

According to Marxsen, the decisive kerygma is the "pre-Easter" kerygma, but it is never entirely clear what he means by this (ET: 154). If, for the most part, he seems to mean the witness borne to Jesus already prior to Easter by persons who stand in an eschatologically qualified relation to him (cf., e.g., 151)--or, in other words, what he in some places calls "Jesus-kerygma"--there is at least one place where he seems to mean Jesus' own witness, or in other words "Jesus' kerygma." Thus he says that "what can be of significance theologically in the historical quest of Jesus is not a 'historical Jesus,' but only his (though really his) offer of eschatological relationship, hence his kerygma. In that the first proclaimers bear witness to this kerygma, they express what 'came to expression in Jesus' (Ebeling). . . . every later kerygma must be questioned to determine whether it has support in what came to expression in Jesus" (154). Clearly, there seem to be at least three distinct kerygmas that are referred to here:

- (1) Jesus' own kerygma, otherwise described as his offer of eschatological relation and, in Ebeling's words, as "what came to expression in Jesus";
- (2) the kerygma of the first proclaimers which bears witness to Jesus' kerygma, or what Marxsen otherwise speaks of as "Jesus-kerygma"; and (3) every later kerygma, which must be questioned as to whether it can claim support in what came to expression in Jesus, or, in other words, in Jesus' own kerygma or offer of eschatological relation. Moreover, what clearly seems to be "the decisive kerygma" here is neither the kerygma of the first proclaimers nor any later kerygma, but, rather, Jesus' own kerygma, to which both of them, in their different ways, are responses and by which the second of them and, presumably, the first as well must be questioned to determine whether it supports them. But this seems to be a distinctively different position from that for which Marxsen argues in the same essay when he says that the

"criterion" by which later witnesses must be questioned is the "apostolic witness" or "proclamation" of the first proclaimers (144 f.)

It would seem that what makes it possible for Marxsen to be so unclear is the confidence with which he assumes that the interest in Jesus evident in the witness of the first proclaimers was the very interest that Jesus himself was concerned to awaken in those around him (C-p: 39 f.). Given this assumption, one can indeed easily confuse Jesus-kerygma and Jesus' kerygma, since the claim or offer set forth in the first is the same as that made in the second. But what does the difficulty created by form criticism mean if not that one has to give reasons for this assumption if one makes it, just as one must give reasons for one's rejection of it if one rejects it (cf. ET: 149)? More important, whence the assumption that Jesus is the primary authority by which all later kerygma must be authorized as distinct from being the explicit primal source of all authority, including the primary authority of the first proclaimers?

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