

That there are at least two distinct senses in which the term "implicitly Christian" can be used seems clear enough; and this is so even if its use in one of these senses is sufficiently problematic to raise the question whether it should perhaps be avoided (Notebooks, 9 November 1997; 13 December 2002).

But there appears to be yet a third sense in which the term can be used—not, however, to characterize a *person* as implicitly Christian, but rather to characterize a *witness* as such. This is the sense in which I have long distinguished between explicit Christian witness and implicit Christian witness, defining the first as witness mediated by specifically religious cultural forms, the second, as witness mediated by so-called secular, or nonreligious, cultural forms. Underlying this distinction is the thought that all forms of culture, secular as well as religious, are implicitly religious in the sense that they necessarily imply an answer to the same vital question, the existential question, that religion as a cultural form, or "cultural system" (Geertz) asks and answers explicitly.

The question, however, is whether what thus appears to be a third possible use of the term really is such, or whether, on the contrary, it is to be reduced to one of the other two uses. At the moment, I'm not able to answer this question to my satisfaction, although I'm satisfied that it requires to be answered.

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