

Λόγος and λόγος

Thoughts on the Christian notion of a σάρκωσις του λόγου

by Lukas Metz

Der Beitrag widmet sich im Rückgriff auf Denkkoptionen Martin Heideggers und Peter Knauers SJ einer Reartikulation der Rede von einer „Fleischwerdung des Wortes“. In Bezugnahme auf die konzeptionellen Parallelen zwischen Heideggers „Sein“ und Knauers Geschöpflichkeitsbegriff wird für die Unhintergebarkeit jenes Horizontes argumentiert, innerhalb dessen sich Offenbarung ereignen können soll. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit gilt der zentralen Rolle, die das „Dasein“ dabei spielt, mittels menschlicher Rede Offenbarungsmittler zu sein. Vor dem Hintergrund der Korrelation von Gott, Wort und Glaube wird schlussendlich über das wechselseitige Bedingungsverhältnis von σάρκωσις του λόγου und ἐκκλησιώσις τοῦ πνεύματος ein trinitarisches Offenbarungsverständnis expliziert.

1. Introduction

A common understanding of religion culminates in the notion that the “main issue” of religious convictions would be God’s existence as a supreme being, as well as his divine attributes or faculties.¹ Therefore, religious propositions are often framed as propositions “about” God and what he “can” or “cannot” do. Accordingly, the main “object” of theology seems to be God as such. On the contrary, one could argue that – despite significant differences – all religions proclaim not so much the existence of one supreme and transcendent being, but that we as humans have some sort of “communion” with this divine entity.² Religion is all about “communion with God,” not so much about the speculative task of natural theology³ – even if the latter has to “pave the way” towards the salvific and soteriological claims of religious traditions.

At least in the Christian tradition, one repeatedly refers to the “word of God” in order to justify religious truth claims. This reference occurs in many different contexts and is generally employed as “regress-stopping-advice”: Whenever something is presented as the “ultimate truth”, theologians – of indeed very diverse convictions – tend to suppress any further discussion by pointing towards the “word of God” and its “content”. Critical contemporaries often disapprove of such “argumentative” maneuvers, because they cannot repress the suspicion that such information testifies a severe lack of hermeneutics concerning

¹ Cf. the studies of *Richard Swinburne*, *The Coherence of Theism*, Oxford 2016; *William Laine Craig*, *God and Abstract Objects. The Coherence of Theism: Aseity*, Cham 2017.

² Cf. the general concern of *Gerhard Gädde*, *Theologie der Religionen. Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin et al. 2021.

³ Cf. the overview in *Joel R. Beeke; Paul M. Smalley*, *Natural Theology: Some Historical Perspective*, in: *Puritan Reformed Journal* 9/2 (2017) 81–127.

revelatory truth claims. One is tempted to ask how anyone is legitimated to present an arbitrary proposition as the “word of God”. Are there any criteria for deciding whether such claims are reliable or not? How could a “true” “word of God” differ from a “false” one? Can any proposition be presented as “revealed” – or are there inherent limits for revelatory claims?

2. Problems of Natural Theology

In order to obtain greater clarity, it is reasonable first and foremost to clarify “who” or “what” is meant by “God”. We all know what a word is – but “God” is not part of our everyday experience. Nobody would seriously say that they were as familiar with “God” as they are with the phenomenon of human speech. The traditional version of *theologia naturalis* tries to outline the philosophical “framework” within which questions about God’s existence and nature are addressed. Especially the common notion of “creation” plays an important role in these patterns of ideas. The conventional notion of creation more or less culminates in the idea that one supreme and transcendent being brings everything into existence by a free act of his divine omnipotence.⁴ This “top-down-model” tends to understand creation as volitional affirmation and “making”-process of beings by one “super-being”. Much has been said about the verdict of “onto-theology”.⁵ Regardless of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of using this label for specific authors, one can nevertheless appreciate the quintessence of this reservation: The being of beings cannot be explained by referring to one supreme being – without simultaneously including the latter in some kind of metaphysics that by necessity violates the absolute otherness and incomprehensibility of what we call “God”. Every argument for God’s existence deals with this problem insofar as the one “who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see” (1 Tim 6:16) is presented as “object” in the concluding sentence of a syllogistic figure. How can God be the aiming point of human thought, if he is really ineffable and does not fall under our concepts? Human language tends to collapse when trying to grasp the divine.⁶ Can the traditional “proofs” of God’s existence actually preserve his absolute otherness? The main problem of conventional thought seems to be the fact that the existence of one supreme being is first proven in a merely univocal way by applying the noetic schemata of one conceptual horizon that encompasses both God and the world. The famous *analogia entis* is then introduced in a second step in order to pay tribute to God’s transcendence.

⁴ Cf. for example *Thomas Aquinas*, S. c. G. II, cap. 30: “[...] Creatori inest potentia ut eis det esse vel eis desinat esse influere; cum non ex necessitate naturae agat ad rerum productionem, sed ex voluntate, ut ostensum est.”

⁵ Cf. *Thomas Rentsch; Rico Gutschmidt* (eds.), *Gott ohne Theismus? Neue Positionen zu einer zeitlosen Frage*, Münster 2016.

⁶ Cf. also *Richard Schaeffler*, *Das Gute, das Schöne und das Heilige. Eigenart und Bedingungen der ethischen, der ästhetischen und der religiösen Erfahrung*, Freiburg i. Br. – München 2019, 142: “Das ‘Schauen’ des Heiligen in seiner bildhaften Gegenwartsgestalt berührt die Grenze des Anschaubaren. [...] Der Erkennende wird an die Grenze des Erkennbaren geführt. Seine Begriffe zerbrechen an der Wirklichkeit, die sich dem begreifenden Zugriff entzieht. Seine Sprache wird selbst zu einem Gefüge gebrochener Bilder.”

At this point, one could ask whether even apophatic forms of theology adequately assure God's ineffability when they explicitly refer to the latter and positively make use of this notion. But are there any alternatives? Is it even possible to speak "about" God without verbalizing something that naturally does not fall under human categories?

3. Knauer's "Proof of Createdness"

The German theologian Peter Knauer SJ has tried to formulate a "proof of createdness" that addresses all aforementioned difficulties and is developed against the background of the union of contradictory opposites such as identity and non-identity, being and non-being in our immanent world-experience:

"Because the Christian message claims that we have been created exactly to the extent that we are, and because our own being is an object of reason, it follows that our own createdness should be recognizable by reason. Therefore, it should be possible to carry out a proof of createdness. If the world had been created, it would exist in an 'all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...'. If, therefore, the world had such an 'all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...', then (and only then) its positive aspects should correspond to its 'all-embracing relationship to ...', and the fact that its positivity is pervaded by negativity should correspond to its 'complete distinction from ...' [...]"

Actually, everything in this world is such a union of opposites. The world is a place of constant interaction and change. Constant change means that all identity in the world already contains non-identity within it. And all finite existence is already being pervaded by non-existence. It is in this union of opposites of everything in our world that our createdness becomes apparent. We will be content here to point out that nobody has yet succeeded in disproving this understanding of the world's createdness."⁷

The crucial point of Knauer's notion of createdness is the fact that it presents an inversion of "traditional" understandings. His "bottom-up-model" does not result in a proof for God, but for our own createdness. Accordingly, it is impossible to "conclude" this proof with the reference to God's existence. For Knauer, the world is not explained by one supreme being as the first cause, but by our createdness as "all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...". Even the conventional conviction that the world somehow "comes from God" can be reduced to both aspects of – what Knauer calls – the "relation of createdness".⁸ This very relation is seen as radically unilateral or "one-sided":

"Such a statement may seem hard to accept. The createdness of the world is but a one-sided relation of the world to God, and as such it implies anything but community with God. [...] God is not an integral part of the system we know as the world. We can only point to His existence and acknowledge that He is absolutely absolute. That is why, initially, the meaning

⁷ Peter Knauer, *Theology and spirituality: the word "God"*, in: peter-knauer.de/TheologyandSp3.pdf [accessed at 10.02.2024], here 6.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 4–7.

of the word ‘God’ in the Christian message represents the greatest possible argument against any reference to the ‘word of God’ or ‘communion with God’.”⁹

If the being of all created things substantially consists in an “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...”, this dependence cannot be increased. It is always at its maximum. But this also implies the profound difficulty of speaking of “revelation” in religious contexts. Due to our unilateral relationship to “him without whom nothing would exist” and “who doesn’t fall under human concepts”, our createdness can never be the “stage” for divine interactions – because such “interventions” would violate the radical one-sidedness of our own *relatio ad Deum*. There is no mutuality between God and the world. By elaborating on this admittedly unfamiliar thought, Knauer conceptualizes a “structure of insurmountability”. In contrast to classical apologetics, it is not possible to somehow “demonstrate” the truth of faith by pointing at this or that “miraculous” event in history. God’s love for everything created cannot be observed by simply “looking” at the world – or as Knauer puts it: “God[']s love for the world doesn’t find its measure in the world and can, therefore, not become apparent, legible, in the world. It remains hidden [...]”.¹⁰

4. Heidegger’s Notion of “Being”

It is very interesting that Heidegger’s¹¹ well known and much discussed notion of “Being” (“Sein”) is characterized by marks which remind the reader of Knauer’s aspects of an “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...”. “Being” is understood by Heidegger in both an ontological and a transcendental way. Even if “Being” itself is no “entity”, no entity as “being” (“Seiendes”) could “be” without “Being”. “Being” is never without “beings” – and is still no “being”.¹² In this sense, “Being” is “Bedingnis” as a non-reified “condition of possibility” for every being.¹³ Furthermore, it is not possible to find any further “ground” for “Being”, because the latter is its own “ground”. There is no

⁹ Ibid., 7.

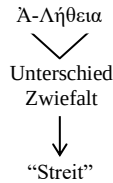
¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹ The continuous reference to Heidegger’s idiosyncratic and poetic language aims at showing a “deep structure” of revelation by virtue of an expressive and unfamiliar terminology. This may be justified in as much as a poetic approach can unconventionally accentuate interrelations that otherwise would remain shrouded by our accustomed habit of speech. If the biblical account of revelation itself is of poetic quality, it shouldn’t be illegitimate to elucidate it by another poetic discourse – in order to grasp a more fundamental, pre-verbal experience that originally gave rise to the biblical formula; cf. *Paul Ricœur, Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation*, in: id., *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, edited by L. S. Mudge, Philadelphia 1979, 73–118, here 100–104.

¹² Cf. GA (= Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe) 9, 306: “Das Sein jedoch ist keine seiende Beschaffenheit an Seiendem. Das Sein läßt sich nicht gleich dem Seienden gegenständlich vor- und herstellen. Dies schlechthin Andere[...] zu allem Seienden ist das Nicht-Seiende. [...] [W]enn anders zur Wahrheit des Seins gehört, daß das Sein[...] nie[...] west[...] ohne das Seiende, daß niemals[...] ein Seiendes ist ohne das Sein.”

¹³ Cf. GA 65, 480. Heidegger nevertheless expresses his inconvenience when thinking “Sein” as “condition of possibility”. Such an approach would be too “metaphysical”. He explicitly rejects the idea that “Sein” could be determined by anything external to it; cf. GA 70, 10, 175, 193.

possibility of reducing “Being” to “something else”, which would be more fundamental.¹⁴ If the understanding of “Being” is inseparably linked to the understanding of our own finitude¹⁵, the world¹⁶ and especially the phenomenon of time¹⁷, it is more than obvious that Heidegger’s “Being” is not God or some supreme reality beyond our immanent sphere.¹⁸ Being confronted with this opaqueness, one could still try to describe the “properties” of “Being”: It is at the same time truth and concealment, disclosure and closure, givenness and withdrawal¹⁹ – but not in the sense that “one part” of “Being” would be giving openness whereas the “other part” simply existed as concealment; on the contrary, the ἀλήθεια of “Being” is at the same time λήθεια. Both are “two sides of one coin”.²⁰ Or to put it slightly differently: There is a “Zwiefalt” in “Being” itself that constitutes its “nature” as opening concealment and concealing openness:²¹



Heidegger also stresses the identity of “Being” and Λόγος – whereby he understands the latter as a “collecting process”.²² But what exactly is “collected”? And is there any coherent connection to the aforementioned properties of “Being”? Against the background of identifying “ground” and “Being”, Heidegger states that this very “ground” would be the

¹⁴ Cf. GA 10, 186 f.: “Weilen, wahren, immerwähren ist jedoch der alte Sinn des Wortes ‘sein’. Das Weil, das alle Begründung und jedes Warum abwehrt, nennt das einfache, ohne Warum schlichte Vorliegen, woran alles liegt, darauf alles ruht. Das Weil nennt den Grund. Aber zugleich nennt das Weil als das Dieweilen das Wahren: das Sein. Das Weil nennt zumal: das Sein und den Grund, nennt das Wahren, das Sein als den Grund. Sein und Grund – im Weil – : das Selbe. Beide gehören zusammen.”

¹⁵ Cf. GA 3, 229.

¹⁶ Cf. GA 27, 392–396.

¹⁷ Cf. GA 9, 376 f.

¹⁸ Cf. GA 9, 331: “Doch das Sein – was ist das Sein? Es ‘ist’ Es selbst. Dies zu erfahren und zu sagen, muß das künftige Denken lernen. Das ‘Sein’ – das ist nicht Gott und nicht ein Weltgrund. Das Sein ist wesenhaft weiter[...] denn alles Seiende und ist gleichwohl dem Menschen näher als jedes Seiende, sei dies ein Fels, ein Tier, ein Kunstwerk, eine Maschine, sei es ein Engel oder Gott. Das Sein ist das Nächste. Doch die Nähe bleibt dem Menschen am fernsten.”

¹⁹ Cf. GA 55, 179.

²⁰ Cf. GA 82, 352: “Die potenzierte transzendente Frage fragt nach dem, worin das Sein als Sein sich lichtet. Diese Lichtung, in der (und vielleicht gar als welche) das Sein selbst aufgeht, ist im Wesen Entbergung des Seins. Als Entbergung west jedoch die Unverborgenheit.” Similar remarks can be found in GA 69, 168: “Die Verweigerung aber gewährt die Lichtung, in der Seiendes aus- und ein-gehen, als ein solches offenbar und verborgen sein kann.”

²¹ A similar graphic can be found in GA 73.2, 943.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, 1450: “Grund als Λόγος. Das versammelnde Bergen [als Ereignis des Ver-Hältnisses].” Heidegger tries to understand Λόγος in its original meaning as “Sammlung” – as opposed to the later interpretation as “Sage” or “Rede”; cf. GA 65, 358, 457.

“collection into openness” within which every being is.²³ If the equation of “Being”, “ground” and Λόγος is correct, then the latter is Λόγος insofar as it “collects” both openness and concealment into the horizon of our world – and thereby initiates the “event” (“Ereignis”) as something which “gives room” to human freedom.²⁴

5. Parallels between Knauer and Heidegger

What has this all to do with Knauer’s concept of createdness? The Jesuit understands our “*status essendi*” as a created *relatio subsistens ad Deum* which exactly exists in an “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...”. These two “aspects” are “logical stopping-points”: They cannot be reduced to something else. For Knauer, there is no way of “surpassing” our createdness or reducing it to something more fundamental. This reminds of Heidegger’s identification of “Being” and “Ground”. Knauer would say: Createdness is its own ground as an “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...”. Furthermore, one could compare the famous “properties” of openness (ἀλήθεια) and concealment (λήθεια) to the aforementioned aspects of our createdness, which cannot be separated and always occur at the same time – in the precise sense that our “all-embracing relationship to ...” is our “complete distinction from ...”. This corresponds to Heidegger’s identification of openness and concealment. Both constitute “Being” as “Lichtung” – which is “opened up” by its own withdrawal and “substantially” consists in this “*natura duplex*” of ἀλήθεια as λήθεια.²⁵ Accordingly, Knauer regards the created world as substantially identical with its “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...”. If one could remove the latter, the world would cease to exist. Finally, both authors claim to “free up” the “worldliness of the world” in its unforeseeable “historicity”. Knauer regards the unilaterality of the world-God-relation as a guarantee for the secular autonomy of immanent processes in the course of human history – which unfolds *etsi Deus non daretur*. Heidegger repeatedly makes clear that “Being” “west als das Ereignis[...].”²⁶ In other words: “Sein verschwindet im Ereignis”²⁷. But what exactly is this ominous “Event”? His cryptic answer²⁸ points towards a familiar intuition: “Ereignis” is always also “Enteignis”.²⁹ This reminds of Heidegger’s characterization of “Being” as both openness

²³ Cf. GA 51, 88: “Grund ist hier das Aufnehmen, aus sich, in sich Sammelnde, welche Sammlung das Offene gewährt, darin alles Seiende ist. ‘Grund’ meint das Sein selbst und dieses ist der Anfang.”

²⁴ Cf. GA 82, 369: “[...] [S]ondern die Wahrheit des Seyns ist die Entbergung und d. h. zugleich die Verbergung des Seins. Dieses aber nicht nur das Erscheinen und Nichterscheinen ‘des Seins’, sondern die Entbergung und Verbergung ist das Sein selbst – als das Ereignis. Und zwar das Ereignis, das ereignet das ‘Wesen’ des Menschen in die Gelassenheit der Armut der Freyheit.”

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 352: “Diese Lichtung, in der (und vielleicht gar als welche) das Sein selbst aufgeht, ist im Wesen Entbergung des Seins. Als Entbergung west jedoch die Unverborgenheit.” Cf. also GA 65, 230: “Hier ist in der unumgänglichen Gewöhnlichkeit des Seienden das Seyn das Ungewöhnlichste; und diese Befremdung des Seyns ist nicht eine Erscheinungsweise desselben, sondern es selbst.”

²⁶ GA 65, 230.

²⁷ GA 14, 22.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 24: “Das Ereignis ereignet. Damit sagen wir vom Selben her auf das Selbe zu das Selbe.”

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 23: “Zum Ereignis als solchem gehört die Enteignis. Durch sie gibt das Ereignis sich nicht auf, sondern bewahrt sein Eigentum.”

and concealment. If “Being” occurs as “Ereignis”, it is no surprise that the latter also bears the “character traits” of “Being”.

6. The Indication of a Problem

Here we reach a decisive point: Both Knauer and Heidegger conceptualize “createdness” respectively “Being” as an insurmountable horizon³⁰ that functions as a “blocking wall”³¹ for any possible revelation on the part of God: The Jesuit insists on the one-sidedness of our “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...” and therefore explains that created reality can never be the *terminus ad quem* of God’s real relation to the world. In Heidegger’s thought, a similar diagnosis can be found: He understands “Being” as the horizon for a possible advent of “the God”³² and simultaneously speaks of several “hurdles” which condition this advent:

“In such nearness, if at all, a decision may be made as to whether and how God and the gods withhold their presence and the night remains, whether and how the day of the holy dawns, whether and how in the upsurge of the holy an epiphany of God and the gods can begin anew. But the holy, which alone is the essential sphere of divinity, which in turn alone affords a dimension for the gods and for God, comes to radiate only when Being itself beforehand and after extensive preparation has been illuminated and is experienced in its truth. Only thus does the overcoming of homelessness begin from Being, a homelessness in which not only man but the essence of man stumbles aimlessly about.”³³

This “homelessness” is owed to the apparent absence of “the God” who remains hidden and distant.³⁴ He does not “show up” at the stage of “Being”. But why exactly? It could be

³⁰ Heidegger’s notion of “Being” is interpreted as such an insurmountable structure by Rico Gutschmidt, *Aufklärung der Aufklärung. Heideggers Spätphilosophie und die philosophische Theologie*, in: *DZPh* 60/2 (2012) 193–211.

³¹ Knauer and Heidegger seem to completely invert Jean-Luc Marion’s attempt to dispel any possibly “hurdle” for the unconditioned manifestation of the saturated phenomenon; for Marion’s aversion against the horizon of Being cf. *Jean-Luc Marion, Aspekte der Religionsphänomenologie. Grund, Horizont und Offenbarung*, in: Alois Halder; Klaus Kienzler; Joseph Möller (eds.), *Religionsphilosophie heute. Chancen und Bedeutung in Philosophie und Theologie (Beiträge zur Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, Experiment Religionsphilosophie III)*, Düsseldorf 1988, 84–103, here 95–97. Even *Ricoeur*, *Idea of Revelation* (see fn. 11), 109, understands Husserl’s idealism as “the most formidable obstacle to the idea of revelation” and therefore implicitly “atheistic”.

³² Cf. GA 65, 230: “Das Seyn aber west als das Ereignis, die Augenblicksstätte der Entscheidung über Nähe und Ferne des letzten Gottes.”

³³ Id., *Letter on Humanism*, in: id., *Basic Writings*, edited by David F. Krell, New York 1977, 193–242, here 218. For the sake of completeness, one could also refer to *ibid.*, 230: “Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of the holy is the essence of divinity to be thought. Only in the light of the essence of divinity can it be thought or said what the word ‘God’ is to signify.” *Marion, Aspekte der Religionsphilosophie* (see fn. 31), 95 f., explicitly refers to this famous passage – only to criticize it for building up an *a priori* pre-condition for God’s revelation.

³⁴ Cf. GA 69, 211: “Jegliches Seiende mögt ihr durchstreifen. Nirgends zeigt sich die Spur des Gottes. Alles Seiende könnt ihr umordnen, nie trifft ihr auf eine freie Stelle für die Behausung des Gottes. Über euer Seiendes dürft ihr hinausgehen, und ihr findet nur die Seiendheit dessen noch einmal, was euch schon als das Seiende galt. Ihr erklärt nur mit Solchem, was euch schon für das Klare gelten muß.”

argued that this negative indication is somehow connected to the very “nature” of “Being”. If it is at the same time openness and concealment, then every “clearing” (“Lichtung”) is always constituted as withdrawal. In other words: There can be no “collection” into the “openness” of a “clearing” without necessarily “collecting” this ἀλήθεια as λήθεια. Consequently, “the God” simply cannot “show up” in all his glory,³⁵ because such a massive advent would violate the nature of “Being” – which cannot suppress its nature as seclusion.

These diagnostics bear witness to a fundamental problem. If Knauer and Heidegger are right, revelation cannot occur as sheer *rapsus* or *illuminatio*. References to “mystical insight” or “experiences of God” become questionable. We only experience our own createdness as opening concealment and concealing openness. But God is not “part” of that experience – and would not really be God if he actually was.³⁶ The claims of all religions and spiritual traditions seem to become shallow and empty. At this point, it is no longer possible to rely on an immediate experience of the numinous in a sacred cosmos. There simply is no “hierophany” of the “surréal” by virtue of a correspondence between the divine reality itself and a “bound” or “adherent” symbolism of nature.³⁷ The “excess” of revelation does not show itself in the form of some very special experience.³⁸ But how can somebody then legitimately claim to “possess” divine truth of salvific quality if there is no place within “Being” that could possibly “show” or “demonstrate” the positive reality of this pretention?

7. A Possible Solution

Is there any possibility to overcome this disillusioning outcome? In order to answer this question, one has to search for a kind of “channel of information” for this divine truth which ultimately is intended to “get in contact” with humankind. Knauer levels out how revelation can solely take place:

“God[']s love for the world doesn’t find its measure in the world and can, therefore, not become apparent, legible, in the world. It remains hidden to the world, unless it becomes known to us by a human word that conveys to us a godly truth. [...] We say God became man in order to make any talk of the ‘word’ of God intelligible. The human being Jesus is created, with its human self-presence into that self-presence of God which we call the Son. That is how he can reveal to us through human language what God wants us to understand, i.e. that we are included

³⁵ Cf. the same conclusion in *Marion*, *Aspekte der Religionsphänomenologie* (see fn. 31), 95 f.: “[...] [D]ann muß man daraus schließen, daß Gott [...] sich nicht offenbaren kann. [...] Das Sein geht also [...] Gott voraus, für dessen Manifestation es im voraus als Horizont das Maß setzt.”

³⁶ In this respect, cf. also the distinction between ἀλήθεια and ἀποκάλυψις in id., *Das Erscheinen des Unsichtbaren. Fragen zur Phänomenalität der Offenbarung*, Freiburg i. Br. 2018, 78–90. For Marion, ἀλήθεια denotes the – potentially idolatrous – revelation of everything non-divine under the finite conditions of our own intellectual – “metaphysical” – grasp. In contrast, ἀποκάλυψις means the self-manifestation of God under God’s own gracious “conditions”. This way, the presented reading of Heidegger’s ἀλήθεια conforms with Marion’s understanding of ἀλήθεια as non-salvific reality.

³⁷ Cf. Paul Ricœur’s description of the archaic paradigm of a “phenomenology of manifestation” in id., *Manifestation and Proclamation*, in: id., *Figuring the Sacred*, transl. by D. Pellauer, Minneapolis 1995, 48–67, here 49–55.

³⁸ Cf. *Marion*, *Aspekte der Religionsphänomenologie* (see fn. 31), 93.

within the love of the Father for him. Why did the Son of God become man? To make the 'Word of God' possible in its strictest sense."³⁹

God's loving presence in the world is exclusively revealed by a human word. For Knauer, God cannot "speak" – unless one human being says what only God can say to us. The unilateral relation of createdness – which impediments any miraculous intervention on the part of God – becomes "transparent" for divine love only by virtue of a word. Correspondingly, human speech plays *the* decisive role in disclosing the salvific presence of whom "no one has ever seen or can see" (1 Tim 6:16): God alone is encountered by faith alone in virtue of a word alone.⁴⁰

Throughout his work, Heidegger has repeatedly reflected on the connection between "Being" as Λόγος and human being ("Dasein") as λόγος. For him, the latter plays an important role as "breach" ("Bresche") for the advent of "Being".⁴¹ "Dasein" is some sort of privileged "place" for the openness of "Being" – without the "breach" of human existence, there would be no "clearing"⁴² – whose "happening" depends on the "shelter" ("Unter-kunft") "Dasein" lends itself to be.⁴³ Heidegger's notion of "Dasein" as the "shepherd of Being"⁴⁴ and of language as the "house of Being"⁴⁵ is very famous. Perhaps it is possible to reformulate the intuition behind these poetic expressions in the following way: In order to appear, "Being" needs a horizon within whose openness it actually *can* appear. There is no "showing up" without antecedent "stage" for this appearance. If there were no human beings out there, no horizon would be given within whose "borders" a disclosive moment

³⁹ Knauer, *Theology and Spirituality* (see fn. 7), 9 f.; cf. also Emmanuel Falque, *Den Rubikon überschreiten. Philosophie und Theologie. Ein Versuch über ihre Grenzen*, introduced and translated by M. Kneer, Münster 2020, 155: „Wir haben nämlich *zunächst* keine andere Erfahrung Gottes als die des Menschen.“

⁴⁰ Knauer's thoughts correspond very well with Ricœur's depiction of the so called "hermeneutic of proclamation" that radically detaches itself from any immediacy concerning the divine presence in creation; cf. *Ricœur, Manifestation and Proclamation* (see fn. 37), 55–61, especially 56: "Hearing the word has taken the place of a vision of signs." Ricœur remarkably doesn't restrict this paradigm to Christianity only, but rightly places it in the context of the Hebrew bible and its harsh critique of idolatry. In addition, he acknowledges the "demythologizing" and "antisacral" (ibid., 62) potential of the proclamation-centered kerygma.

⁴¹ Cf. GA 40, 171 f.

⁴² Cf. GA 45, 212: "Wäre der Mensch nicht seiend, dann könnte auch diese Lichtung nicht geschehen. Die Lichtung für das Sichverbergen – die Wahrheit – ist der tragende Grund für das Menschsein, und dieses geschieht nur, indem es den tragenden Grund als solchen gründet und aussteht. Indem der Mensch seiend im Offenen des Seienden steht, muß er auch zugleich in einem Bezug stehen zu jenem Sichverbergenden. Der Grund des Menschseins muß durch das Menschsein als Grund gegründet werden."

⁴³ Cf. GA 6,2, 365 f.: "Denn die Angel dieses Wesens besteht darin, daß das Sein selbst, in welcher Weise auch immer, und sei es gar in der des Ausbleibens, das Wesen des Menschen beansprucht, welches Wesen die Unterkunft ist, mit der das Sein selbst sich begabt, um sich als die Ankunft der Unverborgenheit in eine solche Unterkunft zu begeben."

⁴⁴ Cf. GA 9, 330 f.: "Ob es und wie es erscheint, ob und wie der Gott und die Götter, die Geschichte und die Natur in die Lichtung des Seins hereinkommen, an- und abwesen, entscheidet nicht der Mensch. Die Ankunft des Seienden beruht im Geschick^[...] des Seins. Für den Menschen aber bleibt die Frage, ob er in das Schickliche seines Wesens findet, das diesem Geschick entspricht; denn diesem gemäß hat er als der Ek-sistierende die Wahrheit des Seins zu hüten. Der Mensch ist der Hirt des Seins."

⁴⁵ Cf. ibid., 333: "Der Mensch aber ist nicht nur ein Lebewesen, das neben anderen Fähigkeiten auch die Sprache besitzt. Vielmehr ist die Sprache das Haus des Seins, darin wohnend der Mensch ek-sistiert, indem er der Wahrheit des Seins, sie hütend, gehört."

could take place.⁴⁶ The horizon of human speech enables the “gathering” of “things” to occur.⁴⁷ Significantly, Heidegger does not speak of the “house of God”, but of the “house of Being”. Why? Given the fact that “Dasein” cannot be separated from “Being” and owes its very ek-static essence to it,⁴⁸ the λόγος of human beings remains within the finite Λόγος of “Being”⁴⁹ that is characterized by the aforementioned Ἀ-Λήθεια as “Zwiefalt”, “Unterschied” or “Streit”⁵⁰. There is no “direct contact” of our epistemic and linguistic faculties with the divine reality. Everything we denote, we denote as created beings whose ek-sistence is openness *as* concealment.

Some conclusions can be drawn: The truth of a word that claims to be “word of God” is only accessible to someone with an attitude of faith. The supernatural truth of God’s love cannot be observed in the “realm” of “Being” – due to its “instability” as abyss (“Abgrund”)⁵¹. In the “clearing” of “Being”, divine truth never appears as some “being” we could “grasp”. No empiric investigation or sheer philosophical effort will ever reach divine reality and be able to “prove” its truthfulness – that in turn can only be “discovered” by faith alone.⁵² This faith has as its only *cardo salutis* the λόγος of a human being – because the “a-lethiological” nature of the clearing of Being dictates the conditions for any possible advent of the numinous.⁵³ The concealing character of the Λόγος explains the reliance on the human λόγος.

⁴⁶ Cf. GA 3, 229: “Auf dem Grunde des Seinsverständnisses ist der Mensch das Da, mit dessen Sein der eröffnende Einbruch in das Seiende geschieht, so daß dieses sich als solches für ein Selbst bekunden kann.”

⁴⁷ Cf. GA 12, 224: “Das Walten des Wortes blitzt auf als die Bedingnis des Dinges zum Ding. Das Wort hebt an zu leuchten als die Versammlung, die Anwesendes erst in sein Anwesen bringt. Das älteste Wort für das so gedachte Walten des Wortes, für das Sagen, heißt Λόγος: die Sage, die zeigend Seiendes in sein *es ist* erscheinen läßt. Das selbe Wort Λόγος ist aber als Wort für das Sagen zugleich das Wort für das Sein, d. h. für das Anwesen des Anwesenden. Sage und Sein, Wort und Ding gehören in einer verhüllten, kaum bedachten und unausdenkbaren Weise zueinander.”

⁴⁸ Cf. GA 9, 332: “Wie verhält sich jedoch, gesetzt daß wir überhaupt geradehin so fragen dürfen, das Sein zur Ek-sistenz? Das Sein selber ist das Verhältnis^[...], insofern Es die Ek-sistenz in ihrem existenzialen, das heißt ekstatischen Wesen an sich hält und zu sich versammelt als die Ortschaft der Wahrheit des Seins inmitten des Seienden.”

⁴⁹ Cf. GA 55, 344 f.

⁵⁰ Cf. GA 73.2, 950: “Wie, wenn ‘Sein’ – kaum daß es gelichtet – eigentlich schon leuchtete in die Zwiefalt des Unterschieds [...]”

⁵¹ Cf. GA 51, 62 f.: “Das Sein, sonst ständig gebraucht und angerufen, bietet uns nicht Boden und nicht Grund, darauf wir unmittelbar dasjenige stellen können, was wir täglich aufstellen und anstellen und bewerkstelligen. Das Sein erscheint dann wie das Bodenlose, wie solches, das ständig nachgibt, keine Stütze bietet und jeden Grund und Untergrund versagt. Das Sein ist die Absage an jede Erwartung, als ein Grund dienen zu können. Das Sein erweist sich überallhin als der Ab-grund.”

⁵² Cf. GA 60, 323: “Erphilosophieren läßt sich keine echte Religion [...]”

⁵³ Cf. Marion, *Aspekte der Religionsphänomenologie* (see fn. 31), 96 f.: “Sein fixiert den Rahmen der Offenbarung. Sein legt der Gabe der Offenbarung die Bedingungen ihrer Entgegennahme auf. [...] Die Hindernisse für die Offenbarung fallen genau ineins mit den Bedingungen der Manifestation.” Though, Marion is not very happy with this concept of a hurdle for any divine self-manifestation. The punchline of this article consists exactly in raising the profile of what Marion seems to despise the most: a hurdle that dictates the conditions under which revelation can occur (cf. *ibid.*, 101). In the end, this project may even converge with Marion’s approach, because it turns out that God can give himself only under conditions he alone sets: namely word and faith – and the unloved *a priori* condition explains *why* this is the case.

8. Towards a Trinitarian Logic of Revelation

Christian theology has always stressed that salvation is accomplished by the incarnation of the divine word: the σάρκωσις του λόγου. There are – roughly speaking – two main traditions of understanding this key paradigm of Christianity: Whereas especially Eastern theologians already celebrate the mystery of Christmas as the moment of Θεωσις, predominantly Western theology stresses the hard-earned atonement of the cross. The aforementioned considerations open up the room for a mediation of these two theological traditions. The infant Christ stands for the conviction that only the word of a human being – born “in our flesh” – can reveal God’s eternal love – nothing else. But why does the sheer givenness of the word not suffice? Why is it not enough exclusively to celebrate Christmas? Why do we need the cross?

The Church fathers used the term λόγος ἄσαρκος to designate the pre-incarnatory “operation” of God’s *oeconomia revelationis*.⁵⁴ On the contrary, λόγος ἐνσαρκος denotes the incarnated word in the person of Christ. Christian Theology has always stressed the utmost importance of the σάρκωσις του λόγου in contrast to its mere “a-sarcic” status. Yet why exactly does the latter not suffice to mediate salvific insight? Why does Christian Theology insist on the former σάρκωσις of the word that is already given *remoto Christo* – albeit in its “a-sarcic” form? Members of all religions and spiritual traditions actually speak and therefore potentially reveal and transmit divine truth. What is so special regarding Christ? Maybe the following thought experiment sheds some light on this issue: The historical Jesus made the experience of attracting followers by proclaiming the kingdom of God. Finally, he reached out to Jerusalem in order to confront the temple aristocracy with his eschatological message. If his word about the Father’s merciful forgiveness was true, Jesus would have to proclaim this word also in the religious and political center of Israel – simply because God’s apocalyptic “offer” of unconditioned communion with him addresses every member of his “chosen nation”.⁵⁵ What if Jesus said to himself: “Well, going to Jerusalem probably will be too dangerous. It could end in misery and death. Let’s not do it. I want to stay safe”? If he had actually decided this way, his whole proclamation would have failed. Why? In this alternative scenario, the “power” of his own word of communion with God would have been too feeble to liberate Jesus from the power of fear.⁵⁶ But if Christ’s

⁵⁴ Cf. Gerhard Gäde, Λόγος ἄσαρκος und λόγος ἐνσαρκος. Zu einer religionstheologisch relevanten Unterscheidung im Werk Jacques Dupuis, in: MThZ MTZ 69/1 (2018) 42–59.

⁵⁵ Cf. Helmut Merklein, Jesus, Kündiger des Reiches Gottes, in: Walter Kern; Hermann J. Pottmeyer; Max Seckler (eds.), Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie, Vol. 2: Traktat Offenbarung, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1985, 145–174, here 165–168.

⁵⁶ Cf. Knauer, Theology and Spirituality (see fn. 7), 11: “The belief in being sustained in the love of God liberates man from the power of that fear which stems from his vulnerability and impermanence. This fear continues to find expression in the fact that, when the worst comes to the worst, human beings may be prepared to walk over dead bodies in order to protect their own safety. Christian faith liberates and delivers mankind from the power of this fear, which prevents humane in favor of inhumane behavior. We deliberately do not claim that faith removes this fear, for Jesus himself knew fear. Faith, however, prepares us for fear; it gives us courage to face up even to situations of persecution by those in power in this world.”

Godhead was only visible in and through his liberation from this power,⁵⁷ his “true” nature as “the Son” would have remained shrouded – and we would have never recognized him accordingly as “the Christ”.⁵⁸ His willingness to face death reveals the “true nature” of “Being” as “Being-in-God” (cf. Acts 16:28; Kol 1:16). Without his authenticity (“Eigentlichkeit”) and decisiveness (“Entschlossenheit”) to become a martyr,⁵⁹ the “Gründung der Wahrheit des Seyns”⁶⁰ as “Being-in-God” would have remained shrouded by the unsurmountable Λόγος of creation. Herein lies the indispensability of Christ’s sacrifice.

If “[t]he human being Jesus is created, with its human self-presence into that self-presence of God which we call the Son”⁶¹, “then, in the face of death [his resurrection is] identical with his being the Son of God.”⁶² The sacrifice of a human who is God leads to re-joining,⁶³ because he transmits the Spirit to those who believe his word (cf. Joh 19:30) – and form the church as his Body.⁶⁴ It is very important to note that the σάρκωσις του λόγου would not be “complete” without this ἐκκλησίωσις τοῦ πνεύματος.⁶⁵ If Christ’s proclamation is already sacramental,⁶⁶ then there has to be a sacramental body of his presence in the world – if the good news shall not perish.⁶⁷ The strict correlation of God, word and faith

⁵⁷ Cf. id., *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören. Ökumenische Fundamentaltheologie*, Norderstedt 2015, 139: “Darin allein wirkt sich seine Gottessohnschaft auf sein Menschsein aus: Wir begegnen in ihm einem Menschen, der nicht aus der Angst um sich selbst lebt und auch andere Menschen aus der Macht ihrer Angst um sich selbst befreit.”

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 144 f.

⁵⁹ Cf. id., *Theology and spirituality* (see fn. 7), 10: “Jesus’ death on the cross can also only be understood as a martyrdom for his message. Jesus was nailed to the cross because his message promised liberation from the power of fear, and because he found followers who adopted his message. God[’]s will was that he should remain true to his mission.” For the martyrological character of Christ’s testimony cf. also *Hansjürgen Verweyen*, *Theologische Hermeneutik heute*, in: *Fundamentaltheologie. Fluchtlinien und gegenwärtige Herausforderungen*, edited by Klaus Müller together with Gerhard Larcher, Regensburg 1998, 177–191, esp. 186–191.

⁶⁰ Cf. GA 65, 417: “Wie wenige wissen davon, daß der Gott wartet auf die Gründung der Wahrheit des Seyns und somit auf den Einsprung des Menschen in das Da-sein. Statt dessen scheint es so, als müßte und würde der Mensch auf den Gott warten. Und vielleicht ist dieses die verfänglichste Form der tiefsten Gottlosigkeit [...]”

⁶¹ *Knauer*, *Theology and spirituality* (see fn. 7), 10.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶³ Cf. GA 65, 230: “Der furchtbarste Jubel muß das Sterben eines Gottes sein. Nur der Mensch ‘hat’ die Auszeichnung, vor dem Tod zu stehen, weil der Mensch inständig ist im Seyn: Der Tod das höchste Zeugnis des Seyns.”

⁶⁴ An attempt to understand the deep connection of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection in the Spirit is famously expressed by *Hansjürgen Verweyen*, *Christologische Brennpunkte* (CSMW 20), Essen 1985, 65–116. Verweyen argues that the death of the bearer of the Spirit is sufficient for the paschal proclamation and its pneumatic character. For the most part, he also affirms Knauer’s understanding of Christ’s death and resurrection (cf. *ibid.*, 141–144) – with the main difference lying in Verweyen’s insisting on appearances of the risen Christ as *de facto*-reason for the faith of the disciples –; even though Christ’s life and death *de jure* could have been sufficient.

⁶⁵ Cf. again *Knauer*, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören* (see fn. 57), 153–157; and also *Richard Schaeffler*, *Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie*, Vol. 1: *Zur Methode und zur theologischen Erkenntnislehre*, Freiburg i. Br. 2008, 219–279. Schaeffler stresses the interdependency of preacher and audience for the enactment of God’s salvific presence in his word and spirit.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Knauer*, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören* (see fn. 57), 230–245.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Jean-Luc Marion*, *Die Phänomenalität des Sakramentes. Wesen und Gegenstand*, in: Rolf Kühn (ed.), *Religio und passio. Texte zur neueren französischen Religionsphilosophie*, Würzburg 2014, 208–227, here 222 f.: “[...] bestimmt sich die Kirche in der Welt als der einzige Schauplatz, auf dem sich gemäß der zugleich sichtbaren und

inherently demands an incarnation of the Holy Spirit in those who recognize the incarnate word of God – whereby it can be stated that both “incarnations” strictly imply each other: It is as true that there would be no incarnation of the word without an act of “church-becoming” of the Spirit, as it is true that the latter would have never occurred without the former. To put it differently: If Jesus’ own messianic consciousness was dependent on his – positive – interaction with other human beings and their reaction, he would have never been recognized as “the Son” irrespective of the affirmation of his followers.⁶⁸ Christ was not dispensed from faith, but relied on the word of faith that his followers delivered to him (cf. Mt 16:13–17) – and by virtue of which he could affirm his mission, and his disciples could partake in his relation to the Father. He made the real experience *extra eo* that his proclamation was able to create a new type of community in the horizon of the dawning βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. This way, his faith was strengthened and undergirded by the positive response on the part of those around him.⁶⁹

Even Heidegger articulated one precondition for the advent of “the last God” whose “apparition” is in need of those whom he calls “Zukünftige”⁷⁰: They have to prepare the arrival of the one to whom they belong⁷¹ – and thereby form the “resonant cavity” of divine presence.⁷² There is no “hint” (“Wink”) of the “last God” without those who “withstand” its “impulse” – and thereby make it present.⁷³ So even for the late Heidegger, there can be no presence of “the God” without any resonance on part of the prevenient community of those

unsichtbaren Arbeit des Heiligen Geistes die Offenbarung des Unsichtbaren Gottes vollziehen kann. In ihr gelangt die Heiligkeit Gottes [...] dazu, sich zu zeigen. Sie übt also eine zur Phänomenologie analoge Funktion aus[...].”

⁶⁸ Cf. *Knauer*, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören* (see fn. 57), 226–229; *Schaeffler*, *Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie* (see fn. 65), 219: “Aber das Zeugnis, das von dieser Erfahrung gegeben wird (‘Verbum Oris’), fordert den Hörer zu einer Antwort heraus, die auf das Anschauen und Denken des ersten Sprechers [LM: ‘Verbum Mentis’] verändernd zurückwirken kann. Der Dialog zwischen Sprecher und Hörer wird so zur erfahrbaren Erscheinungsgestalt der ‘Veritas maior’ [...], die das Bewußtsein der beiden Beteiligten über seine jeweils erreichte Gestalt hinaustreibt [...]” Therefore, Christ was as dependent on his disciples the same way, preachers in general are dependent on their audience in order to retrieve the word of God as external reality that one cannot say to oneself (cf. *ibid.*, 220–228, especially 226).

⁶⁹ Cf. *Knauer*, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören* (see fn. 57), 226–229; *Schaeffler*, *Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie* (see fn. 65), 231: “Und so entsteht ein Dialog ‘aus Glauben zum Glauben’ (Ek pisteos eis pistin), [...] sodaß eine Gemeinschaft gestiftet wird, deren Glieder ‘gemeinsam aneinander Halt finden durch die Gegenseitigkeit des Glaubens, der in euch und in mir ist’[...].” *Schaeffler* is citing Romans 1:12 and 1:17.

⁷⁰ Cf. GA 65, 395: “Die Zukünftigen[...] sind jene Künftigen, auf die als die rückwegig Er-wartenden in opfernder Verhaltnheit der Wink und Anfall der Fernung und Nahung des letzten Gottes zu kommt.”

⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 399: “Das Wesen des Volkes gründet in der Geschichtlichkeit der Sichgehörenden aus der Zugehörigkeit zu dem Gott.”

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 400: “Die wenigen Zukünftigen zählen zu sich die wesentlich Unscheinbaren, denen keine Öffentlichkeit gehört, die aber in ihrer inneren Schönheit das Vorleuchten des letzten Gottes sammeln und wieder den Wenigen und Seltenen im Widerstrahl schenken. Sie alle gründen das Da-sein, durch das der Einklang der Gott-nähe schwingt, die sich nicht überhebt und auch nicht versinkt, sondern die Festigkeit der innigsten Scheu sich zum einzigsten Schwingungsraum genommen. Da-sein – Durchrückung aller Bezüge von Fernung und Nähe (Anfall) des letzten Gottes.”

⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*, 395: “Die Zukünftigen: die langsamen und langhörenden Gründer dieses Wesens der Wahrheit. Die Widerständigen gegen den Stoß des Seyns [...] sind jene Künftigen, auf die als die rückwegig Er-wartenden in opfernder Verhaltnheit der Wink und Anfall der Fernung und Nahung des letzten Gottes zu kommt.”

who are “open” for this “advent”. Only the διά-λογος of pneumatic speech⁷⁴, listening acceptance and performative-participatory affirmation can open up a “dwelling place” for God in this world.⁷⁵ If God’s salvific presence can be properly perceived only by virtue of himself as παράκλητος, then the glorification of his dwelling amongst us also has to be embedded in this very presence.⁷⁶

Considering all this, God only becomes accessible as “Father” by virtue of the word of “the Son” that on its part is recognized by faith alone as being filled with the “Holy Spirit”. The correlation of God, word and faith reflects the trinitarian logic of revelation: The Father is only “touchable” through Christ in the Spirit. To put it in “Marionese”: The ἀποκάλυψις of divine donation can only occur under the condition of the same infinite love that itself is revealed by itself: No insight is possible unless human love conforms to the gaze of God’s love and its being given from elsewhere.⁷⁷ Therefore, the Christian reference to an incarnation of the word and the effusion of the Spirit wants nothing less than to explain how revelation *in general* can alone be possible: God is at the same time messianic revealer and pneumatic revelation of the divine love that actually is revealed.⁷⁸ The “Church-becoming” of the Spirit serves as phenomenal medium for the ἀποκάλυψις of the Trinity in our world.⁷⁹

Additionally, this gives an answer to the problem of unilaterality concerning the relation of the world towards God. Karl Rahner has stressed the utmost importance of the identity

⁷⁴ Cf. Schaeffler, *Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie* (see fn. 65), 249: “Die doxologische Wechselrede ist in diesem Sinne in Anrede und Antwort ebenso geist-erfülltes (‘in-spiriertes’) wie geist-vermittelndes (‘in-spirierendes’) Wort.”

⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 244 f.: “Und er [LM.: der Sprecher] bereitet [...] gemeinsam mit ihnen [LM.: den Hörern], durch sein doxologisches Wort für diesen Gott einen Ort seiner Gegenwart in dieser Welt, wo dieser ‘thront auf Israels Lobgesängen’^[...]]. Dieser Ort der göttlichen Gegenwart ist der ‘Tempel’ (Oikos), in dem Gott für die Menschen anrufbar gegenwärtig wird (in dem ‘sein Name wohnt’). Aber wichtiger als jedes aus Steinen errichtete Haus ist die zum Gotteslob versammelte Gemeinde als ‘Tempel aus lebendigen Steinen’^[...]]. [...] Deshalb ist der ‘Bau’, der durch die Predigt des Evangeliums aufgerichtet wird, ein ‘geistgewirktes Haus’, das durch das ‘geistgewirkte’ Wort der Verkündigung errichtet wird.” The biblical references are Psalm 22:4 and 1 Peter 2:5.

⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 242: “Das Verbum Mentis, das den Anspruch des Wirklichen beantwortet, wird nur durch die Gegenwart der Sache selbst möglich, die dem Subjekt ‘zu denken gibt’. Ebenso kann auch das Verbum Oris seinen Hörer nur dadurch zur Antwort auffordern, daß es ihm den Anspruch der Sache weitergibt, dessen vorantreibende Kraft ihn erst in die dazu geeignete ‘Form’ seines Anschauens und Denkens versetzt. [...] Die Grundregel ‘Deus non cognoscitur nisi per seipsum’ nimmt dann die Gestalt an ‘Deus non magnificatur nisi per seipsum’ [...]. Nicht weniger als das religiöse Verbum Mentis kann also das religiöse Verbum Oris nur von dem gesprochen werden, dem der göttliche ‘Geist’ mitgeteilt worden ist. Und die Aufforderung zur gemeinschaftlichen Teilnahme am Gotteslob kann [...] nur wirksam ausgesprochen werden, wenn sie als die erfahrbare Gegenwartsgestalt dieser Geist-Mitteilung verstanden werden darf.”

⁷⁷ Cf. Marion, *Das Erscheinen des Unsichtbaren* (see fn. 36), 80–90. Marion stresses the primacy of will and love before intellect and insight. One first has to truly love in order to get insight into the saturated phenomenon.

⁷⁸ Cf. Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*. Vol. I/1: *Die Lehre vom Worte Gottes*, Zürich 1980, 319: “Gottes Wort ist Gott selbst in seiner Offenbarung. Denn Gott offenbart sich als der Herr und das bedeutet nach der Schrift für den Begriff der Offenbarung, daß Gott selbst in unzerstörter Einheit, aber auch in unzerstörter Verschiedenheit der Offenbarer, die Offenbarung und das Offenbarsein ist.”

⁷⁹ Cf. Marion, *Die Phänomenalität des Sakramentes* (see fn. 67), 222: “Die Kirche besteht eigentlich nur darin, dem Wunder der Dreieinigkeit zum Sich-Zeigen zu verhelfen [...]” Moreover, it should be referred to Benjamin Bihl, *Die Kirche als Abbild der Dreifaltigkeit. Untersuchungen der trinitarischen Ekklesiologie aus katholischer Perspektive* (MThS 77), St. Ottilien 2015.

of economic and immanent trinity.⁸⁰ If God's revelation therefore "reflects" God's eternal being under finite circumstances, one could say that the pneumatic manifestation of divine love is an "apocalyptic" re-enactment of God's cosmic "Ur-tat"⁸¹ by virtue of Christ's proclamation:⁸² The Son eternally is begotten by the Father through the Spirit and eternally gives himself to his divine originator in an act of unconditioned love. This is what was and is "in the beginning". Christ's loving sacrifice re-enacts this primordial and cosmic "Ur-tat" and spatiotemporally manifests the salvific truth that the whole of creation partakes in God's trinitarian life. The "limit-expression" of Christ's life and death resulted in an anticipatory "burst" of the universe into the kingdom of God – that broke up the "correspondences" of this world.⁸³

If Knauer is correct, created reality can never be the constitutive *terminus ad quem* of God's relation to it. But a trinitarian model can explain how God can nevertheless be related to the non-divine: The relation of the Father towards the world is actually his relation towards the Son – so that our createdness is only *terminus secundarius* of the primary relation between Father and Son – which in itself is the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ By partaking in the divine life of the triune God, we are able to see the whole of creation with new eyes, because now the insurmountable Λόγος becomes for us a parable of God's eternal love.⁸⁵ This very love is finally able to liberate us from our existential "angst" that too often prevents us from acting in a truly human way – but when this hindrance is removed, the word can become flesh in our own life.⁸⁶

9. Conclusion

The Christian message itself is hermeneutic insofar as it explains its claims by means of its own content. The reference to the σάρκωσις του λόγου explains how God's love can

⁸⁰ Cf. Karl Rahner, Bemerkungen zum Dogmatischen Traktat „De Trinitate“, in: id., Schriften zur Theologie, Vol. IV: Neuere Schriften, Zürich – Köln 1960, 103–135, here 115.

⁸¹ It is noteworthy that for many religious traditions, the spatiotemporal enactment actually re-enacts the primordial reality in its salvific character: Babylonians celebrated the cosmogony that was engendered by the victory of Marduk over Tiamat; cf. Paul Ricœur, Manifestation and Proclamation (see fn. 37), here 51, and also 66: "[...] Endzeit responds to an Urzeit." Jews understood the exodus together with the sabbat as partaking in God's primordial rest and Christians relate Christ's birth to the eternal begetting of the Son; cf. Schaeffler, Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie (see fn. 65), 247 f., 254.

⁸² For Ricœur, Manifestation and Proclamation (see fn. 37), 65, the Johannine theology of the σάρκωσις του λόγου reconciles "mythic" manifestation and "kerygmatic" proclamation by identifying them: The λόγος itself becomes the manifestation of the numinous amidst the Λόγος of creation, because it has "the power to set forth the new being it proclaims." This converges with a sacramental understanding of the kerygma itself – cf. Schaeffler, Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie (see fn. 65), 222–228.

⁸³ Cf. Ricœur, Manifestation and Proclamation (see fn. 37), 60 f.

⁸⁴ Cf. Knauer, Theology and spirituality (see fn. 7), 8 f.

⁸⁵ Cf. also Schaeffler, Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie (see fn. 65), 232: „Dieses Wort veranlaßt ihn [LM: den Hörer] nicht nur zu einer neuen Weise der Selbstreflexion, sondern macht ihn dazu fähig, [...] den 'Widerschein seiner Doxa' auf allem, was ist, aufleuchten zu sehen.“

⁸⁶ Cf. Knauer, Theology and spirituality (see fn. 7), 11–13.

potentially be made manifest and the notion of the ἐκκλησίωσις τοῦ πνεύματος defines the “realm” within which the former can be properly recognized and accepted:

“We find an answer in the Christian message itself. You cannot understand it by attempting to integrate it into a comprehensive framework of ideas to make it plausible. However, its apparently impossible claim to be the word of God becomes intelligible by referring to its content. The Christian message is not self-evident in the sense that we can understand it from ourselves and by our own means, but rather in the very different sense that it explains itself through its content.”⁸⁷

What has all this got to do with religion? At the beginning of this article, it has been stated that religious claims would not be so much about God’s existence, but about “communion” with the numinous reality. The previous considerations understand themselves as theological hermeneutics in the best sense of the word: Θεο-λογία is considered to be the task of figuring out how a λόγος can be attributed to the reality we call θεός. By elaborating the notion of createdness as an “all-embracing relationship to ... / in complete distinction from ...” respectively the understanding of “Being” as clearing withdrawal, the inner problem of the phrase “word of God” has been articulated. A “pristine” reconstruction of the Christian creed has showed that the reference to an incarnation of the divine word can be the key to the problem of God’s “speech”. If God’s presence cannot be observed anywhere in the world – due to its createdness as withdrawing disclosure –, it has to be “added” by means of a human word. This word can only be understood as God’s own word in an attitude of faith if and only if the proclaiming individual acts the way God would act – under finite circumstances of this world. This includes the willingness to accept death as martyrdom. Only an existentially performing testimony can bear witness to the reliability of the λόγος ἄσαρκος – which thereby becomes the λόγος ἑνσαρκος. This way, it becomes clear why Christian theology insists on the soteriological role of the cross: It is the last “act” of Christ’s performance that “fleshed out”⁸⁸ the divine love that otherwise would have remained shrouded by the unsurmountable Λόγος of creation.

Furthermore, a σάρκωσις του λόγου can only be recognized if there are any followers who “adopt” the truth of the message and constitute the remaining “dwelling place” for the Spirit that had already spoken through the person now known as “Christ”. The strict correlation of God, word and faith implies a mutual conditionality of the incarnation of the word and the “church-becoming” of the Spirit.

This paper examines the approaches of Heidegger and Peter Knauer SJ in order to make sense of the Christian notion of an “incarnation of the word”. By drawing upon the parallels between Heidegger’s famous “Being” and Knauer’s understanding of “createdness”, an

⁸⁷ Ibid., 8. Cf. also *Schaeffler*, *Philosophische Einübung in die Theologie* (see fn. 65), 229: “Das nach außen gesprochene Wort ist im wörtlichen Sinne ‘In-formatio’, ‘Formgebung’, kraft derer der Hörer jene Form des Anschauens und Denkens erst entwickelt, durch die er zum Verstehen des Gehörten fähig wird [...]”

⁸⁸ Cf. also the expression by *Verweyen*, *Theologische Hermeneutik heute* (see fn. 59), 187: “In einem solchen Akt vermag die Unbedingtheit [...] gleichsam ‘Fleisch zu werden’, zur unabweisbaren Präsenz ihrer Wirkmächtigkeit zu kommen. Von daher ist das primäre Verständnis vom ‘maryria’ als Blutzugnis einleuchtend.”

argument is made for the insurmountability of the horizon within which revelation can possibly occur. Further parts are dedicated to the crucial role of “Dasein” and its ability to reveal divine truth by virtue of human speech. Against the background of the strict correlation of God, word and faith, considerations on the mutual conditionality of a σάρκωσις του λόγου and an ἐκκλησίωσις τοῦ πνεύματος try to outline a trinitarian understanding of revelation.