

Engaging Conradie's theses

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Conradie's twelve theses form a concise and dense text that aims to engage a wide range of conversations between theologians and other scientists. It reads like a mission statement in which he addresses the characteristics and focus of such conversations, whilst providing rules of conduct. With these theses Conradie calls upon Christian theologians to acknowledge that while their contributions to these conversations are valuable, they are also limited. But why state the limited nature of contributions by Christian theologians?

Firstly, Conradie intends to instil trust amongst other scientists by agreeing that Christian theologians will not overestimate their contributions by imposing meta-perspectives over and above perspectives from other scientists. However, Christian theologians also expect that the same courtesy will be shown toward them. This means that all contributions are limited.

Secondly, Christian theologians' knowledge is limited and other scientists can assist them in clarifying and broadening their knowledge. This is true for all participants, which means all contributions are limited.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that Christian theologians draw on particular core assumptions in developing their understanding and approach to reality. This is not unique to Christian theologians as all participants in the multidisciplinary conversation draw on their own unique set of core assumptions. The limited nature of contributions to the multidisciplinary conversation is a limitation shared by all who are dedicated to "...helping the societies in which we are situated to understand

the world in which we find ourselves, analysing what has gone wrong, and helping societies to respond to contemporary challenges (Thesis 1).”

However, perhaps we should reflect more on the disciplinary fragmentation that is the source of these conversational limitations. If the major societal problems are the result of the difference between how life works and the way we think (Gregory Bateson), is it not rather our assumptions that actually limit us?