

A Missio-Relational Reading of Mark

Enoch Wan and Narry Santos

Introduction

As a sequel to an earlier study on Romans,¹ this paper employs a similar approach to read the Gospel narrative of Mark missio-relationally. The thesis of this study is that it is beneficial to read Mark missiologically and relationally; instead of using the critical approach (i.e. historical-critical method).² Reading Mark missiologically means highlighting the missiological elements in the book in terms of language, action and motif of mission.

Following the trend of recent “relational study” in other disciplines³ and earlier studies by Enoch Wan on “relationality,”⁴ this relational reading of Mark will cover three relational elements of the book, i.e. “boundary-crossing,” language of family, authority and honorific title of Jesus and “relational dynamics.”

For the sake of clarity, key-terms are defined and a diagrammatic snapshot of the organization of this study is shown in Figure 1 on page 3.

Missiological Reading of Mark

The missiological reading of Mark entails identifying themes in Christian missions as listed in Figure 1 on page 3. First, it can be seen in the narrative’s language of mission. Second, it is reflected in Mark’s description of mission in the ministry of Jesus, both in Galilee and to the Gentiles. Third, it

can be observed in the “scattering” and “gathering” narrative motifs.

The Language of Mission in Mark

The language of mission is evident in four significant verbs and three central descriptive phrases in Mark’s Gospel. The four verbs are “send,” “call,” “preach,” and “teach,” while the three central descriptive phrases are “good news,” “kingdom of God,” and “on the way.” These key phrases reveal Mark’s intention to trace the mission of Jesus and his disciples throughout the narrative.

Key Verbs on Mission: *Send, Call, Preach, and Teach*

The first verb that reveals the language of mission in Mark is “send.” It occurs 25 times in the narrative through four different Greek verbs: (1) *apostellō* (“send out, send forth”)⁵; (2) *apoluō* (“send away; set free; release”)⁶; (3) *pempō* (“send, dispatch”)⁷; and (4)

ekballō (“expel, drive, or cast out”).⁸ Out of the 25 instances, Mark uses the verb *apostellō* 19 times to express the intentional act of sending out or sending forth for a particular purpose. In one instance, Jesus appointed the Twelve, who were also called “apostles” (*apostolos*, or “sent one on a mission”), that he might “send” (*apostellō*) them out to preach (3:14). In another instance, Jesus called the Twelve and “sent” them two by two to cast out unclean spirits (6:7).

The second verb that shows the emphasis on mission in the narrative is “call.” It occurs 22 times in Mark through five different Greek verbs: (1) *kaleō* (“call, invite”)⁹; (2) *proskaleō* (“call to, summon”)¹⁰; (3) *sugkaleō* (“call with”)¹¹; (4) *phōneō* (“call out”)¹²; and (5) *legō* (“say, call”).¹³ Out of the 22 instances, Mark uses the verb *proskaleō* nine times to call the Twelve and to appoint them as apostles, to summon the Twelve to him in order to send them out by pairs in casting our demons, to call the disciples or the crowd to him in order to give important instruction (e.g., what to bring and do in a village; what to do to the crowd of 4,000) or teaching (e.g., what makes people unclean; what it means to follow Jesus, to be a slave of all, and to give one’s all).

Aside from “send” and “call,” the verb “preach” also affirms the element of mission in Mark. It occurs 12 times through the Greek word *kerussō*

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(“preach, proclaim, to be a herald”).¹⁴ What is preached in Mark involves: (1) “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (1:4; 6:12); (2) “the good news” (1:14; 13:10; 14:9); and (3) “the word” (2:2). The ones who did the preaching in Mark are John the Baptizer (1:4), Jesus (1:14, 38, 39; 2:2), and the Twelve (3:14; 6:12). Even the ones whom Jesus healed proclaimed what was done to them (1:45; 5:20; 7:36b), even they were told by Jesus not to do so (1:44; 7:36a).

The fourth verb that indicates the presence of mission in Mark is “teach.” It occurs 21 times in Mark (apart from the 12 instances when Jesus was called the “Teacher”) through the Greek word *didaskō* (“teach, instruct”).¹⁵ Jesus’ teaching is conducted in the synagogue (1:21; 6:2), beside the sea (2:13; 4:1:6:34b), in the temple (12:35; 14:49), in the villages (6:6), and beyond the Jordan (10:1). It is also done through parables (2:2) and out of compassion (6:34a), described as the way of God in truth (12:14) and pointing to his passion (8:31; 9:31). It is also described as having

authority (1:22b, 27), and generating amazement (1:22a; 11:18). Aside from Jesus, the disciples also teach on their own (6:30).

Central Descriptive Phrases on Mission: Good News, Kingdom of God, On the Way

The language of mission reflected in the words “call” and “send” is closely linked to the task of preaching “the good news of God” (1:14). In fact, both “proclamation” and “gospel” serve as prominent themes in Mark.¹⁶ As used in Mark, the good news refers to the person of “Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1), requires the response of repentance and belief (1:15), relates to the losing and saving of one’s life (8:35), and must be preached to all nations (13:10; 14:9).

In addition, Jesus’ teaching involves unpacking the “kingdom of God” (1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43) or the “coming kingdom of our father David” (11:10).¹⁷ In Mark’s Gospel, the kingdom of God is conceived as “boundary crossing” (i.e., in Jesus, God has intervened in human

history)¹⁸ and as taking hold of people step by step in the journey. Thus, “Mark presents the kingdom of God as the central concept in the proclamation of Jesus.”¹⁹ As a result of this proclamation of the good news and of teaching about the kingdom of God, people are admonished to confess their sins,²⁰ repent,²¹ believe²² the gospel, and be forgiven²³ by Jesus, who is compassionate,²⁴ merciful,²⁵ and willing to help.²⁶

The language of mission is also traced in the narrative through the phrase “on the way,” with the word “way” or “journey” or “road” occurring 12 times throughout the Gospel.²⁷ Mark’s idea of being “on the way” expresses Jesus’ intentional movement or journey on the road (8:27; 9:33; 10:17, 32b, 52), along with his disciples (2:23; 6:8; 9:34; 10:32a), in fulfilling his designated mission. As Rhoads observes, “Jesus is on the move. The disciples whom he sends out are on the move.”²⁸

Being “on the way” begins at the Gospel’s introduction when Mark quotes two Old Testament prophets

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(Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3) about the sending of a messenger to “prepare your way” (1:2) and “make ready the way of the Lord” (1:3). Later in the narrative, this journey is described as “the way of God in truth” (12:14). Pesch sees this theme of the “way” carry Jesus’ work from Galilee to Jerusalem and ultimately into the worldwide scope of the community’s preaching.²⁹ For Senior, the “entire journey motif gives an inherently missionary character to Mark’s Gospel. The Christian message is described as a way, as a mobile, dynamic transmission of God’s Word that sweeps...and moves out into the world.”³⁰

In addition to the language of mission in Mark, there are the narratives of the action of mission by Jesus—that focus of the discussion below.

Action: Jesus’ Mission both in Galilee and to the Gentiles

Apart from the language of mission, the unveiling of Jesus’ mission in Galilee and to the Gentiles serves as a major indicator for the missiological reading of the narrative. In fact, Jesus’ full scope of kingdom ministry is carried out in Galilee and beyond it (i.e., in Gentile territory). Jesus’ mission in Galilee and to the Gentiles shows Mark’s way of depicting the church’s mission as inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles.

Mission in Galilee

The term “Galilee,” which appears 13 times in the Gospel (including the term “Galilean”),³¹ is considered a region of “mixed population”³² (i.e., the Jewish population was interspersed with Greek and other foreign elements due to colonization in the period after Alexander’s conquest of the Middle East [333–323 B.C.E.]).³³ Galilee was not only a geographical center; it was also the cultural, social, religious, political, and ideological hub of the entire Jewish world. In other words, Galilee was a cultural crossroad, where Jesus established a frontier ministry.³⁴ As such, Galilee symbolized the universality of the Gospel.

Figure 1—Missio-Relational Reading of Mark

MISSIOLOGICAL READING		SPECIFIC ELEMENTS	
LANGUAGE		four significant verbs	“send,” “call,” “preach,” “teach”
		three central descriptive phrases	“good news,” “kingdom of God,” and “on the way”
ACTION		Jesus’ ministry in Galilee	1:14-9:50
		Jesus’ ministry to the Gentiles	selected passages and cases
MOTIF		“scattering” and “gathering”	symbolism of “Galilee” (1:14-9) and “Jerusalem”(11-16)
RELATIONAL READING		SPECIFIC ELEMENTS	
		two “ripping open” crucial incidents	1:10-11; 15:38
BOUNDARY CROSSING		confessions: • Spiritual order • Natural order • Health order • Jewish order • Ethnic order: centurion	• 1:27; 3:11 • 4:41; 6:51 • 3:11; 7:37 • 12:28-34 • 15:39
		a set of mission ethics	8:22-10:52
RELATIONAL LANGUAGE	family	terms such as house, household, father, son, etc.	family relation ----> Kingdom of God
	authority	Jesus’ relations	authority & servanthood
	honorific	Jesus’ honorific titles	“Christ,” “Son of God,” etc.
RELATIONAL DYNAMICS	Positive & negative	examples of disciples & others	individuals: Peter, Judas, 12 disciples and multitudes

It was in Galilee where Jesus first preached the good news of God (1:14), where news about Jesus spread rapidly (1:28), where he entered synagogues to preach (1:39), and where a great multitude followed him (3:7). Kelber observes that Jesus’ journeys around and across the Sea of Galilee depict the inclusive nature of the mission of Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. Kelber states, “The lake, losing its force as a barrier, is transposed into a symbol of unity, bridging the gulf between Jewish and Gentile Christians.”³⁵

Mission to the Gentiles

Aside from Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, Mark traces his ministry to

the Gentiles beyond Galilee. Early in the Galilean ministry of Jesus, Mark reveals that the people outside of Galilee and Judea, particularly those “beyond the Jordan and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon” (3:8a), were so responsive to Jesus that they eagerly came to him (3:8b). In Mark 5:1, Jesus went “to the other side” of the sea, into the Gentile region of the Gerasenes. There he healed a Gerasene demoniac and sent the unclean spirits to a big herd of swine (5:2-13). Aside from this Gentile ministry of Jesus, he even allowed the healed Gerasene to testify about the great things the Lord did to him (5:19). This Gerasene proclaimed the miraculous work of Jesus in the

Decapolis, which is another Gentile region. Thus, the healed Gerasene became the first Gentile preacher (5:20) or “missionary to the Gentiles and the anticipation of the universal model of evangelization by personal witness.”³⁶

Later in the narrative, Jesus told his disciples to get into a boat and go ahead of him “to the other side” to Bethsaida, which is another Gentile territory (6:45). There, Jesus walked on the water (6:49), comforted them, and assured them of his presence (6:50). In another instance, Jesus and his disciples returned to Bethsaida (8:22), where Jesus healed a blind man by spitting on him and touching him (8:23-26).

Moreover, Mark specifies that Jesus went to the region of Tyre, which is another Gentile territory (7:24). There, Jesus helped a woman, “a Gentile of the Syrophoenician race” (7:25), by healing her demon-possessed daughter (7:27-30). After this exorcism on Gentile soil, Jesus proceeded to

In addition to the language of the book and the action of Jesus in Mark being missiological, there are the mission motifs of “scattering” and “gathering” in Mark as presented below.

Motifs: “Scattering” and “Gathering” in Mark

So far, our discussion of the missiological reading of Mark has dwelt on Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and to the Gentiles, along with the language of mission in the Gospel. Another way to look for missiological indicators in the narrative of Mark is to explore the “scattering” and “gathering” motifs in the book. These motifs have to do with the geographical significance of “Galilee” and “Jerusalem.”

As we have seen, “Galilee” is the place where most of Jesus’ kingdom ministry takes place, where the symbol of gospel universality resides, and where the proclamation of the

geographical symbolism of “Galilee” and “Jerusalem.” A “gathering” begins in “Galilee,” followed by a “scattering” in “Jerusalem,” and finally a re-gathering is projected in Galilee again. In relation to the disciples, a “gathering” occurred for them in Galilee when Jesus called the two sets of brothers (1:16-20), Levi (2:14), and the Twelve (3:13-19) to be with Jesus, to follow him, and to do their mission with him.

A “scattering” (which involved suffering) occurred among the disciples in Jerusalem, as predicted by Jesus: “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered’” (14:27). Finally, a projected re-gathering with them and Jesus would take place in Galilee after his resurrection, as predicted by Jesus: “But after I have been raised, I will go before you in Galilee” (14:28). This predicted re-gathering is again affirmed to the women disciples by a young man with white robes at the tomb: “But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him, just as he said to you’” (16:7). The purpose of the re-gathering is “to restore the failed disciples.”⁴⁰ Regarding this pattern of motifs, Senior comments:

The return to the place of Jesus’ mission is the effective message of resurrection in Mark’s Gospel. The community is to be regathered in the very territory where Jesus had first collected them and given them a share in his boundary-breaking kingdom ministry. The community is not to remain in Jerusalem, but to move with renewed awareness and power back to Galilee where the universal mission of the church beckons.⁴¹

Second set of the “Gathering-Scattering-Re-gathering” Pattern

Another gathering-scattering-re-gathering pattern occurs to the disciples while they were in Galilee. Like before, their gathering occurred when Jesus appointed the Twelve (also designated as “apostles”) that they might be with Jesus and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons (3:13-15). Then, their scattering (which

AS WE HAVE SEEN, “Galilee” is the place where most of Jesus’ kingdom ministry takes place, where the symbol of gospel universality resides, and where the proclamation of the good news is prominent.

another Gentile territory (i.e., “from the region of Tyre and . . . through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis” [7:31]). There, Jesus healed a deaf and dumb man, by putting his fingers on the man’s ears, spitting on him, and touching his tongue (7:32-35).

In addition, the feeding of the 5,000, which occurred in Jewish territory (6:33-44), had the parallel feeding of 4,000 people, which presumably occurred in Gentile territory (8:1-9).³⁷ This parallel feeding is assumed to be in a Gentile setting, because of the location specified in the verse immediately following the parallel feeding: “And immediately he entered the boat with his disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha” (8:10).

good news is prominent. On the other hand, “Jerusalem” is the location for opposition, suffering, and death. It is in Jerusalem where Jesus is opposed by the religious (11:27-33; 12:13-17; 12:18-27; 14:1-2, 55-65) and political authorities (15:1-20, 24-26), where Jesus is deserted by the disciples (14:26-31, 37, 40, 50-51, 66-72), betrayed by Judas Iscariot (14:10-11, 43-45), and crucified on the cross (15:22-37). Mark highlights this geographical polarity between “Galilee” and “Jerusalem,” in order to exploit the symbolism inherent in both regions.³⁸

First set of the “Gathering-Scattering-Re-gathering” Pattern

The motifs of “scattering” and “gathering”³⁹ relate to the

involved mission) occurred, when Jesus called the Twelve and sent them out in pairs to cast out demons (6:7). The Twelve fulfilled this mission scattering in Mark 6:12-13, “So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons, and were anointing with oil many sick people and healed them.” Their re-gathering occurred in Mark 6:30, “And the apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to him all that they had done and taught.”

Third set of the “Gathering-Scattering-Re-gathering” Pattern

A third pattern for the “scattering” and “gathering” motifs occurs in Mark. First, Jesus’ earthly ministry fits the “gathering” motif of calling Jews into the kingdom of God. This motif is evident in Jesus’ conversation with the Syrophenician woman in relation to the healing of her demon-possessed daughter (7:24-30). Jesus told the woman, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (7:27). This verse affirms that Jesus’ ministry focuses on the Jews, though it also extended to the Gentiles. As Williams states,

Jesus himself does not target an outreach to non-Jews, since his ministry is directed toward the people of Israel, who deserve to be satisfied first (7:27). Nevertheless, Jesus does travel outside of Galilee into predominantly Gentile territory, and while there he responds positively toward those who come to him for help. . . . He also foresees a future mission that goes beyond the limits of the people of Israel.⁴²

After the “gathering” motif, two kinds of “scattering” follow. The first kind of “scattering” involves mission. Jesus mentions three times the mission “scattering” of the gospel for “all nations”: (1) “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations” (11:17)—As Donahue notes, this verse announces that the eschatological “house of prayer for all nations” will replace the temple⁴³; (2) “And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations” (13:10)—Mark believed that the followers of Jesus

had to reach the ends of the earth with the message of the kingdom before Jesus’ very imminent return⁴⁴; and (3) “wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world. . .” (14:9)—Mark foresees a future mission that goes beyond the limits of the people of Israel.

The second kind is the “scattering” that involves suffering. In the parable of the tenants, the servants were killed and later the son, all of whom were sent by the owner of the vineyard (12:1-12). John the Baptizer fits the pattern of a servant, sent by God, yet was beheaded by Herod (6:27-29). Jesus fits the pattern of a son, sent by God, yet was crucified by the religious (15:11-13) and political leaders (15:14-15). Jesus commissions the disciples to be fishers of men (1:17), and sends them to do what he himself did. The same pattern of suffering occurs to the disciples. Just as Jesus suffered in the hands of religious and political leaders, the disciples are also to suffer (i.e., their own “scattering”), as predicted by Jesus in the apocalyptic discourse (13:9-13).

Finally, the “re-gathering” motif at a worldwide scale follows the “scattering” motif. Jesus predicts that at his second coming (13:26),⁴⁵ he “will gather together the elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of the heaven” (13:27). Here, the re-gathering will not be for Jews only, but for Gentiles, too. The scope of the re-gathering is not Israel only, but also “all the nations.” What began for the “children first” now

culminates for all people of the whole world.

In the first half of this study, we have conducted a missiological reading of Mark in terms of the language, action and motif of Christian missions in the book. We shall now continue with a relational approach dealing with the Gospel narrative of Mark in terms of “boundary-crossing,” relational language and “relational dynamics.”

Relational Reading of Mark

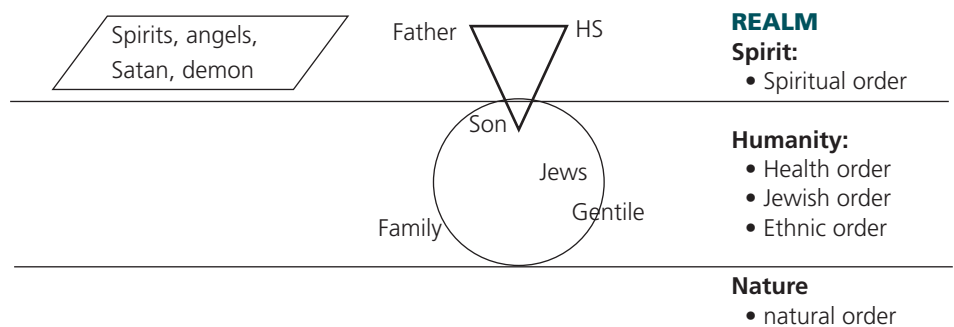
We shall now turn our focus on the relational elements in Mark and will begin with the definition of key-terms: “... ‘relationship’ —the interactive connection between personal beings (or “Beings” in the Triune God) whereas ‘relationality’ is the generic quality of being connected.”⁴⁶

With the aid of a “relational framework” (Wan 2006a, 2006b, 2007) and multi-contextual perspective,⁴⁷ this relational reading of Mark includes sections dealing with Jesus’ relationship in the realms of spirit, humanity and nature as shown in Figure 2 below.

Boundary-Crossing Mission

“Boundary-crossing” refers to the concepts that there are efforts to break out of confines or certain order to gain freedom and fundamental change in mission.⁴⁸ The following discussion will show the helpful concept of “boundary-crossing” for a relational reading of Mark.

Figure 2—The Relational Network of Jesus



“Ripping Open” Episodes in Mark

The first boundary-crossing relational concept in Mark is the set of two “ripping open” episodes found at strategic locations in the narrative. The first episode occurs in Mark’s introduction. During Jesus’ baptism, the heavens “rip open.” The Spirit descends like a dove and a voice from heaven testifies about Jesus (1:10-11). The “ripping open” of the heavens reveals that God is a boundary-crossing God: “God rips open the heavens, crosses the boundary to earth, and sends the Spirit upon Jesus.”⁴⁹ The point of the “ripping open” in Mark 1:10 is to be able to declare the person of Jesus: “You are my beloved Son; in you I am well-pleased.” Therefore, “an

order [4:41; 6:51]; *health order* [3:11; 7:37]; *Jewish order* [2:6,16-17, 28]; and *ethnic order* [15:39]) marked by “boundary-crossing.”

1. *Spiritual Order—The Confessions of 1:27; 3:11.*

In the realm of spirit, we are to examine Jesus’ relationship to the Father and the Spirit (within the Trinity), and to angels and Satan/demons in the non-human realm. Moreover, confession (1:27; 3:11) in the spiritual order highlights the “boundary-crossing” power/authority of Jesus.

Metaphor for the Father and Son Relations. Mark uses the father-son relation as a metaphor for the relationship between the heavenly

the Father-Son relation to the Father-children relation. For the disciples, this extension means that they can also enjoy an intimate Father-children relation, just as Jesus enjoys his Father-Son relation.

The title “Son of God” (and its related term “Beloved Son”) shows up in three strategic places at the beginning, middle, and end of the Gospel. The first instance is at Jesus’ baptism, where the voice from heaven said, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (1:11). The second occurs at Jesus’ transfiguration, where the voice from out of the cloud says, “You are my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (9:7). The last place is at Jesus’ crucifixion, where a human being proclaims about Jesus for the first time, “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (15:39). Like the title “Christ,” Mark drives home the honorable title of “Son of God” to ensure that we see Jesus’ ascribed prestige in the heavenly court of reputation.

Jesus’ Relation with the Spirit and Angels. Jesus’ relations with the Spirit and angels, Satan, and evil spirits are evident in the instances involving these spiritual beings and in the exorcism, healing, and miracle episodes.

Mark mentions the Holy Spirit five times.⁵³ The Spirit is described as a powerful ally of Jesus, descending on him like a dove from heaven (1:8), impelling Jesus to go to the wilderness (1:12), and speaking through his people (12:36; 13:11). Aside from the Spirit, the angels (who are cited five times in the Gospel)⁵⁴ are related to Jesus as ministering servants (1:13), as future participants in the glorious return of Jesus with the heavenly Father (8:38), as spiritual beings who reside in heaven (12:35), and as powerful emissaries in the future day of glory (13:27). Thus, Mark portrays both the Spirit and the angels as Jesus’ powerful allies in the present as well as in the future.

Jesus’ Relation with Satan and Demons. On the other hand, Mark presents Satan (who is found six times in the Gospel)⁵⁵ and his demons (which

JESUS RELATION WITH THE SPIRIT AND ANGELS,

Satan and evil spirits are evident in the instances involving these spiritual beings and in the exorcism, healing, and miracle episodes.

important aspect of the mission task is to proclaim Jesus⁵⁰ in a boundary-crossing relational way.

The second “ripping open” episode occurs at the conclusion of Mark, when the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (15:38) right after Jesus breathed his last (15:37). The ripping of veil from top to bottom shows that the source of the “ripping open” is not human, but divine. The point of the “ripping open” in Mark 15:38 is to break out of the confines of where to meet God—emphasizing that God is available to anyone who seeks him. God’s presence is no longer limited to the temple; access to him is open for all.⁵¹ Thus, “God rips open the curtain of the temple and leaves the confines of the temple to be available for forgiveness and blessing anywhere people have faith.”⁵²

Confessions Marked by “Boundary-crossings”

There are altogether five confessions (i.e., spiritual order [1:27]; *natural*

Father and Jesus. He also extends this Father-Jesus relation to the Father-disciples relation. With Jesus as the model Son to the heavenly Father, the disciples follow his lead in honoring the Father and relating intimately as part of his family.

The Father-Son relation is evident in the Gospel. In Mark 8:38, Jesus is referred to as the Son of Man, who will later come “in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” In this one verse, Mark puts side by side the terms “Son of Man” and “Father.” In Mark 13:32, Jesus talks once more about his coming again: “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” The terms “Son” and “Father” are again juxtaposed. In Mark 14:36, Jesus talks to the Father about his cup of suffering, calling him “Abba, Father.”

In Mark 11:25, Jesus teaches his disciples about prayer and forgiveness. Part of this verse has the phrase “your Father in heaven.” Here, Jesus extends

occur 16 times)⁵⁶ as Jesus' enemies. As Jesus' enemy, Satan tempts him (1:13) and takes away the Word sown in people (4:15). As Jesus' enemies, the demons are cast out by Jesus and are not allowed to speak by him. Thus, Mark portrays both Satan and the demons as Jesus' destructive enemies.

Confession in the Spiritual Order. One key confession in the spiritual realm declares the "boundary-crossing" authority of Jesus. This confession is affirmed by the crowds, who were amazed at Jesus' teaching and his authority (1:22), and who witnessed his casting out of the evil spirit from a man in the synagogue (1:23-26). The crowds' confession about Jesus' authority is contained in these words: "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him" (1:27).

2. Health Order—The Confessions of 3:11 and 7:37

The exorcisms, healings, and miracles of Jesus emphatically show his authority over Satan and his allies, and over the negative forces of nature (i.e., storms; sickness, and even death). Their submission to Jesus' authority generates different responses from various characters in the narrative. In addition, the confessions of 3:11 and 7:37 affirm the "cross-boundary" authority of Jesus in the health order.

The Marcan narrative includes four instances of exorcisms⁵⁷ and three "summary statements" that tell of his casting out unclean spirits.⁵⁸ The crowds who witness the exorcisms usually respond in amazement (1:27), commenting, "He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."⁵⁹ Aside from amazement, the people's response to exorcisms are: "debate among themselves" (1:27); and being "frightened" (3:15). Even the disciples are led to ask a question to Jesus about his authority (9:28). And those from whom the unclean spirits were cast out obeyed Jesus' authoritative instructions (5:19-20).

Moreover, the Marcan narrative includes nine actual instances

of healings⁶⁰ and five "summary statements" that tell of his healings.⁶¹ In response, those who are healed react differently. Some serve (1:28), proclaim freely (1:45; 7:36), fear and tremble (5:33), and follow Jesus (10:52). The people who also witness the healings respond in amazement,⁶² saying, "We have never seen anything like this" (2:12), and "He has done all things well; he makes even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (7:37). On the other hand, the religious authorities react in antagonism (3:6); but in chapter 5 the response of antagonism is not from religious authorities.

Two confessions about Jesus affirm his "boundary-crossing" authority in the health order. The first confession of Mark 3:11 occurred in the context of Jesus' healing many people (3:10), who came from "Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon" (3:8). As a result of this healing ministry, the evil spirits fell down before Jesus and cried out, "You are the Son of God" (3:11).

The second confession of Mark 7:37 was made in the context of Jesus' healing of a deaf and mute man from

that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (4:41). Jesus' walking on water results in the disciples' being greatly astonished, along with their lack of insight and hardness of heart (6:51-52). Therefore, Jesus, as the miracle-worker, is reported to have authority and power over the natural order, as evidenced by the disciples' confession of amazement in 4:41.

4. Jewish order—Commendation of an exceptional scribe (12:28-34)

The Jewish religious leaders revered Jehovah of the OT and devoted themselves to the Torah and their centuries-long rabbinic tradition. They challenged Jesus' authority to forgive sin, for they did not recognize His deity (9-10). They also judged Jesus for being a friend of sinners and publicans (2:16). They adhered closely to the Mosaic law and rabbinic tradition in the observance of Sabbath; yet Jesus condoned His disciples, who violated the Sabbath (2:23-24), and he performed healing on Sabbath (3:2). They were offended that Jesus broke the Jewish tradition and were intent to raise more than questions against him (2:6, 16-17, 28). They raised

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.....

the region of the Decapolis (7:31-35). The crowds were so overwhelmed with amazement that they exclaimed, "He has done all things well; he makes even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (7:37).

3. Natural Order—The Confessions of 4:41 and 6:51

The Marcan narrative also includes five actual instances of other kinds of miracles.⁶³

The miracle of the stilling of the sea results in the disciples' feeling afraid, saying, "Who then is this,

their hands and plotted with others to kill Him (3:6), for they charged Jesus on healing by the power of Beelzebul and being possessed (3:22, 30).

However, there is a crucial episode in the narrative when Mark presented a Jewish religious leader, specifically a "scribe" in an exceptionally commendatory way (12:28-32). The context of this commendable story about an "exceptional figure"⁶⁴ is a series of three controversies between Jesus and the religious leaders (11:27-33; 12:13-17, 18-27) that were all been triggered by questions with malicious motives (11:28;

12:13-15, 18-23). Yet, Mark described the exceptional scribe in Mark 12:28 with no malicious motive.

In fact, Mark explicitly described him as one who recognizes that Jesus has answered the religious opponents well (12:28b), signifying that this scribe is an unusually perceptive man.⁶⁵ His perception led him to ask a sincere question, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” (12:28c), which, in turn, Jesus answers unreservedly (12:29-31).

Mark presented the scribe as a man of insight and of comprehension in relation to Jesus’ answer. He is portrayed as a character, who recognizes Jesus as teacher (12:32a),

“Truly this man was the Son of God” (15:39). This confession has been affirmed earlier by Mark (1:1b), by the voice from heaven (1:11; 9:7b), by the unclean spirits (3:11; 5:7) and by Jesus himself (14:62a). What is interesting in the confession of the Roman centurion is that only at the close of the Gospel does a human character in the narrative (apart from Jesus himself) confess that Jesus is truly the authoritative Son of God.⁶⁹

What is also intriguing in the confession is that it comes from one of the Roman soldiers, whom Mark has been portraying negatively in the narrative as Jesus’ mockers (15:16-18, 20a), abusers (15:19, 24b) and

which show a reorientation toward an ethic of relinquishment for others or a “boundary-crossing mentality of mission.”⁷³

Mark 8:22-10:52 serves as the central segment of the narrative. It is the place where Jesus’ three discipleship discourses are found (8:34-38; 9:35-50; 10:42-45), containing his teaching on the kingdom ethics of mission. This central segment also shows both the contents of the “old” set of self-focused ethics that damage and endanger people’s lives, and the “new” set of kingdom ethics of mission that restore and reward them.

The “old” ethics of self-orientation are as follows: (1) lack of comprehension about Jesus (9:10-11); (2) setting the mind and interests on human things (8:33); (3) asserting one’s own will (8:34); (4) not carrying the cross (i.e., not wanting to be identified with the disgrace of the cross; 8:34); (5) not following Jesus (8:34); (6) saving one’s life (i.e., losing one’s soul to eternal ruin; 8:35); (7) gaining the world (i.e., prioritizing the pursuit of the world’s goods at the expense of forfeiting one’s soul; 8:37); (8) being ashamed of Jesus and his words (8:38); (9) being adulterous and sinful (i.e., disowning and shaming Jesus; 8:38); (10) being inattentive to Jesus (9:5-7); (11) unbelief (9:19, 25); (12) asserting one’s own greatness (9:34); (13) arrogant exclusivism and intolerance of others (9:38); (14) causing others to stumble (i.e., causing others to be misled or trapped in sin; 9:42); (15) abuse of authority (9:42); (16) tolerating sin and worldliness in oneself (9:43-48); (17) hardness of heart (10:5); (18) hindering others to approach Jesus (10:13); (19) self-effort goodness (10:19-20); (20) clutching to one’s riches (10:22); (21) jockeying for position (10:35, 37); (21) envy (10:41); and (22) lording over people (10:42).

On the other hand, the “new” mission ethics are as follows: (1) illuminating insight (8:29); (2) humility that suffers and sacrifices for others (8:31); (3) setting one’s mind

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.....

who acknowledges the truth of Jesus’ reply, and who shows himself to be open to God’s will and to Jesus’ value system (12:32b-33).⁶⁶

Mark highlighted Jesus’ commendation of the scribe, by employing similar wording in the narration of the scribe’s perception (“recognizing that he had answered them well”; 12:28b) and by Jesus’ recognition of the scribe’s intelligent answer (“when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently”; 12:34a). Mark also emphasized the scribe’s perception by including Jesus’ own commendation, “You are not far from the kingdom of God” (12:34b). This negative form of the commendation focuses on the nearness of the scribe to God’s kingdom⁶⁷ and his receptivity to the kingdom message.⁶⁸

5. Ethnic order: Testimony of the Roman Centurion (15:39)

Right after the “ripping open” of the temple veil (15:38), Mark describes the testimony of the Roman centurion. The centurion publicly declares,

executioners (15:15c, 20c, 24a, 25b). How can Mark present the centurion, who is identified negatively with the abuses of the political and military authorities, as an exceptional soldier with a positive character?⁷⁰ He sought to show his own openness to the Gentiles,⁷¹ realizing that they are receptive to who Jesus is—the true Son of God.

“Boundary-crossing” is not only a relational perspective on orders or realms; but applicable to the crossing from the “old” ethical order to the “new” as well.

A set of Mission Ethics in Mark

Another Marcan boundary-crossing concept is the set of mission ethics found in the narrative. This set of mission ethics lets go of the “old” ethics, which show “anxious self-concern—the orientation to self, rooted in fear, which leads people to secure and protect their lives.”⁷² This mission ethics crosses boundaries by adopting the “new” kingdom ethics,

and interests on divine things (8:33); (4) denying oneself (i.e., giving one's will in favor of God's will; 8:34); (5) carrying one's own cross (i.e., facing the disgrace of following Jesus; 8:34); (6) following Jesus (i.e., being ready to share in the same fate as Jesus; 8:34); (7) serving for the sake of Jesus and the gospel (8:35); (8) losing one's life (i.e., gaining eternal life; 8:35); (9) listening to Jesus (9:7); (10) faith (9:24; 10:52); (11) prayer (9:29); (12) being last of all (9:35); (13) being servant of all (9:35); (14) receiving a child (i.e., welcoming the insignificant; 9:36); (15) not stopping a stranger (who may not belong to our group; 9:39-40) in Jesus' name; (16) giving a cup of water (i.e., doing a seemingly insignificant service; 9:41); (17) being a salt in oneself (i.e., helping change the world through one's purifying presence; 9:49-50); (18) being at peace with others (9:50); (19) receiving the kingdom like a child (i.e., with dependent faith; 10:14-15); (20) being slave of all (10:44); and (21) serving others (10:45).

In other words, the "new" set of mission ethics not only value Jesus; but also value fellow members of Jesus' extended family, including those regarded as insignificant or of minimal honor status in society. It involves being last of all, being servant of all, and being slave of all, in order to be on mission for all the nations.

"Family" in Mark applies not only to the new set of mission ethics; it can be viewed from social and spiritual dimensions as well—the focus of our discussion below.

Relational Language: Family, Authority, and Honorific Titles of Jesus

A relational reading of Mark is inclusive of relational language in terms of *family*, *authority* and *honorific titles* of Jesus.

Relational Language of Family

In terms of relational reading of Mark, it begins with the appreciation of his extensive use of the family language. Mark uses the "family"

language in many instances, as represented by the following words: "father" (17 times),⁷⁴ "mother" (17 times),⁷⁵ "son" (32 times),⁷⁶ "sons" (three times),⁷⁷ "brother" (12 times),⁷⁸ "brothers" (eight times),⁷⁹ "daughter" (nine times),⁸⁰ "husband" (one time),⁸¹ "wife" (eight times),⁸² "child" (ten times),⁸³ and "children" (nine times).⁸⁴

The first-century families included their slaves and servants as part of their extended families. Mark uses the following words for these extended family members in the narrative: "slave" (five times),⁸⁵ "servant" (three times),⁸⁶ and "servant girls" (one time).⁸⁷ In addition, Mark uses the terms "house" (21 times),⁸⁸ "houses" (two times),⁸⁹ "household" (one time),⁹⁰ "home" (eight times),⁹¹ and "hometown" (two times).⁹² He also specifies in his "family" language the activities that families do (e.g., "eating,"⁹³ "buying,"⁹⁴ "selling"⁹⁵) and

and farm as the center for a group of people. In the passage in Mark 10:29-31 we meet the family as a household, a group of people bound together by close kinship, who live together and make a living together. This is a pattern found in many peasant communities, in which the place of residence and subsistence takes precedence and defines the group that lives and works there. This perspective focuses on the family as a co-resident group that performs various tasks: production, distribution, transmission, reproduction, and that serves as the primary group of identification.⁹⁸

As "co-residents," the family members live and work together within the context of socio-economic inter-relations.

Mark also has several episodes that show a father appealing on behalf of his children. In Mark 5:22-23, Jairus appeals to Jesus that he graciously heal his daughter. When Jesus arrives at Jairus' house, he allows Jairus and his wife only (aside from Jesus' disciples) to come where the child is (5:40). In Mark 9:16-18, a father appeals to Jesus to help his demon-possessed

MARK TRANSFORMS THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY, by using the new family of Jesus as a picture of God's kingdom.

Mark describes what the kingdom of God is like, through the "family" language.

the items that families need (e.g., "bread,"⁹⁶ "denarii"⁹⁷).

In addition, Mark includes episodes that involve the family members being seen together or being mentioned together. In Mark 1:16, the brothers Simon and Andrew are presented together, engaged in the same fishing trade. In Mark 1:19-20, the brothers James and John are introduced together in a boat setting, mending their nets with their father Zebedee and some hired servants.

In Mark 10:29-31, the household is mentioned to include house, sisters, mother, father, children, and land. Moxnes gives relevant insights on the description of families in Mark 10:29-31:

"[It] focuses on the importance of the house

boy. These appeals for help on behalf of their children reflect a father's care as provider and nurturer for his family, especially in nurturing father-son relations that are based on the father's authority and the son's right to inherit the father's role.⁹⁹

In Mark 6:1-6, the people from Nazareth identifies Jesus in relation to his family. They ask, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, are not his sisters here with us?" (6:3). In an earlier account, the mother and brothers of Jesus are together, on their way to see and restrain Jesus, after they hear that Jesus has not been eating (3:19-20, 31) and that people are saying, "He has gone out of his mind" (3:21). With respect to Jesus' family and their effort in this

specific episode, their action can be taken as a “story of how they attempt to protect the family honor.”¹⁰⁰

Family Relation as Picture of the Kingdom of God

Mark transforms the concept of family, by using the new family of Jesus as a picture of God’s kingdom. Mark describes what the kingdom of God is like, through the “family” language.¹⁰¹ For example, the word “life” is used as part of the “new family” language, connected to a person who, in losing his life for the sake of Jesus and his gospel, saves it (8:35). So a person who “enters life” (Mark 9:43, 45) also inherits

Jesus formed through the 12 apostles is to proclaim the gospel (3:14). Similarly, the first message that Jesus proclaims relates to the preaching of the gospel and the kingdom: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (1:15).

Jesus is clearly conscious of his mission to preach the gospel: “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do” (1:38). Similarly, the disciples did the same preaching ministry: “So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent” (6:12). Therefore, the integral common

Jesus’ relation with the disciples is linked by the relational aspects of authority and servanthood. The disciples are the ones invested with authority by Jesus (3:15; 6:7). Thus, they are expected to be the “serving ones” (9:35; 10:42-45).¹⁰⁶ But they are the ones who are found not comprehending the value of serving and who are found “thinking the things of men,” and not “the things of God” (8:33).¹⁰⁷

They are seen serving Jesus and act as “mediating ministers” (6:39-44; 8:6-9), but they continue to struggle in the narrative about servanthood towards others. For example, they would hinder the work of an unnamed exorcist (9:38), and would not welcome the children (10:13). But Mark shows that the person of authority serves the needs of the unimportant (e.g., child). The children, who are considered “least” in society, need to be served. The “outsiders” (e.g., the unknown exorcist in 9:38) or those who do not conform to the ways of the disciples are also to be served by them or at least not hindered or prevented from carrying out their service. But the disciples misunderstand this way of lowliness and service by arguing about rank (e.g., the disciples were hindering the children to come to Jesus [10:13-16]). There seems to be the presence of a tension between the successes and failures of the disciples, in light of their misunderstanding of the paradox of authority and servanthood.¹⁰⁸

In addition, the relation of Jesus with religious leaders is characterized in terms of the authority-servanthood relational language. The religious authorities think of themselves as the true authorities in the “things of God” (2:7; 3:22; 7:1-5; 15:11, 31-32). But Mark presents them as the ones with no true authority in contrast to Jesus. They are also the ones who desire to be served (12:38-40), rather than to serve, again in contrast to Jesus (10:45). Aside from the religious leaders, other characters of authority, who do not serve in the narrative are the political authorities Herod and Pilate, the rich

JUST AS A PERSON WITH PHYSICAL LIFE is a member of a family, so a person with spiritual or eternal life is a member of the fictive family of God. The words “life” and “eternal life” form part of the new “family of God” language.

“eternal life” (10:17) and becomes part of the new family of God.

Just as a person with physical life is a member of a family, so a person with spiritual or eternal life is a member of the fictive family of God. The words “life” and “eternal life” form part of the new “family of God” language.¹⁰² Mark intentionally employs the metaphor of “entering life” in the “new family” language to symbolize or picture “entering the kingdom of God” (9:47).¹⁰³

In addition, Mark uses the “new family” expression, “receiving children” (which is compared to the picture of “receiving” Jesus and the one who sent him in Mark 9:37). This expression serves as a metaphor for belonging, entering, or “receiving the kingdom of God”: “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” (10:15).

Moreover, the link between the new family and the kingdom of God is evident in the same mission of gospel proclamation for both divine entities. Part of the new family’s mission that

denominator between the new family of God and the kingdom of God is the singular mission to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world (13:10; 14:9).¹⁰⁴

Relational Language of Authority and Servanthood

Jesus’ relations with the characters of the narrative are described in terms of the relational aspects of authority and servanthood. As starting point of his relations with them, Jesus is viewed as the “authoritative one” and the “serving one.” Jesus authoritatively initiates the call (1:16-17; 19-20a; 2:14a), commission (3:13-19; 6:7-11), and training of the disciples (6:12-13, 30; 7:32-44; 8:1-9). In turn, the disciples are seen obedient to his call (1:18, 20b; 2:14b) and commission (6:12-13, 30). Jesus is also seen serving both the disciples and the crowds. Moreover, his highest form of service is his service on the cross (15:22-37). Thus, Jesus is the “paradigm of Christian experience”¹⁰⁵ whom his followers must follow faithfully.

young ruler, Judas Iscariot, and Jesus' relatives.

With respect to the minor characters in the narrative, Jesus' relation to them is understood using authority and servanthood. These minor characters, who do not exercise authority (e.g., Peter's mother-in-law, the poor widow, the anointing woman, Simon of Cyrene, and the ministering women) are the ones who actually serve. Moreover, there are characters of authority in the narrative (i.e., John the Baptist, Joseph of Arimathea, the angels, the young man in white robe, and Jairus), who can be considered the voluntary "serving ones."

Jesus' Honorific Titles

A relational reading of Mark also includes how Jesus is identified honorably by the characters of the narrative. Such identification of Jesus is seen in the honorific titles that are ascribed to him in the Gospel from beginning to the end.

The beginning of the Gospel reveals clearly how Jesus is to be viewed, so that we can relate with him rightly: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Mark's use of the two important titles "Christ" (i.e., the "Anointed" One; the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term "Messiah") and "Son of God" (i.e., the term for the Son's intimacy with the Father) tell us that this is the way we are to value Jesus: as "Christ"¹⁰⁹ and "Son of God."¹¹⁰ The honorable way that Mark presents Jesus at the start of his Gospel is the way he calls on us to appreciate Jesus throughout the narrative.

Mark continues to use "Christ" and "Son of God" in critical places in the narrative. For the title "Christ," it appears strategically at Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus asked the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (8:29b), to which Peter replied, "You are the Messiah" (8:29b). It also reappears (along with the title "Son") at Jesus' trial before the high priest, when the latter asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

(14:61), to which Jesus quipped, "I am" (14:62a). Mark wants us to remember that Jesus as the honorable "Christ" or "Messiah."

Aside from his use of "Christ" and "Son of God," Mark supplies other ascribed names or titles to Jesus in the Gospel. Jesus is called the "Nazarene" (14:67) or literally, Jesus, who comes from Nazareth (1:9) or "Jesus of Nazareth"¹¹¹ (1:24). In the first-century Mediterranean culture, one's place of origin or hometown is inherently indicative of one's ascribed social status.

Jesus is also publicly perceived in the Gospel as an Old Testament prophet. In the context when Jesus' name was becoming known in Mark 6:14 and 16, people ventured to identify who Jesus is. King Herod identified him as the prophet in the person of John the Baptizer who was raised (6:14). Others boldly named

messengers."¹¹²

Aside from being described as prophet, Jesus is explicitly called "Teacher" 12 times in the narrative.¹¹³ This honorific title is attached to him by his disciples (4:38), by some people from the house of Jairus (5:35), by the father of the demon-possessed boy (9:17), by a rich young ruler (10:17), by some Pharisees and Herodians (12:14), by some Sadducees (12:19), and by a certain scribe (12:32). The repeated recognition of Jesus as "Teacher" shows respect for his teaching ability and spiritual depth. In fact, his teaching made so much impact in a Capernaum synagogue that the public was "astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (1:22). Jesus is an honorable "Teacher."

Jesus is not just the "Teacher," he is also the "Son of Man," the most oft-repeated title in the Gospel (i.e., 14

THE REPEATED RECOGNITION OF JESUS as "Teacher" shows respect for his teaching ability

shows respect for his teaching ability and spiritual depth. In fact, his teaching made so much impact in a Capernaum synagogue that the public was "astonished at his teaching..."

him as the prophet Elijah (6:15a). Others said that Jesus was "a prophet, like one of the prophets of old" (6:15b). In another context, this time in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (8:27). The disciples give a similar answer about the people's perception of Jesus: "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets" (8:28).

These two instances of prophetic description need some clarification. These instances show that the public assessment of Jesus as "one of the prophets" is quite high. To be socially located among the Old Testament prophets is an uncommon honor. Later, Mark uses the "prophet" designation to show that Jesus is truly "the last and greatest of God's

times).¹¹⁴ What is unusual about this title is that no human character in the narrative ascribes it to Jesus, nor does Jesus explicitly call himself "Son of Man." However, it is quite clear that it is identified with Jesus, in light of the latter's ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and coming in glory. As "Son of Man," Jesus forgives sin (2:10), predicts and fulfills the prediction of his death and resurrection (8:31), and will come "with great power and glory" (13:26).

Aside from Jesus' ascribed honor through the names and titles of "Christ," "Son of God," "Nazarene," "Prophet," "Teacher," and "Son of Man," the Gospel also gives other honorific titles and indirect descriptions to Jesus. Here are the other titles and descriptions: "Lord"

(7:28); the one greater than John (1:7); the one who acts as a priest (2:23-3:7a), the “King of the Jews”¹¹⁵ (15:26); the one who is the shepherd (14:27); the “Holy One of God” (1:24); the suffering servant (10:45); and “Son of David” (10:47). The cumulative effect of these additional honor ascriptions is the reinforcement of Jesus’ high reputation in the Gospel.

Case Studies of Relational Dynamics

The term “relational dynamics” is a reference to personal interaction that leads to changes such as direction of life, state of being, increased knowledge, etc. There are two kinds of relational dynamic: positive and negative as shown in Figure 3.

The narrative of Mark is woven by positive and negative “relational dynamics” that brought the narrative to life, keeping the tempo fast (with series of movement by action and activities), making the personalities vivid with impactful impression on the reader’s mind. As a literary device, the use of “relational dynamics” in Mark’s narrative is uniquely powerful and impactful.

Relational Dynamics Case Study of the Disciples in Mark

The relational dynamics in the case of the disciples play a major role in the Marcan narrative. The disciples serve the role of being Jesus’ real allies.¹¹⁶ The disciples, particularly the Twelve, are the only characters in the narrative who have been invested with authority by Jesus (3:15-19; 6:7), who have been called to extend his mission (1:17; 3:13-14; 6:8-13, 30), and who have been handpicked by Jesus (3:16-19) to receive his teaching and training in ministry (4:11a, 34b). Yet, they are presented in Mark in both their positive and negative relational dynamics.

1. Positive Relational Dynamics of the Disciples

Mark portrays the disciples as Jesus’ allies by means of the positive relational dynamics of the disciples. The positive portrayal of the disciples is seen in the following accounts of

Figure 3—Case Study of Relational Dynamics of Jesus

TYPES	CASE	REFERENCE
POSITIVE	Disciples: –Calling	1:16-20; 2:14-15; 3:15-19
	–Commissioning	1:38-39; 6:7-13
	–Teaching	3:15-19; 4:10-20,35-41; 6:37-44,46-52; 7:17-23; 8:14-21,27-38; 9:1-13,28-50; 10:23-45; 11:1-6,12-14,20-26; 12:41-54; 13:1-58; 14:12-31,37-42
	Others: –Cases of healing /exorcism	1:21-28,30-31,32-34,41-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-5,10-11; 5:1-20,21-32,33-43; 6:54-56; 7:24-37; 10:46-52
	–feeding multitude	6:58
	–teaching many	4:1-9,21-34; 6:33-34; 7:14-16,24-40; 8:1-10,22-26; 9:14-28; 12:1-12,35-40
NEGATIVE	Pharisees, scribes, & foes	2:6-10,15-17; 2:18-28; 3:2-6,22-50; 5:40; 6:1-3; 7:1-13; 8:11-13; 10:1-16; 11:27-33; 12:13-25; 14:1-2,1-11,15-65; 15:1-15,29-32
	Peter’s denial	14:66-72
	Judas’ betrayal	3:19; 14:10-11,20-21,42-45

the Gospel.¹¹⁷ First, the “call stories” of Jesus’ first disciples (1:16-18, 19-20; 2:13-14) give a positive portrayal. The five men in the three “call stories” are industrious in their tasks (i.e., mending and casting nets, and working in tax-office), and are unhesitatingly obedient (i.e., following immediately). The first two “call stories” (1:16-18, 19-20) have a similar pattern: same venue (Sea of Galilee; 1:16a; 1:19a), same initiator of the call (Jesus; 1:17; 1:20a); same task or trade (fishermen; 1:16b; 1:19b); and same response (immediate obedience; 1:18; 1:20b). The third “call story” of Levi also has a similar pattern (Jesus calls as Levi does his task, and the latter responds quickly). This intentional pattern aims to highlight Jesus’ authority to call and to stress the disciples’ positive attitude of total and immediate obedience.

Second, the calling of the Twelve (3:13-19) singles out the disciples, who are capable of growth since Jesus sees potential in them as associates and entrusts them with weighty responsibilities.¹¹⁸ Third, in Jesus’ explanation of parables (4:10-12,34), they are capable of receiving private instructions as “insiders,”

which “outsiders” are not capable to receive. Fourth, the commissioning of the Twelve (6:7-13, 30) calls upon the disciples for the first time to be engaged in the extension of Jesus’ mission,¹¹⁹ implying that they are competent followers with a key mission to fulfill. Fifth, at the feeding of the 5,000 (6:35-44), the disciples express concern for Jesus, his work, and his audience by presenting the need for food to him. They also display some insight, the ability to make decisions (though unacceptable), and a willingness to work with Jesus.

Sixth, Peter’s confession (8:27-30) reveals that the disciples were perceptive enough to pick up the opinions of others about Jesus being John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets, and they were discriminating enough not to be influenced by them regarding the identity of Jesus. Though they did not fully grasp Jesus’ mission of suffering and death, Peter’s confession indicates that they recognized him as Messiah, “the one in whom the hopes of Israel would be fulfilled.”¹²⁰ Seventh, the eschatological questions (13:3-4), “When will these things be and what will be the signs?”,

show that the disciples had reached a certain level of comprehension, but they needed added information on Jesus' statements.

Eighth, in the preparations for Passover (14:12-16), the disciples are revealed as men of initiative since they ask Jesus, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?", as men who can follow instructions since Jesus instructs them in a detailed way in 14:13-15, and as men who successfully complete assigned tasks since they obey and actually prepare the Passover. Ninth, following the Last Supper, on the way to Mt. Olives, Jesus projects a meeting with the disciples in Galilee after the resurrection (14:28). This implies a reunion between Jesus and them despite their desertion and Mark's omission of the actual meeting. Jesus seeks a continuous relationship with them. Finally, the angel's message for the disciples at the empty tomb (16:6-7), "Tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you in Galilee'" conveyed by the women, gives an assurance of forgiveness. The special mention of Peter (which is unique to Mark) is extremely important, considering his denial of Jesus.

Portraying the disciples as the true allies of Jesus, Mark emphasizes that they are the ones who function in his story as Jesus' committed followers.¹²¹ As such, the disciples join Jesus' mission with total allegiance to him. They are the ones who immediately come after him, even before they see any attesting miracle performed by Jesus; as the ones who still follow Jesus, despite their misunderstandings and the religious leaders' opposition. The disciples follow Jesus because: (1) to them he gives the task to become "fishers of men"; (2) to them he gives the "secret" of the Kingdom; and (3) to them he gives authority to extend the mission he has started.

2. Negative Relational Dynamics of the Disciples

Aside from the positive relational dynamics, the disciples are presented

in their negative relational dynamics. This negative portrayal is seen in the following accounts of the Gospel.¹²² First, the disciples interrupt Jesus' praying (1:35-37). Though their intention is good (i.e., to inform him that the crowds are seeking him), they acted to divert him from his spiritual practice of prayer; not understanding the importance of his prayer life.¹²³ This act of the disciples serves as their first form of minor misunderstanding. As the Marcan story progresses, we see an escalating trend in their misunderstandings (i.e., minor and then major ones), incomprehension, lack of faith, and hardness of heart. This trend culminates at their desertion (including Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial) of Jesus during his passion, and disbelief of eye witnesses

walking on the water (6:45-52), the disciples are revealed as men who easily become afraid (mistaking Jesus for a ghost), who are astonished (like the "crowds" are) by his power, and who lack understanding of his feeding miracle. Sixth, at the feeding of the 4,000 (8:1-4), the disciples again demonstrate their incomprehension of Jesus' ability and their inability to retain learning about the feeding of the 5,000 earlier. Seventh, in the passion predictions (8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34), the three-fold Marcan pattern of passion prediction, incomprehension, and teaching on discipleship shows the disciples as men who are unwilling to accept the idea of a suffering Messiah and who are struggling for positions in the anticipated kingdom.

Eighth, at the transfiguration of

IN THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS' WALKING ON WATER,

the disciples are revealed as men who easily become afraid (mistaking Jesus for a ghost), who are astonished (like the "crowds" are) by his power, and who lack understanding of his feeding miracle.

after his resurrection (16:11, 13) that was rebuked by Jesus (16:14).

Second, the disciples respond with incomprehension to Jesus' parable of the seeds (4:13). In fact, Jesus' direct questions, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?" shows both his surprise at the disciples' lack of insight and his implied rebuke. Their reaction in a storm (4:35-41) with the harsh question, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" exposes their lack of faith and incognito of Jesus' authority and power to deliver. Fourth, in the account of the woman with hemorrhage (5:25-34), the disciples challenge Jesus' question, "Who touched my garments?" According to Melbourne, their action displays "their stupidity by interfering in a matter of which they are not cognizant."¹²⁴

Fifth, in the account of Jesus'

Jesus (9:2-10), the three disciples are still ignorant of the fundamental meaning of "the rising from the dead." Ninth, their inability to heal a boy (9:14-29) despite being given authority to cast out demons shows their lack of dependence on God. Tenth, the disciples' sleep at Gethsemane (14:32-42) despite Jesus' request for support in his time of struggle implies that they "could not be depended upon in a crisis."¹²⁵

Finally, their desertion (14:43-15:47) in which Judas betrays Jesus (14:44-45), they all leave him and flee (14:50) at his arrest, Peter denies Jesus (14:54, 66-72), and they all desert him at his burial (15:42-47), is a scenario of failure. The disciples flee even though they assert they would not, as seen by their rhetorical question, "Is it I?" (14:17-19), which anticipates a negative answer in Greek: "Surely, it can't be I, can it?" Moreover, despite

private explanations by Jesus (4:10,34; 7:17; 9:28; and 10:10), they betray their inability to grasp what is going on about them (4:13; 6:52; 7:18; 8:17; and 9:32). They even tell things that show total lack of comprehension of what Jesus is trying to tell them (8:32; 10:38). As a consequence, they desert him at the critical moment of his life.

Seeing the negative relational dynamics of the disciples, we can see that the second aspect of the disciples' role is to warn the readers of the danger of not comprehending who Jesus is. Singling out the damaging effects of their lack of comprehension, Mark highlights the truth that this incomprehension mars the disciples' commitment to follow Jesus in the way.

In relation to the disciples' failures, we observe a pattern of escalating incomprehension within the narrative.

struggle in their service towards others.¹³⁰ Yet, despite their failures, we do not distance ourselves from the disciples (as if they are enemies of Jesus); but identify with them for we ourselves struggle in serving others just like the struggles of the disciples. We ourselves do not at times comprehend fully "who is Jesus?" just like the disciples. Thus, instead of distancing ourselves from the disciples and their negative relational dynamics, we seek to learn from the disciples' faults and feeble faith, in order that we may not follow their discouraging examples of misunderstanding Jesus.

In addition to presenting the positive relational dynamics of the disciples as Jesus' allies and their negative relational dynamics as reminders of the damaging effects of misunderstanding Jesus, Mark presents

affirm that the disciples as the true allies of Jesus; (2) to remind of the dangers and damaging effects of not comprehending Jesus and the authority and sacrifice; and (3) to serve as foils in contrast to Jesus' examples of authority and sacrifice, and in contrast to several minor characters' examples of service. Thus, these relational dynamics move us to identify closely with the disciples, instead of distancing ourselves from them and their struggles in understanding Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The "relational framework" and multi-contextual perspective inform the missio-relational reading of Mark. We have described in detail three missiological elements in Mark: language (in terms of four significant verbs and three sets of nouns), action (both Jesus' ministry in Galilee and ministry to the Gentiles), and motifs ("scattering" and "gathering").

The concept of "boundary-crossing" (within a relational framework) has been applied to this relational reading of Mark, beginning with the two "ripping open" incidents, followed by the "boundary-crossings" of five separate orders (spiritual, natural, health, Jewish and ethnic). The exorcisms, healings, and miracles in Mark reveal Jesus as the One having authoritative power and sovereignty over all systems (human, natural, and supernatural forces). He demonstrates authority over any force—internal or external—that threatens us.

This missio-relational reading of Mark included a discussion on relational language of family, authority and the honorific titles of Jesus. It is concluded with the identification of "relational dynamics" in Mark as a literary device that characterizes the Marcan narrative to be fast-paced, vivid, personal, lively and impactful.

It is our desire that this missio-relational reading of Mark has been informative and inspiring, as an alternative to the traditional historical-critical approach.

IN ADDITION TO PRESENTING THE POSITIVE relational dynamics of the disciples as Jesus allies

and the damaging effects of misunderstanding Jesus, Mark presents a third feature of the disciples' role.

As Augustine Stock observes, "The failure of the disciples to understand something in one incident is treated as a result of their failure to understand something in earlier incidents."¹²⁶ The lack of understanding of disciples is in a crescendo and accumulatively piled up until they overwhelmed the disciples' commitment to follow and serve the authoritative Jesus. We see that the culmination of the disciples' escalating incomprehension is found in Judas' betrayal (14:10-11, 43-45), the disciples' desertion (14:27, 50), Peter's denial of Jesus (14:29-31, 66-72), and disbelief after the resurrection (16:11, 13) that led to Jesus' rebuke (16:14).¹²⁷

3. Function of the Relational Dynamics of the Disciples

Though they serve Jesus¹²⁸ and act as his "mediating ministers"¹²⁹ at certain episodes of the narrative, the disciples

a third feature of the disciples' role. Mark pictures the disciples as foils¹³¹ or contrasts for both Jesus¹³² and some minor characters¹³³ in the narrative. Through the foils that contrast Jesus and the disciples, Mark stresses the striking disparity between Jesus' display of authority and service, and the disciples' failure to comprehend his authority. Similarly, through the foils that contrast Jesus and the minor characters, Mark highlights the striking difference between the minor characters' examples of service, and the disciples' lack of service. Thus, the foils about the disciples remind us that a faulty understanding of Jesus' service and sacrifice leads to faulty Christology and discipleship.

In summary, the positive and negative relational dynamics of the disciples in the Gospel are meaningful in three ways: (1) to

Endnotes

1. Enoch Wan, "A Missio-Relational Reading of Romans," *Occasional Bulletin*, Evangelical Missiological Society, vol. 24, No. 1, Winter 2010:1-8.

1. The three listed below are illustrative: 1) Harter, William H. "Historical Method of Mark." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 20 (1964): 21-38. 2) Perrin, Norman. "Historical Criticism, Literary Criticism and Hermeneutics: The Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark Today." *Journal of Religion* 52 (1972): 361-75. 3) Telford, William R. "Mark and the Historical-Critical Method: The Challenge of Recent Literary Approaches to the Gospel." In *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, ed. Camille Focant, 491-502. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1993.

2. Sample works employing a "relational approach" are as follows:

Theological:

F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003; Maarten Wise, "Towards a Truly Relational Theology: A Conversation with F. LeRon Shults," *Ars Disputandi* [http://www.ArsDisputandi.org].

Henry Jansen, *Relationality and the Concept of God*. Rodopi B.B., Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA 1995.

Clark H. Pinnock, "Divine Relationality: A Pentecostal Contribution to the Doctrine of God." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. 2000, Issue: 16.

Jill Raitt, *Strictures and Structures: Relational Theology and a Woman's Contribution To Theological Conversation*, J Am Academy of Religion (1982) L(1): 3-17 doi:10.1093/jaarel/L1.1.http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/content/L/1/3.full.pdf+html (retrieve April 4, 2011)

Jacques Haers, P. De Mey, *Theology and conversation: towards a relational theology*, Peeters Publishers, 2003.

Psychology and psychoanalytical studies:

William Borden, "The Relational Paradigm in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Toward a Psychodynamically Informed Social Work Perspective," *The Social Service Review*. Vol. 74, No. 3 (September 2000), pp. 352-379

Wade Luquet, *Mo Therese Hannab, Healing in the relational paradigm: the imago relationship therapy casebook*. Psychology Press, 1998

Donna E. Palladino Schultheiss, "The emergence of a relational cultural paradigm for vocational psychology," *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, Volume 7, Number 3, 191-201, DOI: 10.1007/s10775-007-9123-7

William F. Cornell & Helena Hargaden (Editors), *From Transactions to Relations: The Emergence of a Relational Tradition in Transactional Analysis*. Haddon Press, 2005.

Marketing:

Patricia Sorce, "Relationship marketing Strategy," A Research Monograph of the Printing Industry Center at RIT, September 2002, no. PICRM-2002-04.

John Egan, *Relationship Marketing: Exploring Relational Strategies in Marketing*, Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2008

Management:

John A. Ledingham, Stephen D. Bruning, *Public Relations As Relationship Management: A Relational Approach To the Study and Practice of Public Relations*. Psychology Press, 2001

3. Wan, Enoch. "The Paradigm of 'relational realism'," *Occasional Bulletin*, Evangelical Missiological Society. (Spring 2006b), 19:2, p.1-4; "Relational Theology and Relational Missiology," *Occasional Bulletin*, Evangelical Missiological Society. (Winter 2007), 21:1, p.1-7; "Missionary strategy in the Epistle to the Romans," To the End of the Earth, Hong Kong Association of Christian Missions Ltd. (July-Sept., 2005):1-2 (in Chinese); with Mark Hedinger. "Understanding 'relationality' from a Trinitarian Perspective," *Global Missiology, Trinitarian Studies*, (January 2006a), www.GlobalMissiology.org.

4. Mark 1:2; 3:14, 31; 5:10; 6:7, 17, 27; 8:26; 9:37; 11:1, 3; 12:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13; 13:27; 14:13.

5. Mark 6:36; 8:3, 9; and 10:4.

6. Mark 5:12.

7. Mark 1:43.

8. Mark 1:20; 2:17; 3:31; 11:17.

9. Mark 3:13, 23; 6:7; 7:14; 8:1, 34; 10:42; 12:43; 15:44.

10. Mark 15:16.

11. Mark 9:35; 10:49 (3x); 15:35.

12. Mark 10:18; 12:37; 15:12.

13. Mark 1:4, 7, 14, 38, 45; 2:2; 3:14; 5:20; 6:12; 7:36; 13:10; 14:9.

14. Mark 1:21, 22 (2x), 27; 2:13; 4:1, 2 (2x); 6:2, 6, 30, 34; 7:7; 8:31; 9:31; 10:1; 11:18; 12:14, 35, 38; 14:49.

15. S. Anthonysamy, "The Gospel of Mark and the Universal Missions," *Biblehashyam* 6 (1980): 87.

16. The other occurrences of *basileia* are found in Mark 3:24 (2x); 6:23; and 13:8 (2x). In addition, the word "king" occurs five times (6:14, 22, 25, 26, 27) as a reference to King Herod, and six times as a reference to Jesus, the "King of the Jews."

17. G. Blount, *Go Preach! Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), p. 8.

18. J. Nissen, *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 38.

19. Mark 1:4, 5; 2:5, 7, 9, 10; 3:26, 29.

20. Mark 1:4 (metanoia); 1:15; 6:12.

21. Mark 1:15; 5:36; 9:23, 24, 42; 11:23, 24, 31; 13:21; and 15:32; cf. "unbelieving" (9:19, 24).

22. Mark 1:4 (aphesis); 2:5, 7, 9, 10; 3:28, 29 (aphesis); 4:12; and 11:25 (2x).

23. Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2.

24. Mark 5:19; 10:47, 48.

25. Mark 1:40, 41

26. Mark 1:2, 3; 2:23; 6:8; 8:3, 27; 9:33, 34; 10:17, 32, 52; 12:14.

27. D. Rhoads, "Mission in the Gospel of Mark," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22 (1995): 340-55 (348).

28. R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (Freiburg im B.: Herder, 1976), pp. 59-60; cf. W. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), pp. 67-85.

29. Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhmuller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), p. 216.

30. The 13 occurrences of *Galilaea* are found in Mark 1:9, 14, 16, 28, 39; 3:7; 6:21; 7:31; 9:30; 14:28; 15:41; 16:7; and 14:70 (*Galilaios*). An early witness of Galilee being associated with the Gentiles is cited Isaiah 9:1, where the region is described as "Galilee of the Gentiles."

31. E. Meyers and J. Strange, *Archaeology: The Rabbis and Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), pp. 31-47.

32. Senior, *Biblical Foundation*, p. 217.

33. L. Legrand, *Unity and Plurality: Mission in the Bible* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), p. 53.

34. Kelber, *Kingdom in Mark*, p. 62; cf. F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (Naperville: Allenson, 1965), pp. 112-14.

35. Nissen, *NT and Mission*, p. 40.

36. Senior, *Biblical Foundation*, p. 219.

37. Senior, *Biblical Foundation*, p. 217.

38. Enoch Wan had treated the biblical motifs of "gathering" and "scattering" in the following publications: "Diaspora Missiology," Originally published in *Occasional Bulletin of EMS*, Spring 2007, Posted in "Featured Article" of www.globalmissiology.org July 2007; "The Phenomenon of the Diaspora: Missiological Implications for Christian Missions" Chapter 13 *Asian American Christianity: A Reader*, Edited by Viji Nakka-Cammauf and Timothy Tseng, The Pacific Asian American and Canadian Christian Education project (PAACCE) and the Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity (ISAAC), 2004.

Built on the biblical foundation of biblical motifs of "gathering" and "scattering," Enoch Wan's publications on "diaspora missiology" are as follows: "Global People and Diaspora Missiology, From Edinburgh 2010 to Tokyo 2010" In the *Handbook of Global Mission: Consultation, Celebration, May 11th-14th, 2010*. p. 92-106; "Rethinking Missiology in the Context of the 21st Century: Global Demographic Trends and Diaspora Missiology," http://apps.biola.edu/gcr/volumes/2/issues/1/articles/7, *Great Commission Research Journal*, Volume 2, Issue 1, Summer 2010 Biola University; *Missions Practice in the 21st Century*. (Co-editing with Joy Tira) Diaspora Series WCIU Press no 1, William Carey International University Press, Pasadena, California, 2009; "Mission among the Chinese Diaspora: A Case Study of Migration and Mission," *Missiology*,

American Society Missiology. 31, no. 1, (2003): 35. Pasadena, CA; Enoch Wan & Linda Gross, "Christian Missions to Diaspora Groups: A Diachronic General Overview and Synchronic Study of Contemporary USA," (vol. 3, no. 2, 2008 Global Missiology) (<http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/11>).

39. J. Williams, "Mission in Mark," in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, W. Larkin Jr. and J. Williams, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), p. 144.

40. Senior, *Biblical Foundation*, p. 218.

41. Williams, "Mission in Mark," pp. 143-44.

42. J. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973), p. 114.

43. D. Rhoads, "Mission in the Gospel of Mark," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22 (1995): 340-55 (340).

44. Williams, "Mission in Mark," pp. 145.

45. See footnote #4 in Enoch Wan, "Relational Theology and Relational Missiology," *Occasional Bulletin*, Evangelical Missiological Society. (Winter 2007), 21:1, p.1-7.

46. Enoch Wan, "A Critique of Charles Kraft's Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences in Biblical Interpretation and Missiological Formulation." In *Missiology and the Social Sciences*, edited by Edward Romen & Gary Corwin, The EMS Series #4, 1996:121-164, Also published in *Global Missiology*, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.net.

47. Rhoads, "Mission in Mark," p. 341.

48. Rhoads, "Mission in Mark," p. 344.

49. Williams, "Mission in Mark," p. 143.

50. Nissen, *NT and Mission*, p. 41. The "ripping open" of the temple curtain validates the truth that admission to God is now open to all, especially in light of his people being described now as "God's temple" (1 Cor. 3:16).

51. Rhoads, "Mission in Mark," p. 344.

52. Mark 1:8, 10, 12; 12:36; 13:11.

53. Mark 1:13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32.

54. Mark 1:13; 3:23 (2x), 26; 4:15, and 8:33.

55. Mark 1:32, 34 (2x), 39; 3:15, 22 (2x) 5:12, 15, 16, 18; 6:13; 7:26, 29, 30; 9:38.

56. The exorcisms occur in Mark 1:21-28 (in the synagogue at the Sabbath); 5:1-20 (demoniac at Gerasenes); 7:24-30 (Syrophenician's daughter); 9:14-29 (demon-possessed son); cf. 9:38 ("someone casting out demons").

57. The summary statements that include exorcisms occur in Mark 1:32-34, 39; and 6:13.

58. The word "obey" is used to refer to the submission of the unclean spirits in Mark 1:27 and of the sea in 4:41 ("Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?").

59. The healings occur in Mark 1:29-31 (Peter's mother-in-law); 1:40-45 (leper); 2:1-12 (paralytic); 3:1-5 (withered hand); 5:21-24, 35-43 (Jairus' daughter; this can also be classified as a miracle of raising the dead to life), 25-34 (woman with hemorrhage); 7:31-37 (deaf and dumb); 8:22-26 (blind man); and 10:46-52 (Bartimaeus).

60. The summary statements that include healings occur in Mark 1:32-34; 3:10; 6:5, 13, 55-56.

61. Aside from amazement, the people's responses to healings are: "glorifying God" (2:12), "completely astounded" (5:42), and "utterly astonished" (7:37).

62. The miracles occur in Mark 4:35-41 (sea-stilling); 6:32-44 (5,000 fed), 45-52 (Jesus' water-walking); 8:1-9 (4,000 fed); and 11:12-14, 20-24 (fig tree).

63. Malbon, "Fallible Followers," 32; Williams, "Other Followers of Jesus," 256-57.

64. Williams, "Other Followers of Jesus," 258.

65. Cranfield, *Mark*, 380.

66. Nineham, *Mark*, 328.

67. Williams, "Other Followers of Jesus," 258.

68. J. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 132-33; F. Matera, "The Prologue as the Interpretative Key to Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 34 (1988): 3-20 (14).

69. Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 29-48 (31).

70. Williams, "Mission in Mark," p. 144.

71. Rhoads, "Mission in Mark," p. 351.

72. Rhoads, "Mission in Mark," p. 352.

73. Mark 1:20; 5:40; 7:10 (2x), 11, 12; 8:38; 9:21, 24; 10:7, 19, 29; 11:10, 25; 13:12, 32; 14:36; 15:21.

74. Mark 3:31, 32, 33, 34, 35; 5:40; 6:24, 28; 7:10 (2x), 11, 12; 10:7, 19, 29; 15:40, 47.

75. Mark 1:1, 11; 2:5, 10, 28; 3:11; 5:7; 6:3; 8:31, 38; 9:7, 9, 12, 17, 31; 10:33, 45, 46, 47, 48; 12:6 (2x), 35, 37; 13:26, 32; 14:21 (2x), 41, 61, 62; 15:39.

76. Mark 3:17, 28; 10:35.

77. Mark 1:16, 19; 3:17, 35; 5:37; 6:3, 17; 12:19 (3x); 13:12 (2x).

78. Mark 3:31, 32, 33, 34; 6:18; 10:29, 30; 12:20.

79. Mark 5:23, 34, 35; 6:22, 25, 26, 29; 7:26, 29.

80. Mark 10:12.

81. Mark 6:17, 18; 10:11; and 12:19 (2x), 20, 23 (2x).

82. Mark 5:39, 40, 41; 7:27, 28, 30; 9:36, 37; 10:15; 12:19; 13:12, 17.

83. Mark 7:27; 10:13, 14, 24, 29, 30; 13:12.

84. Mark 10:44; 12:2, 4; 13:34; 14:47.

85. The three instances of the word "servant" are seen are in Mark 1:20; 9:35; 10:43.

86. The only instance of the word "servant-girls" is found in Mark 14:66.

87. The 21 instances of the word "house" occurs in Mark 1:29; 2:15, 26; 3:25 (2x), 27 (2x); 5:38; 6:10; 7:17, 24; 9:28, 33; 10:10, 29; 11:17 (2x); 13:15, 34, 35; 14:14.

88. Mark 10:30; 12:40.

89. Mark 6:4.

90. Mark 2:1, 11; 3:20; 5:19; 7:30; 8:3, 26; 14:3. Though translated "home" in English, it has the same Greek word for "house" and

"household."

91. Mark 6:1, 4.

92. The 15 instances of the word "eat" occurs in Mark 2:16; 3:20; 5:43; 6:31, 36, 37 (2x); 7:3, 4, 5; 8:1, 2; 11:14; 14:12, 14. The word "eating" occurs six times in Mark 2:16 (2x); 7:2; and 14:18 (2x), 22.

93. The word "buy" is in Mark 6:36, and the word "buying" in Mark 11:15.

94. The word "sell" is located in Mark 10:21, and the word "selling" in Mark 11:15 (2x).

95. The 11 instances of the word "bread" are seen in Mark 6:8; 7:2, 5, 27; 8:4, 14, 16, 17; and 15:1, 12, 22.

96. The word "denari" is found in Mark 6:37 and 14:5, and the word "denarius" in Mark 12:15.

97. R. Moxnes, "What Is Family? Problems in Constructing Early Christian Families," in H. Moxnes (ed.), *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 23.

98. F. Barth, "Role Dilemmas and Father-Son Dominance in Middle Eastern Kinship Systems," *Features of Person and Society in Swat* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 83-92.

99. Moxnes, "What Is Family?," p. 28.

100. K. O. Sandnes, *A New Family: Conversion and Ecclesiology in the Early Church with Cross-Cultural Comparisons* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 65-67.

101. J. G. van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 398.

102. For the same expression "enter the kingdom of God," see Mark 10:15, 23, 24, 25.

103. D. Rhoads, "Mission in the Gospel of Mark," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22 (1995), p. 341.

104. David J. Hawkin, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples in the Marcan Redaction," *JBL* 91 (1972): 500.

105. The main role of the disciples is to be examples to the community.

106. The disciples' "desire for positions of importance is stressed in order that Jesus may teach them about the meaning of service" (Best, "Role of the Disciples in Mark," *NTS* 23 [1977], 399). Rhetorically, Mark highlights the importance of service by emphasizing the disciples' lack of understanding about service.

107. What is ironic and paradoxical is that the disciples actually serve Jesus in many ways in the narrative. But when it comes to serving others, they are slow to comprehend that concept of service.

108. The term "Christ" is in Mark 1:1, 34; 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32.

109. The term "Son of God" is located in Mark 1:1; 3:11; 5:7; and 5:39; the term "Beloved Son" in Mark 1:11 and 9:7; the absolute use of "Son" in Mark 13:32; and the "Son of the Blessed One" in Mark 14:61.

110. The title "Jesus of Nazareth" is found in Mark 1:24; 10:47; 16:6.

111. E. K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 62.

112. The title "Teacher," as it applies to Jesus, is found in Mark 4:38; 5:35; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; 14:14.

113. The title "Son of Man" occurs in Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:36; and 14:21 (2x), 41, 62.

114. The title "King" is used in Mark 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32. But the Roman soldiers (Mark 15:18) and the religious leaders (Mark 15:32) use it as a demeaning title. Ironically, Jesus is ultimately the "King of the Jews."

115. Some scholars dispute the present writer's contention that the disciples are Jesus' allies in light of Mark's seemingly "harsh" portrayal of them. These scholars tend to dwell largely on the disciples' negative side with the result that their cumulative picture of the disciples is as follows: "dull-witted, ignorant, incomprehensively blind, lacking in faith, afraid of Jesus, self-seeking, obtuse, recalcitrant, obdurate, obstinate, deaf, wanting in understanding, and unable to withstand adversity" (Bertram Lloyd Melbourne, *Slow to Understand: The Disciples in Synoptic Perspective* [New York: University Press of America, 1988], xi), a view also seen in the works of Achtemeier, Mark; Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*; Schweizer, Mark; Joseph Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark," *JBL* 80 (1961): 261-68; Theodore J. Weeden, Mark: *Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). Kelber even identified them "as Jesus' opponents" (Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 36-42); and Weeden describes them "as complete failures in their attempt at discipleship" (Weeden, *Traditions in Conflict*, 26-51, 162-63). However, the present writer sees a need to explore the disciples' positive side (along with the negative side) in order to gain a balanced, comprehensive understanding of the Marcan picture. Inclusion of the disciples' assets provides a balancing factor to the tendency to dwell on their liabilities.

116. See Melbourne, *Slow to Understand*, 42-49.

117. *Ibid.*, 45.

118. *Ibid.*, 46.

119. Taylor, Mark, 376.

120. Kingsbury (*Conflict in Mark*, 9) finds the concept of "following" and "coming after" as a key function in Mark's story that entails "commitment." He also sees the term "disciples" as a technical term for the committed followers of Jesus as opposed to the crowd's non-commitment with no bonding allegiance to Jesus.

121. See Melbourne, *Slow to Understand*, 19-58.

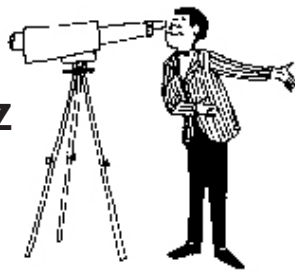
122. *Ibid.*, 49.

123. *Ibid.*, 51.

124. *Ibid.*, 56.

125. Augustine Stock, *Call to Discipleship: A Literary Study in Mark's Gospel*, Good News

As seen through the LENZ



I am very pleased to again have Dr. Enoch Wan, our EMS president write another missiological book analysis, this time on the Gospel of Mark and co-authored with Narry Santos. Great to have one of Enoch's students actively involved in authoring a missiological paper, and making a sub-

Studies 1 (Wilmington, DL: Glazier, 1982), 120.

126. Despite this escalation of incomprehension that culminates in the disciples' desertion of Jesus, Mark reinforces the restoration of the disciples (14:28; 16:7).

127. The instances in the narrative when the disciples have served Jesus (i.e., in the sense of doing something for Jesus) are found in 11:1-7 when the disciples were sent to prepare for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem; and in 14:12-16 when the disciples were sent to prepare for the Passover. In addition, the women in 15:40-41 are said to have served Jesus when he was in Galilee. Two other individual women are able to serve Jesus personally: Simon's mother-in-law in 1:31 after Jesus healed her; and the woman in 14:3-9 when that woman anoints Jesus in advance for his burial.

128. Twice in the narrative the disciples served as "mediating ministers" in bringing the food that Jesus provided to the 5,000 (6:32-44) and to the 4,000 (8:1-9).

129. The instances in the narrative when the disciples have struggled to serve others (i.e., in the sense of doing something for them) are found in 9:38 when John hindered an unknown exorcist; in 10:13 when the disciples rebuked the children and the ones who brought them to Jesus; and in 14:4-5 when some of the disciples rebuked the anointing woman indignantly. See also 10:48 when the crowds sternly told Bartimaeus not to bother Jesus.

130. Foils appear in places where the disciples show lack of insight or comprehension of Jesus' paradoxical nature and in places where they are unwilling to serve others.

131. The instances when we see the disciples serve as foils for Jesus' authority are found in 4:10-13, 35-41; 6:45-52; 8:14-21; 9:2-13, 14-29; 14:17-21, 26-31. Likewise, the instances the readers observe the disciples function as foils for

stantive contribution to our thinking. Other than the Great Commission passage of Mark 16:15, one might not think of reading the Gospel of Mark in a missiological manner. This scholarly presentation by Enoch and Narry dispels that thinking. Examining the book in terms of the language, action, and motif of mission helps us to see the ministry of Jesus in a different light. As I read their paper I received new insights into the Gospel of Mark which were a rich blessing. I think you will find the same in your reading. Thanks gentlemen for your rich contribution to our thinking and study.

Jesus' servanthood are found in 1:35-39; 8:31-33; 9:30-50; 10:13-16, 32-45; 14:32-42, 43-52, 66-72. In connection with the disciples' role as foils to Jesus, Bundy comments, "The disciples belong to the shadows which enhance the effect of the light that falls on Jesus. Their role is that of a mere foil to the principal character" (Walter E. Bundy, "Dogma and Drama in the Gospel of Mark," in *NT Studies: Critical Essays in NT Interpretation, with Special Reference to the Meaning and Worth of Jesus* [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942], 87). Similarly, Best argues about the disciples' role in instances when they are pictured negatively, "In so far as the disciples appear in a bad light it is because Mark wishes to use them as a foil: their failure to understand is sometimes introduced in order to allow Jesus to give further and fuller instruction; their fearfulness is brought out in order that Jesus may show them the sources of calm and courage; their desire for positions of importance is stressed in order that Jesus may teach them about the meaning of service" (Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel according to Mark* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986], 128).

132. The instances when the readers see the disciples serve as foils for the minor characters' servanthood are found in 5:25-34; 10:35-52; 14:143-9; cf. 15:21, 40-41, 42-47.

Listen to an **EMS Audio Interview** with Enoch Wan about "A Missio-Relational Reading of Mark."

