



Theology-Guided Management Model: Purpose and Values for the Profiling of Diaconal Organizations

Corinna Lee

Lee-Consulting.Com, Germany

info@lee-consulting.com

Abstract

The recognizability of a Christian theological profile and the associated credibility of diaconal organizations in Germany represents an increasing challenge for management. This article therefore addresses the question of how theologians, theological reflection and lived faith can regain relevance in diaconal organizations today? This article is an excerpt from the research paper published by the author in 2022 at the Institute for Diaconal Studies and Diaconal Management in Bielefeld-Bethel, Germany. To analyze and work on the topic, the author used theological, business and communication science approaches and combined them with her practical professional experience. On this basis, the author has developed the Theology-Guided Management Model (TGMM). The TGMM unfolds in five steps how diaconal organizations can identify their purpose and incorporate it into their corporate structures and processes using values (theology). The key to this lies in value-led communication processes.

Keywords: Diaconal Organization, Management Model, Theology, Communication

Abstrak

Pengakuan terhadap profil teologi Kristen dan erat kaitannya dengan kredibilitas organisasi-organisasi diakonia di Jerman memperlihatkan adanya tantangan yang semakin besar terhadap manajemen (diakonia). Artikel ini bertujuan menjawab pertanyaan tentang bagaimana para teolog, refleksi teologis, dan praksis iman dapat direlevansikan kembali ke dalam organisasi-organisasi diakonia saat ini? Artikel ini merupakan bagian dari makalah penelitian yang telah diterbitkan penulis pada tahun 2022 di *The Institute for Diaconal Studies and Diaconal Management*, Bielefeld-Bethel, Jerman. Untuk menganalisis dan mengerjakan topik tersebut, penulis menggunakan pendekatan teologis, bisnis, dan ilmu komunikasi serta menggabungkannya dengan pengalaman profesional praktisnya. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, penulis telah mengembangkan sebuah Model Manajemen yang didasarkan pada Model Manajemen yang berpanduan pada Teologi (TGMM). TGMM meliputi lima langkah mengenai bagaimana organisasi diakonia dapat mengidentifikasi tujuan mereka dan mengintegrasikannya ke dalam struktur dan proses perusahaan mereka dengan menerapkan nilai-nilai (teologi). Kunci dari model manajemen ini terletak pada nilai-nilai yang memimpin proses komunikasi.

Kata kunci: Organisasi Diakonia, Model Manajemen, Teologi, Komunikasi

Introduction

The purpose of diaconal organizations is characterized by a special feature compared to other organizations. It goes far beyond a mere corporate purpose and meaning. It is based on a statement of faith and therefore requires theological-hermeneutical reflection in order to be understood. It also requires a language that explains the content and meaning of this statement of faith to a diverse, increasingly unchurched and multirational workforce. The "Theology-Guided Management Model" (TGMM) is a tool that the management of church- diaconal organizations can use to implement meaning and values in corporate structures and processes.

Method

This article presents the Theology-Guided Management Model that the author developed in her dissertation on the topic of meaningful management and value-led communication - interdisciplinary foundations, structures and processes for a theology-led management model in diaconal organizations. The model is the result of a literary research project that incorporates theological, business management and communication science approaches to analyse and deal with the topic. The resulting findings are linked together in a new way and placed in a common context. Since diaconal science reflects diaconal business practice, the author's practical experience from twenty years of diaconal business practice is included.

Findings and Discussion

1. Theology in a Profile Crisis

For diaconal organizations, the credibility of their management is always linked to the question of the compatibility of economically oriented corporate management and the recognisability of a Christian profile. *Diakonie Deutschland - Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung* e.V. is the social service organization of the Protestant churches. It sees its mission as practicing charity and is committed to helping people who are on the margins of society, who are dependent on help or who are disadvantaged. With over 33,000 facilities, *Diakonie Deutschland* is one of the largest organizations providing care, support and assistance to people. More than 625,000 employees and around 700,000 volunteers are committed to the well-being of their

fellow human beings in these diaconal organizations. As a nationwide umbrella organization, *Diakonie Deutschland* sees itself as an advocate for the weak in society and in political dialogue.

Diakonie Deutschland describes its commitment as follows: “The foundation of all of Diakonie’s work is the Protestant faith. The concept of Diakonie traces its origins to the unconditional love of God revealed by Jesus Christ. Diakonie shares the Christian image of humanity. This includes the conviction that every human being is vulnerable and lives from care and reconciliation. Certain situations render people particularly in need of help. By providing practical aid as well as political lobbying, Diakonie carries out its mission.”¹

Traditional diaconal fields of work include care for the elderly and sick, child and youth welfare, assistance for the disabled and counselling services, e.g. for people with a migration background or addiction sufferers.

In Germany, Protestant parishes are also involved in diaconal work. So-called parish diaconia is the traditional diaconal commitment within parishes, which primarily benefits their own parishioners, e.g. through visiting services or collecting donations. This diaconal commitment is generally not institutionally integrated into corporate structures. It is carried out by parishioners working on a voluntary basis, but there are fewer and fewer of these in German parishes. For this reason, the author's research focuses on the form of diaconia that is present in urban society and is therefore recognized by the wider population, people who are distant from the church, secular or non-denominational. This is because all these people rely on the services of diaconal organizations when they are ill, old, in need of care or in other emergencies.

In urban society, Diakonia is therefore primarily perceived through diaconal organizations that unite various facilities under one roof, including hospitals, retirement homes, care services and residential homes for people with disabilities.

People from different cultures, denominations and professions work in these numerous facilities. Different ways of thinking come together against the background of communities of meaning. Diaconal organizations must therefore be seen not only as interdisciplinary, but above all as multirational organizations. This poses challenges for the management of diaconal organizations. *Diakonie Deutschland's* self-description

¹ Diakonie Deutschland: At a glance – Profile of Diakonie Deutschland. Published January 2024. <https://www.diakonie.de/informieren/die-diakonie/das-ist-die-diakonie#c49>

makes it clear that diaconal organizations require not only professional management, but above all theologically aware leadership.

“The management of diaconic companies requires maintaining and communicating the values of the theological, economic, and professional perspectives. Diaconal management is the theologically conscious management, design, and organization of social-economic services in the realm of the Protestant churches,”² says Hübner. Herms and Gohde even emphasize that in diaconal institutions, theological orientation not only represents their essential justification, but is also a decisive efficiency factor.³ For diaconal organizations in Germany, however, this traditionally justified claim presents a growing difficulty. This is because demographic developments are increasingly changing the social framework conditions. Current challenges for German diaconal organizations are the economization of the social market, social and religious pluralization and secularization. Forecasts predict that the number of Christian church members in Germany will be 12.2 per cent in 2060.

Christianity is still the most important religion in Europe, with 75 per cent of the population adhering to it. But here too, the trend is declining due to demographic developments. The reasons for this include people leaving the church, declining birth rates and migration.

This contrasts with the development of growing Christianity on continents where Christians are currently in the minority, as Victor Aguilan explains: “Christians in Asia remain a minority constituting only 9% of the population. However, Christianity here is growing at more than twice the rate of general growth. The centers of Christianity have significantly shifted away from the West to Asia, Africa and the other parts of the Global South”.⁴ Aguilan describes how diaconia and mission are closely linked for Asian churches and emphasizes that preaching and social action are virtually interwoven.

² Ingolf Hübner, „Christian Social Service in Countries with a Predominantly Christian Tradition and State Church History“, in *International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia. Contextual Theologies and Practices of Diakonia and Christian Social Services – Resources for Study and Intercultural Learning* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2021), 118-122.

³ Eilert Herms and Jürgen Gohde (2004): *Theologische Begründung – diakonische Leitung*, 308, Michael Schibilsky and Renate Zitt (Editors): *Theologie und Diakonie*. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher

Verlagshaus 2004): 288- 310.

⁴ Victor Aguilan, “Diakonia In An Asian Context,” in *International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia. Contextual Theologies and Practices of Diakonia and Christian Social Services – Resources for Study and Intercultural Learning* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2021), 220–228.

This close connection was also practised in Germany in the 19th century at the time of the historical founding figures of traditional diaconal institutions. Examples include Theodor Fliedner and the Kaiserswerther Anstalten, Johann Hinrich Wichern and the Rauhe Haus and Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, who gave his name to today's von Bodelschwinghsche Stiftungen Bethel.⁵ For them, their faith was both the cornerstone and cornerstone for the concepts of action practiced in their institutions. Haas/Starnitzke emphasize that, according to biblical testimony, Christian faith strives to become active in love.⁶

This connection between practice of faith and diaconal management has become increasingly less important in Germany under the changed modern conditions. Thorsten Moos analyses a problem of relevance for theologians and theology in German corporate diaconia.⁷ The loss of social significance of religion in modern German society can also be seen, for example, in the fact that although the new generation of diaconal managers can demonstrate a knowledge of business administration, it cannot be assumed without further ado that they have been socialized as Christians or influenced by Christian traditions.⁸ Secularization also means that Christian values are increasingly in need of interpretation and are losing importance in society as a whole.

However, economically orientated and legally correct actions alone are not sufficient for the credible management of diaconal organizations. On the contrary. It is precisely for economic reasons that diaconal organizations need to have a Christian character. The theologian and business economist Udo Krolzik emphasizes that the success of diaconal services on the social market is still decisively determined by their

⁵ In this respect, especially in the 19th century, the founding figures of the great diaconal and charitable organizations, but also of other social works and institutions, were outstanding. Without their entrepreneurial commitment, which is in no way inferior to the commercial entrepreneur in terms of energy, innovative strength, assertiveness and goal orientation, neither the German welfare state nor the supportive social civil culture is conceivable. Rat der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschland, *Unternehmerisches Handeln in Evangelischer Perspektive: Eine Denkschrift* (Gütersloh und München.: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 28.

⁶ Hanns-Stephan Haas and Dierk Starnitzke, *Diversität Und Identität: Konfessionsbindung Und Überzeugungspluralismus in Caritativen Und Diakonischen Unternehmen (DIAKONIE: Bildung - Gestaltung - Organization 14)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer W., 2015), 38.

⁷ Thorsten Moos: *Zur Rolle der Theologie in der Leitung diakonischer Unternehmen*. Systematisch-theologische Beobachtungen und Anschlussfragen, in: Beate Hofmann and Barbara Montag, "Zur Rolle Der Theologie in Der Leitung Diakonischer Unternehmen," in *Theologie Für Diakonie-Unternehmen: Funktionen - Rollen - Positionen* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2018), 195.

⁸ Beate Hofmann: *Diakonische Unternehmenskultur: Handbuch Für Führungskräfte* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2010), 9-13.

Christian character.⁹ Interestingly, diaconal organizations in Germany continue to benefit from a historically grown, traditional trust bonus among the population, even among non-denominational people.¹⁰ They are therefore commissioned by customers, e.g. in nursing or care, because they are traditionally recognized as having a high level of professional expertise combined with a Christian image of humanity. However, it is not clear how long diaconal organizations will be able to benefit from this. The central question is therefore: How can theologians, theological reflection and lived faith regain relevance in diaconal organizations today?

The fundamental significance and importance of theological reflection for diaconal organizations becomes clear when examining the company statutes. The normative orientation and purpose of every organization is anchored in the articles of association. They describe the values according to which a company is orientated and document the company mission, philosophy or vision. The corporate preamble, the first paragraph of the articles of association of Diakonie-Deutschland, contains the normative, meaningful definition for diaconal organizations: *“In Jesus Christus hat Gott seine Liebe zur Welt erwiesen. Die Kirche hat den Auftrag, diese Liebe allen Menschen durch Wort und Tat zu bezeugen.”*¹¹ Translated in English, this means: “In Jesus Christ, God has shown his love for the world. The church has the task of bearing witness to this love for all people through word and deed.” This beginning of the preamble contains a great deal of theological content.¹² At the forefront of diaconal self-description and commitment is a clear statement of faith with the words 'In Jesus Christ, God has shown his love for the world'. However, this theological language is becoming increasingly difficult for people

⁹ Udo Krolzik: *Theologie und Führung in diakonischen Unternehmen – Diakonische Führungskräfte vor der Gretchenfrage: Wie hältst Du es mit der christlichen Prägung?* In: Beate Hofmann and Martin Büscher, *Diakonische Unternehmen Multirational Führen: Grundlagen - Kontroversen - Potentiale* (Bethel: Nomos, 2017), 104.

¹⁰ Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (März 2014), “Engagement Und Indifferenz – V. EKD-Erhebung Über Kirchenmitgliedschaft Als Soziale Praxis,” https://www.ekd.de/ekd_de/Ds_doc/Ekd_v_kmu2014.Pdf.

¹¹ OJ EKD, “Satzung Des Evangelischen Werkes Für Diakonie Und Entwicklung e.V.,” <https://www.kirchenrecht-uek.de/Document/28280>. *To this day, these statements, formulated in the same or modified form, have found their way into various statutes of regional German diaconal works, their basic orders or even mission statements .*

¹² Stephan Haas and Dierk Starnitzke, *Diversität Und Identität: Konfessionsbindung Und Überzeugungspluralismus in Caritativen Und Diakonischen Unternehmen (DIAKONIE: Bildung - Gestaltung - Organization 14)*, 25-26. Haas and Starnitzke have also emphasized confessional affiliation as a sign of identity and state that diaconal identity is essentially determined by God's actions.

to understand due to the developments described above.¹³ At best, the content of the preamble will be comprehensible to Christian socialized employees in diaconal companies and theologians, who at best are represented in supervisory bodies or leading positions in diaconal companies. However, it is highly likely that only they, and not the majority of employees, will understand the content of the preamble. In diaconal organizations, the question of the purpose of the organization is directly linked to an answer of faith. Understanding the statement of faith in the preamble as the meaningful root of the organization therefore requires theological explanations and a transformation into a language that is understandable and comprehensible for everyone. It becomes clear that the decisive denominational characteristic that distinguishes diaconal organizations from other welfare organizations is evident in the way the question of meaning is dealt with.¹⁴

2. Living Theology in Corporate Structures and Processes

The author has therefore developed a Theology-Guided Management Model (TGMM) that can support diaconal organizations in developing the purpose of their organization. This model can be used by theologians in particular to initiate theological reflection within the organization and to use these insights for the design of management processes and structures. The TGMM consists of five successive steps or modules that are linked by value-led communication processes. Each step involves a process of reflection and communication.

The aim of each step is 1. Theology-led Purpose-foundation, 2. Transformative value-identification, 3. Process-oriented value-design, 4. Strategic communication-management and 5. Sustainable process-assurance. As the model was developed specifically for diaconal organizations, explanatory attributes are assigned to the modules, which concretize the aim of each individual step for the needs of diaconal organizations.

¹³ Wilhelm Gräß, *Kommunikation Des Evangeliums, Religionstheologische Ansichten Und Anfragen, Leitbegriff Der Praktischen Theologie (Arbeiten Zur Praktischen Theologie (APrTh) 57)* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014), 64f.; Michael Domsgen and Bernd Schröder, *Kommunikation des Evangeliums, Leitbegriff Der Praktischen Theologie: Arbeiten Zur Praktischen Theologie, Band 57* (Leipzig: Nomos, 2014).

¹⁴ *Diakonie in Germany Is One of Six Welfare Associations. They Are Important Pillars of the German Social System and Are Financed by Social Insurance, State/Church Subsidies or Donations. Her Activities Include Inpatient and Outpatient Care for the Sick And*, n.d.

The model depicts a management process that starts with the Purpose-Foundation (Sinn-Stiftung). The deliberate use of hyphens and capitalization serves to draw attention and emphasize the meaning of the individual terms. The black arrows point to the next step.

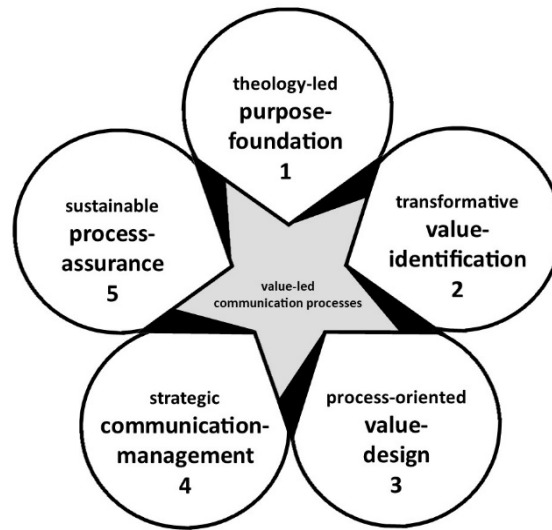


Figure 1: The Theology-Guided Management-Model (TGMM) (own illustration)

In the following sections, each individual module is presented in a summary. The summary provides a brief overview of the content, the responsibilities in the respective discourse, the objective, the key questions required to achieve the objective and the desired results.¹⁵

Step 1: Theology-Led Purpose Foundation



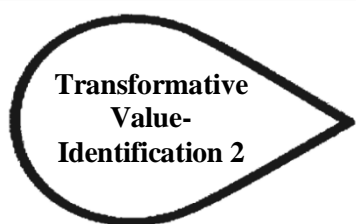
The first step, 'purpose foundation', serves to orientate the company's purpose. Here, the company's meaning and purpose are explored in theological reflections.¹⁶ This process is a theological-hermeneutical discourse. A purpose statement is formulated in this module.

¹⁵ Corinna Lee, *Sinnstiftendes Management Und Wertegeleitete Kommunikation: Interdisziplinäre Grundlagen, Strukturen Und Prozesse Für Ein Theologiegeleitetes ... Diakoniewissenschaft | Diakonienmanagement* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2023), 258-299.

¹⁶ The Company Is Understood as a System Which, According to Niklas Luhmann, Is Constituted as a Decision-Making System through Communication. Communication Is Defined by Luhmann as the Basic Element of All Social Systems. He Understands Individual Communica.; Luhmann, Niklas, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß Einer Allgemeinen Theorie (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft)* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987). 92.

- ▶ The people responsible for this discourse are: *Company management (executive board/management), Moderation: theologian, Company management (members of the supervisory bodies).*
- ▶ The aim of this discourse is to use *the theological statements in the preamble to discuss the meaningful contribution of the diaconal organization.*
- ▶ The key questions that can open up this discourse are: *What are we here for? What do we want to bring into the world? Why do we do what we do?*
- ▶ The results can be seen in the following specifics: *Formulation of meaning and purpose, Purpose statement.*

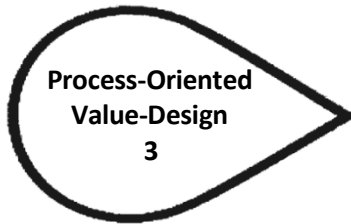
Step 2: Transformative Value Identification



This step consists of two modules: The identification of values and the linguistic transformation. In this step, beliefs are transformed into values and made visible. This step also serves to identify and formulate the mission and vision for the company.

- ▶ Those responsible for this discourse are also responsible for this: *Company management (executive board/management), Moderation: theologian. Company management (members of the supervisory bodies).*
- ▶ The aim of this discourse is *to identify and name the core corporate values from the theologically based statement on the company's purpose. The results of the theological discourse are then translated into a linguistic form using 'values' that can be understood by all employees, regardless of their religion or cultural background.*
- ▶ The key questions that determine this discourse are: *What values result from the purpose statement? What values do we want to align our management with? Are other values also perceived in the company? Are these values understandable for everyone? Where do conflicts of values arise? How are they managed?*
- ▶ The results can be summarised in the following concrete terms: *Vision, Mission, Values, Declaration of core values, Code of Ethics, (...).*

Step 3: Process-Oriented Value Design



In this step, the company processes in which the identified values can unfold their effect are first determined. The values are then given a form through which they can be incorporated into the structures and processes of a diaconal organization.

- ▶ Those responsible for this discourse are: *Company management (executive board/management), Moderation: theologian, Affected management, staff departments (HR, QM, communication, etc.) and employees.*
- ▶ The aim of this discourse is *to shape the corporate values in such a way that their meaningful effect can unfold in structures and processes.*
- ▶ The key questions that determine this discourse are: *Where are the identified values perceived in the company and where are they missed? How are decisions made? What leadership culture do we want to live? How do we implement our image of humanity? How do we shape our diaconal profile?*
- ▶ The results can be summarised in the following concrete terms: *Standards of behaviour, Personnel management, Spirituality and lived faith, Dealing with different stakeholder groups, Corporate goals, Social responsibility, Positioning the company in the economy and society, and many more.*

Step 4: Strategic Communication Management



The 'communication management' in this step is explicitly strategic. In this understanding, corporate communication becomes a central management task. Communication management is conceptualized and practiced in a value- and goal-oriented manner.

- ▶ Those responsible for this discourse are: *Theological management (moderation), Communication management, affected departments and responsible employees, chaplains if necessary.*

- ▶ The aim of this dialogue is to: *to contribute to increasing economic value creation by strategically aligning communication management with the company's objectives, to professionalise communication management, to implement corporate values in the company through targeted communication measures, to shape relationships with stakeholder groups in a value-led manner.*
- ▶ The key questions that determine this discourse are: *What are the company's goals? How do we adapt the communication strategy to the corporate objectives? What topics do we use to translate the values into communication? What media and measures do we use to communicate with the various stakeholder groups? How do we organise the relationships with the stakeholder groups?*
- ▶ The results can be summarised in the following specifics: *Transparent communication of corporate policy (objectives, strategies, processes), Communication of topics and campaigns, Value-led relationship management.*

Step 5: Sustainable Process Assurance

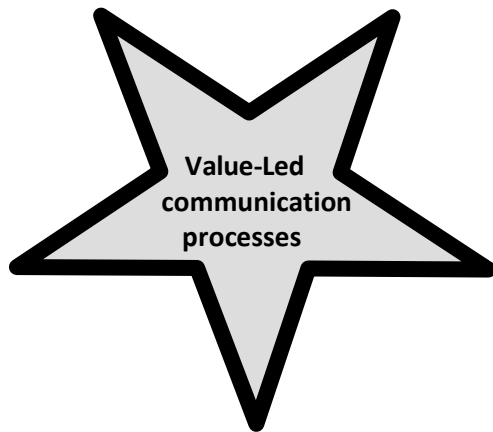


In this step, the communication processes and measures for implementing meaning and values are sustainably secured in a 'meaning and values manual'.

- ▶ Those responsible for this discourse are: *Theological management (moderation), Affected departments and responsible employees, QM, communication management, possibly MAV.*
- ▶ The aim of this dialogue is to create a handbook that can be used as a normative controlling tool for theology-led management. The necessary implementation, evaluation and control measures in connection with the corporate purpose and corporate values are recorded in this manual in a verifiable manner.
- ▶ The guiding questions that determine this discourse are: *How can we record the identified communication processes in a way that is binding for all employees and ensure they are sustainable? How can we review and further develop the functionality of the model and the communication processes identified?*

- ▶ The results can be summarised in the following specifics: *Practical recommendations (procedural instructions)*, *Meaning and values manual*, *Sustainability measurement*.

The Basis of The Relationship: Value-Led Communication Process



Value-led communication processes form the link between all five measures and are at the centre of the model. They have two functions. On the one hand, they represent the connecting communication structure between the individual modules and, on the other, they are a reflection of the value-led relationship processes within the company.

Communication is a relationship. In the model development, communication is understood as the connecting relation between the elements.¹⁷ Communication therefore has a system- forming function. This understanding is helpful and useful for describing the model contexts, processes, responsibilities and functions. In a system-theoretical understanding, however, communication has a neutral function and is free of ethical-normative attributions.¹⁸ The situation is different with normative communication. In diaconal organizations, this value- led approach to communication is rightly expected and even demanded by stakeholders due to the history of diaconal organizations and their Christian roots.

Theology is communication. To speak of God means to speak of people. God's devotion to people, and vice versa, happens primarily through communication. For communication in diaconal organizations, this results in a special responsibility for the theology-led design of communication processes. They can be designed to be meaningful and value-led. The Bible describes how these processes are to be

¹⁷ Fritz B Simon, *Einführung in Die Systemische Organizationstheorie (Carl-Auer Compact)* (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag GmbH, 2015), 19.

¹⁸ Lee, *Sinnstiftendes Management Und Wertegeleitete Kommunikation: Interdisziplinäre Grundlagen, Strukturen Und Prozesse Für Ein Theologiegeleitetes ... Diakoniewissenschaft | Diakonienmanagement*, 168-203.

organised in the stories in which God turns to people.¹⁹

God is relationship. In the Bible, all encounters that Jesus has with people - including those who are social outcasts such as tax collectors and sinners - are described as respectful and appreciative. Jesus accepts people and excludes no one. This can be seen to a large extent in how he communicates with people, how he talks to them. He meets them at eye level, he overcomes all hierarchies, he makes no distinctions based on origin, religion, nationality or gender. He takes people seriously and asks about their wishes and opinions: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51) And Jesus listens.

Relationships are characterized by communication processes. Theology-led management manifests itself in value-led communication processes. The way in which people in the organization are communicated with reflects the culture of a company. Applied to communication, this means If the people have a functional purpose in the organization, communication is functional. However, church-diaconal organizations are based on an image of man that is founded in the likeness of God. Dignity and respect in communication are therefore rightly expected by the stakeholders. It is therefore advisable for diaconal organizations to pay particular attention to the design of their communication processes and measures. With this in mind, the author has developed communication values based on theology. The Sermon on the Mount from Mt 5:3-10 served as her biblical-theological basis.²⁰

Conclusion: Theology as a Creative and Meaningful Shaper of the Future

So far, theological work in diaconal organizations in Germany has mainly been reflected in church services and pastoral care. The author's new approach is to develop a concept for theological work in diaconal organizations. There are numerous theological approaches for transforming the biblical message into the congregational context. They find their way into congregations and churches through worship, preaching and pastoral care concepts. So far, however, a concept that thinks theology in corporate structures has been lacking. What is needed is a concept for theological reflection and its significance for diaconal organizations that enables theologians to go beyond preaching and pastoral care, to consciously lead and shape theologically, to uphold and

¹⁹ Ibid, 168-203.

²⁰ Ibid, 297f.

communicate theological values - in other words, to manage theologically. Without the potential to shape the structures and processes of a diaconal organization, theological reflection is considerably limited in its possibilities.

Theology, as talk of God, wants to be lived. It wants to tie in with people's lives. It wants to have its place in the biography of individuals. Theologically characterised lifeworlds are not only congregations and families, in a church-diaconal organization it is also the workplace. In order to make theology tangible in this context, the author believes that a new approach is needed: the transformation of the gospel into the institutional management context. It may be unusual to think of theology in institutional terms - but for diaconal organizations it is existentially necessary due to their history and their self-description. Theological reflection is theology in action. The theological basis for theology-led management can be found in the 'lived theology' approach developed by the theologian Sabrina Müller.²¹ Müller has a broad understanding of theologising, which she does not just reduce to thinking or speaking. She also includes other forms of expression such as art and music. The fact that many pragmatic elements flow into theology makes it tangible and experienceable. Müller therefore defines 'lived theology' as follows: "Lived theology is grounded in the world of experience and the reality of people's lives. It becomes theology when it finds reflected expression and encounters public resonance."²² Theological questions become relevant in a personal, everyday context. Theology poses questions and provides answers at the same time. The questions that lie in human existence are answered by the Christian message.

Paul Tillich, to whose approach Müller refers, describes this understanding of theology in the correlation method.²³ Tillich formulates: "God answers man's questions, and under the impression of God's answers, man asks his questions. Theology formulates the answers contained in the divine self-disclosure in the direction of the questions that lie in human existence."²⁴ These theological questions about one's own existence can touch on one's own dependence, limitations, doubts, despondency, pain, grief and meaningfulness, among other things. The theological answers are based on

²¹ Sabrina Müller: *Gelebte Theologie*, Impulse für eine Pastoraltheologie des Empowerments, Theologische Studien NF-14-2019, (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag 2019).

²² Ibid., 38.

²³ Paul Tillich, Paul: *Systematische Theologie I*, 8. Aufl., unveränd. photomechan. Nachdr. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 8.1987. 78-80.

²⁴ Ibid., 75.

comforting, encouraging, healing, hopeful, strengthening and loving answers that allow theology to be experienced individually because they have an existential and meaningful character. People who need help come to diaconal organizations and their various facilities in different areas of work. People whose existence is threatened. With this theological approach, theology can therefore be experienced and lived in the context of diaconal organizations.

The model for 'Theology-led management and value-led communication' is a model for living theology in the context of an institution. God's message can be experienced under current conditions and in different contexts. The management model developed here also identifies theology and communication as central management tasks. It integrates different rationalities and management levels through reflective discussions and discourse moderated by theologians. The model serves as an empowering medium and guide for company management and leadership to allow the theologically reflected meaning and the values derived from it to work into and through the company.

These Christian-based values offer the opportunity for theological content in diaconal organizations to find its way into the strategic and operational structures and processes via the normative level. It has been shown that the statement of faith in the preamble to the statutes of Diakonie Deutschland can develop its meaningful effect in diaconal organizations through targeted, value-led communication processes. This realization makes communication a central management task based on biblical and theological principles. Thinking of theology as a means of shaping management is an innovative approach. The theology-led management model makes it possible to creatively organize proclamation and social action in companies. The theology-led design of management thus becomes just as relevant for the church and diaconia as the topics of worship and proclamation, pastoral care and education. The contexts, forms of communication and organization, the language and the relationships associated with communication thus become the focus of corporate structures and processes. Creating meaning, reflective discourse and value-led management come at a price. They require human, financial and time resources.

Theology-led management not only leads to political commitment, such as social responsibility, justice, environmental and climate protection, sustainable

management, combating poverty, gender equality, inclusion and participation, but also to socio-ethical consequences for diaconal organizations. The development of the model is linked to the hope of a benefit, namely the confidence that it will strengthen the position of theology in diaconal organizations. But only enthusiasts can inspire. No matter how many concepts, models and tools are available to those responsible - if there is no flame burning within them, they will not be able to ignite others. Especially in these challenging times for diaconal organizations, creativity, imagination, crossover thinking and thinking together are needed to bring God's meaningful and life-affirming message to people.

References

- Aguilan, Victor. "Diakonia In An Asian Context." In *International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia. Contextual Theologies and Practices of Diakonia and Christian Social Services – Resources for Study and Intercultural Learning*, 220–228. Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2021.
- Domsgen, Michael, and Bernd Schröder. *Leitbegriff Der Praktischen Theologie: Arbeiten Zur Praktischen Theologie, Band 57*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014.
- Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, OJ. "Satzung Des Evangelischen Werkes Für Diakonie Und Entwicklung e.V." <https://www.kirchenrecht-uek.de/Document/28280>.
- Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland: "Engagement Und Indifferenz – V. EKD-Erhebung Über Kirchenmitgliedschaft Als Soziale Praxis." https://www.ekd.de/Ekd_de/Ds_doc/Ekd_v_kmu2014.Pdf.
- Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland/Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (2019): *Langfristige Projektion der Kirchenmitgliedschaft und des Kirchensteueraufkommens in Deutschland*. Eine Studie des Forschungszentrums Generationenverträge an der Albert-Ludwig-Universität-Freiburg. Available on the internet at: https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/dossiers_2019/Projektion-2060_FZG-Studie_Zahlen-katholische-Kirche.pdf. Access: 21.04.2024.

- Fachinformationssystem Kirchenrecht: *Satzung des Evangelischen Werkes für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.* vom 10. Oktober 2019. (ABI. EKD 2020 S.128) zuletzt geändert am 21. Dezember 2021 (ABI EKD 2022 S.25). Available on the Internet at: <https://www.kirchenrecht-ekd.de/document/28280>. Access: 21.04.2024.
- Friedrich, Norbert/Baumann, Klaus/Dopheide, Christian/Eurich, Johannes/Giebel, Astrid/ Hofmann, Beate/Jähnichen, Traugott/July, Frank Otfried/Kruttschnitt, Jörg/Wolff, Martin (Editors): *Diakonie-Lexikon*. Göttingen, Bristol: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2016.
- Gräb, Wilhelm: *Kommunikation des Evangeliums*. Religionstheologische Ansichten Und Anfragen. In *Kommunikation Des Evangeliums: Leitbegriff Der Praktischen Theologie (Arbeiten Zur Praktischen Theologie (APrTh) 57)*, 256. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014.
- Haas, Hanns-Stephan, and Dierk Starnitzke. *Diversität Und Identität: Konfessionsbindung Und Überzeugungspluralismus in Caritativen Und Diakonischen Unternehmen (Diakonie: Bildung - Gestaltung - Organization 14)*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer W., 2015.
- Haslinger, Herbert: *Diakonie*, Grundlagen für die soziale Arbeit der Kirche, Paderborn: Schöningh 2009.
- Hermes, Eilert/Gohde, Jürgen: *Theologische Begründung – diakonische Leitung*, in: Schibilsky, Michael/Zitt, Renate (Editors): *Theologie und Diakonie*. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2004): 288- 310.
- Hofmann, Beate: *Diakonische Unternehmenskultur*. Handbuch für Führungskräfte (DIAKONIE. Bildung – Gestaltung – Organization Bd. 2), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer²2010.
- Hofmann, Beate/Büscher, Martin (Editors): *Diakonische Unternehmen multirational führen– Grundlagen – Kontroversen – Potentiale*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017.
- Hofmann, Beate, and Barbara Montag: *Theologie Für Diakonie-Unternehmen: Funktionen - Rollen - Positionen*, 202. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2018.

- Kirche in, Kirchenamt der Evangelischen. *Unternehmerisches Handeln in Evangelischer Perspektive: Eine Denkschrift*. Gütersloh und München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008.
- Krolzik, Udo: *Theologie und Führung in diakonischen Unternehmen – Diakonische Führungskräfte vor der Gretchenfrage: Wie hältst Du es mit der christlichen Prägung?* in: Hofmann, Beate/Büscher, Martin (Editors): *Diakonische Unternehmen multirational führen– Grundlagen – Kontroversen – Potentiale*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2017.
- Lee, Corinna. *Sinnstiftendes Management Und Wertegeleitete Kommunikation: Interdisziplinäre Grundlagen, Strukturen Und Prozesse Für Ein Theologiegeleitetes Managementmodell in diakonischen Unternehmen. (Diakoniewissenschaft | Diakonienmanagement)*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2023.
- Luhmann, Niklas: *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß Einer Allgemeinen Theorie (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft)*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2015.
- Moos, Thorsten: *Zur Rolle der Theologie in der Leitung diakonischer Unternehmen. Systematisch-theologische Beobachtungen und Anschlussfragen*, in: Hofmann, Beate/Montag, Barbara (Editors): *Theologie für Diakonie-Unternehmen, Funktionen – Rollen – Positionen*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2018): 195-200.
- Müller, Sabrina: *Gelebte Theologie, Impulse für eine Pastoraltheologie des Empowerments*, Theologische Studien NF-14-2019, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag 2019.
- Nagel, Alexander-Kenneth: *Pluralisierung, religiöse*, in: Friedrich, Norbert/Baumann, Klaus/Dopheide, Christian/Eurich, Johannes/Giebel, Astrid/ Hofmann, Beate/Jähnichen, Traugott/July, Frank Otfried/Kruttschnitt, Jörg/Wolff, Martin (Editors): *Diakonie-Lexikon*. (Göttingen, Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2016): 340-342.
- Rat der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschland (Editor): *Unternehmerisches Handeln in evangelischer Perspektive. Eine Denkschrift des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschland*, Gütersloh, 2008.

- Renger, A.-B.: *Christentum und Europa*, in: Große Hüttmann/Wehling, Das Europalexikon (3.Auflage), Bonn 2020. Available on the Internet at: <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-europalexikon/176753/christentum-und-europa/> Access: 12.04.2024
- Schibilsky, Michael/Zitt, Renate (Editors): *Theologie und Diakonie*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004.
- Schmidt, Heinz, Hanns- Stephan Haaas, Sigrist Christoph, and Et.al. *Diakonische Unternehmenskultur: Handbuch Für Führungskräfte*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2007.
- Simon, Fritz B. *Einführung in Die Systemische Organizationstheorie (Carl-Auer Compact)*. Heidelberg: Carl-Auer Verlag GmbH, 2015.
- Tillich, Paul: *Systematische Theologie I/II*, 8. Aufl., unveränd. photomechan. Nachdr. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 8.1987.

