A NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING

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To
Cathy,
a priceless wife
and
praiseworthy woman of faith (Prov. 31:10, 30),
a disciple
abounding in good works and giving (Acts 9:36).
Without her loving encouragement and sacrifice,
this project would not have been completed.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of Matthew's Gospel the resurrected Christ gave a major order of business that He wanted His church[1] to be about in the time of His physical absence: "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Because of the prominence of this passage, and the structure of the Greek, which reveals "make disciples" to be the central command[2] of the Great Commission, it can be said that disciple making is of perennial relevance to the church. This is the task the Lord Jesus wanted to have done, and it must be carried out. It's as simple as that.

While discipling has not always been either a high priority or attained to a strong level of interest among God's people, that has not been the case in recent years. In 1974, in a Ph.D. dissertation at New York University,

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[1]Cf. the suggestive title of Robert D. Culver's study on this passage, "What is the Church's Commission?" Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 10 (Spring 1967):115-26.

[2]D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12 Vols., edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 8:595-96.

Alcorn wrote of the current "discipleship craze."[1] In 1979, in an article in Eternity magazine, Waterman detailed the rise of a discipleship trend or movement.[2] The accompanying avalanche of books, articles, cassette tapes, seminars, and church programs certainly reflected the truth of that statement. In retrospect, it could be said that, in many American evangelical circles, the 1970's were the decade of discipleship.

The Need for This Study

With all of the interest and motion, though, Calenberg's statement made in 1981 is highly ironic: "'Discipleship' has become one of those theological catch words or shibboleths which every card-carrying evangelical feels compelled to enthusiastically and repeatedly utter but which few have taken time to study and define biblically."[3] After a great deal of study, it is the firm conviction of the present writer that Calenberg is entirely too close to correct in his assessment. The following section will state a number of difficulties or deficiencies that, individually and collectively,

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[1]Wallace A. Alcorn, "The Biblical Concept of Discipleship as Education for Ministry" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1974), p. 15.

[2]David L. Waterman, "The Care and Feeding of Growing Christians," Eternity, September, 1979, p. 16.

[3]Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 1.

demonstrate the need for this dissertation-length treatment.

First, there is the problem of assumed understanding, which Calenberg alluded to. Many who are deeply interested in fulfilling the Great Commission simply assume the meanings of some very important concepts, without any collaborative study, and proceed to wide-reaching thought and action on such an unproven basis. Even more deplorable is the student or practitioner who reads his own preconceived notions or framework into key passages.[1] If, says Kaiser, a blessing comes from such twisting of Scripture, it is "in spite of the misinterpretation."[2]

Second, there is a major problem with competing understandings. Because most treatments of discipling are developed in a topical framework,[3] they are necessarily subjective, varying widely as to the particular writer's emphasis. It could almost be said that no two discipling "experts" think or do things alike, unless they are directly dependent on each other. The evangelical sector must move beyond this confusion.

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[1]This writer has critiqued such a procedure in A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "A Theological Evaluation of 'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," Journal of Pastoral Practice 5 (1982):13.

[2]Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Legitimate Hermeneutics" in Inerrancy, edited by Norman L. Geisler, p. 129.

[3]E.g. Carl W. Wilson, With Christ in the School of Disciple Building. Although the work of Robert E. Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism, has been a model of topical thought for many later works, it was written for another purpose before the current trend and is, thus, a less valid example.

Third, the vast bulk of previous studies have been either overly scholarly or overly practical. While there have been many scholarly journal articles and monographs written in recent years on specialized aspects of discipleship and discipling, the practical ramifications have not been explored to any degree. On the other hand, the mass of practical publications suffer from lack of in-depth study, as discussed above. Because the practitioner's interest is application they have strongly tended to get the cart (of application) before the horse (of adequate interpretation). This treatment seeks to balance interpreting and application to a significant degree.

Fourth, there has been, even in scholarly circles, inadequate specialized study in certain areas. A recent article by Siker-Geiseler documents the surprising paucity of studies done on disciples and discipleship in John's Gospel,[1] for instance. There also have been no major works accounting for the troublesome absence of "disciple" from the New Testament after Acts 21.[2] It is hoped that the present study will partially redress some of these deficiencies.

[1]Jeffrey S. Siker-Geiseler, "Disciples and Discipleship in the Fourth Gospel", Studia Biblica et Theologica 10 (October 1980):200.

[2]Calenberg, p. 210. does speak briefly to the problem. For a concise version of the present writer's view, see Luter, "Discipleship and the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (July-September 1980):267-73.

Fifth, many of the scholarly treatments on this subject are Continental or liberal in orientation. This dissertation seeks to utilize European scholarship, where applicable, but to adapt it to the questions of interpretation and application within the American evangelical context. Similarly, while many liberal studies have been consulted,[1] few are of significant value for evangelical thought and practice.

Sixth, there is presently no comprehensive evangelical study available on making disciples. The dissertation by Calenberg at Grace Theological Seminary in 1981 on the related issue of "the New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" is the closest. However, Calenberg used a systematic theology methodology, while the present work is a biblical theology, and necessarily more extensive in scope.

Seventh, the writer has found no significant scholarly treatment that has deeply probed the relationship between discipling and the church. This has been a concern of the present writer for some time,[2] and this dissertation has, as a partial

[1]See the Bibliography for the significant number of studies, especially journal articles, contributed by liberal or non-English speaking writers that are tangential to this dissertation.

[2]The writer's first thoughts on the subject are found in "Discipleship and the Church." Others who have briefly developed the relationship are Ronald A. Jenson, "Gearing the Church for Discipleship" (Unpublished D.Min. dissertation, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974); Jenson and Jim Stephens, Dynamics of Church Growth, pp. 157-66; and Roger Hubbard and Jerome C. Wells, "An Approach to Body Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.M. project, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976).

objective, such a comparative study, for purposes of theological and practical synthesis.

After the preceding elaboration, it must be concluded that another full-length treatment of making disciples is warranted. However, before proceeding, it should also be stated that this dissertation is written from a mild dispensational perspective, and as Smith writes, "The Great Commission has been abused by many in that it has not been given the necessary and correct dispensational treatment. There is the need to put the Commission in proper focus between the two advents of Christ."[1] Thus, the final need for this study has to do with the understanding and practice of making disciples for a dispensationalist.

The Purpose of This Study

This dissertation has as its objective a comprehensive study of the impact that the Great Commission to "make disciples," given at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, had on the entirety of the New Testament. It is conceived as a contribution to American evangelical scholarship. However, the important practical implications of such a subject will also be considered at various points. Further, the relationship between discipling and the church will be studied

[1]Darrell Smith, "A Development of the Great Commission" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967), p. 3.

in an attempt to define the theological and practical proximity of the two New Testament concepts.

Methodology of This Study

There are many ways that a study of this type could be developed. However, most of these would clearly not be adequate to accomplish the purpose stated above. Before explaining the method that will be utilized in the dissertation, however, several deficient approaches will be briefly discussed for the purpose of contrast.

Inadequate methodologies

A common method for such studies, but one that would fall short of adequately accomplishing the objective, is the topical approach. By virtue of its use of categories superimposed by the writer, it tends to be highly selective and, thus, imbalanced. Because of the breadth of subject matter -- the New Testament -- and the diversity in literary genre and authors, the topical study must be rejected as not meeting the need for such a balanced comprehensive study.

Another specialized approach that is inadequate for studying the New Testament concept of discipling would be to focus on one or more individual people.[1] Besides the tendency of such a study to be imbalanced in regard to the whole New

[1]See the otherwise helpful study, especially in regard to background, of William J. Petersen, The Discipling of Timothy.

Testament revelation, it also should be noted that the singular "disciple" is only used some 10 percent of the time.[1] Thus, an individualistic study of discipling certainly would not meet the objective of a comprehensive treatment.

It is also inadequate to focus too much on one passage or section, then universalize the derived principles. Even though it is a crucial pericope, such a near-sighted focus on the "carry your cross" passage[2] in Luke 14 can obscure a great deal of disparate data having to do with the subject of discipleship.

Equally lacking is the approach taken when only one gospel is studied. Even though this method does have to come to an overall understanding of diverse factors within the particular book being examined,[3] it naturally neglects the revelation in the other three Gospels. Nor does the study of two or three of the Gospels escape the same methodological criticism.

Further, it is deficient to study the view of just the gospels, even when all four are carefully taken into

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[1]Of some 265 uses, only 28 are singular. In Matthew only 3 of 74 instances are singular; in Mark, none of 45; in Luke, 3 of 38; in John, 16 of 66, but 14 of those refer to "the beloved disciple" (see Chapter VI); in Acts, 5 of 30.

[2]E.g. Ralph Anderegg, "Discipleship in Luke 14:25-35," (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979).

[3]E.g. Heber F. Peacock, "Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark," Review and Expositor 75 (Fall 1978):555-64.

account. In order to understand the overall meaning of discipling in the New Testament, and especially its application for today, it is absolutely necessary to find out what discipling was meant to be on this side of the Cross and Resurrection and Pentecost theological watershed.[1] Since the Gospels only chronicle the historical situation up to the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, a wider study is necessary.

Finally, even though the term disciple is not found after Acts 21,[2] it is still not sufficient just to study discipling in the gospels and Acts. If the Great Commission is to "make disciples" all the way "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20), it is necessary to explain the impact of Christ's command upon the whole New Testament. Besides, to study only the first five books of the New Testament would be to ignore twenty-two, in which the doctrine of the church is developed in its majestic centrality.

Proper, comprehensive methodology

Nothing less than a full biblical theology of the New Testament is sufficient for the needs of a comprehensive New Testament study of discipling. Helpful general models

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[1]This writer's terminology in "'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," pp. 11-21.

[2]W. H. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance of the Greek New Testament, pp. 608-11.

for such an approach are the works of Charles C. Ryrie[1] and Donald Guthrie.[2]

Ryrie defines Biblical Theology in the following way: "Biblical theology is that branch of theological science which deals systematically with the historically conditioned progress of the self-revelation of God as deposited in the Bible."[3] He continues, "New Testament Biblical Theology . . . is chiefly concerned with the progress of doctrine as revealed through the various human authors."[4]

Thus, the present treatment is an attempt to observe the historical progress seen within the New Testament, especially in the shift from the close of the Old Covenant context, seen in the gospels, to the New Covenant, seen in Acts and the epistles. This will be done by studying the writings of the "various human authors" of the New Testament.

Ryrie also writes, ". . . Biblical Theology is foundational to Systematic Theology."[5] Thus, a study utilizing the comprehensive methodology of an overall New Testament theology, is also necessary in order to understand the systematic doctrinal implications of discipling, especially in relation to the church.

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[1]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament.

[2]Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology.

[3]Ryrie, p. 12.

[4]Ryrie, p. 19.

[5]Ryrie, p. 17.

Arrangement of the study

In a comprehensive New Testament Biblical theology, the categories have to do with the different New Testament authors. Some of these, such as Paul, Peter, and John, are fairly obvious. However, such a breakdown of a chapter per writer would have fragmented the dissertation into too small pieces.

The following order of development was selected as a way to display the diversity of the New Testament writings, while also maintaining a small enough number of chapters to work with toward a comprehensive understanding. Following the present introductory segment, the first chapter will deal with the theology of discipling in the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Next will be the treatment of Luke-Acts. The third chapter will study the theology of discipling for Paul. After that will be Peter's theology of making disciples. Chapter V will handle James, Hebrews, and Jude. The last chapter will present John's theology of discipling. The concluding chapter will recapitulate the findings of the various chapters, then draw wider theological and practical implications from the synthesized data.

Distinctive Features of This Study

Two points should be discussed prior to moving on to the body of this dissertation. First, there are several unique factors in the way that this work is divided and

arranged. Second, several helpful definitions and distinctions should be clarified in advance of encountering the particular term in the middle of a technical discussion in one of the chapters.

Division and arrangement

Generally, if there is a division made between the Gospels in biblical theological inquiry, the three synoptic gospels are separated from the Gospel of John.[1] However, in this study only Matthew and Mark will be looked at together. The reason for such a division is so that both of Luke's writings, the third gospel and Acts, can be studied in a single chapter. The helpfulness of such an approach is that it allows the opportunity to compare the perspective of the pre-Cross narratives of the gospel with the post-Pentecost situation of Acts.

Also, in the chapter dealing with Paul, the passages in Acts that chronicle his conversion and ministry will be studied in detail, along with the Pauline Epistles. This approach allows the opportunity to compare what is seen of Paul's ministry in Acts with what is read about it in the epistles.

The chapter on Peter will begin by looking at his training as an apostle in the gospels, then look at his

[1]See both Ryrie, Biblical Theology, and Guthrie, New Testament Theology, for uses of this standard division.

position in the infant church and his ministry in Acts 1-12. The viewpoint expressed in the epistles will serve as a helpful comparison with what is learned from the gospels and Acts.

The chapter that combines the contributions of James, Hebrews, and Jude occurred because they are the only other New Testament writers who penned just one book. Thus, and because of the relatively small amount of relevant data in any of the three, it is not thought necessary to devote a full-length chapter to James, Hebrews, or Jude.

The chapter on John looks at all the Johannine writings in the New Testament: John's Gospel, his Epistles, and Revelation. Often, the Apocalypse is separated off for special treatment because of its eschatological content.[1] However, there is no need to do so in this study.

Definition

Because the meaning of "disciple" (μαθητής) is simply "learner, pupil, adherent" and "almost equal to Christian" in Acts, according to Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich,[2] and nothing more can be said without looking at the particular usage in context, the meaning of disciple will be generally handled in a broad, general way. Uses like John 6:66 and 19:38, on the one hand, reveal that "disciple" does not connote commitment in and of itself. On the other hand, a passage like

[1]See Guthrie for such a division.

[2]W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, pp. 486-87.

Luke 14:27 requires a contextual understanding of total commitment for the "disciple."

Further, a distinction between discipleship and discipling, or making disciples, is considered both necessary and helpful. For the purposes of this dissertation, discipleship will generally be understood as the relationship between the learner and his Lord, not the frequent student-teacher view often taken in contemporary circles. On the other hand, discipling is seen as the carrying out of the steps of the Great Commission, as will be substantiated in Chapter I.

The reason for this re-definition of discipleship versus discipling is because of an additional, but theologically crucial, category that is seldom considered in this regard. It could be called "leadership training,"[1] or "technical discipleship".[2] The importance of the category has to do with separating off the biblically unique features of Christ training the Twelve apostles to be the foundation of the New Testament church (Eph. 2:20) from the wider teaching and training Christ intended in making disciples. Such a precise theological observation led Eims to see Acts as the proper focus of study for discipling with the gospels as the source for data on leadership training.[3]

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[1]As this writer has done in "'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," pp. 17-21.

[2]Jenson and Stephens, Dynamics of Church Growth, pp. 158-59.

[3]Leroy Eims, Disciples in Action, p. 15.

To summarize this final section, "disciple" will be broadly defined, unless found to be otherwise in context. Discipleship will refer to the relationship between the believer and Christ, whether present physically, as in the gospels, or absent, as in Acts and the epistles. Disciple making, or discipling, will be defined as the outworking of the Matthean Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). Finally, leadership training will usually refer to the unique training of the Twelve by Christ, unless otherwise stated.

CHAPTER I

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN MATTHEW AND MARK

It is natural, in beginning a comprehensive study of what the New Testament teaches on the subject of discipling, to focus initially on the gospels. Since the overwhelming majority of the uses of the central terms involved in such research are in the gospels,[1] they are the obvious point of departure in such a treatment.

There is, however, an even more compelling reason why the sifting of the New Testament data on discipling should start with the gospels, and, specifically, Matthew. Though there are apparently distinctive programmatic statements of what is often called "the Great Commission" in each gospel (i.e., Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20[2]), it is in Matthew that you encounter that crucial command of the

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[1]Of the approximately 270 uses of the noun μαθητής and the verb μαθητεύω in the New Testament, over 240 are in the Gospels (W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek New Testament, pp. 608-611). Also, "the distinctive statistical evidence shows that the special use of ἀκολουθέω is strictly limited to discipleship of Christ; apart from a single reference in Revelation it is found exclusively in the four Gospels", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament s.v. "ἀκολουθέω" by Gerhard Kittel, 1:213.

[2]See the helpful discussion in George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, pp. 172-198.

resurrected Christ: "Make disciples of all nations" (28:19, NASB).

Without that climactic imperative, discipling would still be widely studied because of the widespread presence of the nomenclature in the gospels and, to a lesser degree, in Acts. But, it is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus' decisive direction in Matthew 28:19-20 that adds the powerful sense of urgency to the study and application of discipling. There, in no uncertain terms, Christ states that the process of making disciples is to take place "even to the end of the age" (v. 20). This is what the Lord wants to find His people doing when He comes for them.

Thus, any careful and valid study of discipling must, of necessity, revolve around the hub of Matthew 28:19-20. Its imperatival force and positioning as the conclusion of the first gospel and, implicitly, the commencement of the post-Resurrection epoch in which Christ's ἐκκλησία would be built (Matt. 16:18), make it the unrivaled crux of interpretation on disciple making.

In regard to this pericope, much more will be said later in the chapter. However, before primary exegetical and theological reflection can be properly pursued, a pressing question in the realm of methodology must be discussed.

Present Ferment in Evangelical Gospels Research

Evangelical scholars and pastors alike have, for the most part, always interacted cautiously with the methodology and conclusions of the varied successive types of historical critical study. Many helpful insights have been the fruit of this watchful endeavor. Nevertheless, there is continuing reticence about fully embracing any of these approaches. Thus, it is somewhat shocking to read Stephen Smalley's words in the recent broadly evangelical volume, New Testament Interpretation: "Clearly we must use redaction criticism in any serious study of the Gospels."[1]

While it may appear that Smalley's conclusion is a sweeping overstatement, he may be closer to understanding the present state of affairs in many parts of evangelicalism than most realize. For example, he would have a significant case if we looked at more recent significant evangelical publications in the area of synoptic (gospels) studies.

The impact of redaction criticism on contemporary evangelical synoptic research

It is probably not going too far to say that the "cutting edge" of more conservative synoptic scholarship has been basically preoccupied with redaction critical concerns in the past decade or so. Besides a plethora of more

[1]In I. Howard Marshall, editor, New Testament Interpretation, p. 192.

or less technical journal articles,[1] the 1982 national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society was centered around the theme of biblical criticism, with special attention being given to redaction criticism.[2]

Perhaps even more telling is the fact that three of the few major commentaries on the synoptic gospels that have come from the evangelical ranks have been handled from the redaction critical perspective. Thus, if an exegete or practitioner is to utilize the most up-to-date conservative gospels scholarship, he has little choice but to wrestle with redactionist assumptions, methodology, and conclusions.

The first of these influential volumes to appear was William Lane's The Gospel According to Mark in the New International Commentary series in 1974. Lane's perspective in that work is explained in these words: "That redaction criticism is a valid hermeneutical approach to understanding the text of Mark and the intention of the evangelist has been assumed in the commentary."[3] Though his conclusions were, for the most part, quite cautious, the enthusiastic

[1]Besides publications like the Journal of Biblical Literature, where such might be expected, a good deal of space in both The Evangelical Quarterly and the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, as well as other significant periodicals, has been given over to redaction critical studies.

[2]The title or theme of the meeting was "Biblical Criticism and the Evangelical." It was held at Northeastern Bible College, Essex Falls, New Jersey, December 16-18, 1982.

[3]William L. Lane, The Gospel According to Mark, p. 2.

reception of Lane's book in conservative circles still helped thrust redaction critical thought and method toward the center of the evangelical mainstream.

In 1978 I. Howard Marshall's The Gospel of Luke was published as the inaugural volume in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series. Again, Marshall's exegetical insights were judicious, and his work was widely applauded as a significant contribution to the literature. But, in his prefatory remarks, Marshall was unapologetic about his use of redaction criticism in producing his lengthy treatment: "A modern commentator must inevitably make use of these critical methods, and the present commentary attempts to assess and elucidate the Gospel in the light of these new aids to study."[1]

Most recently, in 1982 Robert Gundry stunned the evangelical world with his controversial (and confusing) Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art.[2] The dust jacket of that work proclaims: "One of the most significant aspects of this study is the number of startling new interpretations made possible through Gundry's consistent application of redaction-critical methods."[3]

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[1]I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 9.

[2]Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art.

[3]Ibid., dust jacket.

Though the long term value of the work of Lane, Marshall, Gundry, and others of like redaction critical persuasion, is presently uncertain, this brief discussion is still sufficient to show that the current heir to the throne of historical critical "orthodoxy" must be recognized and reckoned with in gospels study today. That being the case, it is appropriate to move on to discuss what redaction criticism is and what its major strengths and weaknesses are, before evaluating its implications for the study of discipling in the gospels.

The meaning and background of redaction criticism

In the interest of establishing a wider consensus as to the meaning of redaction criticism several sources (with varying degrees of caution or appreciation toward the emerging discipline) will be consulted. None of the descriptions is identical, but each is helpful to an overall understanding.

From a liberal point of view, Richard Soulen defines redaction criticism as ". . . a method of Biblical criticism which seeks to lay bare the theological perspective of a Biblical writer by analyzing the editorial (redactional) and compositional techniques and interpretations employed by him in shaping and framing the written and/or oral traditions at hand."[1]

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[1]Richard N. Soulen, Handbook of Biblical Criticism, p. 165.

Secondly, from a British evangelical viewpoint, Smalley writes:

> The term "redaction" in Gospel criticism describes the editorial work carried out by the evangelists on their sources when they composed the Gospels . . . the detection of the evangelists' creative contribution in all its aspects to the Christian tradition which they transmit.[1]

Finally, to draw a clear, summarial contrast between the goal of redaction criticism and that of its critical forebears, the words of Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry are to the point: "The theology of the evangelists distinguished from that of the Christian community is the primary focus of redaction criticism."[2]

Thus, in strong distinction from the normative evangelical approach of emphasizing the similarity and unity among the gospels, redaction criticism plays up the diversity of these books, the creative, editorial hand of each evangelist. This tendency, as shall be seen later, has massive ramifications.

But, that this is a valid approach to the Biblical text (up to a point) is demonstrated by David L. Turner in pointing out the obvious selectivity of at least two of the gospel writers as elaborated in Luke 1:1-4 and John 20:30-31

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[1]Stephen Smalley, in New Testament Interpretation, p. 181.

[2]Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels (NASB), p. 287.

and 21:25.[1] According to Turner's reasoning, whenever one studies the "argument" of one of the gospels, or its particular theology (as opposed to a Synoptic theology), a mild form of redactional methodology is being used, albeit unwittingly.

That being true, not a few conservative scholars still have grave misgivings about anything above such minimal wielding of such a critical tool because of its supposedly "tainted" liberal background. To help explain this questionable ancestry, Lane, under the heading "A New Direction for Marcan Studies," relates the birth of redaction criticism in German liberal theological circles.

> It was the interruption in literary publications during the Second World War that opened the way for fresh questions and a rethinking of synoptic studies. Among the new names whose appearances signalled a shift in emphasis in the approach to the Gospels were G. Bornkamm (Matt.), H. Conzelmann (Luke), and W. Marxsen (Mark).[2]

Smalley sums up the basic contributions of these three pioneers in the following way: "Bornkamm's work on Matthew marked the rise of redaction criticism; Conzelmann's treatment of Luke-Acts "marked a watershed in Gospel studies and an important advance in the method of redaction criticism; Marxsen, in his handling of Mark, essentially coined the

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[1]David L. Turner, "Evangelicals, Redaction Criticism, and the Current Inerrancy Crisis", Grace Theological Journal 4:2 (1983):264.

[2]Lane, Mark, p. 3.

title "Redaktionsgeschichte"[1] (i.e. redaction history).

In more recent years, after a time lag due to the need for translation of such pace-setting works into English to allow widespread interaction, as well as the already-mentioned caution of evangelicals toward liberal theories, redaction criticism is being increasingly utilized (and becoming more controversial) among conservative scholars. There remains considerable disagreement as to how much the discipline is inextricably linked to at least some of the liberal presuppositions of its originators as well as to those of its kindred forms of biblical criticism. Further, a lack of consensus on criteria for its use, its strengths and weaknesses, and astoundingly varied conclusions may very well make redaction criticism a major evangelical battleground for the remainder of the decades of the 1980's.[2]

A mid-stream assessment of redaction criticism

It is exceedingly difficult to accurately assess the degree to which prejudgments color any methodology, and this is no less true of redaction criticism. For example, Smalley, an optimistic exponent of the redaction critical method, ties it closely to even more suspect form criticism in writing, "These critical methods belong together and any sharp distinction drawn between them must necessarily therefore be

[1]Smalley, New Testament Interpretation, p. 183.

[2]Turner, "Current Inerrancy Crisis," pp. 263, 285-288.

artifical."[1] On the other hand, Grant Osborne, a somewhat more cautious practitioner, argues that it is possible to completely sever the method from its questionable assumptions, using the venerable Ned Stonehouse as an (anachronistic) example of one who succeeded at doing just that.[2]

While Osborne's stance is understandable in light of the possibility of "guilt by association" (with other forms of criticism) in the eyes of other evangelicals, Smalley's admission would seem to be closer to the mark. Similarly, Graham Stanton warns that we all need to be aware of our starting assumptions: "The presuppositions adopted either consciously or subconsciously by the interpreter are far more influential in New Testament scholarship than disagreements over method."[3]

To reinforce this point, it is helpful to take note of the sobering example D. A. Carson appends to his discussion of redaction criticism in the recent volume Scripture and Truth. There he tells of a naive young evangelical scholar who claimed to be employing redaction criticism as a strictly neutral tool, with no presuppositions regarding

[1]Smalley, New Testament Interpretation, p. 181.

[2]Grant R. Osborne, "The Evangelical and Redaction Criticism: Critique and Methodology", Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 22:4 (December 1979):307-9.

[3]Graham N. Stanton, "Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism" in New Testament Interpretations, p. 60.

inerrancy and related doctrines.[1]

Where will such blissful "openmindedness" in the name of scholarship lead? To those who do not recognize the awesome determinative power prejudgment can have on one's studied conclusions, Stanton sagely observes,

> The attempt to interpret the New Testament from a neutral detached standpoint . . . has largely been abandoned. At the height of its popularity, this approach had its own widely shared assumptions, those of classical liberalism.[2]

If Stanton's assertion is even minimally valid, it would seem that anything less than a strong conscious break with the root assumptions of redaction critical thought is asking for trouble.

On the question of criteria for implementing redaction criticism, Osborne has done a commendable job in discussing plausible "external" and "internal" criteria.[3] Interestingly, though, in a review that concludes the recently published New Approaches to Jesus and the Gospels, Royce G. Gruenler repeatedly takes to task Gundry's commentary on Matthew at exactly this same point: lack of controls. He likens Gundry's

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[1]Donald A. Carson, "Redaction Criticism: On the Legitimacy and Illegitimacy of a Literary Tool", in Donald A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, editors, Scripture and Truth, p. 141.

[2]Stanton, New Testament Interpretation, p. 66.

[3]Osborne, "Redaction Criticism," pp. 315-321.

procedure to "a skier racing out of control down a rock-strewn mountainside."[1]

All in all, we do well to hear the caution of Colin J. Hemer:

> I question the feasibility of enriching exposition by using form and redaction critical techniques . . . . This seems overoptimistic, for these techniques are themselves too uncertain in their application. Unless such a method is controlled by very strict judgment, it could become in practice an invitation to a new kind of speculative eisegesis.[2]

As to strengths and weaknesses of the approach, lengthy lists could be produced on both sides of the ledger.[3] Without going into such detail, however, it can be summed up that redaction criticism makes undoubted contributions by (1) treating the gospels whole and (2) focusing on the distinctive intention and emphasis of the particular writer. On the negative side, (1) the haunting question of assumptions, (2) the question of how much "creativity" in composition the various Evangelists exercised,[4] and (3) the subtlety

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[1]Royce G. Gruenler, New Approaches to Jesus and the Gospels, p. 246.

[2]C. J. Hemer, Review of New Testament Interpretation in The Evangelical Quarterly, 50:4 (October-December 1978): 243; for a different view see S. Craig Glickman, The Temptation Account in Matthew and Luke, pp. 498-99.

[3]E.g. Smalley, New Testament Interpretation, pp. 191-192; Thomas and Gundry, Harmony, pp. 291-293.

[4]This would appear to be a central, if not the central, question in the recent heated debate in the Evangelical Theological Society over Robert Gundry's conclusion regarding Matthew. See also the conclusions of Glickman, Temptation Account, pp. 498-99.

and subjectivity (as opposed to Hemer's "very strict judgment") individual interpreters bring to the text are more or less agreed upon. Such problems account for the bulk of "the wide variation in results"[1] from using redaction critical methodology.

In conclusion, it is far too early to adequately judge the long-term usefulness of redaction criticism for evangelical gospel studies. However, the recent furor over Robert Gundry's use (or abuse) of the method in drawing conclusions about Matthew that were effectively censured by the Evangelical Theological Society, culminating in a request for his resignation,[2] stands as a warning to those who sanguinely employ the technique. It is sincerely hoped that others will not likewise pit theology versus history, with such potentially disastrous bearing on the evangelical faith.

Some implications of a redaction critical approach for the study of discipling

Perhaps the biggest ramification of using redaction criticism as a tool to understand disciple making in the gospels is that it tends to reduce the outcome of such study

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[1]The phrase is Smalley's, New Testament Interpretation, p. 191.

[2]Thirty-fifth annual meeting of the E.T.S., Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas, Texas, December 17, 1983.

to "a basic perception of Jesus and his teaching."[1] If the gospels are as much theology as history (or more), it is difficult, at best, to isolate how Jesus actually discipled and how He taught that it should be done. Instead, Matthew's teaching on discipling is viewed over against Mark's, or Luke's, or John's. The actual expression of Christ's thought on this subject, as well as His related activity, is well nigh hidden behind the individual theological concerns of each Evangelist.

Relatedly, this heavy emphasis on theological diversity that generally characterizes redaction criticism basically undercuts any classical "harmony of the gospels." From a convinced evangelical redactionist perspective, Robert Guelich writes, "We must recognize the impossibility of writing a detailed history of the life and teaching of Jesus."[2] Since students of discipling have typically drawn on the harmony methodology in order to reconstruct "The Training of the Twelve",[3] as well as Christ's wider discipling ministry, such a change in outlook immediately renders most previous thinking on discipling obsolete.

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[1]Robert Guelich, "The Gospels: Portraits of Jesus and His Ministry," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 24:2 (June 1981):124.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Cf. the enormously influential older volume by A. B. Bruce, The Training of the Twelve.

This is a significant dilemma. If this implication is traced out fully, the student or practitioner must choose between a vague portrait of how the Lord Jesus related to His disciples, or a more specific, but perhaps drastically rearranged, presentation by one or another of the Gospel writers.

Which is the better choice? Actually, both options are discouraging when viewed through the eyes of the common topical study approach to discipling. The gleanings of the first option are too imprecise to be of much help in understanding how to make disciples. The other avenue illuminates only how Matthew or Mark wished to portray discipling. However, this in no way helps the student decide which gospel's theology of discipling is normative for ministry today.

It is worth asking if one can find a proper basis upon which to choose "I'm of Matthew", or "I'm or Mark", or "I'm of Luke" in regard to discipling. Is such a choice fundamentally different from the factions ("I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos", etc.) seen in 1 Corinthians 1 and 3?

Another implication that emerges from the application of redaction critical thought to the Gospels has to do with the blurring of progressive revelation.[1] If the Evangelists

[1]For a more practical handling of the bearing of progressive revelation on the study of discipling see A. B. Luter, Jr., "A Theological Evaluation of 'Christ Model' Disciple Making", Journal of Pastoral Practice 5:4 (1982): 14ff.

substantially intermingle theology and history, as redaction criticism affirms, it would appear that we have an unsettling mixture of post-Pentecost theological perspective superimposed upon that which seemingly purports to tell of the historical life, ministry, and theology of Jesus Christ. In other words, there is a strange blend of the actual events and teaching of Christ with the anachronistic theology of the writer, which is placed on Jesus's lips.

Now, such an outlook would not create difficulties if the development of Scripture was along the lines of complete continuity or unity. That is, if the Bible was a revelational "flat plane," there would be no tension. But such is not a widely championed position today.

Not only contemporary dispensationalists like Elliott E. Johnson,[1] but even respected thinkers in covenant theology circles such as Meredith Kline,[2] admit a significant degree of discontinuity between the theology of the Old Covenant, under which Jesus ministered, and that of the New Covenant, under which the Evangelists penned their respective gospels.

While not said dogmatically, it would appear that there are potentially disastrous consequences for the

[1]Elliott E. Johnson, "Hermeneutics and Dispensationalism" in Walvoord: A Tribute, edited by Donald K. Campbell, pp. 248-49, 250-52.

[2]Meredith Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority, pp. 107-8.

bedrock concept of progressive revelation that arise from wearing redaction critical "glasses" while studying the gospels. Relatedly, in an older, but still valuable discussion, Robert Traina states,

> In the exegesis of the Scriptures, it must be realized that the divine self-disclosure which they embody partakes of the element of progression. Not only is this true in regard to the movement from the Old to the New Testament, but also in regard to the revelation found within the two testaments.[1]

Along a very similar line of thought Ramm affirms, "Even in the New Testament there is a division between the events prior to Pentecost and those after Pentecost." He continues, "Therefore, unless this principle of progression is recognized there can be no clear exegesis of Scripture.[2]

If there remains even a substantial kernel of truth in these two statements, it seems unlikely that the muddied water of heavily redacted gospels would easily yield "clear exegesis." What objective criteria can be employed to discern when the Gospel writer is merely describing a historical event or "pure" teaching of Jesus that was given in the twilight of the Old Covenant versus when Matthew or Mark overlays his own New Covenant thought patterns and interpretations? At this point, unfortunately, it is basically one scholar's opinion against another's.

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[1]Robert Traina, Methodical Bible Study, p. 156.

[2]Bernard Ramm, Hermeneutics, p. 23.

That introduces a fourth implication of embracing redaction critical concerns in the study of discipling. The problem of subjectivity and the danger of "speculative exegesis" (Hemer) do not bode well when forced to co-exist with the widely varying approaches to analyzing the differences in wording, content, and arrangement in the individual gospels. Nothing less than a massive, and constant, literary "changing of the guard" lies immediately ahead, if redaction criticism is widely accepted in evangelical circles. Certainly, it could be hoped that the wealth of older pre-redactionist and non-redactionist works would maintain their usefulness. However, it seems more likely that the new wave of scholarship would view previous works in the field as outmoded relics of an unenlightened era prior to the dawning of redaction criticism. Further, considering the frequent, significant disagreements among redaction critical devotees, is it not probable that there would be an endless multiplying of essays and commentaries in order to have represented in print all the relatively plausible options on the various passages?

A fifth ramification has to do with the almost universal acceptance of Marcan priority by redaction critical advocates.[1] Interestingly, Osborne freely admits, "The priority

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[1]James Breckenridge, "Evangelical Implications of Matthean Priority", Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 26:1 (March 1983):117.

of Mark . . . can no longer be considered a given."[1] Thus, it is ironic and disquieting that, at a time when most redaction critics are assuming the priority of Mark to be a solid methodological springboard for their studies, there are more and more plausible attacks on this critical "sacred cow." For example, from widely varying perspectives Lowe,[2] Thomas,[3] Farmer,[4] Dyer,[5] and Breckenridge[6] have each levelled blasts against Marcan priority that deserve hard answers.

With such a factor in mind, it must be realized that it is quite possible that the redaction critical line of thought could gain the ascendancy in even evangelical gospels studies for, say, a few years, but then be unceremoniously overturned by either a new critical methodological fad, as has happened before, or even by a reversal of the present critical consensus on the priority of Mark. While redaction criticism could, theoretically, assume Matthean priority, and still go about its business, it would certainly produce far

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[1]Osborne, "Redaction Criticism", p. 315.

[2]Malcolm Lowe, "The Demise of Arguments from Order for Marcan Priority", Novum Testamentum 24:1 (January 1982): 27-36.

[3]Robert L. Thomas, "An Investigation of the Agreements between Matthew and Luke Against Mark", Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 19:2 (Spring 1976):103-112.

[4]William R. Farmer, Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture, and Canon.

[5]Charles Dyer, "Do the Synoptics Depend on Each Other?" Bibliotheca Sacra 138 (July-September 1981):230-245.

[6]Breckenridge, "Matthean Priority", pp. 117-121.

different and, probably, less drastic conclusions.[1] Thus, to adopt redaction criticism in the study of discipling, with its almost unanimous allegiance to the priority of Mark's Gospel, may not only be setting oneself up for a fall, but also for an almost total reorientation in the aftermath.

In conclusion, it is something of an understatement to say that the application of redaction critical methodology to the subject of discipling in the Gospels would have far-reaching consequences. The minimizing of the ability to understand the historical flow of Christ's ministry, the demise of classical gospel harmonies, the blurring of progressive revelation, the morass of subjective opinion, and an overconfidence in Marcan priority should be enough implications to convince anyone with evangelical convictions to proceed with extreme caution, even if they are not enough to persuade him to set aside the full-blown variety of application of redaction criticism.

Besides these direct ramifications for the study of discipling from the gospels, it is worthy of note that redaction criticism and other forms of critical study that heavily emphasize the diversity of the scriptural revelation at the expense of its unity tend to imply that it is illegitimate to attempt to forge an overall New Testament theology or a systematic theology.[2] If such a view is valid, the present

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[1]Ibid., p. 121.

[2]D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology" in Scripture and Truth, pp. 70-71.

treatment is automatically judged to be out of bounds. Accordingly, only a limited use of redactional insights and an overt attempt to balance the unquestioned diversity of the various portions of the New Testament with their overall unity and harmony will be the working position of the remainder of this treatment of discipling.

The Uniqueness of Christ's Ministry of Discipling

In turning to inquire how Matthew and Mark present the disciple-making ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is helpful initially to lay out the popular model that is accepted (often assumed subconsciously) by many evangelicals today. Carl Wilson succinctly presents the basic logic of what the present writer has called elsewhere 'the Christ model'[1] for discipling in the following way:

> It is my conviction that Jesus and His apostles had a program for about three and a half years that formed the foundation for future growth to maturity and for the basic skills for carrying out a ministry . . . . The disciples would have intuitively used the same approach in building their own disciples as Jesus used with them and the Seventy.[2]

Certainly such an explanation appears sensible and attractive. However, as shall be seen, it is a dramatic oversimplification that is more misleading than not. Such an attempt to virtually reproduce intact the ministry of

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[1]Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple Making," pp. 11-21.

[2]Carl W. Wilson, With Christ in the School of Disciple Building, pp. 60, 69.

discipling seen in Matthew and Mark is rendered implausible by a host of exegetical, theological, and practical problems.[1] These factors will be focused on in the next two sections.

The uniqueness of Christ's person and place in the biblical revelation

While it must be admitted there are aspects of the Christian life in which Jesus Christ is to serve as the believer's model (e.g., 1 Peter 2:21ff.; 1 John 2:6), it is short-sighted for anyone to expect to essentially duplicate what Jesus did in His discipling ministry. As Litfin has said, "Never are we given any sort of blanket statement about Jesus' example that would suggest, 'Whatever Jesus did, you should do.'"[2] There are very good reasons for such a conclusion. Jesus was the unique God-Man, sinless and all-knowing. And, if He did not possess "all the spiritual gifts," so to speak, he certainly functioned with total effectiveness in every situation in which He is seen in the gospels. No finite human, regardless of maturity level, can claim anything beyond a marginal similarity in such areas.

This brief discussion serves to sensitize those who would study Jesus' discipling ministry for clues as to how

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[1]For a slightly different discussion see Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple Making," pp. 11-21.

[2]A. Duane Litfin, "Drawing Principles of Personal Evangelism from John 4: A Case Study in the Use of Narrative Literature," Unpublished paper presented to the Southwest regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 3, 1984, p. 9.

we should disciple today to an oft overlooked theological factor. The possibility of imitating Christ in such things is greatly limited by the biblical fact that He was and is one of a kind. Our common humanity and experience (Heb. 4:15) notwithstanding, there is much about sinful, limited man that renders a substantial mimicking of Jesus' discipling ministry constitutionally impossible. For us to claim to any detailed degree that we are "training the way Jesus did," as many in the popular "discipleship movement,"[1] do today, is to essentially imply such perfection for ourselves. Yet, because that status will never be attained in this life (Phil. 3:12), it must also be realized that Christ's example as a discipler cannot be imitated to the extent the popular model insists on.

A second aspect of the uniqueness of Christ and His ministry has to do with His stated mission. In Matthew 15:24 Jesus claims, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Short of radical speculative reconstruction,[2] the tension between this pericope and Matthew 10:5-6 on the one

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[1]David L. Waterman, "The Care and Feeding of Growing Christians" in Eternity, September, 1979, p. 17.

[2]E.g. Schuyler Brown, "The Mission to Israel in Matthew's Central Section (Mt. 9:35-11:1)," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentische Wissenschaft 69:1 (1978):75-90; Also, Brown, "The Two-Fold Representation of the Mission in Matthew's Gospel," Studia Theologica 31:1 (1977):21-32; Further, in an older study by Ernst Käsemann, "Die Anfange Christlicher Theologie," Zeitschrift für Theologie and Kirche 57 (1960): 167, the opinion that there are two contradictory missionary policies within Matthew's community is developed.

side vis-a-vis Matthew 28:19-20 on the other can only be solved in recognizing some sort of dispensational discontinuity, says Toussaint.[1] How else is it plausible, while maintaining a high view of Scripture, to explain the dramatic contrast between a mission to one nation (Israel) in Matthew 10 and 15 versus a universal mission ("all the nations") in Matthew 28?

The key point here is that Christ's earthly mission was different than that of believers on this side of the Cross, Resurrection, and Pentecost. Living under the authority of the post-Resurrection Great Commission (Matt. 28:18), neither the apostles nor other could properly justify a mission limited to Jewish people only, as Jesus' was (Matt. 15:24). Rather, we do well to perceive the sizeable difference it makes in our study and application of discipling that New Covenant believers are not "sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). To press the gospels model is, then, to limit your perspective to understanding the Old Covenant discipling context of Jesus.

That leads into a third aspect of uniqueness having to do with Christ's discipling ministry. Because He ministered to Israel at the end of the Old Covenant epoch (cf. "the new covenant in my blood", Luke 22:20), a good deal of Jesus' behavior is explicable only within the framework of the Mosaic

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[1]Stanley D. Toussaint, Behold the King, pp. 138, 318.

Law. For example, even though He frequently used it as an opportunity for teaching and healing, Christ scrupulously kept the Sabbath, taking along His disciples to the synagogue (e.g. Matt. 12:9; cf. v. 1). If we follow the logic of Wilson and the popular model, would not a "discipler" today be required to take his "disciples" to the synagogue on Saturday?

Further, does the example of Jesus as an obedient Jew, perfectly keeping the whole of the Mosaic legislation -- required sacrifices and all -- mean that those who would make disciples today must "go and do likewise"? If, as Wilson states, "the disciples would have intuitively used the same approach in building their own disciples as Jesus used with them,"[1] would you not be required to carry out the detailed obedience of the Mosaic economy, even as Jesus modelled before His disciples? Otherwise, what warrant from the narratives of Matthew and Mark do we have that informs us that we should not?

Therein lies the tension. When we focus on the transition in understanding and behavior seen in Acts (particularly the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15) and the clear teaching on the nature of the New Covenant in Hebrews, we find that believers today need not do all these things in exactly the same way Jesus did. We do not have to "clone" every jot and tittle of

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[1]Wilson, Disciple Building, p. 69.

Christ's discipling ministry, which is interwoven with the example of His obedience to the Law of Moses, in order to "make disciples . . . to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

The above examples, though laughable when compared with the everyday New Covenant assumptions most Christians today operate on, are not at all transparent when you study the gospel texts only. Thus, in attempting to accurately isolate the Lord's ongoing (or "timeless")[1] theology of discipling found in Matthew and Mark, the student must consciously and honestly come to grips with the unique and unrivaled person of Jesus Christ and the unreproducible setting of His life and ministry in the final stanza of the Mosaic economy.

A fourth aspect of Christ's uniqueness has to do with His miracles. Is it necessary to be able to do miracles in order for the disciples to grow in their faith (e.g. John 2:11,23, etc.)? Must the discipler heal the sick and leprous, cast out demons, be transfigured, calm stormy waters, feed vast crowds of 4,000 or 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes in order to model after Jesus' teaching of His disciples? Relatedly, must the one who would train as Christ did be able not only to delegate the authority to preach and teach, but also to cast out unclean spirits and heal every kind of disease (Matt. 10:1ff.), to his disciples? Jesus did, as an undeniable part of "the training of the Twelve."

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[1]See the discussion of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Exegetical Theology, pp. 161-162.

A fifth factor that underlines the logically unrepeatable nature of much of Jesus' ministry is its time frame. Since He waited until He was "about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23) to begin His formal work, should a person seeking to be biblically accurate and obedient in discipling today do likewise? Also, should he or she seek to determine by means of a harmony of the gospels how long after Jesus began His generalized discipling ministry (e.g. Matt. 4:18ff.; Mark 1:16-20) it was before he chose the Twelve to concentrate His efforts on (Matt. 10:1ff.; Mark 3:13ff.)? Such careful study would be necessary in order to carry out the discipling process in precisely the same chronological sequence as Jesus did.

Along the same lines, is the discipler who would follow Jesus' lead seen in the gospels required to finish his ministry in three or three and a half years? After all, Christ did say that He had "accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John 17:4).

Even more specifically, is it necessary for biblically accurate discipling that there be a lengthy temptation by Satan in a wilderness, betrayal by a close associate, a "kangaroo court" trial, and death by crucifixion (all or any of these)? This writer hopes not, for if very many of these things were required, no one has ever or could ever carry out the Lord's mandate to "make disciples"!

While the preceding discussion may seem belabored in making its point, one final factor of a different kind should be mentioned having to do with the uniqueness of Christ's own ministry of discipling. It is something of an "argument from silence." But, because of its over-arching importance in the rest of the New Testament canon (i.e., Acts and the epistles), it should not be overlooked.

That factor is the church. It must be asked how Christ's teaching on discipling harmonizes with the emerging ecclesiology seen in the remainder of the New Testament. Correspondingly, how are those today who seek to make disciples to relate to the church which Jesus said He would edify (Matt. 16:18)?[1]

It is common knowledge that Christ proclaimed in no uncertain terms "I will build My church." But, unless we broaden our field of study to include Acts, where we see "disciples" used synonymously with "church" (e.g., 8:1 and 9:1; 11:26; 14:22-23), we lack sufficient data to properly relate these two towering New Testament concepts. Outside of the giving of "the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven" to Peter (Matt. 16:19) and the other apostles (18:18), there is no transparently obvious revelation in the gospels as to how the "church" Christ predicts would be built.[2]

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[1]See A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Discipleship and the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (July-September 1980):267-73.

[2]Ibid., p. 273, n.12.

That is true unless the Great Commission passages were given, at least in part, to explain the human responsibility in the process of building Christ's ἐκκλησία. If so, the relative scarcity of this crucial term in the gospels (found only in Matt. 16:18 and 18:17) and the utter disappearance of the distinctive gospels discipling nomenclature in the rest of the New Testament after Acts 21 can be readily explained. Otherwise, it is deeply troubling to reflect on the paucity of reference to the church in Christ's ministry as opposed to its majestic development in Acts and the New Testament letters. The same is true for the vanishing of the gospels discipling vocabulary, especially when Matthew 28:19-20 clearly teaches that discipling is the central focus of the age-long Commission of our Lord Jesus.[1]

In summary, besides the conspicuous lack of a directive that makes it clear that all who make disciples must duplicate Christ's every action in relation to His apostolic trainees, there are many other aspects of Christ's person and ministry that must be taken as unique and unrepeatable. To accomplish such an extremely literal "imitatio Christi" in the realm of discipling would require a sinless, infinite Person living an Old Testament lifestyle filled with miracles in total disregard to the existence of the entity we call the church.

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[1]Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple Making," pp. 15-16.

The uniqueness of Christ's closest disciples and their training for apostleship

In the preceding section, the issue of Christ's unique person, work, and ministry was fairly clear-cut. But, the proof of the uniqueness of the apostles of Jesus (Matt. 10:2), "the Twelve" (Mark 3:14, 16), is a somewhat more complex matter.

If the entirety of the New Testament may be drawn upon for such proof, it can be readily established from Ephesians 2:20 that the apostles functioned as a portion of the foundation of the Church, Christ being the cornerstone. Since the foundation of any structure is laid once for all, this passage apparently teaches that the apostles' position was unique, for the initial generation of the church, the New Testament period. This is the view of Hoehner in connection with this passage: "Since the apostles and prophets were foundational, they did not exist after the first generation of believers."[1]

However, in developing a biblical theology that draws solely on Matthew's and Mark's teaching on the subject of discipling, the reasoning is slightly more complicated. But, it can be done. Still, care must be exercised at thist point so as not to prove too much.

It is important to realize here that, in spite of their historically unique position and training in relation

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[1]Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, pp. 627, 635.

to the incarnate Jesus, there are still some significant parallels between the apostles and those who would obey the mandate to "make disciples" even today. For example, it must be remembered that the Twelve had been disciples before Jesus chose them (Mark 3:14; cf. Luke 6:13) and, in a very real sense, continued to be disciples during and after their training for their unique mission.

Thus, while there is a tremendous amount that disciple makers seeking to apply the gospels do not have in common with the training the apostles received, there are certainly suggestive features out of their experience that can be helpful in the study of discipling, as well as providing a veritable wealth of insight on the related, but more directly applicable, subject of leadership training. Surely Leroy Eims is at least generally correct in asserting, "If you want to study how to make disciples, study Acts. If you want to study leadership training, study the Gospels."[1]

Again, a hasty conclusion must not be drawn. The words of Sidney Greidanus contain wisdom at this point: "Continuity and discontinuity, a parallel and yet a contrast -- both must be brought out if one is to do justice to the text in its historical setting as well as to the church today . . . ."[2]

In turning to establish the elements of uniqueness in regard to the apostles, the other side of the point just made

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[1]Leroy Eims, Disciples in Action, p. 12.

[2]Sidney Greidanus, Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts, p. 160.

will be initially discussed. As Rengstorf has sagely observed; "It is part of the image of the ἀπόστολος that he shall be a μαθητής, whereas not by a long way are all the μαθηταί also ἀπόστολοι . . . ."[1] Here is seen the simple fact that, although the apostles had been, and were, disciples, most disciples did not become apostles. And since Matthew 28:19 does not say "Go and make apostles," one should be very cautious about prescribing all of their training for the apostolate for those who would be trained merely as disciples.[2]

A second factor that sets apart Jesus' training of the Twelve was the vast amount of time He spent with them. While it would be unduly dogmatic to expect precision in such a highly debatable matter, Eims' estimate of some 13,000 hours is worthy of consideration.[3] In light of such a staggering figure (if anywhere near correct), those exegetes and practitioners who would push strongly for a "training of the Twelve" model must either steeply upgrade the duration of their training,[4] or admit that what Christ and His closest

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[1]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 9 vols. s.v. "μαθητής", by K. H. Rengstorf, 4:450.

[2]Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple Making," p. 17.

[3]Leroy Eims, The Lost Art of Disciple Making, pp. 187-88.

[4]Ibid., p. 188. Eims asserts that, even in a discipleship program today that is characterized by a deep commitment, ". . . it would take thirty-six years to match the time frame used by Jesus" (p. 188). While Eims' specific calculations may be open to dispute, the principle he is articulating retains its validity.

disciples were doing was not meant to be duplicated in any full sense.

A third line of reasoning that points to the unique position of the apostles has to do with the substantial amount of material in the gospels that is in a category Walter Kaiser calls "Direct Divine Commands to Specific Situations."[1] As Kaiser elucidates, "It must be readily acknowledged that our Lord addressed a significant number of commands and promises to His twelve disciples that do not apply (except perhaps coincidentally) to any others -- as His calling certain of them to leave their occupations and follow Him."[2]

Surely Kaiser is correct in his assertion. Otherwise, there is created a huge tension between what is expected in the relationship between the earthly Jesus and His apostles and the viewpoint of the church after Christ's ascension. For example, in Luke 18:29-30a Jesus approvingly states, "There is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much . . . ." (See also the very similar statements in Matt. 19:29 and Mark 10:29-30.) From this pericope it might be surmised that Jesus is granting a blanket seal of approval to anyone who leaves his or her home and family for His Name's sake (Matt. 19:29), or "for the gospel's

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[1]Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Legitimate Hermeneutics" in Inerrancy, edited by Norman L. Geisler, p. 139.

[2]Ibid., p. 140.

sake" (Mark 10:29). That is how these passages initially present themselves, unless the uniqueness of the apostles' training is consistently recognized.

On the other hand, what about the tight restrictions placed upon divorce (i.e., leaving your wife) in the preceding contexts of Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12? Further, what should be made of Paul's argument for the "right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles" (1 Cor. 9:5), when those same apostles most certainly did not take their wives along in their training period seen in the gospels? Only the uniqueness of the apostles' tutelage by Christ can solve what would otherwise be a glaring, if not embarrassing, inconsistency.

For a contemporary disciple to leave his wife and children in an attempt to be obedient to the supposed binding biblical example seen in the Gospels is to be unmistakably disobedient to his clear responsibilities as a husband and father (e.g. Eph. 5; Col. 3). Such misguided zeal in application would deserve the verdict ". . . He has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

A fourth factor is closely related to the third. It has to do with the abrupt disappearance of the technical gospels terminology for discipleship in the middle of Acts. While such a question does not come directly in focus in studying the contributions of Matthew and Mark to the overall theology of the New Testament in regard to disciple

making, its importance for the purpose of interpretation and application should not be ignored.

Is there a plausible explanation available as to why μαθητής and ἀκολουθέω are absent after Acts 21, even though the Great Commission directive in Matthew is to "make disciples" until "the end of the age" (28:19, 20). The view of Hawthorne would seem to have considerable merit as a solution to this dilemma:

> Apparently, therefore, because the writers of the epistles saw in the meaning of the words "disciple" and "follower" a disciple-teacher relationship no longer possible in the new era, they dropped them lest those requirements for the disciples of the earthly Jesus--to leave one's trade, his father and mother, etc.--be universalized and made general requirements for those who would believe on Him now as the exalted heavenly Lord.[1]

If Hawthorne is correct, this "significant and perplexing problem"[2] of the unexpected disappearance of the standard discipling vocabulary in Acts is actually a purposeful clue, evidencing the unrepeatable nature of the apostolic training. Further, the terms that are carefully chosen to replace and re-orient the discipling concept in the remainder of the New Testament revelation[3] imply the same point: the substantial

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[1] Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, 5 Vols. s.v. "Disciple", by Gerald F. Hawthorne, 2:130.

[2] Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 90.

[3] Calenberg, Ibid., p. 210, suggests that " and its related terms" replaes in the Epistles. In A Theology of Church Growth, p. 152, George W. Peters offers "believers", "brethren", "followers", and "saints" as words that "seem to take the place of disciple."

uniqueness of the training of the Twelve by the Lord Jesus Christ.

To review and summarize, there are four lines of evidence that point to the conclusion that the training the apostles received from Christ was largely unrepeatable by intention. Because the Commission is to "make disciples," not apostles; because of the vast amount of time Jesus spent with the Twelve; because they were the recipients of many commands that must be responsibly interpreted as unique to them and their situation; and because the distinctive vocabulary of discipling shifts abruptly and drastically after the gospels and Acts, such a conclusion is exegetically and theologically warranted.

The Centrality of the Great Commission in Matthew

As stated in the introductory remarks of this chapter, it is appropriate to begin a study on what the New Testament teaches on disciple making with Matthew because it is in Matthew 28:19 that we encounter the epochal command to "make disciples of all nations." Without that imperative of our Risen Lord, interpreters conceivably might infer that discipling is biblically important because of the amount of space it occupies in the gospels and the early chapters of Acts. However, the contemporary application would remain quite unclear.

In attempting to clarify that subject it is not the purpose of this section to do an in-depth exegesis of the Matthew 28:18-20 pericope. That has been done by numerous recent interpreters,[1] including the present writer.[2] Rather, it is the task of this treatment to establish the foundational place of the Matthean Commission in the overall New Testament theology of discipling. Toward that end the fruit of others' labors will be utilized.

Relatedly, preliminary observation should be made about the conclusion of the Gospel of Mark in regard to the Great Commission. Because of the dubious inclusion of

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[1]Among recent evangelical handlings of this passage are Robert D. Culver, "What is the Church's Commission?", Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 10 (Spring 1967):115-26; Cleon Rogers, "The Great Commission," Bibliotheca Sacra 130 (July-September 1973):258-67; Grant R. Osborne, "Redaction Criticism and the Great Commission: A Case Study Toward a Biblical Understanding of Inerrancy," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 19 (Spring 1976):73-85; P. T. O'Brien, "The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20," Evangelical Review of Theology 2 (1978):254-67; and D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in the Expositor's Bible Commentary, 8:594-99. Some other noteworthy treatments are Bruce J. Malina, "The Literary Structure and Form of Matt. XXVIII, 16-20," New Testament Studies 17 (Oct. 1970):87-103; Jack D. Kingsbury, "The Composition and Christology of Matthew 28:16-20," Journal of Biblical Literature 93 (Dec. 1974):573-84; Hans Scheiber, "Konzentrik in Matthäusschluss: Ein form-und gattungskritischer Versuch ze Mt 28, 16-20," Zeitschrift für Religions-wissenschaft und Theologie 19:4 (1977):286-307; Oscar S. Brooks, Sr., "Matthew XXVIII 16-20 and the Design of the First Gospel," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 10 (1981):2-18; and Gerhard Friedrich, "Die Formale Struktur von Mt. 28. 18-20," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 80 (June 1983):137-83.

[2]Luter, "Discipleship and the Church," pp. 269-71.

Mark 16:9-20 in the original text,[1] some choose not to comment on the section at all.[2] Others see the abrupt shorter ending as having implications in reference to the Commission.[3] Still others comment cautiously on the Marcan version of the Lord's command.[4]

Because of the textual uncertainty of the passage, and because it makes no significant independent contribution to this study of making disciples, Mark 16 will not be directly handled in this treatment. That does not mean that the directive of Mark 16:15 ("Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation," NASB) is not true. Rather, it assumes that such content is included in going and making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

In beginning this consideration of the foundational and central place of Matthew 28:18-20 within the total New Testament doctrine on making disciples, it is most helpful to consciously back away and look at the text in overview of its

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[1]See the discussions of Lane, Mark, pp. 601-5, and John D. Grassmick, "Mark," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, pp. 193-94.

[2]E.g. Lane, Mark, pp. 591-92.

[3]E.g. Thomas E. Boomershine, "Mark 16:8 and the Apostolic Commission," Journal of Biblical Literature 100 (June 1981), pp. 225-39.

[4]Grassmick, Bible Knowledge Commentary, pp. 195-96; also, George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, pp. 189-90; and Walter W. Wessel, "Mark" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 8:788-90.

context and structure. The setting is a mountain in Galilee (v. 16). In order to deal with the doubts of some of the remaining eleven apostles (v. 17), Jesus informs them that He now has universal "authority" (v. 18). Because of this total ἐξουσία "in heaven and on earth" that He possesses, Christ is able to grant delegated authority along with the authoritative command and process that He wants carried out to the end of the age (vv. 19-20).

Before proceeding to the structure of the Commission itself, two observations should be made. First, although the subject of "authority" is a common theme in the earlier sections of Matthew (7:29; 8:9; 9:6; 9:8; 10:1; 21:23; 21:24; 21:27; and parallel passages in Mark), Jesus had never claimed the cosmic ἐξουσία He does in the post-resurrection statement in 28:18. Thus, this claim of total authority would seem to set off the concluding Commission in contrast to the limited authority exercised (7:29; 9:6) and delegated (10:1) in the prior portions of the first gospel.

Second, not only does the Resurrected Lord make a clear point of His universal authority (v. 18), He also commands a universal task (v. 19). When compared with His previous commission to "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: (10:6), and, specifically, not to the ἐθνῶν (10:5), one can hardly fail to notice that the target of the Matthean Commission is "all the nations" (πανταὶ τὰ ἔθνη). As Toussaint concludes, "This command is in sharp contrast to

what the Lord had previously ordered and practiced (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24)."[1]

In turning to the actual structure of Matthew 28:19-20, Barbieri gives a helpful overview in the following words, "Jesus' commission, applicable to all His followers, involved one command, 'Make disciples', which is accompanied by three participles in the Greek: 'going,' 'baptizing', and 'teaching.'"[2] Here is seen a clear, crisp climactic prescription of how disciple making is to be done throughout the entire age (v. 20). It stands over against the lengthy descriptions in the narrative of Matthew of how Jesus trained His closest disciples. Which has binding authority to the end of the age?

Besides the strong implication of the passage at hand in that regard, the hermeneutical explanation given by Virkler is of great help at this point. In speaking of the descriptive function of narrative literature, he writes,

> When Scripture describes an action of God with respect to human beings in a narrative passage, it should not be assumed that this is the way He will always work in believers' lives at every point in history. The methods God used in the Gospels . . . are often wrongly asserted to be His methods in all believers' lives.[3]

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[1]Toussaint, Behold the King, p. 318.

[2]Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 94.

[3]Henry Virkler, Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation, p. 86. For a helpful discussion on the current re-thinking of Matthew as 'narrative', see H. J. Bernard Combrink, "The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative," Tyndale Bulletin 34 (1983):61-90.

On the other hand, says Virkler, "Prescriptive passages claim to be articulating normative principles . . . ."[1]

To apply Virkler's distinction, one needs only to note the temporary nature of certain aspects of the apostles' training and ministry seen in the Matthean narrative (e.g. 10:5-6) as opposed to the age-long prescription at the close of the book (28:19-20). Thus, to see Matthew's statement of the Great Commission as but an echo of the methodology seen earlier in the gospel is to completely misconstrue this crucial point of literary genre and its intended function. Rather, it is the prescriptive Commission that authoritatively selects from, amends, or drops the many and varied things Jesus and His disciples are described as doing in the body of Matthew. It is the Great Commission that is normative in character, and not the preceding, primarily descriptive, narratives.[2]

This same general point is made in noting the post-Resurrection placement of the Great Commission as opposed to the vast bulk of Matthew. Jesus trained under the Old Covenant situation. But, the Commission is given after the "New Covenant" has been sealed in His blood (Luke 22:20; Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24). The location of the descriptive narratives

[1]Virkler, Hermeneutics, p. 86.

[2]See the related discussion in A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "New Wine in Old Wineskins: The Challenge of Preaching Discipling Passages to the Church," Unpublished paper read at the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Dallas, Texas, December 17, 1983, pp. 9-10.

and the prescriptive command on opposite sides of this biblical and theological "watershed"[1] must not be obscured.

Further, there is at least one other major inclusion in the Commission process that is profoundly different from that which is seen in the earlier part of the Gospel of Matthew. Much as the "going" of Matthew 10 (i.e. to the Jews only) is completely reoriented in Matthew 28:19-20, so the meaning of "baptizing" is seen to be in decided contrast to the only earlier mention of baptism in Matthew 3. As Toussaint elaborates,

> This baptism differs from John's baptism in several particulars. John's baptism was restricted to one nation; this baptism is universal. John's baptism was a preparation for the coming of the Messiah; this baptism is based on the work which the Messiah who came has already accomplished. John's baptism marked an incomplete experience with reference to the Messiah; this baptism indicates a complete position in Christ (Acts 19:1-6; Col. 2:9-10).[2]

It must be considered significant that the baptism of John is the only such rite mentioned in Matthew prior to the Great Commission, since it would have been very simple for the Evangelist to include at least one such description of baptism in connection with Jesus and the apostles. That is especially clear when reference is made to John 4:1-2. There is observed "baptizing" (βαπτίζει) in relation to "making . . . disciples" (μαθητὰς ποιεῖ) (v. 1, NASB). Even more intriguing is the

[1]This writer's terminology in Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple Making," pp. 14, 18.

[2]Toussaint, Behold the King, p. 319.

comparison that is made at this point. Jesus (actually "His disciples", v. 2) was making more disciples (and baptizing) than John the Baptist (v. 1).[1] Since such a clear comparison was available, Matthew apparently deliberately chose to omit it to strengthen the marked contrast in his Gospel between John's baptism (under the Old Covenant), and the baptism of the Great Commission, commanded after Christ's Resurrection until the end of the new age (Matt. 28:19-20).

A further point of potential misunderstanding in regard to the discipling process seen in the concluding verses of Matthew has to do with the phrase "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (v. 20, NASB). Again Toussaint examines the potential tension and evaluates the options in the following words:

> The verb "to command" (ἐνετειλάμην) can refer to two things. It may mean the apostles are to teach everything which Christ had preached and taught during His whole earthly ministry. The word may also be interpreted here in a more restricted sense. Christ could be saying that the disciples were to instruct their converts in a definite course of instruction. The disciples had been commanded previously as to what they were to teach, and the Lord here refers to that. This seems best since the King did not instruct by means of commandments. In addition, the word "whatsoever" (ὅσα, 28:20 KJV) restricts the teaching ministry of the disciples to what Christ had commanded them to teach.[2]

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[1]Robert K. DeVries, "The New Testament Doctrine of Ritual Baptism" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1969), pp. 95-97, 103-107. DeVries draws upon and supplements the thoughts of G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, pp. 67-70, 77-92.

[2]Toussaint, Behold the King, p. 319.

In following Toussaint's conclusion, the interpreter is faced with a strong implication in regard to the discipling "model" taught by Matthew 28:19-20. If, in fact, this crux interpretum refers to a highly selective, restrictive approach to the "teaching" step of the Commission, it is not possible to sustain an inclusive, "copy all that Jesus did and taught" model for making disciples. Such an approach may be compelling in its simple logical appeal. But, it has no firm basis in exegesis or theology.

In resisting such a faulty model that would put a human "discipler" in the place of Jesus in order to duplicate His training with the Twelve, it is crucial to pay close attention to the concluding words of Matthew's Gospel: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20, NASB). Instead of a man taking His place in the discipling process, He tells us He is still present, just in a different way. Rather than a human disciple maker, says Cleon Rogers, this passage

> . . . indicates that Jesus Himself is the Teacher. It calls for a complete submission to Him with total devotion and service. It means living daily in continual fellowship with Him, listening to His Word, learning from Him and putting His teaching into practice, and letting His life be manifest in daily life. It also means proclaiming His Word and seeking to bring others into this relationship who in turn are to win others.[1]

After this discussion, it is now possible to lay out a summary statement in regard to the Matthean Commission.

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[1]Cleon Rogers, "The Great Commission," p. 265.

Because of its post-Resurrection setting, its purposefully simple wording, and the substantial degree of discontinuity with the teaching of the rest of the first Gospel in regard to the epochal command to "make disciples" and the contextual explanation in Matthew 28:19-20, it is highly probable that Matthew's prescription for discipling draws upon the methodology of Jesus with the Twelve seen in the prior narratives only in a very selective way.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to establish the central and foundational nature of the climactic Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 to a comprehensive study of the New Testament's taching on disciple making. This has been done by evaluating an important preliminary hermeneutical issue in the study of the Gospels, by discussing the person and work of Christ and the position of His twelve closest disciples, as well as the relationship of Matthew's Commission to the rest of the Gospel, and the effect such a question has on how that key passage is understood.

Initially, the contemporary interpretive trend known as redaction criticism was treated. Because of its imbalanced overemphasis on the diversity of the Synoptic Gospels, along with a number of additional perceived weaknesses, it was cautiously determined that a judicious limited use of redaction critical findings would be advisable.

Following that, the uniqueness of Jesus' discipling ministry was examined. It was argued that both His unrepeatable person and work, along with the unrepeatable apostolic calling and largely unique training of those closest disciples, require the view that a very limited portion of that material in Matthew and Mark is directly applicable in the study of disciple making.

Finally, in regard to the Great Commission itself, because of its theological location after Christ's Resurrection and its high degree of discontinuity in teaching from the body of Matthew, it was concluded that the profound simplicity of the Risen Lord's prescription for making disciples until the end of the age must be accepted on its own terms.

Therefore, to understand the New Testament teaching on discipling, Matthew 28:19-20 must be kept center stage. To fail to do so is to advance in our study only at the peril of lack of insight not only on this vital subject, but numerous other related, and much more visible, New Testament doctrines. As Lehman wisely advises, "Let us gain the full impact of the interrelations among the new covenant, the Church, Christ's death, His resurrection and ascension, and the Great Commission."[1]

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[1]Chester K. Lehman, Biblical Theology: New Testament, pp. 242-243.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN LUKE-ACTS

In the "Introduction" to his Tyndale series commentary on the third gospel, Leon Morris speaks of "the remarkable fact that Luke is the only one of the four Evangelists to write a sequel to his Gospel."[1] For the purposes of a biblical theology study, this point is even more significant. Biblical theology, says Ryrie, seeks to study how "revelation was embodied in history" and "conditioned by historical circumstances" and "investigates the progress of doctrine . . . in its different stages of development."[2] Although this key element of historical progression in revelation is often thought to be minimized in New Testament theology,[3] it is nevertheless seen in a comparison of Luke and Acts.

The great helpfulness of such a comparative handling of the Lukan writings is that they are of the same general literary type and describe events on opposite sides of the Cross and Resurrection. Such literary and theological considerations make the study of Luke-Acts an unparallelled

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[1]Leon Morris, The Gospel According to Luke, p. 13.

[2]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 13.

[3]Ibid., p. 19.

opportunity[1] to discern the difference that the epochal change from the Old Covenant to the New (Luke 22:20) makes, as we seek to understand the overall New Testament teaching on discipling.

To state the question from the perspective of theological continuity between Luke's gospel and Acts (as opposed to the clear discontinuity just referred to), "Do those apostles that were trained by Jesus (as seen in Luke), see fit to work with those who come under their influence in essentially the same manner (as seen in Acts)?"[2] Such an investigation would seem to be a reasonable way to ascertain how the apostolic band understood that the Great Commission of Jesus Christ should be carried out.

Further, since it has been seen in Chapter I that the central New Testament passage for the study of disciple making is Matthew 28:19-20, is it possible to detect in Luke-Acts a consciousness of or allusions to that foundational command? If so, what do such passages contribute to our overall understanding of discipling?

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[1]Although the Apostle John also authored New Testament books on both sides of the theological watershed, his are not of the same literary type. There is, thus, not a clear, relatively direct comparison between John's Gospel and Epistles and Revelation, as there is between Luke and Acts. (See Chapter VI for the distinctive contribution of each type of Johannine literature to the overall New Testament doctrine of discipling.)

[2]It is realized that much of Acts, especially chapters 13-28, focuses on the Apostle Paul. However, since he was not directly trained by Christ, as were the Eleven (seen in Luke), the same basis of comparison is not available.

Before proceeding to survey the unity and diversity of Luke and Acts, it is helpful to briefly address the present understanding of the literary nature of these writings. This will be done by discussing the relationship of history and theology in Luke-Acts.

Luke: Historian and Theologian

In 1961, C. K. Barrett, in his Luke, the Historian in Recent Study, wrote, "Beyond question, Luke was a historian of some kind; but of what kind?"[1] Unfortunately, even the relative certainty of Barrett's statement has been since called into question in many theological circles.

Morris traces the change of opinion in the following way:

> People used to write books and articles with titles such as 'Luke the Historian.' Discussion centered around the question of whether Luke was a good or a bad historian, but that he did intend to write history was normally accepted. But in recent times many scholars have given attention to the deep theological purpose that plainly underlies Luke-Acts. . . and [Luke] is seen as more interested in conveying religious and theological truth than he is in writing a history. Indeed, so far has the pendulum swung that many suggest that Luke's interest in theology was so great that he allowed it to sway his historical judgment.[2]

Since Morris penned those words a decade ago, it is also helpful to have the recent update and anlysis of opinions about the Lukan writings by Earl Richard, "Luke: Writer, Theologian,

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[1]C. K. Barrett, Luke, the Historian, in Recent Study, p. 12.

[2]Morris, Luke, p. 28. Parenthesis mine.

Historian--Research and Orientation of the 1970's."[1] Such studies cannot be ignored as Luke is approached in the 1980's.

In such accounts it must not be overlooked that, while the more radical part of this "pendulum swing" Morris spoke of took place in liberal theological circles, some within the wider evangelical camp moved in the direction of seeking Luke as more theologian than historian.[2] For example, although I. H. Marshall entitled his 1971 volume Luke: Historian and Theologian,[3] it is the opinion of C. J. Hemer that Marshall's book is decidedly overbalanced to "theologian", and he seeks to redress the inequity.[4]

If a major reason had to be pinpointed for the recent shift toward viewing Luke primarily as a theologian, the movement known as redaction criticism (discussed at length in Chapter I) would be a prime candidate. And, its validity in studying Luke's writings should be recognized up to a point. Along with Morris, it is fair to say:

> The new approach is to be welcomed insofar as it takes seriously the work done by the Evangelists. It can

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[1]Earl Richard, "Luke: Writer, Theologian, Historian --Research and Orientation of the 1970's," Biblical Theology Bulletin 13 (January 1983):3-15.

[2]See, e.g., Charles H. Talbert, Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts.

[3]I. Howard Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian.

[4]C. J. Hemer, "Luke, the Historian," Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 60 (Autumn 1977):28.

> help us to look for those dominant theological considerations that swayed the Gospel writers and induced them to write.[1]

On the other hand, it is easy for such thinking to be carried too far. To focus on Luke as theologian is to risk downplaying Luke, the historian. As Morris concludes, such an outlook

> . . . is not necessary. It is possible to see the Evangelists as theologians and still as men with a profound respect for history . . . . There is widespread recognition that Luke is a reliable historian. His theological purpose is real. We should not miss it. But his theology does not run away with his history.[2]

Hopefully, the present climate in regard to this key issue in Lukan studies is moving toward a similarly balanced assessment. That, at least, is the studied conclusion of Richard following a lengthy review of recent research in this area:

> As a result of the great number of high quality studies produced by Lukan scholars during the past decade, Luke-Acts can no longer be considered "a storm center" of controversy. Instead, Luke's work is now viewed as one of several major contributions of the early community to Christian theology and history.[3]

If it is indeed the proper understanding to hold that Luke and Acts are history and theology in balance,[4] there is

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[1]Morris, Luke, p. 32.

[2]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[3]Richard, "Luke: Writer, Theologian, Historian," p. 12.

[4]See the conclusion regarding Luke (and Matthew) in S. Craig Glickman, The Temptation Account in Matthew and Luke, p. 500.

a solid foundation for the remainder of this chapter. If Luke's purpose was strictly historical, however, there is little place for the present biblical theology approach. If, on the other hand, his authorial intention was exclusively theological, then the crucial historical markers of the Cross, Resurrection, and Pentecost would be muddled. Luke's own theological vantage point would be superimposed on the pre-Crucifixion narrative in Luke, with the result being a question mark as to how to determine where Jesus' Old Covenant life and teachings (Luke 22:20) stop and Luke's New Covenant theology begins.

Therefore, even in the wake of considerable re-thinking of the nature of Luke's writings, it is preferable to view Luke and Acts as history and theology in divinely inspired balance. At this point it is possible to proceed to exploring the unity and diversity of Lukan theology within this established framework of historical progression.

Unity and Diversity in Lukan Theology

There are a number of important and related subjects in which Luke presents a very similar, or identical, view in both his gospel and Acts. But, there are also many themes in which there are highly significant, though sometimes subtle, differences between the two works. Such differences reflect important changes in the progress of revelation from Luke to Acts.

To employ contemporary terminology for such similarity and dissimilarity, it is useful to speak of the "unity" and "diversity"[1] in Luke's theology. Another way of referring to the differences that are discernible because of progressive revelation is "discontinuity," as opposed to "continuity," in which the revelation and corresponding application remain essentially the same.[2]

Unity in Lukan thought

First, some of the factors of unity between Luke and Acts will be surveyed. Though a sizable number of themes could be treated,[3] only those that bear more or less directly on the subject of discipling will be discussed.

In the initial words of the book of Acts there is a crucial unitive idea that links it with Luke's Gospel: "The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day He was taken up" (Acts

[1]For a balanced treatment of this subject, see D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, editors, Scripture and Truth, pp. 65-95.

[2]See the compact, but valuable, explanation of the continuity-discontinuity issue in Henry Virkler, Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation, pp. 117ff.

[3]Ethel Wallis, "Thematic Parallelism and Prominence in Luke-Acts," Notes on Translation 75 (June 1979):2-6; R. F. O'Toole, "Parallels between Jesus and His Disciples in Luke-Acts," Biblische Zeitschrift 27 (1983):195-212; and A. J. Mattill, Jr., "The Jesus-Paul Parallels and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," Novum Testamentum 17 (June 1975):15-46.

1:1-2, NASB). This writer heartily concurs with Bruce[1] and Marshall,[2] who identify "the first account" as the Gospel of Luke and see "Theophilus" as the recipient of Luke's Gospel, also (Luke 1:3). However, it is the latter part of this passage that ties the theology of Luke's two volumes together.

Of the portion "all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day He was taken up," Marshall states, "Luke is associating what Jesus began to do during His ministry with (implicitly) what he continued to do after his ascention."[3] Perhaps Bruce is correct, though, in inferring, "Acts tells us what He continued to do and teach, by His Spirit in the apostles, after the Ascension."[4] Such a deduction fits nicely with the immediately ensuing promises of the Spirit in Acts 1:5, 8. Toussaint, however, is more cautious in his exegesis of Luke's expression here. He writes,

> The verb began indicates that Acts continues the account of the ministry and teaching Christ began on earth. He is still working and teaching through His people today.[5]

[1]F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 66.

[2]I. Howard Marshall, The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 55-56.

[3]Ibid., p. 56.

[4]Bruce, Acts, p. 66.

[5]Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, p. 353.

Actually, it is probably impossible to decide with certainty between the abiding presence of Christ or the Holy Spirit in this context. No further explanatory information beyond this somewhat vague description is given. Nor is there necessarily a conflict between the two options since the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9) and the "Spirit of [God's] Son" (Galatians 4:6) by Paul.[1]

Whatever this wording means precisely, the intended continuity is still clearly seen here. The same Jesus who was born, ministered, died, and rose in "the first account" (i.e., Luke's Gospel), is somehow continuing His ministry, albeit in a different manner. At this point, also, it is insightful to recall the closing words of the first Gospel: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20, NASB). This link between Luke and Acts will also appear to be a thought parallel or possibly even an allusion, to that

[1]Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology, pp. 525, 536, 554-55, takes a more subtle view, using the Romans and Galatians passages to sustain his concept. Guthrie believes Acts 1:2 refers to the Holy Spirit as continuing Jesus' ministry by "enabling" the apostles and the church, even as the Spirit had done in Jesus' own ministry (e.g., Luke 4:1). Also, in reference to the question of whether Jesus' ministry could be used as a "model" (in this case, for discipling; see Chapter I), Guthrie's thoughts are instructive: "Whereas Jesus was unique and cannot, therefore, be held as an example for believers, yet it is true to say that his dependence on the Spirit prepares the way for the disciples' own dependence" (p. 525). (For a contrary view on Jesus as "example," see Richard N. Longenecker, "'Son of Man' Imagery: Some Implications for Theology and Discipleship," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 18 (Winter 1975):15-16.

concluding "Immanuel" promise[1] in Matthew's Commission. If so, it might be implied that Luke was fully aware of, if not consciously referring to, the surrounding thought of Matthew's version of the Great Commission here as he leads into his own statement of the Commission in Acts 1:8, that serves as the "theme verse" of Acts.[2]

Besides this unity of perspective on the abiding presence of Christ, there is also the related commonality of emphasis between Luke and Acts on the work of the Holy Spirit.[3] From the birth narrative in Luke 1-2 on through Jesus' baptism and temptation (Luke 3-4), we observe a cluster of references to the Spirit.[4] But, from that point onward, the mentions are few in the rest of the Gospel (11:13; 12:10, 12). However, in the book of Acts, there are some fifty references to the Spirit. From the initial scene of this second volume from Luke's pen (1:2, 5, 8), to Paul in Rome at the close of

[1]D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 8:599.

[2]Toussaint, "Acts," p. 352.

[3]For a review of recent thinking on a portion of this subject, see M. Max B. Turner, "The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Survey of Recent Scholarship," Trinity Journal 2NS (Fall 1981):131-158.

[4]See the helpful discussion of M. Max B. Turner, "Jesus and the Spirit in Lukan Perspective," Tyndale Bulletin 32 (1981):11-22, 34-36.

the book (28:25),[1] with special emphasis on Pentecost,[2] the Spirit is consistently seen at work.

Lest Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit be misunderstood, though, one further thought should be expressed. Just as the ministry of the Spirit in the third gospel centers around the birth, baptism, and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, so Ryrie rightly points out: "Although the reader of Acts is distinctly conscious of the Spirit's work, it is always, as it should be, the work of promoting the glory of Christ and not Himself."[3]

A third key factor of unity in Lukan thought has to do with the use of the term "disciple." It is used 38 times in Luke's gospel, overwhelmingly in the plural.[4] In Acts it

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[1]Moulton, W. H. and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek New Testament, pp. 820-21.

[2]See Turner, "Jesus and the Spirit," pp. 36-40. For a full-length treatment of the significance of Pentecost to missions and the carrying out of the Great Commission, see Harry R. Boer, Pentecost and Missions.

[3]Ryrie, Biblical Theology, p. 113.

[4]Moulton and Geden, Concordance, p. 610. The only exceptions are the saying of Jesus in Luke 6:40 and one of the well-known "carry your cross" passages in Chapter 14 (vv. 26, 27, 33). It is outside of the purpose of this dissertation to analyze this data further in regard to the related theme of discipleship, but see the excellent recent treatment of Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981). For a good recent discussion of the cross-bearing passages and their bearing on discipleship, see Michael P. Green, "The Meaning of Cross-Bearing," Bibliotheca Sacra 140 (April-June 1983):117-33; see also W. T. Smith, "Cross-Bearing in the Synoptic Gospels" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1953), for a somewhat dated treatment.

is used 29 times,[1] again predominantly in the plural.[2] Also in Acts is the only usage outside Matthew's Gospel of μαθητεύω, which is translated in Matthew 28:19 as "make disciples" (NASB, NIV). As shall be discussed in a later section, the presence of this verbal form would seem to betray a clear consciousness of the central Matthean Commission on Luke's part.

Particularly interesting in such a study of Lukan theological unity is the exact parallel of the phrase "the multitude of the disciples" (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν) in Luke 19:37 and Acts 6:2 (cf. 6:1). The mass of disciples outside Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Luke 19) and the rapidly growing "congregation" (NASB) of the young church in Jerusalem (cf. 5:11) are described in precisely the same terms. As Calenberg observes of Luke 19:37,

> That Luke should refer to this group as disciples seems significant, for he is also the only writer to record some of the most stringent demands that Christ laid

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[1]Moulton and Geden, Concordance, p. 611. One of these occurences is μαθήτρια, referring to the "female disciple," Tabitha, in 9:36.

[2]Besides Tabitha, the other singular uses of μαθητής are Ananias (9:10), Paul (9:26), Timothy (16:1), and Mnason (21:16). For an attempt to study the various uses of "disciple" in Acts to discern levels of commitment and a detailed model of discipling relationships, see David Eenigenberg, "Discipleship and Discipling Relationships in the Book of Acts" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981). Against Eenigenberg's understanding consult Calenberg, "New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship": "In Acts, Luke documented the practice of making disciples rather than developing the teaching of discipleship in the early church" (p. 196). (Also, Sean Freyne says, "In Acts μαθηταί is a technical term to describe the whole community of believers" (The Twelve: Disciples and Apostles [London: Sheed and Ward, 1968], p. 211).

> down for being His disciples (e.g., Luke 14:25-35) . . . . [Disciple] is used very broadly in the Gospel accounts.[1]

Similarly, Arndt and Gingrich see the term being used in Acts to speak of "members of the new religious community" so that it "almost equals Christian,"[2] with little commentary on the content of such "discipleship."

With the breadth of the Lukan concept of "disciple" in mind, it is particularly instructive to compare such an outlook with Matthew's and Mark's use of the term. In regard to Matthean usage, D. A. Carson observes, "The word 'disciple' must not be restricted to the Twelve," noting that the Twelve are not singled out until 10:1-4. Carson also asserts, "Nor is [disciple] a special word for full-fledged believers, since it can also describe John the Baptist's followers (11:2)."[3] In the last instance there is a parallel of significance in Acts 19:1-7. Since the "disciples" in Ephesus had only heard of "John's baptism" (v. 3, NASB), and Paul had to clarify the meaning and re-baptize them, it is probable that Luke's use of "disciple" in that passage is the basic equivalent of Matthew's in 11:2.[4]

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[1]Calenberg, "New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship," pp. 69, 77. Parenthesis mine.

[2]W. F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 487.

[3]Carson, "Matthew," p. 128. Parenthesis added.

[4]Toussaint, "Acts," p. 409, may be justified in saying that the meaning of "disciples" in Acts 19:1-7 is "unclear," though the context would appear to argue for the disciples of John the Baptist" (i.e., in understanding) view.

Markan usage is another thing entirely. In his helpful study Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel, Robert P. Meye concludes that the term "disciple" in Mark refers to being one of the Twelve.[1] Further, Peacock demonstrates that, rather than the disciples in Mark serving as a model for believers, the opposite is true.

> Mark seems to be setting up a long series of basic ideals for discipleship, and then deliberately showing that the early disciples fail every one of the tests. . . . The failure of Jesus' followers in the days of his flesh is the framework of Mark's proclamation of the good news about Jesus Christ.[2]

Thus, while modern students of discipleship can easily identify with the disciples' shortcomings seen in Mark, they should hardly seek to use them as a prototype for their own practice.

Such a comparison between the meaning and use of "disciple" in the three Synoptic Gospels again reveals the implausibility of arriving at and applying a valid "training of the Twelve" model for discipling. Even though there is a basic unity and continuity in Luke's use of "disciple," it is a much broader term than just the apostles. Matthew's usage is at least as fluid. Mark, on the other hand, focuses on the Twelve as "the disciples," but portrays them as consistent failures, not to be emulated.

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[1]R. P. Meye, Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel, p. 103; see also Meye, "Disciple" in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, edited by G. W. Bromiley, I:947-48.

[2]Heber F. Peacock, "Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark," Review and Expositor 75:4 (Fall 1978):561, 563-64.

With such obviously different shades of meaning, it is highly likely that the inspired Evangelists did not intend to bequeath Jesus' specific discipling methodology to the church. Rather, their purpose would appear to be more of a descriptive one as the gospel drama moves toward its climax at the Cross and Empty Tomb.

While there is continuity in the way Luke handles the term "disciple," there is also discontinuity in several related factors. These differences will be discussed in the next section.

A fourth aspect of unity in Lukan theology has to do with the use of "apostle" in both Luke and Acts. In distinction to the breadth of "disciple" in Luke's Gospel, "apostle" has a precise reference to the Twelve in every instance of six uses (6:13, 9:10, 17:5, 22:14, 24:10), except perhaps 11:49.[1] In its 28 occurrences in Acts[2] "apostle" has very much the same orientation, even though it reaches out to include Matthias (?)(1:26) and Paul. The reasoning as to how this could be done, while the uniqueness of the apostolate is maintained, is discussed by Culver under the heading "Essential Features of the Apostolate":

1. An apostle of Messiah (Christ) must be of Messiah's nation, i.e. a Jew.

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[1]Moulton and Geden, Concordance, p. 101.

[2]Ibid.

2. An apostle must have received a call and commission to his office directly from Christ.
3. An apostle must have seen the Lord Jesus, being an eyewitness of His doings and an earwitness of His sayings.
4. An apostle must possess authority in communicating divine revelation, and what he wrote under divine inspiration was indeed "the voice of God."
5. An apostle is required to furnish "the signs of an apostle."
6. An apostle must possess plenary authority among all the churches.[1]

Here again is weighty evidence that the "training of the Twelve" is a misguided example for discipling. They were the Lord's uniquely chosen and qualified apostles. And, since believers today cannot live up to their qualifications and prerogatives, it should be concluded that it is incorrect to try to duplicate their training in any direct and over-arching manner.

There is a related parallel, however, in the Lukan writings that may be suggestive for application in leadership training. Much the same approach for choosing leaders is seen in Luke 6:12-13 (Jesus and'the Twelve'), Acts 6:1-6 (the Apostles and "the Seven," including Stephen and Philip), and Acts 14 and 16:1-3 (Paul and Timothy).[2] In each of these cases,

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[1]This material is a condensation of Robert D. Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate in the New Testament," Bibliotheca Sacra 134 (April-June 1977):136-38.

[2]See the brief similar discussion in A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "New Wine in Old Wineskins: The Challenge of Preaching Discipling Passages to the Church," (Unpublished paper read at the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, December 17, 1983), p. 12.

leaders-to-be are chosen out of the mass of "disciples." In each situation ther eis evidence that the choice is made because of previously considered factors or qualification.

In Luke 6:12, referring to Christ spending "the whole night in prayer to God" (NASB), Marshall observes a parallel in the seeking of God's guidance in choosing leaders with Acts 1:24-26 and Acts 14:23, saying, "The same pattern of choice was followed in the early church."[1] Toward the end of emphasizing the leadership and authority of the apostles, Luke here clearly differentiates "disciples" and "apostles"[2] in v. 13. While it is impossible to know the basis of Jesus' choice of the Twelve (v. 13), since the text does not reveal it, we can be certain that the omniscient God-Man had His perfect reasons.[3]

Acts 6 presents a striking parallel to Luke 6. Marshall observes significantly, "It is only here that Luke refers to the apostles as the Twelve."[4] Very likely that choice of

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[1]I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke (NIGTC), p. 238; Of Luke 6:12, Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke" in Expositor's Bible Commentary 8:888 writes, "[This] is not a routine devotional exercise," recognizing the epochal choice being made.

[2]John A. Martin, "Luke" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 219.

[3]Morris, Luke, p. 125, guardedly expresses his opinion as to why Jesus chose the apostles.

[4]Marshall, Acts, p. 126, also notes that the apostles are called "the Eleven" in Acts 1:26 and 2:14. Such a contrast in wording may be further evidence of an intentional parallel in Luke's thinking between Luke 6 and Acts 6.

choice of wording is to call to mind the description of the careful choice of the apostles seen in Luke 6:12-13. In both passages the gathered followers are called "disciples" (Luke 6:13; Acts 6:1, 6:2). Both contain references to "the Twelve" (Luke 6:13; Acts 6:2), "the apostles" (Luke 6:13; Acts 6:6).

There are, however, two points of difference between Luke 6 and Acts 6 that are reflective of the progressing clarification of revelation and instructive for application in regard to leadership in the church. The authoritative choice of the apostles is made by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 6. But, the parallel choice in Acts 6 is made by the apostles, who have Christ's delegated authority, and shared with "the disciples" (Acts 6:2; "brethren," v. 3; "congregation," v. 5, NASB). The climactic reference to prayer in v. 6, in connection with the recognition of the seven leaders, serves as a final thematic pointer back to Luke 6, helping the reader recognize Acts 6 as a link and advance in the Lukan doctrine of leadership.

A second clarification is seen in the overt listing of qualifications for this leadership position in Acts 6:3: "of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." The silence regarding Jesus' reasons for choosing the apostolic leaders in Luke 6 is replaced by a clear description of what was expected in the way of proven character, testimony, and

spirituality.[1] While it is virtually impossible to decide if Acts 6:1-6 is the beginning of the office of "deacon,"[2] there does seem to be a clear parallel with (or seminal expression of) the qualifications for leadership in the church is detailed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

In this similarity of thought between Acts and the Pastoral Epistles is found a plausible crucial link between Lukan and Pauline theology. If this qualifying for and recognizing of certain "disciples" as leaders is an ongoing principle (Luke 6; Acts 6; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1), then the understanding of the theological transition from the pre-Cross authority of Christ to the foundational delegated authority of the apostolate (Eph. 2:20) to the derived authority of local church leaders is greatly enhanced.[3] The probability of such a biblical theology link is further strengthened by the realization that, although the term "church" is not found in Luke's Gospel, it becomes virtually synonymous with the plural "disciples" in Acts (e.g. 8:1 and 9:1; 11:26; 14:21-23). Thus, although "disciples" is absent in the Pastorals, the basically interchangeable concept "church" is clearly seen in passages such as 1 Timothy 3:5, 15.

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[1] Toussaint, "Acts," p. 367.

[2] Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 740, sees the function, but not the office, of deacon in Acts 6.

[3] Interestingly, Marshall, Acts, pp. 126-27, sees antecedent parallels with the choosing of Matthias in Acts 1 as well as the appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor in Numbers 27:15-23.

This type of theological reasoning is both legitimate and necessary. As the present writer has stated elsewhere in regard to the general subject of this dissertation:

> The Bible often presents a doctrine through the use of several different but related terms. This can easily be seen in the unfolding development of such doctrines as sin, grace, redemption, and regeneration. The same holds true in the realm of practical theology. To understand sanctification, preaching, teaching, or prayer, one must observe all the parallel concepts that are used in the presentation of these truths. It should not be surprising that the same is true of discipleship.[1]

Similarly, "disciples" and "church" must be correlated in order to understand properly the unity of Luke's thought on leadership and discipling.

The parallel between the choosing of the apostles in Luke 6 and the choosing of Timothy by Paul in Acts 16:1-3 is somewhat subtle, but equally suggestive, especially in light of the implications of the study of Acts 6. Just as the apostles (and the Seven in Acts 6) arose out of the wider group of disciples in Luke 6:13, Timothy was chosen out of "the disciples," who were organized into churches (Acts 14:21-23) on Paul's first missionary journey. When Paul returned to that area sometime later, after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), the Apostle chose to take Timothy with him in the ministry (Acts 16:1-3).

Often overlooked in this choice is the background sequence of events spoken of in Acts 16:1-2. In reference to

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[1] A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Discipleship and the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (July-Sept. 1980):268.

the use of "disciple" of Timothy in verse 1, Marshall asserts, "he had evidently become a Christian on Paul's earlier visit . . . ."[1] If such is the case, there is a span of time between the two missionary journeys that allows for the assessment of verse 2: "He was well spoken of by the brethren" (NASB). About the significance of that wording, Counts comments pointedly:

> The commendation of the churches shows that Timothy's discipleship and at least enough ministry training to qualify him as a missionary team member took place in the local church, when Paul was not present . . . . To have joined the team Timothy already must have proved himself in the church.[2]

Counts' conclusion here (i.e. that Paul did not "disciple" Timothy[3] because he had already been discipled in the context of his home church body [Acts 14:21-23, 16:1-2]) seems highly likely when it is considered that the only use outside of Matthew of the Great Commission imperative of μαθητεύω (to "make disciples", "disciple") is in Acts 14:21. Thus, of all the churches in Acts or the epistles, it can be said most definitely that discipling was being carried out in the ἐκκλησία in Timothy's home region.

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[1]Marshall, Acts, p. 259.

[2]William M. Counts, "The Center for Advanced Biblical Studies: A Model for Renewal in Ministry Training" (Unpublished D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 15.

[3]Contra the title of William J. Petersen's popularly written The Discipling of Timothy, and the prevailing model of much of the contemporary discipleship movement.

In comparing Acts 14 and 16 back to Luke 6, the choice by Paul of Timothy in contrast with the choice of Christ is seen. There is a clearer statement of background qualifications in Acts 16:2 than the silent implication of Luke 6. But, all in all, there is still important continuity in the Lukan pattern of leadership recognition in spite of the epochal difference between the narratives in Luke 6 and the middle of Acts.

A final common thread running through the Lukan writings has to do with the message and mission they describe. As Martin states, "Luke emphasized the universal message of the gospel more than the other Gospel writers."[1] Similarly, Ryrie asserts that, in comparison with the other Synoptic gospels, "The revelation of the universality of salvation is primarily Lukan. . . ."[2]

Ryrie also provides a helpful summary view of the third gospel's emphasis on a message of salvation that will reach out to embrace the whole world:

> It was announced by the angels (2:10--"to all people"), confirmed by Simeon (2:32--"to lighten the Gentiles") and John the Baptist (3:6--"all flesh"), and affirmed in Luke's genealogy which traces Jesus back to Adam; but the universality of salvation is best seen in the parable of the good Samaritan. . . .[3]

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[1]Martin, "Luke," p. 201.

[2]Ryrie, Biblical Theology, p. 60.

[3]Ibid.

With this repeated theme of universality in mind, it is not surprising to find that the Gospel of Luke's version of the Great Commission is targeted at "all the nations."[1] Although the identical phrase is found in Matthew 28:19 (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), the Matthean Commission is in basic discontinuity with the earlier portion of Matthew (see Chapter I), where the message was limited to Israel (10:5-6; 15:24). In Luke there is considerably more continuity with the body of the Gospel.

In Acts the continuation of the universal message and mission of Luke is again seen clearly. The outline of the book is, of course, anticipated in Jesus' pre-Ascension command to be His "witnesses" (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48) ". . . even to the remotest part of the earth" (NASB). By the end of Acts the gospel has spread all the way to Rome, well on its way in the carrying out of that universal mission. A crucial step in that direction is the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, in which James expresses the consensus that God is "taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name" (v. 14).

Besides the common thought on mission, there is also seen repetition of emphasis on the message from Luke to Acts. The proclamation of "repentance for forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:47) is heard in Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:

[1]See George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, pp. 190-93, for a helpful analysis of the Lukan Commission in parallel to the commission statements in the other gospels.

"Repent . . . for the forgiveness of your sins" (v. 38, NASB). It should, however, be cautiously noted that Luke never employs "gospel" to speak of the message of the earthly Jesus. As Becker observes:

> In Luke-Acts the term euangelion is found only at Acts 15:7 and 20:24. Possibly this has to do with his particular scheme, according to which the era of Jesus must be distinguished from the era of the church, and so too the preaching of Jesus from that of the apostles. Thus [Luke] can describe as euangelion the apostolic preaching (Acts 15:7; 20:24) but not the preaching of Jesus.[1]

In summary, it has been seen that Luke and Acts have a united revelation concerning the ongoing ministry of Christ, the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit, the use of the focal terminology "disciples" and "apostles," and the universality of the message and mission concerning the Lord. Such continuity is not total, however. The balancing revelation of the diversity and discontinuity in Luke's theology will be treated next.

Diversity in Lukan thought

Because of the necessary allusions to some of the facets of contrast and discontinuity in the preceding section, as well as the complementary nature of several of the subjects discussed below, the contrasting aspects of Luke's theological framework will be probed in less depth and detail. It will be seen that, in a number of cases, the very themes that were

[1]New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology 2:112-13, s.v. "Gospel," by Ulrich Becker.

discussed in regard to their unity in Luke-Acts also contain important elements of diversity.

The first point of contrast has to do with the presence and absence of Jesus Christ. While Acts 1:1 strongly implies that His ministry will continue in some manner after his ascension (Acts 1:9-11), it is still critically important to recognize the physical absence of Christ. While the gospel disciples could physically follow Him, that is not possible in Acts (see also Luke 24:50-51).

A second diversity factor has to do with a change in the work of Holy Spirit.[1] Certainly, the Spirit's ministry is emphasized in both of Luke's volumes. But, the "promise" of the Father (Luke 24:49) to send "power from on high" (NASB), which Acts 1:4-5, 8 identifies as the δυναμίν of the Spirit, speaks of an epochal theological transition. With the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2, there is substantial fulfillment of the (Old Testament) "New Covenant" predictions about the Spirit (e.g., Jer. 31; Ezek. 36; Joel 2; see Luke 22:20).[2] The repeated use of the future tense in looking forward to Pentecost (Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:4-5,8) makes it very clear that the "new Dynamic could not enter into the

[1]Turner, "Jesus and the Spirit," p. 40, concludes: "Luke does not appear to be interested in presenting Jesus' relationship to the Spirit as archetypal; indeed he rather stresses the unique aspects of the Spirit's work in Jesus."

[2]Toussaint, "Acts," p. 358, briefly discusses the contingency aspect of Peter's quoting of Joel 2 as far as the response of Israel is concerned.

Church until after [Christ's] exaltation."[1]

A third subject which reveals diversity between Luke's theology in his gospel and Acts is baptism. Although, for example, the baptism of John (Luke 3:3,7,16,21-22) is found again in Acts 19:1-5, it is (in Acts) seen to be inadequate in reference to the progress of revelation. Thus, a re-baptism, the only one recorded in the New Testament, takes place "only because the previous baptism was not Christian baptism."[2] The instances of proper baptism are seen repeatedly in Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, etc. Those passages argue for a conclusion similar to the one reached in Chapter I. Because there is no other instance of baptism in the Gospel of Luke other than John the Baptist's rite in Luke 3, and because Acts contains a number of examples of baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (e.g. 2:38, NASB), it seems most natural to locate the change in baptismal theology at the point of the theological hinge at the beginning of Acts. If that is a valid conclusion, Luke's revelation on baptism reflects an important theologial advance seen in the diversity between the gospel and Acts.

A final, but vitally important, point of diversity between the two volumes by Luke has to do with the church. Although it was demonstrated earlier that there is a basic

[1]Geehardus Vos, Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments, p. 400.

[2]Marshall, Acts, p. 307.

unity and continuity in the teachings of Luke and Acts on the concept "disciple(s)," and that "church" becomes virtually interchangable with "disciples" in Acts, it is still necessary to examine why the term ἐκκλησία is never used in Luke's gospel.

Although there are broader uses of ἐκκλησία in Acts that would lend themselves to inclusion in Luke's gospel (notably Acts 7:38; or 19:30,32,39), Luke makes no such reference. He could have alternated "disciples" and "church" in the narrower sense, as he does in Acts 8:1 and 9:1, 11:26, and 14:22-23. But, because he chooses not to do so, it seems that the implication is that the church, as Luke understood, did not exist prior to Acts. Even a non-dispensationalist like Ladd can write: "Strictly speaking the ekklēsia was born at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the small circle of Jewish disciples of Jesus, constituting them the nucleus of Christ's body."[1] Ryrie concurs in saying, "Even though the word Church does not appear in Acts until 5:11, and even though there was a certain intermixture with Judaism, there was a distinguishably new group after Pentecost."[2]

To briefly review and summarize, some of the most important elements of diversity and epochal discontinuity seen when comparing Luke with Acts have to do with the change

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[1]George E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, p. 114.

[2]Ryrie, Biblical Theology, p. 120.

in regard to the physical absence of Jesus, the shift in the work of the Holy Spirit, the advance from John's baptism to Christian baptism, and the beginning of the ἐκκλησία Christ predicted He would build in the future in Matthew 16:18. The proximity of all of these crucial theological advances, clustered in the wake of Jesus' giving of the Great Commission (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8) points to the conclusion that the Commission is to be carried out in a very different theological milieu from that in which Jesus trained the apostles. Such a massive change argues also for a significantly different, New Covenant (Luke 22:20) methodology, especially since nowhere in Luke's writings are we told explicitly how discipling is to be done.[1]

The Preparatory Contributions of Luke's Gospel

After the preceding elaboration of the unity and diversity of major strands of Lukan theology, it would be easy to lose perspective on the overall purpose, structure, and historical progress of Luke-Acts. The final two sections of this chapter will set the previous theological conclusions against the backdrop of first Luke, and then Acts, in overview. Several of the ways in which the Gospel anticipates Acts, and, complementarily, Acts fulfills Luke's first volume, will be briefly discussed.

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[1]Calenberg, "New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship," p. 196, observes: "In Acts Luke documented the practice of making disciples rather than developing the teaching of discipleship in the Early Church." A similar statement about the Gospel of Luke would not be inappropriate.

The purpose of Luke in relation to Acts

In the complex contemporary theological context it is difficult to forge a consensus on the purpose of the Gospel of Luke. Many methodological and theological currents affect the way the third gospel is viewed.

Within the rich tradition of conservative evangelical scholarship, the two-pronged proposal of John Martin has considerable merit and precedence. He believes that Luke was penned: 1) "to confirm the faith of Theophilus," showing "that his faith in Christ rested on firm historical fact (1:3-4)"; and 2) "present Jesus as the Son of Man, who had been rejected by Israel and was to be preached to Gentiles so that they could know the kingdom program of God and attain salvation."[1] Jesus' concluding statement to Zaccheus in 19:10 and the Lukan Commission in 24:44-49 would give evidence to Martin's second purpose.

Others, such as Liefeld, would see the question of the purpose of Luke's gospel as much more difficult to decide, if not entirely elusive.[2] In an involved discussion, Liefeld lists the following possible views in an attempt to "discern a single purpose for the Gospel of Luke": evangelism; confirmation of the factual basis for faith; personal assurance; narration of history; an apologetic; solution of a

[1]Martin, "Luke," p. 199.

[2]Liefeld, "Luke," p. 799.

theological problem (i.e., is the church a new entity?); conciliation; defense against heresy; instruction; and dealing with social problems.[1] Finally, Liefeld opts for a "multiple purposes" outlook, that sees the prologue of Luke as "articulating the primary purpose of not only the Gospel but, at least to an extent, of Acts as well . . . ."[2]

Similarly, Howard Marshall relates the purpose of Luke to that of Acts:

> We are fortunate in that Luke has given us his own statement of intention at the beginning of the Gospel. He was concerned to write a Gospel i.e. a presentation of the ministry of Jesus in its saving significance, but to do so in the context of a two-part work which would go on to present the story of the early church, thus demonstrating how the message of the gospel spread, in accordance with prophecy and God's command, to the ends of the earth.[3]

Further, Leon Morris is in strong agreement that there is a heavy continuity in purpose between Luke's gospel and Acts. He writes,

> The great thought Luke is expressing is surely that God is working out His purpose. This purpse is seen clearly in the life and work of Jesus, but it did not finish with the earthly ministry of Jesus. It carried right into the life and witness of the church.[4]

Even in such brief compass, it is possible to conclude that the introduction to Luke's Gospel (1:1-4) was designed

[1]Ibid., pp. 800-801.

[2]Ibid., pp. 801-802.

[3]Marshall, Luke, p. 35.

[4]Morris, Luke, p. 13.

to orient the reader to his purpose for writing not only that first volume, but, to a great degree, Acts (see 1:1) as well. Such an understanding clearly implies that the Gospel of Luke is anticipatory in design: highly significant in its development of Jesus Christ's birth, ministry, and redemptive work, but in a very real sense incomplete without Acts (Luke 24:46ff.).

Thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, it can be implied that no discipling model seen in Luke is an end in itself. Rather, its counterpart (or fully developed form) in Acts must also be studied in order to come to a balanced understanding of how Luke presents discipling.

The structure of Luke

In a perceptive recent article, Simon Kistemaker has discussed the "artistic" arrangement[1] of the material in Luke's gospel. He asserts: "Of the four gospels it is Luke's account that is most comprehensive, and his gospel beginning with the birth announcement and ending with the ascension presents the most complete view of the life and ministry of Jesus."[2] If Kistemaker is correct about the comprehensiveness and completeness of Luke, the reader could expect to see most clearly in

[1]Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Structure of Luke's Gospel," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 25:1 (March 1982):38.

[2]Ibid., p. 39.

the third gospel any discipling approach that the Lord Jesus, or the inspired penman Luke, sought to utilize and have carried out in the apostolic ministry seen in Acts. Is such a clear model seen in the structure of Luke, however?

In order to answer such a question, it is helpful to look at the flow of Luke and attempt to discern whether such a self-conscious model for making disciples emerges. Toward that end, it is the view of Kistemaker that Luke's Gospel can be divided into three main sections, with introductory chapters and concluding chapters. The birth narratives of chapters 1 and 2 are introductory, and the passion and resurrection narratives of chapters 22-24 form the conclusion. "In between," says Kistemaker, ". . . Luke guides the reader of his gospel in respect to Jesus' ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem."[1] Thus, in overview, it is obvious that Luke develops much more of a focus on Jesus' mission of redemption (e.g. 19:10) than his ministry of discipling.

To delve somewhat deeper, the first of the three main sections in the body of the Gospel of Luke is 3:1-9:50. It gives an account of Jesus' Galileean ministry,[2] including the calling of the Twelve apostles in 6:12-13. After the discussion of this passage in an earlier section of this chapter, it seems probable to conclude that neither Luke 6, nor the wider section

[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid.

narrating Christ's ministry in Galilee, intends to teach a "training of the Twelve" applicational model for discipling.

Such a conclusion becomes even more definite if Kistemaker is correct in his understanding of why the sequence of Jesus' words and works is many times notably different from Matthew and Mark: "Luke's sequence seems to be dictated not by strict chronology but by emphasis, themes, literary balance and design."[1] Without a clear chronology and step-by-step sequence of the Lord's ministry seen in Luke, any attempt to slavishly duplicate it today becomes scrambled guesswork.

The middle section of the body of the third gospel encompasses 9:51-19:27.[2] It deals with Jesus' ministry outside of Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem -- which is why it is called the "travel narrative."[3] There continues to be a high level of discussion about various facets of this portion of Luke.[4]

It is noteworthy that the bulk of this section (roughly chapters 10-17) is unique to Luke's Gospel.[5] Also, in this

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., p. 33, states this section may end at 18:14.

[3]Ibid.

[4]See the helpful overview and discussion of James L. Resseguie, "Point of View in the Central Section of Luke," Journal of Evangelical Theological Society 25:1 (March 1982): 41-47.

[5]Kistemaker, "Structure of Luke," p. 33.

segment we clearly see Jesus pointing forward to the Cross (e.g. 9:51; 13:22; 18:31-33).

In evaluating these chapters for their potential helpfulness in constructing a New Testament theology of discipling, it is necessary to clarify a couple of points. First, it is clear that Luke 14:25-35 is particularly fertile ground for our understanding of discipleship[1] (i.e., the relationship of the believer to His Lord, especially in regard to submission, obedience, and commitment).[2] However, it is the horizontal, person-to-person task of making disciples, not the vertical relating of the disciple to Christ, that is the focus of the present study.

Second, while there is striking surface similarity between the mission of the Twelve in Luke 9 and that of the Seventy in Luke 10, neither their training nor objective can be shown to be the same, as Carl Wilson posits.[3] As Geldenhuys points out,

> Luke also shows clearly that there was a real difference between the two missions. Thus, e.g. the Twelve were sent to go and work and preach independently while the Seventy were expressly commanded to go to definite towns and villages in order to carry out a preparatory ministry to the inhabitants before Jesus should arrive there.[4]

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[1]Ralph Anderegg, "Discipleship in Luke 14:24-35" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979).

[2]Green, pp. 120-22.

[3]Wilson, p. 69.

[4]Norval Geldenhuys, The Gospel of Luke, p. 303.

With these crucial distinctions in mind, along with the realization of the uncertain chronology and sequence of these chapters which, for the most part, only Luke includes, it is wise to refrain from using data found here to establish a precise, sequential pattern of discipling. After all, the clear goal of this section is Jesus' movement toward and arrival in Jerusalem, in order to keep the divinely predicted appointment for His death, resurrection (18:31-33) and ascension (9:51).

The final part of the body of Luke's gospel is 19:28-21:38, which tells of Christ's ministry in Jerusalem. Here we have material that largely parallels the narratives in Mark (totally in chapter 20, and overwhelmingly in 21).[1] Such an observation is somewhat unsettling when it is recalled that it is the first gospel that moves toward the concluding epochal commission: to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19, 20). If a detailed model for discipling were a major intention of the writer of the third gospel, we might well expect to see much more of a clear parallel with Matthew.[2]

The preceding rapid survey of Luke's gospel should not, however, be taken to mean that it is totally devoid of

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[1]Kistemaker, p. 33.

[2]Ibid. Kistemaker points out that, reckoning on a section-by-section percentage of all the Synoptic material, Luke has both more in common with the other two Gospels than Matthew (75 to 66%), as well as more unique material (28 to 12%). Further, all the parallels between Luke and Matthew are "confined to the first half of Luke's Gospel."

teaching on discipling. Rather, the overall flow of Luke, pointing toward Calvary, but also beyond to the New Covenant outpouring of the Spirit (24:49; cf. Luke 11:13), makes it clear that Luke is incomplete without Acts (e.g. 1:8, the actual giving of the Spirit in chapter 2, etc.). Thus, whatever embryonic revelation on discipling that is given in volume one by Luke will certainly be filled out or fulfilled in volume two (Acts).

One concluding example will serve to elucidate the point just made. In Luke's statement of the Great Commission in 24:44-49, there is an obvious lead-in and overlap with Acts 1:8[1] by the phrases "beginning from Jerusalem" (NASB, v. 47) and "you are witnesses" (v. 48). But, there is also an important parallel with Matthew's Commission: the πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ("all the nations") of v. 47 is the same "scope of the gospel"[2] in which the hearers of Matthew 28:19 were to "make disciples."

Thus, it could be said that, while the third gospel does not purposefully present a great deal of material that drastically alters the view of discipling derived from Matthew and Mark, it does seem to conclude on a note that partially ties the book of Acts into the flow of the Matthean Commission.

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[1]See Charles H. Talbert, Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts, pp. 58-61, for a full discussion of the parallels.

[2]George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, p. 191.

The relationship between Matthew's statement of Christ's Commission and the narrative of Acts will be explored in the next section of this chapter.

The Transition and Priority of Acts

Since the purpose of Acts in relation to Luke's gospel has already been discussed, it is possible to move on to an examination of the theological transition seen in the book of Acts. Following that, there will be a selective overview of the structure of Acts and its priority for its helpfulness in studying the New Testament concept of discipling.

The transition to the New Covenant

At the Last Supper Jesus spoke of "the new covenant in my blood (Luke 22:20). Such a statement makes it clear that the New Covenant which was prophecied in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and other passages, could not become a reality until sometime after the blood of Christ was shed.

Since the end of Luke finds the apostles still waiting for "the promise of [the] Father," to clothe them "with power from on high" (24:49), it seems to be a justifiable conclusion that the New Covenant still had not yet fully come in. However, most evangelicals would agree that, with the day of Pentecost, the New Covenant has become a full reality. Thus, it is quite probable that the "theological watershed"[1] between the Old and

[1]This writer's terminology in Luter, "'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," p. 19.

New Covenants is only fully negotiated at the beginning of the Book of Acts.

Add to the fact of the change to the New Covenant some of the realities of the change and it is seen even more clearly that discipling would be different in Acts than in the pre-Cross narratives of Luke. The physical absence of Christ, already spoken of in this chapter, and the emergence of the New Covenant entity which Christ had pledged to erect in Matthew 16:18: "I will build My church" (future tense)[1]-- require major changes in thought and behavoir that are retained throughout the remainder of the New Testament corpus.

Thus, for application in today's context, it is more hermeneutically direct to utilize the post-Resurrection, New Covenant model of discipling seen in Acts. Similarly, it would seem to be a more logical method of study to observe how the apostles understood and carried out Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19; cf. Luke 24:47) in the narrative of Acts than to concentrate only on the gospels accounts in which many details are not applicable for the believer today.[2]

[1]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, pp. 119-20, argues exegetically and theologically that the of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost.

[2]Note the warning of Bernard Ramm in Hermeneutics, p. 23, that, unless such a distinction is recognized in our interpretation of "events prior to Pentecost and those after Pentecost," then "there can be no clear exegesis of Scripture."

The structure of Acts in relation to discipling

In relation to this subject, no less a thinker than Charles Ryrie has said,

> The most obvious line of development in the Book of Acts is that which follows the Great Commission. This is the basis for the customary analytical outline of the book . . . . The first seven chapters concern the work in Jerusalem; chapter 8 the work in Samaria; and the remainder of the book, the uttermost part of the earth.[1]

Though not all exegetes or commentators would agree with Ryrie's detailed breakdown of the structure of Acts, the great majority would agree with the thrust of his assertion that the book is consciously developed to show the geographical outworking of the Great Commission, especially as restated in Acts 1:8. Further, Ryrie argues, because of the usage of the term "disciple" and the prevalence of the steps of evangelism, baptizing, and teaching commanded by Christ as the process of making disciples at the conclusion of Matthew,[2] it seems clear that Luke also has the Matthean Commission in mind. That hypothesis will be developed further later, in regard to the crucial usage of μαθητεύω in Acts 14:21.

First, however, a linking point should be made in regard to the usage of "disciples" and "church" in Acts. As this writer has argued at more length elsewhere,[3] the two terms

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[1] Ryrie, pp. 104-05.

[2] Ibid., pp. 124-25.

[3] See this writer's "Discipleship and the Church," p. 269.

become virtually interchangeable in Acts. In passages like 5:11 and 6:1; 8:1 and 9:1; 11:26; and 14:22 and 23, one word, then the other, is used for the same group. It would seem the only real distinguishable difference is one of perspective: the disciples are the church scattered, the church is the disciples gathered as one body.

Does not such repeated interchangeable usage indicate that, in Luke's mind, there must be the closest of relationships between the Commission to "make disciples" and the church? Ryrie goes so far as to say of the narrative of Acts, "The ultimate goal of laying the groundwork of individual disciples in every place was the establishing of local churches."[1] If such an assertion is correct, and the biblical data would seem to demand it, then the emerging focus of the New Covenant fulfilling of the Great Commission is seen to be ecclesiological, with the individual disciple being the building block of the local church. Such an understanding of discipling is clearly at odds with the individualistic or small group models that focus almost exclusively on the model of Christ training the Twelve.

This point can be sustained further by looking in some detail at the development of thought in Acts 14:21-23. There we encounter Paul on the first missionary journey, a crucial moment for Luke to comment on the apostle's disciple making

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[1] Ryrie, p. 125.

ministry in fulfillment of the Great Commission.[1]

In Acts 14:21 there is the only use of the verbal form "make disciples" outside of Matthew in the New Testament. It could hardly be an accident that Luke chose the aorist participle μαθητεύσαντες to fill out and explain the apostle's ministry of evangelism spoken of at the beginning of verse 21. As Calenberg concludes,

> The final usage of μαθητεύω in the NT is found in Acts 14:21 and illustrates the practice of discipling that characterized the ministry of the Apostle during the period of the establistment of the Church . . . . Their preaching of the Gospel was obviously the first step in the process of making disciples in Derbe. That they baptized the new believers and, most importantly, taught them over a period of time is implied in the usage of the term μαθητεύω.[2]

Here, in its clearest form, is the Lukan understanding of the carrying out of the Matthean Commission,[3] drawn from the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Surely Calenberg is accurate in assuming that Luke would not have used μαθητεύω except as a pointer to the Matthean Command and its detailed content.[4]

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[1]See the slightly different discussion in Luter, "Discipleship and the Church," p. 270.

[2]Calenberg, p. 201.

[3]Despite unacceptable conclusions, the general treatment of Edwin S. Nelson, Paul's First Missionary Journey as Paradigm (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1982), is helpful, especially chapter 3: "Paul as Missionary Exemplar in the First Journey," pp. 118-51.

[4]Both F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 285, and Everett F. Harrison, Acts: The Expanding Church, pp. 224-25, make similar exegetical observations.

Before leaving this passage, though, it should again be noted that the discipling here (v. 21) is not done as an end in itself. Soon the strengthened "disciples" (v. 22) are organized into churches with properly appointed leaders (v. 23). Thus, this extremely signficant pericope lends still further reason to view Christ's ἐκκλησία being built up (Matt. 16:18; Acts 14:23) as being the collective goal of Christ's commission to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19; Acts 14:21).

Conclusion

The preceding chapter has attempted to determine the relationship of the two volumes written by Luke in the New Testament (i.e. Luke-Acts) and their individual and collective contribution to an overall New Testament theology of discipling. In order to do so thoroughly, the unity and diversity of the two books were initially discussed. Then, in keeping with the conclusions derived, the general nature of Luke as preparation, and Acts as transition and fulfillment, was probed. All along the way comparison with the Great Commission statement in Matthew 28:19-20 was consistently employed.

In the first section, it was noted that there is a substantial amount of unity and continuity between Luke and Acts. The themes of the ongoing ministry of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the use of "disciples" and "apostles," and the common universality of message and mission are threads that link the two works.

However, it can be concluded that the factors of diversity and discontinuity between the Old Covenant (Luke's gospel) and the New (Acts) are at least equally important. When the physical absence of Christ, the change in the Holy Spirit's ministry, the shift from John's baptism to Christian baptism, and the emergence of the church are considered, we find in Acts a greatly different theological context in which the Great Commission was to be fulfilled.

Further, a survey of the purpose of the gospel, in relation to Acts, as well as its unfolding structure, did little to demonstrate that Luke was purposefully developing a discipling model in his first volume. Rather, there were indications throughout the chapter that the narratives in which Jesus trained the Twelve had application more closely to leadership training, but were of little help in developing an overall discipling model for the New Testament.

Finally, the transitional change seen in Acts, from the Old Covenant to the New, was explored briefly for its implications as to discipling methodology. With that point in mind, the structure of Acts was looked at in overview, in order to detect evidence of Great Commission consciousness in the way Luke developed his argument. The apparent interchangeable usage of "disciples" and "church," as well as the theologically pregnant inclusion of μαθητεύω , pointed toward the conclusion that: 1) Luke understood that the Great Commission was to be carried out essentially as stated at the

end of Matthew; and 2) Disciples were to be made individually to that the church could be built up collectively.

CHAPTER III

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN PAUL'S THOUGHT

In seeking to understand the Apostle Paul's theology of discipling, it is necessary to consider the evidence in both the Pauline epistles and the portions of Acts that deal with the Apostle's conversion and ministry. Such an approach allows for comparison to be made between how Paul expresses himself about related issues in the occasional pastoral contexts of the epistles and the selective historical record given by Luke in Acts.

Such an approach is not without its difficulties, however. For example, there is the problem of determining what, if any, difference it makes whether Paul's sermons and actions in Acts are actually "Pauline", or Lukan interpretive summaries. Also, there is the total absence of the noun and verbal forms of "disciple" in Paul's epistles. What difference in the understanding and application of discipling should this silence make?

The impact that the Great Commission had on Paul's ministry seen in Acts will be handled in the first part of this chapter, along with a brief discussion of the first problem mentioned above. Next there will be a section dealing with the priority of the church in the Apostle's ministry, in

both Acts and the epistles. The final portion will study Great Commission thought patterns in Paul's letters, to find out how the Apostle expressed his understanding of making disciples "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20) in the absence of the focal term "disciple".

The Impact of the Great Commission on Paul's Ministry in Acts

There are at least three ways of seeking to determine Paul's understanding of the Great Commission and its impact on his ministry seen in the Acts of the Apostles. It is feasible to: 1) study how Paul's ministry, particularly the missionary journeys, compared with the Matthean Commission; 2) determine what Paul would have known about the Great Commission from other sources; and 3) compare the Apostle's own personal commissioning in Acts 9, as restated in Acts 22 and 26, with Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20.

Seeing the Great Commission in Paul's ministry

First, as has been done in Chapter II in connection with Acts 14:21ff., it is helpful to search out in the passages focusing on Paul the three steps of the Matthean Commission: going, baptizing, and teaching. The inclusion of these three activities, especially clustered in the same context, are clear textual indicators that discipling, as Jesus commanded it, is taking place.

When this methodology is applied, it is seen that these three steps were present not only in the founding of

the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38-42; 5:21, 25, 42), but also the assemblies in Antioch (11:19-26), Corinth (18:11), and Ephesus (19:1-10, 20; 20:20), of which Paul was either deeply aware or involved.[1] Even such a brief overview reveals that the overriding purpose and direction of the Apostle's ministry seen in Acts is closely connected with the carrying out of the discipling steps in Matthew's Commission.

Considering Paul's knowledge from other sources

A second approach combines logical reasoning with the harmonizing of the record of Paul's initial post-conversion visit to Jerusalem in Acts 9:26-29 with the same apparent event spoken of in Galatians 1:18. Before comparing those two passages, however, it should be asked whether there is any real possibility that the Apostle was basically ignorant of the Great Commission.

Without looking at the relevant biblical data, it can still be confidently stated that such a view defies all probability, even though it has been espoused in liberal circles over the years. As Allison concludes,

> The persistent conviction that Paul knew next to nothing of the teaching of Jesus must be rejected. . . . On the contrary, the tradition stemming from Jesus well served

[1]A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Discipleship and the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (July-September 1980):270, discusses this point in more depth. See also Luter, "A Theological Evaluation of 'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," Journal of Pastoral Practice 5:4 (1982):20.

> the Apostle in his role as pastor, theologian, and missionary.[1]

Ridderbos similarly reasons that Paul was

> . . . informed of a detailed tradition concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is proven by his letters. Undoubtedly, the reproduction of Jesus' words form only a small part of the content of Paul's Epistles . . . . However, this does not imply that Paul was ignorant of Jesus' preaching and life, nor does it remove the fact that he shows himself to be dependent upon tradition for the more exact knowledge of Jesus' death and resurrection.[2]

Such thinking would seem to be equally true in regard to the Great Commission. As Peters argues, "That the Great Commission was a living tradition in the early church is evident from the fact that all four evangelists record it and that the first church was, indeed, a missionary church."[3]

Thus, it is quite reasonable that Paul had heard the Matthean Commission in any of a number of ways. Conversely, it is highly unreasonable that the Apostle would not have been familiar with the Risen Lord's Command through relationships with individuals such as Barnabus, Mark, or Luke.

That Paul was quite familiar with the Great Commission becomes even more readily apparent when Acts 9 and Galatians 1 are probed for illuminating details. For example, even the Apostle's uneasy relating with "the disciples" in Jerusalem

[1]Dale C. Allison, Jr., "The Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels: The Pattern of the Parallels," New Testament Studies 28 (January 1982):25.

[2]Herman Ridderbos, Paul and Jesus, p. 50.

[3]George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, p. 177.

in Acts 9:26 would have yielded some meaningful interaction about Jesus Christ, should Paul have been in ignorance of the Savior and His teachings. Certainly, Paul's meeting with the apostles in verse 27, arranged by Barnabus, was even more fruitful. Therefore, even Luke's sketchy description in these verses strongly implies that any significant shortcomings in Paul's understanding about Christ and His commands would have been dealt with at that time.

The correctness of this understanding of Acts 9:26-27 is further substantiated in Galatians 1:18. Boice concludes that there are the strongest reasons to hold that "this is the visit mentioned by Luke in Acts 9:26-29."[1] In seeking to determine what Paul and "Cephas" talked about during their "fifteen days" (v. 18) together in Jerusalem, Boice states, "No doubt they talked about Christ, and Paul used the occasion to enrich his already firm grasp of the gospel by the stories Peter could tell of the life and actual teachings of Jesus."[2]

Cole finds the main reason for Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 9 and Galatians 1, to be the lone "qualification for apostleship which Paul was lacking. He had no first-hand knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus . . . ."[3] And,

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[1]James M. Boice, "Galatians" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12 Vols., edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 10:435.

[2]Ibid.

[3]R. Alan Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, p. 55.

as Cole further reasons, "Any man who spent a fortnight lodging with Peter must have heard much about the earthly Christ,"[1] including the Great Commission.

Comparing Paul's commission with the Great Commission

This method of examining the Apostle Paul's understanding of the Great Commission is the most direct. The focus of study in this section is the three passages in Acts that recount his conversion and calling most fully.

Initially, it should be stated that there is both an advantage and a difficulty in Luke giving three versions of Paul's commissioning in the Book of Acts. Because Luke considered Paul's conversion so important as to be recounted three times,[2] there is the helpful opportunity to learn more from the slightly varied accounts.

On the other hand, the different versions are problematic because there are apparent contradictions between them. The wording, though similar, is not exactly the same in any of the three accounts, including the direct quotes. For example, the statement of the Lord Jesus to Ananias in Acts 9:15-16 is made directly to Paul in the Apostle's testimony before Agrippa in 26:16ff.[3]

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[1]Ibid., p. 56.

[2]Max Warren, I Believe in the Great Commission, p. 32.

[3]Richard N. Longenecker, The Ministry and Message of Paul, pp. 32-33, helpfully discusses and answers this and other difficulties.

Although it is quite plausible to partially explain the divergences between the passages by the editorial hand of Luke, recording complementary material under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), it is also possible to explain the differences in a more precise manner without violating the doctrine of inerrancy. The reasoning of Longenecker on this subject deserves to be considered carefully:

> Probably . . . Acts 9 presents the actual sequence of events connected with Paul's conversion, Acts 22 adds the confirming vision at Jerusalem some three years later, and Acts 26 is an abbreviated testimony before the King -- abbreviated so that the step-by-step account would not seem overly pedantic to his audience and since for Paul the events were inherently one.[1]

In conclusion, because it is outside the scope of the present study to further pursue the differences in these accounts, it must suffice to say that there are no insuperable difficulties here.

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[1]Ibid., p. 33. Longenecker asserts that Paul saw all these events as "only an extension of that original charge" in Acts 9 (p. 33). For varied treatments of the exegetical and psychological aspects of Paul's conversion, including the relevant passages in his epistles, see, e.g. Maurice Goguel, "Remarques sur un Aspect de la Conversion de Paul," Journal of Biblical Literature 53 (1934):257-67; Charles Guignebert, "La Conversion de Saint Paul," Revue Historique 175 (1935): 475-81; H. G. Wood, "The Conversion of St. Paul: Its Nature, Antecedents, and Consequences," New Testament Studies 1 (1954-55):276-82; Jacques Dupont, "The Conversion of Paul and Its Influence on His Understanding of Salvation by Faith," in Apostolic History and the Gospel, edited by W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin, pp. 176-94; and J. C. Gager, "Some Notes on Paul's Conversion," New Testament Studies 27 (October 1981): 697-704.

Acts 9:15-18

In shifting to study each individual passage for the specific content of Paul's apostolic commission, in order to compare that data with the Great Commission, the observation of Ridderbos is helpful: "Within the center of Paul's preaching there is reflected the ineradicable impression of Jesus on the road to Damascus."[1] The "impression" Ridderbos speaks of is not psychological or emotional only. As all three passages affirm, there is verbal content spoken by the Risen Christ to the blinded Pharisee.

Acts 9:1-3 records that Saul, who had been persecuting "the church" (8:1), was struck down on the road to Damascus as he pursued "the disciples" (9:1). In verses 4-6 Jesus identifies Himself and commands Saul to enter the city and wait for instructions. After that, Acts 9 relates no more communication from Christ to the blinded Saul. However, verses 15-16, spoken to Ananias about Saul, are a rich mine of information concerning the Apostle's future ministry.

Longenecker succinctly places the prophetic significance of this pericope against the rest of the Book of Acts. He writes,

> In highlighting these features of being a "chosen instrument," sent to "the Gentiles," and "to suffer for my [Jesus'] name, Luke has, in effect, given a theological

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[1]Ridderbos, p. 51.

> precis of all he will portray historically in chapters 13-28 -- a precis that also summarizes the self-consciousness of Paul himself as reflected in his own letters.[1]

Besides the unmistakable ramifications of the Lord's directive here, it is also instructive to note the reference to the filling of the Holy Spirit in verse 17, reminiscent of Luke's theme verse in 1:8 (cf. Luke 24:49, in the context of the Commission Luke gives at the end of the third gospel). Further, Paul is baptized in verse 18, which calls to mind the second step of the Matthean Commission: "baptizing them (i.e. the new believers) in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

In summary, Acts 9 not only tells of Paul's conversion and looks ahead to the various facets of his ministry as the Apostle to the Gentiles, it also subtly ties that event to Christ's Commission to "make disciples". Thus, while Paul's calling and position were undoubtedly unique (Gal. 1:1, 15-16), his initial experience and guidance from the Lord were hardly in opposition to the universal Commission to reach out to "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19).

Acts 22:15-21

Chapter 22 finds the Apostle making a verbal "defense" (v. 1) before an angry Jerusalem crowd. After speaking of his earlier life (v. 3) and persecution of the church (vv. 4-5),

[1]Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 9:373.

Paul tells of his encounter with Christ on the Damascus Road (vv. 6-11). Then the Apostle receives his sight and an initial summary of the Lord's Commission in verses 12-14. It is in the elaboration and explanation of this apostolic call, in verses 15-21, that the key points relating to the Great Commission are found.

The first part of verse 15 says that Paul "will be a witness for Him (Christ)". The term μάρτυς ("witness") is the same as is used at the conclusion of the Lucan Commission in Luke 24:48, as well as in Acts 1:8. Also in connection with the latter passage, the target group of "all men" (πάντας ἀνθρώπους) not only calls to mind the earlier description of Paul's commission in Acts 9:15, according to Marshall[1] and Toussaint,[2] but is basically synonymous with πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ("all the nations", NASB) in Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:47, and the geographical sweep from Jerusalem to the end of the earth in Acts 1:8.

In verse 16 the inclusion of baptism is a significant one. Not only does it echo Peter's words in Acts 2:38,[3] but it also "maintained a continuity with the final commission of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 28:19."[4] Nor is the implication

[1]I. Howard Marshall, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 356.

[2]Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, p. 418.

[3]Longenecker, "Acts," p. 526.

[4]Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 738.

of baptismal regeneration that is carried over into many of the English translations enough to keep the student from due consideration of this verse. As Toussaint explains,

> Here Paul's calling on Christ's name (for salvation) preceded his water baptism. The participle may be translated, "having called on His name . . . . Because Paul was already cleansed spiritually . . . these words must refer to the symbolism of baptism.[1]

Following Ananias' words, Paul then describes his later vision of the Lord while praying in the Temple in Jerusalem (vv. 17-21). In verse 21 he tells of the Lord's brief command and explanation to him, as he was to "get out of Jerusalem quickly" (v. 17). The imperative "Go!" is from πορεύομαι, which is also translated "Go" (or "going", "as you go") in Matthew 28:19. Further, the sending of Paul as an apostle (ἐξαποστελῶ) "far away to the Gentiles" (NASB) again links this pericope to the thought patterns of Great Commission phraseology like "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47).

Thus, there can be little doubt that Acts 22:15-21 effectively points Paul's Commission back to the Great Commission in several ways. The Apostle's own baptism reveals the sequence of events in his own conversion to be that of the Matthean Commission. Also, his later vision in Jerusalem maintains both the common focus of the Risen Christ's universal command (Matt. 28:19-20) and the uniqueness of Paul's calling

[1]Toussaint, p. 418.

Acts 26:16-20

The final recounting of Paul's conversion in the Book of Acts is done in Caesarea before King Herod Agrippa (Acts 26:1-29). After an introductory appeal to Agrippa (vv. 2-3), Paul speaks of his earlier life as a Pharisee (vv. 4-5), and then ties his defense to the Jewish hope of resurrection (vv. 6-8). Next he recounts at some length his persecution of the "saints" (v. 10; cf. "church", 8:1; "disciples", 9:1, for the same group) up to the Damascus Road experience (vv. 9-15).

New elements seen in Acts 26:16-20 are relatively few. The "witness" motif (v. 16) has been seen in 22:15, as has the reference to Paul's ministry to Jews and Gentiles (vv. 17, 20; cf. 9:15; 22:15,21). But, the few new factors in this passage are important: 1) the "forgiveness of sins" in verse 18 and repentance in verse 20 both look back to the version of the Commission in Luke 24:47; and 2) the somewhat problematic description of the geographical sequence, or extent, of Paul's earlier ministry links up to a consciousness of the Great Commission. In spite of the silence in Acts 9:26-29 regarding any ministry by the Apostle in "the region of Judea" (26:20), Toussaint concludes,

> Probably Paul first summarized his ministry to the Jews and then described his work among Gentiles . . . . In other words Paul's statement here is not to be taken in strict chronological sequence but as a general overview of his ministry. First, he preached to Jews and then to Gentiles, in conformity with 1:8.[1]

[1]Ibid., p. 426.

Therefore, it can be affirmed that Acts 26 continues the main emphasis of the two earlier versions of Paul's conversion and commission in Acts 9 and 22, both of which echo the various statements of the Great Commission. Further, it adds additional elements dealing with the content of the evangelistic message and universal geographical focus of the Apostle's Commission that clearly reflect crucial thought patterns having to do with Christ's Commission at the conclusion of the gospels.

The conclusion which must be drawn from studying Paul's commission from Christ, the probable extent of his knowledge of the Savior's teachings, and the outworking of his ministry in Acts is that there was a high degree of understanding and conscious obedience by the Apostle to the Great Commission to "make disciples of all the nations" by going, baptizing, and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20). No conflict was found between Paul's commission or practical methodology and that prescribed by the Lord Jesus to be used universally "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

The Priority of Edifying the Church

The preceding section sought to establish the clear understanding and unswerving obedience of Paul to discipling. This segment will endeavor to demonstrate the high priority of the church in Paul's thought and practice. In the process it will be seen that the two are not different allegiances, but complementary aspects of the same one.

In regard to the place of ecclesiology in the overall Pauline theology, Ryrie asserts, "the concept of the church looms large in Paul's thought."[1] Ridderbos speaks of the "central and integral significance which Paul ascribes to the church in all his proclamation of redemption."[2] F. F. Bruce refers to Ephesians, which has so much to say about the church, as "The Quintessence of Paulinism."[3]

It is doubtful that these mature scholars are guilty of overstating the case. Paul's constant focus on the building of the church (cf. Matt. 16:18), seen in his missionary journeys in Acts 13-20, and the amount of space given over to the church in his epistles,[4] make the exact same point with considerable force.

Paul's priority of the church seen in Acts

Even a cursory study of the Book of Acts clearly reveals why the Apostle places the church among his highest theological priorities. In all three passages dealing with

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[1]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 188.

[2]Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, p. 327.

[3]F. F. Bruce, "The Quintessence of Paulinism" in Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, pp. 424-40.

[4]Ryrie, p. 188, capsules the two major uses of the term ἐκκλησία in Paul's Epistles: the local church (e.g. I Cor. 1:2) and the universal church (e.g. Col. 1:18).

Paul's conversion, Christ asks the same piercing question of the blinded Pharisee: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (9:4; 22:7; 26:14, NASB). As Toussaint sagely observes, "The Lord did not ask, 'Why do you persecute My church?'"[1] Rather, he phrased it the way He did to give Saul "his first glimpse"[2] of how closely identified the church is to Christ, and, thus, how important it is to Him.

It would seem that this amazing event on the Damascus Road was what turned Paul around from being a zealous persecutor of the church (8:1; cf. "disciples" in 9:1) to placing the church of Jesus Christ right up at the top of his priority list. The shaping ministry in the church in Syrian Antioch (11:26; 13:1; cf. the interchangeable terms "disciples" and "Christians" in 11:26)[3] would have further encouraged this emphasis.

Further, if there is any valid sense in which Paul's first missionary journey seen in Acts 13-14 is to be viewed as a pattern for ministry,[4] the emphasis on the upbuilding of

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[1]Toussaint, p. 376.

[2]Ibid.

[3]For an example of one who does not agree that "disciples" and "church" and "Christians" are basically synonymous or interchangeable theological terminology in Acts, see David Eenigenberg, "Disciples and Discipling Relationships in the Book of Acts" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981).

[4]See the suggestive treatment of Edwin S. Nelson, "Paul's First Missionary Journey as Paradigm" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1982).

the church by making disciples (14:21) and organizing them into churches with proper leadership (v. 23) would be for Luke and Paul both an unvarying priority. Similar importance is attached to the church throughout the three journeys. But, a statement made by the Apostle at the end of the third journey, as he speaks to the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus (Acts 20:17), reveals the reverence he feels for the church and why: "Be on guard . . . to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (v. 28). In spite of the awkward wording at the end of the verse,[1] it is still clear that the church is such a priority to God because He has bought and paid for it. Thus, it had to hold a similar place of importance in Paul's thought, as it must in the belief and behavior of Christians today.

Paul's priority of the Church seen in the Epistles

From the Book of Acts it has been seen that Paul was involved in discipling toward the end of planting and edifying churches. The same emphasis is seen in the various letters Paul wrote. Even to a group with as many problems as the Corinthians, he addressed them as "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1). Certainly this priority in Paul's thinking, deeply affected the way he addressed such difficulties.

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[1]Toussaint, p. 414, renders the last phrase in Acts 20:18, "by the blood of His own", that is, His own Son.

Further, even though Paul's letters were all addressed to individual members of the churches or the churches themselves, thus making all the material therein relevant to the church to one degree or another, the focus became more direct as the Apostle's ministry progressed. While there was little about the nature of the church in his earliest writings, the longer letters of Romans and I Corinthians contain major passages about the church (e.g. Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12). Then, the Prison Epistles give over extended contexts to the church, especially Ephesians (and Colossians, to a lesser degree). Finally, the Pastoral Epistles address other needed areas about the church in the closing years of Paul's ministry.

In connection with the Pastoral Epistles, Litfin similarly suggests,

> The evolving need for structure in the churches, combined with Paul's awareness that his own steadying influence would soon be passing from the scene, prompted him to treat certain ecclesiastical and pastoral subjects which have profited the church immensely ever since.[1]

With this Pauline background in mind, it is helpful to explore a passage in the last of Paul's Epistles, which has been one of the most widely used passages by the contemporary discipleship movement to attempt to validate their "Christ model"[2]

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[1]A. Duane Litfin, "I Timothy" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 727.

[2]The present writer's terminology used in "A Theological Evaluation of 'Christ Model' Disciple Making."

methodology (i.e., one-on-one or small group discipleship).[1] Second Timothy 2:2 describes what many call "the ministry of multiplication."[2]

Wilson correctly observes that this verse mentions "four spiritual generations."[3] But, he is on less solid footing when he states that those four generations are "Paul, Timothy, Timothy's disciples, and their disciples."[4]

At issue here exegetically is the meaning of "faithful men" as well as the proper understanding of being "able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2, NASB). Wilson reads in his Gospels-based model for discipling in the comment above, even though the term "disciple" is not used, and he offers no basis from the text in 2 Timothy for equating "faithful men" with "disciples." On a related issue, though, Counts concludes,

> Certainly there were parallels between Jesus' and Paul's methods. But there also were significant differences. Neither Paul nor the other apostles formed discipleship groups after the exact pattern of Jesus and the Twelve.[5]

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[1]David L. Waterman, "The Care and Feeding of Growing Christians," Eternity (September 1979), p. 17, refers to 2 Timothy 2:2 as "a key text on the process of discipleship."

[2]Litfin, "2 Timothy," p. 752.

[3]Carl Wilson, With Christ in the School of Disciple Building, p. 51.

[4]Ibid.

[5]William M. Counts, "The Center for Advanced Biblical Studies: A Model for Renewal in Ministry Training" (Unpublished D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 11. For a similar view, see Ronald L. Rushing, "A Comparison of the Discipleship Principles and Methods of Christ and Paul" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981).

Counts' view would appear to be well taken, at least in regard to 2 Timothy 2:2. Hiebert observes that the faithful men must be "reliable and trustworthy men" who are "able and competent in turn to pass on to others this treasure (i.e. the doctrine) by their ability and willingness to teach."[1] Stott goes so far as to say,

> The men Paul has in mind must be primarily ministers of the word, whose chief function is to teach, Christian elders whose responsibility it would be . . . to preserve the tradition . . . . The ability or competence which Timothy must look for in such men will consist partly in their integrity or faithfulness of character already mentioned and partly in their facility for teaching.[2]

In the context of 2 Timothy, this would seem to be the correct understanding. The letter addresses Timothy as a leader, and one who is wavering (1:6-8), perhaps on the verge of being "unfaithful" to his responsibility to "retain the standard of sound words" (1:13) he had received from Paul. The immediately preceding passage speaks of two who were unfaithful (1:15) and one who had continued faithful (1:16-18). Thus, before Paul's death (4:6-8), the Apostle is deeply concerned that the leadership of the churches remain doctrinally faithful and pure in their behavior so that the treasure (1:14) of the Lord can be effectively passed from generation to generation.

Such an understanding is in keeping with what is seen throughout Paul's Epistles. His commitment to discipling, seen

[1]D. Edmond Hiebert, Second Timothy, p. 53.

[2]John R. W. Stott, Guard the Gospel, p. 51.

in Acts, is a commitment to building the church. His goal is to see the whole church grow into the mature likeness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). But, in order to facilitate that goal, he did not push a "training of the Twelve" model, but rather let the Body of Christ minister to itself by the exercise of spiritual gifts and practical service in what Jenson and Stephens call "corporate discipleship" and Hubbard and Wells call "body discipleship."[1] Beyond that, the Apostle was committed to qualified leadership (e.g. 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1) that would keep the church doctrinally pure throughout the generations (2 Tim. 2:2; 4:1-5).

Instances of Great Commission Thought in Paul's Epistles

As Calenberg aptly observes,

> One of the most significant and perplexing problems in the study of the New Testament doctrine of discipleship is the disappearance of the word μαθητής from the pages of the New Testament after the Book of Acts.[2]

Along with the statement of the problem, Calenberg also offers a very helpful answer:

> That this failure to use the term was deliberate is obvious, especially in Paul's case. His close contact with Luke during and after the missionary journeys demand that he was aware of the importance of the term

[1]Roger Hubbard and Jerome C. Wells, "An Approach to Body Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.M. project, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976).

[2]Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 90.

> in the ministry of Christ as recorded by Luke in His Gospel . . . Paul would have found μαθητής inadequate in communicating the full implications of the believer's relationship to the Lord in the post-Pentecost Church Age.[1]

But, even if the gospels terminology, such as μαθητής, is abandoned in the epistles, the Great Commission to "make disciples" is still to continue "even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Thus, it is to be expected that there will be some important usage of phraseology or thought patterns (in the epistles) that reflect the Great Commission.

The following section will survey five of the relatively clear and important inclusions of such thought in Paul's letters. Significantly, four of the five are found in the two letters that Paul wrote to churches he had never seen face-to-face: Romans and Colossians. The final instance is in 2 Timothy 4, Paul's biblical "swan song."[2]

Great Commission thought in Romans

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans the important phrase "all the Gentiles" (or "all the nations") occurs in both the introduction (1:5) and conclusion (16:26). Further, the related autobiographical section by Paul in Romans 15:18-24 gives important data for this study.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 94, 97. See also the similar explanation of George W. Peters, "The Forgotten Word: Discipleship," Wherever, Summer, 1980, pp. 13-14.

[2]This writer's term in Luter, "Paul's Conscious Response to the Great Commission," (Unpublished paper read to the Southwestern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, March, 1981), p. 1.

Romans 1:5 and 16:26

Romans 1:5 speaks of receiving "grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles." (NASB) In Romans 16:26 Paul concludes the book by again referring to the message which "has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith." In both cases, in writing to the Romans whom he had not been with personally (1:8-10, 13), Paul relates his own apostolic ministry and message to the Great Commission target of faith and obedience for "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Although Murray is judiciously cautious on whether to translate πασῖν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (1:5) as "all the nations" or "all the Gentiles,"[1] Harrison seems quite confident in the rendering "all the nations," based on its apparent parallel to the similar phrase in Matthew 28:19.[2] Also, in 16:26, Harrison again relates πάντα τὰ ἔθνη back to the exact phrase in Matthew 28. His reasoning is that it points "to the Great Commission which includes 'all the nations' as embraced in the divine purpose (Matt. 28:19)."[3]

Thus, with parallel introductory and concluding portions that tie so clearly to the Matthean Commission, it is plausible to view Romans as "essentially a missionary manifesto,"

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[1]John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 14.

[2]Everett F. Harrison, "Romans" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 10:15.

[3]Ibid., p. 171.

as does Lane.[1] Here we see the Apostle Paul sending ahead the message that he, as an apostle, and the church at large, is to take to the nations (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47).

Romans 15:18-24

By the time Paul arrives at Romans 15:13 he has concluded the body of the Epistle. At 15:14 he begins to deal with "personal plans" for future ministry.[2] In verse 18 the Apostle gives Christ the credit for the "obedience of the Gentiles" (ἐθνῶν ; cf. Matt. 28:19), the same thought used in Romans 1:5 and 16:26. Then he undertakes a geographical "progress report" of his ministry up until that point in time in verse 19.

Here we encounter Paul's claim that he had "fully preached" (15:19, NASB) the good news "from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum." Several important questions show themselves at this point: 1) Why did Paul phrase the geographical extent of his ministry in the way that he did, considering that he most certainly did not begin his ministry in Jerusalem (Acts 9; Galatians 1:15-18)? 2) What does Paul mean by πεπληρωκέναι ("Fully preached" or "fulfilled", NASB) margin), when he could not possibly have given the gospel to

[1]William L. Lane, in The New Testament Speaks, p. 193.

[2]John A. Witmer, "Romans" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, pp. 438, 496.

everyone between Jerusalem and Illyricum by himself? and 3) What does Paul's model in this passage mean for discipling practice today?

In answer to the first question, it appears that the Apostle is not speaking of Jerusalem as the starting-point of his personal ministry but as "the south-eastern limit of his missionary activity" (Murray)[1] or possibly as "the starting-point and metropolis of the Christian movement as a whole" (Bruce).[2] In either case, it seems that Paul is stacking up the movement of the gospel and spread of the church against Christ's Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19), "beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47), "even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). At this point in the latter part of the decade of the '50's, the Commission had been carried out in a circular area (κύκλῳ) from Jerusalem to modern-day Yugoslavia[3] by the Apostle himself, and he hoped to later get to Rome and Spain (v. 24).

The answer to the second question is probably best understood by looking at the example of Paul's ministry in Ephesus in Acts 19. As Paul was "reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus" (v. 9) over a period of two years or more, "all who lived in Asia" heard the gospel (v. 10). Certainly Paul did not preach to all of the people in that great province,

[1]Murray, p. 213.

[2]F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 261.

[3]Witmer, p. 497.

since we later find that the church at Colossae had "not personally seen [Paul's] face" (Col. 2:1). Rather, the gospel spread from the central ministry in Ephesus out through the province of Asia.

Similarly, the correct understanding of πεπληρωκέναι here (cf. 2 Tim. 4:17, discussed later in the chapter) is, according to Harrison, that Paul "faithfully preached the message in the major communities along the way, leaving to his converts the more intensified evangelizing of surrounding districts."[1] Ridderbos also draws this distinction between "extensive" and "intensive" ministry.[2] Thus, it appears plausible to say that Paul primarily understood his part of the Great Commission to be the "extensive," church planting part that we normally think of as apostolic ministry. On the other hand, it is logical that he expected the various members of the churches to fill in the gaps "intensively" with further evangelism, and baptism and teaching of the converts (Matt. 28:19-20).

The answer to the third question is not clear. However, Paul's model of carrying out the Great Commission may indicate there is still the need for both extensive and intensive ministry today. Certainly all believers do not have the calling or gifts for the extensive ministry, as did Paul.

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[1]Harrison, p. 156-57.

[2]Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline, pp. 432ff.

But, all are responsible for the carrying out of the Commission in an intensive way where they live.

Col. 1:6, 23

Paul's next Great Commission "progress report" comes from a Roman jail cell (Col. 4:3, 10, 18). Several years after Romans (c. 60-62),[1] Paul writes to the other church in the New Testament that he had not seen personally (Col. 2:1). Again, although his primary purpose is doctrinal (as in Romans, but here to refute a "special heresy"[2]), the Apostle sees fit to begin by speaking of the spread of the gospel.

In Col. 1:6 Paul refers to the gospel (v. 5) "bearing fruit and increasing" ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ("in all the world", NASB). There, in 1:23 we read of the gospel which was proclaimed ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν ("in all creation under heaven").

While there is obviously a strong element of "hyperbole"[3] in Paul's statements, it should be remembered, according to Ramm, that the presence of hyperbole "means that some idea or event is stated in an exaggerated manner to indicate its importance or its quality."[4] Geisler is certainly correct

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[1]Norman L. Geisler, "Colossians" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 667.

[2]Ibid., p. 668.

[3]Ibid., p. 670.

[4]Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 143.

in stating that the figure here indicates ". . . the universality of the gospel and its proclamation, not that every person on the globe heard Paul preach."[1] It would also seem that, having reached Rome -- which Luke obviously understands as "the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8) by the way he concludes Acts with Paul in jail in Rome (28:30-31) -- Paul believes that another crucial stepping-stone to reaching "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19) has taken place. Thus, the Apostle emphasizes the widespread penetration of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire in a striking manner of expression.

Colossians 1:28-29

After the lengthy ensuing discussion on the person of Christ and His Headship over the church in the middle of Colossians 1, the Apostle turns again to refer to his own ministry in verse 24. He speaks of his "stewardship from God" (v. 25) as πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ("to fulfill the Word of God"). The thought pattern is very similar to Romans 15:19,[2] where Paul said he had "fulfilled" the Great Commission extensively from Jerusalem to Illyricum. Thus, we might expect another passage that gives some way of understanding the progress of the gospel and Christ's commission.

Colossians 1:28-29 could easily be considered as either an adaptation or an application of the Matthean Commission

[1]Geisler, p. 675.

[2]Curtis Vaughn, "Colossians" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 11:191.

because there are several clear parallels. The emphasis on proclaiming Christ (v. 28) is roughly the same as the "going" (evangelism) step in Matthew 28:19. The three-fold repetition of "every man" is simply individualizing "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19). The "teaching" in Colossians 1:28 is exactly what Matthew 28:20 prescribes. Further, the goal of Matthew 28:20 ("Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you") is clarified by Paul as "that we may present every man complete in Christ") (1:28, NASB). This expression of maturity in Christ as the goal for all believers (cf. Eph. 4:13) is not at all out of line with the total obedience to Christ's commands in Matthew 28:20. Finally, the "power" spoken of in verse 29 calls to mind the promise of Christ's presence "even to the end of the age" in the concluding words of Matthew.

Could it be that in Colossians 1:28-29 the Apostle gives something of a Great Commission for the local church? They are to think intensively, in terms of "every man," instead of the great geographical sweep (cf. Col. 1:6, 23; Rom. 15:19). Those who respond to the proclamation (v. 28) are to be taught "with all wisdom" so as to become mature (τέλειον) in Christ.[1] This view is made even more plausible when it is considered that Colossians 3:16 uses very similar terminology, reversing "admonishing" and "teaching", to

[1]Ibid., p. 193.

speak of those who have been internalized in the Body of Christ and are now growing toward maturity (Col. 1:28).

2 Timothy 4:17

Even as the Apostle exhorts Timothy to "preach the word" (κήρυξον τὸν λόγον) in 2 Timothy 4:2, verses 6-8 tell the reader that Paul is "protesting his consistent loyalty throughout his ministry to his divine mandate."[1] Finally, down in verse 17 we are told exactly how Paul "finished the course" (v. 7, NASB) of his ministry.

After an initial legal defense when no one supported him (v. 16), Paul speaks of the final "fulfillment" (πληροφορηθῇ) of his ministry of proclamation (v. 17). He had the opportunity to preach in Rome at his defense, and in some sense the Apostle regarded that as the ultimate fulfillment or completion of his preaching commission.[2] Because of the inclusion of the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ("all the nations", "all the Gentiles") here also, this understanding seems even more likely. That wording may very well refer back to Romans 1:5 and 16:26, speaking of "the scope of Paul's apostleship" and message,[3] as well as Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:47.

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[1]J. N. D. Kelly, A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, p. 209.

[2]Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, p. 176.

[3]Ibid., p. 177.

In summary, throughout all five instances in the Pauline Epistles that were studied, the Apostle's consciousness of and commitment to the Great Commission was clear. Not only did he choose to give reports on the progress and effectiveness of his "extensive" apostolic mandate in Romans 15, Colossians 1, and 2 Timothy 4. He also adapted the Commission for the "intensive" needs of the Colossian church in Colossians 1:28-29. Thus, based on such passages, it can be said that, even in the absence of the term "disciple" from Paul's writings, the Lord's command to "make disciples" was still being obeyed to the fullest in Paul's ministry.

Conclusion

This chapter has treated the relationship between the Apostle Paul and the Great Commission. That was accomplished by studying the Apostle's ministry seen in Acts, by investigating the priority that the church held in his ministry and thought, and by observing potentially significant phrases and wording in Paul's Epistles that might point to the Apostle's understanding of the Great Commission.

Initially, Paul's allegiance to making disciples was probed by locating the Great Commission activities of going, baptizing, and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20) in the narratives of Acts. Next, it was concluded that the Apostle undoubtedly had heard the Great Commission from any of a number of possible sources. Finally, the relationship between Paul's own personal

calling and commission seen in Acts 9, 22, and 26 with the universal Commission was seen to be both close and complementary.

In the middle section of the chapter it was seen that Paul's priority of the church emerged from the encounter he had with Christ on the Damascus Road. The records of the missionary journeys in Acts 13-20 substantiate this sense of importance in the Apostle's mind. Also, Paul's Epistles further back this understanding and lend no real credence to a one-on-one or small group discipling model, though there does seem to be an implication that "disciples", the individual building blocks of the "church", should be involved in what could be called corporate or body discipling, using their spiritual gifts and practical means to minister to each other.

Finally, in the purposeful absence of the term "disciple," several selected passages were studied to find out what expressions relating to the Great Commission Paul did use. It was determined that the Apostle definitely used the Commission as a constant measuring-stick for his own ministry, and ever kept the universal scope of Christ's command before his own eyes and the church by the frequent use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη . While other factors, such as the Apostle Paul's limited reference to baptism,[1] etc., could have been looked at, also, the material surveyed firmly demonstrated his unbending allegiance to the Commission and the resulting churches

[1]See Luter, "Discipleship and the Church," pp. 268-71, for a discussion of such factors in Paul's thought.

that he was involved in planting and nurturing by going, baptizing, and teaching (Matt. 28: 19-20) throughout much of the Roman Empire.

CHAPTER IV

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN PETER'S THOUGHT

Peter was one of "the eleven disciples" (Matt. 28:16) present when the Risen Christ gave His Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (vv. 19-20). Peter was the disciple among the Twelve that Jesus was directly addressing when He said, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18, NASB).

Because of his training and commissioning by the Lord Jesus and his ministry in the early church seen in Acts and his Epistles, Peter is a crucial object of study in attempting to understand an overall New Testament theology of discipling. His time with Christ in the gospels, as well as the largely different scope of his wider ministry (Gal. 2:7) offers an excellent opportunity to compare the findings of the chapter on Paul with what is observed in Peter's thought and ministry.

In this chapter the gospels, Acts, and the Petrine epistles will be studied in sequence. First, several selected aspects in Peter's training by Christ will be explored. Then, the Apostle's ministry in Acts, primarily in the first twelve chapters, but including other helpful sources, will be observed. The final section will seek out glimpses of the

Great Commission, as well as Peter's development of the church, in 1 and 2 Peter.

Observations of Peter's Training in the Gospels

Although Peter did not write a gospel, there is much about him in the four canonical gospels. In this section, Peter's position among the Twelve will be initially considered. Next, the aim of his training will be thought through. The problem of Peter's failures will be treated after that. Finally, the difference the Resurrection of Jesus made in Peter's life and ministry will be discussed.

The position of Peter among the Twelve in the gospels

Since Simon Peter was one of twelve called by Jesus to be apostles (Matt. 10:2; Luke 6:13), it is helpful to know how he fit into the apostolic band. In answer to that question, Bruce writes,

> Of those twelve men Simon Peter was the acknowledged leader. There are differences between one evangelist and another in their portrayal of Peter, but on this they are agreed.[1]

Cullmann speaks of Peter's "unique position" among the Twelve in the following way:

> Together with the sons of Zebedee and his brother, Andrew, he belongs to the intimate circle of those who gathered around Jesus . . . But, even within the innermost circle it is almost always Peter who stands in the

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[1] F. F. Bruce, Peter, Stephen, James, and John: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity, p. 16.

> foreground. . . . It is Peter who answers when Jesus directs a question to all the disciples . . . . It is Peter who, in various situations, turns to Jesus with questions which all the disciples want answered . . . . He is rather at all times their spokesman, their representative in good as in bad action.[1]

A number of other examples could be discussed at this point, but perhaps the most telling as to Peter's status among the Twelve is that his name is placed first in all four listings of the apostles (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13).[2] Since Matthew actually uses the word "first" (πρῶτος) in reference to Peter, there would seem to be at least some special recognition of his prominence in the group. Probably Carson is correct in understanding to mean "first among equals."[3]

The prominence of Peter was so pervasive that, even after all the disappointments and failures surrounding the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, the angel says to the women outside Jesus' empty tomb, "Go, tell His disciples and Peter . . ." (Mark 16:7). Also, Peter is still listed first among the apostles fishing in the Sea of Tiberias in John 21:2.

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[1]Oscar Cullman, Peter: Disciple-Apostle-Martyr, Trans. by Floyd Filson, pp. 23-24, 30.

[2]D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12 Vols., edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 8:237.

[3]Ibid.; See also the similar comment of Cullmann, p. 24; Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "Matthew" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, p. 41.

Even such a brief survey should be sufficient to prove the point that Simon Peter, in some sense, held a totally unique position among the apostolate. But, at this point, nothing further can be concluded other than that Peter would have been as close as anyone to Christ, thus having an exceptional opportunity to understand the meaning and practice of discipling.

The significance of Peter's training

There are many today who would view the meaning and application of the training received by Peter and the apostles from Jesus in the following way: "The disciples would have intuitively used the same approach in building their own disciples as Jesus used with them and the Seventy."[1]

Although there is an attractive simplicity in such an understanding, there are also two serious exegetical and theological problems. The first has to do with the meaning of "apostle" versus "disciple". The second is seen in looking at the mission of the Twelve in Matthew 10, and then comparing the mission of the apostles in Luke 9 with that of the Seventy in Luke 10.

In answer to the first problem, it must be recognized that Jesus had many "disciples" surrounding Him (Luke 6:13a).

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[1]Carl W. Wilson, With Christ in the School of Disciple Building, p. 69.

From these, He "chose twelve, whom He also named as apostles" (v. 13b, NASB). This is in agreement with the understanding of Rengstorf, who writes, ". . . It is part of the image of ἀπόστολος that he should be a μαθητής, whereas not by a long way are all the μαθηταὶ also ἀπόστολοι. . . ."[1] That is, even though the Twelve never ceased to be disciples, because they were also apostles they were set apart from the other disciples "by a long way," by virtue of position.

Harrison reveals the same conclusion by stating that, even though Peter and the others were, in a sense, the "disciples par excellence,"[2]

> . . . They are also called apostles because Jesus imparted to them his authority to preach and to cast out demons (Mk. 3:14-15; 6:30). Just because this activity was limited while Jesus was with them, the term apostle is rarely used.[3]

F. F. Bruce clearly brings out the factors of uniqueness in regard to the apostolate in the following discussion:

> It is clear from all four Gospels that, out of the wide circle of His followers, Jesus selected twelve men for special training, so that they might participate in his ministry and continue as His witnesses after His departure (cf. Matt. 10:1ff.; Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13; John 6:67, 70). . . . These twelve men are called "apostles" . . . . This term, from the Greek apostoloi, "messengers," probably indicates that . . . the people so designated were invested with their sender's authority for the discharge of

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[1] Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 9 vols. edited by Gerhard Kittel, s.v. "μαθητής" by K. H. Kergstof; 4:450.

[2] Baker's Dictionary of Theology, s.v. "Disciple" by Everett F. Harrison, p. 166.

[3] Ibid., s.v. "Apostle" by E. F. Harrison, p. 57.

> their commission . . . and that it could not be transferred by them to others.[1]

Thus, it can be safely concluded that Peter's training as an apostle was special, unique. But, it remains to be seen how that special training and position worked itself out in the limited missions that were carried out during Jesus' earthly ministry.

In Matthew 10:5-8 the twelve are sent out to preach the kingdom of heaven, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons (vv. 7-8). They were to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v. 6), completely avoiding the Gentiles and Samaritans (v. 5). This is, of course, the complete opposite of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and what is seen in the Book of Acts (1:8).

Since this particular limited mission by Peter and the other apostles is so totally different from "the Church's Commission,"[2] it is insightful to inquire further into the commissioning and authority granted at that time. Otherwise, it would be possible for a zealous, if misguided, "discipler" to look at this passage and attempt to duplicate it in the name of discipling training. Why is such an understanding textually illegitimate here?

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[1] Bruce, p. 15.

[2] Cf. the title of Robert D. Culver's perceptive article on Matthew 28:18-20, "What is the Church's Commission?" Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 10 (Spring 1967): 115-26.

What the Twelve are told to do in Matthew 10:5-8 is based solely on the authority (ἐξουσία) Christ gives them in verse 1. As Rengstorf explains,

> In Mt. 10:2 the δώδεκα μαθηταί of 10:1 are the δώδεκα ἀπόστολοι. Between the two different terms for the same men lies the commissioning or the endowment with ἐξουσία . This shows us why ἀπόστολος is used. The μαθηταί have become ἀπόστολοι by the decision of Jesus.[1]

Thus, for students today to attempt to pattern themselves after this mission, in order to be real "disciples," is short-sighted. Peter and the other "disciples" (v. 1) here are also "apostles" (v. 2), a position which no one holds in that sense today.

The missions seen in Luke 9 and 10 require somewhat closer scrutiny. Certainly there are clear similarities between the work of the Twelve (9:1) and that of the Seventy (10:1). There are parallel instructions (9:3-5; 10:4-8). Even the message is essentially the same (9:2; 10:9).

However, to look no further, as apparently Wilson[2] and others do not, is to miss a great deal of data that is very illuminating. The Twelve (9:1) are given "power" (δύναμις) and "authority" (ἐξουσία) not granted to the Seventy. The Twelve are sent out "among the villages . . . everywhere" (9:6) while the Seventy are specifically limited "to every

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[1] TDNT, s.v. "ἀπόστολος", by K. H. Rengstorf, 1:427.

[2] Wilson, p. 69.

city and place where [Jesus] was going to come" (10:1).[1] Peter and the others were to "proclaim" (κηρύσσω) their message (9:2) while the Seventy were simply to "say" (λέγω) theirs. Finally the Twelve are called "apostles" (9:10) on returning while no such recognition is given to the Seventy (10:17).

In summary, the uniqueness of Peter's training by Christ has been seen in two ways. First, there is the clear distinction between "disciple" and "apostle" as to position and authority. Also, the short-term mission of the apostles in Matthew and the differences between that of the Twelve in Luke 9 and of the Seventy in Luke 10 reinforce the same crucial differentiation between μαθητής and ἀπόστολος.

The problem of Peter's failures

Considering Peter's position as an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1), and perhaps the most prominent one at that (Matt. 10:1; 16:18), it is most disarming that his failures are so clearly set forth in the Gospels. While there is much believers can learn from Peter's lapses (Mark 9:5-6; 14:29-31, 39, etc.), it should also be asked if

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[1] J. Norval Geldenhuys, The Gospel of Luke, p. 303; For a slightly different view of the differences and similarities, see Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 8:937.

his failures really should be used as a positive model in discipling.[1]

If the Gospels are used as the exclusive source for discipling material, and the training of the Twelve as the pattern, such an approach is a logical one to take. Since Simon Peter turned out to be such a great Christian leader (Acts 1-12), even though he made so many mistakes, even denying Christ, is there not to be "expected failure" in the life of a disciple? How could it be otherwise, if the experience of the Twelve with Jesus is to be our model?

First, as has been demonstrated, the training of the Twelve model cannot be sustained in detail because of the uniqueness of the apostles' position and training. Further, there is no crucifixion, resurrection, and Day of Pentecost to intervene in the midst of one's ministry today, as it did with Peter, to turn his spiritual life from denial of Christ to being a dynamic witness (see the next section). Finally, not only is Peter never commended for his failures, but such behavior is not tolerated elsewhere in the New Testament, least of all being seen as a normal part of discipleship.

For example, Paul does not excuse the failure of Peter's behavior in Galatians 2:11ff. Even though he considered "Cephas"

[1]E.g. Roland E. Niednagel, Jr., "The Place of Failure in Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972). For a similar viewpoint in dealing with Mark's Gospel, see Heber F. Peacock, "Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark," Review and Expositor 75 (Fall 1978):555-64.

to be one of the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church (2:9), Paul says in no uncertain terms that "Cephas . . . stood condemned" (2:11).

Also, Paul does not excuse Peter's younger friend John Mark (1 Pet. 5:13) for his lapse during the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Even though he later grew to value Mark (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11), Paul did not explain his behavior as normal or to be expected (Acts 15:37-39). Nor does the falling away of Paul's associates, when he was near death in a Roman jail cell (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:10), seem to be excusable, based on some supposed parallel with Peter's failures.

Therefore, it must be considered a dangerous enterprise to attempt to utilize Peter's manifold shortcomings seen in the Gospels to draw principles for discipling today. Although any believer today would thrill to hear his Lord call him "Rock", as He named "Peter" in Matthew 16:18, no committed Christian would ever purposely cause Christ to say, "Get behind me, Satan," as Jesus did to Peter in Matthew 16:23.

The new beginning in the Resurrection

At the end of the gospels comes the climax of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry: His atoning death, resurrection, and ascension. Here we find the key to understanding the ministry of the Apostle Peter seen in Acts and the Petrine Epistles.

Cullmann aptly assesses the change in Peter's role that Christ's finished work made:

> The death and resurrection of Jesus created for Peter a changed situation. This is true in two respects. In the first place, from this time on his unique role appears no longer merely as that of a representative; in view of the physical absence of the Lord, it naturally appears also in the leadership of the small community of disciples. . . . In the second place, this unique position now rests upon a specific commission. . . .[1]

Now, Peter had been commissioned as an apostle during Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt. 10:1-2, etc.). Also, he had been named "Peter" (Πέτρος), and (representatively) been given "the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:18).[2] However, those are not the commission that Cullmann has in mind.

After the day of Jesus' resurrection, and before His ascending to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit, which would complete the transformation in Peter's ministry,[3] Peter was to receive two additional commissions that were of great consequence. One of these was the Great Commission. Thus, Peter, along with the other apostles, was under orders to carry out Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20), among other things (Luke 24:47-48; Acts 1:8).

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[1]Cullmann, p. 33.

[2]Carson, p. 374.

[3]Ronald R. Gibson, "Peter's Ministry Before and After the Cross" (Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1963), pp. 76-77.

That responsibility was added into what it previously meant for Peter to be an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Simon Peter was also given an individual rsponsibility (or re-commissioning) by the Risen Lord in John 21. As Blum observes, "Three times Jesus commissioned Peter to care for the flock: Feed My lambs (v. 15); Take care of My sheep (v. 16); Feed My sheep (v. 17)."[1] Thus, we see here a thrice-repeated imperative from Christ to shepherd His church. This is the same group that Peter had heard the Savior refer to when He said, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). Thus, for Peter the leadership and building of the ἐκκλησία of Jesus Christ had to be henceforth the highest of priorities.

In conclusion, in this section Peter's (foremost) position among the Twelve was initially established. Then, the unique calling and training of the apostles was discussed. After that, the problem of attempting to use Peter's failures in the Gospels in discipling training was focused upon. Finally, it was shown that Peter's new beginning and re-commissioning for his long-term apostolic ministry actually did not take place until after the resurrection. All of these conclusions call into question the usefulness of a gospels-centered study of discipling.

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[1]Edwin A. Blum, "John" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 345.

Observations of Peter's Ministry in Acts

In this section the focus of study will primarily be the first half of the Book of Acts, although other pertinent passages will also be looked at. The reason for limiting the study in Act is explained in overview by Bruce:

> The first twelve chapters of [Acts] are dominated by Peter. There is, indeed, much to be said for the view that those chapters present the reader with "Acts of Peter" designedly parallel to the "Acts of Paul" in the later part of the book.[1]

In these chapters, and elsewhere, the question will be considered as to how Peter, who was trained by Christ, demonstrates his own personal understanding of the Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20). Did the Apostle use the popular model of today, or was he involved in evangelism, baptism, and teaching, as Matthew 28 commands? Also, what was the place of the church in Peter's ministry, considering his naming by Christ (Matt. 16:18) and his re-commissioning in John 21?

First, the recognized position Peter held in Acts will be studied. Then, the thrust of Peter's ministry will be surveyed, before looking at his priority in regard to the church. The last topic will be to piece together other passages outside of Acts 1-12 that refer to Peter's ministry.

Peter's position in the church in Acts

Cullmann gives a good introductory survey of the

[1]Ibid., p. 24.

place of Peter in the early chapters of Acts in the following way:

> In the Book of Acts we clearly note that Peter takes a unique position in the Primitive Church in Jerusalem . . . . It is Peter who in 1:15ff. prompts the choice of the twelfth disciple . . . . He it is who explains to the assembled multitude the miracle of Pentecost . . . . In [2:37] the witnesses present at the miracle address themselves, as the author puts it, "to Peter and the rest of the apostles." In chapter 3, he performs the healing miracle on the lame man.[1]

Besides the above, Peter is seen as the prime defender of the cause of the gospel in chapters 4-5. He is the one who voices the verdict against Ananias and Sapphira in chapter 5. He, along with John, lays hands on the Samaritan believers in chapter 8, and it is he who deals with Simon the Magician. Also, Peter is the apostle sent to Cornelius, the Gentile centurion (chapters 10-11). Finally, he is jailed as a key leader of the church in Jerusalem in chapter 12, which role, besides being an apostle, we see being carried out again in chapter 15 at the Jerusalem Council.

Although a great deal more could be said, even this brief treatment is enough to establish the central position of Peter in the church, and among the apostles, in the early chapters of Acts. Thus, who could be in a better position to model a correct understanding and application of discipling than the leading figure of Jesus' apostolic band and the leading figure in the infant church?

[1]Cullmann, pp. 33-34.

The thrust of Peter's ministry in Acts

What, in fact, is seen when Peter's ministry in Acts is scrutinized as to its methodology? Do we find a one-on-one or small group approach to be prevalent? If not, how is the ministry of disciple making done?

Initially, it can be said that there is no clear small-group strategy seen at all.[1] After the Upper Room prayer meeting by the 120 (not a small group) in Acts 1:12ff., the group mushroomed after Pentecost. Although there was breaking of bread "from house to house" (Acts 2:46), the main drift of things was that the believers were "day by day continuing with one mind in the Temple." In 4:32 we read that "the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul" (NASB). Further, even though the apostles preached "house to house" (5:42), in disregard of the Sanhedrin, the emphasis was on the church's oneness in purity and outreach. Gifts were brought to the apostles (4:37) and they handled the church's problems (chapters 5-6).

Certainly Barnabas could not be produced as an example of one who was trained that way. When he is initially introduced in 4:36, he is already called by the apostles, "the Son of Encouragement" (NASB), evidencing previous "character and

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[1]William M. Counts, "The Center for Advanced Biblical Studies: A Model for Renewal in Ministry Training" (Unpublished D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 20.

ability to encourage those who were downhearted."[1] Later glimpses indicate more of the work of a leader than of one being trained (e.g. 9:27; 11:22-24).

Nor is Mark such an example. Even though there may be New Testament evidence elsewhere of a "father-son" relationship of sorts between Peter and Mark (1 Pet. 5:13), such a relationship cannot be substantiated from Acts. Although the mention of Peter going to the home of Mark's mother in Acts 12:12 reveals that they likely knew each other, nothing more is known. The reason why Barnabas and Saul take Mark back to Antioch may have been nothing more than that Mark is Barnabas' cousin (Acts 12:25; Col. 4:10).

On the other hand, the steps of evangelism, baptism, and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20) are clearly observable in the ministry of Peter and the apostles from the beginning in Acts. At Pentecost, Peter presents his evangelistic message (esp. Acts 2:38-40), baptizes the believers (v. 41; cf. v. 38)[2] and then is involved in continual teaching (v. 42).

Although Acts 2 is probably to be understood as somewhat of a paradigm of apostolic ministry, we can be certain the "going" evangelistically continued (Acts 4:4, 32; 5:42;

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[1]Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 364.

[2]Ibid., p. 359. Toussaint succinctly lists the alternative understandings of Acts 2:38, opting for a parenthetical understanding of the phrase dealing with baptism.

6:7; chapters 10-11). Baptism is seen in 8:12, 8:36-38, and 10:47-48). The need for teaching is seen as a key priority in 6:2, 4 among the apostles, of whom Peter was the prominent.

Thus, it seems an eminently fair conclusion that the discipling done in the early chapters of Acts was according to the prescription of the Matthean Commission: by going with the gospel, and baptizing and teaching the converts (Matt. 28:19-20). No "training of the Twelve" pattern is readily discernible in the ministry of Peter or the other apostles in Acts 1-12.

Peter's priority of the church in Acts

It would be more than passing strange if one who had heard audibly Christ's own priority to building His ἐκκλησία (Matt. 16:18) had ignored it in his own apostolic ministry. Certainly Peter did not, as shall be seen briefly in this section.

If the beginning of the "church" Christ had predicted in Matthew 16:18 is to be located at Pentecost, as Ryrie argues,[1] Peter was its initial spokesman (Acts 2:14, 37-38) and chief apologist before the religious leaders in Jerusalem (4:8ff.). Further, at the point when the first major case of church discipline had to be undertaken (5:1-11), Peter was God's mouthpiece, so to speak. It is significant that the initial use

[1]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, pp. 119-20.

of ἐκκλησία in Acts is in 5:11, at the conclusion of the Ananias and Sapphira episode. Also, Peter is among "the Twelve" as the new development in church leadership takes place in 6:1-6, in answer to a pressing need of a segment of the church.

Even well after the church is scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1), the implication of Acts 9:31-32 seems to be that the Apostle Peter was involved in traveling around to build up "the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria" (v. 31, NASB). Finally, of course, the conversion of Cornelius, spoken of in Acts 1-11, seems to be the thematic lead-in to the spread of the church to the Gentiles, especially to Syrian Antioch (11:19-26).

Therefore, it can be confidently stated that, in Peter's ministry seen in Acts, the church is at the center of his thinking and activity.[1] As has been seen with the Apostle Paul, Peter went about his ministry of evangelism, baptizing, and teaching to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20) in order to establish the church of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18), and, as it spread, local churches in each area.

Peter's ministry elsewhere in the New Testament

It must be admitted that it is possible for the example of Peter in Acts 1-12 to be altered somewhat by the limited

[1]Ibid., p. 125.

data about the Apostle seen in other parts of the New Testament (outside the Petrine epistles). Thus, what can be learned additionally about Peter's ministry will be rapidly surveyed.

In Galatians 2:7-9 Peter and Paul come to an understanding of their primary missions within the wider Great Commission. Paul focuses on "the Gentiles" (2:9) and Peter "the circumcised" (vv. 7, 8, 9). This, of course, did not exclude Peter taking the gospel to a Gentile (e.g. Acts 10-11) any more than Paul taking the message to Jews (first, continually on his missionary journeys). Here we see no conflict with the data derived from Acts 1-12.

In Acts 15:6-11 Peter stands at the Jerusalem Council and argues for the gospel of grace. Here, as once again the initial step of discipling, evangelism, is in jeopardy, Peter stands firm. Again, there is no reason to alter the earlier findings.

Galatians 2:11ff. speaks of a difficult incident when Peter was in Antioch and capitulated to "the party of the circumcision" (2:11). There is nothing in this context to suggest any shift in perspective. If anything, it is implied that a "party", or small group, perspective is potentially divisive, thus dangerous, to the wider Body of Christ.

The final passages to be observed are found in 1 Corinthians. In the first chapter we find out about the existence in Corinth of a party "of Cephas" (1:12). If, in fact, Peter

had visited Corinth, as Bruce concludes,[1] then it is more understandable why there would be a "fan club" following Peter, as well as factions hailing Paul, Apollos, and even Jesus (1:12). Yet, there is nothing in this context to support a small-group strategy since Paul repudiates the fragmenting tendency these groups were causing in the Corinthian church (1:10-17).

The other mention of Peter in 1 Corinthians has to do with him taking "along a believing wife" in his apostolic missionary travels, along with "the rest of the apostles" (9:5). If that reference does anything, it shows the clear difference between the theological state of affairs in the gospels and the post-resurrection situation in the epistles. There is no hint that the apostles took along their wives while Jesus was with them physically, before the Cross. Yet, such behavior is standard operating procedure by the apostles when 1 Corinthians is written (9:5). Such a discrepancy can best be explained by the realization that Christ did not intend for His training of the Twelve to be duplicated in close detail by the church.

Thus, it is a fair conclusion that the impression of Peter's understanding of discipling seen in Acts 1-12 is not changed in any consequential way by the limited number of references elsewhere in the New Testament (outside Peter's

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[1]F. F. Bruce, Peter, Stephen, James, and John, p. 40.

epistles). Neither the references to Peter in Galatians 2, the record of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, nor the mentions of Cephas in 1 Corinthians show anything that disputes the previously-stated dependence of Peter on the Matthean Commission, as well as a clear priority for the church (Matt. 16:18).

Observations of Peter's Thought in His Epistles

When we turn to the Petrine Epistles there is encountered a final opportunity to compare the approach of the Apostle Peter on discipling, as seen in his ministry in Acts 1-12, with the viewpoint of his two canonical letters. In order to accomplish such a comparison, key passages from both epistles that deal with the steps of Matthew's climactic Commission, as well as the church, will be briefly explored.

Glimpses of discipling and the Church in 1 Peter

Quite a bit on these subjects is found in Peter's First Epistle. Five important passages will be looked at in the following discussion.

1:23-2:2

First Peter 1:22 begins by commending love for "the brethren", an obvious reference to the church. Verse 23 then moves to speaking of being "born again" by the word (λόγου) of God. In contrast, verse 25 says of this same message that it

is the "word" (ῥῆμα) "which was preached to you" (NASB). The shift from λόγος to ῥῆμα reflects a change in emphasis from the message itself to the "utterance"[1] of the message. The use of εὐαγγελίζω ("preached") further supports the fact that this passage is looking back at initial evangelism, the presentation of the gospel[2] as the first step of the Great Commission.

There is a logical progression from the end of chapter 1 to the beginning of chapter 2 in 1 Peter. From speaking of evangelism and re-birth in 1:23-25, Peter now progresses to deal with the growth of the believers he addresses, many of whom are new converts.[3] The nourishment of the Scriptures, spoken of in 2:2, is designed to displace the unworthy behavior described in 2:1. Thus, it seems that 2:1-2 are speaking of the function of "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:20, NASB), the third step of the Great Commission.

2:4-5

It is somewhat surprising that the word "church" does not appear in Peter's Epistles.[4] In spite of such a perplexing

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[1]Edwin A. Blum, "I Peter" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12:227.

[2]J. N. D. Kelly, A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude, p. 81.

[3]Blum, p. 228.

[4]Ryrie, p. 284.

absence, there is still undeniable reference to the church present. The clearest such inclusion is in 1 Peter 2:4-5. There the Apostle Peter, in an "echo" of Matthew 16:18,[1] speaks of the spiritual upbuilding of the church of Jesus Christ. As Raymer writes,

> Jesus told Peter, "On this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). Now Peter (1 Peter 2:4-5) clearly identified Christ as the Rock on which His church is built.[2]

In 2:4 Christ is called a "living stone" that is chosen by God. In 2:5 the believers to whom 1 Peter is addressed are also called "living stones". Besides this strong identification with the Lord Jesus, the word rendered "being built up" in the NASB is οἰκοδομέω , the same term employed by Christ to speak of building His church in Matthew 16:18. So, the differences in terminology and imagery notwithstanding, it is unthinkable to deny that Peter is speaking of the church in this passage.

2:21-24

Some have understood the meaning of 1 Peter 2:21, which speaks of "Christ . . . leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (NASB), as demanding imitation of Christ's life and ministry, including the training He gave to His apostles. Such an idea cannot be supported contextually,

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[1]Julius R. Mantey, "New Testament Facts About the Apostle Peter," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 21 (September, 1978):211-12.

[2]Roger M. Raymer, "I Peter" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 845.

however. Even though the word rendered "example" (ὑπογραμμός) means "model, pattern to be copied",[1] it must be observed tha the example does not have to do with the totality of life. Peter is here speaking of patient suffering (vv. 20-23), and that is the area in which Jesus is to serve as the "model".

It should also be seen that, even in suffering, Christians cannot ever hope to duplicate Jesus' example completely.[2] First Peter 2:24 speaks of Christ's suffering on the Cross in bringing about our redemption. Thus, we must realize that, even when a passage seems to clearly hold out the Savior as a model to be copied, the uniqueness of His person and ministry still must be taken into account, if there is to be proper understanding and application.

3:21

The context of 1 Peter 3:21 has been a battleground over the meaning and significance of baptism. It is not the purpose of this treatment to enter that controversy, but simply to document the inclusion of baptism, the second step of the Great Commission to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19), in the thought of Peter.

In that regard, Ryrie concludes that the reference in 1 Peter 3:21 shows that "baptism was recognized and practiced

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[1]W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. ὑπογραμμός , p. 851.

[2]D. Edmond Hiebert, "Following Christ's Example: An Exposition of I Peter 2:21-25," Bibliotheca Sacra 139 (January-March, 1982):34.

by Peter as an important featue of church life."[1] DeVries further reasons that the mention of baptism here ". . . indicates that the importance and significance of the rite did not lessen with the passing of time as the church matured."[2]

Therefore, whatever the meaning of baptism in this passage, the practice of baptism is an undeniable link to the Great Commission. With the inclusion of evangelism (1:23) and teaching (2:) in 1 Peter, we now see that all three discipling steps (Matt. 28:19-20) are present in the epistle.

5:1-3

Another way of documenting the presence and priority of the church in Peter's thought is by studying Peter's remarks to the leaders of the local church, the "elders,"[3] in 1 Peter 5:1ff. In that passage Peter refers to both his common position, thus identification with those leaders, as a "fellow-elder"[4] (5:1, NASB), as well as his uniqueness as an apostle. The phrase "witness of the sufferings of Christ" is best understood as referring to that aspect of Peter's leadership which the elders could not duplicate: his apostleship.

Interestingly, though, in 5:2 Peter instructs the elders to "shepherd the flock of God," clearly an allusion

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[1]Ryrie, p. 285.

[2]Robert K. DeVries, "The New Testament Doctrine of Ritual Baptism" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1969), p. 136.

[3]Blum, p. 249.

[4]Raymer, p. 855.

to his own re-commissioning in John 21.[1] He also states that they are to serve as "examples (τύποι) to the flock."

Thus, while this passage is in continuity with all the other portions of the New Testament previously studied that teach the uniqueness of the apostolic position and training, there is here seen some secondary sense in which Peter identifies with these "elders", and which the individual Christians are to emulate (5:3). Though it is impossible to exegetically determine what is involved in this "modeling," it is significant that it is the recognized leaders of the local churches who are to be the example, not some individualistic discipler. That point should be taken into account by those who back a small group discipling model, while attempting to ignore or de-emphasize the importance of the church.

Glimpses of discipling and the church in 2 Peter

After having surveyed the discipling steps and the priority of the church in 1 Peter, it is necessary to trace these two emphases in Peter's second epistle. Three passages will be treated from 2 Peter.

1:16-18

The background of 2 Peter is analagous to that of 2 Timothy for Paul. Peter was clealry convinced that he would

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[1]Blum, p. 250.

soon die (1:14-15).[1] Thus, it was imperative that he communicate anything of consequence that needed to be said in this letter. He wrote "to stir you up by way of reminder" (1:13, NASB).

If Peter had deemed it correct and necessary to speak to the issue of the proper discipling model to use to carry out the Great Commission in his physical absence, now was the time to do it. In fact, Peter does refer to the ministry of Christ at this point, but certainly not in such a way as to promote a "training of the Twelve" understanding of discipling.

Second Peter 1:16-18 speaks of the Mount of Transfiguration, where Peter was an "eyewitness."[2] Such a reference shows that Peter, even at the end of his long apostolic career, was totally lucid about events during the earthly ministry of Christ. Accordingly, it would be very strange if Peter failed to take such a last opportunity to correct mistaken views on the Great Commission when his memory of that period was obviously so clear.

2:1ff.

Besides the fact that 2 Peter is, in itself, teaching, the third step of Matthew's Commission (Matt. 28:20), the reference in 2:1 to "false teachers" shows the same function by way of contrast. It is not necessary to determine whether

[1]Blum, pp. 262, 272; Raymer, pp. 862, 867.

[2]Kenneth O. Gangel, "II Peter" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 868.

these heretics were truly Christians or not[1] to make the relevant point here. False teaching leads to false behavior, teaches 2 Peter 2.

Conversely, proper teaching leads to obedience to the Lord and His commands, in keeping with the Great Commission (Matt. 28:20). Thus, if the Commission was to be carried out to the fullest, such false teaching and living would have to be counteracted forcefully. The errors would have to be corrected (3:17) so that the believers could "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 18, NASB).

3:8-10

The reference to the "beloved" in 3:8 is a tender address to the church. After re-orienting their understanding of time (v. 8), because of the "mocking" (3:3) being done by some, Peter moves on to address the apparent "slowness" (v. 9) of the Second Coming of Christ.

The delay of Christ's coming is evangelistic in motive. Although the term "wishing" (NASB) does not represent a decree by God, but rather a "desire"[2] for the salvation of "all", it is clear that the Lord is allowing the optimum length of time for the first step of the Great Commission, evangelism, to be carried out. In the light of the horrible

[1]See the helpful concise discussions of Blum, pp. 276-77; and Gangel, p. 870.

[2]Gangel, p. 876.

judgments of "the day of the Lord" (v. 10), the "going" of the Commission should be pursued without delay because God will not delay His judgment indefinitely.

It is instructive also to note the emphasis on "repentance" (v. 9), the call of Peter in his Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2:38). Further, the wish for "all" to come to Christ is the goal of the Commission in several of its versions ("all the nations", Matt. 28:19, Luke 24:47; "to the remotest part of the earth," Acts 1:8; "every man", Col. 1:28).

Conclusion

This chapter has studied the training, ministry, and epistles of Peter in order to clearly understand how he viewed discipling. Because of his prominence in the gospels and Acts, along with the Petrine epistles, this chapter offered an excellent opportunity to compare the findings of the earlier chapters, especially Chapter III about Paul, with Peter's thought in regard to discipling.

The first section studied Peter's training by Christ seen in the gospels. His apostolic tutelage was seen to be largely unique, and his position within the apostolic band was very close to Christ. Further, it was determined that his failures were not meant as a positive model for discipling. Instead, it is only after the Resurrection of Christ, when Peter received both the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and

his own personal re-commissioning, that the consistent part of Peter's ministry began.

The middle portion of the chapter dealt with Peter's leadership ministry in Acts, primarily in chapters 1-12. There it was seen that Peter still had a unique position among the apostles. In that highly visible ministry he did not carry out a training of the Twelve type of strategy. Rather, he is seen "going" evangelistically with the gospel, baptizing the converts, and teaching consistently (2:38-42, etc.). The church is also seen to be extremely important to Peter. Nor were these conclusions contradicted by the few passages about Peter outside Acts 1-12 (and his epistles).

The last part of this chapter focused on Peter's epistles. Five passages in 1 Peter and three in 2 Peter were studied with a view to locating the steps of the Matthean Commission, as well as Peter's teaching on the church. Besides finding all three parts of the Commission in 1 Peter, there was a clear allusion to Matthew 16:18 in reference to the church and an instructive section directed to the leaders of the local church (5:1ff.). In 2 Peter there were references only to evangelism and teaching and sparce data about the church. However, Peter did not seize his last opportunity to correct any misunderstanding about discipling. Thus, it would seem that what has been seen in the other sections of the chapter represent valid conclusions.

Since Peter was so close to Christ, it was to be expected that he would serve as a crucial "test case" for the foundational findings and reasoning registered in the earlier chapters of this dissertation. Because of the harmony of the conclusions of this chapter with what had been previously worked through, it can now be said that the Apostle to the Jews most certainly held a parallel understanding of discipling as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Both Peter and Paul were evangelizing, baptizing, and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20) in order to build up the church of their Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18).

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN JAMES, HEBREWS, AND JUDE

The three New Testament books with the least material having to do with discipling are the epistles of James, Hebrews, and Jude. For that reason, these three will be handled in one chapter.

The first section will study James, seeking out the data dealing with discipling and the church in that Jewish Christian letter.[1] James will be handled first because it was most likely the earliest of the three epistles to be written. The middle portion of the chapter will treat the Epistle to the Hebrews. The last section will deal with Jude.

The Contribution of James

Initially, some relevant background questions will be addressed. Next, the discipling steps of going, baptizing, and teaching will be traced in James. The final section will look at the priority of the church in the epistle.

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[1]Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 761; See also J. Ronald Blue, "James" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament ed. by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, p. 816; and Donald W. Burdick, "James" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12 Vols., edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 12:162-63.

The background of James

Besides the questions of the recipients and date of James, both of which have significant bearing, there is the even more important inquiry into who wrote James, and what his Christian experience was. Accordingly, the authorship of James will first be looked at, and then the other two questions.

Although there are several men named James in the New Testament, the most likely candidate to have written the Epistle of James is the half-brother of Jesus by that name.[1] If this conclusion is correct, James was not a believer during the earthly ministry of Christ (Matt. 13:55; John 7:5). However, James is present in the upper room before Pentecost (Acts 1:14), apparently having believed somewhere in between.

The most helpful bit of information in trying to determine when and how James became a Christian is found in 1 Corinthians 15:7. There we read that Christ, having risen from the dead, "appeared to James" (NASB). Therefore, since James was not believing during Jesus' previous ministry, it seems most likely that it was this post-resurrection appearance of the Lord Jesus that brought James to faith.[2]

By the time of Peter's miraculous release in Acts 12, James had risen to a point of leadership in the Jerusalem Church (v. 17). At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, he plays

[1]Guthrie, p. 758; Blue, pp. 815-16; Burdick, p. 161.

[2]Blue, p. 815; also Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 132.

a determinative role (vv. 13-21). In Galatians 2:9 James is called one of the "pillars" of the church by Paul. Such is the esteemed position of the Lord's brother.

Many conservative scholars believe that those who James addresses in 1:1 as "the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad" (NASB) are people who had formerly been in the church in Jerusalem, under James' leadership.[1] They had been dispersed by the "persecution that arose in connection with Stephen" (Acts 11:19). Thus, James likely wrote feeling a sense of pastoral responsibility for his Jewish Christian brethren.

In seeking to determine the date of James, there is relatively little data to work with. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, records that James died in A.D. 62.[2] Thus, the letter must have been written earlier. The reference to the church as "synagogue" (συναγωγή) in 2:2 argues for an early date,[3] when Judaism and Christianity were not yet clearly separated in Jerusalem. Also, the lack of any mention regarding the Jerusalem Council (c. A.D. 50) is strange, considering the subject matter of the letter, unless it was written before the Council.[4] Therefore, it seems best to date the book between A.D. 45-49.[5]

[1]E.g. Burdick, pp. 162-63.

[2]Ibid., p. 162; Blue, p. 816.

[3]Ibid., p. 162; Ryrie, p. 133.

[4]Blue, p. 816; Ryrie, p. 133.

[5]Blue, p. 816; Ryrie, p. 133; Burdick, p. 162.

Glimpses of discipling in James

While there is no clear mention of evangelism (with the possible exception of 1:18) or baptism in James, it can be safely assumed that the readers had heard the gospel in Jerusalem (or elsewhere) and had been baptized (Acts 2:38; 2:41). Certainly, if James himself was converted by an appearance of the Risen Christ, it is most probable that the post-Resurrection Commission, emphasizing evangelism and baptism (Matt. 28:19), was among the first and most forceful influences in his new Christian experience.

As for teaching, there are several inclusions in James that are of importance for this study. The warning to the "teachers" in 3:1, for example, is to remind them that obedience is needed on their part also,[1] not just by their hearers. This fits in well with James' earlier admonition to "prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (1:22, NASB). Actually, the many imperatives throughout the letter reveal that James has both a teaching and hortatory (i.e., exhortation, with an eye to obedience) aim in penning the epistle.[2]

A final significant point dovetails with the words of the Matthean Commission "teaching them to observe all that

[1]Blue, p. 827.

[2]See Jean-Luc Blondel, "Le Fondement Theologique de la Parenese dans l'Epitre de Jacques," Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie 111 (1979):141-52, for a discussion of this aspect of James.

I commanded you . . ." (28:20, NASB). Guthrie points out that James has more parallels with the teaching of Christ in the gospels than any other New Testament book, with some fourteen allusions to the Sermon on the Mount.[1] Thus, there can be little doubt that teaching, the third step of the Commission to make disciples, is central in James' thinking.

The church according to James

There is relatively little mention of the church in James. The earlier mentioned reference to the church as συναγωγή in 2:2 is balanced by the standard use of ἐκκλησία in 5:14. The mention of elders in that context also makes it clear that some church government, as is seen in the earlier part of the New Testament era (e.g. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2), is present in the church James addresses.

Thus, while it would be mistaken to attempt to develop an in-depth ecclesiology from James, it can be concluded that the church is important in his thinking. But, how could it be otherwise when James had led the Jerusalem Church for years alongside the one to whom Jesus had said, ". . . You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18)?

In summary, it has been seen that James, the half-brother of Christ, most likely was the writer of one of the earliest (if not the earliest) of the New Testament books.

[1]Guthrie, p. 743.

In his letter evangelism and baptism are apparently assumed, though teaching is a strong emphasis. Also, alongside this selective inclusion of the steps of discipling is clear, though not extensive, reference to the church.

The Contribution of Hebrews

When we approach the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is again helpful to look initially at some background factors. Then, the discipling steps can be studied in Hebrews. Next, the place of the church will be explored. Finally, the teaching on the present ministry of Christ in Hebrews will be linked up with the closing phrase in Matthew: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20, NASB).

The background of Hebrews

In regard to the authorship of the epistle, Morris sagely concludes,

> In the end we must agree that we have no certain evidence about the authorship of Hebrews . . . . We can scarcely improve on the words of Origen's conclusion, that 'who wrote the Epistle, God only knows the truth.'[1]

The other two crucial questions to be dealt with are the readers of Hebrews and its date. Morris rightly concludes that the readers were probably Jewish Christians, based on the well-attested title "to the Hebrews" and the widespread discussion of Jewish ritual.[2]

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[1]Leon Morris, "Hebrews" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12:7.

[2]Ibid., p. 5.

The date of Hebrews is not as easy to decide upon. It is certainly to be placed at a point in time some years after the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry (2:3-4). On the other hand, it can hardly be placed after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, since such a key event would surely have been utilized by the writer as part of his argument about the eclipse of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Accordingly, a date in the late 60's seems most probable.[1]

Steps of the Matthean commission seen in Hebrews

If evangelism, baptism, and teaching can be found in Hebrews, there is a strong likelihood that the writer is betraying a consciousness of the Commission given at the conclusion of Matthew's gospel. In this section those three steps of making disciples will be traced in the epistle.

Evangelism

It is again a surety that the Hebrews knew the gospel, or they could not have been in danger of deserting it.[2] This conclusion is strengthened by the exegetical observation of Hughes on Hebrews 4:2:

> Quite literally, the opening clause of this verse reads, "for we also have been evangelized just as they were", the perfect tense of the verb implying . . . the completeness of the evangelism that had taken place and thus

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[1]Ibid., p. 8; Ryrie, p. 228; Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 777.

[2]Ryrie, p. 227.

> leaving no room for any excuse to the effect that the evangelization had been inadequate or deficient.[1]

Besides this knowledge of the gospel and the task of evangelism spoken of by the writer of Hebrews, it is also very probable that, if the readers knew Timothy, as 13:23 strongly implies, they had heard the gospel and of the need to disseminate it. After all, Paul's former traveling companion on his missionary journeys (Acts 16:3ff.), his "son" in the faith (2 Tim. 1:2, 2:1), had been told by Paul to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5, NASB).

Baptism

Some conservative scholars, such as Westcott,[2] find a number of allusions to baptism in Hebrews. Others see two passages that deal with the subject: Hebrews 6:2 and 10:23.[3] Still others only allow for 10:23 to be speaking of Christian baptism.[4]

While a strong case can be argued for finding baptism in Hebrews 10:23,[5] it is Hebrews 6:2 that offers the most helpful data for the purposes of this study. As Guthrie writes,

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[1]Philip E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 156.

[2]B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 323, sees baptism alluded to in Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 6:2; and 10:23.

[3]Guthrie, Theology, pp. 780-81.

[4]Morris, pp. 53, 104.

[5]See, e.g. G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, pp. 247ff.

"Since the statement occurs in a list of basic elements, this shows the importance of the rite."[1] Beasley-Murray makes the same point in saying,

> The importance of baptism to the writer of this letter is not left in doubt. Its significance to him is crucial. At the beginning of this passage baptism is aligned with repentence and faith on the one hand and resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment on the other.[2]

A significant question here has to do with why the plural "baptisms" (βαπτισμῶν) is used (6:2). Guthrie concludes that the plural includes "a reference to Christian baptism, although not exclusively so."[3] However, Hodges would seem to be closer to the mark in stating that the author of Hebrews spoke "of the various 'baptisms' which Christianity knew (John's baptism, Christian baptism proper, or even Spirit baptism)" as a way of "consciously countering sectarian teachings which may well have offered initiations of their own involving baptisms. . . ."[4]

Beyond this guarded inquiry, it is difficult to move with any degree of certainty. While baptism, as the second step in making disciples (Matt. 28:19), certainly took place among the original Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem

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[1]Guthrie, Theology, p. 780.

[2]Beasley-Murray, p. 246.

[3]Guthrie, Theology, p. 780.

[4]Hodges, p. 793.

(Acts 2:38, 41), as with the converted Saul (Acts 9:18; 22:16), it seems to be assumed as a prior initiation rite by the writer to the Hebrews as he addresses those who had been believers long enough to be teachers (Heb. 5:12).

Teaching

In looking at the description of the Word of God in Hebrews 4:12, it is helpful to note the caution against disobedience in 4:11. With such a contextual pointer in mind, it seems the description of the "piercing" and "judging" function of the Word (λόγος) fits in well with the call to obedience to Christ's teachings in Matthew 28:20. Even though the Hebrews had apparently heard the gospel (4:2) and believed, had been baptized (6:2), and began to grow in their faith (6:1-2; 10:32-34), they were apparently not continuing in obedience to the Word (4:11-12). Their "neglect" (NASB) of the apostolic teaching they had heard, and thus their "salvation" (Heb. 2:3-4), could have nothing less than tragic consequences.[1]

The other passage that discusses the improper relation of the readers of Hebrews to the Great Commission step of teaching (Matt. 28:20) is Hebrews 5:11b-14. Apparently this group "had been Christians a long time", and "others who had been in the faith less time than they should be profiting from their instruction."[2]

[1]Ibid., p. 783.

[2]Ibid., p. 792.

Just the opposite had happened. Rather than assuming the necessary Great Commission function of teaching (Matt. 28:20), whether gifted by the Spirit or not (I Cor. 12:28), they again needed instruction in the elementary truths of the faith (5:11-12).[1] They had failed to be obedient to what they had learned (Matt. 28:20), and thus had not grown toward maturity (τέλειος)[2] in Christ (5:14; cf. Col. 1:28). In fact, they had gone backward. As Morris comments on 5:11b, "the readers of the epistle were not naturally slow learners but had allowed themselves to get lazy."[3]

Thus, these passages in Hebrews which speak relatively directly to the teaching aspect of the Great Commission reveal clearly why Christ called for complete obedience to His commands (Matt. 28:20). Anything less fosters prolonged and widespread immaturity in understanding and behavior throughout the church (Heb. 5:12-14).

Priority of the church seen in Hebrews

The concept of the church in Hebrews is somewhat difficult to trace. Ryrie may be correct in stating that the problem is that the idea "is developed in the Epistle along

[1]Morris, p. 51.

[2]For a study of the use of τέλειος in this letter, see William C. Dunkin, "Teleios in Hebrews: Perfection and the New Covenant" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977).

[3]Morris, p. 51.

practical rather than didactic lines."[1] There may also be a difference in the Jewish Christian thought patterns that are used.

An example of the difficulty encountered is seen in the usage of ἐκκλησία in Hebrews. It is found only twice, in 2:12 and 12:23. In chapter 2 it is part of a quote from Psalm 22:22, while in chapter 12 it seems to refer to some "church", or group, already in heaven.[2] In any event, neither usage is strongly suggestive of a developed ecclesiology.

There are, however, other indications of the church's importance and organization seen in Hebrews. First, there is the corporate meeting of the church, spoken of in 10:24-25.[3] The exhortation to not forsake "our own assembling together, as is the habit of some" (v. 25, NASB) clearly reveals a high priority in the mind of the writer that is being overlooked by a portion of his readers. Further, the command to use that context to "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (v. 24) calls to mind John 13:35 and Galatians 6:10. The love shows the world we are Christ's disciples (John 13:35). The good works are a key part of the spiritual sowing that believers have the opportunity to do (Gal. 6:9-10).

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[1]Ryrie, p. 260.

[2]Hodges, p. 811.

[3]Ryrie, p. 260, writes that "this idea of corporate fellowship is also expressed in the figure which the writer employs (3:6) of the house over which Christ is the head." Assuming the correctness of this view, Hebrews seems to re-echo the same truth of Matthew 16:18 seen in I Peter 2:4-5.

Hebrews also contains some vague reference to church government. In 13:7, 17 we read of "leaders" (v. 17, NASB) over the church, those of a past generation (v. 7), as well as those the Hebrews are to "obey" and "submit to" (v. 17) in the present. We cannot be certain whether these men are "elders",[1] although they do teach the word (v. 7) and undertake spiritual oversight (v. 17). It is possible that this is a general description, much like "those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction" (NASB) in 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Since the other Pauline churches characteristically had elders (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), even though the leaders in I Thessalonians 5:12 are not called such, it is highly likely that they are elders. Similar reasoning would apply to Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.

It should also be noted that the emphasis on teaching and godly living by the leaders in 13:7, coupled with "imitation" (μιμέομαι), again shows the cruciality of obedience to Christ's commands (Matt. 28:20) as encouraged by the life-style of the leader (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 5:3). Further, it is clear that, while the exemplary model of the human "leader" will come and go (13:7), the person of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the individual disciple (Luke 6:40), remains the unchanging pattern "yesterday, and today, yes and forever" (v. 8).

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[1]Morris, p. 148.

Although the Epistle to the Hebrews does not go into great detail about the church, what it does say is sufficient to reveal that the church is a strong priority in the writer's thinking. Glimpses of the church's gathering and its leaders show that the focus of the evangelism, baptism, and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20) that had taken place, that is, the church, was being edified (Matt. 16:18), in spite of the background problems.

Christ's ministry until the end of the age

Besides Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations" in Matthew 28:19, and the procedure involved in doing that (vv. 19-20), He promises "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (v. 20, NASB). Although this promise may be understood as speaking of either Christ's continuing ministry through the church (Acts 1:1), or the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), who is elsewhere called "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9), it may also have to do with a doctrine that is developed in some depth in Hebrews.

In Matthew 28:20 the presence of Christ[1] seems to have been promised to facilitate the carrying out of the Commission. Surely that would include dealing with problems, such as persecution (Acts 4) and doctrinal controversy (Acts 15), both of which are seen to a degree in Hebrews. Thus, while Christ's

[1]D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 8:599.

promised presence throughout the age (Matt. 28:20) has primarily to do with making disciples by evangelism, baptism, and teaching (Heb. 4:2; 5:12-14; 6:2), it does not exclude other needs of believers.

Relatedly, it would seem that the majestic revelation of the present ministry of the ascended Christ, as our great high priest (Heb. 4:14, 15), has much to say about how Christ is with believers (Matt. 28:20) in the present age of the church. He identifies with His own in their temptations, offering grace and mercy in the time of need (Heb. 4:15-16). He is our heavenly "forerunner", showing the way for us in God's presence (6:19-20). He is always making intercession for us (7:25). He will come again to bestow ultimate salvation on "those who eagerly await him" (9:28).[1]

This brief discussion is not meant to infer that the primary reason for the passages given in Hebrews on Christ's present work has to do with the presence of Christ promised in Matthew 28:20. However, there does seem to be warrant for seeing a relationship, especially in explaining Jesus's point to those who face difficulty in carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

By way of summary, the Epistle to the Hebrews has validated what has been seen elsewhere in this dissertation in regard to discipling. Again, the discipling activity of

[1]See John F. Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, pp. 219-52, for a full treatment of the present ministry of Christ.

evangelism, baptism, and teaching were readily found in the epistle. Also, the priority of the church was firmly established, even though the data was neither extensive nor precise. Finally, the relation between the ministry of Christ to the church in the present age, seen in Hebrews, was discussed in relation to the promise of His age-long presence in Matthew 28:20.

The Contribution of Jude to a Theology of Discipling

Initially, a brief survey of the background of Jude will be given. Following that, the several glimpses of the discipling activities seen in Jude will be handled. Finally, the small amount of material dealing with the church will be discussed.

Background of the Epistle of Jude

Based on the understanding of Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James (Jude 1, NASB) that takes James to be the half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55) and "pillar" of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9), most conservative scholars view Jude as another younger half-brother of Christ (Matt. 13:55).[1] As with James, it appears Jude did not view Jesus as the Savior prior to the Cross (John 7:5). Also, we find Jude as one of Jesus' "brothers" in the Upper Room

[1]See Ryrie, p. 290; Blum, "Jude" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12:381-82; and Edward C. Pentecost, "Jude" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 917.

in Acts 1:14, although there is no record as to Jesus appearing to him, as he did to James (I Cor. 15:7).

Thus, there is no way of knowing how Jude became a Christian. Perhaps Mary[1] or James, both of whom had seen the resurrected Christ, led him to faith. All that is known is that between the resurrection and Acts 1:14 his salvation had come about. So, in parallel to James, it could be said that the post-Resurrection Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20) was likely some of the first teaching of Christ that Jude encountered after his own conversion.

The lack of knowledge concerning Jude and the general nature of his letter also make more difficult the question of the date of its writing. Although Blum opts for a date of A.D. 60-65,[2] most evangelical commentators prefer a more general time frame from roughly A.D. 65-80.[3]

Glimpses of the Great Commission in Jude

There is little, if anything, about the gospel per se and evangelism in Jude. However, it is difficult to imagine that Jude could have been in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14) and at Pentecost without being deeply interested in evangelism.

[1]Carson, p. 583.

[2]Blum, pp. 382-83.

[3]Pentecost, p. 918; Guthrie, p. 233; E. M. B. Green, The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude, pp. 47-48.

Whether his own ministry had been in an almost entirely Jewish context, as James' had been (Gal. 2), is impossible to determine. However, evangelism would have to be assumed in the background of Jude because the readers are referred to as "the called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (v. 1). Also, it should be remembered that the pressing occasion for the letter (v. 3) somewhat pushes aside evangelism in favor of an apologetic or polemical function.

Nor is there any overt mention of baptism. But, with the mention of the "love-feasts" (ταῖς ἀγάπαις) in verse 12, which was usually connected with the taking of the Lord's Supper (cf. I Cor. 11:20ff.),[1] the presence of baptism among the group Jude was addressing is highly likely. We know that baptism took place among the Corinthian church (I Cor. 1:13-17), who also kept the love-feast (I Cor. 11:20). There was baptism present in other Jewish Christian assemblies during this general time period (Heb. 6:2). Thus, there is little reason to deny that it was likely found among Jude's readers, although he did not have occasion to mention it.

There is reference to teaching, though. There is both proper, orthodox teaching (vv. 3, 20) and false teaching and corresponding behavior (vv. 4-16). The occasion of the letter spoken of in verse 3 even implies a stronger emphasis on teaching, with Jude himself being the teacher. As Guthrie

[1]Green, p. 174.

observes, "Jude evidently recognized their need of some constructive teaching about the Christian faith before he was faced with the problem of the insidious false teachers."[1]

Also knowing that false teaching leads away from obedience to the commands of Christ, Jude attempted to not only alert his readers to the problem of the heretics but to right the situation. Guthrie continues,

> At the close (verse 17ff.) he suddenly seems to realize the need for being positive in his approach to his readers, and gives a series of exhortations which were clearly intended to offset the evil effects of the false teachers.[2]

All in all, there is very little direct data pertaining to the Great Commission in Jude. Evangelism and baptism are only implied, at best. Even the teaching step, which is definitely seen, is expressed primarily as a negative statement against false teaching. However, it can again be concluded that Jude does reveal an awareness of discipling and in no way contradicts what has been seen elsewhere.

The church in Jude

The church is nowhere mentioned in Jude. The word ἐκκλησία is entirely absent. However, the synonymous term "saints" (v. 3) is seen, and the reference to "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17), whom Paul referred to as

[1]Guthrie, p. 236.

[2]Ibid.

"the foundation of the church" (Eph. 2:20), indicates that the concept would have been known. Also, it is sure that within the context of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v. 3), the doctrine of the church held a central place.[1]

Jude, in referring to the love-feast in verse 12, is speaking of one of the apostolic ordinances of the church. Whether or not he learned of this from the Jerusalem church (Acts 2:46)[2] in which James was a leader (Gal. 2:9), could not be determined. However, the reference does imply a fairly sophisticated ecclesiology and priority for the church in Jude's thought.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter it was noted that there was less direct material dealing with discipling in James, Hebrews, and Jude than anywhere else in the New Testament. It has been seen, though, that there still is significant data here, and in no way have the findings of earlier chapters been invalidated.

In James it was seen that evangelism and teaching were strong emphases. Also, even though the epistle was

[1]For a further discussion of Jude's doctrine of the church, see David L. Hollingsworth, "A Comparison of the Ecclesiology of II Peter and Jude" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979).

[2]Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 360, entertains this possibility in Acts 2:46.

written early in the New Testament period, there was a clear, emerging doctrine of the church. The presence of the discipling steps and the teaching on the church reflect the same beautiful balance seen elsewhere (Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20).

In Hebrews evangelism, baptism, and teaching were all present, though not equally prominent. The teaching on the church was somewhat less clear, though significant. Reflection on the present ministry of Christ also linked up with the least explored part of the Matthean Commission (28:20).

The Epistle of Jude did not prove to be a fertile field of study about discipling. Evangelism and baptism seem to be assumed although teaching was the main thrust of the letter. There is a scanty doctrine of the church, whom Jude simply refers to as "the saints" (v. 3). Again, though, there is no contradictory material in regard to earlier findings.

Certainly James, Hebrews and Jude should not be looked to for the mass of material or detail they contain about discipling. Yet there is enough to determine that these writers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16), were aware of Christ's Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and the dangers of ignoring or distorting it.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLING IN JOHN

In this comprehensive New Testament treatment of discipling, the Johannine writings are the final portion to be studied. They also offer a last opportunity to compare pre-Cross and post-Pentecost perspectives on this subject. Though John's writings contain different types of biblical literature, such a comparison is still valid. The Gospel of John depicts the ministry of Jesus up to the Cross and Resurrection, while the epistles and the Apocalypse are directed to Christian churches after the Great Commission had been given (Matt. 28:19-20) and the Holy Spirit had come to indwell the Body of Christ (John 14:16-17; I Cor. 3:16, 6:19).

This comparison will be broken down in the following way. The first part of the chapter will look at the fourth gospel and what it reveals about discipling. Next, the Johannine letters will be the subject of inquiry. Finally, several points having to do with the book of Revelation will be explored briefly.

The Contribution of John's Gospel

This section will consider four areas. First will be John's relationship to and training by Jesus Christ. Next, the breadth of usage of the term "disciple" in the gospel will be observed. Third, the function of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17), in connection with the subject of discipling, will be explored. Finally, what is often called John's version of the Great Commission (John 20:21-23),[1] will be considered, along with a portion of the "epiloque" of the gospel (John 21).[2]

John's relationship with and training by Christ

All four major lists of the apostles in the gospels and Acts (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13) place John among the first four listed. Beyond that, it is known that John, along with his brother James and Peter, comprised something of an inner circle among the apostles. Jesus took those three apart with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9) and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-33). Thus, although John did not assume the same type of representative (or spokesman) capacity among the Twelve as did Peter (e.g. Matt. 16:13-19), he apparently was very close to Christ, according to the Synoptics.

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[1] See, e.g. George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, p. 196; also, Darrell Smith, "A Development of the Great Commission" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967)., pp. 35-37; Daniel E. Smith, "A Harmony of the Great Commission in the Gospels" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1978), pp. 40-41.

[2] Edwin A. Blum, "John" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, p. 330.

The data seen in the fourth gospel is quite different, however. John is not mentioned by name at all. Rather, it is the conclusion of most evangelical commentators that "the beloved disciple", mentioned 14 times in John's gospel,[1] is actually the Apostle himself.[2] This striking way of speaking, among other things,[3] certainly indicates a close relationship to the Lord Jesus.

There is no need to review in depth the training that John and the other apostles received from Christ (see Chapter IV). But, it is helpful to pursue two additional avenues of thinking about that training that relate to the Gospel of John.

First, in John 1-12 there are a number of clear presentations of the gospel message (e.g. John 1:12; 3:16, 36; 5:24, etc.). Apparently such examples of evangelism took place before the disciples, for the most part, and conceivably served as something of a model for the Twelve in their own later evangelistic ministry, seen in Acts (e.g. 2:38; 10:43). Also, the written gospel itself serves as an evangelistic tool (20:30-31) to help carry out the first step of the Matthean Commission: "going" evangelistically (Matt. 28:19).

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[1] In John 13:23; 18:15 (twice), 16; 19:27; 20:2, 3, 4, 8; 21:2, 7, 20, 23, 24.

[2] See, e.g. Blum, p. 267; Leon Morris, The Gospel according to John, pp. 9-12; Merrill C. Tenney, "John" in Expositors Bible Commentary, 12 Vols., edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 9:20.

[3] For detailed discussion of "the beloved disciple", see Paul S. Minear, "The Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John," Novum Testamentum 19 (April 1977):105-23; John F. O'Grady, "The Role of the Beloved Disciple," Biblical Theology Bulletin 9 (April 1979):58-65; Jeffrey S. Siker-Gieseler, "Disciples and Discipleship in the Fourth Gospel," Studia Biblica et Theologica 10 (October 1980):199-227; and John J. Cunther, "The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve," Theologische Zeitschrift 37 (May-June 1981):129-48.

Second, the mention of baptism in John 4:1-2, notably in connection with making disciples, is highly significant. This context in John (cf. 3:22-23) is the only place in the gospels other than the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19, where a baptism other than that of John the Baptist is mentioned.

It is somewhat uncertain what the significance of this baptism was. Since Jesus and his disciples were baptizing right alongside John the Baptist's ministry (John 3:23; 4:1), so to speak, Beasley-Murray is probably correct in cautiously concluding,

> The baptism . . . therefore was neither Jewish, nor Johannine, nor Christian; it was a baptism in obedience to the messianic proclamation, under the sign of the messianic action and in anticipation of the messianic deliverance. More than that we cannot say.[1]

A further theological point about the baptism in question here is made by DeVries: "It could not be considered Christian baptism since it was practiced before the death and resurrection of Christ, before the technical baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit began and before the church had been formed."[2]

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[1] G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 72.

[2] Robert K. DeVries, "The New Testament Doctrine of Ritual Baptism" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1969), p. 96.

Although it is a subtle observation, it should be noted that the Greek rendered "making . . . disciples" (John 4:1) is μαθητὰς ποιεῖ, not μαθητεύω, as in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 14:21. Although this phrase serves as the functional equivalent of μαθητεύω, it is conceivable that this slight difference in wording by John may indicate a reticence to speak of disciple making at this point in Jesus' earthly ministry in exactly the same way as in the post-resurrection Commission (Matt. 28:19) and the post-Pentecost missionary outreach (Acts 14:21).

What is sure from this passage is that Jesus had instructed his apostles in regard to baptism in some sense prior to the giving of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), and that that instruction was in some way related to "making . . . disciples" (John 4:1). It is, of course, likely that considerable re-orientation would have been necessary from the baptism seen in John 4 to that of Matthew 28, if for no other reason than that seen in the instruction "baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). In any event, it seems practically impossible to know precisely how much discontinuity or continuity there is between these two key passages.

In summary, John's position and training in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ leaves no doubt that he would have clearly understood the command to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19). Also, his reference to baptism in relation with the phrase

"making . . . disciples" reveals a degree of understanding about part of the Great Commission, although his manner of expression seems overly cautious about identifying what Jesus did in the gospels with what He commanded to have done "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20, NASB).

The broad usage of disciple in John's gospel

It is sometimes suggested that the term "disciple" carries with it a level of commitment such as Jesus asks in Luke 14:27: "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disiple" (NASB). In spite of this exhortation to ideal or full discipleship by Christ, such a narrow meaning cannot be substantiated in the Gospel of John, at least in several key passages.[1]

For example, even though the term "disciples" is used to reference to a group of "grumbling" disciples (John 6:60, 61, 66), Jesus says in John 6:64, "But there are some of you who do not believe" (NASB). Eventually, this wider group "withdrew, and were not walking with Him any more" (v. 66), and "the Twelve" (v. 67) remained. Yet, it is beyond dispute that the crux term "disciples" is used of the wider group who turned away at Jesus' hard sayings (v. 60).

It is also illuminating to note that Jesus makes a distinction among the Twelve that remained. Although Peter

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[1]See Siker-Gieseler, pp. 207-8.

speaks for the smaller group, saying, "We have believed and come to know that You are the Holy One of God" (v. 69), Jesus recognizes less than proper commitment even among the apostles. He answered Peter: "Did I myself not choose you, the Twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" (v. 70). Christ, of course, was speaking of Judas Iscariot (v. 71). Still, the fact that "disciple" could in any sense apply to Judas is collaborative proof of the breadth and flexibility of the term.

A second important example of the broad use of "disciple" in John's gospel is in 19:38.[1] There we read of "Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews" (NASB).[2] While Joseph's act at this point indicates faith and courage (Mark 15:43), his previous silent disagreement with the Sanhedrin, of which he was a member (Luke 23:50-51), hardly demonstrated a "carry your cross" (Luke 14:27) commitment to Christ. Thus, although Joseph's identification with the crucified Savior certainly revealed a depth of discipleship over the long-term, John's usage in 19:38 makes it very clear that a fearful, "secret service" Christian can still be legitimately called a disciple.

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[1]Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 71.

[2]For further explanation of this passage and its background, see Ronald J. Schmidt, "Joseph of Arimathea" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974); and L. Robert Bryant, "The Secret Believer in the Gospel of John" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), pp. 36-41.

A third example has to do with Simon Peter in John 18. There he is referred to as one of "His disciples" (vv. 1, 2). Yet, in verse 17, when asked if he was of Christ's "disciples" (vv. 17, 25), Peter answered, "I am not."[1] This parting glimpse of Peter until after the resurrection (John 20:2) is another obvious example that John understood and utilizes "disciples" in a wide fashion.

The relation of the Upper Room Discourse to discipling

As an overall explanation of the function of the Upper Room Discourse within the Gospel of John, Tenney writes,

> Chapters 13 through 17, which contain Jesus' farewell discourses in the Upper Room and his final prayer, occupy about 20 percent of the text. This section contains the teaching by which Jesus sought to prepare the disciples for the shock of his death and the responsibility that would fall to them . . . . He expected that the disciples would be preserved by divine power and that they would discharge their mission in the world adequately.[2]

Johnston, after a detailed study of the points in the Discourse at which Jesus speaks of being His disciples, concludes,

> Christ emphasizes characteristics which should be true of His committed disciples during His absence. . . . The foundational characteristic is abiding. Persecution will be the outcome of abiding. In light of this persecution, there must be a dependence on the Holy Spirit.[3]

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[1]See Bryant, pp. 59-63.

[2]Tenney, p. 20.

[3]Daniel M. Johnston, "The Characteristics of a Disciple of Christ as Seen in John 13-17" (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972), pp. 42-43.

Thus, rather than preparing for His absence by emphasizing a small group discipling model, on that last evening before His betrayal, Jesus deals with abiding in Him (John 15) and relating to the Holy Spirit (John 14-16).

Besides this brief overview of the Upper Room Discourse, two specific passages should be treated. The first is the "New Commandment" in John 13:34-35. The second is Jesus' explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17.

Of importance to this study, John 13:35 states, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (NASB). This command is new in the sense that it is "based on the sacrificial love of Jesus."[1] Thus, it asks for a high degree of commitment expressed in this love, but there is absolutely nothing said about any type of formal training for this display of being a disciple. The world will know Christians as Jesus' disciples by their all-giving love, in imitation of Jesus, not by their attempts to duplicate His training methods.

In John 14:16, Jesus looks ahead to the permanent ("forever") ministry of the Holy Spirit. But, at that point before the Cross, Jesus explains to the apostles that the Spirit "abides with you, and will be in you" (v. 17, NASB). In that regard Blum asks,

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[1]Blum, p. 32.

> Why did Jesus say that the Holy Spirit will be (fut. tense) in them? Because in Old Testament times the Spirit came on some believers for special enablement, but after Pentecost he indwells every believer permanently (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13).[1]

Similarly, Tenney sees the distinction here "between the Old Testament experience of the Holy Spirit and the post-Pentecost experience of the Church."[2]

Since a large part of the reason for Jesus' "farewell instructions" in the Upper Room Discourse had to do with preparing the apostles for their "future ministry,"[3] this epochal distinction in the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17) is crucial to understand for a proper evaluation and application of the teaching of John's gospel about discipling. Even if a highly developed small group model were to be found in John, major adjustments would have to be made for discipling today simply because of the absence of Jesus and the indwelling presence of the Spirit, the shift from the Old Testament rule of life to the post-Pentecost situation.

Thus, in looking at the Upper Room Discourse, it has been seen that, far from requiring the same precise behavior and methodology of discipling seen before the Cross, it, in fact, begins to prepare for the shift to the post-Resurrection

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[1]Ibid., p. 323.

[2]Tenney, p. 146; See also C. K. Barrett, "The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," Journal of Theological Studies 1 (1950):1-15.

[3]Blum, p. 270.

Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 and the post-Pentecost empowerment of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). This is what has been seen in regard to the other Gospels, as well.

The Johannine commission and epilogue

In John 20:21-23 Jesus appears to the eleven remaining apostles on the evening of the resurrection (v. 19) for a very special purpose. He conveys authority in saying, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (v. 21, NASB). Here Smith observes, "The present tense of πέμπω suggests the continuing nature of the commission."[1] Further, He gives "divine enablement"[2] for the task in verse 22: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Here we encounter a difference of understanding by conservative scholars. Tenney, for example, believes, "This was the initial announcement of which Pentecost was the historical fulfillment."[3] Chafer, however, affirms:

> In John 20:22 apparently a temporary filling of the Spirit was given to provide for their spiritual needs before Pentecost. The Gospel accounts were not intended to be the norm for the present age, but in general continue the ministry of the Spirit as it had been in the Old Testament.[4]

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[1]Darrell Smith, p. 36.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Tenney, p. 193.

[4]Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, 8 Vols., 6:71; For the same understanding see Peters, p. 196.

Although the present writer believes Chafer is correct, either view makes the same point within the context of this comprehensive New Testament study of discipling. For the commission to be carried out until "the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20), a new ministry of the Spirit would have to come about. The way of the gospel narrative is not to be indiscriminately copied in discipling.

Finally, in John 21:21-23 the last opportunity in the fourth gospel to alert the reader about a discipling model is seen. As John, "the beloved disciple", is spoken of in relation to Peter, who had just been recommissioned (vv. 15-17), nothing else is said to point toward a discipling pattern that would train the way Jesus did the Twelve. With such a prime concluding opportunity before him, it must be affirmed that the Apostle John had no intention of inferring that such a model was the way Jesus wanted discipling carried out.

In conclusion, after looking at John's training and close relation to Christ, the broad usage of the key term "disciple" in his gospel, the transitional function of the Upper Room Discourse in looking ahead to the New Covenant set-up, and the absence of a small group discipling model in connection with the concluding commission in John 20-21, it seems clear that the fourth gospel lends no basis for any other understanding of discipling other than that previously

expounded from Matthew 28:19-20. Actually, it would seem that such an understanding of the Matthean Commission is strengthened by the data in John's gospel.

The Contribution of John's Epistles

The early chapters of Acts reveal the ministry of the Apostle John, alongside Peter in evangelism and baptism and teaching (Acts 1:13; 2:14, 41-42; 8:14ff.). He is spoken of as a "pillar" of the church (Gal. 2:9), along with Peter and James. Thus, he must have exercised an effective and influential ministry.

Background of the Johannine epistles

Yet, after the Samaritan ministry in Acts 8, the name of John vanishes from direct reference in the book of Acts. He may very well be among "the apostles" in Acts 15 (vv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23). But, after that there is no glimmer of biblical insight at all.

Only extra-biblical tradition guides our understanding of John relocating in Ephesus in any detail.[1] Perhaps he moved around in ministry for some time, taking along a believing wife, as Paul tells us was the apostolic custom for the middle part of the apostolic era (I Cor. 9:5). Otherwise, Guthrie summarizes the most probable understanding of what happened to John:

> There is a strong tradition that he went to Ephesus and exercised a wide ministry among the churches of Asia. If this tradition is correct it is reasonable to suppose that this happened after Paul's ministry in that area. It was probably at Ephesus that John wrote his gospel, followed by the three letters which appear under his name . . . . His favorite term for describing his readers is "little children," which suggests that he himself is now a man of advanced years.[1]

Beyond this sketchy outline, it is precarious to proceed. The remainder of this section of the chapter will move beyond this meager background to seek out the steps of the Matthean Commission in the Johannine epistles, then explore the priority of the church seen in these letters.

Glimpses of discipling in John's epistles

In a very real sense, the First Epistle of John complements the fourth gospel as to purpose. In John 20:30-31 the Apostle stated that he wrote his gospel with a clear evangelistic purpose in mind. Now, in 1 John 5:13, he looks back over that letter and, as Marshall states, "John now sums up by saying that the effect of what he has written should be to give assurance to believers that they do possess eternal life. John was therefore not writing to persuade unbelievers . . . ."[2] Thus, at least in 1 John, evangelism is assumed, as baptism also would be, based on what is seen in John's

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[1] See F. F. Bruce, Peter, Stephen, James, and John, pp. 120-52, for a discussion of the various traditions.

[1] Donald Guthrie, The Apostles, p. 378.

[2] I. Howard Marshall, The Epistles of John, p. 243.

gospel (John 4:1-2) and the context of John's ministry in Acts (e.g. 2:38).

On the other hand, there does seem to be reason to see evangelistic ministry spoken of in 2 John 10-11 and 3 John 5-8.[1] If that is a correct understanding, then it would appear that there were itinerant evangelists and teachers moving around from local church to local church at this point in the latter part of the first century.[2]

As far as teaching, the third step of the Commission to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), is concerned, the reference to "false prophets" in 1 John 4:1 indicates (by contrast) a standard of truth, which has been taught to John's readers primarily as "commandments" (e.g. 2:3). In the other two letters the standard is called "truth" (2 John 1; 3 John 12).

In speaking of the sage of the term "commandments" in 1 John, it would seem the direct background is a passage like John 15:10: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (NASB). However, it is also likely that John has in mind, "teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you" in Matthew 28:20. This becomes especially likely when it is seen that the Greek word for "observe, keep, obey" (τηρέω) is used in Matthew 28, John 15:10 and 1 John 2:3, 4; 3:24, etc.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 73-74, 84-87.

[2]Marshall, p. 48 says, "It would be rash to attempt greater precision" than "a date between the sixties and nineties." Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 309, places all three letters around A.D. 90.

Thus, it would seem that John is thinking about both the teaching of the Upper Room Discourse, on the night of Christ's betrayal, and the later Matthean Commission, as he writes his first epistle.

A similar use of "commandment" is found in 2 John 4-6. The term "teaching" is also seen in verse 9. Although the terms are not found in 3 John, it would seem that "walking in the truth" (v. 3-4) is saying essentially the same thing as keeping the commandments. Thus, it is fair to conclude that all three letters betray a consciousness of, or obedience to, the Great Commission function of teaching Jesus' commands (Matt. 28:20).

One other passage in 1 John should be considered before leaving this section. In 1 John 2:6 the amazing statement is made: "The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (NASB). This passage is capable of being understood as meaning that Jesus is to serve as a model for the totality of our lives. Marshall, however, limits such a broad application somewhat. He writes, "The test of our religious experience is whether it produces a reflection of the life of Jesus in our daily life; if it fails this elementary test, it is false."[1]

In pondering this verse, it is also helpful to call to mind John 15:10: "If you keep My commandments, you will

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[1]Marshall, p. 128.

abide in My love -- just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (NASB). If such a Johannine cross-reference is admissable, it is quite possible that John is thinking of living "in the same manner" as Jesus (I John 2:6) specifically in regard to obedience. But, even if it is not correct, there is no exegetical basis at all in this passage for constructing a training of the twelve discipling model in a misguided attempt "to walk in the same manner as He walked."

In summary, there are references to evangelism and teaching, especially obedience to Jesus' teaching or commandments, in the Johannine epistles. Thus, there is a carrying out of Matthew's Commission in those churches to whom John was writing. Further, there is no basis for a 'Christ model' discipling approach in 1 John 2:6.

The priority of the church in John's epistles

When the epistles of John are studied for data concerning the church, there is very little of an overtly helpful nature. As Cook concludes, "It must be noted that John does not present a formal ecclesiology. There is no didactic portion of John's writings treating the subject of the church."[1]

[1]W. Robert Cook, The Theology of John, p. 142. For a differing view, see R. E. Brown, "Johannine Ecclesiology: The Community's Origins," Interpretation 31 (October 1977): 379-93.

There is not complete silence on the subject of the church, though. The term ἐκκλησία is found in 3 John 6 and 10. Ryrie also finds reference to "the organized group" in 1 John 2:19 and 3:14-18.[1]

Perhaps the most dominant way the church is referred to in John's epistles is as the family of God. As Guthrie observes about this figure,

> The idea of Christians as constituting God's family is found in many other parts of the New Testament, but John makes much of it. His favorite name for God is Father and he calls Christians "children of God."[2]

Under this same figure fits the phrase "little children" (I John 2:1, 12, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 5:21), the apparent levels of spiritual growth referred to as "fathers", "young men", and "children" in 1 John 2:12-14, and the use of "brethren" (3:13) and "the brethren" (3:16). It also is possible that "the chosen lady and her children" in 2 John 1 is a metaphorical way of saying "the church and its members,"[3] although such an understanding of that verse it not at all necessary to establish the point at hand.[4]

If there is any reflection of church government at all seen in the Johannine epistles, it is in the title "elder"

[1]Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament p. 341.

[2]Guthrie, p. 380.

[3]Marshall, p. 60.

[4]Guthrie, p. 385, finds such a view very unlikely.

by the writer of himself in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1. It could conceivably be speaking of a local church leadership position, as seen in Acts 14:23, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3 and 5, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5. Or, it could simply be speaking of "an old man," although Marshall feels that elements of both possible meanings are included.[1] If that is correct, then it is interesting to see John referring to himself in a way much like Peter did in 1 Peter 5:1, where he called himself a "fellow-elder" (NASB) with those he was writing to.

By way of conclusion, the Epistles of John blend very well with the findings of the earlier chapters of this dissertation and John's Gospel. The steps of the Great Commission are either present or logically assumed, and the priority of the church was established, although it is expressed in a somewhat different way than in other parts of the New Testament corpus.

The Contribution of Revelation

There is relatively little of a helpful nature for this study in Revelation. However, it is profitable to think of the Apocalypse in connection with the closing phrase in Matthew 28:20, "the end of the age" (NASB). Also, there is an exceptional use of ἀκολουθέω, to "follow", a common word in the gospels for following Jesus, found in Revelation 14:4,

[1]Marshall, pp. 59-60.

that should be discussed. Finally, the priority of the church in the book of Revelation will be briefly handled.

Discipling to the end of the age and its relationship to Revelation

In Matthew 28:19-20 the Commission to "make disciles of all nations" is to last throughout the present age. The Apocalypse tells of the end of this age, when the nations are judged (chapters 6-19), when Christ comes back and sets up His kingdom (chapters 19-20), and, finally, of the New Heavens and Earth (chapters 21-22). Thus, John is writing of that time when the Great Commission will finally come to an end. From his vantage point on the Isle of Patmos, as the writer of the last of the New Testament books, about A.D. 95-96,[1] John looks ahead to the time when "every nation" (πᾶν ἔθνος ; cf. πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Matt. 28:19) will hear a different "gospel" (Rev. 14:6), a message of judgment.

It is certainly significant that as the Apostle initially addresses his readers, he writes of a blessing given for reading the book of Revelation so as to "heed the things which are written in it" (Rev. 1:3, NASB). The same Greek word τηρέω, which is found in Matthew 28:20, for observing or obeying the commandments of Christ, is translated in Revelation 1:3 as "heed". Thus, since the actual "revealer" of the Apocalypse

[1]Ryrie, p. 346; See also John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, pp. 13-14; and Walvoord, "Revelation" in Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, p. 925.

is Jesus, and the title of the book in 1:1 is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," it almost seems that Christ is either repeating, but more probably expanding, his point in Matthew 28:20 to include the prophetic portrait of the book of Revelation. Among other things, "heeding" the Apocalypse would instill a sense of urgency about fulfilling the Great Commission before the end of the age, with its horrible worldwide judgments upon the very group the gospel of grace was sent out to reach (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

The use of 'follow' in Revelation 14:4

In reference to the overall New Testament usage of ἀκολουθέω , Kittel concludes,

> It is no accident that the word ἀκολουθεῖν is used only in the Gospels, that there is agreement as to its use in all four Gospels, and that they restrict the relationship signified by it to the historical Jesus.[1]

That is, the normal use of "follow" in the New Testament was a physical following of Jesus by his personal disciples.

Kittel continues, though, by saying, "the only exception outside the gospels (Rev. 14:4) is obviously an application of Mt. 10:38 to a specific class of believers."[2] Thus, Kittel understands the "blameless" 144,000 of Revelation 14:1-5, as being "worthy" (Matt. 10:38) by taking their "crosses" and following the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev. 14:4). Blendinger

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[1] Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. ἀκολουθέω, by Gerhard Kittel, 1:214.

[2] Ibid.

indicates this same view: "In Rev. 14:4 ἀκολουθέω denotes those who have shared in the lot of suffering of the slaughtered and exalted Lamb."[1]

Whatever the precise meaning of this difficult text, it does seem that, at "the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20) John speaks of an example of a group who evidence a following of Jesus unlike any other people since Christ's earthly ministry, who fulfill the requirements of the "carry your cross" passages to overflowing (Matt. 10; Luke 14).

The priority of the church in Revelation

The Apostle John addresses the Apocalypse to "the seven churches that are in Asia" (1:4). Then chapters 2-3 give letters to those churches. Finally, Revelation 22:16 tells that the prophecy is a testimony "for the churches". So, there can be very little doubt that Christ had the ἐκκλησία in mind when Revelation was being written.

It is interesting to remember that the churches of Revelation 2-3 were probably started as a result of Paul's discipling ministry in Ephesus, on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:10). The gospel had gone out, baptizing had taken plae (Acts 19:5), and teaching had taken place for some three years (Acts 20:31). The Great Commission, at least in its

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[1] New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Disciple", by C. Blendinger, 1:482; For a similar opinion see Edward Schweizer, Lordship and Discipleship, p. 221.

extensive phase, had largely been carried out in Asia Minor.

But, by the time of the book of Revelation, some of the churches had begun to decline. The church at Ephesus had lost its first love (Rev. 2:4). The ἐκκλησία at Laodicea was lukewarm, and nauseous to Christ (Rev. 3:15-16). Thus, it seems that those local churches desparately needed to hear about the coming judgments, so as to awaken them to what needed to be done in regard to the Great Commission. In that regard, Revelation functions as a much more detailed version of 2 Peter 3:8ff., in which the Lord's patience in waiting and desiring for unbelievers to "repent" is placed against the background of "the day of the Lord," which "will come like a thief" (v. 10).

After this brief survey of the book of Revelation, it can be said that while there is little completely new material in regard to discipling, many of the same points are seen from the different angle of looking ahead "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Although the discipling ministry appears to terminate at the time of the end, as is a reasonable implication of Matthew 28:19-20, up until that time the church continues (chapters 1-3) as the priority that Christ appointed it to be (Matt. 16:18).

Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the writings of the Apostle John to attempt to understand his theology of discipling. John's Gospel, his epistles, and the book of Revelation, were

studied in sequence.

The Gospel of John revealed the special position that John held in proximity to Christ, especially in the striking phrase "the beloved disciple". Further, the gospel betrayed a broader use of the term "disciple", as well as a clear look ahead to the post-Pentecost situation in the teaching of the Upper Room Discourse. Finally, the Commission in John 20:21-23 was seen to harmonize with the Great Commission, serving as something of an interim preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

In the Johannine epistles the steps of the Great Commission were traced, with the most data relating to obedience to Christ's teaching (Matt. 28:20). It was concluded that 1 John 2:6 does not lend warrant to a 'Christ model' approach to discipling. Also, although there is little use of ἐκκλησία to describe the church in these letters (only in 3 John), the imagery of the family of God is especially prevalent, thus revealing a strong priority for the church.

The study of Revelation brought the Commission face-to-face with its terminus, "the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Aside from the unique usage of "follow" in Revelation 14:4, in speaking of the 144,000, the main point had to do with Christ's desired obedience (Rev. 1:3) by His churches (Rev. 2-3), in the light of the coming of the great day of judgment upon the nations, who are also the present focus of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation has been to do a comprehensive study of the New Testament teaching on discipling, which is the focal command of the Great Commission at the conclusion of Matthew (28:19-20). The methodology by which this investigation has been carried out is that of New Testament Biblical Theology. Accordingly, the procedure has been to study writer by writer, although the chapter breakdowns are somewhat unique, having been tailored for the needs of this particular study.

Review of Chapter Summaries

Chapter I studied the teaching on making disciples in Matthew and Mark. After a preliminary consideration of the current trend in gospels interpretation known as redaction criticism, it was concluded that any work in the gospels should be quite cautious in utilizing either the method or findings of redaction critical study. The uniqueness of Christ's person and ministry as well as the unique position of the apostles was then expounded. Finally, the post-Resurrection positioning and structure of Matthew's version of the Great Commission, as well as its clear prescriptive function and discontinuity with the earlier portion of the Gospel, all combine to point

to Matthew 28:19-20 as the central New Testament passage on discipling. Rather than presumptively focusing on the pre-Cross situation under which Jesus trained the apostles, it is reasonable to anchor New Testament thought on this subject in the Lord's epochal command: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

Chapter II dealt with the theology of disciple making in Luke-Acts. Initially, a detailed comparison of the unity and diversity of thought between Luke's two-volume work, the continuity and discontinuity between the end of the Old Covenant era, seen in the third gospel (Luke 22:20) and the beginning of the New Covenant age, seen in Acts, was undertaken. Although there is much in the way of unity and continuity, there is more diversity and discontinuity reflected in areas that bear upon this dissertation. Following that, a survey of the purpose and structure of Luke in comparison with that of Acts determined that the author intended his gospel as an introductory work. Acts is conceived of as a transitional work, orienting the church to the new state of affairs under which the Great Commission is being carried out (e.g. Acts 14:21-23).

Chapter III explored the viewpoint on discipling exhibited by the Apostle Paul in his ministry, seen in Acts, and the Pauline Epistles. A study of the three passages in Acts that describe Paul's conversion (Acts 9, 22, 26) revealed

both a strong unity with the Great Commission and a unique element, having to do with Paul's apostolic calling and his function as the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7-9). The middle part of the chapter observed Paul's ministry in Acts and found it characterized by evangelism, baptism, and teaching for the purpose of building the church of Jesus Christ. The latter part of the chapter considered a selected number of passages in the Pauline letters that clearly reveal that Paul's ministry was closely linked in his mind with the carrying out of the Great Commission. It also seemed clear that Paul conceived of both an extensive fulfilling of the Commission (i.e., by initial evangelism, church planting, etc.) and an intensive filling out and completing of the work the apostle-missionaries had started by the local church.

The fourth chapter considered the theology of disciple making by Peter. As an opportunity to contast the difference the shift from the Old to the New Covenant theological situation makes, Peter was studied in three contexts: his training in the gospels, ministry in Acts, and his epistles. After looking at the unique position Peter held, the knotty problem of his manifold failures for a "training of the Twelve" discipling model, and his recommissioning in John 21, it was concluded that the gospels do not intend to present Peter and his apostolic training as an intact disciple making model to be emulated. In Acts is was seen that Peter's ministry centered

on the same steps of discipling (Matt. 28:19-20) seen in Paul's ministry, although his ministry was primarily as the Apostle to the Jews. A similar consciousness emerged from the Petrine epistles, along with the same high priority on the church as seen in Paul, though stated differently.

Chapter V was the most wide-ranging portion of the dissertation. The thought of three different New Testament writers, James, the author of Hebrews, and Jude, were sifted for their views on discipling. James revealed awareness of the Commission in regard to evangelism and teaching. He also presented a simple, though clearly recognizable, early Jewish Christian conception of the church, the aim of the discipling process. In Hebrews, evangelism, baptism, and teaching were all observed. The references to the church employed different imagery, but present nothing that contradicts other portions previously studied and effectively underlines the priority of the church in an overall New Testament outlook. The emphasis in Jude was on true and false teaching, along with a sketchy, but similar, consciousness of the church as seen in James and Hebrews.

The final chapter treated the theology of John in regard to discipling. This segment offered a last opportunity to observe a New Testament writer's thought both before and after the Cross, Resurrection, and Pentecost. The three sections of the chapter looked at John's Gospel, then the Johannine

epistles, and, finally, Revelation. The fourth gospel revealed the implausibility of modeling after John the Apostle, "the beloved disciple", as well as the broad usage of "disciple" in the gospel, the transitional dispensational function of the Upper Room Discourse, and the harmony of the Commission and interim empowering of the Apostles in John 20 with the Great Commission. In John's epistles, the primary focus was on teaching, especially displaying obedience to Christ's previously taught commands (Matt. 28:20). There was not a great deal of revelation about the church, but it was sufficient to demonstrate that the ἐκκλησία of Jesus Christ continued to remain a central theological priority for John. The brief study of Revelation gave an opportunity to consider the terminus of discipling at "the end of the age" (Matt. 28:2). Again, as in the Johannine epistles, the focus was mostly on teaching and obedience. The church was in clear view, especially in Revelation 2-3, and was implicitly challenged to take its responsibility to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) before the coming of the horrible judgments of the Apocalypse at "the end of the age" (v. 20).

Theological Implications

After an initial synthesis of the finding of the dissertation, the significance of this study for systematic theology will be briefly explored. Then the implications of this investigation for other related doctrines will be touched upon.

Synthesis of overall findings

Following this comprehensive study of the New Testament teaching on making disciples, it can be confidently stated that Matthew 28:19-20 is the central prescriptive pattern for the church's age-long task. In the other statements of the Commission, there is no competing command, only complementary and harmonious emphases.

It was also seen that the most direct New Testament model for discipling ministry is in Acts, not the gospels. The uniqueness of the person of Christ and the apostolic training was seen again and again in those pre-Cross narratives. However, the carrying out of the sequential discipling steps of evangelism, baptism, and teaching all Christ commanded documented that such was the way the apostles of Christ and the early church understood that the Great Commission was to be fulfilled.

Further, the aim of discipling was concluded to be the upbuilding of the collective group of disciples, the church (Matt. 16:18). Such a consciousness was detected in the writings of each author who penned his book in the post-Pentecost context.

Significance for systematic theology

In his helpful 1981 dissertation, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship,"[1] Richard Calenberg asserted, in

[1]Richard D. Calenberg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981).

regard to the tangential subject of the believer's relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, "A brief study comparing the teaching on practical sanctification in the New Testament Epistles with the teaching on committed discipleship in the Gospels has shown that, in fact, they are one and the same."[1] Thus, from the standpoint of systematic theology, Calenberg concluded, "Discipleship is an accurate expression of the New Testament teaching on progressive sanctification."[2]

Calenberg's view is related to the present study as vertical to horizontal, and as singular to plural. His investigation focused on the relationship between the human "disciple" and the divine Lord, and he pursued primarily the individualized aspect. This dissertation has sought to understand the horizontal, person-to-person responsibility of "making disciples of all nations," as commanded and outlined at the end of Matthew.

While these are significant differences, they are also complementary theological emphases. If Calenberg is correct in equating discipleship theologically with practical sanctification, a portion of the doctrine of soteriology, similar reasoning can be employed in regard to making disciples. It would seem that discipling should be integrated into the

[1]Ibid., p. 237.

[2]Ibid., p. 240.

doctrine of ecclesiology,[1] because what is the church, if not the collective group of individual disciples growing in sanctification and seeking to reach others with the gospel together?

If this theological implication is allowed, the anchoring of discipling in ecclesiology could make a difference in the way that crucial doctrine is developed. Rather than disciple making being something of a free-floating practical ministry emphasis, it would necessarily be treated as the divine strategy for building the church (Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20). Further, neither the evangelistic, baptizing, or instructional functions of the church could be separated entirely. They would need to be discussed sequentially and interrelatedly.

Ramifications for related doctrines

In regard to the doctrine of Christology, this dissertation validated the uniqueness of Christ's divine-human person. Recent discipling devotees have mistakenly implied that it was possible, even necessary, for a human "discipler" to duplicate the ministry of Christ. However, it has been seen that no one except Christ could have done what He did, and that He did not expect his followers to fully replicate what He did with the Twelve. Also, his present ministry to the church was elaborated more than is usually done (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 4:14-16).

[1]See the similar conclusion in A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Discipleship and the Church," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (1980):271.

The doctrine of pneumatology was also clarified, especially in reference to the shift in the work of the Holy Spirit from the gospels context to the church age (John 14:17; Acts 1:8). If it were granted that discipling were to be done in the same way today as in the gospels, it would necessarily follow that the ministry of the Holy Spirit would also be the same. If such were the case, even a mildly dispensational understanding of pneumatology would be totally undermined. Fortunately, however, the discontinuity between the pre-Cross and post-Pentecost ministry of the Spirit was seen repeatedly.

There is even an implication for eschatology. In seeking to understand and apply the doctrine of discipling "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20), it becomes necessary to consider the relatedness of the Great Commission, with its global objective ("all the nations"), to God's eschatological judgments, which are also global (Rev. 19:15) in scope.

Practical Implications

The findings of this dissertation relate to more than just scholarly debate or doctrinal formulation. There are also consequences for the practical areas of preaching and teaching on making disciples, for discipling ministry itself, and for leadership training.

For preaching and teaching

Recently this writer presented a paper on this subject to the 1983 national meeting of the Evangelical

Theological Society in Dallas, Texas.[1] The following list of practical suggestions for preaching and teaching on the subject of discipling is adapted from that paper:

1. Preach and teach Matthew 28:19-20 as the central New Testament passage on disciple making. Handle it as Christ's authoritative (v. 18) prescription on this subject, and as mildly discontinuous with the pre-Cross narratives of the earlier part of the gospel.

2. Preach and teach expository messages no discipling, not subjective, topical ones. It's not as easy to fall prey to selectivity, "proof-texting", or eisegesis when using expository methodology.

3. Preach and teach Acts as the best biblical source on discipling, not the gospels.[2]

4. Preach and teach about discipling with primarily corporate emphasis and application, since roughly 90 percent of the New Testament usage is plural.

5. Thus, preach and teach on discipling in connection with the doctrine of the church, since "disciples" and "church" are virtually synonymous in Acts (8:1 and 9:1; 11:26; 14:22-23).

6. Preach and teach on discipling with sensitivity to the biblical and theological discontinuity between the

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[1]A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "New Wine in Old Wineskins: The Challenge of Preaching Discipling Passages to the Church" (Unpublished paper presented to the national meeting of Evangelical Theological Society, December 17, 1983), pp. 1-17.

[2]See Leroy Eims, Disciples in Action, p. 12.

gospels on the one hand, and Acts and the epistles, on the other.

7. Cautiously preach and teach "The Training of the Twelve" in the gospels as leadership training, while also being sensitive to the theologically unique person of Christ and the unique position and largely unrepeatable position and training of the apostolate.[1]

For discipling ministry

Within the local church context, it must be recognized that discipling and the church are inextricably related. Discipling by evangelizing, baptizing, and teaching full obedience to Christ's commands (Matt. 28:19-20) is not an option. It is the church's "gameplan." It is the way churches are planted and built (Acts 14:21-23).

Several other applications, as summarized from the author's article in Bibliotheca Sacra,[2] are:

1. The corporate teaching and fellowship of the local church are indispensable for developing spiritual maturity in individual believers. The function of individual and varied spiritual gifts and ministries is a kind of "body discipleship" the Lord wants all believers involved in.[3]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Luter, "Discipleship and the Church," pp. 271-72.

[3]See the related discussions of Ronald A. Jenson and Jim Stephens, Dynamics of Church Growth, pp. 158-59; See also the suggestive analysis of Roger Hubbard and Jerome C. Wells, "An Approach to Body Discipleship" (Unpublished Th.M. project, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976).

2. Maturity in Christ-likeness is the ultimate goal for the individual disciple (Matt. 28:20; Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 1:28; Heb. 5:12-14).

3. The leaders of the church, especially the elders, should be the clear behavioral models for the wider church body (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; Heb. 13:7, 17). They lead by example (1 Pet. 5:3) as they follow Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

4. Multiple leadership should be the rule, even in small groups, so that the individual weaknesses can be balanced off by the strengths and gifts of the other leaders (Luke 6:40; 1 Cor. 12).

5. The process of discipling should be a source for producing capable teachers, whether they are gifted or not (Heb. 5:11-14). "Disciples" who have learned a good deal have some responsibility to turn and teach others who have not progressed as far (Matt. 28:20).

Finally, it could also be said that Colossians 1:28 serves as a sort of intensive application of the Great Commission to the local church, with the focus changing from "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19) to "every man" (Col. 1:28). Thinking in the terms of Colossians 1:28 may help motivate the local church to fulfill its localized geographical responsibility within the wider scope of the Commission.

As far as the application of this study to missions,

it can be simply said that there is an apparent distinction between the extensive type of ministry the apostles undertook in mass evangelism and church planting (Acts 14:21-23; Rom. 15:18ff.) and the intensive ministry they left for the various churches to carry out in each area (Acts 19:8-10).[1] Thus, rather than expecting every Christian to fit into a single missionary mold, it is most helpful to the edification of the church and its wider discipling mission to recognize and strategically employ these distinctions.

Further, it should be recognized how much mission candidates need the church. As was seen of Timothy in the dissertation (Acts 14:21-23; 16:1-3), Counts concludes, "Christians already nurtured, matured, and tested in the church environment become the members of the missionary teams."[2] There is no New Testament basis for putting spiritual babes on the mission field without a strong background in the church. And, even though specialized training is necessary for today's missionary, it must be recognized that much of what God wants in a discipling missionary is to be learned in the local church context (Acts 13:1ff.; 16:1ff.).

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[1]For the develoment of this distinction between extensive and intensive ministry, see Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, pp. 432-38.

[2]William M. Counts, "The Center for Advanced Biblical Studies: A Model for Renewal in Ministry Training" (Unpublished D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), p. 20.

For leadership training

What has often been called discipleship, or discipling, is, more accurately, leadership training.[1] To attempt to copy the "Training of the Twelve" is much closer to making apostles than making disciples.[2] This, of course, could not be entirely duplicated.

However, it does seem that the Lord intended that a theologically-adjusted model could be used to advantage in training leades for the local church (1 Pet. 5:1). It is necessary, in application of such a nuanced model, to be extremely sensitive to the factor of Christ's unique person and the apostle's epochal position (Eph. 2:20). Yet, even as such theologically-sensitized teaching and application is done the study of the Old Testament, it would seem possible to "principlize"[3] at this point, also.

There is also the need for much further study in this and other practical areas in regard to discipling. This dissertation has laid a conceptual base. However, the understanding without the corresponding application is incomplete. It is hoped that this work will be a part in seeing the church

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[1]See also Luter, "A Theological Evaluation of 'Christ Model' Disciple-Making," Journal of Pastoral Practice 5 (1982): 20-21.

[2]Ibid., p. 17.

[3]See the discussions of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Exegetical Theology, pp. 152, 198; and Roy B. Zuck, "Application in Biblical Hermeneutics and Exposition," in Walvoord: A Tribute, edited by Donald K. Campbell, pp. 26-29.

of Jesus Christ more discerningly fulfill her Lord's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19), thus spreading and building His ἐκκλησία (Matt. 16:18) "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

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