

**UNDERSTANDING REALITY: EXPLORING THE INTERACTION
BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO A THEISTIC PRESUPPOSITION TO CERTAIN
WORLDVIEWS.**

By

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

To begin this introductory section, the author would like to make a personal statement about his beliefs, and why he chose to take a specific stance in the writing of this thesis. He is an African influenced adult Caucasian male, whose specific theological tradition is charismatic, yet who is spiritually conservative in the Biblical tradition. Besides this, the author considers himself to be a Christian contemporary thinker, who affirms the power of human beings, including the authority of scripture, enlightening by the Spirit, and scientific knowledge and technology, to make, improve, deconstruct, and reshape ones built environment. In the author's view, the essence of the Christian contemporary thinker is both progressive and optimistic, and is therefore used throughout this thesis to further understand reality.

Further to this, the author is convinced that theism is a very Biblically viable world-view from which reality should be studied, and throughout this thesis, this is the viewpoint proposed. The author would also like to state that coming from a traditional charismatic background, all character references to God as He, Him, or any similar references have been placed in capital letters as a sign of respect to God, and all that He stands for in the author's life. Furthermore, all masculine references to God are only to be considered as a grammatical expression, and not sexist in any way.

SUMMARY

The question of reality has traditionally been answered from two broad and separate perspectives, namely natural science and theology. However, in recent times, there has been a growing realism and humility about the limits of the two disciplines, specifically in their pursuit of understanding what makes up reality. Indeed, many are openly speaking about “a new convergence” in the disciplines, opening the way to new insights and understandings about reality.

Because of this, many now see both disciplines as complementary ways of seeking to understand reality. As such, this research shows that there is justification to combine science and theology to further the general understanding of what makes up reality. However, the problem expressed, is that even though both disciplines accept their limits, both disciplines have conflicting world-views on what makes up reality. Nevertheless, the research shows that there is commonality, i.e. both study reality from a creation or natural viewpoint, although each differs on the method to use. Natural science basis its findings on empirically verifiable data, whereas theology, basis its findings on revelation and the “Wirkungsgeschichte” thereof.

Unfortunately, this research shows that the problem does not end there. Within the two disciplines there is what one could call *supplementary-worldviews*, meaning, each discipline has multiple world-views within its structures. Taking this into account, the research examines these various world-views, and then suggests a suitable solution to the difficulty of finding pluralism among these views.

The research begins with a clear understanding of what the different views consist of. It achieves success by setting up a common frame of reference between each view presented, and then researches each one individually, and where fitting, complementarity sought and explored. The research puts forth that

one can only come to a reasonably clear understanding of what makes up reality, if one understands the beliefs and views of each on this.

The research further examines world-views such as the open-theism argument for determinism, Darwin's evolutionary theory, and the different views about the end result of humanity and creation. It also examines God's providence and how one would connect it to miracles, prayer, personhood and sin. The objective being to show that other than a theistic world-view, none of the alternative views give satisfactory answers to these questions, and neither do they give answers to the purpose for creation and humanity? The research also shows and argues that evil in this present world must not be thought of as something God willingly planned as an instrument of human punishment and education, but rather as something He allows because of human freedom.

The research also asks questions such as "What is the Final End of Everything", a question that science and theology have been trying to answer ever since humanity became aware of its own existence. The research further expresses that as technology has increased, many of the issues surrounding eschatology have become obscure, and difficult to deal with. The research points out that at times, eschatology has become a topic of debate, resulting in accusations and acrimony among scholars. Yet the research shows that the Bible is clear about what the end entails, whether that is towards the believer or non-believer.

The research also makes a determination that any view that contradicts itself or destroys itself in the process or act of affirming itself, is self-defeating and false and only theism is actually undeniable. Thus, it is established throughout this work, that theism offers an argument with the undeniable premise that leads one to recognise the existence of an infinitely perfect and powerful Being, who has a purpose for humanity and creation. Indeed, the research shows that any

world-view that cannot prove to be true simply based on the premise that it is non-contradictory, must be false.

Finally, the research proposes and confidently states, that by implication, this would mean that *theism*, the only remaining non-contradictory world-view, would be true by the process of falsification of other alternate views, even in today's scientific and technocratic age.

Key Terms: Science, Theology, World-views, Metaphysics, Creation, Evolution, Open Theism, Providence, Miracles, Eschatology.

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