

Although neither Marxsen's three public lectures nor the one lecture discussed in the colloquy afford an egregious example of his "Jesus believed God" kind of revisionary christology and, therefore, could be fairly easily interpreted so as to fit my kind of revised revisionary christology, still both sets of lectures betray enough of his more conventional kind of christology to be even more easily interpreted so as to fit it instead.

Thus, to begin with, it seems clear that the very concept of "*der wirkende Jesus*" (as well as the related concepts of "*Jesu Wirken*," or "*das Wirken Jesu*") has been arrived at, not by taking the earliest witness as kerygma (as Marxsen's own principles require him to take it), but by using the earliest witness as a historical source for reconstructing what took place prior to it and to which it itself was a response. Thus, by "*Jesu Wirken*," Marxsen means "*sein Wort, sein Tun, sein Verhalten*," or, as he can also put it, "*die Worten Jesu auf der einen, das Tun und Verhalten Jesu auf der anderen Seite*" (14, 13). Significantly, he says that, of the three types of responses to "*den wirkenden Jesus*" that can be supposed to have been possible, "*hatten zwar alle Erzähler dasselbe erlebt*." But what could this "same thing" be if not "*der wirkende Jesus*," and what could be meant by that if not precisely "*der historische Jesus*" in the strict sense of "*Jesus vor aller Deutung durch Menschen*" (4)?

I should wish to argue, on the contrary, that, for the earliest witnesses, the content of their witness was not, as Marxsen says, simply "*das Wirken Jesu*," but rather "*Jesu Wirken [als] ein Wirken Gottes*" (18), or even the working of God through Jesus. Therefore, when they represent, or narrate, what Jesus said or did or thought as kerygma, the content of their witness is really *God's decisive action* through the activity of Jesus. (My difference from Marxsen at this point may not be as sharp as this indicates. He does seem to hold that "first sentences" not only refer to the activity of Jesus but also qualify his activity as "eschatological," by which he means, presumably, as the decisive activity of God.)

Yet another clear indication of what Marxsen means is that at no point is there so much as a hint that there can be at most an analogous use of concepts when one speaks of Jesus' living God's kingdom, on the one hand,

and of the disciples's living it, on the other. Of course, insofar as one takes Jesus to be "the historical Jesus," one can speak of his living God's kingdom univocally with his followers's living it. But if one begins, as Marxsen argues one has to begin, with the earliest kerygma, one cannot speak of Jesus's living God's kingdom univocally, but only analogously, with anyone else's living it.

Marxsen says: "*Jesus ist als einer verstanden worden, der einbrechende Gottes Herrschaft lebt und als Angebot anderen zu-lebt*" (17). Or, again, "[*die Anhänger Jesu*] glaubten, dass Jesus ihnen in seinen Wirken Gott zu-lebte" (13). "[*Die Anhänger Jesu*] haben ein Wirken Jesu gesehen [*sic!*], durch das sie jetzt schon (so, wie sie waren) in die Gemeinschaft mit Gott geführt wurden—und das sie dann veränderte. Durch Jesu Wirken, durch sein Wort, sein Tun, sein Verhalten, wurden sie Gottes Kinder und konnten nun als Gottes Kinder leben. Das aber heisst: sie konnten anderen zu-leben, was Jesus ihnen zugelebt hatte" (14). All such talk makes clear that Marxsen talks about Jesus' living the rule of God toward his own from the standpoint of a third-party observer, rather than from the standpoint of a participant, him- or herself transformed by the fact of Jesus.

Add to this, then, the places where Marxsen explicitly talks about the faith of Jesus (e.g., 32, where he speaks of "him whose faith we live"), and it's clear that he really operates with a conventional kind of revisionary christology, however qualified it may be by a form critical reservation and by an insistence that no historical inquiry can obviate the decision of faith. In this connection, it's clear that there are indeed two main points where Marxsen's christology and mine go different ways—where he inconsistently appeals to the historical Jesus, or insists on the theological necessity of inquiring historically for Jesus, and where he talks about Jesus himself as the first believer in God's rule, and thus as the *primary example*, rather than as the one through whom the real first believers became such, and thus as the *primal sacrament*.

Marxsen doesn't seem to realize that simply insisting that Jesus is the primary example of *faith*, as distinct from being merely a moral example, doesn't go beyond representing him as an example and, therefore, fails to say of him what the New Testament—and any christology, properly so-called!—

plainly means to say. Put differently, Marxsen never succeeds in explaining—as, by his own analysis, he is required to explain—why explicit *christology* was already implied by the *implicit* christology of Jesus' activity. Or, put still differently, he never explains why Jesus' activity is implied *christology*. Even a *religious* teacher or example is no more than that; and christological categories are not necessary, or even appropriate, to understand and interpret a mere example, even if it be the most perfect possible example.