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MISSION AS THEOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION: HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. Introduction

This paper presents some foundational aspects of a theological theory of communication in the context of missions. This seems to be necessary in view of the fact that in the theology of the second half of the last century and until the end of the first decade of the new century, "communication" is increasingly perceived as a far-reaching, culturally formative phenomenon. On this aspect R. Stevenson in his article "Global Communication in the 21st Century" aptly remarks:

> "The current revolution in communications is the product of the confluence of three new technologies: the computer, communications satellites and digitization. ... The digitization enables the transfer of all kinds of information - text, images and sound - in a common code that can be stored in virtually any medium. An unlimited flood of digitized data can be transmitted from anywhere in the world to another one in the speed of light. ... In the 21st century a global culture has emerged in which information has become the basis for wealth and power, a global system which eliminates national borders and institutions, a technology which makes available the collective knowledge of the world with one keystroke for anyone, anywhere and immediately."[1]

At the same time communication is not sufficiently reflected from theological points of view which could contribute to apply this basic creation structure and creation gift according to its intention. Therefore, in the following text the evidence of Scripture is collected and evaluated regarding its contribution to a theory of communication. The origin, medium and purpose of language from a biblical perspective are presented in three steps:

The *first* part presents the Trinity as the necessary and sufficient origin and facilitation of communication.

The *second* part then examines the understanding of language in contemporary theology as well as some essential characteristics of the language, as they emerge in Holy Scripture.

Finally, the *third* part draws together the aspects presented by explaining the image of God in man by the fact that it is essentially made possible and justified mainly by his ability to communicate.

2. God's Trinity as a community of communication

2.1 The revelation of God as the original motive of communication

The way towards a theological theory of communication must properly take its beginning from its assigned object of knowledge: God. Without the existence of God there would be no communication within the Godhead nor between God and man. However, this can be

known with certainty only if one has realized Holy Scripture as revelation and thus investigating it about the existence and nature of God. However, man without revelation is caught in a hopeless situation because he does not have the tools to gain a reliable knowledge of God.[2] This immediately raises the question of who or what God is and how to define him. The Being of God, his invisible nature, can be recognized, according to the theology of Paul, primarily in his actions. These actions reflect his "eternal power" and his "divinity" (Romans 1:20). The works of God are thus *a priori* and essentially communicative for humans because they speak to man about the eternity, power and divinity of God. This means that the nature of God is a communicative nature.

However, besides the action of God the word of God, i.e. his verbal speech, is added in the same way, with the result that the communication of God is complemented and integrated into a unity. This unity of word and deed is documented and anchored in the Hebrew concept of DABAR. This means that the intellectual ability of humans to conclude from the incomprehensibility of creation, to which he himself belongs, to an eternal, powerful Creator, is accompanied and supported by God's verbal self-communication. This verbal self-communication of God takes place directly in oral and indirectly in written form.[3]

Here the distinction of the hidden God from the revealed God in the doctrine of God is important. The hidden God, the *Deus Absconditus* reveals to man only his creativity, his divinity and thus his ability to communicate. Only the revealed God, the *Deus Revelatus*, reveals to man his Trinity and the manner of his communication with humans.[4]

An insightful link between Trinity and salvation history has been established by H. Fritzsche.[5] For him, the Christian Trinity is not a philosophical concept, but "the ultimately condensed summary of the biblical proto-

histories"[6]. He provides a useful differentiation of the creative aspect. God as a personal ultimate ground makes man as creature to participate in his own creative activity. This participation has two dimensions, namely creativity and communicability.[7] Just as God created the world as a whole and in Christ sustains the world through His Word (Hb 1:3), so should man shape the creation around him by dominion and work (Gen 1:26-28; 2:5,15). But because God is a social being, likewise man in the image of God is a social being. From this perspective, the Trinity of God reflects itself in the communicability of man.[8]

In summary it can be said that two basic statements about the transcendent *Deus Absconditus* are possible in relation to the origin of the communication. *First*, man realizes that a God exists, and that this God is the creator of the immanent world. *Second*, man realizes that God is a communicative God in his nature, because this immanent world as God's creation communicates something of God to man.

2.2 The Trinity as a community relationship

As we have seen so far, there is an epistemological boundary between concealment and disclosure of God. Therefore, the description of the Trinity is given under the provision that the immanent Trinity - the relationship within God - is accessible only through the revelation of the economic Trinity - God's relationship to creation. This finding is important because every truth about transcendent aspects can be described by human language only in a limited way. However, the nature of God exceeds the creational capacity of comprehension. Therefore, only partial truths about him can be inferred from his revealed nature. For example, the language picture "Jesus was in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18) illustrates the fellowship of the Son with the Father within the immanent Trinity. But this says nothing about how man has to imagine this community in detail.

As a result, the first task is to investigate Holy Scripture regarding statements about the communication between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy-Spirit. The findings are then compared with recent conceptions of theological communication. John 1:1-2 emphasizes by the repetition of the preposition *pros* ("toward God"), that the Logos and God were in orientation to each other. In his pre-incarnational form the Son was in conscious fellowship with the Father. Also John 17:5 emphasizes by repetition that Jesus wants to be glorified through the Father, just as he was glorified, when the world did not yet exist. Jesus wants to experience the glory, the *doxa*, with God (παρὰ σεαυτῷ ... παρὰ σοι). The preposition *para* designates with the dative a physical proximity.[9] This implies, analogous to the earthly fellowship of Jesus with the disciples (John 14:25 παρ᾽ ὑμῖν μένων) the heavenly fellowship of Jesus with the Father in John 17:5.

Also 1 John 1:2 describes a dynamic relationship between the eternal life, namely Christ himself, and the father (τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἥτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα). The preposition *pros* with the accusative here refers to a relationship of proximity.[10] Since God is invisible for humans, the "only begotten God", namely Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, has proclaimed him. The "bosom of the Father" is an image for the familiar communion between Father and Son. It expresses a continuous communicative community relationship.[11] As before God's communication there is his love, the latter is the primal motive of communication. God is love (1 John 4:16), and this love should be reflected in the life of man as a sign of his fellowship with God.

2.3 The communication difference between immanent and economic Trinity
The interpretation of the Trinity presented above as an essentially communicative relationship is rejected by W. Kreck. He only accepts the incarnate, but not the transcendent-trinitarian Son of God as revealer of the Father.[12] In contrast, E. Jüngel argues that in the trinitarian relations of God the paradigm of God's relationship with man can be recognized.[13] Also P. Lönning recognizes the need to "focus on a trinitarian *leitmotif*"[14]. However, he raises the question of whether the relationship of Christ to mankind can be explained *to a sufficient degree* by the relationship of Father - Son - Holy Spirit.[15] An affirmative answer to this question would mean that the incarnation and communication of Christ with humans would reflect *all* truth about the inner-trinitarian communication structures. This seems, however, impossible for two reasons: On the one hand there is non-communicated truth within the economic Trinity. Mark 13:32 and the parallel passage in Matt 24:36 emphasize that the day and hour of Christ's return are *only* known to the Father, but hidden from the angels in heaven, and from the son.

On the other hand there is non-communicated truth between Christ and humans, e.g. his disciples. In Acts 1:6-7 Jesus explains to his disciples that it is not for them (v 7 οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστιν γνῶναι) to know the time of the restoration of the kingdom for Israel. Again, Jesus refers to the Father's own power to set this time (v. 7 χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ). Therefore, there are secrets, both within the economic Trinity and between Christ and humans.

The communication between the Holy Spirit and the Father is described in Romans 8:26-27 with reference to the Christians. The Holy Spirit represents the believers before God with inaudible and unspeakable words. He complements the weak, inadequate prayer of the Christians and perfects it in order to make it appropriate to God. God himself recognizes the thoughts the Holy Spirit wants to communicate. Here, then, occurs an intensity and perfection of communication as it is neither possible nor imaginable for the immanent human communication as well as the human-divine communication.

It turns out that there is a *qualitatively* perfect communication community within the immanent Trinity of God. But in terms of the *quantitative* content of communication, there are differences in the economic Trinity. In this sense, omniscience is attributed only to God the Father. God the Father exceeds both the Son and the Holy Spirit in knowledge. At the same time he shares this knowledge as he pleases with the second and third person of the trinity. Or he withholds this knowledge prior to a certain date. Thus, the Son and the Holy Spirit are essentially one with the Father, but at the same time, however, subordinate to him.

2.4 Results

First, the existence of God is essentially communicative in relation to man through his non-verbal creation and preservation work. In contrast, the Trinity of God is communicated only through His Word to man. God's creativity and communicability are the two basic aspects of his non-verbal revelation. Man also possesses creativity and communicability as foundational dimensions of his humanity because of his being in the image of God.

Second, human language can communicate only partially truth about the immanent trinity because of its creational limitation. Holy Scripture testifies to the communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the immanent trinity. But it does not allow speculation about communication in the immanent trinity, as the ultimate reason of creation. Before communication is the love of God, which finds its expression in the creation of man in the image and counterpart of God.

Third, Holy Scripture testifies to a perfect communication community in the immanent trinity. But the communication community in the economic Trinity is imperfect. The father is omniscient and gives his knowledge to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. In terms of communication, therefore, the unity of immanent and economic trinity is set aside during the incarnation of Christ.

3. Human language as a medium of communication

3.1 The crisis of the concept of God

This theological foundation of a theory of communication began with the biblical and theological proof of the trinity of God. The trinity has been presented as an essentially communicative community. God's immanent communication between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the necessary condition for the possibility of human communication. The imperative nature of this condition became visible when a certain current of the theology of the second half of the 20th century tried to withdraw the previous content from the term "God". In this way, an attempt was made to let die the idea of God. The "theology of the death of God" claimed that God had not proved to be capable of acting and therefore was dead. "Dead" was meant not in the sense of the denial of his existence, but the recognition of his passivity and unresponsiveness.[16] Consequently, only the inner-worldly interpersonal encounter remained, which was designated by the term "God".[17] This reduction is a consequence of the modern attempt to arrive through autonomous reflection - independent of God's illumination and revelation – at the knowledge of God.[18]

As an example and representative of this anthropocentric approach, K. Krenn may be mentioned.[19] He tried to bring the "rational thought" on the path of realizing God, but rejects the means of logic. The reason is that these *means of logic always relate to a frame of reference* and therefore are necessarily ambivalent.[20] For the frame of reference of the existence of God It follows the inherent inability of logic, to draw any conclusions for the realm beyond the immanent, the "finite". This shows the necessity of revelation as the decisive epistemological category. At this point, however, for Krenn the question arises, why the disclosure of the knowledge of God occurs in some people, while in others it does

not. For him, the answer is *chance* which will or will not bring this disclosure.[21]

In the New Testament perspective of Paul, it is not chance, however, but God himself, who allows man the disclosure toward the wholeness of communion with God through Jesus Christ (Mt 11:27; Rom 8:29). This communion with God through Jesus Christ should lead to a form of Christian church fellowship and worship, which, as in the New Testament, represents a "contrast society" as P. Stuhlmacher aptly remarks.[22] In this respect, the development of the modern belief in God has a direct impact on the communication content of the Christian community.

3.2 The crisis of understanding language

We have observed the rejection of a biblical concept of God as the basis of human createdness and the reason and substantiation for his communication and language skills. This was followed by a crisis in the recognition of the human personality and language. Because human language was rejected as an expression of the createdness and image of God, an alternative ultimate justification for the origin of language had to be offered. This raises the question of whether there is an ultimate justification of language beyond the existence of the biblical God as the creator of language. E. Schmalenberg has studied philosophical attempts at a linguistic ultimate justification. He pursues the hypothesis that it is inadmissible to stipulate human language to a final apriori, because this would be tantamount to an "ideological dogmatism".[23] His statement must be commended on the background of the situation discussed so far:

> "If man claims to have recognized the ultimate, no longer questionable terms of knowledge, language and communication, he has set himself, as it were, in the place of God."[24]

From a creation-theological point of view it is clear that the language ability of man which distinguishes him from the rest of creatures must remain a divine mystery.[25] This ability is a direct reflection and effluence of the nature of God, who in his trinitarian nature is a speaking God. In an unrivaled way this is stated in the prologue of John's Gospel: God himself is the Word, in the form of the Son who was with God and became man (John 1:1,2,14). Thus, the ultimate justification of the language remains a mystery and at the same time a central means of expression of the image of God in man.

The power of the word originates from the authority of the speaker, therefore the authority of God as creator and redeemer.[26] This language power of man results, in the context of the communication capabilities of the new millennium, in a new quality of "remote-neighborhood" in a globalized world. This in turn has the potential to bring about a "moral world climate change", as P. Sloterdijk explains:

> "This moral world climate change … is due to the positive side effects of a moreover very dangerous transformation in the world form of the modern era: the suppression of the conventional distance hygiene (in which the distance itself avoids conflicts) and the weakening of the limitational functions. For both the modern techniques of space elimination are responsible, in the first place, the rapid means of transport and ultrafast telecommunication techniques. They made sure that a completely new system of virtual neighborhoods, virtual solidarities and communities has emerged, while their appearance has overridden the basic data of conventional sociologies. ... I call the sum of these conditions: remote neighborhoods. ... The globalization has caused the emergency of remote-neighborly world relations. If you could speak of the adventure of morality - will it not consist in the coming century especially in the cultivation of the remote virtues?"[27]

This shows how the crisis of understanding language already has and will have in the future a wide scope into the coexistence of nations.

3.3 Salvation-historical caesura of communication

God gave man in the creation texts the necessary authority to enforce his language goals. The naming of the animals was a linguistic act of dominion over creation (Gen. 1:28; 2:19). However, the linguistic dominion of man is not unlimited, but is limited by the linguistic dominion of God. The transgression of God's framework of existence for humans (Gn 2:16-17) brought the corruption of communication between man and God.[28] This corruption culminated in the expulsion from the paradise garden (Gen. 3). However, the communication capability of man was still intact in a limited way. He could organize himself in community and was able to agree on a common goal of action with his fellow humans.

The Tower of Babel illustrates this unity of language (Gn 11:1), which made an agreement on a common goal only possible (Gn 11:3-4). This goal was the self-designation of humans in order to ensure the unity of the human race against an impending dissipation over the whole earth (Gen. 11:4). The means to this naming was to build a city and a tower. God recognized the performative language power of humans, but he did not destroy their buildings, instead he destroyed their communicative unity (Gn 11:6-7). Thus, the goal of humanity had failed. At the same time, both the linguistic diversity as well as the associated ethnic diversity and cultural diversity was established (Gn 11:8-9). Noteworthy here is the connection between people and language in Gen 11:6 "One people and one language" (עַם אֶחָד וְשָׂפָה אַחַת).

As an indirect result of the fall of Adam, God limited the power of mankind - which was communicatively separated from him - by so profoundly disturbing the linguistic capability that the performative function of language was restricted to a high degree.

From a biblical-theological and salvation-historical perspective, the Pentecost event appears in the New Testament as a salvation from the confusion of tongues in the Old Testament in the sense of a restoring speech miracle. Are there correlations in the language function here? H. Kraemer contrasts Gn 1-11 and Acts 2 as evidence of the collapse and the restoration of communication with each other. The story of the confusion of tongues is God's judgment on the broken dialogue between God and man, and between humans, since the fall into sin.[29] But at Pentecost the dialogue between God and man is restored to full and genuine communication.[30] From this Kraemer concludes:

> "Fall and Redemption, Babel and Pentecost, are the two hidden factors in language and communication."[31]

In Acts 2:4 the Holy Spirit is identified as agent of linguistic diversity. Acts 2:8-11 shows that the "other languages" (v. 4 ἑτέραις γλώσσαις) were independent languages, or at least were dialects of the Middle East. The Pentecost event did not establish the restoration of the pre-Babylonian language unified language. But it brought the universal communication proposal of God to all nations – beyond the border of the people of Israel. With Pentecost the mode of communication of God changed from the predominantly centripetal to the predominantly centrifugal orientation. The goal of this communication intention will be reached only, from the New Testament perspective, when God's communication offer of the gospel will have reached all nations (Mt 24:14). Then, from every language and ethnic group there will be representatives in God's presence (Rev 7:9), giving proof that God's offer of salvation has indeed been delivered to the *whole* world.

3.4 Results

First, neither human logic nor lucky coincidence is able to secure the knowledge of God, for true knowledge of God comes only through faith in the self-revealing God of Scripture.

Second, the reduction of the concept of God led to a crisis of language. This crisis of language means that a final justification of language and language ability of man beyond the concept of God is yet to be given.

Third, the unity of language and action exists in God's creative acts. From a biblical-theological perspective, Pentecost represents the symbolic restoration of the communication communion between God, man and fellow man in the universal sense. This was an overcoming of the Babylonian splitting of the unity of language and action as punishment for the misuse of the communication ability of humanity.

4. The image of God as communication purpose

4.1 The rationale of human personality

After examining the Trinitarian community of communication and the communication medium of language, the purpose of theological communication is to be considered in the following. This is the image of God in man, the *imago Dei*. In Gen 1:26-28 the origin and destiny of human existence is formulated. Man is created in the image of God in the likeness of God, as a man and as a woman.[32] His destiny is dominion over the animal world. He surpasses creation in that he alone was enabled to enter into a relationship with God. This privilege makes him to be a person, as Dalferth and Jüngel define accurately:

> „To be creaturely counterpart of God which is intended to meet his standard, that constitutes man as a person."[33]

This personhood commits man to shape his humanity according to God in order to reflect him in the image of God. The invisible and unfeasible God speaks to man through His Word.[34] This salutatory character of the Word of God attributes to man a dignity that comes from God himself.[35] However, the reduction of "Word of God" into the person of Jesus Christ is problematic. This christocentrism neglects the salvation-historical dimension of biblical revelation. The reason for this is the pre-incarnational, Old Testament testimony of Holy Scripture is not sufficiently considered. The Trinitarian community of communication already existed before the incarnation of the Son. This communication ability and the associated need for communication of the Trinity were transferred in the creation of man to his personality.

Two key features of the image of God in man are presented by Dalferth and Jüngel. *First*, responsibility: man is responsible to God for the potential that God has given him by virtue of his personhood.[36] This results, *secondly*, in freedom: God allows man an existence in freedom in which he can develop his actions. He can accept or refuse the communication communion with God.[37] The fact that God *speaks* to man as a counterpart, not acting upon him to exert a constraint, provides for man a freedom that permits a response of love to God. However, the speaking of God after the fall is no longer qualitatively and quantitatively present and immediate to the extent as it was the case in the paradise garden. Accordingly, also all human knowledge of the speaking of God is subjected to fallen creation. This is aptly expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:9: "For we know in part and we prophesy in part."

4.2 God's communication as enabling communicative humanity

Against this background God's love can only be properly appreciated.[38] From the motive of love God speaks to man even after the culpable fall into sin, because he has mercifully

preserved for him the ability of responsiveness. Accordingly, it is expressed in Romans 10:8 (cf. Dt 30:14):

> "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the word of faith, which we preach. "

The way to faith is through the hearing of the Word of Christ (Rom 10:17), because it corresponds to the basic structure of man as created by God. On this Jüngel aptly remarks:

> "This responsiveness belongs in a foundational sense to the image of God in man. Man is constituted from and organized by the *word*. Man is man while *hearing*. Only because he can *hear*, he is able to speak, to think, to act and to be human in it. Through hearing man adjusts himself to God's relationship with him, in order to correspond to his God." (italics Jüngel)[39]

Jüngel defines the task of theological anthropology as the "denial of the divinity of man".[40] The pursuit of equality with God resulted in man's loss of divine likeness. The restoration of the image of God is carried out by the image of Christ according to Rom 8:29.[41] In the person of Jesus Christ the aspects of language and action are united, because he is the word-deed of God in incarnate form. This is a *Christological focusing* of the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ, which is an expression of his love toward man.[42] In Jesus Christ, God revealed his own nature as a human being in space and time, in the perfect unity of word and deed.

In the biblical Semitic pattern of understanding, word and deed form an indissoluble unity. This unity becomes a holistic movement of attention from God to man and from man to his neighbor. This contrasts with the split between WORD and DEED through the logical dualism in the Western-rationalist frame of understanding. From this dualistic split between word and deed follows that the aspect of action - as well as the speaking of God - is controversially

discussed well into contemporary theology. The outcome of this discussion is indissolubly linked with the resulting image of man. As was already shown above, the freedom to communicate is a necessary dimension of personhood and thus of the image of God.

4.3 The Image of God as a task
A final aspect of the question of the *imago Dei* is the task and the goal of the divine-human communication community. If this question is highlighted from its purpose – the eschatological perspective of missions - it must be stated that God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28). This statement refers to the orderly implementation of eternal life in Christ (v. 22). First, the resurrection of Jesus occurs, after that the resurrection of his church, and afterwards the transfer of the rule and the victory of Christ over all the dominions, principalities and powers - including death – to God the Father (v. 24-26). Finally Jesus will subject himself to the Father so that the inner-trinitarian distinction in authority is restored. The Triune God will entirely fulfill everything (v. 27-28). In the completed life communion with God and man, between Creator and creature, the creation purpose of God from Gn 1:27 is realized. This is the essential relational structure of the image of God in man. It originates in the relational structure of God as A. Peters explains.[43]

However, while in the Old Testament, the concept of the image of God is primarily determined by the mandate to rule over creation (Gn 1:27-28), in the NT the anthropological use is complemented by the Christological use as J. Jervell elaborates.[44] There is widespread agreement that in Gn 1:26, the terms for "image" - *demut* and *zelem* - are complementary used to express a common fact: It is about the specific dignity of man, which distinguishes him from the rest of creation.[45] Comparing this anthropological use of *damah* with the theological use, then we see God's "claim to uniqueness"[46] in relation to his creation or man-made gods. This claim to uniqueness

corresponds in Gn 1:27 to the encouragement of man´s belonging to God. This unique quality of belonging to God distinguishes humans from the rest of creation and enables him to rule over it. Gn 1:26-28 is limited to define the function, but not the ontological substance of the image of God in a more specific way.[47]

4.4 Results

First, man is a person by virtue of his ability to relate to God, which is an expression of his divine likeness. The inner-trinitarian communication ability and the need for communication were transferred to man in his creation. Accordingly, God primarily communicates with man through the word and elevates man to his specific dignity by addressing him. This is concretized in the responsibility and freedom of man as an expression of his divine image.

Secondly, even after the fall God sustained man's ability of responsiveness. This is vital for man, because he is constituted by the word. He has to rely on the word as a basis for exercising his nonmaterial vital functions (Dt 8:3; Mt 4:4). The presumption of equality with God incurred the loss of the image of God, which, however, is recoverable in the form of the likeness of Christ.

Thirdly, the purpose of communication is the eschatological life communion with God as the restoration of the intention of creation. Here, the anthropological image of God is fulfilled by the Christological image of God.

5. Summary and Theses

The theological description and evaluation of the phenomenon of *communication* has highlighted the inseparability of God, language and humans. As indicated on the basis of Holy Scripture, the necessary factors of communication have been in best accordance with each other. But after the fall of man communication took place only imperfectly. The theology of the 20th century illustrates in a striking way the aporia, to offer an understanding of God, language and humans that corresponds to reality, which is no longer based on biblical revelation, but on the primacy of reason of modernism and postmodernism. Over against a monistic (alone existing) concept of God it must be noted that there is a communicative trinitarian relationship in God. In this relationship, the phenomenon of language has its origin. Over against the waiver of a final justification of language it must be noted that language constitutes human freedom. It is the freedom to relate to God or to refuse it. Over against the systematic Christ centrism it must be noted that the image of God in man was revealed not only in Christ but before at creation. Accordingly, God communicates not only in Christ with man. Rather, already the creation of man included both his divine likeness as well as his communication with God.

Four theses summarize our topic:
(1) On the one hand, communication is nonverbal, on the other hand it is justified verbally in the trinity of God; communication in the trinity enables the communication of man with God and with fellow humans.
(2) The human language is limited in its capacity of expression because of its createdness, but it is sufficient for successful communication; it also participated in the creation quality "very good" of the original state.
(3) God created man to have fellowship with him; therefore, he used language as a primary communication medium and thus as an expression of human dignity in the image of God.
(4) God's work of creation is an expression of the unity of language and action, between word and deed; this unity is also part of his eschatological redemptive work, in which the divine image is restored by the Christ image.

Thank you very much!

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ENDNOTES

1 In German: „Die gegenwärtige Revolution der Kommunikation ist das Produkt des Zusammenflusses von drei neuen Technologien: die der Computer, der Kommunikationssatelliten und der Digitalisierung. … Die Digitalisierung erlaubt die Übertragung aller Arten von Information – von Texten, Bildern und Ton - in einen gemeinsamen Code, der sich praktisch in jedem Medium speichern lässt. Eine unbegrenzte Flut digitalisierter Daten lässt sich von jedem Punkt der Erde zu jedem anderen in Lichtgeschwindigkeit übertragen. … Im 21. Jahrhundert entsteht eine globale Kultur, in der Information die Grundlage für Wohlstand und Macht bildet, ein globales System, das nationale Grenzen und Institutionen aufhebt, eine Technologie, die das kollektive Wissen der Welt mit einem Tastendruck für jedermann, überall und sofort verfügbar macht." - Stevenson, Robert L. „Globale Kommunikation im 21. Jahrhundert", The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. - www.unc.edu/~rlstev/Text/Globale%20Komm%20im%2021.%20Jht.pdf

2 On this, Kaiser aptly remarks: "The aporetic (= hopeless) situation of man, therefore, is that the man does not know anything of revelation as such, and cannot perceive a reasonable starting point to determine and localize the revelation in the complex field of problems. ... Man certainly knows the world from his own experience. But is all he wonders about or what is "objectively" a miracle, already revelation? ... Man does not know. Neither his reason nor any other immanent instance tell him or are able to tell him. There is no element in human consciousness to be found, from which the knowledge of what is revelation, could be derived." - Kaiser, Bernhard. *Studien zur Fundamentaltheologie*. Vol. 1: Offenbarung (Nürnberg: VTR, 2005), p. 19.

3 For the non-verbal, symbolic communication between God and man it must be noted that only the following two facts are transmitted

to man: (1) There is a deity, which is characterized by eternity and power. (2) This deity is the creator of the created world, and thus of man who is part of this creation. This explicit limitation of the contents of the non-verbal communication of God is important for the question of where the communicability of God has its origin, and how man can answer this question. Below we will see that God's communicative nature is substantiated in his trinity. This statement is only possible based on the word of God, so that man can only indirectly say something about the communicative existence of God.

4 This "man" in the collective singular stands instead of "humanity" as a whole. As will become apparent below, the human being as an individual is an irrelevant abstraction, since man always is a social being and can shape his humanity only in community with other people. H. Thielicke designates this existentialist isolation of man as a repetition of docetism: *"This situation structure in which the other encounters me is, as it were, the body of history, in which my personhood lives.* Any attempt to stop it and to see my individual person in its supposed being-as-such, therefore, would be a quasi-modern form of spiritualization, it would be the attempt to understand the human being as disembodied, free floating spirit, and thus a repetition of the old heresy of docetism." (italics Thielicke) - Helmut Thielicke. *Mensch sein – Mensch werden. Entwurf einer christlichen Anthropologie* (München: Piper, 1976), p. 134.

5 Helmut Fritzsche. „Der christliche Gott als der trinitarische Gott", *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 107 (1982): 1-12.

6 Fritzsche, p. 5.

7 Fritzsche explains on this: "Work - that's a giving, which starts from a personal primordial ground and goes onward to something specific, to an opposite, the human creature, whom the creator God makes partake in his own creative work, in accordance with the Old Testament in two ways: first, in terms

of creativity, the creative in God. Man can and should enter into a creative exploration of his environment ..." (p. 5).

8 Fritzsche further elaborates: "Secondly, the corresponding aspect on the part of man toward God is that he does not need to be alone. The life created by God provides the participation in being together, the communication, which holistically connects man physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually with the fellow human …" - Fritzsche, p. 5.

9 Walter Bauer. *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.* 5. ed. (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1958), p. 1210; cf.
Jh 14:17 τὸ πνεῦμα ... παρ᾿ ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται
Jh 14:23 ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ᾿ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα

10 Bauer, p. 1409-1410.

11 The verbal form *on* is written in present participle active and therefore describes a continuous action; cf. Blass, F.; Debrunner, A.; Rehkopf, F. *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch.* 15. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), Par. 318,2. See also Jh 1:1-2 the fourfold use of the imperfect *en* to describe a past action in its progress (Par. 327,1).

12 Cf. Walter Kreck. *Grundfragen der Dogmatik.* 3. ed. (München: Kaiser, 1985), pp. 76-77.

13 Cf. Eberhard Jüngel. *Gottes Sein ist im Werden.* 4. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), p. 117.

14 Cf. Per Lönning. *Der begreiflich Unergreifbare. `Sein Gottes´ und modern-theologische Denkstrukturen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), p. 335.

15 Cf. Lönning, S. 335.

16 On the history of the „God-is-dead-theology", cf. Lönning, pp. 36-66.

17 Cf. Lönning, p. 67.

18 On the various theological currents since the Enlightenment, cf. Thielicke, Helmut. *Glauben und Denken in der Neuzeit.* Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), pp. 57ff.

19 Krenn, Kurt. „Der springende Punkt. Kann

das vernünftige Denken zur Gotteserkenntnis angehalten werden?", in: Krenn, Kurt (ed.). *Die wirkliche Wirklichkeit Gottes* (München: Schöningh, 1974): 159-185.

20 Cf. Krenn, pp. 159-160.

21 Cf. Krenn, p. 174.

22 Stuhlmacher, Peter. „Kirche nach dem Neuen Testament", *Theologische Beiträge* 26 (1995): 301.

23 Schmalenberg, Erich. „Von der Sprachanalyse zur Verständigungsgemeinschaft. Zum Problem der philosophischen Letztbegründung", *Kerygma und Dogma* 25 (1979), p. 123.

24 In German: „Behauptet der Mensch, die letzten, nicht mehr hinterfragbaren Bedingungen von Erkenntnis, Sprache und Verständigung erkannt zu haben, so hat er sich gleichsam selbst an die Stelle Gottes gesetzt." -Schmalenberg, p. 123.

25 Cf. Schmalenberg, p. 127.

26 Cf. Biser, p. 267.

27 In German: „Dieser moralische Weltklimawandel … geht auf die positiven Nebenwirkungen einer im Übrigen sehr gefährlichen Verwandlung in der Weltform der Modernen zurück: auf die Unterdrückung der herkömmlichen Distanzhygiene (bei welcher der Abstand selbst konfliktvermeidend wirkt) und die Schwächung der Grenzfunktionen. Für beides sind die modernen Raumvernichtungstechniken verantwortlich, an erster Stelle die schnellen Transportmittel und ultraschnellen Nachrichtentechniken. Sie haben dafür gesorgt, dass ein völlig neues System virtueller Nachbarschaften, virtueller Solidaritäten und Kommunitäten entstanden ist, mit deren Auftauchen die Basisdaten der konventionellen Soziologien außer Kraft gesetzt wurden. … Ich nenne die Summe dieser Verhältnisse: Fern-Nachbarschaften. … Die Globalisierung hat für den Ernstfall fern-nachbarschaftlicher Weltbezüge gesorgt. Wenn man von dem Abenteuer der Moral hat sprechen können – wird es im kommenden Jahrhundert nicht vor allem in der Kultivierung der Fern-Tugenden bestehen?" - Sloterdijk, Peter. *„Fern-Nachbarschaft. Vor dem G8-Gipfel: Warum wir die Globalisierung des Mitgefühls brauchen. Eine philosophische Betrachtung", DIE ZEIT*, 26.04.2007 Nr. 18.

28 Ross, Allen P. *Creation and Blessing. A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), pp. 134-135.

29 Kraemer, Hendrik. *Die Kommunikation des christlichen Glaubens* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1958), p. 51.

30 Cf. Kraemer, p. 51.

31 In German: „Sündenfall und Erlösung, Babel und Pfingsten, sind die beiden verborgenen Faktoren in Sprache und Kommunikation." - Kraemer, p. 51.

32 Regarding the understanding of humans as man and woman in the postmodern context, cf. Bee, Jacqueline. *Das erste Paar und die Postmoderne: Studie zur ursprünglichen Beziehung und Abhängigkeit der Geschlechter in der Lebenswelt der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Logos, 2009).

33 In German: „Geschöpfliches Gegenüber Gottes zu sein, das dazu bestimmt ist, dessen Anspruch zu entsprechen, konstituiert den Menschen als Person." - Dalferth, Ingolf U.; Jüngel, Eberhard. „Person und Gottebenbildlichkeit", *Christlicher Glaube in moderner Gesellschaft*, Bd. 24 (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), p. 61.

34 Cf. Bee, p. 15.

35 Cf. Dalferth/Jüngel, pp. 63-64.

36 Cf. Dalferth/Jüngel, pp. 64-65.

37 Cf. Dalferth/Jüngel, p. 65.

38 Cf. Jüngel, Eberhard. „Der Gott entsprechende Mensch. Bemerkungen zur Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen als Grundfigur theologischer Anthropologie", in: Jüngel, Eberhard. *Entsprechungen: Gott – Wahrheit – Mensch. Theologische Erörterungen.* 2. ed. (München: Kaiser, 1986), pp. 308-309.

39 In German: „Diese Ansprechbarkeit gehört in einem fundamentalen Sinn zur Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen. Der Mensch ist ein durch das *Wort* konstituiertes und organisiertes Wesen. *Hörend* ist der Mensch

Mensch. Nur weil er *hören* kann, vermag er zu sprechen, zu denken, zu handeln und darin menschlich zu sein. Hörend stellt sich der Mensch auf Gottes Beziehung zu ihm ein, um so seinem Gott zu entsprechen." (kursiv Jüngel) - Jüngel, S. 310.

40 Jüngel, p. 316.

41 Jüngel, p. 316.

42 Regarding the meaning of the person and work of Christ as an expression of the essential love of God which is the foundation of his movement toward man, cf. Prenter, Regin. „Der Gott, der Liebe ist. Das Verhältnis der Gotteslehre zur Christologie", *Theologie und Gottesdienst. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 275-291.

43 Peters, Albrecht. „Bild Gottes IV", *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 6 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980): 506-515.

44 Jervell, Jacob. „Bild Gottes I", *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 6 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), pp. 492, 494-498.

45 Preuss, Horst Dietrich. „DAMAH, DEMUT", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 259; Jenni, Ernst. "DAMAH", *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, vol. 1, 4. ed. (München: Kaiser, 1984), p. 454; Wildberger, Hans. „ZELEM", *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, vol. 2, 4. ed. (München: Kaiser, 1984), p. 559.

46 Jenni, p. 454.

47 Cf. Jervell, p. 492.

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