

*Bearing Witness as a Form of Christian Life-Praxis*

1. Life-praxis includes both making effective use of anyone and anything that re-presents the truth of human existence, which is to say, the witness to this truth borne by others, and then bearing valid witness to this same truth.

2. But, then, "witness" does not simply coincide with or exhaust what is properly meant by "life-praxis," and this for at least two reasons: not only because life-praxis includes thinking as well as saying and doing, whereas witness hardly does, but also because life-praxis includes making effective use of the witness borne by others as well as bearing valid witness oneself. (Upon further reflection, the first of these reasons may not be a good reason. If one is to hold, as I do, such things as that bearing witness includes even the indirect form of teaching and that there can be an immediate validation of the claims to validity that witness makes or implies even on the primary level of self-understanding and life-praxis, it is not easy to see how witness could fail to include thinking as well as saying and doing. The least that one can say, it would seem, is that thinking is unavoidably *involved in* witness, whether or not it itself is called "witness.")

3. There is good reason, then, for speaking of bearing witness not simply as Christian life-praxis, but as one main form thereof—the other main form being making effective use of the witness borne by others.

4. As for theology, it is as necessary—for essentially the same reasons—to making effective use of the witness borne by others as it is to bearing valid witness oneself. (This would seem to argue for a definition of Christian theology as not simply critical reflection upon Christian witness, but rather critical theory of Christian life-praxis, in the sense of the life-praxis mediated by the Christian religion, which includes not only bearing valid witness but also making effective use of the witness borne by others.)

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