

# Shared Leadership

EDLE 637

*Presented by Krystine Hocking*

# MODULE 1

- Reading 1.11

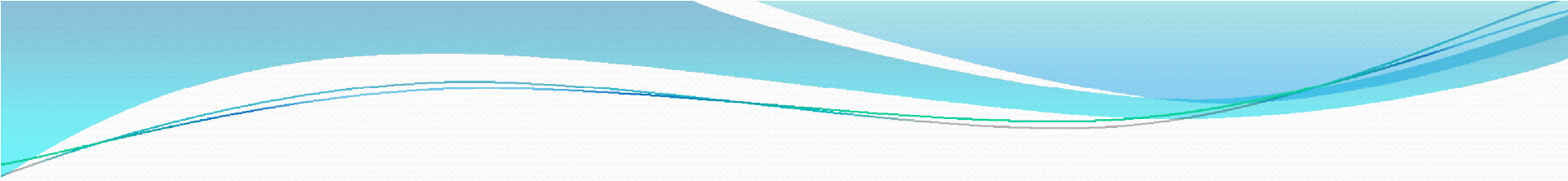
Tuohy, A. (2004). Christian anthropology. In D. Casey, G. Hall and A. Hunt (Eds), *Foundations of Christian Faith* (pp. 93-105). Southbank, Victoria: Social Science Press.

# Christian Anthropology

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Christian theology has a foundational interest in the human person. When talking about God, Jesus, grace, sin or redemption we are exploring what these concepts mean for us as people. Every question we ask about ourselves, our lives, our attitudes and beliefs, presumes a particular understanding of the human person.

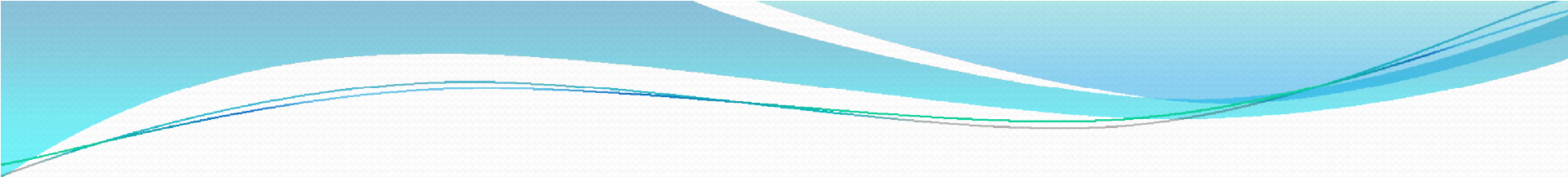
- Anthropology explores the most basic human question: ‘What does it mean to be human?’
- Humans are concerned with their origins and destiny, and the world in which they live.
- Humans strive to display actions and social behaviours of justice and morality.
- Close association between God and humanity which is deeply embedded in the biblical tradition
- Christian anthropology maintains human persons are essentially:
  1. Covenantal - persons is understood in terms of relationship with God, other people and the world.
  2. Transcendent – persons have creative freedom and openness to the ultimate mystery
  3. Ethically orientated – the human person has an ethical constitution of which are centered in belief of God



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## CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY IS COVENENTAL

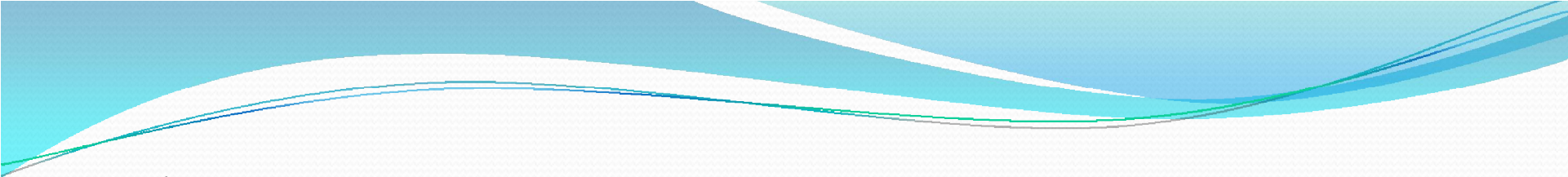
- In western society, we think of ourselves as radically independent
- A fundamental individualism - The desires and choices of the individual person are considered to be the most basic characteristics for understanding the human condition
- We live in a technological world where we no longer depend on the physical co-operation of other people
- Personal autonomy and individualism are becoming so accepted that many believe that there is no need for intimate, self-giving relationships in the world in which we live or the divine
- Contemporary thinkers are concerned about the growing sense of isolation and lack of connectedness experienced by many people
- A lack of connectedness neither nurtures our humanity nor secures our human identity
- To be human is to be in relationship with other human persons, our culture, our history, our world and the divine
- We actually need to be in relationships with others to grow and flourish as human beings



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## COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

- The word covenant was used in the ancient world to describe a bond agreement between two parties
- The biblical notion of covenant is a relationship that is deeply familiar. It understands the bond between God and humanity as a personal and dynamic relationship
- The biblical covenant talks about being relational and graced
- ‘Graced’ because it is freely given and sustained by God and ‘relational’ because it is based on the ongoing response of humanity to the presence of God in the world.
- In Christianity, the covenant between God and humanity is most deeply expressed in the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- Gospel of John demonstrates Jesus’ ministry through his radical and intimate relationship with God
- Jesus constantly refers to “the Father” as the one from whom his authority, wisdom, power, compassion is derived. This relationship was so essential to Jesus, so foundational to his person and ministry that the early Christians recognised Jesus as the divine presence of God
- Christians imitate Jesus on the basis of a deeply personal commitment to live within a particular relationship with God



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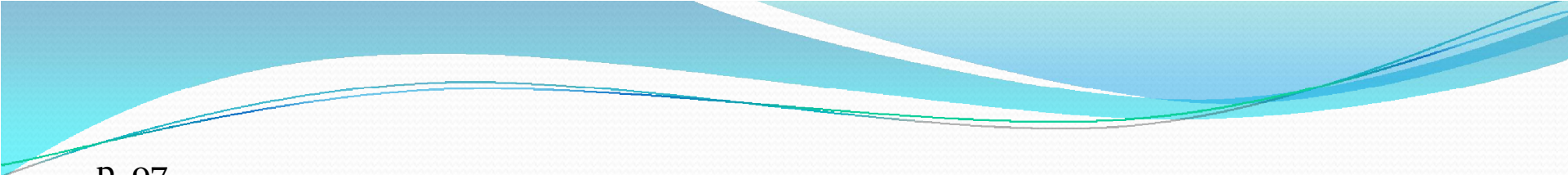
- Christians understanding of God is rooted in the understanding that the essence of God is to be in a relationship with other persons
- God is profoundly present to us and our world as the outpouring of divine
- Christian tradition the *unity* of the one God is actually made present to us through the *relationality of persons* that is the Trinity

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- Human persons are not only called to be relational beings; they are also called to be transcendent beings

#### CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY IS TRANSCENDENT

- Most human conflicts evolve around the human yearning for freedom and a more humane, life-giving future
- The human capacity for freedom is more radical than the ability to make rational choices or the safe guarding of individual rights
- Even when expressions of freedom are controlled or destroyed by oppression, freedom remains constitutive of being human




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### CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

- The freedom of human persons is linked to the freedom of God and reflected in the belief that to be human is to 'image' God

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- Creation belongs not to humanity but to God
- It is within the goodness of creation that the human person appears
- The experience of being human is always both a physical and a spiritual experience; the goodness of creation itself: the profoundly intimate relationship between God and human persons
- Christian anthropology affirms that all human persons have a transcendent reality or soul that unites them with the divine mystery, giving them a dignity unique within creation
- The portrayal of humanity has encouraged the claim that humans have 'divine right'. This right to dominate creation – has include marginal people, the poor, people of colour, women
- This interpretation is not faithful to the biblical text
- This constitutes some human beings as a failure to understand humanity in its proper relationship with God, each other and the world



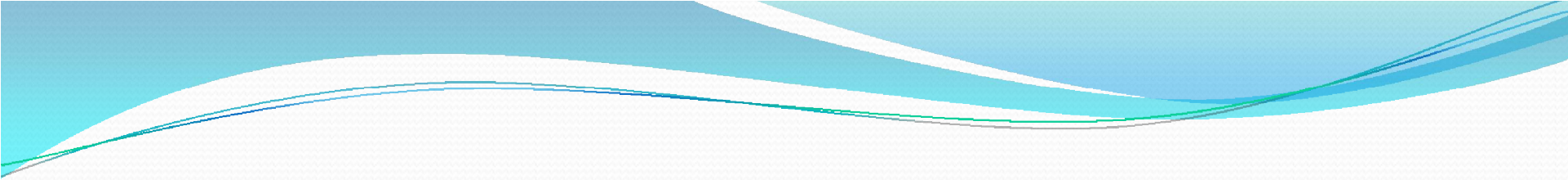
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## REDEMPTION

- Both grace and sin come together in the Christian notion of redemption salvation
- Redemption is an activity of faith that affirms the ongoing grace of God, humanity and the world
- Although the relationship between God, humanity and creation are constantly damaged by human sinfulness, they have been restored by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
- Christianity affirms that the grace of God will always be stronger than the brokenness and sin
- Divine grace and love will be present in our lives as we respond positively to the web of relationships which include God, ourselves and the world around us
- To live a graced life is to be called to ethical responsibility in the way we conduct ourselves in all our relationships

## HUMAN MORALITY

- There is always a moral or ethical dimension to human life



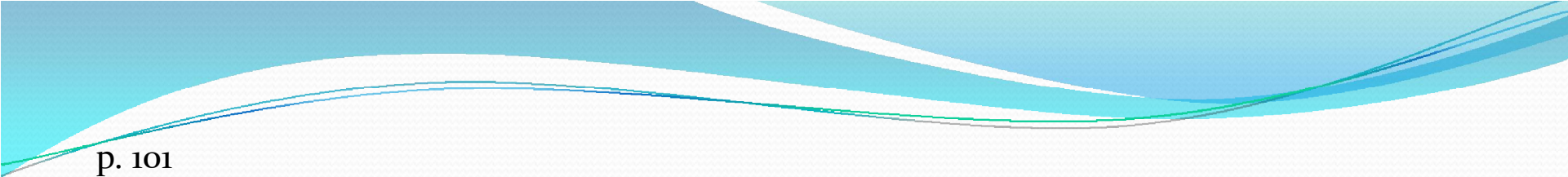
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## GRACE AND SIN

- Grace means 'free gift' or 'self-giving' and acknowledges that human life and creation are blessed by the constant presence of and care of God
- Grace is an expression of the ongoing and loving commitment of God to humanity and creation
- Sin is the deliberate and conscious rejection of God's presence and care in our lives and world

## ORIGINAL SIN

- Emerged from a dispute between two early Christian Bishops, St Augustine and Pelagius
- Pelagius said it was possible for humans to redeem themselves by their own powers
- St Augustine stressed the necessity of God's grace for redemption
- We all end up in situations that are marked at many levels by injustice, oppression and unloving relationships



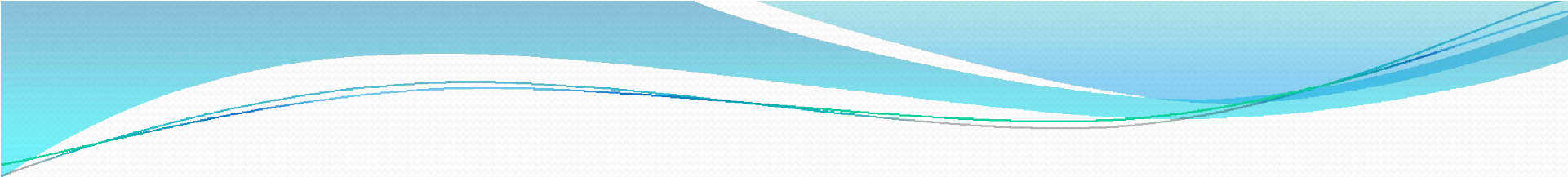
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## DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

- Ethics impacts on the formation of the whole person
- When we engage in unethical behaviour, we not only injure the humanity of those we treat unjustly, we also devalue and diminish our own humanity
- The heart of Christian ethics can be found in the covenant itself
- It requires Christians to “grow in love and knowledge of God”
- Christians are called to live out the grace of God in history in ways that participate in and reflect the nature of God

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- Moral codes or ethical ideals of Christian tradition must always protect human life and nurture the relationships within the harmony of creation
- Human life has a God-given dignity a creative freedom that is both gift and responsibility
- To be human requires a conscious moral response towards ourselves and the world in which we live in



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## CONCLUSION

- Christian anthropology portrays the human person in a positive light
- It acknowledges the goodness of creation and the value and worth of human persons within creation
- To be human is to be free
- Human persons have the ability to shape and transform not only themselves but also the worlds in which they live