

NOTES

RESURRECTION AS *THEOLOGIA CRUCIS JESU*: THE FOUNDATIONAL CHRISTOLOGY OF RUDOLF PESCH

On June 27, 1972, Rudolf Pesch, a young German Catholic exegete at the University of Frankfurt, delivered a guest lecture at the University of Tübingen on the origin of faith in the resurrection of Jesus. The publication of an expanded version of this lecture,¹ which was explicitly intended as a contribution to the discussion of broader Christological issues, was accompanied by four critical reactions, and many other German authors have since joined the debate; in addition, Pesch himself has commented twice on these responses to his work.² To date, however, despite the importance of the issues and their relationship to a number of other Christological questions currently being discussed, there has been no consideration of Pesch's views by English-speaking theologians. This essay, therefore, seeks to present Pesch's hypothesis, to offer a survey of the critical response to his position, and to propose a few evaluative remarks from the perspective of systematic theology.

I

Since there were no eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, questions concerning the historical origins of faith in it are inevitable. The standard account of these origins appeals, on the basis of an analysis of the New Testament, to two historical sources: the discovery of the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Christ led the disciples to faith in and proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. This approach was widespread in the older Catholic apologetics, which considered the Gospels' accounts of the finding of the empty grave and their narratives of appearances of the risen Lord reliable historical sources.³ Contemporary treatments, though more nuanced exegetically and inclined to emphasize the appearances more than the empty grave, often advance the same basic argument. Wolfhart Pannenberg, for example, distinguishes the facts of appearances and of discovery of the empty grave, both of which can, in his opinion, be established as historical, from the Gospel narratives of such events, which were developed for various theological purposes and

¹ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung des Glaubens an die Auferstehung Jesu," *TQ* 153 (1973) 201-28.

² R. Pesch, "Stellungnahme zu den Diskussionsbeiträgen," *TQ* 153 (1973) 270-83; id., "Materialien und Bemerkungen zu Entstehung und Sinn des Osterglaubens," in A. Vögtle and R. Pesch, *Wie kam es zum Osterglauben?* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1975) 133-84.

³ Cf. e.g., K. Adam, *The Son of God* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1934) 207-62; and G. Van Noort, *Dogmatic Theology 1: The True Religion* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1961) 165-87.

cannot be pressed for historical detail. Pannenberg defends the historical reliability of the appearance tradition on the basis of its early origin, as evidenced chiefly by the formula Paul cites in 1 Cor 15:3-5, and argues the historical reliability of the empty-grave tradition from the impossibility of accounting for the early preaching of the resurrection in Jerusalem under any other presupposition.⁴ Efforts, such as those of fundamental theology, to investigate the grounds of Christian faith are thus pointed in the direction of these events, which supply an important part of the desired historical foundation.

It is Pesch's position that this historical reconstruction cannot be substantiated by the texts. As far as the empty grave is concerned, Pesch not only maintains that critical analysis of the oldest account of its discovery (Mk 16:1-8) shows that the historicity of the narrative is not beyond question, but also rejects the argument that the disciples' preaching of the resurrection in Jerusalem soon after Jesus' death implies that the grave must have been known to be empty. He argues that it is not established that the early Church even knew the location of Jesus' grave; that, since the first gathering of Jesus' followers after his death may well have taken place in Galilee, we do not know when and under what circumstances the resurrection was first preached in Jerusalem; and that, as is shown by the popular beliefs concerning John the Baptist reflected in Mk 6:14-16, it was possible to speak of resurrection without reference to an empty grave. While these considerations do not disprove the emptiness of the grave, they do make it impossible to appeal to it as a historically established fact.⁵

Pesch also considers appeal to appearances of the risen Christ unjustified. While he accepts the emphasis contemporary discussion places on 1 Cor 15:3-5, he holds that the central formulation used in this connection, *ôphthê Kêpha*, represents a literary form based on Old Testament (LXX) usage, which asserts the existence of revelation and seeks to express the legitimacy of the witness mentioned as its recipient, but which does not indicate the historical circumstances of the revelation. In this case the passage substantiates its profession of Christ's resurrection by naming the decisive witness to the kerygma, Peter, but does not

⁴ W. Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 88-106; id., "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" *Dialog* 4 (1965) 128-35; id., "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," *KD* 14 (1968) 105-18. A similar position is maintained by G. O'Collins, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (Valley Forge, Pa: Judson, 1973).

⁵ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 204-8; id., "Stellungnahme" 278-80. For more detailed exegesis, cf. id., "Der Schluss der vormarkinischen Passionsgeschichte und des Markusevangeliums: Mk 15,42-16,8," *L'Évangile selon Marc: Tradition et rédaction* (ed. M. Sabbe; BETL 34; Gembloux: Duculot, 1974) 365-409; and id., *Das Markusevangelium 1* (HTKNT 2/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1976) 332-37.

provide justification for asserting that Peter's faith in Christ's resurrection was mediated by a Christophany. Although this reference to the divine origin of the faith does not render historical questioning impossible or declare it inappropriate, the nature of the text precludes answering such historical questions on the basis of its terminology, for a legitimation formula cannot yield historical information of this sort.⁶

If both discovery of the empty grave and appearances of the risen Christ are thus excluded as historically demonstrable sources of faith in the resurrection of Jesus, what possible origins remain? As is well known, Willi Marxsen has concluded from a somewhat similar analysis of the pertinent texts that the historical causes of the early Church's faith in Jesus' resurrection must lie in an event no longer accessible to us, something which led the disciples to regroup, presumably at the initiative of Simon Peter.⁷ In related contexts, Xavier Léon-Dufour speaks of the spiritual experience of the disciples,⁸ and Edward Schillebeeckx tentatively specifies this as experience of the continued offer, through Jesus, of the forgiveness of sin.⁹ Pesch is dissatisfied with Marxsen's position and with the concept of faith which underlies it, and would consider the appeal to spiritual experience vulnerable to charges of subjectivism. Yet it is not only because of these systematic concerns, but also on exegetical grounds, that he proposes a different answer: in his judgment, the roots of the early Church's faith in the resurrection of Jesus lie, not in events after Jesus' death, but in the historical Jesus himself.¹⁰

According to Pesch, faith in Jesus was already present among his disciples during his lifetime; he maintains that Jesus understood himself as eschatological prophet and was confessed by his disciples as prophetic Messiah.¹¹ Appealing to the work of Ulrich Wilckens¹² and

⁶ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 209-18; id., "Materialien" 136-56.

⁷ W. Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem," in *The Significance of the Message of the Resurrection for Faith in Jesus Christ* (ed. C. F. D. Moule; SBT 8; London: SCM, 1968) 30-31; id., *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970) 79-97, 112-29.

⁸ X. Léon-Dufour, *Resurrection and the Message of Easter* (London: Chapman, 1974) 216.

⁹ E. Schillebeeckx, *Jezus: Het verhaal van een levende* (3rd ed.; Bloemendaal: Nelissen, 1975) 310-24, 528a-528e.

¹⁰ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 201-2, 218. Schillebeeckx also stresses the importance of the memory of the historical Jesus in this context. For a brief comparison of Pesch's position with that of Schillebeeckx, cf. A. Schmied, "Ostererscheinungen—Ostererfahrung," *Theologie der Gegenwart* 19 (1976) 48 n. 5.

¹¹ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 221. Cf. also id., "Das Messiasbekenntnis des Petrus (Mk 8, 27-30): Neuverhandlung einer alten Frage," *BZ* 17 (1973) 178-95; 18 (1974) 20-31.

¹² U. Wilckens, *Auferstehung: Das biblische Auferstehungszeugnis historisch untersucht und erklärt* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1974) 8, 96-104.

Klaus Berger,¹³ he argues that the conception of the resurrection of an individual eschatological prophet was available in circles close to Jesus, and that it provided a vehicle for the new expression of faith in Jesus necessitated by his death. Against the widely accepted opinion that the psychological state of the disciples after the crucifixion was such that some external experience must be postulated to account for their later faith,¹⁴ Pesch holds that we are simply not informed about the disciples' state of mind at that time, since the pertinent Gospel texts are redactionally colored. The tradition of the fate of the prophets, the fact that Jesus must have foreseen the possibility of a violent death at the hands of his enemies, and the likelihood that he might well, at least toward the end of his life, have prepared his disciples for such an eventuality without abandonment of the claims implicit in his message,¹⁵ make it quite conceivable that their faith in him could have endured and understood his death. They could then have interpreted the permanent salvific significance of the crucified Jesus—his mission, martyrdom, and eschatologically final authority—by the proclamation of his resurrection, an expression of faith which takes account of Jesus' death and is distinguished from mere continuation of Jesus' message by its reference to Jesus' person.¹⁶ The origins and foundation of this faith lie in the historical Jesus himself, and it is to him that efforts to examine the grounds for such faith are permanently directed.¹⁷

Two points should be noted in order to avoid misunderstanding of Pesch's position. First, he does not deny that faith in the resurrection of

¹³ K. Berger, *Die Auferstehung des Propheten und die Erhöhung des Menschensohnes: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Deutung des Geschickes Jesu in frühchristlichen Texten* (SUNT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976). Discussion of some aspects of Pesch's position has been impeded by the fact that this work, Berger's *Habilitationsschrift* at Hamburg, was available only in typescript at the time of the publication of Pesch's lecture.

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., M. Dibelius, *Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1949) 141; and R. H. Fuller, *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives* (New York: Macmillan, 1971) 2.

¹⁵ On this Pesch refers to H. Schürmann, "Wie hat Jesus seinen Tod bestanden und verstanden?: Eine methodenkritische Besinnung," in *Orientierung an Jesus* (ed. P. Hoffmann; Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 325–63. For Pesch's own further work on this, cf. "Stellungnahme" 275–76; id., "Materialien" 165–68; id., "Die Überlieferung der Passion Jesu," in *Rückfrage nach Jesus* (ed. K. Kertelge; *Quaestiones disputatae* 63; Freiburg: Herder, 1974) 148–73; id., "Die Passion des Menschensohnes: Eine Studie zu den Menschensohnworten der vormarkinischen Passionsgeschichte," in *Jesus und der Menschensohn* (eds. R. Pesch and R. Schnackenburg; Freiburg: Herder, 1975) 166–95; and id., "Das Abendmahl und Jesu Todesverständnis," *Der Tod Jesu: Deutungen im Neuen Testament* (ed. K. Kertelge; *Quaestiones disputatae* 74; Freiburg: Herder, 1976) 137–87.

¹⁶ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 219–26; id., "Materialien" 157–68. Pesch has refined his interpretation in more recent work ("Die Passion des Menschensohnes" 189–92), but retains the same basic position.

¹⁷ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 226–28; cf. also id., "Stellungnahme" 276–77.

Jesus is the result of revelation; he does maintain that such revelation is mediated by the historical Jesus rather than through events after his death, and that it involves a high degree of reflection on the part of its recipients. Secondly, in holding that assertion of Jesus' resurrection is itself a statement of faith, he does not advocate a groundless, blind leap of faith on the part of the believer; he rather proposes a different conception of revelation and a different point of reference for examination of the claims made in such a profession.

II

Reaction to Pesch's suggestions has been extensive, not only among exegetes but also among systematic theologians. A brief survey of these responses may help to demonstrate both the complexity of the issue and the extent to which basic theological stances are involved in it.

The initial Tübingen reactions are quite critical of Pesch's position. In a brief comment, the exegete Karl Hermann Schelkle maintains in rather general terms that Pesch's sketch does not do justice to the New Testament.¹⁸ The other three respondents discuss the issues in more detail. Martin Hengel rejects the entire project as an unacceptable effort to establish the Easter faith as rationally credible, and finds Pesch the victim of misguided apologetic intentions which lead him to a radically different understanding of the resurrection as something which occurred merely in the consciousness of the disciples. An expert on intertestamental Judaism, Hengel judges Pesch's analysis of the categories available to the disciples unconvincing, argues for the necessity of some event after Jesus' death to account for the rise of the disciples' faith, and interprets the *ōphthē* formula as primarily indicative of vision, although our efforts to describe the content of such a vision are necessarily inadequate, since the origin of the apostolic faith is qualitatively different from that of our own.¹⁹ Peter Stuhlmacher, after noting a need for further reflection on the relationship of faith and history, concentrates on the exegetical aspects of the question. He finds the reconstruction of the Jewish background excessively speculative, defends the historicity of the discovery of the empty grave, and considers the *ōphthē* formula a reference to the revelation and appearances of the Lord.²⁰ Walter Kasper, in the only contribution at this stage from a systematic theologian, insists that the systematic question of the grounds for faith in the resurrection must be distinguished from the historical question of the origin of that faith. To him, Pesch's effort to establish faith on the

¹⁸ K. H. Schelkle, "Schöpfung des Glaubens?" *TQ* 153 (1973) 242-43.

¹⁹ M. Hengel, "Ist der Osterglaube noch zu retten?" *TQ* 153 (1973) 252-69.

²⁰ P. Stuhlmacher, "Kritischer müssten mir die Historisch-Kritischen sein!," *TQ* 153 (1973) 244-51.

earthly Jesus alone is a modified version of liberal theology, based on presuppositions which do not leave sufficient room for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Maintaining that the reduction of the appearances to legitimation formulas with merely ecclesiological content has systematically fatal consequences, Kasper detects a lack of a theology of the cross in Pesch, and insists that the resurrection is a reality with its own content, the new life of the crucified in the kingdom of God. Because of the unique role of the first believers, a new divine initiative was necessary after Jesus' death; yet these appearances need not be imagined as miraculous: they are rather the believing experience that the Spirit of Jesus is still operative and that Jesus is alive and present in the Spirit.²¹

Several later reactions are similar to these initial rejections. H. W. Bartsch considers the historical Jesus an insufficient basis for faith, and argues at length that the *ōphthē* formula is neither merely nor even primarily a legitimation formula.²² Hans Küng, while defending Pesch against some misunderstandings of his position, finds his exegesis contrary to the evident intention of the texts, according to which the origin of faith lies in new experiences, encounters with the crucified Jesus now raised up, although the text also contains elements of interpretation.²³ Alex Stock, stressing in general the need to analyze the soteriological presuppositions and implications of Pesch's view, urges the necessity of avoiding preoccupation with historical facticity in pursuit of the historical Jesus, and criticizes the implied conception of the unity of death and resurrection as a false glorification of death, excessively influenced by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and of dubious biblical validity.²⁴ Jacob Kremer's thorough study distinguishes both between a traditional view of the resurrection and a modern view which tends to identify it as the disciples' coming to faith, and between two often corresponding understandings of the appearances. Arguing that whatever faith or messianic expectations were awakened by the historical Jesus must have been shattered by his crucifixion, and holding that the experience of the first believers after Jesus' death necessarily differs from that of later believers, Kremer joins other critics in judging that the *ōphthē* formula is more than merely a legitimation formula; he also finds in the

²¹ W. Kasper, "Der Glaube an die Auferstehung Jesu vor dem Forum historischer Kritik," *TQ* 153 (1973) 229-41. Cf. also id., *Jesus the Christ* (New York: Paulist, 1976) 134; and id., "Aufgaben der Christologie heute," in A. Schilson and W. Kasper, *Christologie im Präsens: Kritische Sichtung neuer Entwürfe* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974) 137 n.4.

²² H. W. Bartsch, "Der Ursprung des Osterglaubens," *TZ* 31 (1975) 16-31.

²³ H. Küng, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976) 370-81. Küng's article on the subject ("Zur Entstehung des Auferstehungsglaubens," *TQ* 154 [1974] 103-17) offers a nearly identical text.

²⁴ A. Stock, "Wirbel um die Auferstehung," *Diakonia* 6 (1975) 187-92.

New Testament the conviction that the Easter message derives from revelation rather than reflection. Since he doubts that the questions of origin and content of faith can be separated, he wonders if Pesch's position on the origin of faith in the resurrection would not inevitably lead, contrary to Pesch's intention, to an emptying of the content of that faith.²⁵

The remaining participants in the discussion have advanced evaluations more favorable to Pesch's hypothesis, though no one has identified himself completely with it. Augustin Schmied's survey of the debate concludes that, while Pesch's reconstruction is not sufficiently established, his efforts to unite death and resurrection and to envision greater continuity in the faith of the disciples before and after Jesus' death are to be assessed positively.²⁶ Adolf Kolping, while accusing Pesch of a monistic view of knowledge and reality and attacking his understanding of the relationship of faith and history, offers no objection to Pesch's historical explanation as such, though he finds too little said of Jesus' person and of his personal activity after his death.²⁷ In a lengthy study published in two versions, Anton Vögtle, Pesch's teacher at Freiburg, finds his student's reconstruction impossible to establish, but registers telling objections against alternative explanations as well.²⁸ While Vögtle does not agree that the *ōphthē* formula exclusively intends legitimation of the witnesses, he judges it impossible to determine its historical basis, since it contains such a high degree of interpretation.²⁹ Since "seeing" alone could not account for the content of the articulations of the Easter faith, as the vague phrases used by Pesch's critics unwillingly attest, Vögtle welcomes Pesch's stress on the importance of the disciples' experience with the historical Jesus, quite apart from the question of the precise categories they used in explicitation of such experience.³⁰ Vögtle agrees that the discovery of the emptiness of the grave cannot be established historically,³¹ but considers continuity in faith without new experiences on the part of the disciples unlikely,

²⁵ J. Kremer, "Entstehung und Inhalt des Osterglaubens: Zur neuesten Diskussion," *TRev* 72 (1976) 1-14.

²⁶ A. Schmied, "Auferstehungsglaube ohne Ostererscheinungen?" *Theologie der Gegenwart* 17 (1974) 46-51. Cf. also id., "Ostererscheinungen" 46-53; and id., "Auferstehungsglaube heute und die ursprüngliche Ostererfahrung," *Theologie der Gegenwart* 20 (1977) 43-50.

²⁷ A. Kolping, "Zur Entstehung des Glaubens an die Auferstehung Jesu," *MTZ* 26 (1975) 56-69.

²⁸ A. Vögtle, "Wie kam es zum Osterglauben?" in A. Vögtle and R. Pesch, *Wie kam es zum Osterglauben?* 9-131. An earlier version was published as "Wie kam es zur Artikulierung des Osterglaubens?" *BibLeb* 14 (1973) 231-44; 15 (1974) 16-37, 102-20, 174-93.

²⁹ A. Vögtle, "Wie kam es zum Osterglauben?" 29-68.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 57-59, 84-85, 103.

³¹ *Ibid.* 85-98.

though not impossible.³² He concludes that we are no longer able to determine how the Easter faith originated.³³ A final commentator, Wilhelm Breuning, supports the systematic implications of Pesch's position, while conceding that the detailed historical reconstruction is not convincing. Breuning defends mediation of faith in Jesus through Jesus himself, and insists on preserving a close connection between Jesus' life-deed, death and resurrection, not only in order to determine the content of faith but also in order to study the process of becoming a believer, since in his view there is a structural likeness between the faith of the first disciples and that of later generations.³⁴

It is evident from this survey of the debate that, while the details of Pesch's position have not been favorably received, his critics differ among themselves on many issues of systematic theology as well as exegesis: the meaning of resurrection, the relationship of faith to history and especially to the historical Jesus, and the relationship of the faith of the first disciples to that of later generations are only the most striking of these. The discussion has at least served to bring these basic differences into sharper perspective.

III

The exegetical questions raised by Pesch's reconstruction cannot be discussed here, especially since adequate consideration of them would require that some of Pesch's other writings and the recently published work of Klaus Berger be taken into account. Since, however, Pesch's systematic program is not dependent on all the details of his historical analysis, it seems appropriate to consider his undertaking from the perspective of systematic theology. The following remarks will be limited to four major topics: the meaning of resurrection, the systematic relevance of the conception of the historical Jesus, the historical point of reference for fundamental theology, and the implications of foundational Christology for soteriology. No more than an effort to clarify the questions can be undertaken here.

Of basic importance is the issue of what is meant by resurrection. Kremer's distinction between two variant understandings,³⁵ while useful, is not completely adequate to the problematic. A distinction of three

³² Ibid. 69-85.

³³ Ibid. 127.

³⁴ W. Breuning, "Aktive Proexistenz—Die Vermittlung Jesu durch Jesus selbst," *TTZ* 83 (1974) 193-213. Cf. also id., "Christologische Bemühungen in der katholischen Theologie," in H. Dembowski, *Einführung in die Christologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976) 200-206; and id., "Systematische Entfaltung der eschatologischen Aussagen," in *Mysterium salutis* 5 (eds. J. Feiner and M. Löhrer; Zurich: Benziger, 1976) 790.

³⁵ J. Kremer, "Entstehung und Inhalt" 3-5.

conceptions on the basis of answers to two questions would provide a better initial clarification of the differing positions, while still leaving room for further variations within the three groups. A first question is the one noted by Kremer: whether resurrection refers to something affecting Jesus or to something which happened exclusively in his disciples. For those who adhere to the first of these alternatives, however, a second question arises: Is this something an event after Jesus' death or is it a dimension of that death? Although the two questions are not identical, they are not always clearly distinguished; for this reason, those who understand resurrection as having happened in Jesus' death are at times wrongly taken to mean that it occurred only in the consciousness of his followers. When the necessary distinctions are made, the varying conceptions can be divided into three approaches: the traditional view, which sees the resurrection as something which happened to Jesus on the third day (understood chronologically)³⁶ after his crucifixion; an approach which tends to understand the resurrection as the rising of faith in the early Church; and a conception which interprets the resurrection as the "other side" of Jesus' death. The first position is that presumed, usually without much discussion, by most theologians.³⁷ The second is that of Bultmann³⁸ and Marxsen,³⁹ at least according to most interpretations of their work.⁴⁰ The third understanding is maintained by Karl Rahner,⁴¹ a fact which has caused Pannenberg to suspect Rahner of Bultmannian tendencies.⁴² While Pesch's conception of the resurrection is not clearly expressed, his stress on the constitutive personal importance of Jesus for faith⁴³ and his positive references to Rahner's theology of the resurrection⁴⁴ suggest that he should be placed

³⁶ For the interpretation of "on the third day," cf. esp. K. Lehmann, *Auferweckt am dritten Tag nach der Schrift (Quaestiones disputatae 38)*; Freiburg: Herder, 1968).

³⁷ Cf., e.g., G. Van Noort, *Dogmatic Theology* 1, 165-87; L. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Cork: Mercier, 1962) 192-93.

³⁸ Cf. R. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth* (ed. H. W. Bartsch; New York: Harper & Row, 1961) 38-43; id., "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ* (eds. C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville; Nashville: Abingdon, 1964) 42.

³⁹ Cf. W. Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem" 50; and id., *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* 138-48.

⁴⁰ Piet Schoonenberg (*The Christ* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1971] 156-66) interprets Marxsen in a different way.

⁴¹ Cf. K. Rahner, "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," *Theological Investigations* 4 (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966) 121-33; id., "Hope and Easter," *Christian at the Crossroads* (New York: Seabury, 1975) 87-93; id., "Jesu Auferstehung," *Schriften zur Theologie* 12 (Zurich: Benziger, 1975) 344-52; id., "Über den Zwischenzustand," *ibid.* 455-66; id., *Grundkurs des Glaubens* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976) 260-79.

⁴² W. Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen" 105 n. 2.

⁴³ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 226-28; id., "Materialien" 157-65, 169-84.

⁴⁴ R. Pesch, "Stellungnahme" 270-71; id., "Materialien" 170-72.

in the third category. The legitimacy of this position, which is also upheld by other authors,⁴⁵ deserves further study. It can, in any case, be said in its favor that many of the objections which are advanced against the second approach cannot be brought against the third.

A closely related issue is the systematic importance of the varying understandings of the historical Jesus. Any theology of the resurrection finds it necessary to establish some additional point of reference,⁴⁶ since even if resurrection has a content of its own, that abstract content is not in itself sufficient to explain its content in Christological application: to confess that Jesus is risen is not merely to assert that someone is risen. What that other point of reference is, however, depends on further considerations. Since both Bultmann and Marxsen maintain the impossibility of establishing positive connection between the public life of Jesus and his death,⁴⁷ each is forced to choose between relating resurrection to Jesus' public life and relating it to the cross; it is impossible for them to relate resurrection to both, because of the lack of intrinsic connection between the two. As is well known, Bultmann takes the second alternative and understands faith in the resurrection as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross,⁴⁸ while Marxsen chooses the first and sees resurrection as a vehicle of interpretation used for speaking of the continuation of Jesus' cause.⁴⁹ If, however, Jesus' crucifixion is rightly seen as the outcome of his public activity,⁵⁰ then Jesus' cause and his personal fate are inextricably connected, and the further point of reference for an understanding of resurrection can and must be both Jesus' public life and his death as consequence of faithfulness to his own

⁴⁵ Cf., e.g., H. Ebert, "Die Krise des Osterglaubens," *Hochland* 60 (1967-68) 305-31; E. Gutwenger, "Auferstehung und Auferstehungsleib Jesu," *ZKT* 91 (1969) 32-58; G. Greshake, "Das Verhältnis 'Unsterblichkeit der Seele' und 'Auferstehung des Leibes' in problemgeschichtlicher Sicht," in G. Greshake and G. Lohfink, *Naherwartung—Auferstehung—Unsterblichkeit (Quaestiones disputatae 71)*; Freiburg: Herder, 1975) 82-120; and W. Breuning, "Systematische Entfaltung" 881-85.

⁴⁶ H. Jellouschek, "Zur christologischen Bedeutung der Frage nach dem historischen Jesus," *TQ* 152 (1972) 117-18; cf. also N. Walter, "'Historischer Jesus' und Osterglaube," *TLZ* 101 (1976) 321-38.

⁴⁷ Cf. R. Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma" 23-24; W. Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem" 46; and id., "Erwägungen zum Problem des verkündigten Kreuzes," *NTS* 8 (1961-62) 204-14.

⁴⁸ R. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology" 41.

⁴⁹ W. Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem" 50; id., *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* 126-28, 144, 147-48. Cf. also id., "Die urchristlichen Kerygmata und das Ereignis Jesus von Nazareth," *ZTK* 73 (1976) 42-64.

⁵⁰ For assessments of this by systematic theologians, cf. J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) 112-59; W. Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* 113-23; K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens* 245-46, 251; H. Jellouschek, "Zur christologischen Bedeutung" 117-22; F. Schupp, *Vermittlung im Fragment: Überlegungen zur Christologie* (Innsbruck: ÖH-Druck, 1975) 15-19; and E. Schillebeeckx, *Jezus* 241-62.

message. The content of the confession that Jesus is risen can and must then be determined with this complete background in mind.

These reflections lead to the issue of the point of reference for foundational Christology. Most contemporary efforts at this see the historical Jesus and the resurrection as twin points of reference for such an undertaking.⁵¹ Pesch's hypothesis would in effect establish the historical Jesus (including his death) as the sufficient historical background for Christology, and would assess the resurrection as a nonfoundational⁵² Christological statement: content of faith, but not part of the historically establishable basis for faith.⁵³ The possibility of carrying out this line of argumentation depends on the presence of a reconstruction of the historical Jesus sufficient to bear the weight of the subsequent argument.⁵⁴ Only one comment on this can be made here. From the viewpoint of systematic theology, the decisive historical question is the presence of implicit Christological claims in Jesus' life, not the presence of explicit Christology at that time. As Raymond Brown has noted, no firm exegetical consensus is likely to be reached on the issue of such explicit Christology.⁵⁵ Since, however, any explicit application of titles to Jesus, whether by Jesus himself or by another, whether during Jesus' lifetime or only after his death, is always dependent on the Christology implicit in Jesus' words and actions both in order to determine the meaning of the titles as applied to Jesus and in order to investigate the validity of that attribution,⁵⁶ systematic theology is independent of the varying results of exegetical research on the origins of explicit Christology, though not of its over-all picture of the historical Jesus.

Finally, some major soteriological implications of Pesch's work should be mentioned. Cornelius Mayer has recently suggested that Christian soteriologies can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their choice of incarnation, public life, or death of Jesus as their primary point

⁵¹ Cf., e.g., W. Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* 53–114; K. Rahner, "The Position of Christology in the Church between Exegesis and Dogmatics," *Theological Investigations* 11 (New York: Seabury, 1974) 185–214; G. O'Collins, *Foundations of Theology* (Chicago: Loyola Univ., 1971) 151–85; and W. Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* 63–160.

⁵² For discussion of the relationship between objects of faith and grounds for faith, cf. K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens* 235–37, 240–42.

⁵³ R. Pesch, "Zur Entstehung" 226–28. For related positions cf. H. Jellouschek, "Zur christologischen Bedeutung" 115–18; F. Schupp, *Vermittlung im Fragment* 30–37; and G. Ebeling, "Was heisst: Ich glaube an Jesus Christus?" *Wort und Glaube* 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1975) 270–308.

⁵⁴ Pesch ("Zur Entstehung" 228) cites a similar comment from a letter of Karl Rahner.

⁵⁵ R. Brown, "Who Do Men Say that I Am?—A Survey of Modern Scholarship on Gospel Christology," *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist, 1975) 22, 36.

⁵⁶ Cf. H. Jellouschek, "Zur christologischen Bedeutung" 114–15.

of reference.⁵⁷ In a somewhat similar vein, Edward Schillebeeckx has argued that the choice between locating salvation in the historical Jesus and locating it in the risen Lord has far-reaching repercussions on all other areas of theology and all other functions of the Church.⁵⁸ If the fundamental outline of Pesch's project is correct, then resurrection is so intrinsically related to Jesus' public life and crucifixion (just as these two are inseparable) that no choices among various points of reference are necessary or even possible. The historical point of reference for Christology and soteriology would necessarily be Jesus' public life and death, and assertion of his resurrection would be a fundamental way of professing his permanent salvific significance.⁵⁹ While the implications of this conception cannot be pursued here, it should be noted that various problems encountered by other soteriologies would be avoided: the reductionism which has often accompanied those which focus on the public life,⁶⁰ the isolation of Jesus' death in many interpretations of its significance,⁶¹ and the escapism which mars much concentration on the resurrection⁶² would all be excluded in principle. The resulting soteriology would be, in a strict sense, a *theologia crucis*—even more precisely, a *theologia crucis Jesu*.

On the whole, the explanation Pesch advances, while clearly not sufficiently established, is important enough to merit more complete exposition on his part and serious discussion by other theologians. The strength of his project would be enhanced by explicit assumption of the soteriological problem as point of departure. Even the categories to which he has recourse in his understanding of the historical Jesus (eschatological prophet, prophetic Messiah) reveal the soteriological roots of all Christological questioning. More explicit development from this perspective would also require further reflection on the nature of faith and its relationship to historical knowledge.⁶³ While this would

⁵⁷ C. Mayer, "Von der satisfactio zur liberatio?: Zur Problematik eines neuen Ansatzes in der Soteriologie," *ZKT* 96 (1974) 405-14.

⁵⁸ E. Schillebeeckx, "Ons heil: Jezus' leven of Christus de verrezenen?," *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 13 (1973) 145-66; cf. also id., *Jezus* 525-28. Schillebeeckx himself considers this a false dilemma.

⁵⁹ H. Jellouschek, "Zur christologischen Bedeutung" 116-17.

⁶⁰ J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (London: Burns & Oates, 1969) 144-48, 157-59; C. Mayer, "Von der satisfactio" 413-14.

⁶¹ Ibid. 408; cf. also H. Kessler, *Die theologische Bedeutung des Todes Jesu* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1970) 15-16, 158-59, 329, 334-35; and id., *Erlösung als Befreiung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1972) 51-52, 55-56.

⁶² D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1967) 142, 176; F. Schupp, *Vermittlung im Fragment* 34-35.

⁶³ Pesch seems to tend toward a position similar to that of H. Jellouschek, "Zum Verhältnis von Wissen und Glauben," *ZKT* 93 (1971) 309-27.

obviously expand the range of inquiry considerably, it may well be that the questions of fundamental theology, Christology, and soteriology are so interconnected that they can only be addressed together, if at all.

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