

Marxsen allowed as how I succeed in showing in my Bultmann essay (1984) that the usual understanding of Bultmann's christology is false. He also allowed that, within limits, the view I rightly attribute to Bultmann is close to his own.

But he also made clear to me that he believes that there are certain things about Bultmann's typical argument that open him to being thus misunderstood. Specifically, there are three such things:

1. Bultmann fails to recognize that there were two earliest communities, not one. (To my direct question whether he himself hadn't once operated on the same assumption, Marxsen answered, "Yes, of course!")

2. Bultmann focuses attention almost exclusively on Jesus' proclamation, instead of recognizing that it is the total activity of Jesus—what he thought (= *Verhalten*), said (= *Reden*), and did (= *Tun*)—with which one must reckon in understanding the beginning of christology. (In this connection, Marxsen appealed to a review of Bultmann's *Jesus* by E. Lohmeyer, who pointed out that the book is a Jesus-book without Jesus. In retrospect, it seems to me that Marxsen has probably allowed himself to think pretty much the same thing, despite the fact that, as I told him, Bultmann's use of "proclamation," when he speaks of it, is nothing like as narrow as Lohmeyer's criticism appears to imply.)

3. Bultmann is not anything like as consistent as he should be in distinguishing between the *historische* Jesus and the *geschichtliche* Jesus.

As I now reflect on it, it's not clear to me that, even if one were to grant Marxsen's three points, it would be easy to see why Bultmann has been so generally misunderstood. I incline to think, therefore, that Marxsen's points have less to do with explaining why Bultmann's christology has been so widely misunderstood than with explaining why, notwithstanding my argument, one today cannot simply take Bultmann's position on the question.

Of course, I have never argued that one should simply take Bultmann's position. In fact, I have allowed, perhaps even more strongly than Marxsen himself is willing to do, that Bultmann has sometimes expressed his position in ways that hardly do justice to it. The fact remains, however, that at the crucial point—whether Christian faith has its *primal source* in the kerygma or in Jesus—Bultmann is on the side of those who say Jesus, notwithstanding his insistence that the *primary norm* of Christian faith, witness, and theology is not the witness of Jesus, or Jesus himself, but rather the witness of the apostles.

Marxsen's own position is not essentially different, although he maintains—in my opinion, rightly—that there was not one form, but two forms, of early Christian witness and that the relatively earlier of these two forms is properly the primary norm of Christian faith, witness, and theology. Why? Simply because implicit christology represents "first statements," while explicit christology consists in "second statements," first statements being related to second as "foundation" (= *Grundlage, Basis*) is related to "consequence" (= *Konsequenz*).