

On the Offices of Minister and Theologian

1. Just as every believer as such is, in some way, *minister verbi divini*, so every believer as such is also theologian. But there is a *representative* form of being theologian, just as there is a representative form of being minister; i.e., there is a *special office* of theologian, just as there is a special office of minister or witness.

2. Even as the so-called minister, i.e., the *representative* minister, is a professional witness, and so leader in the church's primary task of witness, so the so-called theologian, i.e., the *representative* theologian, is a professional critic of witness, and so a leader in the church's secondary task of critically reflecting on witness with respect to its meaning and validity.

3. "Apostles," "prophets," and "preachers-priests-teachers" are all representative ministers or witnesses: apostles being *constitutive* representative ministers; prophets being *unofficial* representative ministers; and preachers-priests-teachers being *official* representative ministers. But distinct from all of these, although essential to each of them, is the work of the theologian as official or unofficial representative critic of the church's witness. (The distinction here between "official" and "unofficial" does not deny, but rather presupposes, that representative witness and representative criticism of witness are alike special offices. But *official* representative ministers, i.e., preachers-priests-teachers, are those who have received and responded to an official "ecclesial" call [as well as "secret" and "providential" calls] to representative ministry, just as *official* representative critics of witness, i.e., official theologians, are those who have received and responded to the same kind of official "ecclesial" call [as well as "secret" and "providential" calls] to their work as theologians—e.g., by being specially appointed by their churches to the faculties of schools of theology. With or without such an official call, however, one may still be called both "secretly" and "providentially" to be a representative critic of the church's witness and, in that case, may pursue one's calling to be a theologian "unofficially.")