

## **PREFACE**

*The South African Science and Religion Forum (SASRF) was established in 1993 as a project of the Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR) at Unisa. The idea was to establish an inter-disciplinary forum where theologians, natural scientists and all interested could enter into dialogue on issues of mutual concern. This much neglected debate has revived world-wide over the last couple of years. Some of the factors which contributed to this are the realisation of the inter-relatedness of knowledge, developments in quantum mechanics, space age technology and chaos theory, a realisation of the effect of changing world-views, the fact that science modified the content of culture, and so on. While science seems to offer some models of interpretation to re-contextualise the biblical creation stories, religion offers the spiritual dimension many scientists look for against which to portray their findings. The SASRF is an open forum inviting people from different belief-systems, various scientific paradigms and diverse cultural backgrounds to share their views and findings. The SASRF keeps close contact with similar efforts abroad and has invited leading figures in the past to contribute to its programme. In 1997 attention will be given to the place of African cosmology and faith in this debate.*

*The 1996 SASRF theme was World-views in opposition: interaction of beliefs and values in science and religion. The idea was to ponder on the interaction between religious and natural scientific world-views. This was discussed from the perspectives of different religions.*

*Although we all have our world-views by which we live, it is difficult for many to precisely describe their world-view and motivate why exactly they hold to such a specific world-view. We are also aware of conflicting aspects within our own world-view and differences between our world-view and that of others, for example those sharing perhaps the same workplace as we do. Even within a relatively fixed world like that of natural science, there are many world-views active. How do they interact with each other and how do they affect the lens through which we see our world today? Are we unduly influenced by modernism which often alludes to a natural scientific world-view to strengthen its claims? How can globalism and contextual values be reconciled? Often we are not aware of the multiplicity of factors eroding and influencing our world-view or of values which are shaped by our world-view.*

*This publication is the outcome of some of the research findings of the 1996 SASRF. The hope is expressed that it may stimulate interest in the theme and participation in the Science and Religion dialogue.*

*Cornel du Toit*