

Encyclopaedic models in the Kuyperian tradition (part 2: from the 1970s to the present)

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Abstract:

This is the second of a series of three articles exploring in historical order several encyclopaedic models presented in the Kuyperian tradition. This article deals with the period from the 1970s to the present. The works of the followers and successors of Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven, Stoker and Van Til are examined and evaluated to identify their strong and weak points. The role of scientific and pre-scientific frameworks (e.g. philosophy, worldviews), their functions, the relationships between the sciences and so forth are explored in several different models. The purpose is to provide an evaluation, to identify strategies and patterns and possibly to draw lessons for the future. My main argument is that, during the period in question, there were several attempts at improving the Kuyperian model(s) by eliminating some "rigidities" and by better recognising the complex and multiple relationships and influences among frameworks. These attempts were not always successful. Yet in many cases they show the way towards a better encyclopaedic model. A further question is introduced: is it possible that a certain mediation-pattern in the models caused Kuyperian scholarship to focus mainly on the development of specific disciplines (regarded as crucial) while neglecting other fields?

Ensiklopediese modelle in die Kuyperiaanse tradisie (deel 2: vanaf die 1970's tot die hede)

Hierdie is die tweede in 'n reeks van drie artikels wat in historiese volgorde enkele ensiklopediese modelle in die Kuyperiaanse tradisie verken. Hierdie artikel handel oor die periode vanaf die 1970's tot die hede. Die werk van die volgelinge en nakomelinge van Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven, Stoker en Van Til word ondersoek en ge-evalueer, ten einde hul sterk en swak punte te identifiseer. Die rol van wetenskaplike en voor-wetenskaplike raamwerke (bv. filosofie, wêreldbeskouings), hul funksies, die verhoudinge tussen die vakwetenskappe, ensovoorts, in verskeie modelle word verken. Die doel is om 'n evaluering te verskaf, om strategieë en patrone te identifiseer en om moontlike lesse vir die toekoms daaruit af te lei. My hoofargument is dat daar, in die periode onder bespreking, verskeie pogings was om die Kuyperiaanse model(le) te verbeter deur sommige van die "rigiditeite" uit te skakel en om die komplekse en veelvoudige verhoudinge en invloede tussen raamwerke te herken. Hierdie pogings was nie altyd suksesvol nie. Tog kan gestel word dat die pogings in vele gevalle 'n beter weg tot 'n ensiklopediese model aantoon. 'n Verdere vraag word aan die orde gestel: Is dit moontlik dat 'n sekere mediasie-patroon in die modelle nie veroorsaak dat die Kuyperiaanse navorsing hoofsaaklik fokus op die ontwikkeling van spesifieke dissiplines (wat as deurslaggewend beskou word), terwyl ander velde van ondersoek verwaarloos word nie?

1. Introduction

This is the second of a series of three articles on the different encyclopaedic models developed in the Kuyperian tradition. In the first article of this series I have explored the contribution of four "fathers" of Neo-Calvinist philosophy (Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven, Stoker and Van Til) a contribution stretching up to the 1970s. It is now time to move to more recent periods: from the 1970s to the present. In doing so, we will not forget the previous article. We will keep observing the developments within the four schools and we will ask ourselves whether the initial models were improved, modified or perhaps rejected. We will also listen to some more "independent" voices (in particular Wolterstorff and Klapwijk).

The same problems and purposes of the previous article will apply: a) outlining the different models in the new dispensation, b) evaluating

their strong and weak points and c) learning lessons for the future. The latter aim (c) will be developed especially in the next and final article of this series (part 3). Nevertheless, in the present article we will already start drawing some conclusions from the exploration of the models.

My main argument is that during the period in question there were (together with a few dismal failures) several attempts at improving the Kuyperian encyclopaedic model(s) by eliminating some “rigidities” and by better recognising the complex and multiple relationships and influences among encyclopaedic frameworks. These attempts were not always successful. Yet in many cases they point towards the possibility of a better model in the Kuyperian tradition.

In the previous article I have pointed out especially two areas of concern: the models proposed by the “fathers” a) suffered of a certain mediation-pattern and b) did not always account sufficiently for the complex inter-relations among the frameworks. In this article a further question is posed: is it possible that patterns of mediation or “sequentiality” in the models caused Kuyperian scholarship to focus mainly on the development of certain sciences while hindering the development of others?

In the following section we will begin our analysis from the Vantilian development of the promising sketch initially supplied by Cornelius Van Til.

2. The Vantilians

In Frame’s (1987:91) opinion, Van Til’s model avoided the rigidities of the “Amsterdam philosophy” and suggested that all the disciplines should be linked to the sources of the Christian religion. In this section I will discuss especially Frame’s contribution, as he is one of the most authoritative representatives of this school and certainly the one who has dealt with encyclopaedic issues more broadly.

Unfortunately, the following generations brought the Vantilian model back to rather scholastic positions. Or perhaps one should rather say that the concerning sides of the Vantilian model (reported in part 1) simply produced their inevitable effects. Very soon theology became the centre of the system and it was virtually impossible to distinguish it from its pre-scientific background (e.g. a worldview, faith or a ground motive).

The Vantilian school adopted very soon a rather irritated attitude towards all issues regarding the demarcation between scientific and pre-scientific frameworks (see Frame & Coppes, 1972:6-19; Poythress, 1976:175-189). In the 1980s Frame (1983:312-313, footnote 24) still regarded the reformational attempt at distinguishing between scientific and non-scientific thinking as a form of dualism! It was not by chance: such distinction would have re-sized the nature and role of theology and this was precisely what Frame and others were determined to avoid.

Theology was to be regarded as “not only science”: it had to be pre-scientific, scientific, supra-scientific and “practical” at the same time. It was supposed to use, as Frame wrote:

not only the methods of science but also those of art, literature, philosophy, law and education. Indeed, since theology must be lived as well as spoken, it uses all of the methods by which human beings accomplish things in God’s world (Frame, 1987:316).

In short, theology underwent such a hypertrophy that (like the frog of Aesop’s tale) it was swollen beyond its possibilities. Theology became faith, Christianity, life itself. It became “application of the Word of God to all spheres of life” (Frame, 1987:76). On the scientific side, all theorising was equivalent to “theologizing” (p. 128). One is reminded of Van Til’s remark (1974:1) that “all the sciences are indirectly theological”.

The regress brought about by the Vantilian school was probably not just a deterioration of an initially good model. With all its good intentions, the model provided by Van Til contained in a seminal way many of the faults which emerged at a later stage. His definition of theology was fundamentally Thomistic. As soon as the sciences were related to Christianity they were considered “theological”. In the next generations all the (Christian) sciences became indirectly theological and theology was not always clearly distinguished from the (Christian) sciences (Coletto, 2009a:29-31). In addition, very soon theology was confused with all sorts of pre-scientific frameworks so that the Christian worldview, faith, religion and so on were equally classified as “theological”.

This was the strategy followed by the Vantilian school in the USA. In some European cases the process was not less devastating

(Coletto, 2009a). Perhaps there are more sensible developments in more moderate Vantilian authors that I haven't yet read. Generally speaking, however, I think in the long run the Vantilian model revealed its intrinsic weaknesses and several un-reformed traits. In its exceedingly conservative spirit it reached back to scholastic patterns of thought and it could become even reactionary in its staunch defence of the superiority of theology. Such model might simply aim, in some cases, at defending well-entrenched privileges of a theological corporation challenged by the emergence (during the 1970s and 1980s), of new and very competent leaders in the reformational community.

But perhaps, it might still be possible to return to Van Til's original intentions and re-structure the model along new lines, making sure that no skew definition, no scholastic infiltration and no corporative interests derail that plan.

Let us see what happened in the reformational school, both in its Dooyeweerdian and Vollenhovian circles.

3. The reformational school

3.1 Dooyeweerdian authors

To my knowledge, the reformational philosophers of the second generation (Popma, Van Riessen, Zuidema, Mekkes), did not design particularly new models. Van Riessen (1970:27-28) proposed two graphics which are straightforward confirmations of the reformational model. As far as the third and fourth (i.e. most recent) generations are concerned, the impression is that the classical Dooyeweerdian arrangement is not much questioned.¹

During the 1970s one can even record a certain "hardening" of the schemes in some authors who started defending a sort of priority of philosophy in a rather tense mood. This is the case, for example, with Troost who filled a whole issue of *Philosophia Reformata* (1978) with a 92 pages text (*Theologie of filosofie?*) in which he highlighted the role of philosophy in reply to an article by Douma (1976) underlining

1 Let us remind the reader that the components of the Dooyeweerdian model are: ground motive – cosmonomic idea – philosophy – special sciences (see figure 1.1 in part 1).

the role of theology. Subsequently, Vander Stelt (1980) reviewed Troost's text (by then published as a book) in a supportive way. Van der Stelt (1980:186) recognised, however, that the discussion was becoming "sensitive" and was creating a climate in which theologians and philosophers were tempted to "resort to mutual recriminations".

Vander Stelt dedicated a considerable section of his career to encyclopaedic issues. One of his contributions is a deep discussion of theology as "pisteology", namely the science studying the "pistic" or certitudinal faith-aspect of our experience and of reality. He penetrated more than others inside the intricacies of the topic and also realised that several un-discussed models are taken for granted even in Christian academic circles. According to Vander Stelt, the lack of attention for these issues can be quite dangerous as several of these models can only lead, in the long run, to the secularisation of scholarship and to the abandonment of the idea of Christian scholarship (Vander Stelt, 1989:6). Vander Stelt's work was dedicated especially to a renewed understanding of the role and nature of theology. His broader model, however, was the classical reformational one and in this circle things didn't change much in the following decades.

Stafleu (1987:242-249) and Botha (2002:214) introduced in the "classical" reformational sequence the idea of a scientific worldview (situated between philosophy and special sciences). This move was reminiscent of Kuhn's approach but unfortunately, neither Botha nor Stafleu elaborated on the idea sufficiently. Roy Clouser (1991:66) confirmed the classical reformational model and recognised that, according to this model, ground motives influence philosophy directly and the special sciences only indirectly. By "indirectly" he meant "through philosophy" but there is no evidence that he may have regarded this as a possible problem.

3.2 Danie Strauss

Due to some of his pronouncements Danie Strauss could be regarded as a victim of "philosophism" (an exaggerated view of the role of philosophy). Not long ago, for example, he wrote: "The Bible exerts its authority therefore *only through the mediation of a Christian philosophy* which ought to provide the special sciences with a Scriptural view of reality" (Strauss 2001:87; italics by R.C.). His most recent (700 pages) book has the title: *Philosophy, the discipline of the disciplines* (Strauss, 2009). In this book the im-

portance of philosophy for the special sciences is emphasized. In a previous article (Coletto, 2009b) I have pointed out a few possible risks of this strategy. Here I would like to remind one in particular.

When the mediating role of philosophy (or theology) is emphasized, often worldviews or ground motives are regarded as pre-philosophical or pre-theological (and not simply as pre-scientific). As a consequence they are perceived as a kind of “property” of a particular discipline (and of those who practice that discipline). The special sciences are then more or less “cut off” from the specific worldview or ground motive and gain access to it only via philosophy (or theology). At the same time, the influence of worldviews or ground motives on the special sciences is perceived as “philosophical” influence, as it is always/only channelled and received via philosophy. In turn, this perception strengthens the conviction that the mediator is really the key player in a model.

In this arrangement it is possible to imagine that the special sciences are “completely in the grip” (Strauss, 2002:157) of philosophy, theology or whatever other mediator is appointed. Should this be true, academics would hardly ever change the philosophy keeping them in its grip. Yet we know that it does happen. How is it possible to change one’s philosophy when one is completely directed by it? To answer this question one has to take into account the pre-scientific levels of worldview and ground motives. All scholars in the different disciplines are also “in the grip” of a certain ground motive or worldview. We should therefore at least grant that they are only relatively in the grip of philosophy, that the situation is a bit more complex and that the factors shaping scholarship are multiple.

To be fair, however, it must be said that Strauss’ contributions must be read while keeping in mind the particular South African academic context, in which a kind of positivist or pragmatist attitude is often present in many faculties, especially in some special sciences. Academics want to be “practical” and in the process it is not rare that they may declare their independence from (and proud ignorance of) philosophical issues.

The purpose of Strauss’ book, as I see it, is not to prove some sort of superiority of philosophy on the other sciences, but to restore the necessity of sound philosophical work. With this purpose I agree fully, and I see no reason to dispute the role played by philosophy in the many

contexts described by Strauss. He aims at proving that philosophy is an indispensable component of scholarship, and those who think they can do without it in most cases have already adopted a philosophy that they don't even know precisely (and is usually poor philosophy).

In addition, Strauss acknowledges the complexities of scholarship: philosophy is not the only factor influencing academic work. In fact, he is very much aware of the rich and complex interaction between scientific and pre-scientific frameworks. To mention only his last (2009) book, he describes for example the influence of ground motives on philosophy (e.g. 2009:44-45; 213), the influence of ground motives on the special sciences (e.g. p. 615, footnote 1), the influence of special sciences on other special sciences (e.g. p. 4; 231-234; 243-248;) and so forth. It is equally interesting to notice that in a recent article he (Strauss, 2010) places worldviews in the centre of scholarship and emphasises their importance.

Similar arguments are applicable to Botha's (2002) article, whose telling sub-title is "philosophy matters" and was written (if I recall correctly a confidential remark) after a tea-room conversation with a colleague who was unwilling to grant any usefulness to philosophy.

From my side, I should perhaps clarify that I don't consider the recognition of the importance of philosophy as wrong or un-necessary. I am not trying to promote a model in which all the "players" have the same tasks. Nor am I suggesting that any framework can replace any other or play whatever role without problems. But this issue will be dealt with only in the next article, in which I will sketch the characteristics of a sound encyclopaedic model. For the moment, the task is to explore a second "branch" of the reformatio school, namely the Vollenhovan school.

3.3 Vollenhovan authors

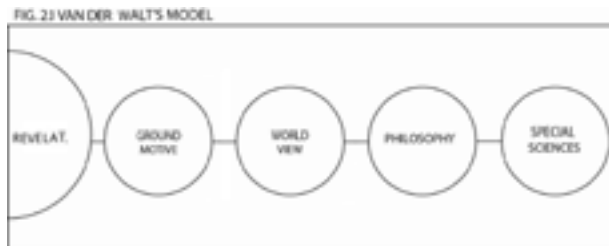
While dealing with the model proposed by Vollenhoven himself we noticed Klapwijk's (1987:107) comment that in these circles the relationship between Scripture and philosophy is more direct. The role of ground motives was not regarded as crucially indispensable. True, for Vollenhoven this concerned especially philosophy and not the special sciences, yet (in part 1) the question was asked whether this arrangement would not lead in the longer run to a more open model, one in which the different disciplines are placed, so to speak, more *Coram Biblia*?

My impression is that, unfortunately, the opportunity was more or less missed. In most cases one may even find a considerable degree of sequentiality, with philosophy playing a kind of central-mediating role in the sequence. This is the case, for example, with Spykman (1991) a reformational theologian who underlines the necessary service of philosophy for theology but never mentions a possible service of theology to philosophy ((even though he (1992) regards theology as a “servant”)).

Wolters went close, perhaps, to proposing a new model. After exploring the classical reformational theme of “structure and direction” he (1986:9) started regarding philosophy as the science focusing on structure and theology as the science focusing on direction. It was just a hint, but as we have noticed, sometimes a model is built on the definitions given to some of its frameworks.

Unfortunately the insight was not developed further and later on Wolters seemed to be comfortable with the classical reformational model. In one instance he approvingly writes: “a significant and perhaps dominant strand in the tradition represented by the Free University of Amsterdam and its younger Reformed sister institutions has always been that philosophy is a key link between faith and scholarship, like the gearbox which connects the motor of a car to its wheels” (Wolters, 1989:14-15). The metaphor emphasises the mediating role of philosophy. As all know that no engine is directly connected to the wheels, all should know that no ground motive is directly connected to the special sciences.

Back to South Africa, the well-known scheme used by Van der Walt in several publications is a sequence of circles.



(see e.g. 1994:126). Once again, one should not ignore the background. Van der Walt is probably the reformational author who succeeded best in “translating” and making accessible to a broad

public many impervious reformational ideas. His books were often planned and used for undergraduate courses, in which he usually dealt with students coming from African (i.e. “previously disadvantaged”) communities. This task required simplification and many of his texts must be read while keeping these facts in mind.

It is actually remarkable that even within these constraints he managed to show sensitivity to encyclopaedic issues. Already in 1983 he (p. 188, footnote 30) wrote the interesting remark that he had no intention of substituting theology with philosophy and of regarding the latter as the new queen of the sciences. It is also interesting to see that (in many illustrations) he used arrows to indicate that there is not only one direction from religion to science, but the opposite direction as well (see Wolterstorff below). But formally, yes, his model remained the classical reformational model with the addition of the worldview-component. At the same time he gradually described worldviews as a kind of pre-philosophical framework. In fact, they contain the same “components” (Van der Walt, 2003:128) that one finds within ontology. Worldviews become, therefore, a kind of pre-scientific philosophy. (In a recent article he (2012) asks the question whether it would not be preferable to classify worldviews according to Vollenhoven’s taxonomy of philosophical trends).

In conclusion, one could have hoped that Vollenhoven’s insight regarding a more direct relationship between Scripture and philosophy might (in the next generations) lead to a new model, a model with less mediators and more direct connections among all the frameworks. But the insight seemed to be maintained only for philosophy and not for other disciplines.

The following generations did not worry too much about placing worldviews between Scripture and philosophy. Already in the first chapter of his *The Relationship of the Bible to Learning*, Runner (1970) re-introduced in his scheme the religious ground motives. In other cases worldviews either substitute religious ground motives or are added to the sequence. Vollenhoven’s doubts concerning ground motives and Dooyeweerd’s recommendations concerning the relativising effects of worldviews were often forgotten. Ironically, the Vollenhovian school which started with less mediators in a

sense ended up with the longest sequence of frameworks in its model.

I suspect that one of the few authors (together with Greidanus, 1990:12-13) in this school who felt like attenuating the sequential model was J.J. (Ponti) Venter. In particular, the conclusion of his (1999) article on the role of philosophy is a brief “manifesto” which offers refreshing perspectives on the topic.

May one say that the representatives of the school of Stoker did a better job?

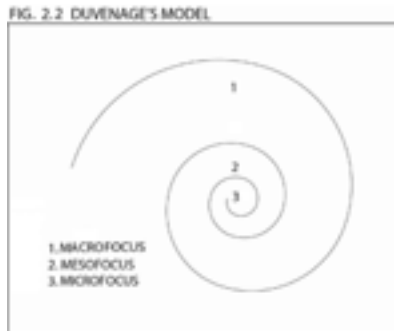
4. In the line of Stoker: Benonie Duvenage

Stoker should be given credit for starting an original branch of Kuyperian scholarship in South Africa. But admittedly, his influence remained rather limited. Most of the Neo-Calvinist philosophers and theologians in South Africa preferred to follow the reformational line of either Dooyeweerd or Vollenhoven. Very few embraced or elaborated Stoker’s philosophy in a full sense and his influence is limited to themes and aspects that can be traced in the work of some academics.

One of these academics is Duvenage, who used Stoker’s philosophy precisely to elaborate his own encyclopaedic model. In fact, Duvenage (although regarded as a theologian by some), had considerable competence in philosophy and was head of the (Potchefstroom) department of *philosophy of science* for a few years. Unfortunately he didn’t write abundantly (especially in English) on his model. Yet his (1985) essay *Christian scholarship as Word-bound scholarship* sketches an original and innovative encyclopaedic model in the Kuyperian tradition.

Although the essay is short it is penetrating, complete, clear and convincing. It interacts with a wide range of contemporary philosophers of science and it avoids some of the difficulties pointed out in Stoker’s model. Most important for our present purpose, it clearly tries to avoid the sequentiality problem and to offer a more complete account of the relationships between frameworks.

How did he achieve this result? He replaced the chain-metaphor with a spiral-metaphor, which is somehow more “dynamic”. Scholarship is like a spiral and different levels (i.e. “foci”) of reflection may be distinguished.



Duvenage (1985:34) described the content of the “foci” (or levels) in this way.

Macrofocus: Scriptural perspectives. Convictions of lifeview. Philosophical points of departure (e.g. ontology, anthropology, doctrine of society).

Mesofocus: relevant Scriptural data (e.g. stewardship). Philosophy of the particular discipline (e.g. economics). Theories about the field (e.g. behaviorism).

Microfocus: scientific knowledge of a discipline (e.g. economics). Pre-knowledge about the field investigated. Knowledge about the status of research in the relevant field.

One should notice that on each level both scientific and pre-scientific elements interact in a dynamic way. The scheme is valid for all types of scholarship (e.g. Christian, secular or whatever else). Duvenage (1985:35) also argues that a scholar is free to move from one focus to the other, thus giving the impression that all the above-mentioned frameworks, players or elements are constantly available and accessible to a scholar.

Duvenage is also careful to preserve the particular function of each “player” by placing it in a certain position and not in another. Each framework or element has a particular role, a particular nature, effects and characteristics. Yet the model remains open and dynamic. On this point one might perhaps remember that in the previous article it was pointed out that Stoker’s model was probably the less affected by mediation-problems.

In some previous writings (e.g. Coletto, 2011a:112-113;) I have asked the question whether the dynamic character of this model

could even be improved. For example, Duvenage maintains some degree of sequentiality when he says that the convictions of a life-view need to be first incorporated in philosophy (more precisely in ontology) in order to become available for further use in the special disciplines. Is it not possible that sometimes these convictions are first used and implemented on the special-scientific level and only later on justified on the philosophical level? We might even notice that a limit of the spiral metaphor is that it is still (or might be interpreted as) mono-linear. The line is bent and becomes more “flexible” but it remains a line. With these critical notes in mind, one must nevertheless appreciate Duvenage’s effort, which goes in the right direction and opens up new possibilities.

In the next sections we should look at the work of scholars who do not belong to one of the schools mentioned up to now, yet have contributed to enriching the discussion.

5. Other voices

5.1 *Nicholas Wolterstorff*

Although it might be questioned to what extent Wolterstorff belongs to the Kuyperian tradition (cf. Wolterstorff, 1989:68) he is included in this section in virtue of his long interaction with Neo-Calvinist circles. Curiously, several arguments by Wolterstorff show similarities with Stoker’s model. Wolterstorff too suffered the lack of a proper demarcation criterion (Coletto, 2011b:59-60) but wanted to make more room for the recognition of theology as a fundamental science. At a certain stage Wolterstorff (1976:104) placed both theology and philosophy “at the centre” of scholarship. More recently, however, he (2004:287) placed only theology at the centre (remember Stoker’s *primus inter pares*) without clarifying what happened to philosophy.

Wolterstorff focused especially on beliefs and their role (e.g. 1976:59-80). A few of his suggestions (addressed precisely to Kuyperian circles) are particularly interesting for the purpose of our research.

The first suggestion is directed against what he calls the “one-directional” character (Wolterstorff, 1989:72; 2004:80) of the Kuyperian model. Wolterstorff notices that such a model over-emphasises the influence of ground motives on science while the

opposite *direction* (the influence of science on philosophy and religion) is not often accounted for. (As mentioned above, Van der Walt (see e.g. 2008:66) promptly accepted the suggestion).

According to Wolterstorff such a mono-directional scheme creates (or is the result of) a problem called “expressivism”: scholarship is regarded as a mere expression of the “spirit” of a certain community. What is lost in this idealistic and romantic attitude, says Wolterstorff, is the fact that science is also the result of a thorough interaction with reality. It is reality which constitutes the common ground for different schools and approaches. And once scientific theories are elaborated, they influence not only our philosophies but also the way we look at the world, in some cases even our religious position. Is it not true that sometimes Christians have lost their faith due to the challenges of (e.g.) evolutionism or rationalism? This briefly summarises his “interactive view” of the relationship between faith and scholarship (Wolterstorff, 1989:77-78; 2004:85).

In his second suggestion, Wolterstorff proposes a more elaborate model to account for the pre-scientific basis of scholarship. There are not just beliefs: there are background beliefs, data-background beliefs, control beliefs and they have different functions (1976:59-66). To complicate the picture further: the same belief can be held as control belief or (e.g.) as background belief, depending on the role it performs in a certain context. In addition, there are many types of commitment: there is actual commitment and ideal commitment. Some control beliefs are drawn from our ideal commitment but it is not always the case. In other words, Wolterstorff pictures a complex network of interactions among multiple factors with multiple functions.

For our purpose it is not immediately important to know to what extent he is right or wrong. It is interesting to notice that in his opinion a more articulated model is needed. Mono-directionality doesn't account for the richness of real scholarship. Expressivism blinds us to the complexities and richness of scientific theorising. Wolterstorff pleads for a better recognition of what goes on in reality, including for example the fact that Christian scholarship is not always different from secular scholarship (Wolterstorff, 1989:65; 2004:72).

Of course there is much in his approach that should be taken *cum grano salis*. Accepting the hint that a more complex model is

needed doesn't necessarily mean accepting all of Wolterstorff's suggestions, for example concerning his "interactive view of science and religion" (Wolterstorff, 1989:77-78; 2004:85). One might also notice that Wolterstorff has his own "mediators". While disagreeing that worldviews or "faith" might constitute the proper "point of connection" between religion and learning, he appoints his own "control beliefs" to perform the mediating task (1989:66 ff.; 2004:73 ff.).² One may also note that he deals preferably with beliefs and principles while paying less attention to the fact that beliefs (but also theories, convictions etcetera) tend to cluster in specific frameworks. What remains valid, however, is his suggestion that to reflect real scholarship the Neo-Calvinist models should be less uni-linear, less mono-directional and more complex.

5.2 Jacob Klapwijk

Unlike Wolterstorff, Klapwijk is part and parcel of the reformational movement, although he doesn't exactly fit into one of the schools mentioned above. His specific suggestions in this field place him in a unique position, although in some instances he seems to support especially the Vollenhoviaian school, with its rehabilitation of the role of worldviews in scholarship. Some of his suggestions are important for our enquiry; I'm thinking in particular of his attempt at re-including worldviews in the process of scientific theorising.

We have learnt that the Dooyeweerdian approach is inclined to avoid the influence of worldviews on philosophising because the universal claims of scientific knowledge would otherwise be compromised. Klapwijk was very aware of these problems and risks yet he felt that worldviews do play a role in scholarship. Only when scholarship learns to deal with the typical and the local it gets in touch with the real world. A "transcendental and hermeneutic" approach is needed, in which both the universal claims of philosophy and the concrete knowledge of worldviews will be harmonised (Klapwijk, 1989:54).

Now, the strategies devised by Klapwijk to include worldviews in the process of (scientific) theorising were probably not the best pos-

² On both his "interactive view" and the link between faith and learning, see Coletto, 2009c:390-393; 404-405).

sible. In his model, he (1987:108) simply inserted a worldview as mediator between religious ground motives and philosophy thus aggravating the sequentiality problem, placing a question mark on the possibility of transcendental critique (Geertsema, 1987:160-161) and providing little guarantee to those who feared the relativist and historicist effects of his operation. A few other moves were even more disputable. After assigning a mediating task to worldviews he (1987:109) stated that ground motives are in fact worldviews (so worldviews mediate between what?).

Geertsema (1987:146) noticed that Klapwijk had instituted in his model an extremely long sequence of mediators (what I call sequentiality). In more recent writings Klapwijk has complicated the picture even more, by abandoning terms like ground motive and replacing them with “faith”, worldview and so forth. It is not much clear what the relationship with the previous discussions is. The most recent metaphor is one of concentric circles (Klapwijk, 2008:200), representing (from the core to the periphery) 1) the special sciences, 2) philosophy and 3) faith. Unfortunately this metaphor does not eliminate or even attenuate any sequentiality, mediatorship or mono-linearity: its only effect is to conceal the problems for a moment.

What I would like to point out in the present context is that, notwithstanding the difficulties, Klapwijk’s basic suggestions contain some truth. In a sense they are also in line with those of Wolterstorff, Duvénage and others. In fact, Klapwijk too suggests that the Kuyperian model should be enriched. When we look at concrete scholarship it is difficult not to perceive the influence of worldviews on theorising. Christian scholarship, for example, is not only shaped by a nature-grace ground motive, but also by specific versions (e.g. Lutheran, Liberal, Catholic) of the same motive (Coletto, 2012), which are usually regarded as worldviews (cf. Niebuhr, 1956). It might be argued that such “versions” are in fact versions of the same ground motive, but do they not then constitute a departure from the universal? Would it not be better to recognise this fact and provide a proper delimitation of the role of worldviews, instead of simply resisting or ignoring their influence? Are we sure that their influence is only negative? Does scholarship have anything to do with the particular and the local? A recent re-phrasing of these questions is provided by Glas (2011:4 ff).

With Klapwijk we have reached the end of this second article and with the above questions we are already pointing towards topics reserved for the third and final part of this series. Before concluding, however, one more question should be considered.

6. A final question

Having observed a range of models in the Kuyperian tradition, a final question should be considered. Is it possible that the persisting sequentiality in the mainline models might have caused Kuyperian scholarship to focus especially on some disciplines while “neglecting” others? The question arises from the observation that, in most models, either philosophy or theology constitutes the centre of scholarship. In the reformational models philosophy is the bridge between the pre-scientific frameworks and the special sciences. Not only: the importance of philosophy (as “gearbox” etc.) is often stressed. The phrase “reformational philosophy” is often used as a synonym of “reformational scholarship”. Can these be the symptoms of a problem?

From section 2 above it should be clear that in my opinion the possibility that insistence on a certain discipline might hinder the interest for or development of the others is quite real. In a case-study concerning a theological institute of Vantilian orientation I (Coletto, 2009a) have described in details how excessive emphasis on and expectations from theology may lead precisely to this sort of problems. How does this happen? The importance of the mediator is stressed to such an extent that almost everything in scholarship is perceived as depending on it. Van Belle (1985:21) has a very effective way of describing the phenomenon when he says that waiting for a philosophical “immaculate conception” can paralyse progress in the special sciences.

Can this constitute a risk for reformational scholarship as well? It would be simplistic to say that reformational and Kuyperian scholars just neglected the special sciences. In a recent report B.J. van der Walt (2007:226) highlights how there have been several generations of scholars dealing with biology, theology, economics, physics, law and so on. And yet, would it not be plausible to maintain that, in many cases, they were mainly busy with the *philosophy* of these disciplines? Could more have been done in this respect? Was the apparent lack of results in this area due to lack of “manpower”,

vision or what else? Whatever the answer, let us keep in mind this question too, in view of exploring (in part 3) a few guidelines towards a proposal for a new encyclopaedic model in the Kuyperian tradition.

7. Conclusion

Although there are priceless intuitions in the different encyclopaedic models examined above, the present article confirms the main problems encountered in part one: there are areas calling for improvement. We have also noticed that although these problems were not eventually solved, there were several attempts and suggestions moving precisely in this direction. Sometimes the moves were a bit awkward and the results did not create broad consensus. Yet in some cases the aspirations and intentions of the authors should be at least in part appreciated.

I believe this is the case, for example, with Stoker's and Van Til's suggestion that the possible contribution of theology towards other sciences should be acknowledged to a larger extent. Or with Wolterstorff's plead for the recognition of the complexities of scholarship and theorising. Or with Klapwijk's attempt at recognising the role of worldviews in scholarship. With Duvenage's sketch of a more dynamic model and so on. I believe that many of the "quests" emerging from the work of several authors can be accommodated in a new model. In part 3, I will try to sketch such a model on the basis of a different metaphor, and in line with the most typical traits of a biblical worldview and ground motive.

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