

In what sense, exactly, is doing theology a form of "fully critical reflection"?

Doing theology is a form of "fully critical reflection" in that (1) in addition to being critical interpretation of the meaning of bearing witness, it is also critical *validation* of the claims to validity made or implied in bearing witness; (2) it critically validates *all*, not merely some, of these claims, whenever they become problematic enough to warrant such validation; and (3) it is *more*, rather than less, critical because it both critically interprets the meaning of bearing witness and critically validates its claims to validity, not on the primary level of self-understanding and life-praxis, but on the secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory.

This means, among other things, that doing theology as a form of "fully critical reflection" always involves beginning again *ab ovo*, or—to change the metaphor from Barth's to Maurice's—it involves digging down beneath all mere authorities to *the primal sources of authority*, i. e., the *implicit* primal source in common human experience and understanding of ultimate reality in its meaning for us; and the *explicit* primal source in specifically Christian experience and understanding of Jesus as of decisive significance for human existence.

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