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Biblical Perspective of Communication and Communion. The Responsibility of the Word for the Relationship between Human Being and God

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Abstract

The importance of *Logos* for communion is essential in the Scripture's pages. In the New Testament, God communicates Himself interpersonally, through the Incarnation of the Word. God speaks to the people through His Son. So, *the Word* is fundamental for achieving communion. The communion has double meaning: *vertical* communion, as relation between Christians and God, and *horizontal* communion as communion between Christians.

Analyzing the biblical perspective of communication and communion, the article tries to emphasize the responsibility of the word, as place of meeting, in the relationship between human being and God, in order to reach to the human and divine-human communion.

Keywords

Person, communication, responsibility, relationship, communion

I. Biblical perspective of communication and communion

I.1. Biblical perspective of communication

The importance of Word for accomplishing communion is pinpointed in the Holy Scripture. The first verse of John's Gospel reveals in a remarkable

way the importance and divinity of Word (Logos). “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1,1)¹.

The greek term *Logos* (Word) translates the Hebrew concept *dabar* that resembled a “communication started by God and could be a commandment, prophecy, warning or an encouragement”².

Thus, in the Old Testament, for *word* the term *dabar* is used, which means “both *word, saying* and *fact, thing*, revealing not only real speech or verbal reality, but also *reality of being*”³.

Dabar refers to the dynamic reality, to saying, and “*work of God*”: “And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all *matters of the Lord*” (2 Chron 19, 11). For the Hebrew man, *work* carries different meanings, it is an element of communication and *permanent word in motion (dabar)*⁴.

The Old Testament text “doesn’t say God’s Word spoke to someone, but *God’s Word was to someone*, thus emphasizing Word’s presence on Jehovah, because «Jehovah» means «I am that I am», being an ontological name”⁵.

God’s *dabar* has divine authority and must be listened both by the angels and people: “Bless the Lord, all ye his angels: you that are mighty in strength, and execute his word, hearkening to the voice of his orders” (Ps 102, 20)⁶, but God’s Word is also eternal: “but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Is 40, 8); “For ever, O Lord, thy word standeth firm in heaven” (Ps 118, 89)⁷.

Considering that *dabar* could also be God’s commandment, it can be confirmed that “*dabar* is the Torah”: “Blessed are they who search *his testimonies*: that seek him with their whole heart” (Ps 118, 2); “By what doth a young man correct his way? By *observing thy words*” (Ps 118, 9); “How sweet are *thy words* to my palate! More than honey to my mouth” (Ps 118, 103); “Thou art my helper and my protector: and *in thy word I have greatly hoped*” (Ps 118, 114); “The declaration of *thy words* giveth light: and giveth understanding to little ones” (Ps 118, 130); “*Thy word*

¹ <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org>

² Radu COMĂNESCU, “The Word”, in: *Altarul Banatului XVI* (2005), 10-12, p. 182.

³ Fr. Gheorghe HOLBEA, *Theology of the Word*, Communication and Communion Masters material, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, 2013, p. 5.

⁴ Fr. Gheorghe HOLBEA, *Theology of the Word*, p. 6.

⁵ Radu COMĂNESCU, *The Word*, pp. 182-183.

⁶ <http://www.ebible.org> - Douay-Rheims, 1899, American Edition (5.05.2018).

⁷ Radu COMĂNESCU, *The Word*, p. 183.

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is exceedingly refined: and thy servant hath loved it” (Ps 118, 140); “The beginning of *thy words* is truth: all the judgments of thy justice are for ever” (Ps 118, 160); “I will rejoice at *thy words*, as one that hath found great spoil” (Ps 118, 162); “My tongue shall pronounce *thy word*: because all thy commandments are justice” (Ps 118, 172)⁸.

Dabar possesses “a power similar to God’s who speaks it and fulfills His will with no doubt: «So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it» (Is 55, 11)”⁹.

God’s “Word” could refer to the revelation given to Moses, but also the visions the prophets received, being “true Wisdom”: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (Prov 8, 22). The sacred Hebrew texts contained important clues regarding the identity of God’s Word, but they don’t confirm the fact that *dabar* is God (according to Proverbs, the *Word* was another creation)¹⁰.

We could ask ourselves how could the Word be God, according to John the Evangelist? To understand the Word’s deity it is required to explain the term *Logos*.

The term “logos” in Greek has more meanings: the spoken thought, its communication; word, articulated language; reasoning, verb; sense; Reasoning or *Word of God*¹¹.

Originally, *Logos* didn’t mean “word”, but reasoning that structures and brings order in the universe, i.e. reasoning that installs the Universe. Thus, in Greek philosophy the originary sense of *logos* was preserved, the term being defined as “divine power through which the Universe gains unity, coherence and meaning”. The translators of Septuagint equated the Hebrew *dabar* with Greek *logos*¹².

Philo of Alexandria explains the role of Logos in Creation starting from the biblical words: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth” (Ps 32, 6). Philo tried to explain how the transcendent God created the Universe and, in the same time, revealed Himself to the people without affecting

⁸ Radu COMANESCU, *The Word*, p. 183.

⁹ Radu COMANESCU, *The Word*, p. 183.

¹⁰ Radu COMANESCU, *The Word*, p. 183.

¹¹ Ioan Mircea, *Dictionary of New Testament*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1995, p. 116.

¹² Radu COMANESCU, *The Word*, p. 184.

His transcendence. From a philosophical perspective, he defines Him in relation to the platonic concept of “world of thoughts”, the Logos being understood as *God’s plan*, but also *God’s creative power*. Philo confirms that the Logos is the Name of God, Angel of God, calling Him: Great Priest, Commander, Ruler, Paraclete, Son of God, a second God, the Ideal Man, model used by Elohim for creating Adam. Though he refuses to declare Logos as being consubstantial with God¹³.

John the Evangelist identifies the *Logos* with Christ, Word of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, who, through incarnation, He didn’t cancel the Hebrew canon, but He fulfilled it.

I. 2. The Words of God the Word

In the New Testament, God communicates Himself interpersonally, through the Incarnation of the Word. God speaks to the people through His Son.

Thus, the “Word” means both the message of God revealed in the Person of Son of God and that must be preached as being “the word of life” (Phil 2, 16), “word of truth” (Eph 1, 13), “word of salvation” (Acts 13, 26), “word of grace” (Lk 4, 22), “word of Gospel” (Acts 15, 7), “word of faith” (1 Tim 4, 6), “word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5, 19), “word of cross” (1 Cor 1, 18), “words of prophets” (Acts 15, 15), “word of wisdom and knowledge” (1 Cor 12, 8), “grace giving word” (Eph 4, 29), but also the Person Himself of God’s Word: “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called *The Word of God*” (Rev 19, 13)¹⁴.

The Word spoken (communicated) by Christ the Savior is *the Gospel* or the good news of salvation. He discovers the Father and His will: “as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (Jn 8, 28); “whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (Jn 12, 50).

Also, Christ the Lord speaks with authority: “he taught them as one having authority” (Matt 7, 29), Him having “the words of eternal life” (Jn 6, 68), His words being “spirit, and they are life” (Jn 6, 63).

The firmness of faith ensures apostolic authenticity and responsibility: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (Jn 8, 31)

¹³ Radu COMANESCU, *The Word*, p. 184.

¹⁴ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the Service of Salvation*, PhD Thesis, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, 1997, p. 24.

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and “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them” (Jn 17, 8). The Word preached by the Apostles and Church is the same word regarding salvation, having also healing effects: “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4, 29-30)¹⁵.

His Word belongs to the Logos,

“That made Himself the same as those who were called to serve the Word, to make them understand the fact that the essence of preaching God’s Word does not only stand in word crafting, in the act of controlling it, but actually in living the preached Truth. That is why Christ the Savior is praying to the Father for His direct followers, the Holy Apostles, so that they will be strengthened with Holy Spirit’s power: «Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth» (Jn 17, 17)”¹⁶.

God the Word communicates His life to the people through His words “with Holy Spirit’s power and calls them to communion between them and Him... as Christ’s Words are «with power» (Lk 4, 32)”¹⁷.

But the Father is the one who communicates the Word.

“He who is God the Word speaks the word in human speech. His speech carries words that were never spoken by anyone else before: «the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works» (Jn 14, 10)”¹⁸.

The Word’s mission for the world is “to communicate, to introduce a divine-human way of living in our life. To recenter our life on the Holy Trinity, in the Spirit of the Trinity”.¹⁹ His words are divine because “each word spoken by Jesus, expresses truth available for all times and people and this is the most powerful symbol of His divinity. His «words shall be true» (2 Sam 7, 28), permanently valid: «For ever, O Lord, thy word

¹⁵ *Dictionary of New Testament*, p. 116.

¹⁶ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 87.

¹⁷ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 73.

¹⁸ Fr. Constantin GALERIU, “God’s Incarnation”, in *Glasul Bisericii*, XLVI (1987), I, p. 25.

¹⁹ Fr. Constantin GALERIU, “Jesus Christ the Savior - our Supreme Teacher”, in *Orthodoxia*, XXXV (1983), I, p. 40.

standeth firm in heaven» (Ps 118, 89); they are words of the Father: «thy word is truth» (Jn 17, 17); «the word of God is quick, and powerful» (Heb 4, 12). And whoever believes in His words shall remain in Truth and know the Truth (Jn 8, 31-32), God Himself, in the Person of the Son of God”²⁰.

God’s Word is loving word and whoever keeps it “shall abide in my love” (Jn 15, 10). “Through the eternal Word, God expresses his love to the people”²¹.

Thus, out of love, God the Word printed his image in the man through creation “as Word in action, speaking Word, has blown His speech in the man so that he could speak in the name of the Lord and could hear God’s Word spoken by another”²².

I. 3. Biblical perspective of communion

As I was saying in the beginning of this article, *the Word* is essential for achieving communion.

The notion of communion (κοινωνία) is used in the Holy Scripture with double meaning: it expresses the relation between God and His followers, but also the relation that must exist between followers, in Christ²³.

In the Old Testament, communion is understood as the relation of Jewish people with God who calls for communion. Thus, the idea of communion is based on the affirmative answer of Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then on God’s Covenant made with them. This Covenant (*berith*) is fundamental for understanding the significance of communion from the Old Testament: *the Covenant* or *Testament* is a gift from Jehovah for the chosen people which creates a relation of communion, as expression of God’s love and of the human answer, by respecting the commandments from the Law of Moses²⁴.

Communication is tightly coupled with communion in the Old Testament as well.

²⁰ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, pp. 77-80.

²¹ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, pp. 73 and 81.

²² Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 31.

²³ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and Spiritual Renewal in the Context of Modern World Secularization*, PhD Thesis, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, 1998, p. 92.

²⁴ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, pp. 92-94.

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“Respecting the Covenant shall maintain the communion between God and the people and shall bring wellness, happiness, life and blessing, failing to comply shall bring punishment, curse, as evidence of Israelite exodus from communion with God”²⁵

But even when the Jewish people broke communion with God through idolatry, God didn't leave His people and the punishments were pedagogical, pursuing to return the people to communion with God.

The prophets as mediators between God and people, were speaking what He was communicating, having the mission to return the Israeli people to communion with God. This return assumes repentance and will to rejoin the communion. Thus, “changing” of heart was a fundamental condition for restoring the communion between God and His people²⁶.

The vocation of communion with God is not intended exclusively for a people, but it targets all humanity isolated through sin.

The Old Testament was preparing the incarnation of God the Word and the commencement of His Kingdom that will consist in a new way of communion with all the people that will convert and will believe in the Gospel (Mk 1, 15). God's Kingdom had an eschatological meaning, but, in the same time, it was commenced through the presence of the Word of God incarnated²⁷.

The Name itself of incarnated Word (Immanuel) designates the new dimension of communion: “shall call his name Immanuel” (Is 7, 14).

If in the Old Testament, God's transcendence is emphasized (the people of Israel is experiencing more of his omnipotence and the communication with Him is achieved through the Law), in the New Testament we find His omnipresence among men with the act of Incarnation²⁸.

Through the incarnation of the Logos, the notion of communion shall gain an ontological meaning: “the Logos dwells in our being, sanctifying it and enlightening it's ultimate total truth”²⁹, the truth of communion.

Communion assumes a personal loving relation with Christ, a union with Him: “ye in me, and I in you” (Jn 14, 20), that could be experienced through love: “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1

²⁵ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, p. 94.

²⁶ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, p. 95.

²⁷ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, p. 98.

²⁸ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, pp. 98-99.

²⁹ Fr. Constantin GALERIU, *Jertfă și răscumpărare*, Ed. Harisma, București, 1991, p. 247.

Jn 4, 16). The Savior Himself preaches that love is the one that establishes the most powerful communion: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (Jn 13, 34). Therefore, communion is spiritual union cultivated by love, the “bond of perfectness” (Col 3, 14).³⁰

The existence in communion of each believer “starts with the baptism and completes through Eucharist, when the deified humanity of Christ unites with every believer’s humanity, so it becomes “sanctuary of the Holy Trinity”, it becomes Church”³¹.

Communion is also seen as partaking of the Holy Mysteries during the Holy Liturgy (Matt 26, 26-28): “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor 10, 17), as a sign of belonging to the same community and confessing the same faith: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4, 5). The meaning of communion as partaking of Christ is also observed in the following biblical texts: “ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1, 9), “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor 10, 16)³².

“The Body of Christ” represents “both the Christians communion with Christ in ecclesial community, but also the communion of all Christians between themselves”³³. The Christian is living a true communitary existence in Christ and Church (Eph 5, 32), through the Holy Spirit of communion.

Thus, the communion is seen as a personal and communitarian experience with the Spirit of Christ (“Holy Spirit’s communion”): “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all” (2 Cor 13, 14). In this regard, communion is a “fellowship of the Spirit” (Phil 2, 1).

Communion in the Holy Spirit is clearly expressed by the feeling of Christian solidarity, of philanthropy and comradeship: “And they continued

³⁰ Gheorghe CHIȘCĂ, “Idea de comuniune în Ortodoxie”, in *Ortodoxia*, XXI, 1969, 3, p. 405.

³¹ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, p. 104.

³² Ion BRIA, *Dictionay of Orthodox Theology*, Editura Institutului Biblic și Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994, p. 101.

³³ Fr. Gheorghe POPA, *Communion and spiritual renewal...*, p. 106.

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steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (...) And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2, 42-44).

Communion is understood as participation of those incarnated in the new people of God to the divine reality through Christ's Incarnation and Sacrifice: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1, 3)³⁴.

The communion also has double meaning: *vertical* communion, as relation between Christians and God, and *horizontal* communion as communion between Christians.

Other meanings for the communion assume: "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil 1, 5), "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1, 3-6), partaking of God, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pt 1, 4)³⁵.

The ontological and existential aspect of Christian communion is also emphasized by the Holy Apostle Paul which identifies baptism with Christ's Death and Resurrection (Rom 6, 4), the Christian life being perfect communion with Christ: "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2, 20).

Breaking communion with God as a result of Adam's fall into sin, is restored by Christ, the New Adam, the source and foundation of new humanity. "He embraced virtually in Himself the entire humanity, to restore its original unity and communion with God"³⁶.

Communion increases by partaking of Christ: "this communion of life with Christ in Church is an organic unity, following the communion model of the Holy Trinity"³⁷.

Communion is not a state, but "a movement that deepens and extends, a process of assimilation and reciprocal giving that's continually increasing, a vital relation of reciprocal fulfillment"³⁸.

³⁴ Ioan MIRCEA, *Dictionary of New Testament*, p. 248.

³⁵ Ioan MIRCEA, *Dictionary of New Testament*, p. 248.

³⁶ Ioan MIRCEA, *Dictionary of New Testament*, p. 105.

³⁷ Gheorghe CHIȘCĂ, "Idea de comuniune în Ortodoxie", pp. 404-405.

³⁸ Deac. Ion BRIA, "Ecclesiology of communion", in *Studii Teologice*, XX, 1968, 9-10, p. 678.

II. The Word - place of meeting and of human and divine-human relation

In his theology, Father Dumitru Stăniloae gives utmost importance “on personal and direct communication and communion because, in essence, both rely on loving your fellow and being responsible; attributes of a deep Christian soul, it means *between*. This *between* (...) reveals hope in a future meeting, in communion and communication, because our great theologian defined himself as: «I don’t know myself outside the context of others»³⁹.

In Father Stăniloae’s thought, the person in communion represents an ontological fundament, after the trinitarian model, a communicational and communitary interdependence existing between all men and God.

“The membership of the word with the man, necessarily communitary, the human dependency of his fellow’s saying and its answer to it, send to a personal-communitary and transcendent source of his... Only faith in the transcendent source and in the unifying destination of the word, followed by fulfilling the divine Word, can support a right and harmonious dwelling among men”⁴⁰.

The spoken word expresses a desire towards dialogue and communion. The word of our fellow has two meanings: “to address us a call to love, to abandon selfishness and recognizing it as equal reality with us, in order to enter the communion and answer our call, to fulfill our call”⁴¹.

The word as an expression is *a vehicle for communion*, “bridge between people as subjects. The word expresses the person’s conscious intentionality towards communion, being in the same time the means of how the other is awoken, attracted. Although the person is mainly intentionality towards communion and the word being its expression, we can say that the *person is word*... The person is provocative, awakening word by other

³⁹ Dumitru MANOLACHE, “A letter of Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae”, in: *Ziarul Lumina*, 30 June 2013 <http://ziarullumina.ro/anul-comemorativ-al-parintelui-dumitru-staniloae/o-sc-risoare-parintelui-dumitru-staniloae> (5.05.2018).

⁴⁰ Fr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Spiritualitate și comuniune în Liturghia ortodoxă*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2004, p. 151.

⁴¹ Fr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, Ed. Omniscop, Craiova, 1993, p. 49.

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person through its attraction in communion... The word, when it's not chit-chat, being the same with the person, wants to directly address to the person whose communion it seeks"⁴².

The word isn't monological, but profound conversational and dialogical⁴³.

"The man was created by God as spiritual person that knows its individuality only in communion with others, and it distinguishes from other creatures through longing after communion and with God its Creator"⁴⁴.

Through the Incarnation of God's Word, the foundation is laid for the meeting between man and God, settling the beginning of an authentic and eternal relationship. The Word is

"the sacred place where the authentic relationship is established... In the *Word*, not only the meeting between people and between the people and divine Word takes place. Through the name *Word* it revealed not only the divine interpersonality, but also God's will and possibility to meet the men and help them meet each other and with Himself"⁴⁵.

The Word is "God's gift and He wants that His words, as expression of His love for us, to not remain without echo in our life, but to become powers that communicate God, that communicate the Life"⁴⁶

God's Word is "bread of life" (Jn 6, 48), and His words "are spirit and they are life" (Jn 6, 63). "They're drink and spiritual food and could supplement even food for the body, because «Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God» (Matt 4, 4). The Word has life in Himself and His words are *life words*"⁴⁷.

Through word the *relationship* is based: "through word, the relationship between *me* and *you* is achieved; relation that's becoming permanent, it perpetuates through mutual trust and love. Also, Word is conversation, not

⁴² Fr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, pp. 81-87.

⁴³ Fr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 234.

⁴⁴ Jurgen HENKEL, *Îndumnezeire și etică a iubirii în Spiritualitatea ortodoxă: Ascetica și Mistica părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, translation by Ioan I. Ica jr., Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2003, p. 289.

⁴⁵ Fr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Sfânta Treime sau La început a fost iubirea*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2012, p. 52.

⁴⁶ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 139.

⁴⁷ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, pp. 143-144.

talk or monologue, but *dialogue*. God Himself is permanently in dialogue with the creation and the creation with God. If it wouldn't be like that, everything would perish. The maximum intensity of this dialogue is given by the Incarnation of the Logos. Through Jesus Christ, God is in dialogue with us and we must answer Him. We have the obligation to answer the divine call, we can't live without God, without His *Word*, His *Gospel*. The Word reveals the self, sensitizes the conscience of a *you*, animates, calls to answer. The word is a way of spiritual communication between two persons, between *me* and *you*"⁴⁸.

III. Word's responsibility in communication

Through the word not only informations are transmitted, but also spiritual power:

“taking into account that through word not only an idea is being transmitted, but a word is more than idea, it's the partaking of spiritual power, that through word some positive or negative energy is transmitted (*the word must be spoken with great responsibility*) in interhuman relationships, but especially from the Word's servants that don't preach themselves but the Word, His Life and His saving Acts”⁴⁹.

Through the Word's Incarnation “God validates the word as mean of approach and communication between Him and people, and between people”⁵⁰.

We must choose our words wisely because “either they will save us and others, or they will condemn us. That is why the words we speak must communicate Truth and always be good, words of blessing. Even Christ the Savior confirms: “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt 12, 37)”⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 144.

⁴⁹ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 145.

⁵⁰ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, pp. 144-145.

⁵¹ Fr. Sorin COSMA, “Human solidarity and communion by word”, in: *Altarul Banatului*, XXIII, 1-3, 2012, pp. 18-22.

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The word is of utmost importance in people's life as it could bless or even kill. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov 18, 21); "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health" (Prov 12, 18); "Put away from thee a forward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee" (Prov 4, 24); "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Prov 16, 24).⁵²

The Holy Apostle James shows that

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body... Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (Jam 3, 2-12)⁵³.

Spiritual communication is specific to the ecclesial community that lives a life dedicated to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. "For those who think of Christ, the grace of His word is «quick, and powerful» (Heb 4, 12) in their feeling and acts. For them, God's word is like the seed that fallen on good ground «which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience» (Lk 8, 15). As a result, they always keep communication between them through the

⁵² Fr. Sorin COSMA, "Human solidarity and communion by word", pp. 22-23.

⁵³ Fr. Sorin COSMA, "Human solidarity and communion by word", p. 25.

word, in the spirit of Christ's life that became a role model of spiritual communion, according to the apostles: «Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord» (Col 3, 16), «Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man» (Col 4, 6)⁵⁴.

In human life, the word facilitates communication, having the power to influence the person that's being addressed to.

Saint John of Damascus confirms the existence of a word as natural move of the mind; a mental word that speaks in mind (“even when we are quiet, we speak a lot in ourselves”) and a spoken word, “that acts in voice and discussions, word that is spoken”⁵⁵. The purpose of words is not only to “speak our minds, to serve in interpersonal relationships as ways of communication and reflect the inner being; they have the power to awaken a sleeping soul, to revive a conscience, to change something inside the man”⁵⁶.

IV. Conclusions

So, communication is initiated by God and to respond to the call for love addressed by God and to keep staying in this communion, the man must accept a personal dialogue, praying and living in communion with God.

We are all responsible for the word's usage in communication and it depends on us whether or not we want to transfigure the word in order to achieve communion with our fellows and with God.

⁵⁴ St. JOHN of DAMASCUS, *Dogmatica*, translation by Fr. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Ed. Scripta, Bucharest, 1993, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁶ Fr. Ilie IVAN, *The Word in the service of salvation*, p. 139.