

Echoes of Nicaea and the Humanity of the Cross: Engaging the Posthuman Asian Context

(Paper presented by Dr. Amritraj Joshua Paul, SAIACS, Bangalore, India
for CATS-X, October 24-29, 2024 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Abstract

The Asian context is transitioning through a posthuman condition. With the merger of humans with technology, we are witnessing the rise of a new *technosapien* within an emerging *technoculture*/context. Apart from neologies and idea like ‘digital eugenics,’ ‘digital feudalism,’ ‘tech oligarchy,’ ‘non-human persona,’ etc., we are also witnessing a new divide – the digital divide – within society at large. Such a scenario raises pertinent questions calling for Christian theological engagement. Is technology detrimental to human existence or is it a blessing? Do we resign the future of humanity and creation to a world of aporetic constructions, or do we take responsibility for fellow humanity and creation by harnessing the gift of technology to synergize the human-technology relationship for the common good. Reflecting on the echoes of Nicaea for our times, the paper argues that implicit to the Nicene creed is the ‘theology of the cross.’ The theology of the cross deepens our understanding of the cross in the light of the Christ-event, and the cross on the other hand anchors the Christ-event in (post)human reality. By repositioning the epistemological starting point (Jn. 1:14) of our faith within the posthuman Asian context, the paper deliberates on the prospects of the ‘humanity of the cross’ to effect reconciliation between humanity and technology for redemptive and restorative purposes.

Introduction

As Ecumenical Christian bodies across the globe are enthusiastically commemorating the 1700th year of Nicaea, it is highly commendable and appreciable that the Congress of Asian Theologians under the aegis of CCA is playing a crucial role in echoing the reverberations of Nicaea’s theological heritage especially for faith and unity in the contemporary 21st century context. Emerging out of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 CE,¹ the uniqueness of the Nicene Creed is that it unites Christians from the Eastern and Western parts of the world. Apart from its universal acceptance, it is part of our historical heritage and also functions liturgically to express the one faith of the Church. As early as 1983 the Vancouver assembly of WCC recognized the need to “confess this message (of the apostolic faith) together in ways understandable, reconciling, and liberating to their contemporaries.”² Similarly the Faith and Order Commission of WCC acknowledged that

The apostolic faith must always be confessed anew and interpreted in the context of changing times and places: it must be in continuity with the original witness of the apostolic community and with the faithful explication of that witness throughout the ages.³

In the light of the task to reimagine and renew its faith confession and expression in the contemporary context, this paper attempts to discern the echoes of Nicaea in conversation with posthumanism. As our world is transitioning through a posthuman condition,⁴ we are witnessing the emergence of the *technosapien* within a *technocultural* context. With the blurring of the lines between the human and the machine or the natural and the artificial, the chorus for the recognition of the ‘posthuman’ is growing stronger. What does the ancient Nicene Creed have to do with contemporary posthumanism?

The paper begins by briefly highlighting contemporary posthuman Asian context, after which it deliberates on the ‘ontological’ tension between Nicaea and Posthumanism, especially by discussing Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of immanence. Following this, it proceeds to delineate two views that privilege posthuman immanentism in the contemporary context, viz., intersubjectivity and transjectivity, leading to the discussion of ‘posthuman issues’ in theological anthropology. In this context, the paper vouches for a re-reading of Nicaea to make the case for ‘relational ontology’ by recourse to *theologia crucis*, and parallelly invoking Athanasius. In the light of this discussion, the prospects of relational ontology to effect reconciliation between humanity and technology for redemptive and restorative purposes by way of relational and reconciliative hermeneutic of humanity is discussed. The paper concludes with a call to re-envision theological anthropology’s concern for the “human person” created in the *imago Dei*, and to remind ourselves of humanity’s responsibility towards the world of technology in the light of God’s teleological design understood concretely in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Emerging Posthuman Asian Context and the Ontological Tension with Nicaea

According to Pramod K. Nayar, posthumanism radically decentres the traditional notion of “a sovereign, coherent and autonomous human in order to demonstrate how the human is always already evolving with, constituted by and constitutive of multiple forms of life and machines.”⁵ To understand the emerging posthuman context, all one needs to do is to take stock of the recent works that have been published in this regard. Apart from major handbooks on posthumanism,⁶ the areas and disciplines that scholars have been engaging from a posthuman perspective are very broad ranged.⁷ Recently the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Ljubljana deliberated on the theme of “Humanism, Posthumanism and Transhumanism in the East Asian Past and Present.”⁸ The range of topics discussed are so intriguing that they interrupt our “anthropological/humanistic slumber.” William Brown in his discussion of ‘Subaltern’ imaginings of artificial intelligence, observes how a (South) Indian movie like *Enthiran* (The Robot, 2010) challenges Eurocentrism in science-fiction and vouches for human and non-human co-dependency and connectedness ultimately leading to an egalitarian world.⁹ At the economic and development front, as a nation we are striving hard to enhance the quality of life by engaging cutting-edge technologies like AI, quantum computing, and semiconductors.¹⁰

If there is one idea or thought that cuts across posthumanism and Asian cultures in general, it is the idea of “interconnectedness.” Asian cultures are integrative and inclusive by nature. Their worldview both religiously/philosophically and existentially are seen to co-evolve and be interlinked with their immediate ecosystem and the whole cosmos. They view life and reality holistically and interconnectedly. However, under the influence of posthumanism across the disciplines of Literature and Cultural studies, Environmental and Ecological Studies, Technology and Economics, including religion/theology, one theme that has been radically disrupted is the theme of ‘what it means to be human.’ From the point of Christian theology especially, with the emergence of the posthuman which presses for the integration of the human and the machine, the understanding of the humanity as created in the *imago Dei* is strongly critiqued and challenged. Putting this in the context of Nicaea and posthumanism, the tension between them is ‘ontological’ in nature.

Generally speaking, Nicaea's worldview was informed by Neo-Platonic Ontology which played up the hierarchical distinctions and binary dualism between God and humanity/creation.¹¹ God was envisioned as absolutely transcendent in relation to creation. By invoking the category of *logos* and infusing it with the Christian affirmation of the 'word became flesh,' they found a basis to affirm humanity's affinity and relationship with God.¹² Metaphysical dualistic categories eventually legitimized a hierarchical structure in the patristic discourse on theological anthropology. Though it is true that Nicene theology made recourse to Neo-Platonist ontology, in the context of their times this was perhaps the best possible methodological framework available to articulate the deity of the Son. However, it prioritized metaphysical discourse on divine substance.

Posthumanism on the other hand seeks to reject the idea of a transcendent other (God) all together. It argues for continuum within the natural order in response to binary dualism, eventually leading to the subtle effacing of the human to vouch for mere 'being.' Though the prime engagement of posthumanism emerged in the context of the relation between the human and the machine, recent discourse problematizes the narrative around "human exceptionalism." Posthuman(ist) thinkers fault human exceptionalism of premodern and modern anthropology for the issues we face in our societies.¹³ In response to this realization posthumanism radically questions the hierarchical power relations between humans and creation by recourse to what is known as the philosophies of immanence. As an alternate to dualistic ontology which was characteristic of Nicaea, the posthuman concern is to vouch for a new ontology of immanence. A leading voice that informs the posthuman immanence is Gilles Deleuze.¹⁴

Understanding Deleuzian Posthuman Immanentism

A new ontology of immanence is derived from Deleuze's rhizomatic approach to becoming in contrast to an arborescent mode of existence. A rhizome (think of ginger) grows freely without being tied to a particular center. It grows horizontally/non-hierarchically reflecting a world of multiplicities without leaving traces of the source of its roots. In contrast, an arborescent mode of existence is hierarchical in nature. This structure has a clear center (root) which gives the sense of direction to the whole body.¹⁵ Rhizomatic imaginations/thought are not restricted by any particular hegemonic or dominating center. They have the potential to collapse all hierarchical modes of existence, and open up the possibility for all forms of 'becoming.' In the words of Deleuze (and Guattari)

We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much. All of arborescent culture is founded on them... Thought is not arborescent, and the brain is not a rooted or ramified matter. What are wrongly called "dendrites" do not assure the connection of neurons in a continuous fabric... Many people have a tree growing in their heads, but the brain itself is much more a grass than a tree.¹⁶

The goal is to "derail" and problematize any and all forms of dualisms and to move beyond them to explore the world of multiplicities and interconnectedness. The new ontology that emerges from a rhizomatic approach to imagining reality is monistic in nature where the prime intention is to argue for a continuum between the entities of apparent binaries. It is not human and/or machine, or even the hyphenated human-machine that is being argued for, but rather the idea of the *humachine*, *technosapien*, *technosocial*, or the *Cyborg*. Here the idea is

to challenge an anthropocentric world view by negating human exceptionalism and to demonstrate the material embeddedness and interconnectedness of all being.¹⁷

A crucial aspect of the Deleuzian philosophy of immanence is the negation or rather the de-transcendentalization of any transcendent being.¹⁸ There are tendencies within Christian theology via Deleuzian idea of immanence¹⁹ to reduce the whole of existence to the plane of immanence. In other words, existence may be imagined only in relation to the immediate natural environment, and any notion of God as the “transcendent Other” or “Wholly Other” must be denied. The claim is that this is not a denial of God, but the rejection of a particular understanding of God, viz., the transcendent God.²⁰ God rather than being the “Pantocrator,”²¹ “expresses himself [sic] in all creatures internally.”²² Such an imagination is intentional in problematizing the hierarchical relation between God and humanity and prioritizing the interconnectivity between them, thus prioritizing intersubjectivity.

Christine Daigle on the other hand engages Deleuze to propose the idea of the “Transjective self.” Though her concern is not theological, she presents a de-monarchialized human, where humans are not the crown or the lords over creation, but are entangled beings. They are entangled with materiality in its dynamism and vibrancy. She introduces the compound term ‘transjective’ to capture the idea that “beings are transsubjectively and transobjectively constituted.”²³ A transjective being transgresses or moves across its subjective and objective sites or modes of existence and hence is constituted by the dynamic flux that transpires between the subjective and material entanglements.²⁴ Daigle’s transjective self does not do away with the notion of the self completely, and also provides space for the traces of the self to affirm the agentic capacity of the self. The posthuman self in Daigle’s imagination is a “field of tensions” which is “being done and undone, both by ourselves and by other beings we are entangled with, doing and undoing them as well.”²⁵

Posthuman Issues in Theological Anthropology

The common denominator between monistic ontology in the idea of intersubjectivity and transjectivity is the aspect of the haecceity of existence.²⁶ Human existence is in a state of rhizomatic becoming where the line maintaining the integrity between God and humans is blurred and multiplicity is the fundamental unity. The logical conclusion of the hermeneutic of transjectivity or the absence of transcendence (De-othering God) is the weakening of the integrity of the divine and human identity in the God-human relationship. Theologically speaking, it not only negates God’s aseity,²⁷ but in doing so it also discards the *imago Dei*, and constructs a posthuman (Cyborg, technosapien etc) based on aporetic constructions. Posthuman immanentism shifts the focus from an ontology of being to an ontology of becoming, with the former prioritizing a hierarchical framework, while the latter proposes a ‘flat hierarchy.’ The deeper issue however is the tension between binary-dualism (which was characteristic of Nicaea) and continuum (which is characteristic of posthumanism). Theologically speaking, by implication, it is the tension between the transcendence and immanence in relation to the God-human-creation dynamics.

A deeper problem in the posthuman discourse in relation to theological anthropology is the way it understands what it means to be human. Nicaea affirms that the one Lord, Jesus Christ ... “For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became *truly human*.” Christian theological anthropology

affirms the creation of humanity in the image of God (*imago Dei*). To be human first and foremost is to be in an image. In line with Athanasius – and the larger Patristic thought – I take the image to mean ‘Jesus Christ.’²⁸ Related to this is the aspect of the fall. Posthumanism remains silent regarding the fallen state of humanity. At best it faults human exceptionalism as the cause for all the chaos in the world. According to Christian theological anthropology, in our fallen state we bear traces of ‘true humanity’ which is seen in Jesus Christ. In affirming that Jesus Christ became *truly human*, we are affirming that he became what we were meant to be. Herein lies the clue to redress the ontological tension between Nicaea and Posthumanism. The following section explores a reimagination of Nicaea *via* the framework of *theologia crucis* to redress the posthuman caricature of transcendence.

Re-reading Nicaea *via* the Theology of the Cross

Implicit to the Nicene Creed is the theology of the cross.²⁹ According to Khaled Anatolios two key works of Athanasius, *viz.*, *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* are “first and foremost an *apologia crucis*.”³⁰ However, by re-reading Nicaea through the lens of *theologia crucis*, the prime focus is not to read it apologetically, but hermeneutically. In the context of engaging posthuman immanentism, the focus is on *how* the continuum between God and humans is mediated by way of *theologia crucis*. From a historical-theological point of view, theology of the cross serves as the epistemological and the methodological point of departure or the framework from which the whole “Christ-event” is interpreted.³¹ Embedded within the gospel accounts of the Christ-event are deep theological themes and truths. Theology of the cross preoccupies itself with extracting and systemizing these themes *via* the criterion of the cross – which was the framework through which Jesus Christ envisioned his life and ministry. Though the cross is a sign, a symbol, and the prism through which humanity comes to know and understand God, this knowing (epistemological) and understanding (hermeneutical) dimension is mediated not just through the event of the crucifixion, but by the Christ-event itself. The cross – figuratively and literally – becomes the *decisive* criterion for making sense of the whole Christ-event in a concrete manner.

By capturing the whole Christ-event, *theologia crucis* mediates how ‘grace’ functions to sustain the continuity between God and humanity despite the “fleeting subjection to dissolution.”³² Embedded within Nicene Creed is a clear outline of the theology of the cross. It traces the contours of the Christ-event reflecting the value of humanity to God. By the act of the incarnation, the Christ-event serves as the point of intersection between two worlds. In the words of Karl Barth “the one known and the other unknown.”³³ Humanity – or the known world – has fallen out of union with its Creator. There exists a disjunction between them. The world of the Creator – the unknown world – meets humanity at the intersection point of the Christ-event. The intersection between God and humanity in Christ “presses for recognition.”³⁴ Nicaea, in anticipation of this gap, recognized the true humanity of Jesus Christ to address the quandary of humanity.³⁵ The basis for this was the deity of Jesus Christ.³⁶ Without the Christ-event, God and humanity would forever remain in two separate planes.

At the core of the Christ-event is the dispensation of the grace of God (Jn. 1:16-17). Athanasius in elaborating on the incarnation, presupposes the doctrine of creation by the Word. In Athanasius’ scheme of thought, humanity is incapable of “independent perseverance.” Yet based on God’s ‘mercy,’³⁷ humanity was given “an added grace... making them in his own

image and giving them also a share in the power of his own Word.”³⁸ The crucial aspect of this “added grace” is that of ‘participation.’³⁹ For Athanasius the quintessential truth of humanity is its creation in the image of God. To be created in the *imago Dei* is to share in the “image of the Image of God.” Anatolios makes the observation that though Athanasius employs the terminology of governance (ἡγεμονία), he uses it primarily in relation to creation as a whole, but never uses it to refer to “God’s activity in relation to humanity.”⁴⁰ Contrary to critical notions, there is reason to read Athanasius as privileging a ‘relational ontology’ as against a hierarchical ontology.⁴¹

The crux of Athanasius’ argument is that more than any metaphysical imagination of humanity, in the light of the incarnation, it is the ‘relational dimension’ that must be emphasized. Theology of the cross helps us recognize that Nicaea’s affirmation of the deity and incarnation of Jesus Christ rather than signifying a *hierarchical ontology* between God and humanity, signifies a *relational ontology* between them in the person of Jesus Christ. The prime concern was to safeguard the ontological relation of the Son with the Father so that humanity’s scope for redemption (salvation) could have a concrete basis. Taking our cues from Athanasius in the light of the Christ-event contrary to hierarchical or monistic ontology, ‘relational ontology’ serves as a more meaningful framework to envision what it means to be human. Rather than prioritizing God over human, the emphasis is on relationality which is funded by the continuity of grace.

Nicaea, Posthumanism, and the Question of True Humanity

Posthumanism seems to be targeting a caricature of the transcendence of God to prioritize pure immanentism. On the other hand, Christian theology needs to be self-critical about its own vulnerability in attracting criticisms due to its overemphasis on metaphysical categories. Yet posthumanism raises a valid point in reminding us of the tensions in the human-machine relationship. However, its convenient erasure of the fall necessitates the reinforcement of ‘humanity’ as imagined in the light of the theology of the cross to preserve the continuity between God and humanity. At the same time, it is unfortunate that the fall/sin becomes the dominant narrative in some discourses on theological anthropology. To use a term that is familiar to the world of digital technology, theology of the cross provides the scope to imagine an *Interface Christological Anthropology* which facilitates humanity’s assimilation into the very being of God, while God remains ever present among humanity effecting their lives every moment. Relational ontology, inherent to which is the aspect of grace, facilitates the continuum between God and humanity slowly yet consistently revealing God’s teleological design for humanity (1Jn. 3:2).

Such an imagination presses for a relational and reconciliative hermeneutic of humanity. A relational hermeneutic of existence in the sense that without negating or over privileging the otherness/transcendence of God, it grounds the reality of God in a way that human experiences can relate to. Jesus Christ is not just the medium of correspondence to the redemptive activity of God, but he is also the one who enables humanity to be co-respondents to God’s redemptive and restorative purposes. This co-response is intrinsic to the *imago Dei*. In this regard, a viable alternate to intersubjective and/or transjective reality is that of proleptic existence.⁴² Proleptic existence accentuates the teleological dimension of humanity, viz., that humanity is God’s covenant partner and recipients of God’s grace. The paradox of

humanity is that though it is radically corrupt (hamartiological dimension), it is also constituted by God's covenant promises (teleological dimension). Through the reality of sin, it is grace that facilitates and preserves the continuity between God and humanity in Jesus Christ. In as much as it is imperative to recognize the fallen state of humanity, without either trivializing or condoning sin or absolutizing it, we must see it to be relativized in the light of God's telos for humanity.⁴³

On the other hand, a reconciliative hermeneutic of humanity reinforces humanity's responsibility towards fellow humanity and technology. The idea of reconciliative humanity stems out of the idea of God's reconciliative nature. This is especially true of the perichoretic relation between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Beyond the understanding of 'change or exchange,' reconciliation means to continuously reach out benevolently to the other.⁴⁴ The Triune God's nature or being is such that the persons of the Godhead are always in a state of benevolent reaching out, overflowing in a relationship of deep communion between them. God being a communion of love, is benevolently and kindly disposed to the other. In other words, reconciliation is communion. This eternal benevolence, the communion and reconciliative nature of God is made concrete and tangible through the true humanity of Jesus Christ, which is mediated through *theologia crucis*. Such a reading leads to the construal of – *humanitas crucis* – the humanity of the cross.

The logical implication of this relational ontological meaning of reconciliation is that prior to the consummation of reconciliation through the cross it is important to acknowledge the 'reconciliative' nature of God. The Christ-event as imagined from the point of the cross serves as a commentary on how the Creator God reaches out to humanity, making concrete the continuum of grace. It is the reconciliative God who initiates and effects reconciliation in the God-human-cosmos relation. By virtue of the same it is possible to extend this reconciliative nature between humans and technology. Extending this to the relationship between humans and machines, the emphasis is on human initiative and responsibility towards the world of technology to effect redemptive and restorative purposes. In other words, we need to press for a synergy between humanity and technology to envision human and digital wellness. The problem with emerging forms of posthumanism is that inherent to them is a subtle form of dehumanization – that which negates humanity as the Creator intended them to be. The relational and reconciliative image derived from the Christ-event serves as the pattern and basis for demonstrating true humanity in a context of emerging posthumanism. In the light of the above discussion, the following section highlights two key implications for envisioning humanity and digital wellness.

Humanity of the Cross and the Scope for Envisioning Humanity and Digital Wellness

Firstly, we need to re-envision what it means to be human in a posthuman context. At its core, the humanity of the cross seeks to affirm the 'human person.' In a world where emerging technologies are "playing God" in terms of creating new life⁴⁵ and even replicating/substituting human reasoning process (AI), the idea of the human person is becoming as fluid as ever. In this context a leading crisis is that of 'identity.' Based on aporetic constructions inherent to the posthuman imagination is a subtle form of 'othering' between the human created in the *imago Dei* and the human constructed according to *imago posthumana*. With digital oligarchies imposing in the words of Deleuze "societies of control,"⁴⁶ digitization

gathers information of ourselves and codifies them producing a new “codified/digital self” eventually leading to a homogenous posthuman self. In such a context we need to re-envision humanity by reverting to the collective wisdom of Nicaea in recognizing the purpose of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

To echo the words of Faith and Order

While metaphors of human beings as nothing more than information processing machines may be useful in a limited technical sense, they do not address the richness of the human condition and experience as manifest through specific cultural and social contexts. The human person is based on a network of relationships constituted through provisional, embodied, contingent, meaning-producing interactions with significant others. The human relationship with the Other who is God also has these characteristics.⁴⁷

It states further that

The vision of AI widely articulated through popular science fiction narratives ends either with idolatry (that ultimately we are obliged to serve the machines we have created) or hubris (that we find false salvation through our own heroic achievements). God’s salvation is an embodied event of human solidarity that is a counter witness. Still, the potential for sin is found within the bounded and contingent condition of being human.⁴⁸

At the end of the day, we are real humans living in a real world. To be truly human is to be conscious of and sensitive to the real issues (existential and spiritual) of humanity. In becoming *truly human* Jesus Christ fully identified with us. The humanity of the cross radically transforms us to the point of seeing ourselves as one with those who are deprived of justice, equality, identity, dignity, and humanity itself. Vinayaraj highlights how posthumanism fails to address the questions raised by marginal communities about dehumanizing social systems and phenomenologies of violence.⁴⁹ The humanity of the cross serves to engage the “agonies of the colonial bodies of the world.”⁵⁰ This realization must inevitably lead to the dispensation of our God given responsibility towards humanity.

This brings us to the second aspect – that of reminding ourselves of our responsibilities towards the world of technology for digital wellness. Re-envisioning humanity in the light of a re-reading of Nicaea via *theologia crucis* must reinforce an affirmative ethics of human responsibility towards the world of digital technology, which comes with immense prospects and potentialities. Yet to the share in the *imago Dei* comes with the privilege and responsibility of ethically and justly using technology for constructive and redemptive purposes.⁵¹ In as much as we are co-creators and co-responsible for technology, we must find ways to harmonize and synergize the potentialities of humanity and technology to serve humanity better. In line with Faith and Order’s affirmation

We are called to relationship of loving care with the wider creation, acknowledging and taking responsibility for our place within the dynamic interconnected and interdependent whole of creation. The fact that God created all things good means that this co-responsibility, however exacting it may be, will always occasion delight and celebration.⁵²

Today as we strive to navigate our way through a world of huge possibilities in the context of emerging technologies, we must never forget that as we struggle to make sense of

humanity in the context of violence, wars, poverty, pain and sufferings of various kinds, the good news of Jesus Christ is that he became incarnate “for us and for our salvation.” Theological Anthropology must facilitate this hope by constantly working towards the reconciliation between humans and machines by acknowledging the “one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.”

Conclusion

At a time when human imagination of the ontological unity between the Father and the Son came under threat, Nicaea intervened to steady the ecumenical church’s affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ. Nicaea serves as a pattern for the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in the contemporary context to engage with emerging ideas that are critical of its confessions. Today as we confess Nicaea anew in the context of posthumanism immanentism, which is informed by Deleuzian philosophy of immanence, we do it by recognizing and acknowledging that at its core Nicaea is founded on a relational ontology which sustains the continuum between God and humanity, and mediates to us the meaning of true humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. In the explication of this faith, we press for a relational and reconciliative hermeneutic of humanity highlighting the urgent need to affirm the human person and human responsibility towards the world of technology.

¹ The Creed of Nicaea refers to the original creed as formulated in 325 CE, while the Nicene Creed refers to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 (the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople). By Nicene Creed, this paper refers to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. For the text of the Nicene Creed refer the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC)/International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). “Praying Together,” English Language Liturgical Consultation, accessed Sept 2, 2024, <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/a42fbd2/files/uploaded/praying.pdf>.

² David Gill, ed. *Gathered for Life: Official Report, VI Assembly of World Council of Churches* (Geneva/Grand Rapids: WCC/Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 45.

³ Faith and Order Paper No. 153, *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Cree (381)* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 2.

⁴ Posthumanism is generally understood as the merger of humans with technology “creating a new and superior posthuman species.” See Brent Waters, *From Human to Posthuman: Christian Theology and Technology in a Postmodern World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), x. Also see Cary Wolf, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2010); Promod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014); Peter Mahon, *Posthumanism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019).

⁵ Promod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (UK: Polity Press, 2014), Chapter 1, Perlego. Nayar differentiates between transhumanism which is understood more in terms of prosthesis to human identity, and [critical] posthumanism where technology is integral to human identity.

⁶ See especially Mads Rosendahl Thomsen and Jacob Wamberg, eds., *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Posthumanism* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2020), and Stefan Herbrechter et. al., *Palgrave Handbook of Critical Posthumanism* (Chad, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). Apart from this there are a host of introductory/intermediate and advanced level monographs on this subject by a host of scholars like Christine Daigle, Francesca Ferrando, Katherine Hayles, Peter Mahon, Pramod K. Nayar, Rosi Bradoiti, etc.

⁷ A casual perusal of the titles on the themes and topics that scholars have engaged will reinforce this point. Today posthuman discourse engages idea like Humanism, Technology, Environmental concerns, Politics, Feminism, Human Rights, questions of Identity, Disability, New Materialism, Education/Pedagogy, Medicine, Robotics, Aesthetics, Music, Films, etc.

⁸ For brief details see Maja Maria Kosek, *Humanism, Posthumanism and Transhumanism in the East Asian Past and Present* (Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana Press, 2023). This was held from May 19-21, 2023.

⁹ See William Brown, “‘Subaltern’ Imaginings of Artificial Intelligence,” in *From Deleuze and Guattari to Posthumanism: Philosophies of Immanence*, eds. Christine Daigle and Terrance H. McDonald (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 183.

¹⁰ The latest news tells us that Tech giants like Google and Nvidia are all geared up to enhance AI focus and invest in India. See PTI, “Tech giants Google, Nvidia to enhance AI focus, investments in India,” *The Hindu*, 24 Sept 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/tech-giants-google-nvidia-to-enhance-ai-focus-investments-in-india/article68676353.ece>. Accessed 24 Sept 2024.

¹¹ For a brief discussion of the influence of Neo-Platonic philosophy in Early Church theology/anthropology see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Classical Approaches to Theological Anthropology,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Theological Anthropology*, eds. Mary Ann Hinsdale and Stephen Oakey (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 11-34.

¹² For a recent work which details the philosophical and dualistic background to theological anthropology in the Patristic period see J. Patout Burns et al., *Theological Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2023), Introduction, Epub.

¹³ Humanity by elevating themselves to a superior status in relation to creation and ‘othering’ them, grossly abused and assaulted creation. This logic of domination and exploitation is funded by the vision of dualistic ontology that sustains a transcendence-immanence binary not only between God and humanity/creation, but also between humanity and creation.

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) was a strong proponent of the philosophy of immanence. Though many club the thoughts of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari together (*Deleuzoguattarian approach*), this paper engages Deleuze in particular. In relation to his influence on posthuman thinking see Christine Daigle and Terrance H. McDonald, *From Deleuze and Guattari to Posthumanism: Philosophies of Immanence* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

¹⁵ The hierarchical structure is represented by the movement from root to trunk to branch to leaf.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987), 15.

¹⁷ See Christine Daigle, “Deleuzian Traces: The Self of the Polyp,” in *From Deleuze and Guattari to Posthumanism: Philosophies of Immanence*, eds. Christine Daigle and Terrance H. McDonald (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 41-62.

¹⁸ See Y. T. Vinayaraj, *Dalit Theology After Continental Philosophy* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 100-101.

¹⁹ As briefly highlighted above, the Deleuzian idea of immanence vouches for an anti-hierarchical and anti-organizational ontology. Here the emphasis is more on interconnectedness and multiplicities, rather than any form of transcendence.

²⁰ Vinayaraj states that “It is not denying God; rather, it is denying God as the ‘transcendent Other’ who has no ontological relationship with the creatures.” Vinayaraj, *Dalit Theology*, 101.

²¹ Pantocrator/Pantokrator in Eastern thought is the idea that God/Christ is the Omnipotent/Sovereign Lord of the Universe. The emphasis is on the “All-Powerful” nature of God, thus reinforcing the hierarchy between God and humanity.

²² Vinayaraj, *Dalit Theology*, 101.

²³ Christine Daigle, *Posthumanist Vulnerability: An Affirmative Ethics* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2023), 29.

²⁴ Daigle, *Posthumanist Vulnerability*, 30.

²⁵ Christine Daigle, “Deleuzian Traces: The Self of the Polyp,” 47.

²⁶ In Deleuzian terms haecceities are “pure becomings.” It is more of a mode of individuation. It is a process of becoming in the plane of immanence, which is also called the plane of consistency or composition. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 266. In simple terms it refers to the “thisness” of a thing.

²⁷ Aseity refers to the state or quality of being independent and autonomous. According to Paul Tillich “There is no ground prior to him [sic] which could condition his [sic] freedom... A conditioned God is no God.” See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 248. For a detailed discussion on the aseity of God see Part II of Tillich’s *ST*, Vol 1.

²⁸ See Athanasius, *CG*, §2, §46.

²⁹ It is interesting that Matthew Steenberg notes “Nicaea can never be read as a coherent source text for Christian anthropology. Nor, in its own right as a document, does it offer much in the way of refining an anthropological approach to theology... But the creed of Nicaea is important to our understanding of theology as anthropology in the early Church for exactly these reasons.” See Matthew C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 126.

³⁰ Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London: Routledge [1998], 2005), 29. Emphasis in the original.

³¹ In line with Karl Barth, by “Christ-event” I mean God’s self-revelation to humanity in a singular event by which God objectifies Godself to humanity calling for a corresponding action on the part of humanity in obedience of faith. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics II/1: The Doctrine of God*, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. T. H. L. Parker et. al. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrikson Publishers [1957], 2010), § 28.

³² See Athanasius, *CG*, §41. This is one among the many of Athanasius’ description of sin.

³³ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press [1933], 1968), 29.

³⁴ Barth, *Romans*, 29.

³⁵ This was precisely the argument of Athanasius – that “Christ became what we are that we might become what he is.” See Athanasius, *DI*, §9, §16.

³⁶ In the words of the Nicene Creed – “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.”

³⁷ Here the Gk text reads as “ἐν οἷς πάντων τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐλεήσας...” → “And among these creatures, of all those on earth he had special *pity* for the human race...” Emphasis added.

³⁸ Athanasius, *DI*, §3. Translation adapted from Robert W. Thompson, ed. and trans., *Athanasius: Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 141.

³⁹ Athanasius states that God “gave them a portion/share even of the power of His own Word.”

⁴⁰ See Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 60.

⁴¹ ‘Relational Ontology’ is used by John Zizioulas, Sarah Coakley, Khaled Anatolios, Allison Marie Covey etc. Myk Habets claims this idea to be present in T. F. Torrance’s interpretation of Patristic thought. It is no surprise that this idea emerges as a common denominator to interpreting Early church thinkers, reflecting the fact that more than preoccupation with metaphysical concerns they were relational in their thinking.

⁴² Prolepsis in simple terms means that which to happen in future is pre-actualized in the present. Ted Peters has developed his whole theological system by way of a proleptic explication of the gospel. Using the category of prolepsis, he explicates how the gospel announces the preactualizing of the future consummation of all things in Jesus Christ. See Ted Peters, *God-The World’s Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). For the discussion on Proleptic Humanity see 301-304.

⁴³ Here I build on the Barthian idea that in Jesus Christ grace sustains humanity’s continuum with God. Barth, *CD III/2*, 43-44.

⁴⁴ See Büchsel, “ἀλλάσσω,” *TDNT* I:254.

⁴⁵ The discipline of Genetics and the diverse sub-disciplines associated with it.

⁴⁶ See Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October*, 59 (Winter, 1992): 3-7. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778828>. For an insightful discussion of how digital oligarchies are imposing “posthumanist confinement” see Avanti Lele, “Posthumanist Confinement: Big Tech’s ‘Societies of Control,’” *EPW*, 56/12 (March 2021): 12-14.

⁴⁷ Faith and Order Paper No. 199, *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), §70, 11.

⁴⁸ Faith and Order Paper No. 199, *Theological Anthropology*, §71, 11.

⁴⁹ See Y. T. Vinayaraj, *Faith in the Age of Empire: Christian Doctrines in a Postcolonial Sensibility* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2020), 48.

⁵⁰ Vinayaraj, *Age of Empire*, 48. Dalit theologians like Sathianathan Clarke and Philip Peacock acknowledge the value of “humanization founded on God-in-Christ.” They affirm this to be profoundly theological and pertinent to the Dalit cause. See Sathianathan Clarke and Philip Vinod Peacock, “Dalit and Religious Conversion: Slippery Identities and Shrewd Identifications,” in *Dalit Theology in the Twenty-first Century: Discordant Voices, Discerning Pathways*, eds. Sathianathan Clarke et al. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 191.

⁵¹ Implied in the ethics of caring for the world of technology is how we engage with and responsibly employ the potentialities of the STEM disciplines which produced tools like Genetics, AI, ML, IoT, CS, ChatGPT etc.

⁵² Faith and Order Paper No. 199, *Theological Anthropology*, §90, 15.