

In an earlier reflection (Notebooks, 10 December 2007), I took myself to task for having said misleadingly that Christians are responsible not only for the valid, but also for the "efficacious," administration of the specifically Christian means of salvation (Notebooks, 6 January 2004). "In truth," I argued, "whether or not a witness is efficacious is the responsibility, not of the one who bears it, but solely of the one who receives it." I am now convinced that this argument itself is misleading—thanks particularly to the adverb "solely."

Granted that, as I argued, the efficacy of witness, as distinct from its validity, depends on how the recipient of the witness takes it—namely, either as or not as an existential communication calling for decision about her or his own self-understanding—how the recipient takes the witness can hardly be completely independent of how the witness is borne—namely, either as or not as just such an existential communication. On the contrary, if a witness is borne as though the response it calls for is something other or less than existential decision for or against one's own authentic possibility—say, the response of intellectual acceptance of certain statements, believing that/about certain things, or adopting a certain world view—then, surely, the recipient can, to some extent, be excused for responding accordingly. In other words, even if how the recipient takes the witness is indeed a *necessary* condition of its being efficacious, whether it is also the *only* condition is another question.

If this is right, the clarification I've offered of "efficacy as distinct from validity and effectiveness" (Notebooks, 31 December 2002) needs to be corrected accordingly. Whereas the validity of a witness, in the relevant sense, depends solely on whether or not it is appropriate, even as its effectiveness depends solely on whether or not it is believed, its efficacy depends *both* on whether or not it is borne consistently in accordance with its own meaning as an existential communication *and* on whether or not it is received or taken to be exactly that, with or without its also being received or taken as true.

Implied by this, of course, is that a witness can be valid in the sense of being *adequate* to its content if, and only if, it is appropriate not only to the *answer* to the

existential question in which its content consists, but also to the existential *question* itself. Also implied, it would seem, is that a witness can be valid in the sense of being *fitting* to its situation if, and only if, it is fitting to the *existential* situation of its hearer(s).

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