**Title:** Views on the image of God: a comparative study of the views of Karl Barth and Anthony A. Hoekema

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**Date completed:** August 2007

**Granting Institution:** Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS)

**Description:** Unpublished Thesis (PhD): 276 pages

**Abstract:**

This study seeks to give a satisfactory, though not necessary final, answer to the questions, “What are the common grounds and points of difference on the views of Karl Barth and Anthony Hoekema about the image of God?” and “What are the underlying influences of these two views?” To reach this goal, it first describes Barth and Hoekema’s views of the image of God; then, it compares and analyzes these two views.

Barth understands the image of God in man as relationship between man and woman. He believes that in the Godhead there exists a being “confronting one another” among the three Persons, of which man is the visible pattern. For him, the man who is the image of God is not an individual man but the man as male and female. He believes that the humanity of Jesus Christ is the very image of God. However, this image is not something He possesses as a person, but is found only in His relationship with His woman, the church.

Hoekema understands the image of God as an unlosable aspect of man. He maintains that the image of God must include both structural and functional aspects of man. In the functional aspect, the image is to be seen in man’s threefold relationship: toward God, toward others, and toward nature.
This study finds out that Barth was much influenced by Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, and Ludwig Feuerbach in the formation of his theology. Martin Buber’s and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s influence were notable in the formation of his doctrine of the image of God. This study also finds out that Hoekema was influenced by many reformed theologians in the formation of his doctrine of the image of God including John Calvin, Emil Brunner, Herman Bavinck, and Hendrikus Berkhof. Due to these quite different backgrounds, views of Barth and Hoekema on the image of God are apparently incompatible. However, after comparing and analyzing these two views, this study concludes that the apparent differences between them are not antithetical but merely complementary to each other.