

Reading what Marxsen says in justifying the apostolic principle as by no means arbitrary—namely, that the apostolic tradition was normative because it had the greatest proximity to Jesus—I have a new appreciation for the position of John Knox, for whom "the beginning" is not, as it seems to be for Marxsen, simply Jesus, but "the event," comprising "community" as well as "person."

Thus on Knox's view, as on mine, proximity to Jesus as such is not the reason for the apostles' normativeness, since, by that test, those who crucified Jesus, being no less proximate to him than those who "followed" him, would have to be accorded the same formal normativeness. Rather, the apostles are normative because, being the "community" aspect of "the event (of the church's coming into being)," they are, together with Jesus as "the person" aspect, co-constitutive of the event itself. This means that just as there is no way of holding fast to the faith and witness of the apostles except by holding fast to the Jesus who is the explicit primal ontic source of their authority, so there is no way of holding fast to this Jesus except by holding fast to the faith and witness of the apostles authorized by him as its explicit primal ontic source.

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