From fides quarens intellectum to fides quarens sapientia: Revisiting and reformulating for the public good Anselmus' famous formulation within a contemporary theology-science perspective

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The influential formulation of fides quaerens intellectum (faith seeking understanding) by the Italian Benedictine monk was seminal first in matters of theology and secondly in its appreciation of the role of logic. The study argues that all three concepts (faith, seeking, and understanding) as understood by the 11th century Anselm - who contextually stood not only in the deep shade of Neo-platonic thought, but also at the dawn of the theological renaissance of the twelfth century – are in need of revision and reformulation for reasons indicated in the study. The most important two reasons are represented by the radical shifts occurred since the 11th century in theological reflection and methodologies, especially in the last century through evolutionary perspectives within theology-science discourses; and also the deep critical reflective unmasking of immunisation strategies regarding accountability in theological reflection.

Keywords: Philanthropy; Anselm of Canterbury; fides quarens intellectum; fides quarens sapiential; theology-science dialogue

1. Introduction

To do something for the public good to improve other people's lives, is most probably the best known and general acceptable description of philanthropy. The "love of humanity" as it is directly translated from its Greek roots, begs the question on how we are to find, discern what it then philosophically-theologically entails; how are we in our different contexts to reflect on its significance, and how is this "love for humanity" to find concrete expression? The latter with regard to concrete examples and suggested guidelines are not my concern for the following exposition. My deepest concern is on theological reflection, its nature and methodologies, and specifically on accountability, that is, to do it responsibly and for the public good. That – in my academic opinion – is the most crucial determining factor in realising responsibly and publicly our philanthropically concerns and subsequent discernment, and then specifically: within the context of contemporary theology-science discourses. Put differently: In reflecting on the philosophical ("love for wisdom") meaning and theological ("words about God") exploration of philanthropy, how can we on the one hand argumentatively turn the "love for wisdom" around to acting from the "wisdom of love" with discernment in a responsible manner? And on the other hand: How can such contextual-social discernment, as "words about God" be held

accountable for the public good?

In most contemporary Christian academic theological discourses on the nature of theological reflection and theological method, whether in Africa, Asia or Americas and Europe, the influential formulation of *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) by the Italian Benedictine monk of the Catholic Church, St. Anselm of Canterbury (1093-1109) is quoted and utilised as one of the most influential descriptions.[1] To give but one recent European example[2]. In his widely respected textbook *Christian Theology* (2017) already in its sixth edition by the British theologian Alister McGrath, he remarks in reference to the treatise *Proslogion*[3] (1079) of Anselm that his "work anticipates the best aspects of scholastic theology" (McGrath 2017:31). For McGrath, his treatise is of importance for two specific reasons, namely firstly on account of his clear appeal to reason in matters of theology and secondly its appreciation of the role of logic.[4] On the phrase *faith seeking understanding* he notes that it "has passed into wide-spread use" (McGrath 2017:31), and it is used mostly in conjunction with a second phrase, namely *credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order that I may understand). To add to McGrath's remark and to give but one older example from my South African context. Almost three decades ago, the South African spirited apartheidsfighter and systematic theologian John de Gruchy (1939-) wrote on the nature, necessity and task of theology. He quotes Anselm's prayer of "I believe in order to understand", preceding it with the following important statement:

> With the foundation of the universities in the Middle Ages in Europe, the study of theology as scientific discipline was established. Indeed, theology was regarded as the 'queen of sciences' because it provided a hierarchical and holistic framework within which all other forms of knowledge could be located. One of the major theologians of this period, Anselm of Canterbury, provides the bridge for us between theology as spirituality and theology as a science. This can be seen from the fact that his theology is cast in the form of a prayer to God, although it is a highly rational discussion (De Gruchy 1994:5)

Theological reflection as rational discussion in prayer format, driven by the hearts longing for a deeper understanding of God! This is indeed an impressive "heart"ful. My primary aim is not a thorough in-depth analysis of the philosophical-theological context and viewpoint of Anselm, but a contextual re-interpretation and re-formulation of his *fides quarens intellectum* to *fides quarens sapientia*, and then specifically within the context of contemporary science-theology discourses.[5]

It will be argued firstly that all three concepts (faith, seeking, and understanding) as understood by the 11th century Anselm - who contextually stood not only in the deep shade of Neo-platonic thought, but also at the dawn of the theological renaissance of the twelfth century – are in need of revision and reformulation for reasons as indicated below. The most important two reasons being the radical shifts since the 11th century that have occurred in theological reflection and methodologies, especially in the last century through evolutionary perspectives within theology-science discourses; and also the deep critical reflective unmasking of immunisation strategies regarding accountability in theological reflection. Secondly it will be argued in the light (or darkness?) of the preceding revision of *faith, seeking and understanding* on what it entails for each concept respectively, and on why the third concept should be replaced by the concept of wisdom if integrated and critically utilised within contemporary science-theological discourses. The replacement of *understanding* with *wisdom* actually comes unintentionally from Anselm's (1077-78:87) himself, namely the remark in his *Proslogion*, stating at the start that he sets out to convince "'the fool', that is, the person who has said in his heart, 'There is no God' (Psalm 14:1; 53:1)". My directive for replacing *understanding* with *wisdom* is thus prompted by Anselm himself since over against foolishness stands wisdom – although it will not be my motivation for its replacement. Its motivation is rather embedded in and emerges from the evolutionary context of *Homo sapiens* and the question on hand, namely off responsible reflection on philanthropy. Lastly it will be argued that the revision is not simply an academic exercise without any contextual importance, but serve an important contribution to the public good of the significance and role of theological reflection within our pluralistic societies with regard to accountability.

But who is the 11th century passionate monk Anselm that wanted to convince the fool that says there is no God? A few historical-contextual notes must suffice.

2. Anselm

2.1. Unrestful beginnings[6]

After his earlier deep disappointment at aged 15 of not being able to enter a monastery without the consent of his father, the young boy from Aosta (then part of the Carolingian Kingdom of Arles) left his home aged 23 and wandered for three years aimlessly through Burgundy and France until he reached Normandy in 1059. He returned home after the death of his father and entered the abbey as a novice aged 27. Three years later he was elected as prior of Bec. Fifteen years later in 1078 he was elected as Bec's abbott. Under his direction, it became the foremost seat of learning in Europe. The most prominent characteristic of his works that followed was his conviction and understanding of the Christian tenets of faith as revealed truths to be captured in a rational system. For him, faith necessarily precedes reason, but then carefully qualified: reason can expand upon faith as an active love of God that seeks a deeper knowledge of God[7]. And from this formulation followed his explication of the attributes of God. It is in this period that he wrote the work in question, namely *Proslogion*[8] in which the phrase *faith seeking understanding* appeared. In 1093 he was appointed as archbishop of Canterbury. Numerous conflicts regarding reform followed, especially with William Rufus and his brother, Henry that brought about a first and second period of exile for Anselm. He however finally returned to England 1106 where he died on the 21 April 1109.

2.2 Conceptual revisitation

The three particular concepts utilised by Anselm in the 11th century, namely *faith, seeking* and *understanding* should each be revisited in the 21st century for two main reasons[9], namely firstly because of the radical shifts that have occurred in theological reflection and methodologies, especially through evolutionary (epistemological) perspectives within theology-science discourses.[10] Secondly because off the deep critical reflective unmasking of immunisation strategies regarding accountability in theological reflection within discourses on the science of philosophy.

Theological reflection and methodologies *after Darwin*[11] and *after Kuhn*[12] and with the exploration and pursue of evolutionary epistemological discourses, have not only lost their status as "queen of the sciences", but also their well-established - up to this historical point - untouchable revelatory claims and nestled innocence.[13] The "queen of sciences" was crudely expelled from her "garden of Eden" of universal and philosophical abstract anthropological and cosmological reflection. At the very same time, she was forced into numerous and unsettling ways to engage with a dynamic reality in which embodied personhood, that is, beings of flesh and blood in pluralistic contexts were to be re-considered, re-valued in their (re-)making sense of this dynamic reality and their human distinctiveness. The "afters" were reflectively taken very seriously by the influential German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014). For him, theological-anthropological reflection within theology-science discourses were no longer possible in isolationistic manners but defines and explores human distinctiveness through reflection on the place of humanity in nature and specifically through a comparison of an ontological closeness between the human and animal world (cf. Pannenberg 1985:27). Convinced by his teacher, one of Pannenberg's students', Wentzel van Huyssteen[14] (1997:1) radically posed the self-critical question by asking whether "Christian theology, as a disciplined reflection on religious experience, can ever really claim to join this postmodern conversation, and if it does, will it be able to maintain its identity in the conversation without retreating to an esoteric world of private, insular knowledge claims?". Not only was *willingness* and *ability* at stake for Van Huyssteen, but also methodology, namely "..(h)ow does theological reflection relate to other modes of intellectual inquiry, and especially to natural scientific knowledge, which very often is accepted unchallenged as the ultimate paradigm of human rationality in our times?" (Van Huyssteen1997:1-2). The spear point of the revision is thus whether Christian theological reflection can ultimately join the current epistemological (evolutionary) discourses with integrity and responsibility? I turn to the question.

2.3 Brief history of Homo sapiens, our biological roots and rationality[15]

The story of human evolution goes back more than six million years. It is a fascinating story of highly intelligent primates that has been labelled by Carl Linnaeus in his 18th-century work *Systema Naturae* with the scientific description: *Homo sapiens*, that is, "wise person". Embedded in the labelling already lies an important indication – even though only being one of them - of what characterises "being human" or "what makes us human": amongst others, wisdom. I return to the concept of wisdom after firstly attending to biological roots off rationality, embedded in our evolutionary history.

I am often spontaneously reminded of this fascinating story of human evolution driving pass the paleo-anthropological site called the Cradle of Humankind in Gauteng, South Africa.[16] Also my home here in Africa. Reminded by these very limestones caves (Sterkfontein Caves) and the closed by Rising Star Cave of our unfolding history stretching back more than 2 million years. Early fossil evidence of *Homo sapiens* appeared around 300 000 years ago and began to show evidence of behavioural modernity at least by about 100 000 - 70 000 years ago. Moving from Africa and subsequently spreading all over the world. The evolutionary success of *Homo Sapiens* can be found in a number of anatomical and physical features, namely the larger, well developed brain which enables advanced abstract reasoning, language, problem solving, sociality, and culture through social learning. But there is even more to that in comparison to the animal world: *Homo sapiens* uses tools more frequently and effectively than any other animal. They also build fires, cook food, clothe themselves, and create and use numerous other technologies and arts.

What is the most important dimension of *Homo sapiens* that I would like to take from the preceding brief notes – since there is so much more to be told but it must suffice - on their evolutionary history? From my chosen and stated focus on revisiting Anselm's "faith seeking understanding", and his specific emphasis on the role and importance of reason as well as on the Christian tenets of faith as revealed truths that had to be explicated in a rational system, I will specifically look at rationality *after Darwin* and *after Kuhn*. Van Huyssteen (1998:xiii-iv) captures the dimension that I will focus on well in reference to evolutionary epistemology and reflection within theology-science discourses:

> Evolutionary epistemology ... reveals the biological roots of all human rationality and should therefore lead precisely to an interdisciplinary account of our epistemic activities. The basic assumption of evolutionary epistemology is that we humans, like all other beings, result from evolutionary processes and that, consequently, our mental capacities are constrained and shaped by the mechanism of biological evolution.

How can these implications from evolutionary epistemology be explicated more closely with regards to our viewpoints on rationality, and specifically for the concepts *faith*, *seeking* (that is, our methodologies) and the understanding of *understanding*?

2.4 Even more after than "After Darwin": Becoming and niche[17]

In contemporary discourses on our evolutionary history, two keywords will serve as vantage point for the following explication, namely "becoming" and "niche". Since Darwin's original theory of evolution that was formulated more than 160

years ago, it has insightfully and dramatically evolved. Therefore my formulation of *Even more after than "After Darwin"*! In the contemporary *Extended Evolutionary Synthesis* (ESS), Darwin's theory is not only understood through a variety of lenses, but has also been excitingly broadened. Convincingly it argues that evolution is much more than the inheritance of genes.

The variety of lenses and its broadening have unearthed the influential totalising discourses on the insistence of natural selection as a creative force as well as opened up new exciting interpretative anthropological horizons. The former, namely EES has taken on and revised the classical understanding of Darwin's evolutionary theory in that "becoming human" restrictively entails past fitness, potentials and survival mechanisms in which natural selection and sexual selection were taken as the key factors in change and adaptations for evolutionary success over a period of time (cf. Van Huyssteen 2018:26). In their important revision of evolutionary theory, Eva Jablonka and Marion Lamb (2005) argue convincingly in *Evolution in Four Dimensions* that apart from genes, three other inheritance systems come into evolutionary play.

Alongside the important genetic inheritance system, Jablonka and Lamb (cf. 2005:1-8) argue for three other inheritance systems that may also have causal roles in evolutionary change, namely epigenetic, behavioural, and symbolic inheritance. What important implications flow from this broadening of traditional evolutionary theory? Evolution is now much more than simply the inheritance of genes. Behaviour and behavioural patterns are vehicles of the transmission of information, and its transmission occurs through socially mediated learning. Language not only ensures symbolic inheritance, but also the ability to engage in complex information transfer containing a high density of information (cf. Jablonka and Lamb 2005:193-231). And here emerges a special and distinct human trait, namely the organisation, transferral and acquisition of information. In short: It is our ability to think and communicate through words and other types of symbols that makes "being human" different. And even more enlightening flowing from the broadening (read: extension) of traditional evolutionary theory, is niche construction, that is, the important implication that variation on which natural selection acts is not always random in origin or blind to function. As response to the conditions of life, a new heritable variation can arise. Niche construction entails the insight that organisms are constructed in development, not simply programmed to develop by genes, and consequently do not evolve to fit into pre-existing environments but co-construct and co-evolve with their environments (see Fuentes 2016:13ff). In this, humans construct ecological, technical, and cultural niches that influence the structure of evolutionary landscapes (cf. Fuentes 2016:14). Subsequently the following question arises: What then does the co-construction and co-evolvement entail, especially in reference to the experience of Transcendence and of faith?

2.4 Religious imagination and the naturalness of religion

In the period from about 2.5 million to 12 000 years ago (the so called Pleistocene period), we find a significant evolvement of increasing complexities – as briefly mentioned before - regarding culture and social traditions, tool and manufacture, trade and the use of fire. But even more: enhanced infant survival, predator avoidance, increased habitat exploitation and information transfer via material technologies (cf. Van Huyssteen 2018: 28). In reference to Augustin Fuentes' article "Human Evolution, Niche Complexity, and the Emergence of a Distinctively Human Imagination", Van Huyssteen (2018:28) insightfully summarises the implications:

> All of these increasing complexities are tied directly to a rapidly evolving human cognition and social structure that require greater cooperative capabilities and coordination within human communities. Thinking of these developments as specific outcomes of a niche construction actually provides a mechanism, as well as a context, for the evolution of multifaceted response capabilities and coordination within communities.
>
> And:
>
> (T)the emergence of language and a fully developed theory of mind with high levels of intentionality, empathy, moral awareness, symbolic thought, and social unity would be impossible without an extremely cooperative and mutually integrated social system in combination with enhanced cognitive and communicative capacities as our core adaptive niche (Van Huyssteen 2018:29).

The key part of our evolutionary niches, and perhaps the best explanation for why our species succeeded and all other hominins went extinct, is a distinctively human imagination as intrinsic evolutionary force. There is not only a naturalness to human imagination, but also to religious imagination and it makes our engagement with the world in some ways truly distinct from any other animals. Van Huyssteen (2018:29-30) concludes:

> Now existing in a landscape where the material and social elements have semiotic properties, and where communication and action can potentially be influenced by representations of both past and future behaviour, implies the possession of an imagination, and even something like hope, i.e., the expectation of future outcomes beyond the predictable.

The crucial question becomes how we put together our representations (read: our reflections and methodologies) in a responsible manner and how we can be held accountable for our representations.

2.5 Seeking, intelligibility and fall from epistemological innocence

How can contemporary methodological *seeking* and accountability be explicated within science –theology discourses from the perspective of evolutionary epistemology? There is

neither an easy nor a quick answer, although there are currently many exciting and creative efforts and proposals[18]. I find strong affinity with the impressive and wide-ranging proposal of Wentzel van Huyssteen in his published Gifford lectures, namely *Alone in the World? Human Uniqueness in Science and Theology* (2006) in which he focuses on the notion of human uniqueness or distinctiveness[19] in science and theology. He argues for an interdisciplinary approach in which theological anthropology has much to learn from humans' (biological) origins, from the dimension of meaning in which *Homo sapiens* have always existed, and from our close relationship to other animals. I turn to his proposal – also incorporating some of his other writings - on human distinctiveness, labelled as postfoundational and ultimately determined by a very specific understanding of human rationality, namely as transversal reasoning.

Relating theological reflection to other modes of intellectual inquiry, becomes for Van Huyssteen on the one hand a quest for intelligibility and on the other hand it entails a fall from epistemological innocence. The former, namely the quest for intelligibility, finds expression in interdisciplinarity (specifically of theology and science). In this sense Van Huyssteen sees his own theological design as public theology, that is, a theology on a journey to find its public voice (cf. Van Huyssteen 2017:143). The latter, namely the fall from epistemological innocence, entails the acknowledgement that science cannot claim rationality at the expense of religious faith and theological reflection (Van Huyssteen 1999:2). They share rational resources. We should rather be exploring the epistemological questions of the nature of explanations and explanatory claims, operative in different disciplines (see Reynhout 2006:8). Van Huyssteen coins the term "post-foundationalism" to refer to his own attempt to split the difference between foundationalist certainty and non-foundationalist relativism by being contextual, but also intersubjective, committed but also fallibilist, provisional but also explanatory.

With his postfoundationalist notion of rationality comes three "eye-openers" from a quite unique link between theology and the sciences with regard to contextual roots, interpreted experience and boundaries. The **first** eye-opener relates to context, that is, that theology and the sciences, albeit in different domains of human culture, are contextually rooted. The **second** eye-opener relates to epistemology, that is, the shaping role of interpreted experience and tradition. How and why and from where we say what we say about God, the world and our relationships shapes the values – epistemic and non-epistemic – of our reflection. The **third** eye-opener relates to interdisciplinarity, that is, the crossing over or transgression of disciplinary boundaries to widen and deepen our reflection. The latter Van Huyssteen (see 1999:8-9) brands – following Calvin Schragg – as "transversal". Transversality is characterised by the interpretative linking together and extension of various discourses, modes of thoughts, and action. Transversality not only represents the convergence of our multiple beliefs and practices, our habits of thought and attitudes, our prejudices and assessments, but it also reveals the shared resources of our respective reflective strategies and reasoning (see Van Huyssteen 1999:136). For the postfoundationalist Van Huyssteen (1997:136), a new and promising understanding of interdisciplinary dialogue now emerges: In interdisciplinary conversation the degree of transversality achieved will ultimately depend on the effectiveness of our dialogue across the boundaries of different domains, and on the understanding we achieve in our interaction with one another. How is the interaction to be understood, and how is it achieved?

The understanding – as indicated earlier – of human rationality from our biological roots, that is, our mental activities are constrained and shaped by the mechanism of biological evolution, leads precisely to an interdisciplinary account of all of our epistemic activities. The interdisciplinary discourse that unfolds finds concrete expression in two related endeavours. The first entails the developing of a comprehensive epistemology (characterised by biological rootedness, that is, all knowledge is grounded in human evolution). The second endeavour entails the exploration of human distinctiveness (where no single defining characteristic of what it means to be human can be taken) across and over the boundaries of the respective disciplines (that is, theological and scientific reflection finding a shared research trajectory). From these two related endeavours flow two specific epistemological liberations, namely epistemic narcissism (only our way of coming to knowledge is valid) and epistemological tribulism (our gathered knowledge in our specific domain captures all there is to acknowledge). Thus, from the shared trajectory between theological and scientific interdisciplinary reflection on human distinctiveness[20] convincingly emerges – as the result of interactions between early humans and their lifeworlds – a human propensity for metaphysical and religious belief.[21] What then is his transversal answer to what makes us human? For him the answer points to the "self" and "personhood". Taking early hominid evolution as his vantage point, he argues that some of our most distinctive traits like consciousness, imagination, sexuality, moral awareness, language, and the religious disposition, present us with a robust notion of embodied personhood, which strongly affirms the emergence of symbolic religious behaviour (Van Huyssteen 2017:157).

2.6 From understanding to wisdom and publicness

Our history as *Homo sapiens* and the emergence of symbolic behaviour, enhances and qualifies subsequently our *understanding of understanding*. It should be qualified as rational discernment of embodied personhood as "wise person" in a responsible and public way (that is because of the shared epistemic resources) in makings sense of the reality that we are experiencing. Rationality, transversally acting for knowledge, in this experiential and symbolic sense should be characterised and qualified as wisdom.[22] My remark needs elaboration.

Traditionally, according to Fuentes & Deane-Drummond (2018a:1), wisdom is often said in the humanities and social sciences to be an inner capacity that serves to ensure the quality of the community, including practical wisdom as well as more transcendent forms of wisdom. In evolutionary anthropology, wisdom is mostly defined as

> the pattern (and ability) of successful complex decision-making in navigating social networks and dynamic niches in human communities. It is suggested that much of the core development of human wisdom occurred with the evolutionary advent of symbolic thought and its correlated material evidence (Fuentes & Deane-Drummond 2018a:1).

In her article on wisdom that forms part of the insightful conference publication *Evolution of Wisdom: Major and Minor Keys*, the American theologian Angela Carpenter[23] (2018) comments. Navigating social networks and dynamic niches in human communities is precisely what makes us unique as humans, and that is the knowledge that is available to us culturally and our ability to rely on, transmit and gradually improve that knowledge. It is knowledge as cultural information (with cognitive skills) to successfully preserve and use that information for survival in their own social niche. That is not simply raw intelligence and rationality, but traditions of wisdom (cf. Carpenter 2018:8). 8). It is all about collective reasoning. Wisdom is not just about knowledge, pure understanding, but is also about the social context, knowing who to trust, about mutual-self-giving and it is about reasoning that takes place not independently but in trusting dialogue and sincere friendship. It is a kind of wisdom to recognise the limitations of one's own reason and to accept from others that which is far greater than one could attain independently. In reference to Anselm's "faith seeking understanding", Carpenter (2018:11) follows the interpretation of the English theologian and poet, John Henry Newman (1801-1890). According to Carpenter (2018:11), Newman characterises this human pursuit in terms of the gifts of faith and wisdom:

> Faith is the first gift in human knowledge of God and wisdom is the last. It is wisdom that seeks out the connection between the things that are known, that systematizes them and in process enlarges the mind. The wise person is not the one who believes, but the one who believes and then also understands.

My motivation thus for replacing understanding with wisdom within the theology-science discursive context comes from this important interpretative connection. But why specifically adding the prescriptive qualification of publicness to wisdom?

Given the shared resources, shared epistemic activities and accepting from others that which is far greater than one could attain independently in our complex sense-making (or decision making) of reality, leads consciously away from the ever lurking danger of sophisticated immunisation strategies into "publicness". Let me explain "publicness" with regard to theological reflection (see Veldsman 2017; Veldsman 2020b). Theology is *made up* of people, that is, theological reflection as an activity of a community of enquirers that take place within the spaces of our communicative practices and the dynamics of our lifeworld involvements. As communities, situated in concrete and specific social-cultural historical context, we have to acknowledge from contemporary hermeneutical discourses and insights that we engage with our contexts from a vantage point of interpreted experiences. Our quests and discernments for intelligibility and ultimate meaning within our lifeworlds and / or on our sites of struggle, are (rational) activities shaped by rational agents and epistemic values. In these very activities, we share – and we should! - common resources of rationality, that is, cognitive, evaluative and pragmatic resources[24]. Put differently: The "stuff" that discernment – and subsequently our articulations and disclosures – are made off, are public. In our very pluralistic contexts and often intense sites of struggle in which we do our theological reflection and make theological statements, we will unavoidably have to start our conversations by bringing our views, convictions, and judgements to those with who we are sharing immediate and also different lifeworlds. In philosophical terms: With those that make up our epistemic communities (cf. Veldsman 2017).

3. Concluding remarks

From the preceding conceptual revisitation of Anselm's *fides quarens intellectum* from an evolutionary perspective, the following concluding remarks can be made. In my academic opinion, Anselm's formulation remains theologically very helpful and applicable as descriptive phrase for theological methodologies and reflection in spite of deep philosophical-theological shifts over the last 10 centuries. However, with the Anselmian intent to convince the fool, new revised content from an evolutionary perspective can now be associated with each concept - except for the concept of *understanding*. It is proposed from the preceding explication that it should be replaced by the concept *wisdom*. Therefore: *fides quarens sapientia*.

Faith (and the plural *faiths* will also be useful if applied in a pluralistic context) can interpretatively understood as the faith of embodied persons stemming from the naturalness of religious experience and finding expression in witness to Transcendence. *Seeking* can interpretatively understood as the rational activity of communities to express our concrete and contextual religious experiences from our shared resources in a responsible manner and to be held accountable for all we say regarding our religious experiences. And as rational activities shaped by rational agents and shared epistemic values, it can be best done transversally. Done transversally to enable on the one hand addressing immunisation strategies, and on the other hand, to be captured as the understanding and expression of our religious experiences in public as *wisdom,* that is, as skilled practice (science) and as discernment. In this manner and with the revised content, my reformulation is not simply an academic exercise without any contextual importance. Definitely not! It serves as "love for humanity" (philanthropy) an important contribution to the public good of the significance and role of theological reflection within our pluralistic societies with regard to accountability – and to act from the "wisdom of love" irrespective whether the "wise persons" find themselves in Africa, Americas, Asia or Europe.

Notes:

1. Perhaps not quite as famous and well-known, but preceding Anselm's description with more than 9 centuries is the Latin formulation on the same (understanding) note by Augustine of Hippo (354–430), namely *crede ut intelligas* (believe that you may understand). The phrase most probably comes from his *Tractate XXIX.* For Augustine, knowledge of God comes before faith in Him. But then with the important qualification added: Faith in God brings with it a constant desire (or seeking) for deeper understanding.
2. An older excellent example of the importance attached to the phrase by Anselm is to be found in the title of his introduction to Christian theology, namely the American theologian Daniel L. Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding* (2004). Migliore (1935-) is professor emeritus of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, United States of America. His book has been for more than a decade at many theological institutions all over the world a standard introduction to Christian theology.
3. McGrath (2017:30) says that the Latin description of the treatise *Proslogion* is" virtually untranslatable". Anselm (1077–78:83) himself however calls it an allocution, that is, a hortatory address, and describes it as faith in quest of understanding, and later calls it an address on God's existence.
4. For these very reasons Anselm is seen by many as the most important theologian in the period from Augustine (5th century) to Aquinas (13th century).
5. My proposed revision and re-formulation of Anselm's influential phrase, is not the first effort in doing so. To name but one earlier important effort more than sixty years ago, is that of the internationally acclaimed German theologian Jürgen Moltmann (1926 -) in his *Theology of Hope* where he argued and suggested *spes quarens intellectum, spero, ut intelligam* (Moltmann 1969:22), that is*, hope seeks understanding, I hope in order to understand*. For an insightful discussion of Moltmann's proposed revision see Braaten (2016:36ff).
6. The brief historical data on Anselm that follows has been selected, reworked and shortened from Williams (2016) and the Wikipedia article on Anselm of Canterbury.
7. With heart-gripping passion, Anselm (1077-1078;84-86) writes in the introductory paragraphs of his *Proslogian:* "Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek you, where and how to find you..... Let me seek you in desiring you; let me desire you in seeking you. Let me find you in loving you, let me love You in finding you".
8. Anselm's *Proslogion* is best known for what was later labelled by Kant as his "ontological argument" for the existence of God. In his argument he characterises God as *the being than which none greater can be thought.* Originally, it was simply called *Anselm's Argument* until the baptising of his argument 7 centuries later by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).
9. The two main reasons do not imply that there are not many other reasons to pursue and which cannot be valued off equal importance. No, there are but these two are emphasised since they are implicated by my preceding choice to revisit and reformulate Anselm's emphasis on rationality within contemporary science-theology discourses.
10. A recent and helpful contribution on the shifts and challenges, is the article on faith and evolution by the South African theologian Ernst Conradie (2018). He identifies and discuss six shifting challenges for theology relating to the historicity of the biblical creation narratives, the nature of divine action, human distinctiveness, the benevolence of the Creator, the fall of humanity, divine election and atheism.
11. *After Darwin* is constituted by his publication *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859).
12. *After Kuhn* is constituted by his publication *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).
13. With the description of "nestled innocence", I have in mind the conviction within many theological and church traditions that because of revelatory truths, theological reflection is no need for public accountability!
14. The South African theologian Wentzel van Huyssteen (1942-) was the James I. McCord Professor of Theology and Science at Princeton Theological Seminary (United States of America) from 1992-2014. After his retirement, he returned to South Africa where he was appointed as an extra-ordinary professor at the University of Stellenbosch. He is also a research-associate of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria. Van Huyssteen represent in my academic opinion one of the contemporary pattern setters regarding models of rationality within theology-science discourses.
15. In the following exposition, I make use and have reworked previous research from Veldsman (2020a:2020c)
16. The Cradle of Humankind was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1999.
17. For this section, I am making use off and reworking recent research that has been published earlier in the year (Veldsman 2020a; 2020b;2020c).
18. To cite but two recent insightful and helpful contributions: The American biological anthropologist Agustín Fuentes (2017*) The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans Exceptional* and the The Dutch theologian Gijsbert van den Brink's (2017) *En de Aarde Bracht Voort: Christelijk Geloof en Evolutie*.
19. I will be using the two terms uniqueness and distinctiveness as synonyms.
20. Within the Christian tradition the doctrine of the *imago Dei* represents the most influential anthropological concept for Van Huyssteen, and he subsequently argues for a creative rethinking of the notion of *imago Dei*. It is a creative re-thinking of *imago Dei* and of emerged human distinctiveness that on the one hand provides an argument for the plausibility and comprehensive nature of religious and theological explanations for a phenomenon as complex as *Homo sapiens* (see Van Huyssteen 2006:113ff.). Scientific notions of human distinctiveness, on the other hand, help us to ground theological notions of human distinctiveness in the reality of flesh-and-blood, real-life, embodied experiences. It is this very creative interdisciplinary rethinking that enables theological reflection to steer clearly and insightfully away from overly complex abstractions.
21. Van Huyssteen's own re-thinking of human distinctiveness creatively unfolds from contemporary paleo-anthropology (Van Huyssteen 2006:163-215). The prehistory of the human mind reveals the remarkable cognitive fluidity (a concept that he has taken over from Steven Mithen) of our mental abilities. Subsequently Van Huyssteen widens his interdisciplinary discourse, engaging linguistics, neuroscience and neuropsychology. Three important insights unfold, namely the naturalness of religious awareness (that is, our emergent capacity for spirituality)

as universal human attribute, the significance of religious imagination and a revisiting and interdisciplinary re-thinking of the notion of imago Dei. The most important emphasis of Van Huyssteen's (see 2006:261ff.) creative re-thinking can be summarised in his interdisciplinary proposal on human uniqueness, that is, on personhood in terms of imagination, symbolic propensities and cognitive fluidity. And on this very point, Van Huyssteen's close argumentative connection with Pannenberg's earlier quoted plea surfaces clearly, namely that it is a proposal that is undertaken from humanity's close ties with the animal world.

22. Since Anselm with his earlier mentioned emphasis on his intent to convince the fool, prompted my focus on wisdom, my motivation and use of the concept of wisdom is deeply and gratefully embedded in the conference publication of *Human Distinctiveness: Wisdom's Deep Evolution*. The conference was held at the Notre Dame London Global Gateway in July 2017. It was the culmination of the transdisciplinary Evolution of Wisdom research project supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation and led by Celia Deane-Drummond and Augustin Fuentes at the University of Notre Dame. A collection of articles that originated from the papers presented at the conference was published by the Centre for Theology, Science, and Human Flourishing, University of Notre Dame as e-book *Evolution of Wisdom: Major and Minor Keys*. In their publication, we find an insightful explorations of the role of wisdom for the characterisation of "being human".
23. Carpenter teaches theology at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, United States of America.
24. In this sense we all are and should be – without choice - "public theologians", that is, we do not have any privileged Garden-of-Eden epistemological positions that we can engage from with our contexts (see Veldsman 2017).

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