

I agree with Marxsen—and, in their ways, also Bultmann and Knox—that three things, all historically contingent, belong together:

1. the once-for-all revelation of God decisively through Jesus;

2. the once-for-all apostolate, i.e., the earliest, the original and originating, and therefore constitutive Christian community through whose faith this once-for-all revelation is received; and

3. the closed canon, i.e., the witness of faith in this revelation by this constitutive Christian community, which is "the canon *before* the canon (of the New Testament or scripture)" and, as such, *the* canon of the Christian church.

21 April 2008; rev. 26 October 2009