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Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology

By Marc Cortez



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What does it mean to be “truly human?” In *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*, Marc Cortez looks at the ways several key theologians—Gregory of Nyssa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, John Zizioulas, and James Cone—have used Christology to inform their understanding of the human person. Based on this historical study, he concludes with a constructive proposal for how Christology and anthropology should work together to inform our view of what it means to be human.

Many theologians begin their discussion of the human person by claiming that in some way Jesus Christ reveals what it means to be “truly human,” but this often has little impact in the material presentation of their anthropology. Although modern theologians often fail to reflect robustly on the relationship between Christology and anthropology, this was not the case throughout church history. In this book, examine seven key theologians and discover their important contributions to theological anthropology.



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Editorial Review

Review

In this book one of today's foremost experts on theological anthropology reintroduces some neglected thinkers and launches an intriguing new research angle. Marc Cortez has some surprises in store for those who think they know the exact parameters of what counts as Christology or what it means for Jesus to embrace our humanity. -- Daniel J. Treier, Blanchard Professor of Theology, Wheaton college Graduate School

Goods theologians listen before they speak, and this volume provides a master class in learning how to listen well. In chapter after chapter, Marc Cortez shows us what it looks like to hear the voices of the church's greatest theologians clearly and interpret them charitably. The diverse cast of characters and provocative topics make for absorbing reading, and we learn how to speak of Jesus Christ, human beings, and our life in relationship with God better than before. This book comes highly recommended for students and scholars alike. -- Keith L. Johnson, Associate Professor of Theology, Wheaton College

As he leads readers through important historical figures, Cortez makes a valuable contribution to the doctrine of the human being and to Christology. He demonstrates how key biblical themes have been taken up in the tradition and, in doing so, points readers to what it means to be human in Christ. This book will be valuable to students and professionals alike. -- Beth Felker Jones, Associate Professor of Theology, Wheaton College

In this fine book, Marc Cortez lends his well-trained ear to the often wonderful (and occasionally weird) tradition of Christian teaching about human beings, specifically, what it has to say about how the person and work of Jesus Christ shapes our understanding of human being and action. The result is a clear, exceptionally learned, and rewarding overview of different approaches to "Christological anthropology" in the Christian tradition. This book will prove a useful resource to anyone seeking to develop a theological anthropology that honors the supremacy of Jesus Christ. -- Scott R. Swain, professor of systematic theology and Academic Dean, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando

In what way does God's entering history in the fully and truly human Jesus serve to ground or establish a Christian anthropology? How does Christological warrant for anthropological claims extend beyond ethics to offer a fuller picture of what it means to be human? With careful and insightful analysis Cortez engages key theological voices from the history of the church and unfolds a striking breadth to the ways that Christology informs anthropology. In so doing, this volume unearths the essential starting points to continued constructive work in Christian anthropology with unparalleled clarity and comprehension. -- Kevin Diller, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Taylor University

Marc Cortez has established himself as one of the more important thinkers around what it means to be human in theological perspective. In this latest offering, his theological acumen, sense of humour, and ability to adeptly navigate large swathes of the Tradition result in a work which is as profound as it is useful. In an age where the centrality of Christ is too-often replaced by a cultural sentimentality, Cortez reminds us that what it means to be human can only be defined in relation to Jesus Christ; and knowing that, makes all the difference in the world. -- Dr. Myk Habets, Head of Carey Graduate School, Carey Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand

Many scholars talk about doing 'theology of retrieval,' but Marc Cortez actually does it. Employing several

fascinating case studies (involving Gregory of Nyssa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, John Ziziouas, and James Cone), he looks wide and digs deep for insights into a theological anthropology that is properly Christological. The result is a work of erudition that sets the table for Cortez's own much-anticipated offerings. -- Thomas H. McCall, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

For those who take seriously the fact that there is one truly human being for and with us by the Spirit---Jesus Christ, Son of Mary and God---this is a helpful book. It sits us down with saints through the ages who have also considered the implications of Christ's humanity for our own. Cortez is a gracious host, inviting us to listen and hear, that we might hear more clearly when visiting these saints in their original "homes." This makes for the best kind of resource book---one that welcomes, engages, and ultimately serves a critical need in the life of the Church. -- Cherith Fee Nordling, Associate Professor, Northern Seminary

What makes us human? And how does Jesus make a difference? Dr Cortez offers us a stimulating and convincing tour of the role of Christology in theological anthropologies from Gregory of Nyssa to James Cone, via Mother Julian of Norwich and Martin Luther, amongst others. The reader is invited to explore the varied ways in which major thinkers have made Jesus the key to being human, and to ask the crucial questions that will decide between their accounts. The readings are persuasive; the expositions lucid; and the whole is a compelling tour of the ways in which belief in Christ might change our vision of our common humanity. This is a quite excellent book; I commend it unreservedly. -- Stephen R. Holmes, Senior Lecturer in Theology, University of St. Andrews

At different periods in Christian history, different doctrines have ascended to the center of theological debate. I believe that in the early decades of the twenty-first century, the doctrine of humanity seems to be near the epicenter. I'm grateful to Marc Cortez for this helpful, judicious survey of how different theologians have grounded their anthropology in their understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ. *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective* is a welcome contribution to ongoing discussions of human nature. As in so many doctrinal discussions, we need to look to the past for wisdom for the present and future. Cortez helps us to do just that in this timely book. Highly recommended. -- Nathan A. Finn, Dean of the School of Theology and Missions, Professor of Christian Thought, Union University

About the Author

Marc Cortez (PhD, University of St. Andrews) is Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College Graduate School. He is author of *Theological Anthropology* and *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies* and has published articles in academic journals such as *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, and *Westminster Theological Journal*. Marc blogs at Everyday Theology (marccortez.com), writes a monthly article for *Christianity.com*, and had articles featured on *The Gospel Coalition* and *Christian Post*.

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