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The History of Discipleship in Judaism: From a Biblical Commandment on the Individual to Rabbinic Regulation on the Establishment of Public Jewish Educational System[1]

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Abstract

This article deals with the history of discipleship in Judaism and its transition from an individual obligation to a public education system. The article is divided into three main sections: The first section discusses the centrality of education to Torah study in Judaism as well as the Jewish legal concept of "educational obligation" as opposed to the modern legal concept of "right to education." The second and central section examines the development of the Jewish obligation to educate – the transition from private to public education. The author analyzes the various Talmudic regulations that led to this transition and the relationship between them. At the end of this section, the author discusses the funding structure of the public education system and the right of parents to choose the educational framework for their children. In the third section, the author emphasizes the distinctiveness of Jewish education as the supreme value of the pure intellectual study of the Torah, which refers both to financial interests such as the teachers' right to strike in Jewish law, and to dedication to study in times of severe hardship and darkness such as the time of the Holocaust. For this research, the author analyzes various Jewish sources, from the written Torah and the oral Torah. From the Talmud, the Mish-

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

nah, the Midrash, and rabbinic responsa from the Middle Ages to modern times. Much of this literature has been translated from Hebrew and Aramaic.

Keywords: *education, Jewish, Rabbi, Talmud, Torah*

Introduction

Unlike in the past, the right to education is a matter of course for everyone today. This right has been recognized by the nations of the world as a fundamental right and is enshrined in Article 26 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948. This right includes free education (which must be compulsory) at least at the primary school level; the availability of technical and vocational education and equally accessible higher education; and the prerogative of parents to choose the type of education they want their children to receive. This right has been enshrined over the years in the laws of various countries and in international treaties.[2] Among the Jewish people, education has been a core value since the founding of the nation. Throughout Jewish history, the Torah study of adults and the younger generation has been known to be extremely important, both for the preservation of the religious-cultural existence of the people and for its continuity. This is how the Sages testify to the importance of education and Torah study:

> Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Do not touch My anointed ones and do My prophets no harm" (1 Chr 16:22)? "Do not touch My anointed ones," these are the schoolchildren; "and do not harm My prophets," these are Torah scholars. Resh Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: The world only exists because of the breath, (i.e., reciting Torah), of schoolchildren... And Reish Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: One may not interrupt schoolchildren (from studying Torah), even in order to build the Temple. And Reish Lakish said to Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: I have received from *my* ancestors, and some say: from your ancestors as follows: Any city in which there are no schoolchildren (studying Torah, they) destroy it. Ravina said: They leave it desolate (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Shabbat 119b).[3]

The Sages in the Talmud claim that even for an important need such as the building of the Temple, it is forbidden to stop the students' studies since the whole world exists solely because of their study. Maimonides in his legal codex cites the words of the above Talmud sages and gives them binding legal status:

> Teachers of small children should be appointed in each and every land, in each and every region, and in each and every village. If a village does not have chil-

2 See: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights from 1966.

3 Most translations into English were taken from *Sefaria.org*. All emphasis added by the author unless differently specified.

> dren who study Torah, its populace is placed under a ban of ostracism until they employ teachers for the children. If they do not employ teachers, the village [deserves to be] destroyed, since the world exists only by virtue of the breath coming from the mouths of children who study Torah (Maimonides 1974. Hilchot Talmud Torah 2:1).

The meaning is that according to Jewish law, a city that does not take care of the education of the younger generation by establishing institutions for learning the Torah should be destroyed. Judaism's approach is very radical and advocates the position that without education and Torah study, we have no right to exist. This radical obligation of learning Torah for every Jew, for every father to teach his son, and for every community leader to take care of the education of the younger generation, can simply explain the phenomenon that among the Jewish people it has always been very rare to find those without a basic education. Among the Jews the greatest shame was ignorance.

In this work, we will point out that education in Judaism is a duty and not a right, we will explore the centrality and origins of the obligation to study in Judaism. We would also like to examine the development and expansion of this duty from a personal-family duty of the father towards his son to a public-communal duty during the Talmud period. We will also discuss the financial significance of the communal-public duty of education. We would like to show that the duty of education in Judaism has always been at the top of the scale of private and social duties - and for this purpose we will see, on the one hand, the uniqueness of the right to strike for teachers in Jewish law, and on the other hand, the sacrifice for Torah study during difficult times such as the Holocaust.

1. The Centrality of the Value of Education for Studying the Torah in Judaism

As early as in the morning when the Jew wakes up, he blesses: "He who sanctified us with his mitzvot and commanded us to engage in the words of the Torah" (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Berachot 11b). One of the things the Jew prays for is "a life of Torah love" (ibid., Berachot 16b). Judaism demands that a person devote his life to the study of the Torah, because true Torah study demands total life dedication to the Torah, as it is said: "Matters of Torah are only retained by one who kills himself over it? As it is stated: 'This is the Torah: When one dies in a tent' (Num 19:14)" (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Berachot 63b). And this is how Maimonides rules the halacha[4]:

4 Halacha – 1. legal part of Jewish religious literature; the name comes from the verb *halach* (heb. "to go"), because we "go" according to, that is, we follow Jewish law. 2. specific law from the halakha system.

> Three crowns were conferred upon Israel: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty. Aaron merited the crown of priesthood…David merited the crown of royalty… The crown of Torah is set aside, waiting, and ready for each Jew… Whoever desires may come and take it (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Tora 3:1).
> None of the other mitzvot can be equated to the study of Torah. Rather, the study of Torah can be equated to all the mitzvot, because study leads to deed… Therefore, study takes precedence over deed in all cases (Ibid. 3:3).

The Jewish people presented a magical ideological vision to the human race. The formation of a utopian society: a society in which intellectual engagement, expressed in the study of the Torah, is the central existential experience of all its members. The idea of eliminating the gap between an intellectual elite and the masses is indeed an absolute utopian idea.

One can find quite surprising parallels between this vision and Plato's utopian vision. Plato in the fifth book of his *Politea* presents a utopia of an ideal state led by the philosopher king. The only place where Plato's vision of the leader-philosopher came to reality is in the Jewish society, which was headed by the sages of the generation. Nowadays, in the Jewish ultra-Orthodox society, the leader of the community is the rabbi, the greatest intellectual who receives his authority by virtue of his Torah knowledge. The ideal of this society is the constant study of the Torah by all members of the community.

Naturally, it is financially difficult to maintain such a utopian society where no one works and everyone studies, as the Mishna says: "If there is no flour, there is no Torah"[5] (Mishna 1987, Avot 3:17). Therefore, the Sages talked about the economic model that can allow the maintenance of a group that is only engaged in learning, this is the Issachar and Zebulun model: "Issachar sits and engages in Torah study, Zebulun sets out to the seas and comes and provides for Issachar's mouth, and the Torah proliferates in Israel" (Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 1878, 72:5).

Admittedly, not everyone is qualified to be a philosopher, some have other skills and qualifications which should be used to support those who dedicated their lives to study. The midrash emphasizes that work and trade are not the goal but a means to enable the study of the Torah. The Zebulun tribe, who were international traders, took care to support the Issachar tribe who devoted their lives to the study of Torah.

Maimonides, when explaining the meaning of the messianic prophecy by Isaiah the prophet "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the kid" (Isa 11:6), asserts that this is a period in which a utopian philosophical society will exist:

5 The second part of this Mishnah is: "…if there is no Torah, there is no flour."

> The Sages and the prophets did not yearn for the Messianic era in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the Gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink, and celebrate. Rather, they desired to be free to involve themselves in Torah and wisdom without any pressures or disturbances, so that they would merit the world to come (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Melachim 12:4).

During the decrees of Hadrian,[6] one of the decrees was the prohibition of public Torah study. Rabbi Akiva, one of the great sages of Israel who lived in the Land of Israel at that time, realized that the implementation of this decree might collapse the religious structure and continuity of the Jewish people, therefore he violated the decree and continued to teach Torah in public, he was captured and executed under severe torture as one of the "Ten Martyrs."[7]

On one occasion, while Rabbi Akiva was sitting and teaching Torah in public, a man called Pappus ben Yehuda, happened to be there, and he wondered at Rabbi Akiva how he was not afraid of the Roman rule and risking his life. Rabbi Akiva, who saw the study of the Torah as necessary and vital for the people of Israel, answered him with the following parable:

> To what can this be compared? It is like a fox walking along a riverbank when he sees fish gathering and fleeing from place to place. The fox said to them: From what are you fleeing?
> They said to him: We are fleeing from the nets that people cast upon us. He said to them: Do you wish to come up onto dry land, and we will reside together just as my ancestors resided with your ancestors?
> The fish said to him: You are the one of whom they say, he is the cleverest of animals? You are not clever; you are a fool. If we are afraid in the water, our natural habitat which gives us life, then in a habitat that causes our death, all the more so.
> The moral is: So too, we Jews, now that we sit and engage in Torah study, about which it is written: "For that is your life, and the length of your days" (Deut 30:20), we fear the empire to this extent; if we proceed to sit idle from its study, as its abandonment is the habitat that causes our death, all the more so will we fear the empire (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Berachot 61b; Midrash Yalkut Shimoni 1960, Deut 837; Babylonian Talmud 1961, Avoda Zarah 3b).

6 Hadrian decrees - imposed by Emperor Hadrian on the rebellious inhabitants of the Land of Israel in 135 A.D., after the suppression of the Bar Kochba rebellion.

7 The Ten Martyrs (heb. *Asara Haruge Malkhut*) - are the ten leading rabbis who were cruelly executed by the Roman government in Israel because they did not obey the orders of the Roman government but continued to study and teach the Torah. These ten rabbis became part of the Jewish consciousness of opposing the Roman orders aimed at the destruction of Judaism. See: Babylonian Talmud 1961, Baba Batra 10b, Sotah 48b; Babylonian Talmud 1999, Berachot 61b, Sanhedrin 14a.

This parable is intended to illustrate the essential dependence of the Jewish people on the study of the Torah. Rabbi Akiva sees the decrees of the Roman Empire as fishing nets, the solicitation and temptation as a fox, Israel as fish, and the Torah as water. The "fox" suggests abandoning the traditional place of breeding and adapting a new way of life to survive the decrees of the Romans and their punishments, but the Torah for the Jews is like water for fish, they cannot live without it. To stop learning the Torah is more serious and dangerous than the decree of the government. The Romans will not necessarily catch the Torah students, but those who abandon the study of Torah surely endanger their future and destiny.

The Talmud cites the story of Rabbi Akiva's sacrifice as an example of Rabbi Akiva's own opinion on the subject of the limit of dedication to the obligation of keeping the Torah, which according to Rabbi Akiva's opinion is sacrificing one's life as it is said: "You shall love your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5), with all your soul - means: "Even if God takes your soul" (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Berachot 61b).

Even in the value of giving charity, Torah scholars have priority, as it is said:

> "Cast your bread on the surface of the water, for after many days you will find it" (Ecc 11:1). Rabbi Beivai said: If you sought to perform charity, perform it with those who toil in Torah study, as water stated here is nothing other than words of Torah, as it is stated: "Anyone thirsty, go to water" (Isa 55:1) (Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 1878, 11:1).

This is because "Just as the tent cannot exist without pegs and strings, so Israel cannot exist without the scholars" (Midrash Tanna Debei Eliyahu Rabbah 1968, 28).

The sages symbolize the ideal of the existence of the Jewish people "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6). Judaism aspires to establish a nation of intellectuals. The idea is not physical power, not a large territory, not great wealth, but a nation where the fulfillment of the ideal is that wisdom will be the common property. Naturally, the centrality of the value of education and the study of the Torah throughout Jewish history led to the enactment of many laws and customs in matters of education, however, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, we will not be able to deal with them within the framework of this work.[8]

1.1. Right Versus Duty

Before we begin our discussion, it is important to emphasize that the use of the concept of "right to education" in the various modern legal theories is very different from the use of this concept in Jewish law. While modern Western law grants

8 For a comparative study on the development of the laws and regulations concerning education in the State of Israel and in the Rabbinic Literature, see: Glick 1999.

rights to a person, Jewish law advocates a system that imposes duties on the individual or the public.

This is not only due to the essential differences between the modern legal system and the ancient legal system. The main difference between the legal theories stems from different worldviews: the secular society created the modern law and placed the individual at its center, while the Jewish society submits itself to a legal system commanded by God (Florsheim 1986, 35). The Jewish-religious worldview is based on a concept of duties, and indeed as we will see there are duties imposed on the parents and on the public, duties that create rights for the child. According to the modern concept, the right of the child creates "obligations" imposed on the father or the state.

Jewish law imposes on the child's natural parents a set of duties arising from the parents' status as natural guardians of their children. This status imposes on the parents, and especially on the father, the duty to educate his sons.[9] This obligation is indeed imposed on the father, but the child is not relieved of it if his father did not teach him Torah, as Maimonides ruled: "A person who was not instructed by his father is obligated to arrange for his own instruction when he can understand, as (Deuteronomy 5:1) states: 'And you shall study them and take heed to perform them'" (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Tora 1:3).

2. The History of the Obligation on Jewish Education – From Private to Public Education

From ancient times, the Jewish tradition recognized education as an essential element whose purpose is to inherit the heritage, to instill the foundations of the faith and the teaching of the laws.

2.1. The source of the parental obligation on education in Judaism

Many times the Bible repeats and emphasizes the obligation to educate children in the way of the Torah and mitzvot:

> But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously, so that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes and so that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live. **And make them known to your children and to your children's children**[10]: The day you stood before your God at Horeb, when God said to me, "Gather the people to Me that I may let them

9 The duty of education also rests with the mother. See: Bakshi-Doron 1982, 69; Bakshi-Doron 2002, 1:250, Siman 54. For further discussion of the question of: who is obliged in the duty of education, see: Glick 1999, 90. et seq.

10 The duty of the father to educate his sons also includes his grandchildren (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 30a).

> hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and **may so teach their children**" (Deut 4:9-10, emphasis added by the author).

And this is how Nachmanides interprets it:

> Only I warn you exceedingly to take heed and guard yourselves very, very much to remember whence the commandments came to you, that you should not forget the Revelation on Mount Sinai, nor all the things which your eyes saw there — *the thunderings, and the lightnings* (Exod 20:15), *His glory and His greatness* (Deut 5:21) and His words that you have heard there *out of the midst of the fire* (Ibid). And you should convey all the things which your eyes saw at that glorious Revelation *unto thy children and thy children's children* (Deut 4:9) forever.… He further charged in the form of a positive commandment that we should inform all our children from generation to generation of everything that happened there — what we saw and what we heard. The benefit of this commandment is very great. For if the words of the Torah had come to us only through the mouth of Moses, even though his prophecy was verified with signs and wonders, yet *if there* [were to] *arise in the midst of* us *a prophet or a dreamer of dreams* (Deut 13:2) and he were to command us [to do] the opposite of what the Torah commanded us, *and he* [were to] *give* us *a sign or wonder* (Ibid), then a doubt would enter the people's hearts. But since the Torah reaches us from the mouth of the Almighty to our ears, and our eyes behold that there is no intermediary, we will reject anyone who differs and who casts doubt … for when we shall also transmit the matter [of the Revelation] to our children they will know that the thing was true without doubt as if all the generations had seen it, for we would not testify falsely to our children... (Nachmanides 1859, Deut 4:9. Emphasis added, brackets in the original).

In other words, it is important to teach the children the source of the truths of the Torah, which is divine, and hence it will also be morally valid to require the children to follow in the footsteps of the ancestors. This commandment repeats in other places: "Impress them upon your children…" (Deut 6:7); "and teach them to your children" (Deut 11:19); "Enjoin them upon your children, that they may observe faithfully all the terms of this Teaching" (Deut 32:46).

All the Mitzvot counters count the father's obligation to teach his son Torah among the 613 mitzvot (Gaon 1979, Mitzvah 15; Maimonides 1990, Mitzvot Ase 11; Eliezer ben Samuel 1902, 118, Micva 256; Moses ben Jacob Mikkotsi 1991, Esin 12; Isaac ben Joseph 1979, 44, Siman 106; Aharon HaLevi of Barcelona 1999, 567, Mitzvah 419). The ancient Midrash is expanding the duty of the father to teach his son the Torah: "'Impress them upon your children…' (Deut 6:7), those are your Disciples. And so you find on disciples that were called sons, as it is said: 'The sons of the prophets' (2 Kgs 2:3)" (Midrash Tanaim 1908, Deut 6:7, 27; Targum Jonathan ben Uziel 1997, 2 Kgs 2:3).

According to the Midrash, this duty is not only the duty of the father, but every person in Israel must teach Torah even to children who are not his sons if he is qualified to do so. Based on all that Maimonides is ruling:

> Just as a person is obligated to teach his son, so, too, is he obligated to teach his grandson, as commands: "And you shall teach them to your sons and your grandsons" (Deut 4:9).
> And not only to one's children and grandchildren alone. Rather, it is a mitzvah for each and every wise man to teach all students, even though they are not his children, as states: "And you shall teach them to your sons..." (Deut 6:7). The oral tradition explains: "'Your sons', these are your students, for students are also called sons" (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:2).

R, Aharon HaLevi of Barcelona is ruling similarly:

> The positive commandment to study the wisdom of the Torah and to teach it; meaning to say how we should perform the commandments, guard ourselves from that which God prevented us and to also know the laws of the Torah according to their true intention. And about all of this is it stated (Deut 6:7), "You shall teach them to your sons." And our Rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "'Your sons' — these are your students" (Aharon HaLevi of Barcelona 1999, 567, Mitzvah 419).

What emerges from this is that there is an obligation from the Torah on the father and the scholars of Israel (even if they have no children) to teach the children of Israel Torah. This obligation is personal, the father and every rabbi must teach Torah to the future generation, but at this stage, we do not see a requirement or recommendation for the establishment of public educational institutions to fulfill and implement this mitzvah.

In the Talmud, the sages state that it is one of the father's basic duties to teach his children, and so it is said in the Mishnah: "A father is obligated with regard to his son to circumcise him, and to redeem[11] him, and to teach him Torah, and to marry him to a woman, and to teach him a trade. And some say: also to teach him to swim" (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 29a.; Tosefta 1955-1988. Kidushin 1:11).

The father's duty is extended to several areas. First and foremost, of course, is the responsibility to join the Jewish people in circumcision, and if he is a firstborn, there is an additional obligation to redeem him. Another obligation is to teach him the Torah to ensure Jewish continuity. The father must train the child to have a profession to guarantee him a livelihood and prevent him from becoming a bur-

11 *Pidjon haben* - redemption of the firstborn; the mitzvah from the Torah to redeem a son who is first born to his mother; on the thirtieth day after birth, the father gives the kohen five shekels of silver in exchange for his son staying with him, instead of serving God in the Temple as a kohen. See: Dadon 2009, 430-432.

den on society. There is even an opinion that it is mandatory to teach him to swim to prevent him from entering the danger of drowning in the future.

The father's obligation to teach his son Torah means not only an obligation to teach his son personally what he knows but to see to it that his son learns Torah. If he knows, he will teach him by himself, and if he did not have the opportunity to learn Torah, he must pay a rabbi to teach his son, as we saw earlier (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:3). From these sources it appears that the duty of education, at least according to the Bible and the ancient interpretation of the sages, was a parental duty, not a public duty. This can also be learned from the mitzvah of circumcision. The Talmud states that one whose father did not circumcise him has an obligation to the local Jewish court to do it (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 29a). However, there is no similar binding instruction regarding a child whose father did not teach him the Torah.

It should be emphasized that the duty imposed on the father is not to teach Torah only, but also to teach him a skill that can support him. According to Rabbi Yehuda, the duty is to study a profession, and it is not enough to have s source of income, such as trade. The Tosefta praises the study of a profession:

> Rabbi Yoseh bar Rabbi Lazar said in the name of Rabban Gamliel: Anyone who has a trade, to what is he similar? To a fenced vineyard where cattle and wild animals can't enter into it, passersby can't enter into it and can't see what is in it. Anyone without a trade, to what is he similar? To an open vineyard, for cattle and wild animals enter into it, passersby enter into it and can see what is in it (Tosefta 1955-1988, Kidushin 1:11).

Finally, it should be noted that there is a source for another obligation in the child's education: to teach him how to behave (Mechilta DeRabi Ishmael 1970, Parashat Bo, 18:73).

2.2. Moving Toward Obligation on Jewish Public Education

Throughout the history of the people of Israel, Yeshiva, Bet-Midrash, and schools for Torah study were formed privately and communally. The Midrashic tradition says that even before the Torah was given, a Bet-Midrash was founded by Shem and Eber where the forefathers studied (Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 1878, 63:6, 84:8). Likewise, the tribe of Levi was entrusted with the study of the Torah among the tribes of Israel (Gersonides commentary 1547, Deut 33:10; Prov 3:9). During the time of King Hezekiah, he decreed a special regulation for his generation, according to which everyone without distinction was obliged to learn Torah, and this is how the Talmud describes it:

> What did Hezekiah do to ensure Torah study? He inserted a sword at the entrance of the study hall and said: "Anyone who does not engage in Torah

> study shall be stabbed with this sword." As a result, they searched from Dan (in the north) to Beersheba (in the south), and did not find an ignoramus. They searched from Gevat to Antipatris and did not find a male child, or a female child, or a man, or a woman who was not an expert even in the complex laws of ritual purity and impurity (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Sanhedrin 94b).

After the destruction of the First Temple, during the exile, the midrash says that Mordechai founded Bet-Midrash for the study of Torah (Midrash Esther Rabbah 1878, 7:13, 10:4). The Talmud when interpreting the verse: "My eye affects my soul because of all the daughters of my city" (Lam 3:51) describe that "There were four hundred synagogues in the city of Beitar, and in each and every one of them there were four hundred schoolteachers, and each and every one had four hundred schoolchildren" (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Gittin 58a).

Such private organizations throughout history depended on a changing economic situation and the reality of scholars with initiative. But throughout time the educational responsibility for the children's Torah study in its original form remained in the hands of the fathers. This reality created a situation whereby the socioeconomically weak population (the orphans and the poor) did not learn the Torah, and the Torah remained the property of the aristocracy and members of the upper economic class who could teach their children or hire teachers for them.

2.3. The Regulation of Shimeon ben Shetach[12]

During the Second Temple period, there was a revolution in the field of education. During this period, sages amended regulations expanding the educational duties. The earliest regulation appears in the Jerusalem Talmud, and it is attributed to the spiritual leader of the nation at that time, Rabbi Shimeon ben Shetach (1st century BCE): "And he (Rabbi Shimeon ben Shetach) installed three things... and that children have to go to school" (Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Ketubut, 8:11, 32c).

The Talmud does not explain the motive and background for the amendment of this regulation, and what were its results. Some researchers seek to understand it using the personality of Rabbi Shimeon and the period in which he lived (Shochetman 1962, 18; Glick 1999, 43-45; Tamar 1982, 158-159). To understand the public-spiritual distress in Israel during this period, the period of King

12 Shimon ben Shetah (transition from 2nd to 1st century B.C.) - President of the Sanhedrin until 38 B.C., during the time of King Alexander Yannai, who was a Sadducee. His sister was Queen Shelomtzion, the king's wife. He is known for his fight against the Sadducees, opponents of the Oral Torah, who were supported by the king, with whom he was therefore not on good terms (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Sanhedrin 19a). After the king's death, Queen Salome Alexandra, or Shlomtzion, gave full support to her brother, who completely succeeded in putting an end to the Sadducees and their influence, and in strengthening the position of the oral Torah among the people.

Alexander Jannaeus, known as King Yannai, let's look at the following Talmudic description:

> An incident occurred with King Yannai, who went to the region of Kohalit in the desert and conquered sixty cities there. And upon his return he rejoiced with a great happiness over his victory. And he subsequently summoned all the Sages of the Jewish people and said to them: Our ancestors in their poverty would eat salty foods when they were busy with the building of the Temple; we too shall eat salty foods in memory of our ancestors. And they brought salty food on tables of gold, and ate. And there was one person present, a scoffer, a man of an evil heart and a scoundrel called Elazar ben Po'ira. And Elazar ben Po'ira said to King Yannai: King Yannai, the hearts of the Pharisees, (the Sages) are against you. The king replied: And what shall I do to clarify this matter? Elazar responded: Have them stand by wearing the frontplate between your eyes.[13] He had the Pharisees stand by wearing the frontplate between his eyes. Now there was a certain elder present called Yehuda ben Gedidya, and Yehuda ben Gedidya said to King Yannai: King Yannai, the crown of the monarchy suffices for you, (i.e., you should be satisfied that you are king). Leave the crown of the priesthood for the descendants of Aaron. As they would say that Yannai's mother was taken captive in Modi'in.[14] And the matter was investigated and was not discovered. And the Sages of Israel were expelled in the king's rage, due to this rumor. And Elazar ben Po'ira said to King Yannai: King Yannai, such (being expelled for slander) is the judgment of a common person in Israel. But you are a king and a High Priest. Is this your judgment as well? Yannai replied: And what should I do? Elazar responded: If you listen to my advice, crush them. Yannai countered: But what will become of the Torah? He retorted: Behold, it is wrapped and placed in the corner. Anyone who wishes to study can come and study. We have no need for the Sages… Immediately, the evil arose and caught fire through Elazar ben Po'ira, and all the Sages of the Jewish people were killed. And the world was desolate of Torah until Shimon ben Shatah came and restored the Torah to its former glory (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 66a).

The wicked Elazar ben Po'ira manages to convince Yanani the king to kill most of the sages of Israel. The devastating result of this act is harming the practical ability to preserve the tradition of the Oral Torah.[15]

A spiritual wasteland falls in the country after a long period in which the sages occupied a central place in the public leadership while strengthening the tradition

13 Since the frontplate bears the Divine Name, they should stand in its honor. Yannai, who was a member of the priestly Hasmonean family, also served as High Priest, who wears the frontplate.

14 Captivity disqualified her from marrying into the priesthood, which meant that Yannai was not qualified into the priesthood as well.

15 Oral Torah-oral tradition, regulations and interpretations of the Torah, which generations passed down as a tradition until written down in the Mishnah and Talmud. For more about the Oral Torah see: Dadon 2009, 488-499; Dadon 2012, 419-442.

of the Oral Torah. Shimon ben Shetach, who was King Yanai's brother-in-law, Queen Shlomzion's brother, was saved from Yanai's sword, and with the death of King Yannai, he took responsibility for the spiritual rehabilitation of the people. He sends a letter to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Pearachia who fled to Alexandria to return to Israel to help him blossom the spiritual wilderness (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Sanhedrin 107b; Babylonian Talmud 1961, Sotah 47a).

Shimeon ben Shetach, who was one of the leaders of the Pharisees, had to fight on two fronts, against the Sadducees and assimilation into the Hellenistic culture. The main struggle among the Sadducees was over the question of ways of studying the Torah since the Sadducees did not believe in the Oral Torah (Tamar 1982, 159).

Shochetman (1962, 18) explains that the Pharisees knew that their victory over the Sadducees would only be complete if the next generation inherited the correct approach to the Torah and studied it according to the Pharisees tradition. Removing education from the sole responsibility of the father and handing it over to the public was, therefore, the best way to ensure the victory of the Pharisees, who, being the leaders of the public, could determine the educational curriculum in the school, and Shimeon ben Shetach as the leader of the Pharisees was the one that brought about to the turning point.

During this period, the Hellenistic culture began to make its mark in Israeli society, and it was necessary to act against assimilation, partly by establishing educational frameworks. There is no doubt that the ability of Shimeon ben Shetach to bring about such sweeping changes in various fields[16] stemmed from his high moral and spiritual power. Despite his high position both in the Sanhedrin and in the affairs of the kingdom, for his livelihood, he was engaged in the linen trade and did not enjoy the wealth of the kingdom. Even Gentiles treated him with respect because of the moral highness that he behaved until they said, "Blessed is the God of Shimeon ben Shetach."[17]

Shimeon ben Shetach who served as president of the Sanhedrin, after the death of his brother-in-law King Yannai, led the Hasmonean state together with his sister Shlomzion the queen and that period of nine years is known as a period of abundance and blessing. The Talmud testifies that Shimeon ben Shetach succeeded in his fight against the Sadducees "to restore the Torah to its former glory" (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 66a) since he understood in his wisdom that the key to a genuine change would come through education.

16 In the fields of law, family law and public education – see: Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Ketubut, 8:11, 32c; see also: Dadon 2018, 129-158, especially pages: 139-140.

17 See the story about the Ishmaelite who sold him a donkey and Shimon ben Shetach returned to him a precious stone that he found hanging around its neck, and said "a donkey I bought a precious stone I didn't buy" (Midrash Devarim Rabbah 1878, 3:3).

2.4. The Regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla

The Babylonian Talmud testifies to another regulation whose purpose was to ensure the education of all the children of Israel. This regulation teaches a lot about the stages of development of the public education system:

> As Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Truly, that man is remembered for the good, and his name is Yehoshua ben Gamla. If not for him the Torah would have been forgotten from the Jewish people. Initially, whoever had a father would have his father teach him the Torah, and whoever did not have a father would not learn the Torah. How did they interpret this verse: "And you shall teach them [heb. *otam*] to your sons" (Deut 11:19), to mean: And you yourselves [heb. *atem*] shall teach, i.e., you fathers shall teach your sons. When the Sages saw that not everyone was capable of teaching their children and Torah study was declining) they instituted that teachers of children should be established in Jerusalem. The Gemara explains: What verse did they interpret homiletically that enabled them to do this? They interpreted the verse: "For Torah emerges from Zion" (Isa 2:3). But still, whoever had a father, his father ascended with him to Jerusalem and had him taught, but whoever did not have a father, he did not ascend and learn. Therefore, the Sages instituted that teachers of children should be established in one city in each and every region. And they brought the students in at the age of sixteen and at the age of seventeen. But as the students were not young and had not yet had any formal education, a student whose teacher grew angry at him would rebel against him and leave. Until Yehoshua ben Gamla came and instituted that teachers of children should be established in each and every province and in each and every town, and they would bring the children in to learn at the age of six and at the age of seven (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Baba Batra 21a).

From the words of Rav Yehuda we learn about the existence of three regulations, that saved the spiritual condition of the people of Israel: The first - the establishment of a public education institution in only one place, in Jerusalem; The second - expanded the number of districts and cities in which public educational institutions was established, as well defines the age of the students to 16 and 17 years; The third - the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla, "teachers of children should be established in each and every province and in each and every town, and they would bring the children in to learn at the age of six and at the age of seven." The last regulation further expands the number of schools and the age of education from the age of 6-7.

Undoubtedly the most important, significant, and expansive regulation is the third, the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla. Because the previous regulations did not meet the needs of the public in terms of the age of the students and the geographical scope. In terms of age - determining the age of six to begin studies is in accordance with the words of the Mishnah: "He used to say: At five years of

age the study of Scripture; At ten the study of Mishnah; At thirteen subject to the commandments; At fifteen the study of Talmud" (Mishna 1987, Avot 5:21). And so was ruled by Maimonides: "Children should be brought to study at the age of six or seven, according to the child's health and build…The children should never be interrupted from their studies, even for the building of the Temple" (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah 2:2; Karo 1992, Yore Dea 245:7-8).

Determining the early age to start the child's educational path has many advantages, as the Mishnah says: "Elisha ben Abuyah said: He who learns when a child, to what is he compared? To ink written upon a new writing sheet" (Mishna 1987, Avot 4:20). The process of the student's adaptation to the educational framework is easier in young age, as well as the absence of discipline problems and the instilling of learning habits that will help the student to learn at an older age. It can also be assumed that in families where the economic situation was difficult, the teenagers helped support the family. Likewise, even in wealthy families, teenagers had to enter the family business[18] and therefore the early age was ideal for starting the educational path.

2.5. The Relationship Between the Regulation of Shimeon ben Shetach and the Regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla

Much has been written about whether Shimeon ben Shetach was indeed a contemporary of Yehoshua ben Gamla. While the former was a prominent leader of the Sanhedrin (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Hagiga 16b), the latter is believed to have served concurrently as High Priest (Mishna 1987, Yevamot 6:4, Yoma 3:9). According to the Talmud, the wife of Yehoshua ben Gamla, who was very rich, purchased the position of high priest for her husband from King Yannai: "As Rav Asi said: Marta, daughter of Baitos, brought a half-*se'a* of dinars in to King Yannai for that he appointed Yehoshua ben Gamla as High Priest" (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Yoma 18a).[19]

The dispute[20] between scholars regarding the identity of Yehoshua ben Gamla causes ambiguity regarding his identification and casts a shadow on the question of the time of installation of the regulation. In any case, it can be said that

18 See the biography of Rabbi Elazar ben Horkanos, one of the greatest Sages of the Tanaim period, (Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 1878, 42:1).

19 Yehoshua ben Gamla is also mentioned as a friend of Josephus Flavius, at the end of the Second Temple (Flavius 1932, 56).

20 See on one hand, Weiss 1871, 182, and on the other hand Halevy 1923, 466. See also: Hyman 1910, 621-623. This dispute affects the understanding of the relationship between the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla and the regulation of Shimon ben Shetach. Because the understanding that Shimon ben Shetach worked at that time together with Yehoshua ben Gamla, is possible only according to one identification, and is not possible at all according to another identification.

the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla was amended after the regulation of Shimon ben Shetach, and there are three approaches regarding the question of the relationship between the two regulations, both of which aim to establish a public education system.

According to the first opinion (Frankel 1757, Ketubut, 8:11, paragraph "Veshejehu Hatinokot"), the regulation of Shimon ben Shetach is the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla. However, there are two traditions regarding the identity of the founder of the regulations. Some believe that the regulations are indeed the same, except that Shimon ben Shetach wanted to amend the regulation to expand the education of the children of Israel, but he did not have the means.[21] He encountered financial difficulties involved in the establishment of such a demanding project. Additionally, he had to deal with the opposition of the Sadducees. Therefore, he joined Yehoshua ben Gamla, who was a high priest and a rich man, who helped him deal with these difficulties (Tamar 1982, 158-159).

The second opinion (Glick 1999, 45; Shochetman 1962, 19) is that these are two different regulations. According to what is said in the Babylonian Talmud, two anonymous regulations preceded the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla, and some scholars understand that the regulation of Shimon ben Shetach is one of those two earlier regulations.

The third opinion (R. Ben Zion Meir Chai Uziel 1953, 348; R. Ben Zion Meir Chai Uziel 2009, IV, 103-109) believes that the Yehoshua ben Gamla regulation did not come to provide a "technical" answer to the deficiencies that were in the Shimon ben Shetach regulation. There is a fundamental difference between the two regulations. While the Shimon ben Shetach regulation left the duty of education as the father's duty, *the father* must send his son to school; Yehoshua ben Gamla's regulation fundamentally changed the definition of responsibility, and from here on *the community leadership* becomes responsible for the establishment and operation of the education system.

It can be stated that at least since the Mishna period the matter of children's education is no longer just a parental private matter, but a public matter.[22] The educational regulations and their strengthening over the generations led to the re-establishment of the tradition and acceptance of the Oral Torah and the Torah flourishing of the entire Mishnah period. After the destruction and the strengthening of the Roman influence in the land, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi strengthened the implementation of the Yehoshua ben Gamla regulation and imposed severe active punishment on the cities that did not observe the regulation (Babylonian

21 Shimon ben Shetach was known to be poor. See: Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Baba Metzia, Chapter 2, Halacha 5 (8c).

22 Gafni is arguing that this was the situation in the Land of Israel, rather than in Babylon, where the education of the children remained the private concern of the parents (Gafni 1991, 107-109). However, many disagree with him, see Glick 1999, 205, note 28.

Talmud 1999, Shabbat 119b; Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah 2:1; Karo 1992, Yore Dea 245:7). Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi even supervised the implementation of the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla, as described in the Jerusalem Talmud:

> Rebbi Simeon ben Yohai stated: When you see towns in the Land of Israel uprooted from their place, know that they did not contribute to the wages of Bible and Mishnah teachers. What is the reason? "*Why is the land ruined, torn down like an uninhabited wilderness? The Eternal said, because they abandoned My Torah*" (Jer 9:11-12).
> Rebbi Judah the Prince sent Rebbi Hiyya, Rebbi Assi, and Rebbi Immi to tour the towns of the Land of Israel in order to give them Bible and Mishnah teachers. They came to one place where they found neither Bible nor Mishnah teacher. They said to them, bring us the watchmen of the town. They brought them the stewards of the town. They told them, these are not the watchmen of the town, they are the destroyers of the town. They asked them, and who would be the watchmen of the town? They told them, the Bible and Mishnah teachers. That is what is written, "*if the Eternal would not build the house*, etc" (Psalm 127:1) (Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Chagiga 1:7).

The Sages also decreed that it is forbidden to live in a city that does not have schools for children: "A Torah scholar is not permitted to reside in any city that does not have these ten things: … and a teacher of young children" (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Sanhedrin 17b).

On a personal note, when I arrived in Zagreb in 1998, I realized that without the establishment of a Jewish school that would ensure the study of Hebrew and Jewish studies, there would be no real future for the Jewish community and that I would not be able to stay with my children for long. That is why I suggested the establishment of a Jewish school, and this initiative was enthusiastically welcomed by the majority of the community board. in 1999, four girls were sent to Israel to study at a college for Hebrew and Jewish studies teachers, and after completing their studies, three of them returned to Zagreb with a teaching diploma. In 2003, the Jewish school in Zagreb was founded with the help of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, which covered the financial costs.

2.6. The Financing of the Public Education System

There are few sources from which one can learn with certainty about the distribution of the burden of financing education expenses between the public and parents, as was customary in the days of the Mishnah and the Talmud. Yehoshua ben Gamla's regulation imposing an obligation on the public to establish an education system is the main source of the obligation of public education, but who is supposed to finance the burden of maintaining the schools? Ostensibly, making education a matter of the community's responsibility means financing the educational

institutions by the public treasury (Glick 1999, 203). However, this does not mean that free compulsory education will be provided.

We can learn from different rabbinic sources about a few opinions regarding public duty. Whether it includes the organization of the educational system and its supervision only, or also the funding, or whether the funding is collected from the parents of the students only, and not from all the community members. There are also approaches according to which the parents can pay the tuition fees for their children, while the financing of the tuition fees of students from poor families applies to the community.

According to the Jerusalem Talmud (Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Peah, Chapter 8, end of Halacha 7 (21a)), anyone who lives in the city for more than twelve months must participate in the tax designated for educational purposes. From this, we learn that the community bears responsibility for financing the education system with the help of a designated tax paid by all residents of the city and not only by the student's parents. The Babylonian Talmud also talks about public funding, although not about the way it was raised (from all community members or the parents only):

> And Rava said: The maximum number of students for one teacher of children is twenty-five children. And if there are fifty children in a single place, one establishes two teachers... And if there are forty, one establishes an assistant, and the teacher receives help from the residents of the town to pay the salary of the assistant (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Bava Batra 21a).

According to the Talmud, the funding of the teacher's assistant is paid from the city treasury, so it is clear that the teacher's salary is also paid from the city treasury.

Some rabbis claim that before the regulation of Yehoshua ben Gamla, the duty of the Torah law was for every father to make sure that his son learns. And since the poor could not fulfill the mitzvah due to financial incapacity, the gates of Torah education were closed to their children, therefore a regulation came and turned education from a private matter into a public matter, and the financial burden for the children's education was transferred to the entire community, which became responsible for all the children of the community regardless of the economic background of their parents. Rabbi Meir Halevi Abulafia (Spain, 12th-13th century) interprets the words of the Babylonian Talmud as referring to the funding coming from the community treasury and emphasizes the social nature of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla's regulation. Paying teachers' wages from the public treasury will lead to the opening of the gates of schools for everyone, the poor as well as the rich (R. Meir Halevi Abulafia 1790, Baba Batra 21a, paragraph "VeAmar Rava"; R. Meir Halevi Abulafia 1799, 241; Rashba 1988, Baba Batra 21a, paragraph "VeHa DeAmrinan"; R. Shneor Zalman of Ladi 2003, Hilchot Talmud Torah, 1:3;

R. Joseph Colon ben Solomon Trabotto 1984, Siman 33). However, some believe that the commandment of educating the children from the Torah applies to the father only if he can teach his son himself, but he is not obligated to hire a teacher to do it in his place. In their opinion, the purpose of the regulation was to add a financial obligation to the mitzvah of children's education (R. Avraham de Bouton 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:3; R. David ben Solomon ibn Zimra 1972, V, 114). Advocates of this opinion believe that the goal of the Yehoshua ben Gamla regulation was to move from teaching by private teachers to collective teaching in schools, which would result in a significant reduction in the cost of education, and would allow most parents to afford it. The third opinion regarding the obligation to fund the cost of education combines the parents' obligation with the community's obligation. According to the advocates of this approach, the obligation to pay the teacher's salary remained with the parents, although in cases of financial difficulties, the parents received a discount or even an exemption from payment, and the cost of the child's education was imposed on the community, which for this purpose collected a special tax for educational purposes (R. Moshe Iserlish 1992, Choshen Mishpat, 163:3; R. Yom Tov ben Avraham Assevilli 2012, Baba Batra 21a, paragraph "Amar Raba"; R. Feinstein 1959-1973, Yore Dea, IV:29). Sometimes the funding of the education system came from donations of community members who were encouraged by the rabbis to contribute to children's education even more than to synagogue's charity (R. Shimon ben Tzemach Duran 1901, 533), or by granting an exemption from community taxes to teachers (Glick 1999, 202 et seq.).

In practice, the scope of the community's obligation to finance the expenses of the education system sometimes exceeded the basic need to pay teachers for basic education. There were communities in which the community even financed advanced education for outstanding children who came from a low economic background (Glick 1999, 222). As a principle, it can be said that the payment of school fees in most communities depended on the family's income and was related to the number of students from each family. The community financed the education expenses in the first stage of education. Special support to children, whose parents could not pay the school tuition, was given almost always in all communities.

2.7. The Right to Choose Education

In addition to the laws dealing with the parents' obligations in the education of their children, there are laws in Halacha concerning the parents' right to choose the educational framework, and in particular, the parent's right to choose an educational framework outside their city (Glick 1999, 156). However, a distinction must be made between the public's duty to establish a school, and the right of par-

ents as private individuals to choose the appropriate education for their children. As long as there is no school in the place, the townspeople can force all members of the community to participate in funding a teacher to comply with the Yehoshua ben Gamla regulation and guarantee every child a basic education. On the other hand, if there is a school in the place and there is no longer any fear of canceling the regulation, each parent may exercise his right to choose for his children the best educational framework in his immediate environment (Glick 1999, 70). This has the effect of encouraging competition that will lead to maintaining the quality of education.

3. The Special Nature of Jewish Education

In this last part, I would like to emphasize the special nature of Jewish education. It can be demonstrated in many fields, however, I choose the following three aspects: education out of economic interests versus education as an independent value; the right of teachers to strike in Jewish law, and the dedication to the value of education and Torah study during the Holocaust. These aspects demonstrate the importance, uniqueness, and high level of dedication to the value of education in Judaism.

3.1. Education for Learning Torah as a Supreme Value and Not Out of Financial Interest

While today's general education system in Western societies is often driven by economic motives and is far from true equality, the Jewish education system is built on the value of pure intellectual study, study for the sake of study. Additionally, alongside pure study, one must also pursue a profession—though not as a substitute, but as a complement. Even after acquiring the profession, studying the Torah does not stop because it has an independent value.

Until the Industrial Revolution, education, culture, and development were often the privileges of the upper class and clergy. The contents of the education corresponded to the interests of that social stratum. Today, although the education system is maintained with the help of the state, which tries to maintain it equitably, this does not mean that we have freed ourselves from the dependence on capital. The economic interest is still the main infrastructure for the existence of the education system. The economic interest also determines the contents of the education system and the importance and prestige of the various professions.

Following the development of the industrial revolution and its market economy, schools today serve the economic interest because, before anything else, they are a mechanism to look after the children while the parents work (in the OECD countries about 70% of women work and men a higher percentage). If there were no

schools, then the economy as it is known to us today could not exist for the simple reason that at least one of the spouses would have to stop working to take care of the children, this situation would cause a shortage of working hands, which would lead to a drastic decrease in income, consumption and growth. The economy also dictates the study content according to the needs of the economic structure which is only replicated and perfected over time. To preserve the economy and ensure its growth, there is a need for "white collar" professions (engineers, doctors, lawyers, economists...) but also for "blue collar" professions (production, infrastructure, cleaning and maintenance workers...). On the other hand, the socio-economic system will also take care of a minimal amount of artists to encourage creative thinking but mainly to give meaning, content, and value to social life. Therefore, the education system is inherently competitive, which sorts the students into the various professions in which they will be engaged throughout their lives. The core of Jewish education is values and Torah study, and by its nature, it does not consider the economy, as the Talmud testifies:

> And there already was an incident in which Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were reclining in the loft of the house of Natza in Lod, when this question was asked of them: Is (Tora) study greater or is (good) action greater? Rabbi Tarfon answered and said: Action is greater. Rabbi Akiva answered and said: Study is greater. Everyone answered and said: Study is greater, (but not as an independent value; rather, it is greater) as study leads to action (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Kidushin 40b).

The general education system often tends to downplay values-based education, avoiding the deep, contentious debates that such education entails. As a result, in modern public schooling, the responsibility for teaching values largely falls to the family and community.

3.2. Teachers' Strike - in Jewish Law

The importance and uniqueness of the children's education and study in Jewish law is evidenced by the opinion of the great Ashkenazi and Sephardic rabbinic authorities on the question: Is it permissible according to the Halacha for the employees of the education system, the teachers, to strike? The great Sephardic authority Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (20th century) in his responsa[23] (R. Yosef 2020, IV, 48), explains that there is a difference between all the workers in the country and the workers of the education system. In the schools, the children are taught Torah and mitzvot, and suspension of Torah study to raise wages in today's reality is

23 Responsa-answer, (heb. *sheelot uteshuvot* - questions and answers), the literature of the exchange of questions and answers, primarily about halacha, between rabbis and Jewish courts throughout the diaspora, from the time of the Gaonim to the present day (see also Dadon 2009, 540-541).

forbidden by Halacha. In connection with this, he cites the words of the Talmud about Yehoshua ben Gamla (Babylonian Talmud 1961, Baba Batra, 21a), which were ruled to be Halacha (Maimonides 1974, Hilchot Talmud Torah, 2:1) and discusses the importance of education and learning for children (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Shabbat 119b). He is ruling that even if the teachers' salary is not appropriate and does not reflect their effort and merit, there is no justification for abandoning thousands of Jewish children to the mercy of the street and canceling them from studying the Torah, because of a salary benefit and improvement of working conditions. If a strike does take place, when the students return to class they will not be able to devote their attention to their studies properly, as they were disconnected from the Torah for a certain time, and as the Sages said: "If you abandon me for one day, I shall abandon you for two days" (Jerusalem Talmud 1523, Berachot 9:5). Likewise in his opinion a long cancellation of studies will inevitably lead the students to moral deterioration.

A similar ruling was given by the great Ashkenazi authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (R. Feinstein 1959-1973, Choshen Mishpat, 59). In his opinion, while a workers' strike has a basis in the Talmud and rabbinic literature,[24] a strike by teachers from teaching Torah is a great sin, for "The world only exists because of the breath, (i.e., reciting Torah), of schoolchildren..." (Babylonian Talmud 1999, Shabbat 119b). Therefore, teachers are forbidden by Jewish law to go on strike to raise their salary, since a person is not allowed to sin to make money and improve his livelihood, and only if the teacher's salary is not enough to support him, and this makes it difficult for him to teach the students in peace of mind, and if indeed striking one or two days will add to his salary, maybe only then there is a reason to allow him to strike (R. Feinstein 1959-1973, Choshen Mishpat, 59).

3.3. The Sacrifice for Torah Study and Education During the Holocaust

Despite the severe hardship during the Holocaust, Jews continued to study and teach their children Torah as best they could in the ghettos and camps, drawing encouragement from their studies as the verse floated before their eyes; "Were not Your teaching my delight, I would have perished in my affliction" (Ps 119:92). In the ghettos, studies continued according to the situation. In the Warsaw Ghetto for example, in addition to studies in the official institutions, extensive Torah study took place underground in improvised places that included small rooms, basements, and attics. According to various estimates, before the war, there were more than 5,000 yeshiva students in Warsaw. After the occupation of the city naturally, the numbers dropped dramatically, but the studies continued throughout the ghetto period. (Glicksberg 1975, 101-117, 156-164).

24 For more about Employer - employee relations in Jewish law see: Dadon 2015, 301-317.

The *responsa literature* of the Holocaust period reveals the incredible faith of Jews who wished to continue following the Torah even in a world of utter darkness, where the Nazis had declared war on Jews and Jewish values. The following is a question presented to Rabbi Ephraim Oshry[25] in the Kovno ghetto on August 26, 1942. He was asked whether One is allowed to Endanger his life for the Sake of Torah Study and Public Worship. Despite the daily hard work and the terrible conditions of labor many Jews found the time and will to engage in Torah study, which filled them with hope and encouragement.

The Nazis were aware of the moral importance of Torah study and public worship in the synagogue and sought to break the Jewish spirit. Therefore, they decreed the death penalty for Jews who engaged in Torah study and public prayers. Rabbi Oshry describes the question he received:

> It was then that R. Naftali Weintrau, the gabai[26] of Gafinowitz's synagogue, may God avenge his blood, approached me and asked me whether the Tora requires one to place himself at physical or mortal peril by attending a minyan[27] in the kloyz where he used to pray every morning and evening. Is he obliged to forfeit his life for the sake of Tora and public worship, or not? (Oshry 1959, 60).

In determining his response, Rabbi Oshry is considering many rabbinical sources,[28] together with the hard and tragic time his people living in. In a time when Nazis' interest was shutting down the voice of Judaism. Rabbi Oshry concluded as follows: On one hand, it is a mitzvah on each one to sacrifice his life for the sake of study of the Tora, however, he did not have the power to order people to risk their life for the sake of Torah study and public worship. On the other hand, Rabbi Oshry did not forbid anyone from sacrificing their life for this purpose. However, as Rabbi Oshry witnessed, many Jews in the ghetto, including himself,

25 Rabbi Ephraim Oshry (1914–2003) during the Holocaust, he served as an important resource for Jews in Ghetto Kovno, answering the most complex and agonizing questions of Jewish law and morality at a time of unprecedented crisis in Jewish history. He began keeping a record of these religious and moral questions, and his answers to those questions on scraps of paper during the war. He buried these papers in tin cans. He hoped to retrieve the papers after the war, which is precisely what he did after liberation. After the war, he wrote out the questions he received and the answers he gave, and published them in five volumes entitled, *She'elot u-teshuvot mi-ma'amakim* ("Questions and Responses from Out of the Depths"). The responsa were published originally in Hebrew, as a five-volume series (1959, New York), later some of these questions and answers were subsequently translated into English and a short version was published in one volume, *Responsa from the Holocaust*.

26 Gabai - a person responsible for the general technical functioning of the synagogue, including collecting money from the members and organizing affairs in the synagogue; One of his duties is to arrange the order of the members to read the Torah.

27 Minyan - Ten Jewish men over the age of thirteen, a quorum required for the reading of some prayers, for example the Kaddish.

28 For background and detailed explanation of this responsa see: Dadon 2016, 203-234, especially 216-225.

did risk their life till the end of the war and kept on praying and studying Tora in public:

> I devoted myself particularly to the daily lessons that I gave for the Tiferet Bahurim society. Wherever I taught, assisted by He Who dwells on high, I was able to bolster the faltering courage and wavering morale of Jewish youth and masses, and I tried to impart intelligence and wisdom so that my listeners would realize and understand that, just as one utters a blessing when things go well so must one offer a blessing when things go poorly; that we must wait silently for God's succor and deliverance, because God is good to those who place their hopes in Him and await His mercy, and He is near to all those who call upon Him sincerely (Ps 145:18); and that we must gird with faith and trust to bear the burden gladly and willingly, because hope for our future still exists (Oshry 1959, 59).

As we know, the situation in the camps was much more difficult than in the ghettos. To conclude this part, below we will present two testimonies about the attitude to Torah study, one from a labor camp and the other from an extermination camp. In the following testimony, Rabbi Prof. David Weiss Halivni, a holocaust survivor, writes in his memoirs that one day during his stay in forced labor camps at Wolfsberg (Stalag XVIII-A), he noticed that the greasy wrapping paper of the sandwich, which the sentry ate, was a page from the "Shulchan Aruch" Jewish law codex, from the laws of Passover:

> When I saw this wrapping paper, I instinctively fell at the feet of the guard, without even understanding why. The letters themselves pushed me to this. With tears in my eyes, I begged him to give me the 'Bletl.'[29] At first the German did not understand what was happening. [...] I explained to him that it was a page from a book that I studied at home. Please, I sobbed, give it to me as a souvenir. He gave me the page and I took it to the camp. On those Sundays when we were liberated, we now had not only an oral Torah but also a written Torah. The Bletl became a tangible symbol of the connection between the camp and the actions of Jews throughout history. [...] The page became a rallying point. We longed to study it when we had free time, even more than we longed for Tefillin. The page, parts of which we had to decipher because the fat made some letters unreadable, absorbed our attention. Most of those who came to hear did not understand the subject, but it did not change. Everyone grasped the symbolic importance of the page (Halivni 1999, 56-57).

I wish to conclude with the words of the writer and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel. In his memoirs, Wiesel, who was a prisoner in Auschwitz, describes a profound experience of studying the Torah under the most harrowing conditions. He recounts the study of a boy who, lacking any texts from rabbinic literature, pursued his learning in a death camp where holy books were utterly unattainable.

29 "Bletl - leaf in Yiddish, sheet of paper.

> I was lucky, if you'll forgive me for this expression - that a former yeshiva dean in Galicia was a colleague of the working group. I see us now, carrying sacks of cement or large stones, pushing wheelbarrows full of sand or mortar, and all that while studying Halacha from the Mishnah or a Talmud page. My friend knew everything by heart, and thanks to him we managed to escape. We went to Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and asked him to pray for us. We headed to Resh Lakish. Will he agree to use his Herculean power to free us? We wandered through the Pombadita groves and the Galilee mountains. I listened to the sages who debated whether one should say Shema Yisrael while standing or lying down (Wiesel 2001, 82).[30]

Conclusion

The two-dimensional mitzvah of Jewish education, the parental-community obligation, is indeed very ancient. These obligations served as a tool for passing down the Jewish tradition from generation to generation and preserved the uniqueness of the people of Israel in the long exile.

In general history, education has mostly been private, which primarily benefited the sons of the elite and affluent strata of society. Meanwhile, widespread public education only began to take shape following the Industrial Revolution, starting in the mid-19th century. However, the central importance of the value of education in Judaism is evidenced by the commandments given in the Torah according to Jewish tradition over 3,000 years ago, commandments for adults to study the Torah and teach it to their children. A tremendous educational revolution happened in the people of Israel during the Mishnah period over 2,000 years ago, when the parental duty of education was joined by a public-community duty, to establish educational institutions where educators and professional teachers would teach. This obligation has been fulfilled by the Jewish communities throughout Jewish history, including and especially when the people of Israel were in exile under difficult conditions for two millennia.

Analyzing many rabbinic sources, we showed the long history and centrality of discipleship in Judaism. Judaism considers education as a parental-community obligation and not a child's right. We examined the amendment of various Talmudic regulations that led to a transition of the parental private obligation to a communal obligation and the establishment of a public education system. The funding structure of the Jewish public education system required many regulations to keep the system going effectively and with good quality. We showed that the revolutionary transition to public education during the Mishna period did not release

30 For another moving Jewish testimony from the city of Modena, in northern Italy, which was used as a transit station for refugees on their way from the camps and the displaced persons' camps to Israel, see: Lev 1998, 119-122.

the parents from their educational obligation, but rather helped the economically disadvantaged class and made it possible for everyone to have a quality education. The parents' rule remains important and central in the education of the children and in shaping their personality, especially in emotional and personal matters where the parents have a greater advantage than the teachers, all this alongside the professional educators and the school teachers. For this reason, parents are the ones who are allowed to choose the most appropriate educational framework for their children, in terms of the selection and quality of the study content.

In the last part of this work, we emphasized the special nature of Jewish education, as demonstrated in three aspects: education as an independent value and not economically conditioned. Teachers' right to strike in Jewish law, and the passionate devotion to education and Torah study during the Holocaust.

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Kotel Dadon

Povijest učeništva u judaizmu: od biblijske zapovijedi pojedincu do rabinske regulative o uspostavi javnoga židovskog obrazovnog sustava

Sažetak

Ovaj članak bavi se poviješću učeništva u judaizmu i njegovim prijelazom iz individualne obveze u javni obrazovni sustav. Članak je podijeljen u tri glavna dijela: prvi dio raspravlja o središnjoj ulozi obrazovanja u proučavanju Tore u judaizmu, kao i o židovskom pravnom konceptu „obrazovne obveze" nasuprot modernom pravnom konceptu „prava na obrazovanje". Drugi, središnji dio ispituje razvoj židovske obveze obrazovanja – prijelaz s privatnog na javno obrazovanje. Autor analizira različite talmudske propise koji su doveli do ovog prijelaza i njihov međusobni odnos. Na kraju ovog dijela, autor raspravlja o strukturi financiranja javnoga obrazovnog sustava i pravu roditelja da odaberu obrazovni okvir za svoju djecu. U trećem dijelu, autor naglašava posebnost židovskog obrazovanja kao vrhovne vrijednosti čistoga intelektualnog proučavanja Tore, što se odnosi i na financijske interese poput prava učitelja na štrajk u židovskom pravu te na predanost učenju u vremenima teških nedaća i tame poput razdoblja holokausta. U ovom istraživanju autor analizira različite židovske izvore, od pisane Tore i usmene Tore, uključujući Talmud, Mišnu, Midraš i rabinske response od srednjeg vijeka do modernih vremena. Velik dio ove literature preveden je s hebrejskog i aramejskog.

What is Jesus' Definition of a Disciple Embedded in the Great Commission?[1]

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Abstract

Any conference on discipleship must be rooted in the biblical definition of a disciple. When Jesus commands us to "make disciples," who or what exactly are we making? What does a disciple look like? We need to look no further than the definition embedded in Jesus' original mandate known as the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). There is a precise structure to this text which gives us the basic characteristics of a disciple. We find here a singular imperative, "make disciples." What is often overlooked is that this central command is modified by three participles, "going," "baptizing," and "teaching." Participles are verbal adjectives (descriptive images) ending in "ing" that describe the nature of a disciple. In this presentation, I will contrast the popular definition of a Christian with the biblical definition of a disciple. Christians, as commonly understood, are those who have trusted Christ for their salvation and believe that they will be with Jesus when they die. In other words, we have, perhaps unwittingly said, "You can be Christian without being a disciple." The "gospel" we have been proclaiming has led directly to a non-discipleship or "forgiveness only" gospel. Bill Hull and Ben Sobels assert two truths: 1. You cannot make a Christlike disciple from a non-discipleship gospel. 2. The gospel you preach determines the disciples you make. In contrast, I will note that the three descriptive participles of "going," "baptizing," and "teaching," when fleshed out,

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

contain within them Jesus' definition of a disciple. This is further underscored by the gospel Jesus proclaimed as recorded in Mark's gospel at the inception of Jesus' ministry: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk 1:14-15).

Keywords: *non-discipleship gospel, Christian vs. disciple, going, baptizing, teaching*

Introduction

I am grateful for this opportunity to be with you as we explore together the many dimensions that the Great Commission calls us; to make disciples through biblical, theological reflection, theological traditions that shaped our understanding of disciple-making, and the many particular issues that should be addressed. This is quite a line-up of topics. I feel like I am at a buffet table with more choices than I can eat.

Just some brief autobiographical notes before I get into the topics, I have sensed that I should explore with you. I was a career pastor ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA, but I slipped out of this fold in my last two pastorates into independent, evangelical churches: one in Silicon Valley, California, and the other in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. I became laser-focused on the Great Commission when I had what I call my "ah-ha" in the Silicon Valley Church. When I arrived as pastor of the Silicon Valley church it had no formal mission statement. Steve Covey's book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, has come out where he says one of the habits of effective people is to have a personal mission statement that focuses on the destiny of our lives. It seemed everyone from individuals to businesses to churches was cranking out mission statements.

I followed suit and persuaded our elders that we needed a mission statement too. I "appointed" a small team of our elders to get to work. It was the blind leading the blind. I was not sure what the end product should look like. We created draft after draft that was placed before our council, usually with a yawn. Then after about a year and a half, we had worn them down so that finally in an exhausted state, were willing to approve whatever the next iteration we presented. This was when I had my "ah-ha" moment. It finally dawned on me that Jesus had done all the work for us when gave this mandate to his disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations…" I realized that every church has been given the same mission. It may look and sound a bit differently given the theological, historical, and cultural lens through which it is shaped, but still, it is fundamentally the same. It was as if the Lord said to me, "Stay focused on this mission. Don't take your eyes

off of it. Your church's effectiveness will be measured by how well you are accomplishing. If Jesus shows up to do a church audit, what will He find?"

At the beginning of my second session, I will give you some more of my journey into what has shaped my understanding of how disciples are made, but that is the focus of my second session. I thought the contribution I could make is to provide a framing of sorts for all the great topics I see we will be exploring. In essence, I am going to attempt to address from a biblical perspective two foundational questions: 1. In this session I will attempt to address the question, who or what is a disciple according to Jesus? 2. In my second session, what can we learn from Jesus' model and practice about how to make disciples? These two questions have dominated my life in ministry.

I am a practical theologian. By that I mean this content will fall less under orthodoxy but more under orthopraxy. My biblical and theological reflection must land in practice. The "how" dominates my motivation as much as the "what." Making disciples is about responding to the imperative that Jesus Himself establishes as the mission of the church. In this session, we will take a fresh look at the marching orders that Jesus gives his church. Let's turn to the last five verses of the gospel of Matthew:

> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:16-20, ESV).

1. The Setting of the Great Commission

Before we examine in detail the Great Commission properly in Matthew 28:18-20, let's set the scene in which the disciples find themselves:

> "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted" (Matthew 28:16-17).

Let's take these two verses a phrase at a time.

"Now the **eleven***…"*

We are immediately struck that Matthew draws attention to the fact that there are eleven, not twelve disciples. Why did he include this specific number? He could

just have easily said, "Now the disciples went to Galilee" and left out their number. Yet, he chose to remind us that their number was incomplete; they had lost one. They had a traitor among them who turned Jesus into the religious authorities. He tragically took his life when he recognized that he had betrayed a most innocent man.

But does not this also cast a shadow on the eleven? They, too, were not exactly paragons of virtue. Peter was the famous denier of Jesus when he had the opportunity to stand with Jesus in Caiaphas's courtyard while Jesus was on trial. We also know that the other ten also ran for cover and deserted their master. Is Matthew telling us from the outset that the Great Commission is going to be accomplished by flawed people? Yes! He will use you and me to carry out his mission to the ends of the earth. Yet Jesus dignifies us by calling us into this eternal enterprise.

*"Now the eleven **disciples**…"*

Again, note what Matthew does not say, "Now to the eleven *apostles*." Matthew avoids an exclusive title and broadens it out to disciples. He was not separating them off as if this commission only applied to a select few who held the office of apostle. When Jesus promises to be with them even to the end of the age, he is looking way beyond this generation to those who would carry out this mission. He was looking to us to be followers of a great teacher, which is what a disciple is.

*"Now the eleven disciples went to **Galilee**"*

How did they know to go to Galilee? Mary Magdalene and the one known as "the other Mary" were the first ones to the tomb of Jesus on that Easter Sunday morning. They were present when an earthquake shook the ground, and watched the descent of an angel who rolled away the stone from the tomb. The angel instructed them to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that Jesus was going before them to Galilee and he would see them there. Hearing that once was not sufficient. As the two Marys were on their way to tell the disciples, the resurrected Jesus met them saying, "Greetings!" They took hold of Jesus' feet (they must have felt where Jesus had been pierced) and they fell on their faces in worship. Jesus reinforced the angel's message: "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me" (Matt 28:10).

Have we ever considered the risk of disappointment that the disciples might have experienced? Did they go with any self-doubt that Jesus would appear and wonder why they should believe these delirious women? Women, as we know in Jesus' day, were not considered reliable witnesses. They could not even testify in a court of law. Depending upon where in Galilee they were to meet Jesus they had

multiple days of travel from Jerusalem to ponder whether this was fool's errand. Would Jesus show up? They had only the word of these delusional women.

"…to a **mountain** *to which Jesus had directed them."*

Ever since Sinai, the Lord had divine encounters with his people in the mountains. In Matthew we have the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, where he turned glistening white, revealing his glory. Jesus had a particular place in mind where the disciples had been directed to go. They had been there before no doubt; they knew where to go. Now a new and better Moses was there to give laser focus on what they were to be about.

"When they saw him, they ***worshipped*** *him, but some* ***doubted****."*

When they saw Jesus, we were told that their response was worship. Perhaps they thought, "It is true. There is he in glorious pulsating life in His resurrected body." We know from other descriptions that Jesus still bore the nail prints on his hands and the penetrating mark of a spear on his side. Yet here he was more alive than they had even witnessed him in his pre-resurrection state.

So powerful was Jesus' presence that they fell on their faces and worshipped him. The Greek word here for worship indicates that they didn't simply bend a knee before Jesus, but lay prostrate before him. In homage and absolute reverence, they honored Jesus as God. He receives their worship. The Great Commission was birthed in the context of worship.

Of course, we love the honesty of Matthew's report: "…they worshipped him, but some doubted." Can you worship and doubt at the same time? I certainly hope so. Dale Bruner writes this Beatitude, "Blessed are those who worship the risen Lord and who still struggle with doubt; they are the people He uses to do his mission in the world."

2. The Authority of Jesus

From this setting we move into the Great Commission proper: "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Matt 28:18). I like to say, that every time we read these words, we need to pause and say to ourselves, "What did he say?" We should never cease to marvel over Jesus' self-acclamation.

No more astounding words have ever come out of a human being's mouth, even a resurrected human being who is God. Abraham Kuyper has famously said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over

which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" I love Dale Bruner's title for Jesus. He is the Cosmocrator, the Lord over all creation. Jesus claims executive powers over all the forces of heaven, meaning that we need not fear even demonic spiritual powers or even all the forces of the earth. Since we are in league with the King, no human powers can be ultimately overpowering. The actual word order in the Greek here places Jesus even more clearly in the center: "…was given to me all authority in heaven and on earth."

In v. 19 Jesus goes on to declare the imperative, the command that is at the heart of the Great Commission, "Therefore, go and **make disciples** of all nations." As we shall see more completely later, there is but one command in these verses, but we cannot pass over the word "therefore." Since Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, *therefore make disciples*.

2.1. Jesus' Authority as the Foundation to the Great Commission

Why does Jesus announce his authority before giving us the Great Commission to make disciples? I think for at least two reasons. First and foremost, Jesus expects obedience. Jesus held up the example of the Roman centurion, a commander of 100-foot soldiers, to teach us the implications of his authority. This highly respected commander sent word to Jesus through intermediaries that his beloved servant was ill unto death. Before Jesus could arrive at his home, the centurion sent friends saying that he was not worthy to have Jesus come under his roof. The friends relayed this message from their commander:

> For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed Him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." Then the men who were sent returned to the house and found the servant well (Lk 7:8-10).

Followers of Jesus are a people under authority, under new management. A disciple of Jesus submits their life to the authority, wisdom, and guidance of Jesus. A disciple of Jesus makes disciple-making paramount in their life.

The second reason that Jesus declares his authority is that we have his full backing to carry out His mission. Jesus does not only tell us what to do, but he gives us the means to carry it out. An image comes to mind to illustrate that we go under and with his authority. Let's go back to the old Western movies from which we got Clint Eastwood. There is a duly appointed sheriff in town with the authority to lock up the bad guys. At times these bad guys escape and get a head start in town. The sheriff needs help. He rounds up all available men and deputizes them by slapping a shiny badge on their vests, as a symbol of the authority of the law. The

deputized group of men goes out under the authority of the sheriff. Just so, Jesus deputizes us. We then go out, representing the unrivaled Ruler of the universe.

There is nothing that cripples our accomplishing Jesus' mission more than fear. We so easily forget that with the authority of Jesus, there is nothing to fear. Yet we are easily intimidated. This is why Jesus' last line of the Great Commission is, "I am with you always to the end of the age." Throughout Scripture, almost every time we see the promise "I am with you" or "I will be with you," it is used in the context of addressing fear. When Moses was called to confront Pharaoh, Moses shrank in fear: "'Who am I that I should go?' The Lord reassured, 'I will be with you'" (Exod 3:11-12). When Jeremiah was called to be a prophet, he objected that he was too young and inexperienced. But the Lord said: "Do not be afraid…for I am with you and will rescue you" (Jer 1:8). The prophet Isaiah, spoke words we have relied on when fear seemed insurmountable: "So do not fear, I am with you, Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa 41:10).

The Cosmocrator, the Lord of the universe, has a call for all of us, to make disciples. I am letting you in on the greatest enterprise you can imagine. You are going to lead people to me, Jesus says, all over the globe, and then build them into mature disciples.

2.2. Jesus' Characteristics of a Disciple

We now come to the center of the Great Commission with a special focus on Matthew 28:19-20. We noted that Jesus, the Chief Executive Officer of the Universe, has a mission for us all. He told us what every follower of his is to be about. There is one single command in this text, make disciples. We are to stay laser-focused on making disciples as the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. C. S. Lewis captures our mission in these powerful words:

> The church exists for no other purpose but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity).

2.2.1. Can You Be a Christian Without Being a Disciple?

I think we need to acknowledge that there is considerable confusion about who or what a disciple is. Let me illustrate this confusion through a brief story. One Sunday, a pastor preached a barnburner sermon on the call to discipleship. This did not sit well with a woman in the church. [Could just have easily been a man.] The woman approached her pastor after a morning service. She said in response, "Pastor, I just want to be a Christian. I don't want to be a disciple. I like my life the

way it is. I believe that Jesus died for my sins, and I will be with him when I die. Why do I have to be a disciple?" Let's explore this short statement.

- *What distinction does this woman make?* This woman thought she was given a multiple-choice exam. Christian or disciple? I think I will choose Christian.
- *Why doesn't she want to be a disciple?* Whatever she thinks a disciple is… and that is not clear, she thinks it will disturb her way of life. She says, "I like my life the way it is." If she is a disciple, she will have to make some unspecified changes. Maybe it's the Africa thing.
- *What was her definition of a Christian?* "I believe that Jesus died for my sins, and I will be with him when I die." Her gospel: forgiveness of sin now and life forever with Jesus later. From her definition of a Christian, she asks a very logical question, "Why do I have to be a disciple?" She saw no connection between being a Christian and being a disciple. Was she right? There are millions like her around the world.
- *How did she conclude that she could be a Christian without being a disciple?* I would submit that her conclusion is consistent with the terms in which we have been preaching the gospel. In other words, **she drew this conclusion not despite the gospel we have been preaching, but precisely because of it.**

What are the usual terms in which we share the good news? I call it the *transactional* gospel because we so often communicate the gospel in *accounting* terms.

1. Because of our sin an eternal debit has been registered on our account that we cannot possibly pay off ourselves.
2. But the good news is that God sent his Son Jesus to cancel this debt: Jesus paid our debt on the cross.
3. Jesus rose from the dead as a demonstration that this debt was paid and that death had been defeated.
4. Now the transaction: If we put our faith in Jesus Christ then his credit is transferred to our account and it cancels out our debt.
5. We are then handed a receipt marked "paid in full."

Forgiveness of sin is the gospel. You are good to go.

You might say, "Well, that sounds like good news to me." Of course, it is an aspect of the good news but certainly not all of it. I call it getting in on the benefits plan. It is all about what we get from God. Dallas Willard had dubbed this "bar-code Christianity." We want to make sure we get the salvation "bar code" so that we can be rung up by God's eternal scanner in the sky. The woman asks the question, "Why do I have to be a disciple?" If she had asked Jesus that question, how

might he have responded to her? Jesus in the Great Commission defines the core elements of discipleship.

Let's take a deeper dive into what is packed into Matthew 28:19-20. There is a very precise structure to the Great Commission. The main command, make disciples, is supported by three participles. In case your high school English eludes you, a participle is a verbal adjective ending in "ing." There are three action words or verbs, that describe making disciples. Therefore, you could translate the verse. 19:

> "Therefore, as you are *go[ing]*,
> *Make disciples* of all nations,
> *Baptiz[ing]* them in[to] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
> *Teach[ing]* them to obey all that I have commanded you."

Three verbal adjectives [participles] flesh out what a disciple is: Disciples are *going, baptizing, and teaching*. We can see that disciple-making covers a wide range: (1) from initially *going* to all "people groups" to share the good news of the gospel, (2) then once someone has embraced or been embraced by Jesus, they are *baptizing* (immersing) converted people into the life of the triune God, and (3) then finally they enter into the lifelong vocation of *obeying* all that Jesus commanded. Let's look at each of these three participles as critical elements in what makes up a reproducing disciple of Jesus.

I. "As You are Going…to All Nations"

First, *going* to all nations (peoples: *ethnes*): Dale Bruner simply says, "Move out." From our inception, we were called to serve a missionary God. The scope of the disciple's call is to all people. Jesus came to establish a worldwide kingdom without borders. Let's highlight three things that capture a "go" mentality:

A. Move Out to All Nations (People Groups)

British church historian and missiologist, Andrew Walls, has observed that Christianity is different from all the other world religions because we have continually shifted our geographical center. Islam emanates from Mecca and Medina; Buddhism is largely in the Far East (China and Tibet); Hinduism is the national religion of India and Nepal. These world religions have stayed largely geographically in the realms of their origins. Not so with Christianity.

We live at a time of the massive geographical shift of world Christianity to the Global South. We do not have time for a world survey, so let's just look at Africa.

In 1900 Christianity was still largely a Western religion with European roots. Sub-Saharan Africa was 9% Christian. By 2023 Sub-Saharan Africa had become 62% Christian and growing. If you combine African and Latin American Christianity, by 2050 only one in six Christians will be white and the Global South will be its center.

Jesus tells us to make disciples of all "nations," which is all that from which we get "ethnic groups." Missiologists have described these as "people groups" with their distinct language and culture. At their latest count, the Joshua Project which tracks distinct "people groups," says that they can identify 17,453 people groups worldwide, while 7,400 are unreached. Unreached people are defined as those who do not have a church in their language or culture. The idea is that people can hear the gospel in their native tongue and within their cultural setting. A disciple has a worldwide consciousness; a sense of God's embrace of all people groups.

B. Move Out by Being a Relational Link to the Gospel

Jesus shared another version of the Great Commission in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Our job is to be witnesses and connectors to Jesus and the gospel. Be attractive followers of Jesus. I love the story that Sheldon Vanauken tells in his book, A Severe Mercy. Sheldon and his wife, Davy, were students at Oxford University in England in the early 1950s. They came with very negative stereotypes of Christians. In their words, Christians "were necessarily stuffy, hide-bound, or stupid—people to keep one's distance from." Hear Vanauken's experience:

> Yet the people we seemed to fall in with at Oxford were keen, deeply committed Christians. We liked them so much that we forgave them for it. We began, hardly knowing we were doing it, to revise our opinions, not of Christianity but of Christians…The sheer quality of the Christians we met at Oxford shattered our stereotype…The astonishing fact sank home: our own contemporaries could be at once highly intelligent, civilized, fun to be with—and Christian.

It was only a matter of time before their defenses were to be penetrated by Jesus himself.

C. Move Out Through Acts of Compassion and Justice

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and so glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Sacrificial acts of mercy still command attention. Nicholas Kristoff is an editorial writer for the New York Times. On several occasions, he has written stories about the impact of evangelical Christians through deeds of mercy. Kristoff recounts the story of 17-year-old

Sonia Angeline and her rescue from the town garbage dump in Mozambique: after 4 days of labor pains, she was a hairsbreadth from death. Katrin Blackert, a 23-year-old volunteer with Iris Ministries, encountered her on regular visits to children at the dump. Blackert paid for a cab to get her to a medical center and saved her life. Kristoff concluded: "I'm convinced that we should celebrate the big evangelical push into Africa because the bottom line is that it will mean more orphanages, more schools, and above all, more clinics and hospitals." The first step for a disciple is to catch the "go" spirit.

II. Baptizing into the Eternal Community of the Triune God

This leads to the second element of making disciples which is, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." I believe we have generally missed the mark of Jesus' intent here. At the simplest level, we turn this into a baptismal formula pronounced while touching the head or lowering someone under the waters of baptism. When we think of the significance of baptism, four truths come to mind. We think of baptism as (1) an act of public declaration of our faith; (2) a sign of inclusion in the church; (3) a cleansing from the guilt of our sin; (4) and a means of identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Now that is a lot, but I still don't think it quite gets at the wonder of why Jesus includes baptizing as a central mark of our discipleship.

My eyes were opened when I read John of Damascus's description of the Trinity as perichoresis, Greek for a circle dance. Choros is a festive dance performed on occasions like weddings or banquets. Adding peri as a prefix, meaning "roundabout," emphasizes the circularity of the dance. Circle dances are very common within the Jewish community. Hava Nagila comes to mind. John pictured the one God who is three persons in a dance of intimacy, equality, and unity, always deferring in love and honor to one another. The one God who is at the same time Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dances in harmonious love at the center of the universe and invites us into the dance.

Let me see if I can catch the depth of meaning here through this paraphrase: "As you are going, make disciples of all nations, *immersing them into the life of the eternal three-person community of love who exists at the center of the universe.*" Why did God create human beings in the first place? Genesis 1 sets us a flow toward the culmination of God's creative purpose. The crown jewel toward which all creation was headed was the creation of human beings, exclusively made in the image of God. God says, "Let us make man in our image, and our likeness" (Gen 1:26). When we look at the "us" and "our" of God through the greater light of the New Testament we see through Jesus that the One God is three persons. In other words, before creation, God existed as the original loving community, a being whose very essence is relationship. The image of God is relational. Michael Lloyd

writes, "It is relationships that matter most to us because we were made not only for relationships, but by Relationship. We were made in the image of God, and God is relationship."

C. S. Lewis reminds us that if God were a solitary, singular being, he could not be a God of love. "Love is something one person has for another. If God were a single person, then before the world was made, he was not love." To be baptized into the life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is to be included in the very life of God, enveloped in his love. Being baptized gives shape to our foundational identity as believers, we are included in the Beloved.

Perhaps a homemade illustration will help us grasp this unimaginable truth. In human terms, I think of it as being invited to join a family table. Imagine [some may not have to imagine] that you were raised in a home where the family hardly ever sat down and shared a family meal. Chaos ruled the home. Finding a center of warmth was elusive. Everyone was on their own. As good fortune would have it, you became friends with someone who spoke respectfully and lovingly of their parents and had siblings they enjoyed, who truly delighted in each other. One night your friend invites you to join the family for dinner. The atmosphere around the table was nothing like you have ever experienced. A beaming father tells you what a delight it is to have you join them. A home-cooked meal is brought to the table with each family member taking their part in making sure the table is set. The conversation turns to the events of the day. They each take an interest in drawing out the others. Humor comes naturally in the form of teasing each other, yet with playfulness. There is a lightness in the air. The family lingers around the table because they enjoy each other so much. You are sitting there thinking, I didn't even know this kind of loving family was possible. As the plates are being cleared, the mother says to you, "You are welcome to join us any time. Consider yourself a part of the family." As you ponder your experience that night, you wonder, "How can I get adopted into this family? This is what I wanted all my life and I didn't even know it until I saw what is possible." Baptism fundamentally means to be embraced by this reality—we are loved and included in the heart of God. Our core identity is that we have been loved into the very life of God.

III. Teaching Them to Obey All of Jesus' Commands

Once a person responds to the gospel's saving message in Christ and then finds their identity in the eternal community of the triune God, they enter into a lifelong vocation of "being taught to obey everything that Jesus commanded." Again, Bruner is very helpful here: He says that disciple is a schoolish word. "To disciple means to make students, bring to school, educate, work with people over time in an educative process." This requires a training mentality and a teachable spirit.

John Ortberg has said, "No one can be a disciple of Jesus because you think you should, you have to want it." If we follow Jesus out of some obligation, because we have to, that eventually will lead to a dry legalism. What makes for the "want to"? Dallas Willard again gets to the heart of the matter: "Unfortunately, many people read that as teaching them what they ought to do, but it's talking about teaching them in such a way that they wouldn't want to be doing anything else." Philip Yancy writes: "I do not get to know God, then do his will. I get to know God by doing his will."

I experienced this truth when I committed myself to prison ministry. Throughout my life, I have listened to people give testimony to ministry behind bars. My inner, gut response was, "God bless you for doing that; I can't imagine doing that myself." Frankly, it scared me to death. But because my disciple-making materials were being used in a Texas maximum-security prison, I responded to an invitation to visit. Big mistake! I like to say, "God ambushed me."

I entered that maximum security prison in a state of anxiety, particularly when the metal doors clanged behind me. I met with and spoke to four different groups that first day in the chapel, greeting each prisoner and introducing myself as they came into the chapel. The next day I was in a room with 48 men who had done dastardly things but had made a commitment to follow Jesus. The very first question I was asked was, "Were you nervous when you came in here?" The men were aware of how intimidating they could be. I acknowledged that I was nervous. The man who asked the question said, "You didn't seem nervous." God's grace. Then at the end of the session with these followers of Jesus, a man named Rocky, spoke words used by the Holy Spirit to place a call on my life. Rocky said in front of the 48 men, "We are the forgotten people, don't forget us!" That was a Holy Spirit stab in the heart. For six and a half years every Wednesday morning, I got to see Jesus at work in the lives of transformed men. As I told them, "I come here because I see Jesus in you." I got to see the heart of God by doing his will.

3. Definition of a Disciple

How would we define what it is to be a disciple from this Great Commission text: A disciple is one who, first and foremost, submits to Jesus as the Lord of the Universe and Lord of our lives. Once this is in place disciples align themselves with Jesus' mission of making disciples while at the same time growing into three dimensions of a disciple that Jesus highlights: (1) Disciples have a restless "go," move out spirit. (2) Disciples find their identity in the eternal loving community of God in which they are included. (3) Finally, disciples spend the rest of their days knowing that their primary vocation is to align their lives with all that Jesus commands.

- Who or What is a Disciple? *A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, committed to the mission of Jesus, and motivated by the love of Jesus*.
- What is Discipleship? *Discipleship is a lifelong process of dying to self while allowing Christ to come alive in us.*
- What is Disciple-making? Disciple-making is *"an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. It also includes equipping the disciple to make disciples who make disciples."*

In our next session, we will explore the question, how did Jesus model for us how disciples are made, and why have not we followed it?

Greg Ogden

Kako Isus definira učenika u odlomku o Velikom poslanju?

Sažetak

Svaka konferencija o učeništvu mora biti ukorijenjena u biblijskoj definiciji pojma „učenik". Kada Isus zapovijeda da „činimo učenike", koga ili što točno stvaramo? Kako izgleda učenik? Ne treba tražiti dalje od definicije koja je sadržana u izvornom Isusovu nalogu koji je poznat kao Veliko poslanje (Mt 28,16-20). Postoji jasno određena struktura ovoga teksta kojom se iskazuju osnovne karakteristike učenika: tekst sadrži jedan imperativ, „činite učenike", no ono što se često previđa jest to da se ova glavna zapovijed dodatno pojašnjava trima participima: „idući", „krsteći" i „učeći". U ovome slučaju participi su glagolski prilozi s nastavkom „–ći" koji govore o naravi učenika. U ovom će se izlaganju usporediti popularno razumijevanje toga što znači biti kršćanin s biblijskom definicijom pojma „učenik". Kršćani, kako se uobičajeno razumije, oni su koji su povjerovali Kristu radi svog spasenja i vjeruju da će biti s Isusom kada umru. Drugim riječima, na taj je način možda nesvjesno rečeno: „Možete biti kršćanin, a da ne budete učenik." „Evanđelje" koje je naviješteno izravno je dovelo do evanđelja koje se svodi samo na oprost grijeha tj. na „evanđelje oprosta". Bill Hull i Ben Sobels iznose dvije istine: 1. Ne možete stvoriti učenika sličnog Kristu na temelju evanđelja koje ne sadrži učeništvo. 2. Evanđelje koje propovijedate određuje učenike koje ćete stvoriti. Nasuprot tome, bit će istaknuto da tri opisna participa, „idući", „krsteći" i „učeći", kada se detaljnije razmotre, u sebi sadrže Isusovu definiciju učenika. To je

potvrđeno porukom evanđelja koje je Isus propovijedao na početku svoje službe: „A pošto Ivan bijaše predan, dođe Isus u Galileju propovijedajući evanđelje Božje i govoreći: 'Ispunilo se vrijeme i približilo se kraljevstvo Božje. Pokajte se i vjerujte u evanđelje!'" (Mk 1,14-15).

Portraits of Deficient Discipleship: A Theological Reflection on Matthew 8:18-27[1]

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the way the evangelist Matthew illustrates the deficiency of discipleship by sketching three portrayals of deficient discipleship. The section under scrutiny is that of chapter 8:18-27 from Matthew's Gospel. The first portrayal is that of a disciple-to-be, described in terms of much enthusiasm without much understanding of the kind of teacher Jesus is (Matt 8:19-20). He is a proper illustration of the first type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without costs. The second portrayal, is that of an acknowledged disciple, described in terms of manifest hesitation that comes from an insufficient clarification of his existential priorities and of the kind of master Jesus is (Matt 8:21-22). This portrayal is a helpful illustration of the second type of deficient attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without commitment. The third portrayal is that of the called disciples, described in terms of fear that comes from the lack of understanding of the kind of Lord Jesus is (Matt 8:23-27). This portrayal is a realistic illustration of the third type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without hardships. Yet, in his answers in the encounters with the three categories of protagonists in the biblical text, Jesus offers corrections to all three types of deficient discipleship. And Matthew combines the revelation of the symptoms of the three deficient types of discipleship with the solution coming

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

from Jesus' answers, to make the recipient-audience of his Gospel understand that discipleship is costly, is based on commitment, and involves hardships.

Keywords: *discipleship, deficiency, costly, commitment, hardships*

Introduction

The subject of discipleship is an important one for Christian communities all over the world. In this regard, the Bible has been for centuries the most important resource for the teachings on discipleship for believers. And in the Bible, the Gospels were always the most studied books from the perspective of discipleship. Moreover, the Gospel of Matthew was always considered as the gospel where the theme of discipleship is an important trajectory in the intention of the evangelist for his primary audience.

The present research argues that Matthew intends to show not only the journey of discipleship but also the deficient types of discipleship as part of this trajectory intended by the evangelist. The text under scrutiny for this research is from Matthew 8:18-27. Here Matthew offers three portrayals of what could be called deficient discipleship. One is that of discipleship that roots its beginning in human beings' decisions, discipleship that is enthusiastic but is not aware of the costs. The second one that will be argued is that of discipleship which is hesitant because of the confused existential loyalties. And the third is that of discipleship that is fearful because of insufficiency of trust in facing hardships.

Methodologically, the research starts with the first pericope, having in the center, the enthusiastic scribe with his declared decision to be Jesus' follower, followed by Jesus's answer in the form of warning and lament (Matt 8:19-20). The research will continue, with the acknowledged disciple, with his request to deal first with familial and religious obligations, followed by Jesus' answer in the form of a radical command (Matt 8:22). The research will end with the committed disciples in the boat fearful for their life in facing the storm on the sea, followed by Jesus's answer to them, rebuking them for their lack of trust in his competency to protect them, and then his miraculous calming of the storm.

1. Discipleship Without Costs

The first portrayal is that of a disciple-to-be (Matt 8:19-20), described in terms of much enthusiasm without much understanding regarding the kind of teacher Jesus is. He is a scribe (Matt 8:19a), therefore a person with a vocation for learning. He seems to be in search of the proper teacher under authority to develop his personality and vocation, and he sees in Jesus that kind of teacher. In approaching

Jesus with such a confident statement: "I will follow you wherever you go" (Matt 8:20), this scribe shows a high degree of determination and the fact that he made up his mind.

His enthusiasm comes most likely from the impression created over him by Jesus' teachings and miracles. This scribe likely understood what many others understood, that Jesus' teaching comes from his authority, different from the way other scribes taught (Matt 7:28-29) (Howard 2023, 237). He might also have been an eyewitness or heard about Jesus' miracles (Matt 8:1-17), which in Matthew's gospel constitutes the context of this discipleship narrative *inclusio* (Talbert 2010, 111).

Yet, in his address to Jesus, the scribe reveals his vision of Jesus – a teacher, even though, the most impressive teacher encountered so far in his life (Bruner 2004, 519). David L. Turner observes the fact that "[t]hus far in Matthew, the scribes have not been presented positively (2:4; 5:20; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29…)" and the fact that in "Matthew those who call Jesus 'teacher' are not disciples (12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36)" (Turner 2008, 239). Matthew Henry is accurate in his observation:

> His profession of a self-dedication to Christ is, [1.] Very ready, and seems to be *ex mero motu*—from his unbiased inclination: he is not called to it by Christ, nor urged by any of the disciples, but, of his own accord, he proffers himself to be a close follower of Christ; he is not a pressed man, but a volunteer. [2.] Very resolute; he seems to be at a point in this matter; he does not say, "I have a mind to follow thee;" but, "I am determined, I will do it." [3.] It was unlimited and without reserve; "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; not only to the other side of the country, but if it were to the utmost regions of the world." (Henry 1994, 1650).

The introductory address reveals also the fact that he placed Jesus on the same level as the other teachers of his time. Moreover, Bruner signalizes the fact that the subject in his address is himself, as he decided to follow Jesus (Bruner 2004, 519). Yet, the scribe will soon learn not only that this unique teacher cannot be followed without being Lord, but also that he calls disciples and elects them not the other way around. And Jesus' call is not for a short-term missionary journey with a boat from one shore to another (Eaton 2020, 52), but for a life-long total commitment (France 2007, 872).

The answer of Jesus in Matthew 8:20 contains a warning that clarifies to the scribe the fact that his condition is radically different from that of the scribes of those days, who were able to offer their disciples protection of a house and existential security (Bruner 2004, 520). Jesus' answer is also in the form of a lament for his condition in the world, namely that of destitution and marginalization. This condition is well described by Robert J. Myles:

> Matthew's Jesus is unable to sink his roots firmly into any geographical region and is socially dislocated from normalized society. On the other hand, the scribe is likely situated at the centre of normalized society; his occupation is principally concerned with upholding the status quo of the ideological–political order that has seen Jesus displaced to the margins (Myles 2014, 126-127).

The reference to foxes and birds could be connected with the security and comfort, proper to the members of the political or the religious elite (Myles 2014, 119, 127) of those times. Yet, in depicting himself as the Son of Man, Jesus underlines the position of his existence on the tragic trajectory of great sufferers of God's people's history, whose recapitulation and culmination his life and suffering constitute. He is not only the "the Isaianic Servant of God (Isa 53:4)" (Ye-Atkinson 2020, 121), but also the suffering Servant of God.

Myles notices the presence of the verb κλίνω ("to lay") only in this text of Matthew 8:20 and is connected with its use in John 19:30, which describes the moment when Christ "bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (Myles 2014, 120). The fact that the cross was the only place to lay his head, illustrates the cost implied in following him. This disciple-to-be is a proper illustration of the first type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without understanding the costs. Yet, the cost of discipleship should be a part of the gospel (Bonhoeffer 1959, 48). And Matthew Henry makes the portrait of the scribe and Christ, a mirror in which any to-be disciple should contemplate his or her motivation to follow Jesus:

> Now we should think ourselves sure of such a man as this; and yet it appears, by Christ's answer, that his resolution was rash, his ends low and carnal: either he did not consider at all, or not that which was to be considered; he saw the miracles Christ wrought, and hoped he would set up a temporal kingdom, and he wished to apply betimes for a share in it. Note, there are many resolutions for religion, produced by some sudden pangs of conviction, and taken up without due consideration, that prove abortive, and come to nothing: soon ripe, soon rotten (Henry 1994, 1651).

To sum up, this first portrayal of deficient discipleship is a reminder for disciples to-be of every generation that authentic discipleship starts with a call of Christ, not with a decision for Christ. The scribe illustrates very well the image of persons in history who attempted to follow Christ based on their blind theology of discipleship that is centered on the human self, confident of human capacities (so evident in the use of the word *everywhere* in Matt 8:19). The two disciples in the scene, as well as similar disciples in history, might be skilled dancers around themselves, whilst they are ignorant in regard with the costs implied in cruciform discipleship (so evident in the use of the word *nowhere* in Matt 8:20), as embodied by Christ's call and vocation. Or in the words of Walter Brueggemann:

> The calling of God means for us to disengage from the postures, habits and assumptions that define the world of power and injustice that is so devoid of

> mercy and compassion in every arena of life. The call is away from ordinary life, ordinary possession, and ordinary assumptions to a way of life that the world judges to be impossible. Thus, the call, is, indeed, to an impossibility (Brueggemann 2006, 95).

2. Discipleship Without Commitment

The second portrayal is that of an acknowledged disciple (Matt 8:22), described in terms of manifest hesitation that comes from an insufficient clarification of his existential priorities and of the kind of master Jesus is. Unlike the scribe in the first portrayal, this disciple is addressing Jesus as Lord (Matt 8:22a), even "though his use of the term does not necessarily mean he is fully committed to Jesus as his 'master'" (Card 2013, 129). However, this disciple seems to be a very devoted Jew, who wanted to fulfill with scrupulosity his religious and familial obligations (Matt 8:22b). The lawfulness of the disciple's request is underlined by Ben Witherington III:

> To understand the radical nature of Jesus' response to his disciple's request, bear in mind that various Jewish texts indicate that the duty to bury someone supercedes even the most binding of religious obligations (m. Ber. 3:1; Tob. 4.3; 6.13), and this is all the more so when one is dealing with a member of one's own family. Even a priest was required to set aside his priestly duties to bury his father or mother (S. Lev. 21.3). Only a high priest or a Nazirite was exempt from the duty of burying one's father (Lev 21:11; Num 6:6-7) (Witherington III 2006, 188).

If in the case of the scribe in the previous scene, Jesus' answer came as a warning and a lament about the costs of discipleship, in the case of this disciple, Jesus's answer takes the form of a command. The contrast has the purpose of underlining the fact that these are negative examples of discipleship (Davies and Allison 1991, 39). And as such these examples illustrate types of disqualified discipleship, "the first's enthusiasm arises from his ignorance of the cost of discipleship, and the second's timidity is due to his awareness of that cost" (Turner 2008, 240). In both scenes, Jesus' answers reveal the real meaning of discipleship:

> To the scribe Jesus says that a disciple of his must live in a kind of homeless state in which no comfort or rest can be found. And to the student he says that to live in a homeless place is literally to be homeless, which means also to be society-less, and so whatever the demands of the home or of the society, they are to be discounted (Basser and Cohen 2015, 222).

In this second scene, Matthew creates another contrast, namely, that between the disciple's request that "in his Jewish culture was a reasonable request" (Talbert 2010, 116), and the radicalness of Jesus' call regarding the firstness of commit-

ment to him as Lord (Matt 8:22c). For, as Craig S. Keener's asserts: "following Jesus takes precedence over all social obligations, even those family obligations one's society and religion declare to be ultimate" (Keener 1999, 844). In the same line, Joe Kapolyo asserts that this disciple "is putting his social and family obligations before his discipleship" (Kapolyo 2006, 1153).

This disciple is hesitant because he is not fully committed to Christ even if he seems fully committed to the Law, and this reality is revealed by his attempt to negotiate his existential priorities. His hesitation in his practice of discipleship is an important reminder of the fact that discipleship requires a permanent decision to put loyalty to Christ first. Any hesitation to do that is walking backward in one's spiritual progress. This portrayal is a helpful illustration of the second type of deficient attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without commitment, symptomatic for a discipleship already begun rather than an indication of hesitancy to start following Jesus (Gundry 1982, 153). Or in the words of Heinz Joachim Held:

> …the point in the second scene is no longer concerned with the first decision *in favour of* discipleship but with the repeated demand for a new decision in terms of complete obedience *within* discipleship. In this way, however, the interpretation of Matthew brings out the situation of the Church practicing discipleship (Held 1963, 203).

3. Discipleship Without Hardships

The third portrayal is that of the called disciples, described in terms of fear that comes from the lack of understanding of the kind of Lord Jesus is (Matt 8:23-27). However, they are obedient for they answered the call of Jesus in Matthew 8:18 (Gundry 1982, 154). If in the first scene, the scribe is characterized by enthusiasm without understanding the costs, and in the second scene the hesitant disciple is characterized by confusion in his arrangement of loyalties, in this third scene, committed disciples are characterized by fear, encountering the hardship of the storm on the sea. Yet, the storm is more than a storm and the story is more than a frightening experience on a troubled sea.

For some commentators the scene is a demonstration of Jesus' divinity and as such a reminder of God's sovereign salvific acts in the history of his people. Margaret Davies, for example, observes that "[i]n Scripture, the sea and floods are always viewed as dangerous (e.g., Genesis 6–9; Ps. 104.25-26; Jon. 1.4-6; Amos 9.3; Isa. 5.30; 17.12) and sometimes symbolize chaos (e.g., Gen. 1.2)," and might be that Matthew intends to make the story a mirror in which the readers to see the "dangers, social and political, which Jesus' and the disciples' insecure lifestyle would bring" (Davies 2009, 79).

For Robert Gundry, Jesus' rebuke of the disciples aims to address their "failure to rest in the divine authority of Jesus" (Gundry 1982, 156). On the same interpretative trajectory, Matthew Anslow the story has a Christological function, as in it Jesus is identified with God, as he is in the role of the One that in Scriptures is calming the sea that is "seen as a chaotic force that God orders, or with which God battles (e.g., Gen 1:6–10; 6–10; Job 38:8–11; Pss 74:13–14; 77:16; 89:8–11; 104:7; 107:23–30; Jonah 1:4–16)" (Anslow 2022, 438).

N. T. Wright connects this story with the divine action of taming the sea in Exodus and using the sea "to stop the disobedient prophet Jonah" (Wright 2004, 89), whilst Anslow connects the story not only with the mighty action of God in Exodus 14; 15:10, but also with its prophetic echo in Isaiah 43:1–2 "where it refers to YHWH's coming salvation of Israel from exile" (Anslow 2022, 438).

Other commentators underline the significance of the story for the illustration of disciples' journey towards maturity in their faith, as a mirror for the church's necessary journey towards maturity of faith. Gerhard Barth considers that the evangelist "here writes the situation of the Church into the life of the disciples during the earthly activity of Jesus" (Barth 1963, 111), whilst for Bruner as "[t]he quake (seismos, Matthew's unique word) hits the lake and covers the ship with waves," so "the world overwhelms disciples" (Bruner 2004, 523).

Gunther Bornkmann notices the uniqueness of Matthew's gospel to present the story as "a description of the dangers against which Jesus warns anyone who over-thoughtlessly presses to become a disciple" (Bornkmann 1963, 56). He also presents Jesus as the embodiment of God's kingdom, making this story "a kerygmatic paradigm of the danger and glory of discipleship" (Bornkamm 1963, 57). Keener considers that the story invites the vision of Jesus as the One that has authority over natural forces, has also authority over "whatever natural crises they may face, whether persecution (10:28-31), provision (14:32-38), the winds of eschatological judgment (7:25), or anything else" (Keener 1999, 849).

Moreover, Brian Wintle considers that the reason for the reversal in order from stilling the storm and then rebuking the disciples in Mark, to the Matthean first rebuking and then stilling "suggests that although Jesus found their lack of faith disappointing, his first gesture was one of loving reassurance" (Wintle 2015, 1238). Held offers an informative comparison between the purpose of the story in the gospel of Mark and the gospel of Matthew, underlying the focus on discipleship in Matthew:

> Whereas in Mark (4.38-40, cf. Luke 8.24-25) the stilling of the storm takes place first and the words of censure addressed to the disciples follow, in Matthew the words of reproach occur first, and the miracle follows (8.25, 26). In short, Mark places the nature miracle of the stilling of the storm in the centre and the words addressed to the disciples are an appendage. By transposing the scene Matthew has created a conversation between the disciples and Jesus

> and placed this in the centre, so that now the stilling of the storm looks like an appendage. In this way it is no longer Jesus and the elements that constitute the theme of the narrative but Jesus and his disciples who are in peril. The miracle story becomes a story about the disciples, so to speak. The evangelist works into the story of the stilling of the storm the picture of the Church in her discipleship (Held 1963, 203-204).

To sum up, this portrayal is a realistic illustration of the third type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without hardships. Discipleship starts with obedience but continues with trust. From a biblical perspective, fear is a sign of lack of trust, and fearful disciples are epitomes of discipleship without hardship. Yet, the type of trust that is Christlike, shown in his peaceful sleep amid a troubled sea (Matt 8:23-27) matures amid existential hardships not in their absence. And this is the journey for all committed disciples of God's people in history, from weak faith to mature faith. The fear is an expression of self-preservation whilst trust is an expression of total confidence in Jesus.

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the way the evangelist Matthew illustrates the deficiency of discipleship by sketching three portrayals of deficient discipleship, in the three scenes of Matthew 8:18-27. The scribe in the first scene, a disciple to-be, characterized by much enthusiasm without much understanding of the kind of teacher Jesus is (Matt 8:19-20), is a proper illustration of the first type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without costs. The disciple in the second scene, described in terms of manifest hesitation that comes from an insufficient clarification of his existential priorities and of the kind of master Jesus is (Matt 8:21-22), is a realistic illustration of the second type of deficient attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without commitment. The third scene, with the called disciples, described in terms of fear that comes from the lack of understanding of the kind of Lord Jesus is (Matt 8:23-27), is a realistic illustration of the third type of deficient human attempt to follow Jesus, namely, discipleship without hardships.

In all three scenes, Jesus' answers, corrects the protagonists' deficient views about discipleship. To the first, the answer contains a description of the condition of the Master that the disciple should embrace, that of homelessness and marginalization. To the second, the answer contains a command to put the following of Jesus, first, above all other existential loyalties. To the group of committed disciples, Jesus' answer contains a diagnosis of their lack of trust in him.

All three answers are more than answers for them there and there. They are explanations of the coordinates for Christlike discipleship, that start with a call for a radical change in life, a permanent decision to embrace the costs, the demands,

and the hardships, involved in following Jesus Christ as Lord. As such, these coordinates, reveal the trajectory of biblical discipleship where dedication, commitment, and trust are paramount for followers of Christ, of every generation.

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Daniel G. Oprean

Portreti manjkavog učeništva: teološko promišljanje o Mateju 8,18-27

Sažetak

Cilj je ovoga članka istražiti način na koji evanđelist Matej prikazuje manjkavost učeništva skiciranjem triju portreta ljudi čije je učeništvo bilo manjkavo. Usredotočit ćemo se na Matejevo evanđelje 8,18-27. Prvi portret prikazuje nadobudnog učenika, kojega Matej opisuje kao entuzijastičnu osobu koja ipak ne razumije kakav je Isus učitelj (Mt 8,19-20). Ova je osoba prikladna ilustracija prve vrste manjkavog čovjekova pokušaja da slijedi Isusa, a možemo je nazvati besplatnim učeništvom. Drugi portret pokazuje osobu koja jest učenik, no koja ipak oklijeva slijediti Isusa zato što mu nisu jasni vlastiti egzistencijalni prioriteti i ne razumije kakav je Isus učitelj (Mt 8,21-22). Ovaj portret služi nam kao korisna ilustracija druge vrste manjkavoga čovjekova pokušaja da slijedi Isusa, koju ćemo nazvati neobvezno učeništvo. Treći portret prikazuje učenike koji su pozvani, ali

su ipak opisani kao oni koji se boje jer ne razumiju kakav je Isus Gospodin (Mt 8,23-27). Ovaj je portret realistična ilustracija treće vrste manjkavoga čovjekova pokušaja da slijedi Isusa, a to je učeništvo bez nevolja. Međutim, kada se susreo s ovim trima kategorijama protagonista u biblijskom tekstu, Isus je ispravio sve tri vrste manjkavog učeništva. Štoviše, Matej spaja simptome ovih triju vrsta manjkavoga učeništva s rješenjem koje nalazimo u Isusovim odgovorima kako bi primateljima – čitateljima svoga Evanđelja – pomogao razumjeti da učeništvo ima cijenu, da iziskuje obvezu i podrazumijeva nevolje.

A Disciple "Will Be Like His Teacher" (Luke 6:40): Making Disciples in the Gospel of Luke[1]

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Abstract

Using Luke 6:40 as a springboard, this paper examines how the formation of disciples occurs and how Luke's moral logic works. Three aspects of formation are examined: the roles of imitation, community, and habit. For Luke's moral vision, the study points out three key warrants: rewards, punishments, and imitation.

Keywords: *Gospel of Luke, Discipleship, Imitation, Ethics, Warrants*

Introduction

On the topic of discipleship in the Gospel of Luke, one regularly finds a description of the virtues and behaviors that characterize a disciple, such as prayer and the use of possessions.[2] This study, however, focuses on another aspect of discipleship, namely how formation occurs. To describe the process of formation in Luke, this study examines three variables: the roles of imitation, community, and habit.[3] As a result of this investigation, one gains not only an understanding of *how* dis-

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

2 See Fitzmyer 1981, 1:244-251; Johnson 2011, 96-105.

3 It is also worth considering other factors, such as the role of revelation, the Holy Spirit, and the heart.

ciples are made but also a glimpse into Luke's moral logic; that is, *why* disciples behave in kingdom ways (i.e., Luke's ethical warrants).

1. The Formation of a Disciple: How It Occurs

1.1. The Role of Imitation

The imitation of an exemplar is a standard way of thinking in the Greco-Roman world. For instance, Philo describes the Patriarchs as "living laws" (*Life of Abraham* 4), and Plutarch provides individuals for emulation and inspiration in his *Parallel Lives* (Meeks 1993, 190). When considering how formation occurs, Luke 6:40 is a pivotal text; it states, "The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher." Why is this passage important? Luke's Gospel is primarily about its hero Jesus; the assumed rationale for so much content about Jesus is that followers should imitate what Jesus says and does, what Jesus commends and commands. This verse makes explicit that disciples require training, and the result of that training is being like their teacher.

Luke chooses paradigmatic passages at the beginning of Jesus' ministry to characterize Jesus' ministry, namely the temptations and the sermon at Nazareth; that is, the temptations describe *what Jesus' ministry is not* and the Nazareth sermon describes *what Jesus' ministry is*. So, with each of the three temptations in 4:1-13 Jesus rejects a ministry 1) that is self-directed by satisfying physical pleasure and comfort (i.e., turning stone to bread in 4:3); 2) that seeks power and esteem (i.e., "all this authority and their glory" in 4:6) by worshiping another other than God; and 3) that is a ministry of style (i.e., throwing himself from atop the temple in 4:9) versus sacrifice and service. Note that the Nazareth account (4:16-30) is *not* the first time Jesus has ministered:[4]

- Already, Jesus has been in Galilee (4:14).
- Already, "news about him went out through the whole countryside" (4:14; cf. v. 37).
- Already, Jesus "taught in their synagogues and was praised by all" (4:15; v. 31).

Luke focuses on and expands this account in Nazareth because it is paradigmatic of Luke's understanding of Jesus' ministry.

After receiving the scroll, Jesus "found"—showing his intent—the passage in Isaiah, which Jesus reads. The Isaiah quotation from chapters 61 and 58 shows the typical Lukan influence of the Spirit: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." In

4 For my comments on 4:16-30, I use an excerpt from my commentary: Cukrowski 2009, 795.

addition, Luke's interest in the dispossessed is evident in the four groups that are served:

- Poor (6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 21:3)
- Prisoners
- Blind (7:21-22; 14:13, 21; 18:35)
- Oppressed

Furthermore, we see the role of Jesus' example in the criterion that is given for the selection of a disciple to replace Judas: "So, one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22; NRSV).[5] That is, the successor to Judas must have accompanied Jesus in his ministry: "All the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us."

We find the rationale for imitation elsewhere in Luke as well. Luke 6:35-36 reads: "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."[6] What is Luke saying in this passage? To paraphrase: "If you love enemies, do good, and lend, then you are a child of the Most High." Why is one a child of God? Luke answers, "Because God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked." Namely, when disciples behave in these ways, they are behaving like their father; they imitate God. And, just to summarize in as clear a way as possible, Luke concludes, "Be merciful as your Father is merciful."[7]

1.2. The Role of Community[8]

The disciples are shaped by the experience of following Jesus. Early in his ministry, Jesus chose Twelve individuals from among his disciples (6:12-16; 8:1; 9:1, 12; 18:31; 22:3, 30, 47; cf. 5:1, 30, 33; 6:1). They receive intensive instruction (6:20;

5 On Jesus' example, see also Luke's small addition in 6:20-8:3 (teaching material) and his big addition in 9:51-18:14 (the travel narrative); notice also that 23 of the 33 parables in Luke occur in this section.

6 On the imitation of God, see Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8 (holy); Matt 5:48; Eph 5:1.

7 Imitation of God is probably implicit in the description of God as a God of grace (1:50, 54, 58, 72, 78). See also the images of a gracious God in the following passages: 1) God as a vineyard owner (13:8; note the language of waiting a year); 2) God gives a banquet (14:17, 21, 23; note the three invitations); and 3) God is a grace-filled father (15:20-23; note the specific language that the father had compassion, as well as the outpouring of gracious acts and gifts). On grace, compare the Samaritan's example of mercy (10:33; "did mercy" in 10:37). See also the language "worthy to be called your son" in Luke 15:19, 21.

8 Talbert 1985, 71-73 mentions examples in Luke 8-11, 22, and 24, as well as some passages in Acts.

7:11; 8:9-10, 22; 9:14-16, 18-27; 40-45, 54; 10:23-24; 11:1; 12:1, 22; 16:1; 17:1, 22; 18:15, 31-34; 19:29; 20:45; 22:11, 14-38, 39-45; 24:36).[9] After Luke sends out the Twelve and the Seventy in Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-16, he gathers them for instruction (9:10; 10:17-24). We also hear about women who follow Jesus (8:1-3; 23:49, 55-56; 24:1-12, 22-24). From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus gathers a community of disciples and trains them through instruction and his example.

Furthermore, we see several places where the language of "following" characterizes the disciples of Jesus:

- 5:11 Simon, James, and John
- 5:27-28 Levi
- 9:23 Anyone: "Follow me."
- 9:49 "Does not follow with us."
- 9:57 A man: "I will follow wherever."
- 9:59 To another, Jesus says, "Follow me."
- 9:61 Another says, "I will follow you."
- 14:27 Whoever: "Take the cross and come after me."
- 18:22 To the rich ruler, Jesus says, "Come, follow me."
- 18:28 Peter and others say, "We have … followed you."
- 18:43 Blind man: "Followed him."

All these individuals who follow Jesus create a community, and there are expectations for the attitudes and actions of these individuals. Some of these expectations about behaviors are worth noting, as the sections below on Community Activities and Habit specify.

1.2.1. Community Activities

As a community, disciples are also shaped by interaction with one another. Functioning as a microcosm, Luke chapter 24 gives the readers a glimpse into this community of disciples; three actions stand out: reflection, remembering, and witness. These are factors that did and will create faithful disciples. Luke's account is descriptive but not necessarily sequential or exhaustive. For reflection, Luke shows that the women are perplexed (24:4), Peter wonders (24:12), the two disciples talk and discuss what has happened (24:14-15, 17) and are amazed (24:22); the Eleven are troubled and question (24:38) and wonder (24:41). Part of being a disciple is faith seeking understanding, which goes back to the portrayal of Mary (1:24; 2:19, 51), which is an echo of Jacob's reflection about Joseph (Gen 37:11).

Remembering is a second component of what disciples do together. Luke records that two men charge the women to remember that Jesus told them, "The

9 Other disciples also receive instruction (e.g., 6:17; 19:37-39).

Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day" (24:6-8). Later in the chapter, two disciples recite for Jesus the events that just occurred in Jerusalem (24:19-24), and in hindsight, they remember, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he spoke to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (24:32). Remembering is a communal action that forms disciples.

Witnessing to one another is a third part of what happens in the community of disciples. Luke describes how the women recount the events at the tomb to the Eleven and the rest (24:9), an account that is repeated later in the chapter (24:22-23). The two disciples narrate the events that just happened at Jerusalem (24:19-24), as well as their hopes about those events (24:21). The two disciples also tell the other disciples about "the things that happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread" (24:35). The Eleven and those with them relate how the Lord had risen and appeared to Simon (24:34). These three activities characterize the disciples and show some of the ways that faith is formed in the community of disciples.

1.3. The Role of Habit

In the formation of disciples, the third main variable is the role of habit. Luke regularly relates that disciples are expected to do and hear (6:46-49; 8:15, 21; 10:37, 39; 11:28).[10] In the first century, this emphasis on habit is to be expected. Aristotle stated, "Habit makes character" (Meeks 1993, 7). What "habits" show up in Luke's narrative?

1.3.1. Prayer

One activity stands out as a regular habit in Luke. Using twelve verbs and three nouns, Luke mentions prayer over fifty times in his Gospel.[11] Prayer both begins and ends the gospel with its first mention in 1:10 and the last mention in the final verse of the Gospel (24:53). Luke shows Jesus as a person of prayer (22:39 "as usual"; assumed in 11:1; 24:53; cf. Acts 3:1). Jesus often withdraws for solitude

10 On obedience, see the following examples: Mary (1:38); Shepherds (2:15); Jesus (2:51); What should we do? (3:10, 12, 14); Peter, "At your word" (5:5); Levi, "Follow me" (5:27-28; cf. 5:11); Tree known by its fruit (6:44); Action flows from the heart (6:45); Hear and do (6:47; 8:15, 21; 11:28); Weightier matters: justice and love of God (11:42).

11 Twelve verbs: αἰτέω (5x), ἀνθομολογέομαι (1x), βοάω (1x), δέομαι (3x), ἐξομολογέομαι (1x), εὐλογέω (7x), εὐχαριστέω (3x), ζητέω (2x), κρούω (2x), λέγω (1x), προσεύχομαι (19x), φωνέω (1x). Three nouns: ἀναίδεια, ἡ (1x), δέησις, ἡ (3x), προσευχή, ἡ (3x). Other possibilities include the following words: αἰνέω, δοξάζω, χαίρω; αἶνος, δόξα, χάρα.
Passages on prayer: 1:10, 13, 64; 2:28, 37, 38; 3:21; 5:16, 33; 6:12 (2x), 28; 9:16, 18, 28, 29; 10:2, 21; 11:1 (2x), 2, 8, 9 (3x), 10 (3x), 11, 12, 13; 18:1, 7, 10, 11 (2x); 19:46; 20:47; 21:36; 22:17, 19, 32, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46; 23:34, 46; 24:30, 50, 51, 53.

and prayer (5:16; 9:18). Jesus retreats to mountains for prayer (6:12; 9:28; 22:39-42). Luke records at least four prayers of Jesus (10:21; 11:2-4; 22:42; 23:34). In fact, Jesus' last words should probably be also understood as a prayer (23:46).

Luke also shows Jesus praying at critical times in his life. Jesus prays at his baptism before he begins his ministry (3:21-22). Remarkably, Jesus spends all night in prayer before the selection of the twelve disciples (6:12). Not surprisingly, Jesus also prays before his death (22:39-42); earlier in the Gospel, he encourages disciples to pray for strength in times of trial (21:36). These examples show Jesus seeking God's wisdom and strength at difficult times in his life, modeling one role of prayer for disciples.[12]

1.3.2. Attending Synagogue

With an explicit statement, Luke records that Jesus "went to the synagogue as was his custom" (4:16); this text indicates that Luke values the assembling together of God's people. The habit of attending the synagogue is mentioned with little comment, but numerous examples follow in the text (4:33, 38, 44; 6:6; 12:11; 13:10, 14; 21:12). This claim also occurs in Acts 17:1-2, where Paul "as was his custom" enters a synagogue and argues from the Scriptures.

1.3.3. Attending Passover

The habit of attending Passover is also mentioned with little comment: Jesus' "parents went to Jerusalem *every year at the feast of Passover*" (2:41, emphasis mine). Luke values the assembling together of God's people, whether it's for weekly worship in the synagogue or yearly celebrations of rituals like Passover. Worship and the celebration of God's acts form disciples in significant ways.[13]

1.3.4. Reading/Obeying Scripture (Implied)

Several times, Luke records that individuals act following Scripture. One such example is found in a concentrated way in chapter 2, where Luke tells how Mary and Joseph 1) circumcise Jesus (2:21; cf. 1:59), 2) complete rites of purification (2:22; cf. Lev 12:2-4), 3) present Jesus to the Lord "according to the law of Moses" (2:22-23, 27; cf. Exod 13:2), 4) offer a sacrifice "according to what is said in the law

12 Jesus teaches about prayer in two separate blocks (11:1-13; 18:1-14). In these teachings, Luke provides a model prayer (11:1-4), stresses the importance of persistence in prayer (11:5-8; 18:1-8), describes God's desire to bless those who pray (11:9-13), and cautions about the right attitude one brings to prayer (18:9-14; 20:47). Jesus offers various kinds of prayer. He prays for himself, as seen in the examples above. But he also prays for Peter and the strengthening of the other disciples (22:31-34). Furthermore, Luke shows Jesus offering prayers of thanks to God for food (9:16; 22:19; 24:28-30) and for the progress of the kingdom (10:21-22). In all of these accounts, Luke stresses the importance of prayer for the life of one who follows Jesus.

13 Note also the role of worship/eucharist (24:31, 35b).

of the Lord" (2:24; cf. Lev 5:11; 12:8). Luke concludes this account with the summary statement, "When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, the returned to Galilee, to their city Nazareth" (2:39), leaving no doubt about the importance of obedience to Scripture.

Luke shows the same importance of Scripture in the life of Jesus. Notably, in the temptation narrative, Jesus responds to the devil all three times with Scripture (4:4, 8, 12). Jesus reads and interprets Scripture in the synagogue in Nazareth (4:17-19), as well as gives two extended examples from Scripture (4:25-27). Luke's depiction of Jesus shows a life that has been saturated with the reading and interpretation of Scripture (e.g., 5:14; 7:22, 27; 8:10; 12:53; 13:27, 35; 18:20; 19:46; 20:17, 42-43; 21:27; 22:37; 23:30, 46).

With these four habits, Luke does not connect many specific virtues as products of these habits; rather, it seems that these habits function as the necessary conditions in which virtue can and should flourish. These are factors that did and will create faithful disciples.

2. Warrants

What warrants does Jesus mention for ethical behavior? With this question, I am classifying moral demands into the categories of norms and warrants. Norms are the dos and don'ts, the naming of virtues and vices. By "warrants," I mean the rationales for the behaviors: *why* one should do or avoid an action. Why is this important? An action/virtue might be the same for a pagan and a Christian, but the warrant(s) could be different.

Unsurprisingly, rewards and punishments are warrants found in the Gospel of Luke. For those who love enemies, do good, and lend, the "reward will be great (6:35b), a theme which one finds elsewhere as well (6:23). The theme of punishment occurs several times (12:46-47; 13:28; 16:23-24; 19:27; 20:16), sometimes in the language of woes (6:24-26 [4x]; 10:13 [2x]; 11:42-52 [6x]; 17:1; 22:22). Other times, even though the language varies, the message of judgment is clear:

- Judge (6:37; 11:19; 19:22)
- Condemn (11:31, 32)
- Destruction (6:49; 17:27, 29)
- Perish (13:3, 5)
- Wrath (3:7; 21:23)
- Fire (3:9, 16, 17; 12:49; 16:24; 17:29)
- Sulfur (17:29)
- Ax (3:9)
- Cut down (3:9)

- Weeping, gnashing of teeth (13:28)
- Thrown out/into the fire/into the sea/down (3:9; 13:28; 14:35; 21:6)
- Sea (17:2; 21:25)

Imitation is another warrant for Luke. There are some difficulties with a warrant to imitate Jesus. For instance, a disciple cannot always do the exact deeds that Jesus does, like raising the dead. Nevertheless, if a disciple asks, "Why should I be moral?" Luke's likely answer would be (in part), "Be like your teacher Jesus. Listen to him and do what he taught."[14] We have already seen above the importance of the role of the imitation of God (Luke 6:35c-36). The Greco-Roman context also had similar appeals to the imitation of the gods (Meeks 1993, 150).

Conclusion

Through this study, we have seen how Luke depicts the formation of disciples; imitation, community, and habit are the primary means by which one becomes a disciple. Key to that formation is the insight that Luke 6:40 provides; this verse marks the role that Jesus' example and instruction play in this formation. Finally, these reflections also offer some insight into Luke's moral vision, especially answering the question "Why be moral?" with appeals to reward/punishment and the imitation of Jesus and God.

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14 One can see how, for example, the descriptions of Stephen (Acts 7) and Paul (Acts 20) mirror the life of Jesus. See Johnson 1992, 114-144, 359-368.

Kenneth L. Cukrowski

Učenik će biti „kao njegov učitelj" (Lk 6,40): učeništvo u Lukinu evanđelju

Sažetak

Koristeći Luku 6,40 kao odskočnu dasku, ovaj članak istražuje kako dolazi do oblikovanja učenika te kako funkcionira Lukina moralna logika. Istražuju se tri aspekta oblikovanja: uloga oponašanja, uloga zajednice i uloga navika. Ova studija ističe tri glavne osnove Lukine moralne vizije: nagrade, kazne i oponašanje.

"Building (Not Burning) Bridges for the Gospel:" Disciplemaking in the Pastoral Epistles[1]

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Abstract

In this article, I explore what the Pastoral Epistles (Titus and 1-2 Timothy) say about disciplemaking. I deal with the goals of Paul's teaching in the letters and the methods that he commended to Timothy and Titus and the churches they served. Goals: the twenty-seven New Testament documents emphasize different aspects of following Jesus toward maturity (i.e., goals of disciplemaking) as the situations they were written to and from necessitate. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul's specific goal is that his readers live virtuous lives, largely as defined by the pagan culture around them. He hopes that in so doing they will gain and maintain a hearing for the gospel. Thereby they would avoid or defuse negative stereotypes that were used against Christians and ease societal anxieties that were common in their world. Methods: in these letters, Paul commends the use of moral examples and appeals to honor and shame. He further exemplifies the use of creeds as a teaching tool for his churches. My purpose is to show that the Pastoral Epistles offer a unique perspective on disciplemaking, focusing on the importance of public witness and utilizing methods like imitation and conformity to social values. They do this to produce mature Christians who can effectively represent the gospel message in their communities.

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

Keywords: *discipleship, disciplemaking, Pastoral Epistles, moral example, honor, shame, rebuke, creeds*

Introduction

A man was walking through a small, rural town and saw that several of the fences and buildings had targets, "bullseyes," drawn on them. He further noticed that every target had a bullet hole in the very center of the bullseye. He thought to himself, "Clearly there is a serious marksman at work in the area." He was impressed… until someone told him that the shooter had shot first and drawn the bullseye later, once the shooter had seen where the bullet had gone. Question: when it comes to disciplemaking, do we know what our target is? Or are we firing blindly and then convincing ourselves that we have hit the bullseye? We say, "We want to make mature Christians"; yes, of course. But have we thought through what "mature Christians" means in terms of specific skills, behaviors, convictions, knowledge, and commitments? Is our thinking *that* specific, that detailed?

If we who preach and teach and lead do not know specifically what our goal is, then the average person in our churches will not know either. We need to be able to answer questions such as these:

- If we want our people to impact their neighborhoods with the gospel, then what skills, knowledge, and behaviors do we need to build in them?
- What behaviors and attitudes make Christian marriages truly Christian?
- What should the life of a Christian husband, wife, mother, father, or grandparent look like?
- How should Christian business people act toward their customers? How should Christian school teachers act toward their students?
- How should being a Christian affect the way employers treat their employees? How should being a Christian affect the way an employee responds to his employer?

The central question is this: in terms of specific behaviors, convictions, skills, knowledge, or commitments, what exactly are we trying to achieve in the disciplemaking process? What do the disciples we are trying to make look like? The more specific we can be, the better. Vagueness keeps us where we are. If we can be more specific & detailed about our goals in disciplemaking, then we are more likely to progress toward those goals.

In this article, I move toward an answer to that central question. In that pursuit, I will first briefly survey what selected New Testament documents say about the purpose of disciplemaking. I will then focus on the Pastoral Epistles (Titus and 1-2 Timothy), and look more deeply into the goals and methods for disciplemak-

ing commended there. I will close with a summary of how the methods from the Pastorals might be applied to churches in Croatia and Central Europe.

1. The Goal of Disciplemaking in the New Testament (Outside the Pastoral Epistles)

All the New Testament authors address the purpose of disciplemaking, but they use different images to describe the goals of the process. They describe different facets of those goals with their statements relating to discipleship or following Jesus (what believers should strive toward) and with their descriptions of what the church should be because the church as it should be is a community of disciples.

The New Testament holds up no single specific ideal for disciplemaking. The descriptions of the goal differ from author to author, book to book, as those authors faced different needs and situations. If we look at what these authors commend for their churches, we can apply their goals to our congregations and ministries in terms of specific changes to behavior, commitment, skills, or knowledge. Let me illustrate by looking at the descriptions in a handful of New Testament documents: Matthew, the book of Acts, and Paul's middle and prison letters.

In Matthew, the church is a kingdom of servants where the last come first (20:26-28; 23:11) and the penitent are restored (18:15-35). Members of the community are to interact in ways that reflect the Beatitudes (ch. 19; cf. 5:3-12). And the church goes into the world to make disciples (28:18-20), possessing spiritual power to bind and release (16:19), sure that the gates of Hell will not stand against it (16:18). Matthew's description of discipleship is general and abstract; these are principles, not rules or commands or a program. But notice what these principles teach us about the goal of making disciples. For example: we can make Matthew's picture of "disciple" more concrete in our churches by teaching our people that when they have conflict with another believer, they should try to follow Matthew 18:15-17 ("If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. …") by attempting to resolve the conflict personally, one-on-one, instead of gossiping or criticizing her behind her back.

In the book of Acts, the church continues Jesus' ministry after his ascension; Luke shows this in the parallels between Jesus' ministry in the gospel of Luke and the church's ministry in the book of Acts. The church lives out its devotion to God in the ways believers act toward each other and the world around them (2:42-47; 4:32-37). Believers bear witness to God's saving actions in history for Israel and the whole world (2:39; 9:15; 10:1-11:26; 15:1-29). Paul uses his conduct as a model for how Christian leaders should protect the church (20:18-35). Again, the picture is general and abstract. But we could embody some of these goals in our churches, making them more concrete, by leading our churches to practice benevolence and

generosity in ways that follow the examples of the early church in Acts 4:32-37 and 6:1-7.

In Paul's middle letters (Romans, Corinthians) and Prison Epistles (specifically Colossians and Ephesians), the church functions as the Body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; Eph 2:14-16; Eph 4:4; Eph 4:11-16; Eph 5:23; Eph 5:30; Col 3:15). This image governs the way believers should treat each other and the way they should see themselves. They are part of each other and belong to each other in some way. They are also part of a larger whole belonging to Christ. Members of the Body do not stand in isolation, nor do they stand above or below the other parts of the body (for all parts are honored and all are of Christ). Again, that works as a principle rather than a specific recommendation, but we could embody this principle by urging our people to find and use their spiritual gifts, as described in Ephesians 4:11-16.

This brief survey is sufficient to illustrate the point. The New Testament authors faced different situations and problems in their churches. They responded to those different situations by emphasizing different aspects of following Jesus, ergo different aspects of the task of making disciples, to meet the needs raised by those specific situations. These are the goals of the disciplemaking process in those situations, and they can guide us as we consider how God wants to direct our ministries in our specific contexts.

2. The Goal of Disciplemaking in the Pastoral Epistles

The Pastoral Epistles describe the goals for disciplemaking that Paul believes best fit the churches that Timothy and Titus serve.[2] The overarching goal of disciplemaking in the Pastoral Epistles is to produce believers who will live lives of public witness, to be walking demonstrations of God's goodness through public piety and virtue. Paul asserts this goal in at least two ways.

The first way Paul asserts this goal is through frequently urging his people to prioritize their witness to outsiders. Paul expresses this desire in three ways.

2 I read the letters in the order Titus - 1 Timothy - 2 Timothy, because the logic of the story that the letters tell about Paul's life demands this order. So also e.g., Marshall 2004. I also treat the letters as a distinct corpus, due to shared features and the collective neglect with which they are treated in studies on Paul and the Pauline letters. Note also that these letters are personal but not private. In other words, though they are addressed to individuals, all three were read before the Pauline congregations; witness the second-person plural pronouns at the end of each letter. They were written to be "overheard" by the addressees' churches. Also, this way of reading the letters is not greatly affected by what one concludes regarding authorship. I treat the letters as early and genuinely connected to the Pauline mission, whether written directly by Paul or incorporating materials from Paul. But even if, as some argue, they are later and wholly pseudonymous, they are still canonical documents that address actual problems in actual churches.

1. Paul frequently commends good behaviors and specifically states that the purpose is to protect their witness and reputation. Here is a sampling of such purpose statements from the letters:

> "... so that the word of God may not be discredited" (Tit 2:5).[3]
>
> "... then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us" (Tit 2:8).
>
> "... showing complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the teaching of God our Savior" (Tit 2:10).
>
> "… so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us" (1 Tim 5:14).
>
> "(Slaves must conduct themselves) so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed" (1 Tim 6:1).

2. In other texts from the Pastorals, Paul commands his people to live in ways that demonstrate virtue before a watching world:

> "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly" (Tit 2:11-12).
>
> "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, … and to show every courtesy to everyone" (Tit 3:1-2).
>
> Paul's people should "... be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone" (Tit 3:8).
>
> "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, … so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:1-4).
>
> "(Elders) must be well thought of by outsiders" (1 Tim 3:7).
>
> "Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves" (1 Tim 3:13).
>
> "… so that all may see your progress" (1 Tim 4:15).

3. Paul expects his people to live out the truth that the gospel is not just for *them*, it is God's plan for making salvation available to all people. Note the universal aspect of Paul's words:

3 English Bible quotes are from the NRSV Updated Edition, www.biblegateway.com, unless otherwise noted.

> "For the grace of God has appeared, *bringing salvation to all* …" (Tit 2:11, emphasis mine).
>
> "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, … and *to show every courtesy to everyone*" (Tit 3:1-2, emphasis mine).
>
> (Paul's people should) "... be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable *to everyone*" (Tit 3:8, emphasis mine).
>
> "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, … so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, *who desires everyone to be saved* and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:1-4, emphasis mine).
>
> "Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom *for all*" (1 Tim 2:6, emphasis mine).
>
> "We have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of *all people*" (1 Tim 4:10, emphasis mine).
>
> "I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).
>
> (The Lord's servant must) [correct] "his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him …" (2 Tim 2:25-26).
>
> "The Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that *all the Gentiles* might hear it" (2 Tim 4:17, emphasis mine).

In all of these, Paul's priority is clearly that his people live lives of witness.

The second way that Paul asserts this goal (that his people will live lives of public witness) is by commanding the readers and hearers to pursue and demonstrate "public virtues," which would be seen and appreciated by the surrounding pagan community.[4] These are the kinds of virtues that were regularly used in inscriptions to honor individuals for lives of excellence. I have in mind here particularly the following virtues:

- Piety or reverence (εὐσέβεια), traditionally translated as "godliness;" by my count, εὐσέβεια or related terms are used 16 times in the letters. Displaying εὐσέβεια meant displaying attitudes and conduct toward religion and God or the gods that people find respectful and appropriate. The opposite of εὐσέβεια was ἀσέβεια, the vice of ignorant or intentional disrespect toward

4 Public virtues were commonly mentioned in Graeco-Roman inscriptions. See Winter 1988.

spiritual things or things that people thought were holy. Akin to ἀσέβεια was "blasphemy," condemned 6 times in the letters. Such conduct was shameful and would harm believers' witness.[5]

- Dignity (σεμνότης); if εὐσέβεια refers to a person's demeanor in regard toward religion, σεμνότης refers to one's demeanor in regards to people, behaving in a way that protects one's reputation and is not scandalous or odd.[6] "The gravitas held in esteem by the ancient Romans was the high seriousness of a person not easily moved … deliberate and indeflectable" (Quinn 1990, 130). Σεμνότης and the cognate adjective σεμνός are used 6 times in the Pastoral Epistles.
- Self-control (or sensibleness; σωφροσύνη, σώφρων and cognates), is used 10 times in the letters. This virtue, one of the four cardinal Roman virtues associated with respectability, refers to knowing what is proper in given situations, and knowing how to act and how not to act. Louw & Nida (1988, 88.94) suggest the word be understood as having "right thoughts about what one should do" and "[letting] one's mind guide one's body."
- Good works (ἀγαθὸν/καλόν ἔργον, ἀγαθοποιέω), are commended 14 times in the letters. Performing good works was itself seen as a virtue in the ancient world (du Toit 2019, 223). This term refers to "a variety of activities that were commended by Graeco-Roman standards" (du Toit 2019, 221-22).[7] Throughout the New Testament world, people were expected to do public service ("public benefaction") in proportion to their ability, great or small, individually or in groups.[8] According to Winter (1988, 87) "…not only did rulers praise and honor those who undertook good works which benefited the city, but at the same time they promised likewise to publicly honor others who would undertake similar benefactions in the future."

So, with commendations of public virtues and living lives "on display," Paul commands his people to live with special care for their witness.

Why did Paul command his people to live with such care? Because his people lived amid a pagan society that did not understand or appreciate their religion.

5 Jude 8-10 illustrates the difference between ἀσέβεια and εὐσέβεια, without actually using either term. Jude here refers to Christian false-teachers who reject authority and insult heavenly beings, contrasting them (v. 9) with the demeanor of Michael the archangel, who acted respectfully when arguing with Satan over Moses' body. Jude's false teachers exemplify ἀσέβεια, Michael exemplifies εὐσέβεια.

6 But see Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972, 39 for εὐσέβεια and σεμνότης; Dibelius and Conzelmann reverse the orientations of the terms as other commentators (e.g. Marshall; Jerome Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, Anchor Bible [Doubleday, 1990]) read them.

7 Du Toit cites Travis B. Williams 2014.

8 For inscriptions and other textual evidence, see Winter 1988. du Toit also cites Williams 2014, 68-81 and 280-95 to this end.

Roman society prized stability and conformity, and Christians did not conform. This was sufficient in itself for Roman society to see Christianity as a threat to order. Critics deemed the Christians "atheists" because they did not worship idols or have a temple. They objected to Christian social teaching because it was disturbingly egalitarian; Christians treated each other as sisters and brothers, against the clear class hierarchy that Rome found so stabilizing.

Further, Roman society in the first century was troubled by several social ills, which early Christian teaching was likely seen to exacerbate. The Pastorals advocate Christian conduct that guards against the accusation of contributing to two specific Roman social ills. The first is the emergence of what classicists sometimes call "the new Roman woman." "Some women of means and position (married and widowed), supported in some cases by free-thinking males, flouted traditional values governing adornment and dress and sexual propriety. The emergence of this movement was so disturbing to the status quo that Augustus issued legislation against it" (Towner 2006, 196).[9] Christianity gave unprecedented rights and freedoms to women, even women of the lower class. Romans tended to see this as a threat to societal stability. In some cases, including 1 Timothy, this particular concern was further inflamed by ill-advised Christian teaching that told women to exercise their freedom in Christ by throwing off the standard expectations of motherhood and home.

A second social problem that the Pastorals show awareness of is the fear of slave revolt. Scholars traditionally estimate that Roman Italy had a population of 6-7 million people, with as many as 2 million slaves. Perhaps half of the population of the city of Rome itself was slaves. Slavery was based on debt and conquest, not race. Therefore, slaves were not necessarily poor; a significant minority of Graeco-Roman slaves were more educated, more skilled, and (occasionally) even more wealthy than their masters. Because of the basis of slavery (debt, conquest, etc.), there were not necessarily any visual cues that differentiated slaves from other residents. This contributed to the fear of revolt. Seneca tells us that the Roman senate debated a law dictating that all slaves wear a particular uniform. The proposal was defeated because the senators did not want the slaves to realize how numerous they were (Seneca, *De clementia* 1.24.1, quoted in Ferguson 2003, 56), which might have given them dangerous ideas. The fear of revolts made it imperative for owners to maintain authority over their slaves. However, the church treated slaves and masters as equals; there are even stories of slaves who became leaders in the churches over their masters. As with the case of the equality of women in the church, making slaves and masters equal was potentially destabilizing.[10]

9 For the "new Roman woman," see Winter 2003.

10 A third social ill from this period that the Pastoral Epistles acknowledge is drunkenness; witness "sober" and "not addicted to wine," etc. in Tit 1:7; 2:2, 3; 1 Tim 3:2, 8; 2 Tim 4:5. Alcoholism, especially among the elderly, is mentioned as a problem in many sources. Dramas from this time

So, in light of these anxieties, Paul commands his audience to demonstrate public virtues that would reassure the non-Christians around them. Sean du Toit (2019, 222) notes, "Ancient Christians saw 'good works' [and other virtues] as a solution to social hostility and conflict."[11] By displaying these virtues and the virtuous conduct that springs from them, Paul's people could win (or at least not lose) a hearing for the gospel.

This provides the background for understanding Paul's commands to his people through Titus and Timothy. He not only commends standard public virtues to his people, but he also orders them to avoid conduct that the surrounding society sees as threatening, corrupt, or shameful. A sampling:

- In Titus, Paul commands his people to avoid debauchery, rebelliousness, arrogance; being quick to anger, addicted to wine, violent, greedy (1:6-7); causing division & disrupting families (1:10-11);[12] being defiant, stealing (2:9-10); being irreverent, overcome by lust (2:12); seeking controversy (3:9-11).
- In 1 Timothy, Paul commands his people to avoid promoting heterodox teachings that cause division (1:3-7); being habitually drunk, violent, quarrelsome, loving money (3:3); promoting asceticism that flouts societal conventions (4:1-3); idleness, being a busybody, given to gossip, saying scandalous things without regard to the damage they do (5:13); being disrespectful of those in authority over them (6:2).
- In 2 Timothy, Paul condemns teachers and learners who argue over words, profane chatter (2:14-16); those who are dominated by lust (2:22); seeking controversy (2:23); self-centeredness, arrogance, abusiveness, being disrespectful of authority, etc. (3:2-5).

Paul commands his people to avoid these vices, to pursue the public virtues, and to live exemplary lives. If the members of the church were known for these virtues (and for avoiding those vices), this would ease the anxieties of the Roman world around them. Paul's purpose is apologetic, he is defending his people against false accusations. Against the charge that Christians were atheists, Paul commands them to be respectful and reverent, so as not to give offense. Against the charge that they were anarchists, Paul urges them to be dignified, self-controlled, and proper, conducting themselves in ways that the world around them saw as stable, honorable, and virtuous.

use "the old drunk" as a stock figure.

11 See Musonius Rufus, *Discourses* 14.9; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 1.15.3; Philo, *Special Laws* 4.58, etc.

12 Warning against teaching that produces controversy and division is a major theme in the letters, mentioned 12 times (Tit 1:10-11; 3:9-11; 1 Tim 1:3-4; 4:1-3, 7; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Tim 2:14, 16-18, 23; 3:6-7; 4:3-4).

But Paul's ultimate goal is not that Christians win respect or honor for their sake. As Theodoret wrote in the mid-fifth century, Paul wants his people "not to strive for honor but for virtue; not to long for reputation, but to seek the work of (real) value" (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972, 51). Paul wants them to do all they can to help the gospel win a hearing.[13] Furthermore, Paul commands them to act virtuously as defined by the world around them, whether those outsiders become Christians themselves or not. Sometimes, conscience would compel Paul's people to deviate from the standards of the communities around them; e.g., refusing to burn incense to Caesar.[14] In those cases, they were to be different, but different in virtuous and honorable ways. They lived their lives on display, knowing that the results of that display could have eternal consequences. Outsiders were watching their conduct, looking for excuses or opportunities to reject the gospel.

In sum, Paul calls his people to act in honorable ways so that outsiders will see and acknowledge God's goodness displayed in them. When societal standards conflicted with their Christian convictions, Paul wanted them to resist in honorable ways. If they gave offense to the pagan culture around them, let it be because of Christ, not their frailties or vices. They lived their lives on display, before a watching world, and must live in ways that open doors to the gospel. This is the goal of disciplemaking in the Pastoral Epistles.

3. Methods for Disciplemaking

The Pastoral Epistles not only describe goals for disciplemaking, but they also describe methods for disciplemaking that Timothy and Titus were to implement. Paul commends at least three methods that the recipients' churches could use to build and shape people for witness. These methods are:

1. Imitation of moral examples.
2. Careful uses of honor and shame.
3. Using creeds or hymns as a teaching tool.

The first method is the imitation of moral examples. In these letters, the three main characters (Paul, Titus, and Timothy) are regularly held up as models to be imitated, and occasionally the mature members of the churches are also held

13 Compare Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" and 1 Peter 2:12: "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

14 "In the Roman world of the early Christian period, while incense was used in many circumstances, the odor of incense seem [sic] to have triggered the notion that a sacrifice was taking place" (Caseau 2022, n.p.).

up as examples. What aspects of their character or story are worthy of imitation?[15] In the letter to Titus, Paul's former life as a Jew and a persecutor of Christians is in the background of the theological material in 2:11-14 and especially 3:3-7, where his biography illustrates the implications of the gospel. Notice the story behind 3:3-7, "*We* were once foolish and led astray, but God saved *us* by his mercy and poured his Holy Spirit out on *us* so that *we* might inherit eternal life" (emphasis mine).

As for Titus himself, he is to be "a model of good works … and integrity, dignity, and healthy speech that cannot be censured in his teaching" (2:7-8, author's translation). He is to provide this example to the young men of his church specifically but to the whole church generally. Further, Paul tells him to encourage mature Christian women of good character and reputation to mentor younger women on how to be Christian women (2:3-5). The parallels between this passage and the instructions regarding widows in 1 Timothy 5:3-16 suggest that there was an order of widows, supported by the church, who ministered among the women of the church in ways parallel to the ministry of the elders (Thurston 1989, 7-8). In keeping with propriety, Titus and the other male leaders should not mentor the young women themselves; compare the instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

In 1 Timothy, Paul is held up as the model of the righteous sufferer (this is also the case in 2 Timothy, below, albeit with a different focus). Paul's life serves as a demonstration (ἐνδείξηται Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς) of Jesus' patience, to show people how to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ (1:16) (Pao 2014, 743-55). The members of Paul's churches were to follow this example by likewise seeing themselves as living demonstrations of God's mercy and grace. Compare Ephesians 2:7: God "raised us up with him and seated us with [Christ] in the heavenly places … so that in the ages to come he might show (ἐνδείκνυμι, 'demonstrate') the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."[16]

> I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, … because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy … and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus … [who] came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life (1:12-16).

15 Esler 2005, 7-8, notes the importance of example for forming character in character/virtue ethics. See also McClendon 1971 and 1986; and Walker 2011.

16 See also δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12:2: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you can demonstrate what is the will of God and that it is good, acceptable, and perfect" (author's translation).

Timothy also serves as an example for his people to follow.

> Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you. … Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. … continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers (4:12-16).

2 Timothy focuses almost entirely on the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Central to this relationship is the idea that Timothy will follow Paul's example, both in his calling as an evangelist and missionary and in suffering for that vocation. If he follows in Paul's footsteps, he will suffer as Paul has suffered. In this letter especially, Paul is the model for Timothy to follow and to pass on to his people. This is like the story of Seneca, the 1st century Stoic philosopher and statesman. When about to be executed under the orders of his former student, the emperor Nero, Seneca passed on "the image of his life" to his students (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.62). Note how imitation works in these texts from 2 Timothy:

> "Join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, …" (1:8-9).
>
> "For this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. … Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me" (1:11-13).
>
> "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2:1-3).
>
> "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendent of David--that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect … if *we* endure [with him], *we* will also reign with him" (2:8-12) (emphasis mine).
>
> "You have observed my teaching, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my sufferings, … What persecutions I endured! … Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (3:10-12).

In 3:14-15, Paul places himself alongside the two women of faith (1:5) who raised Timothy, his mother and grandmother.

> "As for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believe, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have known the

> sacred writings that are able to instruct you in salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
>
> "I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord … will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (4:7-8).

Note first how Paul includes Timothy in his salvation story and ongoing ministry, (e.g., "God saved and called us," 1:8-9). Note also how Paul calls Timothy to take up his mantle, even as he warns Timothy that this is the road of suffering (e.g., 1:11-13). Notice how Paul is not the only mentor or spiritual parent in Timothy's background (1:5; 3:14-15); Timothy's mother and grandmother are also important contributors to his growth.

Also, in 2:2, note what Paul does when facing death. He gives Timothy authority over his teaching and charges Timothy to pass this teaching on to a third generation of Paulinists, who will themselves faithfully teach it to a fourth generation.[17] Paul is not passing on to Timothy a mere set of documents or manuals or even a system of theology. Like Seneca, Paul is passing on to Timothy the image of his life, which (as with Seneca) encompasses more than the text of his teachings: "You have observed my teaching, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my sufferings …" He expects Timothy to follow that image, that example, by developing, mentoring, *discipling* those who will have charge of Paul's teaching after Timothy.

In summary, in these letters, main and ancillary characters are held up as models for imitation, examples to follow. Paul commands and calls Timothy to follow his example. Paul commands Timothy and Titus to be examples for their people to follow. Paul holds up himself and the story of his conversion and sufferings as an example for all who come to faith in Jesus, especially those who suffer for that faith. And Paul also commands mature believers to be models for imitation, investing their time and attention in less mature believers, walking beside them in faith, through trial and difficulty.

The second method for disciplemaking in the Pastorals is the careful use of honor and shame. *Honor* and *shame* are two of the core values of the New Testament world, although their significance can be overstated (Pao 2014, 745-46). *Honor* is worth or virtue that is publicly acknowledged. *Shame* is "the opposite of honor … a claim to worth that is publicly denied and repudiated. 'To be shamed' is always negative; it means to be denied or to be diminished in honor. [But] 'to have shame' is always positive; it means to be concerned about one's honor" (Pilch

17 This concern (faithfully passing on what has been taught) is also the point of ὀρθοτομέω in 2 Tim 2:15 (ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον), which the KJV mistranslates as "rightly dividing (the word)."

and Malina 2016, 89). In English, we use the expression "Have you no shame?" in the same way; in Croatian, perhaps "Kako te nije sram?" or "Zar te nije sram?" Paul's commands to pursue virtue and flee from vice, discussed above, were akin to him telling his people to *have* shame in this positive sense, which would motivate them to avoid shameful conduct.

Leaders had several ways of using shame to influence their people. One such tool was the rebuke, which appealed to the recipient's protective sense of shame. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul rebukes people by explicitly calling them out by name (e.g., Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Tim 1:20) and commands Timothy and Titus to use rebuke in the same way (e.g., Titus 1:13, "Rebuke them [the troublemakers] sharply."). The purpose of this shaming rhetoric was to motivate honorable conduct, "not to humiliate or destroy … [but rather] to admonish [those receiving the rebuke] so that their [thinking] might be transformed" (Honor-Shame 2022).[18]

Honor and shame in the New Testament world relate to imitating moral examples. Pao notes that "to honor is to emulate … That which gains the praise of the one whose opinion one values would naturally become the major force that shapes the behavior of a person." Pao quotes Plutarch: "It is fitting that the older should be solicitous about the younger and should lead and admonish him, and that the younger should honor and emulate and follow the older" (Pao 2014, 750; Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 487A; cf. Plutarch, *Cat. Maj*. 8.4.). Further, "the values of honor and shame are instilled in the young through constant example" (Horden and Purchell 2000, 491, quoted in Pao 2014, 750).

Paul uses honor and shame in several ways in the Pastoral Epistles:

A. Rebukes:

> Regarding the rebellious & corrupt teachers of Titus 1:11, who plagued Paul's churches and might appear [or had already appeared] in Crete: "Rebuke (ἐλέχω) them (the teachers) sharply, to that they (the believers in Crete, not the teachers) may become sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths or the commandments of those who reject the truth" (Tit 1:13-14).
>
> "Declare these things; exhort and reprove ("rebuke," again ἐλέχω) with all authority" (Tit 2:15).
>
> "By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim 1:19-20).
>
> "As for those (elders) who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear" (1 Tim 5:20).

18 In the quote, which is based on the book Ti-Le Lau. 2020. *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, the author is speaking of Paul's use of honor and shame in 1 Corinthians.

"As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, … so that they may take hold of the life that really is life" (1 Tim 6:17-19).

"You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes" (2 Tim 1:15).

"Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth" (2 Tim 2:16-17).

"I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message, be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable, convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching" (2 Tim 4:1-2).

"Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim 4:10-11).

"Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds" (2 Tim 4:14).

B. Public commendations:

"When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing" (Tit 3:12-13).

"Honor widows who are really widows" (1 Tim 5:3).

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor" (1 Tim 5:17).

"Do not ordain anyone hastily" (1 Tim 5:22).

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. … rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim 1:5-6).

"May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus" (2 Tim 1:16-18).

"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus" (2 Tim 4:11-12).

C. Appeals to shame:

> Regarding the teachers of Titus 1:11: "To the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure, their very minds and consciences are corrupted. … they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work" (Tit 1:15-16).
>
> "In the last days, distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, unfeeling, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them!" (2 Tim 3:1-5).

D. Appeals to honor:

> "Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor" (1 Tim 6:1).
>
> "In the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules" (2 Tim 2:5).
>
> "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who does not need to be ashamed" (2 Tim 2:15).
>
> "In a large house there are utensils …, some for [honorable] use, some for [dishonorable]. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become [honorable] utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work" (2 Tim 2:20-21).
>
> "From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8).

In the Pastorals, honor and shame function to set up barriers to destructive behavior. Paul's appeals to public virtues (σέμνος, σωφροσύνη, εὐσέβεια, ἀνεπίλημπτος) meet the prescriptions and assumptions of the surrounding culture. Christians are to live lives of public virtue, largely as defined by the culture around them. But in one regard, the Pastorals use shame in a way that subverts the surrounding culture's definitions. That exception is the way the letters to Timothy treat Paul's suffering. The ancient Mediterranean world generally thought that good fortune and bad fortune operated on what we might think of as a type of *karma*, where people get what they deserve.[19] Therefore, Graeco-Roman soci-

19 We find several examples of this thinking in the Bible: a) The story of the man born blind, "Who sinned so that this man was born blind?" (John 9); b) Resistance to the gospel due to Jesus' shameful death; "Cursed is anyone who dies by being hung on a tree" (Gal 3:13, quoting Deut 21:3); c) The psalmists who cry out to God, "What did I do to deserve this?" (e.g., Psalms 4 & 5); d) The reasoning behind Greek rejection of the message of the cross (1 Cor 1:18ff).

ety tended to offer little sympathy for the suffering and weak, particularly those whose conduct had been labeled shameful by someone in authority.

The persecution that the gospel brought may have been the greatest impediment to its spread, not just due to fear of harm but also due to the shame that persecution carried. Paul confronted this impediment head-on by inverting the surrounding standards of honor when it came to suffering for the gospel. In Paul's thinking, suffering and rejection are inverted, transformed from marks of shame to marks of honor. Paul valorizes the suffering that has fallen on him and he knows will in turn fall on those who follow him. This persecution is no longer shameful because he follows a crucified Messiah whom God vindicated by raising him from the dead; indeed, Paul and his people participate in that crucifixion and vindication/resurrection. Even as he awaits martyrdom, which the surrounding culture saw as shameful and weak, Paul and his followers believe him to be vindicated. "Now is reserved for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8).

Therefore, Paul's suffering, and the suffering of Timothy and others who follow Paul, is *not* shameful. It is valorized because it follows the example of Jesus. God himself, the authority above every other authority, accepts the suffering as honorable and vindicates the sufferer. This makes Paul "an example for those who are going to believe in [Christ Jesus] for eternal life." This specific inversion of honor and shame creates a coherent group identity for Paul and those who follow his example by redefining certain acts, heretofore regarded as shameful, by making them honorable (Pao 2014, 748).

To summarize: in Paul's world, Christians were regarded with suspicion and sometimes demonized by dishonest propaganda. In response, Paul commanded his people to pursue the highest ideals of conduct and virtue. They were to live lives that conformed to the best moral expectations of the communities around them--whenever possible. And when it was not possible, when those expectations conflicted with their allegiance to Christ, Paul expected them to differ in the most honorable, virtuous ways possible. It must be Christ (and not their failings) that gave offense. And when those differences brought suffering, Paul expected them to imitate him as he imitated Christ.

The third method is the use of creeds or ancient Christian hymns; *creeds* and *hymns* are related literary forms with some overlap. These pieces of poetically structured material are a way to teach theological content in cultures where people don't read or don't read well, whether illiterate or pre-literate (as in the New Testament) or post-literate (as in the modern West). Since the majority of its members were illiterate, the ancient Graeco-Roman church recited these texts together in worship to facilitate memorization and learning.[20] There are as many as 35 creeds and hymns recorded for us in the New Testament, and 8 in the Pas-

20 Gamble (1995, 3) estimates that less than 10% of the populace could read or write more than their own names.

toral Epistles.[21] Most New Testament examples focus on Christology and meet the challenges over that topic that arose toward the end of the first century. These group recitations taught believers important orthodox truths about Jesus' work and nature.[22]

The best text from the Pastoral Epistles to illustrate the early Christian use of creeds is 1 Timothy 3:16:

> "We confess, the mystery of godliness is great.
>
> He who was made incarnate in the flesh,
>
> Was vindicated by the Spirit,
>
> Witnessed by angels,
>
> Preached in the nations,
>
> Believed on in the world,
>
> Taken up in glory."[23]

The opening "We confess" tells us that this is a confession used by the early church, something all believers were expected to affirm, covenantal (or almost legal) in nature (Marshall 2004, 522). In worship, the congregation would recite the following truths about Jesus:

> **He who was made incarnate in the flesh,** (not a spirit or apparition, truly human)
>
> **Was vindicated by the Spirit,** (*vindication* means that God says he is right and everyone who opposes is wrong; this happened at Jesus' resurrection)
>
> **Witnessed by angels,** (either the fallen angels during his possible descent into hell or the heavenly angels celebrating his victory over death and hell)
>
> **Preached in the nations,**
>
> **Believed on in the world,** (as the gospel spreads through the world)
>
> **Taken up in glory.** (his ascension to God's right hand, where he rules and intercedes)

In summary: in a world where the majority of people were illiterate, Paul and other New Testament writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote material for their people that would be easy to understand and remember. These statements were

21 I am following the count of the editors of the NA28. In the appendix to this paper, I have isolated the text of these hymns from the Pastoral Epistles.

22 See here the work of Martin, 1982, 37-49. See also Gloer and Stepp 2008, 105; Gloer 1996, 209-17; and Gloer 1984, 115-32.

23 Author's translation. I am following the poetic structure from the NA28.

chanted or recited together in worship. They helped preachers and teachers convey important theological truths and ethical standards.

Conclusion

In this article, I have described an approach to disciplemaking that flows from the Pastoral Epistles. This approach includes goals and methods that derive from the text of these letters. What do we do with this now? Here are my suggestions.

First, church leaders need to think deliberately and prayerfully about what they are trying to achieve when shaping people into disciples.

1. The leaders of the church--not just one person--should prayerfully work through the New Testament to discover the ways it describes mature believers and the ideal for churches. How do the inspired biblical authors describe the goals? What principles and examples do they use that can help us describe what disciplemaking should produce in Croatia or elsewhere; in Zagreb or Osijek or Sarajevo or Novi Sad; in your neighborhood, in your church, with the challenges that your communities face?
2. Be as specific as you can in your thinking. One of Satan's weapons against us is to keep us where we are by getting us to chase vague, poorly-defined goals.
3. Be prepared to repeat the process. As circumstances change in your cities and neighborhoods, as your families change, you may need to adjust. One benefit of the New Testament containing so many different goals for disciplemaking is that it proves that no one set of goals fits every set of circumstances. Choose the methods that seem to fit your situation best, and be willing to reassess.

Second, I invite church leaders to think specifically about Paul's instructions in the Pastoral Epistles and how Paul's concern for their witness might apply to believers today in *their* cities and churches. We can find important parallels between the situation Paul and his churches faced in 1st century Rome and the situations believers in Central Europe face today. The biggest parallel is that, as with Christians in the 1st century Graeco-Roman world, evangelicals in Europe today are an oddity. The people around us do not understand us, or why we are not part of them. They don't know what to do with us.

1. In some places, evangelicals face outright hostility or suspicion. In much of Europe--but not necessarily Croatia--people are generally hostile toward religion itself. In much of Europe, the attitude is "Religion is only for people who need help." And there is a deep tradition of intellectual skepticism and antagonism toward religion.

2. At the same time, and I see this, especially in Croatia there are things we could use to our advantage. Croats are more respectful and positive toward religion in general than many other European groups. This often extends to a deep respect for the Bible, so much so that Bible reading is one of the most effective evangelistic tools. Evangelicals and Catholics in Croatia sometimes speak the same religious language. And there are ways in which Croatia, being Mediterranean, is closer to ancient views of honor and shame than modern Western countries are. That similarity may make New Testament instructions more helpful for disciplemaking here than in the individualistic, libertarian West.

Will the world around us see us demonstrate virtue in our behavior, acting in ways that benefit others and benefit the society around us? Or have we taken refuge inside our fortresses and closed the doors behind us? Brian McClaren wrote, "In a pluralistic society, religions are judged by the benefits they offer to non-adherents" (McClaren 2006, 111).[24] How are we serving the non-adherents, the "outsiders" around us?[25]

To adapt a tweet I saw recently: "The harvest is plentiful, the workers are sufficient (maybe not many, but sufficient. Jesus started with 12, we have more). We need to stop wringing our hands & get harvesting."[26] So teach your people that virtue and Christ-like behavior matter, not just for their spiritual health but also for the eternal destiny of the people around them. Now as then, the world is watching.

Third, churches should prayerfully consider how they might use the methods that Paul commends in these letters.

1. Imitation of Moral Examples. Use this approach by being an example of good behavior and virtue yourself. Expect your leaders to do the same. Teach your leaders and your most mature people that they must invest their time and attention in shepherding others in the church. Mature Christian couples who have a loving, exemplary marriage should be available to mentor younger couples, even those who are not yet officially engaged. Mature Christian men and women who have been good fathers and mothers should be prepared to invest their time, prayers, and attention into younger mothers and fathers, if possible, even before the babies come. Every part of the body of Christ must know that they are responsible for

24 McClaren attributes this quote to "one of [his] mentors".

25 Of course, it is supremely ironic for evangelicals, who are outnumbered in Croatia over 1000-to-1, to think of non-evangelicals as "outsiders." But many are outsiders to the gospel; such are the inversions that the gospel produces.

26 Rebecca McLaughlin (@RebeccMcLaugh) Twitter, 12 April 2024, https://twitter.com/RebeccMcLaugh/status/1778774856181362738. The original read: "In light of the decline in church attendance in America, I am often asked for my thoughts. Here they are (in a nutshell): The harvest is plentiful. The workers are many. We need to stop wringing our hands & get harvesting."

investing in the other parts of the body *without expecting anything in return.* The mature Christian cannot expect favors or service in return for this investment.

One caution: remember Paul's warning about testing people before you give them responsibility; "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Tim 5:22; cf. 1 Tim 3:10). And remember the standards that he sets for leaders, all the character requirements of Titus 1 and 2, and 1 Timothy 3 and 5.

2. The careful use of honor and shame. Honor usually takes the form of recognition for people who have done well at something, particularly if it demonstrates virtue or sets an example for others to follow. So, celebrate happy events with your people, and set an example by being generous with honor for people in your church and even in other churches. Remember Romans 12:10, "Compete with one another to show honor to others."

Shame is difficult and dangerous to use. I hesitate to mention it, to be honest, because there is great potential for damage and abuse. But the necessity of rebuke is a reality of leadership. Leaders are sometimes required to use shame, usually through either public or private rebukes. But they should use it carefully, selectively, and gently. If possible, rebuke should be made in private and only after the leaders have made sure they have the whole story. Remember that the goal of rebuke is to correct and restore. The goal is to win back your brother or sister *and* to restore the health of the church. You are not rebuking to rid yourself of someone simply because they are troublesome. Therefore, rebukes should be made as gently and lovingly as possible, as the situation allows.

I would not advise using a public rebuke except under certain circumstances. If possible, the decision to rebuke someone, especially a public rebuke, should be a decision shared by the leadership, not at a single person's initiative, and only after much prayer and fasting. The decision should be made slowly *if possible*; some situations do not allow you to be deliberate, so pray that you catch such things early. From what I see in the New Testament, Paul reserved public rebukes for leaders who sinned (such as Peter, see Galatians 2) and for sins that endangered the reputation (see 1 Corinthians 5), health, or unity of the church.

- When someone was teaching things that went against Paul's teachings, there was probably first an attempt to correct them privately. But if they persisted, or if people were being led astray, they were rebuked publicly. Remember, teachers are leaders.
- Sexual sin also *sometimes* deserved public rebuke, because it endangered the whole church by disrupting families and by destroying the purity that Christians were supposed to treat one another with.[27] Because of the

27 1 Timothy 5:1-2: "Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity."

potential for scandal which damaged the church's reputation and because of the danger it presented, sexual sins were and should be subject to rebuke. If behavior can be corrected privately, do so. But if the damage is being done, or if the person in sin is a leader, you must rebuke them publicly.

- I think that financial sins *against the church* or its membership could also fall under the category of sins that need to be rebuked publicly, depending on the circumstances. For example: if one member has cheated another, or if one member has embezzled funds from the church, those circumstances probably require a public rebuke.

3. The use of creeds or creed-like statements in worship. The West is increasingly a post-literate society, where people do not read anything that is not on a screen. It's refreshing for me to see Croats reading newspapers in the *kafići*; you would not see that in the USA. But the number of people who read well and often is declining, in Europe as in the USA.

How do you teach basic standards of belief or behavior in a society where people do not or cannot read? One way is through reading together (or memorizing and reciting together) short, concise statements of doctrine. Many evangelical churches around the world use the Apostles Creed this way: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. …"

Other churches do not use man-made creeds because they feel it devalues the biblical text. If that is your tradition, then use the materials you can find in the Pastoral Epistles and other New Testament texts. Read them together, or memorize and recite them together, like the first-century Christians did. There is power in speaking scripture aloud to one another. You can also use these passages as foundations for teaching series or sermon series like you would any other passage of scripture.

APPENDIX: HYMNS IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Based on the NA28 Greek text, there are eight hymns or creeds in the Pastoral Epistles:[28]

Titus 3:4-7

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

Not because of any works of righteousness that we had done,

But according to his mercy,

28 Here I follow the structure of the NA28 text, here with slight alterations to the NRSV translation.

He saved us through the water of rebirth
And renewal by the Holy Spirit.
Which he poured out on us richly
Through Jesus Christ our Savior,
So that, having been justified by his grace,
We might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

1 Timothy 2:5-6
"For there is one God;
There is also one mediator between God and men,
The man Christ Jesus,
Who gave himself a ransom for all,
The testimony at the appropriate time."

1 Timothy 3:16
"We confess, the mystery of godliness is great.
He who was made incarnate in the flesh,
Was vindicated by the Spirit,
Witnessed by angels,
Preached in the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory."

1 Timothy 6:7-8
"For we brought nothing into the world,
So that we can take nothing out of it,
But if we have food and clothing,
With these things we will be content."

1 Timothy 6:11-12
"But as for you, man of God, shun all this;
Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,
Love, endurance, gentleness.
Fight the good fight of the faith;
take hold of the eternal life to which you were called

And for which you confessed the good confession
In the presence of many witnesses."

1 Timothy 6:15-16

"He who is the blessed and only Sovereign,
The King of kings
And Lord of lords.
Who alone has immortality,
Dwelling in unapproachable light,
Whom no one has ever seen or can see;
To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."

2 Timothy 1:9-10

"Who saved us and called us with a holy calling,
Not because of our works but according to his own purpose and grace,
Which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began
And has now been revealed through the appearance of our Savior Jesus Christ,
The one who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

2 Timothy 2:11-13

"If we have died with him, then we will also live with him;
If we endure, then we will also reign with him;
If we deny him, then he will also deny us;
If we are faithless, he remains faithful—
For he cannot deny himself."

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Perry L. Stepp

„Izgradnja (a ne rušenje) mostova za evanđelje":
učeništvo u Pastoralnim poslanicama

Sažetak

Ovaj članak istražuje što Pastoralne poslanice (Titu te 1 i 2 Timoteju) kažu o stvaranju učenika i bavi se ciljevima Pavlova učenja u ovim pismima i metodama koje je preporučio Timoteju i Titu te crkvama u kojima su oni služili. Ciljevi: dvadeset sedam novozavjetnih dokumenata naglašava različite vidove slijeđenja Isusa prema zrelosti (tj. ciljeve učeništva) kako već zahtijevaju situacije iz kojih su pisane i zbog kojih su napisane. U Pastoralnim poslanicama Pavlov je specifični cilj da njegovi čitatelji žive kreposnim životima, velikim dijelom definiranim poganskom kulturom koja ih okružuje. On se nada da će oni na taj način zadobiti i zadržati interes kulture za evanđelje. Time će njegovi čitatelji izbjeći ili ublažiti negativne stereotipe koji se koriste protiv kršćana i popustiti zategnute društvene odnose uobičajene u njihovu svijetu. Metode: u ovim pismima Pavao savjetuje korištenje moralnoga primjera i pozivanje na čast i sram. Osim toga, pokazuje kako koristiti vjeroispovijedi kao alat za poučavanje svojih crkava. Nakana je pokazati da Pastoralne poslanice nude jedinstvenu perspektivu u pogledu stvaranja učenika usredotočenu na važnost javnog svjedočanstva i korištenja metoda poput nasljedovanja i usklađivanja s društvenim vrijednostima. Ovo čine kako bi podigle zrele kršćane koji mogu učinkovito predstaviti poruku evanđelja u svojim zajednicama.

J. I. Packer's Use of the New Testament for His Doctrine of Discipleship[1]

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Abstract

This paper investigates how J. I. Packer, one of the most prominent Evangelical theologians of the 20th and 21st centuries, used the New Testament to build his perspective on discipleship. While a systematic presentation of discipleship is not available in Packer's works, his numerous references to the term reveal his deep preoccupation with the subject. Hence my decision to trace his steps back to the way he uses the New Testament to devise a holistic understanding of discipleship. To achieve this goal, I took several steps of my own, first to study his general view of the Bible, second to go a bit deeper in the same direction by seeing how he works with the New Testament as the fundamental source for his theology of discipleship, and then – the remaining four steps – have to do with Packer's actual use of New Testament books for his doctrine of discipleship; in this respect, I read about his thoughts on discipleship as he read about it in the four Gospels, in the epistles (Pauline and otherwise), the Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation. I also did a brief research on what I called Packer's "two pillars" of discipleship, which he identifies as the nature of and the teaching about discipleship – the former being revealed in the Gospels, and the latter in the epistles. The fact that I went beyond the Gospels and the epistles into a succinct investigation of the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation is merely a natural consequence of my original intention of

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

tracing Packer's way throughout the entire New Testament for his theology of discipleship. In the end, though, this study is not merely a search into Packer's use of the New Testament for his view of discipleship, but also an opportunity to extract some essential features of discipleship which he came across as he studied each literary genre of the New Testament.

Keywords: *discipleship, New Testament, Gospels, epistles, Acts of the Apostles, Revelation*

Introduction

Packer is a theologian with a very practical focus and that is visible in his numerous books which are written in a simple and clear language. His style is engaging, and his explanations are not complicated, but what makes his books truly appealing – especially for Evangelical readers – is his constant interaction with the Bible. For Packer, the Bible is God's inerrant Word, and it is precisely this Evangelical feature of his theology that caused his books to be received by Evangelicals across the world with enthusiasm and interest. Another aspect that made him popular among Evangelicals was his preoccupation with discussing issues of general interest for his readers, and one of these is undisputably the doctrine of discipleship. This paper focuses on how Packer uses the New Testament to put together a theology of discipleship in the context of his understanding of the Bible, on the one hand, and with reference to the books of the New Testament, on the other. It must be highlighted from the start that Packer has a certain methodology in dealing with the New Testament regarding discipleship. Concretely, he believes that the New Testament bears witness to two fundamental aspects of discipleship: first, it is the nature of discipleship which one can see in the Gospels, and second, he points to the teaching about discipleship that is presented in the epistles (Packer 2005, 61). What I did in this paper was to focus on both these two genres, the Gospels and the epistles, for my take on Packer's use of the New Testament for his theology of discipleship, but I did not stop here; thus, I also investigated how he uses the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation for the same purpose.

Methodologically, I had to restrict my research to only some of Packer's books, mostly because he not only wrote a lot, but he also mentioned discipleship numerous times in most – if not all – of his books. This is why I thought I should settle on the one book that talks the most about discipleship and for this purpose, I selected Packer's *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (2005). It is in this book that he discusses the nature and teaching of discipleship as revealed in the Gospels and the epistles respectively, but he also makes multiple references to the rest of the New Testament. I also used his *"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God* (1958), *Discussions: Finding God's Will* (2010), *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*

(2011), and *Knowing God* (the 2023 edition). Evidently, in dealing with these primary sources, my methodology was essentially descriptive, because I went through Packer's writings and identified the context in which he discussed discipleship with specific references to the various books of the New Testament. When it comes to secondary sources, my methodology was also analytical. Specifically, three sources helped me grasp Packer's overall view of discipleship: first, Alister McGrath's *J. I. Packer: His Life and Thought* (2020), which helped me understand Packer's "theologizing" as feature of discipleship based on the disciple's conversation with God through the use of the Bible; second, Vaughn Baker's *Evangelism and the Openness of God* (2012), from which I used the concept of evangelism to define discipleship in the context of the New Testament, and third, Jason Hood's *Imitating God in Christ* (2013), whose idea of Christification helped me comprehend the pneumatological nature of discipleship that I called "Spiritification." The third side of my scientific methodology is critical, in the sense that I not only evaluated Packer's doctrine of discipleship from my perspective but also came up with a systematic way to organize his understanding of discipleship from the perspective of his use of New Testament sources.

1. Discipleship and the Bible

Before delving into how Packer uses the New Testament to build his theology of discipleship, one needs to understand how he views discipleship in terms of the most fundamental aspects of his perspective on the Christian religion. For Packer, discipleship does not just happen; it must be seen within the framework of Christianity's essentials, which – in his case – consists of two crucial concepts: Christ and faith. Discipleship is forged therefore as a mandatory reality that occurs between Christ and faith. It is not just Christ and faith; it is the knowledge of Christ and the beginning of faith, because – as Packer puts it – "knowing Christ is where faith begins" (Packer 2010, 5). This is a very clear affirmation of the Christological foundation of discipleship, which cannot happen in the absence of knowing Christ; and since knowing Christ is synonymous with faith – in which case faith consists of knowing Christ – discipleship is fundamentally dependent on the reality of faith. Discipleship is an impossibility in the absence of faith because, in Packer, faith is not a feeling of some sort; faith is knowing Christ, and this is the only fact that leads to discipleship.

Greg Ogden notices this epistemological equation in Packer, namely that faith is knowledge and a genuine Christian cannot consider himself a Christian without knowing God (Ogden 2019, 102). There is also another aspect of faith in Packer – and this is highlighted by Gary Thomas: when faith comes within a person's life, it is not just there; faith is there to captivate one's entire being. In Thomas' words,

"faith governs our lives" because it emerges at "the crossroads of true Christian living" (Thomas 2003, 29).

There is another reason why Packer makes this essential connection between Christ and faith – and especially between knowing Christ and the beginning of faith – which has to do with the epistemological role of faith itself. Faith leads to the knowledge of Christ, but the actual process of knowing Christ – informed as it is by faith – does not happen in a vacuum. On the contrary, when a person believes in Christ through the active exercise of his or her faith, the reality of faith develops based on something concrete, and it is now that Packer unwraps the rest of his context for discipleship. Thus, discipleship begins and grows through "Bible study, prayer, Christian community" and then he writes "much more" (Packer 2010, 5). The "much more" part will be left aside for this argument, but the first three aspects are vital for Packer's theology of discipleship. Why? First, discipleship cannot happen, and it cannot develop without the Bible. Any Christian who wishes to learn more about discipleship must read the Bible. Second, because the Bible cannot be understood without prayer. Since prayer helps us focus on God, Packer knows that the way we see the Bible is dependent on prayer. Third, Christians read the Bible in the context of the community of believers, which is the church, so it is vital to accept this ecclesiological context for the ongoing reality of discipleship.

Edward Gross realizes why Packer proposes the Bible as a context for discipleship through prayer and church life; it is because we live in a world whose values are opposed to those we find in the Bible (Gross 2013, 33). When one understands the opposition between faith and the world, between Christ's values and the world's values, one feels the need to talk about it with God; that is why Craig Hazen sees Packer's prayer as a "conversation with God" (Hazen 2018, 146). But having a conversation with God based on reading the Bible is doing theology or, as Alister McGrath notices in Packer, "theologizing" (McGrath 2020).

2. Discipleship and the New Testament

While it is clear that, for Packer, studying the Bible is vital for discipleship, it is not just reading the Bible that makes discipleship happen; in fact, it is focusing on the New Testament as part of the Bible that helps us develop discipleship into what it should become. Packer emphasizes that, in dealing with the Bible, we must focus on two aspects. The first is reading the Bible in general because that is how our "Christian commitment" grows into genuine discipleship (Packer 2005, 61); since the Bible is God's revelation, we cannot expect to understand God's way of acting in the world and our experience with him if we are not aware of the content of the entire Bible. Second, focusing on the New Testament supplements our understanding of discipleship by helping us see who Christ is "as Savior God, as

model human being, as coming Judge, as Lover of the weak, poor, and unlovely, and as Leader along the path of the cross" (Packer 2005, 60). To put everything in a nutshell, the New Testament assists us in getting the whole picture of Jesus "as God incarnate" (Packer 2005, 61), by whom we understand not only the reality of death but also that of the resurrection (Packer 2005, 61).

This essential Christological thrust of the New Testament is captured very well by George Demetrion, who writes that "Packer identifies the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ as the central story of the New Testament" (Demetrion 2014, 73). That is a clear demonstration of the vital connection between the New Testament and our knowledge of Christ, in the absence of which discipleship is impossible. Also, Graeme Goldsworthy points out that, in Packer, Jesus is presented as supporting the Old Testament "as the authoritative word of God" (Goldsworthy 2000, 47) but we see that only if we read the New Testament.

Having established the crucial link between discipleship and the New Testament by drawing attention to the person of Jesus, Packer goes a bit further by showing that, when it comes to discipleship, we should not just read the New Testament, but we should read it in a certain way. It is important to have the entire New Testament in mind when we read for discipleship purposes, but Packer is careful to make sure that we understand that there is a certain methodology at play here, in dealing with the New Testament, when we are interested in discipleship. Thus, he writes that we should be focused on "stressing the need for constant meditation on the four gospels" (Packer 2005, 61). It is not that the rest of the New Testament is less important for discipleship, not at all; but it is vital to realize that the Gospels have this extraordinary capacity to keep our eyes set on Jesus. In Packer's words, "gospel study enables us … to keep our Lord in clear view" (Packer 2005, 61), which is a rather beautiful image conceived by Packer to help us accommodate the idea that there is no true discipleship unless and until our focus on Jesus is complete and constant. This is why, in Packer, discipleship is essentially relational; there must be a relationship between the believer who reads the New Testament and Jesus, the central figure of the New Testament. We have to "hold before our minds the relational frame of discipleship to him," Packer writes, and that is made possible by our reading of the Gospels (Packer 2005, 61).

Since the Gospels are about the Gospel, Timothy George emphasizes that, in Packer, the connection between the Gospel, as revealed by the Gospels, and discipleship was evident in his entire activity. According to George, Packer worked intensely throughout his whole life to "forge a coalition and community among gospel-centered Christ-followers around the world" (George 2009, 168). George's "Christ-followers" are Packer's disciples, so discipleship is when believers understand and live the Gospel as seen in the Gospels. Reid Hensarling is also aware of Packer's connection between the "biblical gospel" and discipleship and he points out that, in Packer, the study of the Gospel leads to a stronger, healthier, and more

mature church (Hensarling 2012, 53). By implication, this is a church of disciples that reached this state – as we see in Vaughn Baker – through what Packer describes as evangelism or the preaching of the Gospel, per the New Testament (Baker 2012, 166).

3. Discipleship and the Gospels

The New Testament, however, is full of references to discipleship and Packer makes sure he covers all the types of documents in the New Testament when he discusses what discipleship entails. The four Gospels are referenced in connection with discipleship and the very first such instance is when Packer uses the Gospel of Matthew to juxtapose discipleship with Jesus' "divine Father" (Packer 2011, 114), as in Matthew 11:25-27, for instance. A key aspect of discipleship in Packer is being aware that Jesus did not operate alone or on his own, but under the direction of his Father whose support enabled him to draw people close to him. According to Packer, the Father's help allowed Jesus to produce a powerful impact on people whom he used to "call into discipleship" (Packer 2011, 114). It is important to realize though that discipleship is a close relationship with Jesus under the guidance of his Father (Packer 2011, 114); that is, for Packer, the essence of what the Gospel of Matthew teaches us about discipleship. The Gospel of Mark, on the other hand, extends the focus from God the Father to the people in their capacity as God's creatures. Thus, Packer writes that a key aspect of discipleship taught by Mark's Gospels is personal sanctification, which means that one should love not only God, but also his neighbor, as in Mark 12:29-31) because discipleship is not only a relationship, as in Matthew's Gospel, but also a "process of change" manifested through one's sanctification (Packer 2005, 61-62).

Knowing God in his capacity as Father not only in his divine relationship with Jesus but also in his soteriological connection to us is wonderfully depicted by Pete Alwinson who writes that Packer "hooked" him "for life in knowing God the Father" (Alwinson 2015, 28). Craig Murison and David Benson point out that, in Packer, loving one's neighbor is mandatory according to the Bible, even if it is not an emotional feeling (Murison and Benson 2018, 85). It is rather relational, because – as disciples of Christ – Christians love God the Father and their neighbors due to their personal and genuine relationship with Jesus, as one can see in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Packer notices that loving God the Father and one's neighbor is not the whole story when it comes to defining discipleship. Thus, the Gospel of Luke comes up with a new aspect that has to do with eternal life: those who are genuine disciples of Christ not only manifest their love towards God as Jesus' Father and their own as well as to their neighbor; they are also people who inherit eternal life as a result. When Packer reads Luke's Gospel, he understands that discipleship is inheriting

eternal life because of loving God the Father and one's neighbor, which is quite evident in the parable of the good Samaritan, presented in Luke 25:37. The spiritual mathematics behind discipleship is simple according to Packer: loving God the Father and one's neighbor because of one's love for Jesus leads to eternal life. The story of discipleship, however, does not end here because, as Packer points out, these cannot be achieved unless Jesus' disciples lead a life of "imitating Jesus in humility, love, avoidance of sin, and the practice of righteousness" (Packer 2005, 62). According to Packer, imitating Christ is a key aspect of true discipleship, which we see in the Gospel of John, especially when Jesus washes the feet of his disciples as an example of earnest humility for them to practice among one another with sincerity and love (John 13:12-15). In Packer thus, true discipleship is imitating Christ (John's Gospel) through loving God the Father (Matthew's Gospel) and one's neighbor (Mark's Gospel), which is rewarded by God with eternal life (Luke's Gospel).

David Scott explains that in Packer, Christians – especially in their capacity as God's elect – see their relationship with Jesus through this *imitatio Christi*; in Scott's words, "the elect relate to the incarnation … in terms of imitating Christ's life" (Scott 2018, 50). By imitating Christ, his disciples head towards eternal life which, in Packer, is seen by Jonathan Bayes as "enjoyment of God" (Bayes 2010, 235).

4. Discipleship and the Epistles

Packer's use of the New Testament epistles for his doctrine of discipleship is quite complex, but – as somewhat expected – he focuses a lot on Paul's writings. Thus, he reveals that discipleship begins with the Holy Spirit, in the sense that believers receive the Holy Spirit, which is also the first aspect of becoming a disciple of Christ, as in Galatians 3:2. The second aspect of discipleship according to Packer is the believer's awareness that he or she belongs to God because of the "seal" of the Holy Spirit, as in Ephesians 1:13. There is also a third aspect of discipleship in Packer, which has to do with the believer's realization that, due to his "seal," the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, as in Romans 8:11. Packer's fourth aspect of discipleship resides in the believer's being transformed by the indwelling reality of the Holy Spirit, who makes the believer resemble "Jesus's moral likeness," as in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (Packer 2005, 61). The fifth aspect of discipleship identified by Packer is the presence of spiritual gifts within the believer which is, again, a pneumatological reality worked by the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence within the believer, as in 1 Corinthians 12, which means that "all Christians have gifts and tasks of their own within the church's total ministry" (Packer 2005, 69). The sixth, and final, aspect of Packer's theology of discipleship which I was able to see in his theology based on his use of the Pauline epistles is the awareness worked by

the Holy Spirit in the believer that he or she belongs to Christ due to his death and resurrection, as in Colossians 2:12; in Packer's words, true discipleship consists of "looking to Christ and trusting his shed blood and the promise of pardon" (Packer 2005, 59).

The transformative nature of Packer's theology of discipleship is depicted by Alister McGrath who writes that according to Packer's reading of Paul, theology – and consequently discipleship – "changes lives" and, in doing so, it constantly is "about the renewal of our minds and, subsequently, the redirection and reinvigoration of our lives" (McGrath 2019, 112). When referring to discipleship in the context of a larger discussion that also includes a reference to Packer, Jason Hood speaks about the fact that discipleship in Paul is "Christification" (Hood 2013, 108). Nevertheless, given Packer's focus on the Holy Spirit's role in discipleship, it could be validly argued that Packer's theology of discipleship actively promotes Christification through Spiritification.

Even if the Pauline epistles are the bulk of Packer's theology of discipleship, he nevertheless goes beyond them into some of the remaining epistles of the New Testament, which allow him to elaborate more on the reality of discipleship. To begin with, Petrine's theology provides Packer with the chance to explain that discipleship is profoundly Christological. Thus, discipleship must always be strongly anchored in Christ, in his suffering, in his sinlessness, and in his capacity as shepherd and overseer of the believers' souls, all of which one can see in 1 Peter 2:21-25. For Packer, this means that discipleship is "doing the things [Christ] says," so that believers should have a "life that pleases God" (Packer 2005, 62). To support the same argument, Packer also resorts to Hebrews 12:14, another text whose Christological focus highlights some crucial aspects of discipleship, such as the believer's need permanently to focus on Jesus, his suffering, and his ascension. This unceasing Christological perseverance prompts Packer to believe that genuine discipleship is based on a "ground … well mapped" (Packer 2005, 62) that helps him lead a life of ongoing spiritual transformation. One last epistle I was able to identify outside the Pauline corpus which is used by Packer for his theology of discipleship is 1 John 1:3. According to Packer's reading of this text, discipleship is fellowship with God, and specifically with the Father and the Son. This precision causes Packer to believe that there is a certain standard of Christian living and, in this regard, discipleship has a distinct "charter" for the "quality of Christian experience" – in other words, true discipleship is when believers "seek this experienced fellowship and settle for nothing less" (Packer 2005, 56).

The crucial importance of fellowship in Packer's thought does not escape the attention of Jerry Bridges, who acknowledges that, as far as Packer is concerned, "fellowship with God is indeed both the foundation and the objective of our fellowship with one another" (Bridges 2014, 97). I noticed the same focus on fellowship in Packer, especially in the context of who we are as believers and con-

sequently, as disciples. Since this fellowship is mediated Christologically, I wrote that, in Packer's theology, "the essence of spiritual formation," which is also the core of discipleship, consists of this "obsession with Christ … the only healthy obsession one may entertain; if we are genuine Christians, we must always share in this spiritual obsession" (Simuț 2022, 87).

5. Discipleship and the Acts of the Apostles

One of the most interesting ways in which Packer uses the New Testament to build his understanding of discipleship has to do with his reading of the Acts of the Apostles. The first side of discipleship we can see in Packer's handling of Acts is its beginning; discipleship begins when people repent, accept baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and then receive the Holy Spirit as a gift – and that we read in Acts 2:38. Second, discipleship not only has a beginning in repentance or the dramatic change of one's mind due to accepting Christ and his forgiveness of sins, but also works as witness. In its capacity as a witness, discipleship is a manifestation of Christ's power within believers through the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 1:5, 8. In Packer's words, "Jesus had promised that when the Spirit came, he would empower the disciples for witness" (Packer 2005, 75), and that is the foundation of genuine discipleship. Third, discipleship is a continuous spiritual vocation that manifests itself in the life of the believer; as Packer puts it, discipleship can be seen in terms of a "new ministry" (Packer 2005, 75) which manifests itself pneumatologically and Christologically at the same time; this spiritual vocation, Packer explains, happens through the Spirit who glorifies Jesus (Packer 2005, 75).

Kermit Zarley mentions Packer's conviction that the twelve disciples had been converted before they experienced the Pentecost, in which case discipleship refers to spiritual cleanness, and that points to redemption, justification, salvation, and regeneration (Zarley 2015, 87). This means that the twelve disciples walked with Jesus before his death, resurrection, and ascension; even more importantly though, the pattern did not change after his death, resurrection, and ascension. Consequently, discipleship consists of walking with Jesus in the power of the Spirit. John MacArthur confirms this reality when he points out that, in Packer, the Spirit always points to Jesus (MacArthur 2013, 43). In other words, in Packer, discipleship is focused Christologically although performed pneumatologically.

In dealing with the Acts of the Apostles, especially concerning the spiritual reality of discipleship, Packer seems to admit that there are at least some aspects that remain quite unclear. For instance, he singles out "God's postponing of tongues and prophecy at Samaria till Peter and John arrived" in Acts 8:12-17 and then "his producing these phenomena in the twelve Ephesian disciples after their Christian baptism" in Acts 19:1-6 as two instances which are somewhat dogmati-

cally a bit more difficult to interpret (Packer 2005, 75). Packer goes as far as to suggest that Luke himself did not fully understand what happened in these two cases when he writes that "it is not clear that he [Luke] has any personal theology about them to offer" (Packer 2005, 75). To make things even more difficult, Packer uses a rather hilarious image when he claims that these two incidents "are matters on which Luke is poker-faced" (Packer 2005, 75). Regardless of whether Luke was baffled beyond comprehension about these two facts – having heard about the former, while perhaps having witnessed the latter himself) – it is rather evident in Packer that discipleship happens because of the Holy Spirit and has conversion as its starting point: "the expectation that the Spirit's full ministry to Christian would begin at conversion is clear throughout Acts" (Packer 2005, 75). In either case, however, it is the preaching of the Gospel, that is the message about Jesus, which made the difference between how people were before and how they were after they heard about Jesus. In this sense, discipleship in Packer is about "the full ministry that Jesus foretold" and the preaching thereof as celebrated throughout the entire New Testament (Packer 2005, 75).

In other words, discipleship is about preaching all there is to know and share about Christ according to the New Testament; Donald Ekstrand thus notices that, in Packer, discipleship is "to be mature," "to have a mature relationship with Christ in which we worship, trust, love, and obey him," and to develop a fresh and true vision of Jesus Christ which is based on refusing to preach "a distorted Christ" (Ekstrand 2012, 448). According to Packer, there is no true discipleship in the absence of the preaching of the Gospel; this is why Rober Solomon shows Packer's staunch belief in "the importance of evangelism and mission" (Solomon 2020).

6. Discipleship and the Book of Revelation

Although I have not been able to find many references to discipleship as explained based on the Book of Revelation in Packer's works, I did manage to identify one instance in which he explain discipleship concerning the Book of Revelation. The larger context is a discussion about zeal, which Packer sees as a fundamental feature of genuine discipleship. To briefly summarize Packer's discussion, he believes that zeal should characterize Christian discipleship simply because first, Christ himself displayed a fervent zeal during his ministry, and second, Christ's disciples demonstrated their zeal throughout their ministries up to the point of their death, usually by martyrdom. Among Packer's examples of spiritual zeal, Paul features prominently as a disciple of Christ who faced "prison and pain" with an unwavering commitment to his Lord (Packer 2023, n.p.). Thus, in Packer, zeal goes hand in hand with discipleship because zeal is indeed one of the core characteristics of Christ's followers in their capacity as disciples. Packer's reference to the Book of Revelation, however, occurs when he discusses spiritual zeal and divine jealousy.

In this respect, he mentions Revelation 3:15-16, a text that is addressed to the church of Laodicea and its lukewarm or indecisive attitude towards Christ and Christian life. In this context, Packer explains that zeal is the opposite of apathy, and a true disciple of Christ should always be zealous for the Lord (Packer 2023, n.p.).

As a key feature of discipleship in Packer's theology, zeal is also spotted by John Steinreich, who writes that zeal should always be associated with "joy, prayerfulness, worshipfulness" because "it certainly reflects the attitude and action of both Christ and the early disciples in their faith" (Steinreich 2016, 110). Andrew McGowan emphasizes another aspect of zeal as discipleship in Packer when he points out that zeal should always be directed towards faith, not towards rationalistic explanations of faith, as one can see in the works of certain theologians, such as A. A. Hodge and Louis Berkhof (McGowan 2008, 115).

For Packer, the Book of Revelation seems to be sufficient for his theology of discipleship even if it discloses only one characteristic of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. And since this one feature, identified as zeal, is seen as the antonym of apathy, Packer warns that it is not only zeal that matters (Packer 2023, n.p.); the issue is a bit more serious than that because God's jealousy is directed against any form of passivity, or lack of interest and enthusiasm. Genuine discipleship in Packer goes contrary to indifference and disregard regarding Christ. Those who believe in Christ must always lead a life of zeal, enthusiasm, and passion for Christ as Lord and Savior. Why is zeal so important for Packer? The answer is not complicated: zeal is crucial because it speaks about a person's attitude towards Christ not only with respect to what happens now but also to what is to come in the church's future. Thus, in Packer, zeal is synonymous with hope (Packer 2023, n.p.). Zealous disciples are believers whose lives are full of hope and especially of eschatological hope; disciples must be full of zeal because they not only live for Christ – they also live hoping to see Christ face to face. One last aspect: for Packer, zeal is important because it goes hand in hand with repentance, as in Revelation 3:16, where the apathetic church of Laodicea is urged not only to be zealous but also to manifest repentance. In other words, zeal is the conscious awareness that one needs to constantly renew one's mind for Christ; genuine discipleship thus is characterized by zeal as enthusiasm for the Lord, caused by a permanent renewal of one's psyche in conscientiously following the Lord, loving him, and taking decisions for him (Packer 2023, n.p.).

Robert Solomon warns that Packer's understanding of zeal is neither fanaticism and wildness nor irresponsibility and selfishness. On the contrary, Packer's zeal is merely an attitude of reverence, humility, and commitment to Christ which encompasses one's entire life (Solomon 2022, 227). When we see discipleship in terms of zeal, we understand – together with Christian George – that believers can

live along these lines only if they comprehend "the importance of biblical theology" (George 2006, 172), one of Packer's life-long pursuits.

7. Evaluation: The Two Pillars of Discipleship

As I mentioned in the introduction, Packer builds his doctrine of discipleship while focusing on the Gospels and the epistles: while the Gospels reveal the nature of discipleship, the epistles contain the teachings about discipleship. In other words, according to Packer, the epistles represent the theory about discipleship and the Gospels the practice of discipleship (Packer 2005, 61). Whether Packer did intently consider the remaining literary genres in the New Testament – the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation – as fundamentally important for his doctrine of discipleship is a fact, I was unable to ascertain, even if I did manage to single out some features of discipleship based on his use of Acts and Revelation. What is important though, has to do with Packer's perspective on discipleship, which is based on two pillars: the teaching or the theory about discipleship, to be found in the epistles, and the nature of the practice of discipleship, as revealed in the Gospels. These two pillars, Packer warns, are equally important for discipleship because they both produce a complete perspective on what discipleship is and how it works in the church (Packer 2005, 61). One should never split the teaching from the nature of discipleship because the theory can never replace the practice.

Dewey Mulholland writes about Packer's perspective on the nature of discipleship, which is not about pleasing the people, but about pleasing God; it is not about following the people, but about following Jesus. And, in the end, it is not about gaining what people like, but about gaining what God has to offer, especially divine and spiritual blessings (Mulholland 1999, 109). The teaching about discipleship in Packer is presented by Hal Stewart, who describes it as a "mission to make disciples;" in this respect "disciple-making is the intentional passing on of the biblical faith to another person" (Stewart 2017, 113). Steward also believes that, in Packer, the theory of discipleship can be adequately explained as "God's mission with evangelistic and disciple-making understanding" (Stewart 2017, 113).

Having warned that when it comes to discipleship, theory, and practice must always be considered together, Packer explains why the teaching about discipleship and the nature of discipleship must never be separated from one another. Divorcing the two, Packer says, is a very bad sign (Packer 2005, 61) mostly because focusing on the theoretical aspects of discipleship can lead to a loss of interest in what it means to follow Jesus and "have fellowship with the Lord Jesus in person" (Packer 2005, 61). Conversely, too much focus on being with Jesus on a very personal and singular basis will, most likely, generate an attitude of disinterest towards other people; and that can result only in ignoring the disciple's funda-

mental duty to make other disciples. Packer, however, is convinced that keeping theory and practice together concerning discipleship is possible if we do not lose sight of the fact that true discipleship is anchored in one's new birth and repentance (Packer 2011, 158). When we understand that there is no discipleship without the new birth and repentance – that is without a genuine beginning of faith and an equally authentic life of faith – our discipleship will be no less than ardent (Packer 1958, 13).

The ardent nature of discipleship in Packer was captured by V. M. Liew, who mentions it in the context of Christian worship as a way of life (Liew 2014). This means that, according to Packer, discipleship – very much like worship – is a way of life for all Christians who accept not only to be followers of Christ but also people who urge other people to follow Christ. There is a catch here though, as we read in Cameron Anderson: we can follow Christ only if and when we read about him in the Bible, in his Word, which means that discipleship is legitimate only when based on the Bible (Anderson 2016, 153). And it is straight from the Bible that Packer learns about discipleship and it is in the Bible that he sees its two pillars: the nature of discipleship in the Gospels and the teaching about discipleship in the epistles, together with a whole lot of other crucial features of discipleship that he finds in the remaining books of the New Testament.

Conclusion

This paper was about providing a systematic perspective on how Packer builds his theology of discipleship by using the New Testament. Although it is quite evident that Packer himself may not have consciously thought about these aspects, I was able to identify and trace some concrete steps that lie at the very foundation of his enterprise.

Packer's first step in building a theology of discipleship based on the New Testament is to offer his view of the Bible because it is in the Bible that we read about faith, specifically about faith in God and in Christ as his Son. Faith leads to knowing Christ and knowing Christ is what discipleship consists of ultimately – and all these aspects are found in the Bible. Second, Packer narrows down his perspective from viewing the whole Bible to focusing on the New Testament, which – as we have already seen – contains vital information about the nature of discipleship in the Gospels and the teachings related to discipleship in the epistles. My contribution resides primarily not in investigating the Gospels and the epistles, which I did anyway, but rather in going beyond these two literary genres to see how Packer discusses discipleship regarding the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation. For Packer, the New Testament is important because it reveals Christ not only as God, Lord, and Savior – alongside other vital aspects of his being and work – but also as the central figure of all its books. Third, Packer's discussion of the Gospels

reveals that discipleship has quite a lot of facets: in Matthew, discipleship has to do with knowing God the Father; in Mark, discipleship is linked to loving people; in Luke, discipleship leads to eternal life, while in John, discipleship resides in imitating Christ.

In dealing with the epistles, Packer understands that discipleship must be defined as a radical pneumatological transformation of the human being who is indwelled by the Holy Spirit due to Christ's work – and that's Paul's perspective. The rest of the New Testament epistles focus on discipleship as a mandatory process of leading one's life by Christ's example. The Acts of the Apostles inform us how discipleship can and should be lived as life in the Spirit as believers take the message of Christ to unbelievers and, in doing so, mature in faith. In the Book of Revelation, Packer sees that discipleship has a certain standard; in this respect, discipleship should be zealous and ardent for the sake of Christ, who lives in believers through the Holy Spirit.

In the end, I went back to the nature of discipleship revealed by the Gospels and the teaching about discipleship seen in the epistles, which I consider the two pillars on which Packer builds his theology of discipleship. The nature of discipleship is important because it represents the practice of discipleship; knowing what to do as disciples of Christ is a crucial aspect of living as believers and followers of Christ. Then, the teaching about discipleship is equally important because it shows how we should understand discipleship especially as we live it in the power of the Spirit. Packer warns that these two pillars, the nature or practice of discipleship and the teaching or theory of discipleship should never be separated from one another. He has a very strong reason for his warning: parting these two pillars leads inevitably to a life that lacks the authenticity of faith in Christ, who taught his disciples not only what following him entails theoretically but also how following him should be lived practically daily.

In the end, here is a very short list of what I perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of Packer's dealings with the New Testament as he speaks about discipleship. I was able to gather three aspects that I consider strengths of Packer's approach. One strength of Packer's use of the New Testament for his theology of discipleship is the fact that he tends to use the New Testament rather broadly when he identifies the building blocks of discipleship. Another strength has to do with the fact that his use of the New Testament for his theology of discipleship takes into account the entire Bible as God's revelation. Yet another strength resides in his determination to keep theory and practice, doctrine and applied spirituality, in a close relationship which makes his approach not merely holistic, but also powerfully knit together. Regarding possible weaknesses in Packer's methodology, I should perhaps mention that he does not seem to use all the books of the New Testament for his theology of discipleship – or it may be the case that I have not yet been able to spot every occurrence of the notion of discipleship in conjunc-

tion with biblical verses from the sources, especially epistles, that I believe Packer did not deal with. Another possible weakness – although "weakness" may be too strong a word to describe it – is that Packer, despite his extensive use of Scripture and especially of the New Testament, does not seem to use specialized biblical commentaries to back his position. I realize this may be too much to ask from a dogmatic historical theologian, which Packer indeed was as a scholar, but it is an aspect I noticed as I browsed through his works. The last issue which I find a bit problematic is that Packer has not provided us with a unified and systematized theology of discipleship; what we have are various references to discipleship scattered across his works but there is no integrated perspective on discipleship that Packer himself could have provided.

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Corneliu C. Simuț

Packerovo korištenje Novoga zavjeta u njegovu nauku o učeništvu

Sažetak

Ovaj članak istražuje način na koji je J. I. Packer, jedan od najistaknutijih evanđeoskih teologa 20. i 21. stoljeća, koristio Novi zavjet kako bi izgradio svoje gledište o učeništvu. Premda nam Packer u svojim djelima nije pružio sustavan prikaz učeništva, brojne reference vezane uz taj pojam otkrivaju njegovu duboku preokupaciju ovom temom. Stoga sam odlučio pratiti način na koji je koristio Novi zavjet s namjerom konstrukcije holističkoga razumijevanja učeništva. Kako bih ostvario ovaj cilj, poduzeo sam nekoliko vlastitih koraka. Prvo sam proučio njegov općenit pogled na Bibliju, zatim sam zagrebao malo dublje u istom smjeru, istraživanjem načina na koji je koristio Novi zavjet kao temeljni izvor svoje teologije učeništva. Preostala četiri koraka istražuju Packerovo stvarno korištenje novozavjetnih knjiga, što će nam iznjedriti njegov nauk o učeništvu. Vezano uz to, proučavao sam njegove misli o učeništvu prateći njegovo istraživanje ove teme u četirima Evanđeljima, Poslanicama (Pavlovim i drugim), Djelima apostolskim i Knjizi Otkrivenja. Ujedno sam ukratko istražio ono što nazivam Packerovim dvama stupovima učeništva, koje ističe kao narav učeništva i učenje o učeništvu – prvi stup nalazimo objavljen u Evanđeljima, a drugi u Poslanicama. Činjenica da sam otišao izvan Evanđelja i Poslanica u kratko istraživanje Djela apostolskih i Otkrivenja prirodna je posljedica moje izvorne namjere da pratim Packerove korake u cijelomu Novom zavjetu u svrhu izgradnje teologije učeništva. Na kraju, ova studija nije samo istraživanje Packerova korištenja Novoga zavjeta kako bismo razumjeli njegovo gledište o učeništvu nego i mogućnost da izvučemo neke osnovne odlike učeništva na koje je naišao dok je proučavao svaki književni žanr Novoga zavjeta.

Headwinds Facing Christian Higher Education: How Can We Climb the Heights of Biblical Education… Without a Disciple's Sure Foundation First?[1]

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Abstract

This paper explores the challenges facing Christian higher education institutions, focusing on trends and "headwinds" that threaten operational viability. These institutions are argued to be at risk due to a loss of mission, rooted in a broader cultural shift away from biblical Christian discipleship. The paper uses a Wall Street-style risk assessment to categorize institutions into four quadrants based on headcount and investment: Thriving, Hoping, Inertia, and Struggling. The analysis reveals that a significant majority of Christian schools fall into the Struggling or Hoping categories, suggesting potential long-term viability issues. The paper suggests that the root cause of these challenges is not in attempting or failing to compete with secular schools, but rather, the neglect of discipleship as taught by Christ, predominantly in churches, thence passed along as under-discipled rising students. The paper proposes a return to "Empyreal Discipleship," emphasizing the importance of faculty members as visible disciple-makers. By focusing on discipleship, Christian educational institutions can regain their competitive advantage and fulfill their mission

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

of creating educated disciples. The paper concludes that the path forward involves prioritizing discipleship over mere education to navigate the social headwinds facing Christian higher education.

Keywords: *discipleship, Christian leadership, Christian higher education, Nones, Dones, mission, Christian culture*

Introduction

I am very thankful for this opportunity to present this material to you at the International Theological Conference "Discipleship in Evangelical Churches" in Zagreb, Croatia. A variation of this same presentation was given to the Chief Academic Officers of the US accreditation Board "The Association for Biblical Higher Education" (ABHE) late last year. The material we will discuss is an extension of research and findings in writing the book *The Disciple Dilemma*.[2] As a brief background, I have served as a Chief Executive Officer for six Wall Street-backed industrial corporations[3] to help them return to viable, profitable operations. I have, over these same years, also served as an elder and teacher in mega, medium, and small-sized churches in the cities my wife and I have lived in. Our observations and research around challenges, which we term "headwinds" facing the Western Church have been adapted into this paper focusing on the same symptoms and root causes emerging in Christian Higher Education.

The thesis here is that Christian higher educational institutions face near-term viability risks. Risks have been induced because distortions of intent and content about the mission of institutions are being lost. Mission loss then impairs the identity, meaning, and purpose of who Christians truly are. Further, this impairment metastasizes beyond individual disciples, returning to churches, and, to the crux of this paper, into the viability and vitality of Christian schools and seminaries in the West. Such negative Western trends then migrate into the globalizing social arena of, for example, Central European churches and schools as well. With no intent to be dramatic, this threat is coming for you, your children, and your friends. Do not mistake this presentation to suggest *an accusation of failure by faculty or staff at Christian educational institutions, nor in the local church*. This is a deeply entrenched, traditions-laden challenge. It did not emerge overnight. It will take time to right this situation.

2 www.thediscipledilemma.com.

3 Dennis Allen. LinkedIn profile: https://www.linkedin.com/in/dennisallenceo/?original_referer=

1. Adverse Trends on Campus

Let us do something you may not be comfortable with, analyze Christian higher education through the lens of a capitalistic Wall Street risk assessment. Christian higher education, like other organizations, is along with its higher call, also a business. Christian institutes can be risk-assessed using two simple and available metrics: headcount and investment.

Student headcount tallies both physical and online student enrollments. Investment is a peculiar term, tracking the balance sheet assets of facilities, programs development, and endowments. Both headcount and investment are core to any educational institution's success and long-term survivability.

Now let us parse the data into four business quadrants. Such categorizations are used by corporations and commercial consulting firms, usually applying specialized criteria relevant to that industry along the X-Y axis to analyze the strategic vitality of organizations in that sector. In this case, that criteria becomes our headcounts and investments.

In Figure 1, the grid shows changes in headcount enrollment between 2015 and 2023 on the vertical (Y) axis, and the change in financial investment over the same period from left to right across the page's horizontal (X) axis. The dotted lines demarcate growth versus shrink in the X & Y criteria metrics.

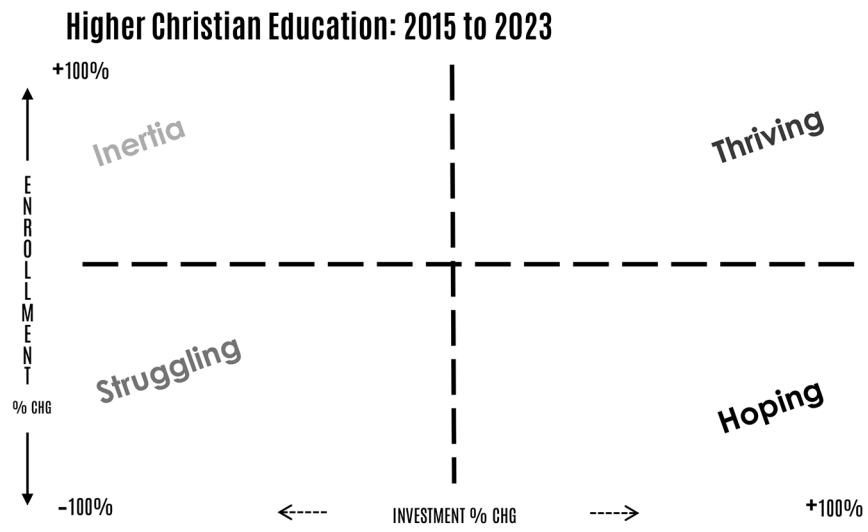

Figure 1: Quadrants

Do you see the four labeled quadrants? The Upper right quadrant "**Thriving,**" shows increasing headcount (online headcount + on-campus) and increasing investment in a school. No distinction is made between part-time and full-time headcount. The bottom right quadrant, labeled "**Hoping**" represents declining headcount, but at the same time, increasing investment—hence, "hoping" increasing investments in facilities, programs, faculty, and amenities will induce headcount to return to a growth trajectory. The upper left quadrant is "**Inertia**," where headcount continues to grow, but investments are decreasing. The lower left quadrant—"**Struggling**"—categorizes institutions where headcount is shrinking and investments are going down simultaneously.

The two most predictable metrics used in the commercial market for "Thriving versus Diving" are Revenues and Profitability. A commercial entity can function for a while with decreasing revenues, but it will not long survive with negative profit. We argue in this article that the two key variables in Christian education are Headcount and Investment. In this grid, headcount is Profit, while Investment replaces Revenue.

Now you can credibly argue that numerous complex factors beyond the two indicators here affect the vitality of organizations. Yet this paper argues that these two fundamental lagging indicators summarize the effects of many other factors in analyzing an educational organization's long-term viability.

Figure 2: 234 of the approximately 350 Christian higher education schools listed in North America were plotted based on data obtained from the Annual Data Tables of the Association of Theological Schools (Annual Data Tables).

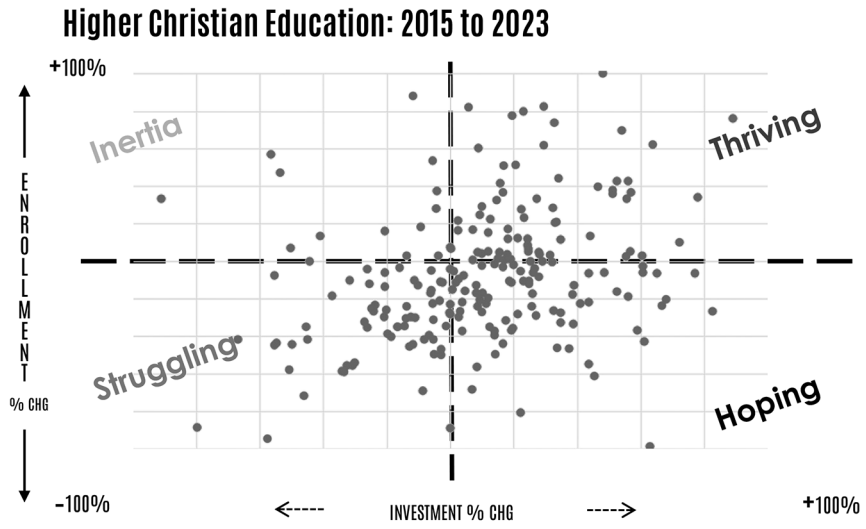

Figure 2: Plotting 234 North American Christian Colleges

The dots taken from the ATS data tables illustrate the absolute value change in enrollment and operating investments[4] from 2015 to 2023, eight years. Why not the entire population of 350 schools? We excluded schools that came or went during the 2015 to 2023 period. Why? While a few new schools emerged in that timeframe, one reason not all 350 schools are shown is many simply shut down.

1.1. Do We Have a Problem?

At first glance, the plotted points might appear, more or less, grouped around the middle. Is all then generally well? See Figure 3. Notice the HCE SCHOOLS crosshair centers on the verge of **Struggling** & **Hoping** for Christian schools.

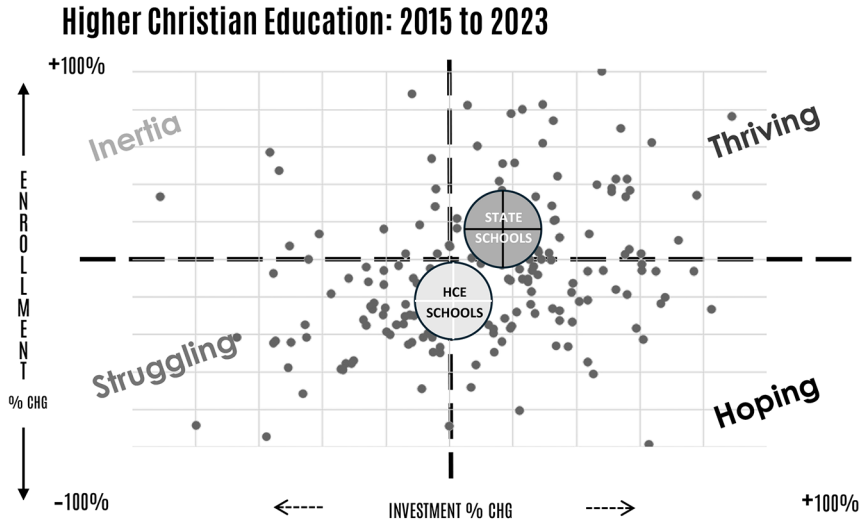

Figure 3: Averaging the Plots of Christian and Secular Colleges

As a comparison, in in the STATE SCHOOLS crosshair centers on Figure 3 is the center-point for secular schools, using the same headcount/investment criteria, taken from a 2023 Wall Street Journal survey (Korn, Fuller, and Forsyth 2023). The Wall Street Journal made the point that though most secular schools have lost State & Federal funds in recent years, they continue to thrive on investments.

1.2. What Do the Numbers Tell Us?

For Christian higher education, 67% of the schools plotted are categorized in either the **Struggling** or **Hoping** quadrants. If you add in the **Inertia** quadrant,

4 Capital investments in faculty growth, facilities and programs.

73% of these schools are at "risk." Why at risk? For perspective, three-quarters of Venture Capital-backed businesses in these same risk quadrants *fail within 5 years* (Gage, 2012).

Let us start looking at symptoms. Two common concerns (symptoms) voiced by North American Seminary and Christian University leaders (Berding 2014; Bouma 2015; Cary 2022):

- biblical literacy among incoming students is in decline
- anxiety and stress among students are consuming budgets and overwhelming staff

These trends are symptoms of a deeper thing, as they are not causes and are not merely the consequences of simplistic things like campus curb appeal. The trends highlight *that there are causal roots beneath the surface that must be identified*. Let us tour more symptoms facing Christianity, to help highlight the cause, and then consider a way forward for Christian schools.

2. The Problem is Deeper Than Just the Campus Numbers

Figure 4 is a "Religiosity Index"—published in the peer-reviewed journal *Sociological Spectrum* (Grant 2008). Around 1998 the index tilted steeply downward. This downslope marks the same timing when Nones & Dones predominantly emerged in North America.

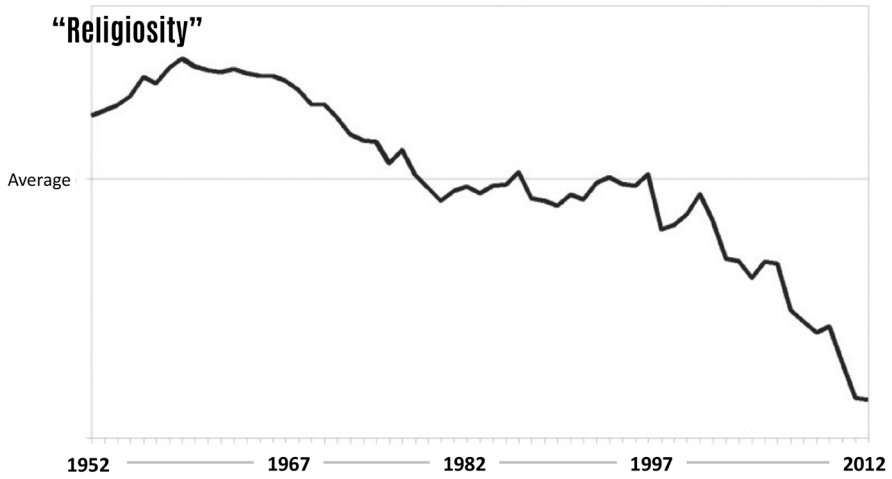

Figure 4: Religiosity Index 1952 to 2012

The local church supplies you with your students—is that good? Let us start well before a lot of today's students were alive. Thirty-eight years from 1972 to

2010: The C and D lines in Figure 5 represent people who attend church rarely. The C & D lines represent the "Occasional" church-goers. These people come to church randomly, as in monthly or a few times a year, but are not regularly present in the life of the church community. There is not much change on those black and grey lines of the occasional church-goers over the 38 years tracked.

Now look at the A and B lines at the top of Figure 5. The B line "weekly" attendees swapped places with the A line "Never/Rarely." That swap in the A and B lines represents five million people pulling away from Christianity in the US between 1972 and 2010. By 1998 the "Nones" and "Dones" (Nones: No church; Dones: Done with church/Christianity) had come on the scene. Many Millennials (born ~ 1981-1996) were teenagers during that period.

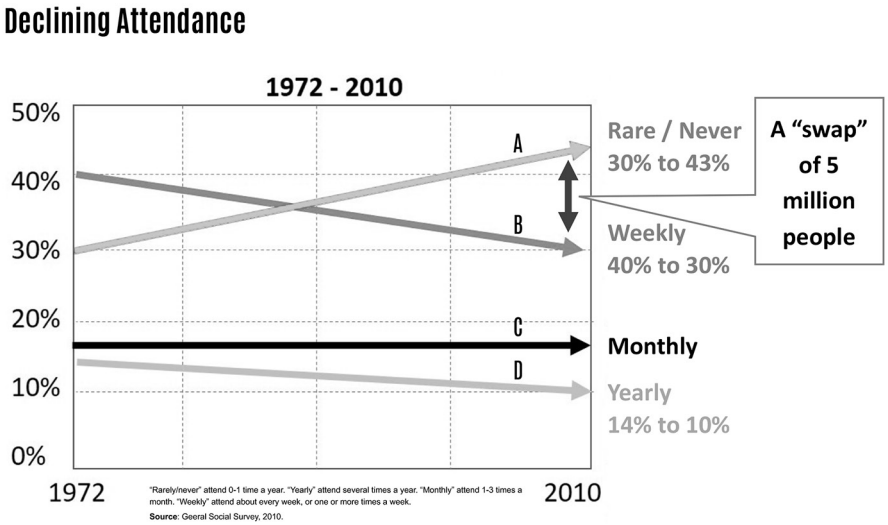

Figure 5: Christian North America Loses 5 Million

Now nearer to the present. Two studies, one 2007-2014, and the other one 2009-2019 tracked the shift in people identifying as Christian in the West. Notice in Figure 6 the tilt downward on the **A** (Protestant) and **B** (Catholic) lines. And the uptick on the **C** and **D** lines – the "nothings" agnostics and atheists. These two studies suggest, in aggregate, that thirty-three million people exited Christianity between 2007 - 2019. In other words, not only are today's arriving students (born ~1996-2006) awash in a church vomitorium,[5] but their parents probably were captive to this deforming trend as well. The aggregate "shift" effect of the period 2007 through 2019 is shown in Figure 7.

5 Roman term: A passage situated below or behind a tier of seats in an amphitheater or a stadium, through which big crowds can exit rapidly at the end of an event.

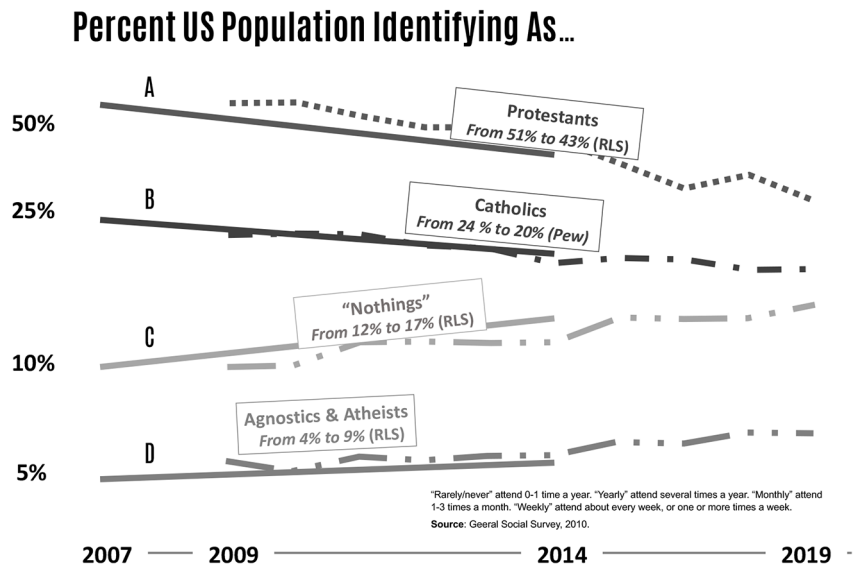

Figure 6: Religious / Non-Religious Population Shift 2007-2019

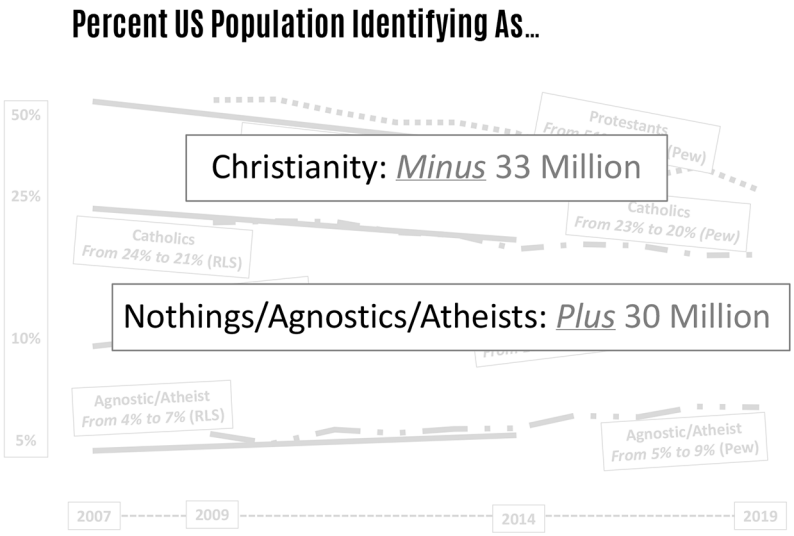

Figure 7: Aggregate Religious / Non-religious Shift 1972-2019

3. Not Exodus But "Exit, Us"

A lot of followers are not following Christ anymore. Christian culture was changing. Is changing. Why? What does that mean for you in Christian education? Campus leaders commonly assume their students were established as disciples in the home congregations sending the students out, and now the college can focus on academics. It is not an accurate assumption, nor is it a new story:

> He was born in a Christian country, of course he is a Christian; His father was a member of the Church of England, so is he. When such is the hereditary religion handed down from generation to generation, it cannot surprise us to observe young men of sense and spirit beginning to doubt altogether the truth of the system in which they have been brought up... (Wilberforce 1834, 6).

It is hard to pass on that which we do not have. According to Cindy Perkins (2023), COO of the Bonhoeffer Project: "Less than 20% of pastors have ever been discipled. Lay people even less. We fundamentally do not understand what discipleship even means." Is something wrong here? A massive exit of people who were raised in the Church. The rarity of discipleship in churches. Headcounts in most Christian colleges are declining as well as investments in the vitality of those Christian schools. Is something wrong here?

Consider other recently documented trends among Western Christians. The Nones & Dones we mentioned earlier? Six out of ten raised in U.S. Christianity *walked out* (Allen 2022, 4-7; Davis, Graham, and Burge 2023, chapter 1; Barna Group 2015).

1. A third of Christians that did stay in church say "Not My Job" for them, to talk about Christ, about their faith, about "the reason for the hope" (1 Pet 3:15) they carry.
2. More than a third of attending North American evangelicals say "Jesus is not the only way to God."
3. "Inert Christians:" No prayer life, no personal bible study, no close community. And 1.7 times a month is the average worship attendance in North America. 82%.
4. "The Muted and UNs:" UN-able, UN-willing, UN-prepared to talk about Christ, or to give "a reason for the hope within them." Nine in ten in North America.
5. "Spiritual Distancing:" Nearly half of North American believers say their life in Christ is private, off-limits to transparent awareness with others.

This paper will not attempt to tackle the scope of nationalism, social justice/tribalism, or power & abuse dynamics, all of which further lure away from Christ's purpose, meaning, and destiny for each believer. Yet the globalization of such

social pressures, like the five traits above, and broader political and illiberal movements lurch toward Europe, as well as the West.

Why should these marginalized Christ followers want to attend a Christian school? The short answer is, in growing numbers, they do not. Why do investors invest in organizations in decline? They usually do not. Christian schools and seminaries should not (and cannot) compete against the strengths of a secular school – meaning "strengths" of the spending, secular edginess, catechizings, and religious apathy, not to mention commercial endowments, government funds, and substantial facilities.

But Christians do have unique weapons in this competition too. Four key biblical themes: Meaning, Purpose, Identity, and Belonging, which, when aggregated are what we know as discipleship. Secular schools cannot compete. Fascades of those perhaps, but no sustainable competition. These core beliefs of meaning, purpose, identity, and belonging about myself are at the center of what it means to be human, and they are four ideas fulfilled only in Christ. *These four words outline biblical discipleship.* Such discipling, if reformed and reinstated among Christian colleges offers the basis of "sustainable competitive advantage," which is something enduringly unique for one, but not for other competitors. These four pillars of a disciple are the sustainable competitive advantage in Christianity, and here, in Christian higher education.

What is the real mission of a Christian college or seminary? And does that institution's culture support that mission? No business turnaround I have been involved with has succeeded by throwing money and marketing at symptoms of decline. Until the mission and culture are clear and deployed into its leadership and populace, money and marketing are a waste. Yet rarely do I encounter leaders who understand how fundamental mission, culture, and leadership are in establishing mission and culture to right a struggling organization. Here it is then: The truncation and omission to disciple as Christ taught discipling *is the cause* of these many adverse trends we have reviewed in Christian higher education.

Conclusion: The Path Forward is Looking to the Past – to Empyreal Discipleship

What is "Empyreal?" It is not Empire. It means the highest, the best, the "real deal." Christ's empyreal discipling, the Lord's version of discipleship, is the only way back from the adversities confronting Christian higher education. And that way back in discipling begins with you, as a discipling educator. Not merely in the classroom though. The way to overcome these headwinds in Christian education involves you plus one, or perhaps two, following you, imitating your passion to serve Christ, talking about your failures as well as successes in life, learning your ways of graciously answering those who inquire (or scoff) at Christ (Col 4:6). It

is not a semester, not a few dinners together. It is life made open and available, usually for a couple of years in a student's life. In other words, the path forward is about faculty dedicated to the idea of disciples, making disciples who make disciples.

The most poignant (and final) directive of Jesus was "Go and make" (Matt 28:19). That is our mission as followers of Christ, individually, and corporately. Discipleship is the fountainhead of meaning, purpose, identity, and belonging for Christ followers. The symptoms and trends we see in Christian higher education will not be reversed until we bring our sustainable competitive advantage—Christ's discipling—discipling individual-to-individual back into the journey in the Academies.

Mission motivates people to be more, and to do greater things. The mission is both performance-focused and motivating. What is your mission in Christian higher education? *Is it possible that your mission is not education*? Could it be you are in the "educated disciples" business, and education is the primary means of your discipling? Many educators would claim discipleship is not their mission, and that education is. Going back to the opening title, "Can one climb the scaffold of biblical higher education…without a disciple's sure foundation beneath it?"

I want to humbly lay this idea at your feet: *your primary mission is discipleship.* Education is your core strength and talent, but your mission? Discipleship. In Kingdom impact, your mission – church leader, professor, or layman is progressing (making) disciples, DWMDWMD—which means, "disciples who make disciples who make disciples." Lifelong, thriving disciple-making of disciples is the key to navigating the social headwinds facing Christian higher education. Do you want to see your Academy growing and flourishing again, with world-changing students who go out into their world as disciples who make disciples? Or will you keep on being a fact-factory, first and foremost?

Discipleship is not happening in student upbringing today. It is not happening in most of their churches. It did not happen with most of their pastors. Students have almost nobody discipling them. Discipleship then, must begin with you, Professor! Against such a discipling gale of the Spirit, no headwind could ever prevail (Matt 16:18; 28:19).

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Dennis Allen

Suprotni vjetrovi pušu u pramac kršćanskoga visokog obrazovanja: možemo li se popeti na visove biblijskog obrazovanja… ako ne postavimo čvrst temelj učeništva?

Sažetak

Ovaj članak istražuje izazove s kojima se suočavaju institucije kršćanskoga visokog obrazovanja, a usredotočuje se na trendove i „suprotne vjetrove" koji prijete operativnoj održivosti. Članak tvrdi da se ove institucije nalaze u rizičnom trenutku gubitka svoje misije s obzirom na svoju ukorijenjenost u šire kulturološke pomake od biblijskoga kršćanskog učeništva. Članak koristi procjenu rizika u stilu one koju koriste brokeri s Wall Streeta te svrstava institucije u četiri kategorije na temelju broja studenata i ulaganja: uspješne, obećavajuće, inertne i posrnule. Analiza

pokazuje da značajna većina kršćanskih škola spada u posrnulu ili obećavajuću kategoriju zbog čega je upitna njihova dugoročna održivost. Članak predlaže da glavni uzrok ovih izazova nije ni u pokušavanju ni u neuspjehu da se natječu sa sekularnim školama, nego u zanemarivanju učeništva koje je Krist poučavao i to najviše u crkvama iz kojih stoga dobivaju studente koji nisu dovoljno napredovali u učeništvu. Članak zagovara povratak „empirejskom učeništvu", pri čemu je važno da predavači zaista podižu učenike. Usredotočujući se na učeništvo, kršćanske obrazovne institucije mogu povratiti svoju konkurentsku prednost i ispuniti svoju misiju stvaranja obrazovanih Kristovih učenika. Članak zaključuje kako put prema naprijed podrazumijeva stavljanje učeništva ispred pukog obrazovanja u svrhu plovidbe ususret suprotnim društvenim vjetrovima s kojima se kršćansko visoko obrazovanje suočava.

Following Jesus in His Care for Creation: What Does the Donkey Teach Us About This in Matthew 21:1-11?[1]

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Abstract

The central question of this article is why Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on an animal, namely, a donkey, and what this reveals about his relationship with creation. The author's primary contribution lies in exploring care for God's creation through a Christological perspective, specifically by analyzing the biblical passage in Matthew 21:1-11. This analysis demonstrates how, through the donkey, Jesus reveals his royal identity and humble character while calling for change, imitation, and a different eschatological future. Together, these elements indicate that Jesus uses the animal world to express his identity and attributes, as well as to communicate the nature of the future world he invites his followers to. As a humble king, Jesus' mission is to restore order to all things and to guide his fallen creation toward a "new creation," where peace between man, God, and the rest of creation will be fully realized. Employing a "method of recovery" or re-reading the biblical text from an ecologically conscious perspective, the author examines the meaning of relevant Old Testament passages.

Keywords: *Christology, animals, donkey, discipleship, creation care*

1 This article was written as part of the Zagreb Biblical Institute research project: "The Concept of Discipleship Among Evangelical Churches in Croatia."

Introduction

Do discipleship and caring for creation have something in common? Dave Bookless (2008) and Steven Bouma-Prediger (2023, 131-171) argue that caring for creation is an essential aspect of the Christian discipleship process. Bookless contends that discussions about discipleship often focus on the moral and ethical attitudes that Christians should adopt. However, care for God's creation is rarely included in Christian discipleship training. This omission is puzzling, as caring for creation is a central theme in the Bible. Therefore, according to Bookless, we cannot truly be disciples of Jesus if we do not care for God's creation (Bookless 2008, 88-89). Richard Bauckham (2010, 1-2) and Jonathan and Douglas Moo (2018, 23-24) share a similar viewpoint.

Much is unclear concerning a proper definition of Christian discipleship. Budiselić (2023, 33) addresses this topic in his book, *Učeništvo na Isusov način*, and draws several useful conclusions: a) In Matthew 28, Jesus called us to make disciples, not just converts (2023, 37); b) the Bible does not provide a specific definition of discipleship but illustrates what it should be (2023, 40); c) the purpose of discipleship, as Budiselić concludes (2023, 41), along with various other authors he references, is to become more like Jesus.

Such a simplified yet meaningful definition will guide us in framing the relevant question for this article: If the purpose of the biblical discipleship process is to become more like Christ, what does it mean to follow Him in the mandate of caring for God's creation? We can explore this question from various angles by examining different aspects of biblical texts and theology.

In this paper, we will focus on the New Testament passage in Matthew 21:1-11. Why does Jesus choose to ride an animal – a donkey – during his entry into Jerusalem, and what does this choice reveal about his relationship with creation? The main contribution of this analysis will be to the field of care for God's creation through a Christological perspective, specifically looking at Matthew 21:1-11. Our analysis will demonstrate how Jesus, through the symbolism of the donkey in Matthew 21:1-11, reveals his royal identity, humble character, and calls for change, imitation, and a vision of a different eschatological future. Together, these elements suggest that Jesus uses the animal world to reveal his identity and attributes while also communicating the nature of the future world to which he invites his followers.

Several domestic authors have explored the role of animals in the Bible. Notably, Miljenka Grgić and Danijel Berković offer insightful perspectives. In her work, Grgić presents a theology of biblical zoology based on Genesis 1. She argues that animals are God's treasures and that humans are appointed as their shepherds, entrusted with the care of both animals and the ecosystem. Her conclusions stem from an examination of Genesis 1, where animals are described concerning inani-

mate nature and humans concerning animals. From this viewpoint, animals are not mere additions; rather, they are an essential part of God's plan for the world (Grgić 2019, 338-339). In his book, *Biblijski bestijarij*, Berković aims to provide an encyclopedic overview of the role of animals in the Bible. He contends that the topic extends beyond merely the relationship between humans and animals. Instead, he argues that animals in the Bible have a paradigmatic role, reflecting the theological truths that the Scriptures endeavor to convey (Berković 2022, 57-58).

Using the method of rereading biblical texts through the lens of ecologically conscious exegesis, or "methods of recovery," as presented by Douglas and Jonathan Moo (2018, 31-40), we will examine the meanings of relevant Old Testament passages, such as Zechariah 9:9 and Isaiah 62:11, among others. So, what is the method of recovery in a nutshell? In light of the growing concern for the environment, Jonathan and Douglas Moo explore the interpretation (hermeneutics) of the biblical text, or how to read and interpret the biblical text within the context of environmental issues (Moo and Moo 2018, 31). They reference the work *Greening Paul*, authored by David Horrell, Cherryl Hunt, and Christopher Southgate, as a starting point for their discussion (Moo and Moo 2018, 32-34). In this book, they analyze three common approaches to interpreting the Bible concerning environmental concerns: "resistance," "revisionism," and "strategy of recovery" (Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate 2010, 11-32).

What do these three options suggest? Resistance refers to the efforts by some, particularly liberationist and feminist theologians, to impose their ideologies onto the biblical text against the clear direction of the Scriptures despite these ideas not being present in such forms (Moo and Moo 2018, 33). Revision involves reading the biblical truth through the lens of our contemporary context and priorities. In this case, we as readers impart new meanings to the text, while demonstrating how these meanings align with the overall message of a specific book of the Bible. Meaning arises from the interaction between the text and the reader, as highlighted by Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate (Moo and Moo 2018, 33). Recovery illustrates the notion that the Bible fundamentally emphasizes the importance of caring for our planet and God's creation. However, this message has often been overlooked in favor of other priorities (Moo and Moo 2018, 33).

Moo and Moo (2018, 34) do not agree with the conclusion put forward by Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate. The main issue with their conclusion lies in the phrase "giving new meaning to the biblical text." They believe that the Bible has a consistent meaning within its context, which remains unchanged regardless of the reader's perspective. Their approach is more aligned with a "recovery strategy." They argue that the Bible contains awareness about the importance of caring for God's creation and the environment. Consequently, we should read the Bible with an ecological consciousness, utilizing standard tools of biblical exegesis (Moo and Moo 2018, 34).

1. Matthew 21:1-11 as the Fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy

To understand why Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on a donkey, we can refer to Matthew 21:4-5, which mentions that this act was meant to fulfill a prophecy. Before diving into our analysis, it's important to examine how Matthew utilizes the Old Testament in these verses.

In Matthew 21:2-5, we read that Jesus instructed his disciples to fetch a donkey and her colt for his entry into Jerusalem. The author notes that this event occurred to "fulfill" (Gr. πληρόω) what was spoken by the prophet. Nolland (2005, 834) points out that line 4 represents the ninth of ten formulas of this type in the Gospel of Matthew where an action is interpreted through a quotation from the Old Testament. Thus, Jesus' choice to ride a young donkey for his royal entrance into Jerusalem is intended to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures (Hagner 1995, 593).

McCuistion (2016, 1) points out that Matthew's use of the concept of πληρόω, or fulfillment, serves to illustrate how the story of the nation of Israel continues in Jesus. Matthew's Gospel primarily addresses Hellenic Jews in the diaspora and Christians of Jewish origin, aiming to strengthen their understanding of Jesus by connecting him to the roots found in the Old Testament. McCuistion interprets the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in Jesus through a typological lens. For instance, he identifies Jesus as a messianic figure who offers a better Law in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). Additionally, he draws parallels between Jesus' exodus from Egypt and Israel's exodus from Egypt, noting that, unlike Israel, Jesus withstands temptations in the desert. Through this comparison, Jesus emerges as a fuller expression of Israel's role as the Messiah and king. McCuistion (2016, 1-2) concludes that Matthew connects his listeners to the history of Israel, bringing it to life and fullness in Jesus. Other scholars have also conducted extensive studies on Matthew's use of the Old Testament.[2]

An important exegetical question arises regarding which Old Testament text Matthew is referencing. According to Nolland (2005, 835), Matthew combines elements from Zechariah 9:9 and Isaiah 62:11. Both McCuistion (2016, 7) and Hagner (1995, 593) make similar observations. Hagner notes that the initial part of the quote is derived from Isaiah 62:11, while the latter portion comes from Zechariah 9:9, possibly recalled from memory or liturgical worship. Both texts, within their broader contexts, proclaim the coming of the Messiah, the Savior (Hagner 1995, 594). Stendahl (1991, 39) points out that church fathers such as Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome identified certain irregularities in Matthew's quota-

2 For more on Matthew's use of the Old Testament, see: Gundry, R. H. 1967. *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel: With special reference to the Messianic hope.* Leiden: Brill; Menken, M. J. J. 2004. *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist*. Leuven: Peeters; Soares-Prabhu, G. 1976. *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew: An Enquiry Into the Tradition History of Mt 1-2.* Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

tions of the Old Testament. Furthermore, Stendahl (1991, 40) suggests that evangelists and apostles generally preferred the Hebrew text over the Septuagint (LXX) when quoting the Old Testament. He argues that their citations reflect their interpretation of the original text's meaning rather than being direct quotations.

Hagner (1995, 594) also observes that Matthew omits the first part of Zechariah 9:9, choosing instead to highlight the second part, which focuses on the humility of the coming king. He argues that Matthew does this to emphasize the humble nature of the Messianic King. Furthermore, Matthew employs the first part of Isaiah 62:11 as a warning, stating, "Say to Daughter Zion," rather than using Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion," to call God's people to follow. In this way, Matthew does not prioritize the joy of the king's arrival but, instead, he brings attention to the need for self-examination regarding one's relationship with the Messiah, while simultaneously inviting them to follow the humble King.

In conclusion, Matthew uses the Old Testament to demonstrate to his readers that Jesus fulfills prophetic predictions about both the Messiah and the King. Through his humble rule, he calls for both imitation and reflection on one's standing before God.

2. The Role of the Donkey and Jesus' Royal Identity

The central question we explore in this article is why Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on an animal – a donkey, and what this teaches us about his relationship with creation. In Matthew 21:4-5, we learn that this act was meant to fulfill Scripture. We will elaborate on what Jesus communicates through this action and what Matthew intends to convey to his readers.

In a broader context, particularly in Matthew 21:10, we see that this passage serves to reveal Jesus' identity with the question, "Who is this?" As we have pointed out earlier, Jesus here reveals his identity as the Messiah and King from the line of David. Davies and Allison (1997, 112), emphasize that this act is a public declaration of his messianic role, not through words but rather through a symbolic performance. It is meant to prompt Jerusalem to decide who Jesus truly is.

An additional argument that Matthew, by describing this public act, wants to confirm Jesus' messiahship and his royal status, that is, belonging to the line of David, is the mentioned concept of πληρόω. McCuistion (2016, 1) analyzes Matthew's use of the word πληρόω throughout the Gospel, arguing that Matthew uses this term mainly in his "assertions about the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah" in Jesus of Nazareth.

Davies and Allison (1997, 112-113) discuss the genre of this biblical account, comparing it to similar narratives found in the Bible and the ancient Near East. They argue that this Gospel account aligns with ancient depictions of a king, ruler,

or hero entering a city. For instance, they cite examples such as 1 Kings 1:32-49 (Solomon), Zechariah 9:9 (the eschatological king), and 1 Maccabees 5:45-54 (Judas the Maccabee, as well as the entry of Alexander the Great into Jerusalem). Common elements in these accounts typically include the entrance of military conquerors, the approach of a king, public celebrations, entry into the city, and ritual cleansing. The synoptic accounts fit within this genre (Davies and Allison 1997, 112). However, Matthew's account in chapter 21 has specific characteristics that set it apart. First, this Gospel report does not describe a military conquest. Rather, it emphasizes the humble nature of Jesus as the messianic king. Second, the Synoptics dedicate considerable attention to the choice of the animal, a detail not seen in other accounts except for 1 Kings and Zechariah. Third, instead of performing a sacrifice in the Temple, Jesus protests against its misuse (Davies and Allison 1997, 112-113).

It is important to recognize the Old Testament tradition behind Matthew 21:1-11. For instance, in 1 Kings 1:33, King David orders that Solomon be mounted on a mule – an animal that is a cross between a donkey and a horse – to authorize Solomon as his successor. Jesus employs a similar imagery during his entry into Jerusalem, indicating that he is the rightful heir to the throne of David. Thus, the role of the donkey in this passage is multifaceted; it serves as a biblical character through which Matthew answers the question of who Jesus of Nazareth is: the rightful royal heir from the line of David.

The royal significance of the donkey is also evident in Zechariah 9:9, which is referenced in Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15 as being fulfilled in Jesus. Furthermore, we can trace a typological connection in Matthew 21:1-11 back to Genesis 49:10-11, where themes of the royal line of Judah and the ideal king to whom all nations will submit are present (Beale and Carson 2007, 63). The phrase "the Lord needs" in Matthew 21:1-3 highlights that Jesus, as king, has the right to the property of his subjects, who are to put it at the service of their sovereign. This idea is comparable to a situation involving King David in 2 Samuel 16:1-12 (Beale and Carson 2007, 63).

The donkey in the Bible was commonly used as a pack animal. For instance, in Genesis 42:26, we read about Joseph's brothers transporting grain on a donkey (Ryken 1998, 215). However, biblical tradition reflects Eastern customs where donkeys were also used in royal ceremonies and during city entrances. An example of this is found in 1 Kings 1:33; 2 Samuel 13:19 and 19:26. David placed his son Solomon on a mule to signify that he was the rightful heir to the throne (Ryken 1998, 215).

3. The Role of the Donkey and Jesus' Royal Character: King of Humility and Peace

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey is a symbolic act that highlights his rightful royal status. Why this is so will shortly be explained. This choice of transportation reflects his character and the nature of his kingship. In the Gospel of Matthew, the author references Zechariah 9:9 to affirm Jesus' royal identity, portraying him not just as a king, but as a unique kind of ruler. Zechariah describes the messiah not as a conquering warrior on a horse, but as a humble figure who arrives on a donkey. This imagery emphasizes the Messiah's mission to bring peace, as he dismantles weapons of war and extends his rule to all nations (Zech 9:9-10).

Different authors make notice of the tendency to cite the prophecy of Zechariah about the Messiah and the King. Hagner (1995, 594) claims that Zechariah's prophecy foretold of a Messiah who was a lowly King. Luz (2005, 7) observes that the word πραΰς[3] (*praus*), meaning "lowly" stands at the center of Matthew's quote. McCuistion (2016, 7) comes to the same conclusion, stating that the humility of Jesus the Messiah and King is one of the central themes of Matthew's Gospel, quoting verses such as 4,14-17; 8,17; 12,17-21; 20,28. Jesus is therefore the messianic king (βασιλεύς)[4] who is humble (πραΰς). The same word, πραΰς, is mentioned by Jesus when he refers to himself in Matthew 5:5 and 11:29 (Hagner 1995, 594). Jesus of Nazareth is not king only through his lineage that goes back to David but through the manner of his rule. His rule is gentle and lowly, like that of David and Solomon. However, he transcends even those. He not only imitates his forefathers in humility but also surpasses them by bringing lasting peace. By quoting Zechariah 9:9-10, Matthew sets the interpretive framework for his text. Zechariah 9:9 speaks of a humble king, while verse 10 describes a king who brings peace. In this context, Jesus is the King. However, he does not ride a horse – symbolizing war – nor does he establish his rule through violence. Instead, he embodies the humility of Zechariah 9:9-10, similar to Moses in Exodus 4:20, and represents peace (Ryken 1998, 215).

The donkey that Jesus rides into Jerusalem reveals these character traits. Jesus enters as a rightful king, much like Solomon, but not to confront Caesar. Instead of a war horse, he humbly mounts a donkey to bring peace. Thus, the donkey, as an animal, symbolizes Jesus as a humble king who seeks to restore peace. Furthermore, this act prophetically points to a future time when Jesus will cleanse

3 In the New Testament, the word πραΰς (*praus*) carries the meaning of "gentle, meek, mild" (Mt 5:5; 11:29; 21:5; 1 Pet 3:4 (Swanson 1997). In Matthew 21,5 this word is used as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, describing the messiah who comes not in violence but humbly, bringing peace (Hauck and Schultz 1964, 649).

4 The New Testament uses the word βασιλεύς (*basileus*) when talking about a king. For example, in "(Mt 1:6; 2:2; Mk 6:14; Jn 1:49; Ac 4:26; 7:10; 1 Ti 1:17; Heb 7:1; 1 Pe 2:17; Rev 17:14" (Swanson 1997).

and restore the Temple, ultimately bringing complete restoration to creation and establishing peace – not only between man and God but also between man and the rest of creation.

4. The Role of the Donkey and Jesus' Call to Change, Imitation and Eschatological Future

As we have indicated after the last part, this symbolic entry to Jerusalem was a deliberate act. To better understand its intention, we will consider the wider context of Matthew 21, as well as some eschatological emphases of the Old Testament texts we used. Nolland (2005, 35) notes that Matthew, in his use of the Old Testament, not only analyzes the Scriptures concerning the historical context they reference but also addresses them in light of the contemporary situations faced by himself and the community to whom he is writing. Additionally, he employs the prophetic Scriptures to point towards the future that Jesus, as the Messiah and King, intends to lead us into. In Matthew 21:13, Nolland (2005, 35) identifies a critique of the Temple's status quo, emphasizing the need for a different and better future. He argues that the passage reflects an assertion of an ideal, promised future that serves to challenge the existing status quo (Nolland 2005, 36).

Jesus is not merely upset in this instance, which is why he turns over the tables. Much like his entry into Jerusalem – a symbolic act meant to convey his rightful royal authority and the nature of his rule – this incident also serves as a prophetic gesture aimed at communicating the Temple's current state and the necessity for its restoration. For example, Old Testament prophets frequently used symbolic actions, such as Jeremiah carrying a yoke, to deliver their messages. In this context, Jesus signifies the Temple's unclean condition and the urgent need for its cleansing or renewal. Davies and Allison (1997, 133-134) agree that a connection between these two acts within chapter 21 can be drawn. Specifically, Jesus entering Jerusalem as a king is symbolically affirmed by his riding a donkey, while his entry into the Temple represents a prophetic act of cleansing it. Both acts reveal Jesus' identity and his intentions. Furthermore, Davies and Allison (1997, 134) point out that the Temple symbolizes the center of the world. It is important to clarify that Jesus is not fundamentally opposed to the institution of the Temple itself, but rather to its misuse. As highlighted in the previous section, Matthew legitimizes Jesus' actions by referencing Scripture and will do the same in the coming Jesus' conflict with the chief priests and scribes. Hagner (1995, 598-599) observes that this prophetic act by the king points to the eschatological goal of Jesus' mission.

Recognizing the prophetic and eschatological dimensions of these symbolic actions provides clarity in interpreting our role in caring for God's creation. Viewing the Temple as the symbolic center of the world – which can also be an image of Eden – reveals a prophetic act that transcends the immediate actions and setting,

highlighting what Jesus seeks to convey about his intentions as king. The world is marred by corruption, but this does not imply it should be abandoned for some alternate reality. Instead, it requires renewal and restoration. Jesus' symbolic act of riding a donkey illustrates the nature of this renewed world. It envisions a world characterized by peace rather than conflict, fostering humble relationships among its inhabitants.

In this context, the donkey symbolizes Jesus as a legitimate and humble king who not only reconciles man with God but also reconciles man and the rest of the creation. As the true King, Jesus rules justly, and the donkey, representing the rest of the creation, submits to his authority. Thus, the purpose of Matthew is not merely to affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and the Son of David as foretold in Scripture, but also to demonstrate through his ministry that the existing religious and social systems require restoration. Jesus leads these systems toward a new creation, as seen in Matthew 21:13 and 21:42.

Taking all of this into account, one must conclude that the interpretation of Jesus' messianic entry into Jerusalem on a donkey extends beyond mere fulfillment of Scripture. It offers a glimpse into the future that he is guiding us toward, along with his call for us to follow him as disciples. As the Messiah and King, Jesus is on a mission to restore order to all things and lead his fallen creation toward a "new creation," where peace between God and man, as well as harmony between man and the rest of God's creation, will be realized. Jesus anticipates this peace as a true man by demonstrating how to rule humbly over creation, while the submission of the donkey demonstrates how the creation submits to Jesus' humble rule.

So, what should we as disciples of Jesus Christ take from these insights? Luz (2005, 8) notes that this symbolic act by Jesus carries both persuasive and educational significance. From Jesus' humility, we can learn how to position ourselves regarding the systems present in our world. In this text, we see the rejection of Jesus by the teachers of the Law juxtaposed with the recognition and acceptance of him as the Messiah and King by his disciples. Therefore, disciples of Jesus Christ are called to obey and follow their humble Messiah and King, participating in his mission to cleanse and establish peace in the world – both between God and man and between man and the rest of God's creation.

Conclusion

In this article, we posed a question regarding the role of the donkey in Jesus' messianic entry into Jerusalem, as described in Matthew 21:1-11. We concluded that the donkey serves at least three important purposes. First, it underscores Jesus' rightful royal and messianic identity. Second, it highlights the nature of Jesus as both Messiah and King. Third, it symbolizes the eschatological purpose of Jesus,

which is to renew creation and establish peace between God and man, as well as harmony among man and the rest of God's creation.

First, in this text, Matthew aims to demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah and King through his entry into Jerusalem. He referenced parts of Isaiah and Zechariah as evidence. Additionally, we noted that this concept has broader roots in Old Testament traditions. For example, Genesis 49:10-11 contains Jacob's prophecy about the descendants of his son Judah, indicating that the ruler's rod will remain until the rightful heir comes, who will tie his donkey to the vine. Similarly, in 1 Kings 1:33, David confirms Solomon as his rightful heir by having him ride on a donkey's colt. Through this public act, Jesus signals to Jerusalem that he is the true messianic king from the line of David. Our analysis revealed that Jesus used the donkey to communicate his royal identity, indicating that God desires to reveal himself and his identity through the animal world.

Second, we have established that Matthew, quoting Zechariah 9:9, guides our interpretation in further understanding the role of the donkey in this context. The king described by Zechariah is not a warlord riding on horseback, but a humble servant who, according to Zechariah 9:10, brings peace to the nations. The donkey here reflects Jesus' character. We often think of humanity primarily as bearers of God's image. However, this text reveals that the rest of creation can also fulfill this role. All of nature reflects God's character. Sin has introduced chaos and enmity into creation. In the original creation, humans, as the image of God, were meant to rule over and direct the rest of creation, which was intended to submit to their authority. This indicates that animals also have a role in reflecting God's character, contributing to our understanding of the divine image in humanity. Both humans and animals can reflect God's character: humans' rule over the creation, while animals accept that authority – it is to be noted that the donkey willingly served Jesus. For this dynamic to function, a humble messiah and king is necessary – one who will restore peace not only between man and God but also between man and the rest of creation. Therefore, our analysis suggests that through the donkey, Jesus reveals his humble character, indicating that God intends to use the animal kingdom to express his attributes or character.

And third, Jesus is the Messiah who restores his creation. In Matthew 21:12-13, he cleanses the Temple. His entry into Jerusalem in Matthew 21:1-11 serves as a symbolic act, communicating both his lawful royal authority and the nature of his rule. This prophetic gesture highlights the dire condition of the Temple and the need for renewal. Therefore, Jesus' messianic entry to Jerusalem on a donkey should be interpreted not only as the fulfillment of Scripture but also as a glimpse into the future that the Messiah and King is guiding us towards, calling us to follow him today. As the Messiah and King, Jesus' mission is to restore order to all creation, leading the fallen creation towards a "new creation" where true peace

will be consummated – not just between humanity and God but also between humanity and the rest of creation. Jesus anticipates this peace as a true man exemplifying how a true man rules with regards to the rest of the creation, i.e. humbly, and how creation submits to this humble rule. From this analysis, we conclude that through the donkey, Jesus called for change, imitation, and a different eschatological future.

In our analysis, we have argued that the donkey serves to affirm Jesus' royal status, to illustrate the manner of his rule through humility and restoration of peace, and to signify the eschatological consummation when, after Jesus' second coming, peace will be fully realized between God and humanity, as well as between humanity and the rest of creation. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we face a similar challenge as the people of Jerusalem at that time: recognizing and following Jesus as the humble king who brings peace.

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David Kovačević

Slijediti Isusa u brizi za stvorenje:
što nas o tome uči magarac u Mt 21,1-11?

Sažetak

Osnovno pitanje u ovom članku je zašto Isus koristi životinju – magarca kod svog ulaska u Jeruzalem i što to govori o njegovom odnosu prema stvorenju? Glavni doprinos autora ovdje će biti polju brige za Božje stvorenje kroz kristološku perspektivu i analizu biblijskog teksta iz Mateja 21,1-11. Analiza će ukazati kako Isus u Mateju 21,1-11 po magarcu otkriva svoj kraljevski identitet, ponizni karakter te poziva na promjenu, nasljedovanje i drukčiju eshatološku budućnost. To skupa ukazuje kako Isus želi koristiti životinjski svijet kako bi otkrivao svoj identitet, atribute ili karakter te komunicirati narav budućega svijeta u koji poziva one koji

ga slijede. Isus kao ponizni kralj ima misiju dovesti sve stvari u red, svoje palo stvorenje povesti prema „novom stvorenju“ gdje će se dogoditi konzumacija mira između čovjeka i Boga i ostatka Božjeg stvorenja. Koristeći „metodu oporavka“ ili ponovnog iščitavanja biblijskog teksta iz perspektive ekološki svjesne egzegeze, autor uzima u obzir značenje relevantnih starozavjetnih tekstova.

BOOK REVIEWS

David Bradshaw

Divine Energies and Divine Action: Exploring the Essence-Energies Distinction

St. Paul, MN: IOTA Publications, MN, 2023, pp. 226

In his renowned book *The Orthodox Church*, Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, Timothy Ware, wrote that Western Christians – Roman and Reformed – perhaps do not agree about the answers, but they at least start with the same theological questions, while the Eastern Orthodox deal with a different set of questions altogether. Professor David Bradshaw's book reflects this observation all too well, since Western Christianity tackles the question of divine energies almost exclusively when studying orthodoxy, even if there is an encouraging trend of Westerners addressing this issue from a practical interest in the topic itself. As a Protestant pastor-theologian, I believe that reading this book has indeed done more for me than just inform me of a mysterious nous of Orthodoxy. It has indeed given me a fresh look at God, his workings in nature, and the Christian life.

Dr. David Bradshaw is a professor of philosophy at the University of Kentucky. The book under review contains 204 pages of dense philosophical theology. It has eight chapters, six of which were previously published articles, a bibliography and index spanning 20 pages, a foreword by Paul Gavrilyuk, the editor of IOTA Publications, and the author's preface.

In his "Introduction," Dr. Bradshaw explains that it is probably not helpful to tackle the essence-energies distinction by comparing it to medieval scholastic philosophy. He invites his readers to enter the world of Eastern theological thought instead (p. xiii). Historically, the essence-energies distinction emerged in the East but was formalized when a church teacher Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) was defending the Hesychasts tradition of those mystics who claimed to see God's "uncreated light" through praying Jesus' prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"). Namely, Eastern theological tradition is especially sensitive and opposed to the notion that people can see or even understand God's essence, so Palamas wanted to show that this *uncreated light* seen by the Hesychasts is one of God's energies and not his essence. Of course, as the author notices in his first chapter ("The Concept of Divine Energies"), the Western theological tradition is not overly acquainted with Palamas' teachings, even though he represents the authoritative teaching of the Eastern Church and the peak of Greek patristic tradition regarding God's relationship to the world (p. 1). His teaching was conceptually colored by Greek philosophy but also firmly grounded in the New Testament (pp. 2-3).

One of the most important Greek terms in this book is *energeia*. The term was coined by Aristotle. In the beginning, he used it with the meaning of *the active exercise of capacity* in contradistinction to its mere possession. Later he developed the term to describe the Prime Mover, the being who is pure energy (pp. 4-5). Neoplatonism later taught that the first principle, the Good, or the One, is *beyond being* and therefore *beyond intelligibility as well*. In other words, it is unknowable, (p. 6), and yet everything seeks it. And so, Plotinus harmonized Platon's and Aristotle's teaching about the first principle in the way that the One as the Good became the final first principle, while the Prime Mover became the Intellect, the first hypothesis after the One. Since the One is beyond being and the object of the Intellect's reflection, the Intellect cannot comprehend it in its unity but refracts it into a vast array of separate intelligible objects which are Forms. According to Plotinus, Intellect comes forth from the One as an eternal act or energy, or as energy which comes forth from the substance, yet this one is itself an internal act or energy constituting the substance (p. 7).

Moving to the New Testament, Bradshaw shows that the words *energeia* and *energein* almost always denote supernatural actions of spiritual beings like God, Christ, angels, or demons. Both Apostolic Fathers and later theologians continued to use these words to denote the capacity for action and action that imparts energy (pp. 9-10). Contrary to many premodern and modern grammarians, who take *energeisthai* as medial, the author points to newer research that shows that in antiquity this form of the verb was always understood as passive, with the sense of *to be acted upon* or *to be made effective, energized* (p. 11). Having this in mind, when we survey the passages where Paul uses this form of the verb, we can see that these speak of God (although, at times, of Satan too) who empowers a person to action (pp. 12-13), implying synergism in which a human being is empowered by an outside, supernatural power (p. 14).

Church fathers developed these ideas. For example, Basil of Caesarea distinguished between that which is unknowable in God (divine essence) and that that can be knowable, such as God's power, wisdom, and goodness. In this way, he introduced the ontological distinction between God's essence and his energies (p. 15), thus appropriating Plotinus' concepts while rejecting his metaphysics. According to Basil, God's essence denotes "God *as he exists within himself and is known only to himself*," while divine energies denote "God *as he manifests himself to others*" (p. 16). One of the rich passages for thinking about this distinction for the church fathers was Exodus 33, where God said to Moses that no one can see him and live, but then Moses can see him from the behind (p. 18). Similarly, the gifts of the Spirit in Paul's Epistles were understood as divine energies in which Christians participate as one part of their deification (p. 19).

Bradshaw believes that the Eastern understanding of divinity is more fruitful than traditional Western theology since it succeeds in being apophatic about

divine essence to the extent that it resists any kind of naming or conceptual imaging, and therefore we can know it exclusively by its energetic expressions which manifest God's character (pp. 21-22). When we comprehend God, we do so only through our conceptions that arise when we think about experiences of our subjective seeing God, and therefore these conceptions are not identical to the object that we comprehend. This differs from the theology of the Western giants like Augustine and Aquinas, who thought that it is impossible to truly comprehend God in our present sinful and corporally limited state, but that we will be capable of seeing divine essence in the glorified state (pp. 23-24). The author mentions other differences as well, for example in understanding God's simplicity which is, in the East, itself divine energy, and not divine essence. This means that God is both simple and beyond simplicity, and therefore his will is not precluded from meaningful interaction with his creatures (pp. 25-26).

The second chapter ("The Divine Energies in the New Testament") tries to show that Paul's use of words *energeia*, *energein*, and *energeisthai* stresses the synergy of divine and human agents (pp. 28-31), one whereby the "activity of one agent *becomes* that of another" (p. 35). The author points out that this does not mean that Paul taught the distinction between divine energy and essence, but that it is peculiar how much he spoke about such energy (p. 56). The third chapter ("The Divine Glory and the Divine Energies") points us toward the similarities between the talk about God's glory in the Scriptures and divine energies (p. 57). Divine glory is portrayed in the Scriptures as "a special and uniquely fearsome form of the presence of God." There are also at least some indications that God's glory *is* God (p. 58). Bradshaw returns to Exodus 33, where God's glory is described as God's back parts, and therefore it is and it is not God, or at least, it does not portray him exhaustively. Also, God's glory exists from eternity and is something that can be given to people and in which people can partake as in God's life (pp. 59-61). Yet, it is also a "hidden majesty" in which God manifests himself as the *unknowable* one (p. 64).

"Essence and Energies: What Kind of Distinction?" is the question the fourth chapter tries to answer. Here Bradshaw reviews the attempts of theologians to categorize Palamas' distinction as "Thomistic real minor distinction," (p. 81) as "formal distinction of Duns Scotus," (p. 82) and as *kat' epinoian* distinction (pp. 83-84). He found the last two views to be the most promising, nevertheless, *kat' epinoian* distinction has its problems (pp. 89-99), and while Duns Scots' formal distinction is probably the closest counterpart to Palamas' understanding (p. 116), Bradshaw thinks it is far better to understand the essence-energies distinction in its terms (p. 117). In chapter five ("The Divine Processions and the Divine Energies"), Bradshaw writes that God's names do not refer to God's essence, but to God's activities, power, and energies (pp. 120-121). Of course, these names do *name* God, but they do so through his energies, through which "God is present

and active among creatures" (p. 123). After giving us a historical overview of the development of the doctrine of energies, the author says that divine energies in the Eastern church fathers have different names, namely *things around God*, *divine processions*, *operations*, *wills*, and the divine *logoi* (pp. 130-131). Nevertheless, they offer "a single comprehensive vision of the relationship of God to creatures, one that exhibits how both the perfections of creatures and their individual uniqueness are due to the indwelling activity of God" (p. 132).

In chapter six ("Perceiving Nature as It Is: The Divine *Logoi* and the Divine Energies"), Bradshaw tackles the question if believers can have a better understanding of nature. Ever since Plato and Aristotle, philosophers believed that human beings' moral state affects their mental capacities (pp. 135-136). Bradshaw asks the question if this is restricted only to moral issues or does it also influence the way we perceive nature and reality. Psalms denote that we can see both proofs of God's existence (pp. 137-138) and the manifestations of his glory in nature (p. 139). Bradshaw believes that there are two ways in which it is possible to have "a truer perception of nature" (p. 140). First, through divine *logoi*, which are "the refracted presence of the divine Logos," since everything "has its own distinctive *logos* which brings it into being and constitutes its ultimate meaning and purpose." Origen and then Maximus the Confessor developed the notion that we can comprehend *logoi* by living Christian life in its fullness through "prayer, study of Scripture, liturgical and sacramental participation, ascetic self-denial, the struggle against the passions, and the active practice of the virtues, especially charity" (p. 143). Such a life transforms our passions and therefore also our senses so we can "read the divine text written within nature" (p. 144). Second, we can have a truer perception of nature through divine energies, which help us see reality through participation in them (p. 145).

The author wrote the seventh chapter to answer those who criticized the essence-energies distinction in his previous works. He welcomes every critique since we are all on a path of growth in the knowledge of Christian philosophical theology (p. 151). On a similar note, his eighth chapter, "Of Essence, Energies, and Computer Programs," converses with authors and works that saw the light of day after Bradshaw originally published the essays in this book (p. 171). Thankful for their contributions, he writes that he has taken the time and effort to think through and reformulate his understanding in light of these discussions, especially regarding the divine essence (pp. 181-190). Bradshaw offers an analogy of God's essence, likening it to a computer program. I will leave the interested reader to further explore the author's analogy since it goes into many details, requires an intermediate understanding of informatics, and is at times almost as complex as the philosophical concepts it is trying to illuminate. I found his definition of the essence-energies distinction more helpful:

> It is the distinction between the inner determinative principle and deepest root of the divine character, on the one hand, and its surface-level manifestations, on the other. The latter include both its natural energies and acts of external manifestation; and the acts of external manifestation, in turn, include both the works that did not begin in time and divine acts that do begin in time, such as the gifts of the Spirit and particular acts of providence. By sharing in these temporal acts, one shares in and comes to know both the temporal energies and the natural energies, although without sharing in or knowing the *ousia* (p. 199).

Professor Bradshaw is optimistic regarding the applicability of the essence-energies distinction to different sciences, as he gives several examples from the fields of metaphysics, philosophy of religion, religious epistemology, but also philosophy of nature (pp. 200-201). He pointed out that some authors tried to reconcile this distinction to Thomism (p. 202), while the theologians applied this key to their various fields, such as questions about the relationship of God and people, ecclesiology, and others (p. 203). In the end, he writes that he believes this topic to be a heritage not only of Eastern Orthodoxy but of Christianity (p. 204).

Since my field of research is systematic and not philosophical theology, I will withhold judgment about the merits of Eastern versus Western theological tradition. Exegetically, I thought that the author jumped to some interpretative conclusions without warrant. For example, he wrote that when God said to Moses in Exodus 3:13-15 that his name is "I am that I am," God was refusing to tell his name since He cannot be named exhaustively (pp. 65-66). Yet, I did not find his argument convincing in light of God telling Moses in the very passage Bradshaw referred to several times, namely Exodus 33, that "I will proclaim *the name Yahweh* before you," and also in light of Jesus' "I am" statements in John (e.g., 4:26; 6:34; 8:12, 24).

The author pointed out that other Christian traditions, both Catholic and Protestant, have already started to appropriate the essence-energies distinction to different fields of knowledge. Since lately *Kairos* has published several articles about discipleship, this book can give an ecumenical contribution to this important topic. For example, Dr. Bradshaw wrote that, even though human beings cannot know God in his essence, God gives them a desire to know him, and this desire then purifies them and makes them like God (p. 70). The desire to know God can be fulfilled only by seeking Christ as the greatest Good by following him experientially (pp. 67-69). This experiential following Christ happens through participation in God's glory and energies in their many forms (God's operations, *logoi*, processions) whereby we are transformed into the image of God (the Orthodox doctrine of *deification*).[1] We participate in God's glory and energies when we

1 For a very helpful Protestant overview of this doctrine and its demystification from unwarranted criticism, see Goran Medved's two articles in *Kairos*: Medved, Goran. 2019. "Theosis

contemplate about God when his power energizes us to do his will while he is working through us, when we actively share in God's work through the gifts of his Spirit, through "prayer, study of Scripture, liturgical and sacramental participation, ascetic self-denial, the struggle against the passions, and the active practice of the virtues, especially charity" (p. 143) (in Protestant terminology, the means of grace). Furthermore, divine energy is present in "the physical means of salvation," in other words, holy relics and holy places (p. 147). While most protestants will reject these means (especially relics), it will nevertheless be helpful to understand the logic behind the Eastern Orthodox stress on these physical means, even if we disagree with them in this regard. The same is true for the Roman Catholics, for whom it is God's grace that turns nature into channels capable of receiving, transmitting, and cooperating with grace.[2]

I would like to relate this emphasis on the physical aspects of salvation to the growing and, in my opinion, correct emphasis on the new heaven and the new earth as the eschatological *telos* of God's creation (cf. N. T. Wright, Randy Alcorn, and other authors), as opposed to some spiritual existence in "heaven." This understanding goes hand in hand with Bradshaw's Orthodox understanding that even in eternity saints will not be able to see God's essence, but only divine energy, and that they will never reach "a final and comprehensive knowledge" (p. 149), but will forevermore progress in the knowledge of God and of his Creation (p. 150). This changes our perspective not only on our present sanctification through Christian discipleship but also on our future glorification that will be progressive as well, as we will be forevermore perfectly dedicated to a form of Christian discipleship as we seek to grasp God through His gracefully condescended revelation of his essence as we relate to him through Christ and through cooperating with his energies.

In the end, I would like to say that reading the book *Divine Energies and Divine Action* was both challenging and rewarding. As a work in philosophical theology, it will be inaccessible to most Christians without at least some philosophical background. Nevertheless, I believe that most pastors and especially theologians should be able to gain a better understanding of the topic and perhaps even some new ideas in lieu of its application to Christian life and theology.

Miroslav Balint-Feudvarski, MTh

(Deification) as a Biblical and Historical Doctrine." *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 13, no. 1: 7-38; Medved, Goran. 2019. "Theosis (Deification) as a New Testament and Evangelical Doctrine." *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 13, no. 2: 159-182.

2 Allison, Gregg R. 2014. *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment*. Wheaton: Crossway, 47.

Carl R. Trueman
Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity
Chicago, Illinois: Crossway, 2022, pp. 204

"For traditional Christians, the narrative of this book is inevitably a somewhat depressing one, as it points both to past transformations in the notion of selfhood that challenge our views at every level and indicates that the world in which we now live is hostile to expression of our beliefs on these matters" (p. 169). This is how Dr. Trueman starts his last chapter of the book. I am citing this at the beginning of this review because that is exactly what I was feeling when I was reading this book. Somehow the reader is tempted to think that we have already lost a cultural battle. But have we lost it? Carl Trueman does not leave us in despair in the end. To understand in what world we live and where the "modern sexual revolution" came from, one needs to understand the past ideas coming from the centuries before. And Trueman does his work diligently.

Carl R. Trueman (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is a professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College. He is an editor at *First Things*, and a respected historian and theologian in church and academic circles. He is the writer of many books, including the important scholarly work, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*. *Strange New World* is just a shorter version of the book. It is a "shorter, more accessible version of the basic argument for nonspecialists who would benefit from the essential narrative, to better understand the historical moment in which they find themselves, and to inform the work they do in ministry, culture, politics, business, and, most importantly, raising the next generation" (p. 12). *Strange New World* is a book written for those who want to understand the times in which we live, the times where the LGBTQ+ culture is rising and its power comes in the political spheres of our modern Western societies. This book is for those who want to know what is going on in the world now, and why there is a crisis of sexual identity among the Western population. To provide the answers and thesis, Trueman wrote nine chapters and made a perfect work of tracing ideas back to the past and connecting them with the present situation.

In the first chapter of the book, "Welcome to This Strange New World," Trueman introduces us to the situation, "Welcome to this strange new world. You may not like it. But it is where you live, and therefore it is important that you try to understand it" (p. 21). There is confusion in this world and cultural flux that is hard to understand. Society is changing so fast, with its emphasis on sex, gender, and identity. Trueman names a few terms that will help us grasp the moment of this culture. The first thing to mention is the notion of the *self*, connected to *expressive individualism, the sexual revolution,* and *the social imaginary*. *Self* is, as the writer provides for us, "the deeper notion of where the 'real me' is to be found,

how that shapes my view of life, and in what the fulfillment or happiness of that 'real me' consists" (pp. 21-22). Trueman concludes with this important definition, "The modern self assumes the authority of inner feelings and sees authenticity as defined by the ability to give social expression to the same. The modern self also assumes that society at large will recognize and affirm this behavior. Such a self is defined by what is called expressive individualism" (p. 22). *Expressive individualism* is the term that describes the behavior of the modern self where authenticity is realized only by expressing your inner feelings so that you can live your life whoever you wish to be. That kind of individualism is connected with *the sexual revolution which* is a rising sexual culture that praises the use of pornography, and gay sex and no longer marks any of these and similar things as stigma. This leads to expressing your sexual identity in a way that demands cultural and public affirmation and acceptance of it. But why do we think in the way we think about these things? Trueman here uses the term used by Samuel Taylor called *social imaginary*, "...the way we think about the world is not primarily by way of rational arguments based on first principles. It is much more intuitive than that. And that means that the story of the modern self is not simply the story of big ideas thought by profound thinkers. It is the story of how the way we intuit or image the world has come to be" (p. 29). With these terms being explained now we can explore more about ideas that we trace back to Descartes and Rousseau.

The second chapter is named "Romantic Roots" and it deals with ideas coming from Romantic thinkers, René Descartes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The first one, Descartes, puts authority on the inner life and inner feelings in the first place, while Rousseau goes further explaining in his works how we are our true selves only when we are aware of our inner life and the voice of nature. For him, we are born without original sin, sin is in society. To be free, we need to find our true selves, our inner person. Authors, writers, and thinkers of Romanticism wanted to connect with nature (society is already spoiled), to find true humanity. They would look into nature to find true morals. Trueman summarizes it, "In short, the Romantics grant authority to feelings, to that inner psychological space, that all human beings possess. And those feelings are first and foremost genuine, pristine, and true guides to who human beings are. It is only society, with its petty rivalries, its competitiveness, and its artificial sophistication, that twists, perverts, and distorts those feelings" (p. 46).

The writer moves on to focus on both Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. Chapter three named "Prometheus Unbound" focuses on Marx's and Nietzche's views on religion. Karl Marx, the materialist in comparison with Hegel who is an idealist, views economic relations as decisive regarding our view on our understanding of reality, and how we think may be different from time to time, just because of economic situation. He also builds on Feuerbach's critique of religion where "he sees religion as deriving from economic conditions. As a result, reli-

gious teachings must be understood in terms of those economic conditions" (p. 56). His understanding of religion is that it is a human creation, it prevents people from rebellion (here he talks against factory bosses and owners), and for people to be free to act - they need to see it as a false thing, and take action into their own hands. Nietzsche goes further, he wants to break free of the metaphysical myths, from moral boundaries, to have true freedom. For him, morality is about taste or aesthetics, and not about right and wrong. This probably sounds familiar to a modern man. Proof of Nietzsche's philosophy is found in the works of Oscar Wilde.

Chapter four named "Sexualizing Psychology, Politicizing Sex" focuses on Sigmund Freud who sees sex as the greatest happiness. The true realization of self, that is without morals, is in sexual pleasure. For Reich, "the existence of moral principles indicates that sexual needs are not being met. And in a world where sexual needs are foundational to identity, that means identities are being suppressed or denied. The game, therefore, is not to change those principles or merely loosen them. It is to abolish them in their entirety" (p. 85). Trueman says that sex become a political issue. Our identity is focused on its sexual part, which becomes the main thing of who we are. And if it is such an important thing, then it becomes politically normative. We no longer talk about sex and gender in natural terms and views but as part of our political battle, stance, and identity. This sounds even more familiar to us living in the post-modern context.

But have people been reading those philosophers and thinkers? When did these ideas become our reality and how? Trueman explains how we can trace ideas from thought to action in the fifth chapter, "The Revolt of the Masses." Trueman explores how technology helped us to become masters of power. He continues by exploring the revolt against traditional authority, such as the Church, family, and nation, and leads us to the topic of the loss of sacred order and the rise of personal opinions not constructed on rationality and authority. He also writes about the rise of contraception, pornography, and sex where sexual freedom is the idea and action that leads to true happiness, which then drives us home to elites, political, educational, and other spheres that hold power and provide a stage for expressive self.

In the sixth chapter named "Plastic People, Liquid World," Trueman continues with the explanation of selfhood in today's culture. He defines three general concepts that help us understand what is a human. These are the nature of personhood, politics of recognition, and the power of imagined communities. In the first one, the nature of personhood, the author explains sociological anthropology and how we act as individuals in society. As humans, we tend to be recognized, as belonging to some group, which leads us to the politics of recognition. He writes more than on the topic of imagined communities. We all tend to belong somewhere and to identify ourselves with something. With the coming of technology,

a lot of types of communities are on offer. We no longer identify with family and nation, but we create our communities where we have a chance to express ourselves and create our own identities. "Today, the self is entirely plastic, and the external world—right down to our bodies—is liquid, something that offers no firm ground upon which to build an identity" (p. 126). In this way, by making us see their victimhood as moral, the LGBTQ+ community becomes a loud dominant voice and narrative.

Trueman continues with the explanation of today's sexual revolution in the seventh chapter named "Sexual Revolution of LGBTQ+." Not everything in this community is perfect. Lesbians and gay people do not always stand with transgenderism. These groups do not share the same opinion about biological sex and gender explanation. Further, the author explains, how these things entered into politics with the document from 2006, named *The Yogyakarta Principles*, which are human rights protection rules about sex and gender for the world governments.

In the eighth chapter "Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness," the author explains the way how expressive individualism has led to the new definitions of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Sexual scandals are not stigmas anymore but are often praised. And because the sexual revolution has gone so wild and open, it is in direct opposition to the religion, in fact to Christianity and Judaism in the West. The problem is that tolerance will never be enough for the LGBTQ+ community, but the issue of equality. The psychological self-pattern of their identity shapes their political position in today's society. Freedom of speech (criticism) is lost, and it is viewed as hatred. This is best seen in the cancel culture movement, where people are being silenced if they are not in the same group as LGBTQ+ or other radical left-wing communities. Trueman states, "Freedom of speech and academic freedom are simply licenses to oppress and marginalize the weak. True freedom is found in closing down such traditional virtues and replacing them with a victim-centered authoritarianism" (p. 166). How to live in such a world? The author tries to encourage us as Christians in the last chapter.

Strangers in This Strange New World is a letter to Christians, to the pilgrims in this new society. First, we need to understand ourselves. We have our part in expressive individualism, our faith is personal, and our responsibility to the gospel message is personal. There is a Christian notion of expressive individualism connected with human dignity in God's order of things. Trueman teaches us to stay humble while examining ourselves and our beliefs while being cultivators of humility while we engage with those we do not have common ground. We can learn this from the ancient church and its difficult situation where the community and fellowship together with the development of theology played a significant part. He encourages us to look to older confessions of faith and to teach our churches and families the whole counsel of God while worshiping God and studying the Scriptures (we can turn to Psalms, which are expressive with emotions

and theology). Trueman also points out that we may find help in natural law and theology of the body. In the end, we do not despair, and neither we are optimistic. Things will get worse, for some time, but let's stay realistic, in the end, God wins, "... let the lamentation be the context for sharpening our identity as the people of God and our hunger for the great consummation that awaits at the marriage feast of the Lamb" (p. 187).

In conclusion, the book leaves a concise and very deep impact on the reader. Many times we do not think why some things in our societies are as they are. We do not think very often about the notion that ideas indeed have consequences. This book is full of proofs that leave us in wonder - where are we going with all the new selfhood concepts of humans and what consequences are we yet going to see? Carl Trueman does a perfect analysis for a normal reader to understand the times in which we live. His writing is very simple, and his style of bringing the discussion into the text at times may cause people to take notes and make bookmarks at many places in the book. Indeed, every word of this book is helpful for a Christian, or traditional person living in today's society.

Strange New World is a book that every leader should have a chance to read, especially European Christian leaders who are waiting for all the trends from the West to come to Europe in larger form. This book can help you understand and navigate how to find the way to be salt in this strange new world. Christians are confused, they do not know how to prepare for the coming trends and how to protect their families from the influence of the things mentioned above. My recommendation is, to get this book, read it, and share it with others, whoever you are, pastor or worker. This work is scholarly, but people should not be afraid. It is not written on a level that a layperson might always have a hard time reading. The book does point you to certain bibliographical references and these are worth checking. Readers might only sometimes stop and check on the internet some stuff that Trueman mentions. At the end of the book, there is an index and a short glossary. If someone needs to find more information about the topic of the book, that person might read a larger book *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. If you want to share this message with your church and friends, then this book would be a guiding book for understanding today's culture.

Matej Sakač

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