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## Teaching a Theology of Ministry Based on the Gospels

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# Teaching a Theology of Ministry Based on the Gospels

STUART L. LOVE

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For over twenty-five years I have taught a class for upper division and graduate students on the foundations of Christian ministry. For the last seven years I have primarily used the four gospels for this purpose. In this article I will describe briefly why and how I use the gospels to teach a theology of ministry through the use of one gospel—Mark. Part of my description involves a brief account of my journey in teaching this class.

## TEACHING JOURNEY

While serving as a minister in Abilene, Texas, in the mid-1970s, I was asked to develop a course at Abilene Christian University on a theology of ministry. Lemoine Lewis, my mentor, had an abiding interest in religious education and ministry even though his academic training was as an early church historian. Lewis told me, “Stuart, if I taught the class I would explore ministry through people: Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, Micah, John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, and, of course, Jesus. People are called to do God’s ministry and in people we see the great theological themes of ministry at work.” Based on Lewis’ advice I developed a course that unpacked theological models of ministry focused on Moses, various prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul.

My second influence came from reading Ray Anderson’s edited work on *Theological Foundations for Ministry*.<sup>1</sup> Influenced by theologians like Anderson, Karl Barth, Helmut Thielicke, Thomas F. Torrance, James B. Torrance, Hans Küng, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I realized more deeply that all ministry is God’s

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ministry and that God’s ministry precedes and determines the church’s ministry. I did not set aside my previous approach, but the centrality of Christ as the Word of God became even more pivotal. As Anderson states, theological reflection “must emerge out of ministry and for the sake of ministry if it is to be in accordance with the divine modality. The ‘practice’ of ministry, then, is not only the appropriate context for doing theological thinking, it is itself intrinsically a theological activity.”<sup>2</sup> Further, “As Christ’s own min-

istry is unfolded and proclaimed, the church discovers its own ministry and its members their own particular ministry.”<sup>3</sup> Reflection on ministry does not rest in Cartesian rationalism or Kantian existentialism; that is, foundations of ministry are not in the human subject. Only “God’s ministry takes what is impossible and creates possibility.”<sup>4</sup> If Christian ministry originates in God in Christ, would this not necessitate a serious study of the gospels where we are told of the story? While studying this story, the question arises: how well do students understand the gospels as pastoral writings for early Christian churches? To gain this under-

standing, we usually look to Paul as minister, that is, the pastoral dimension of Paul's work with his churches. For an understanding of the writings as pastoral,

This approach became the next step in my teaching journey—I taught the course from the perspective of Paul as minister. Influenced by the work of Abraham Malherbe, along with such New Testament scholars as Wayne A. Meeks, Robert Banks, Bengt Holmberg, F. W. Beare, Victor P. Furnish, and Paul Minear, I looked at the means Paul employed to effect personal and congregational growth. I was interested in informing or clarifying to the students Paul's pastoral method. We explored Paul's missionary preaching, self-understanding as minister, power and authority, and example. We also studied Paul as founder and nurturer of churches, his actions and teachings, his focuses on persons, congregations, and the church at large. We also studied Paul's adaptation to circumstances, his co-workers, letters, persuasion, and the role that Paul's churches had as conduits of ministry. We used as primary resources the undisputed letters of Paul—Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. I stressed that ministry for Paul was God-centered and that Christ was his epistemology. As valuable as this approach was I still felt more attention needed to be given to Paul's model for all Christian service—Jesus Christ.

### **The beginning point of ministry is Christology.**

Finally, I have also taught the class as well through the use of the Pastoral Epistles. Whether authored by Paul or not, these canonical letters probably are to be seen as training manuals for church leaders. Timothy (1 Tim 1:3-20; 4:6-10) and Titus are guided by Paul to be church leaders in the face of false teaching (1 Tim 1:3-20; 3:14-4:10; 6:3-5). Church structures are to be established to offset the false teachers (1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:3-22a). Community relations and belief are to be measured by the keeping of the faith (1 Tim 2:1-15; 4:11-5:2; 5:22b-6:2; 6:6-19). A number of teaching difficulties emerged, however. First, the churches in the Pastoral Epistles appear to be more institutionally grounded than in the undisputed letters of Paul or the gospels. Second, male teachers are measured largely by their orthopraxy rather than by their "fruits" as in the gospels. And third, emphasis on the pervasive social-structural setting of the ancient household code indicates how much the writings were shaped by the social institutions of the time.<sup>5</sup> Deacons apparently are not co-workers as in Paul's mission but helpers of the presbyters. Age and gender are stressed. Older men teach the younger men. Older women teach younger women domestic responsibilities. Since the false teachers advocate celibacy, a call for marriage and procreation is stressed, apparently quite opposed to the praise of the single life at Corinth (1 Cor 7). For me, this posed a problem for one who believes that the Pastoral Epistles provide an irreversible model for ministry. As Raymond Brown states:

If one regards the developing structure in the Pastorals as loyal to strains in Paul ... does that mean it is irreformable? This structure developed in a particular type of society (male-dominated) in particular circumstances (acute danger of false teaching). To what extent did those particularities influence the development, creating possibilities of distortion? Does a directive like "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Tim 2:12) constitute permanent guidance for a church directed by male presbyter/bishops, or is it simply the product of a time when most women did not have the same education as men? Holding on to a received faith is contrasted to the coming of false teaching (1:19; 4:1). Do such alternatives allow for beneficial new ideas to challenge unreflective repetition? Are they not one-sided in favoring the status quo? If the Pastorals have developed a more stable structure than that dependent on charisms, has 1 Cor 12 lost all relevance for such a structured church?<sup>6</sup>

Surely, I thought, the centrality of Christ as the basis for service to God can be obscured. Paul's righteousness might become no more than a moral injunction. The central task of ministry might be seen to combat

error and to defend the true faith.<sup>7</sup> I asked—what others have asked—“Do the Pastoral Epistles parallel Ignatius more closely than they do Jesus?” Given our heritage’s penchant for reason, truth, true doctrine, and order, I felt more compelled than ever to return to the gospels for a fresh view of ministry—perhaps a foundational basis for reading the rest of the New Testament and doing theological reflection for our time. Let us now turn our attention to the Gospel of Mark.

### MARK AND MINISTRY

I begin my class in foundations for ministry with the Gospel of Mark.<sup>8</sup> The students are assigned to read the gospel in its entirety in one setting. Together, we explore the possible time, occasion, and *Sitz im Leben* (setting in life) of the writing. Our working hypothesis is that Mark is probably written to a Christian community beyond Palestine, a provenance in Syria, Italy, or elsewhere within the Roman Empire. Rome and the Neronian persecution are attractive possibilities as to the occasion of the writing for most of the students. The community appears to be in the midst of civil and domestic tumult, social disruption, and threat of disloyalty (13:5-23). It faces the prospect of or is actually in the midst of suffering and persecution. We date the writing before the destruction of the Temple and presume that major questions surround the identity of Jesus and the meaning of discipleship. Accordingly, we read Mark’s gospel from the perspectives of Christology and discipleship positing that a flawed Christology results in a deficient discipleship and that this combination results in a defective foundation for ministry. So the beginning point of ministry is Christology.

#### Christology

For Mark the death of Jesus is essential to understanding adequately the identity of Jesus as the Son of God. Put another way, the cross informs Christ’s mighty deeds, preaching, and teaching. Often I begin with a quotation of Paul Achtemeier:

The only ones who are able to identify Jesus as Son of God during his earthly career are those unaffected by that redemptive destiny: God himself (1:11; 9:7), and the demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:7). For all others, until Jesus’ destiny is fulfilled on the cross, his identity as Son of God remains hidden.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, I have the students trace how various groups and individuals identify Jesus in Mark.

The gospel begins with *Mark’s* view: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1), an affirmation quickly confirmed at the baptism of Jesus by *Go*: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (1:11; see 9:7). But what do these identity statements mean? Soon we discover that the *demons* identify Jesus as the “Holy One of God,” the “Son of God,” and “Son of the Most High God” (1:24; 3:11; 5:7). These identity declarations, verbally on target, do not profess faith. Instead, these statements may be attempts to assert power over Jesus since in the biblical social world knowledge of someone’s name or identity was thought to provide power over that person (Gen 2:19-20; 32:27-29; Ex 3:13-15; Judg 13:17-18). The demons’ efforts are “rebuked” by Jesus (1:24; 3:12; see the equivalent in 5:8). The Son of God overpowers evil spirits.

*The crowds*, never on target, are ambivalent about Jesus’ identity. For example, they are amazed and glorify God when Jesus forgives and heals the paralytic (2:12), but some of the crowd in the Beelzebul controversy (3:19b-30) believe that Jesus “is out of his mind” (3:21). Later, people speculate that Jesus is John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets (6:14-15). Ironically, members of *Jesus’ family* do not know him. They try to “restrain him” at the behest of the people (3:21) and probably share in Jesus’ homecoming rejection (6:1-6). The *religious authorities* assert that Jesus’ “derangement” is due to demon possession and that his authority is derived from Satan (3:22). When Jesus stills the storm, the *disciples* in terror ask, “Who then is

this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (4:41). *Herod Antipas*, the political ruler of Galilee, believes Jesus is "John, whom I beheaded," raised from the dead (6:16). In the first half of Mark's gospel no one identifies Jesus as the Son of God during his earthly career except those "unaffected by that redemptive destiny."<sup>10</sup>

In the second half of the gospel (8:22-16:8), the ambivalence of *the crowds* over Jesus' identity persists. He is recognized variously as John the Baptist, Elijah, and one of the prophets (8:27-28). When he arrives in Jerusalem, a crowd perceives Jesus' entry as a royal procession (11:8). *Peter* and the disciples identify Jesus as the Messiah but not as the Son of God (8:29). Further, we learn that, even though Peter has the right words about Jesus as the Christ, he and the disciples lack understanding (8:31-33). Peter "takes" Jesus and "rebukes" him after his Messiah predicts his suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection as the Son of Man. When *Bartimaeus* cries out for Jesus' mercy, his repeated shouts, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:47, 48) are close to Mark's aim, but there is no indication that the blind beggar identifies Jesus in terms of his passion even though he subsequently follows Jesus to Jerusalem (10:52). The *high priest* frames his question correctly, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" (14:61). His motivation, however, is to charge Jesus with blasphemy (14:63-65). Finally, at the foot of the cross, a gentile centurion, "who stood facing him" when he breathed his last, declares, "Truly this man was God's Son!" (15:39). Thus, when Jesus dies—and only then—does a human confess Jesus' redemptive identity (cf. Mt 27:54; 1 Cor 1:18-25; Eph 2:11-22). Usually, this provokes discussion among my students. Why does Mark present Jesus this way? What is Mark's purpose? Does this have anything to do with the lives of the Christians to whom Mark writes? Surprised by their first reading, discussion often gravitates to possible contemporary applications and personal implications. At this point I ask the students to read the gospel a second time from the perspective of discipleship, paying close attention to specific instances when the themes of Christology and discipleship intersect.

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### *Discipleship*

No gospel portrays the disciples as harshly as Mark, despite the fact that the stories of the call of the first disciples (1:16-20), the call of Levi (2:13-17), the appointment of the Twelve (3:13-19), and the mission of the Twelve (6:6b-13) are positive instances of Jesus' relations with them. The first suggestion of a problem perhaps is Jesus' question to the disciples in the parables' discourse (chapter 4), "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?" (4:13; see 6:52; 7:18; 8:17, 21). The full light of Mark's bleak portrayal comes at the close of the story of Jesus walking on water (6:47-52). Now the disciples are characterized by terror, astonishment, misunderstanding, and hardened hearts (6:51-52). In the controversy over the tradition of the elders in chapter 7, Jesus asks the disciples, "Then do you also fail to understand?" (7:18). When Jesus warns the disciples about the "yeast of the Pharisees and Herod" in chapter 8 (8:17, 21), he asks, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? ... Do you not yet understand?" So the first half of the gospel closes with the disciples at center stage struggling with Jesus over his deeds and teachings.

The second half of Mark opens with an extended section fixed on Jesus' anticipated suffering, the disciples' misunderstanding, and instruction on true discipleship (8:22-10:52). The subdivision forms an *inclusio*

bracketed by healing stories of blind men (8:22-26 and 10:46-52) and featuring two themes that intersect—suffering Christology and discipleship.

The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (found only in Mark) opens the section. Strikingly, the man is healed in stages—“I can see people, but they look like trees walking,” to “he saw everything clearly” (8:23, 25). I ask my students, “Does this story function also as a parable of the disciples’ failure to perceive (8:17; cf. 4:12) Jesus’ teachings on discipleship?<sup>11</sup> Is it possible that the disciples’ ‘sickness’ can find healing only after Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection?” I remind them that the *inclusio* closes with the healing of another blind man, Bartimaeus (10:46-52).

We then note that within this material there is a cycle of three predictions of Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection (8:31-33; 9:32-34; 10:32-34), always followed by three misinterpretations by the disciples

**Jesus is unable—and this is significant for a theology of ministry I remind my students—to grant James and John’s demand because only God prepares distinguished places in the kingdom of God. The disciples must learn that the gentile paradigm in which tyrants lord it over people is not the way of the cross.**

(8:32-33; 9:32-34; 10:35-41), and three discourses on true discipleship (8:34-9:1; 9:35-37; 10:42-45).<sup>12</sup> In each instance, assumptions concerning Christology and discipleship traverse and ministry implications emerge. As previously noted in the first passion prediction (8:31-33), Peter actively misunderstands and resists Jesus. In the heated exchange a form of the verb *epitmaō*, translated “rebuked” (8:32-33) is used reciprocally—Peter to Jesus, Jesus to Peter (8:32-33). Elsewhere in Mark the same verb is used by Jesus to rebuke demons—“Be silent, and come out of him!” (1:25; see 3:12; 9:25), or to rebuke the wind when the disciples believe they are perishing in the storm—“Peace! Be still!” (4:39). Clearly, these instances manifest a struggle between God and Satan, a confrontation that reaches its fullness in Jesus’ death and resurrection. Could this help explain why the verb

also is used by Jesus when he “sternly commands” the disciples not to tell anyone about him (8:30)?<sup>13</sup> The same verb also is used when the disciples rebuke parents who bring their children to be blessed by Jesus (10:13 see 10:16)—those to whom the kingdom of God belongs. It is also used when the crowds rebuke Bartimaeus for crying out, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” (10:48). David’s Son does have time to stop, listen, and render mercy on his death trek to Jerusalem.

Returning to the first passion prediction, Jesus rebukes Peter and identifies him as “Satan”—that is, God’s adversary (see 3:23, 26; 4:15) because his behavior and thoughts are antithetical to Jesus’ Jerusalem destiny. The ensuing call to the crowds and the disciples to follow Jesus (8:34-9:1) further links the themes of Christology and discipleship. Those who follow Jesus must “deny” (“disown”) their lives (see 14:30, 31, 72), take up their cross and follow the Son of Man even to death (8:34). The two themes carry forward into the transfiguration story (9:2-13). Even though Jesus’ hidden glory is made visible to the inner circle and the heavenly voice truly identifies Jesus again (see 1:11), it is evident that Peter, James, and John still do not understand (9:9-13). Jesus transfigured means that the disciples need to see and hear him in an utterly new way—“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

The second passion prediction (9:30-32) is followed with a characteristic response—the disciples “did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him” (9:30). What immediately follows is a controversy among the disciples over leadership as they ask, “who is the greatest?” (9:33-37). Concerning greatness, the Greek term (*meizōn*) is used only three times in Mark (9:34; 10:42; 12:31). Two of the instances (9:34; 10:42) involve controversies over privilege and power among the disciples and/or Jesus.<sup>14</sup> Ironically,

the disciples' argument about power and privilege takes place on the road to Jesus' death. Jesus' answer sets forth a thoroughly different paradigm of leadership and power: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (9:35). As his exemplar, Jesus uses a child—the least powerful person in a patriarchal family structure (9:37). The statement in 9:37, "Whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me," probably has christological implications.<sup>15</sup>

The third and final instance of a passion prediction, the disciples' misunderstanding and Jesus' teaching on authentic discipleship (10:32-45), precedes the story of the healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52). Once more, the disciples are amazed and afraid as they follow Jesus on the road (10:32; see 4:40-41; 6:50-51; 9:32). Closer to Jesus' destiny, the disciples still fail to understand. The demand of James and John—"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (10:37) may remind Mark's readers of Herod's exchange with Herodias' daughter (6:17-24). Zebedee's sons seek favored positions in Jesus' "glory" (10:37). Actually, their petition comes as a response to Jesus' question, "What is it you want me to do for you?" (10:36)—a query Jesus poses to Bartimaeus as well (10:51). Jesus is *unable*—and this is significant for a theology of ministry I remind my students—to grant James and John's demand because only God prepares distinguished places in the kingdom of God. The disciples must learn that the gentile paradigm in which tyrants lord it over people is not the way of the cross (10:40). In contrast, Jesus is *able* to answer Bartimaeus' cry for mercy (10:52). Christian ministry cannot serve demands for privileged power. Further, James and John claim that they are able to drink "his cup" and to be baptized with "his baptism"—but apparently they don't understand that these terms are symbols of Jesus' suffering and death. The other disciples are indignant toward James and John (10:41). Now a destructive spirit of competitive rivalry fuels the disciples' controversy over greatness. For Jesus, greatness and power grow out of a servant model: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (10:45). This is Mark's thesis stated precisely at this point to correct the disciples' misunderstanding and to serve as a bridge to the story of Bartimaeus. Healed, Bartimaeus also journeys with Jesus to Jerusalem. His journey, however, is not characterized by incredulity and fear, but by faith—"Go; your faith has made you well" (10:52).

Thus, the *inclusio* (8:22-10:52) reaches its end. It opens with the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26), a healing story that only Mark uses to preface his section on discipleship—a fitting illustration of the disciples' blind state. It ends with the story of the healing of Bartimaeus, a positive example of faith and following that stands in contrast to James, John, and the disciples.

Now we turn to Mark's passion account (11:1-16:8) for some final stories about the disciples. At the Last Supper, a meal concerned with Jesus' self-giving, the disciples are distressed that Jesus tells them that one of them will betray him. One after another they ask, "Surely, not I?" (14:19).<sup>16</sup> Peter and all of the disciples, affirm that they will not desert Jesus (14:26-31). But in Gethsemane the disciples sleep (14:37, 40, 41)—for "their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to say to him" (14:40). As predicted (14:27), all of them desert Jesus and the treachery they thought unthinkable takes place. Jesus is left alone. Raymond Brown summarizes the matter:

In that transition the predictions of the disciples' flight and Peter's denials set a tragic tone, and in what follows the element of failure and abandonment is stronger in Mark than in any other passion narrative. The isolation of Jesus is dramatized in three steps as he moves away from the body of the disciples, from the chosen three, and then falls to the earth alone to beseech the Father three times to take the cup from him—a cup of suffering that in 10:39 he had challenged his disciples to drink.<sup>17</sup>

By this time my students usually see quite clearly how the themes of Christology and discipleship function together in Mark. Often they then ask, "Does the gospel have examples of positive discipleship?" My

first response is to remind them of the story of Bartimaeus. Then I suggest that they reread a number of other stories like the four persons who in confident, aggressive faith in Jesus' power to heal brought the paralytic to Jesus (2:5). Or, read once more the story of the Geresene demoniac who after being healed begged that he might be with Jesus and was told, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you" (5:19). Or, read again the story of the hemorrhaging woman whose faith saved her even without the will of Jesus (5:34).<sup>18</sup> Or, read once more of Jesus' statement to the synagogue leader, "Do not fear, but only believe" (5:36). Or, reread the story of the Syrophenician woman's persistent humility that led Jesus to declare, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter" (7:29). Or, read again the story of the widow who gave "her whole life" in the temple treasury and who stands in contrast to the scribes who "devour widows' houses" (12:40, 44). Or, read once more the story of the anointing at Bethany. Why does the meal take place at the house of Simon the leper? Why is what the woman did to anoint Jesus for burial a remembrance "wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world" (14:9)? Or, finally read once more about the women who followed Jesus to his death (15:40-41). But read this story and perhaps all of the stories soberly for the gospel ends telling us that the women at the empty tomb "went out from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8).

### Ministry

Having explored Christology and discipleship in Mark, I then ask my class to apply Mark's message to such ministry topics as evangelism, leadership, and worship. Some of the following ideas usually are explored.<sup>19</sup>

**The Son of Man "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."**

*Evangelism.* Evangelism must be predicated by the confession of individuals and churches that the Son of God is first and foremost the crucified one. There is no cheap way to make disciples, especially in a culture that knows little about persecution and suffering. Churches that seek to market a message based on consumerism may bypass the confessional center of the Christian faith. The gospel must not be emptied

of its power. Paul decided to know nothing among the Corinthians except Jesus Christ and him crucified so that the Corinthians' faith might rest on the power of God (1 Cor 2:2, 5). Is it possible that there is too much talk about Jesus' glory and triumph as American churches seek to swell their membership rolls? Jesus is the Son of God precisely because he suffered and died. American optimism and individualism can easily assume the rejected one to focus on his glory and triumph, that is, to see his teachings, healings, and miracles from the perspective of the empty tomb. Ironically, everything about Jesus takes on meaning only in the paradoxical power of his suffering and death! It is important how a church answers the question, "Who is Jesus?" as it invites others to follow God's Son! Mark calls for a courageous faith that confesses that the glorified one was first the rejected one. Perhaps it is better to be silent about Jesus (8:30) until we are able to confess with understanding that salvation is found in the cross.

*Leadership.* At the heart of leadership is the power and authority of the one who is servant of all because he suffered for all (10:45; see the portrayal of the servant in Isa 52:13-53:12). Such leadership is based on a radically different social paradigm—whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all (9:35). Such leadership is sustained by the symbol of the cup that Jesus drank and has its power in the symbol of the baptism of his death (10:38, 39). According to this model of leadership Jesus patiently treated his disciples as disciples even though their hearts were hardened, and they did not understand. A corollary is that pastoral care can take place in the midst of suffering. When members of the Christian community hurt, their



suffering need not be interpreted as God's absence or punishment. Quite the opposite, by going to the heart of darkness, life and power for healing can be found.

*Worship.* Even though worship is not explicit in Mark, confession of the crucified Son of God provides a point of reference for liturgical consideration. The Christian community, too, should view worship as the expression of faithful confession of the crucified Christ. When we assemble, we worship the crucified one. Surely this would mean that the cross of Christ should precede and inform our praise to God. My students indicate that Mark might be a little nervous about seeking worship renewal exclusively in praise. After all, Lent precedes Easter. The table of Jesus' suffering should remain central in our liturgy—penitence and forgiveness precedes praise.

## CONCLUSION

I have explored some of the contours I utilize in teaching Mark for ministerial theological reflection. I use the same approach in leading my students through a reading of Matthew, Luke, and John. Each Gospel provides its own unique contribution and reminds us that the traditions of Jesus were vitally important for pastoral care in the early Christian churches. For Mark the question of Jesus' identity is critical for both discipleship and ministry. The Son of Man "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (10:45).

STUART L. LOVE

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## NOTES

- 1 Ray Anderson, *Theological Foundations for Ministry* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd. and Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979).
- 2 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 5 Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 661.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 671.
- 7 J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Harper New Testament Commentary Series; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 13.
- 8 David L. Bartlett (*Ministry in the New Testament* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993]) omits the Gospel of Mark.
- 9 "Mark, Gospel of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) Vol. 4, 557.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Raymond Brown (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 138) states, "The man regains his sight only in stages, for the first action by Jesus gives him only blurry vision. This is also the situation of the disciples stemming from all that Jesus has done for them thus far. Only when Jesus acts a second time does the man see clearly. The next half of the Gospel will describe what Jesus must do to make the disciples see clearly, namely, suffer, be put to death, and rise."
- 12 Achtemeier (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*) believes that there are four elements to the passion predictions: a) the prediction, b) a failure to understand, c) instruction on discipleship, and d) an indication of Jesus' exceptional nature.
- 13 For the messianic secret see 1:34, 44; 3:11-12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; 9:9, 30.
- 14 The third reference (12:31) sets forth the legitimate hierarchical norm for those who follow Jesus—there are no commands greater than to love God and to love one's neighbor.
- 15 *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 140, note 35.
- 16 The term translated "betray" (*paradōsei*) is used in Mark for the following:
  - the arrest of John (1:14)
  - the identity of Judas Iscariot in the list of the twelve apostles (3:19)
  - the tradition handed down (7:13)
  - an element in the passion predictions of Jesus (9:31; 10:33)
  - the future persecution of Jesus' followers (13:9, 12)
  - the behavior of Judas (14:10, 11, 18, 21, 41, 42, 44)
  - the "handing over" of Jesus to Pilate (15:1, 10)
  - Pilate's "handing over" of Jesus to be crucified (15:15)
- 17 *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 145.
- 18 See Antoinette Wire, "The Gospel Miracle Stories and Their Tellers," *Semeia* 11 (1978): 102.
- 19 This section is enriched by my conversations and teaching done with Mark Love.