

On Implicit/Explicit Primal Authorizing Source

1. The distinction between implicit and explicit primal authorizing source is relative, in the sense that what functions in one context as the explicit primal authorizing source may function in another context as the *implicit* primal authorizing source.

2. Thus, for example, in the case of theistic religion, its constitutive concept "God" serves to make the objective ground of ultimate meaning explicit. Relative, then, to nontheistic or nonreligious contexts, the constitutive theistic concept "God" is, as it were, doubly explicit: both in that it is religious and in that it is theistic.

3. Relative to other theistic religions, however, the constitutive theistic concept "God" functions as the *implicit* primal authorizing source, the issue between the various theistic religions being, not What is strictly ultimate reality? or Is strictly ultimate reality God?, but Who, or what, speaks decisively for the God who is strictly ultimate reality?

4. Christological predicates are predicates that function to identify who or what it is that speaks decisively for God. Thus they have the force of asserting formally that the subject of whom or of which they are predicated is the *explicit* primal authorizing source that settles the issue of who or what decisively speaks for God as the *implicit* primal authorizing source.

5. But this means, then, that the subject of such predications provides a material meaning not only for the christological predicates, and thus for the explicit primal authorizing source, but also for the implicit primal authorizing source. For example, the assertion that Jesus is the Son of God provides a material meaning both for "Son of God" and for "God," even while asserting who Jesus is formally—namely, the explicit primal authorizing source relative to the *implicit* primal source called "God."

6. But this it does *all the way back*, so to speak, in that the subject provides a material meaning for everything that, relative to the explicit primal authorizing source last mentioned, functions as the *implicit* primal

source. For example, the assertion that Jesus is the Son of God provides a material meaning not only for "Son of God," and for "God," but also for "strictly ultimate reality." Thus the strictly ultimate reality that theism makes explicit as God is made further and decisively explicit through Jesus Christ, even as Jesus is asserted to be formally the decisive re-presentation not only of God, but of strictly ultimate reality as well.

7. All this could be put in the terms of W. A. Christian's analysis of "meaning and truth in religion" by saying that, relative to the "basic supposition" made by human existence as such, religion is the "basic proposal" that makes the strictly ultimate reality originally, albeit implicitly, experienced in human existence in all of its aspects explicitly religious; just as, relative to the "basic supposition" made by religious existence as such, theism is the "basic proposal" that makes the religious reality explicitly experienced in religious existence specially explicit as theistic; just as, relative to the "basic supposition" made by theistic existence as such, Christianity is the "basic proposal" that makes the theistic reality explicitly experienced by theistic existence as such decisively explicit as Christian. So, at any rate, would one put it from a Christian standpoint, assuming the decisive significance of Jesus Christ.

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