

It appeared to me for a time that there can be a third sense in which a given person or witness may be said to be "implicitly Christian." The other two senses in which this may be said are clarified in Notebooks, 9 November 1997 and, especially, 13 December 2002. What seemed to be a possible third sense is well expressed in the following passage from Notebooks, "On 'the Christian Witness of the Bible,'" 29 March 1995:

One use of this distinction [*sc.* between explicit and implicit Christian witness] is to distinguish between the explicit Christian witness of Christian religious praxis, on the one hand, and the implicit Christian witness of all the rest of Christian life-praxis insofar as it, too, is mediated by the Christian religion, on the other. On this use, one's witness is properly said to be implicitly Christian insofar as what one does, or how one does it, follows from one's self-understanding as a Christian and is by way of actualizing this self-understanding [*sc.* in one's immediate situation]. Thus, to act justly in relation to others, both within society and culture and with respect to maintaining and/or transforming social and cultural structures, is to bear implicit Christian witness, insofar as acting in this way follows from, and in this sense is implied by, one's self-understanding as a Christian.

Having reflected further, however, I'm now convinced that the sense of "implicitly Christian" clarified in this passage is not really a third sense after all. On the contrary, if a witness can be said to be implicitly Christian if, and only if, it is a way of acting that "follows from, and in this sense is implied by, one's self-understanding as a Christian"—and this is the condition explicitly stipulated in the passage—then it necessarily presupposes the Christian *proprium* and can only be a Christian witness in the first of the two senses clarified, especially, in the second full paragraph of Notebooks, 13 December 2004. In this sense, I may be said to be implicitly a Christian because "I am so related to Jesus, mediately if not immediately, that he is of decisive significance for my life and for all human life, although I do not (yet) explicitly confess him to be so."

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