

“JACOB KLAPWIJK’S INVITATION: COME TO THE PARTY!”  
– INTRODUCTION BY GUEST-EDITOR

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As it turns out, the publication of this collection of essays considering Jacob Klapwijk’s 2008 work, *Purpose in the Living World? Creation and Emergent Evolution*, takes place in this 75th year of the Association for Reformational Philosophy. What is contained in this volume are the contributions by the various authors to this Jubilee celebration. As Editor, I am the “luckie felowe”<sup>1</sup> with the pleasant task of introducing this collection of articles. They have been written during 2010 in response to this important publication of an esteemed “elder” of the Association for Reformational Philosophy.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Jaap for the book that he, with Harry Cook’s assistance, has published. This is no mean feat. Secondly, let me personally thank Bert Balk and the Editorial Board of *Philosophia Reformata* for extending to me the honour of editing this volume, which I hope may be the first of other such *Philosophia Reformata* projects that emerge from the global networking among us. For me it has been an inspiring and educative experience. I would also thank Bert for his patience in extending the editorial time-line, which we have exceeded by over three weeks, and also for his and the Board’s tolerance with regard to the size that this volume has reached. This collection of essays covers a wide range, even if together they do not provide a complete evaluation of the wide-ranging scientific perspective Klapwijk presents in *Purpose*. This group of critics highlights various issues which arise from their own specialized study of the book. Our hope is that the discussion of these issues here will be taken up by many. Professor Emeritus Klapwijk has already briefly addressed some of these issues in his article and we look forward to his rejoinder in a next edition of the journal. As we have worked on our essays, our awareness of the importance of these issues has deepened. Clearly more remains to be explored in relation to Klapwijk’s provocation.<sup>2</sup> And also we hope that this special

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<sup>1</sup> This is meant in the biblical sense, as given by William Tyndale (1494-1536) in his translation of Genesis 39:2, “And the Lorde was with Joseph, and he was a luckie felowe”. This is the by-line of the chapter on “The Puritan Movement” in Tawney (1936). Klapwijk refers to Joseph’s life in his discussion of God’s control of what takes place in His creation: “Even processes that are based on chance are described in Scripture as being under God’s control.” (*Purpose* 17 fn. 14)

<sup>2</sup> There are issues of epistemology and ontology, philosophical anthropology, the relationship between the physical and the life sciences, aesthetics, and the way philosophy relates “things”, logically and theoretically, to “aspects”. Harry Cook’s article locates the book’s argument in the context of current debate. Bill Jordan, director of the Centre for Biodiscovery at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, has suggested to me that critical understanding of the philosophical issues raised by *Purpose* might be gained by a systematic comparison with Whitehead’s (1926) famous treatise.

edition of *Philosophia Reformata* encourages further philosophical reflection and research in the natural sciences.

Klapwijk's Cambridge University Press publication has a potential to revive and strengthen a discussion that was on the Association's agenda in the 1950s and 1960s. That discussion came to a focus with the publication and translation into English of *Creatie en Evolutie* (1956 and 1958, respectively) by Jan Lever of the Zoology Department of the Vrije Universiteit. Late last year Lever died, and in compiling this edition, I have become aware that, in responding to Jaap Klapwijk's book, this collection is also paying tribute to Lever's work. We hope therefore that this volume is a worthy recognition of his scientific work as well.

After the publication of Lever's book, the discussion of evolution and the natural sciences was further stimulated in 1959 by Herman Dooyeweerd's extensive review in this journal.<sup>3</sup> Since then there have been loyal efforts by professional *students* of reformational philosophy to keep the envisaged debate alive,<sup>4</sup> even if there remains understandable frustration that this debate, for whatever reasons, has remained seriously under-developed. This initial anticipated discussion was fired by a vision of a major redefinition of natural scientific scholarship and its encyclopedic impact, which Lever himself acknowledged.<sup>5</sup> But the significant disciplinary integration that he thought could be facilitated by the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea has not come about and it remains doubtful whether the extensive discussion that Dooyeweerd tried to inspire by his review of his work has ever taken place. This must prompt us to serious, careful and critical reflection. Maybe *Purpose*, written by a reflective-empirical reformational philosopher, will succeed in putting life back into reformational discussion about the scientific analysis of life, and thereby help generate new theoretical insights and interest for a new generation of Christian scholars and scientists. These "author meets critics" essays are sent forth as a supplement to Klapwijk's stimulus, with a new generation of *students*<sup>6</sup> of reformational philosophy in mind.

Evidently, the author of *Purpose* wrote his book so that it could be read and appreciated by a diverse readership, even as it makes its own signal contribution to reformational philosophy. Later in my own contribution to this volume, I will try to add a brief "sociology of science" comment on his attempt to capture a

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<sup>3</sup> In my own article, and elsewhere, pagination for the Dutch language review is followed by K, which refers to Dooyeweerd (1966), the authorised English-language translation by Adrian Kooymans of "Schepping en Evolutie", produced in Australia 1966, and later circulated in mimeographed form.

<sup>4</sup> For perhaps the earliest such attempt, see Hart (1964). See also the 'Creation and Evolution Bibliography: Selected Reformational Contributions (1899-2011)' which is included in this issue.

<sup>5</sup> See discussion of "The Modern Phase" in Chapter 4 "The Concept of Species and the Problem of Origin" in CE 125-137.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term here in its most general sense. I had considered using the term "aanhangers" (adherents) which Dooyeweerd uses in his 1973 IKOR television interview. That word may for some readers evoke the English-slang "hangers-on", so "students" is used to remind us of the various ways *Purpose* will be appropriated by "aanhangers" in different disciplines and intellectual and cultural contexts. To work together as students, "aanhangers" will need opened-up insight into how we view each other and, to slightly modify the words of Robbie Burns, "to see ourselves as other students just like ourselves tend to view us."

diverse readership. In that sense the contributions collected here are also a sample of the diversity of response that can be expected from among *Purpose's* readers.<sup>7</sup> Chapter 12 of *Purpose*, “The slumbering temptations of essentialism”, is Klapwijk’s critical contribution to “Dooyeweerd studies” and it is a most important part of the book’s philosophical provocation. It will certainly be that for many readers of this journal. Of course, it is a matter of judgment whether this chapter contains the book’s most important contribution, but Klapwijk’s comments there have to be of interest to those seeking to develop reformational philosophy. *Purpose's* contribution to “Dooyeweerd studies” is something we, as a team of writers, have had to consider, if only for some of us indirectly, as we each composed our several responses.

But when we examine the contents of this book, in terms of the ongoing disclosure of this same philosophical perspective, not only outside the Netherlands, where many of the “students” of this philosophy now reside, but also within the fabric of scientific research and university education in its author’s geo-political locality, we can not only sense something of this movement’s vigour but also something of its inherent and inherited fragility. This is not a large movement even if it does have some big ideas.

It is worth noting explicitly that Klapwijk has aimed to do much more than use the creation-evolution debate as a convenient foil in order to give an updated reiteration of his own view of the philosophical style and demeanour that should characterize reformational scholarship. But he has given a further explication of his method, providing a thoroughly detailed example of how he proposes to deal with vital issues — philosophical, scientific and *weltanschauliche* — that continue to be raised in the public debate over evolution and creation that now takes on global, and not just Western, proportions.<sup>8</sup> And so, this book documents decisive steps which he, *qua student*, has taken to cross a boundary into the special scientific arena of evolutionary biology, in order to test the usefulness of his reflective-empirical and transformational philosophical method. *Purpose* is Klapwijk’s invitation to scholars and scientists near and far, to all who may wish to engage him in the critical testing of his views.

And so, this symposium has been convened to give the author of *Purpose* critical “feedback”. In these articles we try to rise to a challenge that specifically calls for philosophical discussion among scientific specialists, particularly, though not exclusively, in the “natural sciences”. This group of critics have set out their critical observations and questions. They answer Klapwijk’s invitation by “coming to the party”. Their distilled professional and scientific responses to the book’s arguments touch upon their own specialities, and upon the philosophical foundations upon which they do their work. Like the book they assess, their critical comments are styled as part of ongoing discussion, concerned to contribute to a Christian scientific understanding of the evolutionary debate for their own scientific fields. And the author’s own reflections on his book’s

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<sup>7</sup> Reviews of *Purpose* can be found in a variety of places. See the bibliography in this issue. For two recent commentaries on the “purpose of *Purpose*” see the two 2010 items in the list of Klapwijk’s publications.

<sup>8</sup> For Klapwijk’s comments on Islamic creationism, see *Purpose* 10.

reception have not stood still. We begin with Klapwijk's reflective re-articulation of the view developed in *Purpose*, stimulated by various scholarly reviews and with fresh reflection on the issues. We also hope that his elaborated response to these essays will appear in a next volume of this journal. All articles confirm that further ongoing discussion is needed.

The areas of scientific expertise of the writers are diverse even if our writers do not stick rigidly to their own disciplinary areas. These include statistics and genomics (Russ Wolfinger), physical chemistry — liquid and gas interfaces at high pressure (John Satherley), history of biology and zoology (Harry Cook), Harry Diemer, miracles, Augustine and patristics (Chris Gousmett), and structural-functionalism in 20th century sociology (Bruce Wearne). Henk Geertsema (Emergent evolution) and Gerben Groenewoud (Augustine and Emergent Evolution), like Klapwijk himself, are well known to readers of *Philosophia Reformata*. They are two philosophical specialists in the thought of Dooyeweerd, 20th century philosophy and various facets of the ancient and modern history of philosophy. And so, in overview, the panel includes scholars and scientists who, with varying exposure to reformational philosophy, are *students* of this philosophy. May the publication of this symposium encourage further insightful exchange between Christians with other philosophical orientations and with non-Christian scholars and scientists as well. We very much want to bring younger reformational scholars from around the world into the discussion and debate, whatever their levels of philosophical expertise and scholarly acumen.

This is not the first time an edition of *Philosophia Reformata* has been set aside to consider Klapwijk's provocative contribution. Here, as we focus upon his 2008 study, themes and arguments emerge that are linked in a line of direct descent to a previous critical review. The journal's 1987 edition examined Klapwijk's lecture 'Reformational Philosophy on the Boundary Between the Past and the Future', delivered at the 50th anniversary conference of the Association at Zeist in August of that year. And so, in line with the dialogical and hermeneutical character of Klapwijk's contribution, this collection includes two of those 1987 critics, Geertsema and Groenewoud, who continue their critical engagement with their colleague's "transformational philosophy";<sup>9</sup> here with further results of *their* professional reflections, they consider the philosophical reflections of their *emeritus* colleague.

So, does not *Purpose* stand as a primary exhibit of the "transformational philosophy" Klapwijk enunciated in that 1987 lecture? This indeed seems to be so, particularly since in this significant discussion of evolutionary biology he introduces an "Augustinian" concept of time as creature (*Purpose* 32-36). In that regard, the contributions of Groenewoud and Gousmett, in particular, will be read with great interest.

But another vital facet of the character of this analysis can be noted from the evident fact that this book, for the author, has itself been emerging for some time. And that emergence, in terms of his own project, also reflects his

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<sup>9</sup> Geertsema (1987) and Groenewoud (1987). The other two critics from that edition of *Philosophia Reformata* were Bos (1987) and van der Hoeven (1987).

awareness of the need to revive the discussion, previously noted, that was developing among reformational scientists and philosophers back in the 1950s. Klapwijk's discussion of Darwin's theories and Darwinism shows that, as a student of reformational philosophy, he has also learned the value of philosophical *patience*, and been willing to listen carefully to the many-sided and often contentious re-evaluations of evolutionary biology that have been put forward (if not recapitulated), again and again to build on earlier discussions.

Therefore for these commentators on *Purpose*, what is in prospect is no mere recapitulation of critical reformational perspectives developed fifty years ago, even if *Purpose* aims to revive a debate that, at that time already, stood in need of further elaboration. So, it may help clarify the "purpose of *Purpose*" if we view it as, in some ways, a continuation of discussions that were present, in fits and starts, in the 1950s and 1960s editions of *Philosophia Reformata*. That will be noted in my "sociology of science" contribution below which identifies some important aspects of the context in which reformational philosophy's consideration of the natural sciences has been formed.

Evidently, our writer's philosophical patience has been stimulated by the scientific persistence of workers in the fields of evolutionary biology in their career-long efforts, whatever their particular theoretical views, to make and discern genuine scientific progress. We note Klapwijk's recognition of the assistance of Harry Cook, and we can guess from these comments (see *Purpose* ix) that he, as a professional scientist, has contributed significantly to the philosopher's appreciation for scientific fieldwork and its necessity for evolutionary biology. Cook's overview is also "contextual" in the sense that he locates the approach outlined in *Purpose* within the field of evolutionary biology and its ongoing debates.

*Purpose* also shows a pathway along which a *philosophical* scholar can begin to engage in the exacting task of interpreting, and learning from, *scientific* work that, according to the scientist's own account, stands in diametrical opposition to the scholar's own scholarly and scientific purposes. Actually, the book is not set forth as some kind of definitive statement about evolutionary biology and its major theories, and of the way Intelligent Design advocates make their particular critiques of naturalistic Darwinism. That is not its aim, even if Klapwijk, as with his commentators and any other responsible scholar, are exercised with finding their own places to stand "in the seemingly endless stream of books that deal with the so-called creation-evolution debate." (Jelsma 2010) Instead, Klapwijk sets forth his discussion as his own attempt to give a coherent theoretical overview. His aim is to assist those who hear, or read, about this viewpoint, to then come to their own understanding of what is at stake. In like manner, two professional scientists, Wolfinger (Whence the question mark?) and Satherley (Emergence in the inorganic world), make their responses as they view *Purpose* from their own fields.

*Purpose's* aim is to give a competent account of a range of issues central to evolutionary theory, prising open important philosophical issues that are too often left un-discussed, un-criticised and dogmatically closed. As a detailed analysis of evolutionary theory, the critical re-contextualisation of its salient

empirical contributions, has also to reckon with the ongoing genesis of these scientific insights from within evolutionary thinking.

Let me reiterate something which has “emerged” for me as I have read and re-read *Purpose*. Philosophical reflection stands in need of patience, which Scripture tells us is one of the priceless gifts of the Holy Spirit. Dooyeweerd’s prefatory warning to those predisposed to “impatiently dipping into” his philosophy begins:

This philosophy, to be sure, is difficult and complicated, just because it breaks with much traditional philosophical views. (*NCI*, viii-ix)

What Dooyeweerd writes here is not only applicable to individual scholars “burning the midnight oil” in the splendid isolation of their own library carrels. It has an immediate relevance for teams and associations of scientific workers joined together in a common daily task, just as we are joined in this Association, and come together from time to time to further our work. The persistent suspicion that has arisen in my reading of *Purpose*, and related literature, is that this book signals a philosophical willingness to take up the challenge of scientifically demonstrating an advanced level of scholarly patience. Indeed, we are challenged by the author to confirm our commitment to a *modus operandi* of scholarly “chivalry” which, in intellectual combat, may even be the necessary precursor to clearing the way, as it were miraculously, for fresh, deepened and new theoretical insights. By refusing to rush to judgment, and instead return once more to consider the complex scientific data upon which hypotheses are framed and tested, we participate within the temporal disclosure of creation with refreshed insight, and this disclosure will continue to be manifest until all is accomplished and the Kingdom of Shalom, God’s eternal sabbath, has come in its fulness.

In this Association, we are joined in a confession that such scientific patience is not generated from mere abstractions, but can only come from a heart united in godly fear (Psalm 86:11), held by the grace that decisively and irresistibly prompts an ongoing scientific wonder at the glory of the Lord, that will be displayed in all the nooks and crannies of creation. And so, we might also judge that Klapwijk has taken to heart the scholarly principles implicit in the *New Critique’s* Foreword where Dooyeweerd explained his anticipation of the patience needed to appropriate his own “difficult and complicated” philosophy. And so, Klapwijk’s *Purpose*, “in Dooyeweerd’s lijn”,<sup>10</sup> shows us something about the way the genuinely scientific results of Darwin and those following in his footsteps are appropriated when by patience we try

... to follow step by step [the] turns of thought, and thereby penetrating behind the theoretical structure to the religious basic attitude of this whole mode of theorising. (*NCI* ix)

Indeed, why should the task of critically immersing oneself in evolutionary thought and thinking it through, step by step, not be received as a divinely

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<sup>10</sup> This is an allusion to Veenhof’s (1939) response to the criticism of reformational philosophy as an threatening deformation.

mandated creaturely task with its own integrity *coram Deo*? In terms that are relevant to the discussion of Klapwijk's critique of Dooyeweerd's concepts of types and laws, we might even suggest that such much-needed hermeneutic activity has its own peculiar integrity within scientific and philosophical reflection. As a particular kind of philosophical reflection it can only truly do its task as it keeps within its own limits, which are not of its own making but which require the thinker's reflective-critical engagement. Despite all the secularised superficiality that derives, as Roy Clouser (1991/2005) has pointed out, from a willingness to be led in theorising by the myth of religious neutrality, a scholar's calling is indeed to become immersed in theories, arguments and contexts, but not in order to pay homage to theories as if they provide life with a point of departure. That would be to allow one's path, if not oneself, to be overtaken and colonized by mere abstractions, as Zuidema (1961, 125) warned:

This is a very antinomical misconception but one for which we must constantly be on our guard because it is characteristic of a temptation which has undermined and threatened Christendom for centuries. Is this not one of the many ways whereby man, or in this case the Christian, seeks his security and point of departure in "the work of his hands" — as has been the case for centuries in Christian theology, and no less in the depending on a "strong" personal faith, and experience of faith, and works of faith.<sup>11</sup>

So one evident purpose of *Purpose* emerges in its demonstration of the author's "dialogical and hermeneutical" patience, an openness, as it were, to the immediate future of his own studies, seeking to have his reflective-critical overview tested for its value in scientific research. In that sense it is programmatic and perspectival. It calls loudly for scientific colleagues to "come to the party" and, if necessary, to set forth their trenchant criticism about the menu *Purpose* offers. Students and scientists, taxonomists and field workers as much as theorists, philosophers of science and "well informed citizens" are addressed here. It is offered as a philosopher's contribution to their reflections about their work and indeed may cause them to probe deeply and even to think in a new way about their "life". It is a work that assumes that the power and impact of evolutionary thinking is something that scientists just have to think about. Without in the least adopting a fatalistic view of the history of science, Klapwijk simply proceeds on the assumption that these days this is a necessary part of being a well-informed scientist, let alone philosopher or citizen. In my specialist contribution to this collection I will try to develop some further thoughts along this line.

*Purpose* provides readers of whatever philosophical orientation with a powerful demonstration of the author's wide-ranging attempt to critically and fairly weigh arguments from whatever source they arise. In that respect, this book is a cogent demonstration of the intellectual benefits of engaging in a critique of the dogma of the autonomy of science, while also being a cogent

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<sup>11</sup> This is Zuidema's 20th century version of Calvin's view: "Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts." (*Institutes* II.II.15)

demonstration that the dogma of science's autonomy is not overcome by merely announcing that science is not autonomous. The challenge for those engaged in scientific work, particularly when they have been self-critically unhinged from reliance upon this seemingly long-established dogma, is to then demonstrate the scientific value of this critical reflective-empirical alternative, not just to themselves, but "in the field", in on-going scientific and philosophical discourse with scientific neighbours.

These days, it seems, the impact of such a dogma may actually be buried even deeper when a contra-dogmatic decree is imported into theoretical discussion under an abstract banner of "scientific politeness", if not "political correctness". If one is not able to concede the "story-telling aspects" that adhere to one's own scientific argument, then one is exposed to the charge of being a fundamentalist (Gould 1997), even as one loudly protests that one can't be a fundamentalist because one is an atheist!<sup>12</sup> But the development of critical scientific thinking, enlivened by a philosophical awareness of the fragility of theorising, is not something that simply emerges as if by magic, when one decides to engage in scientific work, let alone embark upon a scientific career professing oneself to be an advocate of a Christian approach. Theoretical insight and the critical understanding of theories can not emerge without patience, and that might just mean work that stretches from one generation to the next (and to the next) before the much needed public discussion about scientific results can make positive use of issues that have had to lie dormant until then. Greater freshness and clarity in scientific discourse is not created spontaneously by scientists deciding to make a breakthrough.<sup>13</sup> There are structural and institutional contexts to consider here.

But now we reach a truly difficult point: the kind of scientific patience that Klapwijk's work implies and calls for, would seem, these days, to lie on a path that is directly opposed to the culture of academic managerial impatience that characterizes the way universities and colleges are organised around the world. It is noteworthy that one of our contributors, John Satherley of the Department of Chemistry, University of Liverpool, is in fulltime academic work and I want to explicitly draw attention to his very welcome contribution that has had to be squeezed in among many other pressing work demands. His essay, along with those of Wolfinger and Gousmett, who are both also in full-time work, indicate that despite significant work pressures it is possible to produce valuable scientific insights. But given what I have alluded to about market-driven academic life, we should be very thankful to receive such work that clearly goes against the trend. The other four contributors, including this one are, in fact, in various stages of "retirement". It is not really a side issue because

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<sup>12</sup> Scientific dogmatism is regularly challenged in media interviews with "public intellectuals". See discussions between Attenborough and others (2010).

<sup>13</sup> Seerveld (1999, xvi), (2001, 39), in contradistinction to that approach, sees in the term "reformational" a possibility that it might come to mean "freshly-reformed". Klapwijk's colleague in aesthetics discusses how to keep thinking about the bible fresh from ideological staleness. "Fresh" may have a wider application, in its fitting and philosophical resemblance to Klapwijk's philosophical hunch about how we are to think about "new" structuring emergences of the living world.



reformational scholarship has always needed deeper historical understanding into how scientific research has been structured to accommodate an underlying spiritual drive that gives birth to impatience.

But having said that, I will desist from trying the patience of readers any further. We hope the publication of this exchange will not only help keep the issues alive but assist those working in and with reformational philosophy, whatever the discipline, as insightful encouragement to engage further with scientific research, particularly in the bio-sciences. Let us then work with a firm hope in Christ Jesus that something firm and constant for successive generations of scientists, Christian scientists among them, can be achieved in and from the work of our hands.

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