Who is the Human Being? An Ecumenical Approach to Theological Anthropology

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Introduction

During the coronavirus lockdown in the Czech Republic, a group of us prepared an online art competition and exhibition that we entitled "God, who are human beings that you remember them?". Similarly to the exhibition, our book is also inspired by the psalmist's question: "what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (Ps. 8:5). Our question, though, is importantly a little altered: "who" is the human being, not "what". Perhaps this is similar to another question in the Gospels which Jesus asks of his disciples: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Mt 16:13).[1] Our primary interest is not in what constitutes the human being – be it from clay and spirit, or from body, soul and spirit, or if the human being is a living body and enlivened spirit, or only body. We will also touch on these questions, but our search will lead us first in other directions. The Hebrew word *mâh*, which is used in Psalm 8, does not mean only "what" but also "how", "why" or "when". This broadened semantic field is very important for the way in which the whole book is conceived.

This book is about theological anthropology. That means that its central theme is the human being in relation to God and – in the light of that relationship – to everything else, to other people, to creatures, to the places in which we live, to nature, to culture, to society, to religion. Its starting point is the assumption that precisely in this relationship and in these relationships the different dimensions of what it means to be human are revealed and in this way we come to understand who we are. Part of that understanding is obviously tradition, which has given us words and symbols for our experiences and ideas, much earlier than we began to be aware of them. Talk about the human being, like talk about God, is never neutral, but always in some way concrete. Our discourse about the human being is theological, Christian, and within Christianity ecumenical. It has as its starting point the Bible and tradition as a diverse but nevertheless common heritage. The authors of this book come from different churches, and include Protestants, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Evangelicals and Hussites, and their different perspectives echo in each of their chapters. Theological anthropology, as we present it in this book, is also an interdisciplinary subject within theology. The writers of the chapters include Biblical scholars, systematic and practical theologians, philosophers of religion, those involved in religious studies, people working in spirituality, ritual, political theology and ethics. In spite of the variety of confessions and disciplines, our intention has not been to compare our perspectives, and certainly not to judge which is the best or try to create some single artificial perspective. We have tried rather to get our voices in harmony, to find a common rhythm.

Going back to Psalm 8, we could say that the first part of this book begins with questions formed by the unusual grammatical formulation "How is the human being?" It seeks an explanation for why we cannot correctly understand human beings if we isolate them as individuals and if we reduce relationships to some inessential appendix. It shows why precisely relationship, freedom, understanding, and communication are central for "how" the human being is. In addition, it looks at how the human being lives in speech, in stories, symbols, and rituals, and how these contribute to who the human being is. In the second part of the book we move to the question "Why are human beings here? What are they created for?" In the first place this part begins from a relatively short and clear theological answer: the

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[1] See also Mk 8:27 and Lk 9:18.

human being is not God, but is created for the glory of God, to be like God, to be a co-labourer with God, to love God and care for all the rest of creation. This unequivocally theologically given meaning and aim of life does not however correspond to the lived experiences that we people and our world are full of ambiguities, of good and evil, in which we share.

The authors of each of the chapters were thus confronted with another question: When is a human being a human being? Theological anthropology in our shared understanding differentiates between the image of God, which we are, and the likeness of God into which we grow – or which we betray. The creation of human beings in the image of God is here seen as the foundational gift of humankind, possessed by every human being, but at the same time it reminds us that not everyone is like God. It also shows us when not being like God also means being inhuman. This emphasis is visible across the Christian theological tradition in its various forms. The concrete forms of discernment of when the human being lives in God and when not, when he or she is moving towards full humanity and when not, are, however, several. The authors of the chapters dealing with gender, spirituality, and ethics lead the reader to think about what we really need to discern, how human freedom and responsibility enter into our discernment and the place of those values and authorities on the basis of which we orient our actions.

The book works with a whole range of images from the Bible and tradition, but for now we can go back to the Psalms, which help us see why there are opposing characteristics joined together in the search for the "who" of the human being, which, taken as a whole, go beyond a black and white image. In the Psalms there is a huge difference between the one who seeks the face of God (Ps 24:6),[2] the one who "fears" God (31:20),[3] and the one who "serves worthless idols" (Ps 31:6); or between the one who has an upright and pure heart (7:10, 51:12), "those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart" (Ps 15:2), and those who are "evildoers", who "speak lies…, [and are] bloodthirsty and deceitful" (Ps 5:6-7). At the same time the Psalms are acutely aware that these contradictory characteristics can be found in some form not only with the spaces in which we live and in relationships but also within each one of us.

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[2] Elsewhere we hear of asking about the "will of God" (Ps 9:11). But this term has been very problematic within reception history. On the one hand, it has offered the possibility of human beings moving out beyond their self-centred interests. On the other hand, references to the will of God have been used to further the most diverse ideologies, which were then used to oppress human freedom and creativity. Nietzsche, Marx and Freud rightly criticised these caricatures of the relationship of the human being to God and to the will of God. Paul Ricoeur even found a positive meaning to their "hermeneutics of suspicion" and to those forms of atheism which led to the death of false presentations of the will of God. See Paul Ricoeur: *Symbolism of Evil* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1967), 350–352, 356; Paul Ricoeur: *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evaston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1974), 440, 446.

[3] This brings a further image of God, one that carries negative connotations for people today: God as a despot who arouses fear. For a good critique of this image, see Karl Frielingsdorf, *Falešné představy o Bohu* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2010), 117–129, 148. But fear of God is not exhausted with the false images. The depth of this image is touched on, for example, by St John Climacus, who exhorts his reader: "We should fear God as we fear wild animals… We should love God as we love our friends", John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1992), 77 (= John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* 1, PG 88:637D). A similar image can be found in the psalmists, who consider fear of God as "the beginning of wisdom" (Ps 111:10) For them the fear of God means that human beings act justly, because they believe that it corresponds to a higher power and that the God whom people fear is actually their friend, one who loves humanity, who is close to them, protects them, blesses them, responds to their good desires. See, for example, Pss 15:4; 25:12; 67:8; 85:10; 103:11–17; 128:1; 145:19; 147:11.

Other factors also come into play in understanding the differences. People discern differently from positions of power and from positions of powerlessness. They also experience differently the tension between the irrevocable value of the humanity of each person and the call for humanity where it is missing.[4] Gender identity is part of how we see the journey to a full realization of who we are and who we can be. The landscape in which we dwell, the culture and society of which we are part, religious tradition, the church, the times in which we live, all of these contribute to the ways in which we discern, how we decide what to discern, to the models on the basis of which we create our ideas about what it means to grow to the likeness of God or move further away from it. Context means a lot, but it is not all. There is always also "someone", who is thrown into that context and who shares in its formation, be it with different works or different power. And there is also a further "Someone", foundational and inspiring for all relationships and their positive possibilities, Someone who sends to the world that he created ever-new creative energy, who continuously creates this world and us within it.[5]

Who are we writing for?

For many centuries theological anthropology was not a separate treatise within Christian doctrine, that is to say, a comprehensive, well-structured area that would summarise the foundations of right belief, as was the case, for example, in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, creation, redemption, sanctification, the church, the sacraments, the communion of saints, or eschatology. Nevertheless teaching about the human being formed part of each of these different treatises.

When the first Church Councils looked at the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, they had, at the same time, to consider what humanity is, what it meant that God had become human, and what it meant that the God-Man had been crucified, raised from the dead and taken into the glory of God and that he took humanity with him into the glory of God.[6] This earlier insight was echoed by St Irenaeus according to whom the living human

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[4] Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the foremost liberation theologians, writes: "The question is not how to speak of God in a world which has moved away from religious ideas, but rather how to proclaim the Father in a world that is inhuman, and what the consequences are of telling the 'non-people' that they are children of God": Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 57.

[5] See Dumitru Stăniloae: *The Experience of God: The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* II *The World: Creation and Deification* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), 206–207. On the other hand, Stăniloae also opens up the possibility that where violence and corruption grow, God can take some of his energy from such a world, but as in the story of the Fall, this never happens without at the same time opening up new ways of salvation and working with people on them. See ibid., 189.

[6] Parallels between the first human being, Adam and Jesus Christ, renewer of our humanity, are found already in Paul: Rom 5:14, 1Cor 15:22.42–58, 2Cor 5:17; similarly we find teaching that we are adopted as children of God, in Paul's language often more gender-specifically as "sons of God": see Rom 8:12–17.22–23; Eph 3:12; Gal 3:26–29; there is also teaching about how humanity is re-formed in the following of Christ – see 1Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1Thess 1:6; how humanity is one with Christ, see Rom 8:10; 13:14; Cor 15:22.53; Eph 2:6; Col 3:3–4, that this is the new creation, see 2Cor 5:12; Gal 4:19, transformed by God's life-giving power, see 2 Cor 5:4, pervaded with all the fullness of God, see Eph 3:19. According to the author of the Second Letter of Peter, we, people, have the promise of participation in the divine nature (2Pet 1:4), whilst in the First Letter of John we read that, when Christ reveals himself in glory, we will be like him (1Jn 3:2).

being who searches for God is at the same time the glory of God,[7] and the teaching of St Athanasius that God became human in order to renew the unity of human beings with God.[8]

The theologians of the first centuries saw God's grace as a permanent inclination to human beings, as active help in need, and as a guide for the whole of life's journey. It was only later that questions arose as to whether God's grace overshadows human nature or cooperates with it. Augustine's attempt to underline the significance of the spiritual life had its shadow side, one that would influence the theological anthropology of the following centuries, with its negative attitude towards the body, and especially to human sexuality and associated ideas about gender inequality. Augustine's teaching about predestination and freedom, about the church triumphant and militant, is simultaneously teaching about human beings.[9] When scholastic theology sought how to relate together the concepts of the world and the existence of God or when it formulated a Christian metaphysics rooted in Platonism or in Aristotle, it touched on anthropological themes.[10]

In the twelfth century the Cistercian monk Joachim of Fiore interpreted the Book of Revelation to develop his theory of the age of the Spirit, in which people will be so inspired by the Spirit that they will not need any prior form of institutional mediation but will live a contemplative life, drawing freely and in love on the wisdom of God. In doing this, he spoke of the Spirit but also of humanity.[11] Likewise, in fourteenth-century Byzantium, the Hesychast controversies were not only about spiritual experience and the theological distinction between God's essence, which remains hidden, and God's energies, which can be grasped, but also about the understanding of the human being and the reality of human participation in God.[12] And in Spain in the sixteenth century, when groups were persecuted because they believed that they had experienced enlightenment by the Spirit (which led to them being called "*alumbrados*", "the enlightened"),[13] this was not just because they concentrated on the relationship between the Spirit and Church, but it also had to do with the understanding of the communal dimension of humanity and questions of spiritual freedom.

Reformation attempts to strengthen God's transcendence, to divorce faith in God from causal relationships, to liberate Christians from the idea that that could deserve something from God, also had something to say about who the human being was, even if only a sinner touched by

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[7] The Latin reads "*Gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei.*" Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses, IV* Ed. Adelin Rousseau – Bertrand Hemmerdinger – Louis Doutreleau et al. (Paris: Cerf, 1965), 648. (= *AdvHaer* 4.20.7).

[8] "Αὐτός γαρ ενηνθρώπησεν, ίνα ημείς θεοποιηθώμεν". St Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* 54:3; cf. John 1:1–14. See also Andrew Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology", in: *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* Ed. Michael J. Christensen – Jeffery A. Wittung. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 32–44, at 34.

[9] Here an important role was played by Augustine's concept of grace, one that had a vast, and not always good influence in the history of theology. See Augustine's writings *Ad Valentinum et cum illo monachos de gratia et libero arbitrio liber unus* and *Ad Simplicianum de diversis quaestionibus libri duo*; cf. Lenka Karfíková, *Milost a vůle podle Augustina* (Praha: Oikúmené, 2006).

[10] See for example Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.1.vi.viii, I.2.i–iii; Bonaventure, *Hexaemeron* II.9.xxvi, *De scientia Christi* IV.

[11] See Joachim of Fiore: *Liber de concordia* 5.84 (Venice: 1519), fol. 112rb; *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, fol. 37va. See also Bernard McGinn, "Introduction: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Culture", in *A Companion to Joachim of Fiore,* ed. Matthias Reidl, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1–19.

[12] Gregory Palamas, *Triad* III.ii.13; III.iii.12; Gregory Palamas, *The Triads,* ed. John Meyendorff (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 99, 109; *Homily* 34 (*PG* 151:428C–429A).

[13] See Alistair Hamilton: *Heresy and Mysticism in 16th Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992).

grace,[14] or a creature who had to learn to respect the majesty of God.[15] The Reformation brought both a stepping back from collective thought and a move towards an emphasis on the individual, the desacralisation of institutions, an emphasis on Christian ethics and on the internal experience of faith,[16] as well as protests against the most varied forms of determinism[17] and struggles over the respect for human freedom and solidarity.

These examples demonstrate precisely how theological consideration of the human being is linked with other theological treatises and also with spiritual and church practice. But our aim here is not to offer the reader a historical overview, but rather to look briefly at some representative streams and authors of the second half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, to show the theological-anthropological debate in which our book is involved.[18]

Protestant theological anthropology at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries drew on the experience of missionaries and their work on other continents and on the disintegrating imperial division of the world. It used their descriptions of different cultures, as well as their attempts to delineate what culture is, how it forms people and the role the human being plays in it.[19] This led it back to questions about the nature of the human and the sense of the human life journey, which was, for theologians, necessarily linked with God. This theme was found at the end of the first half of the twentieth century in the work of the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who published one of the first specialised books on theological anthropology, *The Nature and Fate of Man*.[20]

A further important impetus came from dialectical theology. This tried to explain in a more explicitly anthropological way the traditional themes of Protestant theology, the relation between sin and grace, determinism and freedom. At the same time it also drew on modern

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[14] In his work *On Christian Freedom* (1520) Luther developed a binary anthropology, according to which individuals are absolute sinners *coram hominibus* and absolutely justified *coram Deo* (WA 7, 50, 3). Similarly in his early lectures on Romans (1515–1516) Luther had already noted that after receiving alien justification (*aliena iustitia*) people are at one and the same time genuinely sinners and graced: "In reality they are sinners but in hope they are justified" (WA 56, 269, 29–30).

[15] In F. M. Dobiáš' 1951 Czech translation of Calvin's *Institutes*, see especially 62–70, 208–210. John Calvin, *Instituce, učení křesťanského náboženství*, trans. F. M. Dobiáš, (Praha: Komenského evangelická fakulta bohoslovecká, 1951).

[16] See, for example, the Puritans, with their stress on ethics and pietism which emphasised the part played by a shared personal experience of faith.

[17] Descartes did not exclude faith in God, but who God is changes into an innate idea, the supreme principle. God does not enter actively into the world that he created. He is not the final certainty on which everything else could be founded. Along with the understanding of God, that of the human being also changed. For Descartes, the human being is a thinking subject, who, by understanding natural laws is enabled to become the ruler of nature. See René Descartes: *Rozprava o metodě* (Praha: Laichter, 1933), 36; *Meditace o první filosofii* (Praha: Oikúmené, 2003), 44–46, 49.

[18] This is treated in a very accessible fashion by, for example, Susan A. Ross, who tries to reformulate the classic themes in contemporary language. She takes the reader through biblical and earlier Christian sources, examples from the Middle Ages and Reformation theological anthropology, as well as modern and post-modern themes and authors. See Susan A. Ross, *Anthropology: Seeking Light and Beauty* (Engaging Theology: Catholic Perspectives) (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

[19] According to Edward Tylor, culture included "knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Edward B. Tylor: *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom* I, (New York: Henry Holt, 1874), 1.

[20] This two-volume study resulted from his 1939 Gifford Lectures: see Reinhold Niebuhr: *The Nature and Destiny of Man I-II* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941–1943).

philosophy of history, existentialism and personalism. It reacted both to the First World War and then to the rise of Nazism. It representatives tried in a number of different ways to bring into relationship divine revelation and the human situation in a wounded world. When they spoke about God, they always spoke also about humanity, and vice-versa. Karl Barth emphasised that when people attempted to attain to God, they created idols. But according to him they are created to hear how God addresses them as "Thou". God saves humanity from his side. He became human so that we would be able to live with all our relationships in covenant with God.[21] Emil Brunner investigated the reasons for the alienation of humanity from God, from the other, from self, whilst also asserting that the self-revealing God works with contact points between humanity and God. He further drew attention to the continuing traces of freedom and the capacity of the human being to enter into loving relationships.[22]

Paul Tillich introduced to the dialectic relationship on the one hand the existential situation of the human being and the struggle over what is most important in life, and on the other hand the symbolic tradition of the Christian understanding of God's revelation. Tillich returned again to the theme of culture. He brought together the understanding and sharing of humanity in the power of being, as this is presented in culture and philosophy, and in religion with its symbolic tradition. Culture and philosophy, according to him, give human beings language to express their situation and their existential questions. Religious symbols mediate God's revelation and lead human beings to a new light, where they can find fundamental answers concerning who God is and who they are without God, with God, in God.[23]

The theological anthropology of the next generation integrated new themes and influences. Wolfhart Pannenberg engaged in a dialogue with the natural sciences and with the methodology of analytic philosophy.[24] Jürgen Moltmann entered into conversation with Marxist analyses of society, with liberation theology, ecology, Orthodox theology and with the tradition of Christian mysticism. In his theology human beings bear the image of the world and of God, with the relationship to God giving them a hope that cannot be reduced to naïve optimism, but which is translated into human action on behalf of others and on behalf of nature.[25] The theologian and left-wing political activist Dorothee Sölle followed a similar path, as she reflected on the question of who the human being is, whilst protesting against nuclear

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[21] Karl Barth: *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III/2.

[22] See Emil Brunner*: Der Mensch im Widerspruch: die christliche Lehre vom wahren und vom wirklichen Menschen* (Berlin: Furche Verlag, 1937); *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology* (London: Lutterworth, 1939).

[23] See Paul Tillich: *Theology and Culture,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, 42; "Philosophy and Theology", "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion", "The Problem of Theological Method", "Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality", in: *Main Works IV* (Berlin – New York: De Gruyter – Evangelisches Verlag, 1987), 279–288; 301–312; 357–388

[24] See, for example, Wolfhart Pannenberg: *Was ist der Mensch?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962); *What is Man?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); *Anthropologie in theologischer Perspektiv* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (London: T&T Clark, 1985).

[25] See Jürgen Moltmann: *Theologie der Hoffnung* (13th ed.), (Gütersloh: Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997); *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM, 1967); *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM, 1975); *God in Creation* (London: SCM, 1985); *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCM, 1992); *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 2000).

weapons, against poverty in the Third World, or engaging in feminist theology or mediating the liberative potential of Christian mysticism.[26]

The dialogue with the natural sciences has been continued by Philip Hefner, who has also studied evolution. His starting point in this is the concept of the human being as co-creator with God. The work of God and the work of humankind, according to him, are imprinted not only on human culture but also on nature and on human nature.[27] Further trends are seen in understandings of people as beings formed by cultural and social relationships, which reflect the Triune God in the human being,[28] and in interdisciplinary concepts of human nature.[29] The concept of human embodiedness, which radically rejects the dualism between bodily and spiritual realities, has seen a whole range of works in the Anglo-American world. These are inspired by analytic philosophy, contemporary biology, and neurosciences. According to Nancey Murphy it is not enough just to do away with the superiority, in theological understandings of the person, of mind over body, or with the enmity between these two poles of our humanity. The spiritual and psychological life of the person, according to Murphy, cannot be reduced to the material, but neither can they be pushed into some form of independence, given that they are always expressed in the life of the body.[30]

David Kelsey's two-volume anthropology, one of the most significant contributions to contemporary theological anthropology, proceeds in a similar fashion. Kelsey takes as his basis the Wisdom tradition in the Bible, especially Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and the Psalms. In place of the origins, of which the narratives of creation in Genesis speak, and from which Christian teaching on being (ontology) would develop, Kelsey concentrates on our concrete daily experience (the quotidian as he calls it) and shows that we live from gifted breath and borrowed time, and that we are not isolated individuals but that we are fundamentally linked.[31]

Modern Orthodox theological anthropology was inspired on the one hand by the return to the Church Fathers and on the other by the dialogue with German Idealism, Romanticism and later with Existentialism. Here anthropology brought together an emphasis on love and freedom. Their open dialectic was based on human integrity and the example of life in

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[26] See Dorothee Sölle: *Politische Theologie* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1982); *Political Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1974); *The Strength of the Weak: Toward a Christian Feminist Identity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984); *On Earth as in Heaven: A Liberation Spirituality of Sharing* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993); *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001).

[27] See Philip Hefner: *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture and Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2000).

[28] See Alistair I. McFadyen: *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Stanley Grenz: *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001). Other Evangelical authors, though informed by the current debates, adopt more classical approaches to theological anthropology. See Marc Cortez: *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010); *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

[29] See Hans Schwarz: *The Human Being: A Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), and also, for example, Leslie Stevenson (ed.), *The Study of Human Nature: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Leslie Stevenson – David L. Haberman, *Ten Theories of Human Nature* (Third Ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Michael Welker: *The Depth of the Human Person. A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

[30] See Nancey Murphy: *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[31] David H. Kelsey: *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology I-II* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

community.[32] The nineteenth-century Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky, inspired the subsequent generation of theologians with his emphasis on the contrast between all too visible human misery and the impoverished beauty of Christ that redeems.[33] Vladimir Solovyov contributed the cosmically-oriented concept of Pan-unity. The human being was part of this and at the same time its divinely appointed mediator. Solovyov here closely linked Christology and anthropology and added to it his mystical experience of encounter with the Wisdom of God, Sophia.[34] This sophiological anthropology was continued by Sergii Bulgakov,[35] whilst the theme of freedom as the fundamental element of humanity was developed by Nikolai Berdyaev.[36] Both had a strong influence on post-Revolution Orthodox theological anthropology in exile,[37] offering ways in which to read the tradition of the Church Fathers. Nicholas Afanasiev and after him especially Alexander Schmemann placed the human being within the Eucharistic celebration of the church, arguing that the key to the symbolic understanding of who the person is in relation to the world and to God could be found there. Schmemann's liturgical and eschatologically oriented theological anthropology criticised the dualism of body and matter, spiritual life and world, and in contrast emphasised the participation of the person in God and the ties between the world, the Church and the Kingdom of God.[38]

In his ascetically oriented theology Vladimir Lossky interprets the human being on the basis of antinomy, that is, the opposing principles that the person bears within and which lead to a mystical centre in which God in Christ renews humanity through the Spirit.[39] Olivier Clément was convinced that ascetical praxis could help human beings to open themselves to transpersonal Being. Human beings, for him, contain nature in their own nature and are persons with responsibility for the world. In the human heart, as the centre of the person, the humanity of the human being is renewed, because the living God is active there.[40] The relationship between the human being and other people and nature is also emphasised by the Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae. According to him, autonomy does not necessarily mean freedom, since it can also lead to isolation and thus to the loss of freedom, to the falling

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[32] Viz Ivan Vasiljevič Kirejevskij: О необходимости и возможности новых начал для философии, in: *Полное Собрание Сочинений* I (Moskva: Puť, 1911), 223–264; English: "On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles in Philosophy", in: *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader* Ed. Boris Jakim – Robert Bird. (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), 233–273; Alexej Chomjakov: *Jedna církev* (Olomouc: Refugium, 2006).

[33] Fyodor Michailovich Dostoevsky: *Идіотъ* (R. Замысловскаго, 1874); Czech translation: Fedor Michajlovič Dostojevskij: *Idiot*, trans. Stanislav Minařík (Praha: Dobrovský, 2014).

[34] See Vladimir Solovjov: *Čtení o boholidství* (Velehrad: Refugium, 2000); *Filosofické základy komplexního vědění* (Velehrad: Refugium, 2001); *Kritika abstraktních principů* (Velehrad: Refugium, 2003).

[35] See Sergej Bulgakov: *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology* (New York – London: The Paisley Press – William and Norgate, 1937); *Beránek Boží: O Boholidství* (Olomouc: Refugium, 2011).

[36] See Nikolaj Berďajev: *Smysl dějin. Pokus o filosofii člověka a jeho osudu* (Praha: ISE, 1995); *Filosofie svobody I-II* (Olomouc: Votobia, 2000).

[37] On their thought, linked in an interesting fashion to contemporary religiously oriented anthropology, see Xenia Borisovna Ermišina: *Религиозная антропология* (Moskva: PSTGU, 2015).

[38] See Alexander Schmemann: *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973); *Liturgy and Life: Christian Development through Liturgical Experience* (New York: Department of Religious Education, Orthodox Church in America, 1993); *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987).

[39] See Vladimir Lossky: *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient* (Paris: Aubier, 1944) = English translation: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2005); *Vision de Dieu* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1962) = English translation: *The Vision of God* (London: The Faith Press – Clayton: American Orthodox Press, 1963).

[40] Olivier Clément: *On Human Being: A Spiritual Anthropology* (London: New City, 2000); *Tělo pro smrt a pro slávu: Malé uvedení do teopoetiky těla* (Velehrad: Refugium, 2004).

away of the human being from God and the breakdown of relationships. Because God became human, human beings can once again be reunited with God and renew all their relationships, fill them with the Holy Spirit and re-direct them towards the goal of their journey.[41] This theme is likewise developed in the apophatic anthropology of the exiled Romanian theologian, André Scrima. Apophatic here means that he emphasised the human being as a mystery that cannot be transformed into concepts but similarly to the divine mystery there can be an engaged knowledge, entering into the depth where God became human, and there listening to and grasping the call to full humanity and understanding it through what the human being lives.[42]

Greek theological anthropology from the generation of the 1960s emphasised spiritual life and social engagement on behalf of others.[43] Metropolitan John Zizioulas took on board Personalist ontology and enriched it with an existential interpretation of the Church Fathers. He set the human being, as a person living in community, in a historical and eschatological perspective, in the Church and in the world, and related the person to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. His impressive synthesis occasioned admiration as well as criticism, as did his critique of individualism emerging from a relational understanding of the concept of person, where a human being cannot own their own inner reality but must live it in communion with the other and with God.[44] Despite criticisms, Zizioulas' theological anthropology has garnered followers both in Greece and in theologians with Greek roots in the West. Among the most significant of these today is Aristotle Papanikolaou. His understanding of the human being as person is both mystical and political, without seeking to make a synthesis of both perspectives. Papanikolaou does not lose track of the communal dimension of humanity nor of a realistic emphasis on the unity with God and in God. But human beings achieve this unity by living truthfully in the face of the problems faced by their contemporaries and by them themselves.[45]

A fundamentally important ecologically oriented theological anthropology is presented by the current Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and his collaborators. Similarly to Stăniloae,

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[41] Stăniloae even criticised Western Personalism for leaving nature out of the personal relationship between the human being and God: see Dumitru Stăniloae: *The Experience of God: The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Volume Two: The World: Creation and Deification* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), 198.

[42] See André Scrima: *Apophatic Anthropology,* trans. Octavian Gabor (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016), published posthumously from fragments.

[43] John Romanides pointed out that both should be understood through what is really present in human experience, whilst Christos Yannaras, on the base of this relationship, developed a personalist ontology. Both drew on Berdyaev's concept of freedom, which they linked to Palamas' teaching on divine uncreated energies. See John Romanides: "Justice and Peace in Ecclesiological Context," in: *Come, Holy Spirit Renew the Whole Creation: An Orthodox Approach to the Seventh Assembly of the WCC in Canberra* Ed. Gennadios Limouris (Brookline. MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1990), 234–249, here 234; Christos Yannaras: "Towards a New Ecumenism", *In Communion* 13 (1998), http://www.incommunion.org/2004/10/24/towards-a-new-ecumenism/.

[44] See John Zizioulas: "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975), 401–448; *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006). Travis A. Ables criticises Zizioulas' concept of communal ontology and says that it is similarly reductive as the Western concept of subjectivity that Zizioulas criticises. Communion is for him rather a given of being than of grace. See Travis A. Ables: "On the Very Idea of an Ontology of Communion: Being, Relation and Freedom in Zizioulas and Levinas," *Heythrop Journal* 52:4 (2011), 672–683; for a similar critique, see Nikolaos Loudovikos: "Person instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position," *Heythrop Journal* 48 (2009), 1–16.

[45] See Aristotle Papanikolaou: *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

they emphasise that human beings are unthinkable without nature and that the destruction of nature, like the destruction of the most vulnerable people, stands against God on the side of death. The human being is an image of the God of life and it is necessary to collaborate in the renewal of life in all possible ways.[46] As we will see later, these emphases are very close also to Pope Francis. However, before we come to him, it is necessary to look briefly at the long journey Catholic theological anthropology has had to travel before arriving at the concepts of Francis.

Catholic theological anthropology of the first half of the twentieth century was massively influenced by the struggle of the church with modernism. On the one hand this struggle included fear and the feeling that the church needed to defend itself against the modern world by clinging to truths which at that time were seen as unchangeable, categorically given and recognisable to the natural reason of each human being.[47] But the emphasis on natural reason also went hand in hand with an emphasis on a life which included faith with its mystical depths, where people recognised holiness as humanity restored by Christ that bore in itself the innocence of a child. In France this concept was incarnated by the Symbolist poet and essayist Charles Péguy, who continues to hold a significant influence over Catholic theological anthropology even today.[48] In interwar Germany an important mystical, but simultaneously anti-modernist oriented philosophical-theological conception of Catholic anthropology was developed by Edith Stein, a convert from Judaism, a Carmelite sister and later a martyr in Auschwitz, canonised by John Paul II.[49]

Among key impulses for Catholic theological anthropology in a new key were the phenomenological-personalist conception of the German philosopher Max Scheler[50] and the Christian existentialist anthropology of Gabriel Marcel.[51] Also important were the new interpretations of Thomas Aquinas that enabled dialogue with the modern world. Here a significant role was played by Jacques Maritain, who succeeded in explaining scholastic themes in relation to the struggle of human beings for freedom and solidarity in the time of war.[52] But there were other currents too. One of the leading representatives of the liturgical

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[46] See Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and John Chryssavgis (eds.), *On Earth As In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2012).

[47] See, for example, *Dei Filius*, the Dogmatic Constitution from Vatican I, or the anti-modernist decree *Lamentabili sane exitu* (1907) or the encyclical of Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (1907).

[48] See Charles Péguy: *Œuvres complètes de Charles-Péguy (1873–1914) I-XX* (Paris: NRF – Gallimard, 1916–1955). Péguy figures in the theological anthropology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, as well as that of Jean Yves Lacoste. See Edmund Newey: *Children of God: The Child as a Source of Theological Anthropology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

[49] *Edith Stein: Was Ist der Mensch?: Theologische Anthropologie, Gesamtausgabe vol. 14.* Ed. Beate Beckmann-Zöller. (Freiburg: Herder, 2005).

[50] See, for example, Max Scheler: *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Leipzig: Leipzig Verlag der Neue Geist, 1921); *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Darmstadt: Reichl, 1928); *On the Eternal in Man* (London: SCM Press, 1960); *The Constitution of the Human Being* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2008); *The Human's Place in the Cosmos* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009).

[51] See Gabriel Marcel: *Être et avoir (1918–1933)* (Paris: Aubier, 1935); *Homo viator. Prolégomènes à une métaphysique de l'espérance* (Paris: Aubier, 1945); *La Dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles* (Paris: Aubier, 1964); *Présence et immortalité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1959); *L'homme problématique* (Paris: Aubier, 1955).

[52] See Jacques Maritain: *Humanisme intégral: problèmes temporels et spirituals d'une nouvelle chrétienté* (Paris: Fernand Aubier, 1936) = English: *True Humanism* (London: Bles, 1938); *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (New York: Éditions de la Maison française, 1942) = English: *The Rights of Man and Natural Law* Ed. Doris C. Anson. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943); *Sort de l'homme* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de La Baconnière, 1943); *La personne et le bien commun* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947) = English: *The Person and the Common Good* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).

renewal movement, Romano Guardini, saw the human being as a relational person, in whom spirituality is connected to everyday experiences.[53] Meanwhile, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin reacted to the deepening conflict between science and faith with his Christian evolutionary anthropology.[54]

In post-conciliar Roman Catholic theological anthropology a very important role was played by the transcendental-existential theological anthropology of Karl Rahner[55] and the Christologically-structured theocentric anthropology of Edward Schillebeeckx.[56] Both are an inspiration for us in that they link the human being with God, placing God in the centre of the person's existence. In their day they formulated traditional themes in a new way. From their contemporary Bernard Lonergan we have borrowed one of the fundamental categories of this book, namely the human being as a "symbolic creature", or more literally, a "symbolic animal", *zoon symbolikon*.[57] Hans Urs von Balthasar argued in his dramatic theology that we best understand human beings when we look at a saint, that is, at someone in whom is to be seen the victorious struggle with the forces of evil, someone who in some form mirrors the beauty of God.[58]

Transcendental Thomism, phenomenology and Personalism were the sources on which Pope John Paul II drew in his work.[59] Walter Kasper and Otto Herman Pesch placed Catholic theological anthropology in an ecumenical context.[60] Maurizio Flick and Zoltán Alszeghy present a theological anthropology as a theological treatise viewed in a complex form, with their interest being centred on the most complete image of humanity, that is, Christ.[61] Their work is a reference point for Catholic theological anthropology conceived in terms of a

[53] See Romano Guardini: *Welt und Person: Versuche zur christlichen Lehre vom Menschen* (Würzburg: Werkbund-Verlag, 1939).

[54] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *Le Phénomène humain* (Paris: Seuil, 1955) = English: *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York, Harper, 1959).

[55] See Karl Rahner: *Schriften zur Theologie X. Im Gespräch mit der Zukunft* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1972); *Theological Investigations XIII: Theology, Anthropology, Christology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975).

[56] Edward Schillebeeckx: *Lidé jako Boží příběh* (Brno: CDK, 2008); see also Jennifer Cooper: *Humanity in the Mystery of God: The Theological Anthropology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2009).

[57] Bernard Lonergan writes: "Traditionally the human being was defined generally and abstractly as *zoon logikon*, *animal rationale*, a rational creature. Today we understand human beings more concretely, as symbolic creatures: their knowledge is mediated through symbols, their actions are informed by symbols, their existence is in tis most characteristic features based on a self-understanding and obligations through specific symbols." Bernard J. Lonergan, "First Lecture: Religious Experience," in: *A Third Collection* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1985), 115. On Lonergan's theological anthropology, see Mark T. Miller: *The Quest for God and the Good Life: Lonergan's Theological Anthropology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2013).

[58] See Hans Urs von Balthasar: *Theodramatik II* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1976); see also Victoria S. Harrison: *The Apologetic Value of Human Holiness in Von Balthasar's Christocentric Philosophical Anthropology,* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000).

[59] Especially his theology of the body from 1972–1984, seen later in the encyclicals *Redemptoris hominis* (1979), *Laborem exercens* (1981), *Mulieris dignitatem* (1988) and *Evangelium vitae* (1995). See also *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006); Jarosław Kupczak: *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

[60] See, for example, Walter Kasper: *Einführung in den Glauben* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1972); *Barmherzigkeit: Grundbegriff des Evangeliums – Schlüssel christlichen Lebens* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008); Walter Kasper – Daniel Deckers: *Wo das Herz des Glaubens schlägt. Die Erfahrung eines Leben* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008); Otto Hermann Pesch: *Katholische Dogmatik aus ökumenischer Erfahrung. 1/1: Die Geschichte der Menschen mit Gott. I/2: Die Geschichte Gottes mit den Menschen* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 2016).

[61] Maurizio Flick – Zoltán Alszeghy: *Fondamenti di una antropologia teologica* (Florence*:* Libreria Ed. Fiorentina, 1970).

treatise.[62] The theme of grace is found at the centre of the pneumatological anthropology of Michael Böhnke.[63]

A significant role in Catholic theological anthropology has been played by liberation theology and political theology,[64] which have turned their attention to human beings in social structures and political relationships, into which they introduced the drama of sin and salvation. Pope Francis has developed this orientation still further in an ecological direction, emphasising again that people cannot live without nature and that therefore they must care for themselves and for nature.[65] This theme is picked up in a number of contemporary studies.[66]

Apart from this we also find in contemporary Catholic theological anthropology interdisciplinary work, which has as its starting point modern and post-modern philosophy, and builds on the observations of sociology and psychology, opening the theological tradition to a conversation on the problems of our world, such as cultural and religious plurality, racism, xenophobia, poverty, problems around gender, abuse of power, populism, and the change of religious imaginations and spiritual orientation.[67]

In the Czech setting the search for a modern interpretation of theological anthropology is found first in Antonín Lenz as part of the defence of Catholicism entering into modern times.[68] During the Communist regime an important role was played by works written or published in emigration, which could freely reflect the changes brought by the Second Vatican Council. Among the best-known is the work of Vladimír Boublík, in which the mystery of the human being is closely linked to the mystery of Christ. In place of static eternal truths Boublík emphasised the gradual revelation of this Divine-Human mystery in history, in which he also places the life of the church, the Body of Christ. He does not present human hope as the explanation of a dogmatic problem but as the way through the abyss of death to new forms of life and love.[69] This line was also taken by Boublík's pupil, Karel Skalický.[70] Another author, Cardinal Tomáš Špidlík, brought to theological anthropology the spirituality and theology of

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[62] See, for example, Gisbert Greshake: *Gottes Heil – Glück des Menschen: theologische Perspektiven* (Freiburg: Herder, 1983; Luis Ladria: *Antropologia Teologica* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1995); Ignazio Sanna: *Chiamati per nome. Antropologia teologica* (Cinisello Balsamo (Milano): San Paolo, 1994); Franco Giulio Brambilla: *Nuovo corso di teologia sistematica. Vol. 12 – Antropologia teologica. Chi è l'uomo, perché te ne curi?* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2009).

[63] See Michael Böhnke: *Gottes Geist im Handeln der Menschen* (Freiburg: Herder, 2017).

[64] See Gustavo Guttiérez: *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974); Juan Luis Segundo: *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976); Johan Baptist Metz: *Zur Theologie der Welt* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1973).

[65] See Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*.

[66] Among them is, for example, the ecologically oriented theological anthropology project of the American Franciscan Daniel Horan, who brings theology and the Christian mystical tradition into conversation with the natural sciences, especially with evolutionary theory. See Daniel P. Horan: *Catholicity and Emerging Personhood: A Contemporary Theological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019).

[67] See, for example, Charles Taylor: *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Lieven Boeve – Yves De Maeseneer – Ellen Van Stichel (eds.), *Questioning the Human: Toward a Theological Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

[68] Antonín Lenz: *Anthropologie katolická: skromný příspěvek ku dogmatické theologii* (Praha: Dědictví Sv. Prokopa, 1882); see also Tomáš Veber: *Teolog - polemik Antonín Lenz (1829-1901): počátky teologické antropologie v českých zemích v 19. století* (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita, 2008).

[69] Boublík's collected texts did not appear in Czech until the beginning of this century: see Vladimír Boublík: *Teologická antropologie* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2001).

[70] See, for example, Karel Skalický: *Revolvit lapidem: projevy z let 1966–2019* (Svitavy: Trinitas, 2019); *Po cestách angažované teologie: teologie křesťanské praxe* (Rychnov nad Kněžnou: Ježek, 2001); *Po stopách neznámého Boha: náboženství a Bůh v novodobém religionistickém bádání* (Praha: Aula, 1994).

the Christian East. The emphasis on the heart as the centre of the human being, linked to all the powers of the human being in prayer and at the same time moving from prayer to daily engagement on behalf of the other was taken up by his Roman and Czech pupils.[71]

The Czech theologian Dominik Pecka, who was persecuted by the Communist regime, dealt with the theme of Christian philosophical anthropology.[72] Anthropological questions were also present in the unofficial lecture courses of Josef Zvěřina; these were eventually published as the two-volume *Teologie agapé*. Love as the basic starting point for Zvěřina's theological understanding was not intended as a counterpoint to education but complemented it, linking together God and human beings, enabling a faith which survives crises and gives meaning to divine self-sharing in the memory of the church.[73]

In the Czechoslovak Church (later the Czechoslovak Hussite Church), which split from Roman Catholicism because of the Modernist controversies, theological anthropology represented one of its controversial themes. Karel Farský's interpretation of creation was influenced by a liberal orientation,[74] whilst in Matěj Gorazd Pavlík there is found an attempt to turn to tradition that is not set out as a confrontation with modern times,[75] and František Kovář represents a philosophical-biblical orientation for understanding the human being.[76] The most impressive theological anthropological project came later in the book of Zdeněk Trtík, *Vztah já-ty a křesťanství* (The I-Thou Relationship and Christianity). This work presents theological anthropology dialogically. It combines the influences of philosophical Personalism (especially Martin Buber), the renewal of Biblical Studies, dialectical theology, existentialism and modern science.[77]

The best-known modern attempt at theological anthropology from the Protestant side is the book of Josef Lukl Hromádka, *Evangelium o cestě za člověkem* (The Gospel on the Way to the Human Being). In it Hromádka considers the human being within the context of the theology of revelation which was at the heart of his interests. He examines God's word, which is beyond the human being and which has become incarnate in Christ. He deals with the church, which

[71] Tomáš Špidlík: *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu: systematická příručka* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 2002); *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu: mnišství* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 2004); *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu: modlitba* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 1999); *Jak očistit své srdce?* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 1999); *Duše poutníka: Tomáš Špidlík v rozhovoru s Janem Paulasem* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2004); *Novéna vděčnosti ke Stvořiteli nebe a země podle Tomáše Špidlíka* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 2017); *Důvody srdce* Ed. Jolana Poláková (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2001). See also Ivana Noble – Zdenko Širka: "Doctrine of Deification in the Works of Cardinal Tomáš Špidlík and His Pupils," *Philotheos: International Journal for Philosophy and Theology* 19 (2019), 125–143.

[72] See Dominik Pecka: *Člověk: filosofická antropologie* (Rome: Křesťanská akademie, 1970–1971).

[73] See Josef Zvěřina: *Teologie Agapé: dogmatika. Svazek I* (Praha: Scriptum, 1992); *Teologie Agapé. Dogmatika. Svazek II* (Praha: Scriptum, 1994).

[74] Karel Farský, *Stvoření: Výklad k biblickému líčení vzrůstu světa v duchu církve čsl* (Praha: nákl. vl., 1920). Karel Farský – František Kalous: *Československý katechismus: Učebnice pro mládež i věřící církve čsl.* (Příbram: Farský, 1922.

[75] See Matěj Gorazd Pavlík: *O úkolech a orientaci církve československé* (Olomouc: 1922). Because of his Orthodox orientation, Pavlík was eventually expelled from the Czechoslovak Church and subsequently worked in setting up a Czech Orthodox eparchy under Serbian jurisdiction. Despite efforts to move the Czechoslovak Church in a liberal and later Protestant direction, Orthodoxy remained one of the important inspirational sources within the church.

[76] See František Kovář: *Filosofické myšlení hellenistického židovstva* (Kladno: J. Šnajdr, 1922); *Idea království Božího v křesťanství* (Praha: Ústřední rada církve československé, 1937).

[77] See Zdeněk Trtík: *Vztah já-ty a křesťanství: (význam osobnosti a osobních vztahů v křesťanství)* (Praha: Nákladem ústřední rady církve československé, 1948).

goes on the path to the human being and testifies to eschatological hope.[78] Hromádka's work had a mixed reception because of his too friendly relations to the Communist regime. Paradoxically, however, his students drew on it, including later dissidents such as Jakub Trojan, whose theological anthropology sets the human being in the world and emphasises the responsibility which comes out of Christian faith. Trojan also had an interest in the Christian conception of human rights.[79] Ladislav Hejdánek interprets human beings, their knowledge and relationships with the help of non-objective thought.[80] Another dissident, Milan Balabán, presents a biblical-poetical approach to theological anthropology.[81]

Looking at contemporary theology, publications on theological anthropology are found principally, though not only, in a Roman Catholic setting. Outside of this setting, the Orthodox theologian Václav Ježek has written on Byzantine theological anthropology.[82] From a Roman Catholic perspective, Vojtěch Novotný considers whether human beings are a substitute for the fallen angels or a unique creation desired by God.[83] Dominik Duka, the current Cardinal Archbishop of Prague, when he was still Bishop of Králové Hradec, published a theological anthropological study which put together biblical, pre-biblical and extra-biblical cultures and concentrated on concepts such as heart, soul, spirit, breath, body, death, resurrection, "the heavenly Adam", and eternal life.[84] Ctirad Václav Pospíšil's theology of creation also returns to classical themes, seeing the human, as a rational being, in the light of the mystery of Trinity.[85]

A significant role in the contemporary scene is played by the Centrum Aletti in Olomouc, which brings together Špidlík's foreign and Czech pupils. They present theological anthropology through spiritual praxis. The teaching of the Church Fathers in conversation with current theological anthropological questions is the theme of lecturers from the Centrum Aletti in Rome, Michelina Tenace[86] and Marko Ivan Rupnik.[87] Michal Altrichter draws on them, also seeking inspiration in Russian Religious Philosophy.[88]

A spiritually oriented theological anthropology is a theme also dealt with by other authors, such as Karel Satoria. For him humanity is not only gift and given, but also vocation and spiritual task.[89] Marek Orko Vácha has a similarly open understanding of the human being in relation to God, initiating a conversation between bioethics, ecology and Christian

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[78] See Josef Lukl Hromádka: *Evangelium o cestě za člověkem: úvod do studia Písem a církevních vyznání* (Praha: Ústřední církevní nakladatelství, 1958).

[79] See, for example, Jakub Trojan: *Idea lidských práv v české duchovní tradici* (Praha: Oikúmené, 2002).

[80] See Ladislav Hejdánek: *Nepředmětnost v myšlení a ve skutečnosti* (Praha: Oikúmené, 1997).

[81] See Milan Balabán: *Hebrejské člověkosloví* (Praha: Herrmann & synové, 1996).

[82] See Václav Ježek: *Od individualismu k obecenství: úvod do byzantské teologické antropologie* (Prešov: Prešovská univerzita, 2005).

[83] See Vojtěch Novotný: *Cur homo* (Praha: Karolinum, 2004).

[84] See Dominik Duka: *Zápas o člověka, Nástin biblické antropologie* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2007).

[85] See Ctirad Václav Pospíšil: *I řekl bůh: Trinitární teologie stvoření* (Praha: Karolinum, 2019).

[86] See Michelina Tenace: *Vybrané kapitoly z antropologie: stvoření člověka k obrazu a podobenství Božímu* (Olomouc: Centrum Aletti, 2001).

[87] See Marko Ivan Rupnik: *Vybrané otázky z antropologie: člověk a vzkříšení* Trans. Adam Mackerle. (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 2003).

[88] See Michal Altrichter: *Studijní texty ze spirituální teologie II. Osoba – osobnost – osobitost* (Velehrad: Refugium – Velehrad-Roma, 2004).

[89] See Karel Satoria: *Povoláním člověk* (Brno: Cesta, 2015).

spirituality.[90] Tomáš Halík remains the most prominent voice in this field, with his emphases on the human being living in the contemporary world, sceptical towards traditional forms of religious praxis, who nevertheless learns who she or he is through meditation or prayer and through relationships with others, especially the most needy.[91]

The list of authors and themes presented here briefly is not and of course cannot be complete. However, it aims to enable readers to have an overview of the main themes which have determined the course of theological anthropology and show how approaches to them in the current debate cross theological disciplines and confessional traditions. Our book draws on previous work in various settings, whilst offering its own new methodological approach to theological anthropology, one which is hermeneutically oriented.

The Basic Method of Our Work

It is, then, now time to examine briefly why in the ordering and methodology of our book hermeneutics has such an important place. When we speak of hermeneutics, we have in mind primarily the theory of interpretation, which was, for a long time, directed to the problems of sacred texts, which authoritatively describe the world and the role of human beings in it.[92] In modern times the interests of hermeneutics has expanded to include analysis of human language and the understanding of human beings themselves. It is within this broad sense that we will work with hermeneutics in our book.[93]

Hermeneutics has a number of presuppositions. Its most fundamental starting point is that there is no zero point from which an understanding consciousness emerges in attempts at interpretation. This does not mean that understanding is completely subjective, but rather that

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[90] See Marek Orko Vácha: *Tančící skály: O vývoji života na Zemi, o člověku a o Bohu* (Brno: Cesta, 2003); *Návrat ke Stromu života: evoluce a křesťanství* (Brno: Cesta, 2005); *Místo, na němž stojíš, je posvátná země: O kruhu úcty k člověku, přírodě a celému vesmíru* (Brno: Cesta, 2008); *Kéž bych pod hvězdami dobře odtančil svůj tanec*, Brno: Cesta 2010; *Věda, víra, Darwinova teorie a stvoření podle knihy Genesis* (Brno: Cesta, 2014); *Příběhy z jiného vesmíru* (Brno: Cesta, 2015); *Tváří v tvář Zemi* (Brno: Cesta, 2016).

[91] See, for example, Tomáš Halík: *Dotkni se ran: spiritualita nelhostejnosti* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2008); *Divadlo pro anděly: život jako náboženský experiment* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2010); *Chci, abys byl: křesťanství po náboženství* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2012); *Žít s tajemstvím: podněty k promýšlení víry* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013); *Žít v dialogu: podněty k promýšlení víry* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2014).

[92] Here we are talking about *hermeneutica sacra*, which as an auxiliary discipline reveals the true meaning of texts which cannot be understood directly and which are at first glance nuclear. The most influential works from this perspective are St Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* (427) and Philip Melanchthon's *De Rhetorica libri tres* (1519). For more on this, see Karel Skalický: *Hermeneutika a její proměny* (Praha: Ježek, 1997, 7–15.

[93] The theme of hermeneutics has been treated in Czech in the following works: Petr Pokorný: *Hermeneutika jako teorie porozumění od základních otázek jazyka k výkladu bible* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2005); Jean Grondin: *Úvod do hermeneutiky* (Praha: Oikúmené, 1997); Jaroslav Hroch et al: *Proměny hermeneutického myšlení* (Brno: CDK, 2010); Manfred Oeming: *Úvod do biblické hermeneutiky* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2001)**;** Karel Skalický: *Hermeneutika a její proměny* (Praha: Ježek, 1997); Stanislav Sousedík: *Úvod do rekonstruktivní hermeneutiky* (Praha: Triton, 2012); Peter Szondi: *Úvod do literární hermeneutiky* (Brno: Host, 2003); Zdenko Širka – Petr Jandejsek (eds.): *Hermeneutika zkušenosti v křesťanské tradici* (Praha: Evangelická teologická fakulta, 2014); two further important works in Slovak can be added: Jozef Leščinský: *Hermeneutika*: *Krátky náčrt dejín interpretácie* (Ružomberok: Verbum, 2013); Vincent Šabík: *Hermeneutika ako veda a umenie chápať* (Sládkovičovo: Vysoká škola Danubius, 2014).

it is always caught between the expectation of understanding and allowing otherness to be made manifest.[94]

A further presupposition is the necessity of avoiding the kind of dualistic thought that posits on the one side objective knowledge and on the other subjective experience. The alienation between them leads to the destruction of a much more fundamental relationship of belonging. These two poles form, rather, a whole, which precedes all understanding and this prior unity is the presupposition for every knowledge event. What is assumed here is that the subject who interprets and describes is never a *tabula rasa*, on which understanding is written. The process of understanding is the result of a confrontation of one's own prejudices with new, strange objects. This confrontation is understood with the help of the concept of horizon. The horizon is the perimeter, the view which borders and includes everything in us. It is a concept that was already employed by Husserl to mark the limits of the individual world and of our activities.[95] We can never be entirely conscious of our horizon, because then it would cease to be an horizon and become an object within that same horizon. The horizon is the context in which we grasp things in a concrete framework. But the horizon is never closed. Each horizon leads further and when it comes to understanding, our horizon joins and merges with the horizon of what we are interpreting.[96]

Closely related to this is pre-understanding as a presupposition for understanding. With our pre-understanding we come to whatever it is we want to understand and we bring this pre-understanding to understanding.[97] In working with pre-understanding we are aware that our being in the world is historical in two ways: common historicity results from the common situation of which we are part; individual historicity results from the origins and unique course of each life.[98] Both forms of historicity share in the already given judgements (prejudices) and emotions to interpret the text or situation in a given way, to see the world in a given way. Pre-understanding does not, then, distort our understanding, but is part of it, pointing to the tradition to which the one who desires to interpret belongs and to what is desired to be understood, or to the one who is to be understood, that is the subject and object of understanding.

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[94] For Hans-Georg Gadamer, for example, the absence of a zero point means that hermeneutical consciousness is always subject to history. "True historical understanding must at the same time reflect on its own historicity", Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I (Praha: Triáda, 2010), 263. On the historicity of understanding, see also: Hans-Helmuth Gander: "Erhebung der Geschichtlichkeit zum hermeneutischen Prinzip," in: *Hans-Georg Gadamer: Wahrheit und Methode* Ed. Günter Figal. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), 105–126.

[95] See Edmund Husserl: *Krize evropských věd a transcendentální fenomenologie: úvod do fenomenologické filozofie* Second ed. Trans. Oldřich Kuba (Praha: Academia, 1996), 287. Gadamer draws on the interpretation of Helmut Kuhn: "The Phenomenological Concept of Horizon", in: *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Husserl* Ed. Marvin Faber (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 106–123. See Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I, 266, 220.

[96] "Understanding is always rather a process of merging these apparently self-contained horizons", Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I, 269. See also David Vessey: "Gadamer and the Fusion of Horizons", *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 17 (2009), 526–527.

[97] "All such understanding is in the end self-understanding", Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I, 232.

[98] See Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I, 249: "In our unbroken behaviour towards the past we do not in any case try to distance or free ourselves from what has gone before. Rather, we permanently live within the tradition and such living within the tradition is not an objective behaviour which would understand what the tradition says as something else, strange – for it is always something particular, a foreshadowing and warning, a re-recognition."

In contrast to methodological prejudice human understanding is an historical event.[99] Interpreters, readers, always finds themselves in a concrete situation and that means that we cannot transcend the final temporal character of our existence. There is no "I" who can rise above history to some other place with a better view from which an objective outlook can be gained.[100] Human beings always finds themselves directly in the tradition, directly in history, and so understanding is not the act of a subject but entry into history, where past and present are joined. The hermeneutical approach emphasises that we have no power over history, nor can we dispose of it.[101] We are subject to it more than we realise. Our values, knowledge, judgements, opinions as well as our expressions of faith, the stories, rituals, and symbols in which faith lives, are part of history, live within history, even if they point before history, beyond history or after history.

Human understanding rooted in history is a cyclical process which is represented with the help of the hermeneutical circle. What this means is the dialectic of the part and the whole, which influences the meaning: in order to gain an overall understanding of the work in its entirety, we must focus on specific details, but we cannot understand these details without understanding the whole. So we move from the part to the whole, and from the whole to the part.[102] "Any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted", says Heidegger.[103] And moreover if we want to understand understanding, we cannot desire to draw near to some cognitive ideal. It is not possible to step out of the hermeneutical circle. Attention rather needs to be given to how we enter it, learning to understand it and working correctly with it.[104]

Hermeneutics, then, helps us to interpret human existence and understanding, at the same time that it critiques classic ontology and metaphysics. It criticises metaphysics for having concentrated on being and having thought that it could postulate its transcendence, for having spoken being, whilst forgetting its power; it criticises ontology for having treated being inadequately and not having sufficiently distinguished between notions of being and being itself.[105] In both cases this led to idolatry, the creations of human thought were presented as

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[99] See Richard Palmer: *Hermeneutics. Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1982), 183.

[100] Rowan Williams calls this position "epistemological safety", the conviction that our knowledge cannot disappoint us, because it is anchored in God's revelation. For his critique of this position, see Rowan Williams: *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 142–145.

[101] Gadamer's theory brought a renewal of thinking about historicity as a hermeneutical principle, where all events (past, present and future) form the tradition in which each interpreter stands at the moment in which they undertake the process of understanding. "Truly history does not belong to us, but we belong to history". Gadamer: *Pravda a metoda* I, 245.

[102] This is a hermeneutic rule coming from ancient rhetoric which modern hermeneutics transferred to the art of understanding. It was above all Friedrich Schleiermacher who made use of this rule and who divided this circular relationship of part and whole from the objective and subjective sides. See Manfred Frank (ed.): *F.D.E. Schleiermacher – Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977).

[103] This is what Heidegger says in §32 of his *Being and Time.* Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 94.

[104] Petr Pokorný gives an example of this, using the image of a beekeeper. He says that if you want to keep bees, you need knowledge and skills and these can be gained. If there is no one to teach you, you can find specialist literature. You do not know the content of this literature, because if you did, you would not need to buy it. But you have some idea of its meaning for you, for your needs and questions. Pokorný calls this pre-common consciousness. See Pokorný: *Hermeneutika jako teorie poznání*, 106–107.

[105] Martin Heidegger sharply differentiated between existence and being. He criticised Western metaphysics for leading people to think that it is enough to concentrate on what is, so that being is understood as some kind of principle of what is, which will actually be deprived of any active role. For him, attention should be given to the

an adequate picture of the supreme reality, but they mediated nothing other than themselves. They were therefore insufficiently critical of the fact that our categories of what is and what transcends us are still our categories, that is, that they bring back down to earth what transcends us.[106] The exaggerated attention on concepts motivated by the conviction that through these categories we can get a hold of and understand being perfectly have in addition sometimes being linked to the belief that this or that way of understanding is the only correct one. So it was necessary to limit such dogmatic concepts, to rehabilitate the plurality of ways of finding meaning and at the same time to leave space for what remains uncaptured and elusive, to concentrate on the question of time, and to show that neither past nor present nor future are something that we could own in the descriptions of their events and promises.[107]

For example we can testify to the wonder at what comes from heaven, like manna, to take away our hunger[108] in such a way that a person is able to imagine that they can become part of what is going on. That enables the genre of confession and witness, when we can enter into the world in an unmediated way and with the help of symbolic language say something about this experience.[109] The assumption that we will be able to differentiate between icon and idol[110] even makes possible a realistic understanding of liturgy and doctrine. Their realism stand and fall with their symbolic mediation.[111] The idols have to die so that the symbol can live, says

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opposite direction, towards being which is revealed through our presence here, *Dasein*. Heidegger's fundamental ontology was inspired by phenomenology, beginning with what reveals itself, and with transcendental philosophy and from there the move to hermeneutics, where Heidegger demonstrated that being and understanding are mutually linked. Briefly it can be said that our understanding is opened in our presence, in its concrete givenness, in the way in which we are thrown into being. And when we understand, which we never do completely, because part of the journey to understanding is always the abyss of not-understanding, we can plan our being in the world, our presence, our being with others. See Martin Heidegger: *Bytí a čas* Second Ed. (Praha: Oikúmené, 2002), esp. 17–30, 73–80, 144–160; *Co je metafyzika?* (Praha: Oikúmené, 1993), for example, 9, 15, 17.

[106] Jean-Luc Marion criticised the concept of idolatry in this way: see *The Idol and Distance: Five Studies* New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), esp. 7–9, 233–253.

[107] Jacques Derrida critiqued both "the logic of identity" and "the metaphysics of the present". The weakness of both, in his view, was that philosophy approached life as a theory. The logic of identity presumed that everything must be placed in the right categories and what cannot be categorised does not exist. The metaphysics of the present worked with the present as a collection of events whose meaning is clear to us already in the moment in which they take place, as if people and the situations in which they find themselves could be frozen and we could adequately deal with them in this lifeless form. See Jacques Derrida: *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 10; "Différance," in: *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 6; "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in: *Derrida and Negative Theology* Eds. Harold Coward – Toby Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 74–142; "On Responsibility: An Interview with Jonathan Dronsfield, Nick Midgley, Adrian Wilding," *Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 6 (1997) Special Issue: *Responsibilities of Deconstruction* Ed. J. Dronsfield – N. Midgley, 19–35.

[108] See Louis-Marie Chauvet: *Symbol and Sacrament. A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 44–45.

[109] See Ricoeur: *Symbolism of Evil*, 350, *Conflict of Interpretations*, 467.

[110] Marion argues that images, not only artistic but also conceptual, can be iconic. This means that they contain the capacity to point beyond themselves to the reality of God, but only if filled with this reality and allowing it to become visible. They do not form this reality, but can visibly reflect it. Only in this sense do they have a share in it. See Jean-Luc Marion: *God Without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 16–19; *In Excess: Studies in Saturated Phenomena* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), esp. 68–69, 75–81; "They Recognized Him: And He Became Invisible To Them," *Modern Theology* 18:2 (2002), 145–152.

[111] Alexander Schmemann says that symbols make it possible to grasp God's "otherness" as "otherness", to speak of "the visibility of the invisible *as* invisible, the knowledge of the unknowable *as* unknowable." Precisely because the symbol of the world teaches us both that and how we participate in the world, and symbols of God teach us that and how we participate in God, it is necessary for the liturgy and doctrine to work with the symbolic structure from which they are formed. See Alexander Schmemann: *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 139–141, quotation from 141.

Ricoeur,[112] underlining at the same time that the symbol is not merely something "like" reality. On the contrary, it is the most real reality that there can be, because it is the reality through which we see that we have a share in it.[113]

In our chapters we start from the theological presupposition that we are born into the traditions of symbolic speech through the Spirit embodied in these traditions. So we could say that we are thrown into them, together with our thrownness into being, and likewise within them we can also make choices and co-create them. But in order not to make idols of them, it is necessary to allow them to speak and not to hold on to them so tightly that we would strangle them.[114] This does not mean that we resign ourselves to discerning between different voices, but rather that this discernment is incarnated, not abstract, and spiritual, not controlled by the desire to command.[115]

What and How We Contribute: A Guide for Readers

Our book is divided into two parts, each of which sets out from hermeneutics in a slightly different form. Christian theological anthropology as we present it in the first part of the book works with an existential hermeneutic perspective, whilst the second part works with a hermeneutic ontology.[116] We begin, then, with the "how" of the human being, and the aids human beings use to understand themselves. Relationships, speech, narratives, rituals, symbols are all here taken as a source of human self-understanding in relation to God and through this relationship to all others and to all else. It is only in the second part that we move to ontological themes, to the investigation of who the human being is. Theological anthropology becomes here, we might say, "theo-anthropology," that is, it takes as its theme "God and the human being in their mutual relationships, such as: God beyond the human, God for the human, God-Human, God with the human, the human from and to God, the human without and against God, the human for and with God."[117] In this instance an interest in theological anthropology requires examining theology across the range of its themes, including Trinitarian theology, the doctrine of creation and the orientation to deification, the Fall and sin, the incarnation of God in Christ, redemption, the Holy Spirit and sanctification, the Church, the communion of saints, and eschatology, which links the teaching about the last things with what has always been and remains most important and what unites the end and the original gift and direction.

The first part of the book is entitled "We are born into a life that was already here before us". It begins with a chapter on the relationships into which we enter, which form us as we form them, and through the help of which we understand humanity. The chapter offers a critique

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[112] See Ricoeur: *Conflict of Interpretations*, 467.

[113] See Paul Tillich: "Dynamics of Faith (1957)," in: *Main Works V: Writings on Religion* Ed. Robert P. Scharlemann. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 231–90; "The Religious Symbol / Symbol and Knowledge (1940–41)," in: *Main Works 4: Writings in the Philosophy of Religion* Ed. John Clayton. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 253–272; Paul Ricoeur: *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 70.

[114] Chauvet speaks about the need to adopt a position of listening and accepting what is ungraspable, a generosity that enables it "to be", that allows it "to be spoken", whilst not clinging to the role of a controller. See Chauvet: *Symbol and Sacrament*, 446

[115] See Chauvet: *Symbol and Sacrament*, 152–154.

[116] Methodologically we start in a certain sense from Martin Heidegger: see footnote 105.

[117] Jan Štefan, seminar on "Theological Anthropology", Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University, 3.4. 2019.

of the modern concept of autonomy that would count with the human being as thinkable without relationships. It also emphasises the value of freedom without which human relationships squeeze the life from the other and bring death. It shows that although human beings are born into relationships in which they experience their dependence on others and on society as a whole, they are also born to freedom and to being able to live their lives in relationships and to act in solidarity. In this way relationships can become an open window to God.

The second chapter focuses on how human beings live in language and language becomes their home. It shows how through language human beings express their existential questions, how language can understand the searching for and finding of good, truth, beauty, how language formulates questions about God, how it asks after the name of God. At a deeper and more fundamental level it presents language as what speaks to us, and looks at the relation between language and understanding, at the pluralities of communication, at dialogue and finally at how language can give testimony to what is inexpressible.

With Chapter 3 we move from language to story. The chapter shows how and why people are able to grasp their personal and collective identity in narratives. But it also emphasises that we are not only storytellers, but that stories also tell about us. This is true for human narratives and for the divine narrative. The chapter describes the lifelong process of interaction with significant stories, placing human beings in the tension between being rooted and being open, and it investigates how stories about human beings make it possible to grow to personal, moral and spiritual maturity. Finally it returns to the story of God in the world and with the world and shows what authentic following of Christ could mean.

The fourth chapter engages in a similar fashion with ritual. It interprets it as the mother tongue of religion. Using Christian sacraments as an example, and especially baptism, it shows how the relationship to God, embodied life and the spoken word form, in ritual, one whole, and it explains how the human being who enters into ritual and acts ritually can be changed by the word and how the tradition where the ritual takes place can be revitalised in the body. It argues that ritual action not only expresses the religious experience of believers but that it also awakens, forms and transforms it.

The first part ends with the fifth chapter. This is given over to the theme of symbols, which underlie ritual and narrative. It shows not only "why" but also "how" the human being is a symbolic creature open to religion, art and dreams. It points to the link between symbol and nature, the spiritual world, and transcendence. It goes back to relationships and their symbolic mediation and shows the difference between when the symbol becomes an idol and when care is taken that it brings an openness to God, to other people and creatures and to the whole experience of the human being with God in the world.

The second part of the book has as its title "We are what we become". It begins with Chapter 6, which examines who the person is through the creation narratives. It shows that according to them the human being is the image of God growing to the likeness of God. It interprets God's likeness both in the sense of the visibility in human life of God's goodness and love and in the sense of communion with God and in God as is presented in the doctrine on deification. It also looks at how both sin and the help of God enter into this process of maturing.

The seventh chapter takes on the theme of human alienation and redemption. Human beings experiencing and causing confusion, the breakdown of relationships and the loss of meaning

are related to Christ, their renewer. The chapter concentrates on biblical texts dealing with the possibilities of return to glory and the joy for which we were created, as well as with the restoration of the image of God through Christ, in the church, and with the new creation.

The focus of the eighth chapter is on the problem of discernment between good and evil and between the various forces at work in the human being. It looks at the question of how human beings become who they are through work with those inner movements, experiences, thoughts, and feelings that precede concrete action. It shows how the Christian tradition has recognised the working of the Holy Spirit, how it has dealt with spiritual experience and how it has cultivated the tension between interiority and social engagement.

The ninth chapter deals with the ethical dimension of humanity. It analyses the external and internal authorities on the basis of which we act, which help to form (as well as at times deform) our values and virtues. It relates together respect for humanity, freedom and solidarity.

Chapter 10 asks "who is the human being?", this time from a gender perspective. It deals with questions such as the extent to which gender contributes to forming the identity of a human being, or to put it theologically, in the human being as the image of God created in God's likeness. It also discusses the part in what is constitutive for humanity from a theological point of view that is played by biological, cultural, social and religious factors contributing to differences in gender identities and roles. And finally it looks at how the understanding of what is constitutive is reflected in our understanding of the acceptability of gender-oriented relationships and unions.

Chapter 11 examines human beings in the context of the landscape, to which they are related in three ways: as those who dwell in it, as those who share in it as part of a whole, a community, together with other people, and as those who live this dwelling and co-dwelling from the perspective of faith and religious practice. The chapter looks at who human beings are in these three ways of dwelling in the landscape and the way in which they bring together in themselves givenness (that they are creatures) and possibility (that they are creator). Landscape is seen here as both witness to human and divine action in the world and as a promise of the eternal home, the new creation.

The twelfth chapter speaks about the relationship between the human being and the *polis*. Its topic is the political dimension of human life from a theological perspective. It brings into relationship the testimony that the created world is good and the experience of evil in the world. It analyses sin against the *polis* and its consequences. At the same time it looks at the dynamic of faith and shows what it means or could mean to talk of hopeful expectation of God, who comes to people as Redeemer and Liberator and transforms the life of the *polis* by the light of the coming Kingdom of God.

The human being in time is dealt with in the thirteenth chapter. The human being as a historical creature is here linked with linear time, which according to Scripture and Christian tradition is structured around divine creation and has its centre in Jesus Christ and its completion at the end of history. In this time human beings live their personal and collective failures. The chapter shows that Christian theology also works with witness, that into this historical time the eschatological Messianic time irrupts, a time of salvation and fullness. The chapter interprets the two times as an allegory of the relation between soul and body. It criticises dualism whilst retaining duality. The link between history and eschatology is then

documented in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the understanding of full humanity in the light of the promise of the Kingdom of God.

The fourteenth and final chapter concentrates on the church and eschatology. It returns to the relational understanding of humanity and shows who the human being is in communion, which never reduces the mystery of the person. It returns too to language, story, symbol and ritual and using the example of the eucharist, it shows how this celebration responds to who we are and who we become and what it means when we speak of the human being as the priest of creation.

The conclusion of the book first gives an overview of the whole book and a brief recapitulation of what each chapter brings to the theme of ecumenical theological anthropology before ending with a commentary on our whole project.