



In the 21st century we need a new philosophy as opposed to the old philosophy: a philosophy of man or philosophical anthropology. The importance of a new philosophy of man is that it addresses people all over the world, thus helping us to overcome our differences. And if we look a bit further into the world of the 21st century, we see that the most pressing project will be the search for meaning in the lives of human beings in a globalised world. Following the complete existential deconstruction that took place in the 20th century, our confusion on the foundations of our life abounds. The next step, consolidation in the 21st century, has been achieved in my philosophical anthropology.

The theoretical basis for the new philosophy was laid by American philosopher and member of the American Philosophical Association James Joseph Dagenais (1923-1981), who came to the conclusion that philosophical anthropology is not a science, but a domain unto itself and cannot be replaced by any other anthropology. The final explanation of man lies outside all possible scientific views that have ever been formulated, because they lie within the origins of every branch of science, including the science of philosophy. It is the final ground on which the philosophies, of any nature whatsoever, can be practised implicitly or explicitly.

Dutch humanist Jaap van Praag (1911-1981) and Dutch philosopher Reinout Bakker (1920-1987) elaborated on the findings of Dagenais. Van Praag for humanism and Bakker for the philosophy of man or philosophical anthropology. Taking this one step further, the new philosophy of man can serve as the basis for a humanist ideology. In his inaugural speech of 25 January 1965 Bakker spoke of the necessary collaboration between philosophy and science. The fact that the ultimate questions about man are so rarely asked stems from giving the scientific foundation of philosophy an absolute status. Many phenomenologists and existentialists have warned against such scientism.

The methods of a post-modern philosophical anthropology will have to be based on reflection, on the claim that it is possible to debate differences and contrasts on reasonable grounds, and on the individual responsibility for the decisions we all make for ourselves in respect of changes in body and mind. A post-modern version of Sartre's creed: man is and always will be what he makes of himself. I have given philosophical anthropology a new concrete substance on the basis of the definition of American philosopher Jim Dagenais: "a consistent overall vision of man and his world", so that it can serve as the basis for philosophy and thus as the foundation for human life.