

Imago Dei – 12th Comenius Conference

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Abstracts

Dr. Gorazd Andrejč (Keynote speaker)

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Title: Image of God in Non-human Creation?

The Substantive Theories of the Image of God (STIG) – such as Aquinas' view that our "intellectual nature" (*ST* 1.93) is the distinctive, God-like characteristic in humanity, or indeed other anthropocentric versions of STIG – have come under increasing criticism from both outside and within Christian theology. One of the views of *imago Dei* that have been developed in response to such criticism is the so-called "creaturely theology" which understands humans first and foremost as *creatures*. It rejects any significant ontological or morally-crucial separation between humans and animals ("human-separatist view"), and broadens the concept of *imago Dei* to include non-human animals (Clough & Deane-Drummond 2009). According to this perspective, any remaining distinctiveness of humans in relation to other created beings is a matter of *degree*, not of kind. I will examine crucial themes that this view brings up by seeking to answer the following questions: Can Christian theological anthropology ever be non-anthropocentric? Should it strive to be? If yes, what could be an alternative, eco-theological conception of human distinctiveness and solidarity that goes beyond the solidarity with all creation?

CV: Gorazd Andrejč is Assistant Professor in Philosophy of Religion at Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen and a Researcher at Institute for Philosophical Studies, Science and Research Centre of Koper (Slovenia).

Dr. Zoltán Balikó

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: Human Work as an Important Dimension of the Likeness of God

Karl Barth describes the human work as *parergon* of God's work (*ergon*). Emil Brunner defines labour as order of God established by the Creation like other orders, e. g. marriage and family. This resulted in the so called Barth–Brunner Debate (1934) on natural theology which is also connected to the Christian understanding of human nature. Thus the world of work is an important subject of Christian anthropology. A different aspect of work is related to Sin and the Fall since after it work became also toil and is important in the representation of God in the Creation as His image. This tension is a significant part of the world of work. Despite of all developments of circumstances throughout history, this part of social reality remains Janus-faced. How can we reflect on this important area of human existence from the reformed theological point of view in the 21st century? Luther's vocation theory which was followed as well as further developed by other reformers (e. g. Calvin) and helped to emerge the capitalism globally has become more and more limited in the circumstances of recent social changes since the world of work has changed enormously in the 20th century. The definition that someone has a profession is less and less applicable since new jobs emerge to be performed for some years and they can disappear in some years as the world changes at a high pace. Protestant theology offers new approaches which can still contain the former vocation view as well. One of the examples is Miroslav Volf's *Work in Spirit* (Toward a Theology of Work) where he recommends a pneumatological approach to the world of work describing all activities of Christians as activities of charismatic character. My approach in this presentation is to outline how Christian anthropology can approach the contemporary world of work in biblical, historical context by drawing the attention to and reflecting on some global phenomena (e. g.

workaholism, globalization). These phenomena are also described by other disciplines like psychology and sociology, so the presentation also contains discourse with these. Developing this structure helps to demonstrate that human work is an important dimension of the likeness of God.

CV: I am Dr. Zoltán Balikó. I work for PRTA as a lecturer where the conference takes place. My focus area is systematic theology. I also work in the Shared Service Centre global industry as Managing Director of a Centre in Hungary where we service our international clients by providing various back office activities. To reflect on this existential situation my research field is the connection of the world of work and reformed theology with the purpose of reflecting on various topics (e. g. vocation in profession vs. quickly changing jobs, workaholism, women at work etc.).

Rev. Attila Balla

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: *Imago Dei*: How Can Humanity Exist in Faith in God and Embrace Science?

The title itself *Imago Dei* warrants a full understanding of the meaning of the word, as it was used by the writers some two and a half thousand years ago, bearing in mind the culture that it was coming from and influence that it had upon the people of the day. This influence need not be theological alone but subliminal as well. Let us be like God, build us a tower: such motives are highly influential; it does raise the question as to what the *imago* is and how it shaped and involved both the theological as well as the lay thinking of the time. One of the great proponents of this thought is Thomas Aquinas.

How are we to understand the word *imago* today? For that, we need to go back to the very beginning of the event, when God had said – we cannot allow man to be like us. Alas, it was too late. Such a desire is now very much in the fore. Let us make us an image – says science today –, let us make ourselves immortal through science. And whilst we are at the beginning of this venture, it is clear that it will happen, it is a matter of *when* and not *if*. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his book *The Phenomenon of Man* raises the issues of the evolution of the soul along the lines of the evolution of scientific knowledge. This brings into focus the reality of God in human existence which we can observe in the very creation of intelligent life and in the complexity of the cosmos itself. We need to ask the great question from our scientists: if we are so ready to make an image of us, what will happen if an image asks the question, once it becomes sentinel: who made you? This points to an essential connection between humanity and its Creator. It is not enough to claim that there is a Creator who is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. How has our growth of knowledge brought us closer to such a Creator as presented by Teilhard de Chardin in his book? Can biology, taken to its extreme limits, enable us to emerge into the transcendent? Are we heading towards creating super humanity, super Christ, super charity, are we creating an omega humanity? Therefore, we have to ask the important question: what is this phenomenon that we call humanity? This in the end should identify the true meaning and purpose of life. Teilhard de Chardin deeply occupied himself with these questions as early as the 1920's until his death in 1955; through books and lectures he raised the issues with respect to how science and faith will be defined in the future. These issues are especially relevant today for our spiritual future.

CV: 1971-1975: Graduate studies for the degree Magister Diviniarum at the United Faculty of Theology at Queen's College, University of Melbourne, Australia.

Last employment: District Dean, rt. of the Anglican Church of Western-Australia.

Present employment (2012–): Spiritual counsellor, Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary.

Dr. Ibolya Balla (Keynote speaker)

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: “You Would Long for the Work of Your Hands”: Job as the Example of the Suffering *Imago Dei*

According to the testimony of Scriptures, humans are not only given a place in creation spatially and temporally, but also have dignity and value before God. Apart from the creation stories it is attested in – among others – Psalm 8, especially verse 5 (“what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?”). However, the reception of Psalm 8,5 in Job 7,17-21 – especially taken into consideration other relevant passages from Job – draws our attention to many important tenets regarding God’s traits considering his relationship with humans. This relationship, or rather stance on God’s part towards humans – represented here by the righteous and suffering Job – is described in the book by various concepts and motifs, many of which can be brought under the umbrella of divine scrutiny. We find here images of seeing, or the lack of it, light, blindness, closeness, distance, hiding, concealing, watching over, remembering etc. After being afflicted by God, Job’s relationship to Him changes: having the mental faculties to cope with what befell him, being able to communicate with God, or even being watched over by God is not a source of comfort but of despair. The descriptions of bodily sufferings paint a picture of a person who is the shadow of his former self, someone who is below human beings (Job 7,7-10; 13,28; 17,1-16 etc.). Suffering is the direct result of God’s watching over Job, there seems to be an inevitable connection between looking and harming (Job 7,12-16.17-20; 10,4-9.14-17).¹ In certain psalms humanity – endowed with rulership over creation – has an intrinsic value and its being the object of divine scrutiny demonstrates the value God places over humans (Ps 7,10; 8). However, the notion that God examines Job means He tests him; this will eventually result in punishing, since mortals cannot be just before God (Job 9,2). Under such divine scrutiny Job feels like dead and wishes to be dead, since one who is the target of God (6,4; 7,20) has no hope. His dignity seems lost before God and humans; he is objectified, he cannot lift up his head (10,15); in his descriptions of divine scrutiny there are images of himself as an object of vision and violence.² Levinas notes similar connections of seeing and seizing, as “vision moves into grasp” in its apprehension of an object.³ Such violence is resisted when the Other’s face and speech disrupt the reductive gaze, making it ethically answerable and forbidding violence, but according to Job the assumptions underlying the language of the relevant psalms legitimate an invasive scrutiny that “does not seek the answering gaze of the human face”.⁴ The restoration of Job – the work of God’s hands –, however, means dignity, value reclaimed: the closeness and vigil of and communication with God is a source of comfort again: when God calls, Job answers Him and in the end sees Him (“You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands”, 14,15; “but now my eye sees you”, 42,5).

¹ Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 136-137.

² Newsom, *Book of Job*, 137.

³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969, 191.

⁴ Newsom, *Book of Job*, 137.

CV: 1995-2001: Graduate studies for the degree Magister Diviniarum, Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Hungary; 2005-2009: PhD candidature for the degree Doctor of Philosophy, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia; 2009: Writing Fellowship, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia; Present employment (2012–): Associate professor, Biblical Institute, Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary.

Dr. Jacob J. T. Doedens

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: In His Own Likeness, After His Image: *Self-Propagating Parodies of Life*

In his seminal work, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, Iain McGilchrist⁵ describes how within Western culture the brain's left hemisphere has taken the lead and impresses its worldview upon society, science, and culture. He describes how the right hemisphere of the human brain is oriented outwards, and understands metaphor and humour. The left hemisphere's function is to systematize the input coming from the right hemisphere, and after doing its task of sorting out, give back the results to the right hemisphere. As turns out from this description, the right hemisphere should be dominant, while the left hemisphere should serve as its helper. McGilchrist assigns the role of 'master' to the right, and that of 'emissary' to the left hemisphere. However, in the view of McGilchrist, the 'emissary' learnt to despise its 'master' and succeeded in taking over leadership. He traces this development in philosophy, art, and literature, from pre-Socratic philosophy until modernity and post-modernity.

McGilchrist describes the Industrial Revolution as the left hemisphere's success in outflanking the right. All this had an almost irreversible effect on how we humans tend to see ourselves. The world of identical and 'perfect' forms produced in factories is how reality should be. Organic, living, non-rectilinear shapes became looked down upon as inferior. McGilchrist depicts what a world totally ruled by the left hemisphere would look like, and concludes that Western culture has almost reached that situation. As an antidote to this, McGilchrist sees a role for the Western Church, but observes that the Church often acted in a contra-productive way by joining the opinions of those who attribute material answers to spiritual problems. Instead, the Church, in his opinion, should have the confidence to stick to its own values and agenda. He insists that we need metaphors and *mythos* as a way to understand the world. These are not an optional luxury.

The Bible, not being a modern book, can certainly add something valuable. However, for biblical scholarship to play a constitutional part in the formation of a more balanced view of human beings within the world, it should leave behind the more left hemisphere driven methods both in the liberal and in the fundamentalist reading of the Bible. Only then new understanding of the ancient narratives with their metaphors, intuition, implicitness, and multi-layered presence may attribute again something indispensable for shaping our world.

CV: Jaap Doedens is college associate professor at Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary. He is a biblical scholar who specialized in Gen 6,1-4 and its *Wirkungsgeschichte* in Second Temple literature, the New Testament, and Early Christianity.

⁵ Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Mgr. Ivanka Dovhoruk

Charles University, Protestant Theological Faculty, Prague, Czech Republic

Title: Truly Human: The Only Ambivalent Nature Among All Natures

I shall deal in my contribution for the most part with St. Augustine's thought. At the end, I shall touch a bit of Sigmund Freud's metapsychology. My thesis is that human beings are exceptional among all creatures due to the natural ambivalence. According to Augustine, the principle on the basis of which it is possible to distinguish created nature and corrupted nature of a human being is libido. Although the libido is inherent also in animals as a reproductive instinct, it does not constitute an evil in them (*Contra Iulianum*). The libido represents the evil only in human beings. Although inherent, it is merely an accident to human nature, it does not belong to it substantially (*De Nuptias et Concupiscentia*). Augustine's theory of libido thus shows that human nature is inherently ambivalent: created (according to substance) and corrupted (according to the accident). Libido is the principle of the corruption of human nature, but humans, according to *natura creata*, must undergo a struggle with libido (*Contra Iulianum*). Human creature is exceptional in the order of creation due to the ambivalence of his or her nature. As a result, there is no sin but in human. But what is the essence of what has been corrupted? In contrast to libido as "I do what I do not will" in Paul's letters (Rom 7,20) stands good will which belongs exclusively to the psychic personality of man before the Fall. It is so powerful that "anyone who wills to live rightly and honorably, if he wills himself to will this instead of transient goods, acquires so great a possession with such ease that having what he willed is nothing other for him than willing it." (*De 1 libero arbitrio* I,13,29).⁶ So, on the one hand, to the freely willing mind regarding human created nature is attributed a great power and sublimity that the rest of creation lacks. On the other hand, sin is only in the will (*Retractionum*), the will of man, therefore man could sin with the first sin, since his will was a free spirit. The ambivalence of nature is what makes man exceptional above the rest of creation. The perverse desires, but also seeking struggle with them – this unceasing conflict is the very feature of human beings. This struggle, however, is conditioned by receiving *gratia Dei* through the recognition of one's dependence on God. Thus, the movement of will to cling again to the Creator – is also possible only for man. Augustine's philosophy is built on the foundations of a Christian faith transcending all understanding. Yet, this very same idea is – paradoxically – confirmed by the theses of the fundamentally atheistic thought of Sigmund Freud. For, according to Freud's theory of libido, only humans are capable of sexual perversion and sexual sublimation. Only the perverse libido, which is not bound to its object or aim, is the reason why merely a human being is able to restrain the libido in sublimation. Animals with their reproduction instinct are incapable of sublimation of sexual drive, i.e. morality and cultural work.

Conclusion: The theological concept of sin thus proves more relevant than ever, pointing to the uniqueness of the human being, who alone among other creatures is ambivalent according to the very nature – always on the edge of perversion and morality.

CV: PhD Candidate of the Philosophy of Religion Protestant Theological Faculty Charles University Prague

⁶ Peter King, *Augustin: On the Free Choice of the Will; On Grace and Free Choice: and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 264 s. ISBN 978-0-521-00129-8, p. 25.

Dr. Zoran Grozdanov

University Centre for Protestant Theology Matthias Flacius Illyricus, University in Zagreb, Croatia

Title: “When I Was Baptized, Christ in Me Became a Croat”: *Imago Dei* as a National Program

The title sentence is taken from the statement by one of the most influential priests in Croatia during the 1980's and 1990's – general editor of the very influential Church weekly “Glas Koncila” (The Voice of the Council) – that heavily influenced Church politics at the time of national awakening.

Many articles and books were written on the intersection and mutual influence of national and religious identity in the wars in former Yugoslavia. Those texts were primarily elaborated within historical, sociological or ethnological discourse, leading to the view of the past conflicts as inevitable conflicts that were generated for decades, even for centuries. However, there is a lack of theological explorations of the causes of so close a connection between national and religious identity, which gave rise to close alliance between religious identities and nationalistic politics, and which lead to the exclusion of the members of the different ethnic communities and turning them into the religious and ethnic “Other”. In this paper, we will investigate the theological foundations of the relationship between religious belonging and national belonging, focusing on the case of Croatia and Catholic theology. At the end of the 1970's and especially in the 1980's, Catholic theology experienced a new theological emphasis on the concept of the homeland, culture, people (*Volk*) and ethnic belonging. These emphases were introduced by the late Pope John Paul II in his encyclicals and elaborated in his book *Memory and Identity* and had a profound impact on the peoples of Eastern Europe that did not go through the process of national formation. At the same time, in the aforementioned decades, Croatian theologians emphasized the concepts of Incarnation and *Imago Dei*, as arguments for developing a theology that will give strong arguments for appreciation and evaluation of national identity and Christian roots of such identity. Such views of Incarnation (as Incarnation into the concrete human being with all his cultural, ethnic and national identity) and *Imago Dei* (as the social aspect of the human being, with sociality comprising of cultural, ethnic and national identity as the foundation of “the deepest human identity” [John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*]) led to the development of the “theology of (national) liberation”, as would profound Croatian sociologist of religion Željko Mardešić say, where ethnic and national belonging were elevated to the level of theological value. Beside analysing these processes which led to the close alliance between religious and national belonging and the exclusion of the Other, we will look into the concepts of *Imago Dei* that transcend or represent discontinuity with cultural and national belonging, which might be one of the theological models for mutual understanding, reconciliation and confrontation with the past of religious communities in ex-Yugoslav countries.

CV: Zoran Grozdanov is an assistant professor at the University Centre for Protestant Theology Matthias Flacius Illyricus, University in Zagreb, Croatia. He studied theology, philosophy and history in Rijeka, Zagreb and Osijek (Croatia) and he completed his PhD thesis at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University in Zagreb. He was the recipient of the “Brot für die Welt” scholarship for doctoral work for which he spent the academic year 2010/2011 at the University in Tübingen, working with Prof. Jürgen Moltmann as a mentor. In 2019 he received Fellowship from the University of Münster, Germany.

Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy-Takács

Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Hungary

Title: Presence and Relationship in Biblical Theology

The presence of YHWH among the people of Israel is one of the central themes of Old Testament theology, and the divine statement is very promising indeed: “I will put my dwelling place among you” (Lev 11,26). There are multiple consequences of this phenomenon, one should consider God’s immanence vs. transcendence, the divine omnipresence vs. manifest presence and covenant responsibility among other topics, but the present paper focuses on the issue in its Ancient Near Eastern context. The ANE is the “cognitive environment” (John H. Walton) in this case, and we may consider “partnership” as a prime way of expression of Israel’s experience. God became accessible through his dwelling among the people, and in the centre of the paper is the cult of Israel as a way to restore imperilled or lost partnership, but our scope is broader than that: it expands from the beginning to call on the name of the Lord (Gen 4,26) through the theologies of Kings and Ezekiel to the church as a temple of the living God (2Cor 6,16). Partnership in this context has enduring theological implications for the 21st century, especially in the way modern societies understand the individual. I shall try to formulate a partnership-centred anthropology as a positive response to the possible negative effects of modern self-awareness.

CV: Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy-Takács is professor and chair of Biblical Theology, Head of Institute of Theology at Debrecen Reformed Theological University. His main research interests include history of Ancient Israel and the ANE, history of the religion of Ancient Israel, Biblical theology.

Drs. Gyopárka Jakab-Köves

Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest, Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of *Imago Dei* in the Context of Covenant

Karl Barth started his theological work with the complete rejection of covenant theology. In the beginning he looked with a slight contempt to the proliferation of federal theology, primarily in the 17th century. Barth has continually corrected his thesis and as he reached the late – III. and IV. – volumes of *Church Dogmatics*, “covenant” became for him a fundamental term. He considered “covenant” as the doctrinal structure of the theology of creation and reconciliation.

But Barth differs completely from traditional covenant theology in that he does not approach the phenomenon of covenant from a historical perspective, because he subordinates the entire relationship between God and the people to the special event of Christ’s redemptory act, he speaks only of one covenant, the covenant of grace. Barth’s Christology is closely related to his doctrine of creation, conceived as follows: creation is “the external basis of the covenant” and the covenant is “the internal basis of creation”. God creates man as the precondition of His covenant with him. In addition, since creation is a form, it can only manifest its reality by the emergence of the covenant. With this supralapsarian concept Barth tries to avoid the natural theology in his doctrine of creation. The goal of creation is the covenant, and not vice versa. He speaks about *analogia relationis* instead of *analogia entis*. His anthropology is founded upon Christology. Jesus Christ is the representative of humanity in the covenant

with God. There is a disparity between the perfect man, the incarnated Jesus Christ and between the fallen mankind, but the relation remains covenantal. Jesus Christ is the representative of all in the making of the covenant.

How does Barth see the role of the created man, of the *Imago Dei* in this context? That is what I am trying to answer in my paper, primarily focusing on *Church Dogmatics*. Many issues will be relevant that became controversial. Why does Barth speak only about the covenant of grace, and why does he reject the concept of the covenant of works? Is the suggestion justified, that Barth has a natural theology on the basis of the Scripture, owing to the fact, that he has nothing to say about the covenant in its historical forms in Scripture? Is the criticism against him correct, that he eliminates the headship of Adam for the sake of the connection with redemption in Christ? I will make an attempt to point out that Barth's dialectics is rooted in Scripture, but his alternative, circular reasoning system can generate self-contradictions.

CV: Drs. Gyopárka Jakab-Köves is a PhD student at Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest. Her supervisor is Dr. Tamás Németh from Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary where Gyopárka graduated in 2020. Formerly she studied German Language and Literature and Hebrew Studies at Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest. Her research area is covenant theology in systematic and biblical theology.

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Kaiser

J. Selye University, Faculty of Reformed Theology, Komarno, Slovakia

Title: Ist der Mensch ein Triebwesen?

Das neuere, von Freud und seiner Schule beeinflusste Menschenbild, das im Denken des Neumarkismus der 68er-Bewegung aufgenommen wurde, hat mittlerweile weite Teile der westlichen Gesellschaften geprägt und zu einem verbreiteten Hedonismus geführt. Es trägt bei allen psychologischen Einsichten einerseits einen stark irrationalen Zug und ist darüber hinaus von einem deterministischen Naturalismus geprägt. Es zeigt sich besonders in der Bewertung und Handhabung der Sexualität, die zu einem wesentlichen Element menschlicher Selbstwahrnehmung avanciert ist.

Dieses Menschenbild widerspricht nicht nur der biblischen Sicht des Menschen, sondern auch der der Aufklärung, der zufolge der Mensch zu vernünftigem, besonnenem Handeln fähig ist. Der Vortrag skizziert die diesbezüglichen Positionen von Freud, Reich, Fromm, Wuketits und anderen, bewertet sie kritisch und skizziert eine theologische Sicht, die die *imago dei* zur Geltung bringt und aufzeigt, daß der Mensch und allemal der Christ trotz seiner Sündhaftigkeit gerufen ist, besonnen zu handeln und im Leben zu herrschen (Römer 5,17). Diese Sicht impliziert, daß der Mensch wenn nicht vor Gott, so doch in innerweltlicher Hinsicht Freiheit hat, über sein Handeln zu entscheiden, und daß er zumindest in der Lage ist, gegenüber seinen Trieben Nein zu sagen (s. Libet), und daß hinter jedem menschlichen Handeln ein bestimmtes Denken steht, das der ethischen Bewertung offensteht.

CV: Bernhard Kaiser (*1954), Dr. habil.; D.Th. (Univ. Stellenbosch)

1978-1983 Pfarrer der Lutherischen Kirche in Chile; 1985-2006 Dozent für Systematische Theologie an privaten Akademien in Gießen und Marburg; seit 2006 Geschäftsführer des Instituts für Reformatorsche Theologie in Reiskirchen und Hochschullehrer in Systematischer Theologie an der Reformierten Theologischen Fakultät der Selye-János-Universität, Komarno/SK.

Prof. Dr. Jenő Kiss

Protestant Theological Institute, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Title: Unabbildbares Abbild

Jürgen Oorschot (Mensch, 2018, 54ff) weist auf den engen Zusammenhang zwischen der Rede von Gott (Theologie) und der Reden vom Menschen (Anthropologie) hin. Es ist eine hermeneutische Korrelation zwischen dem Theomorphismus (Gottesebenbildlichkeit) des Menschen und dem Anthropomorphismus Gottes zu vermuten. Nach Oorschot generiert “[d]ie anthropomorphe Gottesrede [...] dabei nicht ein Gottesbild, sondern präsentiert eine Vielfalt und Pluralität von Einzelmomenten und -segmenten. [...] Vielfalt und Pluralität signalisieren alttestamentlich theologisch wie anthropologisch, dass weder Gott noch Mensch sich in den Bildern und Sprachspielen vollständig erfassen lassen. Die Unfassbarkeit des Gottes JHWH wird selbst an den Stellen deutlich, die von seinem Aussehen reden. [...] Auf der Linie dieser Zurückhaltung verbindet die anthropomorphe Rede Anschaulichkeit und Menschennähe mit dem Ausbleiben *eines* Gottesbildes. [...] Umgekehrt bleibt der Mensch, der zentral als Abbild Gottes bestimmt wird [...] einem feststellenden, ihn sprachlich-rational oder bildlich fixierenden Zugriff entzogen.“ (55).

In unserem Vortrag werden wir versuchen, die biblisch-theologische Ansicht von Oorschot in Bezug auf den Menschen exegetisch zu begründen, ihr in verschiedenen Seelsorge-Theorien auf die Spur zu kommen, die Gefahren des fixierenden Zugriffs auf den Menschen aufzuspüren und zu beschreiben und letztlich diejenigen seelsorgerlichen Möglichkeiten aufzuweisen, die das Auflösen von bereits bestehenden Fixierungen fördern und das Entsprießen solcher Fixierungen verhindern.

CV: Jenő Kiss (1963) is Professor at the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca. He graduated in 1987 with a degree in theology and received his PhD in 2000 in Utrecht, with a dissertation entitled *Die Klage Gottes und des Propheten, Ihre Rolle in der Komposition und Redaktion von Jer 11-12, 14-15 und 18* (supervisors: Bob Becking and Wilfried Thiel; publication details: WMANT 99, Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2003). He has taught courses on Old Testament at the Faculty of Lutheran Theology in Hermannstadt (Sibiu, Romania) between 1995 and 2005. Since 2000 he teaches at the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca. His field of expertise is contextual approach and contextual pastoral care, and he is also an outspoken representative of the importance of biblical texts for homiletics, detailed in his book, *Hármasban Isten színe előtt* (Threesome in the Presence of God).

Prof. Dr. Viktor Kókai-Nagy

Debrecen Reformed Theological University, J. Selye University, Faculty of Reformed Theology, Komarno, Slovakia

Title: εἰκών bei Paulus

“Und Gott sprach: Lasst uns Menschen machen als unserer Bild (ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν)...“ (Gen 1,26). Man nimmt an, dass dieser bedeutungsvolle Satz viele Spuren in dem Neuen Testament hinter gelassen hat. Aber wenn man das Vorkommen des Wortes εἰκών anschaut, wird ganz klar, dass es nur für Paulus einen besonderen theologischen Sinn hat. Bei ihm bringt das Wort die außerordentliche Würde des Menschen zum Ausdruck. In meiner Vorlesung möchte ich dieses Thema untersuchen.

CV: Viktor Kókai-Nagy (geb. 02. 20. 1973.): Assistent Professor in Debrecen (Ungarn) und in Komárno (Slowakei). Forschungsgebiet: Theologie des Paulus, Josephus.

Prof. Dr. Marcin Kowalski

John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin, Poland

Title: Man as *Imago Dei* and a Dwelling Place of God's Spirit in Philo and Paul

Can God's Spirit dwell in a human being and how does it define our human nature? The Stoics answered this question affirmatively, understanding the spirit (*pneuma*) as a divine, rational and material particle identified with the mind. Philo accepts their views to some extent, speaking of reason as part of the divine Spirit in man, responsible for our likeness to God (*Plant.* 18; *Det.* 83; *QG* 2.49; *Her.* 55; *Fug* 134; *Spec.* 1,171). At the same time, he insists that the divine Spirit within humans cannot be of material nature because "man was made after the image of God, and not after the image of any created being (Gen 1:27)" (*Plant.* 19). Also contrary to the Stoic immanence, the Spirit cannot reside in human beings forever, because they are only mortals and their aspirations are mundane (*Gig.* 19, 28; *Deus* 2). Philo understands reason and rationality as *imago Dei* in man, but at the same time speaks of the immaterial divine Spirit that can inhabit only the perfect ones, like Moses (*Gig.* 47). These views are in stark contrast to Saint Paul's vision expressed in chapter eight of the Letter to the Romans. The apostle speaks of a Christian who no longer lives in the flesh but in the Spirit, because the Spirit of Christ dwells in him/her (Rom 8:9). The believer is not only a dwelling place of the Spirit, but also a dwelling place of Christ (Rom 8:10). Living in a Christian, the Spirit of Christ in a sure way leads him/her to the resurrection (Rom 8:11). Paul does not identify the Spirit with reason but with a living and thinking person (Rom 8:5-7) who guides Christians to their communion with the Father and the Son (Rom 8:14-17). The image of the Spirit dwelling in the believers (Rom 8:1-17) provides a link to the story of creation and allows Paul to define the Christian *imago Dei*. It is centred on the likeness to Christ and on the community with brothers and sisters, which reflects the communion between Christ and God.

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Dr. György Kustár

Reformed Theological Academy of Sárospatak

Title: To be "*kata sarka*" or not to be?

In 2Cor 5:16-20 Paul states that "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (NIV) The New King James Version gives a more fitting but more obscure rendition of verse 16: "we regard no one according to the flesh." What does it mean to regard someone according to the flesh? Does he mean our biological existence? Our body? The condition of our being as sinful creatures? Or

is it a sociological category determining the value of an individual as a person who is measured by his/her capability to fulfill his/her responsibilities and roles? These questions become more exciting when we look behind the text and discover some apologetic overtones – Paul perhaps speaks about this issue in light of his own “weakness”, whether it be a disability or an ailment. From this standpoint, “kata sarka” is not only an abstract theological or general anthropological statement but a poignant and deeply personal problem for him, and, in my view, it is connected to the image of Christ. Christ, “regarded according to the flesh”, is an obstacle as a defeated Messiah, as much as Paul in his weakness – but as we no longer know anyone according to the flesh, one can gain a new point of view in faith: Christ is victorious as the Risen One, and Paul is also valuable as a “treasure bearer” in his “earthen vessels” (4,7). This interpretation has far reaching consequences when speaking about persons with disability or severe ailment. John Swinton’s assumption, that cognitively disabled people can develop faith in God by experiencing caring human love, is in parallel with our thesis: to treat someone with love means to look at him/her through different lenses. We regard them not “kata sarka”, but from the *relationship* they have with the Eternal God through Christ.

CV: Dr. György Kustár is assistant professor at Reformed Theological Academy of Sárospatak, Hungary. His main areas of teaching and research are New Testament Greek, The World of the Bible, Introduction to the New Testament, Hermeneutics.

Prof. Dr. Piotr Lorek

Evangelical School of Theology, Wrocław, Poland

Title: The Volitional Dimension of Imago Dei: Man’s Absolute Freedom in Zen Philosophy (D. T. Suzuki) and Evangelical Theology (D. Bonhoeffer)

Is man as God’s image really free? It is not about the sense of freedom itself, because it is widely available to people without mental disorders and does not require any command for them. It is, however, about a human freedom that is ontically true, that is, absolute freedom. Man is subjectively aware of his limitations and impossibility to do what he would like to do. This state of understanding raises the question of whether the human being is absolutely free despite experiencing his accidental inability.

Philosophical and religious thought systems have asked the question of human freedom for centuries. In this work, two argumentative models defending the absolute freedom of man will be presented. Both come from the 20th century. One represents Far Eastern Zen (Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki), and the other represents European Evangelicalism (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). The chosen representatives of Zen Buddhism and Evangelical Christianity are recognized and respected thinkers. Their views on absolute human freedom will first be reconstructed based on selected fragments of their work, and then compared to reveal major similarities and differences. The conclusions will be aimed at showing the basic convergence of both models in the fact of relativization of the human being in the name of defending his absolute freedom. Both systems of thought turn out to use the paradoxicality of philosophical-theological concepts. The conducted analysis will also result in the inconclusiveness and unverifiability of the thesis on the absolute freedom of a human being in both systems of thought.

CV: Prof. Piotr Lorek is the academic dean at Evangelical School of Theology, Wrocław, Poland (2007-). He is a graduate of Biblical Theological Seminary, Poland (1999) and University of Glamorgan, UK (2000). In February 2004, he defended his PhD thesis in the field of biblical theology at the University of Wales, UK. In 2015, he obtained a second doctorate (habilitation) from the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, Poland. He specializes in

NT theology and interreligious dialogue between Christian theology and Zen philosophy. He is the author of two academic books. The first, written in English, deals with the theme of exile in the Hebrew Bible, and the second with the doctrine of hell in the New Testament. In addition, he is the author of books popularizing scientific research on the Bible and contemporary theology. He is a frequently invited ecumenical and retreat conference speaker combining theological knowledge with contemporary coaching and psychotherapeutic techniques. He participates in the work of the synod of the Wrocław diocese of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Poland.

Drs. Márta Lucski

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary

Title: Self-image in the Mirror of Christian Anthropology and the Approach of Pastoral Care

The support in the formation of self-esteem and self-image has never been as important as in our days. Existential problems, difficulties in searching for identity are present in the age of increasingly free personal identity, and these issues make many people feel insecure. The expectations and ideals that are constantly confronting society keep us in a constant tension which causes anxiety and mental illness in many people. Accepting ourselves and feeling accepted is our basic need. The negative effects of growing individualism are already visible in developed societies. Experience has shown, however, that this leads to a narrowing self-acceptance and the loss of our healthy self-image and self-esteem.

How can Christian theology reflect on this social problem? How can Christian teaching, theological anthropology and church ministry help an individual's self-esteem develop in a positive direction?

A human being is primarily viewed as belonging to God and as a member of a particular community, as taught in the Bible. With all this in mind, pastoral care can present a biblical image of humans that can provide answers to the questions of today's people, both in terms of self-interpretation and self-esteem. The aim of this study is to reflect upon the possible problems with self-esteem, and to provide theological, primarily practical theological answers to the question, as well as showing the possibilities of pastoral care in the given topic.

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Dr. Francis Macatangay

School of Theology of the University of St. Thomas, Houston, USA

Title: "Male and Female" as Limits: The Witness of the Book of Tobit

Biblically, creation can be viewed as the divine act of placing limits and boundaries upon the created elements. The limits are meant to make the created world a house of life. "Male and female" may then be understood not necessarily in terms of gender relations but in terms of the limits, or the separation and differentiation that result in limits, that God has imposed for the flourishing of life. The Book of Tobit is a witness in Second Temple Judaism to this understanding of human flourishing and the proliferation of life. The book states that the marriage between Tobiah and Sarah has been decreed from heaven and by the Book of Moses (Tob 6,11), revealing thus God's intention. Asmodeus, the demon who loves Sarah, can be considered "the Completely Other," a being from a different realm, whose irrational desire for

Sarah yields only death. In the case of Tobiah, a giant fish shows a similar desire when it leaps out of the water to devour him (GII Tob 6,3) or swallow his feet (GI Tob 6,3). The conquest of the fish, done under angelic direction, enables Tobiah to acquire fish parts that would later heal his father's blindness and expel the demon. On the night of their wedding, Tobiah's prayer includes references to Gen 2,18-23, stating that since "it is not good for man to be alone," God made Adam a "helper like himself" (Tob 8,6). Tobiah also claims that he is taking Sarah "not with lust but with fidelity," thus implying that his action towards Sarah in marriage corresponds to God's intention at creation. Then Tobiah asks God to bless them with children. In this way, the Book of Tobit seems to underline the biblical claim that life-giving and life-producing relationships respect the limits, defined or understood as male and female, that God has placed upon the representatives of his rule on earth. The implications of this biblical conviction for same-sex unions will be considered.

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Dr. József Nagy

Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, Hungary

Title: The Beast as an *Imago Diaboli*: εἰκών and θηρίον in the Book of Revelation

This study seeks to grasp how the book of Revelation depicts the deformed *Imago Dei*, via the words "εἰκών" and "θηρίον." Since the deformation can be best perceived in the light of the ideal pattern, we deal with Gen 1,24-31 first. According to Gen 1,24-31, God has determined the place of both man and θηρίον within creation. The main difference between humans and animals is that only man bears the image of God (Gen 1,26). Moreover, man's duty is to rule over creation, including the animals (Gen 1,26.28). After the fall (Gen 3), the relationship between θηρίον and man has been altered. For example, the book of Daniel narrates that man is at enmity with lions (Dan 6). Furthermore, Dan labels empires and its leaders as θηρίον (Dan 7). Through the lens of Gen 1,26.28, one can see the alteration, because θηρίον (even if θηρίον is personified) rules over the nations. Besides the Old Testament, Graeco-Roman authors are also comparing some men to θηρίον (e.g. Josephus, Philo).

It is remarkable that in Rev εἰκών occurs always in tandem with θηρίον (Rev 13,14.15[3x]; 14,9.11; 15,2; 16,2; 19,20; 20,4). Since most occurrences are in Rev 13, we choose this chapter to uncover the intention of Rev, remembering how Gen and Dan used εἰκών and θηρίον.

In Dan, εἰκών and θηρίον function as a disguise for leaders and emperors, although these symbols are used separately in diverse chapters (Dan 2; 7). Even if the concept of Rev differs from Dan, these symbols appear in a similar context. Moreover, Rev connects these words into one expression (εἰκών τοῦ θηρίου; εἰκών αὐτοῦ).

An additional shift compared to Dan is that Rev counts θηρίον as an agent of Satan. Moreover, Rev implies that the beast is changed by the image of Satan. One can notice this by seeing the appearances and actions of both the beast and Satan. In the light of Gen 1,25-26, the character of the beast is ironic. While Gen reports that man was created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), in Rev the emperors and empires – compared to a beast – became similar to Satan (*Imago Diaboli*). Consequently, the beast is not the last enemy. The emperors and empires that seek to become similar to God, are failing to reach their goals. Moreover, they turn away from human quality by becoming similar to θηρίον. It is even more ironic that the θηρίον – that

appears as a consequence of distortion – is aiming to distract the attention of the inhabitants of the earth from God.

Most studies on Rev emphasize the relationship between *θηρίον* and *ἄρνιον*. Despite this often noted inner-textual observation, the above-mentioned intertextual remark is overlooked. According to this reading, *θηρίον* – alongside *εἰκών* – represents the distorted *Imago Dei*.

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Dr. Áron Németh

Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Hungary

Title: *Homo homini lupus: Die pejorative Animalisierung des Menschen im Alten Testament*

Die dogmatische Konzeption über den Verlust der Gottebenbildlichkeit durch die Sünde lässt sich mit alttestamentlichen Texten nicht unterstützen. Am Ende der Sintfluterzählung wird die Gottebenbildlichkeitsaussage nicht zurückgenommen, sondern gar wiederholt und verstärkt (Gen 9,6).

Die beiden *imago Dei*-Erwähnungen in Gen 1,26-28 und Gen 9,1-7 bringen die Zwischenstellung des Menschen zum Ausdruck, indem sich die *imago Dei*-Aussage stark mit der Repräsentation Gottes einerseits, und die Herrschaftsauftrag über die Tiere andererseits verknüpft (vgl. Ps 8). Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen geht mit dem Sündenfall nicht verloren, der Herrschaftsauftrag wird aber modifiziert. Nach dem Sündenfall/Sintflut geht es um eine Herrschaft über die Tiere die auch die Tiertötung miteinschließt. In dem ‚Mensch–Tier‘ Verhältnis setzt Gott „eine Art Kriegszustand“ ein, indem die Herrschaft des Menschen über die Tiere zu einer „Schreckensherrschaft“ umwandelt. Das ‚Mensch–Mensch‘ Verhältnis steht in der priesterlichen Urgeschichte außerhalb dieses Herrschaftsauftrags, der Mensch wird dementsprechend nicht beauftragt über anderen Menschen zu herrschen.

Mein Beitrag setzt sich mit dem Phänomen der Animalisierung des Menschen in alttestamentlichen Kontexten auseinander. Die Animalisierung der Mitmenschen ist m. E. das Schlupfloch, in dem die Gottebenbildlichkeit im Alten Testament implizit aberkannt und der ursprünglich begrenzte Herrschaftsauftrag ausgeweitet wird. Es geht also im Alten Testament nicht darum, dass wegen der Sünde Gott die Ebenbildlichkeit zurücknimmt, sondern darum, dass der sündige Mensch die Gottebenbildlichkeit des anderen nicht akzeptiert. Diese Nicht-Akzeptanz artikuliert sich in der Animalisierung des Menschen, in dem m. E. der alttestamentliche Zusammenhang zwischen Gottebenbildlichkeit und Sünde – mindestens implizit und indirekt – zu begreifen ist.

In meinem Vortrag möchte ich durch einige Beispiele aufweisen, wie eine implizite Aberkennung von Gottebenbildlichkeit durch Animalisierung des Menschen im Alten Testament dargestellt wird. Dies zeigt sich besonders in den folgenden Kontexten:

1) Hofsprache: Eine Herrschaft von Menschen über Menschen nimmt der priesterliche Schöpfungsbericht nicht in den Blick. Die Einführung des Königtums in Israel, wie es in dem DtrG vor uns liegt, wird als Abkehr von Gott interpretiert, und die Geschichte der Monarchie ist nach deuteronomistischer Darstellung eine Sündengeschichte. Wo Menschen über Menschen herrschen, stoßen Königswürde und Menschenwürde aufeinander. Dies zeigt sich auch in der metaphorischen Verwendung von *kālāb* ‚Hund‘ in den Samuelbüchern. „Die Hund-Metapher hat einen festen Anhalt an der Hofsprache“, was auch außerbiblischen Parallelen bestätigen. Das heißt, dass die menschliche Herrschaftsausübung über anderen Menschen geschieht durch eine negative protokollarische Animalisierung.

2) Individuelle Klage: „Vor allem in den Feind- und Ichklagen der Psalmen begegnen häufig Tierbilder.“ Das Isolieren und Ausschluss aus der Gemeinschaft von Mitmenschen führt dazu, dass man sich als Tier fühlt. Das Vergleich mit Wüstentieren oder Saprophen in den Ichklagen ist eine Art Selbst-Animalisierung, welche die Aberkennung der Menschenwürde durch den Feinden widerspiegelt (siehe z. B. Ps 22; Hiob 30). Das Isolieren geschieht vor allem durch Verhöhnung oder Verspottung in Form einer diskursiven und psychischen Dehumanisierung/Animalisierung, manchmal kann man aber auch eine physische Aggression voraussetzen. In den Feindklagen wird letztendlich auch der Feind entmenslicht. Die gegenseitige Animalisierung wirkt, wie eine implizite Aberkennung der Gottebenbildlichkeit des anderen Menschen. Diese Redeweise ist aber im Alten Testament nicht abgelehnt, sondern wird als adäquates Stilelement der Klage behandelt. Ein dehumanisierter Mensch darf den Kontakt mit Gott aufnehmen, und das (Klage-)Gebet zu Gott funktioniert als legitimer Ort zum Verbalisieren der extremen Gefühlsäußerungen gegenüber anderen Menschen. Es stellt sich auch die Frage, ob das eschatologische Bild des Tierfriedens (Jes 11) als Modell für den Umgang mit dem Feind gesehen werden kann.

3) Göttliche Strafe: Das Vierte Kapitel des Danielbuches berichtet über die Verbannung Nebukanezzars, und seine zeitweilige Verwandlung zu ein Tier. Die Animalisierung ist in diesem Fall keine verbale Atrozität oder diskursive Dehumanisierung, sondern eine göttliche Strafe. Der Hochmut des babylonischen Königs wird von Gott mit einer „Exkommunikation“ bestraft, dass ein temporäres Tier-Werden mitbringt. Die Isolation bedeutet nicht wie übrigens das „soziale Tod“, sondern eine temporäre Gleichsetzung mit Tieren, eine zeitweilige untermenschliche Lebensform. Es legt nahe, die Anthropologie des aramäischen Danielbuches (Dan 2,4b–7,28) als Anspielung an die priesterschriftliche Anthropologie zu interpretieren.

Am Schluss des Vortrags möchte ich auch darüber nachdenken, ob und wie dieser Ertrag für heute fruchtbar gemacht werden kann.

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2003–2009: Studium der Reformierten Fachtheologie in Debrecen und Wien; 2008–2010: Vikar und Gemeindepfarrer in Debrecen; 2009–2012: PhD-Studium an der Reformierten Theologischen Universität Debrecen (RTUD); 2015: Promotion (PhD; Altes Testament); 2011–2015: Assistent am Lehrstuhl für Altes Testament (RTUD); seit 2015 Oberassistent/Adjunkt am Lehrstuhl für Altes Testament (RTUD)

Drs. Mirjam Piplica Divić

John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin, Poland

Title: *Logos as Imago Dei* in John's Prologue: The Meaning of Logos in John's Prologue

This narrative-critical study aims to observe *Logos* in John's Gospel from the perspectives of its *implied* and *real* readers. In John's Gospel, for his readers to understand the human and the divine nature of Christ, the author had to employ well-known terms and some which shed new light on the presentation of Jesus. The extracted meaning of the Logos in the *Prologue* (John 1:1-18) is being traced in the fourth Gospel. The focus rests on 'the meaning of Logos' that provokes the readers' response, taking into account that Logos is a dynamic substance. Logos becomes the *Imago Dei* and there lies the dynamic. Logos, revealed as Jesus Christ has been leading dialogues and discoursing for the most part in the narrative. The Word as an incarnation – *Imago Dei* – becomes endowed with explicit manifestation and deprived of godly "otherness".

Logos' traits which are presented in the Prologue through his dialectical performances, inducing the reader's response, in the narrative part of the Gospel become known as the divine qualities of Christ. These qualities – which develop into the tenets of Christianity – are easily apprehensible for new Christians, Gentiles, Jews and for contemporary readers. This is where the *implied* and *real* reader meet, having embraced *Imago Dei* as a human entity – Imago – of their own reality. These divine properties as presented in John's Gospel may be historically and semantically (religiously and philosophically) rooted. However, they may also be easily understood from a given narrative, without previous knowledge or religious practice that may facilitate understanding.

Logos is the word, the personalised word containing certain properties which speak about its nature – the divine nature. Logos is also the uttered word, an active-creative force, which communicates God to humans in a revelatory modality – the image. *Logos* has been introduced in categories of cosmology, eschatology and soteriology (Creator, Revealer, and Saviour). Cosmology refers to Logos Creator and Revealer. Logos is presented as true Light. Light is the creative word which brings life, but it is also the means of revelation, introducing Son, True God. Eschatology pertains to Grace, which is Logos' competence to offer salvation to all who are enlightened, and have chosen light over darkness in which they stood so far. Soteriology introduces Logos Redeemer. We are to see the glory of the Father. By way of that glory the 'sonship' is available to humans. Son is revealed in the property which exclusively belonged to the Father. We are invited to take part in Son-Father relation. We are redeemed through the incarnate Logos which is now known as Son, the only begotten Son – Jesus Christ. Logos is the Son who reveals the Father and enables humans to share in his relationship to the Father. Logos' sonship provides the insight into a divine reality, where the possibility to share in this relationship with Father rests on the *imago* that dwells among us, as one of us, inviting us to take part in this divine communication.

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Dr. Theo Pleizier

Protestant Theological University, Groningen, The Netherlands

Title: Restoring the Image of God? A Theological Perspective on Pastoral Care

Religious practices, such as pastoral care, are to some extent restorative practices. They address the fundamental brokenness in human existence and communicate salvation in order to heal and restore. Influential approaches describe the work of pastors as providing counselling in existential crises (Howard Clinebell), as helping to reframe life stories (Donald Capps), or as meaning making (*source*). Each of these approaches gives a different reconstruction of the wrong that is in need of repair. The question that emerges, however, is the question about God: in what sense do the restorative practices in pastoral care aim to repair the divine-human relationship? Do we need a different conceptualisation as some have suggested (Root, Purves, Oden)? They call for a reassessment of the 'classical' approach to pastoral care, namely to 'care for people in their lives before God' (Purves 2001, 6).

In this paper I address the role of theological anthropology in pastoral care practices. What difference does it make if we reconstruct pastoral care as care for people in their lives before God, in existential crisis, or in constructing meaningful narratives? To answer this question, I explore the usefulness of the concept of 'imago Dei' in pastoral care practices. First,

I explore the concept of 'imago Dei' in relation to some influential contemporary approaches to pastoral care and how they approach the issue of restoration in pastoral care practices. Second, I present a pastoral case and test the use of 'imago dei' in analysing this particular pastoral care situation. Finally, I provide a tentative answer to the question whether pastoral care can be understood as 'restoring the image of God' and what kind of theological anthropology is needed for pastoral practice. In the concluding section, the question is broadened. If pastoral care calls for an approach that does justice to a globalised, decolonial, and spiritually diverse world, is the idea of 'imago Dei' still valuable as it suggests a generic view on human nature?

CV: Theo Pleizier, PhD, is assistant professor Practical Theology at the Protestant Theological University, campus Groningen. He teaches homiletics and pastoral care. He has published in various areas in practical theology, including catechesis, spirituality and chaplaincy studies. See for a more detailed CV and a list of publications, <https://www.pthu.nl/Over-PThU/Organisatie/Medewerkers/t.t.j.pleizier/>.

Dr. Sarolta Püsök

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Title: *Gottebenbildlichkeit und Frauen im Dienst Gottes*

Jenseits der klassischen Definitionen der Imago Dei, jenseits der Frage: Mann und Frau und wie die Bibel sie sieht, existieren immer noch viele unbeantwortete Aspekten. Ist es anders wie die Frau gegenüber der Welt verhielt, als die Verhaltensweise des Mannes? Wenn schon, kann/darf/soll es auch den Dienst betreffen? Beispiel für "kann" es: In Vergangenheit man hat das Pfarramt exklusiv nur für Männer ermöglicht, und das zweite Geschlecht könnte nicht Amtsträgerin werden. Damaliger Meinung nach die Frau ist nicht im Stande alle Bedingungen des Amtes zu erfüllen.

Beispiel für "darf" es: Im 20. Jahrhundert hat man das Pfarramt auch für Frauen geöffnet, also auch das zweite Geschlecht dürfte Amtsträgerin werden.

Beispiel für "soll" es: In Vergangenheit wurde von erste Generationen der Pfarrerrinnen irgendwie eine Genderneutrale, oder männliche Verhaltensweise erwartet. Heutzutage man darf theoretisch auch als Amtsträgerin sich selbst bleiben. Wie beantwortet heute die Ungarische Reformierte Kirche diese Fragen?

CV: PhD. Sarolta PÜSÖK (1971, Cluj-Napoca-Ro) is associate professor at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music. She studied theology in Cluj, Sibiu and Basel. 1994: Bachelor and Master in Theology at the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj/Kolozsvár; 1996: Final church examination for reformed ministry; 2009: PhD degree at Reformed Theological University in Debrecen/Hu. Her main research area is systematic theology.

Dr. Jan Roskovec

Charles University, Protestant Theological Faculty, Prague, Czech Republic

Title: *Metamorphosis Through Mirroring: Optical Metaphors in Paul's Description of the New Humanity*

At several occasions in his epistles, Paul submits a characteristic of the new existence of those who, by their faith, have linked up their lives to the Christ – Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and

risen from the dead. Often, these anthropological presentations are not the end in themselves, but are developed in the service of some particular argument. This is also the case of the passage 2Cor 3,7–4,6, one of the most intricate Pauline texts. With the intention to re-establish his authority in Corinth, Paul advances in this passage from the contrast between letter and spirit to a complex description of the new Christian existence, employing a number of biblical allusions and metaphors, mainly of optical nature, among others referring also to the motif of the *imago Dei* (2Cor 4,4). The paper will attempt to make sense of this passage.

CV: Jan Roskovec, Ph.D.

- born 1966 in Prague,
- studied theology in Prague, Cambridge and Erlangen,
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Dr. Enoh Šeba

Centre for Protestant Theology Matthias Flacius Illyricus, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Title: *Imago Dei* in Preaching: Theological Warrant for More Active Involvement of the Listeners

Given that every sermon is essentially an effort to establish and maintain a communication between God and human being, there is a significant question to be asked: What are the consequences of the fact that those who are to be addressed by God through sermon are already created in the image of that same God and are the bearers of His likeness? And even more specifically, could the particular reading of *imago Dei* doctrine serve as a theological warrant for the stronger inclusion of the hearers in the homiletical process? In this paper, I will try to present that social and relational as well as representational interpretations of the doctrine both affirm the humanity's call to a life of mutuality and dialogue and underline the active responsibility of the bearers of *imago Dei*. However, the perspective of New Testament reveals that fullness of image of God is found only in Christ which highlights the need for believers to have their *imago Dei* restored through character formation and gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ. So, in answering the question whether there is a possibility to locate the point of contact between God and man, it is possible to argue that the same God created us for the communion and communication with Himself and restored our possibility to hear and respond to the word of God through Christ's redemption. Several implications for the role of listeners can be explicated here. Firstly, unless understood in terms of total depravity, the doctrine of *imago Dei* always reveals something in humans that effectively points to God. As a result, the act of preaching has potential for meaningful communication because there is an inherent possibility of contact between God and human beings and that contact can be established anywhere within entire realm of human life and experience. Secondly, the relational character of *imago Dei* affects both preaching and listening in manifold ways. For instance, the fact that preacher shares the image of God with her hearers could urge her to show her dependability with them by preaching in a way that discloses her awareness that its full restoration can be accomplished only in authentic dialogue and mutuality. Thirdly, the eschatological aspect of preaching reminds us that preaching encourages our journey toward the full actualization of the *imago Dei*, but also testifies that the preacher's speaking and the listeners' hearing are surely impaired by sin which in turn justifies the stronger engagement of listeners in preaching conceived as a more communal practice.

CV: Enoh Šeba works at the Centre for Protestant Theology Matthias Flacius Illyricus (University of Zagreb). He began his studies of theology in Osijek (Croatia) and later completed his Master's degree at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic. In 2019 he earned his PhD from University of Chester. His major research interests are practical theology, homiletics, congregational studies, liturgics and Christian social ethics.

Prof. Dr. Wojciech Szczerba

Evangelical School of Theology, Wrocław, Poland

Title: Imago Dei as a Symbol of Human Dignity

The presentation renders the concept first of all from a protological perspective and analyzes its usage in Greek philosophy, the writings of the Old and New Testaments, theological tradition and modern philosophy. In the course of argumentation, the substantial, relational and functional meanings of the term are underlined. These three usages can be found in the treatises of Gregory of Nyssa, which serve as the important point of reference for the presentation. In the context of religious inclusion, the relational angle seems to be the most important. As Jürgen Moltmann indicates in his book *God in the Creation*, the concept of imago underlines the fundamental dignity and importance of every person. Since, according to the Christian tradition, every human being is created as the image of God, the concept transgresses the borders of religions and worldviews. This broad perspective underlines German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas noting that the humanistic-Kantian conviction about the equality of all the people and the need for respect of every person can be found in the Biblical concept of imago Dei. "One such translation", he writes, "that salvages the substance of the term is the translation of the concept of 'man in the image of God' into that of the identical dignity of all men that deserves unconditional respect. This goes beyond the borders of one particular religious fellowship and makes the substance of biblical concepts accessible to the general public." From this perspective, the concept of Imago Dei can be rendered as a symbol not only indicating the dignity of every person and human community, but also a symbol against any types of racism, nationalism or xenophobia. In his book *God for Secular Society*, Moltmann indicates that properly understood human rights – based on a broadly understood concept of Imago Dei – should include e.g. democratic relationships between people, cooperation and fellowship between societies, concern for the environment, in which people live, and responsibility for the future generations, which also can be seen as exemplifications of Imago Dei.

CV: Prof. Wojciech Szczerba Ph.D.

Graduate Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw (1996) and Economic Academy in Wrocław (1997). He studied in Holland, Amsterdam at Theological Seminary and Belgium, Leuven at Evangelische Theologische Faculteit. In 2000 he completed his PhD in Patristics at the University of Wrocław. In 2009 he defended his second PhD (habilitation) in Ancient Philosophy at the same University. Wojciech wrote two books dealing with the issue of universal salvation in Greek Philosophy and early Christian thought and numerous articles dealing with such issues like soteriology, Protestant tradition, ancient philosophy and theology.

Wojciech became Academic Dean of Evangelical School of Theology in 2002 and served in this position until he became the Rector/President in 2006. Additionally, Wojciech serves as editor-in-chief of periodical *Theologica Wratislaviensia* (<https://theologica.ewst.pl/>) and secretary to the Council of Evangelical Union. He is involved in various ecumenical initiatives and interreligious dialog.

In 2018 Wojciech received Silver Cross of Merit from the President of Poland, recognizing his ministry to preserve the identity of religious and cultural minorities in Poland. Since 2019 Wojciech is a research associate at Von Hügel Institute at St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge (<https://www.vhi.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/directory/szczerba>).

Dr. Katya Tolstaya

Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Religion and Theology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Title: God's Image and Extreme Dehumanization: Orthodox Understandings of the Human Person in View of Radical Evil and Suffering

The 20th century totalitarian experience has brought a new context to discussions on evil, the presence of God, and theological anthropology. These discussions are at the core of post-traumatic theologies and of theories of transitional justice and have to be made fruitful for a reliable post-Soviet theology, and more narrowly to Through after the Gulag. The phenomenon of extreme dehumanization as in Auschwitz and the Gulag compels a rethinking of theology which takes this phenomenon as its reference and focal point. It also raises a number of theoretical and methodological questions which have to be considered carefully. In my paper I will explore this challenge of extreme dehumanization with regard to the Christian doctrine of man as God's image.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in this doctrine, not only in theological circles, but also in interdisciplinary scholarship. In many discussions, the idea that God's image can be identified empirically or as a specific quality in man is being contested. By contrast, my thesis is that, paradoxically, testimonies from places of extreme dehumanization such as the Gulag and Auschwitz affirm that the image of God is real. These testimonies describe the *loss* of "everything human in man" (Varlam Shalamov), or exactly of what is traditionally described as God's image. The reality of the loss of "everything human" in the 'living corpses' – the *Muselmänner* of Auschwitz and the *dokhodyagi* of the Gulag – obliges us to rethink our theological anthropology.

In the first part of my talk I introduce four common interpretative models of man as God's image (the functional, the relational, the substantive, and the dynamic models). While these models overlap, I argue that they do not correlate with the historical and empirical reality of the loss of God's image. Thus, in their current form, these models are prone to remaining conceptual and cannot provide a reliable (theological) anthropology, nor contribute to truthful memory and remembrance of the victims.

While the substantive model is currently the least fashionable, I will argue that taking God's image as substantive is the only understanding that makes sense. It is precisely the substantive aspect that a) makes the overlap between these models in that they presuppose the ontological reality of God's image; and b) corresponds with the reality of extreme dehumanization. I will plea for reconsidering a substantive understanding in view of the 20th century experience of dehumanization. This experience is not subject to a model or concept we would apply, but is a fundamental given. As long as the concrete and historical dehumanization is not acknowledged and reflected, to speak of man as God's image risks lapsing into abstractions.

In the second part I connect God's image with the Orthodox teaching and practice of the unity of creation (through St Maximus the Confessor to St Gregory Palamas, with their respective teachings on the divine *logoi* and *energeia* that penetrate creation). Together these teachings can serve as *foci* for rethinking Orthodox anthropology and working towards a theology after the Gulag. I have previously argued that Orthodox theology should draw on experiences and developments in existing post-traumatic theologies like *Theologie nach*

Auschwitz and post-Apartheid theology that have critically engaged with societal and ethical issues and have reflected on their respective traditions. These theologies have helped coming to terms with the past and creating a truthful memory culture.

But exactly in the face of the challenge of extreme dehumanization, Orthodox theology and practice bear a surplus value, because they offer an ontological rather than an ethical answer to the problem of complicity in guilt, evil, and responsibility. The inherent anthropology in the Orthodox worldview implies that “each of us is [ontologically] guilty in everything before everyone, and I most of all” (Dostoevsky). This ontological understanding proves fruitful in contexts where confronting guilt and complicity is still difficult.

My other argument is that in modern – mostly Orthodox – elaborations of personal co-working with God on the way towards deification the crucial link between the doctrine of man as God’s image and the unity of creation seems to be missing. Scholarly discussions tend to concentrate on the individual practice and concern topics such as the ‘person’ and the ‘individual.’ Consequently, both discussion and practice remain anthropocentric and are detached from creation.

However, the link between deification and the unity of creation is fundamental to patristic thought and practice. From the desert and Cappadocian Fathers to St Gregory Palamas, and above all in Eastern Orthodox spirituality, the individual practice of deification is embedded in the idea of the unity of creation which can be summarised in the words of the Orthodox liturgy: “God is everywhere present and filling all things.”

CV: Katya Tolstaya is Chair of Theology and Religion in Post-Trauma Societies and Vice-dean and Dean of Research at the Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Tolstaya is the founding Director of the Institute for the Academic Study of Eastern Christianity (INaSEC) at FRT and the Founding President of the International Association for Post-Soviet Theology and Study of Religion (PAST). Her main interest in research and valorisations is to establish the new field of an interdisciplinary and interreligious post-Soviet theology within the interdisciplinary landscape/scope of post-traumatic, post-totalitarian and post-genocidal studies. Her project Theology after Gulag is the first phase of this endeavour. Tolstaya has created a global network to support her in this ambition. Tolstaya obtained her MA in 2000 (*cum laude*) and her PhD in 2006 (*cum laude*).

Dr. Gert van Klinken

Protestant Theological University, Groningen/Amsterdam

Title: Understanding Imago Dei in Northern Europe During the Conversion Era: Saint Boniface

Creation in the image of God finds its source in the Hebrew Bible. Jewish, Greek and Latin theologians made it a keystone of their thinking in the Mediterranean world. It was this concept of human identity, based on imago Dei, that expanded to Northern Europe during the later Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages. Leaving the Mediterranean implied a move to a very different kind of society. In the North it was common to transmit identity concepts via oral transmission. A central notion among Germanic peoples was anchored in the idea that, while it was possible to address the gods, knowing who the gods really were remained an impossibility. The closest one could get to them was by applying strict rules of conduct (laid down in traditional law), honoring the ancestors (linking the living to the transcendental world of the dead) and a close observation of the natural world.

From a historical point of view, it is important to ask what meaning the concept of imago Dei could possibly have for the first generations of Christians in the North, still deeply embedded in the old way of thinking. Now they would have to adapt to a written canon of

authoritative teaching, that had less scope for ambiguity than previous constructs of identity. One can see why so many North Europeans opted for the Arian version of Christianity, with its clear distinction between God on the one hand and Christ and mankind on the other. However, it was not Arianism but the Nicene version of the Christian creed that prevailed in the end, under the aegis of the papacy.

This paper will explore the function of *imago Dei* in the writings of St. Boniface (673-754). Born in Britain, Boniface was a Christian of the second generation, who entered into the service of the church and became a missionary himself. He gained a reputation of a dutiful follower of the papacy. Among the members of his flock he laid the foundations for strict discipline in theological and ecclesiastical matters. Nevertheless, it is striking to note that this faithful son of the Church, who was also an active preacher, struggled to understand the meaning of *imago Dei*, other than a deep mystery. Boniface remained bound to a strong feeling that God and man are and remain *different*, that there may be no definite certainty that the frailty of human identity (sinful as it is) can ever be acceptable to God.

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Dr. Marcin Zieliński

John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin, Poland

Title: Sin and Perfection in the Book of Wisdom

In the Book of Wisdom the notion of sin appears frequently. It isn't only something against the divine law but also against human nature and against reason. In this book there are some interesting words which reveal the meaning of evil and imperfection in human life and its consequences. Evil and sin cast away wisdom from human heart, provoke sadness and at the end punishment after earthly life. In the book of Wisdom there is also information about origin of evil. The expression "It was through the **devil's envy** that **Death entered into the cosmic order**, and they who are his own experience him" in Wis 2,24 needs to be analysed in the context of the entire book in order to grasp the thought of the author. Generally, it shows the disorder and imperfection introduced by sin in the nature of human being. The concept of sin is useful to analyse a notion of perfection and blameless life which can restore the image of God in his creature. In the text there are some expressions connected with perfect life and virtue (cf. βίος ἀκηλίδωτος in Wis 4,9; τὸν τῶν ἀμεινάντων ἄθλων ἀγῶνα νικήσασα in Wis 4,2) The inspired author frequently put together opposite realities (use of *synkrisis*, or comparison) in order to underline a contrast between them and show clearly their characteristics. The concept of perfection is connected with the presence of wisdom and her guidance which can guarantee a perfect, blameless life and the future, eschatological reward. It is clearly said that God created men for incorruption and immortality (cf. ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἀφθαρσίᾳ καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν - Wis 2,23). However, a perfect life doesn't mean a life without any mistake (cf. Wis 8,9 where Solomon can experience the presence of Wisdom as the counsellor in prosperity, and comfort or, better, advisor, counsellor in anxiety and grief, caused by human weakness). In his reflection the inspired author underlines that through self-discipline and with the help of wisdom can the image of God in human being be reconstructed. It is suggested by the last chapter of the book of Wisdom where the return to the paradisiac dimension is described and by some other texts where close relationship is underlined (the author writes there about "kinship"). In this way the author wants to point out that the return to the perfect life with God and the restoration of initial condition of man is still possible. The goal of this paper will be to show the concept of sin and perfection from the perspective of

Pseudo-Solomon and underline some interesting details of his understanding of these topics. The aspect of restoration of imago Dei will also be clearly underlined. The analysis will take into consideration a philosophical background (especially Stoic philosophy), very important for the proper understanding of the author and some texts from Jewish Hellenistic Literature (esp. Philo of Alexandria).

CV: Rev. Marcin Zieliński was born in 1977 in Opole Lubelskie (Poland). After 2 years of pastoral service he started his studies in Rome at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. In 2008 he obtained licentiate in Sacred Scripture and continued his studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, preparing his doctoral thesis entitled “La gioia e la tristezza nel libro della Sapienza”. In 2015 a public defence of his doctoral thesis took place at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Since 2014 he has been working at the Catholic University of Lublin as an assistant professor. Main research area: Wisdom literature, Prophoristics.
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