“Nobody trusts theology and, in fact, for a very good reason;” John D. Caputo, one of the contributors to this special issue of *Open Theology*, once shocked the audience of theology students and professors at the Catholic University of Leuven. Caputo intended to criticize and challenge the partisan thought of theology which often result in self-referential debates without relevance, sometimes even without rational rigor, and almost all the time without credibility. However, there was also a bit of apologetics in Caputo’s statement: When theologians failed, philosophers are here and ready to take the initiative in exploring the fecundity of theological concepts.

And indeed, despite certain forms of theology becoming less and less relevant, the questions of the late theological importance find their way back to the academic as well as public debates even stronger. The field of philosophy has experienced a return to the religious and some do not hesitate to talk directly about the theological turn. As a result, the discourse on religion, naming God, religious experience, faith, and so on, has undergone a great reversal. It is no more theologians who seek to employ the contemporary critical consciousness of philosophy to re-translate, re-read, re-interpret, and re-conceptualize Christianity to make it more comprehensible, more rational, and more attractive. Now, myriad philosophers, religious and secular philosophers alike, do not hesitate to draw inspiration from the sphere of religion and theology in order to interpret the structures of existence in the world.

The motivations for such philosophical reconsiderations of religion vary, but a general perspective suggests that the religious allows for thinking excess, and exploring the impossible; religious thinking offers the possibility of criticizing metaphysics; it provides an alternative to modern objectivism and represents the other of autonomous reason. In short, religion appears as something beyond total control and mastery and yet the questions related to the religious give us much food for thought. Whatever the motivation, the result is obvious: we are confronted with de-localized Christian concepts and even de-theologized theologies that open new horizons for understanding. Perhaps the most interesting part of the whole movement is the audacious and spirited repetition of Christianity outside the exclusively defined ecclesial body.

Nonetheless, there are still theologians among us; even theologians who take Caputo’s exclamation that “nobody trusts theology” seriously and who, at the same time, engage with the plethora of philosophical literature on the questions which used to be once the domain of their discipline. The trained eyes of a theologian cannot but see that the philosophical (re)turns to the religious provoke – whether they intend to or not – a radically renewed sense of theology; a sense which must be, however, uncovered and tested. This topical issue of *Open Theology* aims to explore, interrogate and reflect on how contemporary continental philosophy unfolds and advances the development of (new) philosophical theology. What does it mean to practice theology after the philosophical return to religion? What is the prospect for theology after the theological turn in philosophy?
The idea of philosophical theology is usually associated with the analytic tradition. For this reason, we decided to capture the leading idea behind this topical issue with the subtitle: “Essays in (New) Continental Philosophical Theology.” The reference to the so-called continental philosophy of religion as the main source of inspiration is clear. We have witnessed the decades of developing this discipline which gained rightfully its autonomy; however, on the other hand, it seems that the debate among continental philosophers of religion seems to be stuck on rather formal questions about whether the theological turn happened or not, whether it has been a legitimate or illegitimate development, and whether theology and philosophy can benefit at all from reconsidering their disciplinary borders. For this reason, the aim of this special issue is not to repeat this debate once again. Rather, the contributors were invited to write from the perspective “after the theological turn” and they were encouraged to address crucial theological issues which continue to be unresolved: What should the proper propaedeutic framework for theological work be in a secular context? How to formulate theologically valid as well as contextually plausible truth claims? What kind of grammar should be employed in theology to create not only rational but also credible discourse? To put it differently, this special issue seeks to ponder on theology, not as a useful archive for philosophical thought but, reversely, to take the philosophical return to the religious as the challenge for theological thinking, and thus to explore the possibilities of the transformation of the fundamental theological practice which would revisit its rigor, and provides the possibility of developing an intelligible grammar for articulating normative theological claims.

As the editor, I am glad how many different perspectives found their way to this topical issue of Open Theology. The reader will undoubtedly notice the tension between conflicting theological and philosophical perspectives which are often present within the personality of particular authors; sometimes with the preference given to one approach or another. I think that embracing this tension is the proper way how to think “after the theological turn;” that is, how to overcome the formal debates and discover better theology with the help of philosophy and transformed philosophy due to its engagement with theology.

I would like to conclude by borrowing words from Emmanuel Falque, another contributor to this special issue, “we have no other experience of God but the human experience.” The memory of this is the only protection against betraying theology’s task in this world. I hope you will find inspiration in these essays which are the first attempt to develop a (new) continental philosophical theology.