

There is no basis, arguably, for speaking of an implicit Christian faith or witness except where there is particular historical experience of Jesus in his decisive existential significance. Whether or not Bultmann is correct that *authentic* existence is not possible prior to such experience, he is certainly correct that *Christian* existence is not possible prior to it. What makes one a Christian is not that one has an authentic self-understanding, but that one has come to such an understanding, mediately if not immediately, decisively through Jesus and is engaged in enacting this self-understanding in one's life-praxis by bearing witness to Jesus as the Christ.

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The question christology answers could not possibly be simply the existential question, because even though it is not *only* a question about Jesus, it very definitely *is* a question about Jesus; and this means that it could never so much as arise, much less ever be answered, except on the basis of particular historical experience of the Jesus about whose meaning for human existence it is the question.

Because the christological question could not even arise except on the basis of particular experience of Jesus, it is and must be historical as well as existential, and the truth of the christological assertion that answers it could only be an a posteriori, not an a priori, truth.

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Just as Jesus himself is a historical fact, so the assertion of his decisive significance, however formulated, must also be, in one important part, a historical assertion. And this means that it could ~~be~~ not be made or implied at all except after the fact of his appearance in history and on the basis of particular historical experience, mediate or immediate, of this fact.