

HOW CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS CAN SERVE SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIAN AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARS

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***Abstract:** The article begins by laying out two reasons why much of contemporary theology and scriptural studies are weak in their impact for Christ: these disciplines are often done in isolation from the broader cultural issues facing the church and their results are not presented as knowledge of reality. I argue that an important solution to this problem is for theological and scriptural scholars to appropriate the findings of Christian philosophy and do integrative work with Christian philosophers in their intellectual projects. Next, I state and illustrate four ways that Christian philosophy and philosophers can serve their colleagues in theology and scriptural studies.*

***Key words:** knowledge, naturalism, postmodernism, substance dualism, foundationalism, negative and positive rights, external conceptual problems*

While I have a Th.M. in systematic theology from Dallas Seminary, I must admit that I am neither a theologian nor the son of one. The same thing goes for being a biblical scholar. I am, in fact, a Christian philosopher with more than a passing interest in systematic theology (ST) and scriptural studies (SS). I also have a pretty good sense for what is happening in Western culture generally, and church culture particularly.

Why do I mention all this? It is because I am increasingly troubled by what I am seeing in ST/SS as professional disciplines and by the weak impact they are having on the church and culture. I do not mean for this to be harsh. Rather, it is a serious call for us to reflect deeply on what is happening and how we can fix it. Accordingly, in what follows, I will offer a brief description of what alarms me about the way ST/SS are practiced and provide a general solution for turning things around. Because my solution involves the role Christian philosophy can play in ST/SS, the bulk on my paper will contain a statement and illustrations of four ways in which Christian philosophers can help their brothers and sisters in ST/SS. In the conclusion, I will prescind from these four modes of assistance and make brief observations about the way forward.

Before I proceed, I must say that what follows is said out of love and respect for my family members in ST/SS and out of a desire to shed light on how Christian philosophers can be of help in aiding them to flourish in their disciplines in a relevant way in light of our current culture. In no way is what follows an expression of some sort of (ugly) turf war. That said, let us begin in earnest and see what we can learn together.

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I. WHY ARE SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURAL STUDIES LARGELY WEAK IN THEIR IMPACT?

Ideas matter. In fact, we are largely at the mercy of our ideas. And our ideas about the nature and limits of knowledge are among a small handful of the most important ideas we embrace. It is on the basis of knowledge (or perceived knowledge)—not faith, mere true beliefs, or deeply felt convictions—that people have the authority to define a relevant aspect of reality, to speak and act in public along with the courage and boldness to do so. For example, dentists have the cultural authority to deliver relevant public lectures about teeth, to define their nature, and act in certain ways—e.g. fill molars—and the courage to do both because we take them, quite rightly in this case, to possess the relevant body of knowledge. If my dentist told me that he actually did not know anything about molars but did have very deep feelings and faith commitments about them, he would not get within a hundred miles of my mouth!

Thus, cultural authority to define a relevant range of reality, truth, and what it is rational to believe is decided by people in that culture to those who have (or, at least, are taken to have) the relevant body of knowledge. One of the most important ideas in a society is its understanding of who does and does not have knowledge, who gets to define reality, truth, and rationality and who does not. Thus, it is of the utmost importance for Christian scholars and other leaders to grasp the culture's ideas on this topic, engage in spiritual warfare with them wisely and winsomely (see 2 Cor 10:3–5), and alert/protect the sheep.

In an important interview in *Leadership Journal*, Barna Group president David Kinnaman listed six reasons young people leave the church and, indeed, Christian theism. All are especially relevant to our current discussion: the church's shallowness of thought, including its biblical teachings and practices; the feeling that it is an unsafe place to express doubts; when doubts are received, the answers to them are shallow; simplistic teaching about the complexities of sexuality; its isolationism, that is, its failure to interact fairly with the surrounding culture; and, last but not least, the church's anti-science attitude, including being out of step with scientific developments and debate.¹ Interestingly, all of these issues involve philosophy, apologetics, and engagement with cultural ideas contrary to a Christian worldview.

Why is this the case? The answer is crucial for informing the contemporary practice of ST/SS and how philosophy may be of help in this endeavor. The West is mired in a growing and pervasive secular perspective. This secularized perspective is constituted by two worldviews—naturalism (fueled by scientism) and post-modernism—that agree with each other over against ethical monotheism (of which Christianity is the main version) about one important point: *there is no non-empirical*

¹ David Kinnaman, "Six Reasons Why Young People Leave the Church" (compiled by Eric Reed), *Leadership Journal* (Winter 2012), online at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2012/winter/young-leavechurch.html>.

*knowledge, especially no theological or ethical knowledge.*² Theological or ethical claims are mere expressions of feeling, privatized, arbitrary beliefs, community constructions, brute faith commitments about which there is no way to tell whether or not they are true if the category of “true” even applies to them. This privatization of theological/biblical teaching has marginalized the church, allowed unbelievers to dismiss Christian claims with impunity, and weakened the convictions and courage of our brothers and sisters.

While all this has been going on for decades, the disciplines of ST and SS have become ingrown, privatized language games. Theologians talk to themselves and, occasionally, to laypersons. But they simply are not a part of the conversation in the public square about the ideas that are shaping people’s lives all around us. And scriptural scholars have increasingly turned their attention to tiny, technical issues, churning out more commentaries, or doing biblical theology in a way that simply acts as though a war of ideas and the secularization of culture is not even happening.³ Most ST/SS scholars act as if no culture war exists! The result: With important and rare exceptions, ST/SS are unintentionally becoming the church’s gravedigger as these disciplines and the professional societies that surround them continue to practice isolating activities and to produce irrelevant articles and books that are not even on the radar screen for the debates in the world in which our brothers and sisters must live.

Sadly, it has fallen to Christian philosophers to pick up the baton at such a time as this. And I am happy to report that Christian philosophers—including evangelical philosophers—are mobilizing the church, equipping and emboldening believers, and winsomely and articulately presenting solid Christian views on a wide range of secular debates. Why is this sad? Not because Christian philosophers are doing these things, but because they should be doing them alongside their ST/SS colleagues. And Christian philosophers have learned a lot in the last few decades that would be of immense help to ST/SS practitioners. This should not be surprising. After all, philosophy has long attempted to be the handmaid of theology. *The main reason ST/SS are isolated and weak is their practitioners’ failure to work together with Christian philosophers who hunger to serve these fields and strengthen their impact.* In what follows, I will provide four ways, along with examples, in which Christian philosophy/philosophers can help (and could have helped!) those in ST/SS.

² For critiques of naturalism, see Steward Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *Naturalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); J. P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). For a critique of postmodernism, see Stewart E. Kelly and James K. Dew Jr., *Understanding Postmodernism: A Christian Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017).

³ A notable exception and good model to follow is Robert A. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001). Also, I would include all the books dealing with historical Jesus questions, the historicity of Scripture, the resurrection of Jesus, OT genocide, and so forth.

II. FOUR WAYS IN WHICH CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY/PHILOSOPHERS CAN HELP SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIANS AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARS

1. *Helping to correct mischaracterizations of important issues.* Without the aid of Christian philosophers or, indeed, of philosophy itself, far too often someone in ST/SS unintentionally creates a strawman and dismisses or refutes it without recognizing that he has left the real issue untouched. In turn, this allows ST/SS scholars to draw important conclusions based on the defeated strawman that could not be drawn if the real issue were better understood. And these mistaken conclusions can create a large group of advocates in ST/SS of a view that is not only irrational, but harmful to the Christian faith itself.

Here are two examples. The first one has to do with the ubiquitous rejection of substance dualism in favor of some form of Christian physicalism in ST/SS. In point of fact, far too many ST/SS practitioners reject a strawman version of substance dualism and not the real thing. Why is this so? In my view, it is due to confusions about substance dualism on the part of biblical and theological scholars, confusions that could easily be removed with help from Christian philosophers.

As a paradigm case of such confusion, consider the writings of N. T. Wright. He is on record as claiming that human persons are (or have) souls that are spiritual realities that ground personal identity in a disembodied intermediate state between death and final resurrection.⁴ According to Wright, this was clearly the Pharisees' view in Second Temple Judaism, and, he notes, Jesus (Matt 22:23–33) and Paul (Acts 23:6–10) side with the Pharisees on this issue over against the Sadducees.

However, in a paper delivered in March 2011 at the Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, Wright explicitly disavowed substance dualism.⁵ Yet, in the same paper, he affirms a dualist reading of 2 Cor 5:1–10, Acts 23:6–9, and 2 Cor 12:2–4 in keeping with his thesis that the Jews of Jesus's day, and the NT, affirm life after life after death: death, followed by a *disembodied* intermediate state, followed by the general resurrection.

Wright's confusion becomes evident when we distinguish generic substance dualism (the soul/mind/self is an immaterial substance that is different from the physical body) of which there are at least five different versions in contemporary philosophical literature, from radical Platonic dualism (the body is of little value and may, in fact, be evil; the soul is capable of immortal existence on its own steam without needing to be sustained by God; and disembodied existence is the ideal state in heaven with no need for a resurrected body).⁶ Wright is not careful to distinguish these, but it is the latter, not the former, that he rejects. Had he simply

⁴ See N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2003), 131–34, 190–206, 366–67, 424–26.

⁵ N. T. Wright, "Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in his Complex Contexts," presented at the Society of Christian Philosophers Regional Meeting, Fordham University, March 18, 2011.

⁶ For statements and defenses of these five versions of substance dualism, see Jonathan Loose, Angus Menzies, and J. P. Moreland, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), chaps. 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11.

consulted with a Christian philosopher before reading his paper, he could have avoided leading people in an unbiblical direction towards physicalism.

I suggest a similar confusion plagues much of the rejection of substance dualism on the part of biblical and theological scholars. For example, it is worth noting that Christian physicalist Nancey Murphy herself seems guilty of this confusion. She says that in theological and biblical studies, there has been “a gradual displacement of a dualistic account of the person, with its correlative emphasis on the after-life conceived in terms of *the immortality of the soul*.” [italics mine]⁷ Even if this is true, it follows only that radical Platonic dualism has been replaced, not that generic substance dualism is—or should be—replaced.

A second example is the widespread adoption of postmodern epistemology among scholars in ST/SS due to the alleged demise of foundationalism. Basically, foundationalism is the idea that there are properly basic beliefs that are not entirely justified by their relationship to other beliefs. And non-basic beliefs are justified by properly basic beliefs. Postmodernists reject foundationalism as a theory of epistemic justification. For example, as they assert “the demise of foundationalism,” the late Stanley Grenz and John Franke observe(d) with irony, “How infirm the foundation.”⁸ Rodney Clapp claims that foundationalism has been in “dire straits” for some time, avowing that “few if any careful thinkers actually rely on foundationalist thinking,” even though they cling like addicted smokers to “foundationalist rhetoric.” Says Clapp, evangelicals “should be nonfoundationalists exactly because we are evangelicals.”⁹ Nancey Murphy is concerned to justify a “postmodern” theological method in the face of “a general skeptical reaction to the demise of foundationalism in epistemology.”¹⁰

Four major (philosophical) confusions for this rejection are: (1) a misunderstanding of and disregard for simple seeing or knowledge by acquaintance; (2) confusion about the role of one’s situatedness in gaining access to an intentional object (e.g. from the fact that I see an object from my situatedness, it does not follow that I see a situated-object, one constructed by my situatedness); (3) a failure to distinguish psychological and rational objectivity; (4) the bizarre idea that foundationalism *per se* represents a quest for epistemic certainty, and it is this desire to have certainty that provides the intellectual impetus for foundationalism.

Focusing on (4), this so-called Cartesian anxiety is alleged to be the root of foundationalist theories of epistemic justification. But, the argument continues, there is no such certainty and the quest for it is an impossible one. Further, that quest is misguided because people do not need certainty to live their lives well.

⁷ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10.

⁸ Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 38. Grenz and Franke use the phrase “the demise of foundationalism” ten times in the first 54 pages (Part I) of the book.

⁹ Rodney Clapp, “How Firm a Foundation: Can Evangelicals Be Nonfoundationalists?” in *Border Crossings: Christian Trespasses on Popular Culture and Public Affairs* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2000), 19–32.

¹⁰ Nancey Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion and Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), 131–32.

Sometimes Christian postmodernists support this claim by asserting that the quest for certainty is at odds with biblical teaching about faith, the sinfulness of our intellectual and sensory faculties, and the impossibility of grasping an infinite God.

Unfortunately, this depiction of the intellectual motives for foundationalism represents a deep confusion between foundationalism *per se* (of which there are several versions) and an especially extreme Cartesian form of foundationalism, with the result that versions of modest foundationalism are simply not taken into consideration.

Cartesian foundationalism is rightly rejected because it requires that our foundational beliefs be epistemically certain or incorrigible—it is logically impossible that they be mistaken. But the vast majority of contemporary epistemologists adopt modest versions of foundationalism, retaining the idea that a proper noetic structure is a foundationalist one. Many accept the idea that there is simple seeing—direct awareness of the external world. These epistemologists do not require foundational beliefs to be epistemically certain.

Had scholars in ST/SS read more philosophical works in epistemology, instead of reading what other theologians say about foundationalism and other epistemic issues, I believe a lot of the postmodern popularity would vanish under the demands of intellectual integrity. I have a personal story about this.

Years ago, I was talking to a theologian with a Ph.D. in theology from an Ivy League school who exhibited fear and loathing at the very mention of “foundationalism.” Indeed, he was an aggressive advocate of postmodernism as the correct epistemology for Christians. Postmodernism, he claimed, would secure Christianity’s future in an increasingly secular West. Sadly for him, postmodernism is the cure that kills the patient. As we talked, it became evident that he was horribly confused about a whole host of important issues, so I asked him if he had ever read a philosopher on epistemology in general or on foundationalism/postmodernism in particular. To my shock, he said no. His entire Ivy League theological education about these issues came from reading contemporary theologians all of whom misunderstood foundationalism and epistemic objectivity.¹¹ He *never* was required to read a single philosophical text in epistemology, yet he waxed eloquently on topics epistemological.

2. *Providing distinctions and additional options for consideration.* Philosophers love distinctions. Sometimes these distinctions can be of extreme help for a theologian or biblical exegete by giving that person new eyes to see, a new ability to know what to look for as texts are exegeted, and so on. And sometimes these distinctions provide options for theological or exegetical views that were not considered without the relevant philosophical distinctions.

Here is an example. There is a desperate need for theologians and biblical scholars to provide a carefully reasoned, biblically based view of politics and the role of the state. Christians need an exegetically grounded political theo-

¹¹ For more on this, see J. P. Moreland, “Truth, Contemporary Philosophy and the Postmodern Turn,” *JETS* 48 (2005): 77–88.

gy/philosophy. This would empower believers to approach voting and political activity in a carefully thought out way, and as an expression of a wider Christian political theology/philosophy.

Now, an essential philosophical distinction for discovering biblical teaching about the state is the one between positive and negative rights. A positive right is a right to have something given to the right-holder. If Smith has a positive right to X, say to health care, then the state has an obligation to give X to Smith. In general, positive rights and duties are correlative. That is, if someone has a positive right to something, then a duty is placed on others to provide that right to that person (or class of persons). Thus, the state has the moral right to impose on citizens the duty to provide that right to the right-holder.

A negative right to X is a right to be protected from harm while one seeks to get X on one's own. If Smith has a negative right to X, say to health care, then the state has an obligation to protect Smith from discrimination and unfair treatment in his attempt to get X on his own. We learn much if we approach key biblical texts about the state armed with the distinction between positive and negative rights. This will allow us to see texts that have a crucial bearing on developing a biblical theology/philosophy of the state in a more careful and relevant way.¹²

We have seen an example of how a philosophical distinction can aid in exegesis or doing theology. Here is an illustration of how Christian philosophers can provide additional options to scholars in ST/SS when they seem to be stuck with an either/or situation in which both alternatives are problematic. In a "Five Views" book on biblical inerrancy, R. Albert Mohler Jr. defends the classic version of the doctrine. In my view, Mohler did a very good job of articulating the meaning of biblical inerrancy and the things that follow from affirming or denying the doctrine. But his defense of inerrancy could have been much stronger. His case rests on three pieces of evidence: the Bible's testimony to itself; the tradition of the church; and the function of the Bible within the church.¹³ While these are all legitimate points (with varying degrees of epistemic strength), before Mohler wrote his chapter, why did he not consult a trusted Christian philosopher who is competent in epistemology? He or she could have offered arguments that would have vastly strengthened his case and made it harder for his interlocutors to critique his position. By offering these arguments, Christian philosophers would have provided Mohler with additional options for defending the rationality of biblical inerrancy.¹⁴

3. *Helping to alert ST/SS scholars to the presence of External Conceptual Problems (ECPs) and provide solutions to them.* In assessing the rationality and likely truthfulness of an assertion, explanatory hypothesis (e.g. an exegetical hypothesis regarding the best way to interpret a text) or a theory (e.g. some theory in ST), one has to assess

¹² See J. P. Moreland, "A Biblical Case for Limited Government," The Institute for Faith, Work and Economics, (<http://tifwe.org/research/a-biblical-case-for-limited-government>) (Spring 2013).

¹³ R. Albert Mohler Jr., "When the Bible Speaks, God Speaks: The Classic Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy," in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (ed. J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garrett; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 37.

¹⁴ See J. P. Moreland, "The Rationality of Belief in Inerrancy," *TrinJ* NS 7 (Spring 1986): 75–86.

whether the assertion, etc. adequately solves the intellectual problems that face the proffered viewpoint. Philosophers of science have identified a very significant yet often ignored type of problem lurking in the neighborhood: ECPs.¹⁵ An ECP arises for some theological/biblical theory (claim, etc.) T, when (1) T' provides some sort of defeater for T; (2) T' is rationally justified; and (3) T' is within another academic discipline outside of ST/SS. In this way, while T' is initially a theory in and only in, say, philosophy or economics, when T is proposed, T' becomes relevant to advocates of T when it comes time to assess T's epistemic standing. A failure to consult ECPs in this assessment is a failure to see the development of an integrated Christian worldview as part of the task on systematic theology, biblical theology, and biblical exegesis.

Let me offer a personal and, in my view, egregious example of a failure to consider an ECP. Some time ago, I debated a well-known and (rightly) well-respected NT scholar on the existence of the soul and a disembodied intermediate state between death and the final, general resurrection. I affirmed both, and he, a Christian physicalist, denied both. During the debate, he said that he affirmed an extinction/recreation view of the afterlife: When one dies, one goes out of existence. At the general resurrection, God recreates the person again.

I pressed him on this position by raising an ECP from the philosophical literature on personal identity.¹⁶ As I recall, the conversation went something like this.

Moreland: "How could it be the case that the recreated person is identical to and literally the same person as the one who died?"

Professor X: "I don't know. I'll just leave that to God."

Moreland: "That seems like a *deus ex machina* and, besides, there are a lot of people who have real questions about personal identity and afterlife positions, and your view is the one with the most problems."

Professor X: "Well, in my pastoral experience, questions like these are usually smokescreens for the real emotional or spiritual issues underneath the questions."

That was about it. In my view, when (especially) SS scholars do this sort of thing, or adopt an attitude of "I just stay as close to the biblical text as possible and that's all," it sounds pious, but in reality is it intellectually irresponsible. It fails to consider ECPs in assessing an exegetical position. It also is a missed opportunity to work with scholars from other fields, especially Christian philosophers, to develop a rational, deeply integrated Christian worldview.

4. *Empowering ST/SS practitioners to resist revisionism of the historic understanding of the biblical text due to "rational" pressure to engage in that revisionism.* It seems that more

¹⁵ See Larry Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 50–54.

¹⁶ For some of the relevant literature, see Peter van Inwagen, "I Look for the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come," in Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J. L. Menuge, and J. P. Moreland, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 488–500; Jonathan J. Loose, "Materialism Most Miserable: The Prospects for Dualist and Physicalist Accounts of the Resurrection," in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 470–87; William Hasker, "Materialism and the Resurrection: Are the Prospects Improving?" in *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3 (2011): 83–101; Dean W. Zimmerman, "The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival: The 'Falling Elevator' Model," *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (April 1999): 194–212.

and more theologians and biblical scholars are revising the biblical text or Christian doctrine at just the time when it becomes politically correct to do so. These revisions usually abandon what the church has taught and believed for many centuries in favor of a new view that virtually no one has held in church history but which is extremely popular among secular intellectuals and elites. In my view, examples of such revisionism are: (1) acceptance of homosexuality or gay marriage and gender identity; (2) acceptance of Neo-Marxist views of social justice, white privilege, and diversity (where one's primary identity is with one's oppressed group); (3) embracing Christian physicalism and discarding belief in the soul; (3) rejection of a literal Adam and Eve; (4) adoption of theistic evolution (which, among other things, weakens the epistemic authority of biblical and theological assertions relative to scientific ones); and (5) rejection of biblical capitalism in favor of some form of socialism.

I could go on. Instead, I'll tell a story. Over time, a very, very famous OT evangelical scholar had changed his views from a form of creationism consistent with Intelligent Design theory to the promotion of a theistic-evolutionary view of scriptural teaching. One day, he was visited by someone who is likely the top thinker in the ID movement. After a few hours of conversation, the OT scholar exclaimed, "You mean I don't have to believe in the general theory of evolution? I thought it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt. After all, it is a scientific theory. And I have tried my best to justify new interpretations of Genesis 1–3 so the Bible won't be in conflict with what we know is science. But now I see that there is a rational alternative to theistic evolution that allows me to retain what I all along believed the text actually said."

It is usually most reasonable to side with the vast majority of experts in a field if they agree over against a small minority of dissenters. If one has cancer and 95% of oncologists recommend treatment X while 5% recommend Y, all things being equal, one should go with the majority. But in the case of revisionism, including the examples listed above, it is usually most rational to go against the vast majority of experts in a field. I suggest four criteria as sufficient conditions for when it is most rational to go against the expert majority.

(1) Make sure there is not an alternative interpretation of the Bible that is interpretively reasonable and that resolves the tension.

(2) The presence of a band of highly trained, academically qualified scholars with a good track record for publishing in top journals or with highly regarded book publishers, and who are unified in rejecting the view—e.g. the blind watchmaker thesis (*the* key issue) and, perhaps, the thesis of common descent—held by the vast majority of the relevant experts. This criterion assures us that, for example, ID theory is defensible and very plausible. If you look at the resumes of the top advocates of ID, they all have one or two doctorates from well-regarded universities, and their writings are rigorous, scholarly, and very well informed. Moreover, they have made a robust intellectual case for ID.

(3) There are good historical, sociological, or theological explanations for why the expert majority holds to the problematic view—in this case, evolution—instead

of their adherence to the problematic view being largely a rational commitment based on a lot of good arguments and strong evidence.

(4) Given that fact, it is rational to reject a potential defeater of Christianity precisely because it cannot withstand being weighed against the significantly high rational support of a Christian worldview of which the defeater is an essential component. There may come a time when a historically held, traditional view of some issue in ST/SS must be revised. But this must be done with integrity and faithfulness, and, I suggest, when these criteria are satisfied.

III. CONCLUSION

The West is in the middle of a vicious worldview struggle for people's hearts and minds and the goodness of the social structures of Western civilization. At stake is not merely whether or not Christianity is true; *more basic is whether or not Christian truth claims that constitute a Christian worldview can be known to be true.* Christian philosophers have their eyes on this struggle, but we need help from our brothers and sisters in ST/SS, and the latter, in turn, need help from us.

Here are two words of advice: (1) ST/SS scholars must pay more attention to worldview issues when they do their work, especially topics in metaphysics and epistemology. (2) And ST/SS scholars need to join hands with Christian philosophers in asking for help in their work and in forming multidisciplinary teams to labor together on worldview projects, including integrative books and conferences done together. At present, North America is sloughing towards Western Europe. We are losing the battle of ideas. But if we all follow some of the suggestions in this paper, a community effort may just turn things around. And that should be something about which we can all pray.