

One cannot infer from what someone does that she or he is a Christian. (And if calling someone an "anonymous Christian" presupposed making such an inference, as it does not, Marxsen would be entirely justified in his objection to it.)

This is true, first of all, because even if one were to do what a Christian would do, one might not do it as and because one were a Christian, i.e., had the faith without which one cannot be a Christian. But it is also true, secondly, because what a Christian would do neither is nor can be different from what any morally good person would do under the same conditions and circumstances. So, for all one could possibly know, the person doing what a Christian would do would not be a Christian but simply a morally good person acting out of some other, non-Christian faith or self-understanding.

Even so, it belongs to Christian existence to make as explicit, and, therefore, as specific and concrete, as is helpful what it is that a Christian would do.

July 1995