

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

On the nature of worldviews
and the value of a
Christian worldview for Africa

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1. THE STRUGGLE FOR AN OWN WORLDVIEW AND AN AFRICAN IDENTITY: SOME FLASHES FROM THE PAST ONE HUNDRED YEARS

The right to difference, even for Africans, is now largely recognized. This is no small accomplishment ... Whether it is African philosophy or African theology, one gets the feeling that we have just begun. The last thirty to forty years have laid the foundation, have established the legitimacy of the struggle for selfhood. It is now time to build and provide African contributions in these disciplines (Tite Tienou, 1990:32).

The worldviews which the people of Africa have adhered to during this past century have altered radically in the course of time. And the differences are concomitants of the different phases through which the continent has gone during the past century (± 1890-1990).

For the sake of convenience one could divide the period into three phases: a pre-colonial phase (until ± 1890), a colonial (until ± 1960) and a post-colonial (from ± 1960). The post-colonial phase could (see below) be further divided into sub-phases. Although the main attention will be directed to the final phase (the post-colonial), it is necessary to say something briefly about the two earlier phases, because one cannot understand the post-colonial properly without it.

In this brief overview we will pay special attention to the link between worldview and personal and group identity.

1.1 The pre-colonial phase (until ± 1890)

In this period the people of Africa still lived undisturbed. They did not know the word 'identity crisis', because the traditional African worldview(s) - the embodiment of their religion, culture, values, customs and traditions - still bound together their lives and gave it direction. This was a holistic, all-encompassing vision of life.

In view of the fact that I myself and others have written extensively about this, I am not going to try and describe the traditional African view of life here, and it is assumed that

the readers of this book will be familiar with it. The core of this worldview is probably situated in the spiritual world which influences and determines everything (the physical world and the whole of human existence). This worldview was still strongly traditionally oriented. In this phase Africa thus had a clear worldview and a highly developed culture.

To understand what happened during the two subsequent phases (colonial and post-colonial) in Africa, we should say something about culture: how its outer layers change faster and more easily than the deeper core.

Man was made from the dust of the earth, as the word **Adam** clearly indicates. At the same time he was appointed over the earth. Because God created man thus, he cannot do other than to change his natural environment. God placed him in a beautiful 'house' but he has to make a 'home' of it himself. The Creator had put enormous potential into creation, but man has to actualize it.

Human culture is therefore something totally different from a spider which spins a web, a bird which builds a nest or an animal instinctively feeding and protecting its young. Insects, birds and animals do the same thing generation after generation. Man is creative, from that which exists he can create something new, something different.

The result of human cultural activity is a complex whole. If we use the image of an onion which we are beginning to peel, we find at least the following eight layers: (1) habits; (2) behaviour; (3) customs; (4) material and spiritual creations, like buildings and works of art; (5) institutions, such as marriage, and the state with its laws; (6) values and norms; (7) a specific worldview, and (8) finally the religious convictions of a specific group of people.

You will note that the outside cultural layers are visible. The deeper we move to the centre, the less visible do the facets of a culture become. It is therefore easier to describe a specific custom than it is to describe the worldview of someone or of a group.

A subsequent characteristic of culture is that the outside layers also change more easily than the core. Very few Africans, following acculturation with the West, will still wear traditional African clothes. Many of those who wear Western clothes, however, still have more or less the same worldview as their traditional ancestors. Westernization has not touched their essential being!

This tenacity of a worldview has a link with another trait of culture which we have not mentioned yet. This is that the inner, deeper cultural layers determine and direct the outward layers. For instance: Your marital and family life and the norms which you support cannot be understood without an understanding of your worldview.

Your worldview in turn is influenced by even more fundamental religious convictions or your ultimate commitment in a decisive manner. View of self, view of the world and vision of life are most fundamentally determined by the one you gave your heart to - it is directed by your view of God. (This does not imply that circumstances cannot have an influence on one's religious convictions. One cannot simply say: change our hearts and people will automatically change the socio-economic structures. This is not the full truth - just as the opposite statement will also not be true.)

1.2 The colonial phase (± 1890 -± 1960)

During this phase (Africa divided into separate colonies by the large Western powers) the traditional way of life came under increasing pressure. For the sake of 'modernization' Western worldviews and values, which were -often in direct conflict with the traditional African values, were forced onto the continent's inhabitants.

The colonizers did not hide their Western sense of superiority. The African worldview was considered childish and therefore had to be corrected and brought to the same level as that of the West. According to Westerners of the time Europe and the USA regarded Africa as the symbol of barbarism and non-civilization. The worldview of the African was, according to them, primitive, pre-logical and without intelligence.

It was, however, not only Western colonialism and culture which disturbed the earlier harmonious, holistic worldview of these people. Together with the Western worldview came (Western) Christianity - the gun was accompanied by the cross! Unfortunately this type of Christianity did not preach the radical, integral, encompassing gospel of the Bible. It was a dualistic Christendom, which made a clear distinction between the Christian faith (the 'spiritual', or sacred sphere) and the rest of life (the so-called material or secular sphere).

Such a dualistic Christendom further extended the schizophrenia in the life of the African. Apart from the tensions between the traditional and the Western ways of life Christianity also had to be fitted in somewhere. (Often the Africans - quite rightly - did not distinguish between Western culture and Christianity.) The logical result was a divided soul, as somebody so strikingly expressed it. Their holistic worldview had gone and with it the

awareness of an own identity: Am I (still) an African, (already) a Westerner, or (only) a Christian - or all three at one and the same time?

Most Western missionaries - and also some Africans who embraced Christianity - did not take the worldview and the religion of the African people seriously, because they regarded it as ridiculous, primitive superstition. If they took it seriously, they reasoned, it would weaken the gospel. But it is precisely because they did not take it seriously that the impact of Christianity on the African was weakened.

Because the gospel was not brought as a new, total, encompassing worldview, which had to take the place of an equally encompassing traditional worldview, the deepest core of African culture remained untouched. Christian faith only influenced and changed the outer layers of African culture (such as, for example, customs and behaviour). For this reason it often led to superficial Christianity - totally at variance with the nature of the Christian faith, which is a total, all-embracing religion, influencing the whole of life from a reborn heart (in the same way that a heart pumps life-giving blood to each corner of the body).

The average African convert did not experience the gospel *as* adequate for his whole life, and especially not when it came to the most complex issues of life. For that reason we get the phenomenon all over Africa today that Christians, in time of existential need and crisis, as in danger, illness and death, revert to their traditional faith and view of life. The gospel then, had no real impact in those areas where it really matters!

This has had the result that many Christians in Africa live in two worlds: the older or the traditional one, and the new or the Christian one. They try to straddle both, and this can only lead to frustration and uncertainty, especially for the African, who has traditionally functioned within a holistic, integral religion, without making the distinction between the sacred and the secular.

Let me tell you this one fable which so beautifully illustrates this problem. The king of the birds sent his tax collector to collect taxes from the birds. The fruit bat maintained that he would not pay because he was not a bird -I mean, have you ever seen a bird which brought his babies into the world live and suckled *them*? Shortly afterwards the king of the animals sent his representative to remind the animals of their tax duties. When he came to the fruit bat, he was told that the bats would not pay - after all, the bats could fly, and thus were not mammals. When the king of the animals held a feast for the animals, the bat was not invited - and the same happened when the king of the birds held a feast. The

poor bat - neither animal nor bird - fitted in nowhere. In this way many Africans today live in two worlds: the traditional worldview, and the Christian (in Western guise). Because he does not have a worldview in which he feels totally at home, he experiences an identity crisis.

Apart from the clashing worldviews the people of Africa (as a result of, among others, modernization and the Westernization of their way of life) found that their worldviews did not accord with reality any longer. The result of all this was the emergence of a deep-seated existential uprooting and crisis in their worldviews. (Cf. below in 4. where more attention is given to what such a crisis of worldview really involves.)

It was inevitable that there should be reaction against the contempt for the African manifested by the West, the damage done to their holistic worldviews, and the concomitant identity crisis. This was especially clear in the third, the post-colonial phase.

1.3 Post-colonial phase (from ± 1960)

This phase does not accord exactly with the period of political independence. Reaction already began during the thirties. (At the beginning mostly as the result of the ideas of black people in diaspora outside Africa, and some Westerners in Africa.) The Western colonialist concept that *the* African did not have a clearly coherent philosophy of life was rejected.

The first reaction was that of **African personality** (Blyden) and **Négritude** (Cesaire and Senghor) in which the concern was with a collective black personality and identity (that is, a racist or ethnic concept). According to this all black (African) cultures were based on the same worldview, religion and culture. With this concept of a pan-African 'philosophy' an attempt was made to retrieve the dignity of the black man and the value of black culture (cf. also Nkrumah's **Conscientism**).

A second effort was made by the proponents of a 'Bantu philosophy' (Tempels and his followers) who indicated that black people's view of life was a logically coherent whole. Tempels's objective was to indicate the full human dignity of the 'primitive' African.

A third school of thought included writers who stressed especially the unity of African culture.

All three of these schools of thought therefore posited a general, *typical* African way of

thought, a kind of collective, pre-scientific philosophy or worldview. (A clear distinction was not always drawn between religion, worldview, culture and philosophy.) Furthermore, there is a clear link between the search for a typical African worldview and the existential identity crisis in which Western colonialism had dumped the people of Africa.

These schools were followed during the seventies by a 'critical phase of thinkers who doubted whether there was in fact such a thing as a collective African worldview or philosophy. According to them true philosophy (in the technical sense of the word) is not born in communities but rather in individual thinkers. (Examples of this trend would be Crahay, Hountondji, Towa and Wiredu.) According to them the so-called African philosophy is nothing more than an ethnic philosophy - a subtle way of exercising a kind of spiritual colonialism to keep the black man and Africa further subjugated. Progress is only possible if the so-called traditional African thought should be rejected. If there were such a thing as an African philosophy, then it would have to comply with the standards of *Western* philosophy.

The newest trend (during the eighties and nineties) would seem to have suppressed this critical phase. African thinkers have again started to take seriously their traditional worldviews. Contemporary African philosophies should - at least partly - be built on the foundations of traditional worldviews and will therefore differ from Western and Eastern worldviews. They do agree with the critics mentioned earlier that one cannot speak of **the** (one universal) African worldview, because the diversity is too great.

In recapitulation the post-colonial phase has yielded four efforts with regard to the reflection about a uniquely African worldview: (1) a denial (from the side of the West) that such a thing exists; (2) a view that it does exist (by Westerners); (3) a denial (from Africa itself); and (4) an acceptance (by Africans themselves).

It is interesting to see that the question of an African theology went roughly through the same four phases: (1) the missionaries preached a universal Christian theology and doctrine which left no space for a uniquely **theologia Africana**; (2) by about the middle of the century a group of Westerners and Africans began to struggle with the issue of an own universal African theology; (3) then followed a phase during which it was acknowledged that the ideal of **one** general African theology could not be realized; (4) at present it is culminating in the phase in which the stress is put on the specific, without rejecting the general African traits and characteristics.

In the quotation at the beginning of this paper Tite Tidnou sums up the situation well: the

struggle for the right to differ, to be able to seek an own identity, has been won. This does not mean that a unique identity (as reflected, among others, in a unique, new, contemporary African worldview, philosophy and theology) has already been found. “Most countries in Africa are now politically independent. Nearly all the continent’s mission-related churches are led by Africans. Is there still need for a quest for selfhood and identity? The paradoxical situation in Africa is that the struggle for identity is now more acute than ever before ... That is why the quest for identity is a central aspect of all types of reflection in Africa” (1990:32).

He also directs attention to the fact that Christians (church people) in the past made the most valuable contributions in the quest for an African philosophy. This has become the case less and less. In most African countries the state has taken over the schools and institutions for higher education. The debate about an African philosophy (and worldview) has become more and more secular, seeing that it has been transferred to the secular universities.

These two facts (the importance of a unique **African worldview** and need for this to be **Christian**) are the main impetus behind this publication. A Christian view of life (perhaps later extended to a unique **philosophia Africana**) can help solve the identity crisis with which we are faced in Africa. Because a Christian worldview means integrity and wholeness, it, turns a Christian into a whole person.

In this way I (as a Euro-African) would like to make a positive contribution, as Tienou advises. Let us please leave behind us the negative attitudes (first of the West towards Africa, and later on of Africa towards the West). It has been happening at too many conferences - and it is already decades since independence - that Africa has been accusing the Western world of practically everything bad and corrupt on the continent. In this way I am not for a moment denying the evil committed by colonialism and everything associated with it. It is only an African, who has personally experienced it, who can fully spell this out. (Please remember that my grandparents and parents also experienced British colonialism as expressed in the devastating aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.) But to keep on reviving old grievances will not bring anybody any further, and one should also be willing to look at oneself critically. Many African leaders, following independence, freely chose to experiment with ideologies alien to both Africa and Christendom - such as Socialism and Marxism - and did their countries and their subjects a great disservice in doing so.

1.4 New interest in the phenomenon of worldview and worldview issues

The Protestant-reformational tradition has always given a great deal of attention to visions of life. In a certain sense this already began at Calvin with his well-known *Institutes* (1536-1559). Think also of Herman Bavinck's *Christelike Wereldbeschouwing* (Kampen : Kok, 1913) and J.H. Bavink's *Persoonlijkheid en wereldbeschouwing* (Kampen : Kok 1928).

As regards twentieth century South Africa, there are also many examples. Think of the many articles and chapters which H.G. Stoker devoted to this (for example, chapters 10 and 11 of his *Beginnels en metodes in die wetenskap [Principles and methods in science]*, Potchefstroom: Pro Rege, 1961), JAL Taljaard's *Lewens- en wereldbeskouing en menslike samelewingsverbande [Worldview and human societal relations]* (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege, 1963) and HJ Strauss in *Christelike lewens- en wereldbeskouing (Christian world view)* (Bloemfontein: SACUM, 1964).

It is interesting to note that at the end of the seventies and in the eighties *new* interest has arisen in this issue.

In 1979 the Inter-Varsity Press (England) published James W. Sire's *The Universe next door; a guide to world views* (239 pp.). Apart from an introductory chapter on what a world view is, he also deals with different world views such as Christian Theism, Deism, Naturalism, Nihilism, Existentialism, (Eastern) Pantheism and the "New Consciousness" Movement.

The *Institute for Advanced Christian Studies* in 1983 began a series called "Studies in a Christian World View" (under the chief editorship of the well-known Carl FH Henry). The first issue in this series was completed in 1983 by Arthur F. Holmes under the title *Contours of a World View* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 240 pp.). Apart from an introductory section about the nature of a world view his main objective is the construction of a Christian world view both in the light of history and of today's naturalist humanism.

A year later (in 1984) Inter-Varsity Press (USA) published Brian J Walsh and J Richard Middleton's *The transforming vision; shaping a Christian World View* (214 pp.). The work had its inception from lectures which the authors had presented at the *Institute for Christian Studies (ICS)* in Toronto. The following aspects are dealt with in the chapters: What a world view is, the Biblical view of the world, the contemporary world view, and finally, the Biblical world view in action. In the last chapter it is indicated how a Christian world view works transformingly and reformationally on the world.

In 1985 we were surprised by another work from the same source. While the manuscript was being prepared the author, Albert M. Wolters, was still a member of the ICS in Toronto. (At present he is teaching at Redeemer College in Hamilton, Ontario.) This study is called *Creation regained; biblical basics for a reformational worldview* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B Eerdmans Pub. Co., 98 pp.). He also begins with a description of what a world view is and indicates the large variety of world views which history had yielded. Following that he outlines the main traits of a reformational world view by way of the well-known trinity: creation, fall, redemption. In the final instance he also indicates, by way of examples, how a reformational world view really has reformational, renewing power.

The same year (1985) also yielded up another jewel. The purpose of this work had not been to deal with world view *as such*, but rather to provide the points of departure for a Christian scholarship. These points of departure, however, are nothing other than some of the most important elements of a world view. The title and the sub-title, *Spectacles; Biblical perspectives on Christian Scholarship*, already reveal the world view concerns contained in it. Gordon J. Spykman (Calvin College, Grand Rapids, USA) in it deals, among others, with his vision of the trinitarian revelation of God (more particularly, with God's creational revelation), anthropology, how to read the Bible correctly, and Christian scholarship. This book of 98 pages provides absorbing reading because it has been written so lucidly and simply. (The publisher is the Dept. of Philosophy of Science, Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom, 2520).

A year later the literature in this field was further enriched with a comprehensive bipartite work under the editorship of W. Andrew Hoffecker: *Building a Christian World View* (Philipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. - Part I in 1986, 340 pp., and Part II in 1988, 478 pp.). With the sub-title *God, man and knowledge*, Part I deals consecutively with Biblical and Classical world views, synthetic Medieval world views and post-synthetic world views. In Part two (of the same volume) six different epistemologies are dealt with. Part II (under the sub-title *The universe, society and ethics*) deals with four different cosmologies, then seven different visions on human society and finally with both Biblical and naturalistic ethics.

The final volume to which I would like to direct attention is *Stained glass; worldviews and social science* (1989) under the editorship of Paul Marshall, Sander Griffioen and Richard J. Mouw (Lanham/New York: University Press of America, 187 pp.). As the title indicates, it deals particularly with the relationship between faith or views of life and social theory. The first three essays, however, are also of general interest, because there three leading reformational thinkers give their views about what exactly a vision of life and the

world is and why it has been and still is such an important concept in the reformational tradition.

From all these writings it emerges clearly that reflection on what a world view (vision of life) is, and what the content of a reformational vision of life is have become very topical issues at present.

The great interest, however, is not only to be found in the academic Western world. In the field of practical Christian life, too, on continents such as Africa, there is a growing interest in a Christian vision of life.

During the past century and more Christianity has been rooted and has grown with enthusiasm on this continent. African Christianity, however, is slowly moving into a next stage. Its perspective is becoming broader and deeper, and involving more than merely ecclesiastical matters. It is starting to ask questions about the relevance of the Gospel of Christ for the political, social, economical, cultural and ethical areas of life. To answer these kinds of questions an encompassing Christian world view is needed. At the same time African Christians have started to look critically at their traditional view of life and the world as well as at all kinds of ideologies (for example, African socialism) with which various African countries have experimented since independence, beginning round about the sixties.

One example of this new interest in world view issues is the *Worldview 1988 Consultation* organized from 13-18 June 1988 in Nairobi, Kenya, by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar. One of its recommendations reads as follows: "We are convinced that an integrated Christian world view based upon the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, is an indispensable foundation to live out an authentic Christian life in our contemporary society, hence the imperative of calling all Christians to develop a Christian worldview within the African context. The battle, therefore, is for the Christian mind to think Christianly, and to grasp the full implications of the Lordship of Christ over all areas of life. This implies the necessity to develop a Christian anthropology and a Christian social philosophy'.

A similar Christian worldview conference took place in November 1989 in Jos, Nigeria. These were important events, because they can enable African Christendom to move away from a pietistic, Sunday-only, church-centred faith towards an encompassing framework of faith which has relevance for the *whole* of life.

2 . THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A WORLDVIEW

2.1 By way of introduction

that deeds have fathers. Thoughts or ideas or convictions precede actions. How we think determines what we do and how we live. For that reason it is important to know what somebody or a group might be thinking. This will enable us to understand their deeds more fully.

Apart from the content (exactly **what** a group or person might think), it is also important to know **how** the thought process is working: what are nature, the structure, the functions of the framework of ideas which have such a decisive influence on each person's actions.

Many words have been used to describe such a framework: life perspective, confessional vision, life convictions, lifeview, world-and-life view, worldview, philosophy of life, philosophy, system of values, the whole of a person's ideas or principles and in the case of Marxism ideology. Personally I prefer the word **worldview**.

There are as many definitions of what a worldview is as there are philosophers. I am not going to pay attention to all of them, and will, by way of introduction, simply offer a preliminary circumscription of my worldviews, as nobody looks at reality 'neutrally'. own, because we do have to start somewhere.

A worldview is an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies human activity, shapes it motivates it and gives it direction and meaning so that man's calling in the world is spelled out

Let us now look at the nature (traits) and functions (role) of a worldview.

2.2 The nature of a worldview

The ten most important characteristics are the following:

It is encompassing. The term worldview implies that it encompasses Ideas give birth - they are realized in deeds. Conversely, we could say the **whole** of man's life. A further word to describe this adequately is **cosmoscope**, and if one should want to go further, one could call the study of worldviews **cosmoptics**.

Although the word **worldview** does not make it clear explicitly a worldview also always includes a specific concept of god and some concept concerning normativity. (This can be the true God and his the ordinances, or something in creation that is idolized and which then gives rise to normativity.) The totality perspective of a worldview therefore includes three main elements: a concept of God (or another absolute), a view of creation and a perspective on the guidelines for human action in the world.

It is a mode of looking/seeing. Cf. the word worldview again. It is a mode of looking at the world, a perspective, a viewpoint at the world. The primary concern, of course, is not with **what is seen**, but with the **result of the viewing**. In terms of an image, then, a worldview is the lens, the spectacles, the window through which we view reality. The glasses can have different colour tints: there is a large variety of worldviews, as nobody looks at reality 'neutrally'.

It guides and orients us in our understanding of the world. A worldview does not create the world or reality, but only **directs** us in the understanding of it and our life in it. (This distinction is important, as will emerge later, because it saves us from relativism: so many worldviews, so many worlds!). In order to clarify this guiding and orientating function of a worldview, we can compare it with a road-map: is a 'map' which helps us to determine where we find worldview. ourselves, and how we should determine our route through life.

It reveals a unity. By this is meant that a worldview is not simply a random collection of ideas. It is a framework or a system of convictions which cohere in an orderly fashion in a pattern and which reveals inner interdependence and consistency. (This does not mean that we cannot distinguish different 'levels' in a worldview, and that some elements of a worldview are more central and important than others.)

It is both descriptive and prescriptive. The view is not only **an** image of the world (and life in it), it is also a blueprint for life in the world. It does not only (descriptively) tell you what the world is (what you can see), but also (prescriptively) tells how the world **should be** (what you should see). A worldview therefore has both a factual and a normative side. It also provides standards according to which a distinction can be made between good and evil, right and wrong, ugly and beautiful, order and disorder. In this regard one could compare a worldview with the compass or rudder of a ship, because it indicates direction.

It requires full commitment. If a person (or a group) would not be able to give full

commitment to his worldview, this worldview, even if very healthy, cannot be given substance in a concrete way of life. In contrast to this total surrender means satisfaction, inner joy and peace. (Surrender in this sense means more than merely emotional commitment.)

It is typically human. This means that all people have a worldview, a view of life. It does not mean that all people are aware of this - most people live instinctively, from an intuitive framework of reference or frame of mind. (In times of crisis this fact emerges more clearly.) It also goes without saying that not even all individuals who are aware of their preconceptions hold to an equally clearly worked-out and systematized worldview. (According to some, philosophers are the people who reflect consciously and systematically about worldviews.) It should also be mentioned that a specific worldview is adhered to individually but more often collectively. The rule is mostly that a worldview comes into being within a specific community.

It is pre-scientific. This trait coheres with the previous one, viz. that it is typically human - and all human beings are not scientists or scholars. Worldview should therefore not be confused with sciences or disciplines such as Philosophy or Theology (as does indeed sometimes happen), seeing that it is pre-theoretical. Pre-scientific, however, does not mean unscientific - worldview and scholarship/science are two ways of knowing that each has its own right to existence. Worldview is common sense, and not academic knowledge.

The prescientific nature of such a worldview also means that the validity, truth or falsity, goodness or weakness of a worldview cannot be proven by way of logical (and even less with scientific) argumentation. The obverse is rather true: The religious convictions of a worldview influence and even determine your scientific arguments. Stated differently: one argues from the basis of a worldview, and not towards it.

It is a deeply-rooted source of action. We have already seen that a worldview is not only descriptive but also prescriptive. This trait is related to that. A worldview is also a vision of how the world should be changed. It therefore contains transformative power, wishes to stress man's calling in the world, his responsibility. For this reason I rather prefer the word worldview [**wêreldvisie** in Afrikaans] to **reflection** on the world [Afrikaans **wêreldbeskouing**]. Reflection makes one think too much of a kind of **speculative contemplation** - which also does not fit in with the pre-theoretical character of a worldview - rather than **active persuasion**.

It is a definitive image of reality, and yet fallible. For the adherents of a worldview it is the truth, and yet it has to remain open as a result of all the errors due to human subjectivity. We here have to do with a seeming contradiction: On the one hand we cannot do other than to confess the truth of our vision of reality, and to live accordingly. On the other hand we cannot canonize it as the only truth, because it is a human construct, full of weaknesses and should therefore continually be refined, revised and further developed.

2.3 The functions of a worldview

This section is in a certain sense the result of the preceding and in another sense a brief resume of it. For that reason some measure of repetition cannot be eliminated, and it will therefore be done briefly and in summary fashion.

At the beginning of this book (when we dealt with Africa) we had already suggested that there is a link between worldview and human identity. Now we can go into this in greater detail.

Seen from the side of faith a worldview fulfils the following function: it offers a foundation for life in the final certainty (God or an idol, something of creation elevated to a final certainty).

Seen from the side of the realities of life, it has the following role: it invites and insists on purposeful 'incarnation' or concretization in everyday life. It makes our confession of a final certainty meaningful or relevant for everyday life in its multifarious variety.

For the proponents a worldview adhered to with commitment means the following: • It provides interpretive keys to an understanding of reality and of man himself.

- It integrates (makes a unity of) and structures human experience.
- In this way it gives meaning to human existence.
- As a normative framework it enables man to make choices based on principle and to act according to a specific pattern.
- As active conviction it motivates man towards an awareness of calling (vocation) and responsibility to make a better place of the world.
- It is very important in the formation of a personal identity and integrity. It can

lead to somebody like Luther saying (according to legend): "Here I stand. I can do no other."

- It releases deep emotions in people, but also offers great stability. Because it supplies a sense of security, satisfaction, inner peace and joy.
- It is usually embodied in symbols which have a motivating, inspiring and cohesive force for a specific group or community.
- It has diagnostic value in the sense that it distinguishes friend from enemy. Especially in threatening situations the 'enemy' plays an important role.
- Should a worldview get into a crisis its proponents are shaken to the depths of their beings.

From these ten points it emerges clearly that worldview plays a cardinal role in the moulding - positive or negative - of individuals and societies. But a faulty, negative (defensive anti-this and anti-that), unbalanced, life-denying and destructive worldview breaks man down. The former promotes and the latter hinders spiritual growth towards maturity.

In a nutshell: **Without a vision no mission!**

If we do not have a clear Christian worldview, we will not be able to see our all-encompassing calling as Christians in the world.

Without a truly relevant Christian lifeview - broad, deep and inspiring - the contribution of Christendom to our bleeding continent might be truly minimal. Furthermore: without it, it might even happen that instead of continued growth, large-scale apostasy can occur, because initially enthusiastic converts will, not be able to find any concrete meaning in the Christian faith in the midst of our harsh African realities. African Christianity will, moreover, only truly have a chance against the vortex of the traditional holistic African lifeview, totalitarian Islam, radical / Marxism (with its materialist politico-economic lifeview) and Western/ materialist-individualist capitalism if it spells out its own total, radical an/ integral lifeview and gives it concrete shape in everyday life.

3. THE PRESENT DEBATE ON WORLDVIEW IN REFORMATIONAL CIRCLES

I have tried to represent the preceding section (about nature and the function of a worldview) in as simple a manner as possible without going too deeply into the difficult issues which adhere to the concept of worldview. We should not, however, ignore the issues.

We find a good introduction to the debate on worldview in reformational circles in the recent book **Stained glass: worldview and social science** (1989) under the editorship of P.A. Marshall, S. Griffioen and R.J. Mouw. I use this as a guide to initiate the debate here.

The exposition provided above could give the impression that the concept of a worldview is something typical of, idiosyncratic to, the world of Christian thought. This is not the case, however. It is an alien concept which was neither born nor nurtured in the world of Christendom.

The question is now whether this immigrant had been investigated thoroughly enough before being allowed into the world of Christian thought. Was its philosophical baggage checked well enough before it was allowed to serve as a means (in the form of, for example, a reformational vision of life) of conveying the Biblical message? Is the concept of **worldview** as such not in opposition to the gospel, so that, instead of being a useful aid, it is rather to be seen as a Trojan horse?

In order to try and determine this, we are going to subject the concept worldview to a double security test - and history will serve as an X-ray apparatus in order to help us see what is concealed in the baggage.

The first question which arises is how thinkers have seen the **relationship** between worldview and life (including especially philosophy and other disciplines). The second issue in the security test will be whether the **relativist connotation** which is linked to the concept of worldview is not undermining the Christian faith and thought.

3.1 The relationship between worldview and science, in particular philosophy

Our term worldview had its origin in German Idealism. The philosopher Immanuel Kant first created the term **Weltanschauung**. **Romanticism** gave its own distinctive stamp to it, and by about 1840 it had become a well-known and accepted term in the world of learning in Germany. It indicated a global, comprehensive overview of life and the world. It is therefore somewhat similar to philosophy, but without the scientific, rational pretensions of philosophy. The concept soon penetrated other languages, and was either used just like that as a loan word from German, or a new word was coined. In 1858 already the English equivalent **worldview** became current.

With the coming into being of this concept philosophers therefore had to reflect on what the relationship is between the centuries-old concept **philosophy** and the new concept worldview. Are these simply two words denoting the same thing, or do they indicate different phenomena? And if they do indicate different things, what is the relationship between them?

Broadly speaking, one could say that in this reflection the concept **philosophy** has mostly retained its centuries-old meaning of **rational-scientific** thought about the totality of reality, while **worldview** has had the connotation of a personal and therefore **historico-relative** view of the totality of reality. We will go more deeply into this nature of a worldview in the second main section. At present attention has to be directed to the **relationship** between worldview and philosophy.

A.M. Wolters in the abovementioned work (**Stained glass**) distinguishes among five different ways of seeing the relationship:

- 1 worldview **repels** philosophy
- 2 worldview **crowns** philosophy
- 3 worldview **flanks** philosophy
- 4 worldview **yields** philosophy
- 5 worldview **equals** philosophy

Thinkers who have been proponents of these different views are, among others, the following:

- 1 Soren Kierkegaard (already in 1838) and other later Existentialist philosophers (for example, Karl Jaspers). According to them there is an immitigable tension between theoretical philosophy and existential worldview. Yet both are equally legitimate and essential.

2. This view we find especially in the Baden Neo-Kantian School of, for example, H. Rickert (until 1920) and (after 1900) W. Windelband. According to this worldview is not alien to philosophy but precisely its highest manifestation.

3 According to this viewpoint worldview and philosophy have to be distinguished very strictly. Whatever rights might be attributed to worldview, it should not be confused with (scientific) philosophy. Representatives of this view have been, for example, H. Rickert (after 1920), E. Husserl and M. Weber.

4 This model, which we find in the thought of W. Dilthey and K. Mannheim, is exactly the obverse of the second model: Philosophy does not engender worldview (as crown) but worldview produces a particular philosophy.

5 The fifth model means a complete identification between worldview and philosophy. Worldview is reduced to scientific philosophy and shares in philosophy's traditional claims on rationality and universal validity. F. Engels (who differs from Marx in this regard) is a clear representative of this viewpoint. The dialectical materialist philosophy is the true scientific **Weltanschauung**. As a result of the authority accorded Engels in the Marxist-Leninist world of thought, this became the standard vision on worldview among Soviet philosophers.

All these views are also to be found in more recent thinkers. Although all thinkers cannot be divided into one single model, (cf. Klapwijk, 48-50), it is still handy to give a survey of the variety of viewpoints.

The important question is now: where did our predecessors in the reformational tradition fit in? Because when A. Kuyper at the turn of the century published his **Calvinism** (Stone Lectures of 1898 in the USA), and he used concepts such as **life principle (levensbeginsel)** and **life convictions (levensoortuiging)** these are words from the spiritual climate of the day. And H. Bavinck, who published **Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing**, himself acknowledged that between 1902 and 1908 no less than twelve German books had been published with the word **Weltanschauung** in their titles.

According to Wolters (qwp. 20-33) the thought of Kuyper, Bavinck and Dooyeweerd (the latter until 1940) reflects model 4 cited above: worldview yields or engenders a philosophy, philosophy grows from a deeper-seated worldview, philosophy is the scientific reworking of a prescientific worldview.

From about 1940, when he came with his new concept of (four) religious ground motifs, Dooyeweerd changed his views. Philosophy was no longer for him merely the scientific reworking of a worldview, but both are parallel manifestations of deeper-lying religious ground motifs. According to this, then, religion has a direct influence on philosophy and not any longer merely via the essential link of a worldview. One could therefore typify Dooyeweerd's later viewpoint as a mixture between models 3 and 4 above.

It is understandable why most of the **Calviniae patres** chose the Diltheyan model (number 4) for the relationship between worldview and reality. Their enemy number one in the field of science was the concept of neutrality. And with a vision that philosophy (and all other disciplines via philosophy) emanate from and are determined by a (religiously inspired) worldview they could combat this enemy very well.

To use our image from above again: they checked out the alien immigrant at the border post, and they allowed him to pass the security clearance, because he could provide a valuable service. The real question is, however, whether they were not so influenced by the one **value** of the concept **worldview** that they could not notice the dangers inherent in it. Because inherent that it **determined** the whole of life (including scholarship) but that it also, at the same time, **relativized** it.

This is a very important question, because the enemy of the reformational tradition today is not **neutralism** any longer, but rather **relativism**. The neutrality concept has been rejected by contemporary secular thought. But seven demons (worse than the one thrown out of the house) have come in its place: relativism (or pluralism, as it is called more euphemistically).

The core issue is therefore whether today we can combat relativism with the idea of a (reformational) worldview - while an important reason for the origin of contemporary relativism has been precisely the acknowledgement of the existence of (a variety of) worldviews. Could one exorcise the devil with Beelzebul? Should we not take care that we do not, like Saul, fall into our own swords?

This forces us back to history again. With the aid of what different thinkers have said about worldview, the 'immigrant' is going to be forced to go through the security gate again.

3.2 Is worldview the indispensable bridge?

Before we come to that, I would like to mention that not all contemporary reformational thinkers accept model 4 above. In the above-mentioned volume A.M. Wolters, J.H. Olthuis and S. Griffioen maintain the model according to which worldview (and its elaboration into a philosophy) is the link or bridge between faith and scholarship. (Stated in an image: it is the gearbox which links the wheels of the car to the engine.)

J. Klapwijk, however, does not agree that worldview simply plays a mediatory role. According to him it also has an integrative and transforming role. He also rejects the idea that philosophy is merely, an elaboration or expression of the prescientific worldview (the “worldviewproduces-philosophy model”). He agrees with Dooyeweerd that the philosopher does not only have the task to **bring to expression** a worldview (scientifically), while he is not willing to **account** for it (scientifically) in the academic world. According to Klapwijk the fourth model therefore leads the Christian thinker towards isolation and resignation within particularism, and ultimately towards relativism.

N. Wolterstorff too does not see much value in the concept of worldview as a bridge or a medium between faith (and, for example, Christian) scholarship, as well as the concomitant idea that science is therefore an expression of a particular worldview. According to him this is just as one-sided as the reverse Marxist concept according to which religion/worldview is not the **cause** but always the **result, effect**, of science and sociopolitical circumstances. He would therefore like to stress both directions: science is not only an expression of the self (for example, one’s own faith and worldview), it is also the result of the effect of the world (society and culture) on us. There is a continual reciprocity.

According to S. Griffioen worldview regulate the traffic between scientific theories and reality. They do not do this as self-reliant entities, though, because their reliability can also be questioned if discrepancies come into being between their claims and reality itself.

Although it would seem as if P. Marshall accepts the scheme faith-worldview-philosophy-scholarship, and therefore agrees with Wolters and Olthuis (that worldview and philosophy are the link between faith and scholarship) he does warn that we should not make of philosophy the new queen of science, a guard or a watchdog. It is not necessary for Christians, prior to their practising scholarship, first to undergo ‘philosophical purification’. Philosophy need not be the **starting point** of all Christian

scholarship. Our concept of an inner reformation of science is in many ways too rationalistic. We can simply **begin** with what we already know about Christian faith and then practise Sociology or any other discipline.

It would seem as if important problems are raised here which demand further discussion.

I return, however, to the danger of relativism which is attached to the concept **worldview** and which will necessitate our looking at it closely from a historical viewpoint once more.

3.3 The relativist connotation which historically burdens the concept worldview

You will remember that the reason for this second testing was: If the concept **worldview** **inherently** carries the meaning of relativity, do we not then undermine the gospel if we speak of a **biblical or reformational** worldview?

Because it is impossible to represent the history of the development of the concept fully here, I would like to limit myself to some prominent figures in order to outline the line of development.

Immanuel Kant and Romanticism

The word **Weltanschauung** came into being in the last decade of the eighteenth century in Kant's well-known **Kritik der Urteilskraft** and soon became a key concept within the idealistic form of the early rationalist philosophy. It was transferred from Fichte to Schelling, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Novalis, Hegel and Goethe.

Romanticism, however, was a reaction against the classic rationalist philosophy of, for example, Descartes and Kant, who believed that society was built on the generally valid universal truths of reason. According to Romanticist concepts, this made all things equal in contrast to the rich diversity and variety of reality. With the new concept **worldview** they wanted to justify the variety of cultural expressions. There could not be only one universal worldview, but rather a plurality of life perspectives.

Wilhelm Dilthey

He developed his **Weltanschauungslehre** in the final period of his life (± 1905 onwards). According to him worldviews are interpretations of reality which try to express the sense and meaning of the world. Worldviews therefore have to do with final or most

profound questions and values. A worldview gives unity to experience and actions and has power over its . . . cannot be proven true or false by philosophy or science, because philosophy itself is determined by worldview preconceptions. Modern life is characterized by a diversity of contending worldviews. Seen in historical perspective, each worldview is relative. All of them, however, contain (as partial expressions of the diversity of aspects of reality) truth.

Thomas Kuhn

He is especially known for his ideas on paradigms and “Gestalt switches” (cf. his well-known **The structure of scientific revolutions** of 1962). However, he used the term worldview in almost the same meaning as **paradigm**. He regarded worldview as an essential ingredient of any paradigm. (Cf. chapter 10: “Revolutions as changes of worldview”.) He did not, however, develop this idea in depth. According to him a worldview determines what will be accepted as world. Such a statement brings Kuhn to the edge of total relativism, according to which there are as many worlds as there are worldviews. He did try to water down the relativist consequences of his ideas by acknowledging that ultimately there is only one world. His efforts in this regard, however, were not too convincing, and many of his followers (even though he distanced himself from them) interpreted his work totally relativistically.

Kuhn still tried to maintain a multiplicity of worldviews within the limits of an extended concept of reason. As a result of that he did not study the pre-religious roots of worldviews. In contrast to this the reformational tradition always directed attention to the fact that worldviews have deeper roots in the religious directedness of the human heart.

A victory for subjectivism

Subjectivism (with relativism as its concomitant) is typical of modern (rationalist and irrationalist) philosophy. In the Greeks the word **idea** still indicated what is seen. In modern thought (figures such as Kant and Hegel) idea does not any longer indicate what is seen, but the act of **seeing**, the subjective vision. The concern is no longer with the extramental reality, but the intramental image of reality. Things exist in the fact that they are perceived. Succinctly put: the world is the worldview! Reality is (rationalistically) reduced to our/my view of reality. Thought has swallowed reality, things have been changed into mere ideas.

In an earlier phase Wittgenstein still used concepts •such as **viewing** or **mirroring**, but in his later phases he put the stress on **saying and doing**. Human knowledge of reality has become a language game. If others play the same language game as I do, then they will also see the world that I see as I see it. (The emphasis has shifted completely from

the **looking** to the **doing**.)

If you should want to know how far this relativism of our modern day has developed, read somebody like the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard (for example his book **The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge**). According to him there is an unlimited plurality of language games. Unity of viewpoint or worldview is utterly excluded. Efforts to effect unity can only be terrorist. The rules of a particular game can only be determined by playing the game, and in the playing the game is legitimized. Quite rightly some doubt whether we still have to do with scholarship here, and whether it has not collapsed into pure entertainment!

A backward glance

If we sum up the few flashes the following can be asserted. The term **worldview** found its shape at a time when history was rediscovered. In reaction against Enlightenment thought, the universal was deprecated in favour of the individual, the abstract in favour of the concrete, and the eternal in favour of the temporal. Where thought had earlier been directed at the immutable essence of things, it would now like historical changes to come into their own.

According to this philosophy deals with the universal, abstract, eternal, while worldview stresses the individual, concrete, temporal and unique. Worldview is therefore a personal and dated pre-scientific look at reality. And even though this view might be held by a whole group, it cannot be other than particular, because it does not transcend the experiences and perspectives of a particular nation in a particular time.

It is therefore clear that the concept worldview as it has developed in the course of the past two centuries simply cannot be detached from historical relativism.

3.4 Acceptable or not to the Christian?

What do we do with the 'immigrant' now? As Christians we can welcome the above-mentioned development, because the acceptance of pluralism (a variety of worldviews and paradigms) may create a climate in which an outspokenly Christian approach in philosophy and other sciences will not simply be rejected by other current schools in secular thought - does not Dilthey himself acknowledge the struggle between different worldviews (cf. the title of his well-known book)?

We have to be careful, however, not to over-emphasize the 'openness'. (The earlier so-called neutral thought was neutral towards everything except the Christian.) For

Dilthey (who started thinking irrationalistically after ± 1905) the struggle between worldviews is not a struggle in the Christian sense between the domain of light and the domain of darkness. More important still: He did not seek a solution totally **outside** rationalist philosophy which idolized human reason: He only sought a broader and deeper concept of reason which would also include the historical criticism of traditional criteria for truth.

The same happens with Kuhn (an irrationalist pragmatist). He only wished to extend the standards for rational truth in order to make space for the important role of religious convictions which determine the choice of theories.

There should thus be serious doubt as to whether in the reflection on worldviews in modern irrationalist thought (from Dilthey to Kuhn) the power of Reason is in any way radically questioned. (Absolutized Reason is not rejected but only plays second fiddle now.)

In the world of P. Feyerabend's **Against Method** there will be room for a Christian worldview or paradigm - but then on the same level as the New Age and modern occultism! If it is true (as Heidegger maintains) that the worldview makes the world and that there are therefore as many worlds as there are worldviews, then it would be senseless any longer to speak of a struggle between worldviews. But then: how do we explain for example the vicious attack of the New Age Movement on the mechanistic view of reality? Is this not a struggle between worldviews?

According to Heidegger's viewpoint even the use of the concept of worldview as such becomes meaningless. It has no meaning, for example, to say that one should retain or attain a worldview.

To my mind we cannot do other than maintain that the world (and God's creational ordinances for the world) is more than our view about it. The world transcends the worldview. For that reason then it is true that even if worldviews change (the Christian too) a stable component remains

4. IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS: THE STRUCTURE OF A WORLDVIEW

In search of solutions: The structure of a worldview

In what follows here, I try to provide provisional answers for what has emerged in the debate. I do hope that you can help me by either rejecting or improving on them.

When we deal with this issue, we have to keep in mind that reality is far more complex than the way in which the construction of a worldview is explained here. We distinguish and separate facets of reality here, and then put them together again in accordance with our own 'model' - while in reality it will never exist in such an abstracted and dismantled form. Somebody could say, for example, that our way of looking at a worldview has still not escaped from the age-old dualism of 'doctrine and life', 'faith and action'. And for that reason we still do not have a solution for the familiar struggle between orthodoxy (**believing** in the right things) and orthopraxy (**doing** the right things).

To my mind this is a false dilemma: doctrine and life, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, are linked indivisibly. For that reason it is wrong to put the stress on the one at the expense of the other. (Earlier there was more stress on orthodoxy, today it is more on orthopraxy.) Worldview and one's actions in the world are in reality indivisibly linked. In this book, however, we are involved with a study of the structure of a worldview. It therefore goes without saying that one cannot look too extensively at man's actions in the world which are the result of his worldview.

What I can at present grasp of worldview can be subsumed under the following points:

4.1 A large number of factors play a role in the establishment of a worldview.

By way of introduction it should be stated that a worldview is born not only of religious convictions (note that **all** people believe - it is only the **direction** of their faith that differs) as a large number of factors play a role in this.

The formation of worldview also occurs through other factors (than merely faith) situated **within** the adherent of such a view, such as his emotional life, personality type,

intellectual development, sex, etc. Apart from these, factors **outside** the adherent of such a view also play a role, such as, for example, a specific tradition, education (by parents, school, college, etc.), influence of friends and peers, the reigning socio-politico-economic-cultural conditions and so forth. One should therefore keep account of a multi-dimensional network of influencing in looking at the inception of a worldview.

4.2 A worldview is the bridge or link between faith and man's life in the world.

In any one's life (whether or not he believes in the true God or in a surrogate idol) his faith plays an important role. Faith has a directional force. It wishes to be concretized in one's life. If I see it rightly, worldview is the link or canal between the deepest religious convictions of a person and his life in the realities of every day.

In this regard the already-mentioned image of the lens as medium between man's faith and the actual conduct of his life could be used again. Perhaps a more applicable image would be that of a prism which breaks up the (white) light of faith into all the colours of the rainbow: the deepest religious convictions are broadened, spelled out clearly, made applicable and relevant for a variety of spheres of life.

The one direction is therefore from faith towards practice of life. Man forms a vision according to his faith and then forms the world in accordance with his vision. It is a vision of faith for life.

There is also, however, a second, inverse direction. Man also forms a vision, according to life, and then shapes his faith according to this vision. In this case one can then speak of a vision of life for faith.

INSERT FIGURE HERE

Explanation of diagram

1 = God

2 = Revelation

3 = Faith

4 = Worldview

5 = Reality

(The hermeneutic spiral: between 2 and 4)

This second direction (and the resultant interaction) are very important, because often they are not noticed, or even denied. A worldview is not only the bridge between faith and the wider life, it is **simultaneously** the medium through which our daily experience can either conform our faith or question it or correct it. The bridge therefore carries two-way

traffic.

4.3 Both absolutism and relativism give a twisted image of what a worldview is

We have already (under 2.2, nature of a worldview) mentioned that a worldview is at one and the same time a definite and yet a fallible image of reality. The problem should now receive further attention in conjunction with the just-mentioned bridging character of a worldview.

Some people (especially the older, more rationalistically inclined) tended to fall into **absolutism** (or **dogmatism**). They tended to canonize their own worldviews. Others (especially the present, more irrationalistically oriented ones) tend more to become the prey of **relativism** (or **pluralism**) because they tend towards the minimizing of the phenomenon of a worldview.

The first-mentioned group believe that their worldview is definite, infallible, the final blueprint. Is it not true, after all, that it has been based on (in the case of a Christian worldview) an infallible revelation (the Bible)? The latter trend in contrast puts the stress on the subjective-human character, the contextual situation and the ongoing change in the course of history of a specific worldview. In extreme form they adhere to the idea of 'so many views, so many worlds'.

Thus: **absolute** certainty - or **no** certainty!

This, however, is a false dilemma. The one tends to look at worldview only from the security of faith and therefore absolutizes it. The other looks especially from the point of view of the varying concrete life situations and then wishes to relativize worldviews.

Both views, however, reveal moments of truth. We have to agree with absolutists that a worldview has no value if man is not convinced of its truth. And we have to agree with the relativists when we realize that a worldview can be most dangerous when it is over-estimated. Absolutization predicts trouble (see below on the crisis in worldviews) in a changing world - especially one which develops as rapidly as the world of the twentieth century. A healthy, balanced worldview will always be an open worldview. One which is amenable to testing, questioning, refining and even overturning by the concrete circumstances of life. Absolutization implies, after all, stagnation and fossilization.

Should we keep in mind the two-way traffic outlined above, we will realize that in the

case of a fossilized worldview it is not only growth towards insight into reality but also growth of faith which are blocked. In such a case we cannot say that the worldview is, any longer, playing the role of transparent glasses, but that the glasses have become opaque or painted.

In such a case a worldview has degenerated into an ideology. An ideology is a petrified, hardened worldview which has no interest any longer in reality or what it looks like, but only wishes to impose its preconceived ideas on reality. The two-way traffic over the bridge which is so important when dealing with a worldview has thus been replaced by a one-way traffic (moving only from faith towards reality). By means of all kinds of rationalizations such an ideology can keep on existing for a long time until the realities of life become so overwhelming that the opposite road (from reality to faith) can at times be broken up violently.

With this we have arrived at the following two facets: In the first place what the criterion is for a good/true worldview, and in the second place how a worldview gets into a crisis, and how it can be solved.

4.4 Criteria for a reliable worldview

How can we, living in a world replete with contradictory worldviews (and worldviews which have degenerated into ideologies) know which one is true and reliable?

Our faith, even though grounded in Scripture, is still humanly fallible, and our concrete life forms are not less deficient.

What to do now? Is relativism (as outlined above) not the best answer after all?

I do not believe that this issue can be resolved at the level of logic, reason or science (cf. what has already been said in this regard earlier). What follow here then are simply aids, indications, and no final rational criteria.

In the first place the already-mentioned reciprocation is important. Does reality accord with my faith (and therefore worldview) about it? And the inverse: do my faith and worldview accord with the realities in which I live, do these make sense, or are they in conflict? Although this might seem like a circular argument, it is already a touchstone.

In the **second place** the direction in which various worldviews would like to steer life might tend to be different. We cannot escape the fact, however, that although we might interpret the realities of life differently, we have to do with the same **structures** of

reality, and are bound to them.

God's law orders, structures and maintains creation. Inversely, creation is a response to this order. The worldviews which we accept are in turn a response to this response, that is, second-degree normativity. One's worldview is the ongoing testing of the explicatory ability of your convictions or the normativity which you accept. As a result of its grounding in the creational order a worldview is neither rationalistic nor irrationalistic. (Order is not merely a reasonable/unreasonable matter.

There is a great difference between orderliness and reasonableness -although they are also linked.)

To the extent that a worldview succeeds in correctly understanding this universal order, it will render to the adherents of the view a sense of security and safety. In spite of what is said by modern irrationalist relativism, worldviews are not mere imagination or subjective whimsy. Each worldview in its turn ties in to something beyond subjectivity, historicity and relativity. There is, in spite of the possible distortion of the mirror (worldview) still a life order which it tries to reflect. (This does not mean that we accept the opposite viewpoint of the absolutists, viz. that the worldview perfectly reflects God's creational order, so that we can consider God's laws and our understanding of them to be on the same level.) The test for each worldview is therefore: (to what extent) does it reflect this order correctly and fully?

On the basis of this we can say to the rationalist: There is no rational way to finally convince somebody with a different worldview. And towards the irrationalist we maintain that it does not mean that we are delivered into the hands of the relativity of subjective human choices. Neither of the two positions is true.

In the **third place** we can apply the criterion of utility or value. Utility as a criterion need not be wrong, but it is wrong when - as in modern pragmatism - it becomes the highest criterion. We may therefore ask questions like the following: Is it a positive worldview? Does it promote man's life or does it suppress it and even destroy it? (Even if it is just the life of some, as is the case under an apartheid regime!) Does it bring healing, wholeness, freedom, and peace?

A final, and **fourth** indication for the correctness of a worldview is the following. So far, all the questions have been formulated from one.

direction: the realities of life. In the final instance, however, one would have to fall back on one's faith, which in turn is based on revelation (from outside oneself). In the case of the Christian faith the Source of the revelation is extra-cosmic. It is God Who reveals his will for our lives in creation, in Scripture and in Christ.

You will see that I have to make a choice at this point myself. For me all other unbiblical faiths are of necessity false and all other revelations nothing other than pseudo-revelations. Yet I cannot deny the existence of these, or the right of some to trust in them.

Surrender is no option. The choice is therefore not between a worldview or no worldview at all. Religious surrender - therefore also commitment to a worldview - is simply part of everyone's existence. Some people simply refuse to acknowledge this openly - as it would seem to impeach their dignity and freedom.

The question_ as to how crises occur in a worldview and how they are resolved is closely related to the just-mentioned problem.

4.5 Crises and their solutions

After what has been said above, this can be dealt with very briefly (although not because it is not important). For Africa it is hi^shl^y tonical if one should keep in mind what has already been stated above. (The crisis in worldview which has been caused by Western imperialism and modernization during the colonial and even post-colonial period in Africa.)

It has been mentioned that a worldview lands in a crisis when it is (1) threatened by another, stronger worldview (stronger because of money, technology, weapons, etc.). Or (2) if the worldview that is held does not accord any longer with the changed realities of life. These are in actual fact the two most important reasons: a worldview hostile towards your own worldview, or a changed socio-politico-economic environment. In both cases the personal worldview then becomes obsolete or old-fashioned!" In both cases, then, the personal worldview comes to be questioned by one's environment. (3) A third reason is situated in the adherent of the worldview itself (which might of course also be a result of the first two reasons): half-hearted instead of full surrender and commitment to the worldview.

What reactions are possible in the case of such a crisis of worldview? Just two: either you stick to your worldview, or you change it.

In the case of the first response the adherents dig themselves deeper and deeper into their

worldview rut and they refuse to acknowledge the facts of reality which are in' conflict with it. (A clear example of this is to be found in certain conservative rightwing white groups in South Africa.) This, of course, creates enormous tension (as already indicated earlier on with regard to black Africa). If the traffic across the bridge (cf. above) cannot flow any longer, man becomes vulnerable. No man can keep on living in uncertainty. If your spiritual home (worldview) threatens to collapse, it causes existential anxiety which can assume vast proportions. Life becomes very difficult once the firm foundations have gone. It should be remembered that (cf. explanation above again) a crisis of worldview also implies a crisis of faith: your faith ceases to make sense in everyday life.

The normal run of events in such a case 'where your gods have deserted you' is that the messages from the side of the realities of life become so overpowering that the road across the bridge is simply forced open - and the old worldview is rejected. (An example of this in South Africa can be seen among the more enlightened whites since 2 February 1990.)

Following this questioning of the old, we have the following steps: (1) The lens of the worldview are directed to *the* realities of the environment anew, so that the worldview can *once again* try to make sense of it. (2) The old vision is revised, or (3) a wholly new vision, which can interpret the circumstances more fully, is accepted.

The moral of the story is 'therefore that it is far better to hold an open worldview right from the beginning - rather than to hold to a closed one, which can only be broken and forced open by a crisis in order to bring one to new insights.

Closed worldviews are usually strongly traditionalist, do not have an awareness of alternatives, believe in the sacredness of their convictions, and have a (abnormal) fear of threats to their viewpoints. In contrast to this an open worldview is characterised by lesser stress on tradition, a greater awareness and acknowledgement of other possibilities, its adherents do not enshrine their own insights (a healthy awareness 'of relativity) and are also not so negatively obsessed with everything that is considered foreign and/or alien.

This section on crises in worldview started with a reference to Africa. What is the case in the West? There it does not look any better. For many the changes have been so extensive, so fundamental and so fast that their worldviews could not keep pace and were lost along the way, as they could not make sense any longer of the rapidly changing life. For that reason the contemporary Western man does not wish to make a stand any longer. (Cf. the already-mentioned pluralism and relativism.) What is important, all that has remained, is

not the principle, but the result, not the norm, but the means and especially the ends. Utility and results are what count. Productivity and effectiveness are keywords. (Naturally this implies a worldview as well!)

Such an attitude of seemingly holding to no worldview evokes as much uncertainty as when a worldview has become outdated. It means indecisiveness, passivity, spiritual paralysis and even chaos. Often it is propagated, however, under the (false) cover of 'tolerance'.

Where the African very often has to struggle very hard to **retain** his worldview, the Westerner often has a hard task to **regain** it. Philosophers have said that the Western world is poised on the threshold of the end of the 'century of worldviews'. We are entering a post-worldview era. (This is an interesting theme to follow up, but we do not have the space for it here.)

5. A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW - SOME CONTOURS

We deliberately talk about a Christian worldview, because Christians too hold divergent worldviews. Which one do we have in mind?

5.1 Four different kinds of Christian worldviews

For the sake of convenience we distinguish (as did Niebuhr in his well-known *Christ and Culture*) among four different types:

- Christ **alongside** culture
- Christ **above** culture
- Christ **against** culture
- Christ **transforms** culture

Why do Christians, who, after all, are all believers of the Word, hold such divergent worldviews? Most Christians should after all agree with the following core confession of their faith: “God the Father redeemed his creation, which had fallen into sin, through the death of his Son and renewed it through his Spirit to become the kingdom of God. “

The reason for the differences is that all Christians do not understand the core concepts in this confession of faith (creation, fall, redemption [grace], kingdom of God) in a universal, all-encompassing sense, but limit it in one way or another. According to Scripture creation includes everything that God made, the fall corrupted the **whole** of creation, redemption is intended for the **entire** creation and the concept Kingdom of God points to the fact that God is King of the **whole** of reality.

In the history of Christianity, however, creation (as nature) has often been regarded as a specific (delimited) **area**. The fall has been regarded *as a* loss of **something** and not a totally penetrating corruption of everything.

Or else it has been localized to an area of creation which would be neutral or even bad *as* such. In the same way redemption is seen *as* the return of **something** and not total and integral renewal. In this way too the Kingdom of God *is* seen as an area or **separate**

sphere of creation or even apart from creation.

The end result of such a mode of thought is a dualistic Christendom. Reality is divided into two spheres: a secular, profane or natural and a religious, sacral or supernatural one. Nature (creation) and grace (redemption) are situated alongside, above, or even in opposition to each other. Redemption, according to Scripture, does not mean, however, that creation is rejected or **replaced** or that it is situated in **opposition** to creation, or that we have to **move away** from creation. No, redemption is rather a **recovery** of creation. Redemption does not mean **another** but rather a new creation. Redemption is therefore re-creation.

This confusion about how nature and grace should be viewed and what their reciprocal relations are, have given rise to the following four Christian worldviews:

At the one end of the spectrum there are Christian worldviews which declare natural life (of which, of course, God is the Creator) as ‘illegitimate’. On the other hand there is the Biblical-reformational, which believes that God’s redemption is intended for his (entire) creation. And between these two polar opposites we can distinguish a further two mid-positions.

In Latin we can sum up the four viewpoints as follows: **gratia contra naturam, gratia supra naturam, gratia juxta naturam and gratia in naturam.**

The position of **gratia contra naturam** (grace **against** nature) was assumed by the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, and in modern times we have encountered it among others in Karl Barth and Jacques Ellul and some Pentecostal groups. They find an antithesis between creation and redemption, and according to them Christians should reject worldly things such as politics, philosophy and science.

The viewpoint *gratia supra naturam* (grace above nature) has been the classical Roman Catholic vision since Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. According to this grace (redemption) does not reject nature (creation), but only perfects it. Because grace only completes creation, being something like the cherry on top, it cannot inherently change nature. Redemption keeps floating on top like oil on water, not effecting an integral change.

The third vision of **gratia juxta naturam** (grace alongside nature) is the classical Lutheran view. Redemption is situated alongside nature, both of them being equally

valid, but without liaison between them. Luther maintains the well-known two-spheres doctrine in which the Christian lives all the time. A Christian can be a politician, but his Christian faith does not have anything to say to his politics. One can marry, but **in addition** (and not **in** your marriage) you should also be a child of the Lord.

Gratia in naturam (grace **penetrating into** nature) typifies the reformational worldview, because according to this grace (redemption) is able to reform, to change creation: Grace is not situated against, above or alongside nature. No, like a healing medicine it penetrates into nature and renews and transforms it from the inside out. We can therefore describe this viewpoint as **gratia naturam transformans**: grace is in the process of transforming creation.

The diagram on the next page is intended to give visual shape to these four Christian worldviews:

Diagram illustrating the four Christian worldviews

1 = grace **against** nature

2 = grace **above** nature

3 = grace **alongside** nature

4 = grace **transforms nature**

Naturally a schematic representation like this has limitations. Not one of the four groups can be fully represented (quite apart from the fact that life is often stronger - in the good or the bad sense of the word - than doctrine). Three examples: In the Anabaptist model there is, apart from the trait of “grace against nature “ also a trend towards “grace above nature “. And the Roman model includes, apart from “grace above nature “, also the concept that grace elevates or perfects nature. This is true of individual thinkers whom I have mentioned. In Calvin, for example, we still find remnants of the first three models.

Where the first vision **rejects and replaces** nature, the second viewpoint **subjects and perfects**, while the third **correlates but ignores** nature. The fourth, and to my mind the Biblically correct one, wishes to **heal and sanctify** nature. Of all four of these Christian worldviews, the reformational therefore has the most positive attitude towards God and his creation: creation and redemption are not situated opposite each other dualistically, but redemption is rather directed at creation.

Even the Biblical stress on the radical corruption of man and the curse of God on creation does not mean that God - and us - writes off creation, but rather that God ‘s grace for creation should emerge so much more gloriously.

The basic mistake of the first three dualistic worldviews is that they confuse **structure and direction**. The fall does not change the structure of creation, but rather the religious direction for or against God. And this double direction cannot be localized in specific areas (grace = good and nature = bad). The antithesis cuts right across everything, even one ‘s own heart.

It is a liberating perspective to realize as a Christian, in accordance with the reformational worldview, that one need not reject or have contempt for creation if one wishes to be obedient to God and to serve Him. Or the inverse: of necessity be unfaithful to God if one wishes to work in creation. We have to serve God **in** his creation.

For that reason the core of the reformational worldview is simple: our (whole) life is religion, service to God. We believe that man ‘s religious relation to God is total: it yeasts through everything that one does; it is **radical**: from out of a heart commitment it offers security to one ‘s entire existence; it is central: it offers direction and purposefulness to one ‘s whole life; it is **integral**: it binds together everything that one does to a meaningful

whole.

I hope it is clear from the preceding in what sense we use the word **reformational**. It is not used in an ecclesiastical sense (referring to a group of [Reformed] churches). Also not in a confessional sense (meaning adherence to a certain number of [Reformed] creeds which originated in the 16th century Reformation). These two meanings of reformational are not wholly excluded. My idea with reformational, however, points to a transformational worldview which stands for a 'cultural perspective that calls for the renewal of individuals and the reformation of society according to God 's revealed norms. This is not only the vision of the Reformed churches but also of many Christians from other traditions.

5.2 Predecessors in the Reformational tradition

Christians are usually divided (in a double sense!) according to their church denomination. There are, for example, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Charismatic and (mainly Black) Independent churches. This is not what the section is going to deal with, however. It deals with matters of **worldview** - and these go even deeper than the confessional or theological differences between churches. If we categorize according to worldview, we find that some churches are nearer to each other than expected, and some further away from each other. For example: Mennonite and Charismatic groups hold to a conviction of the Christian **alongside** the world, Presbyterians and Anglicans tend towards an attitude of Christian **against** the world, while Baptists and Methodists hold a more reformational attitude of Christians **changing** the world.

Where should we then begin to look for the origins of a reformational worldview?

It began in Africa

In a certain sense one could say that the great North African Christian thinker **Aurelius Augustine** (354-430 AD). is the father of the reformational idea. Naturally he was, like all us, a man of his time, who reflected the spirit of his time (e.g. Neo-Platonism) in his thought too. The central Biblical truths (including creation, radical fall and redemption) are central in his worldview, however. The reformational attitude to life was, therefore, born on our own continent.

After him, for about a thousand years during the Middle Ages (\pm 400 to \pm 1400), Christianity declined into the un-Biblical dualism already explained above.

It revived in Switzerland

From about the first quarter of the sixteenth century (\pm 1525) the reformational idea revived less radically in the well-known **Martin Luther** (1483-1546), but more radically among the Swiss reformers such as **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531) and especially **John Calvin** (1509-1564). Although somebody like Calvin 's thought was to a degree still entangled with the Medieval two-spheres doctrine, he succeeded in breaking through this dualistic Christendom. He also provided the motto that the Christian should continually be reforming otherwise he would begin deforming. He therefore held a view that is not reformed, but reforming. And although his reformation was still limited to the field of the church and theology, the basis had been laid for reformation of the whole of society. Unfortunately the church and Protestant Christendom soon after Calvin fell back into dualism (so-called Protestant Scholasticism). His followers therefore did not work out a comprehensive reformational worldview and philosophy.

A new awakening in the Netherlands

After a hibernation of more than two centuries the reformational idea reawakened again in the person of **Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer** (1801-1876) in the Netherlands. He blew on the banked fire again, so that the reformational flame could be seen again. From then on a whole array of people saw to it that the flame did not go out again, but kept on burning ever more brightly. Some of them were the following:

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) was undoubtedly a giant among those who were responsible for the revival of a reformational worldview. He began with the liberal Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk) as a theologian and minister, but later broke away. He was the editor of a daily and weekly newspaper, and wrote a great deal, founded (in 1880) a Christian University (the Free University of Amsterdam), became leader and member of Parliament for the reformational Anti-Revolutionary Party, and was even (from 1901 to 1904) Prime Minister of the Netherlands. The reformation which he had in mind was not only ecclesiastical or theological in nature, but had to encompass the whole of life: political, social, economic, educational and academic.

* **Herman Bavinck** (1854-1921) shared Kuyper 's reformational ideals, although he had a completely different nature from Kuyper 's. He also began as a theologian. He was a minister for only one year, however, before he became a professor of theology (first at Kampen and later at the Free University). During the last ten years of his life he also gave more attention to philosophical issues. His academic work was characterized by an impressive width and balance, as well as an ecumenic spirit.

Although Bavinck and Kuyper (and also people like J. Woltjer and W. Geesink) were interested in philosophy they did not have time to specialize in this field. It would become the task of a second generation to disseminate the reformational worldview in philosophical terms.

* **Dirk Hendrik Theodoor Vollenhoven** (1892-1978). He also began with theological studies at the Free University, but finally obtained a doctorate in philosophy (1918). After a few years in the ministry he became a professor at his alma mater (in 1926). Apart from his original work in the field of philosophical systematics (ontology) he will be remembered especially for his unique method for the description of the history of philosophy.

* **Herman Dooyeweerd** (1894-1977), a brother-in-law of Vollenhoven, was a professor in law at the Free University. He worked with Vollenhoven in the development of a reformational philosophy. He also offered a unique vision on Western philosophy, gave a detailed analysis of reality, his own reformational view of scholarship, as well as history and human society. Because he wrote much more than Vollenhoven, and many of his books were translated into English, he is much better known internationally.

The work of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd did not fade away, but was continued by a third generation of Dutch philosophers like J.P.A. Mekkes, S.U. Zuidema, K.J. Popma and H. van Riessen. They have since been succeeded by a fourth generation of philosophers such as J. Klapwijk, J. van der Hoeven, S. Griffioen and E. Schuurman.

It spread across the whole world

The reformational worldview and philosophy fortunately did not remain confined to the small Netherlands. Its liberating message was carried far and wide by students who studied there.

We find representatives of the reformational school of thought at present working in the following countries: The USA (e.g. H.E. van Runner, emeritus of Calvin College, and John van der Stelt at Dordt College), Canada (e.g. Calvin Seerveld, Hendrik Hart, Jim Olthuis, Paul Marshall, Harry Fernhout, Brian Walsh and William Rowe at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, and Albert Wolters at Redeemer College in Ancaster), Australia (Stuart Fowler), New Zealand, England and South Korea.

The flame also burns in South Africa

It began about 1500 years ago in North Africa with the church father Augustine. Our survey of the reformational tradition ends (in 1991) at the other end of the African continent, South Africa. Here too the reformational idea lives, although not among the masses.

In the time ' of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd already a South African, Hendrik Gerhardus Stoker (born 1899) worked with them and created his own philosophy ("The philosophy of the Creational Idea ") at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. He became one of the best-known and greatest South African philosophers. He was succeeded by Jan Adriaan Louw Taljaard (born 1915). The present lecturers in the Philosophy Department of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education are therefore already a third generation of reformational thinkers - N. Theo van der Merwe, M. Elaine Botha and J. J. Ponti Venter.

Other universities such as the University of the Orange Free State, also yielded reformational thinkers, including E.A. Venter, P. de B. Kock and H.J. Strauss. The new generation figures there include D.F.M. Strauss, J.H. Smit and J. Visagie.

5.3 Some basic traits of reformational worldview

All the thinkers mentioned above hold basically the same reformational worldview. As can be expected, they differ in terms of its philosophical elaboration. (Bavinck 's philosophy is known as the Philosophy of the Revelational Idea, Dooyeweerd 's as the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea and Stoker's, as mentioned already, of the Creational Idea. These names already indicate differing emphases.)

What are the shared traits of their worldview?

One could summarize this in the following six distinctions:

- The radical distinction between God and his creation
- The distinction between heaven and earth
- The distinction between God 's creational ordinances and that which is subject to them
- The distinction between various irreducible facets or modes of existence of the earthly reality
- The distinction between different phases in the development of the earthly creation
- The distinction between structure and direction

5.3.1 The radical distinction between God and his creation

Naturally all Christian worldviews distinguish between God and that which He created. We purposely talk about the **radical** distinction between God and his creation, however, because it is not typifying of all Christian views. The reformational vision does not believe in a **quantitative** but in a qualitative difference between God and cosmos. God is totally different.

There is thus nothing godly/divine in creation (for example, the ‘soul ‘ of man). To deify something in creation is wrong. And obversely, there is nothing of creation in God - we may not think about Him in cosmic terms.

This **distinction**, however, does not mean **separation**. The total difference of God does not mean that He (expressed in spatial language) is not ‘near ‘ his creation and does not from moment to moment uphold and direct it. He loved his creation so much that He let his own Son die to redeem it.

5.3.2 The distinction between heaven and earth

Heaven is the residence of the angels and the earth of matter, plant, animal and man. Heaven also belongs to the earthly creation, however, in the sense that the firmament encloses the earth. The word **heaven** in the Bible therefore has two meanings - both created by God but different. (God ‘s own residence, ‘the heaven of heavens ‘, is a third meaning.) Knowledge of heaven (as the residence of God and of the angels) is limited to what God tells us about it in the Scriptures. The earth and the firmament are the horizon of our everyday experience and our scientific study is limited to that. (We cannot even get to know everything about it without the Bible. If we did not have his Word, we would not, for example, have known about creation, fall, redemption and consummation.)

5.3.3 The distinction between God ‘s creational ordinances and that which is subject to them

Everything in cosmic reality (the earth and the firmament) is subject to God ‘s sovereign Will, his creational ordinances. This is true not only of ‘nature ‘, viz. matter, plant and animal (for example, the law of gravity, the law of thermodynamics or organic growth), but also of the whole of human life (for example in the social, political, economic, artistic and religious field). These ordinances **are valid** in the field of nature and in the human domain they **demand** obedience. And they remain valid even though man might in

disobedience disregard them. Man can discover these laws, but never **create** them. They are not dependent on man. Precisely the opposite is true: man is subject to them. It is only by living in obedience to them that he can experience life in its wholeness and fullness.

5.3.4 The distinction between various irreducible facets or modes of existence of earthly reality

Earthly creation is not simply a monotonous, uniform mass, but shows a great diversity of, for example, inorganic matter, plants, fishes, birds, animals and people. At a deeper level, these different **things** reflect different **facets or sides**. We can, for example, distinguish between a numerical aspect, a spatial, organic, psychical, historical, social, economic, aesthetic, juridical, ethical and faith/pistical aspect. They are all different facets or modes of existence of the concrete things such as a plant, an animal, a house, a state and a work of art.

We therefore should not reduce the one to the other. For that reason it is wrong to absolutize one of them and to reduce all the others to this one aspect and, for example, to say that man is nothing more than an economic being.

These facets, also called modalities or functions, also help us to see that man is a totally different creature from an animal because he has so many more facets.

Although these aspects of reality are **irreducible**, this does not mean that they do not also **cohere**. The reformational worldview does not only recognize great diversity but also an unbreakable coherence in creation. We could therefore talk of a principle of coherent diversity (or diversity that coheres).

5.3.5 The distinction between different phases in the development of the earthly creation

The reformational worldview believes in the cultural mandate which God gave to man at the beginning: live on the earth, cultivate it and exercise control over it (Gen. 1:28, Gen.2:15). The earth has to be developed by man in responsible fashion, so that the potential which God put into it can be realized, be deployed to the honour and glory of God. Human cultural activity should therefore not be denigrated but is acknowledged by God Himself to be valuable, *as an* inherent part of the movement of creation towards ultimate fulfilment. This cultural task is not a result of the fall -God had already given it to Adam and Eve - and it should therefore not be considered trivial. A quietistic (even fatalistic) or reactionary (even revolutionary) attitude towards human cultural

development is therefore unbiblical. The reformational worldview is not alien to the world or rejective of culture.

5.3.6 The distinction between structure and direction

This is the last, although very important categorial distinction of the reformational worldview (something of this already emerged above). ‘Structure ‘ indicates the creation as it was meant to be by God. ‘Direction ‘ indicates what happened to creation after the fall, and how this was redeemed by Christ. It was pointed in the wrong direction by the fall (away from the worship of God towards service to Satan), but ‘through Christ ‘s redemption it was recovered and set on the right track again.

The important thing is that reformational thought sees the fall as well as redemption in the total and radical biblical meaning of these concepts. They affect the **whole** of the cosmos down to the **deepest** level of existence. The concern is therefore not only with the religious or moral life of man, but with the whole of natural life (matter, plant and animal), as well as the whole of culture (political, social, economic, etc.).

This also implies that (as already stated above) redemption does not mean a different creation, but a **re-creation** of the earth. God ‘s grace in Christ is not merely an **addendum** to the old, or something that has been put **next to** the old, or (even worse) something which has **replaced/destroyed** the old, but God ‘s grace restores the old. (Cf. the four kinds of Christian worldviews distinguished earlier on.)

These were only some basic traits of a reformational worldview - only the outlines of a picture which can be coloured in further.

I hope that the picture can be coloured in in such a way that it will be relevant and practicable for the African context. This is an urgent priority. Because Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo, a well-known Christian African leader, rightly states that “People perish where there is no vision “.

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Because of a lack of time I could not add any footnotes to the text itself. I do, however, want to acknowledge the sources used by way of this bibliography. Apart from that I hope it will encourage readers to study the issues discussed in a very general sense in this book in more depth.

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