

The testimony: witnessing to live in fraternity

Introduction to the “Small School of Testimony”¹

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Summary

Usually, the testimony doesn't hold much weight in so-called enlightened circles. Yet it forms the heart of life in the Church, for the believer and in society. Today, it could be seen as a certain form of leverage for self-development at a time of profound identity crisis in the West. The forms of testimony are many, but their expression, trinitarian, spiritual and social deserve clarification. In their lives, the disciples of Christ are *witnesses* to the action of the Spirit breathing over creation in its groans. This proximity puts them in a situation where they can give account, testify, to what they're experiencing and observing. Put into words and gestures, the *testimony* unfolds as a response, unique and contextual, at the heart of the numerous ways of “witnessing to experience it together”. The testimony becomes an invitation to journey as a *fraternity*, towards a same Father. Four forms of fraternity are presented here, each of which draws from the sources of Christian testimony.

I am part of a group of theologians and pastors who have been meeting regularly for years. The richness of this group has always been the diversity of ecclesial backgrounds, theological reflexions and spiritual pathways each member has *witnessed*. A diversity, as can be expected, that is at times dissonant, if not confrontational or even potentially divisive. In order to continue to be able to meet as a fraternity, the group has had to seek to go beyond basic exchanges. So, it has progressed, daring to *give testimony*, reviewing a practice that earned its credentials among Pietist, Evangelical or Pentecostal groups. Each member can recount any part of their life, journey or commitments and speak freely, allowing everybody to relate.

The experience was usually enlightening, sometimes tense, at times impossible. If the witness at the stand turns judge, his testimony shatters the nature of the gathering. The participants need to choose, not a lifestyle, but a camp – that of the lawyers or that of the civil party. The hearing taking place is not so much that of a word of life, but that of a person or an institution. The *fraternity* presiding the meeting melts away. I am writing this for my readers, known or unknown, as an exhortation to persevere, to (re)discover a form of authentic testimony, non-judgemental and life-giving.

What does this mean? As in many parish councils already, or Christian groups, the shared testimonies are not just descriptions of facts. They're contributions that bring light to reality, each in their own way, unique and mostly in context. In the light they bring, these contributions bring about and even set in place a sort of fraternity that ties people together,

¹ Organised by the House of Crêt-Bérard in Switzerland : <http://www.cret-berard.ch/activites/petites-ecoles/> (in French)

whatever their journey of faith or life. Traditionally, theology insists on the dialectic between witness and testimony.² Here, we are going to introduce a third notion, fraternity. *Witness*, *testimony* and *fraternity* are thus three dimensions of an ecclesial cohabitation, but more widely, societal. They hold together tensely but they cannot be without each other. It would be a deceit to testify without having been a witness to something. A testimony that doesn't provide an occasion to renew fraternity wouldn't be Christ-like. A fraternity that isn't made up of witnesses has no social depth. We are going to attempt to articulate these three dimensions.

1. The witness: a proximity to the breath of life

Biblical vocabulary takes a lot from legal vocabulary, the word witness being one of them. We could say that the position of the witness of the revelation is to be taken seriously, in that it implies having direct knowledge, visual and personal, of the facts. Luke demonstrates this in his work. The position of the witness and his anchoring to an intractable reference base are central. This is what apostolic tradition was built on, relying on the many witnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The eyewitnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus are all long gone, so does the word lose its legal sense in order to take on an existential dimension? Maybe a little, but not entirely, as long as the hearing is continued in a longer and wider procedure; the hearing of the word of love and reconciliation manifested in the person and life of Jesus, the hearing of humanity to which we are called to be witnesses wherever we go. The word 'witness' is not just for those who knew Jesus in the flesh. Paul and others who knew him and confessed that he was the Risen One (Acts 22: 15; 26: 16) are also witnesses.

In other words, what begins with the testimony of Jesus, continues with that of the apostles and their peers, though it doesn't stop with that generation. New witnesses, compelled by the same word of life, take up the narrative batons, in an unpredictable succession, and anyone can appeal to them and call them to the stand. The strength of this succession is proved by the durability of the legal sense of the word 'witness'. Today, as yesterday, the great (and the lesser) "witnesses of the faith" have an irreplaceable role. Those who left their trace in the Scriptures, in traditions and in the memory of the people of God, provide, as "witnesses", a closeness to the source. We see this in the authority deferred to them.

Nonetheless, we have another meaning for the word "witness" that comes later, not without reason. The work of God continues, it can be expressed with the usual words (witnesses, testimony), but in a way that highlights the sense of continuation. In John's writings, that came later, the witness *par excellence* is the Holy Spirit. "*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me*

² Paul Ricoeur, « *The witness testifies about something or someone which goes beyond him. In this sense testimony proceeds from the Other. But the involvement of the witness is his testimony.* » English translation by David Stewart and Charles E. Reagan : *The Hermeneutics of Testimony*, in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Lewis S. Mudge, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1980)

from the beginning” (John 15: 26-27). This succession of witnesses, as necessary and strong as it is, rests thus on the work of an invisible party, yet present, also called the witness: the Spirit. He is the one we call on as a witness, in secret; a kind of third-party guarantor of the presence of divine action, the mystery of the trinity begins to emerge³. As if the permanent work of God in believers’ hearts needed an ever-flowing source plunging into the heart of the mystery of Redemption, in order to keep the sap flowing.

At the heart of the position of witness, we have the work of the Spirit. Being a witness doesn’t just mean being present in the right place at the right time, or having the good fortune or responsibility of attending a notable event, or being part of a rightly-acknowledged succession, or having a valued social position, or being part of oral culture. Being a witness means allowing the Spirit of God to bring a breath of life, of resurrection, of hope in a given situation. The witness is who he is in the light of what his conscience, enlightened by the Spirit, allows him to see and comprehend. Without the inner testimony of the Spirit, would man even be able to look around to see and hear the Word of Christ, the call to follow in the steps of the Good Samaritan? It is clear now, the work of the Spirit is essential. God himself is the One who makes us witnesses, whatever our situation in life, our education, our actions or convictions. Witnessing is to hear the Spirit talking to us, removing the scales from our eyes to be able to see the presence of the Son, the paradoxical proximity of the witness who sees... yet not always as clearly as he should. The Gospel reminds us that we must not be shortsighted: *“Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You ?”* (Matt. 25 : 44)

2. The testimony : a life put to the test

From what we have learnt about being a witness, we can say that testifying is not a matter of recounting one’s life or making a dissertation based on a profound conviction. Nor is it about pleading for one cause or another. If a witness is called to the stand, he isn’t the procurator, nor the defence lawyer, even if he does have to anticipate the answers he might need to give to their questions! Testifying means being called to appear in order to construct a life together with Christ; the testimony is a life put to the test. And the test is not creating a set-up, a contest of rhetoric or revealing oneself, but it means offering up a part of one’s existence as a celebration of the truth. *“The true witness, far from owning that place of knowledge, is submitted to the Word in which he places his faith.”*⁴ It is no accident that the word witness became, for the primitive Church, a synonym of martyr. Confessing faith in Christ can become a commitment to following a way that leads to rejection and suffering. Oriental Christians know this, as well as so many other men and women who don’t have the privilege of religious freedom.

On the scale of Western secular Christianity on which we are situated, the challenges of witnessing can seem anecdotal and its practice banal. But this isn’t the case. Rejection isn’t

³ [Translator’s note] An oecumenical translation of the Bible in French provides the following note : *« The Spirit of Truth attests of the profound intelligence of Christ. »* (TOB, p.2609, note K)

⁴ *« The testimony belongs to the sacrifice that attests to the transcendence that calls on the self. »*, Antoine Vergote, freely translated from the French text *L’avènement du je*, in *Le Témoignage* (published by E. Castelli, Aubier, Paris, 1972, p.489)

as radical as in the East, but it is latent, having taken on the well-known form of suspicion. We only need to consider how rarely we hear Christian testimony in the public arena, even though religious radicalisation is a main focus in media and politics. The difficulty of witnessing in the media, a space dominated by the sense of membership, whether through advertising or by forms of affective immersion such as 3D or “celebritising”; a difficulty created by the language and spiritual posture of the testimony. The testimony doesn’t necessarily seek to adhere, but provides an adhesion to life... via language. Is this not precisely what text messages or WhatsApp provide to a generation in personal crisis? Peer-to-peer⁵ digital exchanges provide us with an adherence to life (albeit a mainly virtual life), even as things become harder and harder and we are tempted to disappear from self⁶, and we abandon the effort of existing.

With this crisis of being that our societies are going through, we come closer to the meaning and purpose of the testimony. A testimony is by nature a dialogue. As described astutely by Antoine Vergote: “We don’t own our identity as a witness, but we create it through exchange.”⁷ This is exactly what is needed in the West: a place for speech that allows for exchange; which is precisely what witnessing can help to create.

The place for speech where identity is built can be deployed into three areas: the “I” of the speaker, the plural “you” of the hearers and the singular “you” of the Other who brings me into my own through trust. This is the foundation of the non-narcissistic nature of witnessing: when faced with the possibility of letting things slip before a public audience, a situation that rests as much on the kindness of the audience as on the unconditional acceptance of the third party, the Other loving being in the shape of the Son. In other words, the sincerity of the testimony is only a virtue on the condition that it draws from the lucidity of a true vision of self.

The Christian testimony cannot dissociate the narration of facts (role of witness) from the confession of faith (involvement of self). To understand it, we need to join together the juridical vein⁸ to the vein of self-development – and of the Self, elaborated by Jean Monbourquette⁹ – or that of pastoral dialogue as practised during the 3rd cycle for French-speaking Swiss students in theology¹⁰, or more recently, that of the reappropriation of the notion of the individual¹¹. The Christological vein has its roots in the great book of testimony

⁵ Also called friend-to-friend networks.

⁶ Title of the essay by David Le Breton, *Disparaître de soi : une tentation contemporaine* Métaillié, Paris, 2015 [Disappearing from self : a modern temptation]

⁷ See book referenced under note 4, p.489.

⁸ This is what Antoine Vergote does when he writes : « *We would be wrong in attempting to understand the structure of the testimony whilst leaning on the juridical model. Juridical testimony doesn’t consider the word for its value as self-standing substance, but for its function as an indication of fact. In reality, a procedure tends, as much as possible, to eliminate the word.* » (ibid, p.489) [freely translated]

⁹ *Self-Esteem and the Soul : From Psychology to Spirituality*, Novalis Publishing, 2006

¹⁰ *Se dire en vérité?*, published by Jean-Marc Chappuis, Labor, Geneva, 1988 [*Speaking in truth*]

¹¹ « If the human being is born biologically as an individual, he is called to become such existentially. It’s in the religious sphere of existence that the notion of the individual takes its meaning. The individual is such, mainly in his relationship with God, and not just any God, but with the God incarnated not just in humanity as a species, but as an individual, Jesus of Nazareth, of whom the Gospels tell of how he met individuals face to face, always as unique beings, as his own kind. » (François Dubois, *L’Eglise des individus, un parcours théologique à travers l’individualisme contemporain*, Labor, Geneva, 2003, p.438) [*The Church of individuals, a theological journey through contemporary individualism*]

that is the Gospel of John. *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”* (John 1: 6-8) The purpose of the testimony is to make Christ known to men. The recourse to the image of light speaks on at least two levels. Firstly, light indicates a sense of revelation, an eruption of newness. Next, divine light is transferred by radiation, by successive manifestations. A believer testifies of where he comes from: from Christ who lights his way and gives him meaning. By his testimony, he becomes a source of light for others.

3. The fraternity: demanding relationships

Christian testimony always has an outlook somewhat outside of itself, of its execution, of its immediate potential. That’s what is striking with John’s theology: the testimony of Jesus is not an end in itself, some form of mystical accomplishment, outside of time and self-sufficient. In other words, Jesus isn’t the end-word of the testimony, but an icon to be taken up again, to be redrawn; he is himself enrolled in the game of the testimony. There is that of John the Baptist, but he adds: *“I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish – the very works that I do – bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”* (John 5: 36) This certainly gives us plenty to consider surrounding the nature of Christian testimony. It’s part of a relationship with another, the Father, the origin of humanity, towards whom the Son shows us the way through his everyday life. The way of the Son, prepared by the testimony of John the Baptist, gathers disciples together in an apostolic fraternity with demanding relationships.

How do we translate this dynamic into the framework of the Christian testimony, such as it is (im)posed to us today in secularised modernity? I propose the following interpretation: the eschatological and cosmic process that the coming of the johannic Christ heralds in such a determinate way could be read as the trial of a humanity called to live under a renewed fraternity, at the risk of imploding (as per the theme of the judgement). The definitive testimonies will be those that are displayed in the light of new relationships, borne by truly incarnate horizons (works), testimonies that speak as much of “us” in personal and impersonal ways. As Jean-Marc Chappuis wrote: *“Speaking about self is communitarian”*¹². Moving from an impersonal “we” to an inclusive “us” is the very horizon that the testimony is aiming for.

I see four dynamics of fraternity (adelphotes), confirmed by Christian testimony and each telling of the richness of the ties to the heart of the “household of God” (Eph. 2: 19). They are not in opposition, rather complementary. No one can claim to have all the diversity of registers of a fraternity, but each one carries in itself essential elements. The aim here is not to describe them all in detail, but to sketch out their potential based on Biblical example, leaving the reader the care of adding the indispensable updates, even within the public arena¹³, and using their intercultural and interreligious implications¹⁴.

¹² See note 10, page 7 in the French version.

¹³ On the same subject, in French : Catherine Chalié, *La Fraternité, un espoir en clair-obscur*, Buchet & Chastel, Paris, 2004 [*The fraternity, a light-dark hope*]; Régis Debray, *Le moment fraternité*, Gallimard, 2010 [*A time for fraternity*]

The fraternity of restored dignity

One well-known account in the Gospel of John tells of Jesus' meeting with a Samaritan woman. This unexpected meeting gave birth to a movement of fraternisation, of a rapprochement between men and women from two antagonistic religions – on one side the Jews, on the other, the Samaritans. The Samaritan woman, **only witness** of a word that touches her identity in the most profound way, takes her listeners from the impersonal, indirect tense (“*who is called Christ*”) to the collective “*we*” (“*Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard him*”). In restoring her dignity as a woman, Jesus made her the motor of a dynamic of fraternisation in her community. Here, I cannot miss the opportunity of mentioning the testimony of Franco-Swiss pastor Antoine Schluchter¹⁵, especially as his media approach shows that it is possible to bear witness in a public arena. His latest book speaks of the vast fraternity, non-denominational, that built itself around the things that “hold him up, away from hatred”, following a horrendous tragedy. In other words, the nature of this fraternity is not that of blood but of a shared humanity, restored: “*Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*” (Matt. 25: 40)

The fraternity of the baptised, the new witnesses

In the book of Acts, many accounts allow us to see how the first disciples were seeing new witnesses join the nascent communities, but also how the testimonies were not always well received, by any means. From the Ethiopian eunuch who converts thanks to the testimony of the deacon Philip to the account of Stephen's martyrdom, we see a difference of “result” but not necessarily of perspective. Both testimonies seem to show nascent Christianity leaning towards an opening to non-Jews, in a fraternity that would have been unthinkable until now. The force of their testimony is to use a legacy, a common root (the writings of the Scriptures) and reread them for the benefit of their audience. The passage from “it is said that” to “we are being invited to” is striking when we consider the two situations of these **witnesses and heirs**. The passage is written with a “I” at the very midst of the testimony. “I see the heavens opened...” said Stephen, “I baptise you” said Philip to the eunuch. The testimonies of both men moved the religious and cultural boundaries of the time in order to welcome the new witnesses of the faith. In keeping with these stories, the testimony of Jean-Claude Guillebaud¹⁶ speaks largely of this fraternity. He is a witness and heir to the reality of the subversion of the Gospel. As a philosopher he isn't certain in his faith. “Yet I strongly believe that the evangelical message is a fundamental value for our times. Even for those who don't believe in God.”¹⁷ Unbelievers are also included in the fraternity depicted in his testimony. To summarise, the nature of this fraternity unfolds and can be measured over time, it can be expressed mainly through mutual esteem.¹⁸

¹⁴ Abdenour Bidar, *Plaidoyer pour la fraternité*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2015

¹⁵ *En traversée, De la perte au procès. De peine et de paix*, Favre, Lausanne, 2016 [*The crossing : from tragedy to trial, from pain to peace*] & *Je te salue Marie, ma fille, 19 ans, un jour et l'éternité*, Favre, Lausanne, 2014 [*I hail you Marie, my daughter, 19 years old, one day and eternity*]

¹⁶ *Comment je suis redevenu chrétien [How I once more became a Christian]*, Albin Michel, Paris, 2007

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.23

¹⁸ « *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.* » (Romans 12 : 10)

The fraternity of the recognised Christ

The end of the Gospel of Luke tells us the extraordinary story of the pilgrims on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35, NIV). The account is all about recognising the Risen One. It remains emblematic, and situated at the end of the Gospel, it comes in a way to seal the community of the witnesses of the Risen One. The testimony of the pilgrims is powerful, personal and legitimate: they **recognised Jesus**. Here, we have an irrefutable testimony. Yet, even though we have here an obvious mystical angle, the recognition came from a simple gesture, as banal as it was essential. It was effectively a revelation, the word isn't too strong, that came via the means of a sharing, the breaking of bread, and their eyes were opened. The audience, even though they were the apostles, struggled somewhat to come to a definitive and irrefutable conclusion (the endings of Mark¹⁹ and Luke are in opposition as to the convincing aspect of their testimony). When Jesus comes back and is recognised, the "we recognised Jesus" becomes "we welcomed him in our midst". The open confession of the pilgrims at Emmaus built a fraternity of rejoicing brethren, with, in their midst, the mysterious and unexpected appearance of the Risen One; this is what Luke writes next, the account of the apparition. In summary, the nature of this fraternity is sacramental, even mysterious. Contrary to the previous one, this one cannot be measured or deployed chronologically over time. It was given in and through Christ, whose presence is recognised mutually.

The fraternity of a renewed mind

A testimony can come in the form of a book. That of the apostle Paul to the Romans is written as a letter, the heart of which, chapters 9 to 11, is a vibrant testimony aimed at converted pagans and Judeo-Christians: "*my brethren, my countrymen (...) from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came*". What is the meaning of the calling of Israel, if righteousness comes from Christ? **His words are a repeat** of a dialectic already well-known from the testimonies of the Old Testament, that of the promise given to Abraham and his descendants. What does it mean? Paul's reply is an image of an olive tree onto which have been grafted branches of a wild olive tree. Even if this promise is for all, God has not rejected Israel. To prevent the Romans being divided into two communities, Paul invites them to be part of a fraternity with a renewed mind (12: 2). Contrary to the pilgrims of Emmaus who were bringing the facts to the apostles, an absolute that cannot be taken any further, Paul here is "merely" giving us a repeat. It doesn't mean it is a second-rate testimony, history can prove that... If the facts he highlighted were known by all, the discourse was new. In conclusion, this fraternity of a renewed mind is spiritual. No need to live together or be part of a common religious community to belong. Here, we become heirs to a promise that brings us together²⁰. Its theological root is that we are sons by adoption (Rom. 8: 15).

¹⁹ Mark 16 : 13 – « but they did not believe them either »

²⁰ « *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.* » (Galatians 4: 6)

4. The hearing: a witness only, yet fully

Let's end with a quick look at the hearing, the moment of giving testimony, the building of togetherness, the moment where the witness dares to give a word, a gesture, to see the birth of a new fraternity. At the beginning of this article, we indicated that the witness could also become judge, which would prevent the proceeding from being one of a renewed humanity. If I can honour one man, Gerard Pella, it would be that he never turned from testimony to judgement. What is the context of this economy? It can be summarised in one expression: a witness *only, yet fully*²¹. With the desire to be more than just a witness, comes the risk of taking a different role that takes shape at the expense of the audience and the proceeding in general. Not being fully a witness means taking lightly the confidence that Christ placed in his disciples. The image of the testimony as a bridge that joins the two sides speaks for itself. Being only a witness is to let the audience cross the bridge for themselves. Being fully a witness is to solidly join together both sides. Let's go over these two aspects again.

A word that sets the audience in motion

What does it mean to be *only* a witness? It means choosing clearly one of the two (hermeneutical²²) dimensions of the testimony and where to stand. Either we take an absolute (an original experience, unique and indisputable), which cannot be taken any further (I → he/you) and comes across in a narration that can be interpreted freely; or we suggest reusing accessible elements, that can be discussed and are common knowledge, with a new kind of testimony-discourse (he → I/you) and/or a personal one. Using both at the same time would remove from the audience their sense of space where they can take a position. In other words, it would be like having the two following dilemma: either "my experience, my conviction is indisputable and my testimony is obvious" (I → I); or "I'm going to revisit this again as a believer and in a personal way that takes on the dimension of an indisputable experience" (I → I). In both cases, the "he/you" has no place, the testimony is a closed circle. It's as though there was no more distance to cross, no side to reach via a personal crossing. In summary, being only a witness allows the audience to set themselves in motion and cross that bridge, freely, willingly.

The right person, in the right place, at the right time

What does *fully* being a witness mean? It means being the right person, in the right place, at the right time. Let's take the picture of the bridge again. The witness plays the role of a bridge between two sides that it needs to link together, solidly and reliably. With the Christian testimony, both sides are essential: on one side, we have Christ being questioned, absent, sought after; on the other, we have Christ present, speaking. The witness isn't Christ, but he can lead to Him, carry His traits, bring His light... through his testimony. How? Fundamentally, there are two types of bridge. External bridges that span a distance, and internal ones that allow one to (re)live a profound and spiritual unity.

²¹ I owe this wonderful expression to André Dumas, who used it during an interview on Swiss radio, speaking about Protestants. It comes from his book: *Protestants, les Bergers et les Mages*, Paris, 1987, pp. 13-18

[*Protestants, the Shepherds and the Wise Men*]

²² Paul Ricoeur, see work referenced under note 2.

The external bridges are founded on *chronological time*. The testimony bridges the distance between past and present; it is the missing link, a sort of “tangible proof”. Technically, you would call it the eye-witness. Biblically, it’s the link between apostolic and scriptural testimony, acting as a bypass with *the beginnings*. The internal bridges are founded on *narrative time*. With his narration in itself, the witness gives a picture of profound unity – of life and of faith – between what he has received and who he is today. Technically, it is the witness who becomes a sort of guarantor of the good conduct of the accused (of his lack of duplicity, of his profound unity). Biblically, it’s the link of the Son working through the Holy Spirit. We have a continuity between (faith) *the origins* and the present.

In order to fully be a witness, we need to discern the priority in the timing of the testimony: chronological time or narrative time? If this doesn’t happen, we risk having a “half-witness”, meaning that we are playing on several fields without ever fully or completely taking hold of a place, the place where we are personally, *hic et nunc*. Yet the call of Christ to be his witnesses, as per the Scriptures, comes in a completely diverse way. The women at the tomb are not the disciples in the upper room, the Samaritan woman is not one of the pilgrims to Emmaus, Peter is not Paul. Each person’s testimony is essential, but its reliability will not be rendered in the same way. If Paul had not been faithful in his position as witness of the faith, in the narrative time of the confession of the risen crucified one, he wouldn’t have felt the concern, the need, the liberty to go to Jerusalem to meet Peter, the other apostles and the elders. And if Peter hadn’t attested, as an apostle, of a change, chronologically situated and validated, of the open way to salvation for unbelievers, Judeo-Christians would never have accepted this evolution.

A testimony needs to be prepared

What is the situation we find ourselves in? That of the disciples of Emmaus? The Samaritan woman? Paul? Peter? Being a witness, only yet fully, implies working on our discernment, of the place we occupy as a witness, as well as the nature of the bridge we can show and the forms of fraternity we can hope to nurture. In order to prepare ourselves to testify, we need to ask ourselves the decisive questions raised in this article. The force and clarity of our testimony depends directly on the responses, contextual and temporary, that outline these questions.

To facilitate this, we propose that our readers use a version of the ContactGPS²³ programme, specially adapted to this topic. It regroups essential questions and articulates them with the different types of fraternity put in evidence, in the form of a symbolic map that situates the user of the GPS. It gives the user a number of practical hints in how to be prepared.

²³ ContactGPS is a programme that has been developed over several years. A version on the four Gospels was awarded a prize by the Bible Society of the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland) in 2014 : <http://gps.contactgps.ch/rungps/0ZG7V4POIS>