

Is the Jesus-kerygma alone formally apostolic and therefore canonical?  
Or can this be said of the Christ-kerygma, also?

One thing seems clear: if the Christ-kerygma, also, can be said to be formally apostolic and canonical, this can only be because, or insofar as, its earliest instances, at least, evidence, in their way, the one event of the church's coming into being explicitly as the church, and do so no less directly or immediately than the earliest instances of the Jesus-kerygma. The question, then, is whether this necessary condition can be said to be met, and, if it can, why?

The church's coming into being as the church, although clearly one event rather than two, nonetheless had two distinguishable phases. The first phase that began with the community forming in response to the call experienced through Jesus' own word and ministry, when certain persons accepted this call and began to "follow" him as his disciples, lasted until the shattering events of his arrest and crucifixion only a short time later. Characteristic of this first phase, as evidenced by the Jesus-kerygma originating during it, is that, while it was explicitly theological, it was only implicitly christological. This, of course, is why it is reasonable to infer from the same evidence that Jesus himself had not advanced any explicit christological claim. But be this as it may, the evidence provided by the Jesus-kerygma allows no doubt that any christology that the community of response may have had already during this first phase of its coming into being was not explicit, but merely implied—namely, by its "*that*" precisely as kerygma, its "*what*" consisting entirely in traditions concerning what Jesus himself had thought, said, and done.

It was quite otherwise, however, during the second phase of the event, which began with the appearances of Jesus as alive again and present to the community as the Christ of God, notwithstanding his death on the cross. Just how long this second phase lasted is harder to say, because, in a way, the same decisive appearances with which it began already brought it to an end. Just as these appearances themselves involved explicit recognition of Jesus as God's Christ, so the Christ-kerygma originating from them was already explicitly christological, if only to the extent of asserting that the Jesus who was now

experienced as present and living in the community had been designated Christ by God's raising him from the dead. But there are good reasons to believe that, even after the emergence of this explicit christological assertion, the process of the community's coming to explicit consciousness both of itself and of the one through whom it had been decisively called into being as the church continued for some time, perhaps coming to an end (insofar as it has ever come to an end!) only with the work of Paul. Even so, once the earliest instances of the Christ-kerygma had emerged with their explicit assertion of Jesus' resurrection, the witness of the community had become explicitly christological, and with that the community was already in being as the church, more or less explicitly conscious of itself as such.

But now if the Christ-kerygma, in its earliest instances, at least, originated during this second phase of the one event of the church's explicitly coming into being, then it clearly evidences this one event no less directly or immediately than the earliest instances of the Jesus-kerygma. Although what the Christ-kerygma directly or immediately evidences is the second phase of the event, as distinct from the first, it is still the <sup>one</sup> event of the church's coming into being explicitly as such that it clearly evidences. But, then, not only the Jesus-kerygma, but also the Christ-kerygma can be said to meet the necessary condition of being formally apostolic—namely, that it, too, be, in its way, original and originating and therefore constitutive Christian witness. And because, or insofar as, it is formally apostolic, the Christ-kerygma, no less than the Jesus-kerygma, is an integral part of the real canon of the church, as we today, with our ways and means of identifying that canon, have been given to identify it.

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