

WHOLESOME AND DYNAMIC SENSE MAKING APPROACHES IN THE TRANSFER OF DOCTRINES AND THEORIES OF FAITH

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Abstract

Firstly, the idea of sense making views, approaches, orientations or patterns which operate and function in our present and past experiences, is discussed. Sense making approaches operate and function in everyday unaware as well as theoretical aware ways in our lives with totalising complexity and unifying simplicity, computational fluctuation and regularising constancy. They permeate, carry and guide hardened and age-old doctrines, theories, religions, clichés, buzzwords, constructs, banalities, stereotypes, ideologies, truisms, commandments and mottos in every nook and cranny of life. Secondly a sense making view, approach, orientation or pattern is presented here as nothing else than what is usually called one's wisdom or common sense pattern, one's religion or ideology, one's belief or value system, one's symbol spectrum or God, life and world view. Thirdly, extended and differentiated versions of the Ubuntu motto and the central Biblical commandment of love are considered as wholesome and dynamic sense making God-life-and-world views.

1 INTRODUCTION

People's everyday lives and experience as well as their theoretical and scientific deliberations and reflections are encapsulated and permeated by their sense making views (or approaches, orientations, patterns, networks, interests, systems, sets or spectrums). People in most situations do not know why an experience or event makes sense to them or does not make sense to them. Scientists are supposed to be more conscious of their basic sense making approaches and the patterns of sense making pointers with which they analyse and synthesise texts, theories, natural processes and human doings as making sense wholly, partly, or not at all. People's sense making views, approaches and orientations function sometimes as an intricately and seamlessly interwoven totality of regularities, and at other times with computational and computer-like fluctuations and randomness in everyday experience.

Sense making patterns, systems and views embrace in their complexity, and sometimes in their simplicity, all of people's experience, mainly as everyday opinions and views which are not too much reflexively stirred and treated in scientific and theoretical cauldrons and aroused and awakened in forums of debate and discussion. While these dynamic, shifting, moving and changing patterns, systems and views play an overarching and pervasive role in

people's everyday existence, including their scientific endeavours, many people are unaware of the outlines and profiles of these patterns. Their sense making views remain 'undercover' and unspoken in large parts of their daily experience. Only when they ask themselves or are asked by others why and how a specific and particular instance or event, usually in a crisis or survival situation makes sense, their senses as sense making receptors and feeders of their fields and modes of experience are enacted as sense making reflective devices which deliver the sensibility or non-sensibility of the instance or event. It is usually not meaningful to ask a person on the spot to give a description and explanation of his or her sense making orientation, confessional framework, pattern of religion or God-life-and-world view. Apart from the fact that such a question is very abstract and mostly not to the point, people usually do not reflect on their own views, approaches, orientations or patterns about the coterminous connection and otherness of God with their human selves as well as the connection and otherness of their selves with other human beings and the physical-organic world environment in which they are enveloped like animals living in air or water. The mysterious coterminous connection and otherness of the threesome of God, humanity and the physical-organic world environment is apparently in people's day to day experience insubstantial and taken for granted but is a vital element in the whole scheme of things.

2 THE TRANSFER OF SENSE MAKING VIEWS AND APPROACHES FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

Most of us go through life without being aware that through our upbringing, education and training from birth we acquire, take over and accept and rely on some of the following as true sense making packets of codes and modes and pockets of rules and norms for this life and the afterlife:

- Δ faith experience, church doctrines and traditions;
- Δ social customs and conventions;
- Δ political and economic policies and mission statements;
- Δ the Bible or any other book as a divine or human book;
- Δ insights of the founder of a movement or church as the true way of life;
- Δ ancestral and traditional customs;
- Δ acquired habits and behaviour patterns;
- Δ scientific and philosophical dogmas;
- Δ views such as: a divine Jesus should be nestled in a person's ego-centre as the driving force of all his/her actions and doings in this life and the afterlife; or that a person should be baptised with the Holy Spirit to live a meaningful present life and afterlife; or that some people are elected by God for this life and afterlife while others are rejected;
- Δ popular self-help books on numerous ways to live a meaningful and sensible life;
- Δ African, Eastern and Western God-life-and-world views, philosophies and religions.

There is very little wrong with the acquisition, taking over and acceptance of views, orientations and pockets of sense making principles and norms from any source or quarter, provided that we ask questions such as the following: Does something really make sense to me? Can I truly live sensibly according to the insights of the founder of the movement or church to which I belong? Do parts or sections of the doctrines and traditions, social customs and conventions, political and economic policies I am supposed to obey and uphold, really make sense to me? How should the Bible play a sensible role in my life? We can add similar questions about how things, events and human doings make sense to us. However, I do not maintain that we should be critical about how things, events and human doings make sense to us before the nuts and bolts of something, some event or human doing, fall into place. We should at least occasionally negotiate in an interchanging and exchanging way with ourselves and with other people in a conscious way about how things, events and human doings really make sense to us. They cannot speak to us through the senses of our fathers and mothers, peers and colleagues, ancestors, leaders, consultants, ministers, priests and pastors, role models and lecturers. We can share our sense making experiences with them after considering carefully whether and to what extent, if any, our experiences overlap and coincide with theirs. We have to make sure periodically that our complicated sense making guidance system is functioning and not only leading us from day to day where we want to go and do not want to go, but is also helping us to make sense of the tiniest of our daily experiences. It is a hundred times better to be awake and aware of the sense making qualities of as many pockets of our existence as possible than to have these foisted on us by external factors and thus effectively being taken in tow in a direction that does not really makes sense to us.

In a way we have arrived at the most critical point of sense making views in general. If it is expected of us to negotiate with ourselves and to reflect periodically on the quality and the sense making integrity of the big processes to which we belong and are involved in such as marriages and love relationships, churches and confessional communities, doctrines and customs, professions, jobs and labour unions (including the unemployed statuses of some of us), dietary and fashion styles, sports, sport bodies and clubs, countries, cultural groupings and tribes, and governments and countries, as well as to negotiate and reflect on our sense making of the seemingly insubstantial daily actions, events and even preferences for a certain type of car, toothpaste, Bible, hair colour, mobile phone, radio station, politician and beer, the reaction of some of us could understandably be that of exasperation, despair or irritation about never-ending series of reflection and negotiation about the so-called deeper things in life. The retort is sometimes: "I am not a philosopher, a theologian or theoretically minded. I am a practical person and I only want to enjoy life and experience as much well being as possible." Lo and behold, one of our generation's strongest sense making approaches is captured in such a statement. One cannot spew out statements and entrench one's opinionated positions about the enjoyment of life and the well being of one's experience without a few pauses to reflect on which of these makes really sense and which is plain nonsensical.

Similarly, we as modern scientists are not aware of much of the nuts and bolts of our theoretical, scientific and philosophical sense making views, orientations and patterns. Furthermore, many of us are not aware of the usefulness, or otherwise, of the theoretical, scientific and philosophical tools and skills that we have acquired by choice or by default, or how we should make use of them meaningfully in daily life. These theoretical and academic tools and skills are hidden levers, sticks of power and measuring scales embedded in people's sense making views and approaches. And in the theoretical and practical everyday worlds these tools and skills are given the high status of measuring instruments or measure-metrics through which one has to decide whether a position taken in academic or practical everyday life is valid or not.

3 DIFFERENTIAL AND INTEGRAL REFLECTIVE AND REFLEXIVE EXPERIENTIAL PROCESSES

Where considerable reflection has taken place a person is halfway into the area of aware and scientific reflexive patterning and theory formation. Sense making views, et cetera - or whatever one calls a sense making view - are mainly pre-theoretical *unaware reflective experiential processes* which are not always conscious reflection, while scientific and philosophical theory-making and patterning are *aware reflexive and theoretical experiential* processes. There is no real difference in meaning between the terms reflection-reflective and reflexion-reflexive, as there is no real difference between pre-theoretical everyday experience and the theoretical - for some people another type of everyday experience. With the term reflexion-reflexive I follow a tradition which draws from the Germanic-Dutch conceptual and lingual toolbox which distinguishes whether we are busy with:

- √ *reflective* everyday mainly unaware processes and patterns of sense making views (or Glw view). These processes are mainly unaware and non-conscious processes with various scattered aware and conscious insertions and injections from philosophies, sciences and technology that are part of our everyday life experience, and

- √ *reflexive*, that is, aware and conscious theoretical processes and patterns of philosophies, sciences and technology. These processes, which are also experiential in nature (=human beings are doing and performing philosophies and sciences) are mainly aware and conscious processes with scattered unaware and aware insertions and injections from everyday sense making views (or Glw view).

The everyday reflective and theoretical reflexive patterns of experience of the threesome of God, being human and the physical-organic world could (should?) be the basic pointer pattern of any field, capacity, mode or dimension of human experience. Faith and the belief towards God, faith and belief towards oneself as self-confidence, faith and belief towards the neighbours (=human, animals, plants and things in the micro and macro spheres and universes) form the basic pattern of pointers when the leading emphasis in one's doings and actions is 'faith is faith is faith reflective and

reflexive experience'. The basic pattern of the threesome of pointers could (should?) also be operational when the leading emphasis is 'love is love is love reflective and reflexive experience' or 'thinking is thinking is thinking reflective and reflexive experience', or 'feeling is feeling is feeling reflective and reflexive experience'.

People believe, love, proportion, imagine, economise, inform, empower, socialise, produce, verbalise, think, feel, evolve, physicalise, chemicalise, move, coordinate, train, exercise and entitise = all these directed towards God as the 'beyond' neighbour in the 'midst' of their experience (Bonhoeffer), directed towards themselves as their own neighbours, directed towards each other as neighbours and directed towards their animal, plant and soil neighbours, and thus the multiversity of all neighbours on earth and the myriad of galaxies as neighbours.

God through God's Spirit is directly interlocked with the physical-organic environment and the human self through the human senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, etc and is present for example in the experience of feeling and emotions through the senses in a feeling way. Similar processes happen with regard to believing, thinking, speaking, socialising, loving, imagining, et cetera. These fields are not theologically pre-programmed to experience God indirectly through supernatural faith and religious belief as is the assumption of many theological traditions and churches.

4 SENSE MAKING GOD-LIFE-AND-WORLD VIEWS, APPROACHES, ORIENTATIONS, PATTERNS, NETWORKS, INTERESTS, SYSTEMS, SETS AND SPECTRUMS

People do reflect, however, on specific activities and things in their lives. On occasion they have strong views and opinions about some activities and things in which they are involved and engaged from the most complicated to the most simple. These activities and things range from how they experience God, themselves and their fellow human beings and the physical-organic environment to how they brush their teeth, what tastes in food and fashion they enjoy or even whether they believe that modern culture of heated plant oils in our daily diet triggers cancer and cardio-vascular diseases.

The phrase I deliberately present in this essay is that of a *sense making God-life-and-world view* (or *approach, orientation, pattern, network, interest, system, set, spectrum*) or in short a *sense making view* (or *approach, orientation, pattern, network, interest, system, set, spectrum*). A sense making view (or approach, etc) goes under many names and is open to many terminological shifts and turns such as that of *religion* or *religious faith* in church-centred Christianity, theocratic Islam and Judaism; an *ideology* or *idea-system* in sense making traditions with a positive user's value for the term ideology; *meaning-system, symbol-spectrum* or *sign-system* emerging

from a 20th century total emphasis on language, symbols and signs as the be-all and end-all of everything that makes sense to human beings; *belief* or *value system* in liberal or secular Christianity and civil society; *wisdom pattern*, *practical philosophy* or *sagacity* amongst certain philosophers in Africa; a *God-view* as a one-sided (revealed or natural) theological sense making provider, or *(human) life-view* as a one-sided anthropocentric and anthropological sense making provider, or *world-view* as a one-sided natural, cosmological, environmental and societal sense making provider. While the phrases *common sense* and *collective spirit*, *consciousness* or *mindset* came to signify in the history of philosophy that which is sensible to all people with no provision made for the sense making experience of an individual human person which differs from that of the collective consciousness or spirit of the human species, the usage of the term *mindset* on the other hand as used by many has a ring of individuality to it which makes the term useful in the description of a specific and particular sense making mindset, view or approach. But by taking the term *mindset* into the murky waters of a collective mindset like a dialectically compressed and expanding Hegelian *world spirit* or Jungian *collective consciousness* is surely going a bit too far.

Different people's sense making views, approaches and orientations overlap from slightly to greatly. However, there is always something irreplaceably singular to a specific and particular human being's sense making God-life-and-world view. A person's sense making orientation is, fortunately, one of the few human attributes that cannot be cloned in another person.

The basic reason for my choice is not that various designations and notions vying for a place in the sense making sun, such as religion or ideology, value or belief system, common sense or mindset, meaning or symbol spectrum or God-view or (human) life-view or (scientific) world-view taken separately, are not full-blown sense making views, approaches and orientations, but that they are riddled with various one-sided reductionistic characteristics that make them either too dualistic or too holistic, too imperialistic or too individualistic to my sense making taste.

Firstly, the conventional dualistic usage of these designations does not in any real sense take account of the overlapping *interconnectedness* and differentiated *otherness* of God, humanity and the physical-organic micro- and macro- *universes* either in people's everyday practical sense making, or in scientific sense making experiences. The notions of *religion* with all its derivatives of religious experience, religiology, religious studies, etc and *theology* with all its derivatives cannot escape their sense making enthrallment to mainly pointing to God or something divine, in which case the sense making pointers of being human, as well as the physical-organic natural environment, are of necessity left out of the equation with the result that in a highly problematic sense one usually has to start with God or something divine in any endeavour or project. Similarly, where the notions of a *human life view* and a *world* or *scientific world view* are approached in isolation from each other and from God, they are carried by reductionistic captivations similar to the theologistic mindset discussed below.

Secondly, the conventional dualistic or holistic usage of these designations excel in deficient and inadequate weights allotted to both an individual human being's sense making experience (=the particular) and the sense making experience (=the common/general) of the various groups to which he or she belongs. The fault line in most dualisms is that one of the two opposite entities is viewed as of greater sense making importance than the other, and in holisms the materially viewed closed definition of the whole - the wholeness of the whole - is coincidentally repeated in every minute part of the whole.

Thirdly, the conventional dualistic usage of these designations cannot get the weights of the sliding scale in check regarding the relationship of an individual person's contextual sense making experience and the global and universal sense making experiential contexts. It cannot even present us with an appropriate set of weights for both an individual contextual experience and the contextual experience of global societies. The expressions *common sense* and *human rights*, with all the attendant civil niceties, have the inbuilt flaw of emphasising humanity's universal 'global sense making experience', firstly with scant regard for the societal context from which these notions emerged, and secondly with no regard for the experiences of the contextual settings where *common sense* and *human rights* approaches are supposed to be applied.

To be brief, a *sense making God-life-and-world view, approach, orientation, etc.* or a *sense making view, etc.* are but different phrases for the same complex pattern of sense making pointers and guidelines of meaning and values which are compressed and expressed in the *theanthropocosmic principle* as the primary motivational and activating principle in my practical daily considerations and behaviour, as well as in my scientific, theoretical and philosophically reflexive endeavours.

5 INTERCHANGE, EXCHANGE AND FUSING OF TEXTS, THEORIES, SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHIES

Various African experiences of texts, theories, philosophies from African societies and communities were not taken seriously enough in the past, and this attitude is still continuing in many circles today. According to an old condescending view which still persists in many people's minds, African experiences are only authoritative and valid when these experiences are given an authoritative experiential stamp from somewhere else in the world. Africa has suffered and still suffers greatly from the misconception that whatever makes sense from outside Africa is inevitably more valid and acceptable than sense making that is born and bred on African soil. If we in Africa take ourselves seriously we have to emphasise that human culture, social patterns, human behaviour and doings in whatever part of the globe are part of an accumulation of human knowledge of the history of the world. We should not be ashamed and embarrassed to make use of these theoretical, scientific and philosophical tools from any part and any time in the history of the world. In our day and age we should have the confidence, self-esteem and courage through self-empowerment to fit and mix these tools into our sense

making experiences in Africa and thus create our own unique mixtures through ongoing negotiatory exchange and interchange with sense making experiences and views from other parts of the world.

Whether we know it or not, as students and lecturers we inevitably make use of scientific and philosophical sense making views and orientations without realising the need to be cognisant of and acknowledge our indebtedness. Lecturers are sometimes the biggest culprits, because, knowingly or unknowingly, they force these tools and skills, and particularly their application, onto students without informing them accordingly. As lecturers we cannot avoid engagement in a challenging and empowering, interchanging, exchanging and fusing way with the dogmatic and fixed views that students have acquired in the course of their lives. It is not remarkable that many students after completion of their studies use some of the many modern scientific and philosophical tools without realising what the sense making consequences and effects in their lives are? This is a worldwide tendency which is not applicable only to Africa.

Amongst the numerous factors which play a role in the very complex history and unending process of accumulating human knowledge is the ongoing process of interchange, exchange and appropriation or rejection or compromise or fusing (mixing) of 'skills and tools' between people and their societies and between the many sciences and philosophies. No person, culture, language, religion, society, community, science and/or philosophy changes, develops, grows and increases or decreases its openness towards others without conscious interchange, exchange and appropriation or rejection or compromise or mixing of their 'skills and tools' with those of others.

The shape and the size of a person's cultural and scientific universe and accumulation of skills and tools, codes and modes, and science and knowledge from other persons, depend on the levels of interchange, exchange and appropriation (or rejection, compromise, mixing or fusing) of the processes they partake in.

In July 1978 the Ghanain philosopher Kwasi Wiredu presented a seminal lecture titled: *What is African philosophy?* at the William Amo International Symposium held in Accra in which he described the negotiation process of interchange, exchange and fusion between different thought patterns, cultures, societies, religions, philosophies and sciences as follows:

[F]or a set of ideas to be genuine possession of a people, they need not have originated them, they need only appropriate them, make use of them, develop them, if the spirit so moves them, and thrive on them. The intellectual history of mankind is a series of mutual borrowings and adaptations among races, nations, tribes, and even smaller sub-groups. (Bodunrin 1990:177)

The 'moving spirit' to which Wiredu refers can be translated within the scientific and philosophical world as the net effect or distillation of the various sense making orientations and views of people that animates, encourages

and moves scientists to more scientific and philosophical 'borrowings and adaptations' between themselves as scientists and between various sciences.

6 EXTENSION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF THE UBUNTU MOTTO AND THE CENTRAL BIBLICAL COMMAND OF LOVE AS PROTOTYPICAL OF WHOLESOME AND DYNAMIC SENSE MAKING VIEWS AND APPROACHES

In this regard I want to suggest that in our African world more inclusive, extensive and differentiated prototypes of the Ubuntu motto and the central Biblical love commandment should be formulated along the lines of the *theanthropocosmic* principle as a sense making motivational force which could be explored and made operational in every field, mode or dimension of human experience and in the scientific and theoretical world.

6.1 An extended and differentiated Ubuntu motto

◇ *Extension:* In what follows below I present an inclusive differentiated extension of the traditional Ubuntu motto of 'a human being is a human being through other human beings' (*motho ke motho ka batho babang* (Sotho) - *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Nguni) and John S Mbiti and others' inversion and replacement of the 'Western' individualist emphasis of the Cartesian motto of *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) with an Ubuntu version in which the emphasis is exclusively placed on the group as basis for the existence of the individual person: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti 1969:109).

My suggestion for the extension of the traditional Ubuntu motto reads as follows:

*A human being is a human being -
through other human beings,
through the human self,
through the physical-organic cosmic environment and
through God.*

My suggestion for the extension of Mbiti and others' version of the Ubuntu motto reads as follows:

*I am -
because we are,
because I am,
because the physical-organic cosmic environment is and
because God is.*

It is clear that the human self, the physical-organic cosmic environment and God play secondary roles in the traditional Ubuntu motto. One may argue that they are implicitly part of the motto, as many have asserted before but I have not come across any real inclusive and differentiated versions of the Ubuntu motto in my perigrinations in the field of special sciences and philosophies in the African world. A very helpful introduction to the majority of non-extended

and non-differentiated versions of the motto is the article of Mluleki Mnyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi (2005), *The African concept of Ubuntu/Botho and its socio-moral significance*. Barbara Nussbaum's article (2003), *African culture and Ubuntu* offers a general overview without really contributing to the core of the present debate on Africanisation and Ubuntu.

◇◇ *Differentiation*: The inclusive extension as well as the traditional *Ubuntu* motto are undifferentiated and unfocused regarding concrete fields, modes and dimensions of human experience such as loving, thinking, feeling, socialising, believing, experiencing justness, imagining, empowering, economising, producing and speaking. My suggestions for a focused and concrete use of an inclusive extension of the *Ubuntu* formulation in a differentiated sense read as follows:

*A loving human being is a loving human being -
through other loving human beings,
through a loving human self,
through the physical-organic cosmic environment connected to
loving, and
through a loving God.*

and

*A believing human being is a believing human being -
through other believing human beings,
through a believing human self,
through the physical-organic cosmic environment connected to
believing, and
through a believing God.*

and

*A thinking human being is a thinking human being -
through other thinking human beings,
through a thinking human self,
through the physical-organic cosmic environment connected to
thinking, and
through a thinking God.*

and

*A just human being is a just human being -
through other just human beings,
through a just human self,
through the physical-organic cosmic environment connected to
justness, and
through a just God.*

As with the twists and turns of alternating primary emphases on loving, believing, thinking and justness, other typical human traits and modes of experience such as feeling, socialising, imagining, empowering, economising,

producing and speaking can be the concrete leading emphasis or experiential pointer of concentration and focus of a series of human acts in a particular field, mode or dimension of human experience. My sincere hope is that such an extended differentiation of the Ubuntu motto does not contribute to a “process of bastardization” or a loss of the real sense making pointers of the Ubuntu approach to life (Biko 1978:96).

6.2 An extended and differentiated central Biblical love commandment

- ◇ *Extension:* My suggestion for an inclusive extension of the central Biblical commandment of love to love God above and beyond anything else, and to love your neighbour as yourself reads as follows:

*Love God above and beyond anything else -
love your human neighbours,
love your animal, plant and thing neighbours,
love yourself as a human being.*

One of the fallacies of major sections of church-centred Christianity is the view that there is no Biblical injunction to love oneself despite the characterisation in the Old Testament that people are made in the image of God, because we the human race, are so trapped in sin that we are naturally inclined to love ourselves and must therefore actually get rid of the natural human selfhood which out of its natural sinfulness indulges in egoistic and narcissistic humanism. No command to love oneself or to belief oneself sometimes as acts of self-confidence is to be detected in major parts of traditional church-centred Christianity. An extreme example of this line of love reflection is the American Paul Brownback’s (1982) book *The danger of self love*. An injunction to love your animal, plant and thing neighbours would surely be warned against from an other-worldly sense making view that you are not supposed to love “the things of this transitory world” in your journey to a heavenly afterlife. Robert Wennberg offers, contrary to the attitude of escapism from the world, an excellent and extensive introduction from a Christian sense making view to the idea of “the love of animals” in his book *God, humans, and animals. An invitation to enlarge our moral universe* (2003).

- ◇◇ *Differentiation:* In addition the extended central Biblical love commandment should be differentiated into different fields of experience as an operational friendly prototype, that is a first concrete form in which an experiential leading emphasis is in operation and from which other leading experiential emphases can evolve and be generated. A leading emphasis should not only be enacted when love, episodically and contextually, leads the bundle of fields through the basics of the patterning process of love from the pointer of love for God to the pointer of love for others, and from the pointer of love for the physical-organic sphere to love for oneself. Thus, the whole process can roll and evolve through faith and belief, through thinking and rationality, through justness and justice and so forth, changing to other leading emphases in one’s experience of feeling, socialising, imagining, empowering, economising, producing and speaking. My suggestions for a focused and concrete use

of an inclusive extension of the Biblical command of love in a differentiated sense read as follows:

Love in action is the leading emphasis of a patterning process of love acts:

*Love God above and beyond anything else,
love your human neighbours,
love your animal, plant and thing neighbours,
love yourself as a human being.*

Faith or belief is the leading emphasis of a patterning process of acts of faith:

*Believe God above and beyond anything else,
believe your human neighbours,
believe your animal, plant and thing neighbours,
believe yourself as a human being.*

Similarly, thinking in action is the leading emphasis of a patterning process of acts of thinking and thought:

*Think about God above and beyond anything else,
think about your human neighbours,
think about your animal, plant and thing neighbours,
think about yourself as a human being.*

As a last example, let us use the leading emphasis of the experience of justness and proportioning in a patterning process of justness and justice:

*Be just to God above and beyond anything else,
be just to your human neighbours,
be just to your animal, plant and thing neighbours,
be just to yourself as a human being.*

In the above sense every field or mode of experience should at least encapsulate the basic pointer pattern which includes God, one's human neighbours, the physical-organic environment and the human self whether one deals with the Ubuntu motto, or a prototype of the central Biblical command of love. A myriad of other pointers may be added and clustered around the leading emphasis as long as the other pointers are clustered around the basic pointer structure which is guided by the leading emphasis of one's experience during a particular period in operation. My point is plainly that if at least the pattern of basic pointers forms the basic rolling pattern of a specific field or mode of experience, such as the field of faith experience, then hundreds of other faith snippets and pointers are clustered around the faith pattern in motion. The same computational and fluctuating basic pointers or markers of a patterning process of experience are touched upon when any field of experience takes the leading emphasis in what we may call the process of computation, percolation and fusion with other fields of experience.

When human love is in action it leads the bundle of human fields of experience through the pointers of the love of God, self-love, love for others and love for the physical-organic surrounding neighbours. These pointers form the contextual and episodic basics of the love patterning process in a series of love actions from God to the human self and from the self to other human beings and the physical-organic environment. Likewise, when faith takes the lead, the series of acts of believing God (not belief in God), believing yourself (self-confidence) and believing others and the neighbours of the physical-organic environment form the basics of the dot pattern or pointer pattern of faith, belief and trust in a given context and episode of belief in action. The basics of the dot pattern process of thinking from thought to thought are thinking about God, and thinking about yourself and others through the physical-organic environment. The same fluctuating basic markers or pointers of the dot pattern process of experience are touched upon when any field of experience takes the lead over the others or is emphasised or focused on.

7 THE *THEANTHROPOCOSMIC* AND THE *ANTHROPIC-COSMOLOGICAL* PRINCIPLES

With no intended preciosity I call the all-embracing and all-pivotal principle which operates in my deliberations and negotiations concerning sense making views, orientations, patterns, etc, (theoretical) philosophies and the sciences, the radical, differential and integrative *theanthropocosmic principle*. With this principle a person cuts through many pointers of reflection in the radical root seeking sense of the word in which he or she analyses and differentiates and synthesises and integrates many clues, cues and hues and hops, skips and jumps of his or her experience. The principle works with the radicalness, difference and integration of God, human beings and the physical-organic environment and universe, that is the radical *thereness*, the differentiated *thus and thus-ness* and the integral *overlapping, interlocking and velcro-ing and otherness* of God, human beings and the physical-organic environments, spheres and universes in each field, aspect, dimension or area of human experience. Let us break the term *theanthropocosmic* down to make it easier to comprehend:

- Δ The element *the-* stands for God, from the Greek word *theos*,
- Δ The element *anthropo-* stands for human being, from the Greek word *anthropos*, and
- Δ The element *cosmic* stands for the natural physical-organic world or universe, from the Greek word *cosmos*.

The extended and differentiated version of the Ubuntu motto which corresponds with the well known central Biblical commandment - of love in an extended and differentiated form - is inclusively compressed and expressed in the *theanthropocosmic principle* which carries the central thrust of our sense making orientation and thus the central theoretical, scientific and philosophical argumentation of many deliberations in this article. With regard to the operational and discussion value of the *theanthropocosmic principle* we take a philosophical and faith cue from the modern physicists' exposition of and struggle with the so-called *anthropic-cosmological principle*, which roughly

means that *we see the universe (cosmos) the way it is, or at least parts of it, because we exist*. Modern physicists, depending on which sense making view they advocate, take their stand either at the anthropic or cosmological side of the principle. In *The anthropic-cosmological principle* by Barrow and Tipler (1986) an exposition is given of the 'weak' and the 'strong' versions of the anthropic-cosmological principle. In *The universe in a nutshell*, the well-known Stephen Hawking (2001:86) asserts that the anthropic principle is a perspective that is diametrically opposed to the dream of a fully predictive, unified theory in which the laws of nature are complete and the world is the way it is because it could not be otherwise. Hawking (1988:175) seemingly supports only the cosmological leg of the anthropic-cosmological principle in his quest for a unified theory that would explain everything in the universe - "for then we would know the mind of God".

The modern working hypothesis of the whole body of the sciences and philosophy is that the divine *theistic*, the human *anthropic* and the natural *cosmological* principles should separately be the determinative functional and operational principles of the three basic avenues according to which sciences are broadly grouped at universities (= the theological-religious, human sciences and natural sciences). Increasing dissatisfaction with the divorce between the one-sided theistic principle of theologians and scientists of religion, the anthropic-constructivist principle of the humanities (human sciences) and the naturalist and cosmological-discoveryist principle of the sciences (natural sciences) emerges amongst many of us over the past thirty years. Out of a heartfelt sense making need in my daily and scientific life, I view the theanthropocosmic principle as the determinative functional and operational thrust of the basic sense making pointer pattern of every field, capacity, mode and dimension of my experience and in every special science - including theology - and philosophy.

8 THE FALLACY OF THE SENSE MAKING VIEWS OF THEOLOGISM, HUMANISM AND WORLDISM (=NATURALISM)

The historical and traditional background to the sense making views of theologism, humanism and worldism (=naturalism) emerged from the old separatist idea of three separated and isolated dimensional realms or avenues of human experience. The vestiges of the notion of three divided avenues of experience could already be detected in many cultures from 1200 BC in pre-Christian societies to the end of the mediaeval period in 1400 AD. Since the Renaissance in Europe (1400-1600), and especially in the modern period Modernity (1600-2000), the idea of God was put on ice or was suspended from the struggle between humanism (=human beings as the measure of everything) and worldism (=nature or the physical-organic cosmic universe as the measure of everything). As a separate but less important avenue, theologism or Godism continued into Modernity in theology, the churches and religious faith.

Most modern philosophers and scientists have suspended the idea of God in their philosophies and sciences, and either put in its place the (human) anthropic constructivist stance that human beings construct and construe everything in the world, or the (natural) cosmological discoveryist stance that the myriad of universes (=multiverses) in their micro- and macro-existence determine everything in the world.

In the lives of many contemporary pious and religious people, God plays a one-sided and all important role in their sense making view of *Theologism* or *Godism*. God is given a weight out of all proportion regarding the mysterious interconnection and otherness of the threesome of God, humanity and the natural or cosmic world. In Godism the fallacy of God working and breaking supernaturally into God's own handiwork and creation (ie human beings and the natural worldly cosmos) is a tough nut to crack. The question is: If God as Spirit is the creator and the continuing life-giving force and power of human beings and the natural world and if God is thus totally involved in the created universes, how is it possible that so many people accept the nonsensical idea of supernaturalism? The tacit procedure of supernatural theologism works as follows: firstly, God is removed from God's handiwork such as our fields of experience of thinking, justness, feelings, language, love, etc, through the age-old construction of the theologian who knows where to find or not to find God, in the Bible or through revelation. Secondly, by the grace of the theologian, God is allowed to enter God's created handiwork again through divine declared and authorised faith wrapped in the theologian's concept of 'revelation' as if God was squatting or had taken vacation outside creation. While every theologian, priest, pastor and minister in the world is not necessarily suffering from the sense making illness of theologism, the majority of them work in infrastructural ambiances or theo-spheres where they are tempted by the sucking power of theologism, that is to be a spokesperson for God, a divine soothsayer or a DDT (=divine deep throat) with or without the Holy Book, with or without the Holy Father.

Modern *Humanism* has made human beings the masters of their souls and the captains of their fate. In humanism everything in human life, the physical-organic worldly environment and God is experienced, constructed and given meaning from the experiences that human beings have of themselves as human beings apart from their experiences of God and the worldliness of the physical-organic environment. Geoffrey Scott, in *The architecture of humanism*, (1947:191) asserted that

Humanism is the effort of men to think, to feel, and to act for themselves, and to abide by the logic of results ... Authority, habit, orthodoxy, are disregarded or defied. The argument is pragmatic, realistic, human. The question, 'Has this new thing a value?' is decided directly by the individual in the court of his experience; and there is no appeal. That is good which is seen to satisfy the human test, and to have brought an enlargement of human power.

Worldism, Naturalism, Scientism or *Cosmologism* makes the existence of the natural world and the cosmic processes of the universes the measure of everything and the life blood of any meaningful enterprise, action or decision

that human beings undertake. It is also the measure of whether there is a God or not. Some worldistic scientific views see the totality of multiverses (=totality of more than six billion universes) as the source from where God emerges in a physical and evolutionary way, while others are plainly atheistic in the sense that the complex of billions of universes being auto-creational leaves no room for the existence of God or any Intelligent Design.

We call each of these sense making views, orientations or systems fallacies of isolation because God, being human and the physical-organic environment are closely interconnected while their radical otherness has to be emphasised simultaneously in every human experience in order to qualify as authentic human experience. In a field or mode of experience such as that of faith, belief or trust, God, being human and the physical-organic world are not experienced separately as three types of faith experiences or three types of faith, belief or trust as the majority of traditional theologians still assert. In every one of the various fields of human experience the experience of God, being human and the physical-organic natural environment are interconnected, with sufficient and meaningful but mysterious weight given to each in the simultaneous and coterminous experience of the threesome. The *theanthropocosmic* principle is expressive of the threesome of God, being human and the physical-organic environment, which portray a mystery of interconnectedness while each of the threesome's radical otherness is maintained at the same time.

Thus, we suggest that the notions of 'overlapping', 'interconnectedness' and 'radical otherness' of God, humanity and nature in daily life, philosophy and the sciences are compositionally lumped together in the composite idea of a theanthropocosmic sense making principle that is not to be solved as a problem but is only to be accepted as a mystery which could play a meaningful role in theories of faith and Faith Studies and Theology in general.

9 THE *THEANTHROPOCOSMIC* PRINCIPLE: PROBLEM OR MYSTERY?

The well-known American linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky's essay entitled 'Linguistics and cognitive science: Problems and mysteries' (1991) suggests that our ignorance can be divided into *problems* and *mysteries*. When we face and tackle a *problem*, we may or may not have an idea of what its solution will be, but we do have insight, increasing knowledge and a filled in intuition through similar problem-tackling situations; in other words we have an inkling of what we are looking for.

When we face and tackle a *mystery*, however, we can only stare in wonder and bewilderment without even a clue of what an explanation would or could possibly look like. Therefore in many instances we just have to accept the mystery, just as we accept the mystery of the simultaneous *interconnection* and *otherness* of God, human beings and the physical-environmental world. More and more mysteries in our lives from the phenomenon of lightning to the fact of human muscles which have the ability to memorise skills to perform highly sophisticated acts and tasks, and from the speed of light to how mental images are formed in the mind and what romantic love is, have been

upgraded to problems in the last century (Pinker 1999:ix). We are convinced that the radical interconnectedness and otherness of the threesome, namely God, humanity and the physical-organic natural environment, constitute a mystery and we doubt that this mystery could qualify as a real problem that can be solved in the near future.

Thus, I suggest that the realities of God, humanity and the physical-organic natural environment in their radical interconnectedness and otherness have to be compositionally lumped together in the composite idea of a *theanthropocosmic* sense making principle that is not to be solved as a problem but is only to be accepted as a mystery which could play a concrete and determinative sense making role in everyday life as well as in all scientific disciplines and philosophies. Closer to our scientific home, while the *theanthropocosmic* principle already plays a determinative role in theories of faith and Faith Studies, it should contribute to make the traditional animals we call Theology and the churches, Religious Studies and religions as well as Physics and Chemistry, Biology and Life Sciences much more modest when talk of God, human beings and the physical-organic universes are introduced either apart from each other in different scientific disciplines or as a threesome of interconnection and otherness in a specific and particular scientific field.

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