

I realize now that I was mistaken in my earlier answer to the question, What is evangelism?, as well as unjust to those representing the alternative answers I singled out for criticism (see "What is evangelism?" [June 1984; rev. May 1987]).

Evangelism is not, as I held, simply "the explicit witness of the church." Why? Well, because there is a real and important difference between the explicit witness of the church as addressed to those who, having (already) explicitly accepted this witness, are themselves authorized bearers of it and the explicit witness of the church as addressed to those who, not (yet) having explicitly accepted the witness, are not themselves authorized witnesses.

That there is, indeed, such a difference, and what this difference is, is clearly indicated by the distinction the orthodox theologians regularly make in discussing the "causative," as distinct from the "normative," authority of scripture. By its "causative authority," one of them says, is meant the authority "by which scripture generates and confirms assent in the intellect of a person to things to be believed." Or, in the words of another, scripture is employed "in its mode as the formal motive for causing the assent of faith," as distinct from "its mode as the norm for distinguishing the true from the false," when it is employed "in whatever language for generating faith in the intellect of an unbeliever and for confirming faith in the soul of a believer." Of course, these formulations are burdened by questionable assumptions about faith's being a matter only or primarily of the intellect's assent to certain *credenda*. But one need not make the same assumptions in order to appreciate the distinction made between scripture's functioning to *generate* faith in the case of the unbeliever and its functioning to *confirm* faith in the case of the believer.

In the same way, one can appreciate the distinction that Furnish and Marxsen, among others, both make between the two different phases of Paul's ministry as an apostle appointed, as he believed, to establish the gospel. As an apostle, Paul was a sower or a parent, but he recognized a difference between the "missionary preaching" whereby he had sown the seed of the gospel or given birth to his children (cf. 1 Cor 3:6; Gal 4:19) and the "pastoral teaching" whereby he (as well as others) nurtured and cultivated the plant or exhorted

and trained the children. Here, again, one need not make the pertinent distinction by a questionable use of the distinction between "preaching" and "teaching." Whether addressed to unbelievers or believers, the explicit witness of the church involves proclamation as well as teaching.

But the relevant point is that there is a real and important difference between explicit witness's, and therefore both preaching and teaching's, functioning to generate faith and its functioning to confirm faith already generated.

To recognize this, however, is to realize that there are good reasons for holding both that evangelism is properly defined more strictly as the explicit witness of the church addressed to those who are "outside" the church, as distinct from those who are "inside" it, and that it does indeed have peculiarly to do with "the initial stages of Christian existence," as distinct from its later stages, or, as Outler also puts it, with the decision of Christian faith as distinct from the formation of Christian life. On the other hand, what I said in arguing against these alternative positions is still as valid as it ever was, even if it does not really argue for defining "evangelism" as simply and broadly as I previously defined it.

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