



FIDES ET RATIO, REFORMED EPISTEMOLOGY, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Este texto foi palestra ministrada na Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie.

John Cooper

Professor do Philosophical Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a possibilidade e importância de uma filosofia cristã, no meio intelectual e cultural, em diálogo com duas expressões significativas da filosofia cristã: a encíclica de 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, do Papa João Paulo II, e as respostas de dois internacionalmente reconhecidos proponentes da chamada “epistemologia reformada”, Alvin Plantinga e Nicholas Wolterstorff. As duas visões avançam em tradições formidáveis. *Fides et Ratio* amplia a visão neotomista de Leão XIII, cuja encíclica de 1879, *Aeterni Patris*, requeria envolvimento renovado do pensamento de Tomás de Aquino com o mundo moderno. De modo semelhante, a epistemologia reformada se encarrega de revitalizar o calvinismo de Abraham Kuyper, influente clérigo, educador, estadista e reformador social holandês do princípio do século XX.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Filosofia cristã; Neocalvinismo; Neotomismo; Fé e razão.

ABSTRACT

Considers the possibility and importance of Christian philosophy in the intellectual and cultural milieu, in dialogue with two significant contemporary expressions of Christian philosophy, Pope John Paul II's 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* and responses to it by two internationally recognized proponents of so-called “Reformed epistemology,” Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Both approaches advance great traditions. *Fides et Ratio* extends the Neo-Thomist vision of Leo XIII, whose 1879 encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, called for fresh engagement of the thought of Thomas Aquinas with the modern world. Similarly, Reformed epistemology carries on the revitalized Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper, an influential Dutch clergyman, educator, statesman, and social reformer around the turn of the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS

Christian philosophy; Neo-Thomism; Faith and reason.

Distinguished Faculty, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to address you at Mackenzie University this evening on a topic of mutual interest, Christian philosophy. It is of central importance to us at Calvin College and Seminary as we seek to bear academic witness in North America. I assume that it is of interest here at Mackenzie as well, given your Presbyterian heritage, your mission statement, and the diversity of your faculty and student body. Both Calvin and Mackenzie are institutions of higher learning begun by immigrants who professed Reformed Christianity. And both of us find ourselves in cultures that, in spite of strong Christian traditions, are increasingly secular, materialistic, pluralistic, and postmodern. This evening I consider the possibility and importance of Christian philosophy in this intellectual and cultural milieu.

I do so in dialogue with two significant contemporary expressions of Christian philosophy, Pope John Paul II's 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* and responses to it by two internationally recognized proponents of so-called "Reformed epistemology", Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Both approaches advance great traditions. *Fides et Ratio* extends the Neo-Thomist vision of Leo XIII, whose 1879 encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, called for fresh engagement of the thought of Thomas Aquinas with the modern world. Similarly, Reformed epistemology carries on the revitalized Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper, an influential Dutch clergyman, educator, statesman, and social reformer around the turn of the twentieth century.

Kuyper promoted the implications of a Reformed reading of Holy Scripture for every aspect of life, family, society, economics, politics, learning, and art, as well as the church and theology. Thus Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism paralleled Leo's Neo-Thomism in purpose and scope.

Kuyper's influence on Christian philosophy is deep and broad. It is evident in the thought of Herman Dooyeweerd of the Free University of Amsterdam and Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary in the USA. It has been nurtured for generations at Calvin College, where Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff have carried it on. Their Reformed epistemology is well known among English-speaking philosophers. After teaching at Calvin, Wolterstorff became Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale University. And

when Plantinga was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, the dialogue between Reformed and Roman Catholic philosophers in the U.S. became direct and institutional.

I realize that the history of Reformed Christianity and its relation to Roman Catholicism are quite different in Brazil than in the United States. I do not overlook the significant doctrinal and ecclesiastical disagreements and even the hostilities between these traditions. But I believe that Roman Catholic and Reformed scholars in both our countries have significant reason to cooperate as we attempt to engage our post-Christian, postmodern cultures. For in comparing our views of revelation, faith, reason, and Christian philosophy, I find far more on which we agree than disagree. This similarity of perspective is not surprising if we recall that both Aquinas and Calvin esteemed Augustine as the greatest of the church fathers. He is our common spiritual and intellectual ancestor. Of course there are differences that I will point out. But with respect to Christian philosophy, these are disagreements within a shared tradition.

My presentation consists of three parts. First I summarize the key points of *Fides et Ratio*. Then I respond from a Reformed perspective, highlighting shared affirmations and exploring an important difference on the relation of faith and reason. Finally, I discuss Christian engagement in contemporary philosophy.

1. *FIDES ET RATIO*

Fides et Ratio was promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1998 to promote philosophical inquiry, not to stifle it. Consisting of about one hundred short sections, it presents a Christian view of faith and reason, surveys how they have been related during the history of philosophy, and calls for revitalized Christian engagement in philosophical reflection and dialogue.

The Introduction affirms philosophy as a universal human endeavor, a discipline with a cross-cultural core of topics, principles, and methods. Its Socratic search for self-

knowledge and wisdom is natural because we humans are rational beings; and it is necessary, because evil, suffering, and death raise unavoidable questions about the meaning and conduct of life. But philosophy is in trouble in Western culture. Modern philosophy has largely rejected the transcendent and focused on human subjectivity, and most postmodern philosophy is agnostic or relativistic. So the Pope encourages both Christians and non-Christians to renewed philosophical search for truth.

Chapter One locates ultimate truth in the revelation of God's wisdom. The complete self-knowledge that humans seek is not our own construction or achievement but a gracious revelation of God in nature, history, and in Jesus Christ. Reason, using experience, science, and philosophy, can tell us much about the world and ourselves. But it cannot dispel the mystery of human existence, because our origin, context, and destiny are supernatural and divine. Therefore only the Father's revelation in Jesus Christ – the Wisdom of God, the Word made flesh – discloses the real ground of human personhood, freedom, and community, and the ultimate fulfillment of human longing. Reason and revelation thus constitute a necessary and complimentary two-fold order of truth. Philosophical inquiry alone is legitimate but incomplete.

Chapter Two reiterates the necessity of faith for completing knowledge and adds a second factor: redemption from sin. Although Scripture affirms that fallen humans can know God from nature (Ps. 19, Acts 17, and Rom. 1) and gain insight into human nature and destiny, it is much more concerned with human sin and folly. God's wisdom is regarded as foolishness by the wise of this world (1 Cor.1). Fallen humans suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom.1). Sin has wounded and blinded human reason so that it tends to avert even from the truth naturally available to it, not to mention the truth of revelation. To overcome sin, the creative wisdom of God in Christ has also become his wisdom in redemption. For Jesus Christ incarnate and crucified is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1). Therefore, faith in the revelation of redemption is necessary both to heal the wounds of reason and to access all available wisdom and truth.

Chapter Three outlines how the quest of fallen humans for knowledge can nevertheless lead toward faith. Sinful

humans, still long for truth, believe it is attainable, and have some capacity to know it. Paul could reason with the philosophers in Athens (Acts 17). All people need knowledge for practical living and seek answers to the ultimate questions about life, suffering, death, and beyond. Most people live and die according to beliefs they have not verified themselves but receive from community and tradition. Above all, they want to trust the truth disclosed in personal relationships. John Paul writes:

Christian faith comes to meet them, offering the concrete possibility of reaching the goal they seek [...] the mystery of Jesus Christ, which in turn offers them a true and coherent knowledge of the triune God (sec. 33).

Thus, Christian revelation fulfills the quest of reason.

Chapter Four surveys the historical relationship between faith and reason. Greek philosophy advanced the truth by challenging the mythical polytheism of Greek religion. The Christian encounter with classical philosophy was cautious and diverse. Tertullian regarded Greek philosophy as incompatible with the Gospel. But others, such as Origen and Augustine, saw that philosophy could be useful for challenging false teaching and articulating Christian theology. With Anselm and the rise of scholasticism, the role of philosophy in relation to faith and theology was systematized and refined. Thomas Aquinas' synthesis remains a paradigm.

But Thomas' achievement was not sustained. Gradually the legitimate autonomy of philosophy was exaggerated into a separation of faith and reason. Modern philosophy increasingly operated independent of Christian revelation and eventually challenged it. Idealism sought to reinterpret Christian themes in terms of an immanent historical dialectic. Positivism rejected all appeal to the transcendent, and naturalism denied its reality. In our own time, reason has largely been reduced to pragmatic calculation while epistemological relativism and metaphysical agnosticism abound. Theology, deprived of reason, has construed faith in terms of experience and feeling, not knowledge of the truth. In spite of these deficiencies, however, the Pope acknowledges that the philosophy of recent centuries has gained much insight into such topics as human subjectivity, intersubjectivity, freedom, and history.

Chapter Five asserts the response of the Church to this situation. It endorses no particular philosophy and affirms the right of philosophy as an autonomous discipline to its own principles and methods, the standards of “right reason”. But the Church has an interest in promoting sound philosophy because of its importance in the pursuit of truth. Thus, John Paul warns against assumptions and conclusions incompatible with revealed truth, explicitly rejecting rationalism, irrationalism, immanentism, Marxism, and certain kinds of liberation thought. He also warns theologians against irrationalism and fideism and urges that priests be philosophically educated.

Chapter Six explicates the relationship between philosophy and theology. Theology needs philosophy in several ways. First, philosophy clarifies the principles of clear reasoning, accurate interpretation (hermeneutics), and effective communication that theology needs to articulate truth convincingly. Second, theology needs metaphysics, anthropology, and epistemology to elaborate the content of revealed truth. Third, theology needs philosophy to grasp the complex relationship of faith and reason. Fourth, philosophy is necessary for applying the truth of revelation in the “evangelization of culture,” addressing the many perplexing ethical questions and pressing issues of political and social justice. Finally, philosophy is crucial for communicating the faith across cultures and to other religions without relativizing its truth. The relationship between theology and philosophy should be understood as a dialogical circle.

In addition to aiding theology, its traditional role as “handmaid”, philosophy can take two other stances toward Christian revelation. First, like Greek philosophy, it can be pursued as an autonomous discipline seeking such truth as is available to it apart from revelation. Second, there can be Christian philosophy, a Christian way of approaching philosophy both subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, Christianity enables philosophical reason to maintain its proper place, neither claiming all truth nor denying the truth it can attain. Objectively, Christianity supplies philosophy with themes to ponder that it otherwise would lack: the personal, triune nature of God, the creation of the world, the nature of sin and evil, the supernatural vocation of humans, the ultimate basis for the dignity, equality, rights, and freedom of the human

person, the veracity of Sacred Scripture, and many others. Aquinas is again recommended as a model.

In Chapter Seven the Pope identifies the requirements and tasks of the Word of God – the Christian faith – for philosophy and theology. The Bible’s vision of reality implicitly and explicitly takes philosophical positions: God is Absolute and all creatures depend on him. Humans are created in his image with reason, dignity, freedom, responsibility, and a supernatural destiny. Evil is a devastating yet non-essential characteristic of creaturely existence. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of human existence. Because it teaches these truths, Scripture requires that philosophy aim at wisdom, not just critical, technological, or pragmatic analysis. It entails that philosophy engage in metaphysics and affirms the transcendent. Philosophy must operate with a realistic epistemology, which affirms that truth is attainable and which defines knowledge as the adequation of the intellect and reality. Philosophy must affirm the dignity and rights of the person, universal moral truth, and moral responsibility. Philosophy of language and hermeneutics must not only affirm the universality and intelligibility of meaning among humans, but also the possibility of true discourse about God.

The philosophical implications of Scripture also challenge much contemporary thought. *Fides et Ratio* specifically warns against materialism, pantheism, relativism, scientism, positivism, phenomenism, nominalism, historicism, pragmatism, eclecticism, and nihilism, among others. The encyclical concludes by calling on Christian philosophers to recover their relationship with theology and to participate in the “evangelization of culture”. It enjoins theologians to be philosophically responsible in their work. And it encourages scientists and technologists to practice their disciplines within the framework of wisdom and moral values.

2. A REFORMED PERSPECTIVE ON CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Reformed philosophers have affirmed a great deal of *Fides et Ratio* with appreciation. Nicholas Wolterstorff (1999, p. 28) responds, “I find myself in almost complete agreement

with what the pope says about the relation of faith and reason”. Alvin Plantinga (1999, p. 32) judges that “[...] from any seriously Christian point of view, Protestant as well as Catholic, it contains a great deal of solid good sense [...]”. In fact, Plantinga’s appreciation of the shared tradition is deep enough that his “magnum opus”, *Warranted Christian Belief*, identifies his own epistemology as “the Aquinas-Calvin model”.

As a Reformed philosopher, I too affirm the general theological framework and its philosophical implications: that all truth reflects the wisdom of God; that Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God, the Word incarnate, who is revealed both in creation and in redemption; that both faith and reason are necessary for full knowledge of nature, human nature, and God; that knowledge of reality is possible for humans; that the fall has adversely affected reason, and thus that philosophy too needs the healing effects of salvation through Christ. I agree that aspects of Greek philosophy were useful for theology and apologetics, that there is much wisdom in the scholastic synthesis of theology and philosophy, and that the philosophy of the last several centuries has both gained insight and largely turned against the Christian faith. I affirm that Holy Scripture has philosophical implications, and thus that Christian philosophy is important in both its own domain as well as providing Christian perspective in other disciplines. Those disciplines include biblical and theological scholarship, natural science and the humanities, and the practical disciplines that shape our life and witness in the world. I especially appreciate the importance of the biblical perspective on economic, social, and political justice. Reformed philosophers can affirm all these themes and many specific statements of *Fides et Ratio* warmly and gratefully.

For the sake of dialogue, however, I will not dwell on our agreements but focus instead on a difference of emphasis between the Thomist and the Augustinian-Calvinian traditions on the relation of faith and reason. This divergence yields a somewhat different perspective on the relationship between Christian and non-Christian philosophy and thus on our understanding of participation in contemporary philosophical dialogue. Allow me to explain.

Fides et Ratio is self-consciously Thomistic in asserting that faith and reason, although complimentary, interrelated,

and legitimately separated, are intrinsically distinct media of truth. Thus, philosophy and theology are essentially different, and philosophy has its own nature, domain, and autonomy. Apart from theological truth, philosophy is incomplete but not necessarily false or distorted. The Thomist view results from asking the question, “[...] how much can humans know about God apart from special revelation?” This is an important question, but it seems to presuppose the fall into sin, for only then is the separation of faith and reason an issue.

Reformed epistemologists begin their reflection on faith and reason from the integrality of creation. Therefore, like Augustine, we do not draw such clear and systematic distinctions between reason, faith, and revelation. As God created humans, the subjective exercise of faith and reason were not merely complimentary, but integral. As the image of God, our first parents simultaneously knew, loved, and trusted God in a single attitude of devotion. Objectively, revelation was likewise integrated, involving both general knowledge of God from nature (Rom. 1) and his special presence and communication (Gen. 2). Given the original unity of revelation, faith, and reason, our first parents naturally and correctly perceived themselves and all things in relation to God. Had their “world and life view” (a favorite term of Kuyperian Calvinists) been intellectually articulated, it would have yielded a single, comprehensive theological philosophy. Thomists agree that faith and reason were originally complimentary and perhaps would suggest that the difference between us is one of terminology or emphasis, not substance.

The difference does become significant, however, when we consider the consequences of the fall on reason and philosophy. Reformed thinkers emphasize that faith and reason remain integrated and that fallen humans have false faith. Sin did more than wound reason and incline the will away from God. Restless without God, to paraphrase Augustine, the human heart loves something instead of God. It worships a creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1). Fallen humans cling to an idol, their own notion of God, which Calvin in *The Institutes* (I, IV, 1) calls “[...] a figment and dream of their own heart.” This loyalty to falsehood suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. The created capacity to see all things in relation to God now construes all things in relation to the idol. Fallen

human reason thus develops philosophies that articulate false and idolatrous world and life views. In the *City of God*, Augustine elaborates how these two kinds of love lead to two cities and two kinds of philosophy. Plantinga (1984, p. 75) concurs, “[...] non-Christian philosophy is not merely handicapped by the [...] inherent weakness of human reason [...]”;

[...] it is rather that philosophers, like humanity generally, are “fallen” and in need of “conversion”. Much of philosophy is a categorical renunciation of Christian belief, and an attempt to work out a view of the world wholly incompatible with that of Christian theism [...] (PLANTINGA, 1999, p. 33-34).

Fides et Ratio does not deny that much philosophy is incompatible with Christianity. In fact, it condemns many philosophies by name. But it attempts to build consensus on the basis of reason apart from faith and does not take account of how false love and false faith inevitably suppress truth philosophically. The Reformed understanding of this suppression is well developed. Plantinga (1999, p. 34) concludes that non-Christian philosophy “[...] is less a deliverance of reason than the articulation of a rival faith, [...]”. Wolterstorff has explained why all human theorizing involves faith-based perspectives in his book *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, a pointed reversal of Kant’s title.

Looking beyond the fall, Reformed epistemology emphasizes the integration of faith and reason in redemption: God’s saving grace and revelation are necessary to restore the natural power of reason. This affirmation grounds “*Fides et Ratio*’s” significant declaration that distinctly “Christian” philosophy is possible because the Bible itself has implications for metaphysics, anthropology, epistemology, ethics, and social philosophy. Reformed epistemology readily agrees. Plantinga (1999, p. 35) explains:

[...] the Augustinian (Protestant) philosopher might ask such questions as this: what does Christian faith imply with respect to the nature of human beings, of knowledge, of the good, of causation, of natural laws, or morality, of universals, propositions, sets, possible worlds, and a thousand other topics?

But if Scripture contains philosophy, as *Fides et Ratio* claims, then philosophy is not entirely a matter of reason alone, needing merely to be augmented by theology. For philosophers who have faith in God's revelation will have access to more "philosophical" truth than those who have faith in something else. Thus, the Reformed view of faith and reason provides a more substantive understanding of the term "Christian philosophy" than the complimentarist view of *Fides et Ratio*.

Let me summarize the second part of my lecture. Reformed philosophers can gratefully endorse a great deal of *Fides et Ratio*. But we stress more consistently than it does the integrality of faith and reason in creation, in fallen humanity, and in redemption through Jesus Christ.

3. CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN CONTEMPORARY ACADEMIC DIALOGUE

But what does the Reformed approach imply for our final topic, participation in contemporary philosophy? Must Christians remain isolated and reject non-Christian philosophy because it is distorted by false faith? And why should non-Christians take philosophy seriously that admits being influenced by the Bible? *Fides et Ratio* addresses these questions with its clear distinction between faith and reason. It defines philosophy apart from religion as a common human pursuit of wisdom based on universal rational principles, and it offers that definition as the basis for renewed philosophical dialogue. But I will argue that Reformed epistemology's emphasis on the unavoidable integration of faith and reason is even more descriptive of and conducive to authentic dialogue in our pluralistic philosophical milieu.

My argument is this: All philosophers integrate faith and reason. Consequently, every philosophical approach has interests and positions unique to its own perspective, as well as affirmations held in common with other approaches. Thus, Christians are not unique in philosophizing from a unique perspective. They have the same rights and duties as others to

participate in public philosophical dialogue. I elaborate this argument first on faith, then reason.

Reformed epistemology's emphasis on faith readily engages contemporary interest in the motives of philosophy. A basic theme of late modern and postmodern philosophy is the critique of Enlightenment rationalism. It is commonly observed that reason is neither self-validating, nor capable of generating universal consensus about truth, nor capable of optimizing human existence. Furthermore, all reasoning reflects pre-philosophical commitments. Reason is "situated", that is, carried out in terms of perspectives, "pre-understandings", or "metanarratives", which have particular assumptions and serve particular interests. This critique of modern rationalism is made by romanticism, Marxism, pragmatism, existentialism, hermeneutical philosophy, feminism, and postmodern pluralism, even though they vigorously dispute the nature and role of the pre-philosophical dynamics involved. Even analytic philosophers, who limit the scope and methods of philosophy to maximize its rationality, acknowledge a diversity of meta-philosophical perspectives, varieties of theism, naturalism, rationalism, anti-realism, and so forth.

The Reformed tradition is well ahead of this development. It has always criticized the Enlightenment's autonomous view of reason and offered its own account of the foundations of philosophy. It points out that, since the truth of the various perspectives on life from which philosophy is pursued cannot be verified, such perspectives are ultimately matters of belief or faith. Thus, all philosophy is "faith-seeking understanding". This faith is religious in nature because it is attached to something taken as ultimate. In all perspectives, something functions as absolute or ultimate, a notion of God, or Nature, or Reason, or a Human factor, such as self-determination, a definition of the good, or an ideal of socio-economic liberation. The Enlightenment itself is based on a religious faith – faith in reason alone to discover truth and improve human existence. In this way, Reformed epistemology explains the deepest, trans-rational dynamic guiding reason as religious faith without denying other non-rational factors.

But what about reason? Reformed epistemology is conducive to dialogue because it recognizes diverse views of

reason and philosophy. *Fides et Ratio* defines philosophy as a universal discipline with an essential core based in *recta ratio*. Many philosophers, including some Christians, challenge this definition. For example, some deny that the principle of non-contradiction is absolute. Others deny that the purpose of philosophy is to gain wisdom. Thus Wolterstorff (1999, p. 28) observes: “[...] in the history of philosophy [...] there is rather less core consensus than he seems to think there is [...]”. In fact, the encyclical’s definition of philosophy is not purely philosophical but flows from its Neo-Thomist perspective. But that is just the point of Reformed epistemology: Directly or indirectly, definitions of rationality and philosophy themselves are shaped by basic worldviews. That is true of Plato, Kant, Marx, Russell, Sartre, Derrida, the Hindu Radhakrishnan, and the Zen Buddhist Suzuki, no less than the Pope and Plantinga.

I hasten to add that Reformed epistemology is neither fideistic nor relativistic. Reformed philosophers endorse almost all that *Fides et Ratio* asserts about the principles of right reason, objective truth, and the deficiencies of irrationalism. In fact Plantinga and Wolterstorff have spent decades explaining why some Christian beliefs can be “properly basic”, that is, reasonable as beliefs from which to begin. But we recognize that our view of reason is as deeply rooted in the Christian worldview as in rational reflection on experience.

Thus far, I have argued that all philosophers mix faith and reason. I conclude from this that Christians have the same basis and right as anyone else to engage in academic philosophy. But is real dialogue possible? Or only a shouting match between irreconcilable points of view?

Complete consensus is an unrealistic goal. Christians understandably have interests and issues implied by their faith that they cannot abandon. According to Plantinga,

The Christian philosophical community, by virtue of being Christian, is committed to a broad but specific way of looking at humankind and the world and God. Among its most important and pressing projects are systemizing, deepening, exploring, articulating this perspective, and exploring its bearing on the rest of what we think and do [...] (SENNETT, 1998, p. 315).

But Christians are not unique. All philosophers proceed from faith-based perspectives and commitments that sooner or later shape their reasoning. Analytic philosophers, Marxists, pragmatists, postmodernists, and socio-biologists all have some philosophical principles, projects, and conclusions that are not shared by others. Each group develops its own point of view with or without the agreement and sometimes even without the respect of other philosophers. To some extent, all philosophical approaches are unique. Surely, Christians ought to be faithful to their commitment when they do philosophy.

But the diversity of perspectives does not foreclose the possibility of significant dialogue. Honest conversation should include the content of pre-philosophical commitments and their philosophical implications. Non-Christians are entitled to question Christian truth-claims about God and supernatural revelation. Christians in turn can question whether naturalism and humanism can adequately explain nature and human existence. All philosophers can offer reasoned defenses of their positions and perhaps even strengthen them in response to the critique of others. Some positions might be exposed as less coherent or well grounded than others. But in the end no point of view is likely to justify itself sufficiently to win many converts, much less universal assent. That is just how things are in the university, as well as in broader society.

Beyond dialogue, Reformed epistemology seeks agreement and collaboration in pursuing truth. According to Plantinga,

Christian philosophers must be intimately involved in the professional life of the philosophical community at large, both because of what they can learn and because of what they can contribute [...] (SENNETT, 1998, p. 314).

Collaboration is possible because philosophy is a rational discipline, not just an expression of faith. God sustains the human mind and the intelligible order of reality in spite of the fall into sin. Similarities of perspective, common rational principles, and shared philosophical traditions regularly enable philosophers with different worldviews to reach common analyses and conclusions on topics in many

disciplines. For example, Christians and atheists who affirm epistemological realism, or mind-body interactionism, or natural law ethics, or the importance of class struggle in history have opportunity for mutual enrichment as they devise and refine their theories. Even when they disagree, the debate will usually involve rational issues of evidence and inference and not simply reflect different faith perspectives. Thus, Reformed epistemology affirms philosophical dialogue and cooperation aimed at truth even though faith and reason are inevitably integrated.

Let me conclude by summarizing the main points of the lecture. Reformed epistemology warmly endorses *Fides et Ratio*'s vision for the renewal of Christian philosophy and its public engagement in contemporary society and culture. But the Reformed emphasis on the unavoidable integration of faith and reason strengthens the foundation and modifies the framework of this project. Reformed epistemology provides justification for distinctively Christian philosophy, it explains the undeniable diversity of philosophical perspectives, and it offers a rationale for mutually beneficial dialogue in the contemporary philosophical search for truth. I hope that this lecture will serve to promote authentic conversation among Protestant, Catholic, and non-Christian intellectuals here at Mackenzie University. And with Pope John Paul II, I hope for a renewal of philosophical reflection and dialogue that is not merely academic, but aimed at the truth about human justice, dignity, and destiny. Thank you for the honor of addressing you.

REFERÊNCIAS

PLANTINGA, Alvin. *Warranted Christian belief*. Nova York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

_____. *Fides et Ratio: philosophers respond to Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter*. *Books and Culture*, v. 5, n. 4, Jul./Aug. 1999.

PLANTINGA, Alvin; WOLTERSTORFF, Nicholas (Ed.). *Faith and rationality: reason and belief in God*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

SENNETT, James (Ed.); PLANTINGA, Alvin. *The analytic theist: an Alvin Plantinga reader*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998.

WOLTERSTORFF, Nicholas. *Books and Culture*, v. 5, n. 4, Jul./Aug. 1999.

_____. *Reason within the bounds of religion: Reformed Church in America*. 2. ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984.