

change that came over the disciples and Paul. In fact, the Jesus movement began to spread within the synagogues. The movement begun in Jesus that seemed to end with his death then began to take off and to spread with the enthusiasm and zeal of a divine mission. This surge of human energy was not simply Jesus risen; it was *because* Jesus was raised.

THE EMPTY TOMB

There are several versions of the discovery of the empty tomb. They contain a good number of common elements among them along with differing details. The one in Mark 16:1-8, upon which I focus attention, is the shortest of them. In Mark, three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, early in the morning of the first day of the week, went to the tomb of Jesus to anoint the body. Worried about who would roll back the heavy stone in front of the tomb, they found it already rolled away when they arrived, and inside a young man who was really an angel. He delivers the message that Jesus is risen and charges the women: "go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you" (Mark 16:7). The women left, astonished and afraid, and said nothing.

Once again, we ask the question of the historicity of this story. Does it tell the story of the origin of Christian faith in the risen Jesus in authentically historical terms? And again, apart from the fact that my understanding of the resurrection does not support the necessity of an empty tomb in principle, it must be said that history cannot determine the authenticity of these accounts. But neither can history disprove an empty tomb, and a number of exegetes support its historicity. "The empty tomb story was not the Evangelist's creation, but tradition with a long history behind it. Basic to it . . . was an alleged factual report, the discovery of the empty tomb by the women. This alleged factual report was then used as a vehicle for the proclamation of the resurrection."²⁷ But what is at stake here is not the fact of an empty tomb, which in itself is quite distinct from resurrection, but whether the resurrection of Jesus requires it. As far as I can see, the strongest argument against such a necessity rests upon an understanding of the nature of resurrection as transcendent and upon the analogy of Jesus' resurrection with that of others, as it is reflected in 1 Corinthians 15. Of course, one can make up scenarios at one's convenience to explain the removal of Jesus' body by someone or other.²⁸ But this is

27. Fuller, *Resurrection Narratives*, 171. Fuller says that one simply cannot decide whether or not there is a historical basis for the story. "It is impossible for us at this distance to check the reliability of the women's report." Ibid. PHEME PERKINS agrees that the tradition is old, and that one cannot really controvert it. But she adds: "Finding the tomb empty was not the source of early Christian belief that Jesus had been raised." Perkins, *Resurrection*, 94.

28. See, for example, Bostock, "Do We Need an Empty Tomb?" 201-03, who makes a case for the priests removing Jesus' body.

ultimately a work of fancy. Once the imagination is allowed a place in depicting the resurrection in empirical terms or spatial-temporal categories, one also creates problems that are as impossible to solve as they are irrelevant to the point of the resurrection itself.

But at the same time the story of the empty tomb does tell us something about the community which employed it to communicate its faith. For the creation and the telling of the story itself presupposes the faith in the resurrection that it expresses. Thus a brief analysis of the structure of the story will enable us to say something about the character of the early faith in the resurrection.

The story in its simplest form has three elements: the women who go to the tomb, the stone rolled back and the tomb empty, and the announcement of the Easter message. Each of the three elements represents a dimension of the Easter faith of the disciples of Jesus. First, insofar as it is a narrative, the women are the point of continuity in the story. From beginning to end it is the story of their learning of the resurrection of Jesus. These women, then, are presented as the first witnesses to the resurrection and thus at the source of the post-Easter Jesus movement. They are proposed by this tradition as the model in coming to faith in the resurrection.²⁹ Given the low status of women as witnesses in the existing culture, the positioning of these women in this way must bear some significance concerning their historical role.

Second, the tomb is the zone of death. The tomb being opened and the body of Jesus gone means that death has been overcome. Jesus is alive. He is not here in the place of the dead.³⁰

Third, the message of Jesus risen is announced by an angel. This means that it is a revelation that comes from God and is not inferred. "The resurrection is announced by a heavenly messenger, and is a revelation made to the community, not the community's view of the events."³¹

In sum, how may the stories of the empty tomb in their various forms be interpreted today? These stories are symbolic: they give expression to the faith of the community that Jesus is risen. Whether and to what degree there is a kernel of historicity behind them cannot be determined historically. But they dramatize the content of faith. Given Jewish anthropology and conceptions of bodiliness, it is hard to conceive of a more explicit vehicle to communicate the faith of the new Jesus movement: Jesus is risen. The content of this faith is not a datum that can be deduced; it is revealed by God. And given the prejudice against the testimony of women in Jewish society, one has to wonder about the prominent position given

29. Léon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 135.

30. Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: A & C Black, 1991), 385. "He is not here" also means not in and of this world, but "the transformation of the body into an eschatological mode of existence and his immediate assumption into heaven." Fuller, *Resurrection Narratives*, 57.

31. Léon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 112.

them by this story. Women played a prominent role sustaining Jesus' public ministry; it appears that this role is accented in the new post-Easter Jesus movement.

THE APPEARANCE AT EMMAUS

There are many appearance stories in the New Testament, as well as reports of appearances of which we have no account. In John's gospel, Jesus' appearances are compressed into a short temporal framework. In Luke's gospel, Jesus appeared over a period of forty days and then was exalted, although most commentators agree that this framework is literary and not historical. One may entertain the possibility of a shorter or a longer time period in the course of which the disciples experienced Jesus as alive and present, especially longer if the appearance to Paul is counted. One cannot know concretely how the disciples experienced Jesus as risen. "We cannot presume to reach the direct experience of those who became convinced that Jesus had been raised, since our earliest sources are quite reticent in that regard. From Paul we may presume that it is a spiritual experience that carried with it the conviction of a revelatory encounter with God."³² A case can be made that the time it took the disciples to recognize that Jesus was risen was somewhat protracted. How long? We really do not know. The stories of the apparitions were first told or composed within a context of faith that Jesus had been raised. They are expressions of that faith. They are not reports of events as they happened, not chronicles of unfolding events. They were created afterwards as expressions of faith meant to appeal to or elicit faith in Jesus risen on the part of the hearer.³³ A first premise for interpreting them is to understand their genre; they are examples of kerygmatic preaching.

I have chosen to focus attention on the story of the apparition to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). The story is called a "legend," a "tale," or a crafted short story. Luke undoubtedly possessed his own sources or traditions on which he worked. "Consequently, the intention of the story is not to bring historical facts to our knowledge in

32. Perkins, *Resurrection*, 94.

33. The position reflected here is that the word "appearances" does not accurately portray the kind of experience the disciples had in coming to an awareness that Jesus was alive and exalted with God. It may be contrasted with the position of those who defend the appearances as the primary way in which the disciples came to know that Jesus had been raised, and that these appearances consisted in "an experience that was unique and not merely interior but involved some external, visual perception." Gerald G. O'Collins, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: Some Contemporary Issues* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993), 18. O'Collins has written extensively on the resurrection and has consistently defended the historicity of the appearances as sensible experiences of some kind. Besides the works previously cited, see also his *Interpreting the Resurrection: Examining the Major Problems in the Stories of Jesus' Resurrection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).

an objective way. Instead it has to do with the *doctrine* which is brought to our attention in the form of a narrative so that we might become receptive to its implied theological content."³⁴ The genre leads H. D. Betz to conclude that "nothing told in the narrative is incidental; every detail has its significance. It is the intention of this legend to narrate what is essential to the origin and nature of the Christian faith."³⁵ My interest in this story, however, is not quite the same as Betz's, who draws out its theological and doctrinal content. I am interested more in the way this story illustrates the origin of Christian faith in the sense of its historical genesis. Despite the fact that this story is not to be read as an exact historical account of specific events, the subject matter of this carefully crafted story concerns the emergence of faith in Jesus risen. If the disciples in this story are taken as representatives of the earliest disciples of Jesus generally, the story will be seen to explain in a general but historical way how faith in the resurrection of Jesus was generated.³⁶

The story is well known. On the first day of the week, two disciples were on their way to Emmaus from Jerusalem when they were joined by Jesus, whom they were prevented from recognizing. When they expressed their near despair at the execution of Jesus, including the curious reports of the empty tomb, Jesus in his turn interpreted for them at length the events concerning himself in terms of the scriptures. When they came to the village, he stayed to eat with them. "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:30-31). In their excitement they returned immediately to Jerusalem to report to the eleven.

Exegetes break down this story into its principal elements and arrange them in the form of an outline differently, according to the various interests of the authors and the different kinds of analysis to which the story is subjected.³⁷ I propose to comment on six elements of the narrative: 1) the situation, 2) the discussion of Jesus, 3) the use of the scriptures, 4) the initiative of God, 5) the recognition of Jesus in the breaking of the bread, 6) the concluding confession of the kerygma.

First, the story reflects fairly accurately, even though broadly, the historical situation of the followers of Jesus after his death. "But we had

34. Hans Dieter Betz, "The Origin and Nature of Christian Faith According to the Emmaus Legend," *Interpretation*, 23 (January, 1969), 33.

35. Betz, "Emmaus Legend," 38.

36. John Galvin, who has considered this issue extensively, seems to be moving toward the position that theologians should prescind from the discussion of the historical genesis of faith and deal more extensively with the content of resurrection faith. John Galvin, "The Origin of Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus: Two Recent Perspectives," *Theological Studies*, 49 (1988), 42. There is merit to Galvin's concern, but the apologetic theme in this christology also impels some consideration of this issue.

37. For example, Betz, "Emmaus Legend," 38-45, deals with the story theologically; Fuller, *Resurrection Narratives*, 186, outlines the story kerygmatically.

hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Fuller believes that this verse seems "to recapture precisely the actual historical mood of the disciples between Good Friday and the Easter revelations, and therefore to belong to the original pre-Lucan narrative."³⁸ "Historically there can be no doubt that Jesus' disciples had placed in the prophet from Nazareth their highest and ultimate eschatological hopes for themselves and for their nation. His death on the cross had brought an end to those hopes and expectations."³⁹

Second, it would be hard to imagine the followers of Jesus not subjecting his public ministry that culminated in his recent arrest and execution to an intense and protracted discussion. This historical phenomenon is not mentioned in passing but underscored by repetition. The disciples were "talking with each other about all these things that had happened" (Luke 24:14). The subject matter was "Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24:19). And, of course, they conversed about "how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him" (Luke 24:20). A number of things about this are important, but I shall highlight only two. One is that this discussion was an exercise of memory; the disciples remembered Jesus and the events leading up to his death. The other is the narrative form of this memory; Jesus was remembered through what he had said and done, which in turn made him to be the prophet he was.⁴⁰

Third, through the help of Jesus as stranger, the disciples reflected on the life and fate of Jesus in the light of the scriptures. This element of the story too reflects the historical fact that the early Jesus movement and community interpreted Jesus in the light of the scriptures: the New Testament is the product of just such a reflection. This element of the story correlates with the character of the primitive kerygma received by Paul, "in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3, 4). The followers of Jesus found in the Jewish scriptures their principal worldly resource to begin to understand after his death just what happened in the Jesus event.

Fourth, the story reflects the sense that God is operative in the coming to awareness of Jesus being alive and exalted. The disciples are passive to the action of God upon them. It is God who withholds the identity of Jesus as stranger from their recognition, just as God is the agent when "their eyes were opened" (Luke 24:31). Recognition of Jesus risen and alive came as a revelation from God and not merely as an inference or conclusion based on objective data.

Fifth, there is a clear reference to the eucharist in this story. It recalls the Last Supper (Luke 22:19) and contains a classic Lucan way of referring to

38. Fuller, *Resurrection Narratives*, 105.

39. Betz, "Emmaus Legend," 38.

40. Betz, "Emmaus Legend," 38-39.

the eucharist. "The lesson in the story is that henceforth the risen Christ will be present to his assembled disciples, not visibly (after the ascension), but in the breaking of the bread. So they will know him and recognize him, because so he will be truly present among them."⁴¹ But beyond this message of the story, it may also reflect historically where and how the disciples came to recognize that Jesus was alive. It is possible that this story enshrines a tradition of the way in which a revelatory encounter with Jesus occurred. "There is no apparent reason why the eucharistic meal should not have provided the occasion for some at least of the resurrection appearances, more probably those which occurred to groups rather than those to single individuals."⁴² Such a view postulates that the followers of Jesus resumed or continued their gatherings and meals together, and that "they recognized him" (Luke 24:31).

Sixth, the story ends with a statement of the concise formula of the kerygma, "The Lord has risen indeed" (Luke 24:34), as if to say that this is the climax of this narrative. Actually, it is the conclusion of another untold story of Jesus' appearance to Simon. But, more generally, it is the climax of the whole drama of the gradual conversion of the community represented in these two disciples.

In sum, given its narrative structure, this story looks like it could represent, or at least reflect, in a general but ultimately historical way the manner in which the disciples came to faith in the exalted Jesus. Whether or not there were two disciples traveling to Emmaus, distancing the story from such a particular, specific event allows it to represent a community of disciples who are disoriented, but who are still in possession of the vivid memory of Jesus. This community did in fact reflect arduously on the meaning of Jesus in the light of Jewish scriptures, and, as it turned out, did continue the practice of the eucharistic meal, a practice learned in the company of Jesus. It seems quite possible therefore that the story represents broadly the historical route the disciples took to arrive at the affirmation of faith that Jesus is risen. Its historicity, then, applies especially to the structure of the story; the story bears reference to the community. This simultaneously symbolic and historical reference explains why the story would have been an ideal vehicle for kerygmatic preaching. Its structure allows the preacher to develop the logic of faith and the listener to grasp it. This view also fits with the theory that christology developed chiefly within the context of worship and cult.

41. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1559. In Betz's view, the story teaches that the resurrected Jesus is present both in the word-event of engaging the scriptures and in the common eucharistic meal. Betz, "Emmaus Legend," 40, 41.

42. Fuller, *Resurrection Narratives*, 109.

THEORETICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE
GENESIS OF FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION

The first two parts of this chapter provide an interpretation of the New Testament data concerning the resurrection. I pass now to a general theory of the structure of this faith in Jesus' resurrection. At the start, I should note the theoretical character of this reconstruction. We cannot determine concretely how faith in Jesus' resurrection arose. The New Testament does not provide the kind of information that would yield such an inference with any clarity. The wide variety of conceptions of this process is enough to prove that essays at describing or "explaining" how resurrection faith came about are at best hypothetical. But such theoretical characterizations of the epistemology of the resurrection help to establish its analogy with faith experience today and thus its credibility. I present this reconstruction around four points.

THE ROLE OF FAITH-HOPE

The element of hope is highlighted in Karl Rahner's transcendental theology and christology. One of Rahner's principal concerns in his christology is to show an intrinsic consistency between human existence itself and what Christians believe about Jesus Christ. His is an apologetic christology which, to make Jesus Christ intelligible to human beings today, places christological belief in correlation with anthropology. Rahner thus tries to bring out the internal continuity between Jesus Christ and human beings, between what happened to Jesus and the destiny of all. On the basis of this underlying principle, Rahner highlights the role played by hope in the faith that recognizes, grasps, or appreciates that Jesus is risen. For he is, as Paul said, the first of many.⁴³

This hope is understood within the framework of philosophical and theological anthropology. It is not merely a psychological phenomenon. Nor is it simply a craving for individual survival. As I will insist later on, one cannot logically hope for one's own salvation without implicitly including the salvation of all. On the considerably deeper level of the dynamic and teleological character of human existence itself, Rahner understands hope as the fundamental posture of the openness of the human spirit to being itself. At this level, faith and hope are scarcely distinct, for hope in this sense is the ground out of which faith arises. "In the word 'hope' this one unifying 'outwards from the self' attitude into God as the absolutely uncontrollable finds expression. Hope, therefore, represents this unifying medium between faith or vision and love. . . ."⁴⁴ This

43. Karl Rahner, "Resurrection," *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, 5 (New York: Herder and Herder, ND), 323-24, 329-31.

44. Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of Hope," *Theological Investigations*, 10 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), 250.

explains the term "faith-hope"; in this discussion I try to keep the fundamental orientation of human existence toward being, this fundamental trust, closely linked with faith. This faith-hope has transcendental roots; its origin is an element of human existence as such; as a fundamental confidence and trust in being itself, it includes a desire for permanence in existence. This transcendental faith-hope "constitutes the anthropological horizon for an understanding of what is meant by resurrection."⁴⁵ Jesus' resurrection appears as the confirmation and the fulfillment of this hope.

JESUS OF NAZARETH AS THE EXTERNAL REFERENCE
FOR THE "EXPERIENCE" THAT JESUS IS ALIVE

The second element of this theory is the role played by Jesus of Nazareth during his lifetime, that is, in his public ministry. The affirmation that Jesus is risen is an object of faith-hope. It arises out of a participatory or engaged experience of transcendence, and is not a piece of objective information. As such, like all matters of faith, it is revealed; it is given to human awareness through a religious experience taken to be revelatory. But all revelation is mediated to human experience through an external medium or datum which symbolically represents the content of revelation. Revelation is not a purely a-historical inner communication of God to an individual consciousness. One has to ask about the external medium, the external thing, event, or situation which gave rise to an awareness of Jesus' resurrection. In traditional common-sense readings of the New Testament narratives, such a medium is either the appearances of Jesus alive or the experience of an empty tomb or an angelic announcement which mediated belief in the resurrection. Jesus is alive and risen because he was seen; Jesus is alive because the tomb was empty and the angel said he is risen. A critical-historical appreciation of the resurrection narratives, however, requires that a similarly critical and apologetical theology of the resurrection seek a different historical foundation. In the view proposed here, the external event that helped mediate a consciousness of Jesus risen was Jesus himself during his ministry. Or, to be more exact, after his death, the disciples' memory of Jesus filled this role.

Some exegetes and theologians believe that they can find sufficient grounds in the historical Jesus to warrant a belief in his resurrection. Whether or not the disciples actually believed in his resurrection before his death, Jesus provided sufficient indications to warrant this belief.⁴⁶ Other theologians explicitly reject the view that Jesus during his lifetime

45. Galvin, "The Resurrection of Jesus," 126.

46. See John P. Galvin, "Resurrection as *Theologia crucis Jesu*: The Foundational Christology of Rudolf Pesch," *Theological Studies*, 38 (1977), 513-25, and "The Origin of Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus," 25-44; also "The Resurrection of Jesus," 135-36.

supplied the grounds for belief in his own resurrection. The resurrection amounts to new content about Jesus dead and risen, and thus the kingdom of God, and these are precisely not found in a living Jesus. In this sense, Jesus of Nazareth is not a sufficient basis for faith in the resurrection because it is impossible to conclude to the resurrection of Jesus from the content of Jesus' life.⁴⁷ I suggest a position between these two that combines the insights of both. It seems clear that one cannot infer objectively a potential knowledge of Jesus' resurrection from a critical reading of the New Testament record of his teaching during his lifetime. But although the historical Jesus of Nazareth is not the sufficient ground for an affirmation of his resurrection, he is its necessary ground. One cannot affirm a resurrection of Jesus without reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, one must account in some way for the resurrection of *Jesus*. The one affirmed to be risen was Jesus, and such an affirmation necessarily presupposes a memory of him. Further, there must have been something about Jesus that impelled a hope in *his* resurrection. Jesus is thus the external historical cause that gave rise to the faith-hope in his resurrection, but he is not the sufficient or adequate cause.

What then are the historical "grounds" for belief in Jesus' resurrection? What I am calling "grounds" here are not the only factors leading toward faith in Jesus risen. Nor should "grounds" be construed as something probative or impelling faith with necessity. We are speaking of those factors that focus the attention on Jesus as the object of God's action. On that supposition, these historical grounds are found simultaneously in Jesus' teaching and in his person. First, with regard to his teaching, the disciples had a vivid, experiential recollection of Jesus' teaching. This memory included "their recollection of their relationship with Jesus, and recalling his ministry and his message of the kingdom of God; remembering his warning that they might display a lack of faith; remembering their experience of the God of grace whom they had come to know in the presence of Jesus; and recalling how he helped people in distress, how he ate and drank with sinners and promised salvation to them."⁴⁸ The content of Jesus' teaching about God, God's goodness, love, and fidelity, is primary here. And this should be measured against the background of the problem of good, evil, and ultimate justice, which the death of Jesus raised for the disciples.⁴⁹ The impulse must be approached in the cosmic framework of the moral coherence of human existence in which the very idea of resurrection first arises

47. Galvin, "The Resurrection of Jesus," 130–31, explaining the position of Walter Kasper. See Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 124–43, for a nuanced discussion of the scriptural data and grounds of faith in the resurrection. Relative to the appearances, Kasper is clear that these are not to be construed as "objectively tangible events." An appearance was "an experience in faith," but not in the sense that the object, Jesus exalted, was the product or projection of faith. *Ibid.*, 139.

48. Lorenzen, *Resurrection and Discipleship*, 75–76, paraphrasing Schillebeeckx.

49. See the analysis of the parable *The Rich Man and Lazarus* in Chapter 4.

through a contrast experience. The truth of Jesus' message of God as final savior, as it came to bear on Jesus' particular situation, is the first factor suggesting the resurrection of Jesus.

The second factor, Jesus' person, is something that ultimately cannot be clearly portrayed, but must be postulated. It stems from the fact that Jesus made an impact on people, that he so stood out above the content of his message, which was not original in its substance, that people encountered God in him. Because it was Jesus whom people experienced as risen, and not someone else, one must assume that Jesus had a forceful religious impact on people. It is this factor that Bornkamm tries to define with his category of "authority." Jesus displayed this authority in his teaching, his healing, and his overall comportment.⁵⁰ But in the end, this impact that Jesus had on his disciples during his lifetime cannot be reconstructed. It was an existential reality, only the remnants and traces of which could survive in objectified forms. No amount of imaginative and rhetorical skill can substitute for this authority and its existential influence on those who actually experienced it. This is precisely where the difference between the original disciples and all of those who come after them lies. Those who actually encountered and were influenced by the authority of Jesus, and who were led to faith and the affirmation of his resurrection for the first time, represent something that could happen only once. This is the logic behind apostolicity which Paul seeks to defend for himself with his own experience of the risen Jesus. But at the same time Paul is a witness to the possibility of someone who did not know Jesus in the flesh having an analogous experience.

Another way of putting this is to ask why the individual Jesus was raised from death. The answer must be because of the way he lived his life. It is difficult to think of any other reason than the one given in the hymn cited by Paul in his letter to the Philippians: he was raised because of the way he lived; he was obedient to God's rule and therefore was he exalted (Phil 2:8-9). I take this not merely in the moral sense of reward: he earned it. Rather, primarily, and stressing God's initiative, linking Jesus' resurrection to his life means that God has ratified Jesus' form of existence as revelatory of God's values and rule. Jesus' life, especially in its care for every form of human suffering, represents God's own plan for human existence. Thus the objective datum, the external historical event, that pointed to or mediated the further experience that Jesus was and is alive and risen was the experience of the disciples of Jesus himself during his lifetime and the memory of it. This kind of life, the life of this man, leads to life in God. It was the realization that the fidelity of God, the loving creator, lies within or encompasses the fidelity of this man, and this entails resurrection.

50. Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 60-61.

AN INITIATIVE FROM GOD AS SPIRIT

The third element in the genesis of faith in the resurrection of Jesus is the initiative of God operative in the human subject who comes to this awareness. One who so encounters God in Jesus as to affirm that Jesus is now, after his death, alive in the life of God does so on the basis of the initiative of God as Spirit.

This initiative of God in the faith-hope in Jesus' resurrection is urged by several reasons. First, religious experience normally bears the theme of having been initiated by God; it is not accounted for by human potentialities alone. All authentic and lasting religious experiences display the character of having been given gratuitously by God.⁵¹ Second, such a divine initiative is a way of saying that what is experienced here is not mere projection. Christians hold that Jesus really is alive. Affirming that this conviction is due to its being revealed by God is a way of assuring its realism: how else would one be convinced that this is the case? Third, Christian theology generally attributes all saving faith to the initiative of God's grace, here understood as God's Spirit. This intellectual anti-Pelagianism and anti-rationalism in the end rests on the quality of the experience of faith itself: it comes from God's initiative. A fourth reason lies in the transcendent character of the resurrection; it is known in a revelatory religious experience and not in an empirical, historical perception or an objective inference from such an event. Fifth, the agency of God as Spirit is a theologically reasonable way to account for the change that occurred in the lives of the disciples. Of all the historical data, this change is the most remarkable. After the death of Jesus the disciples appear to have been confused, scattered, and disillusioned. Still later they were united, confident, and preaching Jesus alive. A revelatory faith experience can account for the shift from the cycle of disaster, discouragement, and despair to the spiral of a vibrant, enthusiastic, and hope-filled community that is seen in the embryonic church. Sixth, there is an overwhelming witness in the New Testament to the internal influence of God as Spirit within the Jesus movement from its beginning. I take it that this "pouring out of the Spirit" is a symbolic phrase that interprets the corporate experience at the beginning of the Jesus movement. This "enthusiasm" both caused and accompanied the emergent group's recognition that Jesus was alive. With different accents, Paul, Luke, and John all have vivid statements about the role of God as Spirit working within the nascent faith experience of Jesus risen and exalted.

The function of this doctrinal element in the theory of the origin of faith in the resurrection should be clear. The language of the agency of God as Spirit underlines the conviction, internal to faith itself, that faith-hope in

51. William James, in *The Variety of Religious Experiences* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 300-01, 332-36, comments on the manner in which religious consciousness is not completely within human control, and the manner in which it is self-authenticating.

Jesus' exaltation is itself a gift of divine origin. Thus one cannot objectively establish the truth of this faith by historical or rational argument. But at the same time, God as Spirit operates within a human experience that is historically and rationally constituted. The testimony of the Spirit is not direct illumination, not immediately experienced, not an unmediated Word of God. On the contrary, the experience of God present and immanent is precisely mediated by the memory of Jesus. This element of an initiative from God must be combined with the focus on a memory of Jesus; together they form a mediated experience of God's power of resurrection. A purely fideistic interpretation of the Easter experience must be rejected as strongly as a purely rational explanation.

How should this experience of an initiative from God be named? What kind of experience was it? The answer to this question is still more tenuous and exegetes propose various models of experience by highlighting different strands of evidence. Was it a conversion experience? Or an experience of forgiveness?⁵² Whatever the best name for this experience may be according to exegetical data, clearly, as was seen in the case of Paul, it was a call to continue the ministry of Jesus. This seems to be a necessary and integral factor in the whole affair. A participatory encounter with the God who raised Jesus out of death cannot, by definition, leave one indifferent to the cause for which Jesus lived. Indeed, such an encounter presupposes some interest and engagement with this event. Paul is no exception here: in persecuting followers of Jesus he was deeply, although mistakenly, engaged with the cause of God; upon his conversion, he measured the depth of his error by the length of his calling and mission in the name of the risen Christ.

APPEARANCES AND STORIES OF THE EMPTY TOMB AS EXPRESSIONS OF THIS RESURRECTION FAITH

To round off the elements of this theoretical reconstruction of how faith in the resurrection of Jesus first came about, I simply recall the point already made: the stories of appearances and the empty tomb are ways of expressing and teaching the content of a faith already formed. Most exegetes agree on this. On the one hand, then, most of the theories which strive to maintain that the appearance narratives have empirical, historical referents do so by various forms of deliberate ambiguity in the meaning of historical reference: such phrases as the disciples "somehow encountered," or the narratives describe "some historical event," explain little. On the other hand, those who insist on the naive realism of the appearance stories may be falling into the trap of those who deny Jesus was personally risen. Meaning is not totally determined by immediate reference; it is not the case that the affirmation "Jesus is risen" could only be

52. Schillebeeckx, in *Jesus*, 390–92, proposes that the root experience of the first disciples was one of forgiveness that somehow involved Jesus himself forgiving.

true if Jesus were "physically" encountered or the tomb were really empty.⁵³ The fact that some realities can only be known metaphorically or symbolically need not be a philosophical or theological embarrassment. It is a mark of their transcendence. The appearance stories are very clear and positive statements that Jesus is risen, and there is no reason to believe that their authors intended them to be anything less than such positive symbols. There is a middle ground between fundamentalism and a purely existential interpretation of the resurrection. A critical theology, which subjects these symbols to the reflection to which they give rise, should have no problem with the symbolic character of the New Testament witness to the resurrection.

In sum, these four elements provide a framework within which one can understand the genesis of the belief in the resurrection of Jesus. It arises out of a basic faith in God as mediated by Jesus, and a lingering commitment to the person of Jesus as the one in whom the disciples encountered God. This faith is faith-hope; that is, it rests on the anthropological foundation of a fundamental trust in existence and an openness to the power of being. The character of ultimate being, however, is revealed by Jesus to be personal, good, loving, concerned about human existence, and saving. After Jesus' death, the memory of Jesus did not die before faith in this God blossomed into a belief that Jesus was alive and exalted within God's saving power. This belief, however, which arose along the continuum of a memory and commitment to Jesus and his message about God, was new. To the best of our knowledge, this conviction was lacking immediately after Jesus' death. But there was a change in the disciples, from little faith to a fuller faith that included belief in Jesus' resurrection. This experience is attributed to God as Spirit at work within the disciples in tandem with the memory of Jesus and his message.⁵⁴

53. Gerard J. Hughes, "Dead Theories, Live Metaphors and the Resurrection," *Heythrop Journal*, 29 (1988), 325-27. Hughes is here defending a real resurrection of Jesus against Marxsen and G. W. H. Lampe. He sees both as being influenced by overly skeptical forms of philosophy and a biblical criticism that undermines the historicity [read actuality] of the resurrection. Metaphors are used in science and understood realistically, that is, they are considered as successfully referring to their objects, when they explain the data through which the object is manifested, but which is itself beyond direct experience. So too theology is called upon to explain the experiences we have, including their referents, and it is successful and realistically true in the measure in which, with its metaphors or symbols, it accounts for experience. *Ibid.*, 326.

54. This theory is in fundamental agreement with the proposal of Peter Carnley in his magisterial study, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). The key terms of his theory are "remembering" and "knowing," which correlate respectively with history and experience. Memory of the historical Jesus is an integral and essential element of resurrection faith. Knowing, in the sense of encountering Jesus as risen in an experience of Christ as Spirit, is the other essential element in the structure of Easter faith. Recognition of the role of God as Spirit in the experience of resurrection of Jesus takes pressure off the necessity of having to decide what is going on

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The significance of the resurrection lies in the notion of salvation. One cannot adequately convey the place of resurrection in christology outside of the fuller context of meaning which is pointed to by the symbol of salvation and which is fundamental to christology. The meaning of salvation will thus occupy us at length in the consideration of New Testament christology, the history of redemption theories, and a constructive conception of salvation for today. But at the same time it is important to indicate at least briefly the theological significance of the resurrection of Jesus generally and with special attention to the interpretation proposed here.

Let me begin by speaking generally of the place of the resurrection in the economy of salvation that God accomplished and accomplishes in Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus and human reception of the revelation of this resurrection together make up an integral and essential part of God's salvation as understood by Christians. Relative to what God accomplished in Jesus, two things deserve notice: the first is that God, who created Jesus, calls this human being back into God's own life. What God begins in love, because of the complete boundlessness of that love, continues to exist in that love, thus overcoming the power and finality of death. The second is that what God did in Jesus, God always does and has always done. For the salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ consists in revealing the true nature and action of God. Therefore, what God did in Jesus, God has been doing from the beginning, because to save is of the very nature of God. God is one whose concern about the life of what God creates never fails; God's power of life, then, is never finally defeated by death.

This objective salvation, so to speak, is actualized in its Christian form in human existence by means of its being revealed in Jesus. Salvation becomes an experienced reality in the disclosure that God effects through Jesus; salvation is in turn something that is recognized, accepted, internalized, and lived by Christians. A full concept of salvation includes both objective and existential dimensions. This does not mean that God is less a savior relative to people who are ignorant of God, or that people are not saved if they are unaware of the full reality, including the religious sacrality, that makes up human life. It simply means that people participate in life more fully precisely in being more fully aware of their own reality. To be aware of God as savior, and that one is embraced by a divine love that is also a power of resurrection, adds a dimension to self-conscious human

historically in the empty tomb and appearance narratives. Carnley also gives prominent consideration to a eucharistic framework for this experience (325). I have added the third anthropological dimension of transcendental hope as also essential to resurrection faith, and rounded out the theory with a clear statement that the historicity of the empty tomb and appearance narratives is not essential to resurrection faith-hope.

existence. This faith-hope transforms a two-dimensional life of finite time and space into a life with eternal depth and breadth and height. In the end it relativizes suffering and death by an infinite cosmic context of love and eternal life. Resurrection transforms human existence in the end and, when grasped in faith, the experience of life in this world.

But something should be said about the significance of the specific interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus that is offered here. Beyond the obvious concern for credibility, at what other points is this view of the resurrection distinctive?

Jesus Is the Focal Point of Initial Christian Faith

One way to appreciate a first aspect or quality of this interpretation of the resurrection is to contrast it with another. Jon Sobrino warns that "the most radical temptation facing Christianity is the temptation to focus one-sidedly on the risen Christ."⁵⁵ This results in turning Christianity into "religion" in a pejorative sense of an attachment to an other-worldly transcendent power, rather than a way of life lived in this world within the sphere of God's love and justice. When the resurrection takes on central importance, the events of the life of Jesus that led to his death tend to be left behind. Although they are not forgotten, because the gospels continue to be read, they are at least minimized by their relationship to the resurrection which, after all, is symbolic of final victory and renders Jesus trans-historical and always present. This in turn can have a dramatic effect on one's understanding of the Christian life and the significance of participation in the world of everyday affairs, especially the social issues that concern the life and death of so many. Sobrino strongly accuses the church of having failed in this regard in the course of history.

Accepting the warnings of Sobrino, this interpretation of the resurrection tries to retain Jesus at the center of christology. Jesus of Nazareth remains the concrete focal point of primitive Christian faith in the resurrection itself. In other words, the external, objective, and historical referent for Christian faith in the resurrection of Jesus is the Jesus of history, the person Jesus in his pre-Easter life. Negatively, the objective referent of Christian faith is not Jesus' teaching abstracted from his person. The object of faith is not a kerygma of the church about Jesus, for faith in Jesus is prior to such a kerygma, and the kerygma itself, which is about Jesus, grows out of faith precisely as encounter with Jesus. Nor does the basic content of Christian belief in resurrection or eternal life exist apart from the person of Jesus. Christian faith in the resurrection of human beings generally is an extrapolation of faith that *Jesus* is risen. Christian faith is faith in God mediated by this man Jesus, who, because of the way he lived and by the power of God, is now perceived to be alive with God. This is evident from the gospels themselves: they are about Jesus who lived in history and is now alive and risen.

55. Jon Sobrino, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978), 278.

Uncentering of the Resurrection in Christian Faith

This phrase, "uncentering the resurrection," develops another aspect of the preceding observation. The focusing of Christian faith on the historical Jesus implies a certain "repositioning" of the resurrection in the structure of Christian faith. This observation should not be construed to imply any minimization of belief in the resurrection of Jesus within Christian faith. What is at stake here is how resurrection fits within the structure of Christian faith. This is to be understood relative to some interpretations of Christian faith as being centered on the resurrection and on Jesus risen. Therefore, again, contrast with other positions may be the best way to present what is aimed at here.

Hans Küng writes that the resurrection is the core of Christian faith, "without which there is no content to Christian preaching or even to faith." The resurrection is taken "not only as the basic unit, but also as the permanent, constitutive core of the Christian creed."⁵⁶ Resurrection has assumed center stage; other aspects such as the life and ministry of Jesus, and the symbol of incarnation, have lost a certain relative prominence. Walter Kasper, while at times closely associating the resurrection with Jesus' life and death, at other times speaks of the resurrection as a new, underivable act of God that adds new content to the message of the earthly Jesus.⁵⁷ One often finds the reasoning that Jesus' message was falsified by the manner of his death, a statement that seems to presuppose either that there have not been other far more dramatic manifestations of evil in our world, or that one would have expected an intervention of God to save Jesus from his execution. Thus, finally, the resurrection is regularly interpreted as the validation or ratification or legitimation of Jesus' message which, in an implied sense, would not have been able to be perceived as true without a new revelation of Jesus' resurrection and consequent victory.

The problem with this language is not that it is wrong, for it is susceptible to benign interpretation. But it makes it appear as though the person of Jesus, seen in his earthly teaching and actions as a whole, was not and is not in himself a revelation of God, or not a revelation of God sufficient enough not to require another external divine initiative. It gives rise to the following interpretation of Jesus' resurrection which is at best misleading: with the crucifixion Jesus' whole life was voided; it was a catastrophic event because it contradicted his message of God's love. But then there was a further event, recognized as integral in itself, a miracle, a new divine initiative, the resurrection. By this new act of God, then, Jesus' life was validated. Therefore the resurrection, as a distinct and discrete event in response to the cross, is taken as the center of faith, and is that upon which the whole of Christian faith rests. And, given this conviction about the finality of the resurrection, nothing else matters. The focus of faith becomes

56. Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 346; also 380–81.

57. Galvin, "The Resurrection of Jesus," 130–31, paraphrasing Walter Kasper.

Jesus now, risen and present to us as a revelation of our future. Given that relationship to Jesus risen, the memory of his life pales into relative insignificance. It is the mere condition for the possibility of resurrection.

No. A genetic christology from below alters such a perspective. Jesus' message is true, and his life a revelation of God, even if, contrary to fact, there had been no explicit experience of resurrection. Jesus' life, what he said and did, is the center of faith. Jesus' ministry and message mediate a revelation of God. Its content is the love and fidelity of God. In remembering Jesus, his message and life, and by the gracious initiative of God as Spirit in their lives, the disciples came to realize that Jesus is an authentic revelation of God. Moreover, they came to recognize that Jesus now lives with God partly through Jesus' own representation of God during his public ministry. Thus one may speak of the resurrection as God's confirming and validating Jesus' life, but not as an event independent of or isolated from Jesus' life. Resurrection is a part of Jesus' life as its transcendent end.

Analogy with Present Christian Faith

According to the witness of Paul seen earlier, there is a fundamental analogy, that is, similarity admitting difference, between the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of all human beings. There is also an analogy between faith-hope in the resurrection today and the Easter faith-hope of the first disciples. Resurrection faith today is not belief in an external miracle, an empirical historical event testified to by disciples, which we take as a fact on the basis of their word. Although that may describe in fact the belief of many Christians, it is no ideal. A reflective faith-hope today will affirm Jesus risen on the basis of a conviction that Jesus' message is true; because God is the way Jesus revealed God to be, Jesus is alive. This reflection is not deduction; it is a discursive description of the content of the Christian experience just analyzed. Christians today cannot experience Jesus in exactly the same way as his first disciples. Faith-hope in the resurrection is mediated through a Jesus who is represented in and through the Christian community in a variety of different ways. But, finally, belief in Jesus' resurrection rests on an appreciation of the message and life of this man, and the religious experience that his life is a revelation of the way God is, and of the way human life is led back to God. Faith-hope in the resurrection is based on the existential faith that Jesus revealed God as God truly is: a God of love; a God of fidelity; a God who as the author of life is also the finisher of life; and a God who saves from final death those who respond to this God. In sum, first, the historical basis for faith in Jesus' resurrection is the historical life of Jesus himself, and the power of his ministry to reveal a resurrecting God. Second, the religious basis consists in existential revelation and faith which are the products of the initiative of God's grace. And, third, both of these are enveloped within a fundamental, transcendental hope in the future. With regard to the first element, present-day knowledge of Jesus is analogous to Paul's, who did

not know Jesus in the flesh. With regard to the second two factors, a present-day recognition of Jesus as alive is generically the same.

We can now conclude with a summary response to the question this chapter seeks to answer, namely, what does it mean to say that Jesus is risen? What is the logic of this statement? This is an affirmation of faith-hope that expresses a religious commitment and a trust on the part of the self and the community. Whether spoken by the first disciples or disciples today, there is a fundamental continuity in the structure of the conviction. It affirms that Jesus is ontologically alive as an individual within the sphere of God. It is pronounced partly on the historical grounds of Jesus' teaching and life, his message and his person, and at the same time it is based on a religious encounter with God's revelatory Spirit or grace. This resurrection is construed as God's declaration that Jesus' life is a true revelation of God and an authentic human existence. Because recognition of the resurrection involves the self in a performative and engaged way, it is a call to mission, and as such, through hope and commitment, it becomes salvific. More must be said about this salvation in the course of this book. Resurrection for Jesus, as the end and finality of his life, was an intrinsic part of it, not something added on. So too is resurrection for human beings generally. But even here there is a tension. On the one hand, what is revealed in Jesus' resurrection is not that all human life is raised, but that faithful human existence such as his is called back into God's love. On the other hand, what one finds in Jesus' own teaching is a God of unconditional love reaching out pointedly toward sinners. Only on this latter premise can we hope for this salvation.