

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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0. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

- *Anthropos* = “man” (human being)
- Study of those facts about humanity that transcend time and space.

0.1. THE SCIENCE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

0.1.1. SUBDIVISIONS

- Cultural anthropology is one of the four subdisciplines of anthropology. The other subdisciplines include biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistic anthropology. Some anthropologists include a fifth subdiscipline, applied anthropology...
- ...maintaining balance between anthropology as a science that is concerned with causation, structure, function, and the predictability of human and cultural variation and anthropology as a humanity that is concerned with the function of human minds and how humans create their social and cultural worlds...¹

0.1.1.1. MATERIAL

- Physical (Biological) anthropology → Paleontology
- Medical anthropology

¹ LITTLE, LITTLE, W. E. *Humanistic Anthropology*. In: BIRX, H. J. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, London : Sage, 2006, s. 169.

- Evolutionary anthropology
- Archaeology
- Cultural anthropology → Ethnology, Ethnography
- Anthropology of religion
- Economic anthropology
- Linguistic anthropology
- Forensic anthropology
- → *division* (separation?)

0.1.1.2. "IDEOLOGICAL"

(*meaning vs. materiality*)...anthropology as a humanity that is concerned with the function of human minds and how humans create their social and cultural worlds... The emphasis is on MEANING rather than on the MATERIALITY of human life or on innate structures of the mind.²

- Humanistic anthropology
- Psychological anthropology
- Philosophical anthropology³ → Theological (Biblical) anthropology (the nature of man,)
- [WOLFF] (1) An anthropological language primer – the being of man (2) Biographical anthropology – the time of man, (3) Sociological anthropology – the world of man:

0.1.2. TRADITIONS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

- British; German; French; American

0.2. BIBLICAL

- Biblical anthropology: the Biblical Study of Man
- Anthropology is composed of four specialized fields:⁴ (1) cultural anthropology, (2) linguistics, (3) archaeology, and (4) physical anthropology.
- (1) Cultural anthropology, or ethnology, is the study of human culture.
- (2) Linguistics may be paired with the ethnological study of the Bible, and often is.
- (3) Archaeology is, without doubt, the most popular aspect of Biblical anthropology. Archaeology and cultural anthropology have the same goals in the end: the reconstruction of culture histories from relevant data.
- (4) Physical anthropology is concerned with the biological history and makeup of humanity.
- Biblical anthropology is ultimately concerned with humanity's relationship with God, and how that relationship affected culture.
- ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ Biblical anthropology – closer to philosophy or the psychology of the self...

[BARTH] "...anthropology has a special task. It is the task of dogmatics generally to present the revelation of the truth of the relationship between God and man in the light of the biblical witness to its history as a whole. Anthropology confines its enquiry to the human creatureliness presupposed in this relationship and made known by it, i.e., by its revelation and biblical attestation. It asks what kind of a being it is which stands in this relationship with God. Its attention is wholly concentrated on the relationship. Thus it does not try to look beyond it or behind it. It knows that its insights would at once be lost, an the ground cut from beneath it, if it were to turn its attention elsewhere, abstracting from this relationship. Solely in the latter as illuminated by the Word of God is light shed on the creatureliness of man. Thus theological anthropology cleaves to the Word of God in its biblical attestation."⁵

² LITTLE, W. E. *Humanistic Anthropology*. In: BIRX, H. J. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, s. 170-171.

³ Speculation on the fundamental nature of the human species...

⁴ From: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Biblical-Anthropology:-A-Summary-of-the-Discipline&id=6614606>

⁵ BARTH, K. *CD III/2*, p. 19.

1. CONTEMPORARY IDEAS ABOUT MAN

1.1. PHILOSOPHICAL A. → PERSONHOOD

- [PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA (1463–94)] “We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own (Nec certam sedem, nec propriam faciem, nec munus ullum peculiare tibi dedimus), in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. (Tu, nullis angustiis coercitus, pro tuo arbitrio, in cuius manu te posui, tibi illam praeferimus.) I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer (Nec te caelestem neque terrenum, neque mortalem neque immortalem fecimus, ut tui ipsius quasi arbitrarius honorariusque plastes et fctor, in quam malueris tute formam effingas.) It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. (Poteris in inferiora quae sunt bruta degenerare; poteris in superiora quae sunt divina ex tui animi sententia regenerari.)”⁶
- “...Homo sapiens is a “natural-kind” kind, human beings—human selves—really have no nature, are no more than artifacts, histories, hybrids of biology and culture, the sites of certain transformed powers peculiar to human possibility. That single idea is as close to the pivot of my best intuition as anything I can think of.”⁷
- [MARX] “But *man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man – state, society.”⁸
- [SARTRE] “God, value and supreme end of transcendence, represents the permanent limit in terms of which man makes known to himself what he is. To be man means to reach toward being God. Or if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God.”⁹

1.2. CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHOTHERAPY

1.2.1. CENTRAL PROBLEMS

- Psychological anthropology: “...helps to understand ...the many refractions of the core experience that we are at one and the same time part of a singular, particular, and finite world and caught up in a wider world whose horizons are effectively infinite.”¹⁰
- [ROSE] “If there is one value that seems beyond reproach, in our current confused ethical climate, it is that of the self and the terms that cluster around it -autonomy, identity, individuality, liberty, choice, fulfilment. It is in terms of our **autonomous selves** that we understand our passions and desires shape our lifestyles, choose our partners, marriage, even parenthood. It is in the name of the kinds of **persons that we really are** that we consume commodities, act out our tastes, fashion our bodies, display our distinctiveness.”¹¹
- [TAYLOR] “One could say that three of the most dreaded plagues in the history of scientific psychology have been conceptions of personality, models of the unconscious, and systems of psychotherapy. They have proven more than a mere inconvenience; they have encroached so much into the domain of the orderly, the logical, and the rational that to the experimentalist they have

⁶ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486) is among the most read and quoted of Renaissance texts; indeed, the work has been claimed as the “manifesto of the Renaissance”

⁷ MARGOLIS, J. *The Arts and the Definition of the Human*, Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2009, p. ix.

⁸ MARX, K. *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, Introduction*.

⁹ SARTRE, J.-P. *Being and Nothingness*, London : Methuen, 1957, p. 566.

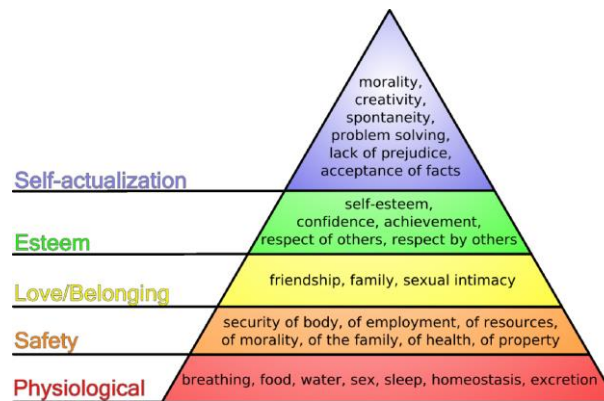
¹⁰ CASEY, C. – EDGERTON, R. B. *A Companion to Psychological Anthropology*, Malden : Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 1

¹¹ ROSE, N. *Inventing Our Selves*, New York : Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 1.

come to represent a veritable disease. Worse, all three converge in what has come to be referred to as dynamic theories of personality. If the experimentalists actually believe that such concepts even refer to anything real, which most of them do not, the history of such theories has been the perpetual bane of scientific psychology because they represent domains of human experience that are not readily amenable to precise measurement, prediction, and control. Yet, they not only refuse to go away but also have tended to dominate the definition of psychology in popular culture, condemning scientific psychology to the oblivion of the specialized peer reviewed journals and the university laboratories, reductionistic science being perceived as generally tackling insignificant problems with impeccable methods.¹²

1.2.2. AUTHORITY AND METHODS

- [ROGERS] “Neither the Bible nor the prophets – neither Freud nor research – neither the revelations of God nor man – can take precedence over **my own direct experience**. My experience is the more authoritative as it becomes more primary, to use the semanticist’s term. Thus the hierarchy of experience would be most authoritative at its lowest level. If I read a theory of psychotherapy, and if I formulate a theory of psychotherapy based on my work with clients, and if I also have a direct experience of psychotherapy with a client, then the degree of authority increases in the order in which I have listed these experiences. My experience is not authoritative because it is infallible. It is the basis of authority because it can always be checked in new primary ways. In this way its frequent error or fallibility is always open to correction.”¹³
- [Maslow] (1) Physiologic, (2) Safety and security, (3) Love and belongingness, (4) Self-esteem, (5) Self-actualization



- [BAUDRILLARD] “The whole of the discourse on needs is based on a naïve anthropology: that of the natural propensity to happiness. Happiness, written in letters of fire behind the least little advert for bath salts or the Canary Islands, is the absolute reference of the consumer society: it is the strict equivalent of salvation. But what is this happiness which haunts modern civilization with such ideological force?”¹⁴

1.3. THERAPEUTIC CULTURE

- How to solve human problems? (what is *wholeness*?)
- What is freedom? (→ freedom for *whom*?)
- What is oppression?
 - [FREIRE] “Any situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human.”¹⁵

¹² TAYLOR, E. *The Mystery of Personality* s. 1

¹³ ROGERS, C. R. *On Becoming a Person*, Boston : Houghtn Mifflin, 1961, p. 24.

¹⁴ BAUDRILLARD, J. *The Consumer Society*, London : Sage, 1998, p. 49.)

¹⁵ FREIRE, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York : Continuum, 2005, p. 55.

2. THE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION OF MAN

2.1. THE PARADOX OF MAN

- “We see him as belonging to heave and earth, and equally bound and committed to both. We see him in the proximity of angels and animals. If we forget that he must remain loyal to the earth, we shall never truly understand him; and even less so if we forget that heaven is above him.”¹⁶

2.2. MAN – THE IMAGE OF GOD

- “What is unique is the continuation of the words addressed to man. This confers on man the office that distinguishes him. Psalm 8.5 understands it as a ‘crowning with glory and honour’.”¹⁷
- Gn 1:26 בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ אֵדָם נַעֲשֶׂה אֱלֹהִים
- Gn 1:27 וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵי אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם
- → What is God like? → (Gn 1:) Intelligence; order; hierarchy; (Gn 2:) Responsibility; love; fellowship...
 - **John 4:24** God is spirit, (πνεῦμα ὁ θεός) → spirituality of man
 - **1John 4:8, 16** God is love. (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν) → ethical
 - **Dt 7:9** he LORD your God is God, the faithful God (הַנֶּאֱמָן)
 - **Ps 7:11** God is a righteous judge (שׁוֹפֵט צַדִּיק)
 - **Ps 99:9** ...the LORD our God is holy (כִּי־קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ)
 - **Ps 116:5** our God is merciful (מְרַחֵם)
 - **1Sa 13:14** The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded (וַיִּצְוֵהוּ) him to be prince (לְנִייד) over his people.

2.3. MAN – THE DUST OF THE EARTH

- → What is the future of man? (→ eschatology)

2.4. MAN – JESUS (BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY → CHRISTOLOGY!)

- **Col 1:15-16** He is the image (εἰκὼν) of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through him and for him.
→ AUGUSTINE “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” (...quia fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.)
- **Heb 1:2-3** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory (ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης) of God and the exact imprint of his nature (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ), and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
- **1Cor 15:45** "The first man Adam became a living being" (ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν); the last Adam became a life-giving spirit (ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν).

2.5. THE LINK BETWEEN HUMANITY AND GOD

- Jesus – the HEAD of humanity (→ the Church)
- the Spirit – God taking abode in humanity (→ the temple)

3. HUMAN CONSTITUTION

3.1. THE HEBREW AND GREEK TERMS

- אָדָם , עָפָר , נֶפֶשׁ , נִשְׁמָה , ...

¹⁶ BARTH, K. *CD III/2*, p. 4.

¹⁷ WOLFF, H. W. *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, Mifflintown : Sigler Press, 1996, s. 159.

- σῶμα, σὰρξ, ψυχὴ, πνεῦμα, (1Thes 5:23 Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη.)
- a working hyposthesis: ontologically man is dichotomical (material body & immaterial soul/spirit); functionally man is trichotomical (e.g. body → senses; soul → understanding; spirit → faith)

3.2. HUMAN EXISTENCE:

3.2.1. HOLISTIC (UNITY)

- Unity of the seen and the unseen aspects of man.

Gn 2:7 הַיְיָצַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפֹּחַ בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

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3.2.2. HIERARCHICAL (SPIRIT OVER FLESH)

- 2Cor 4:18 ...the things that are seen are transient (πρόσκαιρα), but the things that are **unseen** are **eternal** (αἰώνια).
- Luke 11:40-41 You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?⁴¹ But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

3.2.3. PROVISIONAL, TELEOLOGICAL (AFTER RESURRECTION LIFE)

- The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gn 2:17 of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat**)
- Mk 9:2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3.2.4. RELATIONAL (“VESSELS”; “TEMPLE”; “HOUSE”)

- 1Thes 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel (σκεῦος) in sanctification and honor,
- Marriage; the Holy Spirit; Christian unity; Eph 5:18 πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,

4. WHAT WENT WRONG?

4.1. REBELLION → DEATH

- Eph 2:1,5 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- Col 2:13 ¶And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;
- Rev 20:14 Then **Death** and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

4.2. “EXISTENCE IN DEATH” AND REGENERATION

- 1Cor 2:14-15 ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ· μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.¹⁵ ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει [τὰ] πάντα, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ’ οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται. (The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. he spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one)
- John 3:3 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.
- Jesus – the Head of the New Creation

5. CONCLUSIONS

- Man was created for the Son of God.
- Man is a paradox – the image of God and dust of earth at the same time.
- The purpose of human existence is the life after the resurrection.
- The most serious problem of man is death/enmity with God.
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ solves the problem of death: giving regeneration and resurrection.