

Have I defined my obligations as a member of the church too one-sidedly?

It would appear so, insofar as (1) my obligations as a member of the church are determined by my calling to be a Christian; and (2) my calling to be a Christian is not only to assist in the valid administration of the specifically Christian means of salvation—primal, primary, and secondary—but also to make effective use of these same means myself. Of course, if these means are, in reality, what they claim to be, then every human being is at least implicitly called both to make effective use of them and to assist in their valid administration to others. But the distinction of the Christian is to be explicitly—indeed, *decisively*—called to do both of these things through just these means.

The obligations of a Christian, then, are twofold even at the primary level of life-praxis, as distinct from the secondary level of critical reflection on such praxis so as to validate the claims to validity made or implied by it. On the one hand, the Christian is obliged to make effective use of the specifically Christian means of salvation; on the other hand, she or he is obliged to assist in the valid administration of these very means. But this means that, in defining my obligations as a member of the church exclusively with reference to the second—to assisting in the valid administration of the Christian means of salvation—I have indeed defined them too one-sidedly.

Why I didn't recognize this earlier I can't imagine. Perhaps it is one more confirmation of an essentially activist bias in my whole understanding of Christian existence. In any event, I need to reflect on the possibility that, just as the sole root and ground of such existence is the relatively passive act of obedient trust or confidence, not the relatively active act of obedient loyalty or fidelity that necessarily follows from it, so, prior to the relatively active praxis of bearing Christian witness—and, of course, also doing Christian theology—is the relatively passive praxis of receiving that witness myself.

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