

Upon further reflection, I doubt whether it is advisable to say, as I have, that, because doing theology takes place on the secondary level of critical reflection, it “not only . . . is related indirectly even to Christian teaching, but also . . . has another and quite different intention: not to answer the existential question, but to interpret the answer given to it by bearing Christian witness and to validate the claims to validity that this witness makes or implies” (*Doing Theology Today*: 27). Granted that theory intends to answer our vital questions only indirectly, it still seems strange and forced to say that it does not intend to answer them at all. Surely, it *does* intend to answer them, even if only in its indirect way as theory.

Instead of saying, then, that doing theology bears witness, insofar as it does so, only indirectly and unintentionally, it would be better to distinguish between two senses, or, possibly, degrees, of indirectness. Teaching is indirect in the first sense or degree *as compared with bearing direct witness* by proclamation (in the case of explicit witness) and other forms of loving action (in the case of implicit witness), whereas theology is indirect in a second sense or degree *as compared with bearing witness altogether*—the indirect witness of teaching as well as the direct witness of proclamation and other forms of loving action.

Perhaps a way of saying this would be to employ Mr. Wesley’s distinction and speak of “proximate” and “remote” indirectness. Thus, whereas teaching is *proximately* indirect because it is indirect as compared with bearing direct witness by proclamation and other forms of loving action, doing theology is *remotely* indirect because it is indirect as compared with all forms of bearing witness—the proximately indirect witness of teaching as well as the direct witness of proclamation and other forms of loving action.

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