Making Christlike DISCIPLES

Editors
David A. Ackerman
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and
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Making Christlike Disciples is core to the mission of the Church of the Nazarene. As such, it is of utmost importance to reflect on what that means biblically, theologically, practically, and in relation to theological education and ministerial preparation. That is what is being done by the different authors of this book. I recommend it highly to all leaders, pastors, lay ministers, and students. It will help you in your own development by asking important questions, challenging some of our traditional practices but especially also helping us to move forward to fulfill the mission God has called us to, "to make Christlike disciples in the nations."
— Klaus Arnold, Ph.D., Director of Global Education and Clergy Development of the Church of the Nazarene

I am grateful for this book that reflects VNBC's intentional work on robust thinking in the important area of discipleship. The various chapters bring a diversity of perspective and context that encourage further exploration and conversation. From philosophical dimensions, Biblical insights, missional challenges to explorations of the educational milieu in which discipleship takes place, all will provide fertile ground to the serious thinker. I look forward to the continuing conversation.
— Bruce Allder, Asia-Pacific Regional Education Coordinator

In a scholarly fashion, this volume digs deep into the task of discipleship. Each contributor addresses subjects critical to the formation of pastors, educators, and leaders charged with the responsibility of equipping the Church for works of service. For the individual seeking ideas that would stimulate thought and dialogue resulting in praxis, I recommend this volume.
— Mark Louw, Asia-Pacific Regional Director

This book is very timely to read and will help us be more effective in the ministry that the Lord entrusted to us.
Making Christlike Disciple is a continuous process that is the goal of each believer. Those who experience the power of the Holy Spirit and obey the will of Christ Jesus intently will surely encounter real transformation, a life changed from the old self to a new Christ-centered life. Let us be one with our fellow theology scholars as they share their thoughts and principles in making Christlike disciples.
— Rev. Arnel Piliin, Field Strategy Coordinator,
Philippines/Micronesia Church of the Nazarene

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Introduction

Discipleship is at the core of who we are as followers of Jesus. Jesus' command as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20 is clear and simple: "Going, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Although the wording is simple to understand, the challenge is how to carry this out in a diverse, increasingly post-modern, and economically linked world. Each generation and each group must find new and relevant ways to carry out Jesus' command.

Many people are intimidated by the term discipleship. In some circles, it is becoming a "tired term" for its constant usage. There are other words in the New Testament that describe the process of making disciples since the word "disciple" is found only in the four Gospels and the book of Acts. Surely, the early church continued to make disciples even though the word is not found in the Epistles. We see in the Epistles of the New Testament *how* the early church carried out the mission of Jesus. They made converts, baptized and trained them, planted churches, grew in love and fellowship, and lived out holiness in pagan and hostile environments. Rather than getting lost, confused, or frustrated with the term "disciple," perhaps we can focus on what this actually means: to become like Jesus in love and holiness.

A disciple is simply one who follows the teaching of another person and seeks to become like that person. A disciple is more than a follower and more than a student. Discipleship includes the idea of relationship and growing together. Christian discipleship has a primary focus: Jesus. We are called to make followers, students, and believers in Jesus. Everything else we do somehow must fit under the umbrella of this call.

One of the key words Jesus used in verse 20 is "teaching." In the Greek, this is in the form of a participle. Greek participles often require further interpretation, as does this one. To make things

simple and quick, this participle is adverbial in force and in the present tense. This means that the action in the participle, "teaching," is happening at the same time as the main verb, "make disciples." Adverbial participles require further interpretation as to what type of action is happening relative to the verb that is being modified. This one is likely instrumental. The simple idea is that we make disciples "by teaching." This teaching is part of the discipleship process. Education in all of its facets is a crucial part of making disciples.

Now, we need to think more deeply about what education is, since this is part of what Jesus wants his disciples to do. Education involves learning something new. There are many ways to learn. Formal education happens through purposeful classes and instruction and sometimes at educational institutions or on-the-job training. Other types of education are informal, such as when a child grows up in the home. We often hear the idea that a lot of learning is caught rather than taught. We learn passively by watching and listening to others, and we learn actively by people who serve as teachers.

As we think about education in a college like Visayan Nazarene Bible College, we are reminded that both forms of education are essential. This book marks an important milestone for the college as it seeks to develop quality in its education. Quality education must come in two forms, and these are not exclusive of one another; they must both be present for education that leads to making disciples to take place. Quality education must include character formation and the development of the intellect. In biblical terms, this is called wisdom.

The vision, mission, and core values of the college embody these two elements:

VISION

A leading institution of creative interdisciplinary integration and excellent Christian education.

MISSION

Mentoring every generation of transformational leaders through quality holistic education and exemplary Christ-centered life that influence the church and the global community.

CORE VALUES

Academic Excellence (Knowing)

Christlike Character (Being)

Transformational Leadership (Doing)

Creative Wisdom (Living)

This mission attempts to bring character and intellect together, with the goal of equipping students for service. The ultimate goal of education at VNBC is to help students become like Jesus Christ. That is also at the essence of discipleship. We are called to become like our Savior. No two journeys are the same. Each of us must choose the paths we will take on this journey. VNBC stands at the ready to guide students along this journey and to send them out, with assistance, to walk beside them in the coming years as they become alumni in service to God and the church. Often, students experience questions and uncertainty about their future. They do not know what God's call on their lives is. Time spent in study, worship, and fellowship with faculty, staff, and other students helps students hear this call. The end result of this time together is effectiveness in the mission of making disciples. The mission of the college is fulfilled when students carry out the Great Commission of Jesus.

To develop intellect takes knowledgeable instructors who know how to guide students as they develop their own knowledge. This requires the constant need for faculty to research and be trained in good teaching techniques. The world of education is changing; therefore, constant vigilance is required to keep improving. Facts and content cannot simply be presented in lecture format anymore, although this time-tested practice is still important. Students have access to the world's facts on their smart phones. Some degree of information must be memorized, but in today's world, students must also be exposed to *how* to learn the facts, *how* to research, and *how* to process the information that is available to them at the push of a button.

Since knowledge is easily available today, education must be deeper than simply the intellect. There must be something that makes a Christian college stand out from its peers. This special factor is the

mission of becoming Christlike. Character formation is what makes Christian education different than secular or university education. The goal of any educational institution that bears the name of Christ ought to have as its end goal the formation of Christlike disciples who are effective in living out Jesus' teachings.

This means that every aspect of a college must be involved in forming disciples who model Jesus in their hearts, attitudes, and relationships with others. Academic excellence is not simply what grade point average or test scores students earn but must include who they become through the course of their education. They must learn to think critically and evaluatively, but they must also become loving and holy in imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ. That will require faculty and staff to see education in a different way. They are not simply relaying information into the bucket of students' heads but are guiding the transformation of students' hearts to be the firm foundation for anything they think in their heads.

As students take on more of the attributes of Jesus, they will find themselves also engaged in the mission of Jesus. As the Spirit of Jesus fills them and changes their thinking and worldview, they will find that they can more easily hear God's call to go out into the world. If they are not effective in this mission, then there has been a breakdown someplace in their education. If students graduate with wonderful new knowledge and learning but fail to carry on the mission of making disciples in whatever creative way God has called and gifted them, then something has failed in their character formation. The job of the teacher is to ensure that the best and most appropriate environment is provided for this change. We all know that not every student will catch this vision, which can be frustrating to the teacher, but we are thankful that God is very gracious to everyone and does not give up on any of us, including those students who struggle in their character formation. This is a dynamic process and not black and white, either/or, or a matter of formulation.

In our educational processes today, we need both depth and breadth, but we also need feet on the street. Holiness must become evident in loving action. Those who teach must help students have a deep understanding of God's call to be holy and see this especially as lived out in love. Love is a relational term and always has an object to

it. To be Christlike will require students to consecrate love of self so that it can be changed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Their inner Christlikeness will then change the object of love from selfish gains to loving action that leads to development, growth, and transformation of others. This may be seen in loving activities, including compassion, loving homes and families, and involvement in the growth and development of the community.

I commend President Tabuena and the faculty and staff at VNBC for their endeavor to move education forward in the Philippines. The church needs pastors and leaders who know the gospel and know how to proclaim this message of hope. The contributors to this volume hope that the ideas contained will stimulate further thought and dialogue. These articles include contributions from resident faculty, alumni, and educators who assist VNBC in its development. The goal of this book is not simply for intellectual development but to contribute deeper understandings to the mission of making disciples.

David A. Ackerman

1

Wisdom Builds[1]

Larnie Sam A. Tabuena

Inauguration Address as the 9th President of Nazarene College

At the outset, I do convey my profound appreciation for the confidence bestowed upon me as well as the privilege to serve as the 9th president of our premier Nazarene college, an institution enriched with dynamic academic tradition, distinct theological persuasion, and long spiritual heritage. Institutional leadership is such a crucial role that entails an intentional act of consecration, a noble sense of stewardship, resolute determination to fulfill our divinely endowed individual *telos*.

At this juncture, I have recognized the necessity of creative vulnerability to the direction of divine wisdom by appropriating each *kairos* experience for higher learning and holistic growth. The affirmation of our calling constitutes, at times, the willingness to transcend our conventional boundaries and embrace objective uncertainties along the way to facilitate a fruitful human-divine encounter and a new level of trust in the all-sufficiency of God's grace. Knowing full well what the potential expectations demand, the truth remains that the realization of our desired end significantly requires a collective commitment in providing quality Christian education and theological training to equip God-called individuals for ministerial

[1] Larnie Sam A. Tabuena, *Sapientia Aedificat, Inauguration Address as the 9th President of Nazarene College, February 2017*.

formation, academic excellence, and transformational leadership in the 21st century.

Over the years, through critical reflection on my ministry involvement, intellectual journey, and different administrative responsibilities, there emerges an organizing rationale that becomes a potent force to articulate my philosophy of effective leadership and education. It will serve as a prolegomenon to any future discourses, deliberation, collaboration, and even on what relevant practical approach I will employ in certain decision-making processes.

Each one of us has a rich interactive socio-cultural heritage. Transformational development never occurs in exclusive isolation and phenomenological vacuum. "In all aspects, interrelations between people are a phenomenon of mutual enrichment and cross-fertilization in which each person creates his/her own self by contributing to and from someone else's being."[2] Likewise, my philosophy of leadership and education is essentially the product of reciprocal influences in reflexive response to the challenges we are facing. A few years ago, a renowned philosophy professor at the Pontifical Royal University of Santo Tomas, who consistently encouraged me to pursue a great career in philosophical disciplines, gave me a sample copy of the book he was writing with a very captivating dedication: "*Sapientia Aedificat*," wisdom builds. Such a concise but discrete aphorism absolutely reaffirms my conviction and firm resolve on how to navigate the unknown expanse of the current entrusted responsibility in educational leadership full of complexities and surprises.

Perhaps, we are all conscious of the fact that we are living in a postmodern age. It represents a dynamic intellectual mood that calls into question all principles and values within any grand theoretical system. The pluralistic milieu does not tolerate absolutes, foundationalism, authority, and essentials which are evidently present

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[2] Maurice, Nedoncelle, *The Personalist Challenge: Inter-subjectivity and Ontology*, Trans. Francois C. Gerard and Francis F. Burch (Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 8.

at the core of any established world religion such as Christianity. This intellectual temperament is described as "free fall," an experience of the one who has jumped off the plane under the pure effect of gravity without a parachute to control at all. A human being who has abandoned his essence, nature, and origin has also given up on there being any telos or purpose and aim of existence. Life becomes a "free play" of what forces may come which construct existence.

As I analyze the profound reason of resolute human quest for wisdom in the history of thought and that even philosophy itself is etymologically defined as "the love of wisdom," I have discovered its dynamic nature that enables the moral agents to deal meaningfully with existential paradoxes and ironies of all times, more specifically, the fluid zeitgeist and intellectual milieu of the postmodern turn.

Wisdom is a peculiar function of spontaneously well-coordinated human faculties performing an integrative approach to life which involves the task of dealing with the perennial questions on meaningful existence and the ethical and moral education of every generation. Such gift of prudence transcends the technicalities of conventional approaches to onto-ethical growth and management in the public sphere.

On another level, it is conceived as a keen insight that essentially fosters intellectual equilibrium and cosmic harmony within the inclusive realm of pluralistic milieu. Solomon was a great exemplar of this leadership prowess in 1 Kings 3-4 by demonstrating the divinely inspired creative methodology in resolving ethical contradictions and predicaments. The dynamic symmetry of his overarching grasp of the "whole" and the proactive projection of repercussions in a decisive act in a particular situation reveal the very nature of "understanding," which often occurs as another nomenclature of wisdom. Its superior quality embodies the ingenious dialectic of *Sophia* (theoretical aspect) and *phronesis* (practical aspect). The legitimacy of its nature derives from the elaborate fusion of knowledge and experience into insights which essentially signify versatility and universality.

The edifying character of wisdom works from individual empowerment up to the creation of the society that reflects the will

of God. Wisdom manifests itself in the faithful discipline of abiding in God's presence and living according to divine statutes. Proverbs emphasizes that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In other words, theocentric devotion produces sound judgment, spiritual discernment, and the ability to utilize knowledge properly and expediently. Prudence responsibly harmonizes the whole being and always directs and redirects us toward the possible highest ideal. Wisdom indeed builds because it refrains us from drifting away into the perils of inauthenticity and realigns us with the integrative, creative, relevant, symmetrical, and just principles of individual and corporate life.

Truth as Symphonic Integration

Our scientifically-oriented mind basically understands the essence of truth as *adaequatio intellectus et rei;* truth is the correspondence of the ideas in mind and the existing state of affairs. The confirmation of any claims can be done by verification and falsification methods. However, truth is neither a thing nor a system but a participatory existence of "sounding together." Reality is relatedness, so is truth. All reality is connected so that all understanding involves consideration of the interrelationships of things in their subjective and objective conditions.

Musical harmony occurs when the aesthetic combination of different sounds simultaneously fulfills their roles together. Despite the inherent diversity of shapes, color, sounds, and abilities, instruments realize their individual worth through unique participation in the formation of magnificent harmony. Being itself individually keeps its utterly distinctive timbre, and the composer must create a specific part in such a way that each uniqueness realizes its potential performance. At the outset, distinctiveness poses the reality of mutual contradiction like strangers impersonally coexisting in a particular social aggregate. However, their graded differences of qualities already form a kind of gestalt coordinates.

Symphony unveils the harmonious integration of uniqueness that all instruments come into play to produce aesthetic wholeness. The pluralistic structure of an orchestra expresses the wealth of the totality that resounds in the composer's mind. The unity of the

composition comes from the wisdom of the Absolute Thou. Pluralism is by no means intended as a justifiable license to dwell outside the cohesion that resides in the divine being and is enabled by Him, nevertheless, symphonically to get in tune with one another and give allegiance to the transcendent unity. If we really want to hear something intelligible, we are obliged to listen to the entire polyphony of revelation. The multi-dimensionality of truth renders an imagery pilgrimage of which nobody is in a privileged position; all are equal partners.[3]

Truth is not an autonomous concrete object totally outside the "relevance grid" of an existing agent. It is necessarily an event passing through the mind of the finite knower who inherently participates in its whole collaborative process. The truth expressed in every propositional form presupposes an implicit "I" who affirms it. Therefore, it has become axiomatic that within every theory of truth is a theory of the self.[4]

One of the most favorite nomenclatures in Greek philosophy is *aletheia*, a verb form of its English counterpart for "truth," which means the unfolding continuum of the ever-increasing splendor of interrelationship among entities. Truth in the lifeworld is not cognizable but encountered. As the existing subject projects itself in being, in turn, the revelation of such being grows richer in the course of communion. Revelation is not intended to impart some propositions but the acceptance of indwelling presence.

Aletheia is the discovery of the truth regarding our being. The discovery about oneself is the highest form of wisdom. In fact, Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Nobody genuinely grows in isolation because the governing principle of living

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[3] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth Is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, Trans. Graham Harrison, (San Francisco Ignatius Press, 1987), 7-11.

[4]Kenneth T. Gallagher, "Truth and Freedom in Marcel," In *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, The Library of Living Philosophers*, Ed. Schilpp, Paul Arthur and Lewis Edwin Hahn, Vol. XVII (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1984), 371.

is always *esse est coesse*, "to be is to be with." It is by our willingness to open ourselves up for interpenetration or coinherence that enables us to realize the unfolding truth of being. As an institution, we all belong to the *corpus Christi,* keeping each distinct quality of sound as well as faithfully exercising our unique individual gifts; however, we do not lose sight of the greater Self of which all of us are actively participating. Nobody occupies a privileged position and function. Every member has a significant tune to play to complete the beautiful grand harmony.

Creativity as Participated Freedom

The dialectic act of spiritual participation in Louis Lavelle's phenomenological doctrine elucidates a constructive conception of human vocation and the ideal of life. Freedom is the essence of humanity. Isolation suggests an existential mode of inauthenticity since the refusal of personal commitments and unshared freedom reduce a person to a sub-human level. Existential estrangement occurs when convergence at the sphere of anonymity is deprived of co-inherence. *Disponibilite* or availability certainly delimits the intersubjective dimension of *kairos* moment in human existence. By being together, communion and availability enable an individual to come into complete participation with another being. Humanity's future involves proactivity and plans through such commitment in creative fidelity and promises made to self and others. When momentary minds of actual entities yield to matter, freedom to determinism and selfhood to contingent existence, the monad, according to Leibniz, experiences a vanishing point devoid of its transparent *telos*. The world is the interval that separates pure Act (Absolute Being) from the limited act of participation (human existence). By limiting the spirit, matter offers the resistance necessary for the self to transcend itself. The being of God as the pure and infinite act grants each individual consciousness the freedom to separate from it and become an isolated act. A human act is limited by the "natural spontaneity" of the instinct.

Self-isolation can be overcome by participating in something that infinitely transcends us, that is, the pure and infinite act. Participation as the pursuit of ideal perfect inwardness, which is the

essence of the Absolute itself, creates the spiritual self progressively to acquire a unique form in our ongoing experiences. Life's endeavor explores this potential form as a human's spiritual essence, which has its prototype in the reservoir of Being. Spiritual life as a human ideal is a resolution toward gradual liberation from passivity peculiar to instinct. This conversion of spontaneity into freedom is the real vehicle of participation. Our deliberate act of correlating our actual selves with the better version of our potential becoming is the vocation of every moral agent in the world. Indeed, the unexamined life is not worth living.

The crucial aspect of participated subjectivity is never merely a reflexive experience of the conscious self but a meaningful revelation of both the self and others. A person ought not to be conceived as a center or enclosed monad which does nothing but gravitate everything else, including other beings. Essentially opposed to the Cartesian ego, one has to adopt the metaphysic of "we are" rather than the "I think." Adopting a social disposition of relational openness as a manifestation of interiority allows the possibility of encounter in a narrow ridge. Shared freedom makes faith, hope, and love operative within the grand scheme of intersubjective engagements.

To exist means to be influenceable by and directed toward otherness; it means being "en route" toward transcendent reality, toward the Absolute Thou that is addressed in prayer and heard in "trial." "I exist" connotes "I feel" (I am open to otherness), which is the expression of pure "permeability."[5] In the Postmodern condition, emerging arguments attempt to resolve the underlying purpose of the dialogical enterprise. For Habermas, the conversational quest should aim for consensus. On the contrary, Lyotard contends that "paralogy" is the proper goal of dialectical exchange. Paralogy is the ongoing creation of meaning. You say something, and it inspires me to say something in return. Consensus, Lyotard tells us, is merely a stage in

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[5] Seymour Cain, *Gabriel Marcel* (Indiana: Regnery/Gateway, 1963), 94.

our conversation. What conversation can give us can be much more valuable than that. It can bond us to the process of a dialogue that requires both our parts, and when it works successfully, it can awaken our minds to an unending expansion of new ideas. Therefore, within the community of faith, outside the participation of freedom, there lies a wrong sense of autonomy that brings the possibility of clandestine business transactions detrimental to the well-being of the greater self. Participated freedom inspires total openness, which engenders an atmosphere of trust and creativity.

Justice as Ideal Symmetry

The postmodern age has divested the grand ideological systems having intellectual validity that allow us to make sense of the world as a unified whole, by an intellectual temperament of "incredulity toward any metanarratives of legitimation," according to Jean Francois Lyotard. Now the significance of micro-narratives taking part in incommensurable "language games" accommodates the diverse compendium perspectives. Dogmatic affiliation to the overarching intellectual traditions in the history of thoughts loses its grips in favor of a more creative individual temperament. The demise of grand narratives leads to the crises of identity directly tied to the question of otherness.

Levinas's philosophical revolution was inspired by a concern for otherness. In order to encounter the other *qua* other, we must do it on his/her terms rather than ours. Otherness must be absolute, that is, other with an alterity constitutive of the very content of the other. Levinas' ideal intersubjective relationship is justice. Otherness is to be respected. Good fences make a good neighbor. In Marcel's perspective, the primary concern of justice is the recognition, protection, and fostering of human dignity. We cannot love someone in whom we do not first recognize both the general dignity due all human beings and the unique and sacred individuality this specific person embodies. The central element of justice is the recognition of

a "core of the sacred" in man and concern with protecting the integrity of this core against political and technological injustices.[6]

Justice commences with the virtue of reverence for the sanctity of *imago Dei* in other persons on which social and political equity is fundamentally anchored. Institutions will be just when and only when they are focused on preserving and fostering this sacred element in human beings. Although plurality demands at times some kinds of hierarchy to organize accountability structure, yet otherness always carries the meaning of what a person is, a thou who ought to be treated as an end himself/herself. Authentic meaning in life comes from our fundamental commitments that condition our being. Justice in the form of respect and propriety in regard to the sacred core in other persons is indeed a basic moral commitment. Social ontology devoid of justice entails political maneuvering and misplacement of relation. Healthy convergence becomes a fruitful enterprise when the worth of a person is acknowledged and celebrated.

Conclusion

Finally, when I meditatively perform a profound reflection on the edifying nature of wisdom, my mind keeps on thinking about the theoretical and practical implications of *Logos* in pre-Christian thought. No English word quite captures its richness, so it is best to leave it untranslated. All things in the world happen according to logos.

The Logos is conceived as the underlying ground, creating and recreating agent of all creation that without which no entity attains the highest state of being and be restored back to its original mode of being. Furthermore, reality finds its coherence through this organizing order, integrating force, and sustaining principle of the whole existence. Logos as the rational order, in reality, resides in nature; thus, it presupposes soteriological overtones. Nature is the locus of grace not merely because of its logical attributes but as built-in awareness of divine being.

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[6] Brian Treanor, *Aspects of Alterity: Levinas, Marcel, and the Contemporary Debate* (New York: Fordham University), 2006.

The Greeks in ancient times practiced the method of hypostatizing divine qualities. Classical philosophers seem to have meant that the world and its phenomena exemplify a rational order. The Logos is a divine being, an independent deity. Wisdom is a hypostasis, a quasi-personification of certain attributes proper to God, occupying an intermediate position between personalities and abstract beings. It is the personification of God's Wisdom, Word, and Reason.

John the apostle (1:1) declares, "In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God." The New Testament significantly identifies Christ as the Wisdom of God. Jesus Christ is the personification of divine Wisdom. By embodying the divine Wisdom in our being, we become Christlike in our being, doing, knowing, and living and only those who internalize His mind and character will be able to participate in the creation of God's kingdom according to His perfect will.

May the incarnate living Wisdom edify our souls that we could discern what is best, as all distinctly gifted selves harmoniously form a magnificent divine symphony, through our creative expression of participated freedom that respects the integrity and dignity of the sacred human core. To him be all the glory now and forevermore, amen.

2

Ethical Holiness:

An Intersubjective Movement of Presence in Creative Fidelity

Larnie Sam A. Tabuena

In our present age, seismic shifts generate significant waves of transformation by a discerning exercise of practical prudence in response to the perennial yearning to experience the truth of being. The transitional movement from the predominant yet becoming dysfunctional monological structure of Cartesian *cogito*[7] to the dialogical quality of *I-thou* relations in the course of time reaffirms the indispensability of mutual engagement in a growing and dynamic interpersonal relationship marked by honest communication. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, studies in the public sphere conclusively disclose the widespread hunger for profound communal

[7] René Descartes prominently proposed "methodic doubt" into philosophy providing a subsequent developmental climate solipsism, which seemingly appear as an irrefutable rule of reflective thinking. The *cogito* that unveils the ego is a solitary consciousness, a *res cogitans* that is not spatially extended, is not necessarily located in any body, and can be assured of its own existence exclusively as a conscious mind. Solipsism is sometimes expressed as the view that "I am the only mind which exists," or "My mental states are the only mental states." The solipsist can attach no meaning to the supposition that there could be thoughts, experiences, and emotions other than his own. For an extensive study of Descartes' epistemology, see *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*.

life with spiritual significance.[8] Intersubjective communion ushers us to the domains of ontological truth in the light of moral interaction. "No creativity is possible without the social and cultural context that provides the raw materials one uses—the conventions, ideas and institutions against which one must struggle to fashion one's authentic self."[9]

Web-related business economy has recently fabricated a hybrid parlance, "connexity," to obtain the magnificent symmetry of the two ideas: making "connection" and building "community." Leonard Sweet emphasizes that the "heart of postmodernity is a theological dyslexia: me/we, or the experience of individual-in-community. Postmoderns want to enjoy a self-identity within a connectional framework of neighborliness, civic virtue, and spiritual values."[10]

Imago Dei in Judeo-Christian affirmation fundamentally conceives a "human agent" as active participant, communal-historical being, and co-creator of the moral orders in the universe. Its concomitant "rationally informed will" constitutes a potent force of molding circumstances that expresses the complementary proportion of "inherent autonomy" and "moral responsibility." Thus, renewal in God's image includes an intentional counterpart of a person to his/her growth process. It is a dynamic journey not in the context of solitude but through intersubjective communion with other selves. Paul

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[8] Daniel Yankelovich, *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 217. Sociologist Daniel Yankelovich has done extensive tracking specifically with the American culture in the United States for forty years and thereafter concluded his studies of the public revealing an immense pool of goodwill all over the country for enhanced quality of life anchored in meaningful communal life. A web site is a readily accessible point of social convergence to pursue research, learn specific skills of one's interest, connect with people, and enter relationships.

[9] Jacob Golomb, *In search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus* (London: Routhledge, 1995), 201.

[10] Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims: First Century Passion For the 21st Century World* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 115-117.

exclaimed in Philippians 2:12 to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." The verb "work out" is in a present imperative, which implies a strong command to continue in making all possible effort individually and collectively to eagerly preserve the faith and grow spiritually according to such divinely endowed eternal telos. Traditional evangelical emphasis on the conversion event as crisis experience has led at times to the neglect of understanding Christian life as a lifelong journey in its course of "becoming process." "Discipleship entails a path to be walked and a goal to be reached."[11] We are usually tempted to succumb to the aesthetic notions of holiness apart from ethical responsibility involved in it by intersubjective engagements. Ideas about holiness, truth, value, and goodness are basically relational not abstract. The subjective thinker, who by his activity commits himself to an understanding of the truth that, by the manner of his existence, seeks to comprehend himself, not as an abstraction, but as an ethically engaged, existing subject.

According to the biblical account, the principle of true living always signifies being in the presence of others within the context of creative communion and meaningful fellowship. Death implies absolute solitude due to undesirable severance from all vital links. Beings gifted with a spiritual nature have the ability to participate in edifying a social organism because reciprocity presupposes a certain con-naturality. Totally distinct and unique individuals with virtually nothing in common would be devoid of unifying any bonds of communion. Community emerges out of this intimate relationship by virtue of mutual acceptance of differences, valuing the individuality of everyone, willingness to sacrifice oneself for a greater purpose, doing away with formalities.[12]

Is it in the faculties that reflect the Trinitarian relationships, and in what way, or does it lie principally in the acts of knowing and loving God? *Imago Dei* reflects the social nature of Trinitarian relationships and the human potentials ingrained in their faculties in

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[11] Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 231.

[12] Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. from the Portuguese by Paul Burns (Great Britain: Burns & Oates, 1992), 128-30.

order to render us *capax Dei*, capable of knowing and loving God, and achieving ontological growth and spiritual maturity as we journey together in life. It also presupposes harmony between our spiritual faculties and actions that allows us to represent, however imperfectly, the Trinitarian relationships, and to collaborate through knowledge and love in the perfection of the image.[13] Such a proper understanding of *Imago Dei* is crucial for human relationships. All human beings are to live in a partnership entailing a commitment to mutual respect, fairness, and cooperation.[14] The presence of an "I" and "thou" relationship as a constitutive principle of dynamic communion in *Elohim*, a community of disposition and act in the divine essence, finds its creaturely *analogia relationis* in the relationship between man and woman.[15]

In fact, St. Thomas Aquinas describes freedom beginning with the definition supplied by Peter Lombard in the second book of the *Sentences:* "True free will is the faculty of reason and will, through which good is chosen with grace assisting, or evil with grace desisting."[16] Indeed, human faculties serve as enabling grace to

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[13] Servais Pinckaers, *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology,* edited by John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus, trans. by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, DC: The Catholic Press, 2005), 140-142. Humans dynamically resemble God in the measure which resides directly in the capacity as well as acts of contemplative knowing, active charity, and resolute imitation of God as they progress in these levels of essential virtues. "*Imago Dei* is established not only in relation to the divine nature but also in relation to the Trinity in persons. It is only by way of consequence that the image of God resides in our faculties, insofar as they are the principles of knowledge and love of God" (135).

[14] Leroy T. Howe, *The Image of God: A Theology for Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 38.

[15] Gerrit Corvelis Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God, Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 72.

[16] The original text from Lombard's second book of the Sentences states, "*Liberum verum arbitrium est facultas et voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assistente, vel malum eadem desistente."* Peter Lombard, *In Sent,* II 24.3 (Grottaferrata-Rome: Ed. Colleghi S. Bonaventure, 1971), 452. The notion of "free will" confers on a human being mastery over his actions and enables

achieve moral acts of excellence in conformity to what originally God desires us to be and do, as well as the built-in *a priori* discerning mechanism in determining something hostile to God's intention.

> The work of free choice is to place acts which possess the quality of truth and goodness, and which thus lead the human person toward his perfection and beatitude. Free will is therefore a power, progressively formed in us, to produce moral acts of excellence. Our freedom is without doubt an imperfect participation, but it is real participation, in the freedom of God, in such a way that the more it conforms to God through knowledge and love and grace, the more it grows as a power to perform works of excellence. A spiritual nature that manifests itself by the aspiration to truth, goodness, and beatitude, and by a sense of the other, expressed in a natural inclination to live in a society ordered by justice and friendship.[17]

Being bearers of *Imago Dei*, each human person is called in his or her concrete sphere of earthly existence to ethically represent and portray this embedded quality to all creation with resolute determination. After the fall, we are restored from our depraved nature and redeemed by God's sacrificial love to conform in the image of Christ. References to such representations and therein to the reality of the creaturely analogue somehow provide conceptual illumination despite all historical difficulties surrounding the *analogia*

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him to collaborate in the work of providence, for himself and for others. Following St. John Damascense, St. Thomas believes that the image of God in human beings lies precisely in their free will. Pinckaers, *Reader*, 132; cf. ST I-II, prologue: "Since, as Damascene states (De Fide Orthod. II, 12), man is said to be made to God's image, insofar as the image implies an intelligent being endowed with free will and self-movement: now that we have treated the exemplar, i.e., God, and those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with his will; it remains for us to treat of his image, i.e., man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free will and control of his actions." A human being is made in in the image of God insofar as he is an intelligent being endowed with free will and self-movement.

[17] Pinckaers, *The Pinckaers Reader*, 138-139.

entis.[18] Dr. John A. T. Robinson published in the London Observer, "Go deeper and deeper into your own life, into the relationships you have with other people, into the mysteries of life and death, and as you go into those depths you will meet him who transcends everything that you can ever think or do or be."

Kenosis as *Sine Qua Non* of Ontological Growth

According to the ancient truth, the health of the self comes not by concentrating on the self alone but by such dedication to something outside the self; the self is thereby forgotten. The more I concentrate on my own existence exclusively, "the less do I exist," and the more I free myself from such "egocentrism the more do I exist."[19] The growth of being basically requires the deliberate act of self-emptying. Holiness is a form of ontological growth achieved through a humble spirit of consecration. S*ine qua non* is a late Latin expression that means "without which not." *Sine* is a preposition meaning "without." *Qua* is an adverb meaning "in so far as; in the capacity or character of; as." *Non* is a prefix in common use in the sense of "not." The *sine qua non* of anything is the ingredient that is necessary to make it what it is. Without it, the thing does not exist. At this juncture, kenosis is a prerequisite movement of infinite resignation inasmuch as the goal of Christlike quality of life demands an initial act of self-renunciation prior to the leap of faith. We have to be willing to discard our preoccupation with worldly antiques before we can make ourselves open to embrace the holiness mindset. The "repudiation precedes recreation" motif unveils before us the most crucial ethical principle involved in cultivating a sanctified lifestyle. In the final analysis, the initial step to living a Spirit-filled life is death to self which also applies to the particular development of I-thou relationship.

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[18] Berkouwer, *Man, 114.*

[19] Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, vol. 2, *Faith and Reality*, trans. by René Hague (London: The Harvill Press, 1951), 34.

Paulo Coelho illustrates this truth by drawing proximate conceptual parallelism with emptying the cup.[20] In his serious attempt to search for knowledge, a certain university professor visited a famous Zen master in Kyoto. While the monk was serving tea, the professor displayed his erudition by analyzing some writings, interpreting traditional narratives, deliberating on the ancient processes of meditation, and commenting on mystical and physical exercises. He exhausted all means possible to impress his host on the pretext of making his way to be accepted as a disciple. As the professor performed intellectual deliberations verbally, the monk unceasingly filled his cup until it overflowed, and the tea began to spill out across the whole table. What are you doing? Can't you see the cup is full and that nothing more will fit in it? Your soul is like this cup - replied the master. How can I teach you the true art of Zen Buddhism if it is already filled with theories?

Kierkegaard calls the Infinite movement of resignation *Religiousness A* as a new pathos that brings one beyond ethical reliance and the willingness to sacrifice the relative for the sake of one's relation to the absolute. By emptying oneself in the infinite, the individual receives his/her eternal consciousness. The negation of the individual's reliance upon himself or herself in relation to the absolute telos determines the degree of spiritual readiness for a decisive leap into the religious sphere of existence. Humility, resignation, and consecration are essential prerequisites to faith. Pride and self-sufficiency are effective barriers to a relationship with God.[21] The act of total self-renunciation radically dissociates a subject person from his or her finite immediacy as the first genuine expression for the relationship to the absolute telos. Albeit the individual endures

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[20] Paulo Coelho, *The Warrior of the Light*, volume 3 (www. Feedbooks.com), 42.

[21] Søren Kiekegaard , *Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 34, 48; cf. also Søren Kiekegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments,* eds. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 396.

temporality, but he has indeed acquired eternal validity. The finite thou ought to abandon all aesthetic and ethical immediacies to divest the self from any mundane encumbrances toward the establishment of intimate personal relationship and meaningful fellowship. In the kenotic principle (Philippians 2:5-8), the second Person of the Trinity has modeled humility in the form of infinite resignation; "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross." Only by giving up something of value do we find the highest value in subject-subject communion.

> For example, there is more than a single way of "knowing" a flower. One way (more Western, more modern) of knowing a flower is to be full of oneself, one's wits and wisdom, and to subject that flower to withering critique. First way of knowing a flower is to experiment with it as something separate, to stand at a distance from it and pick it apart.
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> The other way (more Biblical, more Eastern) of knowing is really a way of "unknowing": to be "empty" of oneself and to let the flower reveal itself as it is. This second way of knowing a flower is to experience it, to enter in rather than stand back; to stand under (there is no ultimate understanding without standing under) and participate in its beauty.
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> In one you are rich—full of yourself. In one you are poor—empty of yourself. In one you are a distant observer or critic. In one you are an intimate lover. In the experimental you keep something at arm's length distance;

> it is called critical detachment. In the experiential you put your arms around something; it is called loving embrace.[22]

A conscious experience of *imago Dei* seeks to fulfill inner exigency as a declaration of commitment to dedicate oneself to a higher end. The motivating factor of self-dedication is not something external, but it emanates from the depths of one's own life in the form of inner demand. My ideal being resides within the deep domains of myself, empowering my noble senses to experience the call or vocation, even the obligation, to consecrate my life for an ultimate value.[23] Offering one's life does not mean losing the self in oblivion because the essence of self-sacrifice is essentially creative not destructive. Imposing a certain common-sense grid to understand the act itself rationally in terms of making a fair trade-off or exchange of goods where I give something in order to get something in return forfeits the gist of such existential irony present in the dynamic character of kenosis. In this case, giving up everything for nothing is utter madness. Therefore, if we sympathetically participate in the experience of the person who offers his life, we will recognize that he has, without any doubt at all, the feeling that through self-sacrifice, he is reaching self-fulfillment.[24] Being so, a martyr's profound assurance does not completely transcend the biological categories since whether or not those extraordinary heroes explicitly give credence to eschatological significance of the "beyond," they lived and acted as though death might be really, and in a supreme sense, life.[25] Laying down one's life is the consequence of experiencing the acceptance of a call as the most meaningful and fulfilling way of participation in preserving something of utmost importance. Nobody would be willing to die for an abstraction that ends in total annihilation. Just as sacrifice is the highest form of availability, laying

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[22] Sweet, *Postmodern*, 145-146.

[23] Thomas C. Anderson, *A Commentary on Gabriel Marcel's The Mystery of Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006), 76.

[24] Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, vol.1, *Reflection and Mystery*, trans. by R. Hague, (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), 165-166.

[25] Ibid., 167.

down one's life for the sake of others, thus essentially creative and integrative, suicide is essentially a refusal, an act out of despair.

Kenotic ethical framework embodying the "self-emptying-self-giving" dialectic at the higher level of personal communion toward the achievement of ontological growth finds its culmination in the tenet of creative fidelity. Practicing God's presence, the absolute Thou, in such a way that our being gradually conforms to the desirable divine attributes through a meaningful finite I-thou encounter reveals how human agents as bearers of *imago Dei* interactively influence each other within the sphere of faithfulness. Our fidelity is a mode of participation in the mystery of being.

The idea of fidelity is proximately associated with loyalty. In fact, Marcel, who first coined the concept of creative fidelity, "finds a close similarity between his teaching and that of the American philosopher Josiah Royce, who saw in "loyalty to loyalty" the foundation of morality and of human community."[26]

> Fidelity always implies an unconditional vow to another person, a commitment to the other. Fidelity is an abdication to the preservation of one's title to self-esteem; its axis is not self at all but another. It is spontaneous and unimposed presence of an I to a Thou. The creation of the self actually is accomplished via an emergence to a Thou level of reality: I create myself in response to an invocation which can only come from a Thou. It is a call to which I answer 'present.' In saying 'here' I create my own self in the presence of a Thou. Marcel succinctly declares that fidelity is "the active perpetuation of presence."[27]

In other words, it is inevitably the person who is most consecrated and faithful who is most available. Availability and

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[26]Varghese J. Manimala, *Being, Person, and Community: A Study of intersubjectivity in Existentialism With Special Reference to Marcel, Sartre and the Concept of Sangha in in Budhism*, Foreword by Paimundo Panikkar (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1991), 161.

[27] Kenneth Gallangher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 70.

fidelity go hand in hand. The creative power of a person-oriented response to invocation definitely enhances the growth of being. Fidelity equips the self with resolute passion for achieving identity, unity, triumph over the corrosive acids of time. Making promises entails taking responsibility to be something for another person; it is a call into creative relationship in the light of a vow or pledge despite the vicissitudes of time. Fidelity is neither an unreasonably obstinate adherence to one's duty nor mere constancy to preserve the status quo but a creative cooperation with the other in advancing participated freedom. "Hence it involves continuous vigilance against the inertia of conformism and the sclerosis of habit."[28] As authentic existence always presupposes a subject person as *homo viator* or pilgrim in the temporal world, fidelity becomes a betrayal to static conservatism, which provides a ready-made close system encouraging lethargic conformism.

Fidelity also implies committing an unknown bundle. It does not calculate and objectify. It is, in fact, a leap into the dark. "In swearing fidelity to a person, I do not know what future awaits us or even, in a sense, what person will he be tomorrow; the very fact of my not knowing is what gives worth and weight to my promise."[29] Keeping promises in marital life is a moment-by-moment realization. The marriage, which is a promise and pledge, grows to its fullness in the course of time. Fidelity as perpetuation of personal presence and response to a call implies a commitment directed to the other person, not to oneself. "The attempt to understand the meaning of the promises leads us to the notion of an intersubjective presence in which the persons involved are mutually necessary to one another. I can pledge myself only to the extent that I do not retain complete autonomy."[30]

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[28] Sam Keen, *Gabriel Marcel* (London: The Carey Kinsgate Press Ltd., 1966), 35.

[29] Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. by K. Farrer (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 47. Originally published as *Etre et Avoir* (Paris: Aubier, 1935).

[30] Gallangher, *Marcel*, 56-57.

> Faith, understood as commitment, is far more enriching and productive because it carries with it the richness of a binding obligation. Faith is a gathering together of all the forces of our being and putting these forces at the disposal of others—Absolute Thou and the finite thou. Through faith as genuine commitment, I engage in a mystical encounter with the other. Such encounter, which implies a binding obligation since it carries with it a complete bundling together of all the forces of being, adds a new dimension both to me and the other or the thou. By becoming spiritually available to my neighbors, I immediately transcend the narrow limits of my own being. I overcome the restrictions of my egocentricity and discover at this moment the Absolute Thou. I find that God is the very ground of my faith and fidelity; I invoke him and enter into loving communion with Him.[31]

Fidelity is an act of the total person taking responsibility for another. As such, it is the response to an appeal that recognizes in the other person something of lasting value. We treat the other not as a means but as an end and thereby uphold human dignity. The family is the best example of fidelity and commitment where the concepts of promise, presence, and availability spontaneously function. The members of the family become responsible for one another, and there is mutual growth assured through this exercise of responsibility. Indeed, it is a universally observable maxim that maintaining the mystery of the family would restore the balance of our society,[32] even in the postmodern turn.

What would be the repercussion if the path of fidelity assumes monological direction absolutely devoid of response? Karol Wojtyla discusses the experience of the ego conditioned by the reflexive function of consciousness. The "reflexiveness of consciousness denotes that consciousness, so to speak, turns back naturally upon the subject, if thereby the subjectiveness of the subject

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[31] Marcel, *Being*, 78-79.

[32] Ibid., 68.

is brought into prominence in experience."[33] In other words, the subject himself experiences his own action toward the other person apart from reciprocal movement. If the person sows unconditional love even without favorable responses whatsoever from the recipient, the acting subject still reaps the benefits of such subjectiveness. Ethical engagements according to the cardinal virtues primarily edify the acting person who experiences his own attitudes, motivations, and behaviors; thereby, he/she pursues in some way the growth of being. However, without a response to the call, there is no mutual establishment of relation because the "I" cannot be an "I" without a "thou" and vice versa.

In this case, the mode of reflection or the activity of reflective thinking dwelling at the level of abstraction is of itself inadequate when it comes to constituting an experience. It is merely confined in the process of turning toward a previously performed act in order to grasp and comprehend more fully its objective content, character, course, or structure. Thus reflective "thought" becomes an essential tool in the development of understanding the ego and its objects; however, its viability is bound by epistemological boundaries.[34] On the contrary, the reflexive turn of consciousness occurs in the ontological domain involving a subject-object correlation.

> While having the experience of his own ego also has the experience of himself as the subject. It is thus that the ego is the real subject having the experience of its subjectiveness or, in other words, constituting itself in consciousness. Hence not only am I conscious of my ego (on the ground of self-knowledge) but owing to my consciousness in its reflexive function; I also experience my ego, I have the experience of myself as the concrete subject of the ego's very subjectiveness. Consciousness is not just an

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[33] Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. from the Polish by Andrzej Potocki. "This definitive text of the work established in collaboration with the author by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka." *Analecta Husserliana*, Vol. X (Dordrecht-Holland, Boston-USA, London-UK: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 24.

[34] Ibid., 24.

> aspect but also an essential dimension or an actual moment of the reality of the being that I am, since it constitutes its subjectiveness in the experiential sense.[35]

Reflection provides a possible rational understanding in our attempt to articulate our theological distinctives and make them relevant to the present generation. Such kind of thinking consists of objectively analyzing the aggregate of abstract data in terms of how they fit into a larger scheme of things. Thus, reflective thought basically assists us in the area of comprehending experiences epistemologically and scientifically. On the other hand, the reflexive mode of consciousness shapes the being while engaging itself in ethical interaction with the 'other' in creative fidelity, unconditional love, and I-thou movement of presence. Therefore, it functions beyond the parameters of conceptual elucidation toward the formative-transformative experience when it comes to constituting the self ontologically in consciousness.

Aletheia Realized in Self-Transcendence and Openness

One of the most favorite nomenclatures in Greek philosophy is *aletheia*, a verb form of its English counterpart for "truth," which means the unfolding continuum of the ever-increasing splendor of interrelationship among entities. Truth in the lifeworld is not cognizable but encountered. As the existing subject projects itself in being, in turn, the revelation of such being grows richer in the course of communion. Revelation is not intended to impart some propositions but the acceptance of indwelling presence. Christ succinctly declares, "I am the Truth. Thus, the truth is not knowledge about something but the person himself. When you put more premium on the mechanics of exposition in order to handle the propositional truth proficiently, then you prefer to be a theologian than a saint. We do not skillfully master the text, but we allow the incarnate living Word to master us. The Old Testament God, referring to Himself as "I am that I am," reveals a person and the omnipresence of a person to us. *Aletheia* is the discovery of the truth regarding our being. The discovery about oneself is the highest form

[35] Ibid., 25-26.

of wisdom. In fact, Socrates said, "the unexamined life is not worth living."

Nobody genuinely grows in isolation because the governing principle of living is always *esse est coesse*, "to be is to be with." It is by our willingness to open ourselves up for interpenetration that enables us to realize the unfolding truth of being. "Without openness, there can be no acceptance or bestowing, nothing new resulting from the meeting of two presences communicating with each other. Being-in-openness is being in freedom, being capable of that love that transfigures the whole universe."[36] Thus, you cannot recognize the gift of the other by not primarily being a gift. Being as gift implies utter responsibility for what the gift will turn out to be. If such be the case, giving to and responding with the gift is an act of faith, an absolute trust. The gift of presence also involves some risks. "Being-in-transcendence means that a being effectively goes out of itself, enters into communion with another, creating a history together, establishing bonds of interdependence."[37] Self-transcendence signifies an ontological mode of human spirit having an outward-oriented direction to make the self vulnerable for co-penetration as well as to seek rest in an Absolute. At this juncture, the notion of presence refers to one's openness to ontological convergences whose foundation of interconnectedness is the Eternal Thou as an encompassing presence.

A deep-rooted inner urge or demand for transcendence reflects what true exigence for being is that naturally springs from the social-moral nature of the *imago Dei*. Such ontological exigence involves a certain kind of metaphysical anxiety and dissatisfaction with the present self, enduring a radical deviation from its primordial design. Today's functionalized existence reduces individuals to a certain state of systemic depersonalization through the social roles they perform in some larger organization. Technocracy and highly institutionalized structures circumscribe people's freedom and creativity to transcend their situations. Think, for example, of a

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[36] Boff, *Trinity*, 130.

[37] Ibid., 130-131.

person on an assembly line repeating the same minimal activity hour after hour, a clerk in a highly technological department who enters data into a computer all day,[38] or the hypermarket salespeople who mechanically utter a scripted expression, "happy to serve," devoid of personal touch. Undermining the freedom "to be" renders a milieu of emptiness, self-deception, and psychological dissonance that brings the inner demand for being.

"The true exigence for transcendence is a person who yearns for an inner transformation, for example, to be more creative or more holy."[39] The radical change in the very mode of experience is described as *metanoia*, the complete turning of mind, heart, and spirit. It is a response to one's vocation that is creating oneself beyond what he/she is at present. For instance, the inner transformation of a husband who radically changes his attitude toward his wife from considering her only as someone who serves him to seeing her as someone who exists in her own right with intrinsic value.[40] The exigency for transcendence is an aspiration for an increasingly purer mode of experience that is open, receptive, and free from prejudices, and at the same time linked with the plenitude of intelligible essences or the understanding of eternal truth and relations.[41]

The introspective questions, "What I am?" and "What I am worth?" become a "supra empirical appeal" "beyond the limits of experience" towards our last supreme resource, one who can be described as an absolute Thou, a transcendent reality of "infinite plenitude"[42] and yet a person intimately related to me. "An absolute Thou would know and love me profoundly because it would never be

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[38] Anderson, *Commentary*, 120; Marcel, *Mystery* I, 42; Marcel, *Mystery* II, 37.

[39] Ibid.,44.

[40] Ibid., 48.

[41] Ibid.,55-56.

[42] Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, trans. by R. Rostal (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 37. Originally published as *Du refus a l'invocation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940). It is now published in French as *Essai de philosophie concrete* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

external to me but deep within me."[43] In other words, the appropriate consummation of that relationship with such a being takes place in participation with the reality, which is not in a way external to what I am. Thus, only an absolute Thou who knows me and evaluates me from deep within myself could reveal to me what I am truly worth.[44] Supra empirical phenomenon as used in this context acknowledges the absolute Thou beyond the measure of sensible verification for such a being would not be an objective datum. Albeit an absolute being cannot be confined within the experimental methods of scientific investigation through the senses unaided or expanded by instruments to prove hypothetical details, such reality can be encountered in some other kinds of experiences.

Another factor hampering the effluence of ontological exigence is the predisposition of indisponibilite.[45] We herein usually prefer the viable equivalent term "unavailability" to designate concepts like self-centeredness, indifference, insensitivity, and so forth. It can be conceived as a chain that holds us back as well as ties us up to ourselves. It coincides with the ideas of solipsism and nihilism, which connote the attitude of closure with regard to the exclusive creation of meanings. Self-centered individuals do not sympathetically and imaginatively share in the experiences of others and so deprive themselves of participating in all that is alive in them. Such people are unavailable, unable to respond to the many calls made upon them, calls, apparently, to open themselves and participate in the richness of realities beyond themselves. "The self-centered person remains incapable of responding to calls made upon him by life. He remains shut up in himself, in the petty circle of his private

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[43] Marcel, *Being,* 124-25.

[44] Marcel, *Creative*, 144-145.

[45] Marcel mentions the difficulties in translating into English the French terms *disponiilite and indisponibilite.* It has been suggested that the closely associated terms are availability and unavailability. They are the key concepts found in Marcel's philosophy of participation.

experience, which forms a kind of hard shell around him that he is incapable of breaking through."[46]

> Unavailability is to look upon another with attitudes of alienation. One is not at the disposal of others, or unavailable to experience presence, the individual so detached is both enclosed within himself and unable to free himself from the consequence of his withdrawal. To be unavailable is to be in some way not only occupied but encumbered with oneself. He remains shut up in the small circle of his private experience and judges others only by way they fit into his preconceived desires and plans. He seems incapable of laying himself open to a quality or virtue which belongs completely to another person and in the formation of which he himself has played no part. In turning towards myself and refusing to make myself accessible to others and to being, I, an indisponible, tend to make myself unavailable insofar as I treat my life or my being as a possession which is in some way a measurable quantity, liable, by that very fact, to dilapidation, exhaustion or even evaporation. The result of such unavailability is despair.[47]

An indisponible person in the ordinary language is a "selfish one" living in estrangement, and the disponible person is a 'liberated one" whose character manifests purity of motivation. From a perspective of withdrawn attitude, the "other" is treated as a menacing threat instead of a loving presence, co-present Thou. The "I" is never viewed in total preoccupation with its immediacies and concerns but enters into a meaningful dialogue of gracious exchanges with the Thou. There is now a mutual awareness of persons who are not merely bound by institutional manuals and accessed according to

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[46] Manimala, *Being*, 155.

[47] Manimala, *Being*, 158-159; The principle that is operative here is: "He who tries to save his life will lose it; he who loses his life will save it."

their credentials for utilitarian purposes but by their being centers of conscious, responsible, and responsive participation.[48]

A more positive virtue to achieve mutual enrichment is found in the qualities of disponibilite or availability, the opening up of self toward reaching endless possibility, moral harmony, and ontological maturity in different levels. Specifically, it refers to a human attitude of laying oneself open to the impact of Being and allowing the other presence to permeate himself or herself. Whereas, the unavailable person's existence is inauthentic, meaningless, and incapable of spiritually progressing.[49] The disponible person liberates himself from all a priori categories and culturally conditioned biases into which other persons must fit. The agent has developed capacity to internalize and respond to the appeal made by others. Such openness does warrant desirable assurance but confronting the consequence accompanying the risk must never be allowed somehow to prevent that commitment. Disponibility perpetually resists the internal impulses as well as the influential pressure posed by the "collective" to embrace the status of a self-sufficient monad.[50] Through availability, the agent's free selfless act of self-donation may transform the other to become a personal thou in the response of acceptance. "The act of disponibility, of making myself available, by which I open myself to the personal reality of another is a free act; it cannot be demanded."[51] Disponibility should be experienced by everyone as a necessity in life; it should become lifeblood of human existence.

The inner urge for transcendence accommodates disponibilite as a controlling disposition to necessarily achieve Being as fullness or plenitude. Our quest for authentic existence entails the establishment of and conscious participation in an intersubjective

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[48] Ibid., *158.*

[49] Ibid., 156.

[50] Ibid., 59.

[51] Clyde Pax, *Eistential approach to God: A Study of Gabriel Marcel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), 111-112.

community of lovers who experience their common bond in pursuing noble virtues that convey meaning to human life.[52]

Beauty was not fullness of artistry or perfection of lines. It was fullness of being and perfection of presence. In many Mediterranean cultures, beauty is more than an intellectual aesthetic. It is an aesthetic of experience, participation, images, and communal celebration. The French scholar Pierre Babin[53] tells of seeing a number of Corsican elders sitting motionless under a tree, staring at the picturesque mountain range. He spoke to the villagers "of the beauty of the landscape." They responded: "We feel good here." Babin, unsure whether they understood him properly, tried again: "Your village is beautiful!" Once more, they replied: "Do you feel good in our village?"

"An intersubjective union is not static but a living community of persons united in a vital, creative, fructifying milieu. Nor is it an empty universal genus but a type of unity which holds together a number of persons within a life which they share."[54] Plenitude of being indicates an intersubjective movement of presences, animated by love, truth, and other human values, which essentially constitute an organism.[55] Holiness as renewal in the *imago Dei* means "authentic being,"[56] experiencing the fullness of being. Holy living, then, is truth unfolding in the milieu of intersubjective participation of disponible persons who, by performing self-transcendence, are willing to experience the impact of being and

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[52] Anderson, *Commentary*,121.

[53] Pierre Babin and Mercedes Iannone, *The New Era in Religious Communication* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 111.

[54] Marcel, *Creative,* 35; see also Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator,* trans. by E. Cruaford (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 155.

[55] Marcel, *Mystery II*, 183.

[56] That plenitude Marcel calls "being par excellence" at the end of the chapter (Marcel, *Mystery II*, 51), and in *Tragic Wisdom,* says it "is most genuinely being." Gabriel Marcel, *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, trans. by Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick, a publication of the Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 53.

respond to the appeal of the other within a community of loving presences.

Logotheandric Witness as Incarnate Christlike Presence

Christianity is by no means identical with some ideological restatements of particular religious tenets in the form of legitimized metanarratives and metaphysical propositions but essentially a life-changing discipleship process. "Confession of faith" per se constitutes performative statements rather than descriptive ones tantamount to the words "I do" uttered respectively by the bride and groom in a wedding ceremony. Marriage vows are not researched conclusions reached on the subject through series of austere observations and deliberate discourse but an actual personal engagement in the act itself. Thus, the message is not merely encoded in the expressed statement, but it is indeed the person himself/herself. Jesus Christ declares "I am the Truth"[57] rather than just teaching people about the truth. The gospel to be existentially authentic ought to be a "mode of being" effectively engaged in interpersonal communion with other selves; in this manner, each redeemed personality as a bearer of divine grace and unconditional love dynamically represents such divine likeness to fulfill the Christlike *telos*. God, as the supreme influential agent, calls us to share in the holy life and its ethical dimensions of acting and being acted upon by virtue of Christ's exemplary life. Being so, "we can and may share in and emulate the perfect immanent power of becoming and perfect transitive power of influence."[58] Sanctified life encompasses the incarnate state of a transformed being, the synergy of gracious influence within the scope of interrelationship, and the ethically responsible reflection of *imago Dei* to the present age.

At this juncture, from the socio-ethical perspective, living a holy life means mutually practicing Christ's incarnate presence as *logotheandric* witness. "*Logotheandic,*" as bearing a unique symmetry to form an operational nomenclature, is etymologically derived from

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[57] John 14:6.

[58]William L. Power, "Imago Dei—Imittio Dei," *International Journal For Philosophy of Religion* 42 (1997): 140.

logos (word), *theos* (God), and *andros* (man). It presupposes certain conceptual compatibility to the oriental holistic mode of thinking. Analytic rationality manifests utter inability when dealing with a profound understanding of spiritual experience, state of being, and the motive undergirding an act. Why so? Because truth in Christianity does not dwell on the epistemological domain but is in its essence an ontological encounter. The word *theandric* obtained a historic reputation in Western thought and has always been referred to as the union of the human and the divine without confusion. It is analogous to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who has both divine and human natures. In Christian theology, it can be called "the incarnational model."

On the other hand, *logos* is a Greek word that comes from the verb meaning "to say" or "to speak." No single English equivalent quite captures its richness, so it is best in many cases to leave the term untranslated. In the classical period, Heraclitus' philosophy revolving around the concept of the *logos* seems to have provided explanations that the paradoxical world and its phenomenal flux exemplify a rational order. The frequently common concepts associated with this rational order are "word," "reason," and "wisdom." Thus, its basic meanings entail the world-life-view of hypostatizing divine qualities in terms of the creating-recreating agent of all that there is, the integrating principle of existence, and the sustaining force of life. Now we are illumined a little bit on the relevance of why St. John's gospel conveyed the most comprehensive Christological account on the logos. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."[59] Christ is the personification of God's wisdom, and without him, humanity will never experience ontological significance, life's meaning, authentic intersubjective relations, trans-formed self, and eternal validity. Christ has restored the meaningless and corrupted image during the Adamic fall and reunited us to Himself after we had been made partakers of the benefits of his atoning sacrifices by participating in

[59] John 1:14.

his grace and imitating his life.[60] Human faculties, then, specifically free will, ostensibly embodied the divine prevenient grace that enables us to make moral decisions toward the harmony of our profound exigence for being and the revealed living incarnate Word, the perfect Image of the Father in the context of community life.

Albeit the expression "logotheandric" seems to aesthetically fashion a euphonic language and bears the essence of what it means to live and grow in Christlikeness. By embracing the "Personal Truth" and taking the resolute responsibility of representing all the redemptive and sanctifying attributes revealed in Christ, who is the perfect image of the Father, we become *logos Christos/theos*, the incarnate presence of the "Living Word" to both the world and the community of faith. If such be the case, holiness means "Word conformed." We are living according to the written word, the Bible, as well as to the Incarnate Personal Word, Jesus Christ. In other words, the logotheandric witness is another nomenclature for Christlikeness in the interpersonal dimension or the incarnational principle of Christlike lifestyle. Logotheandric witness as incarnate Christlike presence is tantamount to a concrete representation of Christ to others fulfilling both the redemptive value of the gospel and the edifying potential of *theos corpus*. Thus, it implies a "sacramental presence" actualizing agape through intersubjective communion.

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[60] Leo The Great, *Sermons*, introduction by Jacques Leclercq, trans. by Rene Dolle, *Sources Chretiennes*, vol 22 (Paris: Cerf, 1949), 44. Here the classical theological anthropology distinguishes four stages in the evolution of the image: formation though creation, deformation by Adam's sin, reformation by Christ, and conformation though imitation of Christ and the Father. Paul says in Colossians 3: 10: "You have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator . . . Christ is all, and in all."

The famous prologue of the *prima secundae* is not simply a threshold. It shows God laying a foundation, free will, which will support all that follows: morality viewed as humanity's return to God. Nor we forget that finally, in the *tertia pars*, St. Thomas will study Christ who, in his humanity, is the necessary way to God, while in his divine personality Christ is the Word of God, the perfect Image of the father. For a lengthy discussion see Pinckaers, *Reader*, 132-133.

"This work of sanctification finds its principal source in the grace of Christ, who is both Son of God, perfect Image of the Father, and Son of Mary, truly human like us. But this grace requires human collaboration, above all through faith, hope, and love."[61] The communion of the saints could be possibly realized within the nexus of hypostatic union, *Deus homo factus est* (God has become man). God-Man participates in our nature so we can participate in the divine nature. Hence, we participate in one another's life in a common way. Sharing the totally redeemed nature in the same life of the God-Man resonates through the common spiritual DNA in each Christian self. "Since 'hypostasis' is identical with personhood and not with substance, it is not in its 'self-existence' but in communion that this being is itself and thus is at all. Thus, communion does not threaten personal particularity; it is constitutive of it."[62]

Mutually practicing the Christlike presence in intersubjectivity requires an in-depth understanding of what the nature of the "subject" is in relation to the process of growth in sanctification. Marcel explains, in "The Ego and Its Relations to Others," that by the term "ego," he does not mean an isolated entity with precise boundaries but a part of myself which I focus on and present to others for their recognition and approval.[63] We cannot give something that we do not possess. Something is owned before it can be a gift to others, myself likewise. However, since the ego is exposed and vulnerable, the subject exhibits natural proclivity to safeguard it from all external threats, especially from being ignored or slighted by others. Marcel claims that concentrating on one's ego is idolatry of oneself because it becomes the privileged center of one's microcosm to juxtapose others as rivals to be overcome or as mirrors to favorably affirm oneself. He offers the example of a shy young man at the party who is extremely self-conscious because he knows no one and feels

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[61] Pinckaers *Reader*, 135.

[62] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, contemporary Greek Theologians 4 (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 409.

[63] Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator*, trans. by E. Cruaford (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 14-20.

himself at the mercy of the gaze of others. Such self-centeredness, which views others as objects which threaten one's ego, is the opposite of an intersubjective (subject-subject, not subject to object) relation with others.[64] The subject is a permanent, non-contingent dimension of a unique self. Marcel refers to it as the self insofar as it remains to be the wellspring of inner life and conscious acts (knowing, willing, desiring, wondering, and so forth) and thereby ultimately concerns itself with the questions of being, doing, and knowing.[65]

Intersubjective communion, then, is a relation of subjects or selves which to some degree recognize each other as unique, free, self-conscious beings who possess intrinsic value and who are, or should be, in charge of the sense and direction of their lives. Furthermore, intersubjectivity constitutes a mutual enrichment of selves by influencing each other in the subject-I-subject-thou convergence. Objects can be beside but never really with each other since intersubjective relation signifies a bond between subjects that unite them together at the ontological level, that is, qua beings, so that they negate themselves as isolated individuals. Such union is internally making a difference to participating distinct subjects since the other person is "not a threat or obstacle but supportive of me, I am able to relax my egocentric concentration on myself and become open and available to the calls, explicit, of many others."[66] Against Descartes' initial metaphysical assertion of self-existence (*cogito ergo sum*), which is a kind of metaphysical isolation, Marcel would affirm, "we are." Subjects joined together in intersubjective relations do not fuse into one and the same being, nor on the other hand, do they remain totally separate from each other as two nuclei quite distinct from each other. They are truly united in a "suprapersonal unity," yet the integrity of each person is not obliterated in their unity but enhanced, for their relationship is fructifying and a vital milieu from which each subject draws its strength.[67] "Being itself is experienced as intersubjectivity, it

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[64] Marcel, *Mystery I*, 176-77; Marcel, *Homo Viator*, 19-20.

[65] Marcel, *Mystery II*, 25, 55-57.

[66] Marcel, *Mystery I*, 177-81.

[67] Ibid., 182; Marcel, *Fidelity*, 35.

is the 'cornerstone of ontology,'"[68] thus, *esse est co esse*, to be is to be with. Marcel considers the domain of grace as the domain of intersubjectivity.

Engaging in an open personal dialogue subsequent to an attitude of disponibilite allows the primordial state of conscious self as relational ego to take its own course without a loss of being. In the self-donation, participation, and commitment of I and Thou, there arises a community, the fullness of presence one exercises, and the duty and vocation of us all. Intersubjectivity is willful participation in and engagement of spontaneous familial intimacy, which fosters a kind of fertile indistinction of person beyond the human collectivity of the technocratic world.[69] Being-us, the actual community, is the product of the dynamic communing as a mode of being by which we constitute a single unified whole. "The 'I' never exists on its own; it is dwelt in by many, since its roots spread out into others, as it is permeated by others. Beings in communion live in a permanent state of excentricity since their center is called by another center outside them in order jointly to form a community."[70]

Theologically, God, as absolute openness, supreme presence, total immediacy, eternal transcendence, and infinite communion, establishes a viable conceptual structure for the ethical movement of finite I-thou relations. The different images of ecclesia expressed by the figure of the covenant involve the notions of God's special people under the internal motivation of grace to form a messianic community that God desires.[71] Thus, the Holy Christian God renders a heuristic paradigm that best represents the Trinitarian formula, such as the three persons, a single communion, and a single Trinitarian community. No divine Person exists alone for its own sake; they are always and eternally in relationship with one another. God's communion supersedes mere socio-political expressions because it seeks above all the intimacy and freedom of the human

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[68] Ibid., 255.

[69] Manimala, *Being*, 173.

[70] Boff, *Trinity*, 131

[71] Ezekiel 31:33; 37:26; Hebrews 10:16.

heart.[72] So then, if social holiness practically accommodates such theocentric trajectory, we should no longer consider God as the highest priority but precisely "He is our all." "For in him we live and move and have our being."[73] Therefore, holiness simply means "God is my all." It is our commitment to live out the intersubjective attributes of our God as we stay true to our own nature as created in the *imago Dei*.

Practicing the incarnate presence of God in the world and faith-community behooves our determination to produce a creative impact upon life as we all journey together in Christlikeness. Functionalized existence in a technocratic milieu treats everyone else objectively as docile mechanism to achieve whatever desired outcome. However, if the other is a presence, one ceases to be a case since it includes the notion of depth and the supratemporal or eternal dimension of the self that transcends a particular moment of time. Presence signifies a union of the subjects in mutual participation internally affecting each other significantly to achieve the goal of living up to their ideal self or vocation. Experiencing someone as a presence can refresh my inner being as well as strengthen my resolve, and "it makes me more fully myself than I would be if I were not exposed to its impact."[74] The physical proximity of a person to us does not warrant being much more present than a loved one thousands of miles away who is continually in our thoughts and affections since the undergirding qualification here is always grounded in an existing established communion. Experiencing a rose as a presence radically differs from subjecting it as an object of scientific investigation or practically using its substance for economic purposes. Poetic descriptions would somehow enhance my openness and receptivity to the essence of the flower itself and thereby appreciate and welcome the impact of its beauty. In that case, the rose ceases to be an object but now a part of my very being. In other words, the rose is a presence in which I participate, and because a particular union exists between us, it affects me internally in terms of enjoying its refreshing beauty

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[72] Boff, *Trinity*, 132-133.

[73] Acts 17:28.

[74] Marcel, *Mystery I*, 205.

or a change of my perspective about the intrinsic value of the created order.[75]

Another concrete example of presence that Marcel does discuss in some details is an illness. An objective analysis of illness would depict it externally as the breakdown of an apparatus, the malfunctioning of an organism. Considering illness as a presence engenders internal effects to the being of the person who suffers such physical disability who has to choose his/her attitude toward it. In other words, the sick person must decide how to live with it or what course of action would be most appropriate in dealing with it. Will he give up, use his illness as a reason to rebel against God or fate, use it to gain pity from others, or see it as a battle to be fought or as an ordeal that provides him an opportunity to grow in patience, courage, and faith? Upon recognizing my illness as a presence, it becomes now a part of me and is something in which I participate; thus, it is no longer a maladjusted physical tragedy. Likewise, to perceive another's illness as a presence, I consider the person not primarily a malfunctioning organism but as an ill neighbor who calls me to be compassionate and helpful; in other words, who calls me to be an intersubjective union of love with him.[76] Holiness is a "lifestyle of presencing" in order to carry out our mission to be the salt and light of the world and spiritually gifted member constituting an organism. Indeed, Christ's incarnate presence indicates the noble function of the renewed *imago Dei* which is at work in the world as well as in the body of Christ, that is, logotheandric witness.

Conclusion

Inasmuch as "being itself" is experienced as intersubjectivity, i.e., *esse est co esse,* to be is to be with; holiness as a state of being is essentially a dynamic, growing relationship of transformed selves who are mutually committed to participate in each other's spiritual journey and life toward Christlikeness. Indeed, the communion of presence, which internally affects each other significantly in the bond of divine love and fidelity, creates their ideal selves in response to an invocation

[75] Anderson, *Commentary*, 93.

[76] Marcel, *Mystery* I, 209-11

emanating from the I-thou relationship. Fidelity, as an active perpetuation of presence, always signifies an unconditional vow to another person, participating in the highest fulfillment of other's being in agape.

Ontological exigence unveils the depths of one's own life in the form of inner demand. It culminates in the act of self-dedication, availability, and self-sacrifice to gain the consciousness of our eternal telos toward the leap of faith. Thus, holiness as renewal in the *imago Dei* entails "authentic being," experiencing the fullness of being. Since the residency of grace in human faculties renders us capable of knowing and loving God, achieving spiritual maturity becomes an ethical responsibility apart from isolation. We are called to open up ourselves to the impact of being and allow the other presence to permeate us so that the self can obtain endless possibilities of development and harmony on different levels.

Logotheandric witness is a holiness lifestyle of mutually practicing Christlikeness as sacramental presence to edify each other within the faith community and to reflect the redemptive character of the gospel outside the church. Our ethical interaction ought to effectively represent the life of Christ to the world as well as to the ecclesiastical body. In the final analysis, the Christian message is a performative statement reflected by our very being, and in so doing, we become the incarnate *logos theo*.

3

Character Formation and Mission

Bruce G. Allder

Introduction

Debate and conversation surrounding the preparation of men and women for Christian ministry have been an ongoing conversation over many years. It must be recognized that these conversations are often contextually bound. We need to understand the context in which some of these conversations occur to grasp their intent. Helpful summaries of the different emphases within these conversations provide a manageable entry into some of these conversations.[1] While there has been a relatively recent focus on the conversation between the classical (Athens) and Berlin models, amongst many evangelicals, the conversation needs to embrace the Jerusalem model of Robert Banks.[2] Kelsey has given an articulate rendition of the conversation between the classical (Athens) and Berlin models that has set the parameters of this conversation.[3] However, Banks contends that the conversation has stayed with the Berlin model because many of the participants in this conversation are part of the university sector which

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[1] See Rupen Das, *Connecting Curriculum with Context: A Handbook for Context Relevant Curriculum Development in Theological Education* (Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2015), 17.

[2] Bruce G Allder, David A. Ackerman, *The Emmaus Model: Discipleship, Theological Education, and Transformation* (Lenexa: Global Nazarene Publications, 2019), 34f.

[3] David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

has a specific context to the Berlin model.[4] Whether by intention or by the consequence of a mission focus, several evangelical groups have moved toward Banks' missional focus in ministry preparation. The university context is not assumed, even when education is regarded as a core value in the development of a denomination. The Church of the Nazarene is a prime example of this focus.[5]

While this move to a missional focus is justified on many fronts, what has concerned thinkers in this area is the drift to a competency, skills-based approach that appears to lose sight of the character formational elements in ministry preparation. Austin and Perry give expression to this as they appeal to a return to a classical focus in ministry preparation.[6] While this sentiment is applauded, the return to a classical model may well have us losing sight of the missional component to ministry preparation. The Emmaus Model attempts to intentionally bring both character formation and mission into focus in ministry preparation.[7] The purpose of this paper is not to describe the Emmaus Model but to look at the lens through which education is to be viewed in this model. Figure 1 illustrates the model and shows the critical role that the lens plays in focusing ministry preparation towards a specific outcome, namely a discipled disciple-maker. It is to this lens—Christlikeness for mission—that the rest of this paper seeks to explore.

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[4] Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring A Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 60.

[5] The values of the Church of the Nazarene globally, has "missional" as one of its key denominational values. See https://nazarene.org/mission. The Asia Pacific Region of the Church of the Nazarene reflects this in their Regional Strategic Priorities https://asiapacificnazarene.org/about-us/regional-priorities/.

[6] Denise Austin and David Perry, "From Jerusalem to Athens: A Journey of Pentecostal Pedagogy in Australia," *Journal of Adult Theological Education Education* 12, no. 1 (May 2015), 43-55.

[7] Allder and Ackerman.

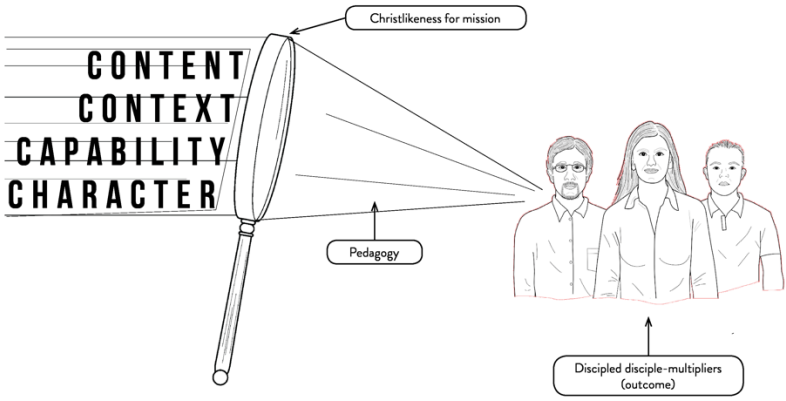

Figure 1: The Emmaus Model

Part One of the Lens:

The Journey toward Christlikeness

This is the character formation element of the lens. The *being* or spiritual formation is an essential component to ministry preparation. Clearly, such ministry is not just a job with a job description. It is a calling that draws us into a future of cooperating with the Triune God. Before we can commence such a journey, there needs to be an understanding of what we are being called into. Jesus' high priestly prayer of John 17 is helpful at this point. The life that Jesus calls us into is described as "eternal life."

> And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3 NRSV).

While the use of the English word "eternal" is often thought of in chronological terms, that is, never-ending, the defining word "knowing" which follows is in the present tense. Read within the context of John's writings, this has a present relational character. Here is the amazing fact of the gospel—this life, as a gift from God, is a present reality as well as an ever-deepening experience through

knowing Jesus Christ, whom God has sent. This is the life that Nicodemus struggled to grasp (John 3), for he thought it was a matter of doing (or earning the right) before he could receive this life. The context of this life is found in the love of God, for the same phrase, "eternal life," is used in John 3:16. This eternal life is not just quantitative (everlasting) but also qualitative (deepening relational connection with God in Christ).

The apostle Paul picks up on this thought in Ephesians 4 when he writes about the purpose of God's Spirit gifting the church.

> The gifts he gave were . . . for the building up of the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:12b – 13).

This relationship requires firstly accepting life as a free gift from a loving God, but then secondly, nurturing and cultivating this in a lifelong journey with the Triune God toward Christlikeness. This knowing ***is*** life in the Kingdom of God. This life is birthed in love and given freely out of grace and grace alone. In receiving life, we then become involved in a lifelong pursuit of *being* in relationship as this life in Christ continues without end. The journey means a dying of the old life we lived outside of Christ as we adopt expressions of Christ's life in ever-deepening ways.

Such nurturing and cultivation of this life implies a journey. While a dramatic change may take place once we enter into a life-saving relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a whole lot of renovation that needs to take place. As Nicodemus learned from Jesus, you don't start to clean up your life of selfishness and destructive behaviors before you receive Christ. The clean-up starts having accepted Christ and is motivated out of a love for Christ. The "curriculum" for discipleship is learning to obey everything that Jesus had commanded his disciples (Matt 28:20).

The preparation and cultivation of relationship take time because it is not simply a matter of imparting information. It is about forming and, yes, transforming through the power of God's Spirit. The journey can be fraught. Dean Smith speaks of the "growing

pains" that can accompany such a journey.[8] Referring to Fowler's *Stages of Faith,*[9] Smith identifies the move from stage 3 (Synthetic-Conventional Faith) to stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective Faith) as one that can be particularly intense.

> Individuals begin to look with critical awareness at their system of beliefs and values tacitly held. . . . This is a time of alienation and disembodying . . . this transition can be precipitated by the experience of breakdown or inadequacy of one's Synthetic-Conventional faith.[10]

Thankfully, there is a way through, but it takes courage to effectively use transformation toward Christlikeness as an essential part of the lens for ministry preparation. Such epistemological crises can feel a lot like a loss of faith if the journey is not conducted in a safe relational space. This relational space is one that moves the teacher from being the purveyor of content and propositional statements to one of a mentor or guide. Class time is spent processing the content that is perhaps received in another forum apart from a lecture.[11] This allows students more access to the mentoring/guiding

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[8] Dean Smith, "Growing Pains: a reflection on the experience of suffering accompanying an epistemological crisis," *Crucible* 7-2 (November 2016) www.crucibleonline.net.

[9] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (New York, HarperOne, 1981).

[10] D. Smith, 7.

[11] The use of the "flipped classroom" is becoming a common pedagogical strategy that has been made accessible to teachers because of technology. Most of the discussion about this concept is in the context of on-line education, but there is a need to see this pedagogical approach in broader blended terms. Gila Kurtz, Alexandr Tsimerman, and Orna Steiner-Lavi, "The Flipped-Classroom Approach: The Answer to Future Learning?" *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning,* Vol 17, Issue 2, 2015. See also Craig B. Murison and David M. Benson, "Reimagining Christian Schools as Revelatory Communities," Irene Alexander, "Modelling Our Teaching on the Jesus of the Gospels," and Diane Hockridge, "Reimagining Christian Formation in Online Theological Education," all to be found in Johannes M. Luetz, Tony Dowden, and Beverley Norsworthy, eds. *Reimagining Christian* Education (Sydney:

relationship that can help them discover God at work in their lives. Yes, the discovery might highlight inadequate conceptual frameworks, attitudes, and priorities that need significant adjustment. This is part of the journey in an accepting, non-judgmental way that trusts the Holy Spirit to do his work in the lives of all concerned. The teacher, rather than having a "know-all, tell-all" role, becomes the compassionate guide and challenger. This student-centered approach is not without its critics, but a focus on the formation of the student requires a pedagogy that gives time, space, and permission for a student to explore seemingly disparate pieces of the journey.

Another important element of this character formation is the use of Scripture. This journey of cultivating a life-changing relationship with Christ (often expressed tangibly in the quality of our relationships with each other) is supported by a scaffolding with sound exegesis of Scripture. The Emmaus Model gets its name from the account of two disciples returning home on that first Easter Sunday afternoon, having heard about the death of Jesus and strange accounts of the empty tomb. In Luke 24, these confused and despondent disciples were walking home trying to make sense of the events of that first Easter. Their expectations (*we had hoped that he* [Jesus] *was the one* [the promised Messiah]; Luke 24:21) were shattered, and the loss of a body from the tomb (Luke 24:23) left them confused. It was Jesus who came alongside them, and *beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures* (Luke 24:27). Meaning-making took place as the Scriptures were correctly interpreted. The dissonance created by the conflicting experience gave an opportunity for Jesus to explain the Scriptures. Surely this is a way forward for those preparing for ministry—a thorough and careful focus on the Word in order to bring meaning and clarity in a dissonant world.

Springer, 2018). For a comparison between traditional and flipped classrooms see Adam Butt, "Student Views on the Use of a Flipped Classroom Approach: evidence from Australia," *Business Education & Accreditation* Vol 6, No. 1, 2014.

Maddix speaks of the important role that Scripture has in Christian formation.[12]

> There is more to the interpretative process than the discovery of a historical meaning contained in the biblical text. Contrary to many interpretive ventures (particularly traditional, text-centered approaches), the criterion for the perception of these biblical texts as authoritative Scripture is not merely what these texts state (i.e., in the information of these texts) but what these texts do (i.e., the ways these texts affect their readers). As important as the biblical text before Christian readers may be, something essential – beyond the information of the text – must happen within these readers so that the text becomes Scripture: there must be a convergence between the text and its readers that brings those otherwise dead words to life.[13]

Such formation involves the integration of Kingdom of God values into our lives. These values are so counter-cultural that many times it takes courage and encouragement to live these out. The Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-11) illustrate this shift. For example, *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matt 5:3). Rather than coming to the task of ministry in relationship with Christ by thinking we have much to offer, the biblical value is coming to God with nothing to offer but ourselves. Remember, Nicodemus asked Jesus what he needed to do to earn the right to be part of the Kingdom of God. That's the point! He cannot offer anything but himself—not his actions, not his self-righteousness, not his possessions earned over time – nothing but himself. With that humble attitude, God is able to work. John Wesley captured this attitude in his prayer written for the Covenant Renewal Service in 1780.

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[12] Mark A. Maddix and Richard P. Thompson, "Scripture as Formation: The Role of Scripture in Christian Formation," *Christian Education Journal*, Series 3, Vol 9, Supplement, 2012.

[13] Maddix and Thompson, 82.

> Lord Jesus, if You will receive me into Your house, if You will but own me as Your servant, I will not stand upon terms. Impose on me what condition You please; write down Your own articles; command me what You will; let me be Your servant.
>
> Make me what You will, Lord, and set me where You will. Let me be a vessel of silver or gold, or a vessel of wood or stone; so I be a vessel of honour. I am content. If I not be the head, or the eye, or the ear, let me be the hand, or the foot, as one of the lowest and least esteemed of all the servants of my Lord.
>
> Lord, put me to what You will; rank me with whom You will. Put me to doing; put me to suffering. Let me be employed for You, or laid aside for You, exalted for You, or trodden under foot for You. Let me be full; let me be empty. Let me have all things; let me have nothing. I freely and heartily resign all to Your pleasure and disposal.[14]

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted (*Matt. 5:4). This sounds odd but there is value in the broken heart. Hope is found even within the desperately painful moments of loss. In the midst of despair and uncertainty, there is the gentle optimism of God's continued presence and grace. This is often learned on the anvil of bitter experience. Glib answers will not satisfy. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth* (Matt. 5:5). A teachable spirit that has the strength to be angry at the right time and self-controlled and humble is valued. There is no place for arrogance or self-serving. The confidence is not in our ability but in the God we lovingly serve.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled (Matt. 5:6). This is an amazing promise, but there is an underlying challenge in this verse. What we ultimately pursue in life will shape who we are, our ministry, and our leadership. This reaches into the very depths of our motivations. Self-deception and a lack of self-awareness can side-track us into less than God-honoring ministry activities. It is in the shaping of our *being* during our ministry

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[14] Ken Bible, *Wesley Hymns* (Kansas City: Lillenas, 1982), A1-A10.

preparation that will set the trajectory of our ministry for years to come. James K A Smith speaks of the need to *rehabituate the heart.*[15] In the context of worship, Smith continues:

> Instead of the bottom-up emphasis on worship as our expression of devotion and praise, historic Christian worship is rooted in the conviction that God is the primary actor or agent in the worship encounter. Worship works from the top down, you might say. In worship, we don't just come to show God our devotion and give him our praise; we are called to worship because in this encounter, God (re)makes and molds us top-down. Worship is the arena in which God recalibrates our hearts, reforms our desires, and rehabituates our loves. Worship isn't something we just do; it is where God does something to us. Worship is the heart of discipleship because it is the gymnasium in which God retrains our hearts.[16]

It is in the arena of ministry preparation that we intentionally put ourselves into a place where this rehabituation can take place. New desires are born and new passions for hungering after God are birthed in the Spirit-enabled process.

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy (*Matt. 5: 7). There is so much more to this than just a soft heart and sympathetic ear. This is a profound recognition that we are a people called by God and the recipients of the amazing grace of God. *Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy* (1 Peter 2:10b). This results in a gentleness and generosity of spirit as we encounter people caught in the mess of life. Jesus describes this approach in his own ministry:

> Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice

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[15] James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 57f.

[16] J. Smith, 77.

> in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope (Matt 12:18-21).

This really is counter-cultural. The focus is on the protection of the weakest, not the survival of the fittest. Learning the gentle rhythms of God's grace and mercy while standing against injustice and abuse is indeed a Kingdom value. Strength without harshness and purpose without domineering behavior become the key features in Kingdom ministry.

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God (*Matt. 5:8). Here is another probing statement that goes to the very essence of our engagement in the Kingdom of God. This is a purity of intention that is the result of God's Spirit coming and cleansing of selfish ambition, serving out of a need to be needed, or the desire to control things. Once again, we can put all kinds of pious explanations as to why we seek to do what we do, but it is only with a Spirit-cleansed and humble heart that we can move out of a self-centered motivation to one that glorifies God only.

> Overwhelmingly throughout Scripture the ideal model is not that of democracy or autocracy but theocracy; leaders see themselves as, first and foremost, servants and followers under the authority and leadership of God, and from that position lead others. . . . Unfortunately, while theocratic leadership sounds good in theory, it is difficult to apply in practice. It is far too easy for church leaders to claim theocratic leadership as a spiritualize guise for autocratic control. . . . Most of us are so embedded within our culture that it can be very difficult to see that theologically the attraction to both autocracy and democracy is largely the product of the Fall. In our human pride and ambition, we have fallen from the beauty and order that have always been

> God's ideal, and part of this beauty and order is the ideal of theocratic leadership.[17]

There is much that can be said about this from a leadership perspective, but suffice it to say that authenticity, transparency, and integrity are expressions of the pure heart.[18]

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matt. 5: 9). The peace spoken of here is a feature of life in the Kingdom. This is much more than freedom from conflict. This is the Hebrew word *shalom*—well-being, wholeness, reconciled relationships, and balance. Ministry in the Kingdom of God is not meant to be "drawing lines in the sand" and polarizing the world into the "haves" and "have-nots," or the righteous and unrighteous. Kingdom ministry is about developing places of grace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and life.

The final two "be-attitudes" point to a challenging reality. *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely, on my account* (Matt 5:10,11). The values of the Kingdom of God are outrageous. They will provoke a reaction in and with the people we serve. Ministry is not for the faint-hearted! Following God's way will create all kinds of pressures, even within our families.[19] This ministry is for the long haul and becomes a lifestyle and life commitment, even though our ministry may take different shapes throughout our life. This is why

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[17] Perry W. H. Shaw, "Vulnerable Authority: A Theological Approach to Leadership and Teamwork, " *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, Vol 3, No. 1, 2006, 121-122.

[18] See Martin E. Marty, "Trust as The Virtue for Ministry," *Reflective Practice Formation and Supervision in Ministry* Vol 32. http://journals.sfu.ca/rpfs/index.php/rpfs/article/view/56/55 (accessed March 26, 2020); Stephen Cherry, "Discipleship and Christian Character," *Theology,* Vol. 119 (3), 2016; Henry & Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on To God's Agenda,* Revised and Expanded (Nashville: B & H, 2011).

[19] See Luke 14:25-33.

life in Christ must capture our hearts and our very being. Anything less will be like seed sown in shallow soil—it won't last. Ministry preparation is deepening the soil and increasing the capacity to love God and others in our journey toward Christlikeness.

Part Two of the Lens:

The Journey for Mission

Now that we have described the "being" of ministry as the journey toward Christlikeness, we turn our attention to the second important element of the lens—that of mission. In the Emmaus Model, this is not just an addition to the lens but an aspect that is inherent in the journey toward Christlikeness. Mulholland says that the two cannot be separated. [20] "Genuine spiritual formation is a process of being formed in the image of Christ *for the sake of the world."*[21] This is the theme the Apostle Paul emphasizes in the imagery of Christians being Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20). God is making his appeal of reconciliation through us, and so our engagement in his creation is essential. There are numerous biblical references that point to the fact that life in the Kingdom of God is not to be focused on us as God's people but on joining God in his mission of redeeming his creation. For example, God called Abram to leave his country and land and go to a place that God would show him. *I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing* (Gen 12:2 NRSV). The Apostle Peter uses the same imagery given in Exodus 19:5-6, when he writes,

> You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (2 Pet 2:9 NRSV).

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[20] M. Robert Mulholland, "Spiritual Formation in Christ and Mission with Christ," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care,* Vol. 6, No. 1, 2013. Emphasis mine.

[21] Mulholland, 15.

The imagery of priesthood is significant as it refers to the whole nation (not just to the tribe of Levi) in Exodus 19, and in 1 Peter to all believers. First Peter is addressed to the *exiles of the dispersion* (1 Pet 1:1). Priests have the important role of mediating God's grace to the world and, as such, have a function beyond their own clan or tribe. This is the essence of the priesthood of all believers. All Christians are to be involved in the mission of God—the redeeming of the world, as such mission is integral to our formation in Christ.

In recent times the term mission has been deemed by some inappropriate for its militaristic overtones.[22] However, the term is still a good term and one that is appropriate in the context of the basic Scriptural way of doing mission, i.e., incarnating the presence of Christ. Incarnation is central to the concept of ministry, with Jesus being the prime example (Phil 2:4-11). Samuel Wells puts this approach into perspective when he articulates four different emphases in ministry.[23] Firstly, he speaks of "working for" people where we work to alleviate hardship and make life better for the other person. It is a delight to do this, and we often feel good about our involvement. Secondly, we can "work with" people to alleviate hardship and build a more positive life. This has obvious strengths in that we work alongside people and bring the resource to assist. This is much more a shared responsibility and usually, working with people means much more can be accomplished than doing this alone. Thirdly, we can "be for" people and advocate on their behalf. Here we speak for those who are oppressed and do not have a voice themselves. This can make a positive difference as problems are highlighted, and injustice can be confronted and addressed. However, there is little personal cost involved by the one who is "being for" someone as the advocates can withdraw to their place of comfort once

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[22] "Consultation on Mission Language and Metaphors," *Evangelical Mission Review,* Oct. 2000. See https://ricklove.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Biblical-Language-and-Military-Metaphors-web-copy.pdf (accessed March 29, 2020).

[23] Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Mission: Being with the World* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2018), 10-12.

the advocacy has been completed. The fourth aspect of ministry that Wells highlights and best expresses incarnation is "being with" people. While all four approaches have merit and a place in Christian ministry, it is this fourth element that delves the deepest into a ministry that is built around an incarnational relationship.

> Being with begins by largely rejecting the problem-solution axis that dominates both the previous models. . . . When it comes to social engagement, it believes one can seldom solve people's problems—doing so disempowers them and reinforces their low social standing. Instead, one must accompany them while they find their own methods, answers, approaches—and meanwhile celebrate and enjoy the rest of their identity that's not wrapped up in what you (perhaps ignorantly) judge to be their problem. Like working with, being with starts with people's assets, not their deficits. . . . being with seeks to model the goal of all relationships: it sees problem-solving as a means to a perpetually deferred end., and instead tries to live that end—enjoying people for their own sake.[24]

Such an understanding of mission keeps both character formation and mission together and certainly keeps any militaristic overtones out of the concept.

However, this leads to an important implication in the Emmaus Model. If the doing of mission (being a blessing to the nations and working with God to see his world redeemed) is an essential part of our being in Christ (are spiritual and character formation), ministry preparation takes place while we are involved in the mission. There is a place for withdrawal from the world in order to prepare for some specific tasks, but the Emmaus Model puts the focus on preparation for ministry while doing mission. Educationally this has several profound implications.

Firstly, there is no theory/practice divide. Critics of this approach may suggest that this is all about a skill-based doing focus. This misses the major thrust of the model, which is experiential

[24] Wells, 11-12.

learning—a robust educational theory that is well documented now.[25] The ministry context becomes the curriculum for ministry preparation. The four major steps in the learning cycle for experiential learning are: firstly, the concrete experience; secondly, reflective observation where one reviews and muses on the experience; thirdly, abstract conceptualization with conclusions drawn and learning takes place; and finally, active experimentation where what is learned is tried out in the real world of ministry[26].

This approach to learning lends itself to engaging in the art of theological reflection. Central to any pastoral theological endeavor, this becomes a central pedagogical platform in the Emmaus Model. While the purpose of this paper is to focus on the lens of the model, it must be said that the dynamic, relational emphasis of theological reflection is a direct implication of the lens. Learning to do theological reflection well is an important part of the pedagogical milieu of the Emmaus Model because we learn in and from mission involvement. The key questions raised in the process of theological reflection allow the formation and missional elements of the lens to come together. Some of the key questions, which sound remarkably like Kolb's cycle of experiential learning, are:

1. Who is involved in this experience?
2. Where is God in this experience?
3. What are my assumptions? Should my under-standings of God be challenged?
4. What questions arise from this experience?
5. What is my response? What can I do as a response to this experience? What is the plan forward?

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[25] David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1984); Alice Y. Kolb & David A. Kolb, "Experiential Learning Theory as a Guide for Experiential Educators in Higher Education," *ELTHE: A Journal for Engaged Educators,* Vol.1. No. 1 (2017), 7-44; Malcolm Knowles, *Andragogy in Action* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984).

[26] Kolb, 201.

6. Did the plan make a positive difference?[27]

The second implication for intentionally keeping mission within the lens of ministry preparation is that such reflective practice is best done in a community of learners. Transformative learning was a concept popularized by Jack Mezirow[28] that takes a constructive approach to learning and similarly shows the amazing potential of allowing experience to shape learning encounters. He identified four elements essential for transformative learning:

1. Disorienting dilemma where an experience triggers a question about what has usually been regarded as true appears not to be.
2. Critical reflection with deliberate, systematic thought about one's basic assumptions in the light of this disorienting experience.
3. Reflective discourse with the individual participating in a conversation (a genuine dialog) in a trusted community so that deeply held assumptions can be examined.
4. Learner autonomy where the learner is able to learn from others that leads to a change of perspective.[29]

Clearly, steps two to four are best conducted in a relational context. The teacher becomes the facilitator, and peers contribute to the learning to a high degree. Pedagogical effort is put into creating safe, critical thinking environments where issues can be explored. The

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[27] For a fuller description of the process of theological reflection, see Robert L. Kinast, *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996); Howard W. Stone & James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Patricia O'Connell Killen & John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad, 2002); Helen Cameron, et al., *Theological Reflection for Human Flourishing: Pastoral Practice and Public Theology* (London: SCM, 2012).

[28] Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991).

[29] Robert W. Ferris *et al., Ministry Education that Transforms* (Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2018), loc. 890 of 3461 e-book.

issues will most often come from painful dissonance that raises its own set of questions. Navigating this terrain is the purview of the teacher—no longer the expert in the room, but a facilitator who brings all their learning, experience, and personal formation to bear on the issue at hand. This is the raw material of transformative learning. One considerable resource we bring to this daunting task is the work of the Holy Spirit.[30] God is at work in our lives. Many times, the process of discernment of God's activity through his Spirit is as important as relaying the content of a new paradigm.

As a cohort of learners works in mission together, they have the opportunity to theologically reflect on the activity of mission—messy as some of the activity may be. This suggests a third and challenging implication for ministry preparation. Assessing learning that takes place in a practical setting, while nothing new in educational circles, is nevertheless challenging. Even disciplines of study that have traditionally been highly content driven (for example, church history or a biblical exegesis class) are now to be viewed through an application lens. Our pedagogy is to model the practical and experiential focus of this education. For example, in a class on church history, rather than just tell about the spiritual disciplines conducted by monks, actually participate in one with the cohort of learners, reflecting later on what went on. In a class on discipleship, have the cohort accompany the teacher to a gathering of a small group of non-believers (perhaps a social event) and have them interact with that group. The teacher engages with this group as well, and there is time spent reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that such an experience provided. Assessment of the learning that takes place is focused on the integration of new concepts.

Conclusion

This paper has focused primarily on the lens of the Emmaus Model. However, these brief thoughts need to be kept in the context of the ultimate outcome of such an educational approach—that of

[30] John 16:4b-15; Romans 8:12-17 to name just two examples of the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. This cannot be over-estimated in ministry preparation.

producing a discipled discipler who in turn makes disciples of Jesus Christ. The lens of formation toward Christlikeness in and for mission seeks to achieve this outcome. Ministry is first and foremost relational. Moving people out of a milieu of real-life relationships into individualized learning (perhaps even remote learning) that is often decontextualized would appear to be counter-productive for ministry preparation. The Emmaus Model seeks to provide a framework for those involved in ministry preparation who view discipleship as central to mission effectiveness.[31]

There are numerous issues to be explored further, including ways of assessing practical performance, character formation, and effective missional engagement. The input to flow through the lens identified as content, character, capability (competence), and context[32] needs further examination to enable a broad as possible engagement into the educative process. Providers of education for ministry preparation will need to think about the shape of a faculty for this purpose, delivery systems that are appropriate for specific contexts, and the sustainability of this approach, to name just a few. Finally, from a Nazarene-specific context, the partnership between local church, the District church and educational provider needs a fresh examination. The Emmaus Model presumes that such a partnership exists and that it is healthy and balanced.

Involvement in ministry preparation by teacher, administrator, and student is a high calling. May God give wisdom and grace to all as we serve the Church.

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[31] See Allder and Ackerman. This booklet was produced for a specific Church of the Nazarene context but does give a brief overview of the model.

[32] Church of the Nazarene *Manual* 2017-2021, para. 529.3 (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2017).

4

Your Gospel Is Too Small:

Reframing the Gospel toward Its Cosmic Grandeur

Jason Valeriano Hallig

Introduction

Paul asked the disciples, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" and they said to him, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling people to believe in him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." Is it possible that we, too, have missed what the gospel really is all about? Brian McLaren also posted several theoretical questions regarding what we believe about Jesus and posed the hard question,

> What if Jesus of Nazareth was right—more right, and right in different ways, than we have ever realized? What if Jesus had a message that truly could save the world, but we're prone to miss the point of it? What if the core message of Jesus has been unintentionally misunderstood or intentionally distorted? What if many of us have sincerely valued some aspects of Jesus's message while missing or even suppressing other, more important dimensions? What if many of us have carried on a religion that faithfully celebrates Jesus in ritual and art, teaches about Jesus in sermons and books, sings about Jesus in songs and hymns, and theorizes about Jesus in seminaries and classrooms . . .

> but somewhere along the way missed rich and radical treasures hidden in the essential message of Jesus.[1]

Let me restate these in simple questions: "What if we have missed something of importance in the gospel?" and "What if what we have missed is itself the very essence of the biblical gospel?" The title I gave this paper declares that very problem—Y*our* Gospel is Too Small.

There is no doubt that the gospel is at the heart of what we believe and preach as Christians and that Jesus is at the core of our message. In sum, we confess that Jesus is the gospel. But what do we mean by that? What is the gospel of Jesus indeed about? This chapter challenges us to ask the question again, not only for ourselves, but also for our churches and the ministries we do. I personally believe that the gospel is what really defines us in terms of who we are and what we do as Christians. This is why it is important that we take a second look at the gospel that influences everything for us.

What is the Gospel?

The Greek word for gospel is *euangelion*, which literally means "good news."[2] This good news is, of course, about Jesus Christ. This is about whom the gospel writers or the evangelists, as they are known, tell us. Mark describes his account as, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The accounts of the life of Jesus have been known as the "Gospels," and rightly so, because they all tell us about Jesus Christ. The Christian gospel then is *that good news about Jesus Christ*.

But what is this gospel about Jesus Christ all about? This is now where we need to take into consideration how we all have understood it or how we need to understand it. Traditionally, the

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[1] Brian D. McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything* (Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2005), 3-4.

[2] For the pagan and Jewish background of the word gospel, see William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 42.

gospel is theologically thought of as "justification by faith." What is meant by this? The common explanation is that men and women are all sinful, and as a consequence, have been subjected to eternal death. However, we confess with John that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son and that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). And this is taken as the sum of what the traditional gospel is all about. Jesus came to redeem humanity from sin and its consequences, which of course he did by dying at the cross for our sins, theologically referred to as the doctrine of atonement. It is believed that Jesus' death offered humanity justification, of which men and women can avail through faith in Jesus Christ. Moreover, through justification by faith, everyone who believes is assured of eternal life in heaven. The concept of heaven is understood as leaving this sinful earth, which is subjected to destruction, and then going somewhere in outer space where God has prepared a place (John 14) for us to live and enjoy God forever.

The question is asked, "What do we do before we get to heaven?" Of course, we faithfully wait for Jesus's return, and at the same time, get ourselves busy with the work of evangelism. This is the common answer: we must preach the gospel to men and women and call them to believe in Jesus so they can join us in waiting for the final salvation or heaven. Some in the evangelical circle have added little spices to it by believing in the doctrine of sanctification or holiness, defined as love for God and love for men and women. And so, while waiting for heaven, we are to love God and to love others. The former points to the religious life of the church, like, worship services and fellowships; the latter points us to practical expressions of loving others.

This kind of gospel has shaped and influenced the lives of so many Christians for centuries. As a result of the revival of biblical theology or biblical studies in the 18th century and onwards, recent Bible scholars are beginning to take another look at the gospel as narrated or presented to us in the Bible. And they have found a quite different gospel. This paper is aimed at expounding the biblical gospel preached by Jesus and his disciples and passed on to the early Christians, and then comparing it with the evolution of the gospel preached by the church all throughout history, beginning with its

internationalization and subsequently toward its institutionalization. My simple thesis is that the gospel that we have known needs a reframing, hence, the subtitle, "Reframing the Gospel toward Its Cosmic Grandeur."

The gospel is greater than what we have been taught. Paul talks about its cosmic nature involving all creations seen or unseen in the heavens above and on the earth below. This is also confirmed by so many confessions in the Old Testament regarding God as the God of the universe or creation. Moreover, the Bible talks about the timeless span and quality of life where all sorts of beings, including men and women, live under God's sovereignty and righteousness in a world that now shapes and affects toward a meaningful existence that moves forward to God's own cosmic grandeur revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Why Reframe the Gospel?

As this paper will show below, it is my firm belief that the gospel we have known and been taught for centuries has an inadequate frame. As a result, people do not hear a gospel big enough for their life-needs and worldviews. Part of the problem of the traditional view is that it cannot respond to the questions of our young people, who are not interested simply in the afterlife. They want to make sense of this present life. They want answers to questions of the now and here. What do we do with the increasing violence against humanity, the wild kingdom, and even the environment? How do we address the growing and worsening problem of global warming? These are just a few examples, and I know there are more questions that are not being addressed by the kind of gospel we have because it is not just fit for that. It indeed has an inadequate frame.

Not too long ago, I read a book by J. B. Philips entitled, *Your God Is Too Small*. It brought me to thinking that our gospel with its present frame has become too small. In the same spirit with Philips, we must humbly say that "Y*our* Gospel Is Too Small" too. The world needs a gospel big enough for their life-needs and worldviews. How then do we reframe the gospel, which we have known, so that it becomes more relevant to today's needs and worldviews? Let me

propose seven steps toward reframing the gospel based on a careful reading of the gospel as narrated or presented in the Bible.

But before I go there, let me give a brief discussion on the old frame of the gospel and why it is inadequate. First, I find the old frame too focused on sin. Justification is understood as God's solution to the problem of sin. And indeed, it is, but only in part. To focus on it as if it is the antithesis of the gospel is too much or perhaps too little for the biblical gospel. This is in part the reason why we love to tell people with the traditional gospel that they are sinful or sinners and they need to repent. Faith is understood initially as repentance from sin. Sin is always the problem. But this overemphasis on sin has made the gospel so offensive to people. Some even argued that we have a low view of mankind. This has led people to disregard our gospel because, to them, such is a diminishing view of men and women. Men and women are viewed as weak and powerless. Of course, we do not want to go as far as Pelagius in our anthropology. That is unacceptable indeed for us. We still affirm the sinfulness of humanity before and outside Christ and that it has greatly marred mankind's ability for good and love. However, the gospel has already altered this. That's part of the good news. We will see this more in the discussion below.

Second, the traditional frame of the gospel is human-centered. God is viewed as one who rescues men and women. What God is doing is not really about himself, his will, or his world, but about men and women and how he rescues them from their sins and brings them back to life eternal. Mankind is at the heart of the redemptive activities of God, who is seen as simply a helper or a savior of humanity. While men and women are important to God and to what God is doing, the biblical gospel puts God/Christ at the center. It is about God.

Third, the traditional gospel is guilt-driven. This is a corollary of the first one. Sin is guilt, and it needs restitution. I find this emphasis on guilt as an influence of the western culture upon the Christian gospel. The psychological aspect of sin necessitates a gospel that deals with such a horrible feeling and, of course, the assurance of being freed from it. The biblical gospel, however, is focused more on the shame aspect of it.

This leads us to the fourth one. The traditional gospel is too individualistic. Again, a western perspective of justification as personal, which means individual responsibility. Such is alien to the biblical narrative of the gospel.

Fifth, the traditional gospel is politically weak. Since it is personal, it loses its power to transform societies. Its political power is highly and radically weakened. The gospel is often viewed as apolitical. This is the reason why the western church adopted the separation of the church and the state. However, we are finding out that such separation had its bad consequences. This is why there is that cry for liberation theology intended to bring back the political and social aspects of the gospel. And lastly, the traditional gospel is eschatologically misdirected. The traditional concepts of heaven and hell are both a misreading of the biblical gospel.

Sadly, the Christian life has been lived out under the influence of such a gospel leading to an indifferent life and eccentric community, which dissociate spirituality from secularism. We have indeed lived in a dichotomized world that is hardly influencing society and its multi-structures of government and diverse cultures of people. Moreover, as the society progresses philosophically, scientifically, and technologically, the church appears to have become more and more irrelevant and insignificant. Some are of the opinion that men and women can live better without God and the church. Laws nowadays are being legislated without Christian influence. New definitions of relationships and responsibilities are being created and observed, supported by atheistic governments. The challenge for the church is never as strong as it is now. As such, there is indeed a need for a gospel that addresses greater human needs and larger worldviews. That said, let us turn to my proposed seven steps to reframing the gospel.

Remembering the Larger Biblical Narrative

The gospel has to be understood from its larger biblical narrative. The New Testament narrative is part and parcel of the biblical narrative. When the gospel is taken out of its larger narrative, then a narrow understanding of the gospel emerges. Studies show that the traditional gospel is a consequence of misreading Paul and

his gospel presentation in his letters. Such is the case because people have been reading Paul in light of the Reformation context rather than the biblical context. The problem of the 16th century Reformation was imported to the reading of Paul and his letters. This is particularly true in the reading of Paul's letter to the Romans. Reformation theologians have always seen the book of Romans as centering on the gospel of justification by faith. This is the reason why the theology of the gospel is centered on justification. As such, to them, justification is the gospel.

The writers of the New Testament situate their accounts of Jesus's story within the story of the Jews or the biblical story. This is why biblical scholars like E. P. Sanders questioned the interpretation of Paul as centering on justification by faith as understood by the Reformers. E. P. Sanders started the discussion of the New Perspective on Paul or popularly known as the NPP. As such, Paul is situated in the Jewish narrative. Jews did not take the Law, for example, in terms of legalism, that is, the law viewed as the way to justification or legalistic righteousness. Sanders argues that the Jews understood the Law in the context of God's covenant with Israel. He calls it "covenantal nomism," that is, the law functions within the context of the covenant. In other words, the Jews were not trying to enter into the covenant through the Law; they were already in the covenant. Instead, they were maintaining themselves in the covenant through the Law.

But what was the covenant for? Was it God's response to the fall? Certainly not. The covenant was the renewal of God's intention in creation, that is, the establishment of the kingship of God over his creation: "The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all."[3] F. F. Bruce writes,

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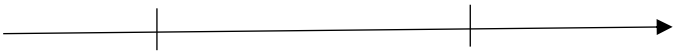
[3] The kingship of Yahweh is a witness to his own work and character. Bruggemann writes, ". . . the metaphor of king is a way of witnessing to Yahweh's work of ordering creation as a viable, reliable place for life and well-being." Moreover, this witness testifies or rather declares that the kingship of Yahweh is "marked by righteousness, equity, and truth (Psalms 96:10,13), and it is a cause for great joy ad exultation among all creatures (Psalms 96:11-12)." Walter Bruggemann, *Theology of the Old*

> The kingship of Yahweh, the God of Israel, had been for centuries a dominant theme in national worship. His sovereignty was manifested at creation in the curbing of the unruly deep: Mightier than the thunder of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, Yahweh on high is mighty (Psalm 93:4).[4]

Genesis provides us the account of God's kingdom with mankind as his co-rulers or stewards of his good creation. Bruggemann and others write, "As the image of God, human beings function to mirror God to the world, to be as God would be to the nonhuman, to be an extension of God's own dominion."[5] Hence, the biblical narrative begins with God's work of creation serving as the context of the covenant that followed.



The people of Israel were God's people in and through whom God exercised his rule to all the nations. They were supposed to be the people who would bring the blessings of God to all the nations. This is shown in God's covenant with Abraham, that he would be a father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:1-16). The history of Israel was a narrative of God's covenant with Abraham. This covenant was ratified at Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Law through Moses. Scholars describe the covenant as "a royal or kingly covenant in which Israel came under the rule of Yahweh and the people were constituted as his domain (see Exod. 19:5-6)."[6]

Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 238-39.

[4] F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 22.

[5] Bruce C. Birch, et al., *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 50.

[6] G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 18.

Israel David

The Davidic kingdom was the climax of God's kingdom with Israel. However, Israel with its kings became unfaithful to God, leading to the collapse of the monarchy, which symbolized the kingship of God with his people. The destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people of Israel appeared to have ended God's kingship with his people. But not so, because the promised kingship of David would come in and through his Son—the Messiah, as prophesied by the prophets.[7]

David Jesus

The narrative of Jesus is indeed the continuation or actually the fulfillment of the promised eternal Davidic kingdom that shall be for all nations. The kingdom of Jesus fulfills the covenant God made with Abraham and intended from creation.

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[7] For a thorough discussion on the God's covenant with Abraham, David, and the people of Israel, see Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). Beasley-Murray (*Jesus and the Kingdom*, 20) notes,

> Any summary of the prophetic teaching concerning the nature of existence in the kingdom of God would have to note the following three features,
>
> The universality of the rule of Yahweh.
>
> The righteousness of the kingdom.
>
> The peace of the kingdom.
>
> Thus, the goal of history is reached in the revelation and universal acknowledgement of Yahweh's sovereignty, the triumph of righteousness, and the establishment of peace and salvation in the world.

The larger narrative shows us that the narrative of the gospel is not limited to the narrative of the justification of mankind but rather belongs to the narrative of divine kingship to which men and women are called to participate.[8] The gospel then invites us into the narrative of the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus. We will discuss what this faith means in the context of the kingdom later.

Returning the Missing Part of the Jesus's Narrative

The good news is not just simply a message or a prophecy. People hear and read about the good news, but it is really more than words that echo in our ears. The four Gospels we have in the New Testament are written testimonies about the person of Jesus, whom the early Christians believed to be the Messiah. Their testimonies were not just anchored in stories from living witnesses and inspired prophecies from the Scriptures; they were talking about the person of Jesus. Jesus *is* the good news. They were talking about the person whom they have seen, heard, and touched when he was with them (cf. 1 John 1:1).

Their accounts of the person of Jesus include the birth, public life and ministry, and then his death, resurrection, and ascension. Although not all of his life is described, most of what he said and did as the Messiah is included. Hence, the Jesus narrative is quite comprehensive. However, the theological expression of the narrative appears to have been truncated with a strong emphasis on his death and resurrection. In fact, some believe that the gospel accounts were accounts of the passion narrative with an extensive introduction. The first theological arrangement of the life of Jesus is expressed in the Apostles' Creed, which states

> I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated

[8] See N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2016), 71-142.

at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

The Apostles' Creed sadly was not written by the apostles themselves. We don't know the actual author/s of the creed. It is simply believed to be the summary of the confession of the early church in the third or fourth century. But what is strikingly missing in the creed is the public life and ministry of Jesus and its theological significance.[9]

What is in the public life and ministry of Jesus? Were the things that Jesus did and said not theologically important? Most of the preaching of the church today echoes the teachings and ministries of Jesus. They tell us a lot about Jesus and the mission he actually fulfilled with his death and resurrection. Knowing what Jesus said and did during his public life and ministry will uncover the very reason why Jesus was born, suffered, crucified, died, was buried, and rose again. The problem is that theologians have jumped to the Medieval and Reformation theologies for their theological interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus. And voila, there we have the doctrine of atonement in the context of justification by faith. They, however, missed the biblical reason the Gospel authors provided for us in the public life and ministry of Jesus.

In his book, *The Secret Message of Jesus*, Brian D. McLaren offers his readers an extensive discussion on what was the heart of the public life and ministry of Jesus. McLaren writes, "I have read, reread, and reflected on his public presentations. Jesus preached his message of *the kingdom of God* in public on many occasions over a period of about three years."[10] Similarly, Scot McKnight is convinced that Jesus's favorite title of self-reference is the Son of Man. McKnight concludes,

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[9] N. T. Wright takes note of this missing part. See *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (San Francisco: HaperOne, 2016).

[10] McLaren, *The Secret Message*, 35. Emphasis added. See also, James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* in *Christianity in the Making*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 383.

> Whatever one makes of the historical questions, in the Gospels Jesus constantly refers to himself through this rather ambiguous if also highly evocative expression of the "Son of Man." As one scholar has put it, the term function as a "job description" for Jesus' own mission as the true representative of the new Israel he is proclaiming in his kingdom message.[11]

Indeed, the kingdom of God is what Jesus preached and taught to the people: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Beasley-Murray notes that "this passage set by Mark as the climax to his prologue to the ministry of Jesus, and is intended to supply a summary of the gospel preached by Jesus."[12] The kingdom of God is at the center; his life and ministry revolved around the proclamation of the kingdom of God (see Matthew 5-7).[13] This is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures or the Jewish story, which McLaren believes to be the one that resonated with the themes of the Jewish Scriptures.[14] So, we can say that the Jesus narrative is the Jewish narrative; it is the fulfillment of the Jewish hope.

The missing part in the Jesus narrative is the message of the kingdom of God, which Jesus inaugurated in and through his life and ministry with the people and later established in and through his death and resurrection. The cross was the climax of Jesus's life and ministry vis-à-vis the kingdom.

Reinterpreting the Passion Narrative

With the missing part returned, then we need to reinterpret the passion narrative. What actually happened at the cross? The cross

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[11] Scot McKnight, *The Story of the Christ* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 62.

[12] Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom,* 71.

[13] See Darrell L. Bock with Benjamin I. Simpson, *Jesus the God-Man: The Unity and Diversity of the Gospel Portrayals* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 15-63. See also Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 86-121.

[14] McLaren, *The Secret Message*, 19-34.

is the main act of the biblical narrative. Both the traditional gospel and its "reframation" have their center at the cross. Where there is no cross, there is no gospel at all. The life and ministry of Jesus would have meant nothing had he not died at the cross. Jesus himself knew the necessity of the cross. In his human agony, he cried, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. . . ." But he had no choice, except to do the will of the Father: "Yet not my will but yours be done." Indeed, it is at the cross where we first saw the light. But what is the light we saw at the cross?

For centuries we have understood the cross through the lenses of the Medieval and Reformation theologies. We have understood it in terms of the doctrine of atonement. We believe that the cross is the atoning sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men and women. We believe that we have received both forgiveness and freedom from sin. The cross is the antidote to the sin problem of mankind. There is no doubt that sin and the cross were somehow two important realities in the passion narrative. But we need to understand the relationship properly in the light of the biblical narrative. The cross was the expression of the faithfulness of God both to the covenant he gave with Abraham and the calling he gave the people of Israel.[15] The doctrine of atonement is the language of systematic theology that emerged out of the Reformation's interpretation of the death of Christ. Biblical theology, on the other hand, offers a theological understanding in the light of its kingdom narrative. The cross is not simply God's provision for the forgiveness of sins. We understand this when we see sin not just as an offense or a moral failure but a power that has enslaved men and women since the fall of Adam and Eve. Sin reigned. By its power, sin had defined men and women, and it determined mankind's destiny—death.

The cross, however, is more than a provision; it is God's power. Hence, Paul writes, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation. . . ." The power of the gospel is the power of the cross. At the cross happened the epic battle between two kingdoms—the kingdom of sin and darkness and the kingdom of the Son and light. As such, the cross is the dethronement of sin. The

[15] Wright, *The Day the Revolution*, 295-351.

reign of sin since Adam ended at the cross. Sin lost its power to define men and women, and as a consequence, it will no longer determine human destiny. Indeed, as N. T. Wright cries out, the crucifixion was the day the revolution began. Wright writes,

> As Jesus's followers looked back on that day in the light of what happened soon afterward, they came up with the shocking, scandalous, nonsensical claim that his death had launched a revolution. That something had happened that afternoon that had changed the world. That by six o'clock on that dark Friday evening the world was a different place…they believed that with this event the one true God had suddenly and dramatically put into operation his plan for the cue of the world. They saw it as the day the revolution began.[16]

The revolution was to crush the reign of sin over men and women. And there at the cross, sin was crushed indeed and rendered powerless by the blood of the Son.

The dethronement of sin is only the first half of the act; the second part comes with the enthronement of the Son. The cross is not all about sin; it is also about the Son. Both sin and the Son were crucified. The former to its end; the latter to a new beginning. Sin is forever undone; it is a kingdom gone. On the other side, the Son and his kingdom have now come. Christ is king. Indeed, the cross was the enthronement of Jesus as king.[17] Unknown to human eyes and human minds, the cross is the crown. And there sat the Son on his throne with the crown on his head and the title over his head, the king of the Jews. He won the victory: *christus victor*.[18] And so after the

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[16] Ibid., 3-4.

[17] Wright, *How God*.

[18] See N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 540-611. He believes that the cross was the symbol of the victory of God: "It was to become the symbol, because it would be the means, of the victory of God." James D. G. Dunn however raises the danger of Wright's proposal as a form of "Grand Narrative," which could make the gospel to today's generation as a suspect. See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 470-

resurrection, King Jesus commanded his disciples with the following words, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you to ends of the earth" (Matt 28). The Great Commission is anchored in the authority of Jesus as the new King of both heavens and the earth.

Growing up in the Roman Catholic faith, I was told again and again that Holy Week was about mourning because in that week, God died: "*tatlong araw na walang Diyos"* (three days without God). The same idea was also taught by the Protestants. We think that Jesus died, and he died for our sins. We wait for the Resurrection for the good news of life. Rightly so, because we have understood the cross as God's atoning sacrifice for the sins of men and women. The biblical narrative, however, gives us another picture. The Passion Narrative is not about the day when God died; rather, it was the day when God became King. It is not a week of mourning, but it is a celebration since on that day Christ was enthroned as king indeed.

Redefining Faith

So far, we have been talking about the divine factors of the gospel. In the following, we are going to discuss the human response to the Gospel. The Gospel is not a gift given to men and women without condition. By condition, we mean the human appropriation of God's grace in Jesus Christ. God does not coerce anyone to receive the Gospel of Christ. Rather, through the Gospel and its proclamation, God persuades men and women. The proclamation of the Gospel is one of persuasion. The Bible calls men and women to faith in Christ Jesus.[19] This is in line with the biblical narrative

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77. However, we must understand that God's narrative is never coercive nor oppressive. The Kingdom of God is one of righteousness and justice.

[19] Dunn emphasizes the fact that faith in the New Testament, particularly to Jesus, is faith in God (*Jesus Remembered*, 500-503). Hence, faith in Jesus is also faith in God.

beginning with Abraham, who was called by God and was given the covenant unto which Abraham responded by faith.

The Gospel is that grace of God in Christ received by faith. As Paul says, "For by *grace* you have been saved *through faith*, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:8-9). Faith is not anchored in any person but Jesus Christ. Moreover, it is neither about Christ nor for Christ. Many wrongly equate faith with doctrines or teachings about Christ. While it is important that our knowledge of Christ or our Christology is right, faith is never anchored in that knowledge. Hence, faith is not an intellectual assent. Likewise, faith is not something that we do for Christ. God does not require anything or any works that we must do as a condition for faith. One common mistake is that many associate faith with repentance from sin. The call to repentance is not a call to faith. A person can repent of his or her sins and yet not put his faith in Christ. Faith is centered on Christ. Where there is no Christ, there is no faith. Sin does not define faith; Christ does.

What is faith, then? The Greek word *pistis* was used by the Greeks in reference to "loyalty" or "allegiance."[20] Early Christians applied it to their relationship and commitment to Jesus as the King. Jürgen Moltmann believes that faith "is a call to follow Jesus," with him and his works as signs of the kingdom of God.[21] Matthew W. Bates captures this very essence of faith in the context of the biblical narrative and in relation to the person of Jesus Christ.[22] He believes that faith is that allegiance to the person of Jesus the King. Allegiance means that personal recognition of the kingship of Jesus and one's rendering of loyalty to him as King. So, to put your faith in Jesus

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[20] Rudolf Bultmann, "*Pisteuo,*" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 6:174-228.

[21] George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 113. See also Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 54.

[22] Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

means that you recognize his kingship, brought by his death and resurrection, and you commit yourself to living your life in loyalty to him and his kingdom. It involves a change in the course of one's life toward a new course of direction anchored in the life and mission of King Jesus. Hence, faith is not a one-time confession of the kingship of Jesus, but a lifetime commitment to living one's life in Jesus. Such life is characterized by the Holy Spirit.

God's gift for faith is the Holy Spirit Himself. While it is anchored in the person of Jesus the King, God seals it with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Udo Schnelle writes, "As the beginning of communion with Christ, reception of the Spirit in baptism (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11; 10:4; 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14) marks the beginning of the believer's participation in the saving event."[23] As such, living by faith is living by the Holy Spirit. Faith, though a human response to the kingship of Christ, is lived by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who works in and through the believer's life toward life in Jesus. Christlikeness is the work of the Holy Spirit with the daily cooperation of the believer and the cultivation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This happens through the believer's submission to the Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit with regards to sin, righteousness, and eternal life.

Reclaiming Our (the Church) Identity as the People of the Kingdom

The gospel creates a new people of God—the Church.[24] G. E. Ladd writes, "Jesus looked upon his disciples as the nucleus of Israel who accepted his proclamation of the Kingdom of God and who, therefore, formed the true people of God."[25] He adds, "He indicated his purpose to bring into being his *ekklesia* who would recognize his messiahship *or his kingship* and be the people of the Kingdom and at the same time the instrument of the Kingdom in the

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[23] Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, 270.

[24] See Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church: Contours of Christian Theology* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1995), 42-44.

[25] Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 379.

world."[26] This is why the Gospel cannot be personal or an individual religious enterprise. The Gospel does not call us to accept Jesus as our personal Savior; rather, when we recognize Jesus as the King and commitment is given to him in loyalty, we join the people of God. Hence, faith is not accepting Jesus but uniting with Jesus and his community.[27] The moment we believe, we are united with the church. Hence, our identity as believers is not only tied to Jesus, the head, but also to the church, his body. In Christ, we are one with the church. Christ and the church are inseparable realities in our identity as Christians. We cannot believe in Christ without belonging to the church; we cannot belong to the church without believing in Christ. The "only Jesus movement" is not Christian. It is coming out of ignorance of the Christian faith or the fruit of arrogance of individualistic Christianity.

The church is the people of the kingdom.[28] There is no kingdom without a king; but likewise, there is no kingdom without a people. The kingdom of God in the biblical narrative has five aspects:

The Kingdom	**Israel**	**the Church**
The King	Yahweh as King	Jesus as King
The people	Israel (ethnic)	The church (catholic)
The Will	The Torah	The Word and the Holy Spirit
The Land	the Promised Land	The whole creation
The Hope	God's eschatological reign through Israel	New Heaven and New Earth

The church as the people of the kingdom means that we are the new people of God. In Christ, the new people of God is expanded

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[26] Ibid. Italic is mine.

[27] Clowney, *The Church*, 44.

[28] Ladd proposes maxims on the relationship between the Kingdom and the Church: 1) The Church is not the Kingdom, 2) The Kingdom creates the Church, 3) The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom, 4) The Church is the Instrument of the Kingdom, 5) The Church: The Custodian of the Kingdom (*Theology of the New Testament*, 109-117).

to all the nations, both Jews and Gentiles.[29] Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, no is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). The unity of the church is a unity of nations. Hence, the church is not ethnic (one nation) but catholic (all nations). It is inclusive, not exclusive. As such, no nation has the monopoly of the church—its life and ministry. Ethnicities do not define church membership and ministries; we are defined solely by our identity and unity in Christ. We are Christians; we are the church.

However, the kingdom of God is more than a matter of identity; it is the life of God's new community. The church is the new world. We are God's kingdom on earth. We are the answer to the Lord's Prayer: "May Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This prayer is a call for the church to live as the people of the kingdom on earth. In other words, we are to exercise God's righteous kingdom here and now. We are called to be God's co-rulers or stewards of this earth or rather the cosmos. We are the hope of the world, not only in terms of unity but also in terms of responsibility. The church must model to the world the kingdom of God. Weak ecclesiology is not only a weak life but likewise a weak witness to the kingdom of God. We will discuss more of this in the next section.

The kingdom life is not limited to the fellowship of the saints. It involves responsibility to the whole world and the rest of creation. N. T. Wright rightly notes,

> The Early Christians saw Jesus' resurrection as the action of the creator god to reaffirm the essential goodness of creation and, in an initial and representative act of new creation, to establish a bridgehead within the present world of space, time, and matter ('the present evil age,' as in Galatians 1.4) through which the whole new creation could now come to birth. Calling Jesus 'son of god' within the context of meaning, they constituted themselves by implication as a collection of rebel cells within Caesar's

[29] Wright, *The New Testament*, 455.

> empire, loyal to a different monarch, a different kyrios. Saying 'Jesus has been raised from the dead' proved to be self-involving in that it gained its meaning within this counter-imperial worldview. The Sadducees were right to regard the doctrine of resurrection, and especially its announcement in relation to Jesus, as political dynamite.[30]

Through our commitment to justice and righteousness, we let the world experience and enjoy the reality of the kingdom here on earth. Creation, likewise, experiences the presence and power of the kingdom in the world. This we do as the people of the kingdom.

Restating the Mission of the Church

The church has anchored its mission in the Great Commission Jesus gave to his disciples: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. . . ." And so, the church goes proclaiming the "gospel" to make disciples of all nations. Hence, it is believed that the church exists for the making of disciples.[31]

A closer look at the biblical gospel and Jesus's words for his disciples, however, offers us a more comprehensive understanding of the mission of the church. While the making of disciples is an important work of the church, the mission is beyond it. The Great Commission is only the means toward the goal of the mission of the church. The biblical narrative as a whole has to be taken into consideration in understanding the words of Jesus after his resurrection. The neglect of the biblical narrative has led to a narrow definition of the Great Commission. The church has missed both its foundation and goal. As a result, the task of making disciples became its very being or the *sine qua non* of the church. At a recent seminar

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[30] N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 729-30.

[31] Wright, however, puts the mission of the church under its two poles of Christian living: worship and mission. See, Marcus J. Borg and N. T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1999), 207-28.

on discipleship I attended, the speaker talked about it without giving us why we do what we do.

Apparently, this reframing challenges us to restate the mission of the church in the light of the gospel narrative, that is, the kingdom gospel. The church is called to be the kingdom of God. Disciple-making is anchored in the very being of the church as the kingdom of God. We disciple people so they participate in the kingdom Jesus established in and through his life. As such, discipleship is ushering people into the kingdom of God and teaching them to live the kingdom life. This we see clearly in Jesus' words to his disciples, revealing two maxims of the Great Commission. First, the Great Commission is rooted in Jesus as the new King: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . . ." Scholars are convinced that the "authority" Jesus expressed to his disciples is more than his authority to forgive sins; it points to the new status or authority of Jesus as the new and *now* rightful King of the nations. John Nolland writes, "In discussing 20:22, 27:38, I suggested, further, that at least in some proleptic sense Matthew sees Jesus as manifesting his kingly rule from the cross, perhaps even in some ironically intended sense taking up his rule as king there."[32] There is now a new King, and his name is Jesus, to whom all nations must pledge their allegiance if they want to become part of his eternal kingdom. Craig Keener writes, "Because Jesus has all authority, because he is king in the kingdom of God, his disciples must carry on the mission of teaching the kingdom (10:7)."[33]

Second, the Great Commission has the kingdom of God as its goal. The kingdom of heaven, interchangeably used for the kingdom of God, is not the same as what many believe as going to heaven once a believer dies. The kingdom is life—a life of reconciliation not only to God and humanity, of humans to themselves, but also of humanity to creation. It is a life that involves both relationships and responsibilities. As such, the kingdom of God

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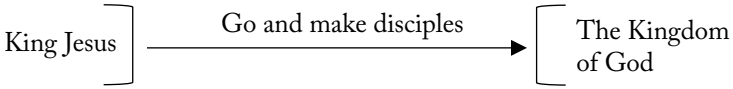
[32] John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* in NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1264.

[33] Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 718.

is the exercise of God's righteous and loving authority in and through men and women over God's creation toward a dynamic, productive, peaceful, and prosperous life that brings honor and glory to God Himself both now and forever.



Discipleship and the kingdom are inseparable. The Great Commission is the bridge to the kingdom. It gives people access, both to King Jesus and the Kingdom itself. Without discipleship, people will be deprived of the kingdom if not locked out of the kingdom. And so, a proper understanding of discipleship is indeed a must for the church and its mission. Hence, the mission of the church cannot just be discipleship that is limited to evangelism, but a cosmic kingdom discipleship. We do this through the twofold task of discipleship—baptizing men and women—and teaching them the kingdom. The former calls men and women unto personal allegiance to King Jesus, resulting in a union with the body of Christ—the church; the latter brings them to a growing knowledge of the kingdom.

Reconstructing Biblical Eschatology

An important aspect of the gospel of the kingdom is its future—the Christian hope. The kingdom of God offers its people hope, and as Paul declares, this hope does not disappoint us (Rom 5:5).[34] The Christian hope is primarily a reference to the future reality of what N.T. Wright calls "life after life after death."[35] This is also known as the consummation of the Kingdom of God, where the renewal of all things will come to its fullness.[36] Both heaven and earth

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[34] See the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, edited by Richard John Neuhaus (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969).

[35] See Wright, *How God Became*.

[36] See George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 307-328.

will be renewed for the final and eternal reconciliation. No longer will they be subjected to separation or corruption. God will make everything new, paving the way for the fullness of the new creation—the new heaven and new earth.

Biblical eschatology paints to us a beautiful and eternal reconciliation of heaven and earth coming together as one—the home of the kingdom of God.[37] The present separation between heaven and earth will be overcome, and it shall be no more. Moreover, Christians are not going to leave this earth toward a new world called "heaven." That belief in a new but separate heaven is totally alien to the biblical narrative and theology. It is more at home with the Gnostic belief of dualism—good and evil, heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, etc. Rather, in the renewal of the good earth, the new heaven will come to be forever one with its counterpart—the earth. Those who belong to the kingdom of God will all be resurrected to participate in the consummation of the kingdom. We, too, will be given a new resurrected body fit for the new heaven and the new earth. Revelation declares this reality with the words of God: "Behold, I am making everything new" (Rev 21:5).

When the reconciliation and renewal of all things come to reality, then God will make his dwelling among men and women. This is a picture of God coming to be one with his beloved humanity created in his image and restored to their glory.[38] Under renewed union with God, the renewed humanity shall be God's co-rulers of God's renewed or remade creations. The whole cosmos now comes under the righteous and loving rule of God in and through the new and eternal humanity. And it is this future that all creation has been longing to come, for it is only under the righteous and loving kingdom of God in and through men and women that creation will experience its fullness and its full potentials to be that glorious world both for the joy of humanity and the glory of God. This is our hope.

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[37] N. T. Wright, "Farewell to the Rapture," in http:// ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/farewell-to-the-rapture/ (accessed February 22, 2020).

[38] Ibid.

The Christian hope is not heaven separated from earth. The future is not about us going to heaven, but heaven coming for us, that is, earth and heaven coming together in perfect harmony and unity. Likewise, the future of the new humanity is our reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus. God and humanity shall be forever united in Christ to be given co-rulership or co-kingship of God's good creation, seen and unseen. There is no hope greater than the biblical Christian hope indeed.

What will be destroyed is not creation, but Satan and sin. Both shall not take part in the new creation. Together with all those who rejected Christ and his kingship, and yes, including the anti-Christ, they will perish forever and ever. The kingdom of God is a whole new world. It is an eternal kingdom reserved only for the people of the kingdom.

We also need to reconstruct the fact that the Christian hope is a new hope. This is not the hope of future resurrection before Christ. The resurrection is no longer a future event but a present reality we have in Christ. To Jürgen Moltmann's hope is grounded both in history and experience.[39] It answers the deepest question of life. The answer is Jesus is risen. In him our resurrection is sure. Writing about Jürgen Moltmann, Marcel Neusch writes,

> Moltmann maintains that Christian hope is in fact not an abstract utopia but a passion for the future that has become "really possible" thanks to the resurrection of Christ. By entering into history, the resurrection of Christ introduces a novum which gives substance to hope and opens up to it a definitive horizon (an ultimum) that does not signal the end of history but is rather a real possibility for human life and for history itself.[40]

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[39] See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. by James W. Leitsch (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

[40] Marcel Neusch, *The Sources of Modern Atheism: One Hundred Years of Debate Over God*, trans. by Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist, 1982), 211.

Moreover, we have been given the Holy Spirit as God's *arabon* (deposit) for the future—our new hope. We know that we will share in the resurrection because we have been given the Holy Spirit now. Creation witnesses its own resurrection in the resurrection of Jesus. In other words, history and eschatology have come together in Jesus's resurrection. G. E. Ladd rightly says,

> An all-important fact in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom was the recovery of the prophetic tension between history and eschatology in a new and even more dynamic form. In this person and mission, the Kingdom of God had come near in history in fulfillment of the prophetic hope; but it would yet come in eschatological consummation in the future at a time known only to God (Mark 13:32).[41]

Conclusion

Jesus's words to his disciples remind us of what is at the heart of his command for them: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you as well" (Matt 6:3). Yes, the gospel is all about the kingdom of God. It is what the good news about Jesus is all about. With the death and resurrection of Jesus, the kingdom has finally come. Jesus is king. And this the world must know in and through the mission of the church.

As the people of the kingdom, we not only pledge our allegiance to Jesus, we likewise announce his kingship in and through people who come to share with us the eternal blessings of the kingdom, and together with us live the kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven, transforming lives, people, and the cosmos in preparation for the renewal of all things at his coming again.

The growth and expansion of the kingdom of God continue to answer the Lord's Prayer: "May your kingdom come to earth as it is in heaven." The church, as the people of the kingdom, is God's holy agent in persuading the nations to the kingship of Jesus and in giving them God's righteous and loving authority here and now until its glorious consummation when God makes all things new. This is the

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[41] Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, 320.

kingdom, and this is why Jesus was born, lived and ministered, suffered, died, was buried, and rose again; and for this, he will come back.

5

The Cost of Being a Disciple (Luke 14:25-35)

David A. Ackerman

Introduction

If one wishes to learn about discipleship, then the Gospel of Luke is a good place to look. Luke, as well as the other Synoptic writers, has much to say about what it means to follow Jesus and make him *kyrios*, "Lord" and "Master." The stated purpose of the Gospel of Luke is found in 1:4: so that Theophilus might know the certainty of the things he has been taught. Fitzmyer explains, "Luke writes from the period of the church and intends to assure Theophilus and other readers like him that what the church of his day was teaching and practicing was rooted in the period of Jesus, to strengthen them in fidelity to that teaching and practice."[1] The story of Jesus and his church continues in the book of Acts, where the disciples work out their call to be disciples in the post-resurrection period through suffering and mission.[2] The call Jesus gave to become his follower catches fire through the work of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship becomes a journey of commitment that encompasses all of one's life and sends disciples out into the world in service to their Lord. Luke

[1] J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* Vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 9.

[2] Acts is the second volume Luke wrote to Theophilus. Acts 1:1 contains the significant *protos logos*, "first book," believed to be the Gospel of Luke. Its genre is radically different but the two provide the grand story from the birth of Jesus to the birth of the church.

wants Theophilus and his house church to hear this call of discipleship and deepen their faith in Jesus.

Although the third gospel is anonymous, it has traditionally been attributed to Luke, the beloved physician and travel companion of Paul the Apostle. Evidence for Lukan authorship comes from the title of the most ancient manuscript, P^{75}, which dates from 175-225. Fitzmyer gives these clues about the author: (1) the author is not an eyewitness but probably a second- or third-generation Christian (1:2); (2) he is not a Palestinian native; (3) he is well-educated; and (4) "he differs from other evangelists in his desire to relate the story of Jesus not only to the contemporary world and culture but also to the growth and development of the nascent Christian church."[3] We know very little about Luke since he is mentioned only three times in the New Testament (Phlm. 24; Col. 4:14; and 2 Tim 4:11). The strongest internal support for Lukan authorship comes from the "we-sections" of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).

The date and place of writing of this Gospel are uncertain. If we take the ending of Acts as a clue, Luke may have written his Gospel before the death of Paul in the mid-60s. Most modern scholars suggest that Luke was written after Mark's Gospel, upon which Luke seems to rely. Whatever the case, it is clear that he writes to a new generation of believers who need to hear the call to discipleship for themselves. This Gospel, as with the other Gospels, re-enlivens Jesus' words and calls readers to take up their crosses and follow him. The audience could have included Gentile Christians since Luke is concerned with (1) relating the Christ-event to a Greco-Roman literary tradition, (2) dedicating the work to a Greek (Theophilus), and (3) his desire to relate salvation promised to Israel to Gentiles.[4] Luke's theology focuses upon the "history of salvation." He begins to unfold this gospel with the birth of the forerunner, John the Baptist, and ends with Paul, the great missionary apostle, sitting under house arrest in the center of the Roman Empire. This Gospel is written about the events (*peri logon*, 1:4) of the birth, life, teachings,

[3] Fitzmyer, 1:35.

[4] Fitzmyer, 1:57-58.

death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The central theme is the Christ event of Jesus' death and resurrection. Much in the Gospel leads to this point, and much in Acts reflects back on it as the Holy Spirit helps the early church spread the message. Norval Geldenhuys says,

> [Luke] wrote his Gospel not merely to write a beautiful story, to afford pleasure to his readers or to satisfy curiosity, and not even just for the sake of giving instruction. He wrote with the object of convincing, converting, saving and spiritually edifying his fellow-men . . . . The Gospel was written "out of faith unto faith" in order to hold up Jesus as Lord and Redeemer.[5]

Luke 14:25-35 fits well with this purpose and reveals the key response Luke anticipates from his readers. The Christ event brought a peace unrecognizable to the world. So radical was the new reality brought in Jesus Christ that division even among family members would be the result (Luke 12:51-53). Luke is determined that Theophilus and anyone who reads this document respond to the radical call of discipleship with full commitment. In this passage, Jesus explains that a disciple must be willing to count and pay the high cost of following him.

On the Way to the Cross

This passage is found in a strategic location within the Gospel of Luke. There is a significant shift in the storyline at 9:51, when Jesus turns his face towards Jerusalem and purposefully begins the journey to the cross (9:51, 53; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28). Craddock adds, "Geographical references are puzzling and do not support movement from Galilee to Jerusalem. . . . Today students of Luke generally conclude that the journey is not geographical but is an editorial structure created by Luke." This section is particularly

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[5] Norval Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 42.

Lukan since it contains stories common only to Luke or arranged uniquely by Luke.[6]

Charles Talbert suggests a chiastic pattern in 10:21-18:30. He puts 14:25-15:32 alongside of 12:29-13:9. In each of these sections, he sees four themes present in this order:

1. Transcendence of family loyalties (12:29-53)
2. Prudent action taken ahead of time (12:54-59)
3. Repentance (13:1-5)
4. A fruitless tree is cut down (13:6-9)

1. Transcendence of family loyalties (14:25-27)
2. Prudent action taken ahead of time (14:28-33)
3. Tasteless salt which is thrown away (14:34-35)
4. Repentance (ch. 15).[7]

In the broad context, Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (9:51) begins with an encounter with a man wishing to bury his father. The message is clear from the beginning: commitment to Jesus must be total. This call to discipleship intensifies as Jesus journeys towards the cross. He sends out the seventy-two with little but his words of instruction and promise (ch. 10). This call upon the would-be disciple takes on magnitude when he says, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters" (11:23). The conflict of the cross becomes increasingly clear when Jesus pronounces the six woes upon the Pharisees and experts on the law (11:37-52). Great crowds trample to see Jesus (12:1), but little do they know what they are in for. Luke establishes Jesus as teacher and miracle worker, surprising people with his wisdom and authority. This is further supported when Jesus healed the crippled woman on the Sabbath (13:10-17) and later visited a Pharisee's house (14:1).

The dinner at the Pharisee's house creates the opportunity for Jesus to teach on the inclusiveness of the kingdom and to tell the Parable of the Great Banquet (14:15). The point of this parable is

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[6] Fred B. Craddock, *Luke* (Louiseville: John Knox, 1990), 139-40.

[7] Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula: Scholars, 1974), 52.

that invitation to discipleship in God's kingdom is open to all. No excuse is good enough for one not to enter the kingdom (14:18-20). The call continues despite those who refuse the invitation. Fitzmyer points out that in 14:25-27, Jesus shifts from the inclusiveness of the parable's wide-reaching invitation to the specific conditions of discipleship. "Entry into the kingdom has its own conditions, and these Lukan verses stand in antithetic parallelism to vv. 15-24."[8] Marshall sees this section as taking up the theme of 14:18-24 and developing it further, only with a different scene and audience.[9]

The historicity of this passage is challenged by some interpreters. Marshall, for example, argues that this passage is "probably a Lukan composition based on Q material, but also including material from other sources."[10] Tiede, on the other hand, concludes that since the parallels to Matthew and Mark are scattered and weak, Luke probably did not derive the structure from Q or Mark. He adds, "Perhaps the repetitions in the section would suggest a memory pattern, and the possibility of other written sources (such as 'L') can never be excluded."[11] Craddock designates these challenges to the authenticity of this section as (1) the teachings repeated elsewhere in Luke, (2) the lack of internal unity in the passage, (3) the abrupt shift from the audience and content of the previous section and the shift from the private home to the public audience.[12] The uniqueness of this passage could also be accounted for by Luke's particular interest in helping his readers hear the call to be a disciple.

In Luke's account, Jesus has brought up the subject of cross-bearing and the radical call of discipleship several times before this occasion. In Luke 9:23, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." And in 9:57-58, Jesus calls a man walking with him to follow him. The

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[8] Fitzmyer, 2:1060.

[9] I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 591.

[10] Marshal, 591.

[11] David L. Tiede, *Luke* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 269.

[12] Craddock, 180-181.

man is not willing to pay the price but rather wants to say goodbye to his family. The theme rings out that following Jesus is the highest goal for anyone. This theme is repeated in Luke 14:25-35.

To the Cross (v. 25)

Although it is evident in the text that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, the implied significance is that he is actually on his way to the cross. Great masses of people were following him, but for what reason? Had they counted the cost of being Jesus' disciple? Did they understand the demands of the kingdom of God? Jesus addresses several crucial issues in this passage that were relevant to the "great crowds" following him. Verse 25 introduces these issues and sets up the scene for the crucial call to discipleship.

Luke begins this passage in verse 25 with a verb in the imperfect tense, implying how the "great crowds" continuously followed him. This verb is a compound of *syn* "with" prefixed to *poreuomai* "I go." This is followed with *autō* in the dative case either because (1) the pronoun's case is attracted to the *syn* prefix, or (2) because the pronoun is a locative of place, implying that the crowds were following Jesus as he journeyed towards his goal of Jerusalem. Marshall says that this combination keeps the theme of Jesus' journey before the reader.[13]

In the second clause of verse 25, Luke uses a preposition (*pros*) plus a pronoun, an accusative of reference (*autous*), with a verb of speaking (*eipen*) instead of using the more common dative of reference (*tois autois*) (see 1:13; 4:36; 5:22; 7:24, 40; 15:3, 22; 22:15, 70; 23:4; 24:18, 44). This form is rare in the other Synoptics but occurs occasionally in classical and Hellenistic Greek. This has been called a "Semitism" since it is related to the Hebrew *le* or *el*.[14] The introductory verse (25) is probably a Lukan creation, possibly due to its vagueness.[15] Furthermore, the idea that Jesus "turned" (*strapheis*)

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[13] Marshall, 592.

[14] Fitzmyer, 1:116.

[15] Fitzmyer, 1:1060, referring to J. Jeremias, *Die Sprache der Lukasevangeliums* (Göttingen, 1980), 241.

to address a crowd is a common occurrence in Luke (7:9; 9:55; 10:23; 22:61; 23:28). Craddock points out that since the crowds came to Jesus and since he did not call them, "one is to read what follows, therefore, as the response of Jesus to the enthusiasm of persons who seem totally unaware that he is going to Jerusalem and to the cross."[16]

Conditions of Discipleship (vv. 26-27)

After Jesus turned, he spoke to the "great crowds" with powerful words. Jesus was not one to hide the seriousness of the call to discipleship. In verses 25-26, he lays out this call in words and phrases that show the actual cost of discipleship. A structural analysis of these verses reveals this cost. These two verses are carefully structured and contain several parallels and reoccurring thoughts.

A If anyone comes to me

B and does not hate his own father

and wife

and children

and brothers

and sisters

and still even his own soul

C is not able to be my disciple.

B[1] Whoever does not carry his own cross

A[1] and come after me

C[1] is unable to be my disciple.

The three key thoughts in verse 26 (A, B, and C) are repeated in verse 27 (B^1, A^1, C^1), but in a different order and with a slightly different wording. The call is inclusiveness and open to anyone (*tis*) and whoever (*hostis*). The universal call, however, is a conditioned response of the individual. Jesus is the primary goal of this call. A and A^1 represent the direction of the call. B and B^1 represent the condition upon the call. C and C^1 represent the result of the unmet condition

[16] Craddock, 181.

of B and B[1]. Verse 33 is similar to verses 26-27, which will be explored later.

The syntax and word meanings further reveal the call to discipleship found in these two verses. All of the verb tenses in verses 26-27 are in the present tense. The call to discipleship is timeless and continuous. Although the reflexive pronoun *heautou* comes after the accusative of direct object *ton patera*, it could also go with the *mētera, gynaika, tekna, adelphous*, and *adelphas* since all these too are in the accusative case and form a complex direct object linked with the conjunction *kai*. In verse 26, the *mou* is enclitic (the accent is found in *einai*, the same as in verse 27), and so the emphasis falls on *mathētēs*.[17]

Two significant words in these verses are "hate" (*misei*) and "carry" (*bastazei*). One might find Jesus' call to hate one's family disturbing, considering he called his disciples to love one another. *Misei* can denote ordinary human hatred. However, hating one's family was forbidden in the Old Testament (Lev. 19:17) and was the same as shedding blood (Deut. 19:11). As Michel writes, *misei* refers not to hate in the psychological sense, but to disowning, renunciation, rejection. . . . This abnegation is to be taken, not psychologically or fanatically, but pneumatically and christocentrically."[18] Furthermore, Plummer writes,

> The context and the parallel passages (Mt. 6:24, 10:37) show that the case supposed is one in which choice must be made between natural affection and loyalty to Christ. In most cases, these two are not incompatible; and to hate one's parents as such would be monstrous (Mt. 15:4). But Christ's followers must be ready, if necessary, to

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[17] Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 364.

[18] O. Michel, "*Miseō*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4: 690-911.

> act towards what is dearest to them as if it were an object of hatred.[19]

Goulder attributes Luke's use of strong language to his asceticism: "Luke is nailing his colours to the mast: no commitment, no salvation."[20] Caird adds,

> The Semitic mind is comfortable only with extremes—light and darkness, truth and falsehood, love and hate—primary colours with no half-shades of compromise in between. . . . Thus, for the followers of Jesus, to hate their families meant giving the family second place in their affections. Ties of kinship must not be allowed to interfere with their absolute commitment to the kingdom.[21]

The simple meaning of *bastazei* is "to bear, carry, or lift up." A person bears a burden (Matt. 8:17; 20:12). People carry such things as a pitcher of water (Mark 14:13), a child (Luke 11:27), and stones (John 10:31). Here and in John 19:17 it is used in reference to bearing a cross. Here it is used figuratively (of the disciple) and in John literally (the actual cross of Christ).[22] The redaction critic might ask, would it have been possible for Jesus' listeners to understand the bearing of a cross, or would this reference to bearing a cross be the work of the evangelist Luke after the cross and resurrection? We must bear in mind in answering this criticism that crucifixion and cross-bearing was a common execution practice for the Romans before and during the time of Jesus.[23] Geldenhuys states, "About A.D. 6 the Romans crucified hundreds of followers of the rebel, Judas the

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[19] Plummer, 364.

[20] Michael Goulder, *Luke A New Paradigm*, vol. 2 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 596.

[21] G. B. Caird, *The Gospel of St Luke* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), 178.

[22] Plummer, 364.

[23] For a description of crucifixion, see M. Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

Gaulonite; and for the inhabitants of Palestine, crucifixion was a common spectacle both before and after that date."[24] It would be safe to assume that Jesus' audience understood what bearing a cross meant but may not have understood the cost involved. Only after Jesus' own death would the true cost of discipleship be fully realized.

Verses 26-27 are unique and yet share common elements with other Synoptic passages. Since these verses share elements with Matthew, it is believed that they come from the Q source. Verse 26 is a combination of Matthew 10:37, 16:24, and 19:29. These verses are also paralleled in the Gospel of Thomas 55 and 101. To what extent did Luke redact this passage, and to what extent did he edit other sources? This is a difficult question to answer. Behind these passages, there lies either a common tradition, a common document (Q), or a common memory of the events which actually took place. Craddock offers that the *inclusio* of the refrains in vv. 26, 27, 33 "serves as a literary device for gathering sayings that otherwise would not belong together."[25] Goulder labels this Luke's *oratio recta*, the repetition of the moral.[26]

All three Synoptic Gospels speak of bearing one's cross. Mark's passage (8:34-9:1) speaks of self-denial and does not mention family. Matthew's passage (10:34-39) is much closer to Luke's. For Matthew, devotion to Jesus could mean for the disciple separation from family. Matthew speaks of being worthy of Jesus through loving Jesus more than the closest of family members. Luke is much stronger in his description of the call to discipleship through his use of the word "hate." Concerning this word, Marshall writes, "Matthew's form has toned down the force of the original (Lukan) saying in the interest of a comparison between the claims of family and of Jesus; Luke retains the hyperbolic form, which is an authentic part of Jesus' teaching."[27]

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[24] Geldenhuys, note #2, 400.

[25] Craddock, 181.

[26] Goulder, 597.

[27] Marshall, 592.

Another significant difference in these passages is the list of family members. Fitzmyer offers that "Matthew's form is probably more primitive in its parallelism of father/mother and son/daughter. Luke has changed the second one to wife/children, added a third (brothers/sisters), and also the echo of 9:23 in vs. 27. . . ."[28] "Father and mother" is an Old Testament expression and is pre-Lukan since Hebrew has no single word for parents.[29] The context within Matthew is Jesus' sending out the twelve disciples. Part of Matthew's list of family members comes from a quote of Micah 7:6. The emphasis seems on the call to supreme love of Jesus, even to the point of losing family members. Luke includes this theme but also emphasizes counting the cost before one undertakes the journey of discipleship. This theme becomes evident in later verses.

These verses give the radical call to discipleship and the extent of the cost of following Jesus. In Luke's account, verses 26-27 set the conditions for discipleship. Craddock states, "What is demanded of disciples . . . is that in the network of many loyalties in which all of us live, the claim of Christ and the gospel not only takes precedence but, in fact, redefines the others. This can and will necessarily involve some detaching, some turning away."[30] The masses who were following Jesus may have thought he was about to bring the kingdom of God as they perceived it. He turns and, by this drastic call, weeds out those who do not wish to be his true disciples. Geldenhuys adds, "He who wishes to follow him must choose him so unconditionally as Lord and Guide that he makes all other loyalties and ties absolutely subordinate to his loyalty and devotion to him."[31]

The Parable of the Tower Builder (vv. 28-30)

Jesus then illustrates this call to discipleship through two short parables. These parables drive home the point that discipleship is not to be entered half-heartedly, nor is it to be entered without

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[28] Fitzmyer, 2:1061.

[29] Fitzmyer, 2:1063.

[30] Craddock, 182.

[31] Geldenhuys, 398.

serious consideration. The first parable describes a person desiring to build a tower. This person is motivated to count the cost of building this tower lest he be ridiculed when the project is left incomplete.

Jesus begins the parable of the Tower Builder with *tis gar ex hymōn* ("if any of you"), which is a "parabolic introduction in the form of a rhetorical question with a conditional participle."[32] This form is used in 11:11, 12:25, 14:28, 15:4, and 17:7. According to Marshall, this form is characteristic to Q and L. He adds, "The effect of it is to address the hearers personally and force them to decision on what is being told to them. Its force is roughly: 'Can anyone of you imagine that . . . ?' and it establishes an incontrovertible fact of ordinary life as a basis for a spiritual lesson."[33] Verse 28 forms a negative rhetorical question that demands a negative answer: of course, no one would not first sit down and count the cost of building such a tower. Or, put in a positive way, everyone would first count the cost to build the tower.

Jesus connects this parable with the call to discipleship of verses 26-27 with the connective *gar* ("for"). Marshall offers that the force of this word shows that "would-be disciples must be ready for the ultimate self-denial (vs. 26ff), for anybody who undertakes a task without being ready for the total cost involved will only make a fool of himself."[34] There is an interesting repetition of the indefinite pronoun *tis* ("anyone") in various forms in verses 26, 27, 28, and 31. In verse 28, *tis* functions as the subject of the main verb *psephizei*. The adjectival clause *ex hymōn . . . oikodomesai* further clarifies *tis*. The participle *kathisas* is possibly an adverbial participle of mode denoting the manner in which the action of counting the cost (the main verb *psephizei*) is affected. The phrase *ouchi proton kathisas* is repeated in verse 31. This could be significant in that it lays stress on the serious decision one makes when becoming a disciple of Jesus. This is not an everyday choice about a simple matter, but it takes serious

[32] Marshall, 593.

[33] Marshall, 463.

[34] Marshall, 593.

consideration because it takes all of who a person is. These words are key to understanding the two parables of this passage in their context.

The word "tower" (*pyrgos*) is "a farm building, apparently of some size, since even the foundation for it may take the builder's total resources."[35] The main verb in verse 28 is *psephizei*, which comes from a root word meaning "little stone," "pebble," or "dressed stone." Stones were often used for calculations, and so over time, this word began to be used for counting and reckoning. It also took on the meaning of "to vote" or "to caste a verdict."[36] In Revelation 13:18, this verb is used for counting the number of the beast. Disciples need to calculate their stones to determine if they can build the foundation for a large tower.

These two parables come from the L source since they are common only to Luke. Luke uses this parable to drive home the point of counting the cost of discipleship. According to Goulder, Luke's parable is not "an exposition of God's action, like the Marcan, and most of the Matthean parables, but an *imperative*, hortatory parable, challenging the would-be Christian to commitment. Luke's characters do not always act quickly, with haste, or at once; they not only rise (*anastas*), they also sit down when occasion requires. . . ."[37]

Jesus interjects a little humor in his call to prospective disciples. It should be obvious that any prudent person would first count the cost before beginning to build such a substantial project. Not counting the cost could bring the ridicule of others and an unfinished and unusable project. Plummer writes, "The lesson conveyed is not so much, 'It is better not to begin, than to begin and fail,' as, 'It is folly to begin without much consideration.'"[38] One wishing to build must not jump into the project with no foresight. Rather, one needs to sit (*kathizō*) and calculate for a while and

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[35] Marshall, 593.

[36] G. Braumann, "*Psēphos*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 9:607-8.

[37] Goulder, 597.

[38] Plummer, 365.

determine if the cost is really worth it. One must calculate and consider carefully the resources of one's closest family. Is one willing to put family members in second place and Jesus Christ in first place? This is the challenge of this parable.

The Parable of the King at War (vv. 31-32)

The second parable is about a king who is trying to figure out if his military can defend against an invading army. He must count the cost of human lives and determine if he has enough to win the war. This short story forms a transition between counting the cost and the call to give up all of one's possessions. It shows the seriousness of discipleship by showing counting the cost of discipleship is on the same par as the price of an earthly kingdom.

Luke uses the adjective/verb combination *dynatos estin* instead of the simple verb *dynatai* to emphasize that the king "has ability" to win this war and save his kingdom. Would-be disciples likewise must realize that though the cost is high, paying it will save their souls. *Ta pros eirēnēn* is literally "the things pertaining to peace." Luke uses the preposition plus accusative to show reference. "Peace" is the opposite of war and disturbance. It is a translation for the Hebrew *shalom* which means more than the absence of conflict but contains the ideas of well-being, wholeness, and everything in its proper order and relationship. In this context, peace would involve avoiding the coming conflict with the king who has 20,000 soldiers. The 10,000 soldiers would have to be exceptional fighters to win a battle against 20,000. The king would be taking a chance if he went up against the other king. Terms of peace might not be a bad alternative in this case.

The first king is ready to surrender to the invading king if his calculations suggest that he will lose the war. Thackeray sees this phrase as "a primitive and widespread Semitic phrase implying in certain circumstances unconditional surrender. . . ." Peace is better than defeat if the cost in human lives is too much. The king must act wisely to ensure the overall safety and longevity of his kingdom. Either fighting the war or surrendering will cost the king. Fighting the battle will bring much sorrow and pain. Surrendering puts the other king in control. Either way, the king must choose carefully by

counting the cost. Verse 33 links this unconditional surrender to the type of sacrifice of everything that disciples must make to follow Jesus.[39]

In this parable, a different word for counting the cost is used. *Bouleuomai* is found only in the middle voice in the New Testament and means "deliberate" or "consider." In Acts 5:33 it has the meaning of taking counsel. In Acts 15:37 Barnabas determines to take Mark with him, which leads to the famous dispute between Barnabas and Paul. The king had to deliberate and determine whether his forces were strong enough. This was a serious decision that could result in the total loss of his kingdom.

This parable is unique to Luke. Blomberg sees this passage as building to a climax. The first parable is not as serious as the second, and this may be why Jesus' conclusion seems still more severe in verse 33.[40] More is at cost in the second parable. In the first parable, the costs to the builder are his resources and possibly his reputation if he does not complete his building. In the second parable, the costs to the king are his peace, the lives of 10,000 soldiers, and possibly his whole kingdom.

The central message of this parable is that the disciple must take the decision of becoming a disciple with great seriousness. The king had to take very seriously the threat of another king who had twice the fighting force as he had. Jarvis says that these parables are not examples of self-renunciation but of self-assertion. "But at a deeper level, the man who desperately wants to get his tower built or his war won will throw everything he has got into achieving his object."[41] To be a disciple will entail one's total resources, a subject that Jesus addresses in verses 33. Caird summarizes,

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[39] H. St. J. Thackeray, "A Study in the Parable of the Two Kings," *Journal of Theological Studies* 14 (1913): 399.

[40] Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1990), 281.

[41] Peter G. Jarvis, "The Tower-builder and the King going to War (Luke 14:25-33)," *Expository Times* 77 (April 1966): 196.

> The twin parables of the tower-builder and the king were not meant to deter any serious candidates for discipleship, but only to warn them that becoming a disciple was the most important enterprise a man could undertake and deserved at least as much consideration as he would give to business or politics. Nobody can be swept into the kingdom on a flood-tide of emotion; he must walk in with clear-eyed deliberation.[42]

Application of the Parables (v. 33)

Jesus' call to be his disciple takes supreme dedication to him and careful consideration. In verse 33, Jesus drives home the parables with the radical call to give up everything to be his disciple. This passage is arranged in a climactic sequence, with verse 33 summarizing the previous calls to discipleship.

Jesus brings the crowd back into his central call with the phrase *pas ex hymon* ("everyone one of you"). He may have lost a few attentive ears with his parable about the warring king. No doubt there were probably very few kings in Jesus' audience, if any at all, since there are no second-person pronouns or references in the second parable. *Houtōs* shows the application of the parables. Fitzmyer points out that Luke uses the formula *houtōs oun* for similar conclusions to other parables (see 12:21; 15:7, 10; 17:10; 21:31).[43] There is a repetition in this verse of the formula given in verses 26 and 27: *ou dynatai einai mou mathētēs*. With this statement, Jesus sets out a negative condition. The condition of being a disciple is not one that requires a person necessarily to give something in return, an act that could lead to works righteousness. Discipleship is not something that can be bought or earned. If so, this would be expressed in a positive manner without an *ou*. Rather, the condition of discipleship is met by what a person gives up, an act that shows total trust in the grace of God. Discipleship is a radical re-alignment of priorities. Discipleship is best experienced when one submits everything in one's life to the Lordship of Jesus.

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[42] Caird, 179.

[43] Fitzmyer, 2:1066.

A significant word in verse 33 is *apotassomai*. This word occurs only in the middle voice in the New Testament. When used with persons, this word takes on the meaning of saying farewell or taking leave (Acts 18:18; Luke 9:61; Mark 6:46). When used with impersonal objects, as in our passage, it means renouncing or giving up.[44] This word is a combination of *tassō*, meaning "to determine" or "to set in place," and the preposition *apo,* meaning "away from." The basic idea is pushing something away from oneself, hence, saying goodbye. One is to put all things away from one's self and draw Jesus in closer. The things one is to renounce are the *hyparchousin*, a present active participle from the verb *hyparchō*, meaning "to exist," "to be present," or "to be at one's disposal." In Hellenistic Greek, it was widely used for the verb *einai* ("to be"). As a substantival participle, it means one's property, possessions, and means.[45] In verse 33, a literal translation of the word in its context (*pasin tois heautou hyparchousin*) might be, "all the things that exist in reference to a person" (with reflexive pronoun, *heautou*). "Possessions" might be a possible translation but misses the underlying meaning of the verb. This word is totally inclusive of all one's possessions as well as all non-material things, even including one's familial relationships (v. 26). Jesus goes the farthest in his call to discipleship in this verse.

This verse is very similar to verses 26-27, with the main difference being the first clause. In verse 26, the first clause deals with family relationships. In verse 27, the first clause deals with bearing one's cross. In verse 33 the first clause summarizes all of the above and deals with everything that pertains to one's person. Fitzmyer notes that verse 33 is Luke's composition "in order to add a further condition of discipleship, his favorite idea of disposing of material possessions."[46] Thus, Luke has a two-fold attitude towards possessions:

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[44] Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 123.

[45] Bauer, et.al., *Lexicon*, 1030.

[46] Fitzmyer, 2:1061.

(a) a moderate attitude, which advocates a prudent use of material possessions to give assistance to human beings less fortunate or to manifest a basic openness to the message that Jesus is preaching (3:11; 16:8a; 12:42; 8:3; 16:9); and (b) a radical attitude, which recommends the renunciation of all wealth or possessions (6:35; 9:3; 10:4; 12:33; 16:13).[47]

In verse 33 Jesus reiterates the message he is trying to get across to the crowd following him: discipleship is costly, so costly that it requires renunciation of all and a total dedication to him. In this verse, we have Luke's *oratio recta*, the repetition of the moral.[48] This moral is the call of total dedication of one's self to Jesus Christ. Stein writes, "One can only receive the grace of God with open hands, and to open those hands, one must let go of all that would frustrate the reception of that grace. Jesus refers to this letting go as repentance."[49] How far is one to take this renunciation? Should we literally "hate" our family? Schweizer writes, "Of course not all are called in the same way to the same form of discipleship. But it is equally sure that there is no such thing as a totally middle-class discipleship where there is only preservation of one's heritage and radical renunciation can never flower."[50]

Salt Illustration (vv. 34-35a)

Following this radical call to become Jesus' disciple is found a short parable or illustration about salt. This parable is linked to the previous discussion with *oun* ("therefore"). In the first phrase, Luke uses an adjective (*kalon*, standing first for emphasis) in predicate position with the noun it describes (*to halas*). Then follows an interesting phrase. The laws of chemistry state that it is impossible for the compound salt to be made tasteless. "Tasteless" is a translation of *moranthe*, an aorist passive subjunctive of *mōraino*. The word in

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[47] Fitzmyer, 1:249.

[48] Goulder, 598.

[49] Robert H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 112.

[50] Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. by David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox, 1984), 242.

classical Greek meant "to be foolish" (Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:20).[51] The root *mōros* denotes deficiency, sluggishness, or mental dullness when referring to a human psychological condition.[52] A person is a fool because he or she is deficient. The salt that has lost its flavor is deficient because it is not pure salt since pure salt cannot lose its flavor.

This short saying is found in all three of the Synoptic gospels (Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50). Common among all three passages is the idea of salt losing its saltiness. In Matthew, Jesus applies the saying to his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. He calls the disciples the salt of the earth. In Mark, Jesus uses salt in a similar fashion in referring to the disciples, except this time, the cause is sin in one's life. Luke's reference is different in that the parable is rather generic—no one is called salt. The salt serves only as an object lesson. The last part of the saying is also different. In Mark, there is no reference to the salt being thrown out. Both Matthew and Luke mention the salt being thrown out. The salt in Matthew is thrown out to be trampled. Luke, however, gets graphic and states that the *only use* for salt is to be thrown out; it is not even fit for land (possibly as a fertilizer or weed killer) or even for the dung heap (fungi killer).

Did the evangelists redact this saying to fit their particular purpose? We may never know. Scholars take different positions on the issue. For example, Craddock states that verses 34-35 "may have been brought to this location by Luke as a final caution to unreflective enthusiasm."[53] Plummer, on the other hand, offers that this parable probably was uttered more than once and in more than one form.[54] Of more concern is how this saying fits into the context of Luke 14 and what it implies about the call of discipleship (*oun*, verse 34a).

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[51] Bauer, *et. al*, *Lexicon,* 531.

[52] G. Bertram, "*Mōrós*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 4:832–47.

[53] Craddock, 181.

[54] Plummer, 366.

Salt is one of the most plentiful spices on earth. The question remains, how can salt lose its flavor? Palestinian salt was often obtained by evaporation from the Dead Sea. Marshall explains,

> Since the water of the Dead Sea contains various substances, evaporation produced a mixture of crystals of common salt and carnallite . . . since the former crystallizes out first, it is possible to collect relatively pure salt by fractional collection of the first crystals, but it would be easy to mistake crystals of bitter-tasting carnallite for slat, especially if contaminated with fine clay, etc., which would also produce a stale taste. Carnallite, or gypsum out of which the salt content had been dissolved away, would be "salt that become tasteless."[55]

The central message of this short saying in the context of this passage is that the decision would-be disciples make must stick like the flavor of pure salt. A decision made hastily is good only to be thrown out. Craddock adds,

> Just as salt can lose its savor, so can an initial commitment, however sincere, fade in the course of time. Even with attention and with the nourishment of prayer, reflection, fellowship, and activity, commitments will be severely tested once Jerusalem is no longer a distant goal but a very present and painful reality.[56]

Conclusion (v. 35b)

Jesus ends this section of teaching with the often-repeated phrase, "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear." This phrase is made up of a present active participle used substantively (*echōn*), an object of the participle (*ōta*), a present active infinitive showing purpose (*akouein*), and a present active imperative (*akouetō*). Ears are meant for the purpose of hearing. This phrase could be redundant if taken literally. Rather, Jesus is speaking beyond the physical aspects of hearing. A person can hear but not listen. Jesus knew that when he

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[55] Marshall, 596.

[56] Craddock, 183.

quoted Isaiah's prophecy in Matthew 13:14: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." Those who heard the call of Luke 14:25-35 had obviously heard Jesus' words unless, of course, they were deaf. The issue is whether they had listened and whether they had actually counted the cost of following Jesus.

The Call of Discipleship

The key issue of this passage of Scripture is the requirement to becoming a disciple of Jesus. Each of the above sections adds a slightly different aspect to Jesus' call. In the first section, we learn that even family ties must yield to the call of the kingdom of God. In the second section, we learn that following Jesus means taking up a cross; it means being willing to put our lives at risk. In this respect, it requires total trust in Jesus Christ. The parables highlight this cost yet add that one cannot make this decision with haste. The decision to follow Jesus must be made with careful calculation. Although we may not know the future or the outcome of our decision, Jesus wants us to be willing to make the commitment in faith. The final section calls would-be disciples to make a lasting decision that is more certain than the flavor of salt.

The crowds may not have fully realized the cost involved in following Jesus. There was more to following Jesus than merely trouncing across Palestinian hills and meadows. As Jarvis writes, "We should notice that Jesus was here claiming for himself an allegiance which was reserved in the Old Testament for God alone."[57] Quoting Schmid, Fitzmyer writes, "Only the person who is capable of a radical and painful decision, to set all natural, human relations behind the connection with Jesus (cf. 9:59-62; 8:19-21; 11:27-28) and to give up life itself in martyrdom, can really become a disciple of Jesus."[58] The simple message Jesus told that day is that he desires unconditional surrender of one's entire existence to him by means of a carefully made and lasting decision. Blomberg aptly states, "If people must

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[57] Jarvis, 196.

[58] Fitzmyer, 2:1062, quoting from J. Schmid, *Evangelium nach Lukas* (Salzburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, (1940), 247-248.

carefully calculate their chances of success in major human endeavors, how much more so must they take seriously the results of spiritual commitments."[59]

This passage is timeless and still speaks to us today. For those who are disciples, this passage is a sober reminder of the seriousness of our decision. For those who are not yet followers of Jesus, it gives the cost of following Jesus—one's self. There really is no greater cost, and there really is no greater reward. Luke very powerfully calls his readers to follow his Lord. In a subtle way, he reminds them of the significance of what Jesus did on the cross. He reminds us of the decision Jesus calls for us to make. It is a matter of accepting or rejecting the Jesus bound for the cross.

[59] Blomberg, 281.

6

An Exegetical Analysis of Genesis 12:1-3: A Study of Abrahamic Call as a Model for Biblical Discipleship

Timothy Sooyoung Lee

Introduction

It is said that the twelve disciples who become later the twelve apostles correspond to the twelve tribes of ancient Israel, and thus, this suggests the divine intention to "renew the people of God."[1] The renewed people of God are called the church in the New Testament. If so, there is likely a theological continuity between ancient Israel and the new Israel—the church.

One of the central themes of the gospel is discipleship.[2] However, there is no reference to "disciple" in the narratives of the Old Testament. Does that mean the absence of the idea or concept of "discipleship" in the Old Testament narratives? Or does the theological continuity between ancient Israel and the new Israel ensure such a theological continuity in discipleship between the gospel and the Old Testament narratives? The twelve tribes of ancient Israel have their roots in the person of Abraham. With this, can a case be made for an analogy between the Christian call and Abrahamic call? Furthermore, is the Abrahamic call understood to be

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[1] Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 135.

[2] Carson and Moo note that one of the central themes in Mark is discipleship. See, D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 194.

a call to discipleship? For the Christian, this call is regarded as a call to discipleship.

With these questions in mind, we will explore the original meaning and purpose of the call of Abraham through exegetical analysis of Genesis 12:1-3. We will focus on the theological meaning of the divine command to Abraham, which was followed by the divine blessings to him. To this end, careful consideration will be given to the literary context of the text and its historical and cultural context of the divine command to Abraham. Finally, based on exegetical discoveries, we will present Abraham as a type for disciples and his calling as a model for biblical discipleship.

Setting for Abrahamic Call

Marking a significant turning point in Genesis, the Abrahamic narrative begins in Genesis 12:1-3. At first sight, it appears that all of a sudden, Genesis introduces the calling of Abraham without much information as to why he was called to move. Relating to Abraham's leaving Haran for Canaan, however, the text itself provides a specific clue to this question by stating, "Now the Lord said to Abram" (v. 1). Here, the verb "said" is in the so-called "*waw*-consecutive" form in Hebrew.[3] The use of the *waw*-consecutive verbal form makes it clear that this text is related literarily to the previous contexts in chapter 11; first, to the introduction of Abraham's family (11:27-32), and ultimately, to the Babel narrative (11:1-9) chronologically and logically. Abraham's story did not appear out of the blue. Then, why did God call Abraham to leave Haran for the land of Canaan?

Macro-Context of Abrahamic Call

According to the author's "transitions in terms of content and style," the structure of the book of Genesis can be divided into two

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[3] According to Pratico and Van Pelt, the *waw*-consecutive (also called "w*aw*-conversive" or "*wayyiqtol*") forms are "used primarily in narrative sequences to denote consecutive actions, that is, actions occurring in sequence." See Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 192.

parts: Genesis 1:1-11:32 and 12:1-50:26.[4] The first part is "the primeval history and covers the time between creation and the [city] of Babel," that is, an "indeterminably long period of time in the far distant past."[5] However, the second part is distinct and characterized by a focus on Abraham and his descendants. The chapters in this part are called the "patriarchal narratives."[6]

The bifid structure of Genesis is supported by Brueggemann, who argues that both of the two parts "begin with a creation initiated by the word of God."[7] He observes that "in Genesis 1:1, God calls the universe into existence by the power of his word; in Genesis 12:1, God calls a special people into existence by the power of his word."[8] Thus, the literary relationship between the two parts of the book becomes obvious. This understanding suggests that the book of Genesis be understood as a book of creation with an emphasis more on a particular person, Abraham, who is the founding father of the Hebrew nation, ancient Israel. It is noteworthy that the author devotes only 11 chapters to the primeval history, while 39 chapters to Abraham and his family. The primeval history includes "the stories of creation, human origins, the fall of humanity, and the relentless progress of evil—all against the backdrop of God's enduring patience and love."[9] On the other hand, the second part of the book tells "the story of the beginning of redemption through Abraham and his seeds."[10] It seems that the author intentionally structured the book in a way that emphasizes the importance of this one man, Abraham. For the author and to the original audience, Abraham and the nation that

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[4] Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,1994), 48.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Walter Brueggemann, "Genesis," *Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1982), 105, quoted in Dillard and Longman, 48.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 24.

[10] Ibid.

will be established through him seem to be more important. Consequently, the primeval history serves to introduce Abraham by "provide[ing] a significant theological backdrop for understanding the blessings and promises" given to Abraham.[11]

Literary Context of Abrahamic Call

The text of the Abrahamic call in Genesis 12 begins with the *waw*-consecutive verbal form, which is "a basic characteristic of narrative in the Hebrew Bible."[12] The *waw*-consecutive form in verse 1 suggests that 12:1-3 is unlikely an "independent, self-standing introduction to the Abraham stories."[13] It is part of Terah's *Toledoth*[14], which, beginning in 11:27, "opens the Abrahamic cycle," and concludes with 25:11.[15]

Wenham understands this large section as a single literary unit under the title, "Story of Abraham."[16] In this unit, "11:27-32 deals primarily with [Abraham's] family background [and his homeland], while 12:1-9 focuses on the divine promises [to Abraham]."[17] Indeed, Terah's family was introduced in order to point to a special man, Abraham.

It is also noteworthy that Terah's *Toledoth* is preceded by Shem's *Toledoth* (11:10-26). Thus, Shem's *Toledoth* makes way for that of Terah. As Wenham rightly notes, ultimately, it "serves as a

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[11] L. A. Turner, "Book of Genesis," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and D. W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 356.

[12] G. C. Aalders, "Genesis," *BSC* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 45, quoted in Dillard and Longman, 49.

[13] Gordon Wenham, "Genesis 1-15," *Word Biblical Commentary,* Volume 1 (Waco: Word, 1987), 267. Its Hebrew form is וַיֹּאמֶר.

[14] The Hebrew word for this is תּוֹלְדוֹת rendered as "genealogy," "account," or "generation."

[15] Wenham, 267.

[16] Ibid., 248.

[17] Ibid., 267.

preface to the story of Abraham in the overall pattern of Genesis."[18] Abraham is introduced as a son of Terah and a descendant of Shem. Furthermore, Shem's *Toledoth* is preceded by the introduction of the Babel episode (11:1-9). Therefore, Genesis 12:1-3 is directly related to the Babel episode literarily.

Genesis 12:1-9 falls into two parts: 12:1-3 and 12:4-9. The former part sets out the divine call of Abram, while the latter Abram's response in obedience.[19] Genesis 12:1-3 consists of a divine command followed by a series of promises:

- v. 1 Go by yourself: God commands Abram to leave all his possessions

- vv. 2-3 God promises Abram blessings.

Discussion of Issues, Problems, or Questions in the Passage

12:1. The story of Abram begins with the *waw*-consecutive form ("and said") in verse 1. As mentioned above, in the Hebrew narrative, the *waw*-consecutive form is used to convey the continuity of the context. According to Fields, the *waw*-consecutive plus imperfect verbal form is categorized into the "sequential" nuance in terms of "time relative to the previous verb," which usually describes an "action [or situation] after the previous modal verb, either chronologically or logically."[20]

Then, God's call to Abram is presented in the imperative verbal form, "go" or "leave" (לֶךְ) combined with לְךָ (literally "to/for/by you").[21] Forming a "dative construction (ethical dative)," "go by yourself" (לֶךְ־לְךָ), suggests that Abram was requested to go alone

[18] Wenham, 248.

[19] Ibid., 269, 274.

[20] Lee M. Fields, *Hebrew for the Rest of Us: Using Hebrew Tools Without Mastering Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 153.

[21] Most English translations do not reflect the presence of this Hebrew word.

and break away from the group.[22] The use of this ethical dative serves to "emphasize the uncompromising nature of God's words."[23] Abram had to leave his country Haran, his kindred, and his father's house. God asked Abram to give up all he held dearest.[24] The repetition in the phrase seems to be emphatic, with a threefold emphasis on his possession. In a society that is characterized by a larger family system, what does it mean to leave his father's house? Abram had to abandon all that was significant to him as a sign of his undivided loyalty to God in obedience. God's command required Abram's "renouncing and denying all natural ties."[25] It was such an intransient and determined command because God was about to do special things based on Abram's obedience.

When did God command Abram to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house? Verse 4 makes it clear that Abram was called in Haran, giving rise to another interpretive question. Our text does not specify the city in which Abraham dwelled when God called him for the first time, but other passages (e.g., Gen 11:31; 15:7) point to the city of Ur of the Chaldeans as his hometown. This is supported by Steven in his sermon (Acts 7:2). If this understanding is correct, the call in the text is not the first call from God. It appears that God originally called Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans, and he reiterated that call when Abraham was in Haran.[26]

God's initial call to Abram came when he was in Ur. This is significant in understanding the meaning and purpose of God's calling of Abram. What does Ur signify?

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[22] U. Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol 1., trans. by I. Abraham (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 2:310, quoted in Wenham, 266.

[23] Wenham, 274.

[24] Ibid.

[25] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 192.

[26] Derek Kidner, "Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary," *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1967), 113.

12:2-3. In verses 2-3, the verbs in the first person singular imperfect forms plus conjunction *waw* (וְ with God as their subject are dominant. The mood of the *waw* conjunctive plus the imperfect (*weyiqtol*) is "irreal" and its "aspect is primarily iterative or continuous."[27] Wenham takes the verbal form of the *weyiqtol* form to mean "purpose or consequence."[28]

However, the use of the cohortative form is worthy of notice. The two Hebrew verbal forms of "I will make [your name] great" in verse 2 and "I will bless" in verse 3 represent themselves as cohortatives.[29] According to Fields, the cohortative functions as a "resolve [in] a directive used when the speaker [(1st person singular)] has the ability to fulfill the action" with a translation "I will."[30] In these cases, with God as the speaker, the fulfillment of all the promises given to Abram is assured. Furthermore, the cohortative forms following an imperative ("go by yourself" in v. 1) express the speaker's intention.[31] Although the cohortative suffixes[32] are not found in all the imperfect forms, the literary context requires them to be cohortatives as well. This understanding is supported by most English versions, which translate such imperfect verbs as "I will make of you [a great nation] . . ." (v. 2), "I will bless you . . ." (v. 2),[33] and "I will curse" (v. 3), respectively. They are not cohortatives in form, but they are cohortatives in meaning. Cohortative forms or meanings seem to be necessary so that God reveals his will or ability to fulfill all the promises given to Abram. Consequently, the Hebrew syntax allows "the divine intentionality . . . [to] be expressed by translating

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[27] Fields, 185.

[28] Wenham, 275.

[29] Marked with suffixes ה (*he*) on the imperfects, two verb אֲגַדְּלָה in v. 2 and אֲבָרֶכְךָ in v. 3 represent themselves as cohortatives in form.

[30] Fields, 195-6.

[31] Wenham, 266.

[32] When the Hebrew alphabet ה comes at the end of a verb, it forms a Hebrew cohortative form.

[33] The verb, "I will bless [those who bless you]" in v. 3, is cohortative in both form and meaning.

verses 2-3 'Go [by yourself] . . . so that I may make you . . . I will bless you, . . . etc.'"[34]

It is noteworthy that there is a thematic continuity between 11:4 and 12:2; both relate to building a kingdom and making a name. However, there is a sharp contrast between the two verses as well:

> Gen 11:4 "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves . . ." (emphases added).

> Gen 12:2 "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and [I will] make your name great . . . (emphases added).

People in Shinar tried to build themselves a city called Babel. In ancient times, a city meant a nation or a kingdom. They wanted their own kingdom to make their names great and not to scatter. In 12:2, God wanted to build a great nation or kingdom and make Abram's name great. However, the principal agents are different. One is the kingdom of man, the other the kingdom of God.

In verse 2, the last clause raises an interpretive question because the verb is in the form of an imperative ("be a blessing"), not in a prediction ("you shall be a blessing"). Paul Jouïon argues that the imperative in biblical Hebrew can "express the same mood in the second person as the cohortative does in the first person."[35] Especially, "following a cohortative, the imperative frequently expresses a consequence, which is to be expected with certainty."[36] If this is the case, this imperative indicates that God promised Abram a blessing that would happen in the future by grace. Putting this together, God is saying, "Abram, if you leave for the land of Canaan,

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[34] Wenham, 275.

[35] P. P. Jouïon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947), 116h, quoted in Wenham, 266.

[36] Wenham, 266.

I will promise you all these blessings; I will fulfill my promises to you without fail *so that you shall be a blessing*."[37]

In this way, the promise of blessings to Abram becomes central. The fact that the cognate words of "bless" occur five times[38] in the text demonstrates that the central theme of Abram's call is God's plan to bless men. God's blessing on Abram and all the family of the earth echoes Genesis 1:28 when God blessed humankind after he created them. By promising Abram blessings, God reasserts "[His] original intentions for man."[39] It is noted that such blessing is twofold: verse 2 focuses on "national blessing promised to Abram;" verse 3 stresses more on "international blessing promised through Abram."[40] Indeed, in verse 2, Abram is described as a "recipient of a blessing, whereas in [verse 3], he is to be the mediator of blessing."[41] The expression "all the families of the ground will be blessed" in verse 3c implies "the division of the one family into many (Gen 10:5, 20, 31)."[42] After the fall, the curse was pronounced upon the ground in 3:17. However, "the blessing of Abraham was once more to unite the divided families, and change the curse, pronounced upon the ground on account of sin, into a blessing for the whole human race."[43]

Interpretation of the Passage

The structure of Genesis 12:1-3 is straightforward: God's uncompromising command to Abram in verse 1 is followed by his firm promises to him in verses 2-3. As imperative together with a

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[37] The English translation in italic illustrates the syntactical meaning of the imperative of the verb.

[38] Wenham observes that "five times the verb or the noun derived from 'bless' is used." See Wenham, 275.

[39] Ibid.

[40] P. R. Williamson, "Covenant," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, eds. T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 146.

[41] Ibid., and Keil and Delitzsch, 193.

[42] Keil and Delitzsch, 193.

[43] Ibid.

dative construction, "go by yourself" in verse 1 indicates, Abram needed to separate himself from his country, his kindred, and his father's house. The threefold emphasis on his possessions indicates that Abram had to give up all that was significant to him as a sign of his obedience to God. That was the cost of following God's command.

Then, was there any reward offered to Abram for his obedience? As stated above, God's command was followed by his promises to Abram. It was the reward offered to Abram that he would be a recipient of blessings and a mediator of blessings for all the family of the earth. It is not a small thing at all. Furthermore, by the use of cohortatives which emphasize the speaker's resolve to accomplish what is significant and necessary, God assured Abram that he would fulfill all the promises given to him. However, it appears that "the promise of blessing is conditional."[44] From this grammatical and syntactical analysis, what God intends to do for Abram seems to be conditioned by his response to the imperative verb in verse 1. Even though God's calling of Abram was not based upon his merit, the promise is contingent upon Abram's obedience to God.[45]

As mentioned above, the bifid structure of Genesis suggests that Genesis is a book of creation with an emphasis more on a particular person, Abram. He is chosen as the founding father of a new nation. Evidence was already provided to establish the literary link between the Babel narrative in chapter 11:1-9 and Abram's calling in chapter 12, even though they are separated by the introduction of Shem and Terah's families. This understanding leads to the conclusion that God's promise to Abram is regarded as a counter-solution to the Babel crisis. In Shinar, the Babel community tried to build their own kingdom to make their name great. However, God cursed their plan by scattering them all over the land. By calling

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[44] C. W. Mitchell, *The Meaning of BRK "To Bless" in the Old Testament,* SBLDS 95 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 30, quoted in Williamson, "Covenant," 145.

[45] Williamson, "Covenant," 145.

Abraham out of the cursed city[46] into the land of blessing—Canaan, God is about to build his own city—His kingdom in which its residents' names will be great. If Abram's hometown is identified as Ur of the Chaldeans, which was in Babylon, and his first call was from his hometown, it is not incorrect to say that Abram was called to come out of Babylon. Sailhamer also understands "Abraham's call as God's gift of salvation in the midst of judgment" by linking directly "the call of Abraham . . . [to] the dispersion of the nations at Babylon (11:1-9)."[47] Here Abram "marks a new beginning in God's plan of blessing."[48] In this sense, the redemptive history that begins with God speaking corresponds to the history of creation.

As the literary context and its structure indicate, Genesis 12:1-3 "binds together primeval and the patriarchal history by presenting the call and blessing of Abram as the answer to the calamities that have befallen mankind in Genesis 1-11."[49] As the founding father of a new nation or as the one who introduces a new beginning in God's redemptive plan, the significance of Abram in the book cannot be emphasized enough. It has been noted that God's promise to Abraham "seems to allude to the divine mandate given to Adam . . . suggesting that this divine enabling of Abraham is but the next step in the outworking of God's original purposes."[50] After the wicked attempt of the Babel community to rebel against God, which came to an end with the divine judgment, the new "phase of salvation history begins with the call of Abraham" in Genesis 12:1-3.[51] Thus, "it is not surprising that Jesus Christ is presented as a royal descendant

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[46] Babel is believed to have been located somewhere in Babylon or Chaldeans.

[47] J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, General editor, F. E. Gaebelein, volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 111.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Wenham, 270.

[50] P. R. Williamson, "Abraham," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and D. W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 16.

[51] Ibid.

of Abraham . . . and in him [Abrahamic] promises find their ultimate fulfillments."[52] Therefore, those who are in Christ are regarded as the spiritual seeds of Abraham, as Paul implies in Romans 4:13 and Galatians 3:16. "The promise and the blessing given by free grace to Abraham are also the inheritance of his spiritual children"[53] – disciples, the true believers in Christ.

In summary, the history of the divine promise does not emerge in a vacuum. From the beginning, it was related to the redemptive plan of God to bless his people. The call of Abram and the following promise to him serve as the answer to the calamities that have befallen humanity in the Genesis prologue (Gen 1-11). The Abrahamic narrative emerges against the historical backdrop of a misguided attempt to build a city at Babel, an initiative that ends cursed. More originally, however, we find a theological background for the call of Abram in the story of human banishment from Eden (Gen 3).

Abraham as a Role Model for Disciples

Our text is a story of establishing the kingdom of God by calling a person, Abraham. In the New Testament, Jesus is introduced as the One who inaugurated the kingdom of God on earth. In the gospel of Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus Christ begins with Abraham (1:2), while he is introduced as the son of Abraham (1:1).

"The identity of the seed of Abraham has been one of the chief themes" of the Bible.[54] At the time of Jesus, the Jews claim that they belonged to Abraham (John 8:33). However, the true descendants of Abraham are those who follow what Abraham did in obedience to God's command. Abraham is a role model for Christians. Abraham demonstrated his faith in obedience to God and

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[52] Ibid.

[53] R. K. Harrison, "Abraham/Abram," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey Bromiley, Revised edition, volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 17.

[54] Sailhamer, 112.

became the father of faith. According to Hebrews, Abraham's entire life under God was an outstanding illustration of faith in action (Heb 11:8-19).[55] Disciples should model themselves after Abraham, imitating his work of faith that was expressed in the exchange of the known for the unknown.[56]

Abrahamic Call as a Model for Biblical Discipleship

If Abraham is understood as a role model for disciples, his calling is also understood as a model for biblical discipleship. We understand the Abrahamic call as a call to discipleship. Then, we can compare a Christian call to discipleship today with the Abrahamic call to discipleship.

The Purpose of a Call to Discipleship

God's call of Abram compares with Jesus' call of his disciples. Both calls are a gracious and free invitation into the kingdom of God. As Abram was called to come out of Babylon into the Promised Land of Canaan, so disciples are called to come out of contemporary Babylon—the secular world—into the kingdom of God Jesus inaugurated in his ministry. Both the Abrahamic call and the call of disciples are results of God's redemptive plan to bless his people. Both calls find their fundamental theological background in the story of the fall, which resulted in human banishment from Eden. Thus, both calls are understood as an invitation to a new Eden—the kingdom of God.

The call of Abram serves as the divine counter-solution to the calamities that have befallen humanity in the sinful world, more particularly, to the curse that befalls the community of Babel. Likewise, Christ calls his disciples out of contemporary Babylon to bless them. A call to discipleship to Christ serves as an answer to calamities and curses that have befallen humanity in this damaged and troubled world.

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[55] Harrison, 17.

[56] Kidner, 114.

The Promise of Blessings in Discipleship

There was a reward offered to Abram for his obedience. If so, there is a promise of blessing offered to disciples for their obedience. With the frequent use of the word "bless," God affirmed that the call of Abram was God's plan to bless humankind. Furthermore, God's blessing on Abram echoes the divine plan to bless all the humankind recorded in Genesis 1:28. It was both a national blessing to Abram and an international blessing through Abram. Similarly, blessings promised to disciples include a national blessing. Disciples of Jesus become the members of the church—the new Israel. They inherit the kingdom of God. Furthermore, there is an international blessing that is spread out to the end of the world through disciples. Like Abram, disciples, therefore, are described as recipients of blessing and mediators of blessing. The Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) is understood in terms of the original plan of God to bless all the nations.

However, the promise of blessing is conditional. As the case of Abrahamic call shows, what Christ intends to do for his disciples is conditioned by their responses to the command to deny and take up their cross and follow Him. Even though Christ's calling of disciples is not based upon their merit, the promise is contingent upon their obedience to Him. If we follow the call of discipleship, "we will discover that there is far more pleasure to be experienced in Him, indescribably greater power to be realized with Him, and a much higher purpose to be accomplished for him than anything else this world has to offer."[57]

The Cost of a Call to Discipleship

A response to a call to discipleship begins with self-denial. Self-denial is not a rejection of what we dislike. It is giving up on something we want and like.[58] Abram's response to the call of leaving shows what self-denial looks like. Abram gave up all he held dear to follow God in obedience. He left his country, his kindred, and his

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[57] David Platt, *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live* (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 2015), 5.

[58] John Piper, one of his audio sermons.

father's house. God asked Abram to make one of the most challenging decisions. Similarly, disciples are asked to deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow their Master, Jesus (Luke 9:23; cf. Matt 16:24). Jesus speaks of the painful cost of being a disciple, saying, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). He already said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:24).

There was a cost of following God. In separating himself from his country, his kindred and his father's house, Abram had to give up all that was significant to him as a sign of his obedience to God. Likewise, there is a cost of following Christ. Like Abraham, disciples are required to give up all that is significant to them for Jesus' sake. Disciples have to abandon all they hold dear as a sign of their undivided loyalty to God in obedience. The cost is quite expensive, but it is worth it. For Christ is going to do special things based on disciples' obedience. Platt notes, "When we become followers of Jesus, we make a decided break with an old way of living and take a decisive turn to a new way of life."[59] That is the cost of being a disciple.

Summary

Abraham's story is a clear reminder that the initial call to the kingdom of God is a call to leave everything behind—to abandon everything for the sake of the kingdom. His story corresponds to the call to discipleship to Jesus Christ. When they were called to follow Jesus, Peter and his companions immediately left their fishing boat, fishing net, fishing village, and even their fathers. That is the cost of discipleship. Wilkins notes:

> [It] implies that they are leaving behind everything, including livelihood and home. Peter states it emphatically later: 'We have left everything to follow you!' (19:27). They

[59] Platt, 23.

> heed Jesus' call to change their primary occupation from fishing for fish to fishing for [men].[60]

The disciples can be said to follow the faith of Abraham, who left his country, his kindred, and his father's house. So, Abraham's story reminds us that "the initial call to Christ [and his kingdom] is a call to [leave]. Such a call has been clear since the beginning of Christianity."[61]

Conclusion

The exegetical study on Genesis 12:1-3 contributes to our understanding of the meaning and purpose of Abrahamic calling. It also sheds new light on discipleship to Jesus Christ because Abraham is portrayed as a type for disciples, and his call is presented as a type for biblical discipleship. Thus, a strong case is made for an analogy between the Christian call to discipleship and the Abrahamic call to discipleship. The Christian call to discipleship today can be compared to the Abrahamic call to discipleship because our exegetical discoveries confirm Abraham as a model for a disciple and his calling as a model for biblical discipleship.

The call of Abraham was to shape the people of God who do the will of God (Gen 18:19). As the Abrahamic call is understood as a model for biblical discipleship, so is the call of disciples today understood to make the people of Christ who do his will.

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[60] Michael J. Wilkins, "Matthew," *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 176-7, Kindle Edition.

[61] Platt, 2.

7

The Heart of Teacher's Efficacy: A Mirror in Facilitating Teaching and Learning Experience

Rosario Jill C. Galarido

William Ward once said, "The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." Certainly, when one is inspired, he can perform beyond the boundaries and limitations. That is why teaching is not just touching the head but touching the heart as well. When hearts are touched, it affects eternity.

The millennial teachers are the forerunners of today's global education. How the teacher equips herself, lays her efficacy, the efficacy that will allow her to make a significant change and impact in the lives of her learners. Teachers have to face the reality of today, that rivalry in education is just a fingertip of technology. The digital world has its own efficacy that has hooked and trapped many learners of this post-modern era. They were snatched from the reality of human connection and learning. To preserve the dignity of human learning, the art of teaching must be humane. Reality in teaching requires heart work and not just hard work.

Digital Age

Efficacy is an intrinsic motivation that basically expresses effectiveness and efficiency. We, the educators of today, must have full consciousness, by which we are to make the most of every opportunity by making our life an influence while living in the advantage of the digital age. Yes, we are now all living in what we

called a "global village" in a digital city. Everything is fast, advanced, quick, and instant. We need to have an upgrade. Innovation is needed. The classroom is no longer confined inside the four walls and board. The digital platform has it all and has taken its place. This is now the world of our learners and we need to walk with them through their journey of learning. Equipping and mentoring should go together. Our life and our heart along with the technology with which they are living should collaborate towards fulfilling and engaging achievements.

The Education 4.0 is on its cutting edge. Its global connectivity reaches every individual more for up-to-date learning. The Industry 4.0 has reached to its colossal move. The workforce has embraced the advantage of using technology, maximizing the skills in collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and competition. Society demands so much in order to survive. The skills and competencies are on top of the list. And for the new generation of educators to survive in their profession and vocation, one has to deeply reflect their calling to duplicate themselves in terms of values and standards. This will pave the way for learners to be able to embrace and stand in the new learning dynamics of the 21st century in the midst of technology. The motivation to teach and learn will be realized when essential skills and personal values will cover as a veil in the person of a teacher. This value will give a stronger sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy

The famous psychologist Albert Bandura, in his Social Cognitive Theory, states that there is a strong sense of influence on how an educator feels, behaves, and is motivated towards his learners. According to Bandura, there are four main sources of self-efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and emotional and physiological states.[1] "Self-efficacy theory is based on the assumption that psychological procedures serve as means of

[1] Miriam Akhtar, "What is Self-Efficacy? Bandura's 4 Sources of Efficacy Beliefs," 2008, http://positivepsychology.org.uk/self-efficacy-definition-bandura-meaning/.

creating and strengthening expectations of personal efficacy."[2] This is how efficacy is defined in education. What learners see from their teacher is a direct instruction of learning by imitation. Thus, we need to give our learners something worth imitating. Henry Brook Adams once said that "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

We as educators are primarily labeled to be lifelong learners. One must have continuous learning as a required prerequisite in order to be abreast of the new trends and practices across cultural borders and developing continents. We should be interested and motivated in our learning while we are teaching. But how do we keep our learning interesting? When do we say that self-efficacy matters in our learning and teaching? Do we desire to duplicate ourselves in the lives of our learners, so they too in the future can do the same? Teachers have to keep their flame burning in teaching and in learning. This passion is an indicator of our efficacy.

The competency we want our learners to achieve and fulfill is not just for them to comply. Learners as well have higher aspirations for their teachers, who one way or another are one of the sources of motivation to value their present and even their future learning. Educators should realize that the standards and expectations we set for our learners are reciprocated. We teachers need to raise our standard in the mainstream of our society to make a significant difference in the lives of our learners and colleagues by living a life worth motivating. We need to open the window of excitement in the world of holistic learning. We should aim to get motivated to motivate others. Our circle of influence must grow each and every day. And perhaps, we are to assess our self-efficacy.

And how does one achieve efficacy? Is it through the latest creative pedagogy? Is it the updated computer savvy? Is it with transformational relational theory? Is it through dynamic inquiry and

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[2] C.J. Weibell, "Principles of learning: 7 principles to guide personalized, student-centered learning in the technology-enhanced, blended learning environment," 2011, https://principlesoflearning.wordpress.com.

survey? Perhaps all of the above mentioned may be right and correct. Efficacy matters from the knowledge, skills, and attitude of the teacher. Efficacy is identified both in a quantitative and qualitative manner.

As educators, the knowledge we give should be seasoned and wrapped with heavenly wisdom. This will strengthen the skills that are needed along the way, realistic skills that help one to master the craft, and significant skills that make the craft last. These skills will sustain us in the midst of challenges and change. This is what we call passionate teaching—teachings where both ends meet—effectiveness and efficiency. Ron Clark once said, "Passion is the fire in our hearts and the determination in our minds to make a difference."[3]

In the Christian learning milieu, our way of teaching and learning is revolutionized by the way God puts his interest—in our hearts. The matters of the heart are the main target in most of God's principles for living. "God is interested in hearts because that's where real and lasting change takes place."[4] The observable indicator when one learns is when one is changed, change in thoughts, actions, and words. This change can influence from one person to another, even beyond time and space. The Great Teacher of all times, our Lord and Savior *Jesus Christ*, made this powerful impact of change on this planet. His teachings remain as he modeled his teachings from the heart. His efficacy is a paragon of virtue. His legacy of efficacy was highlighted in various personal and professional values. These values are translated into words and become the guiding principles of life.

Personal Values

In facilitating teaching and, learning personal values are vital in connecting and building relationships as values are perceived universally. The study, "Assimilating Personal Values on Ethics Instructions," stipulates that values are priceless yet are not cheap.[5]

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[3] Ron Clark, *The Excellent 11*, 2004.

[4] Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, *Parenting is Heart Work*, 2006.

[5] Rosario Jill C. Galarido, "Assimilating Personal Values on Ethics Instructions," 2018; unpublished paper.

How we may act or react in the way we do reflects our embraced personal values that mark our integrity. "Integrity is choosing your thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal gain" (Anonymous). Values are pillars for a strong foundation as one desires for optimum change and success. It pursues transformation to achieved changes to make a significant difference in life and in society. Basically, our family is the main source of how each one is attributed to its value system. Consequently, the church plays a significant role in strengthening these attributes expressed in the devotion of faith. The school as a second home provides opportunities to mold character and conduct as each individual engages through varied and differentiated interactions.

As we desire change in our country, perhaps we will all be led to the expected ethical standard of society. It will all start with how we value values. These values have become our guiding principle amidst the chaos and dilemma and have become our way to resiliency.

As one embraces the divine calling of teaching, one has to be guided by values, and these values are intricate in the instruction of ethics through various learning and subject areas. While desiring to nurture the spiritual dimension of people, the need to be equipped with excellence for a scholarly life should also be taken into account. To be fully equipped, one has to acknowledge the moral responsibility before people and God. One has to preserve ethical standards. As such, the manifestations of acquired values are expressed as part of the transformation of values in the context of lifestyle, habits, routines, principles, and disposition in life.

The transformed lives of every man and woman called by God come to their meaning and purpose when values are observed and manifested by many. Transformational leadership is one of the ultimate desires of both the church and the institution as they take dominion in changing individuals for the greater good. It seeks to support that through values, one can be motivated for a purpose-driven life and be holistically transformed into all its undertakings. Significantly, teachers need to strengthen their personal values for self-efficacy as transformed individuals.

Outcome Based

In consonance, the Nazarene institution outlined an exit outcome statement on how each learner will be assessed and evaluated in his or her course of study into four areas: Content, Competency, Context, and Character. With full intention, it was then highlighted that the **Character** outcome must be strengthened since this is the entry and exit point of every individual who is called by God to demonstrate Christ-like leadership and excellence in the work of community and church ministries.

Character observed in values has a cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimension. We must understand the value that we want to acquire. We need to know that we have to value such.[6] These dimensions are experienced in the educative process of the learner. It takes inner values to engage in meaningful endeavors in life. In educational institutions, we make the main agenda to inculcate within every learner the need to value not only the opportunity to have the education but the privilege of life. These things are valuable in that sense. Likewise, in the expression of our religious beliefs, we adhere and embrace the biblical principles as our way to preserve our integrity and reputation. We are conscious of doing what is right and noble. Philippians 4:8-9 states, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." Values are expressed as they call for different situations and experiences. This is how self-efficacy transcends meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

Discipleship

"All authority in heaven and or earth has been given to me. Go then, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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[6] Purita Bilbao, *et al. The Teaching Profession* (Quezon City: Lorimar Publishing), 2006.

Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20 AMP). Today, this unfading word of mission is still our main agenda. Regardless of societal stratification, all the people of God are tasked with this assignment. It is a call to teach and to touch lives. It is a command to follow without any question or inquiry. It requires a strong influence on self-efficacy. Significantly, how we talk should synchronize in our walk as value teaching through discipleship.

To make disciples requires an investment of time, effort, and resources. This was seen in the life of Jesus Christ together with his disciples. His time demands quality and quantity. His effort necessitates objectivity and subjectivity. His resources stipulate collection and disbursements. These are all translated as having a real passion and strong commitment. Mentoring one's life then is a big agenda of today's learning milieu as the product of one's self-efficacy.

In this postmodern world, one has to be bold, confident, and totally equipped to fulfill the mission of discipleship. It will entail intensive holistic training so that one has the full grasp of what it means to be called by God for a higher purpose. With much expectation, when one responds to godly endeavors, one is expected to be the exemplar of biblical character and traits. And for every learner to experience meaningful learning, teachers must make a leap of faith to facilitate teaching with values integration and character transformation in all learning areas with efficacy unfading. The Apostle Paul commends this objective to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-2, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

The 7 Gs

Google has taken the limelight in the field of research among our millennial learners. The letter "G" has been the lingua-franca. The new "Generation" of learners has taken the leap in dominating the "Globe." Thus, these 7 Gs are simply presented as one of the keys to the efficacy of teaching for a good grasp and recall.

Let us try to look into these 7Gs of values and elements from the heart that will give us a new perspective in this passing time. This will respire us to renew and rekindle our calling as dispensers of knowledge, skills, and values to all new generations of learners. These can be the guiding principles as we re-design the blueprint for those who are starting in this teaching ministry. This will be our self-efficacy guide:

1. ***Genuineness*** *– Being Honest and Sincere*

Being real in our motivation and desires requires consistency. Regardless of time and occasion, we are to be genuine, being real in our thoughts, actions, and words matters in our daily activities of living. There is no room for pretension as it will only spoil sooner or later. Discernment in our spirit helps us identify if people are not true to what they say and do. Being real in all areas of our endeavor is revealed with the smiles that come from our eyes and the kind of words we utter. The way we deal and respond to people reflects our inner selves.

This trait will sustain in all its roller coaster ride of teaching and learning experience. Even in the midst of stress and difficulties, we can cope with the demands of the predicament without stepping on one's toes. Genuineness in teaching is by the way we value what is essential.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at, man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). When Samuel was about to choose and anoint a new king of Israel, God taught him right then and there. This only means to be genuine in leadership, the heart matters a lot. Teaching is leadership in function and communication. Our heart of teaching must walk and talk in the path of truth.

2. ***Graciousness*** *– Being Polite and Showing Respect.*

Being gracious is expected to be observed at all times. Most often, this is tested when we are placed in the midst of a situation where it requires immediate response and reaction. It is not a quaint notion, but a trait that we direly need today and every day as we commence different activities in life.

Nothing compares to the gentle words when in the middle of rising conflicts. With all the divergences that we have experienced, we should take into full consciousness how this trait will bring us to the pedestal. So much is expected from teachers that sometimes we intentionally take it for granted in our position. This profession certainly demands values on civility.

Values are both taught and caught. When we teach our learners to be polite and respectful, we should model them inside and outside from the four walls of the learning centers. We should seriously "walk our walk and talk the talk." The way we deal with our learners, colleagues, parents, administrators, and community requires graciousness, and this should be our full armor in our duty of 24/7 in this education system.

As Christian educators, we should be reminded of how the story of "Mary and Martha" taught us. While Martha was so much concerned about the duties and responsibilities, she forgot to exhibit the attitude to be gracious enough with her visitor. Mary, the sister, however, opted to express her graciousness, that while Jesus takes the visit, she chose to give reverence by taking time to listen to his words that are worth living. She gave her full respect by spending time in the presence of the visitor. The due respect and politeness at that particular time are basically observable. What Mary did matters from her gentle heart; graciousness was directly observed in her behavior.

In the same manner, Jesus Christ himself showed how gracious and compassionate he is. He modeled it to us perfectly. While he was with the crowd, he accommodated everyone by the way he healed sick people, fed the hungry, and replied to those who inquired. Certainly, why did people draw to him on all occasions? It is because of his gentleness in spirit and undoubtedly his personality as well. More so to say, our heavenly Father is gracious in love. It is by his grace that we are saved. Likewise, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

Being gracious is necessary for every Educator today. One must have this full gear of traits in the teaching ministry. We are to

develop within us the trait of being polite and full of respect. Politeness is shown in the manner in which we respond to people and in the circumstances. We are to uphold respect on all occasions. This should be given at any rate and any status in life. We need to give respect when respect is due. Grace speaks beyond the boundaries of our actions.

3. ***Gregariousness*** *– Being Friendly and Enjoying Companionship*

We are born in a society. This society dictates our culture of togetherness in which we associate our existence. We are nurtured by our culture by observing the importance of our language, beliefs, values, and norms. This fosters collaboration and builds strong bonds of relationships.

Social media has somehow robbed us of direct communication and fellowship. However, we should take into account its advantage for reaching out, connecting, and eventually making a network to the people who surround us. This is an avenue by which we can increase our circle of influence to its optimum. Our social life should be seasoned with care and altruism. Friendship should blossom within and among our learners.

We have witnessed how Jesus spent time with his disciples and people in the community. Much of his ministry work is evident in how he enjoyed the bond of togetherness. He worked in a team with much enthusiasm. His consistency in his philanthropic lifestyle gained much of his influence from all walks of life. Adults and children alike, wealthy, poor, listened to his words of wisdom, parables, and words of life.

Becoming a gregarious person allows us to increase our world of influence. There will be open doors of opportunity in reaching out to more and more people for the Lord. A wide network of society is at our hands. Spiritual multiplication can happen anytime soon and transcends for a lifetime. With this, we will all be encouraged by Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promises is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us

encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

We educators should be the pillar of a strong foundation of relationships among our learners as well as in the community of faith. Gregariousness should be our DNA. It should be seen in us naturally. It should be our lifestyle manifested in our words and actions. With our being clothed in this, our learners can come to us without pretension and with full transparency. The respect we gain from them should not be motivated by fear but rather by love and care, and this should likewise reciprocate. When we value relationships, relationships will bring us to where we are going. Our mission to teach and touch lives is our vision to bring them to Christ, so they too will come to imitate Christ-likeness.

4. ***Gratefulness*** *– An Attitude of a Thankful Heart*

"Thank you" are just two simple words that are often neglected by many. While others have a hard time uttering these magical words, there are others, however, who have become part of their system. And it is observed that those who make use of this word as part of their lifestyle reap their share of blessings. The Apostle Paul encourages us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances for this God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

This attitude cultivates and develops a positive disposition in life. When faced with challenges in life, it is this attitude that drives resiliency. It allows one to appreciate small things and eventually opens doors of opportunity for learning and valuing. Our learners have to value this sore trait as our response to life and as our act of worship. Being grateful transforms our inner being from the inside out. It is evidently observed in our words and our own facial expressions. It was simplified in Matthew 12:34b "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."

As educators, nothing beats a stress-free life than having the habit of being grateful every day. Every person and situation we meet has its divine reason and purpose, and we need to be thankful as it develops the best in us. We may be bombarded with lots of deadlines and reports or overwhelmed with appointments and commitments,

but still, it is our heart that counts the most. And we should not take it for granted to thank the people who surround and back us up all the way in all of our scenes in life. They deserve our words of affirmation. They need to know that that they are valued and appreciated all the more.

5. ***Growth Mindset*** *– Desire to Enrich and Enhance*

Alvin Toffler noted that "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." This only means that we are all in the arena of learning and developing ourselves. Literacy is weighed not on the accumulation of knowledge but rather on how this knowledge is put into action. Yesterdays' life will never be the same again. Today we must face tomorrow with excitement and anticipation. How we gain our learning matters if we are proactive by making the most of every opportunity to rediscover ourselves and get back into the basics of life. Humility is required in allowing ourselves to be nurtured and enriched. Learning is unending; learning requires no age and place. As educators, we are destined for holistic growth and consistent development. Who we are is designed for reason and purpose. With the evolution of distance learning in education, no one is exempted from learning. Learning is no longer bound in the four walls of classrooms and facilities since the outside world environment is the classroom itself. Our experiences and societal interaction have more to offer in the realization of learning new things in life.

A change of behavior is an indicator of where individuals learn. When people learn, consequently, they desire to be progressive in themselves. And for this to happen, they need a renewed way of thinking. It should radiate from the inside out. It should be cultivated on how our thoughts indulge for a renewed life. Romans 12:2 states, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Our desire for growth benefits our personal and professional development. We are mandated to have a sustained development of our Christian walk in devoting our time to share our faith. Much of this time requires daily nurturing of God's word. Psalm 119: 33-37

simply presents, "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word." This is just a part of this verse from Psalm 119, where the word of God nourishes our soul. The entire chapter gives us the full sight of how his words increase our comprehension of the value of life.

As educators, we need to gird up our thoughts in our going and growing. A growth mindset allows us to have a higher perspective of understanding and self-introspection. It gives us the ability to choose what is best for us. It brings us to the consciousness that every day is an opportunity to learn, whether in good times or bad times. As we grow, our way of dealing every day with the state of affairs is perceived with a desire to expand our horizon.

*6. **Grit** – Mental Toughness and Resiliency*

Grit has today become the recent buzzword in education and different industries, as psychologist Angela Duckworth according to her research. She emphasized that intelligence and talent are not the only indicators in one's success but rather an exceptional combination of persistence and passion, which she named "grit." This trait is certainly what an educator in this post-modern world must have. Consistency coupled with a strong sense of commitment and dedication is the key to reaching one's achievement in life. In teaching, grit is an observable indicator that brings efficacy. When we start the race, we must finish it. We are not to give up nor give in.

Teaching for the first time and teaching for a lifetime matter when one has the full grasp on how he or she invests in the concept of teaching. Teaching is an investment of time, resources, and relationships. With this full realization, one has to deeply make a self-assessment since teaching is not just a profession but a vocation, a sacred calling with the full intention and purposive and meaningful vision. This vision is cascaded into a mission wrapped with passion. This strengthens the determination and ardent interest that requires people to do something with passion. Passion is expressed in Proverbs

3:3: "Let love and faithfulness never you, bind them around your neck, and write them on the tablet of your heart." Here, the word heart translates into passion. When persons have an intensity to do something, they are burning it with fire and excitement. No circumstances could stop them from doing it until the end.

Furthermore, there are various biblical verses that encourage Christian believers to keep on doing and finish what we have started. Grit can be pictured by how the way the farmer labors in the field, from the tilling of the field, plowing, sowing, and up to the harvest. They endure in all seasons. Galatians 6:9 states, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Jesus' life ministry is another way to illustrate how being gritty matters. Amidst all the miracles and wonders that he performed, he received persecution but yet finished with the cross. He set his life as an example to follow, that we need to overcome such challenges and tribulations. His teachings give us timeless lessons that have a powerful impact on our lives. He made a significant difference and changed the whole world. In the same manner, we educators of today must not cease to labor in teaching his principles and truths that have been the guide of many successful men and women in the field—past, present, and even in future generations.

*7. **God-centeredness** – Christ-likeness in Behavior and Attitude*

A lyric of a song, "Mirror of Your Heart," from Chris Christian, one of the famous Christian artists in the 1990s, had expressed it this way:

> All I want for others to see
> Is a reflection of you inside of me?
> Like the sun on the still waters
> Let me be the mirror of your heart.
>
> I want to walk in the image of you
> Like a child imitating
> What would his father do?
> Let me be the mirror of your heart.
> Lord, I want to be your disciple

An example, the way You were to me
And as I see Your humble perfection

Let be the mirror of your heart.

Spending time with our heavenly Father is the most special and precious time we could ever spend. Intimacy with him requires both the quality and quantity of time. The more we seek Him, the more we know Him. And the more we know Him, the more we come to know more about who he is in our lives and how we live our lives to the fullest. Putting God as the center of our life is our inner core. He alone is our main and ultimate focus in all the things we think, do, and say. He alone is our main priority in life. Seeking him requires putting our hearts, thoughts, and actions in Him. King David intensely expressed it in Psalm 27:4: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." In the presence of God, we know that everything is laid down in a proper perspective. In Him, we cannot ask for more but of his great love and sustaining grace. Living in this earthly walk requires us to face the daily challenges and endure the difficulties we can ever imagine. However, trusting Jesus Christ allows us to fall back in the security of God's loving arms. It was vividly expressed by King David in Psalm 84: 10: "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." Having this word of assurance, peace, and security brings us closer to God's perfect plan and will. We are with him, and he is in us.

Thus, placing him above all else are the clear words uttered to us by Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to as well." Godly people live godly lives because what they ought to be comes from the deep understanding that God is the epitome of all qualities and traits a human being could ask for. Our lives are precious gems, and we are treasures worth keeping. As educators, we need to cultivate and nurture ourselves with a full zest for the teaching

ministry. God-centeredness should be our ultimate desire in our daily becoming.

Insights

The teaching profession is often taken as the road less traveled by young people of today. Yet, it is in this profession where other professions are birthed. Living in the ministry of teaching is rewarding yet challenging. It is rewarding to see how we usher others in the fulfillment of their dreams. It is a never-ending crusade to reach others' lives by the hand, by the head, and by the heart. The competence, values, and attitudes that educators share are essential skills that permeate every learner on his or her journey. On the other hand, teaching is challenging, for it demands steadiness in all its adversaries. Thus, the heart of a teachers' efficacy reflects on how they have influenced others' lives for the greater glory of the One who created every human being. The legacy we leave therefore, is how we live.

Finally, let me share a poem I composed as a tribute to my Mom and to all the teachers around the globe.

Teacher's DNA

I am an artisan on her side,
Imitating her task even how she decides.
And in life's roller coaster ride,
She assures me that in God I will abide.
I wrote lesson plans with all the glee,
And the visual aids and computing grades
Become my cup of tea.
Constructing and checking of test papers
Are easy peas for me,
While composing songs with choreography.

She taught me varied things that sometimes
I cannot understand,
So I just caught it with values at hand.
And those day are worth remembering,
So I treasure them all as a silver lining.
For in life it's not all about learning
But about who you are in the purpose of living.

The Teacher is my Mom in a real person,
With passion in her profession.
And today I now embraced this vocation,
I hope to do the same in this mission
To keep the fire for the next generation.

8

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

The Power for Discipleship in John 14:15-21

David A. Ackerman

Introduction

The purpose of John is clearly stated in 20:30-31: "Therefore, Jesus did many other signs before his disciples which are not written in this book, but these [signs] have been written in order that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."[1] John's clear purpose is to help readers put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. He does this by recounting the signs that Jesus did, including his death and resurrection, all of which prove this important claim.

Some in the Johannine community may have had the problem of an absent Lord. Jesus was no longer with them but had gone back to the Father who had sent him (20:17). The problem of the absent Jesus was solved by the presence of the Spirit. Barrett states, "The sequel to the earthly life of Jesus was his return to the glory he had enjoyed before the creation of the world, and the earthly counterpart of this heavenly event was the gift of the Spirit."[2]

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[1] All Scripture translations are author's own.

[2] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), 74.

Jesus had promised his disciples he would return someday to take them to a home prepared for them (14:2-3). Meanwhile, they were not to let their hearts be troubled. To help in this time of trouble and even persecution (no doubt a reality for many in the Johannine community, see 16:1-4), Jesus said that the Father would send a Comforter to stand beside them. The absent Lord had not actually left his disciples "orphans" but had given them another Helper to take his place until he returns again. This Helper is with us as well, as we continue to serve the Lord Jesus by making disciples in his name.

Saying Farewell

John 13-17 is the literary genre of a farewell discourse, which was common in the ancient world. A farewell discourse was a collection of the last words of a great person given in the form of admonitions, decrees, or ecstatic pronouncements. The Johannine farewell discourse is similar to the one in Luke 22. Other farewell discourses in the Bible include Jacob blessing his sons (Gen 49), the book of Deuteronomy, which is Moses' farewell discourse to Israel,[3] Joshua's address to Israel (Josh 22-24), and David's blessing to Solomon and Israel (1 Chron. 28-29).

Jesus knew the time was near for him to face death and return to the Father (13:1). He had recently raised Lazarus from the dead (ch. 11) and entered Jerusalem (ch. 12) for the Feast of the Passover, with crowds shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" All during this time, he was aware of the impending doom awaiting him (12:23). The key issue for the Jews was faith: would they accept Jesus as their Messiah (12:37)? After this farewell discourse, Jesus departs with his disciples to pray, after which he is arrested (ch. 18), taken before the high

[3] George R. Beasley-Murray points out this similarity: "Israel is on the point of entering the promised land as the chosen people of God, and the disciples are about to be launched as the new Israel in order to be the instruments of the divine sovereignty in the world" (*John,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 [Waco: Word, 1987], 223). Many other interesting links between Deuteronomy and John 13-17 can be found.

priest, and eventually before Pilate, who sentences him to death by crucifixion (ch. 19).

The farewell discourse occurs in the context of the Lord's Supper, although in John, there is no mention of bread or wine in a eucharistic fashion. Chapter 6 and the Bread of Life discourse could serve as the Johannine eucharistic meal, and so chapter 13 serves some other purpose. Jesus showed his love in a symbolic yet practical way to his disciples by washing their feet. Whereas, with the Lord's Supper, he showed his love through giving his life. Both show love and self-sacrifice and are to be modeled by disciples (John 13:17; Luke 22:19). As John wrote this Gospel on the other side of Easter, he was calling his readers to faith in Jesus just as Jesus was calling his first disciples to put their trust in him.

Kennedy classifies the literary structure of John 13-17 as epideictic rhetoric, which is the oratory of praise or blame. This type of rhetoric has the goal of strengthening the audience's adherence to some value as the basis for a general policy of action. Jesus is concerned that his disciples are secure at his departure. The questions asked by the disciples help create the situation in which Jesus can respond about his departure. The audience is the disciples. The rhetorical problem from the point of view of Jesus is "the distress of the disciples and their limited understanding of his nature and mission," and from the point of view of John is "how to present the scene in such a way that both its pathos and its glory will emerge."[4]

Jesus' consolation begins in 14:1. The questions asked by the disciples serve to 1) add interest to the drama, 2) show the ethos of the disciples, and 3) develop the basic topics of the discourse (13:1).[5] In 14:15-21, Jesus offers consolation to the disciples by the coming of the Holy Spirit. In these verses, the topics of 13:1 are repeated, such as the world (v. 17), Jesus' relation to the Father, and the

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[4] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 75.

[5] Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 80.

disciples' need to love (vv. 20-21).[6] Culpepper points out that many of Jesus' words are foreshadowed earlier in the letter, such as the use of *pneuma* (Spirit) in 7:39 used in 14:17. This ties the farewell discourse into the gospel narrative.[7]

The unit begins with v. 15 and ends with v. 21. The question by Judas in v. 22 is a literary device that serves to create the opportunity for clarification or repetition. Verse 23 begins the theme with which v. 15 begins—keeping Jesus' commands. The following verses then continue the themes of vv. 15-21 with some modification but in striking parallel:

	15-21	**23-31**
Keeping Jesus' commands	15	23, 24
Giving of Paraclete	16	26
Conflict with the World	17, 19	27b
Jesus' leaving	18	28
Unity between Father, Jesus, and disciples	20	23
Disciples loved by Father	21	23

The Call to Love and Obey

Verse 15: If you love me, keep my commands.

The passage begins with a conditional sentence. The protasis ("if") controls the grammar of the next two verses and the thought of the next six.[8] This is a third-class conditional sentence in the Greek and describes the "more probable future": if this condition is met, which is most likely will be, but there is still some decision involved,

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[6] Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 81.

[7] R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 39-40.

[8] Barrett, *John*, 385.

then the apodosis ("then") will be true.[9] If the disciples say that they love Jesus, which should be the case, then they will show this by keeping his commands. Jesus may say that here because, in the near future, he would no longer be present with them in person but only through the Comforter. At that point, they will need to show their love for him by doing as he has taught them. When he is gone, will be the true test of faith in him.

Love was critical to the Johannine community. The verb for "love" used here is *agapaō*, which is the word often used for God's undeserving and uncritical love for humanity. This type of love is described further in 1 John 4:7-10. Verse 10 says, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as the atonement for our sins." Love, as defined by Jesus' life, is self-emptying, faithful, committed, sacrificial, giving, and redeeming. Verse 11 then tells the Johannine community to love one another as God has loved them. The type of love the disciples should show is given in John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." This was the kind of love Jesus was going to show his disciples, and this was the kind of love he wanted them to show to others.

In the apodosis of this sentence, "my commands" comes first in the Greek for emphasis. The disciples would show their love by obedience. The verb *tērēsete* is also used with Jesus' commands in 14:21 and 15:10. Elsewhere it is used for keeping God's commands (Matt 19:17; 1 Cor 7:19).[10] The commands the disciples are to keep are not defined in this verse. This verse, as well as v. 21, implies that the commands are linked to loving Jesus. In v. 23, "word" (*logon*) replaces "command" (*entolas*). In 15:12, Jesus gives the essence of his commands: "Love each other as I have loved you." There is a reciprocal connection here: the disciples love Jesus by keeping his command to love another. Brown comments, "His commandments

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[9] David Ackerman, *Grammatical Notes for New Testament Greek* (2020, 101).

[10] Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (XIII-XXI) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 638.

are not simply moral precepts; they involve a whole way of life in loving union with him."[11] This way of life is marked with faith. Schnackenburg writes, "The 'word,' which is not Jesus' own word, but which comes from the one who sent him (v. 24), is related to the whole of Jesus' activity in the sphere of revelation (see 8:28, 31, 43, 51; 12:48ff) and the demand *tērein ton logon* of Jesus refers to faith (8:51f; 15:20; cf. 17:6)."[12] Bultmann points out that beginning in v. 15, faith replaces love from vv. 10-14: "This love in fact can be nothing other than faith." The intention of these verses is to define the nature of love. "The question therefore which activates the section vv. 15-24 is this: what is this love, which is directed to Jesus? . . . The clear presupposition of vv. 15, 21, 23f. is that the believer must love Jesus, indeed that he wants to do so, and this presupposition implies that love is a personal relationship. . . ."[13] Love is faith lived out.

Verse 16: And I will ask the Father and he will give another comforter to you, in order that he may be with you forever.

Verse 16 introduces the new idea of a gift of "another comforter" (*allon paraklētos*). Verse 17 shows that this is the "Spirit of truth," referring to the Holy Spirit. There has been much discussion on the meaning of this word, partially because this word is used only in 1 John 2:1 and John 14-16 and does not appear in the Septuagint. In 1 John 2:1 Jesus is called a *paraklētos*. This word is a combination of the preposition *para*, "to come alongside of," and the verb *kaleō*, "*to call*." Combined, this means someone who is called to come alongside of someone, thus a helper. It is often but not solely used in legal contexts for a counselor. Grayston argues that this word does not get its meaning solely from legal contexts but was rather a general term

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[11] Brown, *John*, 638.

[12] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. 3 (New York: Crossroads, 1982), 74.

[13] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 612.

referring to a supporter or sponsor.[14] In Greek legal procedures, *paraklētoi* were those who helped not by only speaking but simply by being present.[15] According to Harrison, parties in a suit pleaded their own case, and the jury would award the most impressive party. Two groups were utilized: the speechwriters and those speaking on behalf of the litigant. Harrison states, "Appeals to the emotions of the jurors were considerably less bridled than would be tolerated in most modern courts. A litigant would try to impress the court by getting a number of supporters (*paraklētoi*) simply to appear beside him, without speaking or giving evidence."[16]

John was not obliged to use a word like this in such a narrow sense. It could also refer to an intermediary who comes alongside a person as a "helper." Hoeferkamp adds, "St. John no doubt filled the term with new content as he reflected on the nature and the functions of Jesus."[17] The last phrase of this verse is helpful for a definition: "in order that he may be with you forever." The reason (*hina*) the Spirit will be given is so that the disciples will not be left alone. The Spirit takes the place of Jesus and will stand beside them. They do not have to obey Jesus' commands by their own power, ability, or pride.

The word for "other" (*allon*) designates "another of the same kind." That the Father will give *another paraklētos* suggests that Jesus has already been a *paraklētos* to his disciples. Thus, this verse implies a trinitarian formula in that the Father sends two *paraklētos*. In many places in John the Spirit does the same things Jesus does:

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[14] Kenneth Grayston, "The Meaning of *PARAKLETOS*," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1981): 67.

[15] Grayston, *PARAKLETOS*, 70, referring to H.J. Lipsius, *Das Attische Rect und Rechtsverfahren* (1905), 907, 919.

[16] A. R. W. Harrison, *The Laws of Athens Procedure*, Vol. II, 1971, 156f, 163f, quoted by Grayston, *PARAKLETOS*, 70.

[17] Robert Hoeferkamp, "The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel from the Viewpoint of Christ's Glorification," *Concord Theological Monthly* 33 (1962): 521.

	Spirit	*Jesus*
Called holy	14:26	6:69
Called truth	14:17; 15:26	14:6
Dwells in disciples	14:17	14:20
Sent by Father	14:26	14:24
Not known by world	14:17	16:3
Teaches	14:26	7:14
Proceeds from Father	15:26	16:27
Witnesses of Jesus	15:26	8:12, 13
Convicts world of sin and judgment	16:8	9:39-41; 5:22, 27, 30; 3:18-21
Speaks only what he hears	16:13	14:10

Jesus always speaks in the future tense concerning the Spirit because he has not yet been glorified (20:21-22). The verb "to give" is often associated in the New Testament with the giving of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), and "gift" became a designation for the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45).[18] The gift which will be given to the disciples who love Jesus and love others will come from the Father because of Jesus' prayer, particularly the one in ch. 17.

Windisch states, "Jesus, on earth, promises the sending of another Paraclete, who is to remain forever with the disciples. This means that up to this time he himself was their Paraclete—their counselor, companion, and protector—and that his last deed as their Paraclete is to provide a successor." The phrase, "to be with you forever," is similar to Jesus' promise in Matthew 28:20. Windisch adds, "What the Johannine Christ ascribes to the other Paraclete, the Christ of Matthew claims for himself."[19] Although Jesus later says in v. 18 that the disciples will not be left orphans but he himself will

[18] Brown, *John*, 638.

[19] Hans Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, trans. James W. Cox (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 5.

come to them, in this verse, the Spirit will not leave them orphans either but will be with (*meta*) them "forever."

Verse 17: The Spirit of truth, who the world is not able to receive, because it does not seem him nor know him; you yourselves know him, because he remain in you and is in you.

Verse 17 begins with the accusative *to pneuma,* which stands in apposition to the accusative *paraklēton* in v. 16; the *paraklētos* is the Spirit of truth. The word *pneuma* occurs in John 24 times. In 1:33, the Spirit comes upon Jesus when he is baptized. In 3:5-8 the Spirit gives the new life that is from above (being "born again"). The Spirit counters the flesh (*sarx*), which is a life that does not believe in Jesus. In 4:24, God is described as Spirit, and his people worship in spirit. In 6:63, the useless flesh is again compared to the Spirit who gives life. The Spirit who is sent by the Father (14:26), testifies about Jesus (15:26), guides the disciples into truth and reveals the teachings of Jesus (16:13-15), and is received by the disciples (20:22). Schweizer writes, ". . . *pneuma* is the power that gives encounter with God through the knowledge of Christ, the power that is present in the proclamation of the community, shaping the life of the eschatological people of God and in so doing summoning and judging the world."[20]

Brown sees "of truth" as an objective genitive: "the Spirit communicates truth."[21] The Johannine community believed that they possessed the truth because they were filled with the Spirit (1 John 4:6). They had the right message about Jesus Christ, but the world and the "antichrist" did not (4:6).

The "world" (*kosmos*) opposes the Spirit and is not able to receive the Spirit like the disciples because it neither sees him nor knows him. The "world" for John has several nuances. Jesus came to bring salvation to the world (1:29; note the "whosoever" of 3:16; 6:35; 8:12), but the world did not recognize or believe in who he was (1:10;

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[20] E. Schweizer, *Pneuma,* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 892-893.

[21] Brown, *John*, 639.

even his own did not believe either in 1:11). The world of unbelievers stands in opposition to the disciples and hates them just like they hated and rejected Jesus (15:18), but the disciples can find peace because Jesus has triumphed over the world (16:33). Bultmann comments, "The world *qua world* cannot receive the Spirit; to do so it would have to give up its essential nature, that which makes it the world."[22] Beasley-Murray comments, "In John to 'receive,' 'see,' 'know,' in relation to God are all faith terms, and imply receiving the revelation, seeing it embodied in Jesus, and entering into the communion with God which knowledge of God entails. The incapacity of the world to receive or see or know the Spirit is due to its rejection of the revelation in Jesus and a consequent blindness under the judgement of God. . . ."[23]

In contrast, the disciples will receive the Spirit because they know him by knowing Jesus, and he lives with them and will be with them. This will give them deeper insight into him and assurance that he has not left them. Brown writes, "The failure to see is not really a reason or cause for the world's failure to accept the Spirit of Truth. The failure to accept and the failure to see or recognize constitute one attitude."[24]

The disciples are emphatically compared to the world in the last clause of this verse (indicated by the pronoun *hymeis*). The word "see" (*theōrei*) from earlier in the verse is not repeated but only the word "know" (*ginōskete*). The disciples have already "seen" the Spirit in Jesus Christ and have yet to "know" or experience him in their own lives. Bultmann offers, "In truth the Spirit is not something which one can first get to know and then have, or first have and then get to know. Possessing and getting to know coincide, because the Spirit is the <u>how</u> of believing existence; whoever allows his existence to be disclosed by the revelation exists in its light."[25] The Spirit is given

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[22] Bultmann, *John*, 616.

[23] Beasley-Murray, *John,* 257.

[24] Brown, *John*, 639.

[25] Bultmann, *John*, 617.

because of the disciples' obedience to Jesus' commands (v. 15). First John 3:24 shows that obedience means abiding in Jesus and he in the disciple, and this is assured to the disciple by the indwelling of the Spirit (1 John 4:13).

The prepositional phrases in vv. 16-17 show the close relationship of the Spirit with disciples: "with you" (*meth' hymōn*, 16b), "beside you" (*par' hymin*, 17d), and "in you" (*en hymin*, 17d). In the first reference, the Spirit is given as a permanent companion to the disciples. The *paraklētos* is not a temporary comrade but will be present "forever." The way the disciples will know the Spirit is because the Spirit will be present with them and in them. All the pronouns are plural. Barrett suggests that *par' hymin* refers to the presence of the Spirit in the church, and the *en hymin* refers to his indwelling in the individual Christian.[26] The crucial issue in v. 17 for Schnackenburg is "the strengthening the faith of the disciples in their task in the world. Jesus, returning to the Father, gives their activity support from heaven, but the Spirit of truth fills them inwardly and is a lasting help to them (*par' hymin*) in their self-assertion over the world. He also gives them constant inner strength (*en hymin*)."[27]

Verse 18: I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.

Verse 18 begins with "not" (*ouk*), emphasizing that Jesus will ***not*** leave his disciples as orphans. This opening negative clause makes the last positive phrase even more significant. This verse is pivotal to chs. 14-17. If the disciples had not realized yet the full impact of Jesus' statements concerning his return to his Father in 13:18-19, they soon would with his arrest, trial, and crucifixion in chapters 18-19. This statement must have been a tremendous reassurance to them as they reflected upon the events of those days.

This verse holds two promises for them. The first clause reflects the promise of the Spirit. "Orphans" literally means persons without parents, and figuratively refers to being "abandoned" or "deprived." Jesus would not leave them alone but would be present in

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[26] Barrett, *John*, 387.

[27] Schnackenburg, *John*, 75.

the Spirit. The second clause promises Jesus' coming again. The present tense *erchomai* is used as a futuristic promise that is sure to happen. Jesus will certainly come to his disciples after his crucifixion (12:23) but also to take them to the place he will be preparing for them (14:3). This statement could create some confusion about whether Jesus is coming in the Spirit, Jesus is the Spirit, or Jesus and the Spirit are coming on separate occasions. Hoeferkamp offers, "It is not true that St. John sees the exalted Christ and the Spirit as merging into one figure, as many have supposed. Even though the Paraclete has to do exclusively with Christ, as we have seen, he nevertheless remains distinct from Christ."[28] For the post-Easter Johannine community, this verse would have the effect of 14:3 with a strong promise for the future.

Verse 19: The world will see me for a little while, but you will see me, because I live you also will live.

The world would no longer see Jesus after his crucifixion. For the unbeliever, this would be the end of Jesus of Nazareth. The word for "see" (*theōrei*) is used in both vv. 16 and 19, indicating that the world will not be able to see either the Spirit (v. 16) or Jesus (v. 19). The world will not be able to Jesus because it does not have the gift of the Spirit who enables people to see the resurrected Jesus. The eyes of the world are not the eyes of faith.

Even though the world will not see Jesus, the disciples will. Two emphatic "you" plural pronouns (*hymeis*) appear in the last two clauses of this verse. The first stands in strong opposition to the "world" since both appear in the nominative case. Two keywords are repeated: see and live. The disciples will see Jesus for a short time because he will rise from the dead and appear to them, and this resurrection will directly affect their lives. But after his ascension, they will no longer see him. Every generation after this will not see him in the flesh. The world must see to believe, but not seeing Jesus does not mean the disciples will not have life. That is where faith comes in.

[28] Hoeferkamp, "The Holy Spirit," 524; see Barrett, *John*, 387.

Life comes when people believe in Jesus even though they cannot see him (1 Peter 1:8).

Jesus uses two tenses for the verb "live." For himself, he uses the present tense: "I live." For the disciples, he uses the future tense: "you will live." The certainty of Jesus' life assures the possibility of life for the disciples. Schnackenburg comments,

> The choice of tenses is not only determined by the demands of rhetoric, but also theologically justified. As the Son of God, who originally has life in himself from the Father (see 5:26), Jesus can only speak in the present tense: I live. The disciples, on the other hand, to whom Jesus mediates life, can be addressed as believers in the present (see 5:24 and elsewhere), and as men who will only receive life from the glorified Christ (see 17:2) in the future (see 6:57).[29]

The Johannine community must have believed that their eternal life rested upon the fact that Jesus had come in the flesh and lived among them (1:14), died on their behalf (3:16), rose from the dead for them (11:25), and returned to the Father to prepare a home for them (14:2-3). The very existence of the living Jesus was the revelation of life (14:6). Jesus' resurrection confirmed every claim he made in his earthly life. The disciples would see him resurrected and would experience him through the Spirit.

Verse 20: In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

This verse begins with the vague reference, "in that day." There are several possible ways to take this phrase. First, this could be a reference to Easter Sunday morning, the day of Jesus' resurrection. The disciples will come to understand the deep relationships provided through Jesus when he appears to them as resurrected. For the Johannine community, this would translate over into a realized eschatology by which they could experience the power of Jesus' resurrection through the indwelling Holy Spirit. A second option would be when Jesus comes again at the end of the age (14:3).

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[29] Schnackenburg, *John,* 78.

For the Johannine community, this would be a future eschatology when they will see him as he is (1 John 3:2). Both of these options may be possible: Jesus' resurrection appearance is a guarantee that his coming again will indeed happen. His promise in v. 18, "I will come to you," is certain for both the first disciples and all who come after them and believe in him also.

The use of emphatic pronouns throughout the verse (Greek does not require a pronoun with a verb) adds assurance of Jesus' coming again. The world does not *know* the Spirit (v. 16), but the disciple will *know* to whom they belong. Their knowing will happen only when they encounter the risen Lord.

The content of the knowledge is given in the *hoti* ("that") clause: "*I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you*." The verb "to be" must be supplied in all three phrases. The preposition *en* appears four times in this verse. This preposition often introduces a "locative of sphere," which shows here the intimacy in relationship between the three entities. The Gospel of John begins with the intimacy of God and the Word. This theme continues through the book with Jesus making many references to his close relationship to the Father, for example, in John 10:30: "I and the Father are one." Jesus already told the disciples that know him is to know the Father (14:7-9). Then, in John 15, Jesus emphasizes the close relationship between him and his disciples, particularly seen with the repeated word "abide." This verse builds shows the crucial link Jesus is between disciples and the Father. It then becomes essential to determine how this relationship will continue after Jesus is gone.

Verse 21: the one who has my commands and keeps them, that one is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my father, and I will love him and I will reveal myself to him.

This verse takes up the theme of v. 15 with a slightly different emphasis. Verse 21 reverses the words of v. 15. Instead of loving Jesus followed by keeping his commands as in v. 15, in v. 21, the one having and keeping Jesus' commands is the one loving Jesus. This is not a critique or embrace of a works-righteousness in the Pauline sense found in Romans and Galatians but shows the faith commitment of the disciples.

A series of four substantival participles occurs in this verse. All four speak of the same person or class of persons. The first two, *echōn* and *tērōn*, are dependent on the same article that begins the sentence. The use of one article for both participles shows that having and keeping Jesus' commands belong together, are part of the same action, and should not be separated. The participle *echōn* is a rather vague word unless seen in context. Barrett offers that here it means "to grasp firmly with the mind."[30] Morris offers: "The meaning appears to be to make the commandments one's own, to take them into one's inner being. Jesus speaks not only of 'having' the commandments but also of 'keeping' them, i.e., to observe them in daily life is more than to have a firm intellectual grasp of their content."[31]

The verse then moves on to its emphasis: the one who loves Jesus will be the one loved by the Father. We run into the problem of what the commands are about which Jesus is speaking. There is likely here an implied link to v. 15 and the command to love Jesus. The participles "having," "keeping," and "loving" are all linked together and essentially refer to the same activity.

In the second sentence of this verse, John uses the future passive indicative *agapēthēsetai* ("will be loved") to show the Father's response to those who love Jesus. Barrett warns that one should not take God's love in this verse as conditional. Rather, "Because the disciples love one another they will appear to men as members of the divine family; their love for Christ, and union with Him, means that the Father loves them in him."[32] This phrase almost appears to be a contradiction to the universalistic thought in 3:16 that "God so loved the world," including those against Jesus and his disciples.

What is the difference, then, between the love that God shows to the world (3:16) and the love that the Father shows to the disciples? A clue may be found in the future tense and the passive

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[30] Barrett, *John*, 388.

[31] Morris, *John,* 653.

[32] Barrett, *John*, 388.

voice of this verb. The future tense speaks of an action that will happen sometime beyond that moment, such as the giving (*dōsei*, also a future tense) of the *paraklētos* in v. 15. The passive voice refers to an action that will happen to the disciples, such as the giving of a gift. Thus, this verb reminds one of the gift of the *paraklētos*, described in v. 15, who the Father will give to the disciples when Jesus is glorified. The disciples will be in a special love relationship with the Father because they will have the Holy Spirit.

Not only will the Father love the disciples who love Jesus, but also Jesus will also love those disciples and also reveal himself to them. The verb *emphanisō* is used in theophanies and resurrection appearances (Exod 33:13, 18; Acts 10:40; Mark 16:9; Matt 27:53). It is used in reference to the Easter experience and the future coming of Jesus.[33] For the disciples who heard these words in the farewell discourse, this promise was fulfilled in only a few short days. But for the readers in the Johannine community and the church throughout the centuries, this revealing of Jesus will happen not only in the second coming but also in the everyday experience of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit makes present in our lives now what we look forward to experiencing someday when Jesus comes again.

Judas (not Iscariot) may have been thinking of the apparent contradiction between God's love for the whole world and the special love of the Father for the disciples. And so, he asks in v. 22, "Why are you going to show yourself to us and not the world?" Why should the disciples get the special attention of the special revelation of Jesus and not the world? Jesus' answer in v. 23 shows that this is not a contradiction at all. He says that if "anyone" loves him and keeps his commandments, this one will receive the love of both Jesus and the Father, and both will abide in this person. Surely this "anyone" includes those in the world who will respond in faith to Jesus (20:31).

A Needed Word for Today

This passage has important messages for us today, especially those involved in church work and theological education. First, this

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[33] Bultmann, *John,* 621.

passage is evangelistic in keeping with John's purpose in 20:30-31. Although Jesus is directly addressing his disciples, there is an indirect address of hope to the unbelieving world. Those who do not believe are provided an opportunity to trust in Jesus and a warning about missing out on the special privilege available only to those who love Jesus and keep his commands.

Another theme is the relationship of faith and obedience. When Jesus was no longer with the disciples, their faith would be tested. The mark of a disciple is faith and doing what Jesus did (14:12). Obedient faith and faithful obedience bring relationship with God (3:16). This will be shown by how the disciples love one another (15:12-13).

A third theme is the giving of the Holy Spirit, mentioned also in 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13. The Spirit as the *paraklētos* comes alongside disciples in Jesus' name, representing him and the Father to the disciples. Jesus had to go before the Spirit would come. He had to face the cross and experience resurrection and ascension. Morris comments, "This appears to mean that the work of the Spirit in the believer is a consequence of the saving work of Christ and not something separate from it. . . . It is only because Christ has died for us and put away our sins that the Holy Spirit can be found at work within our hearts."[34] The Holy Spirit leads people to the saving work of Jesus on the cross.

When those in the Johannine Community heard this part of the farewell discourse, they were reminded to remain true to Jesus and his teachings handed down to them. With the threats of heresy, they needed to know well Jesus' commands and to live in obedience to them (1 John 2:18-20). Those who were orthodox had the assurance that the Spirit of truth was with them and in them. To abide in Jesus is to abide in agreement with the Holy Spirit. Unbelievers in the "world" did not believe in Jesus, and therefore, lacked the truth because truth is found only in Jesus (John 14:6). Sloyan offers, "There

[34] Morris, *John*, 663.

is the possibility for Christians of living in truth because Truth lives in them."[35]

The realization that Jesus had not left them orphans would have brought great comfort to those suffering persecution by antichrists, Jews, or Romans. The problem of an absent Lord was solved by the coming of the Spirit who would be Jesus' presence with disciples. Through the Spirit, eternal life and victory through the power of Jesus' name are available to them (14:12-14).

As we read the Gospel of John today, the message to the Johannine community becomes the message for us when we accept its authority and inspiration. As we await the coming of Jesus again, just like the early church, we are reminded that we are not alone. Love was crucial for the early Christians because, without it, they could have compromised with heresy and collapsed under persecution. They needed to accept the resurrected Jesus by faith.

We have to live without a physically present Lord. Not like many other religions that have dead founders, Christianity is based on a crucified and resurrected Savior who is ever-present with believers now through the abiding Spirit.

[35] Sloyan, 182.

9

Authentic Mode of Coexistence

Larnie Sam A. Tabuena

Creating one's comprehensive life-meaning ought to be a constant affirmation of a conscious self as a person and not some manipulable utility. Such assertion radically elevates an autonomous individual endowed with the inherent faculty of conation to achieve his/her projected telos through the intentional exercise of creativity. The formation of individual identity should not in any way be circumscribed by the "herd value framework" and 'the safety of the unanimous." It is an entirely futile attempt to subsume the burden of being meaning-makers under the cloak of the "sacred collective." The progressive leap of becoming is realized by an act of individual volition and compendium of choices which brings self-directed agents to the increasing levels of being.

Authenticity is usually measured in the context of individual autonomy rather than duty-bound conformity to the imperatives of long-established conventions. It entails an increasing capacity to transcend enculturation which readily provides the basic life scripts. Becoming a well-integrated person means having the ultimate prerogative to re-invent life around the expressed purposes of active moral agency. Just as the microcosm we find ourselves thrown into is riddled with absurdity, it challenges us to revise and devise the logic of our being and thereby attain existential meaning.

However, the nature of a person is not merely confined to an understanding of a moral entity or self-conscious being who essentially possesses rational powers, volitional dynamism, and sentient constitution. The highest value of human beings as the crown of God's creation should not revolve around our superior

faculties to self-navigate the process of becoming in fulfilling our desired outcome because such declaration of displaced autonomy to achieve authenticity brings the all-pervasive threat of paralyzing finitude. A person is a dynamic subject of experience whose self-affirmation, primordial meaning, and ontological growth will not be genuinely realized in the state of total independence but through engagement with other selves and the created order. The principle of *esse est co esse*, "to be is to be with", unveils the profound secret of authenticity and significance. Humanity is not just an aggregate of conscious beings normally interacting on actual occasions but an enriching I-Thou convergence that creatively edifies the subjects. Co-relationship to flourish integrates the essential dimensions of the objective lifeworld, subjective faith, and intersubjective truth.

Thus far, in my reflective engagement with the history and traditions of religious thoughts, I realize that such comprehensive attempts to relate human life to that which is conceived as the ultimate reality, supreme being, ubiquitous knower, controlling power, greater self, or absolute thou, worthy of our highest devotion, fundamentally bear witness to humanity's perennial concerns of achieving a meaningful ontological interconnection. The potential exigence to experience wholeness remains to be a healthy phenomenon of conscience as well as the essential project of dasein.

A specific type of ontos, human being, referred to by Heidegger as "dasein," literally means "being- there," is by no means a mere designation of static phenomenological status in the mundane order of existence but an active pursuit of creative telos to gain ontological significance and eternal validity. Dasein is a uniquely human existence that projects itself forward in time to the point of possibility. An individual is never a finished product: human existence is, by definition, open-ended. Therefore, the finite's existential openness to being in the supreme act of faith implies both the capacity for infinite receptivity and to evolve into fullness. Another property of dasein is its throwness; by which Heidegger means that "existence for every individual involves being thrown into a world whose structure had long since been established. I am thrown into a nature,

and this nature appears not only as outside of me, in objects devoid of history, but it is also discernible at the center of subjectivity."[1]

At this juncture, our inherent quest for authenticity embedded in the very core of our human potential for higher evolution ought not to be construed as distinct from the universal phenomenon attributed to as "religious consciousness." The dynamic dialectic of the finite-infinite experiences within the aggregate of moral agents immanently interacting while projecting their process of transcendentally becoming signifies the unique scope and complex ramifications of philosophy in dealing with the concepts of religion. The historical search for intuitive wisdom and practical prudence reveals the indispensable necessity for transcendence and the human inability to capture the profundity and depth of key human experiences.[2] The main aim of philosophical inquiry is the attempt to discover the most basic truth about the human condition and its necessary connections, which constitute an approach to epistemology. Religiosity is a dynamic interplay of our consciousness of the human inner constitution and the intuition of the "beyond." Thus, philosophy of religion is not a body of knowledge to be investigated or a method of inquiry to be mastered, but rather the dynamic history of a mystery that reveals itself through the power of a question: the question of the meaning of life.

The prevailing experience of despair in a macrocosm of reality lies in the fact that emptiness is the natural result of individual self-concept and public consciousness of one's being as just an agglomeration of functions. However, the lingering agony of angst precisely is a spiritual condition of alienation from the ground of one's being. Such adverse conditions are what Karl Jaspers called "the boundary situation," the shattering of being in everyday life. In this process, we are confronted with a reality far greater than ourselves. It points to the possibility of salvation. Through transcendence, we

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[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. from the French by Collin Smith (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1986), 346.

[2] Brendan Sweetman, ed., *A Gabriel Marcel Reader* (Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2011), 1.

move beyond our own finite nature to that which is unconditional. Despite observable nuances of prescribed ways of understanding ourselves and in relating with the divine, common to all the great world faiths is a "soteriological structure," and they each offer their own approach to obtain conciliation- through faith in response to divine grace; or through total self-giving to God. Without some ground in an absolute or unconditional, there cannot be any meaning.

I want to highlight two emerging representative thoughts as to specific responses to philosophy's inquiry into the domains of religious phenomena. First, onto-theology, like the traditional metaphysics, conceives that the essent as such in general is the very foundation of the universal unity and totality on which all beings can be subsumed. The *a priori* intuitive abstraction of the supreme being becomes the basis of all unity. At times, we fail to recognize God because instead of appropriate conformity to the *imago Dei* as divinely embedded structure of intentionality, in turn, we created Him in our own image. We should have the attitude of openness to discover the reality. I am reminded by a particular case when my dissertation adviser at the University of Santo Tomas, Dr. Florentino Hornedo, visited St. Mary's seminary for some speaking engagements; somebody had been given a task to meet him at the bus terminal. Unfortunately, the man sent by the seminary failed to recognize him due to the inconsistency between the prior descriptions and the present reality. The man was looking for Hornedo, who was described as an individual with a flat top haircut, but the actual person at that time had grown long hair. Secondly, Fideism can be a viable alternative in elucidating religious phenomena as "exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilized especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth." Correspondingly, a *fideist* is someone who "urges reliance on faith rather than reason, in philosophical and religious" matters and who "may go on to disparage and denigrate reason.[3]

[3] Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God," in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. By Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 87.

The two traditions represent the endless debate between Faith and reason. The issue has never been resolved, and it will continue ad infinitum without understanding the dynamics of human faculties in developing the synthetic creativity of wisdom.

The death of God case, which is initially Hegelian, renders here an appropriate example of philosophical ambivalence in faith-reason controversy. A rupture in the transmission of faith between generations: the act of faith itself seems no longer necessary for life and meaning. [4] Likewise, the widespread phenomenon of the 21st century is the disappearance of the "enchanted world," an eclipse of God in our civilization, and the eviction of transcendence from the public sphere.[5] "The Death of God" was the first philosophical articulation in Hegel's philosophy in 1802 publication of "faith and Knowledge." He writes, "Formerly the infinite Grief existed in the feeling that God Himself is dead."[6] The God of the Enlightenment was precisely a God who does not manifest himself in knowledge and so a God totally abstract and unrelated to life-dead.

According to Hegel, then, "the unbridgeable gap between sighing subjectivity and the God for whom it longs was established in order to ward off the risk that knowledge, in the act of comprehending its object, will reduce God to the level of man- or worse, that of a mere object."[7] God was removed from finitude so that his transcendence might be preserved. Religion, on the other hand, was located in the finite, more precisely in a finite and limited subjectivity yearning for the infinite that transcends its grasp. Religion, as this longing, is subjective, but what it seeks and what is not given to it in intuition is absolute and eternal.

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[4] Regina Schwartz, ed., *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach of the Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

[5] Ibid., 8.

[6] George F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge: An English Translation of G. W. F. Hegel's Glauben Und Wissen*, eds. Walter Serf and H. S. Harris (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), 190.

[7] Schwartz, *Transcendence, 12*

The pursuit of authenticity, within the bounds of time, context, interiority, and relationship with the other, unfolds before us the fact that existential meaning is attributed to as a spectrum of dynamic perspectives. Thus, let us consider three vital approaches when we think of the validity of religious consciousness, which in some cases their various combinations serve as heuristic structure in philosophy, phenomenology, and epistemology. Through this analysis, we can perhaps gain viable insights that can assist us in formulating a sound philosophy of education.

Objective Lifeworld

The subject person is fundamentally an embodied being-in-a-situation, and he/she is always located in a specific context. The concrete human situation represents the immediate world of meanings. Thus, any kind of multidisciplinary investigation ought, to begin with, the concrete human experience. As it is always stated in educational methodology, we have to intuit the unknown by initially accessing the known.

We have here the dominant notion of *lebenswelt* "lived world." Human development should come from the *lebenswelt*. Phenomenology, a philosophical method founded by Edmund Husserl in the first two decades of the 20th century, seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of the objective world as it appears to the subject. Rather than engaging in metaphysical questions, phenomenology describes 'phenomena.' Husserl's phenomenology favors an analysis of the constructs of everyday consciousness, the *lebenswelt* (lifeworld) of the perceiving subject. The lifeworld is the frame of subjectivity through which the individual apprehends and interprets the external world.

Perception is the acknowledgment of the object's uniqueness in terms of the givenness of the world to consciousness as well as the ability of the consciousness to verify the object of sense. Objects don't exist for themselves, but they exist for the senses. The economic unity of the senses and the objects is possible because of intentionality. Intentionality is not a singular system; it involves the given and the receiving. It is the metaphysical sociality by beings and the interconnectivity of things in the whole structure. The result of

intentionality is a relationship. Our embodied presence phenomenologically constitutes the intentional arc. The gist of Merleau-Ponty's critique of pure empiricism is specifically directed against the fragmentation of the primordial unity or integration of an object and the partitioning of our human faculties that function to experience the wholeness of reality.[8]

Furthermore, perception is knowing in a very radical phenomenological way. Our body is no mere physical body. We learn with our whole body as it is oriented toward the world (intentionality). Can you play a guitar without moving your fingers? In the *primacy of perception*, Merleau Pointy asserts that our primary device for phenomenology is our self. The body, which stands between the interior consciousness and the natural world, is a tool of knowing. The body is a milieu empirically exposed to the lived world limited by space and time, but it belongs to the transcendental reality that interprets what it is receiving. If the world is God's utterance and a code to be deciphered then, our perception is a direct encounter with the cipher. Knowledge is a kind of deciphering sensation.

In the perspective of Biblical realism, Grider considers "nature as the locus of grace." The natural order, including human physical existence, is the residence of grace. We celebrate our bodily constitution, which links us with nature. The act of Christological incarnation validates the principle of the sacramental world, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory the glory of the One full of grace and truth." We can view things eucharistically because it is indeed a residency of grace.[9]

Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" envisions the integral human person - body, soul, and spirit. The physical human body ostensively signifies specific meanings pertaining to our fundamental questions about life's purpose, sacred vocation,

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[8] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. from French by Collin Smith (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1986), 346.

[9] J. Kenneth Grider, *Wesleyan Holiness Theology*, Foreword by Thomas C. Oden (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 42-44.

relationship, reality, and God based on Scripture. As a person with a body and soul, made in the image and likeness of God, we find the meaning of life through finding out what it means to reflect God and what our bodies have to do with it. We are not only living as a visible representation of God to the world through the gift of free will but also through being in communion with others. "To be human means to be called to interpersonal communion."[10]

One of the serious platonic errors linked to Christian moral thinking was centered on one fundamental aberration; "the flight from existence."[11] From the source itself down to various ramified interpretations subsequently, there consistently appears a radical separation of "being" in the realm of essences and "becoming" signified by the world of changing sense experiences. The Platonists elevated intellectual knowledge above the domains of sensible objects, and according to them, the superiority of reason to intuit the changeless, eternal principle supersedes the faculty of human sensation.

On the contrary, Aquinas employed Aristotelian categories in explaining experiences in the light of hylomorphic reality, which is based on a metaphysical assumption that all things are composite of form and matter, essence and existence. He advances his "this-worldly" epistemology into the form of a philosophical dictum, "we have no knowledge of essences except through the gate of sense experience."[12] We are indeed a psychosomatic unity. Knowing is mediated through the world of sense experience. Every agent, by its

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[10] Brooke William Deely, *Pope John Paul II Speaks on Women*, ed. with Introduction by Brooke William Deely and Foreword by John P. Hittinger (Michigan: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 131. For a more profound reflection on the intrinsic value of human body, see John Paull II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997).

[11] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 39.

[12] Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 144.

action teleologically intends the actualization of potential is precisely the fulfillment of *Imago dei.*

What then is the implication of this discourse to theological education? In searching for the rationality of meaning, there is always room for what Marcel calls "primary reflection." It is ordinary, everyday reflection, which employs conceptual generalizations, abstractions, and an appeal to what is universal and verifiable. Primary reflection is also the level of objective knowledge. This is because the concepts employed at the theoretical level are objective in two key senses. First, they represent essential features of the objects of experience (at an abstract level) as they really are in the objects. Second, these essential features are also objective in the key sense that they are understood by everyone in the same way.[13] Primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience. It forces to take up an aptitude of radical detachment, of complete lack of interest. However, human beings are not tabula rasa. We have with us the basic intellectual orientation, cultural and mental baggage, and even spiritual divine image.

Objective knowing in terms of epoche or reduction is to behave like a little child taking events one item at a time without presupposition, anticipation, and structuring.

> A father was trying to read the newspaper, but his little son kept pestering him. Finally, the father grew tired of this and, tearing a page from the newspaper—one that bore a map of the world—he cut it into several pieces and handed them to his son. 'Right now, you've got something to do. I've given you a map of the world, and I want to see if you can put it back together correctly.' He resumed his reading, knowing that the task would keep the child occupied for the rest of the day. However, a quarter of an hour later, the boy returned with the map. 'Has your mother been teaching you geography?' asked his father in astonishment. 'I don't even know what that is,' replied the boy. 'But there was a photo of a man on the other side of the page, so I put the man

[13]Sweetman, *A Gabriel Marcel Reader*, 4-5.

back together and found I'd put the world back together too.'[14]

We assemble facts intellectually according to how the objects unfold themselves to us just as they are. Going back to the things themselves constitutes a presuppositionless mode of approaching what has been presented to us. Such a method of epistemology is objective cognition without employing colors of interpretation.

Man is organic to the world and its completion. The fact of human rootedness in nature brings to the fore the unfolding attributes of intelligence and self-determination necessary to the continuous process of immanent development. The multiple variants of isms and emerging systems of thoughts hinges upon the presupposition of a finished world as an existing autonomous fact, and equally independent knower, equipped with peculiar apparatus of faculties. Is intelligence then purely cognitive in the sense of purely re-encoding and reflecting an independent, finished reality? Such exclusive reference to cognition as something external misleads us by being oblivious to its reality as the necessary experience of the soul, including the valuing structure. Thus, the existing living centers having the faculties to appreciate the grandeur and the manifold qualities of the world is a crucial truth.[15]

Individual knowledge must be phenomenal and relative as they appear to us through the medium of our bodily and mental organization. Nature itself is an objective system; nevertheless, our translation of mechanism into terms of perception is a subjective process. By considering the finished world complete in itself subsequently brought in contact with some rational and empirical agents, relativity is utilized as a methodology. Our rootedness in nature is properly evaluated in terms of relatedness as the perpetuity of process, exploration into truth, and recognition of reality as

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[14] Paulo Coelho, *Stories for Parents, Children and Grandchildren*, Volume 1; available from http://www.Feedbooks.com, 2001, 8.

[15] A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, The Gifford Lectures (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), 111-13.

complementary elements of one system.[16] The fundamental point is, "Man the knower is within the real system which he knows, and that as regards his knowledge of nature his body is within that nature-system and continuous with it."[17] The significant correlation between the conscious subject and the objective life-world lies in the complementary structure of intentionality. The world continues to be a meaningless void and incomplete circle without the experiencing agent of its grand purpose and design. Even the development of the organism and its powers to commune with nature is nature's purpose of self-revelation.

Subjective Faith

Much of Kierkegaard's critique of the "present age" is a confrontation of passionless zeitgeist manifesting itself in the deprivation of inwardness. The "present age" is an age without passion, and that Western thought has lost its sense of inwardness. Its tendencies can also be observed in any age such as; people tend to identify themselves with the collective, to see themselves as just product of their time and place, to allow them to escape taking personal responsibility for their actions; people are afraid to make a passionate commitment to anything, particularly without guarantee, hesitate to take a leap of faith; the tendency to reduce people to the lowest common denominator, to discourage greatness and uniqueness, they prefer to live in the cellar; people want the comfort that religion can bring, without exerting effort, people fundamentally want an easy, secure life.

On the contrary, "Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion, and in its maximum, an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness."[18] Subjectivity is not selfishness or eccentricity, but it is rather genuine "inwardness" involving commitment, passion, and decision. Subjectivity means a concrete being developing because it is

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[16] Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, 115-16

[17] Ibid., 122.

[18] Ibid., 33.

the being's creative counterpart to personal truth. Knowing is an existential reality rather than cognitive and epistemic. The conditions of knowledge are ontologically built-in to a person as he/she discovers being. Authentic Christianity, therefore, in conformity to Christ and becoming like Him. Truth is not a unity of all attributes or ideas constituting a person. The truth is the total person.[19] Subjectivity, however, "culminates in passion, Christianity is the [absolute] paradox, paradox and passion are a mutual fit."[20] If such is the case, only subjective faith and nothing else can deal effectively with the absolute paradox.[21]

The notion of paradox in Kierkegaard's existential thought renders two main uses such as, in a broad sense, the contrasting relationship between the logical evaluation of faith and its psychological character, and in the narrow descriptive sense, subjective faith encounters the Absolute Paradox, the Logos

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[19] Florentino H. Hornedo, "The Philosophy of Søren A. Kierkegaard," *Lecture on Kierkegaard*, University of Santo Tomas, May 2010.

[20] Søren A. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by David Swenson and Introduction and Notes by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 206.

[21] "Paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. But the ultimate potentiation of every passion is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although in one way or another the collision must become its downfall. This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think. This passion of thought is fundamentally present everywhere in thought." Søren Kierkegaard, Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong, *Philosophical Fragments: Johannes Climacus* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1985), 46.

Kierkegaard means that the Eternal (God) has come into time (become human) in the absolute paradox of the Incarnation. Climacus [a pseudonym of Kierkegaard] does not consider the idea of a God-man to be a logical contradiction. The paradox belongs to an ethnico-religious order, not a logical one; it is more like what St. Paul calls a stumbling block (1 Cor 1:23) or a blasphemy, and Climacus clearly considers it more shocking even than the command to sacrifice one's son. For a lenthy discussion on the "Absolute Paradox," see Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments,* 38-47.

embodied in human form.[22] The paradox of God's revelation, by its nature, is an offense to human reason and only to be grasped through the infinite passion of faith.[23] The paradox is a logical problem with no rational solution- the case of incarnation is a total contradiction. Kierkegaard advocated the principle of parsimony or economy that entities must not be multiplied without necessity because existence is unsystematic, fragmentary, and sometimes absurd; thus, it cannot be reduced to a certain thought-bound philosophic system likewise, the incarnation as the absolute paradox. God is "totally Other" at the same time, not totally Other. Contemporary disciples failed to see Christ's divinity in the human. Faith is an act of the will by accepting the non-cognitive truth. God is the very other; thus, we cannot be united with Him. Communion is possible through the incarnate Christ representing both human and divine. The acceptance of grace gives us the privilege to participate in the life of God called redemption.[24] Incarnation is not only contrary to rational evidence but is even self-contradiction on rational grounds.

Kierkegaard's contribution is unparalleled in the history of philosophy, for he is not especially concerned with knowing the truth but rather with being in truth or doing the truth. The truth is to be acted upon, an affirmation in a more personal way than epistemological in nature. Faith is a happy confrontation by setting aside reason, and its structures in favor of the revelation contained in paradox. Faith is not putting aside reason, but it is the equilibrium of faculties. Authentic faith is openness to the divine personal revelation and not just an organ of human knowing. Likewise, entering a marriage covenant is not the result of a logical conclusion; indeed, you are not marrying a thesis or an excerpt but a mysterious presence.

Faith is the soul's logic to the unknown, inner intuitive wisdom. Faith then, according to Wesley, implies both "supernatural evidence of God and the things of God, a kind of spiritual light

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[22]S. Heywood Thomas, *Subjectivity and Paradox* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 103.

[23]A. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology: Schleiermacher to Barth* (London: Collins, 1937), 217.

[24] Hornedo, *Lecture on Kierkegaard's Philosophy*.

exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof."[25] It is also an act of our totally integrated human faculties. Tillich argues that faith as being ultimately concerned is a centered act of the whole personality. It is also a leap of constant becoming. In faith, a mystery of self-transcending dynamic participation of the human spirit in the divine nature can be affirmed, which leads to the fulfillment of our infinite value.

Faith, according to the tradition of inquisition, is the affirmation of proposition. It emphasizes the preciseness of the statement. But faith is also the fullness of truth in giving the whole being, the totality of surrender to the will of God. The incarnation is not only the infinite taking human flesh but we, the finite, will become like Christ. Faith is a phenomenon of life, not a path of consciousness.

The paralysis of human understanding, when confronted with existential questions, reveals the utter impotence of rationality in the Hegelian sense to richly capture the sense of authenticity subsequent to the realization of a projected telos. Faith is, therefore, what the Greeks called the "divine madness."[26] Pascal insists that faith can nevertheless be rational in the absence of proof—i.e., that it is rational in a prudential rather than an epistemic sense. Kierkegaard's priority on the subjective dimension of faith vividly attributes it as the "objective uncertainty along with the repulsion of the absurd held fast in the passion of inwardness, which precisely is inwardness potentiated to the highest degree."[27]

The "Ultimate" discloses itself only to the passionate man, the man who allows himself to be grasped by the ultimate. "Subjectivity is a passionate concern for one's being. At every moment

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[25] John Wesley, *The Scripture Way of Salvation, in John Wesley's Sermon: An Anthology*, ed. by Albert Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 374.

[26] Søren A. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 11.

[27] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 540.

of living in whatever he is doing, a subjective individual is absolutely interested in his eternal happiness,…absolute telos."[28]

In the realm of mystery, the distinction between subject and object breaks down through secondary reflection, which restores such unity. According to Marcel, Secondary reflection is essentially recuperative. The most basic level of human existence, being-in-a-situation, or situated involvement, is the level at which the subject is immersed in a context, a level where the subject does not experience "objects." This realm of human existence is best described as "mysterious" from the philosophical point of view because it cannot be fully captured and presented in ordinary conceptual knowledge. It is not an unknowable realm but a realm that is beyond conceptual knowledge and must be experienced to some extent to be truly known.[29] Subjective faith as a new dimension of knowledge allows us access to the realm of being, understand the Absolute Paradox, and experience the unity of our being. It is also the dynamic structure of integrated knowing because our human faculties are united in the mystery of total involvement.

Intersubjective Truth

Marcel's most seminal formulation is the notion of ontological intersubjectivity, achieved through a concrete approach to being and experiential thinking, as the basis of establishing a fraternal society. Searching for the meaning of being in man's specific mode of existence only occurs by opening ourselves up to other people whom we conceive as "thous" and thereby affords us the possibility to intimately participate in the grand mystery of being. Being is meditatively recovered by the restorative power of secondary reflection, that is, participation or a new immersion into being. A life devoid of personal engagement has become a widespread phenomenon in the postmodern technocratic milieu where the

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[28] F. Russel Sullivan Jr., *Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard* (Washington D. C.: University of America Inc.,1978), 92. See also Herbert M. Garelick, *Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 19-20.

[29] Sweetman, *A Gabriel Marcel Reader*, 5.

computer-generated dream world threatens to dehumanize and reduce us into systems of functions. The reification of the human person is "a pitiless sacrilege to treat God's image merely as a factum."[30]

The unfolding truth of being can only be realized through our mutual participation in humanity's meaning as we are all journeying together to achieve existential wholeness. To be a subject, to be a person is to be with. A symphonic truth is experienced by the distinctively unique participation of each instrument to produce a beautiful harmony of the orchestra under the common inspiration of music. The multidimensionality of truth makes us aware that no individual, race, or civilization has the monopoly of truth, and in order to achieve it, we need to engage ourselves in personal communion. Truth in phenomenology is not hypostatic, substantive, or objective. It is like gestalt, mosaic, harmonic and participatory. Essential fragments create the whole image. The position of each fragment determines the meaning. Even in scholarship similar principle applies. For instance, peer review in publication is a social confirmation of the greater possibility of being right.

An isolated entity may affirm itself but cannot explain itself. Meaning is a relationship, metaphysical in nature, not empirical, not physically documentable. Concepts must be understood in the context of their whole relationship. Gestalt- meaning is relatedness. Wholeness is the interrelation of parts, the perception of the interrelationship of the parts. Likewise, being is a community. The Trinity speaks loudly of this concept. Allah's essence is transcendental solitude. The living incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, is a personal being. Marcel expressed a crucial insight by employing St. Augustine's words, "to know the truth, we must be in the truth,"[31] intersubjective truth.

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[30] Vincent P. Miceli, *Ascent to Being: Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Communion*, Foreword by Gabriel Marcel (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer,1965), 33.

[31] Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. by Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949), 113.

Marcel, at one point in his philosophical engagement, attempted to elucidate his concept of a person as opposed to that anonymous and irresponsible element which is designated by the definite pronoun "one." This "one" is, therefore, by definition, unable to be pinned down. Here is an example:

> a rumor is circulated about a certain person. I ask, "who says so? Who vouches for this?" I am told simply: I can't tell you who, but one is, or they are saying that it is true. . . . What is proper to the person is precisely his being opposed in a radical way to this elusive "one'" or "they." It is essential to the person to be exposed in a certain way, to be engaged, and consequently, to be involved in an encounter. . . . Truth is itself only where it is spirit, not only a light, but an openness to light. And if truth is such, then one can understand much more easily how it is allied to love. [32]

When Marcel emphasizes that our being is a being-in-a-situation, he is indicating that the only experience we have of existence is participating-in-existence. The crucial aspect of participated subjectivity is that it is never merely an experience of subjectivity. Every participation is a revelation not only of self but of other. If I were to divorce myself in thought from every mode of participation, what I would have left would not be a privileged self, but nothing at all; apart from participation, the self is nothing but an abstraction; for the concrete self is *esse est co-esse*, to be is to be with. The question of truth becomes the question of the scope and depth of participation. Obviously, a participated datum is a datum in which myself is involved and from which I cannot separate myself. It is not something I have but something through which I am. That is why in questioning the datum, I call my self into question.[33] Being is not an idea but a presence.

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[32] Gabriel Marcel, "Truth and Freedom," *Philosophy Today* 9, no. 4 (1965): 232, 236.

[33] Kenneth T. Gallangher, "Truth and Freedom in Marcel," in *the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. by Paul Arthus Schilpp and Lewis Hahn, The Library of Living Philosophers (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1984), 375.

We participate in the realm of humanity through freedom as well as in the infinite transcendent ground, motivating our exigence for being. The human self emerges within an enfolding absolute presence, and his thought, arising out of that self, is in contact at its source with the presence of being. The organ of ontological truth is freedom. Liberty, in turn, must be understood not as an occurrence in the void but as participation- as a response to the invocation of being. In affirming being, I affirm myself in a uniquely intelligible way. Apart from this self-affirmation, there is no possibility of affirming being or the truth of being. The instrument for the revealing of truth is nothing less than the intersubjective movement by which the whole self turns to the source from which all illumination proceeds.[34]

Dynamic interrelation occurs beyond the metaphysical cohesion of substances devoid of context. The objectifying propensity of an I-It structure diminishes the individual's worth as a person and forfeits the primordial intersubjective dimension of self in a creative fashion. Genuine communion acknowledges the distinctiveness of subjectivity as the ontological source of objective perfection like being, goodness, and charity. "It is dispositional potentiality, one which antecendently structured by its own past free decisions to manifest itself in this way rather than that way."[35] Being with an inbuilt capacity for self-transcendence is intersubjective in nature when such dispositional potentiality affirms the internal impulse of an I-thou relation. It means that the totality or Gestalt whole, and not the individual entity, becomes the regulative principle of social ontology.

What then makes co-relation authentic? What is the ultimate ground of ontological intersubjectivity? How shall it impact the mode of ethical interaction among persons as bearers of imago Dei? We have to elucidate the significance of vertical and horizontal dimensions of personal communion to appropriately understand the

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[34]Ibid., 378, 382, 386.

[35]Joseph A. Bracken, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Reconstruction of the God-World Relationship*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 29-30.

direction as well as the core emphases of our discussion. The vertical aspect of meaningful interrelation involves an all-embracing transcendental reality at the base of pure experience. It is a sort of concrete universal or simply an ontological ground for entities to mutually collaborate in dynamic co-origination. Such all-encompassing context ontologically prior to the reality of both the I and the Thou comprehends the particularity of individual entities within its scope. Martin Buber attributed this primordial ontological ground where actual entities enter into dynamic interrelation as the reality of "the between."[36] Nishida has also provided a conceptual counterpart from an Asian perspective that he delineates the concrete universal as a place, ontogenetic matrix, which seems to imply both a transcendent activity and a transcendent context. It is an all-encompassing energy field within which everything determinate originates, sustained, and developed.[37] Theologically, the diverse description of the ontogenetic matrix proximate to the notion of Ultimate Reality can be construed as the logos-governed universe. Momentary subjects of experience grow in actual occasions in dynamic interrelations within the infinite sphere of the Logos. Therefore, the transcendent source, the all-encompassing Logos, for the I-Thou relationship in human experience enables us to be intuitively aware of divine co-presence in our intimate communion.

Another essential feature of authentic communion is the notion of inverse correspondence of which "deeper self-identity is to stand in dynamic relation to that which is opposed to it and thereby to create something new."[38] Radically negating oneself as self-sufficient and autonomous of the other performs introspection's noble functions toward knowing thyself. For instance, the identity-

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[36]Ibid., 110-14

[37] Abe, Masao, "Nishida's Philosophy of 'Place'," trans. by Christopher Ives, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1988): 355-71, 364.

[38] Bracken, *The One and the Many*, 117. See also Abe, Masao, "'Inverse Correspondence' in the Philosophy of Nishida: The Emergence of the Notion," trans. by James L. Fredericks, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1988): 325-44.

in-difference of man and woman is an excellent way of understanding inverse correspondence that creative tension, negation, and uniqueness constitute something new. Self-development is the coherent movement of internal dialectic or intra-subjective reflection of self-negation and self-affirmation. Analogically, contemporary actual entities mutually influence one another's self-constitution in terms of inverse correspondence. The all-encompassing energy field is a dynamic reality that actively enters into the self-constitution of concrete subjects empowering them in their dynamic relations.

The horizontal dimension of communion encapsulates the very essence of societies "not simply as aggregates of actual entities with an element of order existing between and among them,"[39] but "as structured field of activities for their constituent actual occasions which readily fits into the scheme in which Ultimate Reality is described as one all-embracing primordial field."[40] The ontogenetic matrix as the ultimate field of activity is not just an extensive continuum but a dynamic principle of creativity. The enduring quality of the context or field for the interplay of actual entities creates an occasion for the emergence of each new generation and its modest modification of inherited design.[41] Societies provide structure, order to successive generations of actual entities, and the repository for the transmission of creativity from one set of actual entities to another.[42] Thus, faith-community, likewise, is the "called out ones" whose all-embracing milieu regulated by the divine presence entails a dynamic principle of faithful discipleship and creative Christian interrelations.

Conclusion

Some objective thinkers, like the logical positivists, would claim that outside empirical verification and falsification of scientific procedures and rational validity, any proposition is nonsensical. In the same way, phenomenologists suggest that we need to go back to the

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[39]Bracken, *The One and the Many*, 90.

[40]Ibid., 149.

[41] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 90-91.

[42]Bracken, *The One and the Many*, 149.

things themselves, the *lebenswelt*, life-world, to access the essence of things. Other contemplative people merely rely on the mystical phenomena of life and will only embrace faith as the only means to deal with the irony of existence. Many people extremely emphasize community-based undertaking in their search for truth. However, to have a balanced perspective in our religious consciousness, the objective lifeworld, subjective faith, and the intersubjective truth should be taken into consideration as we engage ourselves in the grand enterprise of achieving what passionate thinkers in history called thus far, an "authentic mode of life."

Man's rootedness in nature as embodied being-in-a-situation signifies the frame of subjectivity. Our incarnate presence phenomenologically constitutes the intentional arc of which the whole body is inherently oriented to the world. Nature is indeed the locus of grace. The psycho-somatic unity of human nature actualizes the dynamic potentiality of the imago Dei. Man's organic unity to the world acknowledges the necessary relatedness as a constant process of exploration into truth and the complementarity of integral elements to the whole reality.

I-Thou relation seriously considers genuine inwardness involving a passionate commitment of a subject-being to the truth. Subjectivity is conceived as dispositional potentiality to willfully manifest oneself in a particular way in the light of concrete being developing. Inward passion employs creative spirit to foster the edification of persons in communion. Subjective faith encounters the absolute paradox, which renders analytic approaches ineffective when confronted by the complexities of existential experience and ontological interrelations.

Meaning in human life, identity formation, and fruitful ministerial vocation realize themselves within an authentic mode of coexistence through its vertical and horizontal intersubjective dimensions. The ontogenetic matrix as the ultimate field of activity is not just an extensive continuum but a dynamic principle of creativity. Societies represent the horizontal dimension as structured field of activities through which the interplay of experiencing subjects in an orderly fashion generates the novel formation, active counterpart, and immanent growth in dynamic interrelations.

10

The Way of Freedom in Christ

Discipleship in Galatians 2:15-21

David A. Ackerman

The letter to the Galatians addresses a critical issue faced by first-century Christians. Apparently, some so-called agitators had infiltrated and "bewitched" the churches of Galatia (3:1). Paul the Apostle responded with a strong letter of opposition and correction of the situation. It is difficult to tell who these false teachers were based only on Paul's letter. There has been much debate about their identity and background. Paul claims right at the beginning of the letter that they were confusing the Galatians and preaching a different version of the gospel than Paul (1:7-9; 5:10, 12). They may have been acting like Peter in 2:14: "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

These so-called "Judaizers" or "Agitators"[1] were teaching the Galatian churches that Gentiles need to be circumcised as a criterion for becoming a Christian (5:2; 6:12). They claimed that a person receives the Holy Spirit and is justified by obeying the law (3:2, 10). Paul denounces in strong terms this interpretation of the gospel and calls it no gospel at all compared to the true gospel he preached (1:10). His message proclaimed that salvation comes through grace and is experienced through faith in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1:6-7). Consequently, Paul gathered the papyri, writing utensils, and

[1] George Lyons, *Galatians: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2012), 40-42.

scribe in order to save the Galatians from the legalistic trap into which they were headed.

Although Paul does not use the Greek word for "disciple" in his letters, the concept of following Jesus lies at the core of his proclamation. He preached that following Jesus is made possible because of God's grace. Discipleship in the letter to the Galatians must be viewed against the distorted teaching of the agitators. Being a Christ-follower is not a matter of doing certain rituals or trying to keep regulations or an ethical code but in relationship.

The Need for a Letter

A cloud of uncertainty covers such exegetical clues as the date, place of writing, and location of the recipients of the letter. This may have been one of the first letters Paul wrote, possibly around. The date is tied up with the identity of the recipients. Scholars debate the location of the Galatian churches, whether these churches were found in the northern half dominated by ethnic Galatians or the southern part, which had mixed races.

Several clues can be gathered about the inhabitants of Galatia as a whole. The Galatians had their ancestral roots in the Celts of Central Europe who had migrated south to the territories of Phrygia ("Galatia" is a variant of the Greek *Keltai*). Roman influence began around 190 B.C. after an ally, the Seleucid king Antiochus III, was defeated by the Romans at the battle of Magnesia. Eventually, the kingdom of Galatia became a province of Rome.[2]

When Paul wrote this letter (late A.D. 40s to early 50s), the Galatian Christians were influenced from many directions. No doubt, they had their own distinctions inherited from their Celtic roots. Roman and Greek thought patterns would have had some impact on their thinking and lifestyles. Then came a new teaching called claiming Jesus to be the savior of the world, taught by someone who named Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. Many Gentiles believed in the message Paul preached and joined others to become churches. As

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[2] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1982), 4.

with much of the Roman empire, scattered Jews may have been present in many of the major cities of Galatia. Certainly, there was enough legalistic Judaism in the area to cause Paul to write a powerful letter of confrontation.

With a pastor's heart, Paul was deeply concerned about the spiritual state of the Galatian Christians. He could speak from personal experience about bondage to human interpretations of the law compared to the freedom of being in Christ (1:13-14). He had experienced the futility of trying to keep the letter of the law compared to the richness of knowing Jesus as Lord (Phil. 3:4-8). As a former Pharisee, Paul knew and had practiced observance of the Jew laws. As he writes this letter, he appears concerned that the Galatians might be fooled into thinking that salvation requires following certain practices of Judaism, such as circumcision, which could lead to the trap of legalism. He is concerned about the misuse of the law and the abuse of the message of the cross. He argues that a person is justified before God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Christ is the only means of salvation. Salvation is through the grace of God and not through any human effort.

Galatians 2:15-21 is found at a critical point in Paul's argument. Paul devotes the first chapters of his letter to defending his authority and the authority of the gospel he preached. He received the gospel by revelation from Jesus Christ and not from any human source (1:11-12). When Paul was called by Christ on the road to Damascus, he did not consult any person before preaching the gospel (1:15-16). He did not need anyone's approval because he received his message and commissioning directly from God. He did not even consult with the apostles in Jerusalem (1:17). So powerful was this gospel to him that he introduced to the council of apostles in Jerusalem his mission to the Gentiles lest he should be running his race in vain (2:2). He wanted a united effort to share the good news of Jesus Christ because he believed it was for all people. The apostles had nothing to add to Paul's message (2:6). He had it right, so they welcomed his efforts in going to the Gentiles (2:9).

As an illustration, Paul uses a situation that took place in Antioch between him and Peter ("Cephas" in the text). Evidently, Peter had been eating with some of the Gentile believers. Then a

group came from James. This group, known as "the circumcision party," stressed the practices of Judaism, especially the need to be circumcised. This put pressure on Peter to withdraw from his association with the Gentiles (2:12). This group may have reminded Peter about the importance of circumcision to be considered a child of Abraham and that the law did not allow the eating of certain foods. Paul gives no further details of the teaching of this Jewish-Christian group in Jerusalem. More significant, Paul opposed Peter in front of the assembly (2:11, 13). Peter and the other Jews were inconsistent and hypocritical about compelling the Gentiles to become like Jews in order to share in table fellowship (2:14). This situation was similar to what the Galatians were facing, which may be why Paul brings up this story.

It is unclear whether Paul's speech to Peter that begins in v. 14 ends in v. 14 or continues on until v. 21. According to Betz, this has led to a discussion of the historical accuracy of this passage. Most scholars see Paul as addressing Peter directly and the Galatians indirectly.[3] Somehow Paul begins addressing Peter in v. 14 and ends by addressing the Galatians directly in 3:1.

Although the extent of the speech is questionable, the purpose of this passage is much clearer. In his structural analysis, Betz sees the letter to the Galatians as Paul's letter of apology. The letter shares a structure common to ancient forensic rhetoric. Chapter 1:6-11 functions as the *exordium*, which sets out the character of the speakers and issues involved. This is followed by the *narratio* in 1:12-2:14, which states the facts of the case. Betz calls the section of 2:15-21 the *propositio,* which gives the points of agreement and disagreement and the issues to be proved. This is followed by the *probatio* (3:1-4:31), where the argument is developed, the *refutatio* (5:1-6:10), which is a rebuttal and exhortation (*exortatio*), and finally, the *paroratio* (6:11-18), which is a summary of the case.[4] Furthermore, 2:15-21 as the *propositio* has a two-fold function: "it

[3] Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 113-114.

[4] Betz, *Galatians*, 15.

sums up the legal content of the *narratio* . . . and provides an easy transition to the *probatio*."[5]

Longenecker sees two major arguments mentioned in this section and developed later in the letter. In vv. 15-16, Paul argues that the law plays no positive role in how one becomes a Christian. This is developed in 3:1-18. In vv. 17-20, Paul argues that the law plays no positive role in how one lives as a Christian. This is developed in 3:19-4:7.[6] Contrary to Longenecker, it can also be argued from these passages that the law does indeed have an important and positive role in salvation and Christian living. However, he may be right in pointing to the fact that obedience to the law cannot save a person; only Jesus can. Paul puts the law in the right perspective as the guide that brings a person to Jesus. Longenecker adds, "While often largely ignored in the exposition of Galatians, this passage in reality is not only the hinge between what has gone before and what follows but actually the central affirmation of the letter."[7] The flow of thought in this passage moves from the situation in Antioch to the heart of the gospel. We get a glimpse of Paul, the man in Christ.

Justification by Faith

We who are Jews by nature and not sinners from the Gentiles (v. 15). In this verse, Paul broadens his audience. In a smooth transition, he moves from speaking to Peter (singular "you" *su* in v. 14) to using the plural "we" (*hēmeis*). Williams writes, "The transition was the easier because the temptation to which the Galatians were exposed was identical with that to which St. Peter had temporarily yielded . . . ."[8] "We" is clarified by "Jews by nature." This verse can be taken as one complete sentence by supplying the linking verb "are" with the first three words as subject/predicate: "We are Jews by nature. Or,

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[5] Betz, *Galatians*, 114.

[6] Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 82-83.

[7] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 83.

[8] A. Lukyn Williams, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), 47.

this verse could be dependent upon v. 16, making the main verb of the one long sentence "we have believed" (*episteusamen*; see the RSV). The latter seems to point to Paul's purpose. In v. 15 he is drawing in those who see themselves as Jewish Christians. A distinction is made between Jew and Gentile. A Jew is one by nature or birth (*physei*). The Gentiles are called "sinners" because they are outside the law and not children of the promise, and so they have no salvation.[9] Lambrecht sees the distinction as basically one of racial origin rather than of moral character.[10] Grammatically, "Jews" stands in the same position as "sinners," implying that Jews have the special privilege of being the children of Abraham and have the law, whereas the Gentiles stand outside of this without the law. This may have been a common understanding among Jews, as Romans 2 suggests. This statement may be full of irony to confront the pride of the Jews.

And because we know that a man is not justified by works of law (v. 16a). With v. 16 Paul begins to build his case. *Eidotes*, a perfect active participle, can be an adverbial causal participle dependent upon the main verb *episteusamen*. It is "because we know" that we can then believe. In a few words, Paul points at the fault of his opponents: "a man is not justified by works of law." This is the first mention of justification in the letter. The form of the word used here for "justified" (*dikaioutai*) is present passive indicative. *Dikaioō* is a forensic term meaning to regard as right or acquitted.[11] The sinner is declared as righteous before God. Sins are remembered no more. Ridderbos argues that what is at issue is God's verdict. Justification is the "juridical judgment of God, in which man is protected from the sanction of the law in the judgment of God, and goes out acquitted."[12]

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[9] Betz, *Galatians*, 115.

[10] Jan Lambrecht, "The Line of Thought in Gal. 2:14b-21," *New Testament Studies* 24 (July 1978): 48.

[11] G. Schrenk, "*Dikē*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2: 208-9.

[12] Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 99.

Paul claims that this relationship does not come about by "works of law." In the Jewish tradition, justification was viewed as something God owed humanity based upon the actions of humanity.[13] Paul transforms that idea by insisting that justification is totally an act of grace by God. The preposition *ek* is used three times in v. 16, indicating source or sphere. Williams sees the construction of *ergon nomou* as possessive, "works which belong to and are required by the law."[14] He may be right because neither a subjective nor objective genitive makes sense. The stress seems to lie on "works." Paul is saying that there is nothing within the law that persons can do that will put them in a right relationship before God.

But through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul draws a drastic comparison between the wrong way to be justified ("by works of law") and the right way to be justified ("through faith in Jesus Christ"). Fung sees the preposition *dia* as designating "faith in Christ as the means of justification," the exclusiveness and all-sufficiency of faith.[15] He also points out the significance of the change from *ek* to *dia*, saying that it makes "the antithesis between faith and works as the means of justification formally as well as materially complete: in the Christian way of salvation faith replaces works and Christ replaces law."[16]

Even we have believed in Christ Jesus. The main clause of the sentence shows the heart of Paul's message—faith in Christ Jesus. The main verb, *episteusamen*, may be an ingressive aorist stressing entrance into the state of belief.[17] It may also be a historical aorist, as in this translation, stressing a complete act in the past (RSV, Longenecker). Betz says, "The preposition *eis* ('in') stands for an entire Christology and soteriology which explains why the Christian

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[13] Richard S. Taylor, ed. et. al., *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 297.

[14] Williams, *Galatians*, 49.

[15] Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 115-16

[16] Fung, *Galatians*, 116-17.

[17] Williams, *Galatians*, 49.

can expect justification through his faith relationship with God 'through Christ.'"[18] Williams sees this phrase as meaning, "to cease to lean on oneself and to place one's entire trust on Christ."[19] Paul's argument becomes clear. He is taking the stress off of earning one's salvation by works of the law and placing the emphasis upon the grace of God through Christ Jesus.

In order that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of law all flesh will not be justified. To make his point even clearer, Paul repeats his thoughts in this next phrase. The *hina* shows the purpose of faith in Jesus Christ: in order to be justified. The comparison is quickly evident between Paul's ideal and the dangers facing Peter, the Galatians, and the opponents through the use of two genitive clauses. The first clause, *ek pisteōs Christou*, has caused much debate as to whether it means "faith in Christ" or "Christ's faithfulness." This phrase seems to stand in parallel with the second clause, "works of law," *ex ergōn nomou*. Whichever side one takes in the argument, the issue is clear: either we rely on our own righteousness found by obeying the law, or we rely on the saving grace of Christ. To answer this dilemma, Paul quotes in part from Psalm 143:2, which reads, "for no one living is righteous before you." Paul shows that the later choice of justification through the works of the law is not a valid choice based upon Scripture. This leaves only the right choice of justification through the grace of Christ.

A Refutation of a Charge

But if while seeking to be justified in Christ we are found also to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? No way! (v. 17) Paul then refutes a false charge that one could possibly say in response to his theology of v. 16. This sentence is a first-class conditional sentence, which assumes the protasis to be true.[20] Betz points out that vv. 15-16 show assumed agreement, and v. 17 shows assumed

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[18] Betz, *Galatians*, 118.

[19] Williams, *Galatians*, 49.

[20] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 89.

disagreement.[21] One might argue, since we are justified by faith and not by obedience to the law, then can we do as we please, i.e., sin? This would make Christ promote sin by allowing disobedience to the law. To this objection, Paul says, *mē genoito*, a strong negative meaning, "no way," "let it not be," "may it never happen." Betz comments, "For Paul there is no possibility of conceiving of Christians as living outside of the realm of God's grace."[22] Ridderbos adds, "Paul nowhere does injustice to the gravity of sin or to the holiness of the law. Both are always totally assumed."[23]

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I show myself as a transgressor (v. 18). This sentence is connected with that which came before through the use of "for" (*gar*). Paul argues that if a person goes back to the law after having been justified, then he or she becomes a worse transgressor. Or, as Ridderbos puts it, "By returning to law, a person increases his sin and demonstrates anew that he cannot keep the law."[24] By returning to the law, a Christian nullifies the true intent of the law, which is to lead to Christ.[25] The Christian who does this becomes a "transgressor" (*parabatas*). The word *parabatas* describes one who oversteps the boundaries of God's commands.[26] The NIV translates it as "lawbreaker." The law is still relevant but must not take the place of faith in Christ and reliance upon his grace for salvation.

The Death of Self

For I through the law died to the law, in order that I might live to God (v. 19). In this verse, Paul shows the purpose of the law: to bring one to the sphere of Christ. The Greek for "I died" (*apethanon*) could be taken as a historical aorist showing decisive action in the

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[21] Betz, *Galatians,* 119.

[22] Betz, *Galatians*, 120.

[23] Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 101.

[24] Ridderbos, *Galatians,* 103.

[25] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91.

[26] J. Schneider, *"Parabainō*, in *Theological dictionary of the New Testament,* ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 5:737-38.

past. At death, one ceases to have any relation with those things of the former life. Ridderbos says, "This being dead to the law implies two things: (a) his own impotent ethical condition, and (b) his unprofitableness with regard to the law."[27] The "I" (*egō*) is in emphatic position as the first word in the Greek sentence. There is a death of the old self trapped under the law and sin. The law ceases to have any hold over the person at "death." The purpose of this death is so that (*ḥina*) "I" might be able to live to God. Whereas death ceases a relationship, life provides unrestricted relationship with that new one.[28]

The "I" of this sentence is not just for rhetorical emphasis. Paul himself had experienced death to the law and rebirth to God. A change of lordship had taken place. Paul is hoping to draw the Galatians to the same conclusion. The Galatians were being led to believe that the law was still in force as the means of gaining righteousness. Paul argues that Christ has taken its place in salvation history.[29]

The New Life in Christ

I have been co-crucified with Christ. And it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (v. 20a). Paul breaks forth into testimony and clarifies the "I might live to God" of v. 19. *Christō* is in emphatic position in the Greek. Paul declares that he was crucified with (*syn* plus *stauroō*) Christ through identifying with the type of commitment and sacrifice Christ made on the cross. Williams asks, "But how was St. Paul crucified with Christ? He went over to Christ's side, took his position with him in his shame, venturing all on him, passing in spirit with him as he endured pain and death. St. Paul's life thus came to an end, and he shared the new resurrection life on which Christ entered."[30] The verb is a perfect tense showing that Paul's crucified position continues on. This is the type of life Paul

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[27] Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 104.

[28] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91.

[29] Bruce, *Galatians*, 142.

[30] Williams, *Galatians*, 53.

continually lived. Cousar adds, "Being crucified with Christ is not a temporary stage to be quickly passed through in the journey toward a blissful life without pain, anguish and struggle. It remains the daily experience of the community justified and ordered by the power of God."[31]

An identification takes place. The old person under the law (and sin) is put to death, and a new person under the Lordship of Christ is born. Ridderbos says, "But he who loved thus also lived in his own. Hence the life of faith in him is not a matter merely of being oriented to what has happened, but is also a new, reborn life, in which the strength of Christ's love, in which the liberating Spirit, reveals Himself."[32] The individual's own wishes are no longer the guiding principle. Every thought, word, and deed comes under the control of Christ. The death of self is not a death of personhood but a cessation of control. "The risen Christ is the operative power in the new order, as sin was in the old . . . ."[33]

And that which I now live in the flesh, I live by means of faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself in my behalf. Even though there is a new Paul living, he is still trapped in a world full of sin. "In the flesh" (*en sarki*) is probably referring to mortal existence.[34] This life is one marked with frailties and weaknesses. Longenecker points out the significance of *nyn*: "It identifies the believer's Christian existence in contrast to that of his or her pre-Christian life."[35] The old life was one of legalism by works of the law. The new life is lived by faith. The object of this faith is Jesus Christ. Longenecker states, "The object of Christian faith is here expressed by the dative article *ta* followed by a Christological title in the genitive and by qualifying adjectival phrases also in the genitive."[36]

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[31] Charles B. Cousar, *Galatians* (Louisville: John Knox, 1982), 61.

[32] Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 106.

[33] Bruce, *Galatians*, 144.

[34] Bruce, *Galatians*, 145.

[35] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 93.

[36] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 94.

Paul ends this verse with a declaration of the gospel. Justification by faith finds its source in the Son who loved us and gave Himself for us upon the cross. This is grace through and through. *Agapēsantos* and *paradontos* are both aorist active participles used attributively. They point to the act of Christ's death and resurrection. Bruce comments, "While Paul is still using the pronoun 'I' / 'me' representatively, it is difficult not to recognize the intense personal feeling in his words: it was a source of unending wonder to him 'that I, even I have mercy found.'"[37]

Nullification of Grace and of the Cross

I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no reason (v. 21). The *propositio* traditionally ended with a refutation of the charge, and this is what Paul does in this verse.[38] The word for "nullify" (*athetō*) means to invalidate or declare invalid and is often used in the context of covenants, treaties, or wills.[39] What Paul does not invalidate is "God's special grace to Israel in giving them the law."[40] Paul does not see the argument for justification by faith as contradicting God's plan of salvation. Bruce notes two ways of nullifying God's grace: "one, by receiving it and then going on as though it made no difference by continuing to live 'under law' (cf. 5:4), and the other, by receiving it and then going on as though it made no difference, by continuing to sin 'that grace may abound' (Rom 6:1)."[41]

The *gar* links the last phrase to the first by explaining what Paul means by nullifying the grace of God. Paul uses a conditional sentence, possibly assuming the position of his opponents. For new converts who are experiencing Jewish influence, the argument for

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[37] Bruce, *Galatians*, 146.

[38] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 94.

[39] C. Maurer, *Tithēmi*, in *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 8:158-59.

[40] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 94.

[41] Bruce, *Galatians*, 146.

justification through law could be a real danger. Paul draws the Galatians back to the heart of the gospel by saying that Christ indeed died for a purpose. After a Christian hears v. 21b, he or she is tempted to argue back, "Yes, Christ died for a reason, and I am that reason!" There is a subtle link in this verse between the grace of God mentioned in the first clause and the death of Christ in the last clause. It is through Christ's self-sacrifice (and resurrection; Rom 4:25) that we are justified before God. The sequence in the entire section is interesting. If Scripture (v.16) or experience (vv. 19-20) will not convince the Galatians that justification is through faith, then surely the work of Christ on the cross will.

Discipleship in the Way of the Cross

In this brief passage, Paul very skillfully moves from the scene in Antioch to direct confrontation with the Galatians and those who were agitating them. Yet, at the same time, he sets out some of the major tenants of his theology. Betz's rhetorical analysis opens up new awareness by showing that Paul introduces the main points of contention to be developed later in the letter. The first and primary principle that Paul gives is that Christ is Lord supreme. Because of his love and grace, Christ has made salvation and restoration of relationship with God a possibility. The wrong idea, that one can earn justification by works of the law, or better, through one's own efforts, only leads to defeat. This view nullifies God's place of grace shown on the cross. What must take place is a radical transformation of the person. A total change of mindset takes place. Through submission to the lordship of Christ, one lives by faith and not by works. One lives by the influence of the indwelling Spirit and walks in "Christ-likeness," and not by any effort to please God.

This passage seems to speak specifically to those who are in the "in crowd," in other words, those who are longtime members of a church or those born into the church. There is a certain degree of comfortableness that comes from faithful church attendance. The Jewish Christians, in Paul's mind, began to fall back to reliance on the law for their justification. We face a similar situation today. It is easy to fall back on our past track record. In the holiness tradition, there is a danger of getting caught up in the "doing" of the gospel

instead of the "being." Several implied points of "being" the gospel can be found within this passage that are relevant for us as committed and faithful Christians devoted to heart holiness.

First, Paul says, in essence, that holiness is not a matter of what we do but what Christ has done for us. All of salvation is of grace. As one becomes more like Christ, it becomes more tempting to boast in one's holiness. As one begins to take on the characteristics of Christ, those characteristics become one's own. A true transformation takes place. History and experience (for example, Jews and legalism), however, have shown that self-reliance can too quickly lead to spiritual pride. Paul draws us back to the heart of the gospel, which is grace.

Second, the Christian life demands submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ. His will for our lives becomes our will. We lay ourselves at his feet to mold and transform us as he sees fit. The result is that we grow into his likeness. His Spirit becomes our strength. Our desire becomes to serve him. His grace compels us to live righteously. It is in giving ourselves to Christ that we find life.

Finally, Paul calls the church of today into action. Paul speaks of living in this passage: living to God, living by faith, and living in the Son. Grace is not stagnant. The old cliché, "Saved, sanctified, and petrified," is too often the case. Through the grace of God working in our submission to Christ, we are called to action. Our action must be the result of God's grace and not the cause of God's grace. Our theology should lead to how we live. Holiness is not just a doctrine to be believed in but a calling to be lived out. This brief passage says much to the church, but the church is made up of individuals. Therefore, each of us is called to accountability. We have a responsibility. This responsibility is light and freeing compared to the heavy burden of the law of works righteousness.

Jesus left his disciples with a simple command: make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Though simply stated, this command encompasses all of life, including theological education. The highest goal of theological education is to help students grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is demonstrated in students' ability to model Jesus by helping others grow into Christlikeness.

Visayan Nazarene Bible College has collected essays on the topic of making Christlike disciples. One of the goals of this volume is to demonstrate careful scholarship from different disciplines and provide fresh ideas for fulfilling this mission. Each of the contributors comes with years of experience in discipleship through pastoral and educational ministries. This book echoes the mission of VNBC: Mentoring every generation of transformational leaders through quality holistic education and exemplary Christ-centered life that influence the church and the global community. These essays will inspire a new generation of scholars to articulate how to make disciples through theological education.

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