

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19 f. that “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself . . . . we entreat you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.”

I should argue that this simply puts explicitly, in third-person terms, the claim that Jesus himself made implicitly, in first person terms—or, more exactly, the claim that Jesus himself is represented as having made implicitly, in first-person terms, in the Jesus-kerygma. Jesus claimed, or is represented as claiming, that through him, through the “*that*” of his word, God was reconciling the estranged world to himself. And he, Jesus, entreated, or is represented as entreating, those to whom he spoke in God’s stead, as an ambassador for God, God making his appeal through him, “Be reconciled to God, who is reconciling himself to you!”

This is entirely consistent, of course, with the point Marxsen made long since against Bultmann’s denial that Paul’s understanding in 2 Corinthians 5:17 ff. is what Jesus himself had already meant or been understood to mean in the Jesus-kerygma. *Formally*, Marxsen replied, Bultmann is correct: “Being in Christ” is a later way of putting things, presupposing, as it does, Easter and the post-Easter Christ-kerygma. But *materially*, Paul’s statement “holds true already of the period of the earthly Jesus,” and thus of the Jesus-kerygma. “Jesus announces the present breaking in of the kingly rule of God (thought of as in principle something that is coming) (Mk 1:15). Paul says that, amidst the night that still persists, the Christians live as children of the coming day (1 Th 5:5). Thus both say that what counts is to accept God and God’s salvation now, in the midst of this world that is passing away. This is always a risk, because appearances speak against it. Yet this is precisely what faith is. It was not Paul who first summoned people into this faith; Jesus had already done so.” “Whoever gives oneself over to Jesus of Nazareth gives oneself along with him to the inbreaking of God’s rule and then lives ‘a new creation.’ For this person (again and again, in each such act), the ‘old’ that has surrounded him or her has ‘passed away.’ It is no longer determinative. Therefore, the ‘new’ has actually come” (JC: 51, 73; *Wer sich auf Jesus von Nazareth einläßt, läßt sich mit ihm zusammen auf einbrechende Gottesherrschaft ein—und dann lebt er neue Schöpfung. Für ihn ist (immer wieder, bei jedem Einlassen) das ihm umgebende Alte*

*vergangen. Es bestimmt ihn nicht mehr. Darum ist wirklich Neues geworden [Ch-p: 55]).*

I find it significant, incidentally, that Paul says both that God “reconciled *us* to himself through Christ” and that “in Christ God was reconciling *the world* to himself.” This indicates, I take it, either that Paul is saying the same thing in two different ways—somewhat as I do when I say that Jesus is “the decisive re-presentation of the meaning of ultimate reality for us,” meaning by “us,” not only “us as Christians,” but “us as human beings,” or “the world”—or that he is saying the two different things that other places in the passage indicate he has in mind. I mean the places where “us” clearly means not all of us as human beings, but only those of us to whom God has given, or entrusted, the “message of reconciliation,” whether apostles only, or, as I should argue with Furnish *et al.*, all Christians simply as such.

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