

Overview: Communication is for Communion

- The problem we all face: Spin and partisan warfare
- Part One: Communicating in truth and love
- Part Two: A brief Trinitarian theology of communication
- Part Three: Four communicative temptations to avoid
- Concluding discussion: Practical examples and next steps



Part One: Communicating in truth and love

- The challenge: Communicating both truth and love at the same time

The happy family avoids talking about politics





What happens when you say what you really think

Truth, love, and dialogue: a package deal



- Verily, my good man, I believe thou holdest thy Bible upside down.

Thomas's *Summa Theologica*: A closer look

- Leads off each question by listing the best objections to his view, fully and fairly
- Cites by name respected authorities who disagree with him
- Only then gives his own answer
- Finally, takes the time to respond to each objection with care, and aims to show how much he and his interlocutors have in common
- On the whole: speaking the truth, speaking the truth in love, and going as far down into the truth as he can (1.5 million words long!)

Communication is for communion

- What language is for: communion in truth and love, with the mind and the heart



St. Augustine: Communication as God's image



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Truth and love in worship



**La Sagrada Familia,
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Does our communication serve communion?



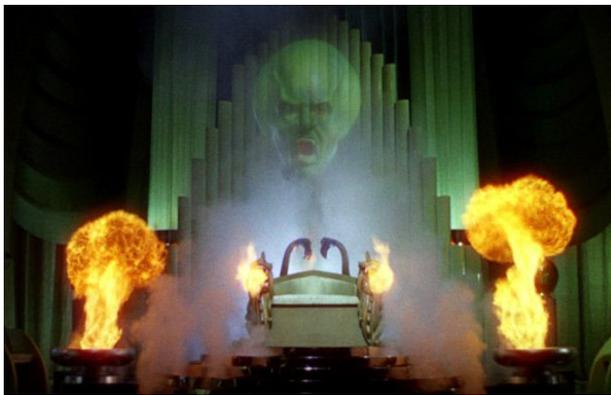
Part Three: Four communicative temptations

- Distortion #1: The sin against truth
- Distortion #2: The sin against love
- Diminution #1: The temptation of church marketing, communion-as-useful
- Diminution #2: The temptation of the church as club, communion-as-pleasurable

Dissimulation: The sin against truth



- **Never lie**



Smoke and mirrors



What's really happening

The church as a school for truthfulness



- **Honesty about our sins and struggles**

Subjugation: the sin against love



- **What we've got here is failure to communicate**

The church as a school for loving persuasion



- Taking seriously the views of opponents
- Articulating opposing views fairly
- Being honest about your own weak points
- Giving reasons, seeking to persuade not coerce

Diminutions of communion



- Included into what?

Temptation of church marketing: communion-as-useful



- **Everything goes better with Jesus?**

Temptation of church as club: communion-as-pleasurable



- **Membership has its benefits?**

What communication is for



Discussion

- Four temptations: two distortions and two diminutions
 - 1) Dissimulation (the sin against truth)
 - 2) Subjugation (the sin against love)
 - 3) Church marketing: communion-as-useful
 - 4) Church as club: communion-as-pleasurable
 - Where have you seen these at work?
 - Where have you seen the church overcoming them?
 - What practical steps can you take to overcome these temptations as a church communicator?

For further reading

- *Speaking of God: Theology, Language, and Truth*, by D. Stephen Long (Eerdmans, 2009)
- *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity*, by Paul Griffiths (Brazos, 2004)
- *Real Presences*, by George Steiner (University of Chicago, 1991)
- *The Bible and the New York Times*, by Fleming Rutledge (Eerdmans, 1999)