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RAHNER'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL RETURN:
THROUGH A MAN TO GOD, THAT IS FROM A MAN
AS 'THE IDEA OF CHRIST' TO CHRIST AS AN 'EC-SISTENCE MAN'

Treść: 1. Human nature as a condition of capacity to divine self-revelation; 2. Man as "The Idea of Christ"; 3. Humility of God as a heightening of a human nature. Man as a question, God as an answer; 4. Christ as an "ec-sistence of the man"; 5. Instead of the conclusion.

Słowa kluczowe: Rahner Karl, antropologia, chrystologia, Wcielenie, idea Chrystusa, ek-systencja człowieka, uniżenie Boga, wywyższenie człowieka

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Rahner's thinking about God relies on a certain reversal of a starting point in the theological thinking, on returning towards man and his experience of faith.¹ As far as in theology, a reflection focuses first on God, to some extent "from the top" and only from this perspective, through a prism of this reflection, looks on the man who is a crown of a creation, inasmuch as Rahner leads us in the opposite way. In theology, Rahner takes into account the recipient of the Good News along with his cognitive-volitive abilities and circumstances of his life and faith. That is why such a man, the way he really lives, thinks and acts, becomes a kind of the starting point in the reflection about God.² The man is himself a question of being as such. This question goes beyond itself, because as a matter of fact, it is the question of God Himself. On the other hand, this question shall remain endless, as the man himself exists as much as he asks a question about God. Therefore, he must look for the answer beyond himself, but at the same time he cannot abandon the search, because it would be no more. The sense of human being comes down to continually exploring the answer to the question about himself, which he finds out beyond himself.³ There are substantial arguments which make Rahner authorized to come up with such a conclusion – on one side the transcendent God, by no means inaccessible in his being to the human cognition in a direct way, and from the other side the

¹ K. RAHNER, "Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zur Anthropologie und Protologie im Rahmen der Theologie", w: *Mysterium Salutis II*, 406-420; K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie IX*, Einsiedeln 1970, 98n.

² K. RAHNER, *Anthropologie theologische*, LThK I, 618-627; cf. K. H. WEGER, *Karl Rahner. Eine Einführung in sein theologisches Denken*, Freiburg/Br. 1978, 23.

³ K. RAHNER, *Geist in Welt*, München 1957, 71; K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie IV*, Einsiedeln 1960, 142; K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie V*, Einsiedeln 1962, 23; K. RAHNER, *Hörer des Worte. Zur Grundlegung einer Religionsphilosophie*, München 1941, 45.

transcendence of human being, its capacity for the mystery of God⁴. Through mediation of human history and human experience of Jesus of Nazareth, we are capable to recognize him as Christ. That is in fact, the man learns about God through a mediation of manhood, or more precisely through the mediation of human mediation⁵. The man himself cannot and is not able to get to know God in a direct way. A man can get to God only if God will allow him and will provide it to him. God gave man an access to Himself through a manhood of his Son; he made himself available to the man by becoming a man – in a human history and through it, in human experience and thanks to it. By entering into a human history and its experience, God took the way of communication with man, so this means that man had to possess in himself an ability to establish contact with God. Thus a human being had been designed by God somehow in such a way as to make him capable of accepting God's initiative and decoding what God is. Talking even more accurately – in the moment of his creation, the human being has already obtained from God not only an ability of hearing God, His apprehension, but also an ability of understanding God, experiencing Him, establishing dialogue with God, the ability to respond to what it hears, so the ability to know, which born a bond. And this leads Rahner to another important conclusion – in a relation with man God wanted to become his partner, wanted to be in the communion with him, hence this profound vocation of the man, being in the moment of his creation fitted by God with definite abilities to become a worthy partner for dialogue with God.

1. Human nature as a condition of capacity to divine self-revelation

Since a human existence is rooted in history as a way of knowing God and complete union with him, therefore one should conclude that God wanted, or rather more did plan from the very beginning, to reveal himself to man in the human world. In other words – the Revelation, which was the way of expressing God himself through a manhood of Jesus from Nazareth, had been intended by God from the very beginning, and did not appear only as a emergency response to God in the misery of sin that occurred in the human world. Rahner goes even further: the Revelation is not only about the fact that it cannot be diminished to a “mission possible” of God in a hopeless situation of man, caused by his own fault, but that God wanted the Revelation for its own sake⁶. God simply wanted to become a man and give us this way an access to him, talk to us about himself. Therefore, a sin and a whole soteriological repair mission are like a secondary reason for the Revelation. The Revelation first of all discloses to man who he really is. Since God created us in order to incarnate, man was really coming at the time of Jesus Christ, through whom we can fully recognize our dignity as people. The Revelation becomes an experience of transcendental necessity, which as a secret until the end of the inexpressible God, allows man to understand that his existence without God

⁴ K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie XII*, Einsiedeln 1975, 24; P. EICHER, *Die anthropologische Wende. Karl Rahner philosophischer Weg vom Wesen des Menschen zur personalen Existenz*, Freiburg/Schweiz 1970, 55.

⁵ Cf. K. RAHNER, *Przez Syna do Ojca*, transl. A. Morawska, Kraków 1979, 185-186.

⁶ J. FEINER, M. LÖHRER red., *Mysterium Salutis II*, Einsiedeln 1966, 416.

and beyond God is unthinkable, neither in fact nor in theory. The deepest understanding of the experience of being human is based on this. It leads man to experience God and sharing His transcendental reality. For Rahner, a human being is subject to the possibility of the Revelation – God becomes the man to reveal himself in the world: comes out of himself and reveals his love in what is beyond Him, and for this reason He creates man – to accomplish His desire of expressing himself beyond himself. So, man is not a coincidence and the Revelation is not a necessity caused by a human sin. Human nature is therefore a condition of the possibility to divine self-revelation. That is why, as stated by Rahner: “Anthropology and Christology determine each other within the Christian dogma, if both are properly understood. The Christian anthropology makes sense only when being understood as human *potentia oboedientialis* for *unio hypostatica*. On the basis of this transcendental anthropology Christology can grow”⁷.

2. Man as “The Idea of Christ”

With the help of a transcendental deduction method, Rahner wants to take us through the way of knowing Christ, in order to get knowledge about God, which is possible in Christ and thanks to a former capacity for God. This is not only a moment, a single occurrence, but a process of opening the man onto a divine reality. It is an intellectual process, which is accomplished only within the grace of Christ. A theologian uses for this purpose the term “the idea of Christ”, which is the equivalent to the transcendental human structure, and which in turn means extra- or beyond historical openness of human being for Christ⁸. This openness in the structure of the human being is an expression of desire, which is somehow incurred in human existence – desire to know God. For man, Christ is the way to know God. By recognizing Christ, man is recognizing God. But because of his specific transcendental structure, the man before recognizing Christ revealed in history, first has to deal with His idea, on which he has become already open. According to Rahner, the counterpart to know God is then a human idea of Christ, for which he had been previously opened, i.e. a man has in his ‘eyes of the soul’ a sort of reflection of Christ, which is still not the same reality of Christ. The idea of Christ, which man carries himself, is a kind of cognitive ability, allowing him to become acquainted with something in himself, a proper object of the cognition. A human mind takes an active part in the cognition as it contributes to the knowledge. By recognizing an object, which is Christ, man recognizes himself simultaneously, and this is the way that a kind of relationship between Christ and his idea is developed. And since the idea does not assume the real Christ, but is a prior openness to Christ, this means that it is already preparing man to know God. This openness was previously caused by God.⁹

Man is then both a material, historical and particular being, and simultaneously a being of an absolute transcendence. And this in consequence means that being settled

⁷ K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie VII*, Einsiedeln 1966, 43.

⁸ K. RAHNER, “Probleme der Christologie von heute”, w: *Schriften zur Theologie I*, Einsiedeln 1954, 207.

⁹ K. P. FISCHER, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis. Die Anthropologie Karl Rahners*, Freiburg I Br. 1974, 279.

in a historical existence, a human being is inclined towards the supernatural existence – because living in history he awaits a fulfillment of his very nature beyond. Man finds this self-fulfillment beyond the history in God. And that is why God had revealed himself to man in history, so the man can recognize himself – not only whom he is, but also whom he might and should be. God reveals himself to man through his personal Word of Jesus Christ – the Savior. Through this apparition of God, man becomes open to being in general, that he might discover the anticipation of spirit, and the transcendence. The revelation is made exceptionally important to know – man can not only distinguish himself from other beings, but he can also recognize and experience himself as a human oriented for God. And this is in Rahner's opinion, the primary purpose of the Revelation¹⁰.

However, the question comes now whether this orientation is only an opening of human being in general, and so for God, or whether is also, through a transcendence of human spirit, an openness of man for the inner essence of God? In Rahner's opinion, through a transcendence of a human spirit, man can be opened only to the being in general, but is not able by reason's own ability to reach an essence of the existence, unless provided by God. So, the orientation for God does not already mean knowledge of His being. The transcendence of the human spirit provides the man, in his historically embedded existence, with a capacity of "and only until" experiencing his focus on God.¹¹ In Rahner's opinion, this is the deepest sense of revelation, being reached through a transcendental deduction of Christ idea: the revelation does not explain us as much God, as explains us something important about the man – that he is oriented for God. This allows the man to reach the nature of God, because God offers himself to the man. Reaching the nature of God as such cannot be made from man's side, because this would mean that man is able to recognize this nature by intuition, which is impossible. This is only possible from the side of God through the revelation. The idea of Christ, being previously owned by the man in himself, makes him opened for God, but this opening remains meaningless itself. Only God can cause that an idea of Christ being owned by the man as the empty one, becomes filled with the content, as a God's gift to the man¹².

For Rahner "the idea of Christ" is not a "transcendental idea"¹³ concept, as per Kant's understanding¹⁴, as an idea created by pure reason, a purely rational concept, but God becomes accessible to man above all through revelation. By revealing himself, offering himself to man, God simultaneously enables man to know Him. Accordingly with an adopted and slightly modified Rahner's concept of a transcendental

¹⁰ K. RAHNER, *Hörer des Wortes*, München 1941, 181, 191.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² P. EICHER, *Die anthropologische Wende*, *op.cit.*, 344.

¹³ Rahners takes over from Kant a concept of the transcendent idea itself, but he does not take over its understanding from Kant, as a concept of pure reason. Supported by Heideger, Rahner explains that apart from the concept of God created by the mind, we do also have to deal with something in the man what allows him to enclose the grace of God – K. GÓZDŹ, *Teologia człowieka. Z najnowszej antropologii niemieckiej*, Lublin 2006, 308.

¹⁴ K. P. FISCHER, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis*, *op.cit.*, 281-284.

revelation, God fully opened himself to man in the revelation. Therefore, Rahner does not limit God only within an area of the mind as Kant did, making out of the mind something greater than God, because God cannot become merely a synthesis of human sensory experience. He is an absolute being, who allows man to know him in a history only because, he wanted himself to be revealed to man¹⁵ through revelation, and the grace of self-revelation to man. A cognition of the self-revealing God depends from the man's disposition, how much the man can accept God revealing to him. For Rahner, the man is a spirit being oriented for an absolute transcendence, and through this direction another kind of being is indicated, which penetrates the man and allows him to be known. This being itself remains always inexhaustible and unknowable for man till the end, what means that being on which the man is oriented for, which offers itself in a history to the man and causes that man can recognize him, is somehow for the man a Someone, whom the man cannot manage by himself. Man is a being related to the mystery of God and his unlimitedness, what in Rahner's opinion is demonstrated by transcendentals. They remain themselves only empty ideas and concepts, which cannot constitute a simple sum of sensory experience, and the man cannot manage these ideas or have them at his own disposal¹⁶.

What is then the transcendental idea of Christ? Rahner acknowledges in this phrase a theological content of man that is someone oriented for an absolute mystery of God, in whom he can find his final fulfillment. A question arises then, what is a way from this orientation to the fulfillment, as the orientation itself is not a fulfillment yet. Orientation of human being for God is a directed search for the fulfillment. Man goes beyond the void of knowledge about God, to find an access to the mystery of God. This cannot be however accomplished by the power of man himself, as the man is not capable to grasping God. There is exactly the opposite – this is God who includes man in His mystery, holds the man, and pulls him into his mysterious reality. Simultaneously, this move from the side of God creates a new kind of human being from the inside. This inner newness of man consists in a change of human spirituality. Man as the human spirit is being recreated through the light of divine grace, the grace of Christ, by which man becomes able to receive the God himself. And because of that, in Rahner's opinion, man can be described as an eternal desire of God. However, man being the eternal desire of God becomes a searching Christology at the same time, because there is not only a natural desire for God in man, but also a question about the mystery of Christ. Therefore, the man carries an idea of God-Man in himself, which is both an idea and a reality¹⁷.

On the empirical background the man cannot find an answer to the question whom he is as it remains at the level of a mystery. So, man is not so much a puzzle, which he discovers by his own abilities, cognition or experience. Answering the question whom the man is, becomes possible only through the revelation – must be coming from God himself. And God fully, directly to the man comes out in the unique way of revelation – in the person and the creation of God-Man. He only embraces the question and the answer to whom

¹⁵ K. RAHNER, *Hörer des Wortes*, *op.cit.*, 181.

¹⁶ K. RAHNER, "Die Christologie innerhalb einer evolutiven Weltanschauung", w: *Schriften zur Theologie V*, Einsiedeln 1954, 189.

¹⁷ K. RAHNER, "Natur und Gnade", w: *Schriften zur Theologie IV*, Einsiedeln 1960, 222.

the man is. The one person of the Eternal Word was a perfect union of questions and answers with each other in a union, without confusion and change, as well as without a separation and disconnection, where the human nature becomes the question, and the answer is divine. How can the man however exist in a form of man, that he cannot provide it by himself? The answer to this question may only come from revelation¹⁸.

One could suspect Rahner of reducing Christology to anthropology, but in fact Rahner means something completely different. In order to enable the man an extensive reading of God's revelation, Rahner wants to bring the transcendence down and direct the faith of man to Christ. Speaking more precisely, Rahner does not see a possibility to reach a final content of revelation through man – it is somehow beyond the man – and that is why he proposes something being possible for the man – reaching a human figure of revelation, Jesus of Nazareth, in whom God had revealed. And here, we come to a real need for creating a phrase of the idea of Christ in Rahner's concept. He assumed though that man needs to fill his human "I", which becomes his fulfillment. Man finds a fulfillment in a historically expressed "You" of God, this is in Jesus Christ, who as the Savior God-Man is the reason for the man's existence¹⁹.

3. Humility of God as a heightening of a human nature.

Man as a question, God as an answer

Man as the searching Christology is a constant question about himself, the answer to what he finds in Christ. He does not come up with it by himself from the empirical background, but reads it out from transcendence, being provided to him on the earth in the historical revelation of God, which was accomplished in Jesus from Nazareth: God-Man. On one hand, God-Man is a part of the mystery of God, but from the other He is also a part of the mystery of man²⁰. A veracity of his humanity is a testimony of his spiritual possibilities towards man – He can really fulfill the man. His human existence is a place of self-revelation of God, and at the same time He mediates the man in revelation, that is the focus on absolute mystery. The man is the transcendence, i.e. the question about himself, but always in directing on the mystery of God. That is why Rahner may say, that Christology is a self-transcending anthropology, and the anthropology is a diminishing Christology²¹.

The mystery of Jesus Christ: God-Man is the mystery, which reveals itself from one side, and which hides itself from the other side. A personal unity of two natures with their simultaneous distinction is the subject of this mystery, which means that this mystery unifies Divinity and Humanity in one person, in one entity, but at the same time it distinguishes between them permanently. And this is just this part, which is hidden from man and which remains a mystery that man cannot fully understand to the end²².

¹⁸ K. RAHNER, *Przez Syna do Ojca*, *op.cit.*, 167-168.

¹⁹ K. RAHNER, "Die Christologie innerhalb einer evolutiven Weltanschauung", *op.cit.*, 217

²⁰ K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Menschwerdung", w: *Schriften zur Theologie IV*, Einsiedeln 1960, 73.

²¹ K. RAHNER, "Probleme der Christologie von heute", *op.cit.*, 184.

²² K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie Weihnachtsfeier", w: *Schriften zur Theologie III*, Einsiedeln 19, 41.

The secret already lies in the definition of the God-Man and appears in two expressions – God and Man. In fact this mystery boils down to the person of the Savior, who gives the man Salvation and transforms him this way. Thus, the reality of the entrance into a mystery is an entry into Salvation's reality. God-Man offers the salvation to man, that ensures its share in this mystery, as he already has human nature himself. In other words – the humanity of Jesus Christ is a measure of participation in human nature, so in our mystery, and the moment of offering Salvation to man²³. Rahner wants to bring attention to the salvific nature of the Incarnation's mystery, without which we would not arrive to the Calvary on the Cross. However, at the same time he opposes a reducing way of Christ's human nature as a passive instrument being served by God. Rahner draws attention to the fact that a humanity in the Incarnation cannot be treated only as something, which had helped God to come into being in a historical world. For him, the Incarnation is, most of all, this salvific reality in which and by which, the history of man becomes fulfilled. By accepting humanity, God in the Incarnation accepts the history of world and man as his own, and opens a way to man to an existential acceptance of Jesus Christ the Divine; becomes the way of salvation which leads man to God. Jesus Christ is the summit of the unity of God with man²⁴.

For Rahner, man is a mystery not defined to its end, a secret's form of a special kind. God is a great-grandform to what the man is as a mystery. A fullness of God is a mystery for man, and man owns a piece of this mystery through his focus on God, and thanks to this orientation. But man is also aware of his own impotence, his emptiness – as in comparison with the fullness makes his own emptiness. So, his focus on God is some kind of mystery. This does not at all mean that man is nobody compared to this fact. Just his focus on God causes, that each statement about man is a statement about God, what means that God has to be included into each statement about the man. Thus man as the mystery is included in the mystery of God, what particularly means that Jesus Christ is God-Man by giving us his secret, draws us into the mystery of God, which is an unusual way of incorporating since he participates in humanity. So, the mystery of man lies in its existence on the focus on God as the great-grandform and the mystery fullness²⁵.

The mystery of Christ brings in salvation, to which God opens the man "with" and "in" love. Rahner demonstrates that man in Christ is opened for salvation, what is a kind of a priori necessity of each human being. The freedom offered to man can of course allow him to make a choice – he can be consciously interested in this mystery and follow it, but he can also do otherwise. In any case, meeting of man with God's love guides him to self-experience himself as a spirit. This self-experience includes two moments: the revelation and the supernatural existence. The first is getting to know the possible means of salvation, and the second one an internal experience of God.

The mystery of Christ becomes fully exposed to us at the moment of the Incarnation, so through adopting a human body by the Son of God, wherein a meaning and

²³ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁴ Cf. I. BOKWA, *Wprowadzenie do teologii Karla Rahnera*, Tarnów 1996, 154-160.

²⁵ K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Menschwerdung", *op.cit.*, 140; K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Weihnachtsfeier", *op.cit.*, 42.

purpose of being the man is revealed. Thus the Incarnation, which is an acceptance of humanity, discovers the man his deepest mystery. The man is directed to God – this is a mysterious sense of human nature, which becomes fully realized in the Incarnation. By experiencing a discovery of his own mystery in the reference of God's revelation, man simultaneously realizes that he cannot fulfill himself since he cannot manage himself. The final fulfillment of his being does not belong to him, but it becomes fulfilled only through his openness to the mystery of God²⁶. Rahner places the Incarnation in the very center of the Christological doctrine and wants to show through it such a way of joining the two natures in Jesus Christ, that in no way diminishing the human nature. On the contrary, he wants to prove that human nature has reached in the Incarnation a peak of its own fulfillment, and by this the Incarnation becomes the deepest basis of life's attitude of man to Jesus Christ²⁷.

For Rahner the Incarnation was planned by God from the very beginning, it is the aim of God's action in creation²⁸. An act of God's ascension to the world has also become an act of God's self-revelation, His self-explanation, self-manifestation. And at the same time, the same explanation made by someone who is both God and Man suggests that the Incarnation is not only God's revelation in the world, but an explanation of a truth about man, the discovery of a creation's definite meaning. Rahner comes to the conclusion that the Incarnation is planned by God just because God created man with regard to the Incarnation. The Incarnation is then the purpose of the creation. Therefore, it is not an incident or an accidental act, but a purposeful God's entrance into the world, demonstrating an internal sense of the whole creative dynamics²⁹. Consequently, this means the rejection of an apparent image of God. In the Incarnation of His Son God disclosed a man before man, allowed the man to find himself and his own sense. It is not a creation of man that explains the Incarnation, but it's exactly the opposite, the divine desire of Incarnation explains the creation, which means that human nature is a condition of the possibility for God's self-revelation³⁰. God is able to reveal Himself, to uncover Himself, to express Himself on what is not God, and as such poses man just to accomplish it through him: "Human nature is not a mask ... in which the hidden Logos made some gestures in the world, but from the beginning it is a real essential symbol for the Logos itself, so one may and even should, say, man is possible because a manifestation of Logos on the outside is possible"³¹.

Finally then the Incarnation leads us to the conclusion that man in his eschatology is not a product for himself, but he is the concept of God. A man came into being by the power of God, God gave himself to man, and by this God leads man to his ultimate fulfillment and this means that Christ as a divine image is an idea of man.

²⁶ K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie Weihnachtsfeier", *op.cit.*, 39.

²⁷ I. BOKWA, *Wprowadzenie do teologii Karla Rahnera*, *op.cit.*, 152-153.

²⁸ K. RAHNER, *Bóg stał się człowiekiem. Medytacje*, tłum. M. Węclawski, Poznań 1978, 48.

²⁹ K. RAHNER, "Probleme der Christologie von heute", *op.cit.*, 185.

³⁰ Cf. I. BOKWA, *Wprowadzenie do teologii Karla Rahnera*, *op.cit.*, 149.

³¹ K. RAHNER, "Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte", w: J. FEINER, M. LÖHRER red., *Mysterium salutis II*, Einsiedeln 1975, 332.

The humility of God in the Incarnation is an occurrence, which deprived man of God's secret border. By entering into the world and accepting the humanity, God revealed his inner life to man³². Thanks to this incident, man is not only distinguished from God, but simply united with God. Thus the idea of man was explained to man by God in Christ, it was somehow revealed in Him. The man carries the idea of Christ in himself, because Christ reveals the right idea of man to the man. Here God reveals to man a fullness of being a human, which means being an existence of God in the world (wahrhaftes Existential)³³. Thus the existence of man is the existence of God and that is why Christ is the answer of God to man's question about himself³⁴.

4. Christ as an "ec-sistence of the man"

A human existence is exceptional and particular for Rahner, because the man is for him an existence of God in the world³⁵. And this forces Rahner to look deeper into the secret of man. It is not enough to see in the man an ordinary openness for God's mystery or for the revelation as something that allows us to brighten the existence of the man as "being-in-itself". Rahner deepens his understanding of man's existence by looking at it through an "ec-sistence". By the "ec-sistence" Rahner understands the transfer of human existence to the mystery of God, whereas the Revelation is an acceptance of this transfer. This finally means that God takes a human existence for his own by becoming a man. For Rahner, the center of gravity in mysterious understanding of man's secret lies in the fact that human existence is handed over to God's own. However, a question comes how the man may remain a man of God-Man and not be lost in Him in a monophysical way? This means such an understanding of the Chalcedon dogma, which leads us to the proper understanding of man as a mystery. An understanding of this mystery is connected with an understanding of the human reality of Jesus Christ, which exists in Him in the way of becoming. The way of an existence is becoming humanity³⁶.

Rahner wants generally to look at the human being through the Incarnation³⁷, and this guides him to ask the question: is an adoption of the body through the Logos causing anything at all in man; or is it maybe an ordinary use of the body; whether is it passive or active; how does Logos belong to humanity?³⁸

This question conceals in understanding the specific humanity. Man is someone oriented to God, so elevated to Him. This elevation does not refer to a moral ground, but to an ontological one³⁹. And if so, we have almost two elements of the same relation-

³² K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie Weihnachtsfeier", *op.cit.*, 44; K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Menschwerdung", *op.cit.*, 148-152.

³³ K. RAHNER, "Probleme der Christologie von heute", *op.cit.*, 205.

³⁴ K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Menschwerdung", *op.cit.*, 144.

³⁵ K. P. FISCHER, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis*, *op.cit.*, 301.

³⁶ K. GÓZDŹ, *Teologia człowieka*, *op.cit.*, 321.

³⁷ K. RAHNER, "O teologii Wcielenia", w: *Pisma wybrane*, tłum. G. Bubel, Kraków 2005, 296-315.

³⁸ K. RAHNER, *Podstawowy wykład wiary. Wprowadzenie do pojęcia chrześcijaństwa*, tłum. T. Mieszkowski, Warszawa 1987, 176-184.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32-35.

ship: the unification of humanity with divinity and an ascent of humanity to God. This second point is for Rahners a “date” determining a self-consciousness of man, what means that man is able to distinguish and recognize that he is at God’ disposal through his openness to God. Thus, man is someone aware of his openness to God, his being for God. The hypostatic union is an evidence of this. A rank-and-file Christology becomes there fully enlightened by the transcendental anthropology. Not only Logos becomes the man, but also a man plays a part in this unification⁴⁰.

In order to explain this ascending of man to God and determine ideas more clearly, Rahner uses the concept developed by Bernhard Welte⁴¹. Accordingly to it, a key word is “ecstasy” – meaning an ascending. In this project, man is transcendence as an ascent to God. Man is a spiritual existence and is expressed by being in someone else, in other one. It is about identifying a relationship between being and knowing. Being in someone else is a discovery, knowing that I it is me, because I do recognize myself in another one. A man in his striving is to return to himself and recognize himself. He is then an original association of the spirit with the others. Man recognizes himself in this relationship as being someone different from the world. By this knowledge, man enters into the world being different than he is, but still does not stop being a spirit. We can notice here a relevant process: man is open to the world which is different than he is. Man fulfills himself by the fact that he can leave this different one, this other one. This means that man is able and he can remain himself. Thanks to this openness to another one, man accomplishes himself. Man is the only human being in this openness which is focused on not getting lost being itself – and this is something the greatest that man possesses in himself⁴².

There are however borders of this openness and man can experience it. This border does not completely limit him. Despite this border man can go beyond toward the Boundless one. The man can cross this border as a spirit, because as the spirit he has his foundation not in this surrounding world, but in God. Thus it means that man originally as a spiritual nature, is not only a common being in another one, but is a being in God. In his origin, the man is first with God before he will be at another one in the world. This means that an original openness of human nature is primarily focused on God, and not to on the world. That is why God is a transcendental foundation for man and that is why we describe man and his deeds from God’s side. This is the mystery of our being a human. Human openness to the world is based on a human openness to God, what means that man participates in the absolute and it is a foundation of being itself⁴³. My being in God corresponds with being in myself. Being in God means being in itself. There are two ways of being a human: in God and in itself. Both of them grow in the same common direction and cannot be opposing. Man in his orientation for God finds out himself in Him, and does not get lost himself. Standing before God does not mean for man his destruction or abolition, but it justifies his being, which only as human being can stand before God. Only man can be an absolute being towards God’s You. This standing of

⁴⁰ K. GÓŹDŹ, *Teologia człowieka, op.cit.*, 322.

⁴¹ K. P. FISCHER, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis, op.cit.*, 303.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 303.

⁴³ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, München 1968, 190-191.

man before God justifies his own existence of the human being. Standing before God means a human integrity. This is a confirmation that man is the spirit – he has a freedom oriented for God. It allows us to formulate a thesis that the mystery of God is also the mystery of man, and none of these mysteries can be expressed without the other one.

A mystery of creation is deepened in a mystery of the Incarnation. Here, man remains in a real union with God and owns his share in His existence. We deal at this point with an internal assumption of the hypostatic union with God – the human being in God is a certain assumption. On the one hand there is a human nearness in relation with God, on the other hand – remoteness by a distinction of man from God. This dialectic of approaching and receding can be exclusively altered by God, as seen in the hypostatic union. If God had approached a human to the maximum, then God would not destroy this man, but make him accomplished in itself. Thus man remains still a human, but taken into the mystery of God, so becoming a complete person. The person is however understood here as an ec-static climax of God's Spirit. God does not meet Jesus of Nazareth, but the man in general⁴⁴.

Rahner defines a hypostatic union as an ontological and existential (both these definitions must exist complementary), an absolute devotion to the holy mystery, that is God. This devotion is of such a nature that it becomes its own reality of God, where the word "God" is a denounced mystery. The word God is the answer of God. The ontological commitment to God defines as the primary relationship of man as a spirit focused on God⁴⁵. Giving a concrete existential means a real divine-human existence of Christ, which we find in Jesus from Nazareth. A dedication means the existential expression of Christ's essence; it means that Christ is there to surrender. This is an absolute devotion; it is ontological and occurs in the existential way. Jesus exists in the absolute self-surrendering to God. This absolute self-surrendering contains the absolute self-contagion of God to man. And because of this self-contagion of God to man, the self-surrendering of man to God becomes possible. An absolute surpassing of the human beyond itself, going out to God is not possible on his own merits. An approximation of man to God is being achieved through God's approximation to man, through the power of God⁴⁶.

What is new is there a new definition of man from God's side, set out to God-Man, Jesus Christ. By the closeness of God in relation to the man, aspects of man's personality are redefined – this what creates him, attributes of the person: he is a spirit, he is in himself and he is free.

The question arises: how God approximates the human? The fact is that God is an absolute mystery and it is this mystery that approximates the man. But man cannot read it from God's side, but he can read it from the bottom up, from his hand, anthropologically, which means that God allows the man to enter into His mystery. A self-absolute, self-dedication of man to God must be an expression for the self-surrendering of God to man, which means that man being absolutely dedicated to God exists as an absolute,

⁴⁴ K. P. FISCHER, *Der Mensch als Geheimni*, op.cit., 306.

⁴⁵ K. RAHNER, "Über den Begriff des Geheimnisses in der katholischen Theologie", w: *Schriften zur Theologie*, Einsiedeln 1960, 94.

⁴⁶ K. RAHNER, "Theos in Neuen Testament", w: *Schriften zur Theologie*, Einsiedeln 1954, 93.

lowliness God, self-surrendering himself. And this “absolutely” becomes possible only in Jesus Christ. Only He – Man, who in his absolute dedication to God exists in such a way as God exists. This becomes possible only when God accepts it by his lowliness⁴⁷.

This man – Jesus Christ – is a self-expression of God because God is expressed when he humbles himself⁴⁸. The man, who surrenders absolutely in God, may exist as its own reality of God in itself. But this is possible only when we accept that God approaches man in an absolute way, in a such a way that makes this man his Word, so the real self-expressing of himself. God still remains a mystery, but he simultaneously reveals how man exists in this mystery.

A man is an open question to the existence of God. God-Man is a fulfillment of this existence. Rahner defines God as an unspeakable mystery of man, but at the same time this God-Mystery is nearby the man and he opens himself to man whilst expressing himself. Jesus of Nazareth, the only man, he is in his concrete reality an open and denounced mystery of God. God created man as the infinite question, and a purpose of this question is God himself. God wanted to reveal himself to man and he wanted man to recognize him – and this is the purpose. God-Man is the answer. Without this answer, man shall remain a question without an answer.

5. Instead of the conclusion

Walter Kasper used to ridicule about opinions deriving from the classical theology perceiving the Incarnation as a “God’s slide into a human nature, as in the mechanic’s overalls to repair the disintegrating world”⁴⁹.

For Rahner, the Incarnation of Pre-eternal Son was not only a remedy required for “solving the problem” of sin, an intervention driven by a human infidelity, as Thomists wanted it to be; or a culmination of human history as eternally planned by God, like Scotists wanted it to be, but the Incarnation is an absolute achievement of human potential, most of all meant as human openness to God, in whom man meets his fulfillment.

One should underline that thanks to exegetical studies of the recent centuries, and a changed approach to the interpretation of texts, we know that Christology is a primary ‘hermeneutical place’ of each Christian reflection. This is Christ who is the most important Word of God about the world that we want to understand in the light of faith. We believe that theology should clearly and interchangeably articulate it. Secondly, since the time of Renaissance a main benchmark of our interest has changed – we have gone from the theocentrism to the anthropocentrism. Instead of a set of issues as proposed by the classical theology: “theology (=doctrine of God) – anthropology - Christology”, nowadays another structure of lecture is postulated: “Christology – anthropology – theology”. It seems that we could even come up after Rahner with a bolder proposal: “anthropology – Christology – theology”. The human being opened in Christ comes to God. Christ becomes somewhat like a focal point in a meeting of God and

⁴⁷ K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Menschwerdung", *op.cit.*, 150.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 149; K. RAHNER, "Zur Theologie der Weihnachtsfeier", *op.cit.*, 44.

⁴⁹ See: W. KASPER, *Jezus Chrystus*, transl. B. Białecki, Warszawa 1983, 41.

man, and in Chris a question is born that awaits an answer. Man alone would remain a question without an answer, God alone would remain the answer without a question, and by this without a way to know the answer. Jesus Christ God-Man is an encounter of the mystery of man and God, where a human mystery becomes explained in the mystery of God in a dialogue of love.

Rahner proposes to get to a human form of Revelation – to Jesus of Nazareth, in whom God had revealed. He defends however a human nature of Christ before reducing it to a tool, used by God to come into being and to reveal in the historical world. Then the incarnation alone should be treated instrumentally, but actually for Rahner the Incarnation is the reality of salvation, in which and by which the history of man becomes fulfilled. Here, a sense and purpose of being a human appears in the most revealing way. Rahner in his Christological lecture is concerned about that in the Incarnation, being a combination of divine and human natures, in one person of the Divine Son, a human nature is not diminished, as it reaches just here a peak of its own accomplishment. The Incarnation is the Revelation of God in a human world and in a human way, but it is also an explanation of the human being itself. Here the man can somehow exceed “a limit of divine secrecy” and he can feel his life being unified with God’s life. A man carries in himself the idea of Christ, because Christ reveals to him a proper idea of the man. God reveals to man a fullness of his human being, which means to be an existence of God in the world. Thus the existence of man is his existence with God, and that is why Christ is the answer to the man’s question himself. The peak of God’s self-giving to man is the Incarnation, which cannot be deduced from the anthropology. On the contrary, this the Incarnation that opens broad horizons for understanding the anthropology, and the anthropology becomes comprehensible only from a perspective of the Incarnation. It becomes obvious here that a person can courageously live in hope for his fullness in the life of God. The anthropology does not reduce Christology, on the contrary, without it neither man nor God can be explained, it leads us to the theos-logy. Thus, the anthropology is a question, a starting point in theological researches, The Christology is a way of searching for an answer, and the theology is the answer. A leap from an existential analyzing the man to answering the most basic question about his sense and purpose cannot be done without Christ. This purpose is fully revealed only in the union of God with man in the mystery of Incarnation.

RAHNEROWSKI ZWROT ANTROPOLOGICZNY:

PRZEZ CZŁOWIEKA DO BOGA, CZYLI OD CZŁOWIEKA JAKO „IDEI CHRYSYUSA”
DO CHRYSYUSA JAKO „EK-SYSTENCJI” CZŁOWIEKA

Streszczenie

Według Karla Rahnera Chrystus staje się jakby centralnym miejscem spotkania Boga i człowieka, to w Nim właśnie rodzi się pytanie, na które czeka odpowiedź. Człowiek otwarty w Chrystusie dochodzi do Boga. Sam człowiek pozostałby pytaniem bez odpowiedzi, sam Bóg odpowiedzią bez pytania, a tym samym bez drogi do poznania odpowiedzi. Jezus Chrystus Bóg-Człowiek to spotkanie tajemnicy człowieka i Boga, gdzie tajemnica ludzka wyjaśnia się w tajemnicy Boga w dialogu miłości.

Rahner proponuje dotrzeć do ludzkiej postaci objawienia, do Jezusa z Nazaretu, w którym objawił się Bóg. Broni przy tym ludzkiej natury Chrystusa przed zredukowaniem jej do narzędzia, jakim posłużył się Bóg, aby zaistnieć i objawić się w świecie historycznym. Wówczas samo wcielenie trzeba by traktować instrumentalnie. Tymczasem Wcielenie dla Rahnera jest rzeczywistością zbawczą, w której i przez którą spełnia się historia człowieka. Tu najpełniej ujawnia się sens a zarazem cel bycia człowiekiem. Rahner w swoim chrystologicznym wykładzie dba o to, aby we Wcieleniu, które jest połączeniem natur boskiej i ludzkiej, w jednej osobie Syna Bożego w niczym nie umniejszyć natury ludzkiej, która tutaj właśnie osiągnęła szczyt własnej realizacji. Wcielenie jest objawieniem się Boga w ludzkim świecie i na ludzki sposób, ale jest też wyjaśnieniem samego człowieka. Tutaj człowiek w pewien sposób może przekroczyć „granicę Boskiej skrytości”, tu swoim życiem może czuć się zjednoczony z życiem Boga. Człowiek nosi w sobie ideę Chrystusa, bo Chrystus odkrywa przed nim właściwą ideę człowieka. Bóg odkrywa przed człowiekiem jego pełnię bycia człowiekiem, które oznacza bycie egzystencją Boga w świecie. Zatem egzystencją człowieka jest jego istnienie z Bogiem, i dlatego Chrystus jest odpowiedzią na pytanie człowieka o samego siebie. Szczytem samoudzielenia się Boga człowiekowi jest Wcielenie, którego nie da się wydedukować z antropologii. Przeciwnie, to Wcielenie otwiera szerokie horyzonty dla zrozumienia antropologii, antropologia staje się zrozumiała dopiero z perspektywy Wcielenia. Tu staje się jasnym, że człowiek może odważnie żyć nadzieją na swoją pełnię w życiu Boga. Antropologia nie redukuje chrystologii, przeciwnie, bez niej nie da się wyjaśnić ani człowieka ani Boga, ona prowadzi nas do teo-logii. Zatem punktem wyjścia teologicznych poszukiwań, pytaniem jest antropologia, drogą szukania odpowiedzi chrystologia a odpowiedzią teologia. Bez Chrystusa nie da się uczynić „przeskoku” od egzystencjalnej analizy człowieka do odpowiedzi na najbardziej podstawowe pytanie o jego sens i cel. Ten ujawnia się dopiero w pełni w zjednoczeniu Boga z człowiekiem w tajemnicy Wcielenia.