

ABSTRACT
INVERBERATION: THE IDIOM OF GOD AMONG US
KARL BARTH'S FILIAL-PNEUMATOLOGY
AS BASIC STRUCTURE OF
CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

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This dissertation contends that the act of truthfully speaking of God, theology, is a tertiary medium of God's revelation. It is thus a thesis both about God as well as the discipline of theology, formally and materially. Theology is reverberation of God's revelation, his own knowledge and speech, in the content and shape of human knowledge and speech. It is a posteriori words of God derived from and patterned after his own, a priori Word in Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Theology is, hence, externally constituted, and exists in the occasion of its particular idiom. When and where Christ is confessed in truth, as God and Man by the Spirit (and not by assumed, native processes of thought), in that event occur both the revelation of God as well as the determination of theology.

Necessarily, this work aspires to be an instance of that which it describes; a dialectically-shaped confession sourced in and normed by the Spirit. The work construes the idiomatic reality of God in our present age as his "Inverberation" – the objective pulsing of his presence in the reading and proclaiming of Scripture as the condition of our being and time – not by processes of disengaged reason, but from within the structure and content of revelation. It would be re-verberated knowledge and speech.

The thesis progresses by locating itself within the framework of a theologian who has argued similarly: Karl Barth. It begins by contrasting Barth's one-time understanding and practice of theology, as pneumatocentric and dialectical, with the practice of contemporary religious studies. It follows Barth in establishing the incarnational structure of reality and possibility in revelation by construing revelation as God's subject-determining objectivity. Next, it speculatively fleshes out that reality and possibility via engagement with Jacques Ellul, Albert Einstein, George Steiner, and Michael Polanyi. With the basic structure of Inverberation thus governed by Incarnation, the work explores the biblical basis of Inverberation as coordinate with Incarnation by exegesis of John 1:1-18. Finally, it concludes by demonstrating this modality, as the reality and possibility of Spirit, is not anthropological-pneumatology or Spirit-Christology, but Filial-Pneumatology. It does that by showing the fundamental discontinuity between Barth's thought and that of Jürgen Moltmann.