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Tomáš Halík: A Theology for the Post-Secular

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Abstract

This article presents the work of Czech theologian and priest Tomáš Halík as a theology for the post-secular. The first section outlines three general post-secular themes woven throughout his corpus: the blessedness of spiritual seeking, a receptivity to the critical insights of atheism, and the affirmation of doubt and uncertainty as an integral feature of Christian faith. The second section then demonstrates what is distinctive about Halík's contribution: his engagement with themes of *both* plurality *and* uncertainty in a single theological schema. I argue this is an apt response to the post-secular dynamics of the nova effect—as outlined by Charles Taylor and others—that is otherwise lacking in the literature to date.

Keywords

atheism, Czech, doubt, fragilization, Tomáš Halík, mystery, nova effect, plurality, post-secular, seekers, Charles Taylor, uncertainty

Introduction

This article presents the work of Czech theologian and Roman Catholic priest Tomáš Halík as a theology for the post-secular. It is difficult to fully appreciate the contributions of Halík without knowing something of the biography that animates them. Halík participated as an active dissident under the Communist regime in Czechia during the

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1980s.[1] He was persecuted by the secret police during this period and banned from university teaching due to being deemed an enemy of the regime. He was also involved in the Czech underground church and was ordained to the priesthood in secret.[2]

To this day, following the Velvet Revolution and the collapse of the Communist regime, Halík remains an integral figure to the intellectual life of Czechia as the priest presiding over the Academic Parish of Prague. As both a scholar and pastor, he now navigates a post-Communist culture characterized by a widespread suspicion of institutional religion but a remaining openness to non-materialist accounts of reality and spirituality.[3] And these unique life experiences—both extreme secularization under Communism and the spiritual ferment that has followed it—have profoundly shaped the post-secular theological focus of Halík.

The term *post-secular* (like the term *secular* itself) is admittedly a nebulous one. Others have chosen alternative descriptions of what Halík contributes to the literature: "Tomáš Halík on Faith in a *Secular* Age"[4] or "Theology and an Age of *Uncertainty*."[5] But all these terms—"post-secular" or "secular" or "age of uncertainty"—ought not carry excessive weight. The theologian Graham Ward provides some helpful terminological guidance along these lines in a review of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*:

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1. The biographical details in this paragraph are drawn from: André Munro, "Tomáš Halík: Czech Roman Catholic Priest and Sociologist," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 28, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tomas-Halik; Tomáš Halík, "Biography," http://halik.cz/en/o-halikovi/zivotopis/kratky-zivotopis/. For a fuller account, see Tomáš Halík, *From the Underground Church to Freedom*, trans. Gerald Turner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019).
2. There is much more that can be said of Halík's biography. He also collaborated closely with the then future President Václav Havel during the regime; following the 1989 Velvet Revolution, Halík would become one of his advisors. And to this day, Halík remains an integral figure in Czech intellectual life. He is Professor of Sociology at Charles University (Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts) and also priest of the Roman Catholic Academic Parish of Prague and President of the Czech Christian Academy. Pope John Paul II appointed Halík as adviser to the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers in 1992 and Pope Benedict XVI gave Halík the title of Monsignor in 2009.
3. Dana Hamplová, *Náboženství v ˇceské Spoleˇcnosti Na Prahu 3. Tisíciletí* (Prague: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2013). This text is cited in Alister E. McGrath, "On the Threshold of Mystery: Tomáš Halík on Cultural Witness in an Age of Uncertainty and Change," *Religions* 14, no. 3 (March 2023): 399, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030399.
4. Pavel Roubík and Martin Kočí, "Searching the Altar of an Unknown God: Tomáš Halík on Faith in a Secular Age," in *A Czech Perspective on Faith in a Secular Age*, ed. Tomáš Halík and Pavel Hošek (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015), 97 (emphasis added).
5. Alister McGrath, "Teologie a Doba Nejistoty," in *Vykročit z Uzavřenosti*, ed. Martin Kočí (Prague: Lidové noviny, 2018), 32–40; Alister McGrath, "'To Stand by the Distant': Tomáš Halík on the Work of Theology in an Age of Uncertainty," *ABC Religion and Ethics*, January 16, 2019, https://www.abc.net.au/religion/tom%C3%A1%C5%A1-hal%C3%ADk-on-theology-in-an-age-of-uncertainty/10718890 (emphasis added).

> The theologian does have a task [but one] quite different from the one presented to Augustine or Aquinas. . . . Whether we name where we currently stand "post-secular," "post-Utopian," "post-Christian" or the "age of authenticity" . . . the theologian is still called upon to articulate the grammar of the faith.[6]

This task of reimagining the "grammar of the faith" for our epoch is what this article suggests is characteristic of Halík's work. He interprets the message of the Gospel in light of shifting religious tides of Europe and the West—to read the signs of the times as he often describes it.[7] In order to demonstrate this, the first section of this article examines three interlocking and related post-secular themes in his corpus: the importance of the searcher, atheism as an interlocutor, and the virtue of doubt.[8] The second section then demonstrates what is distinctive about Halík's contribution: his engagement with themes of both plurality and uncertainty in the single theological schema.

Blessed Are the Distant

The first post-secular theme to be examined, "Blessed are the Distant," is a phrase coined by Halík to encapsulate a central thrust of his corpus: those on the margins of Christian belief—the uncertain, the doubtful, the reticent—are integral to the life of the church. This theme runs throughout Halík but is examined most extensively in *Patience with God: The Story of Zacchaeus Continuing in Us*.[9]

Halík recounts how the story of Zacchaeus helped him interpret the emergence of swaths of new and hesitant religious onlookers in his own post-Communist context. In the midst of a post-Soviet religious revitalization, there also emerged the phenomenon of curious seekers, "those who were unwilling or unable to join the throng of old or brand-new believers, but were neither indifferent nor hostile to them."[10] He interpreted these Czechs as "Zacchaeuses," remaining in their fig trees and curiously appraising Christianity from a distance. Halík swiftly applies this paradigm beyond the confines of his own context to all seekers. He suggests that Zacchaeus might help us understand

6. Graham Ward, "History, Belief, and Imagination in A Secular Age," *Modern Theology* 26, no. 3 (June 8, 2010): 343, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2010.01611.x. See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Charles Taylor, "Challenging Issues about the Secular Age," *Modern Theology* 26, no. 3 (June 8, 2010): 404–16, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2010.01615.x.
7. For Halík, this appears to be increasingly central to the theological task of the church. For example, Tomáš Halík, "Christianity in a Time of Sickness," *America Magazine*, April 3, 2020, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/04/03/christianity-time-sickness.
8. The scope of this article is limited in being confined to the English translations of his work. This article is therefore best construed as a partial interim report on his theology, subject to refinement upon more resources being made available and future publications.
9. Tomáš Halík, *Patience with God: The Story of Zacchaeus Continuing in Us*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2009).
10. Halík, 3.

seekers *in general*, those on the margins across the various post-secular contexts in the West where institutional Christianity appears to be in decline.

Halík argues that a shyness or an "aversion to crowds" often produces Zacchaeuses, a suspicion that truth "is too fragile to be chanted on the street."[11] He suggests that a reflexive aversion to overconfidence can sometimes accompany Christian proclamation. For others, reticence exists because, like the original Zacchaeus, "their house is not in order [and] changes need to be made in their own lives."[12] But Zacchaeuses remain curious even with their reticence. This is what makes them Zacchaeuses after all. For all their desire to remain hidden, they nevertheless "sense the urgent moment when something of importance passes by them. It has a force of attraction, as it had for Zacchaeus, who longed to set eyes on Jesus."[13] For Zacchaeuses are not merely distant—they are distant *onlookers*.

Halík argues that Christians must themselves become Zacchaeuses if they are to address Zacchaeuses. Like the apostle Paul, we must be willing to "become all things to all" (1 Cor 9:22, NRSVA). This will require rejecting the peddling of "ready-made but often facile answers" and accepting the call of being "seekers with those who seek, questioners with those who question."[14]

This vocation is not reducible to a detached and utilitarian mission strategy. Halík argues it is a good *in itself* to embrace the position of seeker. He recounts a time he encountered the slogan "Jesus is the answer" scribbled on a subway station in Prague. It was also coupled with a response: "But what was the question?"[15] Halík agrees with the rebutting sentiment. He argues:

> Answers without questions—without the questions that originally provoke them, but also without the subsequent questions that are provoked by every answer—are like trees without roots. But how often are "Christian truths" presented to us like felled, lifeless trees in which birds can no longer find a nest?[16]

The "confrontation of questions" restores "real meaning" to statements of Christian dogma. For truth happens through dialogue; answers are not the end process of intellectual searching, as if there was a problem that is now solved. Rather, questions thrust us back into the exploration of *mystery*, and thus "we must never abandon the path of seeking and asking."[17] Zacchaeuses are a gift because they shift us away "from apparently final answers back to infinite questions."[18]

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11. Halík, 5.
12. Halík, 5.
13. Halík, 6.
14. Halík, 7–8.
15. Halík, 6.
16. Halík, 7.
17. Halík, *Patience with God*, 7.
18. Halík, 7.

Halík calls this emphasis a new or "alternative" liberation theology.[19] In the same way liberation theology has demonstrated the value of interpreting Scripture from the vantage point of the poor, "we can now offer another, different hermeneutic rule": "It is necessary to read scripture and live the faith also from the standpoint of our profound solidarity with people who are religiously seeking, and, if need be, with those who experience God's hiddenness and transcendence 'from the other side'."[20] This is an exhortation to see things from Zacchaeus's perspective, a position of "observation and expectation."[21] He suggests this ought to foster within us a "prior interest" in people "on the fringes of faith"—those in the gray zone "between religious certainty and atheism" or "doubters and seekers."[22]

This new theology of liberation is refracted through an ecclesiological lens in Halík; he believes Zacchaeuses ought to shape the ministry of the church. For his "prior interest" in people "on the fringes of faith" is not classically missional, namely, an interest in mere "conversion" or helping the uncertain become more certain. Halík argues we must move away from "the traditional believers-nonbelievers paradigm to the new *seekers-dwellers paradigm*" of the church in our new age.[23] McGrath helpfully demonstrates[24] that this paradigm has its origins in sociologists Robert Wuthnow[25] and Charles Taylor (more on Taylor in a moment).[26] Halík "emphasises the importance of the 'fringe'—the liminal zone at the interface between the church and the world."[27] He calls this elsewhere the "anteroom of the church."[28]

Pavel Roubík and Martin Kočí suggest Halík's position implies that "Zacchaeuses will never become standard parishioners."[29] And this certainly characterizes portions of his work. Indeed Roubík and Kočí quote Halík himself: "Without that 'fringe,' the Church would not be a Church but a sect."[30] There is perhaps further scope to critically

19. Tomáš Halík, "Patience with God: The Story of Zacchaeus Continuing in Us: Author's Response," *Horizons* 38, no. 1 (2011): 128, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0360966900007738. This new liberation theology is not to intended to "displace" other liberation theologies but supplement them.
20. Halík, *Patience with God*, 18–19.
21. Halík, 19.
22. Halík, 16.
23. Tomáš Halík, "Church for the Seekers," in *A Czech Perspective on Faith in a Secular Age*, ed. Tomáš Halík, Pavel Hošek, 1st ed., Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series IVA, Eastern and Central European Philosophical Studies, vol. 51 (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015), 127 (emphasis in original).
24. McGrath, "'To Stand by the Distant.'"
25. Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3–9.
26. Charles Taylor, "The Church Speaks—To Whom?," in *Church and People: Disjunctions in A Secular Age*, ed. Charles Taylor, Jose Casanova, and George McLean (Washington, DC: Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2012), 17–24.
27. McGrath, "'To Stand by the Distant,'" 4.
28. Halík, "Patience with God," 194.
29. Roubík and Kočí, "Searching the Altar of an Unknown God," 114.
30. Halík, *Patience with God*, 77.

examine the implications of his approach. How willing is Halík to leave marginal seekers unchallenged by the Gospel and the call to tether themselves in mutual love to a parish or Christian community?

But even if there is a prima facie contentedness with leaving Zacchaeuses outside the church and its blessings, Halík's account is multifaceted. Halík certainly believes this liminal fringe must always exist within the church—there always needs to be Zacchaeuses. But he does not suggest Zacchaeuses never move in or out of the "anteroom" of the church. Halík argues that the "need for teaching, for persuasion and *conversion*, and for providing answers to the questions of seekers" remains;[31] analogously, Jesus "healed the sick and led the hungry to be filled."[32] The primary emphasis of Halík is simply that *baptized dwellers* must never lose the spirit of *anteroom seeking*. In this sense, Christians stand with Zacchaeuses even in their church membership. From their vantage point, we glimpse how God appears to marginal seekers and are gifted a "new, exciting, necessary, and useful *religious experience*."[33]

Thank God for Atheism

This reading of seekers leads to a closely related theme in Halík: his engagement with atheism. "Critical Atheism Helps [Christianity]," Halík succinctly argues.[34] For the opposite of faith is not atheism but idolatry. He claims that "if atheism is simply a critique of theism, of a specific understanding of God, it can be useful to the faithful by reminding us that each human notion of God is merely like a finger pointing at the moon, rather than the moon itself."[35] It can help us, in the terms of Wittgenstein, to not conflate the *signifier* and *signified*.[36]

The qualifier "critical" atheism is important because Halík does not affirm all expressions of atheism. This subtlety is a strength of his work. He avoids reducing atheism to an abstract monolith detached from its varied and particular expressions.[37]

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31. Halík, 17 (emphasis added).
32. Halík, 17.
33. Halík, 18.
34. This is a subheading in Anselm Grün, Tomáš Halík, and Winfried Nonhoff, *Is God Absent? Faith, Atheism, and Our Search for Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press, 2019), xvi.
35. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, *Is God Absent?*, xviii.
36. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, trans. Anthony Kenny (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 64–65. I am indebted to the theological development of these concepts in the recent translation: Christos Yannaras, *The Effable and The Ineffable: The Linguistic Boundaries of Metaphysical Realism*, trans. Jonathan Cole, Winchester Modern Orthodox Dialogues 1 (Winchester: The Winchester University Press, 2021), xxii–xxiii.
37. For this line of thought, he explicitly leans on Viktor E. Frankly and Lapide Pinchas, *Gottusche und Sinnfrage* (Gutersloh: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 2005) cited in Tomáš Halík and Gerald Turner, *I Want You to Be: On the God of Love* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019), 39. For a more recent exploration of this insight, see David Newheiser, ed., *The Varieties of Atheism: Connecting Religion and Its Critics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

For example, Halík rebukes the ideological atheism he encountered under Communism. He also explains that in his own Czech context many people call themselves atheists but are better described as "apatheists": "they do not even think enough about God to categorically deny his existence."[38]

Rather, atheism as *critical unbelief* is where Halík finds an ally: the sharp and thoughtful atheism of someone like a Nietzsche or Feuerbach. This of course is not a novel idea. For example, Merrold Westphal offers a similar contribution in his essay "Taking Suspicion Seriously." "The atheism of suspicion [and not every form of modern atheism] can provide helpful conceptual tools for personal and corporate self-examination."[39] This kind of atheism, which "can fulfill an iconoclastic role, can be an ally with faith in faith's fight against caricatures and ersatz spirituality, against the human—all too human—images of God whose creation and worship has been forbidden by the biblical faith."[40]

The iconoclastic interlocutor of atheism pushes Christians back to what Halík often describes as the God of Good Friday or the God of Job.[41] Halík believes that "a certain type of honest atheism," one that mourns "the tragedy of the world," might find resonances with these biblical pictures of God.[42] For example, in the cases of Job and Jacob, we are shown that "God loves those who wrestle [and] quarrel with [him]."[43] Hence, the kind of atheistic protest that emerges from the tragedies of life is the kind of "wrestling" Christians must "integrate" into their own beliefs.[44]

Halík believes Christians must learn to befriend or integrate the atheistic spirit within each one of us:

> Make him an accomplice and aid to our faith by allowing him to watch over our experience of divine transcendence, preventing us from getting too comfortable in the light of Mount Tabor, helping us not think we possess God when we next have a religious insight or experience his closeness—if we give him that important task, he can teach our faith to be humble. I pray, "I believe; help my unbelief, that it might guide my faith to ripen."[45]

The embrace of critical atheism purges idolatrous faith.

To be clear: Halík is not merely addressing atheists in this discourse. Christianity should learn from the "incomplete truth" of atheism too: "To use for its own benefit

38. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, *Is God Absent?*, 36.
39. Merold Westphal, "Taking Suspicion Seriously: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism," *Faith and Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (1987): 26, https://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil1987412. See also Merold Westphal, "Nietzsche as a Theological Resource," *Modern Theology* 13, no. 2 (April 1997): 213–26, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0025.00038.
40. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, *Is God Absent?*, 47.
41. See again Žižek, Milbank, and Davis, *The Monstrosity of Christ*, 50–57 and G. K. Chesterton, "Introduction to the Book of Job," in *The Book of Job* (London: Cecil Palmer and Hayward, 1916), ix–xxvii.
42. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, *Is God Absent?*, 129.
43. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, 129.
44. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, 129.
45. Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, 138.

the fact that, during the modern era, it was subject, more than any other religion, to the purgative flames of atheist criticism."[46] In essence, Halík is proposing a paradigm shift: rather than seeing atheism as an enemy to battle with in our post-secular age, it should be reinterpreted as a thorn in the side of Christianity. It is a *grace*—even if at times a *thorny* or *painful* grace—that might "awaken our faith from the complacency of false certainties" and refine misconceptions about the God we worship.

Little Faith

The borders between the two major themes explored so far and the next theme, "Little Faith," are blurred and porous in Halík. The idea that Christian faith is or even ought to be "little" or fragile, intermingled with doubt and uncertainty, is intimately connected to his receptivity to spiritual seeking and critical unbelief. But the theme is distinct enough in Halík's work to warrant particular attention, especially in *Night of the Confessor: Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty*.

Halík introduces the aim of *Night of the Confessor* in a way that aptly summarizes the impetus behind much of his theology: to take a stand against "*facile belief*."[47] Halík opposes the kind of Christian faith that would be an anathema to a Zacchaeus, namely, "providing simplistic 'pious' answers to complex questions."[48] The better way is to face complexity and doubt head-on. It is wrong to "conceal our crises . . . evade or elude them."[49] Rather, by moving through them, we are remolded "into a state of greater maturity and wisdom."[50] For crises of religion—both on the macro-scale of dwindling Western Christianity and the micro-scale of individual faith crises—are "enormous opportunities opened to us by God."[51]

This theme, introduced at the start of *Night of the Confessor*, is picked up and expounded further in the chapter "Give Us a Little Faith."[52] The title of this chapter is inspired by the Gospel passage Luke 17:5–7: "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed . . . .'" Halík presents a provocative interpretative question:[53] "Isn't Jesus saying *to us* with these words: Why are you asking me for *lots* of faith? Maybe your faith is 'far too big.' Only if it *decreases*, until it is as small as a mustard seed, will it give forth its fruit and display its strength."[54] Halík adds that, like a mustard seed, our faith might even need to fall to the ground and die to be reborn fruitful. In the paradoxical logic of the Gospel: it might be through the diminution of our faith that we find advancement.

46. Halík, *Patience with God*, xiv.
47. Tomáš Halík, *Night of the Confessor: Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Image Books, 2012), 7 (emphasis original).
48. Halík, 7.
49. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 7.
50. Halík, 7.
51. Halík, 7.
52. Halík, 17–23.
53. Halík presents this as an allegorical reading of the passage that is mindful of our times and does not make any claims about authorial intent.
54. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 17.

Here "little" faith is not synonymous with simplified or "childish" faith but quite the opposite: "The opposite of the 'little faith' I have in mind is actually 'credulity,' the overcasual accumulation of 'certainties' and ideological constructions, until in the end one cannot see the 'forest' of faith—its depth and its mystery—for all the 'trees' of such religion."[55] McGrath rightly summarizes Halík's concern here: "One of the core challenges facing Christianity is the misguided quest for false certainties."[56]

Halík argues that the alternative to certainty is that our faith must be crucified before it can be resurrected. This is because faith in its primal form and naiveté, often received in childhood or at conversion, is eventually confronted by the "multivalence of life":[57] complexity, paradox, and suffering shatter simplistic conceptions of reality. And yet many respond to confrontations with this multivalence by attempting to retreat to the security of their beginnings, "either the 'childish phase' of their own faith or some imitation of the Church's past."[58]

These themes are picked up again later in *Night of the Confessor* in the chapter "Discreet Faith." It begins with Halík recounting a time he was invited to speak at a "mega-rally of young Christians" that he ultimately declined: "I have never felt at ease among religious enthusiasts."[59] He proceeds to explain his hesitancy: "A touch of scepticism, irony, and commitment to critical reason as a permanent corrective to any tendency to superficial religious enthusiasm is . . . a prerequisite if we are not to drown out the real voice of God with our own whooping and shouting."[60] As per the chapter's title, Halík's inclination is toward the importance of *discreet* faith.

The most serious objection Halík has to such events is "the brazenly casual way that people there trumpet out the great words of our faith through loudspeakers."[61] For as Nicholas Lash argues,[62] "it is the tragedy of modern western culture to have fallen victim to the illusion (widely shared by believer and nonbeliever alike) that it is perfectly easy to talk about God."[63]

Halík rejects the possible rebuttal that sound pedagogy involves starting with simplifications and building up to complexity.[64] He suggests this is inevitably a "*dumbing down*" that often results in wholesale contemptuous rejection of religion later in life.[65] Those that work in this "simplification industry" never deliver on the promise of the

55. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 19.
56. McGrath, "'To Stand by the Distant,'" 5.
57. This phrase come from Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 19, but it remains ambiguous in the text whether this is his own phrase or quoted from Paul Ricoeur, who is mentioned just prior.
58. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 20.
59. Halík, 50.
60. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 51.
61. Halík, 55.
62. Indeed, Lash is influential on Halík. See Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 109–28.
63. Nicholas Lash, *Holiness, Speech and Silence: Reflections on the Question of God*, repr. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 84.
64. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 55.
65. Halík, 55.

"next stage" that is needed when inevitably one encounters the "multivalence of life." Halík proposes an alternative model of discipleship in post-Christendom: from the beginning to the end of the pedagogical journey the disciple must be made aware that the God they are being put in touch with *is* the depths of all reality. When someone is "*introduced into the faith* they need to be told clearly that they are being introduced into *a world of mystery and depth*."[66] And this is a theme—God as Mystery—we will reexamine in due course as central to his distinctive contribution to the post-secular discourse.

Nova Effect Theology: The Value of Halík amidst the Post-Secular

These themes in Halík are self-evidently apposite in a post-secular age. Halík ought to be commended for presenting them in an especially accessible and pastorally sensitive fashion. And devoting time to simply explicating these insights as I have in the first half of this article is a necessary task in itself given his relative underexposure in the Anglosphere.[67] But one might nevertheless question what Halík contributes to the post-secular discourse that qualifies as particularly new or distinctive. For instance, there is already a range of constructive theological reflections about religious uncertainty.[68] Neither is genial engagement with atheism alien to Christian thought.[69] And much of what Halík has to say about Zacchaeuses is a refraction of earlier scholarship from someone like Karl Rahner, whom Halík explicitly draws on in his engagement with the concept of anonymous Christians.[70]

66. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 56.
67. This is slowly changing. I have already cited the important work of Czechs Roubík and Kočí, "Searching the Altar of an Unknown God." More recent work has been published by McGrath, "On the Threshold of Mystery." And Adela Muchova brings a useful practical theological lens in "Pastoral Practice of the Academic Parish of Prague," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Theologia Catholica Latina* 66 (2021): 56–91. Furthermore, the recent translation *Touch the Wounds* has received ample attention in book review form. See the reviews by Aden Cotterill, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, August 2, 2023, 1–2; Alister McGrath, *Modern Theology*; and Luke Timothy Johnson, *Commonweal Magazine*, September 15, 2023, https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/wisdom-any-season.
68. For instance, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *Doubt, Faith, and Certainty* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017); Roger Lundin, *Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Peter L. Berger and Anton Cornelis Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions without Becoming a Fanatic*, paperback ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2010). I will have to more say about this body of literature shortly.
69. For example, consider: Westphal, "Taking Suspicion Seriously"; Westphal, "Nietzsche as a Theological Resource." "Death of God" theologies also engage at length with these themes. For a more recent conversation along these lines, see Žižek, Milbank, and Davis, *The Monstrosity of Christ*.
70. Karl Rahner et al., *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews, 1965–1982* (New York: Crossroad, 1986).

But the second half of this article aims to demonstrate that Halík achieves more than merely transposing or popularizing the insights of others. I will argue that across his corpus—by engaging with the motifs of both uncertainty and religious plurality via the mystery of God—Halík provides a distinct contribution to an underexplored feature of the post-secular: a pervasive amalgam of uncertainty and plurality along the lines of what Charles Taylor calls the *nova effect*. I will first briefly outline this feature of the post-secular as articulated by Taylor and others. Then we will be well positioned to appraise the distinctive contribution Halík makes amidst these societal conditions.

The Post-Secular and the Nova Effect

A central aim of Taylor in the somewhat sprawling *A Secular Age* is to provide a "summary over-view" of what he calls "the currents and cross-currents in the polemics around belief and unbelief."[71] And the nova effect is a concept articulated with this purpose in mind. Its primary concern is how contemporary post-secular conditions of belief are shaped by religious plurality.[72] Indeed, the term *nova* is shorthand for exploding plurality: the "ever-widening variety of moral/spiritual options" catalyzed by the existential vacuum left by humanist alternatives (e.g., "a purely self-sufficient humanism . . . accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing" or "Providential Deism")[73] to Christian orthodoxy.[74] And the *effect* of this explosion of options is, according to Taylor, an increase in an awareness of the fragility of our own already adopted solutions. Plurality is inherently *fragilizing.*

71. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 299. It is important to clarify Taylor's use of the term *belief*. He does not use the term to refer merely to propositional assent—the kind of thing selected on a census form (and I follow Taylor in this article). Taylor understands that most discussions of secularization focus on a decline in *belief* in this narrower sense. He concedes that this is understandable given Christianity has from its outset been uniquely tethered to creedal statements. But Taylor suggests a more textured account of belief and unbelief is needed and indeed employed in his work. He treats belief and unbelief throughout *A Secular Age* "not as rival theories" but as "alternative ways of living our moral/spiritual life, in the broadest sense . . . as lived conditions, not just as theories or sets of beliefs subscribed to" (4–5). This is analogous to what Taylor elsewhere calls a *social imaginary*: Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Public Planet Books (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
72. Here two things need to be noted. First, I say *post-secular* conditions of belief while mindful of the arguably misleading title of the book *A Secular Age*. Any careful reader can discern that Taylor is exploring the ways our current age is not merely *secular* but also thoroughly *post*-secular in its religiosity. Secondly, although I am focusing on *A Secular Age*, these ideas appear in embryonic form in his earlier works. For example, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11. For further exploration of the relationship of these two texts on this theme of plurality, see Fergus Kerr, "How Much Can a Philosopher Do?," *Modern Theology* 26, no. 3 (June 8, 2010): 321–36, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2010.01610.x.
73. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 18, 221–69.
74. Taylor, 299.

In another succinct passage, almost amounting to the thesis of *A Secular Age*, Taylor sums up the nova effect in the following terms: "The *mutual fragilization* of all the different views in presence, the undermining sense that others think differently, is certainly one of the main features of the world of 2000, in contrast to that of 1500."[75] If everybody in your life believes (or disbelieves) like you do, then questions about your own perceptions of the cosmos "don't as easily arise."[76] But plural modernity ensures questions *do* easily arise. The self-evident givenness of our account of life cannot be sustained. Belief is now one "embattled option" among many.[77]

Claims like this are not exclusive to Taylor. Hans Joas, in *Faith as an Option: Possible Futures for Christianity*, explicitly signals agreement with Taylor and argues, "It is obvious that the conditions for transmitting (or rediscovering) faith are also very much affected by the tendency towards increased options."[78] Likewise, Peter Berger, despite Taylor and Joas distancing themselves from features of his account, also suggests pluralism is a defining feature of religiosity in modernity: "Pluralism . . . has enormous implications for the individual and his beliefs. Neither the individual's self nor his worldview can any longer be taken for granted."[79] And Alasdair MacIntyre explores throughout his corpus the concept of

75. Taylor, 303–4 (emphasis added).
76. Taylor, 304.
77. Taylor, 3. Taylor recognizes that a thin plurality—the mere coexistence of faiths—is not new (e.g., ancient India, Ottoman Empire). But what is unique today is the ability to construe our religious neighbors as more than an "other" or "stranger" whose way of life is too "incomprehensible" or inconceivable for myself but as like us. Now the religious other has a form of life that we can even imagine ourselves partaking in with some imaginative effort.
78. Hans Joas, *Faith as an Option: Possible Futures for Christianity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), 89. Joas is not persuaded that plurality ruffles belief. He argues on the contrary that optionality can *increase* religious attachment. But I would suggest this emphasis is at the expense of a more well-rounded account of the diversity of responses plurality can engender. It can perhaps increase attachment for some and be destabilizing for others. Notably, Joas does in *Do We Need Religion?* hint that "pluralism does not weaken faith but can, *under specific conditions*, strengthen it" (38, emphasis added). But this is undeveloped in his corpus.
79. Peter L. Berger, *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity*, Anchor Books ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 1993), 86; Peter L. Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014). Taylor distances himself from Berger—I think too hastily—because he reads in his work the suggestion that *all* become uncertain of their beliefs due to pluralism. Joas is critical of this too. He also reads Berger as misconstruing religious faith in terms of epistemic cognitive assent and economic preference and choice rather than passive self-surrender before the transcendent. These are legitimate queries to raise about Berger's account. But Berger *does* make space for increased certitude—a process of fundamentalization—as another response to pluralism. In either case—amidst the convergences and divergences of their accounts—all three are attempting to capture a post-secular fact: *pluralism shapes and affects belief in various ways*.

inter-traditional encounter and "epistemic crises" in a fashion similar to Taylor's concept of fragilization.[80]

Not that all these accounts are in total consensus; there are both trivial and non-trivial discontinuities. But there is still significant convergence among them. This further ratifies what Taylor attempts to articulate with the nova effect: Western post-secularism is a context in which pluralism profoundly affects religious belief. And it is these particular conditions of belief—the nova effect—that I want to suggest that Halík uniquely engages in what follows.

Halík: A Theology for the Nova Effect

How the theology of Halík addresses the so-called nova effect or fragilization is perhaps more obvious in light of the first half of this article (and I will therefore devote less time to it). Halík endorses a life of faith that is intermingled with doubt and opposes a facile belief constructed upon false certainties. And this is partly grounded in a recognition of the *multivalence of life*—reality is riddled with paradox and interpretive ambiguities.

This emphasis is especially fitting in a context of mutual fragilization where, in the language of both Taylor and Berger, our own worldview can no longer be so easily "taken for granted."[81] The multivalence of reality is foregrounded. And Halík provides theological resources to aid Christian living amidst this experience rather than providing trite apologetic to quickly resolve dissonance. As per the English subtitle of *Night of the Confessor*, his is a theology for "Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty."[82]

But the particularly distinctive contribution of Halík is in his engagement with the *causes* of fragilization too—the *nova*. In the first instance, Halík is aware of these pluralistic post-secular currents. He is a close reader of Charles Taylor (as well as Peter Berger and Hans Joas).[83] And these themes feature in his work. For example, the role

80. For example, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 354–55; Alasdair C. MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays*, ed. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3–23; Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Relativism, Truth, and Justification," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 52–73.

81. Berger, *A Far Glory*, 86.

82. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*.

83. Taylor is cited across his work. He is referenced in relation to Robert Wuthnow's seekers-dwellers paradigm in Grün, Halík, and Nonhoff, *Is God Absent?* Halík argues that *A Secular Age* is "the most important work about religion in our times" in Halík and Turner, *I Want You to Be*, 55. Taylor then pops up in the preface for the English translation of Tomáš Halík, *Touch the Wounds: On Suffering, Trust, and Transformation*, trans. Gerald Turner, English language (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2023). And where he is most cited—and for the first time this includes texts other than *A Secular Age*—is in a forthcoming translation: Tomáš Halík, *The Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change*, trans. Gerald Turner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2024). In a postscript recommended reading section for this book, several of Taylor's books are listed (along with those of Berger and Joas).

of religious plurality amidst globalism is recognized in his engagement with Berger and José Casanova in his primarily sociological essay "The Transformations of Religion in the Process of Globalization."[84]

But perhaps where Halík is in clearest agreement with Taylor in *A Secular Age* is in *I Want You to Be*. Here—critiquing a minimalist approach to tolerance that merely undergirds a non-integrated multiculturalism—Halík suggests a new form of engagement with the cultural other is needed:

> Our world, the "global village," has become too cramped for us to live undisturbed like that alongside each other. Our numbers have grown, and, like it or not, there are more and more people who are "different" from us. Our fences are not as far apart as they used to be. We can see into the kitchens and smell the aroma of exotic soups from the dining rooms of those others. We can overhear family rows that we had no inkling of before. . . . *Nolens volens* we live together—and therefore we must find different rules for this coexistence than simply "keep out of my circle."[85]

A full-orbed treatment of Halík on tolerance is beyond the scope of this article. But what is clear, even when setting aside the normative thrust of these comments, is that Halík is cognizant of the unique form of contemporary plurality and its influence on Christian life and faith.

With this emphasis in mind, it is little wonder that Halík often engages in reflection on other religious perspectives throughout his corpus, given his interest in responding to the post-secular. Here I refer not primarily to his direct use of sources from alternative traditions—although this permeates his work.[86] I refer instead to how Halík thinks about the fact of religious difference itself. He provides a theological paradigm that attempts to explain the existence of other religious perspectives.

Engagement with this theme is most explicit in a section of *Night of the Confessor*. Halík describes his approach as *perspectivism*: "The perception that we all look from our own particular limited perspective and fail to see the whole."[87] Halík suggests this is an approach that rejects relativism—he really does take from his vantage point Christianity to be true—though without looking "acrimoniously at people who view

84. Tomáš Halík, "The Transformation of Religion in the Process of Globalization," in *The View from Prague: The Expectations of World Leaders at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, ed. Jiří Musil and Tomáš Vrba (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 102–3; Halík cites Berger, *A Far Glory*; and José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
85. Halík and Turner, *I Want You to Be*, 112–13.
86. For example, he engages with Zen Buddhism in Halík and Turner, *I Want You to Be*, 44–46. He likewise often engages with Judaism and Islam: Halík, *Patience with God*, 2009, 141–63. These citations are far from exhaustive. And this approach emerges from a lifetime of interreligious dialogue and ecumenicism. For example, see Halík, *From the Underground Church to Freedom*.
87. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 104.

reality from a different angle."[88] He rejects the claim that all religions are the same or equally valid; this is a judgment beyond the capacity of human creatures. In fact, the more Halík becomes familiar with other religions the more he is aware "of their *differences*, their variety, their plurality, and their *incomparability*."[89]

This perspectivist approach to alternative traditions surfaces across his work. And it is of course not unique to Halík. It explicitly draws on Karl Rahner and a Vatican II–inspired inclusivism—a *via media* between exclusivism and pluralism in *both* its commitment to Christian faith *and* receptivity to alternative religious perspectives and their "anonymous Christians."[90]

But what is crucial for the purpose of this article—and in particular the argument I am developing in this second section—is not the veracity or even the details of Halík's approach (though further critical engagement with Halík on these issues ought to be pursued). I am simply demonstrating the fact Halík *has* an approach: Halík not only addresses the nova *effect* but equally the *nova*. This might prima facie seem a trivial observation. But this is in fact an especially distinctive contribution of his post-secular theology. Halík brings together under the single theological schema issues of *both* religious conviction *and* religious plurality.

There has of course been extensive engagement with both of these themes in Christian theology but almost aways as *discrete* topics. To demonstrate such a claim is not possible here. But a cursory look across the "other religions" literature in recent decades is sufficient to recognize that the question of the uncertainty or epistemic tensions that arise in encountering other religious perspectives is at least peripheral if not absent.

Take a volume like *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religion*.[91] This is a useful text to treat as representative since it includes a variety of contributions from informed and diverse commentators in the religious plurality discourse of the late twentieth century. Yet none of the themes addressed really broaches questions concerning the relationship between plurality and ongoing religious conviction.[92] Even a cursory scan of the subject index will indicate that this issue is absent.

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88. Halík, 104. For further attention to how this corresponds to the idea of *pluralistic robust realism*, see Hubert L. Dreyfus and Charles Taylor, *Retrieving Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); and for plurality more generally, see, for example, Taylor, "Understanding the Other: A Gadamerian View on Conceptual Schemes," in *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 34–47.
89. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 105 (emphasis original).
90. Halík, *Patience with God*, 2009, 46–67.
91. Gavin D'Costa, ed., *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, Faith Meets Faith (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).
92. The fact that these questions are being asked—that this discourse became so prominent—perhaps itself indicates the effect of religious pluralism on religious conviction. The nova effect necessitates this literature (even while it is somewhat ignored within it).

The more recent movement of comparative theology, somewhat reticent about pluralism discourses emphasizing a priori rather than a posteriori appraisal of religious difference, goes further. Representative figures such as James L. Fredericks or Francis X. Clooney—themselves practitioners of sustained interreligious discourse—recognize that rich encounters with a religious other can be "frightening and confusing . . . destabilizing" and that the "pressures of diversity" religious communities face can be "bewildering."[93] But this feature of inter-traditional encounter is mentioned in passing and then left otherwise undeveloped.

The same trend can be observed from the other direction: literature on doubt and uncertainty tends to avoid considering plurality. This is true concerning literature on the issue in general.[94] But where this absence is most stark is in theological responses that *explicitly* engage with the nova effect and fragilization. Religious diversity is not addressed in *Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age* despite it being conversant with Taylor.[95] Nor does Andrew Root tackle this feature of fragilization at length when attempting to directly respond theologically to these themes.[96] This is all to highlight (all too briefly I might add) a consistent vacuum in the literature. The questions concerning religious plurality (the *nova*) are separated from questions about religious conviction or belief (the *effect*).

The closest one might come to a counterexample is a text like Paul J. Griffiths's *Problems of Religious Diversity*.[97] And this is somewhat conversant or at least sits adjacent to a relatively recent discourse in analytic philosophy about religious disagreement.[98] But these conversations, albeit Griffiths's less so, have a particularly

93. James L. Fredericks, *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 9; Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology Deep Learning across Religious Borders*, Auflage (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 3. Note how close both Clooney and Fredericks come to articulating something like the nova effect and mutual fragilization. Yet the comparative theology movement—which I concede I am very roughly representing in these two figures—only goes so far as naming the dynamics in brief. And so although there is an exhortation towards careful and generous interreligious dialogue within comparative theology, there remains a lack of theological resources provided to help one navigate the potential feelings of fragilization that ensue.
94. Thiselton, *Doubt, Faith, and Certainty*; Os Guinness, *Doubt: Faith in Two Minds* (Berkhamsted: Lion, 1976).
95. Lundin, *Believing Again*.
96. Andrew Root, "Faith and Fragilization: Douglas John Hall and Charles Taylor in Dialogue," in *Christian Theology after Christendom: Engaging the Thought of Douglas John Hall*, ed. Patricia G. Kirkpatrick and Pamela McCarroll (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2020), 29–44.
97. Paul J. Griffiths, *Problems of Religious Diversity*, Exploring the Philosophy of Religion 1 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001).
98. Matthew A. Benton and Jonathan L. Kvanvig, eds., *Religious Disagreement and Pluralism*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Peter Forrest, "The Epistemology of Religion," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/religion-epistemology/; Bryan Frances and Jonathan Matheson, "Disagreement," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2019 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/disagreement/.

philosophical timbre. This is not to disregard their insights. It is simply to recognize their primary aim to pursue a constructive theological response rooted in Christian sources for the life of faith and the church.

Here I suggest Halík provides something distinctive. He marries within a single theological corpus the *nova* and the *effect*. To augment the title of this article: *Halík provides a theology for a nova effect–age*.

Lest one thinks this is a coincidence—Halík does have wide-ranging interests and so perhaps it is by happenstance that these two themes appear in the same corpus—one need only observe the singular theological rationale that undergirds his two-pronged engagement with both plurality and fragilization: God as mystery. Halík argues that "God is mystery—that should be the first and last sentence of any theology."[99] McGrath notes that Halík is thinking downstream from his teacher Jan Patočka and a modernist rejection of a God that can be rationally mastered.[100] But Halík also moves in a much older apophatic tradition. He argues, "[The] inexhaustible source of inspiration for this type of theological reflection—the source, moreover, that almost all the great mystics, as well as the ancient theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, drew on—will undoubtedly be so-called *negative theology* (or apophatic theology)."[101]

Emphasizing apophaticism is hardly distinctive given its rich history and current resurgence in contemporary theology.[102] But how Halík *employs* this theological apparatus, with both the *nova* and its *effect* in its crosshairs, is particularly novel. In the first instance, his affirmation of "little faith" and his rejection of "facile belief" is precisely due to the mysterious direction of our faith—the God of Mystery we trust in. To have a faith that is "too big, too noisy, and too human" fails to grasp the theological axiom that lies at the heart of Halík's theology: "The *Mystery* which likes to speak through its silence and reveal itself through its hiddenness."[103]

The same can be said of how Halík engages with the theme of plurality. In the passage from *Night of the Confessor* on perspectivism cited earlier, the central emphasis is an apophatic one: "Truth is a book that none of us has read to end."[104] Likewise, in *Patience with God*, the reason given for constructive engagement and dialogue with alternative traditions, even while remaining rooted in our own, is summarized by what Halík calls an Ignatian maxim: "God is *always greater, semper maior.*"[105] Halík suggests, drawing on the work of French theologian Joseph Moingt, that our God is the God of *others* whom no one can monopolize. Because our "God remains a radical

99. Halík, *Patience with God*, 2009, 46.
100. McGrath, "On the Threshold of Mystery," 7. See also James Dodd, "Jan Patočka's Philosophical Legacy," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford University Press, 2018), 396–411.
101. Halík, *Patience with God*, 2009, 20.
102. For a helpful and recent primer on this trend, see Timothy Trouter, "The Eclipse of the Word: Five Theses on Apophaticism," *Theopolis Institute* (blog), April 6, 2023, https://theopolisinstitute.com/conversations/the-eclipse-of-the-word-five-theses-on-apophaticism/.
103. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 62–63. Emphasis added.
104. Halík, *Night of the Confessor*, 104.
105. Halík, *Patience with God*, 52.

mystery," we cannot presume mastery of Him when engaging with those outside the bounds of the church, whether it be the critical atheist, the Zaccheaus-like seeker, or the religious other on our doorstep.[106]

To summarize: it is not a coincidence that both plurality and uncertainty are integral in Halík's work. As I have demonstrated, he is acutely aware of the ways contemporary plurality shapes Christian faith today. And his engagement with both of these themes is not a random or disparate affair produced by his characteristically sprawling reflections. Rather, a singular and conscious theologic—God as mystery—animates his two-pronged engagement with both plurality (nova) and uncertainty (effect). He does indeed set out to articulate *faith in an age of uncertainty*—as again per the subtitle of *Night of the Confessor*. But Halík is aware that this uncertainty germinates and festers in an ecosystem of exploding religious diversity. And this makes Halík an especially pertinent theological interlocutor for the post-secular.

Conclusion

This essay has presented the theology of Tomáš Halík as a valuable and distinctive contribution to the post-secular. The themes Halík foregrounds in his corpus—blessedness of spiritual seeking, his extensive engagement with atheism, and the affirmation of doubt and uncertainty—are much needed in our current milieus. But I have shown Halík provides something especially distinctive to a well-trafficked post-secular discourse in addressing the unique amalgam of *both* plurality *and* fragilization in modernity, namely, the nova effect. Due consideration of this contribution promises to nudge long-running pluralism and uncertainty discourses in theology closer together rather than being kept asunder. And even more crucially—at least for the future thriving of the Western church—further attention to Halík in the Anglosphere promises inspiration for the critical task of crafting a grammar of faith for the post-secular epoch that confronts us.

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Aden Cotterill is a PhD student in theology at the University of Cambridge. His dissertation explores a theological diptych of philosopher Charles Taylor and Czech theologian Tomáš Halík, with particular focus on the themes of plurality and uncertainty. His other recent publications include "Triadic Differences and Theological Coherence: Oliver O'Donovan's Reflections on Friendship" (*Studies in Christian Ethics*), "The Dialectics of Place and Pastoral Practice" (*Ecclesiology*), and "The Voice of One Crying Out in a Post-Soviet wilderness: Tomáš Halík on Putin's Russia and the Invasion of Ukraine" (*St Mark's Review*).

106. Halík, 52–53. The earlier quote, "God is mystery—that should be the first and last sentence of any theology," opens the chapter that this long discussion about Moignt and those outside the church appears in. It is as if for Halík to speak the divine mystery is to in the next breath talk about religious diversity and the experience of religious uncertainty.