

The constitution of a religious community has a threefold structure determined by two correlations. First, there is the correlation between the *religious object* and the *religious subject*, and then, second, there is the correlation involved in the religious object itself between its *transcendental aspect* and its *historical aspect*.

Thus, for example, the Jew who is not a constitutive member of the Jewish religious community may be said to believe *in* God, decisively *through* the oral law/Torah, *with* Moses and the chosen people of God. Or the Muslim who is a nonconstitutive member of the Islamic religious community may be said to believe *in* God, decisively *through* the Koran, *with* Mohammed and all his faithful followers. Similarly, any Christian who is not her- or himself an apostle—not a "disciple at first hand," in Kierkegaard's way of putting it, but a "disciple at second hand"—has traditionally been said to believe *in* God, decisively *through* Jesus, *with* the apostles and their successors.

In modern revisionary forms of Christianity, however, the clear traditional distinction between Jesus and the apostles breaks down. So far from being the historical aspect of the constitutive religious *object*, Jesus is understood to be simply *a* (even if *the!*) constitutive religious subject. Thus he becomes, in effect, the first Christian, the first and foremost apostle, and so no more than *a* (even if *the!*) constitutive member of the Christian religious community.

Just this is the real import of distinguishing, as revisionary theology typically does, between authentic Christianity as "the religion *of* Jesus" and traditional Christianity as "the religion *about* Jesus."

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