

Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences: An Ecumenical Perspective with Reference to Pannenberg, Rahner, and Zizioulas (Princeton Theological Monograph Series)

Christopher L. Fisher

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Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences: An Ecumenical Perspective with Reference to Pannenberg, Rahner, and Zizioulas (Princeton Theological Monograph Series) Christopher L. Fisher Description: The medieval worldview that regarded human beings as at the center of God's plans for His universe has long been regarded as obsolete; its synthesis of Christian theology and Greek philosophy having collapsed under the weight of Copernicus, Galileo, and Darwin. The popular stereotype is that Science, both in the Copernican revolution that dethroned the earth-centered view of the cosmos and in subsequent developments in evolutionary theory and general relativity, has marginalized and trivialized human existence, revealing humanity's ""place in the cosmos"" to be accidental, peripheral, and ultimately meaningless. However, an investigation into both modern Christian theology and contemporary twenty-first century Science reveals just the opposite, providing solid evidence in the interdisciplinary dialogue concerning the significance of humanity within the universe. In this important study, Christopher Fisher analyzes several modern theologians, including Wolfhart Pannenberg, Karl Rahner, and John Zizioulas, to reveal how contemporary ecumenical theology is deeply and intrinsically committed to a high view of human cosmic significance as a consequence of Christianity's indelible Trinitarian and incarnational faith. Fisher then demonstrates how research in contemporary natural Science confirms this finding in its own way, as recent primate intelligence studies, artificial intelligence research, and even the quest for extra-terrestrial intelligence reveal the wonder of human uniqueness. A contemporary version of the teleological argument also resurfaces in consideration of cosmic evolutionary perspectives on human existence. Even ecological concerns take on a new poignancy with the realization that, among material creatures, only human beings are capable of addressing the world's situation. This interdisciplinary study uncovers the surprising coherence and convergence of Christian Theology and Natural Science on the subject of human existence and significance here at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and it highlights the very unique role of humanity in global and cosmic history. Endorsements: ""Through an incisive study of several leading twentieth-century theologians, Chris Fisher explores the ecumenical consensus for a strong reading of human cosmic significance. While acknowledging problems surrounding earlier forms of anthropocentrism, he argues that Christian theology remains wedded to a high understanding of the place of human beings in the economy of creation and salvation. This is a valuable contribution to an important debate in contemporary theology."" -- David Fergusson University of Edinburgh ""This is a fascinating work on the interface between theology and science . . . The author's remarkable breadth of knowledge, clarity of thought, and lucid writing style enable him to help the reader to understand the coherence between science and faith. This scholarly work is an irenic and well-informed presentation of the Christian faith and will become one of the primary textbooks in theology, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of science."" -- Laurence W. Wood Asbury Theological Seminary About the Contributor(s): Christopher L Fisher is Adjunct Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He is an ordained elder in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church and serves as Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church in Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania.

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