discussion with an important paper on 'Stoic Christian Natural Law and the Modern Secular Natural Law'. (Weber 1973:140).

2.5.11. A.W. Eister states that in this paper Troeltsch was:

> ..... concerned in the first place with the philosophical question about the validity or truth values of competing theological ethical formulations (or with "belief systems" as they might be referred to today and with the question of whether or not truth is absolute and universal or "absolute" only for believers within the context or confines of their own culture(s). He was using the three types of religious or socio-religious expression, churchly, sectarian and mystical, to help discover how these several diverse forms of religious organisation might be implementing the "Truth" embodied in natural law. The church through comprehensive institutionally organised sacraments and rituals (as well as the exercise of social powers), the sect through selective screening of those human agents it would "accept" and retain as members and the "association of mystics" (for which Troeltsch apparently could not find an adequate term comparable to the other two) through emphasis on "inward" devotion of the religiously sensitive or the responsive. (Eister 1975:227).

2.5.12. In this paper, Troeltsch brought to a point his thinking on the Church-sect typology, at last combining his thinking on compromise and the church-sect distinction, and compromise and natural law. He did this by arguing that there were two forms of natural law which were related to the church and the sects, namely relative and absolute Natural Law. The methodology of the church-sect typology as Troeltsch will use it two years later in the Social Teaching is complete.

2.5.13. From this survey of Troeltsch's approach to church and sect types prior to the Social Teaching it is clear that he based his version of the typology on theological and ethical differences. Troeltsch's discussion of

these types in the years 1902 to 1910 always takes place within the context of Christian ethics, and Troeltsch is always eager to contrast the ethical rigorism of the sect-type with the compromise and sacramental nature of the church-type. In his discussions of these types, then, church and sect are first of all distinguished by their ethical and theological characteristics which for Troeltsch are primary. Sociological characteristics, where they are discussed at all, are given a very secondary, even incidental place, being seen as products of primary ethical and theological characteristics of church and sect.

TROELTSCH'S PRESENTATION OF CHURCH AND SECT IN THE SOCIAL TEACHING.

The Dualism Of Early Christianity.

2.6.1.1. Troeltsch repeats the contention that he made in 'What does 'Essence of Christianity' mean?' that the source of the church-sect typology is the implicit dualism of Christianity. This dualism took two interrelated forms: individualism and universalism on the one hand and radicalism and conservativism on the other. In the first Troeltsch contrasts the individualism which arises from the call to discipleship, brotherhood in the Kingdom of God and the direct relationship that the individual can have with God with the universalism of the Gospel which seeks to reach the whole of mankind. In the second this dualism is expressed as radical and conservative tendencies within the Christian community. The radical tendency is related to the 'individualistic' stresses on discipleship and brotherhood and so challenges secular institutes and lifestyles for the sake of the Kingdom. The conservative tendency is a result of the Gospel's universalism which seeks to embrace all mankind within God's grace. It is thus more tolerant of existing social conditions. (Troeltsch 1912:34-58, 82-6).

2.6.1.2. For Jesus, Troeltsch argues, these tendencies formed a duality. They only hardened into a strict dualism when Paul laid the foundation for

ecclesiastical church life, in place of Jesus' loose brotherhood. Paul achieved this by making Christ, instead of the Father, the centre of fellowship and worship. He thus established the basis of the cultus. Furthermore, through Paul's doctrine of predestination, inequality is introduced into the Christian community and the principle is established that the individual must serve the universal whole. (Troeltsch 1912:78-79).

2.6.1.3. In primitive Christianity this dualism led Christianity to present its members with a radical model for their lives as Christians within the Christian Community. However, in its ideas about leadership it adopted a predominantly conservative and institutional stance. It also had, for the same reason, a basically affirmative attitude to the state. (Troeltsch 1912:82ff).

2.6.1.4. In early Catholicism, in Troeltsch's account, the conservative tendency of the Gospel found expression in the theory of relative natural law. Through this idea many of the values of Roman and Hellenistic society were accepted, and a theocratic idea of the state was developed. The radical tendency, however, found a balancing emphasis in the idea of absolute natural law, asceticism, monasticism, and a negative view of the state. Troeltsch concludes, however, that while the two theories of natural law and theocratic absolutism were the means by which the church formed a compromise with the world, the original social ethics of the Gospel were kept alive by the ideas of brotherly love, the primitive state, and absolute natural law in monasticism which took over the tasks of social work, education, and Bible translation. The radical ideas of the Gospel would later break out from this source, but only after the Church's dualistic political theory of relative natural law and theocracy had helped to create a new civilisation. (Troeltsch 1912:100-61).

The Emergence Of The Sect-Type After The Development of the Mediaeval Synthesis: Troeltsch's Basic Analysis Of The Sect-Type.

2.6.2.1. Troeltsch takes the theme of dualism up again at the end of the second chapter of the Social Teaching in the section entitled 'The Absolute

Law of God and of Nature, and the Sects' where he gives his first definitions of his types. Here he returns to his theme of the radical and conservative tendencies within Christianity. The conservative tendency came into its own in the Middle Ages when Paulinism receded in the face of Aristotelian philosophy. The radical tendency, however, had run alongside the conservative tendency in the ancient church through the stress on eschatology and the stress of the fathers of the fourth century on natural law communism.

2.6.2.2. The radical tendency, Troeltsch says, 'broke forth' with greater power in the fourteenth century when the inclusive attitude to the world, engendered by the conservative tendency, reached a climax in Thomism. The strict radical ethic of Jesus then arose in reaction to the compromise of Thomism. The ethics of this reaction found no place within the Church apart from monasticism so it expressed itself in the sect movement (Troeltsch 1912:328-330,333) which .....

> ..... became the second classic form of this social doctrine of Christianity. (Troeltsch 1912:330).

2.6.2.3. Troeltsch argues that the main course of church history follows the channel created by the church-type because of its universalism in which it seeks to control the mass of mankind and so dominate civilisation. Paulinism, Troeltsch asserts, led the way in this direction in its desire to conquer the world for Christ, in its acceptance of the state and in its recognition of the existing order as ordained by God. The only unity to which it aspired, however, was in the Body of Christ from which the power of the new life of the Spirit would prepare the way for the Kingdom. But as the church renounced these supernatural and eschatological notes it had to rely on 'objective' religious truth and power, which then became the basis of its Christian life.

2.6.2.4. In order to create a new lifestyle in society the church had to control society through the sacrament of penance and through the priesthood. This in turn entailed a relative acceptance of the world and the state (Troeltsch 1931:334-335). The church thus found it impossible to avoid making a compromise with the state, the social order, and the

prevailing social conditions. The Thomist philosophy, says Troeltsch, worked this out into a comprehensive theory which also maintained the ultimate supernatural end of life. This theory, it was claimed, was derived from the Gospel which was conceived .....

> ..... as a universal way of life offering redemption to all, whose influence radiates from the knowledge of God given by the Gospel, coupled with the assurance of salvation given by the Church. (Troeltsch 1912:335).

2.6.2.5. It was this development of the Gospel as an objective sociological point of reference which allowed the development of the church-type as a dominant ecclesiastical organisation. It was also this objectification which resulted in the subordination or suppression of the individualism and radical fellowship of love of the Gospel. They ceased to be 'ruling principles of the system' and as a result the sect movement developed as a reaction. (Troeltsch 1912:335-336).

2.6.2.6. The church-type, Troeltsch states, is conservative and seeks to dominate the whole of life. The sect, on the other hand, is concerned with personal life and therefore forms small groups and is either indifferent or hostile to society as it has no desire to control it in its existing form. Thus the sect either tolerates society or seeks to violently replace it (Troeltsch 1912:331). Troeltsch notes that church and sect both depend upon social development. The church uses the state and fuses her life with it, becoming part of the social order and as such dependent upon the upper classes. The sect, on the other hand, are connected with the lower classes or groups hostile to the state and so "work upwards from below, not downwards from above" (Troeltsch 1912:331). The church also seeks to harmonise a supernatural order with the natural order, and tries to incorporate asceticism into this harmony. In this order the supernatural is encountered through nature. The sects, however, refer to the supernatural world directly and develop a personal asceticism which is hostile to the world and does not merely renounce it. Asceticism in the church is meritorious and based upon a dualistic morality; for the sects it is detachment from the world and a concentration upon the practice of the ethic of love and of the Sermon-on-the-Mount. This is expressed in the

refusal to use courts of law, swear, exercise power, or fight. But it did not, Troeltsch stresses, lead to self-mortification or the denial of the natural life (Troeltsch 1912:331-333).

2.6.2.7. Troeltsch now turns to the task of defining church and sect as sociological types through contrasting them. He outlines the main characteristic of the sects as the following:

> In general the following are their characteristic features: lay Christianity, personal achievements in ethics and in religion, the radical fellowship of love, religious equality, and brotherly love, indifference towards the authority of the state and the ruling classes, dislike of technical law and of the oath, the separation of the religious life from the economic struggle by means of the ideal of poverty and frugality, or occasionally in a charity which becomes communism, the directness of the personal relationship, criticism of official spiritual guides and theologians, the appeal to the New Testament and the Primitive Church. (Troeltsch 1912:336).

2.6.2.8. The sect is established on a different sociological basis from the objective sacerdotal foundations of the Church. The basis of the sect is found in a common ethical performance drawn from the life and 'Law' of Christ. This implies a different attitude to the history of early Christianity and Christian doctrine. Scriptural history, and the history of the primitive church are, for the sects, permanent ideals, not mere starting points for future development. Further the sect type emphasises Christ's role as the Head of the Church, binding the Church to himself through the Law, and not as the God-Man who is at work in the Church. "On the one hand", says Troeltsch, "there is development and compromise, on the other literal obedience and radicalism". (Troeltsch 1912:336-337).

2.6.2.9. Troeltsch felt that this emphasis made it impossible for the sect-type to form mass organisations - their development is limited to small groups confined through personal relationships. This was also the reason that their ideals had to be constantly renewed since it resulted in a lack of continuity. Further this led to a close affinity with idealistic groups in the lower classes. They had a simplistic view of social life in which "an idealistic orthodoxy" could easily envision a transformation of the world by the principles of love. (Troeltsch 1912:337).

2.6.2.10. The sects thus gained in the intensity of the Christian life, says Troeltsch, while losing the universalism of the church. They held that the world was so corrupt that it could not be 'conquered' by human effort, so contradicting the idea of the transformation of the world by love in which they also believed. As a result of this they adopted eschatological views. Troeltsch concedes that in all of this the sects are closer to the individualism of the Gospel than the church-type, but that they tend towards legalism. The sects also gained in specific breath and receptiveness of the church. They 'reversed' the process of assimilation in which the church had engaged, having based its piety on an objective basis (Troeltsch 1912:337).

> The church emphasises the idea of grace and makes it objective; the sect emphasises the idea of subjective holiness. In the Scriptures the Church adheres to the source of redemption, whereas the sect adheres to the law of God and of Christ. (Troeltsch 1912:337).

2.6.2.11. The sect is a voluntary community and as such its life and unity depend on the life and effort of members in fellowship. For this reason the sect rejects infant baptism and criticises the church's idea of the sacraments. The spirit of fellowship is not weakened by individualism, but strengthened by the service of individuals to the fellowship. Such fellowship, however, has a narrow scope because of its intensity, hence it does not include relationships based on secular interests. These are either rejected or avoided. As a consequence, Troeltsch tells us, the sect does not seek to educate the masses, as the church does, but simply gathers the elect in opposition to the world. The result of this is that the sect-type preserves Christian universalism only in its eschatology. (Troeltsch 1912:338-339).

2.6.2.12. Troeltsch believes that the sect's exclusive individualism also explains its asceticism which is a purely religious view of life indifferent to culture. Troeltsch distinguishes the asceticism of the sect from that of the church. The asceticism of the church is meritorious, heroic and restricted to a special class. The asceticism of the sect, on the other hand, consists in detachment from the world for the sake of the

religious life and the fellowship of love. This is rooted in the New Testament and is a continuation, albeit on a narrower basis, of Jesus' attitude to the world. Thus the sect's approach to asceticism is not contemplative and appropriate only for a special class - it is possible for all and directed towards all. It unites the fellowship of the sect rather than dividing it. (Troeltsch 1912:339-340).

2.6.2.13. Troeltsch recognises that while he presents these, the church and sect types, in strict contrast to one another, they do impinge on one another, both are .....

> ..... a logical result of the Gospel, and only jointly do they exhaust the whole range of its sociological influence, and thus also indirectly its social results, which are always connected with the religious organisation. (Troeltsch 1912:341).

This means that the church-type is not a deterioration of the Gospel but its preservation, conceived as a free gift, as pure grace. Furthermore with its universalism the church still continues the evangelistic impulse. For this reason the church was forced into a position of compromise. Neither, however, is the sect simply a one-sided emphasis on certain aspects of the church-type; rather it is a continuation of the Gospel. Only in the sect are radical individualism and the idea of Christian love fully stressed and an ideal fellowship built up upon these foundations. For this reason the sect develops a subjective and inward unity in place of the external membership of an institution. The sect also retains the original radicalism of the Christian ideal and its antagonism to the world. It retains the demand for personal service which it also sees as a work of grace. The sect emphasises the subjective realisation of grace in the individual's life, and not objective assurance of its presence. The sect does not rely on past miracles or on the miraculous nature of justification, but on the living presence of Christ, and victory in the Christian life. (Troeltsch 1912:341).

2.6.2.14. The starting point of the church, Troeltsch continues, is the Exalted Christ and faith in Christ as Redeemer. This is its objective 'treasure' which is made more objective in the sacral institution. The

sect, on the other hand, starts from the teaching and example of Jesus, and the 'subjective' work of the Apostles and their lives of poverty. It unites individualism with religious fellowship, and bases the office of ministry upon service and power, and not upon ordination and tradition. The sect can therefore call laymen to the Christian ministry. The church dispenses the sacraments without reference to the character of the priest, in the sects they are either administered by laymen or made dependent upon the character of the president. In some cases they are discarded altogether. The individualism of the sect, Troeltsch says, moves towards a direct relationship with God and therefore it tends to replace the doctrine of the sacraments with the doctrine of the Spirit and enthusiasm. (Troeltsch 1912:341-342).

2.6.2.15. Troeltsch once again states that both these types are based upon "fundamental impulses of the Gospel". The Gospel contains the idea of objective salvation through the knowledge of God. Once developed this idea finds expression in the church. The Gospel also contains the idea of absolute personal religion and absolute personal fellowship. The sect-type develops out of these ideas. The teaching of Jesus thus tends to lead to the sect-type, while the absolute faith in the person of Jesus tends to lead to the church-type. The New Testament thus helps to develop both the church and the sect-types. (Troeltsch 1912:342-343).

2.6.2.16. In conclusion Troeltsch says that the church type began Christian history and was responsible for a great world mission. Only when the church was objectified to its fullest extent did sectarian tendencies emerge as a reaction. (6) Just as the church developed in connection with feudal society, so the sects arose in conjunction with the individualism of late mediaeval city civilisation. (Troeltsch 1912:343).

The Mediaeval Sects and Natural Law

2.6.3.1. After these lengthy and detailed comparisons of the church and sect types Troeltsch turns to a consideration of the manner in which the sects used the idea of the law of nature.

2.6.3.2. The sects based their attitude on the 'Law of Christ'. Where they wanted to base their attitude on a rational or universal foundation they based it on the absolute law of nature of the primitive state in which there was no violence, war, law, oaths or private property. The sects thus rejected relative natural law, and the consequent compromise of Christian ethics it entailed. The sects had no idea of a graduated social order; for them only absolute contrasts existed. Through their appeal to the absolute law of nature the sects gave their Biblicism a greater emphasis and complemented it with illuminating reason and passionate sentiment. (Troeltsch 1912:344).

2.6.3.3. This conception of natural law was open to different interpretations; it could include inequality, or stress equality and lead to democratic and communistic ideas. However, whichever interpretation is followed, both divine and absolute natural law are opposed to existing conditions. The more strongly this is emphasised, the stronger becomes the impulses for reform for the creation of something new. This end can be achieved in different ways; some attempted to realise the idea in groups which were detached from the world. Others took the way of peaceful reform, which, if and when it fails, can give way to violent, coercive and revolutionary methods which are justified by recourse to the Old Testament and the Apocalypse. This reformist view of natural law is often linked to general social and political movements which are frequently nationalistic and sometimes friendly to the national state. (Troeltsch 1912:344-345).

2.6.3.4. The fact that the sects swept away relative natural law and replaced it with absolute law, says Troeltsch, produced a number of religious and theological results which he describes as "typical of the sociological character of the sect system and of its relation to the church system". Firstly Divine Law was no longer reduced to the level of the decalogue and relative natural law, but was identified with the law of Christ in the New Testament and the Sermon-on-the-Mount. This aimed at a Christian ethic which was above that of relative natural law. Secondly in removing the different grades of morality implied in relative natural law and replacing it with the absolute law of God and nature, which required a response of all men alike, Divine law also removed the idea of a graduated

ascent from creature to supernature. Instead it stressed the immediate relationship of the creature with God. This, however, does not affect the organisation of society as long as the sects avoided communistic and democratic political ideas. Thirdly the idea of God as Lawgiver became dominant for the sects with the result that, despite the sectarians' emphasis on personal service, grace and predestination, the idea of law is substituted for the idea of the church as the means of grace. (Troeltsch 1912:345-347).

2.6.3.5. Troeltsch argues that the sect-type is to be identified by the way it interprets natural law which means that mystical and enthusiastic movements may not be confused with the sect-type, as they frequently are. The mystical type, says Troeltsch, is completely separate from the sect as it stresses the individual's relationship with God. However mysticism and enthusiasm can merge into the sect-type, but when it does so it takes on the sociological characteristics of the sect. Conversely the sect-type can also merge with the mystical type - there is a constant exchange between the two types. Sociologically, however, they are quite separate. (Troeltsch 1912:347-348).

2.6.3.6. Troeltsch thus gives sociological flesh to his types. However some of the sociological characteristics of his types bear no formal relationship to one another. The reason for this is that the characteristics of Troeltsch's types are not united by a primary sociological characteristic such as, for Weber, membership, but by different theological and ethical principles, of which the two types' sociological characteristics are mere expressions.

2.6.3.7. The church-type is an expression of the "universalism" and conservatism of the Gospel, the two irreducible aspects of Christianity. The theological principle of universalism leads the church to create an objective sacramental system through which it can embrace the whole life of the world and its citizens. The ethical principle of conservatism leads the church to accept the world as it is, to accept relative natural law, and to work for its own spiritual ends with the ruling authorities. Put together these principles, one theological and one ethical, enabled the

church to compromise with the world, or rather made it inevitable that it would form such a compromise. The sect, conversely, is a product of the gospel's individualism and radicalism. Individualism, as a theological principle, leads the sect to emphasise subjective holiness in the life of the individual as being of primary importance, hence it creates small communities of ethically committed persons apart from the world where such performance can take place and where intense individual relationships can be formed. From this perspective the world is, at best, irrelevant, or at worst, an obstacle to the spiritual life when its values erect barriers to the practice of subjective holiness. The ethical principle of radicalism leads the sect to adopt absolute natural law and to stress the eschatological hope of the Kingdom of God. In the light of this hope the present order of the world is seen to be totally inadequate and rejected as a result. This rejection either leads to an isolationist withdrawal, or to an attempt to destroy the old order by force.

2.6.3.8. All of this makes it even clearer that Troeltsch's types are not, in their intent or nature, sociological types; they are rather theological and ethical types which have accompanying, and quite secondary, sociological characteristics. Further it is the theological and ethical principles upon which the two types are founded that form the unifying focus for the various sociological characteristics that are attached to the types.

Church and Sect within Protestantism.

2.6.4.1. Troeltsch adds to his theoretical statements about church and sect in his introduction to the second volume of the Social Teaching. The church-type, Troeltsch informs his readers, as a supernatural, universal institution, absorbs all of human life on the basis that it has arisen out of relative natural law, and forms a preparation for the supernatural life. The sect-type, however, has developed its social idea from the Gospel. The Christian character and holiness of this ideal should be provided by the

unity of the group and the behaviour of its members, not by objective institutional structures. Consequently it does not recognise secular institutions and either avoids them in a spirit of tolerant detachment, or, under the influence of an "enthusiastic" eschatology it attacks these institutions and replaces them by a purely Christian order of Society. (Troeltsch 1912:461). In each case, Troeltsch notes the nature of Christian fellowship is seen differently. In the church it is conceived as an institution which has absolute truth and sacramental power independent of individualism, while in the sect fellowship is seen as a society whose life is constantly renewed by the life of its individual members. For this reason supporters of the church idea are able to relegate the idea of Christian perfection to a particular group while the supporters of the sect see it as binding on all Christians. (Troeltsch 1931:461-462).

2.6.4.2. Troeltsch notes that the church and the sect also interpret the idea of grace differently. The former sees the existing order as a result of sin and so sees "grace" as a power which purifies the world's institutions and uses them as the foundations of a "higher structure", and subjects them to a central authority such as the Papacy whose authority is conceived as being supernatural in origin. The sect-type also sees existing society as the result of sin, but for this reason the sects reject society. Instead they create an alternative social order based upon the gospel as a challenge to existing society. "Grace" for the sect, then, means the election which separates the Christian from the rest of the world and inspires the subjective Gospel ethic. "Grace" also indicates the vindication of the sect and the reversal of social values in the Last Judgement. "Grace", for the sect, is not a supernature erected above nature, but it is identified with the primitive state. For fallen humanity grace is not purification and the climb up to supernature, but opposition to sin expressed in the Christian spirit and moral law. (Troeltsch 1912:462).

2.6.4.3. Troeltsch adds that this relates to a further distinction in religious psychology and theology. Christianity, he says, is linked to the idea of fellowship. The church-type regards Christ as the founder of the church, and itself as the objective treasury of grace. The sect-type, on

the other hand regards Christ as the Law-Giver, divine example, and as the present exalted Christ who fills the Christian community with his energy. He is the source of all spiritual influence and activity. (Troeltsch 1912:462-463).

2.6.4.4. Finally Troeltsch extends this analysis to ethics:

> For our present subject it is vital to remember that the idea of the church as an objective institution, and as a voluntary society contains a fundamental sociological, distinction. This distinction leads to a corresponding distinction in the sphere of ethics: on the one hand the Christian ethic is supplemented by the natural ethic, and is thus enabled to dominate the masses; while on the other, this idea of nature as the "complement" of grace is rejected, and the influence of this group is therefore confined to small circles of passive resistors or revolutionaries. The church-type accepted a natural ethic whose standards differ greately from those of Christianity; the sect-type rejected this idea entirely. Those who regarded the churches as an objective institution looked upon "Nature" as something, though different from grace was yet capable of being moulded by it; wheras those to whom the Church was a voluntary society regarded "genuine Nature" altogether as something which was identical with grace, while they rejected "fallen Nature" as something which could not possibly be harmonized with grace at all. (Troeltsch 1912:463).

2.6.4.5. The themes of universalism and conservatism and on the one hand and individualism and radicalism on the other are once more implicit in Troeltsch's analysis. Whereas before he indicated the manner in which they expressed themselves as sociological characteristics, now he seems to consider how these principles are expressed in doctrinal orientations to society. Because of its universalism and conservatism the church-type has a conception of religious fellowship which embraces the institutions of society, while that of the sect, because of its individualism and radicalism, is such that it critically separates itself from the structures and institutions of society. Similarly the doctrines of grace and of Christ are also orientated according to these principles to either reinforce the church's involvement in society, or the sect's isolation from it. In the one case the doctrines of grace and of Christ so function as to facilitate the work of the church in society, and in the other they

function as the basis of the separation of the life of the individual from the rest of society within the religious community. Finally the two tendencies also, in the area of ethics, produce different ideas of 'Nature'. The first making existing reality compatible with Christianity, and the second placing existing reality totally at odds with Christianity. This later view forces the Christian community to create its own new and independent "reality".

2.6.4.6. Troeltsch's remark that the sociological distinction between church and sect also results in ethical distinctions between nature and grace demands comment. Troeltsch is putting the cart before the horse here, since it is the ethical distinction that Troeltsch makes with regard to the individualism and universalism in the "essence" of Christianity that actually produces his sociological distinction. It seems that Troeltsch was not aware of the logic of his own thought at this point. (7)

2.6.4.7. In the following section on the Protestant sects (Troeltsch 1912:691-728) Troeltsch's emphasis on his universalism-individualism polarities is once again seen in the way in which he classifies these groups. Sects, in Troeltsch's analysis, were both individualistic and radical. The Anabaptist movement which like the Mediaeval sects expressed its individualism in a voluntary church which gave a subjective interpretation of Christian doctrines. The doctrines of Christianity were matters to be experienced and expressed in the individual's life and in the life of the community. The Anabaptist's radicalism was expressed in a commitment to absolute natural law and in separated communities with a high stress on church discipline. Again, like the Mediaeval sects the Anabaptists retained the universalism of the gospel in their eschatology. Troeltsch feels that this was a response to their salvation in the face of the world. Not infrequently this eschatological note would combine with the sect's radicalism and explode in apocalyptic violence such as at Munster and finally in the English Civil War where it reached its peak and burnt itself out. Never again, Troeltsch notes, did Christians try and establish the Kingdom of God by the sword.

2.6.4.8. However at this point the unity of Troeltsch's dualistic typology begins to fragment. Later groups, beginning with the English General Baptists, adopted the individualism of the Mennonites but rejected their ethical radicalism and commitment to absolute natural law. The Pietist movement, which issued forth into the Moravian church, Methodism and the modern sects, also separated individualism and radicalism. It stressed the subjective nature of Christian faith and doctrine in voluntary groups while maintaining a conservative bourgeois social ethic. In Socialism and Christian Socialism, however, the radicalism of the sect seeks to combine with the universalism of proclamation in order to create a new social order through consent rather than by coercion.

2.6.4.9. This left a great problem; how to combine the radicalism of the Gospel ethic with a popular mass religion. The upshot of all this is that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the two theological and ethical tendencies that are intrinsic to Troeltsch's classification of the sect-type begin to travel in two separate directions, destroying the uniformity of his typology. Troeltsch classifies as 'sects' disparate groups which are individualistic and conservative or radical and universalistic. He is unaware of the fact that these different combinations will produce quite different theological and sociological characteristics.

2.6.4.10. Troeltsch also distinguished between aggressive and passive sects. The aggressive sects combined their rejection of existing society with eschatological violence. They were not content merely to reject the world but sought to change it in an eschatological crusade. The aggressive sect alone, according to Troeltsch, attempted to change society and when it declined after its last push of energy in the seventeenth century this passion passed into Christian Socialism which had set aside the sword as a means of establishing God's Kingdom. (Troeltsch 1912:804-806).

2.6.4.11. The passive sect on the other hand was non-violent. Its view of eschatology caused it to withdraw from the world and form proleptic communities whose lifestyle would anticipate the coming Kingdom. However, Troeltsch argued that the passive sects were short term phenomena and could not persist long after the commitment of the first generation had passed

away. As a result the passive sect combined with Calvinism to form the hybrid type of the 'Free Church' or 'Ascetic Protestantism' (Troeltsch 1912:656-661, 688-691).

2.6.4.12. Calvinism was by nature inclined towards the church type but on failing to gain power it had to adapt. It did this by adopting the Free church ideal of the passive sects. Both Calvinism and the sects shared the same attitude of intra-mundane ascetism towards the world, (8) but the sects taught Calvinism what it meant to be free while Calvinism taught the sects what it meant to be the church. This for Troeltsch was the second great synthesis or 'compromise' of Christian history. (Troeltsch 1912:805-820).

2.6.4.13. In his account of Ascetic Protestantism Troeltsch presents an early example of the theory of the process of sect development in which the sect loses many of its defining characteristics and becomes a species of the church-type. As its eschatological hopes are disappointed its hold on Christian radicalism is gradually loosened, thus it compromises with the world and accepts relative natural law in some form. Its individualism is also weakened as it accepts some elements of universalism (in the Troeltschian sense), in the form of the objectification of its doctrine and the acceptance of the world. However having lost the two foci by which Troeltsch defines the sect-type, individualism and radicalism, it is no longer a sect and in Troeltsch's analysis becomes a sub-type of the church type.

Troeltsch's Final Perspectives on Church and Sect in the Conclusion to the 'Social Teaching'.

2.6.5.1. In his conclusion to the Social Teaching Troeltsch again summarises his three types and stresses their common roots in the Christian faith, however, on this occasion he indicates their point of authority and unity of experience. The church finds its centre on the objectivity of grace and sacraments, the sect its in subjective holiness and ethics, and the mystical type in inner experience. (Troeltsch 1912:993-994).

2.6.5.2. Troeltsch argues, at this point, on the basis of his survey that each of these types produces different emphases in theology and he illustrates this with regard to particular doctrines. For the church-type, he says, Christ is the Redeemer who imparts the results of his finished saving work to individuals through the church. "The Christ of the sects", on the other hand .....

> ..... is the Lord, the example and lawgiver of Divine authority and dignity who allows His elect to pass through contempt and misery on their earthly pilgrimage, but who will complete the real work of Redemption at this Return, when He will establish the Kingdom of God. (Troeltsch 1912:994).

2.6.5.3. The Kingdom of God for the church-type is the Church itself, whereas for the sect Jesus is the Herald of the Kingdom. He brings it into history Himself, thus the sects are inclined to millennialism. Again for the church redemption is complete in the atonement while the sect sees the completion of redemption as a future event in Christ's Second Advent and the establishing of the Kingdom of God, for which the whole course of worldly history is a mere preparation. (Troeltsch 1912:994-995).

2.6.5.4. Troeltsch concedes that this presentation of doctrine is abstract and acknowledges that the types intermingle. However, he does stress that these expressions are not mere philosophical elaborations of the idea of God or mythical additions; they are all based on the Christian ideas of God and fellowship. The perspectives and perception of individual religious thinkers, Troeltsch claims, will ever be determined by their basic idea of religious fellowship or their sociological orientation. (Troeltsch 1912:995-996)

2.6.5.5. This sociological influence, says Troeltsch, may also be seen in the development of scientific theology: with each of the different forms of church-type whether Catholic or Protestant developing a form of theology which suits its sociological orientations. However the sect

> ..... which belongs essentially to the lower classes, and which therefore does not need to come to terms with thought in general, goes back to the pre church and pre-scientific standpoint, and has no theology at all; it possesses only a strict ethic, a

living myth, and a passionate hope for the future. (Troeltsch 1912:996). (9)

2.6.5.6. Only mysticism, Troeltsch claims, has been able to develop a truly scientific theology in which Christian ideas have been connected with modern scientific ideas. (Troeltsch 1912:996-997).

2.6.5.7. Troeltsch also states that the different types hold different ideas about truth and toleration, which he feels sheds light on the complicated relationship of Christianity to the State. The sect-type believes that it possesses the absolute Truth of the Gospel, but does not maintain, unlike the church, that this Truth can be grasped by the mass of mankind, and stresses that it will only be consummated at the end of time. Consequently the sects do not attempt to make the majority of society conform to the Gospel. Moreover such coercion would be contrary to the nature of the Gospel itself. However, says Troeltsch, the sects do seek to maintain strict internal discipline over matters of truth while enjoining the state and the established church to exercise religious toleration. Mysticism alone, of all the types, allows both internal and external freedom of conscience since it has a relativistic view of truth. This, Troeltsch recognises, proves to be anarchic and ultimately destructive of any organised fellowship. (Troeltsch 1912:997-999).

2.6.5.8. Following this Troeltsch rehearses and summarises the place of the different types in the history of Christianity. First comes the church-type based on compromise and relative natural law and a dualistic morality. The sect arose alongside the compromises of the church (and in reaction to them). The sects wanted to realise the ideal of the Sermon-on-the-Mount and so were comforted by the Hope of the Kingdom. However, in Ascetic Protestantism the sects found a way of entering the life of the world. In the aggressive sects the sect-type used force when it felt that the imminence of the end justified this, and sought to establish a Christian order by violence. Troeltsch adds that these experiments were never permanently successful and in fact damaged the Christianity of these sects by substituting the Old Testament and the Apocalypse for the Gospel. Mysticism which only appeared in a distinct

form late in Christian history, was untroubled by questions of compromise and relationships with the world because its emphasis was purely inward, personal and asocial. (Troeltsch 1912:999-1001).

2.6.5.9. Finally Troeltsch turns to the question of what kind of religious organisation is best for modern Christianity and states that the most effective form of Christian organisation has been the church which has preserved the objective form of doctrine, remained most dominant and carried the main thrust of Church history. However it has had to accommodate Christian thought to existing conditions and has ever been required to use compulsion to gain its spiritual ends. This compulsion, Troeltsch notes, has broken down in the present day with the state being religiously neutral; many countries allowing several confessions to exist side by side. Furthermore many of the activities in which the church was a leader have fallen into secular hands. The Roman Catholic Church seeks to compensate for this by dominating the leaders of these fields, but the Protestant Churches, having absorbed Free Church, sectarian, and mystical ideas, cannot do this. It has, instead, embraced the sectarian and mystical ideas of religious toleration, the separation of Church and State, and congregational autonomy and freedom. Troeltsch discerns in this development a growing together of church and sect types, but adds that too much emphasis is still placed on external toleration. He, himself, would prefer a re-orientation of the state-church. Troeltsch desires to make it an institution in which internal toleration and freedom, on the mystical model, is established so that Christians of all opinions can find a home there, while at the same time enjoying peace and unity, and continuity with the past. (Troeltsch 1912:1006-1010).

2.6.5.10. In these final sections of the Social Teaching Troeltsch surveys some further implications of the orientation of the sect to individualism and of the church to universalism. This time, however, he stresses the subjectivism and objectivism which these orientations entail. Thus the sect has a subjective interpretation of Christian doctrines, stressing their ethical and experiential dimensions, while the church emphasises their objective implications for its institutional authority and power. Subsequently the sect has no formal theology as its faith is lived, while

the church articulates its doctrine in an objective intellectual system. This is related to different conceptions of truth. Truth for the church is objective, and so universally applicable - by coercion if necessary. The sect, on the other hand, understands that truth can only be grasped subjectively by the individual. (10)

2.6.5.11. The different orientations behind church and sect also have different historical results, according to Troeltsch. The individualistic and subjective sect is only a temporary phenomenon in history which has little cultural impact unless it combines with the church in some way. The universalistic and objective church, in contrast to the sect, dominates history and sets the direction for the development of Christianity. Troeltsch is clearly impressed with the cultural power of the church and for this reason he is orientated to its universalism and objectivism. It is out of this perspective that Troeltsch desires a revitalisation of the church-type, which should now be inclusive of the other types, so that Christianity's historical power, and ability to compromise, might be renewed.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF TROELTSCH'S PERSPECTIVE ON CHURCH AND SECT.

2.7.1. It should now be clear that the divergent tendencies toward universalism and individualism which Troeltsch sees in Church history are the focal ideas which lie behind his church-sect-distinction. These two basic characteristics are always accompanied with a corresponding tendency towards objectivism and subjectivism (Gustafson 1969:146-147; 1967:64-68; 1975:224-226). This is no accident, since Troeltsch is drawing upon the tendency within the philosophy of his day, following Hegel (see above), to distinguish between the objective and subjective aspects of a phenomenon. In this case Troeltsch has sought to distinguish between the objective and subjective tendencies within Christianity. For him this is a more fundamental question than the sociological types of church and sect since the Gospel itself has both objective and subjective aspects which were later to develop into the types of church and sect. In distinguishing

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between universalism within the Gospel Troeltsch is actually proceeding according to his philosophical and theological agenda as discussed in the previous chapter. This dualism expresses itself in the area of doctrine and theology with the church giving an 'objective' interpretation of the doctrines of incarnation and redemption which served to enhance the social power of the ecclesiastical institution. The sect, however, gave a subjective interpretation to these same doctrines and so made them matters of lived experience which furthered the discipleship of the individual and the community. (Johnson 1953:88-92).

2.7.2. In terms of sociological characteristics this dualism means that the church manifests itself as a compulsory institution. It claims all of society's citizens as its members from birth. In this way it is a sociologically objective institution, like the state, and it satisfies its tendency to universalism by embracing the whole of a culture. The sect, on the other hand, is sociologically defined as a voluntary community; it stresses subjective meaning rather than objective power. As such it concentrates on the lives of individuals and their relationships within the community. It is particularistic emphasising the value of given individuals within specific groups and communities. (Robertson 1970:116-117).

2.7.3. The objective and subjective tendencies also lead to a dualism in ethics with the church, in its drive towards universalism, adopting a relative interpretation of natural law, and the sect, in its individualistic concentration, adopting an absolute interpretation of natural law. Through the church's emphasis the Christian ethical values can be related to a more universal social ethic which can be practised by the broad mass of humanity. In this manner, too, the church becomes an objective social force. The sect rejects relative natural law and instead gives an absolute interpretation to natural law which leads to a 'utopian' ethic of love and fraternity defined either with reference to the past in primitivist terms, or with reference to the future in eschatological terms. In either case this ethic is conceived as a possibility only for individual Christians within their voluntary communities of commitment; it is an internal, subjective ethic.

2.7.4. Occasionally, though, the sect will seek to establish the rule of absolute natural law by violence. In these instances the sectarians see themselves as agents of eschatological wrath, called to fight for the Kingdom in the face of the godless. Thus their ethic does not become a majority ethic; it remains that of Christian individuals. Those who are by violent means forced to conform to it must then join the (subjective) church community. In any case it is the passive sect which is closer to Troeltsch's ideal type and not the aggressive sect as suggested by Steerman(11); the rejection of violence practised by the passive sects is closer to the ideal of absolute natural law than the militancy of the aggressive sects who embrace the Holy war. (Steerman 1975:189-191).

2.7.5. The conservative inclination of the church, as it seeks to accept society as it is, and the radical inclination of the sect as it pursues the ideal are also manifested in different interpretations of natural law. At the same time, both of these inclinations add to the universalism and objectivism of the church, by aligning it with the social order, or the individualism and subjectivism of the sect by orientating it towards alternative values to those dominant in society. As a consequence of these conservative and radical inclinations, the two types will tend to be associated with, and disposed to, the interests of different social and political classes. The church-type in its conservatism will be aligned with the ruling classes, and will share their values, while continuing to work with the lower classes, often acting as a means of social control. The sect, because of its radicalism, will find points of agreement with the lower classes, especially amongst those disaffected with the social order. In as far as the sects draw on and direct these interests they are subversive. Occasionally, the sects are aligned with revolutionary movements, but more often they contribute to the fragmentation and rejection of established authority within a society and so bring about its demise by degrees.

2.7.6. This leads finally to the cultural stance of the two types. The church, in seeking cultural objectivity, will always seek involvement within the structures of society and within the dominant tendencies of the age in order that it might channel them towards its own universal mission.

The sect, though, by definition, will always withdraw from culture seeking its own subjective and particularised alternatives. Culture for the sect is either evil, an obstruction to holiness, or a matter of indifference.

2.7.7. Any discussion of the cultural stance of Christianity, however, entails a return to Troeltsch's concept of compromise. The church-type in its involvement in culture will seek a compromise with culture. It will do this by trying to penetrate culture with Christian values that are so altered that they are socially relevant and realisable. The church-type will also receive the predominant cultural values of a society into its Christian ethic thus acclimatizing Christianity to its host culture. This process, Troeltsch feels, is necessary if the Christian ethic is to have any sociological impact, but it is possible only for the church as the objective manifestation of Christianity. As an objective institution, like the state, the church-type is able to bring different social and cultural forces into a synthesis by being able to dominate them and direct them according to its own ends. Furthermore, only the church-type is able to bring Christian values into such a cultural synthesis because it translates its doctrines into social powers by objectifying them. It applies Christian ethical values to society through its concept of relative natural law, and through its use of coercion it brings all members of society and all areas of social life into the cultural synthesis which, along with the state, it seeks to create. Troeltsch hopes that it will finally even bring the sect and mystical types into such a synthesis, but through moral authority rather than through compulsion, since the values of freedom and toleration also need to be incorporated into any new cultural synthesis.

2.7.8. The sect-type as a voluntary and subjective community gives expression to those extremes of Christianity which may never be synthesised and so prohibit compromise in Troeltsch's sense. The sect emphasises the transcendent and 'utopian' or ideal nature of Christian ethical values. These are framed in terms of absolute natural law which is in eternal opposition to secular culture and which calls forth ever renewed protests against the church and its compromises. The idealism of the sect, however, is sociologically inapplicable. The sect-type can never have any direct cultural influence because it does not accommodate itself to historical

reality. Consequently it withdraws from the mainstream of culture and history and seeks to create an enclave in which it might practise its ideal values despite the recalcitrance of the rest of the world. Such a course of action Troeltsch regards as ethically noble, but socially impotent.

2.7.9. There is a clear parallel here between church and sect and subjective and objective ethics or cultural values. The former, for Troeltsch, represent the ideal and absolute good, and the latter those relative goods and systems of value which arise in the course of history. Subjective ethics and values only have any historical consequence if they are related to history through the mediating agency of the cultural values. But in making this transition they must be accommodated to historical circumstances and so loose their radicality. Objective, cultural values and ethics are, however, indirectly founded upon, and inspired by, the subjective, personal values.

2.7.10. Similary the sect represents the absolute and ideal aspects of Christian ethics which, in themselves, are irrelevant to history and culture. The church-type, on the other hand, represents Christian ethics as applied in history and culture. If the values of the sect are, in any way, to have historical impact, it must come to terms with the church in some way. At the same time the church-type also needs the sect-type for its own revitalisation. The sect, then, is the expression of Christianity in terms of the morality of the conscience or 'subjective' ethics. The church is the expression of Christianity in terms of Christian values in terms of the cultural values or objective ethics. While Troeltsch affirms the necessity of both types, just as he affirms the necessity of the two moralities, he prefers the church-type for the same reason that he prefers the cultural values. The church-type is able to bring many elements into a synthesis, whereas the sect-type leads to pluralism and polality by emphasising extremes. (Frieson 1972:75).

2.7.11. Thus Troeltsch's typology and the notion of compromise related to it are a direct reflection of his treatment of subjective and objective ethical systems in relation to history and culture and the cultural

synthesis. In fact Troeltsch's analysis of church and sect form a part of his overall programme in his theology of culture and history, discussed in the last chapter. This analysis is, it would seem, inspired by the basic intentions of that programme, and so inseparable from it. Troeltsch's treatment of the church and sect is thus dependent upon his theology of culture and his preference for dominant cultural values and forces that he displays in that theology: the church-type adopting these cultural values, while the sect seeks the absolute and ideal which are beyond history.

SECTION EIGHT: A CRITIQUE OF TROELTSCH'S TYPOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

2.8.1. Troeltsch's typology, especially the dualism he creates between church and sect types is open to serious criticism on several points. For the purposes of discussion here these will be divided into two areas: sociological and theological and ethical.(12)

2.8.2.0. Sociological Criticism of Troeltsch's Typology

2.8.2.1. Sociologists of religion find fault with Troeltsch's typology on two counts: firstly that it is too limited and secondly that the diverse characteristics of the two types have no logical coherence.

2.8.2.2. Troeltsch's types are limited in that they are too historically specific; they are too closely identified with pheonomena in Christianity between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries. Troeltsch's church-type is so defined in terms of Mediaeval Catholicism that it cannot be applied easily to later ecclesiastical institutions, such as Lutheran, Calvinist and Anglican churches. His sect-type so closely resembles Mediaeval and early Reformation sects that later examples no longer correspond to the type. The consequences of this is that Troeltsch's typology is incapable of functioning as an explanatory tool by which modern Christian groups can be understood. Nor can it be applied outside of Christianity to the

institutions of other religious traditions as a tool of the universal sociology of religion. (Gustafson 1969:147; Johnson 1963:539-542; 1971:124-125; Moberg 1962:73-99; Redekop 1962:151-160; Steerman 1975:181-254).

2.8.2.3. To many of Troeltsch's critics it appears that his types are defined in terms of the empirical characteristics that such groups have possessed in history. His definitions are not 'analytic'; they are not logically consistent constructs which define a type in terms of its main characteristics. All of the secondary characteristics of the type should be logically related to its main characteristics as this is necessary for an ideal type. It seems to the sociologists that Troeltsch's types lack this consistency, the characteristics of the various types having no internal logical relationship to one another. The characteristics of one type frequently appear in examples of another type. This has led to one commentator (Robertson) to remark that Troeltsch's types are not really types at all but a 'dichotomous classification' of groups in terms of their empirical characteristics. (Robertson 1970:115-116, cf Gustafson 1967:65-67; Johnson 1963:538-542; 1971:124-125; Redekop 1962:161).

2.8.2.4. In making these criticisms the sociologists have misunderstood Troeltsch's purpose and approach. In the first place Troeltsch's only concern in the Social Teaching was the history of Christian social ethics and he applied and adapted Weber's typology for this purpose. It is little wonder, then, that Troeltsch defines the types only as they apply to certain periods of Christian history for this was the brief that he set himself. Troeltsch was a historical theologian using a sociological method.

2.8.2.5. Secondly Troeltsch's types do have focal points and organising criteria which gave his types a certain coherence as has been shown. (13) These, however, are not sociological characteristics but theological and ethical orientations which stand behind Troeltsch's sociological formulation of his types (Johnson 1955:88-89). The sociologists looked for sociological organising criteria in terms of a main sociological characteristic for each type, and finding no such criteria, assumed that there were no organising criteria at all. Because the focus of Troeltsch's

types were not sociological they were opaque to Troeltsch's sociological critics. All of Troeltsch's types do have a clear internal logic, but it is theo-logical and not socio-logical.

2.8.2.6. This in itself, however, is a major fault for most sociologists in that it introduces 'subjective' elements into ideal types which should be defined in sociological terms alone. (Eister 1967:87).

2.8.2.7. Futhermore, the kind of ethical interests which Troeltsch discloses through his typology, (e.g.,the contrast between 'pure' and 'compromised' religion), always lead to a portrayal of options in terms of polarized and dualistic extremes which by nature are inexact. This may do very well for the prophetically minded ethicist in his all inclusive polemics, but it is useless for the sociologist in that it does not allow the portrayal of the diversity of religious phenomena which cannot be embraced within simple dualism. (Dittes 1971:375-385).

2.8.2.8. In the light of this there is little wonder that sociologists' have found Troeltsch's typology unworkable for their purposes. It represents theological interests which are given a sociological formulation. The typology introduces all manner of extraneous elements into sociological work which are incompatible with good sociological method, hence, the difficulty which sociologists encounter in trying to apply and define Troeltsch's typology. If they wish to develop a more adequate sociological understanding of church and sect then they must turn to the alternative definitions of Weber, Berger and Martin. (Swatos 1976:129-142; Berger 1954; 1958; Martin 1952). But Troeltsch's typology must be evaluated on the grounds on which it is founded; those of theology and ethics.

Theological and Ethical Criticisms of Troeltsch's Typology

2.8.3.1. The series of dualism and polarities which lay behind Troeltsch's typology have already been noted. It is sufficient to say that Troeltsch's

typology is perfectly consistent with, and arises from, his dualistic worldview. It is based on two sets of polarities; the first between objective and subjective expressions of religion, resulting in the church-sect dimension, and the second between transcendent and imminent ideas of God resulting in the institutional (church and sect) - mystical dimension (Gustafson 1975:224-226). Both of these polarities occupy a central place in Troeltsch's typology and ethics.

2.8.3.2. The background to this fundamentally dualistic point of view is to be found in Troeltsch's Lutheran roots and context. Following Luther's famous (or infamous) two kingdoms doctrine it became part of the Lutheran habit of mind to frame all such questions in a dualistic fashion; Law and Grace, public and personal, church and state, church and world, justice and love, God and world, and, so on. While Troeltsch formally rejected much of the dogmas of Lutheran orthodoxy, he retained its habit of mind, and brought it to bear on the issues of philosophy, history, and ethics which concerned him most - thus he produced dualisms of spirit and nature, human sciences and natural sciences, the absolute and the contingent in history, and the subject and objective in ethics. (Robertson 1975:245-248).

2.8.3.3. Troeltsch read the history of Christian social ethics with the same perspective, so it is hardly surprising that he seeks to find a similar dualism there in terms of universalistic and individualistic aspects of the Gospel, linked to radical and conservative understandings of the Christian ethic and expressed in subjective and objective interpretations of grace. These finally crystallize in the dualisms of church and sect and collective and individual religion (mysticism). For the purpose of ethics, though, both sect and mystical types stand on the same subjective pole. (Frieson 1975;277-278)(14). Such a scheme would appear obvious to a mind nurtured in the Lutheran tradition but it is in fact a particular meta-theological view point which has been imposed on the wider Western Christian tradition; a tradition which has, in the process, been manipulated to provide illustrations of the themes of this viewpoint. In some respects it was inevitable that Troeltsch should have a tendency towards such a dispositional dualism, but it is one which he should have been able to anticipate as an acute critic of other peoples illegitimate

historical presuppositions and guard against them. (Frieson 1975:271; 1972:595).

2.8.3.4. The framework, Troeltsch has produced, distorts those options in Christian ethics which it seeks to describe. It forces them into polar opposites, each having extreme characteristics, which they do not have in history. The framework thus misinterprets history and historical movements, placing groups which do not really belong together into overrigid and straitjacketed formal categories, it also theoretically excludes other mediate and alternative positions. This is done without making real reference to any logical sociological relationships between the characteristics which define different groups and movements.

2.8.3.5. Thus, for instance, the fundamental characteristics which Troeltsch identifies with church and sect types are often switched between the two types. The universalism of Christian Socialism (a sect-type movement in Troeltsch's analysis) and the political and social conservatism of the Pietist sects are but two examples of this.

2.8.3.6. Again the characteristic of 'compromise' which is so important for Troeltsch's definition of the church is not necessarily the inevitable path a church must take. Society might accommodate itself to the church, or the church might take a sectarian stance against society over some issues. A good instance of this is the position of the American Catholic Bishops over nuclear weapons. This is an expression of the prophetic dimension which remains in all Christian traditions. (Johnson 1971;131-132).

2.8.3.7. Moreover, the reverse also holds true in that the sect is not necessarily withdrawn from society. Sects may, as Weber noted, become a major force for social change. Society became accommodated to the values of the sects as an innovating movement within society, replacing traditionalist values with those favourable to nascent capitalism. In this connection S.D. Berger notes that Weber's idea of the sect is similar to Marx's idea of the revolutionary party. Both act as mediating structures which inculcate new values into broad groups of people which will later result in their effecting social change. Both require a total commitment

from their members so that they be effectively disengaged from the dominant values of society and re-educated or socialised into the values of the group. Berger, however, rejects the idea of revolution and its power to create a new society and prefers, instead, to see a "breakthrough" made by sects or other divergent groups. (Berger 1971;486-499).

2.8.3.8. Troeltsch's assertion, then, that the direction of Christian history lays with the church-type does not necessarily follow, since in an era of social transformation it may well find itself left behind, aligned with the forces of reaction. Indeed, Troeltsch's own studies in Protestantism and Progress (Troeltsch 1906), on which the churches were anachronisms, points in this direction. Troeltsch again, because of the theoretical assumptions of his typology, ends up contradicting his own best insights.

2.8.3.9. Lastly, this suggests that social involvement does not necessarily imply compromise, as Troeltsch thinks, nor does social isolation lead to social impotence. In the first place there are many 'sect-like' groups around the world, such as the Sojourners Community in Washington D.C. which practise a high level of social involvement while at the same time are struggling not to compromise the ethics of the Gospel. (Wallis 1976, 1981, 1983). In the second place, a degree of isolation or detachment from society, Berger suggests, is necessary for such groups in order that their members may internalise new social values. These can then become the basis of their action in society and so result in the transformation of society. Troeltsch arbitrarily believes that to be socially involved automatically means compromise with the dominant groups and values of society. This is more a reflection of his predilection for dominant cultural movements in society, noted in the last chapter, than upon the success or otherwise of different social-ethical strategies.

2.8.3.10. In fact, when viewed and described in strict terms, all three of Troeltsch's types are pathological from the perspective of ethics. The church-type is so hopelessly compromised with the dominant values of the world that it can offer no serious challenge to them. The sect is so totally withdrawn into itself that it can have no influence upon society.

The mystical type, likewise, looks only to the spiritual life of the individual and regards culture and society with disdainful indifference. If Troeltsch's typology had been even close to the truth there would have been no independent Christian social ethics whatsoever!

2.8.3.11. So as a device for identifying and presenting the different ethical options within the Christian tradition Troeltsch's typology is inadequate. It misrepresents those positions it describes and obscures and confuses the various different ethical options that do exist within Christianity. Therefore as an analytical tool for the understanding of Christian ethics it fails seriously and needs to be abandoned and replaced.

2.8.3.12. Troeltsch's typology is also suspect when looked at in purely theological terms, especially from the perspective of the doctrine of the Church. Troeltsch adopts sociological language in his typology to distinguish between different theological and ethical traditions and positions within Christian history. It is already clear that this is bad sociology; it now becomes clear that it is also bad theology. This is because Troeltsch's sociological distinction of church and sect are at oods with a theological understanding of these terms.

2.8.3.13. A church in theological terms is any community which gathers around the figure of Christ and seeks to worship and to serve Him, but in Troeltsch's sociological terms only those groups which enter a compromise with state and society and adopt a relative view of natural law are churches. Likewise a sect in theological terms is a group which gives some secondary issue primary importance and makes it into a test of fellowship in a divisive manner, or which denies some primary element of orthodox Christian faith. A 'sect' in Troeltsch's sociological terms is a group which withdraws from society, places a heavy stress on discipleship and holds an absolute interpretation of natural law. (Little 1954:262-276).

2.8.3.14. Most of the groups which Troeltsch describes under the heading of 'sects' are in fact churches in the sense of being quite orthodox Christian communities. In fact, very few of the groups he considers are sects in the theological sense of the term. The reason for this is that

Troeltsch is primarily interested in the social ethics of Christian groups and not in those of Christian deviations such as the Mormons, the Christadelphians and the Jehovah's Witnesses, all of which had emerged by the time he wrote the Social Teaching, but to which he makes no reference.

2.8.3.15. Both for these reasons, and because the terms 'church' and 'sect' carry with them implicit value judgements, one of approbation and one of derogation (Moberg 1962:89), Troeltsch would have done better to talk of the different ethical emphasis of different churches standing within different traditions and styles of ethical reasoning rather than in attempting to force them into his typology. Troeltsch himself concedes this point at two places in the Social Teaching, (Troeltsch 1912:334,340-341). But to have changed his language would have exposed the arrogance of the claim that the direction of Christian history lies with one kind of church rather than with the Christian community or movement as a whole. Furthermore, it seems inevitable that Troeltsch's Lutheran mindset should lead to his polarising the church community just as he polarised everything else. Here again Troeltsch contradicts one of his own insights. He has allowed a sociological definition of the church to swallow up a theological definition of the church. This is despite the fact that he maintains that sociology cannot fully understand the transcendent nature of the church with the result that priority ought to be given to the theological understanding of the church.(15)(Reist 1966:30-35).

2.8.3.16. Troeltsch's typological approach thus fails in a number of areas: it is neither good sociology, nor good ethics, nor good theology. If the history of Christian ethics is to be understood, and if a more adequate basis for developing a viable social-ethical strategy for the Christian faith today is to be found, other approaches will have to be adopted.

2.9.0. CONCLUSION: 'COMPROMISE' COMPROMISED

2.9.1. The central thesis of the Social Teaching and many other of Troeltsh's writings on church and sect is that Christian ethics are more historically and culturally effective when united with secular social values in a compromise. Such compromises, he argues, can only be developed by the church-type which, in its universalism, seeks to embrace society. The sect may present a noble witness to the idealism and purity of the Gospel ethic, but it is socially ineffective because of its refusal to compromise with society.

2.9.2. The basis of this argument is found in Troeltsch's philosophy of culture in which the moral and cultual values of an age and its 'meaning' are set by a cultural synthesis which seeks to harmonise the diverse and often polarised forces and values in a society at a given time. This synthesis is brought together around the most powerful and dominant forces and values of the age which act as a focus for all the other elements within a culture and give them their meaning. The church-type, as a social force, is able to feed Christian values into the synthesis and so give them social relevance.

2.9.3. However in the critique of Troeltsch's typology which has been offered in this chapter Troeltsch's thesis has been shown to be in error. Compromise, in the first instance, is not necessarily a function of the church-type, and, in the second instance, 'compromise', even in Troeltsch's sense, is not necessarily the most effective way of giving relevance to Christian ethics. The 'breakthroughs' which challenge the dominant ethics of a society which can be achieved by those groups which Troeltsch calls 'sects' may often be far more effective in this regard.

2.9.4. In fact, the church type, because of its compromise with the dominant and established values of society may actually hinder social progress, as indeed Troeltsch himself complains in many places. The alignment of the church-type with the state causes it to be naturally conservative and antagonistic to any change. This in turn may lead to the

identification of Christian values with those of the established order and result in the alienation of many from the Christian faith for this reason. Further the church itself will begin to think of the social relevance of Christian ethics as being the justification of the established order, whatever it be, and so fail to translate Christian ethics into a critique of social conditions and into movements to change them.

2.9.5. Furthermore, because of its deliberate alignment with, and preference for the dominant forces within culture, the church may find itself affirming an essentially evil set of cultural values, in the way that many churches and Christians did in Germany during the Third Reich. Now in Troeltsch's cultural philosophy this cannot happen since each epoch stands in a direct relationship to God and so its main cultural ideas are the manifestations or revelations of God. Troeltsch's assumption that the main cultural values of a culture will be basically good clearly underestimates humanity's capacity for idolatry and radical evil which can then be expressed in its social structures. Yet this assumption is central to Troeltsch's theory of compromise, since if cultural values are understood as emanating from God and being expressions of the divine will, then the church is both summoned to form a compromise and justified in so doing. Without this assumption the imperative to compromises loses both its obligatory nature and its legitimacy. Without this assumption the tendency to compromise has no moral authority, and so the central tenet of the Social Teaching collapses as a result.

2.9.6. In conclusion, then, it must be said that because of the doctrine of compromise Troeltsch exaggerates the credibility and effectiveness of the social ethics of the church-type and its approaches to society. At the same time he seriously underrates the social potential of the position in social ethics represented by those groups which he designates as 'sects'. In setting up this extreme polarisation of ethical positions he also excludes the possibility of other ethical standpoints. In view of the ethical confusion of the present day it is necessary to move beyond both Troeltsch's typology and assumptions if a clear view is to be gained of the real options that exist for strategies of Christian ethics in contemporary society. Sadly many Christian ethicists have not yet made this transition.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1) Troeltsch seems to duplicate this dialectic in his account of the 'Free Churches'. (Troeltsch 1912: pp 661-673).

2) For a fuller discussion of Weber's ideal types see 0.2.3.-0.2.7. above.

3) This suggests, according to G.W. Swatos, that Troeltsch was not seeking to establish sociological paradigms but analytical aids to help him understand his material. (Swatos 1976:133).

4) This appears to be a further reflection of Hegels diatectical theory.

5) This, B.A. Reist claims, is Troeltsch's summary of his Social Teaching which, he says, may be completely summed up in his concept of compromise.

6) Troeltsch appears to be taking an intenable position at this point in suggesting that the church type was present from the beginning. Sociologically, however, Early Christianity had the formal characteristics of a sect.

7) Troeltsch's prior predication of individualism and universalism within the heart of the Gospel as different ethical tendencies which are then expressed as radicalism and conservatism respectively forces him to interpret all later manifestations of Christianity from within a dualistic framework.

8) As they lost their eschatological hope the passive sects made their peace with the world by adopting the Calvinist doctrine of the 'calling' with its world-orientated ascetism, and by adopting a bourgeois lifestyle which was eventually to lead to the rise of capitalism. In doing this the passive sects merged with neo-Calvinism to form the broad movement of Ascetic Protestantism. The social ethic of this movement was basically conservative and work orientated. It was also pre-eminently practical and pragmatic forming a social doctrine which clearly preserved Christian ideas of personality. Ascetic Protestantism as a social theory effectively dominated the societies of the Anglo-Saxon world producing conservative democracies which maintained religious and economic reason.

9) Troeltsch does not entertain the idea of 'existential' or narrative forms of theology which are common to these types of groups. Instead he understands theology only in the narrow, and abstract form of academic theology. (R. Friedmann The Theology of Anabaptism Herald Press Scottdale. Pa 1973 pp 21-35; J.B. Metz Faith in History and Society Barnes and Oates, London 1980 pp 205 - 218).

10) This assertion is open to question since the doctrines and sacraments of even the most institutionally and intellectually orientated churches are open to mystical interpretation and experience. Examples of this are Jesuit and Puritan mystics. On the other hand, external

peer pressure and the force of events can often promote assent within the hot house atmosphere of the marginalised group.

11) Steerman argues that the aggressive sect is the 'periodic' climax of Troeltsch's sect type, just as the hierarchically defined late Mediaeval Church was the climax of his Church type, (Steerman 1967: 181-204). So the aggressive form of the sect is the purest representation of the sect. Steerman can only say this by indulging in that vice common to sociological interpreters of Troeltsch; that of selective reading - stressing some of Troeltsch's definitions of his types rather than others. Steerman totally overlooks the importance of absolute and relative natural law in Troeltsch's definition of his types. Universal brotherhood and non-violence are both important elements of absolute natural law. (Bainton 1951: 75-80; Troeltsch 1912: 344-5). In adopting violence the aggressive sects had abandoned absolute natural law and so had ceased to be normative in terms of Troeltsch's types. Troeltsch also believed that the aggressive sects had weakened their Christianity by resorting to violence. (Troeltsch 1912: 999-1001).

12) The main criticisms of Troeltsch's typology offered in this thesis are directed against the theory which supports it. To offer a detailed critique of the interpretation of history which he develops by the use of this typology would be a complicated and voluminous task which cannot be undertaken here. However, a brief survey of some of the difficulties which arise from his use of his typology as a heuristic tool for the study of history are offered below and are closely based upon Roland Bainton's remarks on the Social Teachings.

In his review of Troeltsch's Social Teaching (Bainton 1951) Roland Bainton regards Troeltsch's typology as basically sound (Bainton 1951:78-78) but he then proceeds to make several criticisms of Troeltsch's handling of history which on closer investigation are seen to relate to Troeltsch's typology.

Firstly, Troeltsch ignores the plurality of political thought of both West and East in the early church which included many who advocated a 'Christian society'. Troeltsch took Paul's apolitical and conservative viewpoint as representative of the whole period. This was important for the development of the conservative-universalistic and radical individualistic tendencies within Christianity, which were later to emerge as church and sect types. However it does not enable a clear view of the variety of social teachings of the period. (Bainton 1951:73-75).

Secondly, in line with this first oversimplification, Troeltsch proceeds to show that Augustine, in the little space that he does give to his social thought, was really part of the early church, and that his thought did not profoundly affect the development of Mediaeval Christendom. This relates to Troeltsch's theory of the development of Christian institutions. He held that the church-type, which required the union of church and state and the idea of a Christian society only reached its full development in the Gregorian Reform. (Steerman 1975:186-189). Thus the theology of the church-type could only

develop after this time - in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Consequently, Augustine's theology, which clearly advocated the theocratic union of church and state, and the idea of a Christian society, does not fit into Troeltsch's developmental scheme, and so it is neglected or misunderstood. (Bainton 1951:73-74; Reece 1975:82-87)

Thirdly, Troeltsch also neglects the sects of the early church, (e.g. Montanism, Novantianism and Donatism), which displayed all the characteristics of his sect-type. (Bainton 1951:78-79). The reason for this is that according to his theory of the development of Christian institutions, the pure sect-type could only emerge after the full development of the church-type in the Gregorian Reform as the sects were basically reactions or protests against the church-type's objectivism and compromise. (Steerman 1975:189-190). The sects of early Christianity clearly do not fit into his pattern and so are quickly dismissed.

Fourthly, Bainton finds Troeltsch's account of the post-Reformation sects too sketchy and suggests that Troeltsch had become more interested in cramming the varities of sects into his typology rather than in tracing their social teachings. (Bainton 1951:94-95) Troeltsch's definition of the sect-type is unable to embrace these latter groups because it is too dependent on the characteristics of Mediaeval Catholicism. Again, these later groups do not conform to Troeltsch's theory of the development of Christian institutions.

Fifthly, Bainton records that Troeltsch identifies both sectarian and churchly elements within Calvinism (Bainton 1951:88-91) and its later manifestation as Ascetic Protestantism. This hybrid was expressed as a congregational Free Church, which stood between sect and the church-types. Bainton states, however, that congregationalism was a far more complicated phenomenon than Troeltsch allowed, and in fact it is a plurality rather than a whole. (Bainton 1951:94). This difficulty, although Bainton did not realise it, actually represents the breakdown of Troeltsch's typology and theory of the development of Christian institutions to which it is related. Neo-Calvinism and the sects as they matured both developed into a new form of ecclesiastical institution - the Free Church, which was neither a church nor a sect in the strict sense. The Free Church, as a historical phenomenon, combined characteristics which Troeltsch had formerly ascribed to either the church or the sect-type as defined by their Mediaeval manifestations. Troeltsch actually defined the Free Church as a sub-species of the church-type because it did not withdraw from the world but formed an effective compromise with it. However, Troeltsch based this definition on characteristics which were secondary in his original specification of the church-type. In fact, if anything, the Free Church is closer to the sect-type because it is a manifestation, in Troeltschian terms, of Christian individualism and formed a voluntary community while refusing to align its ecclesiastical institution with the state. It does not seek to impose on society the objectivism and universalism of the church proper. (In fact for this reason Weber was inclined to describe most North American Christian groups as 'sects'). (Gustafson 1969:144-147; Steerman 1975:192-196). In fact the Free Church is, as D. Martin indicates, an independent

type with its own origin and unique characteristics (Martin 1962:1-14). It is not a sub-species of either church or sect types. Thus the Free Church is both outside of Troeltsch's typology and of his theory of Christian institutional development.

Sixth, and lastly, throughout his article Bainton makes several serious criticisms of Troeltsch's theory of relative and absolute natural law, which were so important to his church-type typology. Bainton finds Troeltsch's description of the use of natural law in the early church accurate as far as the final doctrine appropriated by the Church Fathers is concerned, but he finds it erroneous in certain important details. Bainton states that he cannot find, as Troeltsch did, the distinction between absolute natural law and relative natural law in Seneca. The distinction appears first of all only in Ulpian. More importantly, Christians prior to Constantine used natural law theory, as Troeltsch's own investigations reveal, to oppose the state, especially over Emperor worship. Only after the Emperor Constantine is natural law used to baptise the institutions of society such as slavery, property and war. Even here, however, it is not possible to draw a strict line since the church's use of natural law theory is very tentative and ambiguous. For instance, Ambrose held an absolute natural law view of property, but a relative natural law theory of war and slavery. (Bainton 1951:75-76). Thus in the early church the idea of relative natural law, even if the distinction between this and absolute natural law was clearly perceived, did not enjoy the universal and unequivocal acceptance by the ecclesiastical instituion and hierarchy which Troeltsch requires for this theory of church development.

Bainton also feels that this distinction between absolute and relative natural law is actually misleading when it is applied to the Mediaeval sects. Troeltsch himself recognises, says Bainton, that the sects make no reference to natural law in their writings. Bainton claims that .....

> ..... (what) Troeltsch has done is to set up a pattern of ideas somewhat arbitrarily imposed upon classical antiquity, and most arbitrarily imposed upon late mediaeval sectarianism. If he deemed it expedient to talk of absolute and relative natural law, he might have made it still more plain that he was describing types rather than using the terminology of particular groups. (Bainton 1951:80)

If Troeltsch's theory about the use of natural law received little support from the historical materials of the early church, it receives even less from those of the Mediaeval sects where Bainton regards it merely as a supra-imposed scheme. Now if such a theory receives so little concrete support from historical evidence how can it be valid when used in the descriptions of types purporting to relate to such historical phenomena? Moreover if the criterion by which Troeltsch distinguishes the two types on the basis of either a radical or

conservative social ethic is questionable, how much more so the typology itself?

Lastly, Bainton notes that Troeltsch often speaks of relative and absolute natural law in connection with the ideas of religious liberty and the right to resist the state. But he uses this language in a very vague matter. Bainton feels he would have done better to speak of the varying contents ascribed to natural law by the different parties, for instance, the supporters and opponents of religious liberty. (Bainton 1951:91) Thus, once again, Troeltsch's natural law theory does not relate to anything in the historical data that he is attempting to describe through its use.

Overall, then, the distinction between absolute and relative natural law bears no real relation to, nor does it have any roots in, the historical data to which it is applied as a heuristic tool.

In his writings on history Troeltsch rigorously opposes the imposition of any predetermined scheme, logic or pattern upon the course of historical development or upon the facts of history. Such approaches, he argues, only distort history and deprive historical individualities of their uniqueness. Each individuality must be taken as it is if its inner meaning is to be understood. In his church-sect typology, however, it is clear that Troeltsch has broken his own rules. He has attempted to squeeze the history of the development of Christian institutions into a schema; the development of universalism leading to the objectivistic church institution which results in an individualistic reaction in the subjective voluntary community of the sect. The history of Christianity simply will not fit into this scheme. Secondly, through this typology Troeltsch has tried to force Christian groups into categories to which they do not correspond which have deen developed from historical considerations. On historical grounds then, Troeltsch's typology is to be rejected because it leads to the distortion of history,

13) However it is open to debate whether or not these points and criteria are actually sufficient to do the job required of them and if they do not actually disintegrate into a plethora of dualisms.

14) Frieson argues that Troeltsch is inclined toward the church type because of his dualistic theology. (Frieson 1972, 1975). Clearly this is in accord with the main thrust of the argument of this thesis.

However, Frieson is mistaken in making Troeltsch's religious a priori the basis of his theological and philosophical dualism. This concept was confined to Troeltsch's early thought and was left behind when he developed his historicist perspective. Consequently it cannot be used to explain the dualistic perspectives which he held at that time. These were founded on a historicist philosophy and metaphysics which have been thoroughly discussed in this thesis. The theoretical details of Troeltsch's types have also been discussed more extensively here than in Dr Frieson's work.

15) Troeltsch emphasised the uniqueness of the church and found old definitions of the church inadequate, for while he believed that Christianity was all embracing it was never viable as a comprehensive total institution in society. Any attempt to clarify the sociological influence of Christianity must, therefore, be based on particular investigations and not upon generalised abstractions. The contrast between church, state and the rest of society is a contrast between religious forces and secular forces. It is in fact a contrast which occurs frequently in Troeltsch's ethics, a contrast between a social organisation which refers to the "religious idea of the love of God and man" and social organisations based on "worldly" aims. This contrast, Troeltsch maintains, cannot be fully understood by social science. Consequently the sociological definition of the church is not to be confused with a theological definition of the church or the church's self-understanding. Both of these deal with different realities. Moreover, for the same reason, the one does not contradict the other. (Reist 1960:30-35)

CHAPTER 3

GOD, RESPONSIBILITY AND TRANSFORMATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF H. RICHARD NIEBUHR'S THEOLOGY AND ETHICS.

1. INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. Like Troeltsch, H. Richard Niebuhr is a holistic thinker and so it is not possible to take one part of his thought apart from any other. Thus to study his typology of religious orientation one must study his theology and ethics as well. Furthermore it is the contention of this thesis that neither Troeltsch's nor Niebuhr's typologies can be separated from the rest of their theologies and philosophies. They are, for these thinkers, devices of ethical and theological analyses rather than of disinterested sociological research. This makes it necessary to make a survey of Niebuhr's thinking in its breadth and depth before turning to his typology of religious orientation.

3.1.2. There are three themes which are central to Niebuhr's thought which will be considered in turn. The first is that of 'radical monotheism'. This represents Niebuhr's basic theological position where everything is orientated around the oneness of God as the 'principle of being'. The second is that of 'responsibility'. This is the ethical development of radical monotheism in which God is seen as acting upon the self in every event. The self must respond to such events as God's action in a fitting or appropriate manner. Undergirding both of these themes is the third major theme of Niebuhr's thought; that of transformation or conversion. This is the proper purpose and outcome of both monotheistic faith and responsiblist ethics; all of human life, culture and existence is to be relocated around God's centrality. However, in studying these themes one must consider Niebuhr's historical development in order to place them in context.

3.2.1. While still a seminarian Niebuhr wrote three articles for the magazine of the German speaking Evangelical Synod. In these articles he shows a predilection for a pluralist or dualist philosophy in which evil is not attributable to God, a concern for social ethics and the role of the church in society, and an awareness of the problem of historical relativism. He writes under the influence of European and American religious liberalism (Fowler 1974:8-17). Given these interests it was almost inevitable that on commencing doctoral studies at Yale in 1922 he should choose to study Troeltsch under D.C. Macintosh. Niebuhr's own deep interest as a young man found a resounding echo in Troeltsch's programme, and it was only natural that Niebuhr would seek to clarify and give form and substance to those interests through a detailed study of Troeltsch.

3.2.2. In his thesis on Troeltsch (Niebuhr 1923), Niebuhr analysed Troeltsch's philosophy of religion. In the first part of this work he outlines Troeltsch's intellectual development. He notes the various influences on Troeltsch from the neo-Kantianism of the early period of the religious a priori, to his later historical period under the pull of Dilthey, Weber, and Mienke. (Niebuhr 1924:1-91). In the latter part of his thesis Niebuhr discusses Troeltsch's philosophy of religion. He considers Troeltsch's various dualisms which he seeks to reconcile in a synthesis, his theory or method of compromise, his attempt to 'overcome' historical relativism by finding the absolute in history, and the various methodologies Troeltsch develops to analyse religion and produce a solution to the problems he perceives in the relation of religion to culture and history. Niebuhr concludes that Troeltsch never really achieves a synthesis between the various dualisms in his philosophy and theology, only a series of inadequate compromises. In Niebuhr's view the goal of synthesis of bringing various elements into a harmonious whole was frustrated by the very means of compromise by which Troeltsch sought to achieve it; compromise entailed accommodation rather than reconciliation. Niebuhr conceded that Troeltsch did find a point of modest certainty in the concept of the relative absolute - the immediate, but limited, manifestation of God within a culture. Niebuhr, it seems, found this a too

precarious and temporary solution to the problem of historical relativism. Lastly, Niebuhr distinguished between Troeltsch's formal, neo-Kantian method of analysing religion and his actual, historically orientated method. Niebuhr argues that the two methods are at odds with each other and that Troeltsch seems to favour the historical approach. This, it would appear, is also Niebuhr's choice. (Niebuhr 1924:92-270, Fowler 1974:19-22).

3.2.3 While Niebuhr had profound disagreements with Troeltsch, he adopted much of his thought and approach. In the first place he made the issue at the centre of Troeltsch's philosophy and theology - the problem of the relation of Christianity to culture - his own. In doing this he also embraced the various questions which were attendant upon it. He accepted, as established, historical relativism and sought to study Christianity and culture within the framework of catagories and critical methods which it created. He consequently adopted the sociological interpretation of Christian institutions and movements which Troeltsch had learnt from Weber. The sociological approach to the situation of Christianity in its social and historical context committed Niebuhr to take up Troeltsch's search for a new Christian ethic suitable for forming a creative synthesis with contemporary culture. Historical relativism made all Christian ethics particular to a given time and place and the changing social and economic substructures of society required new institutions and new patterns of ethics as their counterparts.

3.2.4. Niebuhr also inherited another of Troeltsch's priorites with his acceptance of historical relativism. Like Troeltsch, Niebuhr had to relate the absolute and its revelation to history so that all values were not lost in a sea of particularity. He began this task by adopting Troeltsch's own philosophy of critical realism which saw that historical relativism did not overthrow the Absolute, but that the Absolute somehow existed behind historical relativism, being implicit within it.

3.2.5. As well as inheriting Troeltsch's framework or complex of concerns and problems, Niebuhr also took over his method of trying to resolve those problems. This was his method of historical analysis in which the historian would attempt to circumscribe an individual totality by

identifying its 'essence', its process of development and its latent possibilities. The historian would then bring this essence into a new synthesis with the present from which a temporal or time-bounded value could be derived. Niebuhr used this method in his earliest works. (Niebuhr 1924, 1937, 1941, Fadner 1975, 96-100).

3.2.6. Niebuhr establishes a harmony between revelation and history in his scientific objective and his subjective or internal history. They are simply different ways of viewing the same events. In fact they should inform each other. Scientific history should adopt insights produced by internal history and internal history should likewise be influenced by external history so that a community is able to see itself as others see it. (Niebuhr 1941:59-66).

THE EMERGENCE OF RADICAL MONOTHEISM

The Roots of Radical Monotheism

3.3.1.1. Though Niebuhr's basic monotheistic conviction had always been with him, perhaps as part of his Reformed heritage, the sources which he chose to help him to give it expression were diverse. In the first place he adopted a number of philosophical ideas which were to prove vital to the expression of his monotheism. There was firstly Mead, whom Niebuhr met in 1921 (Kliever 1977:18-20). Niebuhr used his value theory to establish a sociological theory of things and the identity of persons. Secondly Niebuhr found Royce's analysis of faith, requiring both trust and loyalty to the transcendent object of faith, very useful. Lastly Niebuhr used Whitehead's analysis of the transformation of the idea of God from void to enemy, to friend to depict the movement from false faith to true faith. However, none of these philosophical theories promoted the triumph of Niebuhr's monotheistic convictions over his dualistic tendencies. For that one must look to the theological influences which profoundly altered Niebuhr's approach.

3.3.1.2. Niebuhr encountered these in a very theologically influential and concentrated form during his sabbatical visit to Europe in 1930-1931. He discovered that German theologians considered American theology to be deficient in its doctrine of God, but Niebuhr found German theology deficient in its ethics. Niebuhr saw the need for a transcendent view of God, such as that developed by crisis theology, to correct the culture-bound moralism of liberalism with which Niebuhr was disillusioned. However Niebuhr did not sacrifice ethics to deity, as he felt some of the crisis theologians did, but he wanted to find a third way, or 'third piece', which would combine these two emphases. (Fowler 1974:57ff).

3.3.1.3. With this in mind, Niebuhr appropriated elements of Barth's theocentric general theological approach but felt that it had to be complemented by a more "worldly" emphasis. He was drawn to Tillich's cultural theology in which God is present in all culture but undertook to give it a more practical orientation. (Hoedemaker 1970:27; Kliever 1977:29-36)(1).

3.3.1.4. As a result of his encounter with Barth and Tillich an idea began to crystallise in Niebuhr's mind how American and German theology might be reconciled. He believed that American empiricism might be combined with German transcendentalism. (2) Niebuhr identified three elements which he believed could make up his third missing piece, in theology between them in articles he wrote in the 1930's. A new theological synthesis would be

> empirical while maintaining the independence of God from experience ..... valuational while preserving the priority of God ..... and historical while accounting for the presence of God..... (Kliever 1977:36). (3)

3.3.1.5. To develop such a synthesis for American theology, it seems, was the chief purpose of Niebuhr's experiment in doing theology as history in The Kingdom of God in America, (Niebuhr 1941). In this work he attempts to define how the reality of divine transcendence or sovereignty has been related in history to human action and culture. Niebuhr sees this as the root problem of Protestantism. By stressing God's kingship it relativised

the absolutism of the Catholic Church. However it threatened to replace this absolutism with various others of its own which in turn would be faced with a sceptical anarchism which again appealed to the immediacy of God's Kingship. The task of what Niebuhr calls "constructive Protestantism" is to steer a course between these two extremes. (Niebuhr 1941:15-44). In The Kingdom of God Niebuhr examines how American Protestantism had sought to achieve this balance. Niebuhr sees the cultural forms of Christianity as movements in which faith is expressed in the "evercoming kingdom". Above all he searches for the correct balance between human freedom and divine sovereignty and finds it in Jonathan Edwards, the great philosopher theologian of the American Great Awakening.

3.3.1.6. At the centre of both Edwards' theology and philosophy was the supremacy, centrality and dominance of God. For Edwards, God is both Lord and King over all creation and the fundamental source and creation of being. (Sandon 1976:102-113). (4)

3.3.1.7. Edwards also redefined personal freedom as freedom from sin through faith in God. This was very attractive to Niebuhr. This sense of freedom transformed people's concept of God from a being who was feared as the enemy to one who is loved for his own sake and beauty. Edwards completes the full transition from God as void to God as enemy to God as companion which Niebuhr believes Barth failed to make. (Fowler 1974:120-30; Niebuhr 1941:99-119).

3.3.1.8. In discovering and accepting Edwards at this time Niebuhr also discovered what he called the 'Great Tradition' which emphasises God's sovereignty and man's sinfulness. He identified its members as Paul, John, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Pascal and Kierkegaard (Godsey 1970:21). While these figures do have points of agreement it is doubtful that they can be taken as part of one line of development. What is important to note is that these were the thinkers whose influence Niebuhr was now consciously adopting for the further development of his theology and ethics.

3.3.1.9. The roots of Niebuhr's radical monotheism are, then, to be found in his struggle with American Christianity. He went to Germany with a great dissatisfaction with American Liberalism, a dissatisfaction which he found confirmed by German theology, especially that of Barth. However, he wished also to maintain the practical emphasis on ethics which he felt was the strength of American theology and the weakness of German theology. He looked to a practical reinterpretation of Tillich's theology of culture to provide such an emphasis and it is this that is partly enshrined in Niebuhr's theory of value. Niebuhr left Germany with a profound conviction of the importance of the "otherness" of God and that the "Kingdom of God" was in fact the essence of American Christianity and the basis of its ethical concerns. In this light it might not be too much to claim that part of Niebuhr's purpose in the Kingdom of God was to discover if in American theology the Kingdom of God had ever been placed in a conjunction with God's otherness.(5) Niebuhr found just such a conjunction in Edwards who opened up to him the whole Augustinian and Calvinistic tradition in theology. In Edwards Niebuhr found just the right balance between the otherness of the divine in God's glory and perfection and the rule and presence of God in the world. This was expressed in God's sovereignty and sustaining providence as the one in whom all beings cohere and find the source of their existence. In Troeltschian terms Niebuhr must have believed that Edwards' theology with its dimensions of divine transcendence and imminance was just the right cultural value to be brought into relation with modern American theology. He believed it could provide a new synthesis which would take American theology beyond its current impasse. Niebuhr's development of his radical monotheism is his attempt to arrive at such a creative synthesis - which in many places he presents as a cultural synthesis.(Kliever 1977:37-45).

The Shape of Radical Monotheism

3.3.2.1. At the centre of Niebuhr's radical monotheism is his concept of God as the centre of being and centre of value.(Niebuhr 1922, 1941:115-39; Fowler 1974:167-76). This is given practical expression in Niebuhr's analysis of faith as commitment and loyalty to a centre of value.(Niebuhr 1933:276-80). Such faith, Niebuhr argues, is an existential necessity for

man who cannot live without relationships of trust and loyalty which require commitments to centres of faith. All henotheistic or polytheistic centres of value fail because they are too limited and come to grief over the universal scope of being. They only ever have a partial embrace of reality but can never include its entirety. Consequently these false areas of values flounder on the hidden reefs of those aspects of reality which they deny or whose existence they may only dimly perceive but cannot acknowledge without invalidating themselves. A fully consistent and enduring faith which is free from illusion is only possible on the basis of a commitment to the universal and an affirmation of the value of all that is. (Niebuhr 1960: 16-39, 114-19). Niebuhr seeks to buttress and accommodate to Christian orthodoxy his existential affirmation of the ontological situation with his Christology and his language about God.

3.3.2.2. Niebuhr develops his Christology as an adjunct to his monotheism and as a way of orientating it to his basic loyalty to the Christian tradition. However, he reformulates traditional Christology to suit his monotheism and its existential ontology. Thus for him, to say that Christ is both human and divine in the traditional sense of Chalcedonian formulation and their incarnational theology is to lapse into Christomonism and into a henotheistic and defensive faith. (6) Consequently Niebuhr tries to represent the 'two natures' doctrine in terms of the double movement from man to God (Jesus' humanity) or from God to man (Jesus' divinity). This does not, however, express the full intention of Chalcedon as Niebuhr has no concept of the pre-existence of Christ. He makes no mention of it whatsoever, not even to reject it, and his idea of Christ's resurrection is also vague and verges on the symbolic. Having said this, Jesus does play an important role in Niebuhr's theology. He is the exemplar of radical faith; he is the one in whom God displays his faithfulness. In Jesus God as the centre of being is shown to be faithful, benign and dependable. God is also disclosed as being the centre of value. Jesus further becomes the symbol through which people are integrated into the Christian community by reinterpreting their lives. Thus it is by looking at Christ and by responding to him that, in Niebuhr's rendering of the Christian faith, people attain to radical faith. (Niebuhr 1941:100-141;

1952:26-43; 1960:39-44; Fowler 1974:90-95; Hoedmaker 1970: 17-21; Kliever 1977:93-102).

3.3.2.3. Niebuhr's doctrine of the trinity develops along similar lines to his Christology. He cannot accept the Nicene formulations of three persons of one substance because it is contrary to the unitary concept of God which his monotheism requires. This can in no way admit of any plurality in the Godhead.(7) As a result Niebuhr develops an economic trinity of functions in which God characteristically acts as Creator, Ruler and Redeemer and must be responded to as such. Again this is far from the intention of Nicea.(1946:371-384).

3.3.2.4. Niebuhr does affirm a personal concept of God (Niebuhr 1960:44-3), but it is hard to see how he can substantiate this from the rest of his theology(8). How is it that the "principle" or "structure" of being can exhibit traits of personality, have a life story, or freedom? Niebuhr might argue that this is the way that human beings must existentially relate to the centre of being, but an illusion it remains - even if it is an existentially necessary one.

3.3.2.5. Niebuhr's theology of culture, which for him covers religion, politics, and science, is also highly dependent on his doctrine of God as well as his analysis of faith. With it he makes a penetrating critique of the parochial commitments in each of the areas he studies. Niebuhr establishes that for religion, politics or science to function they must have an orientation to the whole universe. Niebuhr's examination of the scientific enterprise, which has its own faith and morality, is particularly valuable in this regard. However the problem in Niebuhr's theology of culture, as in his analysis of faith, is that of defining coherently that universal to whom one should be orientated. All that he allows is some kind of existential intuition from the course and structure of life.(Niebuhr 1939:27; 1946:10, 240-45; 1952:129-133; 1960:30-63; 78-89; 93-99; 127-41).

3.3.2.6. In the evolution of Niebuhr's radical monotheism there is also a clear movement on Niebuhr's part away from history toward existence and

ontology. Niebuhr moved away from some of Troeltsch's assumptions and methods toward Tillich's method. He attempts to solve the problems of history, which he inherited from Troeltsch with existential and ontological methods which he had gleaned from Tillich.

3.3.2.7. Niebuhr's radical monotheism is, by and large, coherent and basically consistent. Its inconsistencies arise in connection with the traditional categories of theology with which it seeks to align itself - Christology, the doctrine of God, and the Trinity. The reason for this is that Niebuhr's radical monotheism is not so much theology in the usual sense as an interpretation of the acts of God as perceived from within a particular religious tradition. Instead it is a religious philosophy or existential theory of human life which attempts to use the categories and vocabulary of Christian faith and in so doing redefines them.

Radical Monotheism Replacing Historical Relativism with Religious Relativism. (9)

3.3.3.1. It would be wrong to think that Niebuhr's development of radical monotheism and his consequent shift from history to ontology which it entailed caused Niebuhr to lose sight of the problem of historical relativism. For Niebuhr historical relativism was one of the unavoidable conditions for all human thought (Niebuhr 1952a:94) and is still present in the background of his monotheism, and indeed is one of the factors in its development.

3.3.3.2. Troeltsch, in his approach to this problem, was afraid that historical relativism would lead to a total relativism of values (an anarchy of values). He had tried to guard against this by his postulation of a cultural synthesis which has to be created in each age to establish the values that will govern that age. This was a combination of tradition and ideals in which the absolute is partially manifested giving these values their relative and temporary authority.

3.3.3.3. During his re-orientation to monotheism in the 1930's, Niebuhr rejected Troeltsch's concept of God which he felt was too closely identified with culture (Kliever 1977:29-36). He also rejected Troeltsch's process of historical (crisis) value formation, which he had sought to use in The Social Sources, with his adoption of value theory.

3.3.3.4. Instead of seeing God as the absolute which penetrates culture Niebuhr sees God as, in Edwards' terms, the centre of the harmony of being and the centre of value. The position of God in the universe as "the One beyond the many" and "the infinite principle of being" means that all other beings are related to the Deity and defined by that relation both ontologically and valuationally. No existence in this perspective has any meaning in itself, it only has meaning in relation to the One. The result of this is an ontological relativism in which all finite points and relationships are relativised and revalued in reference to the infinite centre of value.(10) Relativism, then, is a quality of existence. When applied to human beings it means that their knowledge, understanding, and valuing will always be relative to their ontological and existential position. This position is always changing as God redefines that position by enlarging their context and vision, and through the events of history.

3.3.3.5. Historical relativism now becomes a special instance of ontological relativism as it is simply one of the factors which define and redefine the human situation in the universe. Given that, this is the nature of the universe before the One, it is a aberration of both faith and reason to take any position as absolute, since a sensible epistemology must accept relativism because it is in the nature of things (Niebuhr 1952:14).

3.3.3.6. Niebuhr's method of value formation in contrast to that of Troeltsch, is also ontological. Values are defined in relation to the One and not to societies or cultures. They will change as one's perception and situation are redefined by God.

3.3.3.7. Niebuhr thus confronts moral relativism but does so in a different way from Troeltsch. Niebuhr makes moral relativism an ethical necessity since no point of morality can be taken as absolute - it only has

meaning as part of the relation between an 'existent' and the centre of value which is itself the only true absolute. Its contingent nature and its situatedness must be accepted. However this does not mean that human beings can abandon values, or simply devise and select their own because they are relative. Rather a system of values is forced upon them, being determined by their relationship with the centre of being. Thus while values are relative they are also inescapable, being defined by the situation in which people must live and act. Values may not be transferred from one situation to another, but there is no escaping them either; they are ontologically necessary and inevitable, just as much as the laws of nature.

3.3.3.8. So it is that Niebuhr transcends the problem of historical relativism in which the conditions, perceptions and inperatives of any historical moment are redefined and revalued by their relation to the One beyond the many whom Niebuhr believes to be dependable, trustworthy and faithful.(11) This is the basis for Niebuhr's objectivism or "beliefful realism".(Fadner 1975:41-57).

NIEBUHR'S TRANSFORMATIONIST ETHICS

The Development of Niebuhr's Sense of Responsibility.

3.4.1.1. Niebuhr's responsibalist ethics are very closely related to his monotheistic theology and grew up alongside it. Prior to 1930 Niebuhr still thought of ethics in liberal, social gospel and Troeltschian terms (Kliever 1977:46-47, Niebuhr 1929:3-6) as idealistic and dualistic - needing to be accommodated to the conditions and values of culture. However after 1930-1931 when Niebuhr experienced his 'conversion' to radical monotheism he began to explore an ethic which related to God's priority and God's action in history. This exploration came to expression in Niebuhr's debate with his brother, Reinhold, over the nature of God's presence and action in history in relation to human conflict in 1932.(Niebuhr 1932a, 1932b, R.Niebuhr 1932).

3.4.1.2. Two things become clear from this intense discussion between the brothers Niebuhr. Firstly, that Richard advises human inaction to leave room for God's action. Such inaction is not surrender in the face of evil, rather it is a withdrawal in repantence from the cycle of self-assertion in history and a call to others to do likewise. The aim of withdrawal is to clear a path for God's action which is free from the vanity of both righteous attempts to control events and from proud attempts to manipulate them toward humanly devised goals or idols. This is necessary for God to bring the cycle of self-assertion to an end in destruction and judgement, without the interference and ambiguity which the church's participation would add. The end of this cycle will clear a way for the kingdom of God to emerge within history. For Richard Niebuhr this is always an inherent possibility in history, because the Kingdom of God is given in the structure of reality. It only needs men to act in repentance and forgiveness for the conditions for its emergence to occur. (Niebuhr 1932a:460-9). Secondly God's action is also identified by Niebuhr with the possibilities and processes of history and being. Human beings simply have to co-operate with these forces of God's Kingdom for the new order to arrive. Richard thus has, at this stage, a vision of history and reality as being a fundamentally moral order which punishes and destroys evil by the force of its own laws. If these laws are obeyed, or co-operated with, then a community of love will be the end result. Once again Niebuhr uses an impersonal view of God as he identifies God with the forces of ontological necessity, which for some happy coincidence conform to the aspirations of human morality. "God" is the rationale or logic of the natural order. (Niebuhr 1932b:470-471).

3.4.1.3. Niebuhr takes this basic conviction further in a series of articles he wrote during the Second World War. (Niebuhr 1942a: 1942b: 1943.). These war articles show that there is a third aspect to Niebuhr's radical monotheism, and that it is this which forms the basis of his ethics. Not only is God the principle of being and the centre of value, but God is also the author of all action and all events. (Niebuhr 1942a:630-2). This was implicit in the 1930's articles but is made plain in these essays.

3.4.1.4. In the 1930's pieces, the correct moral response to God's action was seen by Niebuhr as waiting passively and purposefully for the divine action in all historical events to come to its culmination. In his war articles, Niebuhr strikes a much more active note. Now the correct moral response is to act in the light of God's present action.(12) The question "What must I do?" must be preceded by the question "What is God doing?"(Niebuhr 1942a:630). This identification of correct moral action will be of great importance to the development of Niebuhr's contextual ethic and he defines it for the first time in these articles.

3.4.1.5. However, to act in the light of God's action one must first make an interpretation of the pattern of divine action. The interpretations which Niebuhr makes of God's action in the war is that God is acting in remedial judgement and that the whole situation resembles the crucifixion. This means that one must act first to restrain the aggressing party from injuring one's neighbour, who should always be one's main concern. Secondly, one should intervene to protect the weak and innocent whenever one can. Thirdly, it means that after the war, when God's judgement on all nations has been completed, or at least this stage of it, there must be a generous international settlement in which forgiveness is exercised so that the offending nations are restored to the community of civilised nations. Fourthly, and most importantly, as God's action takes the form of remedial judgement and crucifixion it means that all parties must accept their guilt and repent; none may see themselves as more righteous or morally superior to those whom they oppose. This means that any thought of judgement must be put aside and forgiveness offerred instead as all stand under judgement.(Niebuhr 1943:208-210).

3.4.1.6. The shift Richard made in these later articles may have taken place under the force of his brother's earlier injunction that Christians must have some present responsibility for society beyond anticipated waiting and palliative action.(Reinhold Niebuhr 1932:468-9). It seems that Niebuhr accepts this criticism but he redefines it in his own terms; that one must decide to whom one is responsible and for what. In a further article of 1946 (Niebuhr 1946b) Niebuhr defines the Christian's social responsibility as being that of being responsible to God for society. This

means that in exercising its social responsibility the church does not merely have to react to the crises and demands of society. Rather it must respond to God's action as Creator, Ruler and Redeemer of society. (Niebuhr 1946b). This is the first occurrence of Richard Niebuhr's concept of responsibility, and indicates, along with Niebuhr's war articles, the development of a relational ethic. Niebuhr understands this as acting in the light of God's action of creation and redemption, rather than out of loyalty to the universal community of being for which one is responsible.

3.4.1.7. In an encyclopaedia entry, published two years later in 1945 (Niebuhr 1945), Niebuhr's ethics advance a little further along these lines and draws the ideas he was articulating in 1942-43 closer together. Here he makes his famous distinction, for the first time in print, (13) between teleological and deontological ethics (Niebuhr 1945c:259-60), while at the same time describing Christian ethics as

> .....that part of Christian theology which deals with the principle of human response to divine action in creation, revelation and redemption. (Niebuhr 1945c:259-66).

The Subsequent Development of Niebuhr's Ethics

3.4.2.1. Niebuhr's thought in the early 1950's was centred on providing an analysis of the conditions and processes implied in making the kind of responsive decisions to God's action which he had originated in the 1940's. This analysis takes two parts. Firstly in Evangelical Ethics (Godsey 1920:86-93; Irish 1973:9-12) and in Christ and Culture (Niebuhr 1952a), Niebuhr looks at the human side of such decisions. He is particularly concerned with their existential context and conditions and the faith and relationships in which people must stand in order to make them. Secondly, in his analysis of 'missionary motivation' Niebuhr sets out the divine conditions of life in the world to which human beings must respond. (Niebuhr 1951). Niebuhr summaries this double analysis in his essay on Biblical Ethics in the collection edited by himself and Waldo Beech (Niebuhr 1955) by defining Biblical ethics, and so Christian ethics, as a dialogue between God and humanity. Christian ethics, he says, begins and ends with God, and

while it sometimes takes the form of laws, it defines good and evil in relationship to the neighbour and in terms of attitudes to God. (Niebuhr 1955:10-16).

3.4.2.2. In this material one also detects a remarkable coherence between Niebuhr's developing ethics of response and his radical monotheism. His doctrines of God and of faith are particularly important as a foundation undergirding his ethics. In many respects Niebuhr's contextual ethics are simply an extension of Niebuhr's theology of radical monotheism to the sphere of morality.

3.4.2.3. In these pieces of the early 1950's all the main elements of Niebuhr's responsibilist theory of ethics are present. They remain only to be synthesised into a unity which he does in his posthumous work The Responsible Self which he presented first as lectures in 1960.

3.4.2.4. Niebuhr begins this work by comparing three symbols or metaphors of the moral life which have been highly influential in history. The first is that of deontological ethics which operates on the 'Man-the-Citizen' model of humanity and seeks to answer moral problems by asking "What law must I obey?". The second is that of teleological ethics which operates on the model of 'Man-the-Maker' and starts with the question "What shall I do?". Niebuhr finds both of these theories inadequate, the first subjecting the good to the right, and the second the right to the good. This problem cannot, he maintains, be avoided by combining the two theories developed by Plato and Aristotle respectively. It is hinted at by Aristotle's doctrine of the mean which Niebuhr sees as parallel to his ideal of a 'fitting' response. Niebuhr sees the same in the Stoic stress on rational response to the world, and in Spinoza's idea of the proper interpretation of reality. However Niebuhr believes that the 'proof' for this theory is actually found in the experience of human suffering which is not created by the self and so is an external force, but not one amenable to law. The self thus has to decide what is going on in its suffering and respond accordingly. Neither the deontological nor teleological theories, Niebuhr holds, can explain what is happening in suffering.

3.4.2.5. The 'responsibility' theory of ethics begins, in contrast to the other models, by deciding what response is "fitting" and takes as its basic model that of "Man-the-Responder". It rests upon four characteristics. Firstly, that a moral decision or action must be a free human response rather than a mere physical reflex. Secondly, any decision or action involves an interpretation of what is happening in the events of history, in the intentions of others, and in the patterns of nature. Thirdly, a decision or action in this theory entails accountability as one makes a response to fit in with the action of the other upon the self and in anticipation to the reaction of others to that act. Fourthly, and lastly, a decision or action involves a social solidarity since such responsibility and interpretation can only take place within a community. Niebuhr argues that this model of responsibility is a better, less distorting model, by which to interpret Biblical ethics. (Niebuhr 1963:47-68).

3.4.2.6. All the themes of Niebuhr's thought are present in this work so that once more Niebuhr's radical monotheism is strongly united to his ethics. In essence Niebuhr's ethics are really an extension of his doctrine of God. As the centre of being, the principle of being, and the direction or power of being, it is God who is encountered in all things and in all events dictating their value and meaning. (Niebuhr 1963:115-126).

3.4.2.7. The self, may in faith, identify this One as God and so renounce all lesser faiths, and affirm the worth of life, and so affirm that reality is trustworthy and good. To do this, however, the self must question its past encounters and inherited traditions, and the future hopes and expectations which have formed it and defined its responses. It must then re-interpret them in the light of God - seen as Companion, through the symbol of Christ. (Niebuhr 1963:136-45, 174-8). Niebuhr's views of faith and his Christology thus also play their part in the articulation of the ethics so that it forms a consistent continuity with the rest of his thought.

3.4.2.8. This last work of Niebuhr's was to have been a prologue to his work on systematic ethics. Thus he gives no full development of the trinitarian structure of his ethics here. This structure is indicated,

however, in his lectures which present God as Creator, which means that humanity must respond with reverence for the whole of creation; as Sustainer or Ruler and Judge, to whom all must respond by accepting the limits God imposes on their lives through nature and through others, and as Redeemer, to whom human beings must respond by transforming all their values. (Niebuhr 1963:24-41, cf Fowler 1974:151-211).

3.4.2.9. Niebuhr's responsibilist theory of ethics grows up steadily alongside his monotheism. In fact it is basically an extension of this monotheism. Viewed as a system Niebuhr's theology and ethics form a highly consistent unity. This being the case the same problems that were encountered in Niebuhr's monotheism will also be encountered in his ethics. It is no easier to define the One who is present in all actions and events than it was to define the One who is the centre of being. God is simply the confluence or convergence of events, if there is such a thing. This is identical to Niebuhr's ontological definition of God in his theology - that God is the convergence or confluence of being. (14)

THE INTEGRATING THEME: TRANSFORMATION

3.5.1. The Christian religion, like all other great religions, for Niebuhr, has a vital task within human life in which it often fails. Its function is to transform or convert human life by turning it from particular commitments and perspectives by relativising them and then reorientating them to the universal. It is with this in mind that Niebuhr formulates both his radical monotheism and his responsibilist ethics; it is the clear imperative which stands behind both and which purpose both serve. This much is clear from the survey of Niebuhr's thought undertaken in this chapter.

3.5.2. The notion of transformation finds considered articulation in The Meaning of Revelation where Niebuhr states that he conceives the relationship between natural religion and revealed religion as one of transformation rather than replacement (Niebuhr 1941:IX-XI). For Niebuhr, natural religion arises out of human psychological and social needs for

affirmative and undergirding value and for the endurance of what is valuable. Revelation neither replaces this natural religion nor is it a development out of it. Rather revealed religion revolutionises natural religion, exposing all the lesser gods of natural religion to be empty, and all the petty loyalties of human beings to be idolatry. (Niebuhr 1941:128ff).

3.5.3. Niebuhr extended this analysis to other areas of his thought. Natural faith he said is transformed by the relativisation of the finite causes or others to which human beings commit themselves, to which they are loyal, and which define their relationship with other human beings and all other existents by God who is the principle of being, and alone worthy of commitment and loyalty. Faith is then transferred to this One God through whom human beings then relate to all creation. This marks a transition from an exclusive and closed faith to which is inclusive and open to all of being. It is this universally orientated faith which Niebuhr calls 'radical monotheism'. (Kliever 1977:86-93).

3.5.4. Values also suffer this same fate. Those centres of values to which human beings give ultimacy, and in relation to which they value all else, are also relativised by the revelation of God as the infinite centre of value. These lesser centres only themselves have value in relation to the divine existence. They must, consequently, be reinterpreted and reorientated according to the true source of value. In relation to God everything has value. The relativisation and transformation of value relations thus entails a move from a valuing of some existents in relation to a finite value centre to a universal acceptance of everything in relation to God. This also means an end to the fragmentation of the self amid many centres of value and the acquisition of a new coherence as all values are united in God. (Niebuhr 1960:100-135; 1963:115-126).

3.5.5. Ethics too are transformed as human beings see that the one who acts on them in all events is good and trustworthy and not any anonymous and arbitary force. This brings an end to defensive ethics which seek to preserve life and value from death. These ethics, which inevitably seek their own glory, are relativised by the destructive action of the author of

all events. This makes possible a new interpretation of the world in monotheistic faith which is able to act and decide freely within the constraints of the moment in response to God's action as Creator, Govenor, and Redeemer. (Niebuhr 1963:136-145),

3.5.6. Human cultures are transformed through the relativisation of their history and henotheistic faith and values. These are identified as limited and transitory and can have meaning only if they are re-interpreted and revalued by the Absolute. Politics, science and religion will only function in a creative way if they are re-orientated away from narrow traditional and cultural perspectives to the universal commonwealth of being. A society's history, culture and tradition can only have lasting meaning if it is re-interpreted and re-appropriated in the light of that absolute universal which Niebuhr calls 'God'. (Niebuhr 1939:19-35; 1960:38-39; 1963:90-107).

3.5.7. In all of these transformations the self too is transformed as its history and relationships are changed. It reinterprets its own life as it sees itself and all others as having value to God and so locates itself within the universal community of being. The self thus learns to see all action upon itself as God's action and learns to respond accordingly as it comes to believe in the principle of being as good and reliable. By all these conversions the self's being is redefined so that it no longer serves its own narrowly defined causes, but the cause of being. It is this, in fact, which is the theme of the Responsible Self.

3.5.8. The means by which these transformations take place is Jesus Christ who discloses the will and nature of the one God. The symbol of Christ relativises all human commitments, activities and accomplishments, and then relates people to God. This new relation to God enables them to respond to God's will and purpose resulting in the transformation of their lives and action. (Niebuhr 1952:26-43; 1963:162-178).

3.5.9. The accumulative effect of these transformations is a permanent revolution (Niebuhr 1941:128-129), in which actions, faith, commitments, history and values are all relativised by their own historical contingency and by God's absoluteness. They are then transformed by being reorientated from a focus on the limited and partial to a focus on the unlimited and universal. That this process should occur again and again is due to several causes. Firstly, to the tendency of human beings to henotheism. Secondly, to the relative nature of all history and culture. Thirdly to the movement and action of God interpreted as the advance of the divine purpose to the eschaton, which is implied in Niebuhr's thought. This movement revises and changes the relations and values of things.

3.5.10. Thus the central thrust of Niebuhr's thought is clear, but what is unclear is the content of the universal toward which all being is to be orientated. Without a clear picture of the identity of God the character of the universal, benign or otherwise, simply cannot be identified.

NIEBUHR'S ADVANCE ON TROELTSCH

3.6.1. Having given an overview of Niebuhr's theology and ethics and noted its starting point in the problems of Troeltsch'ss theology of culture it would be appropriate to review Niebuhr's theology in the light of this starting point.

3.6.2. In the first place, Niebuhr resolves Troeltsch's problem of historical relativism by subsuming it under the ontological relativism produced by his monotheism. It is not only the position of values, traditions, and ideas in time which make these things relative, it is their position in being, because they are to be valued and interpreted by their relation to infinite and not merely within their cultural context. Niebuhr solves the problem of history by replacing it with the problem of being. In fact, historical relativism is simply a particular example of the precariousness of all life before God. This also makes room for revelation. Rather than revelation being undermined by relativism,

revelation actually produces relativism by relating all things to the principle of being before which everything is relativised.

3.6.3. Niebuhr's radical monotheism also enables him to go beyond Troeltsch's identification of the forces of God and the forces of culture, and the values of God and the values of culture. In Troeltsch's theology God as the immanent Absolute is directly related to each and every culture through its cultural synthesis. In this synthesis something of the ultimate purpose of history is manifested giving the values of the synthesis divine sanction (they become relatively absolute). Niebuhr felt that this was too close an identification of God and culture. While he relates God directly to each culture, he interprets that presence to mean the judgement and transformation of cultural values rather than their sanction. Troeltsch defined the relation between God and culture in the way that he did in order to give some kind of authoritative undergirding to relative values. Niebuhr avoids the amoral consequences of relativism by making those values and responses which emerge out of their relationship with God, at a particular place and time, obligatory for human beings. Thus it is in the relationship to God that relatively absolute values are to be found and not in culture.

3.6.4. Troeltsch held a dualism between universal and absolute values and contingent cultural historical values; between spirit and history. Niebuhr dissolves this dualism in his radical monotheism (which identifies God as the centre of value (Troeltsch's absolute value)), by defining God as the principle of being and author of all events (Troeltsch's cultural-historical process), with the result that all values, both those of conscience, and those of history exist only in relation to God. Further, because values are relationally defined, they are not changeless and absolute. Only God is absolute. Moreover the same one who values all is also the one who is active in all historical events, so that there is never a question of relating history to the will of God; history is the will of God. (15)

3.6.5. Lastly, and most significantly, Niebuhr replaces Troeltsch's concept of compromise as the basis of the cultural synthesis with that of transformation which becomes the proper task and function of religion. This enables Niebuhr to require religion to have a great deal more impact on culture and society without itself being accommodated to its values. It means that in the cultural synthesis he is able to look for, and demand, more on the part of religion. Religion, or rather radical faith now becomes the senior partner in the synthesis rather than the junior, as in Troeltsch, by demanding that culture turn from its limited commitment to a universal commitment.

3.6.6. Niebuhr's approach to the problems of history and culture does represent a clear advance on the positions that Troeltsch took. His transformations of the problems of history into the problems of being make them soluble ontologically and theologically. Faith and revelation are given a more positive place in the world rather than trying to merely protect them from the threats of history as did Troeltsch. Niebuhr's radical monotheism also allows him to say all that Troeltsch wanted to say about the immediacy of God to culture but without the damaging consequence of God being identified with culture. Lastly, Niebuhr's substitution of conversion or transformation for compromise as the aim of religion and the cultural synthesis is probably his most crucial advance on Troeltsch(16), since it avoids the subordination of religion or faith to culture and seeks the renewal of culture by radical faith. This is altogether a more worthy and positive programme than the simple attempt to stave off the anarchy of values that occupied Troeltsch. Niebuhr is concerned with the transformation of cultural values rather than their stability and preservation.

THE RELATION OF NIEBUHR'S THEOLOGY AND ETHICS TO HIS TYPOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

3.7.1. It is now possible, after having comprehensively reviewed Niebuhr's theology and ethics and indicated their relationship to Troeltsch's

thought, to tentatively suggest how they relate to Niebuhr's typology or religious orientation.

3.7.2. Troeltsch had used his typologies of religious orientation as a tool in his ethics and theology of culture - to illustrate its main themes within the history of Christian ethics. Thus church, sect and mysticism are all used to show patterns of compromise, corporate and individual religion, and of absolute and relative ethics.

3.7.3. As Niebuhr adopts much of Troeltsch's methods it would only be natural to assume that he will use typologies of religious association in a similar manner: to identify patterns of faith: of monotheism and henotheism and polytheism; of responsibility and irresponsibility, of relatedness to God or being and to culture, of particularism and universalism.

3.7.4. Secondly, just as Troeltsch used his typology in a normative fashion - classifying his types by their degree of compromise and assessing them accordingly, it might be reasonable to suppose that Niebuhr would do the same. In which case it should be anticipated that Niebuhr, having defined the cultural task of Christian institutions as that of 'transformation' should in turn classify and assess their representative types according to their success in this task. Whether or not this is so will be made plain in the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Hoedemaker's assertion that Niebuhr adopted Barth's theology and Tillich's social ethics is far too simplistic. From Barth he adopted his stress on God's transcendence and the crisis which the encounter with God produces in human experience, and from Tillich the general principle of God who is both present in culture, but also inheres being. Niebuhr's social ethics, as we shall see, are his own.

2. This parallel's Troeltsch's attempt to combine Dewey's empiricism with Bergson's and Dithey's idealism.

3. It is interesting to note that all the future points of Niebuhr's theology are here: the sense of God's giveness to human experience as the principle yet transcendent over it as that principle; the valuation of all existents in terms of God as the centre of value; and the God who both acts and is revealed in history as the divine purposes are fulfilled within it.

4. Sandon claims that Edwards' doctrine of God made Niebuhr's theory of radical monotheism possible. This I feel is to claim a little too much. It was certainly a major stimulus in its development but it was not indispensible as the seeds of it are also found in Niebuhr's combination of Barth and Tillich and in his own theological genius.

5. This idea is absent from the commentators on Niebuhr which I have consulted.

6. This is also Troeltsch's objection to the absolutism of dogmatic theology.

7. Niebuhr's trinity is thus not even an economic trinity in the traditional sense, as he describes the self-revelation and manifestation of God in terms of three functions rather than as three persons.

8. Since Niebuhr avoids metaphysics and ontology for the sake of his 'confessional' stance in theology, he never states what his concept of God actually is.

9. Secondary sources have been of limited value in this area.

10. Again Niebuhr does not really explain what he means by God's infinity, unless he is working with the difficult idea of an infinitely extending universe. He merely uses it.

11. P. Ramsey argues that in his saner moments Niebuhr is an 'objective relationist' rather than a relativist and that to maintain this relationalism he would have to affirm some 'objective' and permanent values. Ramsey recognises that Niebuhr felt that relativism was inevitable - in the light of the discoveries of

history and sociology and the 'time-full' existence of humanity. This conviction of Niebuhr's, which Ramsey believes is unwarranted, is, Ramsey argues, based on the presumption that a book entitled The Critique of Historical Reason had been written establishing historical relativism as a fact. In the first place, for Niebuhr there was only one 'objective' object in the universe, and that was God. To speak of anything else as 'objective' or permanent would have smacked to him of polytheism. He would have asked what it was that was being served; 'objective values' or God? In the second place, Niebuhr's theory of ontology excludes any such 'objective values' as values exist only in relationship: and no relationships are permanent in Niebuhr's theology - everything is always being relativised by the infinity of being. In the third place, The Critique of Historical Reason had been written by Troeltsch, only under the title Der Historismus and Seine Probleme. Niebuhr, of course, had read it and found it highly persuasive. However the difference between Troeltsch and Niebuhr, as I have indicated, is that Niebuhr sought to limit the consequences of historical relativism with a relativism of being. The only 'objectivity' that occurs in Niebuhr's thought is that which relativises all others. It seems that Ramsey has confused Niebuhr's ontological relativism with a relational objectivism of his own devising. (Ramsey 1957:151-172).

12. This point raises the fascinating issue of H Richard Niebuhr's pacifism. In his support and enthusiasm for the American cause in the First World War Niebuhr enlisted as a military chaplain, but was still in training when the war came to an end (Diefenthaler 1983:176). At this time, then, Niebuhr was not a pacifist. However, along with his brother, he seems to have been caught up in the general groundswell amongst American Christians which culminated in the rise of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Thus we find Niebuhr writing several articles in the 1930's in support of non-resistance of which his comments on the war in China form apart. The other writings he produces on this theme were the unpublished lecture 'The Social Gospel and the Mind of Jesus' and 'The Inconsistency of the Majority' (Niebuhr 1934). In the first article, presented in 1933. Niebuhr depicts Jesus as a radical who rejected the possibility of the achievement of God's Kingdom by aggressive human action and instead stressed the need to wait for the Kingdom as a result of God's judgement - to do otherwise would only perpetuate the existing system. This clearly implies non-resistance. This is essential to this strategy because without it individuals, electing themselves as instruments of divine vengeance and judgement, would simply surplant one human kingdom by another and fail to appropriate the will of God. (McFaul 1974:41). In the second article a year later Niebuhr argues that for the Fellowship of Reconciliation to be consistent it must maintain a non-resistant stance rather than just reject violent action. Non-violent action he says can be just as aggressive, self-righteous, and coercive as violent action - they are simply different ways of building the same human kingdom. "A Christian Pacifism", Niebuhr concludes,

> or, better, a Christian non-resistance, which we may define historically as the type of faithful attitude we see in Jesus, rejects the dominant position of the present fellowship - the aggressive principle of fighting for our ideals, whether by the tongue and boycott or by the sword. It rejects the innate humanistic faith in which this idealism is built. It is as deterministic as communism is, but that there is a divine teleology, and that the aggressiveness of the righteous runs counter to it as often as does the aggressiveness of the unrighteous. It seems that the characteristic deed of Jesus was not enacted in the Temple but on Golgotha and understand that he did not say, "love your enemy in order that you may convert him to your point of view", but "love your enemy in order that ye may be sons of your Father in heaven who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and the good". It will understand further that the grand word "reconciliation" has been employed by Christianity not in connection with the shedding of blood of the evil but of the innocent. This Christian pacifism will also understand that there can be no exemption for pacifists and it will seek none. (Niebuhr 1934:44).

Both of these pieces echo the theme of Niebuhr's 1932 articles; the need to wait patiently for God's action, and the need to renounce self assertive and aggressive human action which can never lead to the Kingdom of God.

By the following year (1935) Niebuhr changed course. In Man the Sinner (Niebuhr 1935) he describes the Christian strategy in the world in the face of sin is to restrain sin by laws devised by sinners for sinners which can be backed up by force if need be. Such a strategy is purely medicinal and not destructive, and is subordinated to the task of redemption and reconciliation.

This will mean, Niebuhr adds, that force will be limited by the priority of reconciliation. (Niebuhr 1935:278-280). This is a theme which is echoed in Niebuhr's war articles where he states the need to restrain the neighbour from abusing others in a non-judgemental attitude and to aim at the neighbour's ultimate redemption and rehabilitation. Clearly Niebuhr feels that there is a need to act to restrain sin in the present as well as a need to renounce self-assertion to await the Kingdom.

Six years later (in 1941), Niebuhr moved even further from his non-resistant position. He argues in 'The Christian Church in the World's Crisis' that the action one should take is determined by one's context, and it is the motive or interpretation of events from which people act that is all important. Thus whether America enters or stays out of the War is not the real point it is whether or not it makes its decision on the basis of a narrow nationalism, or a universal internationalism - what are the aims that are being sought in such action? If an action serves the interests of the international community it is responsible; if it serves lesser

interests it is irresponsible. In this discussion Niebuhr also allows for the use of coercion but does not indicate what kind of coercion, nor under what circumstances it should be used, nor the extent to which it should be used. (McFaul 1974:141-143).

This piece of work set the tone for Niebuhr's writings of 1942 and 1943 in which he carefully examines the motives both of 'coercionists' and pacifists without giving explicit sanction to either position. What is also different in these later articles, and stands in contrast to the pieces of 1932-1934 is that the Christian's task is not to passively wait for God's action to come to completion in the future, he must react to it in the present. For Niebuhr this seems to mean, reading between the lines of his articles, responding to the crucifixion of the innocent by restraining the aggressors and co-operating with God's use of the nations to bring them to judgement and redemption. This certainly entails the use of coercive force.

This movement from a strict non-resistant position to a very subtle 'just war' position which defines the justness of a war, and the side which one consequently chooses to support, by reference to God's action within it of judgement and redemption, seems to have two sources. The first is that Christians have a responsibility to act to restrain sin (here it seems that Richard Niebuhr was influenced by his brother's argument). The second source of this change was the further development of Niebuhr's contextual or responsiblist ethics in which decisions are to be made on the basis of the circumstances of the context, and of God's action within the context. This meant that he could no longer maintain the strict principle of non-resistance which he took from the example of Jesus. Niebuhr is now concerned with God's immediate actions in contemporary events, not the outcome of these actions in the future, as was Jesus. Niebuhr's vision is now tactical and not strategic.

It is for this reason that I cannot go along with McFaul's contention that Niebuhr's pacifism was a response to the circumstances of the times.(McFaul 1974:41-43). This is to read back into the 1930's ideas which he only fully developed in the 1940's. In the 1930's Niebuhr was concerned with understanding the strategy of God's action in history, as disclosed by Jesus. This, to him, demands non-resistant renunciation of self-assertive and aggressive action to allow God's purposes in history to come to their completion. By the 1940's Niebuhr's focus has narrowed to the action of God in one's immediate context to which one must respond and co-operate. He is concentrating on the tactical level of God's actions. This is a significant shift perhaps brought about by the urgency of events between 1934 and 1940 with the rise of Hitler and the advance of the Second World War.

13. Fowler records that Niebuhr was discussing teleological and deontological ethics, and 'Man as Responder' to the action of God as Creator, Governor and Redeemer from this date, though it seems

from this article he speaks of God's action as that of Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer. (Fowler 1974:148-149).

14. All that is possible is a resigned aquiescence in the face of the relentless movement of being to its finale. This is the attitude of the stoics and Spinoza whom Niebuhr greatly admired. But this attitude is only possible if 'being' can be perceived as having a single direction or good and is not, in fact, merely a chaotic interaction of arbitrary forces. In Niebuhr's judgement 'being' does have a meaningful unity but this could simply be his own 'hopeful projection'.

Two contradictions in Niebuhr's conception of God are also exposed by his understanding of 'being' - that Niebuhr's God is both amoral and apersonal.

In the first place, if God is merely the 'centre of being', defined in terms of 'principle' or 'structure', then terms of value make no sense when applied to 'God'. If God's value is ontologically defined, then the dimension of freedom no longer exists in the deity. All that remains are the amoral inevitabilities of the flux of being which determine 'God's' existence.

In the second place, if God is the 'centre' or 'principle' of being, as by ontological necessity, then 'God' may not be a person in any meaningful sense. Personality is only possible where freedom, self-consciousness and responsiveness to others exist. Niebuhr's God has none of these qualities and so may not be known as a person. (Niebuhr's entire epistemology is also undermined at this point as it depends on a personal ground for knowing).

By defining 'God' in terms of being as ontological necessity, Niebuhr has stripped away all elements of personality and morality from the deity. It might be possible to say that being has a 'centre', whether this is comprehensible is doubtful, but it is not possible to ascribe either personality or value to this centre since it is merely the confluence of necessary forces which can hardly be said to be moral in nature. It is at this point that Niebuhr's radical monotheism collapses into an amoral ontological monism.

It is interesting to note that both Tillich and Barth avoided these contradictions. Tillich did so by placing 'God' outside of being, as its 'ground'. Barth, on the other hand, began with 'God's' personality and defined everything else on the basis of this premise. In this Barth stands closer than Niebuhr to the Christian tradition.

15. But this brings the wheel full circle, for if history is God's will, then God is responsible for historical evil, the very thing that he sought to avoid with his original dualistic theology. Niebuhr does try to avoid the consequences by interpreting such evil as God's will through the model of crucifixion but to do so

only restates the problem: does God crucify Jesus and all the innocents of history, or do human beings? If history is simply the expression of God's will where does the freedom of human action, in which Niebuhr seems to believe, fit into the picture? In any case I am not sure if 'innocence' is quite the right word to describe Jesus' attitude as he faced the cross. It was a deliberate choice for him, it is not for many others.

16. After the Social Sources Niebuhr says little about the cultural synthesis, yet it is clear that this, or something like it, is his purpose; he is seeking the renewal and reorientation of Western culture through radical faith.

CHAPTER 4

THE ORIENTATION OF CHURCH TO CULTURE IN THE THOUGHT OF H. RICHARD NIEBUHR.

INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. This chapter begins with an examination of the dialectic which is found to be crucial to Niebuhr's whole development of his typological approach. Attention is then given to Niebuhr's early church-sect-denomination typology. Particular stress is placed upon its ethical intent as a means of exposing the disunity of the Church and establishing a strategy for its recovery. Niebuhr's growing disillusionment with the general approach of this kind of typology is also noted. The next section then examines Niebuhr's later five-fold typology which found expression in Christ and Culture. The source of this new typology is located in Niebuhr's encounter with Gilson's classification of different solutions to the problem of revelation and reason which he gave in his Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (Gilson 1932). Each of Niebuhr's five types are carefully examined in relation to Troeltsch's and Gilson's typologies, and in relation to Niebuhr's withdrawal-engagement dialectic. This is followed by a summary and critical review of Niebuhr's whole typological approach. Niebuhr's approach is severely criticised for its tendency to distort the positions which it presents and its obscuring of others which it does not. This occurs because of the bias of the typological approach toward one particular type. The chapter concludes by relating the development of Niebuhr's typology to that of his theology and ethics, arguing that the problems in Niebuhr's typology arise from problems in his thought as a whole.

4.1.2. The general argument offered here is that Niebuhr's typologies, like Troeltsch's, are vehicles of his theology and so demonstrate the superiority of one preferred type over others which are then viewed as pathological. As a result of this Niebuhr's typology becomes a pathology

of dysfunctional cultural relationships, in which the preferred type is also, inevitably, included.

WITHDRAWAL AND ENGAGEMENT

The Implicit Dynamic of Niebuhr's Typology of Religious Orientation.

4.2.1.1. Niebuhr's work in his typologies of religious orientation seems to be an expression of different polarities. He has an institution-community dualism which seems to be the implicit content of his church and sect types, especially as it appears in his writing of 1945 (Niebuhr 1945a; Hoedemaker 1970: 142-145). His later typology, in Christ and Culture (Niebuhr 1952), takes the church-world polarity as its basic frame of reference restating his two polar referents as 'Christ' and 'Culture'. Underlying both these typologies is Niebuhr's dialectic of withdrawal and engagement(1) which implicitly informs his whole treatment of different types of religious orientation.(2).

4.2.1.2. The different poles of this dynamic seem to be present in Niebuhr's two fundamental types, expressed as church and sect in the Social Sources and 'Christ of Culture' and 'Christ against Culture' in Christ and Culture.(1920: 1-17, 249-278; 1952a 43,53). The first type in each case represent an engagement with the world which sooner or later leads to accommodation or compromise with culture. The second type is its counterpart which, in reaction to the Church's compromise, calls for its disengagement from the world that it might be restricted to loyalty to its Head, and to purity for its God. The strengthening of the Church to which this leads will in turn create a momentum for an aggressive re-engagement in culture. Niebuhr's two polar types represent, as will be made clear, a cycle of withdrawal and engagement which forms the Church's perpetual response to culture and also informs the other types in Niebuhr's typologies. Furthermore, this cycle also forms the basic strategy through which Niebuhr sought the transformation of culture in his early years.

Withdrawal and Engagement as the Church's Strategy for Transforming Culture.

4.2.2.1. The Withdrawal-Engagement theme develops very early in Niebuhr's thought pre-dating his 'monotheistic' conversion by some five years. In the 1925 article 'Back to Benedict' Niebuhr upholds the monastic ideal of withdrawal and purity as a source of renewal for a culture bound church so that it might be restored to its primary commitment to God. In subsequent articles, 'What Holds Churches Together' (1926) and 'Churches That Might Unite' (1929), Niebuhr identifies the compromises that the church has made with culture in accepting its patterns of class, caste, and nationalism with the result that the unity and division of the churches rests in their conforming to the divisions present in society. The church, says Niebuhr, must withdraw from these divisions to find true unity. Niebuhr pursued this theme further in the Social Sources (cf Fowler 1974: 39-46; Kliever 1977: 46-52).

4.2.2.2. Niebuhr brings this whole issue into sharper focus in his contributions in the collaborative volume The Church Against The World (Niebuhr 1936a) (written in collaboration with William Paulk and F.D. Miller). (Niebuhr later abridged his contributions to this book in his article in Christendom: 'Toward The Emancipation of the Church' (Niebuhr 1935b)). In his introduction to this book Niebuhr argues that he and his contemporaries are living through a time when the Church is threatened by the world, both by worldliness without, and more importantly, by worldliness within. He recognises that the Church and the world have always been in opposition but stresses that there are periods when the world is half converted and other periods when the world attacks the Church. Niebuhr argues that the present period is such a time as the Church has capitulated to the world with many compromises of faith and discipline. It has sought to be the world's saviour, in the world's terms, forgetting that there is already another Saviour. Now is the time, continues Niebuhr, for the Church to detach itself and to await fresh orders. (Niebuhr 1935a: 1-4).

4.2.2.3. Niebuhr develops the contention that the church must detach itself from the world in his article in this volume: Toward the Independence of the Church. In this article he describes the relationship between church and civilisation as a cycle of alliance and withdrawal. The church launches an aggressive assault on non-Christian societies until these civilisations, being 'converted', accept an alliance with the church. The church then grows corrupt as the civilisations it sponsored decline and become corrupt. The only remedy for this is a withdrawal by which the church itself might be converted anew and prepared for a new aggressive assault on civilisation. Niebuhr denies the possibility of attacking civilisation without this withdrawal. For Niebuhr the central question for any Christian is to discern where the church stands in its time; whether it should retreat from the world, or attack it. Niebuhr feels that for Christians of his time the choice has to be one of retreat in order to prepare for a new assault. However, Niebuhr stresses that it is not civilisation itself which is the church's enemy. The real enemy is worldliness which corrupts the church. Niebuhr defines worldliness as idolatry and lust; the first being the perversion of worship and the second the perversion of love. It is this, Niebuhr contends, that holds the church captive. (Niebuhr 1935a: 123-128).

4.2.2.4. Niebuhr proceeds, in The Independence of the church, to describe the captivity of the church to capitalism, nationalism, and 'anthropocentrism'. The church's liberation from these bondages is to be found in an internal revolt which is motivated by a love for the church and which steers its own independent course orientated to the Gospel. The revolt ideally avoids entanglement with other ideologies and protests. Ultimately, the only freedom which the church may find from cultural captivity is captivity to God. (Niebuhr 1935a: 120-154).

4.2.2.5. Yet this path to liberation, Niebuhr warns, will be far from easy since any church which seeks to assert its independence will find itself, once more, in a familiar dualistic tension.

> There is no easy way in which the Church can divorce itself from the world. It cannot flee into asceticism, nor seek refuge again in the inner life of the spirit. The road to independence and to aggression is not one which leads straight forward on one level.

> How to be in the world and not of the world has always been the problem of the Church. It is a revolutionary community in a pre-revolutionary society. Its main task always remains that of understanding, proclaiming, and preparing for the divine revolution in human life. Nevertheless there remains the necessity of participation in the affairs of an unconverted and unreborn world. Hence the Church's strategy always has a dual character and this dualism is in constant danger of being resolved into the monism of other-worldliness or this-worldliness, into a more or less quiescent expectation of a revolution beyond time, or of a mere reform programme carried on in terms of the present order. How to maintain the dualism without sacrifice of the main revolutionary interest constitutes one of the important problems of a Church moving toward its independence. (Niebuhr 1935a: 154-155).

4.2.2.6. In these two works Niebuhr sets the general strategy of withdrawal which he advocated in his earlier writings into a general pattern or framework and which he argues has occurred several times in history. This serves to make the strategy far more comprehensible to his audience and consequently far more commendable as a course of action. In addition to this he substantiates what he hints at in the Social Sources, and reiterates in Christ and Culture that withdrawal from culture and engagement within culture are both the solution and part of the problem of the church's relation to civilisation. Thus the answer to this question, at least at this stage, for Niebuhr, lies in the process or pattern of movement between the two poles of withdrawal and engagement and in determining one's place in that process. However, to pursue one or other of these options to the exclusion of the other is to give a seriously false answer to the problem of Christ and culture. In Niebuhr's words it is to dissolve the dualism in which the church necessarily exists in being in the world but not of the world, of being both called to God and sent into the world. This dualism may be dissolved by an exclusive emphasis on withdrawal into the 'monism' of other-worldliness, and of passive waiting for an ahistorical eschaton; or into the monism of a this worldly reform programme which leaves the world substantially as it found it. The church as a revolutionary society can be content with neither of these responses. Its business is to prepare the way for God's transformation of human life within history. (3)

4.2.2.7. Niebuhr says nothing new in the Kingdom of God about the process of withdrawal and engagement but he does seek to give it a grounding in history. Hitherto it has simply been a theory to which he has alluded. Niebuhr finds the historical expression of this process in the orientation of the different groups within the Protestant movement. That is to say in the dualistic tension between church and world under which all these groups lived, and in the cycle of prophetic and institutional forms through which these groups developed as a movement.

4.2.2.8. Niebuhr's next treatment of the Withdrawal-Engagement theme occurs in his seminal article 'The Responsibility of the Church for the World' (Niebuhr 1946) which plays a very significant role in the development of his 'ethics. Niebuhr begins by acknowledging that the question of the church's responsibility for society is a difficult one; neither Jesus nor his disciples found an easy answer to it. This leads to a paradoxical attitude toward culture which later found expression in the antithetical types of Christian organisation; the culture defending "churches" and withdrawing "sects". This problem, adds Niebuhr, is rooted in the nature of both church and society. It is most acute in the present time since the church is located in many societies which are on the point of death; either from abject poverty, or from anxiety, despite great affluence. These are the same nations which the church has taught and formed, thus its sense of responsibility for them, and its feeling of guilt and inadequacy in the face of the failure of their Christian cultures is great. (Niebuhr 1946: 111-114)

4.2.2.9. Niebuhr defines the church's 'responsibility' as being responsible for the world to God. The purpose of this responsibility is the conversion and redemption of everything in the world and not its judgement which remains God's right. The 'content' of the church's responsibility, says Niebuhr, is mercy. (Niebuhr 1946:114-120).

4.2.2.10. Niebuhr uses this definition, first of all, in a negative sense to analyse the patterns of irresponsibility that have occurred in the church.

> Two sources of temptations seem especially prevalent in history, the temptation to worldliness and the one to isolationism. In the case of the former the to whom, in the case of the latter the for what of responsibility is mistakenly defined. (Niebuhr 1946: 120).

4.2.2.11. The Worldly Church is a church which becomes responsible to society for God rathen than responsible to God for society. It operates on the basis of approval of society, especially of the rich and powerful within it as it, itself, enjoys the trappings of power. Most often it is allied with the existing social order(4) but it may also ally itself with revolutionary forces. Its chief sin is that it substitutes a group for God, whether it be class, nation, or even humanity which is finite. It most often takes a conservative option from a legitimate desire for order, though it sometimes follows a revolutionary path out of a concern for the reformation of society. (Niebuhr 1946: 120-122). The church which has become "worldly" in this manner will engage in false prophecy and false priesthood. It will proclaim the security and divine sanction of a culture or a cause, and threaten those who dissent with divine punishment. It will believe that all supreme values are manifested in the group it has made absolute. The worldly church will also seek to cultivate through religious means those virtues which will support its culture or ideology as a kind of sacrifice for God's favour. Niebuhr states that this kind of church represents a tendency to look at all questions of human values from the perspective of society both as their justification and their source. (Niebuhr 1946: 122-124).

> When the Church has accepted this view of itself it has given evidence of its complete fall into worldliness for now it has substituted civilisation or society for God as author and end of its being. (Niebuhr 1946: 124).

4.2.2.12. Niebuhr believes that the worldliness of the churches developed as a reaction to the isolationism of these same churches in the past. The Church which seeks isolation is aware that it is accountable to God in Christ but believes that the body for which it is accountable is only itself. Thus it seeks its own growth, health, and continuation apart from the world which it rejects as being impure and sinful. The world must be avoided since contact with it brings corruption. It denies its

accountability for the world of which God is the Creator - seeing itself as the Ark of Salvation. Niebuhr sees much evidence of this attitude in the Christianity of the first and second centuries, in the monasteries, in the Protestant sects, and in the currents of Protestant individualism. (Niebuhr 1946: 124ff).

4.2.2.13. For Niebuhr these two forms of irresponsibility are interdependent in that either extreme calls forth its antithesis. He is concerned that the tendency in the early twentieth century to worldliness will produce a counter-movement toward isolation. The solution to the question of responsibility is not to be found in either extreme, nor in a compromise between the two options. The answer is to be found in attending to the two aspects of Christian responsibility in a proper way so that neither are confused or separated, but maintained in the 'unity of responsibility to God for the neighbour'. (Niebuhr 1946: 126).

4.2.2.14. Lastly, Niebuhr discusses the strategy that a properly 'responsible' church will pursue. He notes that the church's responsibility to God for society will vary with changing situations and positions but he feels that its strategy can still be described in a general fashion. Firstly, Niebuhr says, the church has an apostolic duty to proclaim the Gospel message that at the heart of all being is goodness and love as shown by God-in-Christ, not only to individuals but also to groups such as societies and nations. It fails in this responsibility unless it finds an appropriate way to make an address to these collectivities. Niebuhr argues that the church has not yet crossed the bridge from an individualistic to a social reality. When it does address society it often speaks of it as a physical body rather than as a spiritual reality, and so concerns itself only with prosperity and peace. The church must proclaim the need for repentance - the message of grace and forgiveness is not rightly heard without this note. Moreover corporate and not merely individual sins must be condemned, such as the evils of the Nazis and the saturation bombing of the Allies. Nor is it enough merely to address prominent individuals: people in their communities must be approached. The church must change its methods of proclamation to serve both God and Neighbour. Secondly, as a response to Christ-in-God the

church also has a responsibility, as the Shepherd of the Lost, to care for the 'lost sheep' of society; for the poor, sick and downtrodden, both directly and in working for social, political and economic change in society. In this connection Niebuhr notes that many of the leaders of the Social Gospel movement were inner-city pastors. The church is also called to extend the same concern to entire nations; to defeated nations, and to victorious nations in moral danger. Thirdly, the church is a social pioneer. Niebuhr sees the church as that part of society which responds to God as the representative of the rest of society and pioneers repentance and change because it has the Word and the Spirit of God. Thus it has the active responsibility to identify the sins of society and repent of them on its behalf and be freed from them within itself as a pioneer of new life. Niebuhr likens this to the representative responsibility of the Hebrew prophets and the prophetic remnant, and of Christ who acted on the part of all mankind. Thus, in the case of slavery, the Church recognised this evil, purged it from itself and worked for its abolition. It must do the same in the case of the abuses of wealth and property and in the race issue otherwise its voice will be hollow. The church does this, not in order to secure its own holiness or salvation, but to bring the world to repentance as Christ brought the elect to repentance. This form of pioneering or representative responsibility(5) is the highest form of social responsibility to which the church can aspire(6). (Niebuhr 1946:126-132).

4.2.2.15. In 'The Responsibility of the Church for the World' Niebuhr for the first time identifies the extreme poles of his withdrawal-engagement dialectic with sect and church, an identification which had only been implicit before. Niebuhr also gives his clearest description and criticism yet of the disconnected extremes that this dialectic can produce in terms of the worldly and isolationist churches. However, a change of note also occurs with regard to the way Niebuhr values the process. Niebuhr relates the process to his theory of responsibility and he changes some of the aspects of the dialectic. The withdrawal of the church to God is restated in the responsibility theory as accountability to God, and the movement of the Church from God to the World is restated as accountability to God for society. The result of this is that Niebuhr is no longer concerned with the church's strategy of withdrawal from, or re-engagement in the world,

but with the proper relationship between the Church's God-ward and world-ward orientations. The Withdrawal-Engagement dialectic is emptied of its positive content by this new development and so ceases to be, for Niebuhr, the strategy whereby the church and the world are to be transformed and becomes, instead, a pernicious cycle of irresponsibility which has to be transcended.(7) The vehicle by which this can be achieved is Niebuhr's 'responsible' church, which is a kind of hybrid of the withdrawing and engaging types, somehow embracing within itself both sides of the dialectic.(8) Thus it is a faithful servant of the Gospel while acting as a pastor to the hurts of the world - defined in collective terms. Above all it is representatively responsible for the world before God - and thus this, it would seem, would be a summary of the church's role in this stage of Niebuhr's thought. In fact he affirmed this position again in 1949 in 'Disorder in the Church'.(Niebuhr 1949:84-86).

4.2.2.16 A clear process of evolution is discernible in these articles in which Niebuhr, in the 1920's, begins to commend a strategy of withdrawal of the Church from culture as a preparation for a renewed assault on culture. By 1935, Niebuhr has identified this strategy with a dialectic between withdrawal and engagement which re-occurs again and again in the history of the Church. The extreme poles in this dialectic, moreover, give rise to pathological forms when dissociated from the dialectic. This dialectical process itself, it seems, is Niebuhr's strategy for the transformation of the world. However by the 1940's Niebuhr has become disillusioned with this dialectic: he now sees it, and its polar positions, as pathological and needing to be transcended. He accomplishes this through his theory of responsibility into which he transfers the positive aspects of the dialectic, and which replaces the dialectic as his programme for cultural transformation.

4.2.2.17. However, this evolution is not as clear as it seems from this summary since by 1952 Niebuhr has again revised his judgement on the Withdrawal-Engagement dialectic in his introduction to Christ and Culture (Niebuhr 1952a:43, 53). He seems to view it here as an existential and historical inevitability produced by the various relativisms which bear down upon human life. The Withdrawal-Engagement dialectic is simply the

context in which the question of the relation of Christ and Culture is to be resolved. Niebuhr still regards the extreme types of the dialectic as pathological, favouring instead the mediate types which seek to embrace both poles of the dialectic, and he does not see the dialectic as the solution to the Christ-culture question, but as part of the problem. Instead he looks to his 'conversionist' position which transcends the dialectic to provide the answer that he seeks(9).

4.2.2.18. It has already been argued in this chapter that Niebuhr's dialectic of withdrawal and engagement strongly informs his typologies of religious orientation. Indeed in 'The Responsibility of the Church' he quite explicitly relates this dialectic to his church-sect typology (Niebuhr 1946: 114ff). This claim will be more thoroughly substantiated in the following sections which will concentrate on an analysis of the development of Niebuhr's typologies of religious orientation.

CHURCH, SECT, DENOMINATION: NIEHBUHR'S EARLY TYPOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

4.3.1. Niebuhr's first and most comprehensive discussion of church and sect occurs in the Social Sources. He explains his typology in the first introductory chapter of that work.

> One element in the social sources of theological differentiation deserves special attention. Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch have demonstrated how important are the differences in the sociological structure of religious groups in the determination of their doctrine. The primary distinction to be made here is that between the church and the sect, of which the former is a natural social group while the latter is a voluntary association. The difference has been well described as lying primarily in the fact that members are born into the Church while they must join the sect. Churches are inclusive institutions, frequently are national in scope and emphasise the universalism of the Gospel: while sects are exclusive in character, appeal to the individualistic element in Christianity and emphasise its ethical demands. Membership in a church is socially obligatory, the necessary consequence of birth into a family or nation, and no special requirements condition its privileges; the sect, on the

other hand, is likely to demand some definite type of religious experience as a prerequisite of membership. (Niebuhr 1929:17-18)

4.3.2. Having described the basic features of church and sect Niebuhr turns to explain the process whereby the sect becomes a 'denomination' - a process dubbed by later sociologists as 'the sect-cycle'.

> The sociological character of sectarianism, however, is almost always modified in the course of time by the natural processes of birth and death, and in this change in structure changes in doctrine inevitable follow. By its very nature the sectarian type of organisation is valid for one generation. The children born to the voluntary members of the first generation begin to make the sect a church long before they have arrived at the years of discretion for with their coming the sect must take on the character of an educational and disciplining institution, with the purpose of bringing the new generation into conformity with ideals and customs that have become traditional. Rarely does a second generation hold the convictions it has inherited with a fervour equal to that of its fathers, who fashioned these convictions in the heat of conflict and the risk of martyrdom. As generation succeeds generation the isolation of the community from the world becomes more difficult. Furthermore, wealth frequently increases when the sect subjects itself to the discipline of asceticism in work and expenditure; with the increase of wealth the possibilities for culture also become more numerous, and involvement in the economic life of the nation as a whole can less easily be limited. Compromise begins and the ethics of the sect approach the churchly type of morals. As with the ethic, so with the doctrine, and also with the administration of religion. An official clergy, theologically educated and schooled in the requirements of ritual, takes the place of lay leadership, easily imparted creeds are substituted for the difficult enthusiasms of the pioneers; children are born into the group and infant baptism or dedication becomes, once more, a means of grace. So the sect becomes a church. (Niebuhr 1929:19-20).

4.3.3. Niebuhr offers as examples of this process the 'Half-way Covenant' of the New England churches, the birth right membership of the Society of Friends and the transitions which have taken place in the histories of the Mennonites, Methodists and Baptists. (Niebuhr: 1929:20-21).

4.3.4. Having defined the institutions and the processes with which he is dealing Niebuhr stands back to make an ethical assessment of the phenomena he has considered thus far. He finds evil in it, but the evil, he argues,

lies not in the rise of the sects which formed an effective balance to the church and which preached the Gospel to the poor, nor in the rise of the denominations as such since they also play a useful role. Rather the chief evil lay in the fact that the institutional church-type did not see beyond its own self-preservation, and displaced Gospel ethics with church ethics, and so could not move beyond its allegiance to a particular class to serve the whole community, thus making the rise of the sects necessary. This same sin, Niebuhr claims, is being repeated by the denominations who, lacking a unifying sense of Christian brotherhood and loyalty, have no basis of cohesion from which to work. They thus leave the way open to other 'lower' cohesive forces such as class, nation and sectional interests to determine the structure of society to which they then conform. Thus in every social conflict in America the churches have taken divisive sectional stances which were dependent upon the group on which they were based. The denominations never speak with a united Christian voice; they have no brotherhood but are divided by the world's caste system; the world has triumphed over them and they have lost all their moral authority (Niebuhr: 1929:21-25).

4.3.5. Niebuhr's treatment of church and sect at this point in time is basically Troeltschian. He employs the same primary criteria that Troeltsch settled upon, that of compromise or non-compromise (Eister 1973:361-367) and relates it to the same secondary distinctions which Troeltsch described; the relative and absolute forms of ethics, the difference between institution and voluntary community, and the universalistic and particularistic focus of each group. The only feature which is missing is the distinction which Troeltsch makes between the radical and conservative tendencies in Christianity. Niebuhr also acknowledges Weber's contribution to the church-sect distinction in his opening remarks about the church being a natural group and the sect a voluntary association (Niebuhr: 1929:17). But while he begins his treatment of church and sect with this it is not enough to challenge the strongly Troeltschian flavour of his treatment of these categories.

4.3.6. The one element which does seem new in Niebuhr's approach to this question is the emergence of the denomination out of the stabilising of the

sect's life and its embourgeoisement. This, though, is simply a development of Troeltsch's ideas on the rise of the Free Church. (Eister 1973:389-341). In this process, the sectarian movements approximate churches in the growing economic prosperity of their members and their adoption of elements of a Calvinistic theology.

4.3.7. Troeltsch had studied this transition in relation to a specific group of protest sects, but Niebuhr generalised it by relating it to the internal change a sect experiences when its members begin families which children who must be nurtured, trained and socialised into the religious life of their parents, as in the church-type. What was a matter of conviction for their parents will be a question of tradition for the children. Thus for Niebuhr, the sect almost inevitably becomes a church through the natural biological processes. He also relates the economic development, which Troeltsch records, to this process as an adjunct, but not as its mainspring.

4.3.8. The real difference between Troeltsch and Niebuhr lies in the use he makes of the church-sect typology. Niebuhr uses it to make a moral judgement about the development of Christianity. This breaks all the conventions of good sociology. He attacks the church-type for its compromise with the world as a result of which it lost its vision and failed to serve all sections of the community, especially the poor. The very relationship which for Troeltsch was the great positive strength of the church-type for Niebuhr is its greatest weakness and its greatest sin. The relationship of the church-type with the powerful in culture and society has divided the Body of Christ.

4.3.9. Niebuhr's dialectic between withdrawal and engagement is also present in the typology of the Social Sources. In fact it becomes a sociological process. The church's worldly compromise provokes the withdrawal of the sect which eventually finds a re-engagement in the world in the form of a denomination. However the process as it occurs here is more accident than strategy, being a process generated, in the first place, by the sin of the church-type.

4.3.10 Niebuhr has little to say that is complementary about the church or denominational types in the Social Sources. They have both, in their way, compromised Christian faith with the ideologies of the social groups to which they have conformed and thus contributed to the division of the Church. However, there are two groups upon which Niebuhr does bestow praise. The black denominations, in which, he argues, the aspirations of black people have found free expression, and the sects which have maintained their integrity in the face of the compromise of other groups and have evangelized the disinherited and the masses which the churches and the denominations had excluded and alienated. In the final analysis it is to the kind of Christianty represented by the sects that Niebuhr looks for the salvation of the church from its condition of malaise produced by its social conformity. The sects' form of Christianity will enable the church to aggressively face society once more. (Niebuhr 1929:20-76, 106-111).

4.3.11. Denominational Christianity, Niebuhr says in his conclusion, can never provide a basis for a cultural synthesis but only the Christianity of the New Testament in its revelation of a Christ-like God in the person of Christ which presents the highest way of life, through the fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of man. Niebuhr claims that this ethic is in many respects echoed and anticipated in many movements of social reform and national independence. It will overcome international conflict through non-resistance; the gulf between rich and poor through a 'love communism', and the colour bar through the practise of this same spirit in its day-to-day dealings. He stresses that the church must have unity in itself before it may address the world. Niebuhr anticipates the objection that this would make the Church into yet another sect. He maintains that this need not be so. He sees this Christianity as a kind of 'hidden Church' within the historical Church. It is a fellowship which has often quietly sponsored the Christianity of brotherly love. It has frequently produced sects, many of which have been untrue to it by championing their own interests and welfare, and by trying to pass on the spirit of this Christianity through legalistic channels. At the same time this fellowship has produced many outstanding individuals who have served both God and humanity. It is the growth of this Christianity which will turn the tide. (10) (Niebuhr 1929: 278-294).

4.3.12. While Niebuhr does criticise sectarian Christianity here for the first time in the Social Sources it is only its distorting secondary features which he challenges. The basic ethical and theological stance which it embodies is one which he basically approves of at this stage.

4.3.13. In the Social Sources, then, Niebuhr is thoroughly Troeltschian in the way that he defines church and sect types, but not in the way that he uses them - he stands Troeltsch's position on its head. Compromise is, for Niebuhr, a point of failure rather than success. Niebuhr castigates the church-type in both its strict and denominational forms, and gives a qualified approval to the sect. In this Niebuhr is less sociological than even Troeltsch. He gives sociological categories a subjective, implicit theological and valuation content. He then uses these categories to make further value judgements. It thus is surprising, given this, that sociologists have made such an extensive use of the Social Sources. This book is really a work in ecumenical studies and Christian ethics; Niebuhr using sociological concepts and methods to these ends.

4.3.14. Later, in the articles he wrote for the 1931 edition of the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Niebuhr takes a far more sociological approach to this whole question and, in his articles on 'Protestantism' (Niebuhr 1931b) and 'Religious Institutions' (Niebuhr 1931c), he defines different types of religious institutions by their internal characteristics. Initially he distinguishes three types of Protestantism: the 'institutional', the 'sectarian' and 'Calvinistic' types. The 'Institutional' type is represented by Anglicanism and Lutheranism which in many respects stands close to Catholicism since it regards the Church as having an institutional character as a divinely ordained teacher, pastor, and priest. However, in Protestantism this institution is co-extensive with the national community and subject to political control. In the sect-type, on the other hand, which is represented by the Anabaptists, Quakers, Baptists, and Congregationalists,.....

> .....the church is a voluntary association of believers separated from the state, subject to democratic majority rule in matters of faith and practice, and devoid of sacramental character. (Niebuhr 1931b:571).

The Calvinistic type, Niebuhr continues, shares some of the characteristics of the other two. It sees the Church as co-extensive with the national community, but does not concede control to the state. It also makes some concessions to democracy in its structure, but subordinates the local congregation to the national institution and the laity to the clergy (Niebuhr 1931b:571).

4.3.15. Niebuhr identifies the political disposition of each type. He notes that the institutional type is basically conservative and orientated to feudalism. The sect one on the other hand is democratic and orientated to socialistic revolution or reform, when it does not withdraw from society. Calvinism for its part is disposed toward democratic liberalism and capitalism. From this it is clear that the 'institutional' type is a restatement of Niebuhr's church type, while the 'Calvinistic' type has some of the features of the denomination. (Niebuhr 1931b:571-575; 1931c:267-272).

4.3.16. The orientation of each type to theology, ethics and class remain what they were in the Social Sources. The only difference is that Niebuhr discretely introduces a fourth type - that of the 'society' which stands half-way between the sect and church types. This is the form which all churches take in the United States, being influenced by democratic, and pluralistic ideas and conditions (Niebuhr 1931b:272). This approximates to the 'denomination' of the Social Sources but is more sharply distinguished from Calvinism which he now presents as a type on its own.

4.3.17. Niebuhr stresses these same themes in more detail in his substantial article on 'Sects' in the 1931 Encyclopedia (Niebuhr 1931d). Niebuhr begins by noting that there are three uses of the term 'sect':- as a term which identifies various factions within religion, as a derogatory term used by the dominant or established group in a conflict situation, and a "religious conflict society which arises in opposition to an institutional church". (Niebuhr 1931d:624). It is based on the commitment of adult individuals to definite principles as a 'contract society' as opposed to an institution.

> Whereas the Church is inclusive tending to regard all members of a parish, a community or a nation as its wards, and serving as

an educational and sacramental agency, the sect is exclusive, setting up definite requirements for membership, and exercising missionary and disciplinary functions. While the churches either organically related to the state or closely identified in practice with the social order, the sect tends to be critical of, or antagonistic to, prevailing political and economic institutions. The church accommodates itself to the mores of the community, while the sect is rigoristic. For the former a religious doctrine of salvation and the participation of individuals in the means of grace are primary. The latter emphasises conduct rather than faith. To the priestly and professional leadership of the church and its hierachical organisation the sect opposes a lay leadership and a democratic organisation. Whereas the former is usually allied, in its leadership at least, with the socially powerful classes the latter enfranchised or economically weak. As a final and inclusive distinction it may be said that the church is always interested in the principle of continuity, whereas the sect emphasises discontinuity, whether between church and state, between the converted and unconverted, or between present and future. (Niebuhr 1931d:624).

4.3.18. Niebuhr denies that the sects are products of 'Protestant individualism'; they occured outside of Protestantism as a recurrent social phenomena. Moreover they have led to a number of important results for Christianity. Firstly, they have called back the church from its accommodation. Secondly, they have prepared the way for social reform. Thirdly, they have so emphasized individual conviction in religion and ethics so as to provide a necessary counter-balance to the ecclesiastical "system of collective dogma and authority". (Niebuhr 1931d:630).

4.3.19. This article stands in contrast with Niebuhr's treatment of the sect-type in the Social Sources. There he is more concerned to describe the transition of sect to denomination for the sake of exposing the class identification of different sects and their betrayal of the disinherited amongst whom they began. But in this later piece of work Niebuhr is much more concerned to describe the sect-type in itself, and it is interesting to note that he makes no reference to the sect-cycle here. Niebuhr's discussion remains heavily dependent upon Troeltsch; he locates the main periods of sect development from the Middle Ages onwards, after Thomas's synthesis of Christianity with Mediaeval culture and he restates Troeltsch's distinction between pacifist and revolutionary sects as

separatist and Millennial sects. Despite this, there are some significant differences between Niebuhr's and Troeltsch's accounts. Niebuhr does take the ancient sects of Montanism and Donatism far more seriously. He abandons Troeltsch's distinction between absolute and relative natural law, prefering to speak of vigorous and relaxed ethics. He makes a good deal less polemical use of the concept of compromise. His division of Mediaeval, Reformation, and modern sects into four periods in place of Troeltsch's two enables him to better describe the salient features of sects in a given period without forcing them into predetermined categories. Lastly, Niebuhr gives a less ideological view of sectarian groups, preferring instead to emphasize their own contingent characteristics.

4.3.20. All in all, Niebuhr's article 'Sects' is a far better piece of sociology than either Troeltsch's work on the sect type in the Social Teachings or his own work in the Social Sources. However he does not entirely abandon all subjective evaluation and in the concluding paragraph of the piece Niebuhr registers once more the profound sympathy which he felt toward the sect-type. The contributions which he states that the sect-type has made reflect his theological stance at this time. The sect's challenge of the church's compromise is an echo of the withdrawal pole of Niebuhr's withdrawal-engagement dialectic; its rejection of antiquated forms as a prelude to reform also reflects the aggressive re-engagement phase of that same dialectic. Lastly Niebuhr contends that the sect provides a counter-balance to the church. This is a restatement of his dialectical tension between the poles of withdrawal and engagement. The one type needs the pull and pressure of the other to prevent it from becoming a malformation.

4.3.21. Niebuhr continues in this non-polemical vein in another encyclopedia article in 1945. He again defines his two types in terms of their own internal structure, but on this occasion he puts this distinction to theological rather than sociological use. He follows once more the pattern he established in the first of his 1931 articles in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

> The meaning of the term "church" varies between two poles, but in every case some reference to both is involved; the first of these is a special community of men constituted by Jesus Christ or by God through Christ; the second is the idea of an institution which carries on or witnesses to the work of Christ among the "natural" communities of mankind. Each is subject to a variety of interpretations, hence three main sets of problems have been discussed in theology with reference to the church; the nature and function of the community, the nature and function of the institutions and the relations of the institution to the community. (Niebuhr 1945:169).

4.3.22. The idea of the church as a community is predominant in the sub-apostolic period. This community is conceived as the regenerated new humanity, separated from the world but scattered through it geographically. The new community is bound by the new law of Jesus. This model of the church, Niebuhr observes, has been a constant source of inspiration to reform and sectarian movements throughout history. However the basic problem that constrains it is how the church, defined as a separated community, is to be related to the rest of the human community, and to the rest of the church. (Niebuhr 1945:169-170).

4.3.23. The institutional idea of the church came into its own with the Christianisation of the Roman Empire and the development of the priesthood, episcopate, and the sacramental system.

> It is in part the consequence of the growing maturity of the Christian movement, in part the result of the accommodation of Christianity to prevailing social and religious practices. (Niebuhr 1945:170).

4.3.24. Clearly Niebuhr's concerns here are basically theological rather than sociological. However, the way in which he deals with the relation of church and sect, and institution and community in this work stands in continuity with his work in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Niebuhr defines these types not in terms of their orientation to culture but in terms of their own internal organisation. However this is not to say that the problem of church and culture does not figure in this article - it is present as the basic problem that confronts the sect-type. Niebuhr's withdrawal and engagement dialectic is also present in the accommodation of the communal type to society and its basic orientation as

a servant of society, and in the separation of the sect from society. Again the two types are part of the same polarity; they are opposites, but one cannot completely exclude the other. However, what is lacking is any polemical stance; Niebuhr does not indicate any preference for either church or sect types, or communal or institutional views of the church, but sees both as necessary.

4.3.25. In as far as Niebuhr, during this period (1929-1945) bases his typology on Troeltschian premises he will face the same sociological criticisms that were made of Troeltsch's categories. This is certainly the case with regard to the Social Sources where Niebuhr uses Troeltsch's theory of compromise to distinguish between church and sect. But even worse, from a sociological point of view, Niebuhr makes use of his typology to make evaluative judgements of different Christian institutions. The picture differs somewhat, however. because of Niebuhr's sect-cycle. For a while this was widely applauded and adopted by sociologists, but after the work of Wilson and others it became clear that many sects did not undergo any process of upward mobility, or if they did, they retained their sectarian organisation; they remained static as organisational types. Secondly, sects are not the sole province of the lower classes as both Niebuhr and Troeltsch had held. Some groups, such as the Freemasons, function as elitist, procultural sects which remain sects because of their exclusive membership and internal discipline.

4.3.26. Sociologists would probably find themselves more at ease with the position that Niebuhr takes in his writings after the Social Sources (1932 onwards). Here he has shifted his ground. Troeltsch's theory of compromise is no longer the basis of distinguishing church from sect. Instead, Niebuhr separates them on the basis of the kind of organisational pattern that they follow, either being an institution or a community. Further, in these later writings, the dispassionate historian seems to be more at the helm rather than the passionate Christian ethicist and ecumenist of the Social Sources. His contributions to the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences at least reckon as pieces of creditable sociology. However, as we have noted, his dialectic of withdrawal and engagement still figures in these articles, although in a restrained fashion, and the basic

concepts of the church which lay behind his organisational criteria are essentially theological in character - being concerned with different understandings of the church's election and mission in the world. This is clearly spelt out in his 1945 article. This leaves Niebuhr vulnerable on two counts. In the first place Niebuhr faces criticism from the sociologists for once again having introduced non-sociological criteria into his definition of what claim to be sociological types. In the second place he lays himself open to the more serious theological charge that in basing his distinction between church and sect on different theological understandings of the church he is acknowledging that theological differences are fundamental to the social differentiation of Christian institutions; the reverse of the argument in the Social Sources.

4.3.27. It is not explicitly clear why Niebuhr moves from a typology based on compromise to one based on different conceptions of the church. But it seems certain that his growing dissatisfaction with Troeltsch's idea of 'compromise' caused him to abandon it entirely as a method or as a sociological criterion. Niebuhr might also have wished to move away from the positions of extreme withdrawal or accommodation of both church and sect types. These types represented pathological stances both in Troeltsch's analysis, and in his own dialectic of engagement and withdrawal, which he himself rejects during this time as a vicious cycle. Niebuhr's discontent with both Troeltsch's concept of compromise, and his own dialectic of engagement and withdrawal, which is reflected in this movement, lay in the fact that neither could transform the world, but only ever reacted to the world. Viewed in these terms both compromise amd his own withdrawal-engagement compromise must have appeared as failures to Niebuhr. It seems that in the next stage of Niebuhr's development of his typology of religious orientation, from 1945 onwards, he realises this failure and faces up to it squarely, no longer disguising theological distinctions as sociology. Instead he analyses the theological positions which lay behind the distinctions in the church's life and existence and searched for a position which would enable the church to transform the world. Perhaps it is for this reason that after 1945 he never again makes reference to church and sect as sociological types.

The Sources of the New Typology

4.4.1.1. It would seem that in the early 1940's Niebuhr was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the church-sect typology which he had inherited from Troeltsch. However he did not abandon it since he felt it contained theological distinctions which were important. Instead he sought to refine and modify these distinctions, as discussed above, in order to adapt them to his theological purposes. Niebuhr continued to labour with Troeltsch's typology a tool despite its inadequacy simply because it was the only one he had.

4.4.1.2. This situation, though, changed in 1945, the same year Niebuhr's last article employing a variation of the church-sect typology appears. When discussing the concept of 'revelation' in a further encyclopedia article Niebuhr describes Gilson's classification of the positions taken in Christian history defining the relation between reason and revelation. Gilson defined four positions: 'Tertullianism', which regards revelation as exclusively self-sufficient; 'Averroeism', which regards revelation as a confirmation of the truths of reason; 'Thomism', which regards reason as preparatory to revelation; and 'Augustinianism', which makes reason dependent on faith. (Niebuhr 1945: 661).

4.4.1.3. In the work from which these categories are drawn (Gilson 1939) Gilson states that it is his intention to give a more accurate description and classification of Mediaeval thought than that which usually persists. His first type which he describes as the 'Tertullian School', consists of those who maintain that revelation replaces reason and that therefore all philosophical speculation is futile. All that is needed in the minds of these men is simple obedience to the commands of scripture. Among the representatives of this view Gilson places Tatian, Saint Bernard, and the 'Spiritual Franciscans'. He notes that this group arises whenever philosophy is taken too seriously by the church and threatens to make inroads into the domain of revelation. (Gilson 1939:3-15).

4.4.1.4. The next tendency that Gilson considers is that which he calls the 'Augustinian family' which does not replace reason with revelation but makes revelation the basis of reasoning. The Christian first accepts the truths of divine revelation by faith and then employs reason, represented by the highest philosophical and scientific developments of the day to understand them. Gilson includes in this family, along with Augustine, Anselm, Bacon, Raymond Lull, and Malebranche. The great strength of this school, he says, is that while all agree that reason must proceed from faith and upon the orthodox content of such faith, they do not agree about the content of reason and so use different intellectual methods from Platonic philosophy to strict logic and mathematics. This means that they can always adapt to new intellectual and cultural situations. The corresponding weakness of this position, though, is that it takes a creative genius to use reason and faith in this manner. The number of such geniuses are strictly limited, with the result that lesser minds work to obscure the use of reason with their interpretation of revelation. The other difficulty with this school, says Gilson, is that it presumes faith and so has nothing to say to the philosophically minded pagans - the idea of purely philosophical Christian wisdom was left to others. (Gilson 1939:15-33).

4.4.1.5. Gilson's third 'family' is that of the Spanish Islamic philsopher Ibn-Rushd (latin: Averroes) who saw revelation as a form of the absolute knowledge that was perceived by the philosphers. Averroes respected the moralising influence of revelation on the irrationally minded and the miraculous way in which it was given to them. However he would not allow that it contradicted reason; merely that it presented the wisdom of reason in an imaginative and popular form. He also created a subtle distinction between the necessary truths of philosophy, represented by Aristotle which had to be accepted by reason, and the truths of revelation which had to be accepted by faith. Averroes developed this distinction to escape the criticisms of the theologians.

4.4.1.6. Gilson's fourth 'family' is that of Thomas Aquinas who, he says, rejected both the 'theologism' of Anselm, and the separation of faith and

knowledge practised by the Averroeists. Thomas argued that to believe in two contradictory bodies of truth was absurd and a misuse of the concept of 'truth'. Thomas himself, however, did accept the basic principle that some kind of distinction had to be drawn between reason and revelation. He made this distinction on the basis of perfection: what was believed by faith was known only through revelation and was not accessible to reason, and that what was known by science is established by natural reason. Furthermore this distinction is universal since there is no 'higher' reason which had access to the same truths as revelation. In order to gain salvation, all classes, ignorant and educated alike, had to believe in God's teaching in revelation which was attested by miracles, especially that of the growth of the church. Having said this Thomas, unlike the Averroeists, does not believe that science and religion, having different epistemological bases, can contradict each other. The truths of both come from one divine source. Thus if some scientific proposition were contrary to faith it was likely to be wrong scientifically. However all propositions of faith were neither provable nor disprovable by philosophy. Thomas's approach, then, is to distinguish not to separate philosophy and theology. His answer, Gilson argues, is that the theologian should think like a philosopher where appropriate. Likewise the philosopher should think like a theologian when in turn dealing with matters of revelation. Thomas does have separate theological from philosophical ideas, Gilson contends. He states that there are some ideas, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul which may be established by practical reason and so are not statements of faith, but they are necessary to faith. Other doctrines such as the incarnation and the Trinity can only be known to faith. God, he says, has given revelation, so that all, learned and unlearned, may come to salvation. (Gilson 1939:69-84).

4.4.1.7. Gilson's work was important for Niebuhr in two respects. In the first place he encountered in Gilson's small volume a non-sociological, theologically and historically orientated use of typologies of religious orientation. Gilson had defined these on the basis of different solutions to the reason-revelation problem. This stood in contrast with Troeltsch's approach which was a fusion or confusion of sociological, theological and ethical criteria. In the second place Niebuhr encountered a broader use of

types. In Gilson these were defined by their own inherent content, rather than by their external social relations. Two of these the 'Tertullianist' and the 'Averroeist' Niebuhr would have recognised as variants of his own sect and church types and the 'Augustinian' stance would have echoed his own conversationist position. The Thomist position, however, would have been new to him as a distinct type. It would seem that these types formed the basis for the expansion of his own typology in Christ and Culture. Niebuhr never acknowledged(11) that Gilson influenced him in this change of emphasis, but that Niebuhr took his point of departure from Gilson's lead here is suggested by two points. Firstly, the similarities of approach: both use theological rather than sociological criteria to classify their types. Secondly, the similarity between Niebuhr's and Gilson's types.

4.4.1.8. In Gilson, Niebuhr encounters a way of making a theological classification of religious types in terms of their content and convictions. This subsequently displaces the Troeltschian approach he had hitherto adopted of classifying theological types by sociological criteria. It is broadly Gilson's approach he uses in Christ and Culture and this replaces the Troeltschian framework which he used in his earlier work on this topic.

Christ, Culture and the Five Types.

4.4.2.1. Like Niebuhr, Troeltsch was concerned with the relationship between the church and the world. However he saw this as primarily expressed as a problem of the relationship of different institutions within society. Niebuhr in Christ and Culture takes a different line. He seeks to give a theological definition, which is informed by both history and philosophy, of both Christ and Culture. Christ and Culture exist as spiritual or valuational realities in history rather than sociological realities (Niebuhr 1952: 26-52). Here Niebuhr approaches the same basic problem which Gilson addressed. He does so in the same way but on a much broader canvas which draws in many other aspects of the same Christ-culture problem.

4.4.2.2. In Christ and Culture Niebuhr begins by defining the two polar types of 'Christ Against Culture' and 'Christ of Culture' which either set Christ and Culture in an exclusive antagonism or into an inclusive unity. Niebuhr then adds to these two basic types three median types all of which seek to reconcile Christ and culture in some way; by synthesis, as in the 'Christ Above Culture' type, by a dualistic tension as in the 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' type, or by the transformation of culture as in the 'Christ Transforming Culture' type. These five types, Niebuhr believes, continually reoccur historically in the multiplicity of answers to the Christ and culture relationship. According to Niebuhr these types are exhaustive because they are logically defined by the problem. He admits that these types are artificial in nature and that no historical example actually conforms to them but he feels that they are useful for identifying and providing a framework for the motifs which reoccur in Christian history as answers for the Christ and culture problem are sought. Thus they may be of assitance to Christians in the present time who seek to address the same problems (Niebuhr 1952: 53-57). Lastly Niebuhr, unlike Troeltsch, states that no one type represents the definitive answer to the Christ and Culture problem, but all are right and appropriate in particular situations. Only taken together do they represent the proper Christian response of discerning which response is the correct one for their time and place.

4.4.2.3. The first type which Niebuhr studies in detail is the Christ against Culture type. This emphasizes the opposition between Christ and culture; whatever the culture may be, Christ is seen to issue a decisive "either-or" decision concerning it. In its early period Christianity was antagonistic to Jewish and Greco-Roman civilisation. In the Mediaeval period both sects and monastic orders advised withdrawal and separation from culture. In modern times missionaries direct their converts to abandon "heathen cultures" and many others counsel practical rejection of culture in stressing the antagonism to Christian faith or communism, capitalism, industrialism, nationalism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. (Niebuhr 1952: 53-54).

4.4.2.4. Niebuhr informs his readers that it would be possible to multiply the list of the representatives of this type and to show the resemblance between groups of different backgrounds. However he feels that this would be unnecessary as the similarity between them would soon be seen. Nor would it matter whether these groups are eschatological or mystical in orientation. What matters is that they stress the nearness of the Kingdom in temporal or 'super-sensual'terms. Thus despite the diversity between the groups which represent this type, they give a common answer to the question about Christ and culture.

4.4.2.5. Having described the general orientation of this type and having given various heuristic examples of it Niebuhr turns to give a theological analysis of it. He notes that those occupying the 'Christ Against Culture' position have often brought great assets to society, although they never intended to do so. (In this connection Niebuhr mentions the monastic contribution to democracy). Moreover they require the mediation of others to communicate their contribution. Niebuhr sees the strategy of withdrawal embodied in the 'Christ Against Culture' position as necessary in order to affirm the distinct Lordship of Christ over the Christian and the church, and to act as a counterbalance against the easy compromise and loss of identity the church would suffer in the world without this witness. Niebuhr observes that the strategy of withdrawal has often led to reform in the church, although, again, this was never the intention of the radicals. A withdrawal from the world is necessary both for the individual and the church at some points in their history in order for the Lordship of Christ to be established over them, but an equally necessary re-engagement is required as he sends them out again. Niebuhr concedes that further withdrawals may be necessary in his own time. But despite this he concludes that this position is inadequate in that it does not recognise that it is impossible to withdraw from a culture. Those who represent this position are all members of a culture, and so must think and communicate in the categories which their culture has established. What actually happens, Niebuhr argues, is the selection, conversion and acceptance of various lesser evils in the natural order. Thus the radical Christians cannot reject an entire culture as they propose. (Niebuhr 1952:76-86).

4.4.2.6. Niebuhr again returns to his withdrawal and re-engagement dialectic here; the radical type representing the withdrawal pole of this dialectal pair. He stresses the necessity of withdrawal for the sake of the health and integrity of the church - especially, as he has emphasized before, as a counter-balance to the compromise which the church is prone to enter with culture. That the Christ Against Culture type should exist, then, is essential since without it the reform of the church would be difficult to generate. However this response, by itself is never enough. It is only one part of the equation, which falls without the other - namely re-engagement in culture. As a response it can never be complete since it is impossible to withdraw completely from a culture.

4.4.2.7. Niebuhr proceeds to consider various theological objections to the position. He states that the issues which the Christ Against Culture Christians face are not only ethical but religious. As Christians withdraw they beg many questions about God's relationship to human beings and their work. The first of these is that of revelation and reason. Reason, says Niebuhr, is taken to designate cultural knowledge and revelation is divinely given knowledge of salvation. Revelation is defined as anti-rational and reason seen as inadequate - even as deceptive because it does not, and and cannot lead to salvation. Tertullian, Tolstoy, the Protestant sects, and the Quakers all took this view. However all found that reasoning must take place within the circle of faith, albeit on a different basis, since revelation, by itself, is not enough. (Niebuhr 1952:86-88).

4.4.2.8. In their doctrine of sin the Radicals made society the chief medium of communication of sin and the source of all corruption. One of the chief reasons for separating from society is to preserve the holiness of the church. The uncultured soul cannot be said to be evil, but must be good being created by God. Niebuhr feels that this doctrine of the social inheritance of sin is an important contribution to theology, but observes that the Radicals cannot be wholly consistent in. They have to fight against sin in themselves, when separate from culture, and it is a requirement that each person should acknowledge their sinfulness. Sin, therefore, has to be fought by means other than mere withdrawal alone. (Niebuhr 1952: 88-89).

4.4.2.9. Related to this last problem is that of Law and Grace. Because the Radicals emphasize the new law, and the Christian's conduct in the world by which they are to establish their distinct identity, they are in danger of overemphasizing law and giving it priority over grace. The Radicals thus invite the charge of works - righteousness. Obedience to rules may then obscure the love and service of God and neighbour. The Apostle John, Niebuhr observes, combines law and grace; Tertullian is more legally minded and Tolstoy even more so as for him Christ is only the Lawgiver. Alongside this, however, Niebuhr feels the representatives of the radical position do reflect the fact that Christians need forgiveness of sins, like all other human beings. They recognise that Christ is not merely the founder of a new and closed society or the giver of a new law, but the expiator of the sins of all. Moreover the radicals believe that the only distinction which separates Christians from others is the spirit in which they do the common tasks of life. The Christian simply does everything with a different attitude and reflects grace because he knows this. (Niebuhr 1952: 89-91).

4.4.2.10. The last and most difficult problem facing 'radical' Christians, Niebuhr concludes, is that of the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. How is Christ the Lord, Lawgiver, and Redeemer related to the Author and Creator of nature? Tolstoy abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity whereas the author of First John and Tertullian helped to form it. The real danger is that as the radicals seek to defend Christ's Lordship and define his commandments they set this in opposition to the material world and its origin. This has often resulted in the transformation of the duality between church and world into a dualism of nature and spirit in which Christ or the spirit of Christ is placed above all material and temporal authority, even, paradoxically, that of the scriptures and the historical Jesus. The heresy of Manicheism is always at the edges of the Christ Against Culture movement, hence it needs others to balance it out. (Niebuhr 1952: 91-92).

4.4.2.11. The fundamental characteristic of the Christ Against Culture position, then, is that it places Christ as Lawgiver in an antagonistic relation to culture which it sees as basically sinful and from which

Christians must withdraw if they are to be obedient to Christ. Niebuhr sees this response as necessary for the health of the church but insufficient and prone to heresy by itself - it needs to be balanced out by the other types. Niebuhr also places the type in his now familiar dialectic of engagement and withdrawal and it is here its importance to the other types and its dependence upon the other types lies.

4.4.2.12. Clearly the Christ Against Culture type parallels Troeltsch's sect type. But what is at issue here is the type's theological and ethical response to culture and it is the basis of his classification. Thus while Niebuhr has a wide discussion of the type's understanding of Christ as Lawgiver, of culture as corrupt, of law and grace and the relation between Father and Son in the Trinity, he says nothing about patterns of membership or other sociological characteristics. He defines the type by its theological and ethical position.

4.4.2.13. In this respect Niebuhr is closer to Gilson than to Troeltsch in this matter. His Christ Against Culture type parallels Gilson's 'Tertullianist' response to the problem of reason and revelation in that revelation replaces reason just as Christ is to displace culture. Like Gilson Niebuhr takes Tertullian as the leading representative of this type and stresses it's basic characteristics of the rejection of human work and thought in favour of simple obedience to the commands of Christ. Niebuhr, however, places these characteristics within the much wider framework of Christ and culture which, as Niebuhr unintentionally shows, embraces that of reason and revelation.

4.4.2.14. While Niebuhr sees the Christ Against Culture type as necessary to the life of the Church, by itself it is inadequate and even destructive. Furthermore while it has made a contribution to the transformation of culture which is Niebuhr's major aim in his theology and ethics, and prepares the way for it, it requires other types to communicate that contribution and to carry through the openings for reform which this position creates. By itself the Christ against Culture position is only partially successful.

4.4.2.15. The second position which Niebuhr discusses in Christ and Culture is his other polar type, that of the Christ of Culture. This type, he says, recognises a fundamental agreement between Christ and culture. Jesus is presented in it as the great hero of human culture and history. His life and teaching are seen as the greatest of human achievements and the culmination of human values:

> He confirms what is best in the past and guides the process of civilisation to its proper goal. (Niebuhr 1952:54)

Christ is thus part of culture.

4.4.2.16. In the 1950's Niebuhr felt that this position was represented by those Christians who made a close connection between Western civilisation and Jesus, or democratic values and Jesus' teaching. There are also other contemporary interpreters who associated Christ and the 'spirit of Marxian society'. In ancient times forms of this type were present alongside the Christ Against Culture type. (Niebuhr 1952: 54-55).

4.4.2.17. Niebuhr offers a defence of 'culture Christianity' against its critics, many of whom, he observes are themselves really champions of culture, but of a different culture to that of their rivals. Thus the fundamentalists champion the rural culture of America, and yet others the proletarian culture of the cities. Secondly, those who call for a return to Biblical Christianity in contrast to 'culture-protestanism' forgot that the Bible itself contains a variety of cultures. The Christ of Culture movement, Niebuhr argues, has done valuable work in translating the ideas of faith into contemporary forms, in extending Christ's Kingdom by giving it cultural embodiment, in discerning the this-wordly aspects of Christ which the radicals ignore. (Jesus sought to heal the body, opposed unjust customs, regulate family life, and to purify the Temple, as well as look forward to eschaton). Moreover, the culture-Christians reached significant intellectual groups within society that the radicals alienated. The culture-Christians affirmed the universal Lordship of Christ over all life. Niebuhur notes the objection that the culture Christians, by accommodating Christ to culture, had produced as many Christs as cultures. Niebuhr responds by stating that Christ has many aspects which are easily

overlooked, but which his alignment with many different cultures discloses. The culture-Christians, he says, also encouraged those positive values and movements towards reform within a culture by identifying Christ with them. He feels that to recognise that truth and value is found in a culture is to recognise that the Spirit proceeds from the Father as well as the Son. (Niebuhr 1952: 110-116).

4.4.2.18. In considering theological objections to the Christ of Culture position Niebuhr states that its evangelists have not succeeded in removing the offence of Christ. Nor do they always succeed in winning the cultured, who often see them as a threat, introducing a corrupting and weakening element into their culture. The culture Christians also have a tendency to abstract one aspect of Christ, which they feel is compatible with the culture they are engaging, and absolutise this making it the whole. Thus Christ is only the Logos, only the bringer of the message of universal love, only the reformer, and so on. In its adoption of the New Testament canon, and in later Councils, the Church rejected such a narrow view of Christ. As a whole the Church has resisted this path much more than the path of radical Christianity. Niebuhr states, however, that these extremes are similar in the stances they take on reason and revelation, grace, sin and the Trinity. The culture Christians, like the Radicals, reject theology, but for different reasons; they see it as obscurantist. They see reason as the main road to truth and salvation, and identify revelation with a mystic and an uncultured presentation of the same truths which reason establishes. However, argues Niebuhr, the culture-Christians cannot be entirely independent of revelation and have, at the end of the day, to affirm that Christ is the Son of God and is risen from the dead. The rational systems they devise about the aim of human life and its chief good fall to the ground unless God has disclosed them in Christ. This is the basis of the culture-Christians reasoning and it is one which reason cannot establish. (Niebuhr 1952: 116-120).

4.4.2.19. Culture-Christians, advises Niebuhr, also gives a cultural interpretation of sin identifying it with bad social institutions and superstitious religion. They believe, too, that the individual's heart or soul can contain a 'realm of sinlessness', but like the sectarians, they

are forced to acknowledge the inherent sinfulness of reason which corrupts all intentions. This brings them close to other believers. (Niebuhr 1952:120-121). Like the radicals, Niebuhr continues, the culture-Christians incline to law, emphasizing the need for human effort in the cultural task. Grace is seen either as a distraction to this task, causing people to rely upon God rather than their own effort, or as an adjunct to this task enabling and sustaining it. Culture Christianity has given birth to movements which stress both aspects. Niebuhr, in reflecting upon this, states that this might be part of the old paradox of Christians having to work out their salvation while God is also at work within them; the Kingdom is both gift and task. However irrational grace and law may be, they are both real. Culture-Christians also tend to deny the doctrine of the trinity by identifying Christ with the spirit present in culture. The question arises, however, says Niebuhr, about the relation of this spirit to the Creator of nature. This is especially important as natural forces threaten to overwhelm culture, and as science discovers that nature only makes sense within a rational ordering. On top of this, other questions arise as spirits emerge in culture which are contrary to the spirit of Christ. Niebuhr concludes:

> It becomes more or less clear that it is not possible modestly to confess that Jesus is the Christ of culture unless one can confess more than this. (Niebuhr 1952:122).

4.4.2.20. Niebuhr's Christ of Culture type is the mirror image of his Christ against Culture type of which it is the logical counterpart. It stresses the continuity between reason and revelation, Christ and culture while the radicals stress their incontinuity. Just as the radicals give priority to revelation the culture-Christians give priority to reason. Their view of Jesus is also different making him the great Champion and redeemer of culture in contrast to the radical's view of Jesus as its great enemy and judge. However, in their views of sin, grace and Law the culture-Christians and the radicals find themselves on oddly common ground, until one remembers that extreme positions often meet each other on some issues while going in different directions.

4.4.2.21. Niebuhr's dialectic of withdrawal and engagement once again underlies this contrast and resemblance. The culture-Christians represent the pole of engagement in culture; developing as a response to the anti-cultural stance of the radicals. The concern of the culture-Christians is to win over culture, reform it, and affirm what is good, beautiful, and true within it. However in so doing they frequently compromise the Christ and so set the dialectic in motion again.

4.4.2.22. Following this logic the Christ of Culture type formally corresponds to Troeltsch's church-type because it forms a creative compromise with culture. However in actuality, while this was Troeltsch's formal definition of the church-type none of the examples he described as representing this type ever went as far in accommodating Christ to culture as did the majority of culture-Christians.

4.4.2.23. In fact Niebuhr's Christ of Culture type is much closer to Gilson's 'Avoerroeist' family. This is particularly evident in the continuity which both posit between Christ and Culture and revelation and reason. There is no clash between the two as they both deal in the same truth. However both also agree that these truths are in the first place the truths of reason which is the main route to knowledge. Revelation is a republishing of these same truths for the ignorant and the uncultured. The only significant difference between Niebuhr and Gilson is that Niebuhr's culture-Christians are more committed to the distinctive centre of their faith than were Averroes and his followers.

4.4.2.24. Lastly, Niebuhr finds that like its counterpart, (the Church Against Culture position), the Christ of Culture type is not self-sufficient or self-consistent. It needs the presence of other types to balance its excessive tendencies and to maintain its Christian commitment. It only makes sense, and can only survive, as a Christian position if there are other stances around it whose grasp of Christology is more profound than its own.

4.4.2.25. Niebuhr turns from the two polar positions to what he calls the 'churches of the centre'. He remarks that it is easy to think in dialectical caricatures such as spirit and nature, self and other, church and sect, and so on, which distorts the actual variety of life. The majority of churches reject the extremes of both radical and culture-christians and seek a position in which they can show both devotion to Christ and to culture. The 'Churches of the centre' have a broad agreement that Jesus is the Son of God, the Creator of nature; that humanity must be obedient to God in natural life and see this as the basis of culture; that sin is universal, and hold such a view of Law and Grace that they avoid legalism. They give primacy to grace, but stress the necessity of works of obedience. (Niebuhr 1952: 123-127).

4.4.2.26. Despite this agreement, the 'Churches of the centre' diverge in the way they approach their common ideal of holding Christ and culture together in some kind of unity while maintaining the distinction between them. Niebuhr's third type (his first median type) does this by seeing Christ as both continuous and discontinuous with society. Christ is the fulfilment of culture's aspirations but also the one who brings to it supernatural gifts which it would not otherwise have acquired. But he also leads people to a new society which they could not attain by their own efforts.

> Christ is the Christ of culture, but he is also a <u>Christ above culture</u>. This is the 'synthetic'option. (Niebuhr 1952:55).

4.4.2.27. The synthetic Christians, Niebuhr relates, rejects both the extremes of the radical who does not take culture seriously, and of the culture Christian who do not take Christ seriously enough. They wish to affirm both Christ and culture but maintain the distinction between the two. Thus they cannot affirm Christ and culture by accommodating Christ to culture since this compromise is achieved either by making Christ the key to speculative metaphysics (the Gnostics) or the revealer of value (Modernists) and ends up by either humanising God or divinising man. The synthesist, however, wishes to affirm the importance of the transcendent world and the commands of Jesus, but only alongside the commands of God in the natural life to which the Christian also has a responsibility. This is

expressed in the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, divine and human, united yet distinct, and in the divine, yet sinful nature of culture. (Niebuhr 1952: 127-130). Justin, Origen, Thomas Aquinas, and Butler all occupied this position in Niebuhr's view. (Niebuhr 1952: 130-146).

4.4.2.28. In his theological appraisal of the Christ Above Culture position Niebuhr observes that synthesis appears to satisfy the human desire for unity in reason, religion and morals by combining all within a simple system. It also creates a divine foundation for natural and cultural life. Its great flaw, however, is that in making this synthesis it absolutises a particular culture which it identifies as particularly Christian and then seeks to defend it thus making the relative infinite, absolute and eternal. The only way to avoid this, argues Niebuhr, is to understand that any culture, and any synthesis is temporary. Cultures change and need to be constantly re-converted. Further, the ministry of Christ and the grace of God, Niebuhr believes, become identified with a particular institution within society which is as much the product of human effort as any other institution. Christ, and those who would be obedient to him, must then conform to the institution. There is no free Lord, and no free obedience. Niebuhr feels that all of these objections combine in one, that peace and integrity are sought on earth rather than hoped for as part of the eschaton so that what should be eternal is made temporal and finite. If the synthesis were taken as a symbol of the eternal peace, if it were seen as temporary and in need of conversion it would escape these criticism but it would then no longer be a synthesis. Niebuhr also criticizes the synthetic view for the unhealthy hierarchical division it creates among men as if some are (or even could be) more holy and obedient than others. In conclusion Niebuhr states that the synthesists do not take the presence of sin in culture seriously enough. (Niebuhr 1952:146-153).

4.4.2.29. Christ and culture in the synthetic position, are not opposed, but are placed in a hierarchical relationship to one another. As a result they are both continuous with each other in as far as culture prepares the way for Christ, and Christ fulfils culture, but also discontinuous as Christ transcends culture with supernatural grace and salvation which he

brings and in the supernatural end to human life which he establishes. This in turn leads to a hierarchical view and organisation of life. Those areas of human life and society which are seen to pertain to culture (the natural life and the state) serve, and are surpassed by those other areas of life and society which pertain to Christ (the monastic life and the church).

4.4.2.30. At first sight it would seem that Niebuhr's dialectic of engagement and withdrawal is absent from this type, but this is a false impression as it finds expression here in two hierarchical stages. The Christians who find themselves by their station involved in the natural life are obliged to engage in culture, whereas those who are called to the spiritual life must withdraw from it. The Church as an institution is both engaged in culture in the person of its priests and bishops, and withdrawn from it in the person of its religious communities.

4.4.2.31. The synthetic type is quite close to Troeltsch's actual description of the church type - especially the leading example of it that he gives in the Social Teachings: Thomism. It is this type which actually engages in the process of forming a creative compromise with culture in the cultural synthesis. Indeed, it is also this type which represents his own approach to the problem of the relation of Christ and culture.

4.4.2.32. The synthetic type clearly reflects Gilson's 'Thomist' position on revelation and reason. In Niebuhr's account of this position culture prepares the way for Christ or grace, which then transcends culture. This parallels the roles of reason and revelation in Gilson's account of the 'Thomist' family in which revelation turn surpasses reason with knowledge that is inaccessible to it.

4.4.2.33. Niebuhr's assessment of the synthetic type is largely negative despite his statement that all of the types are part of the Christian answer to the Christ and culture problem and constantly recur in appropriate situations. The synthetic type commits what are to Niebuhr's mind the two most heinous theological sins. In the first place, it is absolutised, giving ultimacy to one relative cultural position above all

others, (Henotheism). In the second, it is also defensive seeking to protect its absolutized theology, and culture from all threats and challenges. (12) This inevitably follows from its absolutism. The result is that it substitutes polemics for argument and understanding. It would appear that this is also Niebuhr's final and damning assessment of Troeltsch's method of synthesis.

4.4.2.34. Niebuhr's fourth Christ and culture position, and his second 'median' position is that of Christ and Culture in Paradox. This type places Christ and culture in a duality in which both are affirmed as authoritative and requiring obedience, but which are in opposition to each other, but an opposition which is embraced. Christians must live in a tension that comes from being obedient to two authorities which do not agree but both of which must be obeyed. The dualists refuse to compromise the claims of Jesus and so are like the radicals. They differ from them in that they argue that obedience to God requires obedience and loyalty to society as well as to Christ who judges society. In this scheme humanity is subject to two moralities as citizens of two worlds which are both continuous with each other and yet opposed. (Niebuhr 1952:55-56).

> In the polarity and tension of Christ and culture life must be lived precariously and sinfully in the hope of a justification which lies beyond history. (Ibid:56).

4.4.2.35. In examining the theology of this position Niebuhr says that the dualists are the greatest critics of the synthesizers who do not take seriously the corrupt nature of culture and its evil potential. For the dualist the conflict is found not between Christ and culture but existentially between God and ourselves. The dualist poses the Christ and culture question as a question about human culture. They stress the radicality of sin and grace. As humanity stands before God it is sinful, and so are all of its cultural works, which are regarded as different expressions of Godlessness, pride and the lust for power. Before God everything is equally corrupt. The grace brought by Christ is equally radical: completely transforming and changing human beings, making them righteous. The dualist shares the radical Christians' judgement about culture but not their conclusion. The dualists do not withdraw from

culture because they realise that they are part of it and cannot but live within it. The dualists understand that it is God's will for them to continue to live within culture. Thus dualist Christians are believers in paradoxes. They are both saints and sinners; Christ has made all things new, yet nothing has changed. The Christian lives under both law and grace, but the law comes as both judgement and as grace, being written on the heart by the Spirit, but as an impossible demand of love. The dualists are caught in an endless dialogue with law and grace. Lastly, they meet God as both Judge and Saviour in nature and religious experience. Thus culture has two sides: its darkness, which God judges; and those blessings through which the divine mercy is shown. The dualists must endeavour not to separate God's action as Judge from his work as Saviour. In this respect, Niebuhr notes, the dualist is trinitarian, or at least binitarian. (Niebuhr 1952:154-163). Niebuhr regards Paul, Marcion, Luther, Kierkegaard and Troeltsch(13) as dualists. (Niebuhr 1952:163-87).

4.4.2.36. Niebuhr examines what he considers to be the theological virtues and vices of the dualist position. The dualists, Niebuhr says, have successfully stated what it means for Christians to be living 'between the times' in a sinful world, correctly identifying the real tension that they experience. Moreover, whereas the radical's conception of the new life is static, and the cultural and synthesist Christians' views of culture are absolutist, the dualist Christian sees the new life and the demands of culture as both dynamic and relativistic since they have affirmed both the religious life and cultural life. They have also set the one free from the other. However, the vices of dualism parallel its virtues; it produces anti-nomian tendencies which find expression in the argument that since obedience or disobedience are equally as sinful, laws should be ignored as one relies on grace. This is a distortion but one which dualists are unable, without the aid of the other types, to refute. Dualists also have tendency to cultural conservatism which is inevitable if the institutions of society are seen as fences against sin. In addition to this, they have a predilection for identifying the creation with the Fall and so associate sin with the material world as such. It is, Niebuhr claims, only a simple step from this to Marcion's position. Niebuhr concludes again that the dualists need the other types, like the radicals, to assist them in making

a contribution to culture, and in also providing a more positive view of the world. (Niebuhr 1952:182-191).

4.4.2.37. Niebuhr's dualist position, then, is one in which Christ and culture are held together in tension. Christians are at the same time to be obedient to Christ and involved in culture. While human culture is sinful it is God's will as Creator that Christians be involved with it. Thus both the Father and the Son are obeyed. Christians can, however, proceed with confidence relying upon the forgiveness of sins. Having said this, the pressure of the tension between law and grace will always bear upon them.

4.4.2.38. Niebuhr's Withdrawal-Engagement dialectic is present in this position as well. The dualists reach the same view about culture as the radicals and so, in one part of their lives, withdraw from its values in favour of obedience to Christ. In another, however, as citizens they must be engaged in culture. Withdrawal and engagement are thus held together in a dynamic tension with the Christian responding to both imperatives at the same time, relying on the forgiveness of sins and eternity to resolve the ambiguities which arise from the tension.

4.4.2.39. Dualism, as a distinct type, is unknown to both Troeltsch and Gilson. Troeltsch does, of course, discuss this stance in the Social Teachings in connection with Luther's social ethics but it is for him simply a variant of his church-type and he does not distinguish it from the cultural, synthetic, and conversionist views which his type also embraces. Dualism, as a type, is also foreign to Gilson, although he does refer to it in connection with the desire to separate revelation from reason that was represented in the 'German Theology' which so influenced Luther. This type is unique to Niebuhr who, it seems, developed it out of the examples furnished him by Luther and Troeltsch. He then found similar ideas in Paul and Marcion and generalised it as a recurring type. This is his only addition to the classification that he received from Gilson.

4.4.2.40 Niebuhr apparently prefers this position to that of the synthesists and, indeed, to the radical and cultural positions. The reason for this would seem to be that it is the first position to correctly, in Niebuhr's mind, define the circumstances of the Christian life - of having to participate in sinful culture. It affirms both the authority of the Father as Creator, and Christ as Redeemer and Judge, but without placing Christ and culture in a hierarchical relationship. Rather they are held together in a dualistic tension. However even this type still needs the other types to enable its contribution to culture to be made, and to correct its overpessimistic view of culture. (14)

4.4.2.41. The Christ Transforming Culture position is Niebuhr's fifth and final type and his third median position.

> Those who offer it understand with the members of the first and the fourth groups that human nature is fallen or perverted and that this perversion not only appears in culture but is transmitted by it. Hence the opposition between Christ and all human institutions and custom is to be recognised. Yet the antithesis does not lead ethics to Christian separation from the world as with the first group, or to mere endurance in the expectation of a trans-historical salvation as with the fourth. Christ is seen as the converter of man in his culture and society. (Niebuhr 1952:56).

4.4.2.42. Niebuhr notes that the conversionist position is closest to the dualist, but has affinities with the other stances also. They share with the radical the distinction between God's work and humanity's but do not take the path of withdrawal. Thus while they accept their position in society they do not blunt Christ's judgement on culture. Like the synthesists and the dualists they recognise Christ as Redeemer, not, primarily, as lawgiver, who heals the deepest recesses of sinful human nature through the incarnation, thus making the conversion of culture possible. They stress with the dualists the depth of sin, but also emphasize God's rule over all of life. The conversionists are distinguished from all the positions in three respects; firstly, by their positive view of creation, to which they link their Christology - making Christ active in creation as well as redemption; secondly, by their view of the Fall in which they see the distortion of nature rather than its

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ruin; thirdly, they take a positive view of history regarding it as the acts of God by which cultures are transformed. (Niebuhr 1952:192-197). Niebuhr finds this theme in the Gospel of Saint John, Augustine, Edwards and Maurice. (Niebuhr 1952:197-228).

4.4.2.43. This type is unique, in Niebuhr's analysis, in that it posits both discontinuity and continuity between Christ and culture. With the radicals, the conversionists identify sin in culture, but they confront it - sending culture into crisis. However, rather than rejecting culture or seeking its precarious and conditional rapprochment with Christ through synthesis or dualism, it seeks the conversion of culture and its re-orientation around Christ. Thus Christ does not replace culture but redefines it so that a continuity exists both between Christ and a converted culture and between the old culture and the new.

4.4.2.44. It would appear that the dialectic of withdrawal and engagement is also transformed in this type as both poles find unity in conversion. The imperatives of the withdrawal pole for faithfulness and obedience, and of the engagement pole for affirmation and responsibility for the world both find apparent fulfilment within this process. Thus as long as the process of conversion continues, the dialectical tension between these two poles is, at least temporarily resolved and the effective transformation and society achieved.

4.4.2.45. This type bears no resemblance to any of Troeltsch's types, although there is a very dim perception of it in his treatment of Calvinism. The primary reason for this is that Troeltsch's understanding of the Christ and culture problem was defined by his synthetic approach. However Niebuhr's Christ Transforming Culture type clearly echoes Gilson's 'Augustinian' approach to the problem of revelation and reason. The Christ Transforming Culture position recognises the sinfulness of culture but does not reject it, preparing instead to re-orientate it on the basis of Christ. Gilson's Augustinian position likewise recognises the limitation of reason but does not reject it, preferring to use it once it has re-established its foundation on revelation and been made it dependent on faith.

4.4.2.46. The conversionist position is Niebuhr's own preferred stance. It is composed of those who represent the 'Great Tradition' which emphasizes God's sovereignty with which Niebuhr identifies himself, and he offers no theological objection to this position. Further, it is the only type which is not logically dependent on the other positions since it contains the balance of the Christian faith within itself having no tendencies, which Niebuhr perceives, to extremism or heresy. However he does make it strategically dependent on the other types. This last stance, for Niebuhr, is the culmination of the argument.

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF NIEBUHR'S TYPOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

4.5.1. Niebuhr's first typology of religious orientation which he offered in the Social Sources in 1929 was largely Troeltschian, with the exception that he dropped the mystical type as irrelevant to the American situation. He also developed Troeltsch's idea of the Free Church into the type of the denomination to which he added the concept of 'the sect-cycle'. Niebuhr maintained this emphasis in his 1935 Encyclopedia articles. In both cases he has a strategic bias toward the sect-type since its stance of withdrawal seemed to him to be a necessary option for the times. Niebuhr developed this idea in the light of his withdrawal-engagement dialectic, which clearly influenced his early typology. However, with the shift in his theology during the Second World War from a strategic to a tactical emphasis in his goal of transformation, he came to see both church and sect types as, by themselves, pathological. The result of this, it would appear, is found in 1945 when, in discussing conceptions of the church, he prefers to speak in terms of institutional and communal understandings of the Church. These categories clearly correspond to the old church and sect-types since the church-type, in the Social Sources, is characterised by its institutional form and the sect by its organisation as a voluntary community. However what separates these categories from the earlier types is that Niebuhr abstracts, from the earlier types, those aspects which form the self understanding of each type of its identity as the church. This results in a shift from a typology based upon sociological criteria to a

theological approach based upon the self-perception of those occupying the position that the type represents.

4.5.2. This approach was given further impetus with Niebuhr's discovery of Gilson in the same year. In Gilson's work he found an alternative to Troeltsch's sociologising approach. Gilson's approach was one of historical exposition and representation from primary sources of actual, rather than hypothetical positions, of the relation of reason and revelation. Niebuhr, it appears, took Gilson's approach and broadened it, both in terms of historical scope and the breadth of the problems he discussed. Niebuhr took the question of Christ and culture, rather than revelation and reason, and the whole of Christian history, rather than merely the Middle Ages, to produce a wider and more inclusive picture of the problem(15), modifying and supplementing Gilson's types. The result was the five types of Christ and Culture. The first two of these (the Christ Against Culture and Christ of Culture types) represented Troeltsch's sect and church types. They are, once again, presented as polar opposites in terms of Niebuhr's withdrawal and engagement dialectic. The other three types seek to bring Christ and culture into some kind of reconciling relationship and in doing so express the withdrawal-engagement dialectic in different ways. All with the exception of the conversionist stance which seems to suspend it.

4.5.3. In as far as Niebuhr's early typology is based upon Troeltsch it is open to the same objections already made of Troeltsch's typology. However his later Christ-culture typology is a new departure and has several advantages over Niebuhr's earlier approach and that of Troeltsch.

4.5.4. In the first place, Christ and Culture takes a purely theological approach by defining the different types within the context of the theological problem by which they define themselves and by their doctrinal development in the light of this self-definition. This leads to a greater clarity of understanding and purpose than in Troeltsch's approach where theological and sociological criteria are confused.

4.5.5. In the second place, Niebuhr's shift from a sociological to a theological and historical emphasis, following Gilson, made possible a wider framework of discussion than Troeltsch could conceive of, even in the Social Teachings. Consequently Niebuhr is able, despite the relative brevity of his work in comparison to that of Troeltsch, to consider the fundamental theological and philosophical problems that lay behind Troeltsch's simple church-society question - those of Christ and Culture, and so consider a far wider variety of responses to that problem.

4.5.6. This leads to the third advance that Niebuhr made upon Troeltsch and his own early work. He is able to consider a far more subtle variety of cultural responses than was Troeltsch and is able to present historical examples in their own terms rather than as re-interpreted within the framework of the typology. Troeltsch's historical material, while at times presented in a masterly fashion, is either squeezed into his typological framework or fundamentally at odds with it. Niebuhr's more sensitive approach allows him to be far more consistent with, and faithful to his sources.

4.5.7. Despite these improvements, Niebuhr's typology still suffers from serious difficulties. Niebuhr's typology serves to distort some options, and eliminates others. For example, he states that the Christ Against Culture position withdraws from culture and then argues that any such withdrawal is impossible and that, instead, the radicals really choose between different aspects of culture rather than reject it totally. If this is the case, why not restate the radical's position as Christ Discriminating Culture?(16) Niebuhr also cites the Gnostics and Ritschl as examples of the Christ of Culture position. He argues that both present Christ as something of a cultural hero. But this is inconsistent. Christ for the Gnostics was simply a Saviour figure whom they aligned with Occidental and Oriental mysticism, while culture was basically irrelevant. (Ferguson 1980:126-132). Ritschl, on the other hand, who stood closer to culture and had a far higher regard for it than did the Gnostics, had a far more orthodox view of Christ. Lastly, Niebuhr identifies Marcion, along with Paul and Luther, as dualists and argues that dualism is ever on the edge of Marcion's heresy of postulating the existence of two

Gods. Yet this is to misrepresent the tension in which the dualist stands. They are all implacable monotheists who seek to bring the diverse aspects of reality under the rule of the One God. Without the premise of monotheism, the tension of the dualist position would not exist. Therefore for dualism to slide into a metaphysical or ontological dualism would be for it to contradict its own fundamental premise. Marcion, therefore, was not a dualist in this sense. His difficulties occurred over his anti-semiticism and his dilemmas over the problem of evil in the canon. No dualist after the mind of Paul or Luther could have taken up this position. Niebuhr is not consistent in his development of the type being restricted by his own ideal type criteria. (Niebuhr 1952:163-73; Ferguson 1980:137-40).

4.5.8. A further distorting factor is present in Niebuhr's dialectic of engagement and withdrawal. The radical and cultural positions are clearly formulated in its terms. The opposition between these two types seems to be couched largely in terms of polarity. The other types, however, are also influenced by this withdrawal-engagement dialectic, as has already been shown. This dialectic distorts the presentation of the different positions because they are formulated in terms of how they resolve this dialectic, either in opting for one polarity or the other (total engagement or total withdrawal) or in terms of how they reconcile these two poles. On the one hand, this leads to the representation of a position as being more extreme than it actually is, or they are classified according to the way they resolved a theological problem that has been set for them from without, by Niebuhr, and not one which was posed either by their context or by themselves. Christians before Troeltsch and Niebuhr were quite unaware and unconcerned by any withdrawal and engagement dialectic. All they were aware of was being faced, as Christians, with a non-Christian culture with which, either negatively or positively, they had to deal. They had no conception of any withdrawal-engagement dialectic therefore to evaluate and classify their position on these grounds, as Niebuhr does implicitly, is both anachronistic and unfair.

4.5.9. Niebuhr's obvious preference for the conversionist position is a further distorting factor in Niebuhr's typology. All the other types stand in the shadow of the Christ Transforming Culture position with the result

that their failings are stressed far more emphatically than their advantages. All the types are evaluated, and even ordered, according to the success which they enjoy in converting culture. The radicals fail because of their withdrawal, the culture Christians because of their accommodation. The synthesists fail because of their hierarchical and absolutist tendencies, and the dualists because of their innate conservatism and proneness to Marcion's heresy. The radicals and culturalists do balance out each other and the synthesists do go a way to creating a Christian culture, and the dualists more so, but only the conversionists really succeed. They transform culture by Christ rather than merely reconciling Christ and culture. The withdrawal-engagement dialectic also plays a part here since the polarity it represents must first be overcome for any transformation of culture to take place. This much is clear from 'The Responsibility of the Church for the World'.(Niebuhr 1946:111-126). The Christ Against Culture stance, having withdrawn from the world sees itself as responsible only for the Christian community and so will never transform the world. The Christ of Culture position, because of its engagement in the world, has chosen to be responsible to the world rather than to the Lord of the Church. It is likewise unable to transform the world. These two types are both pathological, since, either as the Withdrawing Church or the Worldly Church, they fail to live up to their responsibilities. The synthesist and dualist types do fare better, but fail in so far as they still are caught up in this dialectic. They fail because they are so confused in their responsibilities; the former subordinating responsibility for, or to, the world to responsibility for, or to, the Church; and the latter by trying to be responsible for things sacred and secular separately at the same time. Only in the converionist position is the proper balance found in being responsible to God for the world. Only in the Christ Transforming Culture type can the transformation of culture take place, because the responsibility and strategy of Christians is properly understood. This may serve to support Niebuhr in his established convictions about the theology of culture but it does not lead to the fair presentation of the different positions in his typology. Those types are again assessed in terms of an agenda which is totally extrinsic and alien to them.

4.5.10. There are also serious problems with Niebuhr's conversionist position itself. To begin with, Niebuhr never answers the question of just how cultures have been converted; it is only ever set out as a programme in his work. Niebuhr never gives any examples of that programme having ever been pursued with any success. John, he acknowledges, was not really interested in the conversion of culture. Augustine, Niebuhr also recognises, represented a conflicting spectrum of positions. Furthermore it would be difficult to argue that the culture of the Late Empire was 'Christian' by conversion since who had been converted to what, by whom and how is a matter of considerable debate. As far as Maurice, Niebuhr's other example, is concerned, he had only an idealistic programme which he was never able to fully implement. The Christ Transforming Culture type, therefore, seems to be a totally hypothetical position. (17)

4.5.11. There is also some question as to whether or not the conversionist position is really an independent type. It would seem to be, much more, a variety of the dualist type since, as Niebuhr himself states, all the 'conversionist' thinkers that he quotes established some kind of dualism between time and eternity, or spirit and materiality, or regenerate and unregenerate. To seek to convert non-Christian culture to Christ is simply anther way of stating the same dualism that Luther or Troeltsch faced between the ethics of Christ and His Kingdom and those of the world. Thus the conversionist type is not, and cannot be, independent type since it contains an implicit dualism at its very heart. This has, perhaps, two sources. Firstly the dualist manner in which Niebuhr, following Troeltsch, set up the Christ-culture problem both in terms of its basic components. Secondly the duality that must, necessarily, underlie all Christian thought, between nature and grace, God and world, and fall and redemption. (18) A monism, such as Niebuhr seeks in his transformationist monotheism, is simply not possible in Christian theology because that destroys the basic framework in which it perceives itself. Christian faith lives between the times when the Kingdom has come but while the old order of the old Aeon still exists. Thus it is never possible to go beyond a dualism, and even Niebuhr is, in time, driven back to this. (19)

4.5.12. Niebuhr's typologies, then, like Troeltsch's, fail to give a clear picture of the various options for Christian ethics, which was their intent. Further, as with Troeltsch, at least four of Niebuhr's types are pathological since, should any Christian groups conform to them, they are guaranteed to fail because of the inherent contradictions and weaknesses of each type. The fifth type, too, may be regarded as pathological as it is a non-position - being purely hypothetical so all who aim at it will remain forever in the realm of abstraction. They will be burdened down with theorising for eventualities which will never occur. It is a theological cul-de-sac. Hence, while Niebuhr intends to open up and explore the different options in Christian ethics by his five-fold typology, he succeeds only in misrepresenting them and closing them off as so many failed causes.

4.5.13. In addition to this Niebuhr, also contradicts and frustrates his own existentialism of choice in Christ and Culture by his use of his typology. He argues that Christians have the responsibility for finding the appropriate resolution of the tension between Christ and Culture for their own day but he obstructs this free decision by advocating one stance above others and by placing the options that these types represent in a bad light. The only way in which Christians can respond to the problem of Christ and culture in the manner that Niebuhr recommends is by examining anew the issues that they face in this confrontation and finding answers that are appropiate to their needs and the temper of their times. However, a breadth of vision and imagination is needed which is only possible if their minds are uncluttered by restrictive and distorting typologies. Contemporary Christians must develop a new option of their own which will have its own unique strengths and weaknesses.

4.6.1. The final outcome of Niebuhr's typological approach has some clear parallels with the results reached in other areas of his thought discussed in the last chapter. There it was noted, in connection with Niebuhr's ethics, that during the Second World War Niebuhr made an important shift in his ethical thought. He moved away from a strategic approach which saw a non-resistant pacifism as the primary (human) action which would clear the way for God's generation of the Kingdom, to a tactical approach centring upon the idea of responsibility which leaves all questions of strategy to God. The role of humanity is simply to respond to God's action in the world as they perceive it affecting them. This transition finds its counterpart in Niebuhr's abandonment of the church-sect typology which he makes at about the same time. Prior to 1939 Niebuhr saw church and denominational types as pathological - leading to the accommodation of Christian ethics to culture. At the same time, he has a great sympathy, though not agreement with, the sect-type and the Christianity it represents. He calls for the strategic withdrawal of the Church from the world on the sectarian model. By 1946, however, the isolationist church is condemned, along with the worldly church, as irresponsible. The sect-type is now numbered with church and denominational types as pathological. This has the result that none of the positions in Niebuhr's original typology can offer him a mode of action in the present. Consequently Niebuhr initiates a new search for a model of Christian existence in culture and society which will be more amenable to his responsibilist ethics. This search found expression in the five-fold typology of Christ and Culture. It culminated in his conversionist stance with its monotheistic view of creation and history; the latter being understood as the 'acts of God' in a responsibilist fashion. Niebuhr's movement from the position he held in the Social Sources, and 'The Church Against the World' to that of Christ and Culture is thus part of the general movement in his ethics that occurred this time.

4.6.2. In this connection it is interesting to note the fate of the withdrawal-engagement dialectic. Some commentators have argued that there was at this time a change in priorities from withdrawal to engagement in

Niebuhr's thought. They contend that he believed that the church had regained its strength and needed to face the world once more. (cf Kliever 1977:46-54; Hoedemaker 1970:137-140; Irist 1973:7-9). This is a far too superficial reading of what occurred in this transition, for Niebuhr never, anywhere, states that the church is ready for a new engagement with culture. Rather he is still suggesting that a withdrawal may be necessary as late as 1952 in Christ and Culture. Instead it would seem that Niebuhr had come to see that the cycle of strategies of withdrawal from and engagement in culture followed by a strategy of engagement within it was problematic. He still believed that it was historically given but now he tactically attempted to go beyond it in an immediacy of response to God's action within human culture. The essentially human strategies of withdrawal and engagement which arise from human success and failure actually hinder God's indefinable strategy in culture to which humanity must respond. This response will be tactical, being based on the meaning of God's action in the present. Niebuhr is seeking to transcend the human strategies of withdrawal and engagement in order to respond to the divine action. In Niebuhr's responsibilist ethics, and in his conversionist position, the approach of Christ toward culture and society is determined by God's actions. The place of human beings is simply to tactically respond to God's strategy.

4.6.3. In the conclusion to Chapter Three it was also suggested that Niebuhr's typology of religious orientation would reflect his theology, as Troeltsch's did his, and that different positions would be evaluated according to how they measured up to radical monotheism and so fulfilled its aim of transformation. That Niebuhr does judge the various positions both in his earlier and later typologies against his programme of transformation has been established, but the manner in which they relate to radical monotheism has not. Niebuhr's three early types (church, sect and denomination) were all found wanting in the light of radical monotheism. The church and denominational types substituted the sovereignty of the world for the sovereignty of God. The sect limited that sovereignty to the Church denying that God was Lord over the creation and that Christ's redemption was universal. For Niebuhr these would both have been different forms of henotheism - making God the god of the group ((Niebuhr 1960:24-31;

56-63). The synthesist position is also rejected because of its absolutism and its rejection of the relativity that radical monotheism entails (Niebuhr 1941:1-5). The dualist position was proven to be inadequate by its very structure since it became a form of polytheism by dividing God's authority or by having two gods (Niebuhr 1942:945). Only the conversionist position is consistent with radical monotheism and is therefore given full approval. Niebuhr's radical monotheism is thus a further implicit criterion in Niebuhr's typology which, as such, stands in complete continuity with his ethics and theology.

4.6.4. Just as the development of Niebuhr's typology of religious orientation expresses the central themes of his theology and ethics it also encounters the same difficulties and problems as his theology and ethics. The question of how the transformation of culture is to be achieved is central to Niebuhr's responsive/contextual ethics. The hypothetical nature of the Christ Transforming Culture position is a reflection of the indeterminacy of action in a responsibilist framework where it is impossible either to prescribe or predict what actions are, or will be, 'fitting' in any given situation.(20) However, Niebuhr's failure both to give examples of what actions have <u>been</u> fitting in past situation, which will in no way prejudice future action, or of how cultures have been transformed, suggests that both approaches are purely hypothetical.

4.6.5. This problem of definition is directly related to the weakness that was indicated as being at the heart of Niebuhr's theology in the last chapter; that of his understanding of God. Only if God has a clear identity would it be possible to indicate some consistency and constancy in the divine actions in history, which, in turn, would require a flexible but consistent and constant response in the actions of human beings. In other words it would be possible to identify certain classes of action which would always be present in people's response to God because there would be certain permanent patterns in God's action in history. But because Niebuhr's God is contentless, being simply the 'confluence of being', it is not possible to identify any reliable pattern of personal action which give some continuing patterns of fitting response or models of transformation. As it is, because of the anonymity of Niebuhr's God, it is only possible to

point to the arbitrary events that arise out of history's contingencies, and the inevitable events which arise out of its necessities which are all, somehow, united in a single direction by the centre of 'Being'. It would seem, therefore, that Niebuhr gives no examples because there are none.

4.6.6. Niebuhr's typologies of religious orientation, then, are theologically loaded and were subtle apologies for his own theological and ethical positions. In this he followed Troeltsch. But, again in keeping with Troeltsch's example, Niebuhr's typologies foundered on the same rocks that brought his theology and ethics as a whole to grief.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1 Kliever sees Niebuhr's withdrawal-engagement dialectic as the result of Niebuhr's prioritizing of the Church-God relation over the Church-World relation which leads to the requirement for a double movement from God to the world and to God from the world (Kliever 1977:7-9). To suggest that the dialectic is the consequence of a combination of two of Niebuhr's other polarities (Church-God and Church-World) only complicates the issue unnecessarily.

2 Both typologies are based upon a polarity which arises out of the God-Church-World triad which is fundamental to Niebuhr's thinking about the church. They are also caught up in and expressions of, the basic dualism which characterize the church's existence in the world. This also demonstrates the continuity between Niebuhr's fragmentary ecclesiology and his typologies of religious orientation which are so significant in his ethics.

3 This parallels the stragey of non-resistance that Niebuhr advocated in 1935

4 In this regard the worldly Church is similar to Bergson's 'closed religion'.

5 This idea of the representative repentance is a difficult one and would seem to imply that people are responsible for the sins and actions of others over whom they have no control. To speak of repentance in this connection makes no sense, for one cannot turn from sins one has not committed or undo the consequences of such alien sins. The idea of representative repentance only makes sense for an appointed mediator, such as the Temple Priesthood or Christ as the Mediator for the Church and the world. To suggest that the Church is the mediator for the world in this regard is problematic since in doing this it would seem to be encroaching upon the role of Christ in Christian theology, and Niebuhr has already argued that one of the Church's problems is that it has sought to play Saviour. Is he suggesting that it do so again?

However it is possible to accept responsibility for the sins of others as part of the Church's mission towards them in which it proclaims God's judgement upon sins and calls society to repentance and works to overcome the fruits and conditions of sin. This, it would seem, is what Jesus, Paul and Ezekiel all had in mind.

Yet having said all this it is often the case that the Church is so implicated in the sins of society that it must first repent of its own sins and overcome them in its own life before it may address wider society. In this case the Church would be responsible for society's sin because it would be its own. It would seem that Niebuhr has confused these three senses of 'responsibility' in his concept of 'representative responsibility'.

6 The 'pioneering church' seems to combine the faithfulness of the sect with the involvement of the church.

7 This development is parallel to the changes in Niebuhr's attitude toward war during the same period.

8 Niebuhr seems to have developed a tacit threefold typology of 'Worldly Church', 'Isolationist Church' and 'Responsible' or 'Pioneering Church' which roughly correspond to the Christ of Culture, Christ Against Culture, and Christ Transforming Culture types of Christ and Culture respectively.

9 Most of Niebuhr's commentators when discussing the Withdrawal-Engagement dialectic fail to describe its development correctly, arguing that Niebuhr advocated withdrawal in the late 1920s and early 1930s but urged involvement in the Kingdom of God in America (1937) or 'The Responsibility of the Church for the World'. The truth is, however, Niebuhr had become disillusioned with this as a general approach and had subordinated it to his responsibilist ethics.

10 At this juncture the 'hidden church' seems to be a pure Christianity or community of Christians which stands behind both the sect type and the church-type and is the perennial source of renewal for the Christian faith, overcoming the distortions of both types. It is, however, manifestly closer to the sect type here.

11 In the preface to Christ and Culture Niebuhr notes that he has gained many insights from others which he was 'unable' to acknowledge. Gilson's contributions to the formation of this new typology would seem to be one of these. No other scholars seem to have discovered this contribution.

12 This echoes Niebuhr's attack on 'apologetics'.

13 Niebuhr also describes Troeltsch as a dualist. His dualism found expression in a double dilemma in the contrasts between the absolute claim of Christianity upon those to whom it comes and its relativity as a historical tradition. For Troeltsch it was an absolute within a relative context. The second way this dualism expressed itself was in the contrast between the ethics of personal conscience, which are directed toward the production and defence of free personalities and seek to control nature to that end, with the ethics of the cultural values which seeks to preserve historical institutions and material life. A synthesis is only possible between the two as an individual achievement. Troeltsch himself, Niebuhr states, must have experienced the acute tension between these poles in his service of the Weimar Republic. (Niebuhr 1952:183-185).

> It is clear that his version of the claims of Christ was more akin to the cultural Christian interpretation of the New Testament prevalent in his day than to a more literal and radical reading of the Gospels. Even so a tension between Christ and cultured remained, and could not be solved save in a life of continuous struggle. Rather than

being a straight forward example of the dualist type Troeltsch seems to be more a combination of the dualist and synthesist positions. He is a dualist in the way he defines and sets the context of the Christ and Culture problem, but he is a synthesist in the approach he takes to the solution of the problem of the cultural synthesis. (Niebuhr 1952:185)

14 Niebuhr seems to contradict himself at this point as he previously identified the 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' positon's pessimism about culture as one of its strengths. Niebuhr appears to be looking for an approach which is both pessimistic about the past and present situation and content with culture as a human achievement, yet one which is also optimistic about its worth, possibilities and future. He finds this in the conversionist or Christ Transforming Culture position which for him has become the measure of the whole problem.

15 The Christ-culture issue also seems to be the context of the Church-society relationship or the 'social problem' which was Troeltsch's main concern in the Social Teachings and Niebuhr's in the Social Sources.

16 A 'Christ Discriminating Culture' type would in fact be a great deal closer to what actually happens with those groups which profess and practice separation and non-conformity in history. For example the Anabaptists rejected the cultural expressions of power, violence and economic exploitation within their society while affirming its structures of trade, primary production, agriculture, and, in some restricted cases, public services.

17 Niebuhr does give examples of 'conversions' in his writing of cultural theology in which he describes how Christian values have been formative in Western culture for example in the Kingdom of God in America (Niebuhr 1937) or 'The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy' (Niebuhr1954). However, in each of these cases it would be difficult to say that culture had been 'converted' to these ideas. Rather, the concepts of the Kingdom of God and of Covenant had penetrated culture and had influenced the development of its political and social life. Such penetration and influence can take place by a great variety of means and avenues that probably owe much more to the accidents (or providences) of history, and to the vigour of Christians than to the re-orientation of Culture to Christ. In addition to this, the very concept of the 'conversion' of a culture is a problematic one, despite Niebuhr's optimism, since it would require a collective will which somehow transcends and incorporates the wills of individuals. It is not clear that such a will exists, or, if it does exist, how it might be converted, since societies always seek their own welfare in pragmatic and utilitarian fashion is unclear. When the Church addresses society or culture it always addresses particular groups of responsible individuals and calls upon them to turn their actions around. If there are any changes in culture it is an expression of the conversion of these individuals.

18 J.M. Gustafson notes, in this connection, the tendency among modern ethicists to think in categories akin to nature and grace. "Nature", says Gustafson is roughly equal to "Law" representing the continuities of life, and "Grace" the Gospel and redemptive newness of life. He sets both Troeltsch's church-sect distinction and Niebuhr's Christ-culture typology within this context and suggests that Niebuhr's Christ-culture typology could be restated as a grace-nature typology as Grace Against Nature, the Identity of Grace and Nature, Grace the Fulfilment of Nature, Grace and Nature in Dialectical Relation, and Grace Transforming Nature (Gustafson 1978:12-119). It would also be easy to restate 'nature' and 'grace' in eschatological terms as World and Kingdom and then see the typology as representing the different ways in which the new order might be related to the Old in the period 'between the times'. Either way it would seem that Christ and culture, nature and grace, Kingdom and world all represent a basic duality which necessarily forms part of the foundation of all Christian thought which, as Niebuhr himself recognises, it would be disastrous to deny or suppress. (Niebuhr 1935a:154-155). The trouble is that this is exactly what Niebuhr tries to do.

19 Niebuhr himself also makes this distinction in The Hidden Church and the Churches in Sight (1954) where he argues that the church, in the first place, is an eschatological reality which has both come and is present and is yet to come and yet to be fulfilled. The present state of the church and the churches comes from 'living between the times'. The churches are institutions of the present order, but they cannot be abolished since they are the means whereby the church of the future is expressed and manifested in the present. Consequently they share the faults of worldly institutions while at the same time expressing the grace of the church. (Niebuhr 1945b:113-116).

20 Niebuhr's description of the 'Responsible Church' in 'The Responsiblity of the Church for the World' (Niebuhr 1946:126-133) may have been an attempt to do this but in as far as it rests upon the idea of 'representative responsibility' it is problematic.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: TYPOLOGIES AND DUALITIES

INTRODUCTORY

5.1.1. The previous chapters have shown that Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's treatment of types of Christian ethics are intrinsically related to their theories of ethics and theologies of culture. It has emerged that these typologies are seriously flawed in several respects. This is partly a result of the influence of their theologies on the formation of their typologies. To begin with, their typological approaches distort and close off the possibilities of those options which they do represent. This is because the models both Troeltsch and Niebuhr produce are implicitly polemical, being designed to act as foils to their preferred types. Secondly, their typologies systematically exclude other options as they handle only that material which will fit into their typological framework. The typologies thus become an obstruction to understanding rather than aids to such understanding. It restricts observation and gathering of materials to just those cases which are included in the typological scheme. (Diesing 1972: 199-201). Thirdly, both Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies tend to become pathologies. When the individual types within each scheme are subjected to close scrutiny they are found to be defective in some important respect or another, to the extent that any Christian institution which actually occupied that position whould be in a deformed and ineffective state from the perspective of Christian mission. This is a consequence of both the exaggerating procedure of Weber's method of ideal type formation, which both Troeltsch and Niebuhr use, and of their use of such exaggerated types for <u>evaluative</u> purposes. Fourthly, and lastly, it has been shown that Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's typological aproaches do not offer real guidance for action in the contemporary crisis of Church and society. Troeltsch, at the end of his lengthy discussion, admits that he has no proposals for a contemporary Christian ethic and looks hopefully to the vague possibilities of a new synthesis, while Niebuhr offers an approach to ethics which is hypothetical at best and intangible in practice.

5.1.2. These four problems are interrelated. They are linked to Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's typological approach on the one hand and their theological definition of the context of ethics on the other. (In the case of Troeltsch his 'social problem' - the relation of the Church to other social institutions and values, or as in the case of Niebuhr's 'Christ and culture').

THE LIMITATIONS OF TYPOLOGIES.

5.2.1. Both Troeltsch and Niebuhr use types which owe much to Weber's conception of ideal types (discussed in the Introduction to this thesis). Troeltsch learnt his sociology from Weber. Weber was Troeltsch's close friend during the period when he was writing the Social Teachings, and so Troeltsch's idea and use of ideal types was built upon Weber's thinking. Niebuhr learnt his sociology largely from Troeltsch and began by first accepting, and then adapting Troeltsch's development of Weber's types.

5.2.2. Troeltsch based his types of church, sect and mysticism on Weber's earlier 'historical' version of the ideal type which Weber had articulated in 1904. Each type was thus defined in terms of a peculiar historical case and then 'logically developed and synthesised' to be compared and contrasted with other historical cases. Thus the church type was defined in terms of the Mediaeval Church, the sect in terms of the Anabaptists, and the mystical type in terms of the sixteenth century "Spirituals". Once defined in terms of those cases which Troeltsch considered to be their foremost examples these types were then used to classify cases earlier and later in history. (1)

5.2.3. Since they were based on specific cases, Troeltsch's types were 'objectively possible', but they prove to be far from casually adequate in explaining the patterns of social behaviour found in a wide number of cases. Instead of the one version of a type being applicable to all cases, qualifications, subtypes, and even hybrid types had to be developed. Troeltsch's distinction between violent and pacifist anabaptist sects(Troeltsch 1912:802-7), his development of the hybrid of the "Free

Church" (Troeltsch 1912:661-691;805-7) and his presentation of the Quakers as a cross between mystical and sectarian types (Troeltsch 1912:780-4) all serve as examples of this. Troeltsch's types being historically defined were simply not broad enough to be generally applied to the whole of Christian history. He had begun with historically specific types which he had then sought to apply to the rest of Christian history. This was inadequate.

5.2.4. At this point Troeltsch also ran into a problem that was endemic to Weber's early version of ideal types. Weber had based his first idea of ideal types on the accentuation of the extreme characteristics of a case into a logically coherent synthesis. This leads to the production of a caricature rather than a useful model. Moreover, there is no way that the heuristic utility or inutility of a caricature can be established or undermined (Andrseki 1979: 462-55; 1984: 41-50). Troeltsch's types all fall into this category. They are caricatures of the social realities that they depict. As such they bear a strong resemblance to those realities but their extreme features are too highly pronounced. On top of this there is no way, and indeed Troeltsch offers none, in which the viability of these types may be measured.

5.2.5. For his early work, the Social Sources, Niebuhr simply adopted Troeltsch's types, with the difference that his third type was the denomination rather than mysticism. However in Christ and Culture Niebuhr develops types which approximate Weber's later 'pure' or 'general' types. He defines his five types in terms of a much wider range of instances than did Troeltsch. Instead of defining his types in terms of one historical instance and then applying the type to the rest of history Niebuhr sought to define his types in terms of a number of instances. In addition to this he abandons the principle of accentuation which so encumbered Troeltsch. The result is a more balanced and more historically faithful portrayal of the cases which approximate his types.

5.2.6. Despite this, however, Niebuhr's typology also fails, falling victim to the same problems of distorted presentation and exclusive selection which bedevilled Troeltsch's theory. The reason for this was that while Niebuhr improved on Troeltsch's methodology he still shared with him certain basic assumptions and approaches.

5.2.7. In the first place, both Troeltsch and Niebuhr began by formulating their two polar types and then categorised their other types with reference to these polar types. Thus both Troeltsch and Niebuhr fell to defining their types by reference to extremes. They also set up a dialectic between their polar types, which it seems is an inevitable consequence of such polarised typologies, which then became a further extraneous factor by which the types were defined. (Diesing 1972: 201-2).

5.2.8. Secondly, Troeltsch and Niebuhr built evaluative principles arising from their theologies into their typologies. This led to one of the types becoming the measure of all the others. For Troeltsch, this was the church-type in its ability to compromise. For Niebuhr it was the Christ Transforming Culture type with its power to reorientate a culture to radical monotheism. This was contrary to Weber's theory and usage. He saw ideal types as being purely interpretive rather than evaluative. For Troeltsch and Niebuhr ideal types were tacit evaluative tools.

5.2.9. These difficulties in Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's typologies might tempt some to conclude that all typological approaches as such are flawed and ought to be abandoned. This would certainly be an overreaction since it would lead to the casting away of a valuable conceptual tool which is almost as old as conceptual thought itself. Such typologies are essential to sociology (Hekman 1983: 1-17; Rex 1973: 192-211) and useful in other disciplines including theological ethics. They can be used to great effect as heuristic tools provided that their limitations are understood; that they are only suggestive, approximate and partial in their scope. They can provide overviews, but only in the most tentative manner. All extreme polarisations and hidden evaluative principles must be avoided. The first, because it will present all options in terms of one extreme or another, and not in their true colours, and the second, because all evaluation must be

done openly and not by slight of hand. An evaluative discussion should follow any typological presentation in theological ethics, since it is an evaluative discipline. But that evaluation should not be assumed in the typology itself for that would be to presume the author's case before the author has formally proven it. This would lead to a misrepresentation of the other positions represented in the typology in favouring the author's own bias. This is bad theology and does not in any way produce a creative deliberation on the merits of different ethical options.

5.2.10. Typological approaches have been used in a more creative manner in theology since Troeltsch and Niebuhr. Examples of this would be Long's historical survey of Christian ethics (Long 1967), Gustafson's discussion of the different ways that Christ informs the moral life of Christians (Gustafson 1979), Yoder's analysis of the different varieties of Christian pacifism (Yoder 1971), and Dulles discussion of different stances in ecclesiological polity and models of revelation (Dulles 1976,1983).

5.2.11. Where typologies are used to open boxes and bring greater understanding as in the above works all is well and good.(2) Where they are used to create closed boxes, as, in Troeltsch and Niebuhr, and where they assume over-evaluative and definitive proportions, then problems come flooding in. The categories by which Troeltsch and Niebuhr interpret their material is far too limiting to contain it. Both Troeltsch and Niebuhr, it has been shown, defined the context of Christian ethics in terms of a dualism. For Troeltsch this was a dualism between the church with its emphasis upon the ideal and universal ethics of personal conscience (his subjective ethics) and the secular institutions by society with their historically defined cultural values (Troeltsch's 'objective ethics'). For Niebuhr the dualism lay between Christ as the publication of God's will amongst human beings and human culture as the material and spiritual achievements and organisation of human life. They both identified a dialectical tension and process which operated in history between the 'sacred' (Church and Christ) and secular (society and culture) poles.(3) For Troeltsch, this was represented in the church-type's continuing quest for a creative 'compromise' with society and its cultural values, and the continuing reaction of the sect-type to that compromise in favour of the

absolute ethics of Christ's teaching. Niebuhr expressed this same theme in the dialectic of engagement and withdrawal between the church's involvement in the world and its subsequent withdrawal from the world in order to save itself from the corruption which such involvement brings. In both cases there is a retreat from the secular pole back into the sacred.

5.2.12. An explanation of the dialectic is offered by J.E. Dittes in his comments upon Troeltsch's church-sect-mysticism typology. He argues that a logic of immanence and transcendence permeates all Western religion, including Christianity. In Christianity the holy is first known in identification with the world, and then, because the holy becomes contaminated, it has to be purified by withdrawal from the world. Church and sect, he advises, seem to be a part of this pattern. (Dittes 1971:378-80). (4)

5.2.13. For Dittes, and for Niebuhr and Troeltsch as well, this 'logic' of immanence and transcendence or sacred and secular is intrinsic to Christianity presumably because of its basic theological orientations. The consequence of this is that the movement between different types of Christian institutions, some emphasizing involvement with the world, and others emphasizing withdrawal, is inevitable.

5.2.14. Indeed both Troeltsch and Niebuhr find the origins of their different types within the founding documents and doctrines of Christian faith. (5) However, to identify the historical development of particular institution in continuity with particular doctrines and New Testament emphases is one thing, to then argue that these same emphases and doctrines inevitably led to the rise of a particular institution is another. It is to make the basic and serious logical mistake of confusing historical explanation with a casual and deterministic sequence. It is the error of trying to erect logical necessity on the back of historical contingency.

5.2.15. The idea of a dialectic of engagement and withdrawal seems to have three quite different roots which make it far from inevitable. Firstly, the polar definition of types of Christian institutions, secondly, the

historical performance of the Christian church and thirdly, the eschatological dualism of Kingdom and World.

5.2.16. It was noted above that the positing of two polar types in a typology often led to a dialectic between the poles. The other types within that typology would then become expressions of that dialectic or at least be heavily influenced by it. Such a dialectic, of course, exists only within the typology as an intellectual construct. It is a tension between two opposed ideas and has no existence in the real world. The typologies of both Troeltsch and Niebuhr do give rise to such a dialectic - this much has been made very plain, and Niebuhr also defines his intermediate types in terms of this dialectic. However, both Troeltsch and Niebuhr go one step further than this: they predicate the existence of this dialectic in the real world. In doing this they reify what is only an ideal reality (if that). This imposition of an ideal dialectic upon social reality in Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's typologies is a case of a theoretical construct determining the way that the world is interpreted rather than being a heuristic aid to understanding the world in all its variety.

5.2.17 Troeltsch and Niebuhr also based their understanding of the engagement/withdrawal dialectic upon their observation of the Church's behaviour in history. The church has always had an ambivalent attitude to the world, and it may well be, on account of this, that the church has vacillated between withdrawal from the world and involvement within it. While there might be some truth in this observation it does appear to be a great oversimplification of the sort that historians should ever be wary. Even if it were true this vacillation does not provide any grounds for suggesting that this is the way that the church should normatively behave, or that this dialectic is an inevitable law of the church's life in history. At most, then, the alternation of the church between involvement on the one hand and withdrawal on the other is merely a piece of historical abstraction. Having said this, the moral theologian might well see this vacillation in a different light; as a weakness in the church's life which had to be overcome.(6) The dialectic which Troeltsch and Niebuhr identified, if it exists at all (7), is simply contingent and should not be elevated to the status of necessity.

5.2.18. Thirdly, and lastly, the dialectic of engagement and withdrawal seems to be a distorted version of the tension between Kingdom and World restated in terms of a historical cycle. The dualism or duality between Kingdom and World is a necessary one in Christian theology (Yoder 1971:52-84; 1963:59-73)(8), however it is an eschatological rather than sociological or historical dualism. The tension between Kingdom and World is a tension that occurs betwen two domains or orders that coexist. As such it is a constant tension and does not result in a dialectical progression. To attempt to reformulate this dualism in sociological or historical terms is thus to misrepresent it. It is an attempt into theoretical force into an abstract scheme realities which cannot be fully reconciled within history, but which will be reconciled at its consummation. To treat these two theological realities, then, purely as interacting historical or sociological forces which pull one way and then another, is to fail to comprehend them. This is especially so with regard to the Kingdom, which is a supra-historical reality. Rather, the dualism between Kingdom and World leads to their continual juxtaposition and a constant interaction of confirmation and confrontation between them.

A FINAL WORD

5.3.1. In this thesis it has been shown how Troeltsch and Niebuhr's typologies are inherently linked to their theologies and ethics and how these typologies are flawed as a result, misrepresenting some options and excluding others. This analysis was necessary because Troeltsch's and Niebuhr's classificatory schemes have been widely adopted in Christian ethics and had become the means whereby the usefulness of different approaches to Christian ethics have been evaluated. This led to a situation in which the options for Christian ethics have thus been falsely delimited and misunderstood.

5.3.2. If Christian ethics is to address in a creative and imaginative manner, the difficult issues which confront it in the modern world, then it needs to dispense with the dichotomous typologies of Troeltsch and Niebuhr which have so overshadowed Christian ethics during the last fifty years.

Instead, approaches which recognise and build on the duality of Christian theology and ethics should be pursued. (9)

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1 At the very least the procedure is prone to anachronism in that the features of one historical case are read into other cases in different places and times, whether in the past or the present.

2 Having said this, such categories as 'church' and 'sect' which carry an implied valued judgement in their very meaning really must go. Only confusion can result from the use by the sociologists of the language of theological polemics. Descriptive terms such as 'institutional' and 'intentional' groups such as Long employs would be so much better. (Long 1961:164-174)

3 The use of the terms "sacred" and "secular" here are open to challenge as both Troeltsch and Niebuhr worked rigorously to abolish the kind of separation of faith from life that these terms imply. They are used here as a kind of shorthand to describe the dualism to which both Troeltsch and Niebuhr subscribed. This consisted of an absolute or ideal principle which stood behind the universe and was its goal, and the values of culture which were characterised by a logic of pragmatic survival or of limited faith's defensiveness. The former principle is divine in the sense that originates in God and is given to redeem culture. Culture is a human reality which is characterised both by works which exemplify human dignity and charity, and also by violence, expediency and myopic short-sightedness. These last aspects need to be limited and controlled by the divine principle in order that the first might develop in greater purity and strength. Gustafson identifies this dualism with that of grace and nature in which grace transforms nature (Gustafson 1979:111-113). It ought also to be remembered that both Troeltsch and Niebuhr had Lutheran roots which disposed them to think in dualistic terms concerning Christianity and culture following the model of Luther's Two Kingdoms theology. So as far as it goes the terms 'sacred' and 'secular' are accurate enough; the one describing a divinely given reality and the other a human reality apart from, but in need of, the divine.

4 Two contemporary sociologists with theological orientations follow Troeltsch and Niebuhr in this idea of a dialectical cycle. David Martin argues that Christianity's drive to unite humanity in Christ creates new divisions between "liberated" territory which has been brought under the control of the gospel of unity and that which remains in the grip of diversity. This line of demarcation is expressed in the division between spirit and nature, church and world and sacred and profane. Martin maintains that this drive develops according to a dialectic of 'storage and release' in which the religious symbols and power contained in the idea for sacred space and the presence of the divine break out into attempts to extend that space or break the barriers which limit it. These releases in turn consolidate and draw up new boundaries to preserve the sacred and adjust to life in the world. (Martin 1980:36-37).

David Clark describes a similar process in which radical movements seek the Re-formation of a 'closed church'; an institution which is held captive by constructing ideologies. This re-formation in Clark's analysis follows six stages: 1) It will begin with a protest against the church's captivity or deformity as a closed institution having become deficient in some respect. 2) This leads to a withdrawal and dispersal of the protesting group in the face of their rejection by the established church. 3) The various dissenting groups begin "networking"; establishing links, a common understanding and an exchange of leadership. 4) This is closely related to the next stage of the process: that of clarifying the message in which groups identify their common significance and purpose and determine whether to preserve their message in isolation or to carry it into the world. 5) If this later course is adopted then a stage of re-entry and re-engagement is reached. In this case the movement takes on a prophetic stance both individually and communally. The success of this offensive depends upon the contingencies of the time, but can lead, claims Clark, to a major re-ordering of society, as it did at the Reformation. 6) Clark concludes that finally a stage of assimilation is reached when the message of the Re-forming movement is accepted into the established churches and society at large. The re-forming groups then loose the vitality and themselves become subject to institutional rigidity. (Clark 1984:73-77).

> The re-formation process must then begin all over again, only this time it is hoped a little further along the way towards the kingdom then where it began before. (Clark 1984:77).

There is little evidence to show that church history actually does follow patterns which are as simple as this, usually both tendencies (of 'storage' and 'release') exist along side each other and the former quite frequently has as many radical tendencies as the latter has conservative. (Contrast the sensitivity of many of the "established" churches to the issues of women's liberation and urban deprivation with the fierce patriarchalism and conservatism of the Harvest Time 'House-churches').

Secondly, if such a dualistic dialectic exists it is more, as is argued in the text, a malady to be treated then a sign of health or a prescription for the future well-being of the church. Above all it is a contingent sign of what has historically occured in the church and not a necessary logic for its life.

Thirdly, the dualism between Christianity and culture is better expressed in the eschatological duality of Kingdom and World which is to be expressed in a continual tension of interpenetration and interaction.

5 Martin would relate this to the idea of the incarnation:

> The Christian incarnation provides a unique point of reference, and is simultaneously capable of validating the world in principle and of proclaiming a judgement

> on the world. The judgement includes active and passive suffering of crucifixion. The validation of the world in principle implies the category of the church, while the form of judgement implies both the active and the passive sect. (Martin 1965:10).

There is a good deal of truth in this observation but there is no reason why the dual emphasis here should develop into a dialectic which produces two different social institutions. If they are understood as being two sides of an eschatological tension: that the Kingdom is already present, but its fullness is yet to come, then they can be held together in the same institution.

6 Niebuhr, as was noted in the previous chapter, did come to this view but did not totally break free of this dialectic since it dominated the very typology he produced which was intended to go beyond it.

7 One wonders if there is really any historical evidence for such a dialectic outside of certain sociological models.

8 Yoder defines as heretical any attempt to define the Church's position in the world without eschatology:

> The attitude which seeks peace without eschatology is that which would identify church and world or fuse the two aeons in the present life with the act of God whereby evil is removed from the scene. This means a confusion between the providential purpose of the state, that of achieving a "tolerable balance of egoisms" ..... and the redemptive purpose of the church, the rejection of all egoism in the commitment to discipleship. This confusion leads to the paganisation of the church and the demonization of the state. (Yoder 1971:64).

9 It is interesting to note that both R. Gregor Smith and E.J. Sharpe in their encyclopaedia articles on Worldliness and The Kingdom of God (Smith 1967:363-4; Sharpe 1983:317-8) describe similar dialectics to that discussed earlier in this chapter either between a this-worldly and an other-worldly ethic, or between an emphasis on the presence of the Kingdom in the world and its coming fulfilment in the future. If the Church is to get beyond these counter-productive swings of the pendulum it must develop a holistic approach. Such an approach embraces the full meaning of both the Kingdom and the world and sees both the positive and negative aspects of the world in the light of the values of the Kingdom which are its starting point and one goal. The work of J.H. Yoder and S. Hauerwas has made good progress in this direction (Yoder 1963, 1971a, 1971b, 1972; Hauerwas 1984).

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