

# Multiple Patterns Reflecting the Trinity and Coinherence in Verbal Communication

Vern S. Poythress

**ABSTRACT:** The Son who is the image of the Father is the starting point for a series of reflections: Adam is made in the image of God, and Adam fathers a son, Seth, after his image (Gen. 5:3).<sup>1</sup> The series of reflections leads to coinherent perspectives, which can be applied to divine verbal communication as a reflection of the Trinity.

This chapter develops three perspectives on reflections focusing respectively on the original, the image, and the harmonious relation between the two. These three perspectives are coinherent in a manner reflecting the original coinherence in persons of the Trinity. Using this pattern of reflections of coinherence, we can see multiple patterns of coinherence in verbal communication: eternal communication within the Trinity (John 1:1), communication creating the world (Gen. 1:3; Ps. 33:6), covenantal communication to mankind (John 17:8; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), and communication between

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human beings (Col. 3:16). The original pattern or archetype lies in God the Father speaking the Word in the context of the Holy Spirit as akin to the breath of God (Job 33:4) and as a recipient of divine speech (John 16:13). This pattern is reflected with other levels of communication. The unity of meaning, the distinctiveness of persons, and their coinherent fellowship are reflected in communication.

By understanding the Trinitarian foundation reflected in human communication, we may grow in praising God for the reflections of his character in the world and the profundity of the gift of wisdom given to us through the Word of Christ, the Son of the Father in the communion of the Holy Spirit.



Since my friend Wayne Grudem has been a long-time defender of the integrity and truthfulness of divine communication in Scripture, I would like to offer for his Festschrift a further reflection about divine verbal communication.

### **Stages in Communication**

How do we understand divine communication to us? This communication has more than one stage. Revelation 1:1–3 describes several stages:

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which *God* gave *him* to show to *his servants* the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending *his angel* to *his servant John*, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is *the one who reads aloud* the words of this prophecy, and blessed are *those who hear*, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

The message originates in “God” (1:1), that is, God the Father. The Father gives it to Jesus Christ, who sends “his angel” to “his servant John” (1:1). John writes the message (Rev. 1:11; 22:10). It then gets read aloud and heard (1:3). Other passages in Revelation indicate that the words are also communicated through the Spirit (1:10) and are “what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

The communication has still another layer, because the servants of Christ are described as witnesses in 2:13; 6:9; 11:3. They imitate the fundamental witness of Jesus Christ, “the faithful and true witness” (3:14).

The stages mentioned in Revelation are unusually many. But the idea of stages is broader. In divine communication, the word of God is normally mediated through prophets, apostles, and other messengers, whether divine, angelic, or human. The Bible itself is the Word of God, written with human hands. Jesus Christ has a central mediating role, as he indicates in John 17:8: “For I [Jesus] have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.”

“The words” originate with God the Father (“you”). Christ receives them and gives them to the disciples. The context shows that, in this early part of John 17, Christ is focusing on those who are physically present before him, primarily the twelve apostles. They pass on the word to a larger group: “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through *their word*” (17:20). The Holy Spirit as “another Helper” (John 14:16) has a role in conveying the word as well.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he *hears* he will *speak*, and he will *declare* to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and *declare it* to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and *declare it* to you. (John 16:13–15)

### **Trinitarian Revelation**

This passage shows us the work of all three persons of the Trinity. Since this revelatory work is central to redemption, it suggests that all the revelation from God to man will have a Trinitarian basis. Most of the time in the Bible, this Trinitarian basis is implicit, but it becomes explicit in this key passage, John 16:13–15. And indeed, once we observe the Trinitarian pattern, we can observe aspects of it elsewhere.

John 1:1 describes the second person of the Trinity as “the Word.” The allusion to Genesis 1 in John 1:1–3 shows that the eternal Word lies in the background of the specific utterances in Genesis 1 through

which God creates light (1:3), the expanse (1:6), and other elements in the created world. John 1:1 also serves as part of the prologue introducing the earthly ministry of the Word, a ministry in which he speaks what the Father gives him: “For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to *say* and what to *speak*. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I *say*, therefore, I *say* as the Father has *told* me” (John 12:49–50). The Scripture is described as spoken by the Spirit (e.g., Acts 1:16; 4:25; Heb. 3:7; 2 Pet. 1:21), and 1 Peter 1:11 even describes him as “the Spirit of Christ” in the prophets.

### **A Pattern of Likeness and Reflections**

How then do we understand the passing on of divine messages? The key passages involving the persons of the Trinity show that the message passed on to us has first been communicated between persons of the Trinity. In John 17:8 Christ indicates that he has “given them the words that you [the Father] gave me,” showing that communication comes from the Father to the Son. John 16:13 shows that what belongs to the Father and the Son is *heard* by the Spirit, who then speaks. We must have in mind the relations between persons of the Trinity and ask what implications these relations have for communication. Because we are dealing with a level involving *divine* communication, we must also ask about the relation of the communication between divine persons and the communication to human persons. What is the significance of the transition from divine to human?

To answer this question, we have to take some space to reckon with the meaning of humanity. After this reflection, we will return to consider divine messages. Asking about humanity leads naturally to considering the creation of man in the image of God. Scholarship has seen much debate about the meaning of the image of God. But for our purposes it is not necessary to settle these debates. It suffices to observe that human beings are like God in a cluster of ways. These similarities can be observed and affirmed even if we do not immediately associate them with the phrase “the image of God.” In fact, when the Bible describes God as speaking, this speaking is analogous to human speaking. Without an analogy between God and man, the language of speaking would make no sense.

The language concerning image also has an analogy in God himself, because Christ is called the image of God in 2 Corinthians 4:4: “In their [unbelievers’] case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is *the image of God*.” The mention of “light” and “glory” offers an indirect allusion to passages in the Old Testament where God appears in light and glory. Moreover, in Ezekiel 1 God appears in glory in the “likeness” of a human form: “seated above the likeness of a throne was a *likeness* with a human appearance” (1:26). Ezekiel summarizes in a way that indicates that the glory of the Lord appeared: “Such was the appearance of the *likeness* of the *glory* of the LORD” (1:28). Immediately after this vision, Ezekiel hears the voice of the Lord (1:28–2:1). In Ezekiel 1–2, revelation comes from God to man. This revelation includes a visual component, which reveals glory and the “likeness” with a human appearance. It also includes a verbal component, in the form of divine speech. The two components are two sides to the same overall experience.

The connection between Old Testament theophanies of glory and Christ is confirmed two verses after 2 Corinthians 4:4, where Paul says that God “has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the *glory* of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (4:6). The glory of God (4:6) is also the glory of Christ (4:4). And this glory is seen “in the face of Jesus Christ,” an expression that alludes to Old Testament passages concerning the face of God and the presence of God. Christ as “the image of God” reflects the glory of God, that is, the glory of the Father. The idea of reflection is built into what Christ is as *image*.

Second Corinthians 4:4 occurs in the context of communicating the *gospel*, “the gospel of the glory of Christ.” We might suppose that the language of image or reflection is appropriate only for Christ in his incarnation. But Colossians 1:15–16 goes further: “He [the Son] is the *image* of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth.” The divine Son is the “image,” now in the context of the fact that he is the divine Mediator of *creation*. So there is an original relation of reflection between the Father and the Son, even apart from redemption and the incarnation. The deepest and most ultimate instance of reflection is found not in man, who is made in the image of God, but in the Son, who is eternally the image of God.

Hebrews 1:3, without using exactly the same terminology, has a similar idea: “He [the Son] is the radiance of the glory of God and the *exact imprint* of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” Like Colossians 1:15, the last clause, about upholding the universe, shows once again that the concept of reflecting God belongs to the Son as a divine person, not merely to his human nature. The expression “the radiance of the glory of God” alludes again to Old Testament theophanies in which God’s glory appears.

It is interesting that the previous verses in Hebrews 1, namely verses 1–2, have focused on the Son’s role as the final Prophet, by whom God “has spoken” (1:2). Communication from God (1:1–2) and the appearing of God in glory that reflects him (1:3) go hand in hand.

### **Perspectives on Reflections**

To understand more thoroughly the nature of reflections, it is convenient to employ three different perspectives. We can illustrate using the particular case where God creates man in his image (Gen. 1:26–27). The first perspective starts with a focus on the original pattern that is going to be reflected. We focus on God as the origin and then see how the reflection derives from him. Let us call this perspective the *originary* perspective.<sup>2</sup> The second perspective starts with the reflection itself, in this case Adam. It then considers how this reflection derives from a previous pattern. Let us call this perspective the *manifestational* perspective, because the reflection “manifests” the pattern that it reflects. This theme of manifestation is particularly evident in the case of theophanies. A theophany manifests the presence of God. The third perspective starts with a focus on the relation between the original pattern and its reflection. It then considers how the relation connects the original and the reflection. Various features are shared by way of analogy between the original and the reflection. In the case of the creation of man in the image of God, we consider ways in which man is like God, and the ways in which the act of creation and the created product (man) show similarities that tell us both about God and about man. Let us call this third perspective the *concurrent* perspective, because the shared features are “concurrently” in the original and in the reflection.

2. The labels come from Vern S. Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1999), 36–42.

The same three perspectives can easily be applied to the theophany in Ezekiel 1. This theophany contains a “likeness with a human appearance” (1:26). The originary perspective starts with the original pattern, which is clearly God himself. It is God who always exists who has manifested himself to Ezekiel. The manifestation derives from God the original. The manifestational perspective begins with the manifestation, namely, the likeness with a human appearance. This manifestation is at the center of Ezekiel’s vision. From the manifestation we understand that it is a manifestation of something—a reflection of God the original. Finally, the concurrent perspective focuses on the relation between the original and the manifestation, that is, between God and the likeness. The throne on which the likeness sits expresses and reflects God’s power and authority. The likeness with human appearance expresses God’s human-like abilities, which are displayed in God’s speech and his rule. The brightness (1:27) displays God’s purity and glory. The passage concludes in a summary that speaks of “the likeness of the glory of the LORD” (1:28). The glory is clearly the glory of the Lord, a glory displayed visibly in the brightness of the manifestation. Glory is then a concurrent feature, both of the Lord and of the manifestation, because the manifestation reflects the glory that belongs innately to the Lord. It should be noted that the actual effect of the vision on Ezekiel is to convey to him the experience of the glory of the Lord. Ezekiel does not *become* the manifestation that he sees. But he does receive an impact, and that impact lies in the reception of the glory of the Lord.

The creation of man in the image of God in Genesis 1 has an organic relation to Ezekiel 1. It is because man is made in the image of God that it is appropriate that God appears in human form in Ezekiel 1.

Both Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1 have an organic relation to 2 Corinthians 4:4. The language of “image of God” in 2 Corinthians 4:4 is a clear allusion to Genesis 1:26–27. The language concerning “glory” in 2 Corinthians 4:4 (and 4:6) has a relation to many Old Testament theophanies, but certainly also to Ezekiel 1. The relation to Ezekiel 1 is confirmed in Revelation 1:12–16, where Christ appears in glory. Revelation 1:12–16 combines features from Daniel 7:9–10, 13; 10:5–6; and Ezekiel 1:26–28. The fire, the brightness, the gleaming metal, and the overall human appearance all feature in Revelation 1:12–16.

These relations between Ezekiel 1:26–28 and the New Testament show that Ezekiel 1:26–28 is an adumbration of the revelation of God in Christ. God, who stands behind the manifestation in Ezekiel 1, corresponds with God the Father in the New Testament. The human likeness corresponds to Christ the Son. Is there a role corresponding to the Holy Spirit? First Peter 4:14 associates the Spirit closely with glory: “The Spirit of *glory* and of God rests upon you.” This verse is one of a number of verses that associate the Spirit with the glory of Old Testament theophanies (see, e.g., Isa. 63:10–12).<sup>3</sup>

### Reflecting the Trinity

The three perspectives on reflections in theophany correspond to the ways that the three persons of the Trinity participate in theophany. The originary perspective begins with a focus on God the Father as the origin of theophanic manifestations. The manifestational perspective begins with a focus on the manifestation that the theophany brings about. The Old Testament manifestations foreshadow the coming of Christ as the climactic manifestation of God, in his incarnation. The concurrent perspective focuses on glory that is shared, which anticipates the Holy Spirit. Just as the glory comes to Ezekiel and impacts him, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament brings the glory of Christ to us so that we see it. This glory is the glory of the Father in the Son, as 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6 indicates. The expression “the glory of Christ” in verse 4 is linked to the expression “the glory of *God* in the face of Jesus Christ” in verse 6. In verse 6, the work of the Holy Spirit is implicit in the fact that this shining of glory brings about inward “knowledge” “in our hearts,” which requires the illumination of the Holy Spirit applying the message of the gospel to our hearts (1 Thess. 1:5).

The three perspectives on reflections are possible because of the prior differentiation in the way reflections unfold. The perspectives are, if you will, epistemic reflections of the nature of theophany. And, as we have seen, theophany in its structure of reflection reflects God’s Trinitarian character.

The triad of perspectives can in fact be applied to God himself, in the mystery of the Trinity. The Son is the image of the Father, according

3. Meredith M. Kline, “The Holy Spirit as Covenant Witness” (ThM thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1972); Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980).



to Colossians 1:15. This relation of image is an eternal relation. Let us consider this relation as a relation involving reflection. The originary perspective begins with God the Father as the original pattern. The manifestational perspective begins with God the Son as the manifestation and reflection of the Father (“the exact imprint of his nature,” Heb. 1:3). And what of the concurrent perspective? It begins with the relation. And what is the relation between the Father and the Son? It is a relation in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who expresses the eternal love between the Father and the Son (John 3:34–35). We might expect this result on the basis of the fact that God expresses himself in revelation in harmony with who he always is. Thus, theophanies and their fulfillment in the incarnation reveal the same God who always is, in the fellowship of the persons of the Trinity.

### Coinherence

This eternal fellowship in the Trinity involves mutual indwelling of the persons, as expressed in John 17:21: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are *in* me, and I *in* you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” The next verses in John 17 speak about the glory shared by the Father and the Son: “The *glory* that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you *in* me” (17:22). The language of glory hints at the presence of the Holy Spirit, and so does the language of indwelling, since it is through the Holy Spirit that the Father and the Son dwell in believers (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9–11).

Several terms have been used to designate the mutual indwelling of the persons of the Trinity—*circumcessio*, *perichoresis*, and the term I will use, *coinherence*. Coinherence is a unique property belonging to the persons of the Trinity. But we can see a kind of derivative reflection of the original coinherence when we come to theophany. God is present *in* the manifestation in human appearance in Ezekiel 1:26. And he is present *in* the glory of this manifestation. In addition, the glory and the manifestation in human appearance lie within the cloud of glory that comes to Ezekiel, which represents the presence of God. This presence of God in his manifestation foreshadows the presence of God the Father in Christ during his earthly life. Jesus points to the indwelling of the Father: “Do you not believe that I am *in* the Father and the Father is *in*

me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who *dwells in* me does his works” (John 14:10).

### **Derivative Coinherence**

The three perspectives on reflections show in themselves a derivative coinherence. Each perspective presupposes the others and in a sense has the others “within” it. If we start with the originary perspective, to look on something *as an original* already implies that the original has generated a copy, a reflection. The originary perspective *begins* with the original but also moves out from there to consider the relation of the original to its reflection. When we use the perspective to contemplate the reflection, we are exercising the ability to have the equivalent of the manifestational perspective within the originary perspective with which we started. And, of course, when we contemplate the relation between the original and its reflection, we are exercising a form of the concurrent perspective, which is defined as focusing on the relation between the original and its reflection.

Similarly, from the manifestational perspective, we start with the manifestation or reflection. But this starting point already implies that there is an original pattern that the reflection reflects. Hence we end up focusing also on the original, and then we have the equivalent of the originary perspective.

If we start with the concurrent perspective, this perspective presupposes an original and a reflection, between which a relation exists. So, implicit in the concurrent perspective is the originary perspective, focusing on the original, and the manifestational perspective, focusing on the reflection.

In sum, the originary perspective, the manifestational perspective, and the concurrent perspective form a natural triad. Each presupposes the others and each is “in” the others. All these perspectives are used by us with our finite minds. Our minds are not identical with God’s. But we can know God. Our minds reflect, on the level of the creature, the knowledge that God himself has as the infinite God with infinite knowledge. Our knowledge reflects the knowledge of God. Likewise, the coinherence of the three perspectives, a coinherence we experience within our finite minds, reflects the original coinherence among the persons of the Trinity.

The pattern of reflection manifested in coinherence is a pattern that itself comes from God. The original for the pattern is found in the Son, who is the image of the Father. The relation of the Father to the Son is the original or archetypal instance of a pattern of reflection. This relation of reflection is itself reflected in the relation between God and man when God creates man in his image. The relation of reflection is also reflected in the pattern of triadic perspectives. The triad consisting in the originary perspective, the manifestational perspective, and the concurrent perspective reflects the triad of the persons of the Trinity. Moreover, the coinherence among the three perspectives reflects the original coinherence among the persons of the Trinity.

### **Application to Speech**

Now we can return to consider the speech and messages of God. The pattern of reflections has relevance for understanding the speech of God. As John 14:10 indicates, the speech of the Son takes place through the indwelling of the Father. When taken alone, John 17:8 might lead us to think that there are two completely distinct speeches with two sets of words and two speakers. On the one hand, the Father “gave” to the Son “words.” That constitutes the first speech. On the other hand, the Son has given words to the disciples. That constitutes the second speech. The only thing in common would then be the fact that it happens to be the same words that make up the content of the two speeches. But a picture in which the two speeches are separated is not really correct. When the Son gives words to the disciples, the Father is present *in* the Son. The Father is speaking in the Son. The Son’s words reflect the Father’s words, so that we can use the three perspectives on reflections. But it is also true that the words coinhere, and the persons who speak the words coinhere. So when the disciples receive the Son’s words, the Father is not in the distant background, in such a way that the Son alone is the speaker. Rather, both are present, and both are speaking. But they speak in differentiated ways. The Father is still the origin for the words, and the Father speaks in the Son, who does the works of the Father on earth.

All of this communication takes place in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in the Father and in the Son, and vice versa. So we can more thoroughly appreciate the implications of John 16:13–15,

where the Spirit speaks what he has heard. The words that the Spirit is passing on are not words that we should think of as having been given by the Father and the Son after which the Father and the Son have walked away. The Father and the Son are present in the words of the Spirit. This presence is to be understood as analogous to the way in which the Father and the Son “make [their] home” with a believer, in the language of John 14:23. The Father and the Son indwell believers. They do this through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in whom and through whom the Father and the Son dwell in human beings.

### **The Original for Speech**

Since we are applying the principles for reflections to divine speech, it is natural to ask what is the original divine speech. The original is the Word, as John 1:1 says. The original speech is the speech where the Father is the speaker and the Son is the speech. The Spirit is present in the divine communion of persons. A human speaker expresses himself in speech, and so “indwells” his speech by expressing *himself*. By analogy, the Father is *in* the Word that he speaks. He is in the Word in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere, in John 16:13, the Bible represents the Holy Spirit as the hearer of divine speech (and, in 1 Cor. 2:10–11, the searcher of divine knowledge). The Holy Spirit is also likened to the breath of God that carries his speech in power to its destination (Ezek. 37:9, 14). Either way, the Holy Spirit is associated with the movement of the Word to its destination.

As we observed, John 1:1–3 contains allusions to Genesis 1. It thereby indicates that the eternal Word mentioned in John 1:1 is the original for the specific divine utterances in Genesis 1, such as “Let there be light” (1:3). We can now construe this reality as an instance involving reflection. The original is the eternal divine Word of John 1:1. The reflection or manifestation is found in the specific utterance of Genesis 1:3. The reflection *manifests* the original. The divine Son is present in the specific speeches. There is a coinherent relation between the original eternal Word and the specific words.

We can extend this pattern to the cases where God addresses human beings. As we have seen from John 17:8, Christ gives to human beings “the words that you gave me.” These words reflect the words that the Father has given to the Son. And these words, in turn, reflect an even

deeper original, namely, that the Son *is* the Word. Through the coinherence of indwelling, the original fellowship between the Father and the Word in the Spirit is also genuinely and profoundly present in the very words that the disciples receive from the Son.

### **The Presence of God in Our Words**

The message in words from the apostles is infallible. When we receive the words and digest them, our digestion is fallible. But, for those whom the Spirit illumines, the digestion is nevertheless real. We have the Word written on the heart (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). When “the word of Christ” dwells in us richly, we may teach and admonish “one another in all wisdom,” a wisdom that is from Christ (Col. 3:16). The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, by dwelling in us, enable us to speak “the word of Christ” to others; this speech is not ours *in isolation* from the reality of indwelling. God speaks through us and is present in his Word that goes forth from us. Fallibility implies that truthfulness must ultimately be checked by conformity to the written Word of Scripture. But divine presence extends also to our speech when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **Meaning, Power, and Presence**

God’s Trinitarian dwelling in his Word has implications for how we think about the meaning, power, and presence of God in his Word.<sup>4</sup> God is present in the truth of his meanings and in the power of his omnipotence. Meaning, power, and presence in God are not separable but, we may say, coinherent. Each is “in” the other two. Each presupposes the other two. Just as the attributes of God coinhere in the one God, so the attributes coinhere in the eternal Word, and then they coinhere derivatively (by reflection!) in the particular words of particular utterances. That is true when God creates the world. The utterance “Let there be light” has meaning and power, and manifests the presence of God in the created world. Its meaning, power, and presence are coinherent. Likewise, when God speaks to human beings at Mount Sinai, he speaks meanings in power and in presence.

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4. For a discussion of the triad of meaning, power, and presence, as a variation on John Frame’s triad for lordship (*authority*, power, and presence), see Vern S. Poythress, *In the Beginning Was the Word: Language—A God-Centered Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), chap. 3.

This coinherence of meaning, power, and presence has implications for interpreting the Bible. Interpreters can fall into major methodological errors if they try to have one of the three without the others. If they try to have presence without meaning, it is mysticism. They try to surpass the word of the Bible in favor of some wordless union with God, rather than dwelling *in* the words (and the words dwelling in them, John 15:7) to have communion. Or consider another problem. Seeking to control meaning “scientifically” usually means falling into the error of trying—at least temporarily—to have meaning without power and presence. By ignoring the presence of God himself, they falsify the purpose of Scripture and refuse to honor God. Or interpreters may try to have power without meaning or presence. The power is the power of transformation, which an interpreter may seek by importing special meanings that move him and excite him inwardly. But ignoring the real meanings also means missing the real power. The power of God is found not in whatever we may choose to make the Word of God mean but in what God does in fact say, which is filled with power and presence.

### **Climax in Christ**

This communication in meaning, power, and presence comes to a climax in Christ. Christ provides the climax of the meanings of revelation as the final Prophet (Heb. 1:1–2). Christ brings the power of the kingdom of God for salvation. And Christ is “God with us” (Matt. 1:23), the climactic manifestation of the presence of God. The words that Christ gives to the disciples reflect and therefore convey, by the indwelling of the Trinitarian God, the meaning and power and presence of Christ. Through Christ we receive the words of the Father to the Son (John 17:8), through which we have communion with the eternal God, who created and sustains the whole world “by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3).