

II. CHRISTIAN FIRST PRINCIPLES: BEING AND KNOWING

A. CHRISTIAN FIRST PRINCIPLES REGARDING BEING

1. Orientation: Philosophical Views of Being

In philosophy, the question of Being is discussed under the heading of Metaphysics or Ontology (currently used interchangeably). Metaphysics asks the question, "What is the nature of ultimate reality?"

a. Definition of Some Relevant Terms

- (1) **ultimate** - that being or reality which cannot be reduced to some more basic reality than itself
- (2) **being** - any existing entity or object; the totality of existing things
- (3) **ontology** - the study of the essential properties, nature, and relations of being in itself; the study of being as being
- (4) **metaphysics** - the study of ultimate being, which attempts to answer the question, "What is the nature of being as being?"

b. Abstract Description of Various Types of Metaphysical Views

Metaphysics or Ontology considers two basic components of being: qualitative and quantitative

The quantitative component deals with the question, "How many beings exist?"

For purposes of classification, we consider 3 basic answers:

One being:	monism
Two beings:	dualism
More beings:	pluralism

The qualitative component deals with the questions, "How many different kinds of beings exist?" and "What is the nature of these beings?"

For purposes of classification, we consider 3 basic answers for the number of kinds:

One kind:	monism
Two kinds:	dualism
More kinds:	pluralism