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Editor's Note: This essay is a translation, by John H. Kok, of Gerrit Glas's inaugural lecture—"Wat is christelijke filosofie?"—as Professor of Christian Philosophy at the Vrije University, Amsterdam.

What is Christian Philosophy?



by Gerrit Glas

“We must know where to doubt, where to affirm and where to submit...”¹ I would like to use these words of Blaise Pascal to set the tone for my discussion of this question: What is Christian philosophy?²

Doubt! Affirm! Submit! According to Pascal, we can break each of these rules. We shortchange doubt when we claim that everything can be proven. If we acquiesce in everything, we fail to do justice to argument and the ability to make judgments. So too, assuming that everything should be doubted leaves no room for assent.

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I have chosen these words of Pascal—a believer, skeptic, and mathematician—because they evidence the spirit with which the Christian philosophy I have in mind is done. Pascal is not trying to find the golden mean among doubt, proof, and assent. Rather, his thoughts assume and tangibly demonstrate the tension among these three. Doing philosophy is about the thoughtful exploration of that tension—a tension that does not absolve the investigator. The relationship between the thinker and the truth is at stake—a relationship that must be there. Philosophizing requires thinking through the position from which one is philosophically busy.

Be that as it may, the more immediate question might be, “Is Christian philosophy what we need today?” Aren’t we talking about some kind of relic, an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms—a “wooden iron,” to use Martin Heidegger’s term?³ Is it not better to keep faith and reason separate? Does “Christian philosophy” deserve a place in the university? Is it not simply faith lurking behind an intellectual façade?

I will address such later, but I want first to articulate where I stand—my (thetical) position, if you will. Doing so fits with the style of philosophizing I am addressing. This way of doing philosophy is interested in the relationship between questions and the questioner. What is the gist—the direction-setting spirit—of the question? What does the person asking the question presume, and what am I being asked to take for granted when engaging that question?

The answer is not difficult when we recognize that the spirit behind these queries is scientism: the conviction that knowledge and insight are legitimate only when matters are substantiated scientifically and can be traced back to empirical data and logical argument. Christian philosophy does not have a problem with hard evidence and cogent argumentation. Rather, the *pretense* of these questions is the issue: the way in which they are posed, the claims they imply. The implicit contention is that science is the only credible yardstick, the last court of appeals when it comes to human knowledge, the key to insight and truth. That claim itself, however, is far from scientific and cannot be confirmed with scientific means. The term Alvin Plantinga would use is “self-referentially inconsistent.”⁴ Herman Dooyeweerd would describe it as “uncritical”—because those who defend this claim have not critically evaluated their own starting point. Had they done this, they would have seen that what they assert presupposes that the theoretical attitude of thought is absolute, that is to say, is impervious and accountable only to itself. But that presupposition deserves critical review.⁵

Returning to the question posed earlier, we would ask, “Do we need Christian philosophy today?” And should not faith and reason be kept separate? These questions may well have been broached by a particular scientific spirit, but does that spirit render them illegitimate? The answer, of course, is “No.” We simply need to pry them loose from the mindset in which they are grounded. Once we have done that, the Christian philosopher, just like every other philosopher, must confront the relationship between these pre-theoretical intuitions and convictions and the insights that theoretical reflection gives. Heartfelt convictions and life-shaping commitments are pre-theoretical in nature. Their content is rooted in a defining attitude: awe, honor, surrender, thankfulness, wonder, a sense of insignificance and deficiency.

Theoretic insight is gained through abstraction and experimentation. Scientists step back from (the nexus of) concrete everyday life, searching for underlying patterns and regularities. They construct or control experimental spaces and then trace the effects of interventions that change one or more variables. A philosopher—also a scientist, albeit

of a certain sort—looks for fundamental connections and foundational structures that usually have to do with things as a whole. Philosophers usually try to gain knowledge about knowledge. The question here is this: Is the basic positioning of the believer at odds with the basic positioning of the philosopher? Is there some connection between these two? And are there ways in which the insights of the believer can be connected with the insights of the philosopher whose work deserves the predicate “Christian” (or, as the case may be, Jewish, Muslim)?

Before proceeding, I want to preview the three steps I will take. First, I will sketch the landscape. What is Christian philosophy? In which forms do we find it? To what kinds of questions does Christian philosophy look for answers?

Second, I will review how the Christian “Reformational” philosophy taught at the Free University (Amsterdam) and elsewhere came to be back in the 1930s. What is happening with that form of philosophy today? Is it still a going concern? And how does it relate to the contemporary context?

Finally, I will engage a theme that, given my own disciplinary background in psychiatry and psychotherapy, is particularly close to my heart, the I-self relationship. I will describe how that theme—how one relates to oneself and the fact that during the course of one’s coming and going one *does* relate to oneself—has helped shape my conception of Christian philosophy. Discussing that theme will bring us back to Pascal, to the thinker who believed and doubted and, despite his great intellect, also knew when to surrender.

The landscape

On paper, Christian philosophy can be conceived of in three ways: as a philosophy devoted to a specific topic or object, as a philosophy that avails itself of a particular approach or method, and as a philosophy that proceeds from a particular sense of inspiration or life commitment.⁶ These distinctions are theoretical; most approaches are an amalgamation of these.⁷

Natural theology and philosophy of religion would be examples of the first form: a *philosophy devoted to a specific topic or object*. Natural theology—

reasoned reflection on the truths of the faith—focuses on questions like these: Does God exist? And if he does, can we (say, on the basis of the teleological ordering of nature) prove that to be the case? Philosophy of religion—certainly of the

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Christian religion—deals with the same kinds of questions, but most often by focusing on epistemological matters: How can God or the absolute be known? What is the warrant for such knowledge? Philosophy of religion also addresses many other themes, like sacrifice, myth, symbols, miracles, religious identity and culture, and religious (life-defining) conviction.⁸

This designation, however, says nothing about the nature of these approaches. They can have a defensive or an offensive intent, as found, for example, in negative or positive apologetics.⁹ In both cases, the method may be either more parsingly analytic or more conceptually systematic. It is interesting to note that most recent academic work in philosophy of religion is trying to resurrect the project of classical natural theology, but this time with modern methods borrowed from analytical philosophy.¹⁰

The second form of Christian philosophy assumes that *philosophizing*, too, *can be done in a Christian kind of way*. There are, I believe, two variants here—a *pluralistic* and a *radical* vision. In the former, Christian philosophizing is assumed to be one perspective among other (non-Christian) forms of philosophy. The radical variant assumes that philosophy is per definition Christian philosophy—a perspective that begs further analysis. There are, as I see it, two different foundational perspectives operative within this (radical) variant: one type could be labeled as “transcendental” and the other as “existential.”

According to the transcendental approach,

philosophy is by definition Christian philosophy, or at least theistic philosophy, because, in principle it is not possible to do philosophy (well) apart from certain theistic presuppositions. According to this kind of transcendental philosophy, God’s existence can no more be doubted than that of the external world or of other minds. Doing so is impossible because every attempt to deny the existence of the external world or the consciousness of others or to reduce these to, say, processes of the brain necessarily appeals to categories that already presuppose the existence of such entities. The self and the person of the other are, in other words, transcendently (necessarily) presupposed and hence irreducible. Some philosophers have applied this argument to the existence of God—God, too, is presupposed in a transcendental way.¹¹ That is to say that we must proceed assuming his existence; otherwise, our thinking and speaking will become thoroughly confused. Theo de Boer has, I believe correctly, pointed out that this classical transcendental approach fails when it comes to the existence of God.¹² Because the self and other minds belong to the world as we know it, the transcendental argument only works when we are dealing with matters empirical. And that is not the case, or at least not in the same way, for God, because God is not present-to-hand as my “self” or the mind of the other. God reveals himself by speaking through his prophets, and his poets bring him closer to us in their musings. We could also say that who God is becomes manifest in the grandeur of nature and in artistic beauty. Nevertheless, we cannot identify his existence with anything in our world. More precisely, there is nothing in reality—no part of nature, no prophetic voice or poetic turn—whose existence we can comprehend solely because we assume that God exists. God may be presupposed but certainly not as a transcendental, as something that must be thought in order to think.

What is there to say about the other radical, more existential approach? Philosophy here is the exploration of different existential attitudes or positions, all the while acknowledging that philosophy itself is not free from such an existential posture or mindset. I know of no philosopher who was more conscious of this intertwinement of content and point of view than Søren Kierkegaard.¹³

His philosophy is an extended journey along all sorts of possible attitudes to life: that of Don Juan, the judge, the evil-natured seducer, the innocent girl, the dogmatician, the systematician, the doubter, the dread-filled one, etc. Each of these attitudes to life is tested for its viability and consistency. Philosophically, the system-builder is naturally the most interesting, and there is no better example than Hegel. Kierkegaard compares Hegel to a man who built himself a magnificent house but forgot that he also had to live in it and, hence, ended up outside in the doghouse.¹⁴ One has to take care of one's own quarters, also in philosophy.

Is Kierkegaard's philosophy Christian in the sense that he develops his own method and manners? Yes and no. Yes, because Kierkegaard's approach is indeed unique: testing one's own station from the inside out, all the while exposing the foolishness and radical nature of the Christian faith. No, because his style and way of working is so personal and even inimitable that one can hardly speak of a "method." What's Christian about his philosophy lies in his testing the existential consistency of various standpoints and, on that basis, incorporating specific points of view. Those points of view clarify the subjective conditions that give ground to faith.¹⁵

And then there is the third form of Christian philosophy, one that celebrates *Christian faith as a source of inspiration*. A broad spectrum of approaches fits this cluster. The key question has to do with how this inspiration relates to the content of philosophy. Once again, I see two primary variants. The one sees philosophy as an explication and further elaboration and articulation of a Christian world-and-life-view; the other provides one set of possible answers to the great perennial questions of humankind.

The first approach clearly leads to world-viewish philosophizing. One's world-and-life view affects all of one's being, and philosophy offers the analytical and conceptual means to clarify and account for one's position. It could also be called comprehensive philosophy in the sense that "worldview" and "philosophy" are often used interchangeably here. Articulating one's worldview serves likewise to convey where one stands with respect to other (non-Christian) approaches.

A hermeneutic philosophy approaches things differently. Because people are beings that desire meaning and a sense of significance, this approach, similarly, sees cultural activity, science, and philosophy itself as responses to this search for and pursuit of meaning and import. A Christian worldview is, then, one possible answer to this quest for meaning: an optional matter of choice and appropriation. In the more nuanced renderings of this hermeneutical approach, the self and its choices are subjected to critical analysis. Those for whom religion is an option place themselves, in principle, outside religion—religion becomes a preference that one may or may not freely choose. From my perspective, however, the pivotal point in religion—at least in Christian religion—is that one's "self" is already taken up in religion's perspective and must be interpreted and understood from that vantage point.¹⁶

Christian philosophy in neo-Calvinist perspective

How should Reformational philosophy be characterized, given the rubric above? Also, what can be said about its development, and what are its prospects?

The character of the works of Herman Dooyeweerd and of Dirk Vollenhoven, both graduates of and professors at the Free University in Amsterdam and the founders of what would later be called "Reformational philosophy," can be summarized with four basic thoughts.

The first basic tenet is the reality of modal diversity: everything in the world can be seen as answering to a number of irreducible/unique norms and laws. This diversity has to do with the modes of being (or functioning) that things, events, and human beings display—a diversity that simultaneously evidences deep coherence.

The second key thought is that what human beings do (or not) is rooted in one's "heart"—the spiritual center of every person. Out of the heart, says the Bible, are the "issues of life."¹⁷

The third point has to do with religion. Religion is neither a mental construct nor a correlate of certain kinds of psychological behavior. Rather, religion circumscribes and informs all of life and constitutes the connection with the origin

of all that is. Everything that is created, all of reality, is connected with the source and origin of that reality.

The fourth of these basic convictions is that reality exists as “meaning.” Although the phrasing could be clearer, Dooyeweerd uses “meaning” to give expression to the Apostle Paul’s confession that all that exists “is from, through, and unto God.” Nothing exists in and of itself. Everything that is points toward an Origin beyond itself and likewise bears witness to the operation of that Origin. The third and fourth tenets are closely interrelated: when emphasizing the connection between God and the world, the focus is on religion; when underscoring and investigating what that connectedness implies, the meaning character of reality is in the limelight.

The first three basic thoughts were, albeit in another form, already articulated by the founder of the Free University (est. 1880), Abraham Kuyper. The spectrum of modal law diversity is a cosmological transcription of Kuyper’s sociological principle of “sphere sovereignty.” Seeing the human heart as spiritual center goes back via Kuyper to John Calvin and Augustine. Being human finds its depth and substance *coram deo* (before the face of God). The notion that religion is something that is not limited to the inner recesses of one’s life, but touches every aspect of one’s life, is also typically Reformational. In that regard, one thinks of Kuyper’s famous line from his lecture at the opening of the Free University in 1880: “there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”¹⁸ Or going back further in time, one thinks of one of the basic insights of the Reformation, namely, that the world is not divided into sacred and secular domains but in its entirety gives expression to God’s creating and providential activity. Nothing is neutral, except for the material substratum of things.

The fourth tenet—that reality exists “as meaning”—is, as I said, a bit difficult to digest semantically. After all, how can it be that every thing’s being amounts to “referring and expressing” and yet is “itself” not something?¹⁹ I am inclined to give Dooyeweerd the benefit of the doubt here. The main point is that Dooyeweerd proves himself to

be a modern thinker, particularly in his rejection of any form of metaphysics. He clearly maintains that metaphysics proceeds, per definition, from an autonomous attitude of theoretical thought, such that when one philosophizes about things (beings and their relations), one takes them to be “things as such”—as substances—with (primary and secondary) qualities. And that, even when one does not take these substances to be autonomous, it is inevitable that when the dust settles and one has taken stock of the hierarchy of entities in one’s purview, one will begin to speculate about the *highest*

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Being, the *causa sui*, the uncaused cause of itself and all that is. But, according to Dooyeweerd, philosophizing about (God or) some such highest being is out of the question, at least if it is done without Scripture. In other words, Dooyeweerd, early on, was not alone in opposing this kind of theo-ontology.²⁰

How should one characterize this attempt at Christian philosophy? I don’t think that this is a philosophy with a Christian topic or object, at least not in the first place. Reformational philosophy is not interested in philosophizing about God or about how God knows what he knows or about how one would come to know that; nor are logical arguments seeking to support the truth of specifically Christian presuppositions (nor most anything else) high on the list of priorities. Neither is it the case that this is a philosophy that avails itself of a particular approach or method. The clearest case in point would be the *pièce de resistance* of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, the so-called “transcendental critique of theoretical thought.” Its explicit intention was to show, with quite ordinary philosophical means, that there is not a philosophy in the world that can operate without a religious start-

ing point. However, there have been few issues in Dooyeweerd's thinking that have more been criticized. Must we then conclude that Reformational philosophy is a philosophy that proceeds from a defined sense of inspiration or life-commitment? At first blush, that is certainly the case. All four main points discussed above clearly have a religiously reflective character. But caution is in order because these (Christian, inspired) insights do not function as foundation so much as, at most, entry points. They are pre-theoretical intuitions that—once transposed to the philosophical level—must still prove their worth. In addition, the validity of some of these intuitions can, in principle, not be proven because they are beyond the grasp and past the limits of theoretical thought. Using terminology reminiscent of Immanuel Kant, Dooyeweerd speaks here of origin, unity, and coherence in diversity as “transcendental ideas.” In addition, he states explicitly that philosophy cannot be an extrapolation of everyday (world-viewish) insight.²¹ To assume that that is what Christian philosophy is all about is to inflate philosophy's place and to misapply one's world-and-life view. Philosophy has its own agenda and remains tied to theoretical abstraction. The perspective that worldview offers is “thicker,” more encompassing and content-rich, and, in certain ways, also more foundational.²²

Are we back where we started? None of the three lines sketched above lead us to suppose that Dooyeweerd's philosophy can be called “Christian.” That's strange because if there is one philosophy in the continental tradition—next to neo-Thomism—that is perceived as being Christian, it would certainly be Reformational philosophy.²³ Are we possibly on the wrong track, or is there something amiss with our rubric? Could it be that the Christian character of his philosophy is more intangible, tied maybe to ethnic ethos or language group?

I think not. I am inclined to admit that my rubric is a bit stilted, but it has served as a catalyst to clarify what is at issue. When we look at Dooyeweerd's development, for example, we see him move from an initial worldview orientation toward a philosophical approach that is more difficult to categorize, in which the Christian character is especially evident in particular focal points

and in a peculiar style of argumentation.²⁴ These focal points are altogether philosophical—origin, unity, reality's coherence and diversity—and classical philosophical themes. And attending to the status of theoretical thought is clearly part of what philosophy is all about. So too, these insights are presented with philosophical argumentation and finesse, with only marginal reference to parallel insights from worldview and religion. What is Christian about Dooyeweerd's philosophy is not owing to the object (approach 1), or to the method (approach 2), and not even to his Christian spirituality or inspiration as such (approach 3). By the time this inspiration has been transformed into philosophical insight, that insight can stand on its own two feet, for it has earned contextual weight and place in the broader philosophical debate. Because the argumentation directed to rival positions is comprehensible and remains philosophically cogent throughout, it is no longer necessary for Dooyeweerd to repeatedly and explicitly refer to Christian starting points.

Thinking that through, we find that the outcome of such a development is one that maintains that true philosophy is Christian philosophy—which is, as we saw, a variant of the second approach (Christian method). Such a philosophy might even argue that the predicate “Christian” is immaterial: there is only good and less good philosophy. Good philosophy converges per definition with Christian insight. Dooyeweerd never went that far, though, because his concept of philosophy is much less brazen. Philosophy remains a theoretical activity and, as such, is limited. It can never grasp the breadth and depth of a religious worldview's insight. The Christian world-and-life view, as we saw, does not allow itself to be taken up and transformed in its entirety into philosophy. A tension remains, such that comparisons back and forth, between philosophy and heartfelt conviction, will always be part of the picture. It is understandable, then, that Dooyeweerd, also later in life, continued to move from religious certainties to philosophy and back again.²⁵

In summary, I see Dooyeweerd the philosopher as someone who came to embrace a very unique position—one that resists the confines of the three-fold rubric with which I began: *Christian*

*philosophy is a philosophy inspired by a Christian world-and-life view, but it is one that qua conceptual articulation and argumentation can stand, intentionally, on its own two feet and take its own insights as thesis into the debate.*²⁶

Is this a case of wanting to have one's cake and eat it too—the claim to be both bona fide philosophy and truly Christian? It is, for those who (like Husserl) take philosophy to be “rigorous science.” But that (idealist) view is subject to the critique mentioned earlier on—the self-referential inconsistency of the assertion that reason must be its own yardstick. Besides, that point of view has lost most of its allure among philosophers of late. Have your cake and eat it too? Well, yes, in a certain sense. But

The Christian world-and-life view, as we saw, does not allow itself to be taken up and transformed in its entirety into philosophy.

as far as that is concerned—and *I can't emphasize this enough*—there is no difference between Christian and non-Christian philosophy. Every philosophy, in a certain sense, is subject to the influence of pre-theoretical convictions and intuitions. And every scientific/theoretical insight that is promoted to the status of philosophy runs the risk of devolving into bad metaphysics. However, more important than this fact is what follows from it: Is one, as philosopher, ready to substantiate one's own insights with philosophical means and to defend these against those insights that rival these?

Dooyeweerd was clearly up to the challenge. His vision and approach led him to a perspective that claimed to be richer, more livable, and internally more consistent than competing perspectives. Exposing and critiquing antinomies was Dooyeweerd's philosophical method in rising to this challenge. Briefly put, his critique presumed that absolutizing one dimension of reality would inevitably lead to internal contradictions in the

philosophies of those who did so. Ascertaining antinomies helps one track down where relative truths have been elevated to absolute truths and, eventually (after many, many steps), to point out a defined order of modal aspects, none of which is absolute (or sufficient unto itself).

How have things fared since Dooyeweerd laid down his pen? Contrary to what is often thought to be the case, Reformational philosophy has never been an altogether homogeneous movement: So many heads, so many minds! Though sometimes confusing for the student, the variations nonetheless prove the point that Christian philosophy is not a matter of course and encompasses a range of ways and means.

I will limit myself to a brief analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Reformational philosophy. The movement itself was successful both within the Netherlands and internationally; albeit, to my mind, it is underestimated, qua content and impact, in philosophical circles still today. Educationally, certainly within the Netherlands, it has had a significant presence. With recognized chairs in Reformational philosophy at most of the major Dutch universities, it has reached thousands of students who otherwise would have had little or no involvement with philosophy. They were challenged to consider some of the tensions that run deep within our culture and were provided with a vocabulary to name those tensions. They also learned to evaluate critically how the results of research and scholarship are used and maneuvered in society—learning, for example, to distinguish between methodic reduction (or abstraction) and reductionisms. In terms of impact and dissemination, work in the philosophy of technology, the philosophical critique of culture, and the philosophy of law and society was particularly successful.²⁷ Questions about the relationship of faith and science have been addressed on a variety of levels as well.²⁸ Progress has been booked in the philosophy of the natural sciences and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in the philosophy of biology.²⁹ Connections have also been laid with informatics and systems theory.³⁰ Aesthetics has received a good deal of attention, as have philosophical anthropology and philosophy of mind, including the philosophical foundations of psychology.³¹ A start was made in

the field of philosophical ethics, particularly in the form of what today is called the “normative practice” model³²—a model that was subsequently applied to medicine, education, management, and the fields of media and communication. Dooyeweerd’s theory of modal aspects was likewise amended here and there along the way.³³ Strange as it may seem, little has been done in philosophical theology. Likewise, Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique of theoretical thought—originally intended to engage opponents in dialogue—unfortunately remained, by and large, a topic for internal discussion.³⁴ Much energy, seen now after the fact, was also devoted to an intramural discussion of Dooyeweerd’s concept of time.³⁵

And as for the future? I will limit myself to a few broad strokes and then narrow my focus to pencil in a few details. As an academic discipline, philosophy today finds itself in troubled waters. Therein, however, also rests a wonderful opportunity for the Dooyeweerdian variant of philosophy. Contemporary philosophy finds itself in a bind: on the one hand, charting intellectual depth-dimensions and booking scholarly progress seem to call for increasing specialization; on the other hand, specialization makes the field increasingly opaque and inaccessible for most students and irrelevant for “normal” people. At the same time, relevance to and impact on society are increasingly regarded as important marks of philosophy. Running parallel to these quandaries is the fact that (interdisciplinary) connections to other sciences and academic disciplines are not being addressed. Interdisciplinarity, however, is integral to the warp and woof of the Dooyeweerdian tradition—a trump card if there ever was one. Next to the ongoing conscientious work that remains crucial in fields like epistemology, ontology, and the history of philosophy, I see a bright future for further developments in the philosophy of the special sciences, including those disciplines devoted to specific practices (like medicine, psychology, education, management)—yes, I envision the prospect of collaboration on professional ethics with technical and pre-professional schools as well.

Double sensitivity and the I-self relationship

So then, what do I take Christian philosophy to

be? With Dooyeweerd, I take Christian philosophy to be a project that begins with a set of insights, of which the comprehensive framework of one’s basic beliefs (or worldview) is clearly recognized but that does not necessarily need to draw on that background in the process of philosophical discourse. Take, for example, the notion of the irreducibility of the modal aspects, the primacy of the lifeworld for theoretical thought, or the idea that reality does not rest in itself but awaits disclosure—an unfolding defined by the attunement of structure and direction. Christian philosophy wants to stand on its own two feet philosophically by using argument and by seeking to meet the criteria of being consistent, cordial, and comprehensive. I continue to value the Dooyeweerdian type of analysis as a heuristic tool to uncover how a philosopher thinks about the coherence and diversity within reality as well as about its unity and origin. Even though philosophy is not the elaboration of basic worldview beliefs, it does remain connected to them. In fact, I believe that the ways in which the relationship between worldview and philosophy is given shape will result in a more diverse palette than the one-sided transcendental approach that Dooyeweerd himself employs.³⁶ Christian philosophy knows many guises and will usually be defined by how one adapts one’s philosophy to the context in which one operates. That attunement determines how the relationship between worldview and philosophy gets defined.

This way of seeing things softens the contrast some see between analytic and continental approaches to Christian philosophizing. Dooyeweerd’s philosophy has a continental flavor to it—his conceptual handle, a neo-Kantian slant, if you will. His is a very different world than that of the more analytically oriented “reformed epistemology.” One can understand these differences, however, when they are taken in their context. Dooyeweerd used the philosophical means available to him at the time. He assessed his times in terms of the crisis articulated by German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler in his *The Decline of the West* (1918) and called for a much more critical reflection on the foundations of philosophical thought than had already transpired after the demise of German idealism and neo-Kantianism.

Reformed epistemologists speak to a context defined almost exclusively by an analytic style of philosophizing. One usually has no other choice than to avail oneself of the theoretical tools of one's time.

That said, I am convinced that Dooyeweerdians and Reformed epistemologists have much to offer each other. The analytically trained philosopher may well learn from Dooyeweerd's sensitivity for the pretended autonomy of the theoretical attitude of thought or from his aversion to any form of speculation about God and divine attributes. At the same time—further research will have to tell—Dooyeweerd might have been overly sensitive in some things, for example in rejecting any notion of substance (of bare particulars distinct of properties or attributes and as denoting irreducible individuality). On the other hand, Reformational philosophy can learn from the openness and argumentative force of colleagues trained in the analytic tradition, even though those in that lineage may at times rather naively introduce particular truths of the faith or too hastily label them as “properly basic.” I also wonder about the extent to which that same tradition lacks sensitivity for philosophical themes and questions arising within the special sciences—something on which the Dooyeweerdian approach is strong. In any case, I see reflecting on these kinds of differences as a crucial component of Christian philosophizing.³⁷ Exercising one's sensitivity to these matters is crucial: understanding how a thinker relates to the topic at hand and being sensitive to how one postures oneself in that context. Elsewhere I have described this process as cultivating a double sensitivity.³⁸ With a wink to the Danish philosopher, we could speak of a Kiekegaardian footnote to Herman Dooyeweerd's thought.³⁹

Is this not hermeneutical philosophy—in the sense of a sort of meta-level approach to how Christians, but not only they, perceive the relationship between worldview and philosophy, bringing the implicit attitude of the thinker to the surface regarding the topic addressed and, with that, the context within which the project is situated? Yes and no. Yes, it is, in the sense that we are indeed talking here about a form of explication and meaning analysis.⁴⁰ No, it is not, because the hermeneutical approach remains tied to a particular reflex-

ive tradition of thought, which with good reason has been subjected to a good deal of critique—because clearly not everything can be appropriated reflexively (e.g., certain forms of evil) and because philosophizing also develops in relation to that which eludes articulation. My more specific objection is that, before one knows it, hermeneutics—as meta-philosophy of the relationship between worldview and philosophy—takes on a synthesizing and legitimating role and is, in turn, granted a dominant position with respect to insights from the lifeworld. Some forms of deconstructionism, I believe, evidence the same tendency. I have been fascinated by the subtlety of and the intelligence behind those approaches as well as their acknowledgement of finitude, alterity, and openness. But what gnaws at me is the very character of these points of view: the remarkable fact that, for all their subtlety and feel for relationships, one's own hyper-reflexivity is not factored in or accounted for. The form of hermeneutics that I have in mind here remains a form of analysis—an analysis of positions and ways of relating—but it does not become a separate synthetic meta-discipline. In addition, that conceptual analysis looks for support from the analytic tradition, for example, in the analysis of performative speech acts and in the application of the same to social and religious phenomena. Nick Wolterstorff, Charles Taylor, and

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Paul Ricoeur are representative of this approach.⁴¹

Does Christian philosophy then not become a form of navel-gazing—the cultivation of self-interpretations? No, I don't think so. As I said, we are talking about one part, one aspect of Christian philosophizing. Given the double sensitivity referred to above, one can positively embrace the

work done in the various subdisciplines: the critique of culture, the philosophy of the special sciences, professional ethics, central epistemological and ontological themes, etc. The fundamental framework is what is Christian here: the idea of a multifaceted, ordered reality that is not sufficient unto itself and that calls for normed unfolding—a developing that can be denoted in terms of structure, direction, and context. There are huge questions to be grappled with here concerning the nature of “nature” and the notion of “order.” In the world picture of evolutionism, for example, nature and order are contingent, the product of development by happenstance, and humankind simply an epiphenomenon. How that picture relates to the image of a God who creates and rules is obviously also a question worth pondering.

Does this mean that Christian philosophy has no uniquely Christian themes (see approach 1)? After all, what I have argued so far could be summarized this way: follow in Dooyeweerd’s footsteps with a worldview-inspired Christian philosophy that is articulated with philosophical means and an ongoing analysis in terms of structure and direction, a philosophy that allows for more variation than did Dooyeweerd and that emphasizes a (double) sensitivity for how one relates to one’s own points of view and how that relationship is influenced by (and in turn influences) the debate with those who think otherwise. But . . . is that all? Doesn’t Christian philosophy have its own agenda when it comes to matters that are explicitly tied to the content of faith? That is certainly the case.⁴² Indeed, we can go a step further: the perspective of creation, however theological the language, of God’s law as a cloak that fits reality well is one theme already mentioned. But there are other givens for Christian thinking that are almost adverse to or at odds with being thematized: the foolishness of the Gospel; the givenness of an evil that is older and stronger than we are; and the salvation coming from afar through an incomprehensible act of divine sacrifice, as well as the need for conversion, for surrender and spiritual participation “in Christ,” for transformation through the Holy Spirit, for a kingdom that is not of this world and yet one that begins among us, etc. There is a spiritual side to reality that cannot be grasped conceptually and yet

manifests itself—as power, as *dynamis*.

As strange as it may seem, there are possibilities here for philosophers with a less pretentious view of philosophy, possibilities to introduce contrary points of view and unexpected perspectives as suggestions or options having a degree of plausibility. For philosophers with greater expectations—say, a philosopher in the reflexive continental tradition—this is much more difficult, given their preference to comprehend, their desire to assimilate and synthesize. The same can probably be said for analytic philosophers as they key in on logical and argumentative clarity, although it is my impression that that tradition is more open to highlighting the paradoxical aspects of the Christian faith without reasoning them away.

How could it reason them away, without reverting to the company of comprehensive philosophy? Well, maybe we do not have to be so afraid of starting with a comprehensive framework. The works of Johan van der Hoeven and Henk Geertsema provide wonderful examples of this untroubled attitude.⁴³ The kind of translation referred to previously can still be taken up in due course: one that is recognizably Christian and yet one that only avails itself of philosophical means to legitimate its claims. I am aware that there are limits for philosophy in this regard. And yet there are possibilities here, probably more than have been realized to date.

I will limit myself for the moment to my own interdisciplinary field, the philosophy of psychiatry and psychology and, specifically within that field, to topics like fear and evil. The kind of philosophy that I have in mind first carefully delimits which aspects of human behavior can be explained with existing theories and models and which cannot. Once the theories and models have all been considered, one can conclude that there are dimensions of human behavior that elude theory’s grasp and that call for a different sort of vocabulary. For example, in that regard, I have argued elsewhere for implementing a more existential vocabulary when formulating theories about fear and anxiety.⁴⁴ This existential terminology is, in the first place, philosophical—articulating aspects of clinical reality that do not lend themselves to conceptualization in the more special-scientific context of psychiatry and psychol-

ogy as such. For example, with people struggling with pathological fear, there is, in some cases, an empirical, experiential intensity present that often eludes the conceptual vocabularies of psychiatry and psychology—a dynamic intensity that, from a religiously sensitive point of view, could denote the reality of a spiritual dimension. Philosophically

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speaking, things then get very interesting: both conceptual fields, the religious and the scientific, come close to coinciding. And yet they must be kept distinct. Christian philosophers will be tempted to assimilate the spiritual dimension into their philosophizing. Doing so, however, given the limits inherent to the theoretical attitude of thought, would be inappropriate. The languages of each are different and need to be kept distinct, lest annexation and simplistic system-building be the result.⁴⁵ What the philosopher can do is to take note of and to compare the different ways of relating to this dynamic reality—religiously, psychologically, theoretically. Such a comparison could lead, for example, to making the case for an open professional attitude, an attitude defined not only by knowledge and skill but also by spiritual sensitivity.⁴⁶

Similar types of analysis are possible with respect to evil, for example, regarding the evil brought about by people with a sadistic personality disorder. It is not difficult to ascertain that existing theories about sadism and the development of a sadistic personality disorder don't hold much water.⁴⁷ And demonstrating, philosophically or scientifically, that a spiritual dimension is operating in these personalities that could explain sadism is out of the question. To make that claim would be to overestimate philosophy's reach and to suggest that it can actually get a handle on the spiritual dimension of human existence. But, once again, what *can* be done is to carefully distinguish which aspects of this behavior can and which cannot be explained by a particular theory. After considering

the theories available, the philosopher can conclude that there are aspects of such a person's behavior that still beg explanation. These aspects will require a vocabulary that is inevitably ambiguous because, on the one hand, it has to refer to (observable) behavior and, on the other hand, it has to make room for and denote a dimension that eludes sense perception.⁴⁸

Philosophy is, as I suggested earlier, the thoughtful exploration of tensions. As such, it helps create room—room for that which transcends theoretical thought but which can nonetheless not be avoided.

Conclusion

In summary, I see Christian philosophy as a philosophy that is inspired by insights from a centuries-old, long-standing, broad Christian tradition; as a philosophy that, having appropriated these insights, can stand on its own two feet and works to defend its position with arguments. Christian philosophy is conscious of the relation of the thinker to her object, of how influential that relation is, and of the fact that that relation is itself influenced by the context within which the thinker is operating. That is why I have argued for cultivating a double sensitivity and for hermeneutical insight into the way in which the relationship takes shape between worldview and philosophy (on the part of nonChristian philosophers as well). That is my Kierkegaardian footnote to Dooyeweerd's approach. Given its relational and contextual sensitivity, Christian philosophy is necessarily plural: Christian philosophy unfolds within a context and as a certain type of thinking. The Dooyeweerdian variant, undone of its strong transcendental character, still has a strong pedigree, but it needs to be supplemented with a more explicit engagement with typical Christian themes, like evil, suffering, finitude, guilt, reconciliation, and healing. Christian philosophy will always retain an edge, a Pascalian tension: rooted in an age-old faith that is not blithely embraced without critique, it will grant independent thought room to roam without losing sight of its limits, while remaining sensitive to doubt and temptations, knowing that both may ultimately be called to account for what they presume, to make plain what often goes without saying.⁴⁹

Endnotes

1. The aphorism in its entirety reads, “201. ‘We must <have three qualities, Pyrrhonist, mathematician, Christian. Submission. Doubt. They all interlink.> know where to doubt, where to affirm and where to submit when necessary. Whoever does not do this does not understand the force of reason. There are some who fall short of these three principles, either by affirming that everything can be demonstrated, lacking all knowledge of the demonstration, or doubting everything, lacking the knowledge of where to submit, or by submitting to everything, lacking the knowledge of where to discriminate” (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995]).
2. This essay is a translation by John H. Kok of Gerrit Glas’s inaugural lecture as Professor of Christian Philosophy (Dooyeweerd chair) at the VU University Amsterdam: “Wat is christelijke filosofie?”
3. Martin Heidegger, “Einführung in die Metaphysik,” *Gesamtausgabe. Band 9* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1935/1983), 6.
4. Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, eds. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 16–91.
5. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought. Vol. I* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris/Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953–1958), 34–38.
6. The point here does not concern positions in the debate regarding faith and science; were that the case, a different classification would be called for, for example, that of Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and conceptual issues* ([rev. ed. of *Religion in an Age of Science*] New York: Harper Collins, 1997) or that of Jacob Klapwijk, “Rede en religie in de greep van grondmodellen,” *Philosophia Reformata* 73(2008a):19–43.
7. I will limit myself in this compilation to those forms of Christian philosophy that explicitly attempt to connect philosophy and the Christian faith. Among others, I consulted Karl Jaspers, *Der philosophische Glaube* (München: Piper, 1948); Paul Ricoeur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay* (New York: Columbia University Press (original: *Critique et la conviction* [1995], 1998); Theo De Boer, *De God van de filosofen en de God van Pascal: Op het grensgebied van filosofie en theologie* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1989); Theo De Boer, *Langs de gewesten van het zijn: Spiritualiteit van de woestijn* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1996); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The making of the modern identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), as representatives of an existential-phenomenological and a hermeneutical approach respectively. I consulted Hent De Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) and E. Evink, *Transcendentie en inscriptie: Jacques Derrida en de hubris van de metafysica* (Delft: Eburon, 2002), as illustrative of a postmodern approach. I consulted C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), as spokesperson for Kierkegaardian thinking. And I consulted Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), as a representative of *Reformed epistemology*.
8. See H. G. Hubbeling, *Denkend geloven: Inleiding tot de wijsbegeerte van de godsdienst* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976); R. Douglas Geivett and Brendan Sweetman, eds., *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Brian Davies, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
9. See Alvin Plantinga, “Advice to Christian philosophers,” *Faith and Philosophy* 1(1984):253–271; *The Twin Pillars of Christian Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Calvin College and Seminary, 1992); and “Augustinian Christian Philosophy,” *The Monist* 75 (1992):291–319.
10. See, e.g., the work of Paul Helm, *Faith and Understanding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); and the work of the so-called Utrecht school, e.g., Vincent Brümmer, *Speaking of a Personal God: An essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); A.Vos, *Kennis en noodzakelijkheid: een kritische analyse van het absolute evidentialisme in wijsbegeerte en theologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1981); M.Sarot, *De goddeloosheid van de wetenschap: Theologie, geloof en het gangbare wetenschapsideaal* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2006); and G. Labooy, *Waar geest is, is vrijheid. Filosofie van de psychiatrie voorbij Descartes* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007).
11. For Immanuel Kant, who abandoned the attempt to prove the existence of God, things are a bit more complicated. God as the only and all-sufficient cause is presupposed but then as (transcendental) idea to regulate the use of reason’s concepts, not as a concept with empirical content or as a reality behind or beyond the empirical universe (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1787/1976], B713vv).
12. Theo De Boer, *Langs de gewesten van het zijn: Spiritualiteit van de woestijn* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1996), 57–64.
13. Sören Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin Classics, 1843/1992); *The Concept of Anxiety: A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the Dogmatic issue of hereditary*

- sin*, trans. Begrebet Angst, ed. and trans. R. Thomte with A.B. Anderson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1844/1960); *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1845/1992); and *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian psychological exposition for upbuilding and awakening*, ed. and trans. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1848/1980).
14. Søren Kierkegaard writes, "A thinker erects an immense building, a system, a system which embraces the whole of existence and world-history etc.—and if we contemplate his personal life, we discover to our astonishment this terrible and ludicrous fact, that he himself personally does not live in this immense high-vaulted palace, but in a barn alongside of it, or in a dog kennel, or at the most in the porter's lodge" (*The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian psychological exposition for upbuilding and awakening*, ed. and trans. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1848/1980], 44). See original: *Søren Kierkegaard Skrifter*, Vol. XI (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2006), 158–59). See for similar remarks Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton UP, 1845/1992, 118–25 (original *Søren Kierkegaard Skrifter*, Vol. VII, pp. 97–103).
 15. C. Stephenn Evans, *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 15–17 and 133–49, speaks of a non-evidentialist apologetics that calls for exercising certain receptive dispositions: "openness to the mysterious aspects of human experience, an unselfish willingness to consider whether one's own attempts to dominate the world are an expression of sinful pride, and an attempt to hope towards the possibility of a life of eternal love for oneself and for other human beings" (148). Evans suggests possible connections between Kierkegaard's and Plantinga's non-evidentialistic apologetics; see Evans, 169–82 and 183–205. I have also pursued such a connection with Plantinga's way of thinking, but then via Pascal's "the heart has its reasons, which reason does not know" (Glas, "Heeft het theïsme eigen gronden? Alvin Plantinga over de 'proper basicity' van religieus geloof," [*Philosophia Reformata* 65 (2000):170–82.
 16. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The making of the modern identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) and Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
 17. See Proverbs 4.23: the *KJV* uses the word "issues." Other translations render the Hebrew with "wellspring" (*NIV*), "source" (*NEB*), or "springs" (*ESV*).
 18. The entire sentence reads, "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: 'Mine!'" (James D. Bratt, ed., "Sphere Sovereignty," *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 488).
 19. In my opinion, Dooyeweerd's definition/description of being as meaning is related to difficulties that others have pointed out regarding his notion of individuality as evident in his theory of individuality- and thing-structures (see Van Riessen, *Wijsbegeerte* [Kampen: Kok, 1970], 182ff, and Danie F. M. Strauss, "An analysis of the structure of analysis," *Philosophia Reformata* 49 (1984):35–56. Laws play an important role in the definition of "all that which is" as "meaning"; the universal (or at least the domain specific) holding of laws has to do with what holds for an aspect or sphere of reality, which leads to the unattractive thought that the individual this or that is precisely that which eludes what the law's holding defines.
 20. Is it possible that Dooyeweerd goes too far here? To suggest that metaphysics is connected per definition with absolutizing the theoretical attitude of thought does so in my mind. There are all kinds of metaphysics. Analytic philosophy has engaged classical metaphysical discussions. Versions of Neo-Thomism have developed through discussions with phenomenology and deconstructionists. There are ontologies with a more limited horizon, devoid of any speculation about Being, per se. And yet, even though the temptation to lock God up in a system of necessary truths has few takers of late, that temptation might lie just around the corner, certainly when one takes the perceived need for "pure-thought" on the part of some philosophers into consideration. In that regard, Dooyeweerd's critique still pertains.
 21. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought. Vol. I* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris/Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953–1958), 128, 158.
 22. Dooyeweerd agrees that the perspective that worldview offers is not an immovable foundation. All kinds of worldview-related insights come up for discussion in philosophy and in the special sciences: cosmological insights, insights from evolutionary theory, insights from the neurosciences or from the social sciences, and insights won in philosophical dialogue with phenomenology, hermeneutics, and deconstructionists. To typify Dooyeweerd's position on this point in a few sentences is difficult. In his engagement with a variety of disciplines (mathematics, biology, various social sciences, law) he was clearly open to adjusting his position and to changing terminology (e.g., in his use of the term "enkapsis"). At the same time, he was on the lookout for claims within the academy that helped substantiate insights to which his own systematic reflection had brought him.

23. Where does Thomism, which has something of all three approaches, fit in this rubric? In directing itself to typical Christian topics—the existence of God and the immortal soul, the nature of suffering, etc.—Thomism clearly has its own agenda. Its method is derived from scholastic metaphysics and, for some, augmented by the ways and means of analytic philosophy. Its Christian inspiration is evident as well. For example, when Moreland and Rae (*Body and Soul: Human nature and the crisis in ethics* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000]) say that according to the Bible human beings have a soul that continues to exist after death and then, in passing, add that substance dualism “does the best job of accounting for the biblical data,” we see elements of all three approaches: a Christian theme; a method that hails back to scholastic distinctions; and Christian inspiration (continuity of “the” soul). My difficulties with this approach follow from my conviction that the metaphysical concept “soul” (in substance-dualism) is of an entirely different order than the biblical concept “soul.” For example, the Bible nowhere refers to the soul as being “immortal” or as having an indestructible “nature”—characteristics that Moreland and Rae attribute to the soul on the basis of substance dualism. The (Bible’s) everyday language of faith is here insufficiently distinguished from the theoretical order of philosophical language. At the same time, I realize that a Kantian or neo-Kantian nomenclature (attuned as it is to “boundaries” and to the mandate that empirical limits not be transgressed) may have difficulty doing justice to the “substantive” character of “the” soul. We are be-souled creatures—living beings (Genesis 2.7)—souls who sometimes are downcast and pant and thirst and long to be refreshed. Most know today what is meant by the *soul* of the nation or corporation. It is a term that refers to so much more than being a conceptual construct posited to help one think straight. The challenge remains to craft philosophical vocabulary that keeps one from the currents of ancient and Cartesian views of the soul, all the while respecting the “substantial” character of the soul. Glas (“Christian philosophical anthropology: A reformation perspective,” *Philosophia Reformata* Vol. 75 [2010]:141-189) provides an overview of how this question has been dealt with in the Reformational philosophical tradition; in Glas (“Persons and their Lives: Reformational philosophy on man, ethics, and beyond,” *Philosophia Reformata* 71[2006a]:31–57) and Glas (“Searching for the dynamic ‘within,’” In G. Glas, M.H. Spero, P.J. Verhagen, H.M. van Praag, eds., *Hearing Visions and Seeing Voices: Psychological aspects of biblical concepts and personalities* [Dordrecht: Springer, 2007a]:295–310), I have outlined my own contribution.
24. See Marcel E. Verburg, *Herman Dooyeweerd: Leven en werk van een Nederlands christen-wijsgeer* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1989), chapters 1 and 2; Roger D. Henderson, *Illuminating Law: The construction of Herman Dooyeweerd’s philosophy 1918–1928* (Diss: Vrije Universiteit, 1994) shows how the original emphasis on the idea of a “divine world plan” transitions to the idea of the heart that directs itself to the origin of meaning.
25. I think, e.g., of Dooyeweerd’s *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular and Christian Options* (1979)—see also his *Vernieuwing en Bezinning* (1963). Worldview and philosophy are actively interrelated for Dooyeweerd, although as the years passed, their connects in his own thought did begin to solidify. Worldview breathes insights that philosophizing incorporates as ideas and intuitions. Philosophical reflection, in turn, assesses and critiques world-viewish givens—for example, at points where speculation has gained the upper hand. The context remains transcendental, and the content develops, briefly put, from Calvinistic to ecumenical. The fact that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy becomes ecumenical could be seen as an initial, tentative step towards the view that all philosophy is Christian philosophy. As indicated above, Dooyeweerd himself does not go that far; he warns repeatedly that the limits of philosophy must be kept in mind.
26. Its “standing on its own two feet” does not mean to say, to use Wittgenstein’s analogy, that the ladder (i.e., worldview) can be thrown away after climbing up on it. Dooyeweerd cannot and will not go that far. The movement between worldview and philosophy is one of back and forth. Philosophical positions have the character of a (hermeneutical) project. These projects are adjusted repeatedly, owing to internal philosophical argumentation, but also given feedback from the lifeworld.
27. For the philosophy of technology, see, e.g., Egbert Schuurman, *Perspectives on Technology and Culture*, trans. John H. Kok (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 1995) and *Technology and the Future*, trans. H. Donald Morton (Ontario: Paideia, 2009); Maarten Verkerk et al, *Denken, ontwerpen, maken: Basisboek techniekfilosofie* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2007). For culture critique, see Hendrik Van Riessen, *Society of the Future* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1957) and *Mondigheid en de machten* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (1957; 1967); Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress: A diagnosis of Western society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979); Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange, *Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an economy of care* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); and Bob Goudzwaard, Mark Vander Vennen, and David Van Heemst, *Hope in Troubled Times: A new vision for confronting global crises* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007). For social philosophy, see Richard Mouw and Sander Griffioen, *Pluralisms and Horizons: An essay in Christian public philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Sander Griffioen and René van Woudenberg, “Theorie van sociale

- gemeenschappen, in *Kennis en werkelijkheid: Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*, ed. R. van Woudenberg (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1996), 236–66; J. Govert Buijs, ed., *Als de olifanten vechten... Denken over ontwikkelingssamenwerking vanuit christelijk perspectief* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2001); Jonathan Chaplin, “‘Public justice’ as a critical political norm,” *Philosophia Reformata* 72 (2007):130–150; Jonathan Chaplin, “Beyond multiculturalism—but to where? Public justice and cultural diversity,” *Philosophia Reformata* 73 (2008):190–209; and Abraham Kuiper, “Sphere Sovereignty,” in James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuiper: A centennial reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 461–90. For philosophy of law, see Herman Dooyeweerd, *De modale structuur van het juridisch oorzakelijkheidsverband* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandse Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1950) and Hendrik J. Van Eikema Hommes, *Major Trends in the History of Legal Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1979).
28. See Jacob Klapwijk et al, eds. *Vrede met de rede? Over het vraagstuk van rede en religie, van autonomie en heil* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976); Henk Geertsema, *Het menselijke karakter van ons kennen* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992); Gerrit Glas, “Modellen van ‘integratie’ in de psychologie en psychiatrie” (I–III), *Psyche en Geloof* 20 (2009):152–193; Jitse M. Van der Meer, ed., *Facets of Faith and Science, Vol. 2: The role of beliefs in mathematics and the natural sciences: An Augustinian perspective* (Lanham: University of America Press, 1996); René van Woudenberg, *Gelovend denken: Inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992) and “Theorie van het kennen,” in *Kennis en werkelijkheid: Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*, ed. R. van Woudenberg (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1996), 21–85. For deep-going, more epistemological analysis, see Stafleu, M.D., “Theories as Logically Qualified Artifacts,” *Philosophia Reformata* 46 (1981):164–89; “Theories as logically qualified artifacts,” *Philosophia Reformata* 47 (1982a): 20–40; *Theories at Work: On the structure and functioning of theories in science, in particular during the Copernican Revolution* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1982b); and “Modelvorming als heuristisch instrument in het wetenschappelijke ontsluitingsproces,” *Philosophia Reformata* 60 (1995):1–15.
 29. For an overview, see Stafleu, M.D., “Filosofie van de natuurwetenschap,” in *Kennis en werkelijkheid: Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*, ed. R. Van Woudenberg (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1996), 177–202, and Stafleu, M.D., *Een wereld vol relatie: Karakter en zijn van natuurlijke dingen en processen* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2002); see also Jacob Klapwijk, *Purpose in the Living World? Creation and emergent evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008b).
 30. See, e.g. Sytse Strijbos, “The Concept of the ‘open system’: Another machine metaphor for the organism?” in *Facets of Faith and Science, Vol. 3: The role of beliefs in the natural sciences*, ed. J.M. van der Meer (Lanham: University of America Press, 1996b), 157–68, and “The concept of hierarchy in contemporary systems thinking: A key to overcoming reductionism?” in *Facets of Faith and Science, Vol. 3: The role of beliefs in the natural sciences*, ed. J.M. van der Meer (Lanham: University of America Press, 1996b), 243–56; see also Strijbos, Sytse, and Basden, eds., *In Search of an Integrative Vision of Technology: Interdisciplinary studies in information systems* (New York: Springer, 1996), and Andrew Basden, *Philosophical Frameworks for Understanding Information Systems* (Hershey/London: IGI-Publishing, 2008).
 31. For aesthetics, see Calvin Seerveld, *Imaginativity,” Faith and Philosophy* 4: (1987), 43–58; Calvin Seerveld, *Bearing Fresh Olive Leaves: Alternative steps in understanding art* (Toronto: TorontoTuppence Press, 2000); and Adrienne Chaplin-Dengerink, *Mind, Body, and Art: The problem of meaning in the cognitive aesthetics of Susanne K. Langer* (Diss: Vrije Universiteit, 1999). For philosophical anthropology, see Gerrit Glas, “De mens: Schets van een antropologie vanuit reformatorisch wijsgerig perspectief,” in *Kennis en werkelijkheid*, ed. R. van Woudenberg (Kok: Kampen, 1996), 86–142. For the philosophy of medicine, psychology, and psychiatry, see Bart S Cusveller, *Met zorg verbonden: Een filosofische studie naar de zindimensie van verpleegkundige zorgverlening* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2004); Glas, Churchland, Kandel, and Dooyeweerd, on the reducibility of mind states, in *Philosophia Reformata* 67 (2002):148–72; Glas, “Ambigüiteit in Kandel’s neurowetenschappelijke fundering van de psychiatrie,” *Tijdschrift voor Psychiatrie* 48 (2007b):849–56; Glas, “Neurowetenschap en de vrije wil,” in *Omhoog kijken in platland: Over geloven in de wetenschap*, eds. C. Dekker, R. van Woudenberg and G. van den Brink (Kampen: Ten Have, 2007c), 221–42; Glas, “Modellen van ‘integratie’ in de psychologie en psychiatrie” (I–III), *Psyche en Geloof* 20 (2009):152–93; and Willem J. Ouweneel, *De leer van de mens: Proeve van een christelijke-wijsgerige antropologie* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1986).
 32. For ethics in general, André Troost, *The Christian Ethos: A philosophical survey* (Patmos: Bloemfontein, 1983); Troost, “Normativiteit: Oorsprong en ondergang van het denken over scheppingsordeningen,” *Philosophia Reformata* 57 (1992a):3–38; and Troost, “De tweërlei aard van de wet,” *Philosophia Reformata* 57(1992b):117–31. For the normative practices model, see Henk Jochemsen and Gerrit Glas, *Verantwoord medisch handelen: Proeve van een christelijke medische ethiek* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1997); Jan Hoogland and Henk Jochemsen, “Professional Autonomy and the Normative Structure of Medical Practice,” *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 21(2000):457–75; and Henk

- Jochensen, "Normative practices as an intermediate between theoretical ethics and morality," *Philosophia Reformata* 71(2006): 96-112.
33. See, e.g., Willem J. Ouwenel, *De leer van de mens: Proeve van een christelijk-wijzgerige antropologie* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1986), who argues for introducing a modality of perception in addition to psychic/sensitive mode of being.
 34. See, e.g., Peter J. Steen, *The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought* (Toronto: Wedge, 1983) and Roy Clouser, "The transcendental critique revisited and revised," *Philosophia Reformata* 74 (2009):21-47.
 35. For an overview see Atie Th. Brüggeman-Kruijff, "Tijd als omsluiting, tijd als ontsluiting" (I & II), *Philosophia Reformata* 46 (1981):119-63 and 47 (1981):41-68.
 36. Many voices in the circles of Reformational philosophy agree (Danie Strauss, "An analysis of the structure of analysis," *Philosophia Reformata* 49 (1984):35-56; Roy Clouser, "The transcendental critique revisited and revised," *Philosophia Reformata* 74 (2009):21-47. Since the 1970s, many have made the case that the transcendental perspective needs to be transformed into a more open (transcendental) hermeneutical perspective. See, e.g., Henk Geertsema, "Transcendentale openheid: Over het zinkarakter van de werkelijkheid in de wijsbegeerte van H. Dooyeweerd," *Philosophia Reformata* 35 (1970):25-56 and 132-53; Geertsema, "Christian Philosophy: Transformation or inner reformation," *Philosophia Reformata* 52 (1987):139-65; Geertsema, *Het menselijke karakter van ons kennen* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1992); Jan Hoogland, "De uitdrukingskracht van de transcendentale kritiek," *Philosophia Reformata* 59 (1994):114-36; Jacob Klapwijk, "Antithesis, synthesis, and the idea of transformational philosophy," *Philosophia Reformata* 51(1986):138-52; Klapwijk, "Reformational philosophy on the boundary between the past and the future," *Philosophia Reformata* 52 (1987):101-34; Kapwijk, "Epilogue: The idea of transformational philosophy," in *Bringing into Captivity every Thought: Capita selecta in the history of Christian evaluations of non-Christian philosophy*, eds. J. Klapwijk, S. Griffioen, and G. Groenewoud (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 241-66; and Johan van der Hoeven, "Na 50 jaar: *Philosophia Reformata* – *Philosophia Reformanda*," in *Filosofische reflecties en ontmoetingen* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 90-116. Theo De Boer advocates for something similar, particularly in "Hermeneutiek van de transcendentie" and "Transcendentie en transcendentale kritiek" in De Boer, *Langs de gewesten van het zijn: Spiritualiteit van de woestijn* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1996), 156-95 and 236-57.
 37. I think also, e.g., of a thinker like Paul Ricoeur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998 [original: *Critique et la conviction*, 1995]), whose hesitancy to highlight the religious moment in his philosophy had to do, he explained, with a French academic context that was in large part dominated by the idea of *laïcité* (secularism of the public sphere) leading to a deep divide between religion and the public sphere, between church and state. (But, here too, there is a difference between explaining and justifying.)
 38. See Glas, "Persons and their Lives: Reformational philosophy on man, ethics, and beyond," *Philosophia Reformata* 71(2006a):31-57.
 39. See also my "The Thinker and the Truth: Kierkegaard and reformational philosophy" (submitted).
 40. Given my background in psychiatry, I will make a point of comparison: the psychotherapist and psychiatrist also take note of how the other responds/reacts to topics raised and then situate these given the professional relation/context in which such topics are being raised. Often the how is more telling than the what in this exchange.
 41. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical reflections on the claim that God speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The making of the modern identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
 42. Alvin Plantinga, "Advice to Christian philosophers," *Faith and Philosophy* 1 (1984):253-71.
 43. See, e.g., Johan Van der Hoeven, "'Het probleem van het kwaad': Vuurproef voor levensechtheid en bescheidenheid van het filosoferen (in de hoofdrol Paul Ricoeur)," in *Peilingen. Korte exploraties in wijsgerig stroomgebied* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1980), 168-93; Henk Geertsema, "Homo respondens: Het antwoord-karakter van het mens-zijn," in *Homo respondens: Verkenningen rond het mens-zijn*, eds. G. Buijs, P. Blokhuis, S. Griffioen, R. Kuiper (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2005), 25-45.
 44. See Gerrit Glas, *Angst: beleving, structuur, macht* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2001).
 45. This is also the reason that "direction" in the opening-up of creational structures may never simply be equated with this spiritual dimension of reality. Philosophy of a discipline always involves an analysis of a dynamic to which there are always empirical correlates: attitudes, tendencies, disjunctions, integration, etc.
 46. Elsewhere (Glas, "Searching for the dynamic 'within,'" In *Hearing Visions and Seeing Voices: Psychological as-*

pects of biblical concepts and personalities, eds. G. Glas et al [Dordrecht: Springer, 2007a], 295-310), I have referred to this as “searching for the dynamic within.”

47. Carl Goldberg, *Speaking with the Devil: A dialogue with evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1996); also Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs, “Four roots of evil,” in *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil*, ed. A.G. Miller (New York & London: Guilford Press, 2004), 85-101.
48. Similar analyses are possible when it comes to, say, reconciliation. In setting forth some elements of a phenomenology of evil and reconciliation (Glas, “Elements of a phenomenology of evil and reconciliation,” in *Trauma, Truth, and Reconciliation: Healing damaged relationships*, ed. N. Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006b), 171-202. I try to illustrate that both evidence a mirrored, three-layered structure.
- 49 The author is very grateful to John Kok for his unselfish offer to translate the manuscript and for his meticulous work.