

*What is it to do Christian theology?*

To do Christian theology is to engage in *the church's ongoing self-criticism* by critically appropriating its own witness of faith. By its very constitution, the church is called to be a witnessing community and, to this end, always to take care that the witness it bears is, in fact, the witness it *claims* to bear by reason of its calling. This means that each and every Christian, as a member of the church, always bears a twofold responsibility, which she or he assumes publicly with her or his confirmation: first of all, *to bear Christian witness*, and then, secondly, and in order to bear the witness the church is called to bear and claims to bear, *to do Christian theology*. To do Christian theology, then, is simply to reflect critically on the witness the church bears, in critical discussion with all others similarly reflecting, so as to be able both to understand what it really means and to validate (or, as the case may be, invalidate) the claims to validity that the church makes or implies in bearing its witness.

*What is a course in Christian theology supposed to be?*

A course in Christian theology is supposed to be *an exercise in doing it*—in doing Christian theology. As such, its general purpose (whatever its particular purpose may be) is always the same as that of any other such course: to help anyone who takes it to develop further her or his own *aptitude* for doing Christian theology—by actually doing it, together with others, in the company of at least some others who, having done it before, and even done it professionally, may be able to help in learning how to do it, to do it well, and, finally, to do it better. By an "aptitude" for doing Christian theology is meant both acquisition of the knowledge and skills required, and thus a developed *ability*, to do it and an acquired *disposition* to exercise the ability in any context or situation that happens to call for its exercise.