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## DEATH AND TRUTH IN JUSTIN POPOVIĆ'S ANTHROPOLOGY

**Abstract:** *The terms death and truth represent one of the major themes in Justin Popović's anthropology. In the first instance, the term death correlates to the term truth and defines it to some extent. Death is obvious reality and category of truth. In the second instance, truth conditions and ultimately re-defines the former. The challenge in this study is to recognize truth as the living reality personified in Christ. The goal is to revalue few aspects of the terms death and truth in relationship to Christ as vigorously advocated in Justin Popović's anthropology.*

**Key words:** *Death, Truth, Christ, Justin Popović, Anthropology, Incarnation and Resurrection.*

### Justin Popović's last decades and preliminary truth of death:

After 1946, Professor Popović did not return to his university post. He stayed a while in the interior, at the monasteries of Kalenić, Ovčar, Sukovo and Ravanica until May 28, 1948, when he was invited to go to Čelije, a small monastery near Valjevo dedicated to Archangel Michael. *Udba* (the secret police of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) constantly monitored and often interrogated Popović, especially to restrict his freedom of movement and encounters.<sup>1</sup> Popović, on the other hand, was trying to lead a hermit's life and even going to Belgrade became a rare occasion.

He lived practically under house arrest while working on translations and compositions of his own while daily celebrating the Eucharist, during which he shed copious tears. The gift of tears was not just Popović's urge to improve, but a yearning for restoration in Christ amplified by sweet tears of joy.<sup>2</sup> Withdrawal to the monastery was a preparatory period for the event to come. He died on April 7, 1979, on the day of his birthday, the feast of the Annunciation and was buried at the monastery of Čelije in Serbia.<sup>3</sup> His tomb soon became a

1 Regarding the oppressive regime of the Communist party, Popović in 1960 wrote in *samizdat* (secretly circulated pamphlet): "Not collaboration, but *coexistence* (italics edited for emphasis)... Our communists impose collaboration instead of coexistence upon the Church. In the meantime, those same communists are championing the foreign policy of 'peaceful coexistence' among various ideologies, regimes, and systems." Popović 1990, 29.

2 For lack of better translation of the gift of tears and the state in which Popović was during the Eucharistic celebration, the Greek word πένθος suggests the meaning of mourning, or grief for sin along with the joy bearing an element of spiritual sorrow. In this process of joyful mourning, Popović's testimony confirms the distinctive anthropology of the body as being seen as an important agent of spiritual growth through the physical expression and the restored state before Christ.

3 He was conscious to the end, bade farewell to the entire convent, spoke to each of his spiritual children and blessed each individually. Some of those spiritual sons are also some of the finest Serbian theologians alive: Bishop Atanasije (Jevtić), Bishop Irinej (Bulović) and Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović).

place of pilgrimage for the Orthodox throughout the Balkans, Europe and America while miracles at his grave have already been reported.

### Introduction

The terms death and truth represent one of the major themes in Popović's anthropology. These themes deserve a special place in any anthropology known to scientific disciplines also. Both correlative terms tend to define human identity, its origin and goal. We have read the portion of Popović's biography and truth about the end of his life. In the first fact, the term death correlates to the term truth and in some way it defines it, because death is rather obvious and consequently ultimate reality of this world. Every reality is judged through death. It becomes conditioned and definite in death. And death cannot be relativized. The previous statements are nothing but the category of truth. Justin Popović died, was buried and that is true also. But in the second fact, truth conditions and ultimately re-defines the former. Truth in the absolute sense cannot be conditioned by death in any way. It is the vice versa scenario which this study attempts to create: truth is (the) absolute and ontological category which defines anthropology and overcomes death.

What lies at the center of gravity in Popović's anthropology is to make one self free—free from evil, sin and death. Yet, the freedom from something rather someone, exclaims the liberty for—freedom for Christ. This is the crucial imperative of Christian anthropology.<sup>4</sup> The main argument of this study is the following: death and truth do not just correlate rather find its meaning in the light of Christ. In the context of death, truth does not stand as a theory secured by a rational demonstrative argument. Neither can it be taken as a philosophical notion reasoned through the scholastic enterprise of conceptual necessity. The truth defines the notion of death but overcomes it through the personified manifestation in Christ.

### Death and truth: anthropological agenda

With regard to the academic aspect of Popović's ministry as theologian, two interacting insights shape his anthropological stance as synthesized in his philosophical work *Философске Урвине* (The Philosophical Abyss). The first insight reveals an indomitable will to come to terms with life by resolving the question of death. It represents the ultimate human exclamation mark before the inexorability of death conditioned by the desire to live. The second builds up on the first one by suggesting a bounce back from death to life. It responds to the condition by which death is overcome and life prolonged. However, the second insight brings about the question of true life or true god and ultimately the notion of truth itself: what is (the) truth?

From the foregoing, there are two main coordinates that permeate Popović's anthropological agenda: (a) the question of life endangered by death; the drive toward the eternal reality, and the solution of death; (b) the unity with the Truth which defeats death and ultimately ensures life.

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4 This liberation is accompanied by a struggle which ultimately leads towards defining human identity. The story of a struggle toward defining human identity is arguably elaborated in *The Philosophy and Religion of F.M. Dostoevsky* (1923), and *Dostoevsky on Europe and Slavism* (1940) along with *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (1974). But it is fully examined in his most significant work and main source of this thesis, the three-volume *Dogmatics*, especially the third one originally published as *The Orthodox Philosophy of the Truth* (1935).

a) The notion of death within the question of life

The quintessential question of life is answered in the solution of death. Death became so entangling issue that it appears to be the gravest problem of humanity. And within the same problem ought to be sought the depth of human capacity to resolve it.<sup>5</sup> In its struggle for life, humanity inclines toward yearning for eternal life as the remedy to overcome the fear of death.<sup>6</sup> Yet eternal reality and divine existence cannot stand as a satisfying human paradigm without a concrete divine intervention in the human realm. Becoming aware of its finitude and inability to sustain itself,<sup>7</sup> humanity simply cannot be considered as the cause of its genesis or the sufficient criterion of its identity.<sup>8</sup> The human longing to live especially to live infinitely is triggered by the discourse of death. In fact, “can a life which is infected by death and which ends in death really be called life?”<sup>9</sup>

The way of gaining the knowledge of God and eternal reality, and ultimately resolving the question of death, is the way of knowing humanity itself, its purpose and meaning. Thus, it becomes quite natural and logical to embrace the world full of superstitions, myths, and legends, and especially full of gods. Humanity does not invent god, but seeks one responsible for its identity and justification of its purpose. Realizing the notion of death to be the greatest distress, humanity passes it over and relays it to gods as the problem of their own to solve. By experiencing and evaluating gods, humanity realizes the decisive responsibility to choose its gods, i.e. especially to choose the best one who can overcome death. The following

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5 “Man is valued according to his trouble. If you find his main trouble you will find the center of his being. Man is usually entirely involved in his main trouble. Within the same he should be sought. All of his values and defects are present in his trouble and around that trouble. There lies his paradise and his hell.” Popović 1999, 357.

6 “There is no human work which could save humankind from death and the devil. Even all human works, if they were to merge into one enormous work having that purpose, could not do anything. Salvation from sin, death and the devil immensely surpasses all human powers and works; it is in everything entirely and perfectly the work of all-goodness, all-love and all-power of Christ. And since it is such, people have no right to praise their work, whether individually or collectively, because no culture, civilization, science, technique, philosophy or art makes sense. Yes, they do not make sense because they are like mosquito powerless and horribly helpless before the dreadful reality of death.” Popović 2004b, 88.

7 In this context Popović made severe criticisms of humanism which inevitably leads man to hominism and humus (man is dust [Latin *humus*] and dust only). Exploring Christian anthropology only based on the human experience in horizontal view leaves no space for God. Therefore in humanistic Christianity Popović observed anthropological reduction as the sharpest protest against the Godman and his criterion. The favorite yearning of European man to reduce everything to man as the fundamental value and criterion fails, and will always fail. *Menschliches, allzumenschliches* indeed reduces Christianity to humanism making it temporal and vogue, while at the same time Christianity becomes simplified and eventually nullified: “Any aspiration and attempt of Christianity to merge, to forge a *Gleichschaltung* with the spirit of the times, with the transitory movements of various historical periods, and even with political parties or regime factions, robs Christianity of that specific value which makes it the only divine-human religion in the world.” Popovich 2009, 37.

8 “There are only two philosophies: the theandric and the human. One is the philosophy of theandric monism, and the other the philosophy of human pluralism. The human philosophy is in the midst of the bewitched circle of death and mortality in which sensitivity and cognition is destroyed by sin. And that is where man and the world are ‘legionized,’ and there is the name for man and the world: legion. Everything smells of mortality there, and everything is “human, far too human”—*menschliches, allzumenschliches*.” Popović 1999, 345.

9 “Just as honey is not honey when it is mixed with a poison which gradually turns all the honey into poison, so a life which ends in death is not life”; Popovich 1994, 32.

extensive citation wraps up Popović's anthropological agenda regarding the question of life through the solution of death:

Polytheism is a result of many wonders in the world. The whole world and every little matter trouble the spirit. There is no trouble that man can explain by himself completely, but he flees to gods. It is hard to discern among them. Every god proposes divinity and human worries cause him to adopt them. The greater a trouble is the greater the god who is sought after. But there is a problem that synthesizes all the rest of them. The god that solves this one and converts it to joy is truly god and there is no other. That greatest nausea is death.<sup>10</sup>

If he (god) makes out of it what is his own, finds the purpose or justifies it, that god is a truthful god and there is neither falsehood nor weakness in that god. Yet, the same god is even more real if he lived in your body conceived of your clay, if he lived with your soul and sweetened the bitter mystery of your life, if he was the pupil of your tearful eyes and the one who perceived and realized the meaning of the fatal mystery of life over which you cry.<sup>11</sup>

Man does not want to die, but rather attempts to prolong his existence at all costs. Driven by the urge to live, man actually seeks life eternal or immortality. The primary concern is life and it is the fact of life which precedes the great human question of death. In fact, the question of life is the greatest human imperative, but inevitably involves the problem of death. The question of life is always the most crucial agenda for anthropology hence for theology or religion. And yet, only the everlasting life is true life. Any other notion of life ceases to express the notion of life itself to begin with. Life becomes rather *is* life only if it is everlasting. This is a primary notion of life but not the most definitive one. Life itself seeks quality not just quantity. Arguably, life in everlasting torture is not a life per se, unless one chooses to take a path of hedonism or masochism. Life becomes rather a new reality, an experiential event between humanity and God. Consequently, drive for the true life means personal adventure, e.g. toward other, and not just a mere existence in eternity.

b) The unity with the Truth which defeats death

The path from death to life, rather, the quintessential answer of life through the solution of death is concretized in the person of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Life and the drive for life experienced through feelings, knowledge, or any praxis, seeks by its nature a mode of its perpetuation. That feeling of everlasting life which Isaac the Syrian calls a sense of God creates also one of the most intriguing human doubts concerning its origin. In fact, how can a mortal nature led by corrupt and finite humanity invent or even implant into itself a consciousness and desire for

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10 "Within the miserable reality of death, little man struggles to justify his existence and his purpose, marching before the mill of death; the story of the world chronically devastated by the epidemic of death as *nicht-vorwärts-können* still continues. No matter how hard human capability attempts to avoid death, delay it, or overcome it, when it is sliced by death itself, what is really left of it? The world became one death race on human skulls and the universe is a pressurized cemetery of people who as desperate moles are unceasingly digging but never dig out anything." Popović 1999, 286.

11 Popović 1999, 288.

12 The most essential difference between Christianity and all other religions and philosophies is that eternal life and eternity in Christianity is not an abstract notion or a subjective hypothesis, but the living, real personality *which we have seen with our eyes, which we have seen and our hands have touched* (I Jn. 1, 1-2). Popović 2004, 177.

eternal life, if humanity itself is mortal to begin with? The question does not simply bring into play the obvious fact that the sense of life does not actually belong to humanity. It brings the answer which requires humanity to follow and live the fact that Christ is the sense and meaning of life through whom non-being and death is moved to (true) being.<sup>13</sup> In this context Christian anthropology is unique because it is analogous to the second creation (κτίσις ἑτέρα).

Popović's anthropology as a struggle toward defining human identity is fully examined in the three-volume *Dogmatics*, especially the third one originally published as *The Orthodox Philosophy of the Truth*.<sup>14</sup> The original title of the *Dogmatics* claims on the one hand, Christ-centric approach as the inevitable condition for defining humanity.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Popović defines truth as matter. Truth and grace came through Christ (Jn. 1, 17), and most importantly, were passed on and remained in the ecclesiological context. This way truth and grace do not remain captured by Christ's personality in history only, but continue to occur through the same Christ mystically in the Church.<sup>16</sup> In the Incarnation, Christ did not only acquire matter, but rather became identified with it. What stands behind the famous patristic phrase: "the only thing new under the sun" (τὸ μόνον καινὸν ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον)<sup>17</sup> is the event of the invisible God who became visible—body and remained body.<sup>18</sup> The core of the incarnated God is the radical notion of truth being identified not just with a person, but with matter too. If truth was accessible or at some point indirectly representable prior to the Incarnation, its great power was not sufficient to sustain its veracity as in the event of Christ and consequently the Church through the Eucharist.<sup>19</sup> This attractive relationship to truth however, echoes sort of a relationship with matter too. Humanity is akin to matter. It is a very objective human condition. That is why humanity does not have a body, but rather humanity is body. For the same reason Christ is the "new center (κέντρον)"<sup>20</sup> of this world. The Truth *is* incarnate too. The Truth in fact, reveals itself to us and to some extent paradoxically it becomes ours: "The theandric body

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13 Popović 2004b, 93.

14 See also in *The Philosophy and Religion of F.M. Dostoevsky* (1923), and *Dostoevsky on Europe and Slavism* (1940) along with *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (1974).

15 It is not humanism, Popović stated, but the humanity of theanthropic faith that fights for the true man: "Every Christian in his faith has Christ's philosophy of life and the world and all things; all beings and all events in the world he perceives from Christ's point of view meaning: from the point of view of eternity and theandricity. Henceforth only in the theandric faith and in the theandric philosophy is given the opportunity and power to truly observe the world from God's point of view, from the point of view of eternity: sub specie aeternitatis. Our faith is an unceasing fight for the life eternal, continuous anguish for the eternal life (I Tim. 6, 12)." Popović 1999, 354.

16 Grace cannot be taken as a substance, but as an event, as a relationship between God and His Church. Speaking of the substance by itself is possible, but two terms are needed to relate to one another in order to speak of unity. In the ecclesiological context, we have God and His Church, both the Giver and the receiver; grace remains always a God-given gift. The grace of God overflows the Church with its ineffable bond, and beyond natural unity brings the people of God as one before the Godman. Popović 2004b, 31.

17 John Damascene, *De Fide*, III, 1; PG 94, 984 B; also in Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, III; PG 45, 584 B or Irenaeus of Lyon, *Contra Haereses*, IV, 34, 1.

18 All faith in Christ as God and all acts according to that faith are based on the reality of his divinity. The first martyr for the Godman, the archdeacon Stephen, and like him all other martyrs, confessors and faithful, find the inexhaustible well of enthusiasm and joy for their faith in the Lord Christ. Popović 2004b, 45.

19 "How can Christ be God who saves if he did not institute the Eucharist at the Last Supper and shed the blood for the remission of sins? (Mt. 26, 26-28; Mk. 14, 22-24; Lk. 22, 19-20 also in I Cor. 11, 23-29)." Popović 2004a, 42.

20 Popović borrowed this strong term from Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, PG 91, 668 AB. The literal meaning is any sharp point or of the nails which fixes Christ to the Cross. Lampe 1969, 744.

of Christ principally through the Incarnation has become but trans-subjectively ours, whilst through the Communion it becomes truly and personally ours.”<sup>21</sup> This is not contradictory, because the Truth, the Son of God is one of us (humanity) in terms of matter (body). This is the fact of the Incarnation, where the very natural human need for the absolute reality recognizes and communicates through matter.<sup>22</sup> In this regard, the role of matter is not important only for the sake of matter, but because the truth occurs as the relational matter in one of the divine persons.<sup>23</sup>

But the question of veracity and the real magnitude of truth lie within the cosmic combat against the reality of the same world: death.<sup>24</sup> There is a nomenclature of sin which lead corruption and death to become truth of this world. By entering into the body, Christ justified the meaning of body (matter) and entire human being<sup>25</sup> in the cosmic scene of death. The context of death is an inevitable battle field and insurance of truth. Death destroys all human realities, including all human truths. The absolute truth cannot but exist by the fact of resolving a meaning and purpose in the context of death:

Is it necessary, is it justified, is it a logical life where death is the most necessary necessity? One may add also whether the truth is about death: is it certain or justifiable, in Dostoyevsky’s manner, reality as it appears to be? Is there anything new to this truth over this “huge water mill of death?”<sup>26</sup>

Apparently, all possible problems in this world originate—rather, culminate—in death. The question of death thus appears as one of the most troubling questions of all. Orthodox philosophy and *Dogmatika* acknowledge the implications of the incarnated Truth only in the context of answering this question. Is not death and resolving death the most reflexive human endeavor in all its spheres: “Value, the true value of every science, philosophy, religion, culture one will find only in the context of death?”<sup>27</sup> The answer rather solution of death thus inevitably involves the human body.<sup>28</sup> Through the (human) body one can experientially realize the true victory over death.<sup>29</sup>

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21 Popović 1999, 395.

22 “Christmas is by precedence the day of joy, the day in which (the) Eternity (вечность) was born; the day in which the goal of our life is transferred from matter to Creator, from man to God.” Jevtić 1980, 34.

23 And that which is more important than the most important, and more wonderful than the most wonderful and more moving than the most moving is that the simple hypostasis of God, the Λόγος, out of his immense love for mankind, became the eternal Hypostasis of the Church. There is no wealth of God, there is no glory of God, there is no goodness of God, if the wonderful Godman did not become forever ours, forever human. Jevtić 1980, 8.

24 “The redemption of Christ is an infinitely interesting dramatic act, because it presents a personal encounter of the personified Immaculacy with personified peccability—Christ and Satan.” Popović 1999, 69.

25 The mystery of the Incarnation brings the mystery of salvation. The goal of the Incarnation of God is the salvation of humanity and the world from sin, evil and death. The Lord Christ has come to the world to find and save that which is lost (ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός)25 to save sinners (ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι)25 to cleanse us from sins with his blood,25 to deliver us from all iniquities (ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας),25 to destroy death and evil,25 by his grace to teach us about his salvation,25 that He may enlighten us who are obscured by sin and take us into the eternal light and truth,25 and to unite us with God and give us eternal life. Popović 2004a, 21.

26 Popović 1999, 293.

27 Popović 1999, 297.

28 “Death constantly attacks humanity from the outside and inside. But how? From the outside through temptations, inside through sins. And what is more, from the outside and inside through visible and invisible diseases. And all that: temptations, sins, diseases are nothing else but the teeth of death. And they

## Truth: the Resurrection

At this point the most radical event in human history witnesses to the new reality in the Incarnation of the absolute Truth. Truth is being itself which applies to all other realities. Truth is only the Truth if it can respond to this task with an adequate, viz. an existential answer. The truth means life (in Serbian *истина-исто* means something unchangeable hence everlasting), and truth which gives life also. The ongoing cosmic project to ensure life was a forever impossible task for humanity. But, Christ proved death to be a non-absolute reality.

The Resurrection is primarily the event of veracity of truth where (new) life is established and its ontological character confirmed. At the same time, the Resurrection establishes ultimatum to death. As a matter of fact, the question of life is the most intriguing human question and not the question of death, because it is through death that the reality of life is being rediscovered and reestablished. Therefore, the question of life is impossible to explain without Christ's resurrection. Indeed, what is the greatest joy in "this sad island of death called earth,"<sup>30</sup> if not the Resurrection? And if Christ did not rise from the grave, death would reign and reign forever. The Resurrection guarantees the greatest desire—to live.<sup>31</sup> It also proves the most affirmative response to such an event of life—an experience of joy. At last, we have a firm grasp of the obvious: the Resurrection remains the unique event and fact of reality through which all other realities (and truths) obtain veracity. The same concept of Resurrection applies in theological treatises regarding dogmas, since all dogmas rely on the one—the Resurrection of Christ.<sup>32</sup>

However, focusing on the historic event of the Resurrection, one cannot help but observe the line between death and life. Resolving the question of death in the most practical manner through his personality (Jn. 11, 25), Christ established the irrevocable anthropological and cosmic reality of a new life. Truth through life drives all other anthropological and theological issues. However, joy of life emerges as one of the most important imperative in Popović's anthropology. The old slogan of death is old and relative. But the reality of the resurrected Christ applies to humanity as the ontological framework of its being.<sup>33</sup> The resurrection of Christ at last revived powers in humanity by which one may experience the true potential and consequences of its being. Through the resurrection, Christ established the

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constantly bite man from the outside and inside. The most terrifying is that they bite not just his body, but his soul, consciousness and conscience." Popović 1999, 338.

29 Through religion, philosophy and numerous beliefs, man attempts to conquer death, and never succeeds in it, never finds a lever by which he can raise up his body into the immortal reality. From there, all of them are bankrupted by the problem of body... The problem of the mortality of the human body thus is a test of all religions, philosophies and sciences: one which fails (is bankrupted) by the problem of body, necessarily fails by the problem of spirit as well. One who conquers the death of the body, who gives and assures immortality of the body, that one is the ever-desirable god and savior, he is the sense of life and the world, the joy and solace of humanity and humankind. Popović 1999, 298.

30 Popović 2004a, 661.

31 "The Resurrection (of Christ) is the most necessary necessity for the solution of the problem of life. Popović, 2004c, 178.

32 At last, if there is any evangelical miracle, which all other miracles could rely on, then that miracle would be the resurrection of Christ. Only in the light of the resurrection did Christ's figure and act become totally clear. Only in the resurrection of Christ do all the miracles, truths, words and evangelical events obtain their total context. Because the Theandric truths are true by the truth of his resurrection, and his miracles are real by the reality of his resurrection. Popović 1999, 299.

33 Only when man takes communion with the joy of Christ's resurrection is his soul visited by true sense and logos, the true logic and reasonableness and taken by Christ's miraculous immortalities and infinities. Popović 1999, 339.

eternal sense and meaning of life—a life without end, that is a true life.<sup>34</sup> Christ's event, e.g. the Incarnation and Resurrection, is the foundation of the apostolic kerygma. Truth and life in essence are personalized because the intention was justified in the personal act of Christ, the Son of God.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

Popović's often panegyric statements on the main topic found in Dogmatics actually point to the heavily borrowed foundation in the biblical and patristic references. There are many claims within the historic-dogmatic method and often without modern comparison or references. Nevertheless, the question of death and life or what is truth cannot but leave impressive conclusion. Popović stands on the long line together with other apologists of truth thus becoming a truth-talker and truth-doer. The way Popović builds up his arguments just seemingly made a poetic impression about the Truth. The very constructive method of Popović's work in fact leads to the most profitable conclusion about true theology and true anthropology. Despite the fact that many humanistic attempts, whether through Hellenistic philosophy or anti-Christian religions, worship and theologized god as the measure of all things, their testimony remains insufficient. To talk about God without the context of the resurrection is not enough. The same applies in the case of humanity as the ultimate meaning and measure of all things. The outcome of all human effort is experienced literally as a dead-end. Indeed, the most provocative question arises out of this clash of stories: what can God narrate to humanity if He has never lived in body and history and has not experienced death? But at the same time, one might raise the same question regarding humanity: what can humanity tell about God without experiencing the eternal dimension—rather, the earthly-heavenly dimension of delight? Those and innumerable other experiences only Christ could live through, to the depth of the human setting—his body, death and victory over death—and share his experience in the Communion with others.

Christ is an experience of human life in all its bitterness and nausea unto death defeating the same death through the very instrument of the Resurrection—human body. Human life ending with death is not reality anymore. There is a shift of meaning of death. Death is overcome by the Truth, and the fall of death is publicly announced loud and clear through the praise of the Resurrection. The anthropological implication of the Resurrection is history which ends not in death, but life. Truth revealed its power in absolute manner.<sup>36</sup> Before Christ, humanity was limited to conceiving and embracing the truth within its true power, viz. the grace of God. Since the Truth cannot create truth nor *be* anything else but the Truth, Christ enters into the world (John 1:17; 14:6) and summons everything else which is not truth to

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34 Every perishable human being acquires his imperishable meaning and purpose in the resurrection, a mortal being acquires meaning when he is clothed in immortality ... and all people, all living and that have lived and will be living—acquire their final and eternal meaning in the resurrected Christ, the only victor over death, sin, hell and the devil (I Cor. 15, 53-56). Popović 2004c, 173.

35 “Without the resurrection of Christ as the foundation of the New Testament morality, the new life in Christ and according to Christ, is impossible, and not just impossible, but senseless, because if there is no resurrection, there is no immortality, no eternal life. In that case, the most natural and logical moral is to eat and drink because we will die tomorrow (II Cor. 15, 30-32).” Popović 200b, 784.

36 “The effect of corruptibility in death has no more power over humanity since the Logos abided in one human body; Popović refers to Athanasius the Great. *De incarnat. Verbi*, 89 PG 25, 109 ABCD, 112 AB. Popović 2004a, 449.

become one with the Truth.<sup>37</sup> Thus we have the most tangible Theophany on the one hand: Christ has shown Divine personality in the flesh. But the truth of Christ on the other hand is the Paschal establishment in the midst of corruption and death. The greater reality justified in the former is Christ—the personified everlasting Life and personified Truth to all truths and all realities.

Through the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ, death was not just ridiculed and diminished, but the pre-eternal plan of the economy of salvation was revealed. The truth about death is that it became an instrument of salvation and threshold of a new life united with the Truth. The Truth is revealed as the salvific unity of both worlds in the person of Christ: “spiritual and invisible with material and visible as one creation (τοῖς νοητοῖς συνῆψε τὰ αἰσθητά, καὶ μίαν ἔδειξε τὴν κτιστὴν φύσιν).”<sup>38</sup> The concluding remarks are as follows:

- The Truth is relational and ontological category personified in Christ, the Second person of the Trinity.
- The Truth is always revelatory establishment which defines any given reality especially in the context of death.
- The Truth is matter as elevated in the most obvious way while being transformed into the body and blood of Christ. There is no human example nor any god in the pantheon of history that could ever satisfy this human longing for immortality as in the way accomplished by the living matter of Christ through whom everything has been created (Col. 1, 16-17) and experienced in his Church (Eph. 1, 5.10. 23; 2, 7; Col. 1, 14-19).<sup>39</sup> Matter is the very element, e.g. the Eucharist, through which humanity partakes and becomes saved.<sup>40</sup>
- The Truth is revelatory, relational and salvific unity with the one who defeated death. It is the “continuation of one event, one fact: the resurrection of Christ”<sup>41</sup> as experienced in the Church. The Church grows in the material realm through the same body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, thus establishing the greater reality of all: the new, eternal and immortal organism, the Body of Truth.<sup>42</sup>

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37 “While the words of God during the creation of the world have been clothed in matter, during the Incarnation God clothes himself in the body. Thus, the Incarnation of God is the greatest event in all worlds for every person, every being and all matter.” Popović 2004a, 13.

38 The reference is to Maximus the Confessor, *Expositio Orationis Dominicae*; PG 90, 877 B. Popović 2004a, 13.

39 Popović 2004a, 13.

40 By becoming a man, that is blood and body, the Savior sanctified that primary element of life by transforming it into the blood of the Lord, especially in the Eucharist. That way He showed that the body is for the Lord (I Cor. 6, 13), for immortality and life eternal. Popović 2004b, 393.

41 Popović 1999, 302.

42 “From the Lord Christ, the head of the Church grows the entire body of the Church, harmoniously composed and assembled with that which every joint helps out, working according to the measure of each ligament, *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work* (Eph. 4, 16).” Popović 2004b, 15.

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**СМРТ И ИСТИНА У АНТРОПОЛОГИЈИ ЈУСТИНА ПОПОВИЋА**

Термини смрт и истина представљају једно од важних тема које се издвајају у антропологији Јустина Поповића. У једном случају термин смрт се односи на термин истина и до одређене мере га описује. Смрт је очигледна стварност и категорија истине. У другом случају, истина условљава и даје завршни опис смрти. Изазов овог рада је да препознамо истину као живу стварност оличену у Христу. Задатак је да поново испитамо неке погледе на термине смрт и истина у односу на Христа као што је Јустин Поповић узвишено бранио у својој антропологији.