

Theology, I've argued, can and should be done constructively and prospectively as well as critically and retrospectively. But what, exactly, is the difference between these two ways of doing it?

Assuming that (1) doing theology is critically reflecting on the meaning and validity of bearing witness; and (2) "bearing witness" designates the life-praxis of religious believers of some kind, and thus what they in fact believe and do, one may say the following.

Doing theology critically and retrospectively is determining whether what religious believers of some kind have in fact believed and done is what they by right ought to have believed and done—namely, because it was both adequate to its content and fitting to its situation.

Doing theology constructively and prospectively is determining what religious believers of some kind by right ought to believe and do, whether or not they have in fact been believing and doing it—namely, because it is both adequate to its content and fitting to its situation.

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