Thesis 2

Not only from an understanding of being human as an evolutionary process, but also from an understanding of being made in the image and likeness of God, we may say that being human is being consciously open to create much as God can create.

Not Creation ex Nihilo

The word ‘create’ comes from Latin *creatus*, past participle of *creare* "to make, bring forth, produce, beget," related to *crescere* "arise, grow" (see [***crescent***](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=crescent&allowed_in_frame=0)). Related: *Created*; *creating*. The root word is *crescere, ‘to grow.’* [*http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=create*](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=create)

Christians believe that only God can create from nothing. Thesis 2 does not reject that distinctive way in which God creates from nothing.

Rather, Thesis 2 affirms that given the conditions of earth and humanity in our ecosystems, just as God can help grow new forms, shapes, and beings out of the state of earth in our past, so also humans can help grow new forms, shapes, and beings out of earth and ourselves in the past.

Created in the Image of God

Early Christian writers account for the fact that humans are rational (*logikos*) by supposing that humans somehow have a share of or a reflection of the Divine Word (*Logos*) as in John 1:1 and John 1:25. John 1:1 affirms: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:25 affirms: “And the Word was made flesh.”

Aristotle famously affirmed that the human being is “*zoon logon echon,” the living being having rationality.* This was translated into Latin *as “animal rationale.”*

20th Century European Philosophy on the Distinctive Quality of Being Human

What distinguishes humanity from all other species is that humanity “*exists.” “*Exist’comes from *exeo, I go out.* We see this in the English word *Exit*, which means that one goes out of a building here.

Humans exist. We are able to go outside our past and present self unto a future self. We are not defined by instinct as other species are. We can beyond our past selves and fashion new selves, building upon the best of the past as we develop new selves and new social relationships so that the dignity, well-being, and creativity of all humanity can flourish in dynamic and ongoing self-actualization

Image of God in Humanity as a Potential to be Raised unto Becoming the Offspring of God

God as the Creator is the Being who truly creates autonomous nature governed by natural laws and who truly creates humanity as autonomous beings with the freedom to exist beyond ourselves. Just as

God lets be nature and human nature, permitting, guiding, and encouraging nature and human nature to develop our better potentialities. So also humans can let nature and human nature, permitting, guiding, and encouraging nature and human nature to develop our better potentialities.

We as humans can be procreative in nature with deep re4spoect for our ecosystems and developing the potential of nature to become a beautiful garden.

More importantly, we as humans can be procreative, begetting children and raising them, guiding them, encouraging them to be authentic self-creators open to being loved by others and open to love others.

The human is a creature, deeply related as a mammal to other humans and to nature. Nevertheless, the human is the social mammal that “exists!”

Rather than emphasizing humanity has having a fixed human nature, much like other creatures determined by their instincts, this approach focuses more upon humanity’s ability to move outward and upward.

This human ability we have which enables us to transcend ourselves and to seek the more, is grasped by Augustine as revealing that our hearts are restless until they rest in God.

Our restless ability to transcend ourselves defines us as the creatures who are open to being explicitly adopted as children of God and participating more consciously and more fully in God’s creative and re-creative love.

Our Human Destiny

Our human destiny is to participate in the fullest and most conscious way possible in God.

Our human destiny is to participate freely, responsibly, gladly, with love, to become a co-worker with God in creation, a guardian of being (as Heidegger affirms, a shepherd of Being).

Understanding Sin in the Light of Our Human Potential to Exist Beyond Ourselves, Becoming Co-creators with God (a summary from my last paragraph on the Glory of God)

In summary being human means being open to a creative future, being open to transcend our past selves and to co-create with God new selves best fulfilled in loving communion with God and others, thereby living out our identity as Images of God.

However, sin has perverted our human ability to be creative through love. Instead of exercising a loving dominion over creation and transcending ourselves in a loving communion with others, in our sinful condition we turn dominion into domination and communion with others into a relationship of power and submission.

But the Spirit of the Crucified and Risen Christ has freed us from the power of sin and enabled us to fulfill in loving actions our human ability to be open to a creative future and to other persons as God grasps them. Jesus was open to his future and to other people and grasped them as God did. Although Jesus' grasp of God's love for him as his Beloved Son resulted in the rejection of Jesus by the people and his crucifixion, Jesus remained faithful to God's love.

Faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus is not a magic which automatically ensures human salvation. The death and resurrection of Jesus constitute God's gracious gift of love. Faith in such love involves thankfulness that overflows into loving actions in all of a person's life. The life of Jesus constitutes a pattern which the believer gratefully incorporates into the believer's life. Living by faith in the Spirit of the Crucified and Risen Christ requires, St. Paul has told us, walking in that Spirit, incorporating into our life such virtues as charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency. Living by such virtues involves crucifying our flesh, the totality of fallen human existence separated from God's redemptive love. The virtues listed by St. Paul do not constitute a new set of rules, for there is only one limit on what is allowed in Christian freedom, namely, belonging to Christ and sharing his life and sufferings as well as his glory. Sharing the life and sufferings of Christ involves the imitation of Christ and the taking up of our cross daily. The result is that crucifying our flesh liberates us to be truly human, liberates us to live for a creative future in both others and ourselves through God's gracious gift of love.