

It lies in the nature of the case that there are two, and only two, conditions under which an instance of Christian witness can be appropriate: either it itself is (or belongs to) the constitutive and therefore formally normative instance(s) of Christian witness by which the appropriateness of *all* other instances has to be determined; or else it is one of these other instances that so agrees in substance with the formally normative instance(s) that it, too, is appropriate and therefore *substantially* normative for determining the appropriateness of *some* other such instance(s). Consequently, to determine that an instance of Christian witness is appropriate is to determine that one or the other of these two conditions is satisfied. But to determine that either condition is satisfied requires rightly understanding, and so interpreting and reformulating, the constitutive and therefore formally normative instance(s) of Christian witness.

That this is so if one is to determine that the second condition is satisfied is obvious enough, since no instance of Christian witness can be determined to be in substantial agreement with another unless both instances are rightly understood. But it is no less so even if one is to determine that the first condition is satisfied; for whether an instance of witness is (or belongs to) the constitutive and therefore formally normative instance(s) of Christian witness depends upon its satisfying, in turn, certain necessary conditions. Specifically, it has to make or imply the claim to be appropriate to Jesus Christ by asserting or implying that Jesus is of decisive significance for human existence (by, in Luther's terms, "preaching and pushing Christ"); and it has to be not just *an* instance of asserting or implying this, but must be (or belong to) *the* instance(s) of doing so, in the sense of the earliest, the original and originating, and therefore constitutive such instance(s). But, once again, whether an instance of Christian witness satisfies these conditions and thus is (or belongs to) the constitutive instance(s) of such witness can be determined only by first rightly understanding it, and therefore interpreting and reformulating it. (Cf. *Doing Theology Today*: 30 f.).

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