

*On the Polarity of "Witness" and "Existence"*

1. Ordinarily, I use "witness" to mean the specifically *Christian* witness of faith, while by "existence" I mean human being(s) simply as such. But just in meaning this I involve myself in meaning more than this—and that in a twofold respect.

2. Since, according to the Christian witness itself, it is not the only or the first witness of God to human beings, because God, in the words of scripture, has not left himself without witness (Acts 14:17), and, accordingly, women and men have also witnessed to God, however strangely, there is a sense in which existence is itself witness. More precisely, it follows from the Christian witness's own claims that every woman and man, simply as such, is the recipient of the original witness of God to her or him, and is her- or himself—directly or indirectly, properly or strangely—a witness to God. Consequently, there is a sense in which the address of witness to existence can be understood only as the address of witness to witness.

3. On the other hand, it is just as true that there is a sense in which this address must be understood as the address of existence to existence.

1970; rev. 31 July 2009