

UNIVERSITY "OVIDIUS" - CONSTANTA
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
DOCTORAL FIELD THEOLOGY

**Scientological pseudo-religious groups - perverting
and distorting the dialogue between theology and
science**

SUMMARY

COORDINATOR :
Prof. Univ. Dr. Pr. Gheorghe ISTODOR

Student:
Pr. Drd. Viorel POPA

CONSTANȚA
2023

Introduction. Topicality and necessity of the topic	3
I. Fundamental landmarks of the dialogue between science and religion/orthodox theology	6
II. Scientology - heretical and syncretistic group with a claim to Church. Missionary evaluation.....	15
III. "New Thought" - anti-revelation dimension of the sectarian phenomenon. General references	20
IV. Missionary-Orthodox attitudes towards Scientology groups	29
V. The Church's vision of dialogue with the sciences from a missionary perspective	33
Conclusions.....	39
Bibliography	42

Introduction. Topicality and necessity of the topic

The dialogue between science and theology is particularly important for the contemporary Orthodox Christian as an enhancement in the knowledge of God through scientific investigation of His creation.

The topicality of the theme stems from the fact that finding ways to bridge the gap between science and religion has been a constant effort in recent times, driven by the changes that have taken place in the last century not only in science, but also in the way we tend to understand reality, all the more so as pseudo-religious scientological groups have represented and represent a perversion and distortion of the dialogue between theology and science. It should be noted that the sectarian dimension uses the sciences to make themselves more attractive to contemporary desacralized man, and the present paper will show how the syncretistic dimension affects the dialogue between theology and science.

More precisely, it is the result of a certain crisis in our understanding of reality. A new paradigm has been imagined, in the light of which a dialogue between science and Christianity can indeed take place, because the Christian religion is considered capable of providing an elaborate explanation of the rationality of the world.

However, it has gone relatively far in exploring specific ways of dialogue between Christian Orthodoxy and scientific and especially basic research. This has been due to the prevailing view that there are no major differences in the way the different branches of Christianity relate to scientific research on reality. Therefore, a separate examination, especially for Eastern Christianity, was not considered necessary. Orthodox spirituality has often appeared old, conservative and dominated by immobility in the eyes of people educated on the formative frameworks of the last three or four centuries. This impression was particularly prominent in the context of the scientific paradigm of modernity. In the environment created by the Enlightenment, a doctrine emerged that thrived on asserting the superiority of reason and was hostile to institutional authority - including that of the Christian tradition as a spiritual or doctrinal heritage.

The consciousness that articulates the new phenomenological discourse points to a cultural context that is exceptionally conducive to a two-way opening between orthodox patristic spirituality and basic research in the modern sciences. This "sensitivity" to the danger of mixing mental constructs, which have previously morphed into ideologies and diverted spiritual exercise and scientific inquiry from their true purpose, has given rise to a consciousness that modernity has until recently lacked. This horizon of possibilities has never

been encountered before, but it does not automatically guarantee a fruitful dialogue between the Eastern Christian experience and the world of science. It would be easy to suspect a forced rapprochement between these two levels of human experience that focus on different levels of reality. Even after we have escaped the boundaries imposed mainly by metaphysics on how religious phenomena can be understood, there remains a long way to go in terms of clarifying how the Orthodox position on Christian experience is understood. Metaphysical doctrines, from the beginnings of modernity to those of classical German philosophy, have established certain conditions under which religious phenomenon can only be accepted as relevant if it is subject to the principle of reason. They imposed the condition that every reality must have its own concept and cause, thus rejecting the full meaning of revelation. There is a difference between the content of the Eastern Christian Tradition and the content imposed by modernity under the name of theology.

Theology has tended to become increasingly systematic in its attempt to meet the demands imposed by reason during the Enlightenment on any substantive discourse. The key aspects of Christian doctrine had to be listed and arranged according to a certain logic, in distinct chapters, starting with what was considered most important to what was seen as of secondary importance. This view of religion and Christianity in particular, which dominated Western discourse, also had a considerable influence on modern Orthodox theological discourse.

Fundamental research, especially in physics, has highlighted in the most practical way possible the limitations of the model of understanding based on logical and formal reason. Certain levels of reality, especially quantum reality, cannot be explained by the classical explanation given by science based on logical formalism, so the need for alternative explanatory models has arisen. Similarly, in philosophy, the theories of existentialism, hermeneutics and phenomenology were the most vigorous reactions to the crisis caused by the Enlightenment paradigm of reference to reality and human existence. We must acknowledge and reclaim the rationality that articulated the European spiritual and cultural model with Eastern Christianity, because it does indeed have specificity and difference. It offers a solution to the impasse that the explanatory rationalist model has reached, without giving up or abandoning reason, but only rejecting an absolutisation of the role that formal reason plays in knowledge.

The contemporary cultural context exceptionally facilitates such a rapprochement between science and Orthodox theology. On the one hand, essential elements of the spirit of the Orthodox tradition have been recovered, thanks to 20th century authors who corrected an inadequate trend in Eastern theological thought (the neo-patristic movement). On the other hand, science has become increasingly aware of the dangers posed by the interference of

Enlightenment ideologies and rationalistic constructs in its own development. Also, because of the challenges it has posed to theology in the last century - its spectacular discoveries (from quantum mechanics to the new cosmological vision to neuroscience) - frontier research in science has demanded new explanations and positions from theology, a positive development that has corrected the sterile stereotyping that threatened theological discourse.

At the same time, philosophy has provided an extremely favourable opportunity for rapprochement through phenomenology. Phenomenology, as reflected in the recent French phenomenological movement, can offer a way of mutual understanding and a discourse that allows a rapprochement of the vision of phenomenality of the two paths: the scientific-experimental and the spiritual and hesitant. Future research will certainly prove that this path is valid and can produce exceptional results in terms of understanding what we now call Ultimate Reality. It will succeed to the extent that the cultural context, developments in spiritual experience, and the powers of human cognition allow it to do so. Identifying ways to build bridges between science and religion has been a constant effort of late, spurred by changes over the past century not only in science but also in the way we tend to understand reality. More precisely, it is the result of a certain crisis in the way we understand reality. A new paradigm has been imagined, in the light of which a dialogue between science and Christianity can indeed take place, because the Christian religion is considered capable of providing an elaborate explanation of the rationality of the world.

The necessity of the theme must be given by the awareness of the danger represented by scientological groups, in particular the harmful syncretism between the theological and scientific teaching, but also the danger represented by the scientistic ideology that characterizes these groups.

The belief that scientism is science and that its authority should be similarly accepted has been disastrous. For example, Marxism presented itself not as a philosophy of history, but as a science of history, comprising predictable and objective laws of economic and political development equivalent to the laws of biology and physics. As we now know, Marxism is more of an ideology, which explains why many today still cling to some of its principles in the face of overwhelming evidence of its bloody failure, evident in the 100 million people killed in its name. The scientific camouflage only made his murderous irrationalism more palatable to those who despised traditional religion but never lost the human need to believe.

Syncretism is the distortion of any kind of dialogue (including the dialogue between theology and science) by diffusive and confusing mixtures. Syncretism involved a double loss, of truth and of identity. Unfortunately, in the contemporary world, we find a tendency to use

the dialogue between theology and science as a pretext to impose syncretistic gnosis. In particular, the results of quantum physics are mixed with elements of Eastern religions, with concepts from different religious and philosophical traditions, resulting in a syncretic mixture. Modern science has improved human life enormously, but human life involves much more than science can know or improve. Giving our assent to statements based on mere authority or claims of "settled science" makes us vulnerable to scientism that has been used to justify some of the worst horrors in human history. A healthy skepticism, the hallmark of genuine science, should be our guide - especially when radical claims are made about the strange, unique and complex mystery of human beings.

I. Fundamental landmarks of the dialogue between science and religion/orthodox theology

The distinction between religion and Orthodox theology is obvious since by religion we can understand in a syncretistic way monotheism, pantheism, monism. Religion as perceived in contemporary times is tributary to multiculturalism and pseudo-religious pluralism.

Theism is a philosophical concept, unrelated to Revelation.

The term theism comes from the Greek *theos*, which means "god". The term theism was first used by Ralph Cudworth (1617-88). This view usually implies the idea that God is beyond human understanding, perfect and self-sufficient, but also uniquely involved in the world and events. Advaita followers define God as "*neti neti*", meaning "not this not that", to prove that God is a "different kind of being" that cannot be described by finite human speculation.

Polytheism is the belief that there is more than one deity. It is a belief in plurality and plurality that manifests itself in many forms. It is a system of symbolizing reality in a pluralistic way in order to meaningfully account for the multifaceted religiosity experienced by humans¹.

In practice, polytheism is not just the belief that there are multiple gods; it usually includes the belief in the existence of a specific pantheon of distinct deities. Polytheism is widely seen in almost all cultures. Popular Hinduism, Egyptian religion, Greek religion, etc. are overtly polytheistic. People worship various gods and goddesses. High ritual practices are common among polytheists. The priestly class is at most advantaged by polytheism. Polytheism makes religious life vibrant. Many temples can be built and various myths and epics put into

¹ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, 2001, p. 789

circulation. Polytheism gains prominence in this postmodern age due to the factor that polytheistic faith promotes and assimilates all indigenous and popular narratives. The idea of the 'many' paves the way for all forms of faith, worship and religiosity.

Henotheism is the view/belief that there are many deities, but the ultimate worship is of only one of them. The henotheist worships only one God, agreeing that other deities exist and can be legitimately worshipped by other groups of people. The henotheist also believes that the God they worship is the supreme God in the pantheon of existing deities².

Monolatry is the belief that there can be many deities, but that only one is worthy of worship. Sometimes people who claim to be monotheists fall into the monolatry category when they try to be polemical with people of other faiths. Monolatry sometimes causes people to desecrate deities they do not worship. Religious Fundamentalism is a form of Monolatry in which the follower of a particular deity tries to force their religion or deity as the "Absolute" on their fellow man³.

Pantheism is the belief that the physical universe is equivalent to a god or gods and that there is no division between a Creator and the substance of its creation. In other words, God and the world are identical. Pantheism states that "God is all in all". God pervades all things, contains all things, subsumes all things, and is found in all things. Nothing exists apart from God, and all things are in one way or another identified with God. The universe is God and God is the universe. All is God and God is All. This is another form or idea similar to Monism⁴.

Panentheism. Panentheism is the belief that the physical universe is united with a god or gods. However, it is also the belief that a god or gods are greater than the material universe. Panentheism means that "everything is in God". It means that the universe is in God, but God also exists beyond the universe. Here God is seen to be alongside creation. Panentheism denotes the belief that the reality of the world and the whole created order does not exhaust the reality of God without rest. However, it also holds in common with pantheism that God's presence and active agency pervades the world, sustainingly activating it in every part. Panentheism primarily emphasizes divine immanence, but does not altogether deny divine transcendence⁵.

Deism is the belief that at least one deity exists and created the world, but that the creator(s) do not alter the original plan of the universe. Deism usually rejects the supernatural events (such as prophecies, miracles and divine revelations) prominent in organized religion.

² Ramesh Chopra, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary Of Religion*, Isha Books, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, 2005, p. 347

³ Trung Nguyen, *History of Humans*, EnCognitive, 2016

⁴ Paul A. Djupe, Laura R. Olson, *Encyclopedia of American Religion and Politics*, Facts On File, Inc., New York, 2014, p. 316

⁵ Edward Craig, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Routledge, London, 1998, p. 100

Instead, deism argues that religious beliefs must be based on human reason and the observed characteristics of the natural world, and that these sources reveal the existence of a supreme being as creator.

Autotheism is the view that whether divinity is also external or not, it is inherent within the "self" and that one has a duty to become perfect (or divine). Autotheism can also refer to the belief that one's self is a divinity.

Since the 1960s, scholars in theology, philosophy, history and science have studied the relationship between science and religion. Science and religion is a recognised field of study, with dedicated journals (e.g. *Zygon*; *Journal of Religion and Science*), academic chairs, academic societies (*Science and Religion Forum*) and recurring conferences. Most of the authors are theologians (e.g. John Haught, Sarah Coakley), philosophers interested in science (e.g. Nancey Murphy) or (former) scientists with long-standing interests in religion, some of whom are also Appalachian clergy (e.g. physicist John Polkinghorne, molecular biophysicist Alister McGrath and atmospheric scientist Katharine Hayhoe). More recently, authors in science and religion also have degrees in this interdisciplinary field (e.g. Sarah Lane Ritchie).

The systematic study of science and religion began in the 1960s, with authors such as Ian Barbour and Thomas F. Torrance challenging the dominant view that science and religion were either at war or indifferent to each other. In *Barbour's Issues in Science and Religion* (1966), Barbour laid out several themes of the field, including a comparison of methodology and theory in both fields.

Zygon, the first magazine specialising in science and religion, was also founded in 1966. While the early study of science and religion focused on methodological issues, authors from the late 1980s through the 2000s developed contextual approaches, including detailed historical examinations of the relationship between science and religion⁶. Peter Harrison challenged the war model, arguing that Protestant theological conceptions of nature and humanity contributed to the emergence of science in the 17th century⁷. Peter Bowler drew attention to a broad movement of liberal Christians and evolutionists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who sought to reconcile evolutionary theory with religious faith⁸. In the 1990s, the Vatican Observatory (Castel Gandolfo, Italy) and the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences

⁶ John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991

⁷ Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998

⁸ Peter J. Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion: The Debate in Early-Twentieth-Century Britain*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001

(Berkeley, California) co-sponsored a series of conferences on divine action and how it can be understood in light of various contemporary sciences. This resulted in six edited volumes⁹.

Today, the field has become so diversified that contemporary discussions of religion and science tend to focus on specific disciplines and questions. Instead of asking whether religion and science (in the broad sense) are compatible, productive questions focus on specific topics. For example, Buddhist modernists have argued that Buddhist theories of the self and Buddhist practices such as mindfulness meditation are compatible and are corroborated by neuroscience.

The dialogue between science and religion has a double taxonomic nature. In other words, there are two distinct models followed by this dialogue, namely, on the one hand, the model of scholastic dialogue mediated by interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodologies, as epistemological interaction operating between various scientific disciplines and Western heterodox theologies (all operating under the rigours of the status of academic disciplines); and on the other hand, the model of personalistic dialogue mediated by Orthodox patristic gnoseology, as an interpersonal relationship of working together between the Orthodox theologian (who brings knowledge through faith based on undemonstrable truths received through supernatural revelation) and the scientist (who brings knowledge through scientific reasoning based on demonstrable truths obtained through observational, laboratory or mental experiment).

It can be seen that the divergence lies in the fact that while the scholastic approach operates dialogue at the level of academic disciplines (scientific and theological alike), the personalist approach uses dialogue at the level of human persons (theologian and scientist). In our view, the source of this distinction is the different and radical way in which Western (heterodox) theology, on the one hand, and Eastern (Orthodox) theology, on the other, formulate their own gnoseological and existential statutes.

Certainly, theology has always been viewed from different perspectives. However, beyond the multitude of alternative views proposed, a distinction has emerged - especially in the Western world, through the Reformation and Scholasticism - between "theology" as experience, the encounter with life in Christ, and "theology" as science, all that pertains to scientific research conducted within the field of theology¹⁰. For example, within the academic theological curriculum, certain areas are considered "theological scientific disciplines", such as

⁹ Nancey Murphy; Robert Russell; S.J. William Stoeger, (eds.), *Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action. Twenty Years of Challenge and Progress*, Vatican Observatory Publications; Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, Berkeley, CA, 2008

¹⁰ Adrian Lemeni, *Patristic Landmarks in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 9

church history, biblical archaeology, palaeography applied to church texts, biblical exegesis by the historical-critical method, philology and others. All of these are examples of interweaving the scientific research position with the vision and needs characteristic of theological thought. However, these disciplines are, by their very method of working, sciences, and only by extension, given their object of study, can we call them theology¹¹.

The evolutionary view of biology is based on Charles Darwin's theory of the origin of species by natural selection, published in 1859. Darwinism has had a major impact on science, but also on non-scientific fields: philosophical, ideological, political and religious. Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory revolutionised the way we study nature and the way we think¹². "Darwin gave the coup de grace to uncritical vitalism in biology, to occultism in psychology and to mysticism and formalism in philosophy", said the American evolutionist J. M. Baldwin, 50 years after the publication of *The Origin of Species*¹³. Two points stand out here. First, that Darwinian evolution based on natural selection provides the only adaptive mechanism and the most important evolutionary mechanism accepted by science today, more than 150 years after the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Second, the Darwinian theory of evolution is the most ideologized and politicized scientific concept, with various cultural, social and political effects. Ernst Mayr, one of the most prominent evolutionists of the 20th century, pointed out that no scientific theory has faced such fierce and long-lasting opposition¹⁴. We point out that the ideologisation of certain aspects of science is inevitable¹⁵; here we wish to denounce the abuse of ideologisation in culture, education, social life and political action, which ultimately undermines science.

Darwinism had such a profound impact on the mentality of its era that its principles, understood or misunderstood, were used for or against various ideas and ideologies. George Bernard Shaw (a socialist) once remarked that Darwin "was fortunate enough to please everyone who had a vested interest". Evolutionism "has been used to support virtually every kind of imaginary 'ism'"¹⁶. In his Autobiography, speaking of the languages into which Origin

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 10

¹² V. Smocovitis, "It Ain't Over 'til it's Over" in *Rethinking the Darwinian Revolution, Journal of the History of Biology*, no. 38, 2005, pp. 33-49

¹³ J. M. Baldwin, *Darwin and the Humanities*, Demiurg Publishing House, Iasi, 2015

¹⁴ E. Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought. Diversity, Evolution and Inheritance*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982

¹⁵ R. M. Young, E "volutionary Biology and Ideology: Then and Now", in rev. *Science Studies*, no. 1, 1971, pp. 177-206

¹⁶ D. Alexander, *Creation or Evolution. Must we choose?*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010

of Species was translated, Darwin noted that an essay on the book also appeared in Hebrew "wishing to show that the theory was contained in the Old Testament"¹⁷.

What has generated and continues to generate most of the comments, interpretations or even hostile reactions to the theory of evolution by natural selection is the fact that for the first time a scientific explanation has been given for the finality in nature, without the need to imagine a supernatural creator. Since Darwin, man's static and self-sufficient view of the world, as shown by the Church, has been demolished; it has been replaced by a dynamic view, free from all omniscient authority, always subject to criticism and renewed by the contribution of science.

It is amazing how a simple observation of an obvious fact in nature - differential survival - could generate so many extra-scientific interpretations. Given a metaphorical name, almost personified by some, differential survival has been a source of ideological manipulation and has been able to cause harm to both science and society¹⁸. Differential survival can be discovered by anyone, no scientific method is needed. But scientific analysis of this finding involves explaining why some individuals leave offspring and others do not, why not all individuals have the same qualitative traits. Differential survival, continued over a long period of time, produces irreversible biological changes. Darwin called this process natural selection, and its result over time - descent with changes and divergence of characters; today we designate these two findings with a single term - evolution.

Natural selection, a blind but creative essence, takes over the creative role of God, therefore it is the opposite of divinity, it is diabolical. The state of differentiated survival or natural selection is often designated by the words driving force, cause, factor, mechanism, fundamental principle, agent, thus creating the conditions for the personification of nature. As a result, this 'force' seems to be the supreme danger to humanity: it brings man closer to the animal and brings the animal closer to man, it leads to instability and the destruction of the social order, inter-ethnic discord, cultural disorientation, atheism, the biologization of society, the ruin of traditional religious morality, sexual revolution, ethical nihilism, the disappearance of humanism and the rule of animal laws in society, the idea that the world is governed by a law of conflict and war instead of peace and harmony, the disappearance of the meaning of life, the activation of hidden forces in the psychology of the individual: selfishness, violence, shamelessness, disobedience, discrimination against others, etc.

¹⁷ Charles Darwin, *Memories of the Development of My Thought and Character*, Academy of the Romanian People's Republic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1962

¹⁸ D. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea. Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, Penguin Books, New York, 1995

For centuries, natural philosophers, their scientific successors and theologians alike have tried to explain the physical and natural world. The now-common cultural narrative of the perpetual conflict between science and religion simplifies the arguments and struggles of the past and overlooks the cross-pollination between those who have embraced faith and reason as the keys to understanding the earth's history. When geologists unequivocally rejected the idea of a global flood and acknowledged the antiquity of the Earth, many conservative theologians recognized that the past was more than what is literally written in the first chapter of Scripture, the Book of Acts. But some creationists rejected this view and chose to see geology as a threat to their faith.

Interestingly, the founders of modern creationism based their views on a surprisingly insightful critique of pre-plate tectonic geology¹⁹. John Whitcomb and Henry Morris wrote *The Genesis Flood* (1961), the book that sparked the creationist revival and resurrected evangelical belief in a global flood. Whitcomb, a professor of Old Testament, and Morris, an engineer, embraced the literal biblical interpretation to argue that the world was several thousand years old and that Noah's Flood laid down all the sedimentary rocks before carving the topography we know today. Their lack of geological training did not prevent them from arguing that a global flood offered a better explanation for the geological record than the theories of geologists.

Whitcomb and Morris argued that the stratigraphic column developed by the geologists was a fiction because, they believed, it was based primarily on the illusion of fossil succession. Pointing out that if the greatest thickness of sedimentary layers from each geological epoch were added together, the pile would reach over 100 miles high, they felt that this ridiculous height invalidated the conventional geological column. In reaching this conclusion, they overlooked the fact that the average thickness of rocks in any geological epoch is only a fraction of the maximum thickness, and that only a fraction of the Earth's dynamic history is preserved in any region of the planet. Whitcomb and Morris did not go so far as to suggest that Christians reject geological facts, but argued that the long and complex history of the planet that geologists read into the rock record was fiction.

In their zeal to dismiss conventional geology as a sham, they described it in terms that serve well to describe their own work: 'Proustian interpretations, pure speculation and dogmatic

¹⁹ D.R. Montgomery, *The Rocks Don't Lie: A Geologist Investigates Noah's Flood*: W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2012, p. 102.

authoritarianism - a system that purports to lay out the entire evolutionary history of the Earth and its inhabitants, but at the same time full of countless gaps and contradictions²⁰ .

In their view, the simple meaning of God's words went beyond anything science could show. "The educated Christian knows that the evidence for the full divine inspiration of Scripture is much harder than the evidence for any fact of science"²¹ . They read Scripture to determine geological history and then sought scientific support for their views - and rejected or ignored the contradictory evidence. They were surprisingly direct on this point: "We take this revealed framework of history as our basic data and then try to see how all the relevant data can be understood in this context"²² .

Their view of earth's history was based on a literal interpretation of the Creation. In the beginning, at Creation, God made the Earth's core and a kind of crust. Rocks that show evidence of internal deformation, such as folds or minerals that form only at high pressures or temperatures, date from the first day. Over the next week, a huge amount of geological work was done, especially on the third day, when mountains were pushed up and ocean basins were carved out in a great rush of water as the planet was reshaped to become a suitable domain for humans.

All this erosion and deposition formed sedimentary rocks that contain no fossils and carved mountains into them. A few thousand years later, the Flood tore the entire surface of the planet apart, killed everything that wasn't on the edge of the arc and deposited fossilised sedimentary rocks. Then the current geological era began after a brief Ice Age caused by all the snow that accumulated on the newly-risen mountains. The world was created to look old. Whitcomb and Morris simply rejected the fossil evidence for a long history of life "based on overwhelming biblical evidence"²³ and claimed that it was impossible to know the age of the world by studying the workings of the natural laws that operate today.

The idea scoffed at in Victorian England took root in Cold War America. However, at the time, Morris admitted that he knew few evangelicals who adhered to their views²⁴ . One of the many inconvenient facts facing global flood proponents is that although most of the world's sedimentary rocks are found on continents, a global flood would preferentially deposit sediment in low-lying places such as ocean basins. Many proponents of flood geology have adopted the

²⁰ H.M.Morris; J.C. Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications*, The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 1961, p. 212.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 118

²² *Ibid*, p. 4

²³ *Ibid*, p. 457

²⁴ R.L Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992

ecological zonation theory of Price's student Harold Clark, who argued that geological layers with distinct fossil assemblages represented antediluvian ecological zones. While they argued that sedimentary cover on modern continents was eroded from ocean basins, this raises the question of how entire ecological communities of organisms and coral reefs could have been transported intact and unmixed over great distances to be deposited while preserving the original ecological zonation.

When 19th-century geologists dismissed the idea of a global flood as the central event in earth's history, even fundamentalists accepted that the first book of Scripture could not fully explain the past. Later, in the war against evolution, reactionary evangelicals resurrected discredited 17th-century ideas to explain topography, rock formations, and the earth's history - invoking a mysterious vapor vault they claimed fell from the sky to trigger Noah's Flood.

Exhibits at the Creation Museum in Peterson, Kentucky, USA, explicitly reject reason, labeling it the enemy of faith and alleging a centuries-long conspiracy by scientists to mislead believers about the nature of the world. Despite centuries of geological research contradicting creationist claims, Gallup tracking polls from 1982 to 2012 consistently found that over 40% of Americans believe God created humans less than 10,000 years ago²⁵.

While struggles over the geological implications of biblical interpretations date back to the earliest days of the Church, the story of how naturalists have struggled to reconcile the biblical Flood with a growing body of conflicting geological evidence shows that the revival of Flood geology in the twentieth century has recycled previously abandoned ideas in the face of compelling evidence²⁶.

In the light of 19th century scientific discoveries, it seemed reasonable to read the biblical account of the Flood as either allegorical or as a story told from the perspective that the whole world seemed flooded by the ark. Time and again, Christians have accommodated geological discoveries by reinterpreting the Fairy Tale to preserve the integrity of both natural and scriptural truths. Of course, there were significant gaps in conventional geological theories when Whitcomb and Morris expounded their biblically inspired views of earth history. Plate tectonics did not yet offer an explanation for the origin and distribution of mountains and other geological issues, such as the presence of fossils of temperate and tropical creatures buried in rocks at high latitudes.

²⁵ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/155003/hold-creationist-view-humanorigins.aspx> accessed 14 April 2012

²⁶ M.B. Roberts, "Genesis Chapter 1 and geological time from Hugo Grotius and Marin Mersenne to William Conybeare and Thomas Chalmers (1620-1825)", in *Myth and Geology*, Geological Society Special Publication, London, volume 273, 2007, p. 39-49

But when the plate tectonic revolution swept through the earth sciences and explained previously perplexing observations, creationists ignored what they considered to be yet another flawed geological theory.

Honest dialogue between religion and science can only take place when it is understood as mutually beneficial. Sometimes the need for dialogue between science and religion stems from a certain mutual dependence, as Albert Einstein suggests: "(...) even if the fields of religion and science themselves are delimited from each other, there are nevertheless strong mutual relations and dependencies between the two. Although religion may be the goal-determiner, it has nevertheless learned from science, in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set itself. However, science can only be created by those who are deeply imbued with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. This wellspring of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of religion (...) I cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without this deep faith. The situation can be expressed in an image: science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."²⁷

It is now obligatory to realize how patristic methodology, without opposing scientific methodology in principle, does not align itself with it, but is placed above it, as a result, if divine revelation. It is superknowledge, a vision of world realities resulting from a spiritual understanding of the mysteries of the origin and purpose of the cosmos, which lies beyond discursive and analytical logic based on disparate information interconnected exclusively by unspiritualized reason.

II. Scientology - heretical and syncretistic group with a claim to Church. Missionary evaluation

Scientology began not as a new religion, but as a new system of mental therapy with the publication in 1950 by American L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986) of *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*²⁸. This widely sold publication in the United States became the movement's basic text. It detailed mental techniques that could be used to eliminate all negative psychosomatic fears, feelings, sensations and illnesses. After successfully applying these techniques under the guidance of a counselor or auditor in sessions known as *auditing* sessions, an individual would experience a transformation from a state of pre-clearance to a state of clarity in which anything became possible.

²⁷ Albert Einstein, "Religion and Science" in *The New York Times Magazine*, 9 November 1930, pp. 1-4

²⁸ Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics. The Modern Science of Mental Health*, Excalibur Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009

Continuing his research, by 1952 Hubbard had developed a religious philosophy related to mental health issues and, in particular, related to obstacles to rational thought described as engrams.

In 1954 the first Scientology church was established in Los Angeles, California, and in 1959 the headquarters was moved to Saint Hill Manor in Sussex, England²⁹. In 1969 the "Sea Organization" was formed, which allowed Hubbard, along with his closest followers, to continue his research and writing aboard several ships. In 1975 Hubbard returned to land in Clearwater, Florida.

Like other systems of thought, both Western and Eastern, including that espoused by Christian Science and the Brahma Kumaris movement, Scientology rejects the idea that the individual is his body. In the teachings of Scientology, the body is simply a vehicle that houses the "thetan", which is essentially an individual expression of an ultimate reality, theta or the primary substance of thought, the source of life, the basis of all Being³⁰.

The thetan, being the real being that transcends the body it inhabits, is not only immaterial and immortal, but also possesses infinite creative powers and an ability to control the universe. Hence the belief that everyone becomes a "*Clear*" through auditing and comes to enjoy total freedom.

Originally, it is believed that the thetans created the world as a toy in a similar way to the Greek gods or the young Krishna. However, due to carelessness, they became overwhelmed by the physical universe and thus lost their creative powers and abilities. This led to the development of a reactive mind that gives irrational and emotional responses to reality and especially to anything that leads to a recollection of painful and traumatic past experiences. Such experiences dealt with in this way give rise to the aforementioned engrams, which prevent rational thought from reminding the individual of the original experience.

Scientology's mission, then, is to streamline the path to salvation or wholeness by essentially eradicating the engrams that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. Through the use of a simple device, known as an E-Meter, the emotions and emotional responses of clients to questions that highlight the engrams present in the auditing process are recorded, thus a rational discussion and elimination of engrams acquired either in the present or in a past life can begin, thus freeing the person to be his/her thetan³¹.

²⁹ James R. Lewis, *Handbook of Scientology*, Brill, Leiden, 2017, p. 165

³⁰ Peter Clarke, *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis, London and New York, 2006, p. 564

³¹ R. Wallis, *Road to Total Freedom: A Sociological Analysis of Scientology*, Heinemann, London 1976

As a controversial movement throughout its history, many have questioned Scientology and its recruitment methods, its supposedly authoritarian style, and some of the methods it has used to uncover information about its activities. Scientology has come under heavy attack in Europe, particularly in Germany, and its American missionaries were banned for a time by the Home Office from doing missions in the UK.

However, by the time of Howard's death in 1986, Scientology was an international movement with about 3,000 churches and missions worldwide³².

Scientology anthropology is profoundly anti-Christian. Hubbard believed that there are three "Parts of Man" for every human individual³³. These are: spirit, mind and body. The spirit, known as the "theta being", commonly referred to as "thetan", is actually the "true" self in Scientology. One does not "have" a thetan, but rather "is" the thetan, or as Hubbard wrote; "the thetan is the person. You are YOU in a body"³⁴. The thetan possesses "no mass, no wavelength, no energy and no time or location in space"³⁵, pointing out that unlike other Parts of Man, the thetan exists entirely outside the physical universe and as such is a creator of "things" rather than itself being a physical "thing"³⁶. The notion of the thetan reinforces the primary purpose of Scientology, which is to liberate the thetan (the individual's true self) from the confines of the physical universe.

Hubbard referred to the physical universe as the MEST universe, composed of Matter, Energy, Space and Time³⁷. The MEST universe is completely separate from what Hubbard called the theta universe, which refers to all spiritual aspects of the universe - life, spirituality and thought. Instead, MEST refers to all the physical elements of the universe, such as objects, stars and galaxies³⁸. The theta universe could be considered the "true" universe in Scientology because MEST is considered an apparent reality that is brought into being by the agreement of all thetans. This agreement has tricked the thetan into associating with the unfulfilled environment of the MEST universe³⁹. According to Hubbard, the thetan is subject to decay because of its misguided dependence on the MEST universe, and it is this joining of the thetan

³² *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*, pp. 563-565

³³ L. R. Hubbard, *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 74

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 66

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ L. R. Hubbard, *Dianetics: The Original Thesis*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007

³⁸ L. R. Hubbard, *Science of Survival*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007

³⁹ H. B. Urban, *The Church of Scientology: A History of a New Religion*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2011, p. 42

and the MEST universe that causes the thetan to experience pain⁴⁰. Unlike the MEST body, the thetan is believed to be capable of infinite possibilities and can only be freed from the confines of the MEST universe through the *auditing* process of Scientology⁴¹.

Hubbard's work on liberating the spiritual self from the physical universe has drawn comparisons to Buddhist practice⁴². Indeed, Hubbard considered the state of *Clear* to be an easier goal to achieve than the Buddhist quest for Nirvana, which he saw as a fruitless endeavor: "Buddhists talked about Nirvana. ... They had become completely overwhelmed, devoid of any [E-Meters] and a map. We are Scientologists. We will not fall into the abyss. And we will not join Nirvana. We have [E-Meters] and a map. We know the rules and the way. This is the greatest adventure of all time. Liberation. ... Nirvana is choked by the overwhelmed. ... We are Scientologists. We have won"⁴³.

With this work on the state of Clear and the interaction between theta and MEST, Hubbard claimed to have discovered how a person's essence and personality can be completely separated from the body. In addition, he claimed that mankind had convinced itself that it consisted of mind and body alone, writing that

In Scientology, the spirit itself has been separated from what spiritualists called the astral body, and there should be no confusion between the two. Just as you know you are where you are right now, so you would know if you, a spirit, were detached from mind and body. Man has not discovered this until now because, in the absence of Scientology technologies, he has had very little reality about his detachment from mind and body. The whole cult of communism is based on the fact that one lives only one life, that there is no afterlife, and that the individual has no religious significance. Man, in general, has been close to this state for at least the last century. The state (condition) is of a very low order excluding, as it does, any recognition of self⁴⁴.

Therefore, it is only through the execution of Scientology practice that the abilities and perceptions of the thetan can be brought to the surface. Scientology teaches that the thetan usually resides in the human skull, but it can also be found in four different locations:

1. The first would be completely separate from a body or bodies, or even this universe.

⁴⁰ L. R. Hubbard, *Science of Survival*, p. 12

⁴¹ H. B. Urban, *The Church of Scientology*, p. 43

⁴² F. K. Flinn, "Scientology as Technological Buddhism", in *Scientology*, Lewis, J. R. (ed), Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, pp. 209-223

⁴³ S. A. Kent, "Scientology's Relationship with Eastern Religious Traditions," in *Rev. Journal of Contemporary Religion*, No. 1, Vol. 11, 1996, p. 29

⁴⁴ L. R. Hubbard, *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought*, p. 66

2. The second would be in close proximity to the body and consciously controlling the body.

3. The third would be in the body (skull).

4. And the fourth would be a reversed state, in which he is compulsively away from the body and cannot get close to it⁴⁵.

The ideal location for thetan is the second, residing close to the body but consciously taking full control. Hubbard taught that through attachment to a human body, the thetan begins to associate "being with mass and action, [and] does not consider itself as having an individual identity or name"⁴⁶. As a result, the thetan confuses itself as part of the MEST universe. Scientology seeks to "externalize" the thetan from the human body, allowing it to inhabit the second location and freeing it from the confines of the MEST universe, while remaining in full control of the body⁴⁷.

Scientology followers are convinced that the thetan existed long before the physical body, and the self-improvement process in Scientology is about returning the thetan to its original state, free of the limitations of MEST, rather than improving the thetan beyond any previous state. The entire MEST universe is not necessary for thetans to operate and communicate. All forms of physical communication, including the written word and even speech through physical bodies, are secondary to thetans' ability to communicate independently and without the mediation of the MEST universe. These charts illustrate the ultimate goal of self-development in Scientology, namely that the thetan can exist, operate and communicate outside of MEST, unaffected by the traumas of the physical universe, while retaining full control of the other Parts of Man, mind and body.

Beyond its value to the study of Scientology, the chapter makes a significant and original contribution to the broader field of sociology of New Religious Movements. I contrast the vertical, top-down authority of the CoS with the flatter, more horizontal forms of auditing found in the Free Zone. Maintaining a dual focus on this vertical-horizontal axis has opened the study of Scientology to new questions and a new focus on Scientologies lived outside the CoS, complicating questions of power and authority and reframing them in terms of authenticity, innovation, and materiality. These new frameworks are portable and can be applied beyond the CoS and the Free Zone. They have wider societal implications in terms of understanding how

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 66

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 67

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

institutions seek to control and protect knowledge and methods, and the ways in which people seek to circumvent and undermine this.

III. "New Thought" - anti-revelation dimension of the sectarian phenomenon. General references

The New Thought emerged in the context of the spread of Christian Science and the interest in alternative healing that it generated in the last decades of the 19th century. Its origins can be traced to Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925), a close associate of Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) and former editor of the Christian Science Journal. Hopkins and Eddy had a falling out in 1885 that led to Hopkins' departure from Boston and the founding of an independent school, the Emma Hopkins College of Metaphysical Science, which in later years evolved into the Christian Science Theological Seminary⁴⁸. Hopkins taught her own brand of Christian Science, but more importantly, she opened up avenues for teaching metaphysical healing outside the rigid controls required by Eddy and the organizational structure of the Church of Christ Scientist.

During her ten years in Chicago (including her travels around the country), the somewhat shy and reclusive Hopkins would train most of the people who later founded the main sects that made up the New Thought - Charles and Myrtle Fillmore (Unity School of Christianity), Melinda Cramer (Divine Science), Annie Rix Miltz (Homes of Truth) and Helen Van Anderson (Church of the Higher Life). After retiring to New York, he will accept Ernest Holmes, who founded Religious Science, as his last student. The name New Thought, to include these related but divergent groups, was issued in the 1890s⁴⁹.

As New Thought strove to assert itself, it moved to differentiate itself from Christian Science. At the same time, Mary Baker Eddy was struggling to separate her beliefs from those of her former teacher, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866). In this context, some have suggested that Eddy plagiarized her writings from Quimby and that New Thought actually derived directly from Quimby. This view was supported by the first historian of the New Thought, Horatio Dresser⁵⁰.

Later historians were to accept Dresser's view for most of the 20th century, and Hopkins' role was largely forgotten until she was rediscovered in the 1990s. Common to the New Thought

⁴⁸ G. Harley, *Emma Curtis Hopkins: Forgotten Founder of New Thought*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 2002

⁴⁹ Martin Alfred Larson, *New Thought, Or A Modern Religious Approach. The Philosophy of Health, Happiness, and Prosperity*, Philosophical Library/Open Road, New York, 2022

⁵⁰ Horatio W. Dresser, *The Quimby Manuscripts*, Cosimo Classics, New York, 2007

is a belief in the One Reality of God and the possibility of healing through attunement to that One Reality. Humans, as an individualized expression of God, can manifest God's perfection, health and abundance. To help individuals manifest God, the various New Thought churches offer the services of practitioners who have been trained in the art of healing prayer and who have demonstrated skills in harmonizing with the One. Apart from this common core, New Thought groups vary greatly in different aspects, not least in their relationship to Christianity. Some groups, such as Unity, emphasize their Christian heritage and similarities to traditional Christian thought. Others, such as Divine Science, are more distanced, emphasizing what they see as a more universal spirituality⁵¹.

As early as the 1890s, leaders began to suggest that it was desirable for the various New Thought groups to make common cause. After several false starts, an organisation of what became the International Alliance of New Thought was founded in 1914.

The New Thought spread rapidly, reaching England in the 1880s, and in the following decades finding its way mainly to various English-speaking countries - Australia and South Africa in particular. The movement was introduced to England by Frances Lord, one of Hopkins' pupils and author of *Christian Science Healing* (1988). In England, New Thought produced one of its most important early theorists in Thomas Troward (1847-1916). Among the early organizers were F. L. Rawson, founder of the Society for the Propagation of the Knowledge of True Prayer, and Henry Thomas Hamblin (1873-1958), whose work continues in the Hamblin Religious Trust and its journal *New Vision*. In the 1950s, Fr. Mandus (1907-88) founded the World Healing Crusade, whose publications circulate internationally.

The most active South African New Thought groups were the School of Truth, founded in the 1950s by Nicol Campbell. The Australian work was started by Veni Cooper-Matheson in 1903, but was greatly encouraged by several visits by Julia Seton from 1916. The New Thought suffered badly during World War II, but has recovered in recent years, with the largest group affiliated to the American-based Unity School of Christianity.

Although it spread throughout the English-speaking world, New Thought was most successful in Japan, where Masaharu Tanaguchi appropriated the writings of Ernest Holmes of Religious Science to create Seicho-no-Ie, now the largest individual New Thought group in the world. It flourished in the years immediately after World War II and was carried around the world by the migration of its followers. Today, more than half of all New Thought followers belong to Seicho-No-Ie (House of Growth)⁵².

⁵¹ B. Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1999

⁵² *Encyclopedia of New Religions Movements*, pp. 458-459

From a New Thought point of view, it has taken mankind thousands of years to learn that we have the ability and power to control our destiny. Since thought and thought-related energy is a movement in consciousness, we are beginning to understand how working with the thought process, in alignment with universal principles, contributes greatly to the effects of our lives. The thought process is a creative force constantly at work in humanity. "We live in an intelligent universe that responds to our mental states. To the extent that we learn to control these mental states, we will automatically control our environment. This is why we study the power of thought when approaching the subject of spiritual healing of the mind"⁵³, writes Ernest Holmes, founder of Science of Mind, a significant and impactful element in the burgeoning New Thought movement. In Holmes' teachings, as in those of other New Thought participants, we find distilled wisdom, gleaned from many ages and many cultures and manifested in a great soul who shared his wisdom with many others.

Philosophia Perennis - a term coined by Leibniz - is a metaphysics that recognizes a substantial divine Reality for the world of things, lives and minds⁵⁴. It is the psychology that finds in the soul something similar or even identical to the divine Reality. It is the ethics inherent in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent. It is ancient wisdom. Ancient wisdom has inspired countless millions of people throughout the ages. It has seeded the growth of spiritually innovative philosophies and inspired numerous religions and their multitudinous followers!

New Thought followers say that if one does not consider oneself a sage or a saint, then perhaps a good thing to do is to study the works of the past. Many of the founders of the New Thought movement have done just that. These great teachers (from many perspectives) then offered their "wellsprings" of wisdom to those individuals who gathered and passed through a central door of inspiration, dedication and commitment to what has become an international activity involving spiritual truths.

New Thought has evolved as a movement that has no specific dogma to which member religious movements must adhere. This idea contrasts with Christian Science, which has a more strictly outlined set of beliefs that define the organization. The first goal of the New Thought vision is metaphysical healing. Second, the different sub-organizations place a different emphasis on traditional Christian religious beliefs that are practiced in tandem with New Thought.

⁵³ Ernest Holmes, *The Science of Mind: A Philosophy, A Faith, A Way of Life*, Tarcher Putnam, New York, 1998, p. 139

⁵⁴ Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, New York, 2009, vii

Many of the founders of the various branches of the New Thought movement have been magnetic and inspiring speakers, gifted authors and prominent leaders with far-reaching vision. Although opinions on who actually founded New Thought vary, because the essence of the movement is rooted in the interpretation of the teachings of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (known as "Park"), he is credited as the overall intellectual father of New Thought.

First, let's take a step back to the precursors: Franz Anton Mesmer, Emanuel Swedenborg, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Phineas Parkhurst Quimby.

Franz Anton Mesmer is at the heart of the evolution of the New Thought movement. A Viennese psychiatrist, Mesmer brought forth the theory of "animal magnetism" and produced cures through the laying on of hands, hypnosis and suggestion, later known as mesmerism. The word mesmerisation comes from Mesmer. He also used the harmonica, a glass harmonica, as an important part of his therapy⁵⁵.

Emanuel Swedenborg was truly one of the great minds of Europe and it is precisely his thought processes and teaching that we can attribute to the success of his mission as a teacher and philosopher of the Spirit. And in the late 1600s and early 1700s, the Spirit needed a vehicle to help lay the foundations for what was to follow. It needed a respected person who could attract people's attention and expand men's and women's awareness of the realities of spiritual communion and communication without creating a cultural or theological shock.

Swedenborg's theology included simple concepts⁵⁶. He believed that the Bible was the Word of God; however, its true meaning was very different from its obvious meaning. He believed that the world of matter was a laboratory for the soul, in which material is used to "force-refine" the spiritual. In many ways Swedenborg was quite universal in his concepts, for he believed that all religious systems have their divine duty and purpose, that this is not the only virtue of Christianity. He believed that the mission of the church was absolutely necessary insofar as, left to its own devices, mankind simply could not resolve its relationship with God. He saw the true power of Christ's life in the example he set for others and vehemently rejected the concept of Christian atonement and original sin.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist and poet and a leader of the Transcendentalism movement. He was influenced by such schools of thought as English Romanticism, Neoplatonism and Hindu philosophy. Emerson was noted for his ability to

⁵⁵ Harry Witchel, *You are what You Hear. How Music and Territory Make Us who We are*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2010, p. 167

⁵⁶ Simeon Stefanidakis, "Forerunners to Modern Spiritualism Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772),"
<https://fst.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Spiritualism-Guide.pdf> accessed 12.06.2023

present his ideas eloquently and in poetic language. Several of Emerson's ancestors were ministers, including his father, William Emerson, who was minister of the First (Unitarian) Church in Boston.

Emerson graduated from Harvard University at the age of eighteen and taught school in Boston for the next three years. In 1827 he entered Harvard Divinity School and a year later was licensed to preach by the Middlesex Association of Ministers. In 1829 he became minister of the Second (Unitarian) Church in Boston. While abroad in England, Emerson became acquainted with such British literary figures as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, and William Wordsworth. His meeting with Carlyle marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship⁵⁷.

Several important elements in Phineas Parkhurst Quimby's life led to the development of his ideas of mental healing. Quimby became ill with tuberculosis and became disillusioned with the method of treatment prescribed by his doctor and gave up hope of a cure. One of his friends suggested he take up horse riding as an outdoor physical activity to improve his condition. Physical ailments prevented him from following this suggestion, but he did the next best thing and embarked on carriage rides. This course of action produced remarkable results, and his recovery has given rise to much reflection on the subject.

Quimby began studying Mesmer and his works in 1838 after attending a conference and began experimenting with the help of Lucius Burkmar⁵⁸. He quickly saw the mental and placebo effect of the mind on the body and developed theories of healing with the mind and opened an office in Portland, Maine. Quimby became so busy practicing healing that he failed to publish his writings. Among the students and patients who joined his studies and helped him translate his teachings into writings were Warren Felt Evans, Annetta Seabury Dresser and Julius Dresser, founders of the New Thought movement by name, and Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science movement. Later, in 1921, Horatio W. Dresser published the large but less complete volume, *The Quimby Manuscripts*. Still later, in 1988, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby: *The Complete Writings* was edited by Ervin Seale, who devoted much of his life to the task, as did his friend Errol S. Colley.

Warren Felt Evans was one of the first people to write seriously about Quimby's teachings. Although he did not start a movement based on these teachings, as other students did, he opened a practice in Salisbury, Massachusetts. Although the most important gift Evans

⁵⁷ Arthur S. Lothstein, Michael Brodrick, *New Morning: Emerson in the Twenty-first Century*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2008, p. 4.

⁵⁸ J. Gordon Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Gale, Farmington Hills, 2009, p. 134

left to the New Thought was his written work, he also took the important step of integrating the philosophies of Swedenborg and Quimby into the New Thought.

Mary Baker Eddy developed a movement from ideas she derived from Quimby's teachings. Through treatment for her own ill health, Eddy became a student of Quimby and began to develop her own unique ideas about metaphysical healing. In 1862, she healed quickly after Quimby treated her⁵⁹. In 1879, the Church of Christ, Scientist was founded, which soon ordained Eddy as pastor.

Ernest Holmes and the science of the mind. Ernest Holmes, born in 1887 on a small farm in Maine, was the youngest of nine sons. As a teenager, he attended Bethel Preparatory School, but spent most of his time outside with nature, asking questions like, "What is God? Who am I? Why am I here?"

Although religion played an important role in Holmes' family, in his youth, aside from attending church and reading the Bible, he did not show a strong affinity for organized religion. In fact, he quarreled with local preachers and doubted the answers he received at church. He also did not excel in school. Although he was an intelligent young man and showed an early interest in reading and learning, he found school itself boring and uninteresting and left formal education before he finished high school and set out on his lifelong path of independent thought. He went to Boston, worked in a grocery store, and continued his studies relentlessly.

A year later, Holmes discovered the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson. "Reading Emerson is like drinking water to myself," he later said. His metaphysical studies intensified, his search for truth leading him to literature, art, science, philosophy and religion. In particular, he was drawn to the Christian Science teachings of Mary Baker Eddy. Soon, he explored the writings of Christian D. Larson, Ralph Waldo Trine, Horatio Dresser, and Phineas Quimby. He was particularly impressed by Larson's writings on New Thought and eventually abandoned the Christian Science textbook for Larson's work⁶⁰.

In 1914, at the age of twenty-five, Ernest moved to Venice, California. Continuing his studies, he discovered the writings of Thomas Troward, which fanned the flames ignited by Emerson and his earlier studies of metaphysics. Almost casually, he began speaking about Troward's writings to small but growing groups. Unceremoniously, he began his lifelong ministry. Later, as his audiences grew, he was ordained as minister of the Church of Divine Science.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁶⁰ Scott Awbrey, *Path of Discovery*, Los Angeles United Church of Religious Science, Los Angeles, 1987

Ernest published his first book, *Creative Mind*, in 1919. He continued his studies and lectured to growing crowds in California and eastern cities. Meanwhile, he was writing *The Science of Mind*, which was to become the "textbook" of Religious Science philosophy. Published in 1926, it was revised in 1938 and is now in its forty-fifth edition. *The Science of Mind* has been translated into French, German and Japanese.

By the time the book was published, his many enthusiastic students urged him to set up an incorporated organization. At first he refused, but eventually agreed, and the Institute of Religious Science and School of Philosophy was established in 1927.

Also in 1927, on October 23, in Los Angeles, Ernest Holmes, at the age of forty, married Hazel Durkee Foster, a widow. Hazel was wealthy and socially connected in Los Angeles. She became a practitioner of Holmes's work and provided invaluable support as his confidante and counselor. Her connections to well-established people in the business and entertainment worlds lent legitimacy to the work and contributed significantly to Holmes' success.⁶¹ Ernest and Hazel were to be inseparable companions for thirty years. Holmes had no children, but he left a legacy to all mankind; it is the way of life he called Religious Science.

The Religious Science movement gained momentum in the 1940s and 1950s. By the time Holmes made the transition on April 7, 1960, there were eighty-five churches spread nationwide in Los Angeles, as well as hundreds of licensed practitioners of the spiritual mind. Holmes never satisfactorily solved the problems of organizing and managing a growing movement. However, he was extraordinarily successful at the things he did best - preaching Sundays, teaching his philosophy of Science of Mind, and practicing spiritual mind treatment.

Nothing in Ernest Holmes' early life suggested that he would create a new spiritual philosophy, found a church attended by thousands, and inspire Norman Vincent Peale's "positive thinking" that would spread to churches across America⁶².

Ernest Holmes' teachings are classic New Thought teachings and are based on the belief that there is a universal law of cause and effect operating in the life of mankind that is primarily mental and spiritual. He believed that all people have "conscious access to this law". "There is a power for good in the universe greater than yourself and you can use it"⁶³. Holmes spoke these exact words to a group of students who shared his 20th century. Thanks to this man and

⁶¹ Neal Vahle, *Open at the Top: The Life of Ernest Holmes*, Open View Press, 1993, p. 5

⁶² *Ibidem*

⁶³ James Reid, "Dr. Ernest Holmes: The First Religious Scientist,"
http://www.religiousscience.org/ucrs_site/our_founder/first_religious.html accessed 12.06.2023

his work, countless seekers have discovered a rewarding awareness of their infinite potential, they say.

Dr. Holmes' book, *The Science of Mind*, relates "the laws of science, the views of philosophy and the revelations of religion applied to the needs and aspirations of mankind." This correlation, something entirely new to the world, was also the beginning of the Institute of Religious Science and the School of Philosophy, where he and others were to teach and inspire. This, in turn, was to lead to the beginning of the Church of Religious Science, later to become the United Church of Religious Science and Religious Science International.

As Dr. Holmes has always insisted, he has not legislated any of the laws that govern the universe, nor has he invented a new secret way for mankind to partake of the unlimited good in the universe. He sought only to explain the infallibility of the laws and to express the essence of the eternal way. In Volume 1, Number 1 of *Religious Science Magazine*, Ernest Holmes made this announcement: 'The purpose of this magazine shall be to instruct ethically, morally and religiously, scientifically, on life and its meaning. A semi-religious magazine, with ethical tendencies, with a moral tone, with a philosophical point of view, it will seek to promote that universal consciousness of life which binds all into one great whole.... It will also be the aim of Religious Science to present to its readers a systematic and comprehensive study of the subtle powers of mind and spirit, so far as they are now known, and to show how these powers may be consciously used for the betterment of the individual and the race.'⁶⁴ .

An interesting aspect of *Science of Mind* is Holmes' method of prayer as a spiritual treatment of the mind. He wrote: "The things we need, we must ask for - and we must believe we get them! This probes to the depths of the metaphysical and psychological laws of our being and explains the possibility of an answer to our prayers. . . . When we pray, we must believe that we have . We are surrounded by a universal law that is creative. It moves from thought to work. If there is not first an image, it cannot move, because there would be nothing to move towards. Prayer, which is a mental act, must accept its own answer as an image in the mind before the divine energies can play upon it and make it productive. . . . But let us remember that true prayer is always universal. There can be no good only for us, but only as that good is for all'⁶⁵ .

When Holmes was once asked on what authority his teaching was based, he sent the questioner to Jesus, who, when asked the same question, said that the authority of his words lay in his deeds. "There is no authority for the *Science of Mind*," Holmes said, "apart from what he

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ Ernest Holmes, *The Science of Mind*, p. 458

has done." The serious student of Science of Mind will find "that she teaches a principle which can be demonstrated, that her authority lies not in her words, but in what she can accomplish"⁶⁶

In beautiful, powerful and precise writing, Science of Mind offers a blueprint for rebuilding the mind, redirecting thought processes and giving individuals an extraordinary ability to build our world through the extraordinary working power of our mind. Holmes' philosophy incorporates two paths for our mind's desire to know what is so: Those who know themselves understand the universe, and those who know the universe understand themselves!

As we remain open to growth at all levels of our being, we avoid diminishment. we become aware that we may represent the music of life, but the Creator is the Master musician.

"New Thought", "Christian Science", "Divine Science" and "Religious Science" are distinct spiritual movements that emerged in the religious and spiritual context of the 19th and 20th centuries. Although they share some common elements, they have significant differences in their doctrines and practices. Here is a comparison between these movements:

New Thought:

The New Thought is a spiritual movement that emerged in the 19th century in the United States and sought to combine ideas from the field of spirituality with positive thinking and self-development methods.

The New Thought Adept believes in the power of thoughts and the ability to control one's own reality by changing attitudes and thoughts⁶⁷.

The movement focuses on positive affirmation, visualization, meditation and personal development practices to improve well-being and achieve material and spiritual success.

New Thought does not have a strict religious structure or a fixed set of beliefs. There are many denominations and groups that adopt similar principles, but these may vary in interpretation.

Christian Science is a religious movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the 19th century in the United States. It focuses on Bible interpretation and spiritual healing.

In Christian Science, it is taught that spiritual reality is the only true reality and the material world is illusory. By correctly understanding the divine nature of man and the world, believers can heal illness and suffering.

Christian Science promotes healing through prayer and understanding the spiritual truths of the Bible.

⁶⁶ Neal Vahle, *Open at the Top*, p. 7

⁶⁷ Glenn R. Mosley, *New Thought, Ancient Wisdom. The history and future of the New Thought movement*, Templeton Foundation Publishing, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 43-50

The main reference work is "Science and Health with Key to the Bible" written by Mary Baker Eddy.

Christian Science is based on a specific interpretation of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ, but is seen as a continuation of and an improvement on traditional Christianity.

Divine Science is a religious movement that focuses on the divine nature of the human being and its spiritual identity. It was founded in the 19th century and has links with the currents of spiritual thought of that period.

The core belief of Divine Science is that the material world is a result of divine reality and that people can achieve wellness and healing by understanding their spiritual nature.

Divine Science is based on the study of the Bible and the spiritual teachings of leaders such as Malinda Cramer and Nona Brooks, who helped develop the movement.

Central to the teachings of Divine Science is the idea that people can heal by recognizing spiritual truth and trusting in divine power. "New Thought" focuses on positive thinking and mental transformation, while "Divine Science" relies on understanding the divine nature of man and the world to achieve wellness and spiritual healing.

Religious Science, also known as "Science of Mind", is a religious movement that promotes the power of the human mind to create reality and influence health, prosperity and relationships. This movement focuses on the understanding that divinity or God is present in every human being and that humans have the power to create their lives through their thoughts and beliefs. Religious Science is based on the understanding and application of spiritual principles to achieve wellness and heal various aspects of life. The movement has a religious and organized structure, with churches and worship centers where specific Religious Science teachings are taught and practiced.

Essentially, New Thought and Religious Science encourages the idea that thoughts and mindsets can influence life and contribute to well-being. However, "New Thought" is sometimes considered more eclectic and not necessarily based on a specific doctrine or religious structure, while "Religious Science" is more structured and oriented towards a religious view of the power of the human mind and the divinity within.

IV. Missionary-Orthodox attitudes towards Scientology groups

Proponents of the doctrine of scientism believe that the boundaries of science (i.e., usually the natural sciences) can and should be extended so that something not previously understood as science can now become part of science. Thus, a possible synonym for scientism

is scientific expansionism. Exactly how the boundaries of science should be expanded and what exactly should be included within science are issues on which there is disagreement within scientological groups.

Probably scientism, in one version or another, has been around as long as there has been science. However, between about 1970 and 2000, a number of distinguished natural scientists, including Francis Crick (b. 1916), Richard Dawkins (b. 1941), and Edward O. Wilson (b. 1929), advocated scientism in one form or another. Some proponents of scientism are more ambitious than others about expanding the boundaries of science. In its most ambitious form, scientism asserts that science has no boundaries: eventually, science will answer all human problems. All tasks facing human beings will eventually be solved by science alone.⁶⁸

The most common way to define scientism is to say that it is the view that science reveals everything there is to know about reality. Scientism is an attempt to extend the boundaries of science in such a way that all genuine (as opposed to apparent) knowledge must be scientific or at least reducible to scientific knowledge. This epistemological form of scientism must be distinguished from its ontological form: the view that the only reality that exists is that to which science has access. A common way of stating ontological scientism is to claim that nothing is real except material particles and their interaction. Ontological scientism implies epistemic scientism, but epistemic scientism does not imply ontological scientism⁶⁹. This is because one can assert the view that knowledge that can be obtained by the scientific method exhausts all knowledge, and yet deny that anything not mentioned in the theories of science does not exist. This can be done because epistemic scientism does not exclude the existence of things that cannot be discovered by scientific investigation or experimentation. If such things exist, all it says is that knowledge about them cannot be obtained. Epistemic scientism sets the limits of human knowledge, but not, like ontological scientism, the limits of reality.

It is often taken for granted that scientism and traditional religions, such as Christianity and Islam, are incompatible. Scientology groups believe that religion can be compatible with the epistemic and ontological forms of scientism. Of course, from a missionary point of view we cannot accept such a conception of religion. After all, scientism denies that it is possible to obtain knowledge of God or a divine reality (epistemic scientism) and that there is a transcendent or non-physical reality beyond the physical universe (ontological scientism). While Dawkins, Crick, Wilson and others think along these lines, they may be scientifically

⁶⁸ Mikael Stenmark, *Scientism: Science, Ethics and Religion*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2001

⁶⁹ Mary Midgley, *Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and Its Meaning*, Routledge, London, 1992

mistaken. This is possible because all scientism holds is that religious beliefs must meet the same conditions as scientific hypotheses to be known, rationally credible or about anything real. Scientists like Dawkins, Crick and Wilson take it for granted that religious beliefs cannot meet these requirements, which could of course be questioned. British philosopher Richard Swinburne (b. 1934), among others, argues that theism can be confirmed by evidence in the same way that evidence supports scientific hypotheses⁷⁰. Scientism cannot therefore be equated with scientific naturalism or scientific materialism.

Another way of stretching the boundaries of science within Scientology groups is to argue that not only can science fully explain morality, but it can also replace traditional ethics and tell people how they should behave morally. Ethics can be reduced or translated into science. However, for a claim to be scientological in this sense, it must argue more than that science is relevant to ethics. No one would deny this. Rather, it must assert that science is the only, or at least the most important, source for developing a moral theory and explaining moral behavior. There are proponents of this axiological form of scientism (called value scientism) in the ranks of evolutionary biology⁷¹. Part of the idea is that evolutionary theory is rich enough to fully explain morality. The explanation is broadly that morality exists and continues to exist because it arose and continues to function as a strategy adapted to ensure the fitness of individuals or their genes. Some, like Wilson, even believe that evolutionary biologists will be able to discover a genetically correct and completely equitable ethical code, thus giving people scientific and moral knowledge.

Advocates of scientological groups may also go beyond morality and expand the boundaries of science so that religion or existential questions come within its scope. It comes very close to existential scientism which claims that science alone can explain and replace traditional religion. Dawkins, for example, argues that since the advent of modern science, people no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with profound questions such as "Is there a meaning to life?" and "What are we for?", because science is capable of addressing all these questions and is, moreover, the only alternative to superstition. Wilson argues that science can explain religion as a whole material phenomenon and suggests that scientific naturalism or materialism should replace religion.

Some supporters of Scientology groups advocate both value scientism and existential scientism. However, it is important to distinguish between these two forms. It is possible to claim that evolutionary theory is the only, or at least the most important, source for developing

⁷⁰ Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996

⁷¹ Tom Sorell, *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science*, Routledge, London, 1991

a moral theory and explaining moral behavior, while denying that biology or any other science can explain the meaning of human life or fulfill the role of religion in human life. One could argue that evolutionary theory can show what ethical principles should be used when trying to solve moral problems concerning (e.g. abortion, population growth, conflicts between people of different classes, genders or races) and stop there, thus accepting that the choice of religion or worldview is beyond the scope of science⁷².

Thus, value scientism does not imply existential scientism. Religions and worldviews generally include certain ideas about how people should live and what a good life is. If this is correct, then accepting existential scientism also implies accepting value scientism. But, on the other hand, it is perhaps possible to say that science alone can answer some existential questions, and thus that science can partly replace religion. In other words, it is questioned or denied that science can, so to speak, deliver the whole package in the form of a complete worldview. If so, one could argue, like Dawkins, that the only reason any organism lives is to be a DNA propagation machine, yet deny that science can provide ethical guidelines for how humans should conduct their lives⁷³. Science can at least answer some existential questions, but it cannot solve moral problems.

Neither value scientism nor existential scientism implies epistemic scientism or ontological scientism. It is coherent to argue that science can answer moral questions and replace traditional ethics, or that science can answer existential questions and replace traditional religion, without arguing that the only reality that can be known, or the only reality that exists, is that to which science has access. Although there is no necessary logical connection between the two later forms on the one hand and the two earlier forms of scientism on the other, they are nevertheless often combined.

This variety of forms of scientism shows that scientism should not be equated with scientific naturalism or materialism, because there are possible forms of scientism that do not imply acceptance of scientific materialism or naturalism. This variety also demonstrates that the relationship between scientism and traditional religions is not a given. Only between existential scientism and traditional religions is there a direct conflict. Other forms of scientism may be compatible with traditional religions⁷⁴.

⁷² Crick, Francis, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*, Scribners, New York, 1994

⁷³ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1989

⁷⁴ Robert Almeder, *Harmless Naturalism: The Limits of Science and the Nature of Philosophy*, Open Court, Chicago, 1998.

The main criticism of scientological groups is that their proponents, in their attempt to extend the boundaries of science, rely in their argument not only on scientific premises but also on philosophical premises and that therefore scientism is not science as such.

V. The Church's vision of dialogue with the sciences from a missionary perspective

Today, there are many approaches to the relationship between theology and science based on different perspectives. There is an approach to the relationship between different religious traditions (Jewish, Muslim, Eastern traditions) and contemporary science. There are also numerous works on the relationship between Christian theology and science. Unfortunately, an approach to the relationship between theology and science from the perspective of the Orthodox tradition, taken from an ecclesial perspective, has not yet been developed. Even where the Orthodox approach is formally invoked in research on the relationship between theology and science, the ecclesial dimension is missing.

In order to approach the dialogue between theology and science from an Orthodox perspective, it is imperative to assume and value the authentic identity of theology. Theology is not limited in its academic and rigorously conceptualized expressions. Theology presupposes an experience of prayer and liturgical life lived in the fullness of the Church. The living event that grounds the identity of Christian theology is Jesus Christ, the Truth of the whole world and the Truth of each one of us. Jesus Christ, the Logos of all creation, through His Incarnation in history, makes possible the existence of theology as an act of life embodied in the immediate experience of the Church⁷⁵.

An ecclesial hermeneutic of the typology of the relationship between theology and science cannot ignore the mystery of the Incarnation and the condition of the Fall, which is also manifested in relation to philosophy and science. Science represents a form of knowledge consequent to the garments of skin, it is an expression of knowledge marked by the fragmentation produced by sin. The object of research of science is the intelligible comprehensive world in its present form, marked by the reality of the fall into sin. Science does not have access to the study of reality before this moment.

Not even theology, in its discursive form, can express itself on the world before sin. Through contemplation, theology, as a spiritual vision, can describe that reality. While various models of the relationship between science and theology are presented in the theological

⁷⁵ Adrian Lemeni, "The Ecclesial Perspective in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science", in *Teologia*, no. 78 (1), 2019 pp. 40

literature, the ecclesial assumption of this dialogue proposes a relationship that is not mediated and conceptualised by a particular schema. It is very important to affirm in the relations between theology, philosophy and science that no abstract schema can effectively mediate these relations, precisely because of the risk of levelling them and diluting the Christian witness. The ecclesial approach to relations between theology and science insists that this kind of dialogue cannot be mediated and is not exhausted within conceptual schemes and methodologies.

An intellectual schema in the relationship between theology and science, however sophisticated, is deficient and runs the risk of creating multiple confusions. A relationship between Orthodox theology, on the one hand, and science and philosophy, on the other, cannot ignore the liturgical dimension of ecclesial experience. Discursive scientific knowledge cannot reach the natural contemplation of the rationalities of creation. Ecclesial experience shared in the comprehensive Tradition of the Church and rooted in Revelation expresses the significant criterion of an authentic articulation of Orthodox theology with science and philosophy.

The Orthodox approach to the relationship between theology and science implies the assumption of patristic and ecclesial landmarks. Considering that dialogue between Orthodox theology and science is not only possible, but also necessary, we affirm that this dialogue must be mediated by the landmarks of Orthodox gnosis structured by patristic thought and ecclesial life. It is a dialogue that Orthodoxy understands as animated by the mystery of speaking with God and whose fruits can materialize in a more comprehensive understanding of the created world, of life and man's purpose in it, through the uplifting spiritual meanings about them, in a clear openness to the scientific spirit⁷⁶.

From an Orthodox perspective, the relationship between theology and science is asymmetrical because theology is not limited to academic theology. Starting from the assumption of the ecclesial perspective, theology is the expression of the living memory of the Church's experience. An epistemological monism is overcome whereby theology and science are placed on the same level of knowledge through a homogeneity and equivalence of knowledge. From the perspective of the ecclesial Tradition, theology is not confined within the limits of theological science. Therefore, capitalizing on a relationship between theology and science from this perspective can bring a renewed richness of meaning in strengthening the consciousness of dialogue in this field.

The ecclesial assumption of the dialogue between theology and science implies an effort to identify the traces of spiritual intentionality in scientific and philosophical thought. Theology,

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 42

as an expression of spiritual and ecclesial experience, implies the experience of grace. But this experience of grace through the Holy Spirit in the mystical body of Christ generates knowledge beyond logical intentionality. By valuing the ecclesial dimension in the relationship between theology and science, we insist on the existential effort to intuit profound realities that go beyond the strictly conceptual approach⁷⁷.

The ecclesial perspective concretized in the relationship between theology and science implies wisdom as a life event, in a mystagogical key. The affirmation of the ecclesial dimension in the relationship between theology and science, as well as the comprehensive witness of the relationship between Christ - man - world, revealed by the Tradition of the Church, highlights the mystagogical aspect of ecclesial wisdom. This wisdom is experienced in the life of the Church and goes beyond a philosophical or scientific wisdom.

The ecclesial dimension of the dialogue between theology and science also involves grounding the relationship between reason and faith in the Spirit of the Holy Fathers, as well as valuing the mystery of the person. By assuming the mystery of the person, we acutely experience the awareness that the person is beyond scientifically presented objectivity. The mystagogical assumption and development of the dialogue between theology and science goes beyond an external, academic, sociological or cultic approach to this issue.

The way of assuming the Holy Fathers and the Tradition imposes the demands of an authentic ecclesial life in which the Nicene Creed cannot remain a mere external discourse, but is an act of life practiced in daily existence. The patristic perspective involves dialogue between theology and culture, theology being called to respond to human needs in a contextual way. Dialogue must not be stopped by extreme attitudes, such as intimidation or fear, or conversely, contempt and superiority. Dialogue between science and theology does not mean concordism or syncretism through which many confusions are made. An encounter between patristic gnoseology and scientific epistemology presupposes the existence and development of spiritual discernment⁷⁸.

Beyond the epistemological mutual enrichment given by a complementary vision of scientific and theological knowledge, the dialogue between theology and science, honestly completed, could be a way of developing personal relationships based on respect for otherness. A consciousness open to the creative assumption of the limits of human possibilities of research, touched by the profound mystery of creation, is a consciousness ready for science. Theology

⁷⁷ Alexei Nesteruk, *The Universe in Communion*, Ed. Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2009

⁷⁸ *Patristic landmarks in the dialogue between theology and science*, Adrian Lemeni (coord.), Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009

could strengthen this consciousness committed to the effort of assuming the truth of the world⁷⁹

Orthodoxy affirms the updating of patristic thought as essential in the contemporary world. This updating does not mean a mere textual appeal to our patristic writings, but rather a way to bring about a true inner resurrection and sharing of the Truth of the world. The Church understood as a laboratory of resurrection in which, through the Holy Liturgy, the Kingdom of God is prefigured here and now, produces a radical metanoia through which the human mind is renewed and thus knowledge does not remain the exclusive result of a critical and erudite rationality that develops scholarly theories, hermetic to the concrete needs of the human being. A theology based on the Orthodox Tradition generates creative thinking, open to life and to the needs of the contemporary world, and gives answers by assuming the same way of life as the Holy Fathers⁸⁰.

Contemporary science recognises the rationality and mystery of the world. Theology, starting from the epistemological shifts in the paradigm of contemporary science, can open an honest dialogue with science, but insisting on the fundamental particularities existing in the Orthodox tradition. A profound rationality of the world does not achieve its ultimate goal in the absence of a Person who generates and recapitulates all the profound reasons of creation. The knowledge of these final reasons, beyond any claim to scientific objectivity, means communion with the divine Logos, imitation of the communion fulfilled between the Persons of the Holy Trinity⁸¹.

The unifying perspective of the Orthodox Tradition demands an openness to the other. But this openness is not just a formal relationship, animated and sustained by mutual interests, but is strengthened by the power of holiness. The effort to achieve a holy life demands at once both the gentleness shown to the friend and the power to witness to the Truth of the Gospel. In the dialogue between theology and science, theology must not fall victim to the temptation of concordism or to the other side of the block by which it closes itself in a frustrating or aggressive way to science. Orthodox theology has no ideological position to defend, but only the redemptive Truth of the world to confess. In this way the risk of ideology, which is present in both theology and science and through which distances are invented and amplified, can be overcome.

⁷⁹ Adrian Lemeni, "The Ecclesial Perspective in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science", p. 44

⁸⁰ Alexei Nesteruk, *Light from the East*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2003

⁸¹ Adrian Lemeni, *Truth and Communion*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011

Consistent with the Patristic Tradition, Orthodox theology assumes, always hoping in the chance that God will work through everyone, but never giving up hope in the full awareness of the Truth of which it is a part. In this way one can speak of the catholicity of Orthodoxy given by a fullness of Truth that guides to holiness. But, at the same time, this catholicity is open because the one who is committed to the Way of Truth and Life, which leads to holiness, is a creature open to his friend and to the whole world. The saint prays for all his brethren and for all creation.

According to the Orthodox Tradition, the Truth can be lived most authentically in the spiritual and ecclesial experience. The Truth of the Orthodox Tradition does not require accommodation to the demands of a theory that belongs to any age. That is why Orthodoxy has no resentment towards the development of science and does not feel the need to adjust its creed according to the rigors of one theory or another, which through time is perfectible. From an ecclesial perspective, apologetics or fundamental theology should be the path of an assumed dialogue in which the great dimension of Orthodoxy is valued. In this agreement, Orthodoxy is not a confession among others, nor is Christianity merely a religion among other religions. Orthodoxy is the way of the ecclesial experience of the Truth through which eternal Life is shared, the believer living the condition of a son in relationship with God, thanks to the Incarnation of Christ, an event which causes history to be assumed in the perspective of the Resurrection.

The specific identity of the dialogue between Orthodox theology and science can only be grasped by assuming the integrating and unifying perspective of the Holy Fathers, for whom Truth is a central priority in their ecclesial knowledge, so that Truth experienced in clerical and ecclesial life becomes the fundamental criterion of apologetics. The autonomous intellect can only perceive forms of truth, pieces of conceptual truths, without access to the unitary contemplation of Truth. A partial knowledge lacking the wholeness of a clerical and ecclesial vision risks distorting the knowledge of the part. Only a knowledge understood as the power of the Holy Spirit can move the hearts and minds of people to receive Jesus Christ as the Truth of the world, possible to experience in the living experience of the Church⁸².

Truth cannot be owned, but shared. Knowledge is not merely an effort to discover truth through an intellect detached from the reality of the object being studied, but is the union of the knowing subject with the object to be known. Therefore, the sharing of divine truth is possible only through the deep love of the living community of Christ's Church. It is in love that true

⁸² Adrian Lemeni, "The Ecclesial Perspective in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science", p. 46

knowledge of the Truth is possible, and this knowledge manifests itself as love, but outside the full communion of the Holy Trinity, extended in the life of the Church, there is no fullness of love. Thus Truth can be shared in the experience of the clerical power of the ecclesial community. The Truth is revealed in the light of the Pentecost paradigm. The sharing of the Truth involves the passage from death to life, from a life enclosed within the limits of decay to a life open to incorruptibility, to holy resurrection⁸³.

Christ is not a principal truth, quantifiable at the level of a concept and generator of doctrinal systems or moral codes. Christ is the personal Truth, of each of us and of the whole world, who calls us from death to life and, at the same time, gives us the power to rise again through his victory over death. Jesus does not represent abstract doctrinal truths, but reveals Himself as the Way that leads to the Father. "I am the light of the world" (John 8:72). Confession of Truth is only possible by walking in the light of Christ. Any separation from Christ removes us from the absolute reality of the Truth revealed in the Son of God. When Pilate asks Christ, "What is truth?", the Saviour gives no definition, but confesses, "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth; everyone who is of the truth hears my voice". (John 18:37). The essence of the Gospel is the witness of the Incarnate Truth which enables us to share in the Kingdom of God.

When Christ says that He is the Truth, He does so because He is the Life that saves the world, frees it from the conditions of sin. In this way, truth is not an ontological content, assuming that true life consists in knowing God as a living communion with God. "And this is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent". (John 17:3) Christ is the Truth because he offers not only a solution to the temporary mode of existence subject to biological conditions, but he offers the way that leads to eternal life, possible to foresee in this very existence, here and now.

At a time when the relationship between theology and science tends to be associated only with the natural effort to demonstrate religious truths in an exclusively rationalistic way, for the assumption of the ecclesial perspective of knowledge, the confession of divine-humanity as a fundamental criterion is imperative. Experience in Christ, God-man, as the Truth of the world, makes it possible to overcome all illusions. Father Stăniloae says: "It is not a mistake. In this way we have come to know the Truth. We no longer consider the world as the ultimate truth, but Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the world and of men, their Redeemer from the power of death and from the dark perspective of hell [...] We have known that Christ is the Truth

⁸³ *Ibid*

from whom and to whom all things are carried. I knew that those who hold the world as supreme truth are in a lie, taking for light the darkness of an atheistic culture. I knew that those who do not know Christ as the Son of God, incarnate and light of the world, but judge him as a unique reality, are living a great lie. I knew that all the words that support this false idea are lies. I knew that just having them, we would be in eternal poverty and death"⁸⁴ .

Conclusions

The great century that passed also witnessed the emergence of scientism as a distortion of the dialogue between science and religion. Looking back, we are now in a position to say that behind all that was misleading in the new movement were certain "great truths" that contemporary man wanted to hear. Old ideas about death were overcome, the "spiritual" world was brought closer, accepting broader views of the human spirit, healing and spiritual development.

Out of the new interest came psychical research, as an effort to put phenomena in the whole field of Scientology on a scientific basis. The results were meagre and were achieved slowly. Although the entire field of psychology cannot join the field promoted by Scientology, the Church of Scientology and New Thought groups have taken advantage of it, distorting the dialogue between science and theology.

Psychology, in the sense that we now use the term, did not exist when the New Thought and Scientology movement began. We are now so accustomed to the psychological viewpoint on any subject of public interest that we forget how recent it is. It took modern science, then the theory of evolution, with its attempt to explain mental life on a biological basis, and the gradual transfer of interest to the inner life for psychology to take hold. The terms "suggestion", "subconscious" and the other words we use so freely are very new indeed. The old intellectualism in psychology prevailed for the most part during the nineteenth century. When, finally, a psychological laboratory was established, it was in the name of a physiological point of view, and, like many other theories imported from Germany, we must still estimate the physiological theory at its true value. In the end, it may seem as far from the truth as the idealism and criticism which we are about to examine again.

If psychology is a sign of the times, we can very well say that it is developing and more discoveries will be made in this scientific field. Pseudo-psychology belonging to the Church of Scientology and New Thought is essentially practical and differs decisively from that science

⁸⁴ Pr. Dumitru Staniloae, *Jesus Christ, the light of the world and the indulger of man*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucharest, 1993, p. 79

which holds that the inner life is entirely determined by the brain. Scientology movements promote mental healing without regard to psychology as a scientific field and its findings.

The New Age began in part as a reaction against authority in favour of individualism and the right to test faith through personal experience. By acquiring the right to think for oneself in religious matters, man also acquired the freedom to live according to his beliefs. Inner experience has taken its rightful place as a means of testing even the most exclusive teachings of the Church. The seat of authority has been found by some in human reason, and by others in what the Quakers call the inner light. Thus inner guidance paved the way for another, more spiritual phase of liberalism. The Emersonian idea of self-reliance is an expression of this belief in the light that shines for the individual in the sanctuary of the soul. After the mental healing movement had been going on for half a century, its adherents saw in Ralph Waldo Emerson a prophet of ideas for which they worked in their own way, each in the sphere of his own experience.

This emphasis on inner experience is a sign of contemporary man who is able to identify and appreciate 19th century individualism. It was necessary for man, affected by secularisation, to 'earn the right' to think for himself, to test things for himself and to become aware of his subjective life in contrast to his objective one. Contemporary man is eager to prove that the individual has survived death, that a spirit can return and establish its identity. He has also had to argue for the freedom of the individual in contrast to the tendency of evolutionism to regard man as a product of heredity and environment. The whole modern view of success has grown up around a new conception of the individual. Today's society, afflicted by desacralization, advocates the individual man in many ways and has done so ever since modern science revealed the theory of physical force, its laws, processes and conditions.

But the 20th century took a long step beyond the individualism with which the modern liberal movement began. This period marks a 'breakthrough' not only beyond the theoretical idealism that emphasised Thought as the only reality, but also beyond all kinds of theory that emphasised the subjective. Contemporary man has entered the inner world to gain new knowledge, to acquire the psychological point of view, to discover the psyche, to learn about suggestion and the subconscious. He had to learn that all real development comes from the inside out, according to these laws

The history of the Scientology movement is, for the most part, a record of one of the few contemporary movements for the inner life and the individual. To trace this history is to identify in it a striving for knowledge and power which the individual takes for granted. The man of today, to a certain extent, has come to have the present social point of view. It was the

war, more than any other event of the last century, that provided the contrast through which man understands the subjectivism of the nineteenth century. As a result, it became clear that all true peace is social. The nation was brought out of its isolation into prominence as a world power to secure this greater and lasting peace. As a result, man mistakenly realized that justice is only social. He has also come to the conclusion that the moral and spiritual are neither subjective nor objective, but they are social.

Scientologists' thinking about God has become practical, concrete. This newer conception of God also fits in with modern man's desire to test everything for himself, to feel in his own life what man claims to have felt in the past and which has uplifted him. Thus Scientological practices follow as a natural consequence of the newer idea of man.

Liberalism, which "liberated" man from the old theology, left him free to draw on all the sources of known religions for himself. In the practical sense of the word, we can say that the new thinking is intended to witness a return to the original Christianity of the Gospels. The great work of religious liberalism in the nineteenth century was to "liberate" the world from theologies it was never meant to believe in. The emphasis was on the social aspect of Christian teaching.

The spirit of Scientology is to ensure that what is spiritual must be spiritually discerned. It emphasizes leadership, life, and believes that it is only through social salvation that wholeness can be achieved.

Scientology movements have a pseudo-therapeutic dimension. Their founders have fought hard with the authorities for recognition as therapeutic movements, some of them having to advocate very radical views to get attention. Thus, Christian Science had to perform a function in contrast to the materialism of the age, bringing new heretical teachings into the mainstream resulting in a syncretism between science and theology.

As a reaction against 19th century materialism in favour of "spiritual healing", we could hardly trace the history of the New Thought without remembering the context in which it arose, namely as a protest, led by people who worked "to alleviate human evils" considered to be different from an intellectual protest such as religious liberalism. It was seen as a protest in the name of life and a call for leadership.

Scientology groups are seen as a "client cult", i.e. when the religion offers some kind of service or therapy to people if they join. The auditing process can be seen as a pseudo-therapeutic service as it promotes becoming the best version of a person. This triggers the never-ending question of whether Scientology is a valid religion or a degrading cult. A counterargument against it is that because the church is tax-exempt, some may say it is a

"money-making endeavor." When the authorities granted them tax exemption, Scientology groups were turned into a major business.

In conclusion, the opportunities Scientology groups offer for a better life are misleading. The dangerousness of the groups is that it is very difficult for a member to leave the movement and they have to disconnect from family or friends if they are not part of the group. Scientology groups are a pseudo-religion and pseudo-science and are obvious representatives of the syncretism between science and religion. Even though today's man may think that these movements may be an escape to better himself, it is very important that he knows more about Scientology movements and their beliefs.

This paper has shown that Scientology pseudo-religious groups represent a perversion and distortion of the dialogue between theology and science because they are manipulative and syncretistic, degenerating the two fundamental fields of human knowledge, theology and science.

Bibliography

A. BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC SOURCES

1. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27.66, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1980
2. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, 4.18.5, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1*, Hendrickson Publishing, Peabody, 1995
3. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 2 on Hebrews*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 14. Edited by Philip Schaff, Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, 1889
4. St. Athanasius the Great, *Three words against the Arians*, in PSB 15, published by the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the BOR, Bucharest, 1987.
5. Saint John Damaschin, *Dogmatica*, Scripta Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993
6. Saint John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*, Sophia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2022
7. St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, in PSB vol. 23, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1994

B. DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

8. Elwell, Walter A. , *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, 2001

9. Chopra, Ramesh, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary Of Religion*, Isha Books, Rajarajeshwari Nagar,
10. Nguyen, Trung, *History of Humans*, EnCognitive, 2016
11. Djupe, Paul A.; Olson, Laura R., *Encyclopedia of American Religion and Politics*, Facts On File, Inc.
12. Craig, Edward, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Routledge, London, 1998
13. Fahlbusch, Erwin; Bromiley, Geoffrey William; *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 4, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999
14. Gordon, Haim, *Dictionary of Existentialism*, Routledge. Taylor & Francis, London, 2013
15. Singh, Nagendra Kr, *Encyclopaedia of Gods and Goddesses*, Anmol publishing, Delhi, 2000
16. *An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present*, Patrick J. Hayes (ed.), ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2016
17. Benowitz, June Melby, *Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2017.
18. *Chambers Dictionary of Science & Technology*, Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 2007
19. Clarke, Peter, *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis, London and New York, 2006
20. Dufour, Xavier Leon, *Dictionnaire de Nouveau Testament*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1996
21. Macey, David, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*, Penguin Books, London, 2001
22. Melton, J. Gordon, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Gale, Farmington Hills, 2009
23. *Religions of the world. A comprehensive Encyclopedia of beliefs and practices*, J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (eds), ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2010
24. *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Routledge, London, 2005
25. Ionescu, Răzvan Andrei; Adrian Lemeni, *Dictionary of Orthodox Theology and Science*, Doxologia Publishing House, Iasi, 2016
26. Stevenson, Angus; Maurice Waite, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011

C. TEXTBOOKS

27. Abbott, Deborah, *The Christian Science Tradition: Religious Beliefs and Healthcare Decisions*, Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith, and Ethics, Chicago, 1996.
28. Achimescu N., *New Religious Movements*, Limes Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2002
29. Adams, George, *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Series 2, The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, 1950
30. Albanese, Catherine L., *America, religions and religion*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, 1981
31. Alexander, D., *Creation or Evolution. Must we choose?*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010
32. Alfeyev, Hilarion, *Orthodox Christianity*, vol. II, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Yonkers, 2012
33. Almeder, Robert, *Harmless Naturalism: The Limits of Science and the Nature of Philosophy*, Open Court, Chicago, 1998.
34. Brunner, E., *Offenbarung und Vernunft*, Zwingli Verlag, Zurich, 1941
35. Buican, D., *The Evolutionary Revolution*, Editura Stiintifica, Bucharest, 1994
36. Burke, K., *On Human Nature*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003
37. Burrell, Maurice, *The Challenge of the Cults*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1982
38. Cabada, Castro M., *Thought*, vol. 39, 1983
39. Carter, Craig, *How to Use the Power of Mind in Everyday Life*, Science of Mind Publications, Los Angeles, 1978
40. Chardin Teilhard de, Pierre, *Christology and Evolution*, Harcourt, San Diego, 1971
41. Dawes, Gregory, *Galileo and the Conflict between Religion and Science*, Routledge, New York, 2016
42. Dawkins, Richard, *The God Delusion*, Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston, 2006
43. Dawkins, Richard, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989
44. Dresser, Horatio W., *The Quimby Manuscripts*, Cosimo Classics, New York, 2007
45. Holmes, Ernest, George P. Bendall, *The Ernest Holmes Papers A Collection of Three Inspirational Classics*, Penguin Publishing Group, New York, 2014
46. Holmes, Ernest, *Living the Science of Mind*, DeVorss & Company, Camarillo, 1984
47. Holmes, Ernest, *The Basic Ideas of Science of Mind*, Science of Mind Publications, Los Angeles, 1971
48. Hubbard, Ron, *Dianetics. Modern Science of Mental Health*, Excalibur Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009

49. Hubbard, Ron, *Dianetics: The Original Thesis*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007
50. Hubbard, Ron, *Science of Survival*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007
51. Hubbard, Ron, *Scientology: A History of Man*, New Era Publications, Copenhagen, 2007
52. Nicolescu, Basarab, *Science, Meaning and Evolution-Essay on Jakob Bohme*, Vitruviu Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000
53. Nicolescu, Basarab, *Transdisciplinaritatea: Manifest*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 1999, p. 173
54. Nicolescu, Basarab, *We, the Particle and the World*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2002
55. Peel, Robert, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority*, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1977
56. Peels, Rik, *Monotheism and Fundamentalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023
57. Schur, E. M., *Our criminal society*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1969
58. Silberger, Julius, *Mary Baker Eddy: An Interpretive Biography of the Founder of Christian Science*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1980
59. Simonyi, K., *A Cultural History of Physics*, CRC Press, Boca Raton. 2012
60. Sofronie, Archimandrite, *The Birth into the Unfallen Kingdom*, Reîntregirea Publishing House, Alba-Iulia, 2003
61. Taşnadi, Alexandru, *Econoteologia*, vol. 1, Eco Print Publishing House, Satu-Mare, 2016
62. Taylor, C.A., *Defining Science: A Rhetoric of Demarcation*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, 1996
63. Thomas, Aled, *Free Zone Scientology. Contesting the Boundaries of a New Religion*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2021
64. WCC Publications, Geneva, 1996
65. Wegner, Daniel, *The Illusion of Conscious Will*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2002
66. Westbrook, Donald A., *Among the Scientologists History, Theology, and Praxis*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018
67. Williams, Raymond, *A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983
68. Wilson Bryan R., *Sects and Society: A Sociological Study of the Elim Tabernacle, Christian Science, and Christadelphians*, University of California Press, Oakland, 1961

D.STUDIES AND ARTICLES

69. "Answers to Questions" in *The Christian Science Journal*, issue 1, no. 6, 1884
70. "Letters from the People" in rev. *The Christian Science Journal*, issue. 1 no. 3, 1883
71. "Religion et libre pensee", in: *La petite Gironde*, 24 May 1901
72. "The Church of Scientology", letter to *The Sunday Times*, 28 December 1969
73. Andersen, Peter B.; Rie Wellendorf, "Community "in Scientology and among Scientologists", in *Scientology*, 2009
74. Brown, Mackenzie, "Colonial and Post-Colonial Elaborations of Avataric Evolutionism" in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, no.42, issue 3, 2007
75. Campbell, Colin, "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization." in *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization*, Helene Loow; Jeffrey Kaplan and (eds.) Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira, 2002.
76. Campbell, John H., "Evolving Concepts of Multigene Families," in *Genetics and Evolution*, vol. 10, 1983
77. Cantor, Geoffrey; Kenny, Chris, "Barbour's Fourfold Way: Problems with His Taxonomy of Science-religion Relationships", in rev. *Zygon*, no. 36, issue, 4, 2001
78. De Ridder, Jeroen, "Science and Scientism in Popular Science Writing" in *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective*, no. 3, issue 12, 2014
79. Deacon, B., "The biomedical model of mental disorder: A critical analysis of its validity, utility, and effects on psychotherapy research" in *Clinical Psychology Review*, no. 33(7), 2013
80. Draper, Paul, "God, Science, and Naturalism", in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*, William Wainwright (ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005
81. Einstein, Albert, "Religion and Science" in *The New York Times Magazine*, 9 November 1930
82. Forrest, Barbara, "Methodological Naturalism and Philosophical Naturalism: Clarifying the Connection" in re. *Philo*, n. 3, issue, 2, 2000
83. Lemeni, Adrian, "The Ecclesial Perspective in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science", in *Teologia*, no. 78 (1), 2019
84. Nicolescu, Basarab, "Transdisciplinarity as a Methodological Framework for Going beyond the Science-Religion Debate." *Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion*, no. 2, 2007
85. Passas, N., Anomie and corporate deviance. *Contemporary Crises*, no. 14, 1990

86. Pedersen, M. S.; S. Orlovská; M. E., Mortensen; M.E. Benros, "Head Injury as Risk Factor for Psychiatric Disorders: A Nationwide Register-Based Follow-Up Study of 113,906 Persons With Head Injury" in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* , 171 (4)
87. Peel, Robert, "*Science and Health* and the Bible" in *The Bible and Bibles in America*, Scholars Press, Atlanta 1988
88. Peels, Rik, "A Conceptual Map of Scientism" In *Scientism: Prospects and Problems*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2018.
89. Peels, Rik, "Scientism and scientific fundamentalism: what science can learn from mainstream religion", in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, Routledge, London, New York, 2022