

It is one question whether what a person says and does is a consequence of saving faith and, in this sense, is witness. It is another question whether what a person says and does is experienced by another as confronting her or him with the decision of saving faith and, in this sense, is witness. This means that whether or not a person bears witness in the first sense is independent of whether or not another person experiences it as <sup>bearing</sup> witness in the second sense. Likewise, whether or not a person experiences another person as bearing witness in the second sense is independent of whether or not the other person bears witness in the first sense.

According to Bultmann, "obedience and love as such are never evident, but are experienced only insofar as one experiences the service of another, and so experiences it that, through such service, one knows oneself to be renewed to a new understanding of oneself in obedience and love" (*GV*, 1: 213). But if this would presumably have to apply to the apostles' experience of Jesus' service to them, it would also have to apply to any disciple-at-second-hand's experience of the apostles' service to her or him as well as of anyone else's service in mediating to her or him the witness of the apostles.

Thus, whether or not I can speak of the obedience and love of others—be they ordinary Christians, the extraordinary Christians we call "apostles," or Jesus himself—depends on whether or not I so experience them as to be renewed <sup>or confirmed</sup> through them <sup>in</sup> a new understanding of myself in obedience and love. In other words, I experience others as themselves obedient and loving, not by somehow determining that they bear witness in the first sense, as a consequence of their saving faith, but simply by experiencing them as bearing witness *to me* in the second sense, as confronting me with the decision of saving faith.

Of course, in thus experiencing ordinary Christians as obedient and loving, I also experience, in the only way in which I could experience, the obedience and love of the apostles as well as of Jesus himself. Conversely, my own Christian experience of God's love as the sole implicit primal authorizing source is invariably the experience also of the

obedience and love of Jesus and of the apostles as well as of the ordinary Christians through whose witness my experience is mediated.

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