Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-first Century*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2012, 52 p.

In this small volume, published by World Council of Churches Publications, the well-known metropolitan and Orthodox theologian Kallistos Ware inaugurates the *Doxa&Praxis* series, which has its main goal to publish and to make known the theological research and insights of Orthodox Christian authors. As we notice from the foreword (pp. 7-11), by the director of Volos Academy of Theological Studies, Pantelis Kalaitzidis, this first volume of the series contains the text of a public lecture with the same title, presented at Volos in 2004, within the framework of the program on Orthodoxy and Multiculturalism. Also from the foreword, the reader can see the dominant theological issues that form the main core of the distinguished metropolitan's lecture. According to his opinion, during the 20th century, the primary theological insights addressed the issue of ecclesiological identity and nature of the Church, but in the 21st century the "quintessential problem" of the Orthodox theology will be anthropological.

The volume is divided into five chapters. The first chapter, "Looking to the past: our chief task in the twentieth century", is a retrospective analysis on the Orthodox theological reflection of the 20th century. Its main accent was posed on the ecclesiological issues, starting from two major historical events, which have had a major impact on the Orthodoxy of the last century: the 1917 Russian revolution, followed by the collapse of the Russian Empire and the emigration of Orthodox Christians to the West seen as a direct result of the revolution. Both historical realities changed the way of perceiving the nature of the Church, but also of what represents the Orthodox Church in comparison with other Churches that are active in the West, with an emphasis on the "Eucharistic" and "universal" ecclesiology. Although the common view is that there is a sharp contrast between "Eucharistic" and "universal" understandings of ecclesiology, the Metropolitan calls out for a balanced ecclesiology, in which the two understandings are not opposite alternatives but complementary. (p. 21).

The second chapter deals with the challenges of the new millennium in which we live. Without claiming that it could be a prophecy, the author thinks that the theological leitmotif of the twenty-first century will be anthropological, even if ecclesiology will continue to play a significant role in Orthodox theological reflection for a long time to come. The question will be not only "What is the Church?" but also and more importantly, "What is the human person?" as "person-in-relation" according to the image of God within ourselves, for only in the Church the human persons "become authentically themselves" (p. 25).

He also points out on four levels why, in the present era of globalization, the concern of human personhood is very relevant: the social and political, technological, ethical and ecological, or better said, the eco-theological levels.

In the third chapter of the small volume, "Apophatic Anthropology", the metropolitan counts four "urgent reasons" which compel us to approach the understanding of human personhood, in the 21st century, in a profound manner. To accomplish this deepening understanding, we must explore new areas of still unknown research, because both in the Patristic and Byzantine era and in recent times "we shall not find anywhere a fully articulated system of Christian anthropology" (p. 31). The Triadological and Christological discussions and decisions from the Ecumenical Councils certainly involved presuppositions regarding the nature of the person, but they were neither the main discussion subjects nor single independent issues.

Very deep insights of human personhood are offered to us by the Ecumenical Councils and by the Church Fathers, but there is "not a single developed doctrine". The terms used for the human person, such as *dianoia* or *nous* were never defined exactly, nor interpreted by the Christian writers in the same manner. Now the metropolitan uses the very balanced affirmation of Archbishop Georges Florovsky, who considers that the ecclesiology is "in the process of formation", the same statement being extended by the author also to the Orthodox anthropology. He hopes that the Orthodox Christians will not endeavor just by themselves in this anthropological quest, but also will collaborate with theologians of other confessions and also with scientists, in order to reach an "genuinely ecumenical" understanding of human person. In the author's opinion the anthropological view should be developed mainly in three ways: 1. recognition that the human person is a mystery (secret) for ourselves; 2. an essential element of the human person is that we are created in the image and likeness of God; 3. each of us is called to be a priest of the creation and a mediator. The human person is defined as "endlessly varied, innovative, unexpected, and self-transcending" (p. 33). Further in this chapter, the author develops the first way of the anthropological view. Starting from the apophatic theology of the Greek Fathers, he stands up for an apophatic anthropology as a counterpart for the previous.

The fourth and fifth chapters develop the last two ways of the anthropological view. When we talk as Christians about our human personhood, we state that we are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:26-28) and we are a "living icon of the living God" (p. 37). Being iconic, the human nature is relational by definition. It is primarily in relationship with God, and it is naturally heading toward Him. For Orthodoxy there is no "natural" human being other

than God. Therefore it is wrong to define the human person through itself, as an autonomous entity, and only after he is in relation to God. Without God the human being becomes subhuman. For many Patristic authors the image of God within the human person has been often associated with the soul and rarely both with the body and the soul. Saint Epiphanius of Salamis observed rightly that “Tradition holds that every human being is in the image of God, but it does not define exactly in what this image consists” (Panarion 70, 3,1; here p. 38). Kalistos Ware tends to explain the image of God within the human person from the triadological point of view of Father Dumitru Staniloae: “The Trinity alone assures our existence as persons”. The last chapter, entitled “Priest of the Creation”, is an incentive for us to “reactivate the Greek Patristic idea of the human person as mediator between heaven and earth, as cosmic liturgist, as priest of creation” (p. 43). The author outlines such a plea starting especially from Saints Gregory of Nazianzus and Maximus the Confessor, also revealing what was stated in this sense by the neo-patristic authors (including Father Staniloae).

Although at the beginning of this small volume the Metropolitan Kallistos Ware does not himself pretend to be a prophet, his work is likely to be prophetic for the 21st century Orthodox theology, but we will know if things will be so or not, only after a few decades. By sharing the theological insights of the author, I myself believe that anthropology will play an important role in the theological, social, philosophical and ecumenical future of Christianity for the following decades of the 21st century. If Orthodox theology will find the right “lens” to focus on the anthropology, it will know how to deal with the most stringent problems of its believers. As we have seen already, beginning with the late 20th century, the new important issues of society started to be focused more on the ethical ground (bioethics, euthanasia, stem cells sampling etc.), thus shifting the approach of anthropology, from being viewed mostly as a theological field, to a wider array of sciences.

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