

# The Wisdom of Faithful Reason

## Why Theology & Academics Need One Another

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## Overview

- General sense of the integration of faith and learning (preparing for a specific example)
- A Mutuality Model for Science & Theology
- The need to consider worldviews
- The role of Christian Scholarship
- Theology and Academics (humanities & sciences)
- Example: theology and postmodern philosophy
  - Can we learn from each other?

## Some Biblical Reflections

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, **taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ** (2 Cor. 10:5)

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, **mind** and strength (Mark 12:30).

## Tertullian

- Famous apologist and biblical theologian, “the father of Latin theology” (2<sup>nd</sup> Cent).
- “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?”
- We seek to answer this question, with a specific example from postmodern philosophy.

## Is Rationality Purely Neutral?

- Postmodern philosophy rejects the myth of neutrality and certainty.
- Example: Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche (19<sup>th</sup> C.)
- Neither science nor principles of reasoning are neutral, value-free and purely objective and universal.
- Rejecting the “view from nowhere.”

## Christian Worldview

- What does it mean to redeem reason?
- 1. Re-orient reason to its proper end/goal.
- 2. Ground reason in reality (spiritual, etc)
- Give reason a “godly” shape and basis.
- Needed: a Christian Worldview
  - James Orr, *A Christian View of God & the World* (1893)
  - Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism* (1899)

# Theories & Worldviews

**Theories and Theory Choice**



**Paradigms**



**Academic Disciplines = Traditions of Inquiry**



**WORLDVIEWS**

- Interpreting theories can only be done by drawing upon larger worldviews or philosophies of life

## Christian Scholarship & Biblical Worldview

- Christian Learning = the project of interpreting and forwarding arts and sciences on Christian grounds
- Collegiality Metaphor, Mutuality Model
  - Replace the medieval “queen of the science”
  - All work together to help the Church develop a biblical, scientific, contemporary worldview

## What is theology?

- Theology seeks to know God, and all other things (creatures) as they relate to God
  - Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*.
- Theology is not a science (English)
  - Greek, Latin, German or French, OK
  - Christian theology is grounded upon spiritual truth and supernatural revelation.
- Three domains or levels:
  - Theology in praxis
  - Theology as worship, preaching, liturgy, prayer
  - Theology as an academic discipline (“science”)

## Theology as Worship & Mission

- “Divine theology brings into harmony the voices of those who praise God’s majesty.”
  - Diadochus of Photike (*Philokalia*, vol. 1)
- Praise and Worship seeks the truth
  - Unlike flattery or marketing!
- It is lived out in all we do, including our academic callings/vocations
- Missionary encounter with culture (Lesslie Newbigin)

## What is philosophy?

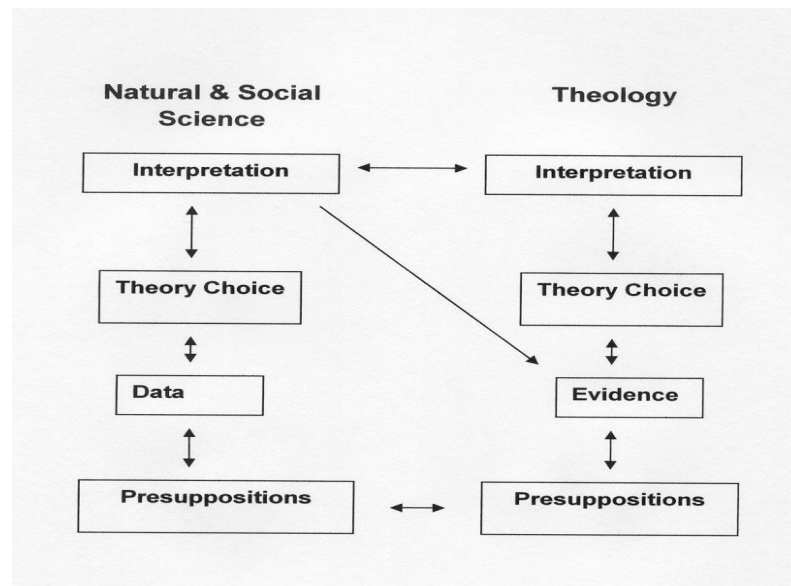
- Fung Yu-Lan, Chinese Philosopher (20<sup>th</sup> C);
  - Philosophy is systematic reflection on life (where “life” in an inclusive whole)
- Edward Craig, English Philosopher (20<sup>th</sup> C)
  - Philosophy is about “some very general picture of what the world is like”, and includes questions regarding “value, reality and knowledge”

## Theology v. Philosophy

- The aims and methods are distinct, as with most academic disciplines (“sciences”).
- Christian Doctrine: Study of God & other things primarily in relation to God.
- Philosophy: The “big questions” of life; rational reflection upon general human experience.
  - Good philosophy can be done from a context of many different worldviews.

## Mutuality of Theology & Science

- Theology needs Christian Scholarship
  - Doctrine of creation, e.g., needs to connect to sciences, art.
  - Theologians need Christian scholarship on the arts and sciences
- Christian scholars (philosophers) in the arts and sciences need theology
  - Christian doctrine helps us to understand, develop and update core concepts in our biblical-scientific worldview.



## Theology and Philosophy in Mutual Interaction: Historical Examples

- Anselm (1033-1109)
  - Theology seeks Philosophy
- Aquinas (1224-1274)
  - Philosophy leads to Theology
- Luther (1483-1546)
  - Theology & Philosophy in Tension
- James Orr (1844-1913)
  - Theology transforms Philosophy
- Borden Parker Bowne (1847-1910)
  - Philosophy transforms Theology

## Summary

- Theology needs philosophical rigor and insight to help the Church in its mission.
- Philosophy helps us understand the culture and its assumptions, also.
- Theology should engage in common work with all the disciplines to develop a biblical, rational worldview for today's church.
- Theology and philosophy can be colleagues without becoming the same thing.