

The Power of the Christian: Discerning an Improvisatory Ethic of Power from the Gospel of Mark

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Abstract

The presence of power, operating in both obvious and subtle ways in public life, necessitates the development of a Christian ethic of power with which to guide the church and her members in all relational discourse—both with those inside and outside of Christian communities. The core question to be considered in this study is: how are Christians to hold and exercise power?

In order to gain an understanding of Jesus' own conception and use of power, this study focuses on a narrative analysis of the Gospel of Mark, emphasizing the pericope of 10:42-45. Here we find the self-subordinating, atoning action of Jesus in the cross as the primary Scriptural image of a Christian's own expression of power. In order to address the process of forming a normative ethic from our exegesis, this survey will make use of a critical integration of the ethical methodologies of Richard Hays and Samuel Wells, making use of the narrative's own imagery of Servant, Sacrifice, Shalom as the Bible's own formational pattern for Christian ethical formation.

Key words: *authority, Church, Christians, community, exegesis, ethic, Jesus Christ, power.*

Christian praxis must involve an investigation into the notion of power, primarily because of Jesus' promise that his disciples would receive power from on high in order to serve as his witnesses in the world (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). But, this concept is also significant for Christians to understand because of the high degree of power that the churches have attained within contemporary cul-

tural discourse (Cf. Hunter 2010, 99ff).¹ Not only this, but every Christian, from ecclesiastical leader to the newly converted, has some degree of power within their personal realm of influence. Yet, as Miroslav Volf points out, "...the question of power is almost absent from the writings of theologians, [yet] in the Bible it figures prominently," (Volf, 1996, 109). The presence of power, operating in both obvious and subtle ways in public life, thus necessitates the development of a Christian ethic of power with which to guide the church and her members in all relational discourse—both with those inside and outside of Christian communities. The core question to be considered in this study is: how are Christians to hold and exercise power?

Discerning a Normative Paradigm in the Narrative of Scripture

In order to accomplish the task of discerning an ethic of power from the narrative of Mark's gospel, this study will make use of Richard Hays' methodology presented in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Hays, 1996). According to Hays, New Testament ethics is focused on four "overlapping critical operations," (Hays, 1996, 3). First, in the descriptive task the student is to approach the Scriptures and explain them in detail in their own right. Second, the synthetic task seeks to discern a "Canonical Coherence" within the diverse messages and styles of the New Testament. The goal of this is to derive a unity in the New Testament's ethical vision without imposing pre-determined systems foreign to the nature of the texts themselves. In awareness of the wide array of testimony in the New Testament regarding ethics, Hays puts forth the idea that a "cluster of focal images" originating in the Scriptures must be used to direct our understanding of New Testament ethics. He proposes the images of: *community, cross, and new creation*. Third, in the hermeneutical stage, the task becomes focused on moving from the world and era of the First Century to the context of contemporary Christian life. Hays proposes that the gospel story,

"...creates a symbolic world in which we are to find our orientation and iden-

- 1 Hunter's analysis of the expression of power within representative Christian groups such as the "politically conservative, "politically progressive," and the "Neo-Anabaptists," is balanced and thoughtful, and ventures beyond the conception of power as purely economic or political (p181), but something "ubiquitous" in "social life" (p193). He begins a constructive plan for "post-political Christian witness" by focusing on the reconstitution of Christian identity as separate from political allegiance (p184). This is a helpful place to begin, and leads one to ask where Christian identity, then, is to be located? This study agrees with Hunter's conclusion that a re-focusing of Christian identity and activity must be directed to the person and work of Jesus (p187).

tity... The task of ethical reflection, within this narrational model, then becomes to discern and create *metaphorical correspondences* between our communities in the present and the communities whose story is told in the New Testament, so that the gospel story continues in our midst," (Hays, 2006, 15-16).

According to Hays, this hermeneutical task requires "an integrative act of the imagination," (Hays, 1996, 6). In other words, the contemporary believer can enter into the world of the Scripture through the doorway of this theological metaphor, and the intentions of Scripture can enter into the world of the believer, thus bringing about transformation, through this same door. Through this process, the metaphors communicated through the text are enabled to analogically interact with present day believers in their world, thereby participating in the reshaping of individual perception (Hays, 1996, 298). In following these metaphorical guidelines, Christians come under the shaping authority of Scripture, which functions in the power of God's Spirit to mold the people of God into the embodiment of the gospel as expressed through their words and actions in the world (Hays, 1996, 249).² At this point, the goal for the transforming community is to perform the text faithfully and fruitfully through improvisational interpretive methods that become "acts of commitment at risk," (Hays, 1996, 305). This final aspect of New Testament ethics, Hays calls the pragmatic task.

Hays' account is helpful in guiding Christian communities in the work of interpretation and application of the text for ethical construction. However, there are areas of his method that require critique. The first critique comes as a consequence of a great strength, that is: the focus of communal participation in the embodiment of the Scriptural story is a necessary corrective to a modernist theology which has tended to overemphasize the value of the individual over and above that individual's belonging in community. However, Hays' stress on communal identity and participation in the Christian life goes too far and overshadows the necessity of the individual Christian wrestling with the text and applying its imperatives in her own life. The *Moral Vision* requires more personal emphasis on the ethical task. The individual is missing, and as a result, the restoration of the people of God in covenantal context is so emphasized that personal relational restoration with God is absent, and the ontological sin problem within individuals is not addressed.

The writings of the New Testament are indeed addressed to a 2nd person plural "you" the vast majority of the time. These letters were most likely read publicly, and discussed and labored over through corporate discussion and prayer

2 Referencing J. H. Yoder, 1984, 56. He points to Yoder's concept of finding an "interworld transformational grammar" that can help us participate with God through the text of Scripture in order to bring about a "collision of the message of Jesus" with our cultural context.

because they were addressed to communities. The church is indeed meant to be a Scripture shaped *community*; but, the act of listening in these contexts (very much like Hays' action of *listening* to the texts of the New Testament for the accomplishment of this monograph, p188, 199) takes place within distinct embodied persons *before* taking place through interaction within the community of faith. *The Moral Vision* so emphasizes community that the questions regarding the goals, motives, and direction of the Christian life for the *individual within community* are not even on the radar. This is not to say that there is no need for communal focus in our development of ethics from the New Testament, yet a communal reading of the Bible, and the consequent steps of interpretation and embodiment, must begin with the affections of distinct persons, the volitions of distinct persons, and the actions of distinct persons; this communal embodiment of the New Testament must, at the very least, begin with redemption from the sin problem of distinct persons— a theme which is conspicuously absent from much of *The Moral Vision*. The reader is left asking: "Where is *my* sin problem? How does the Holy Spirit work through the New Testament to cleanse me from sin, so that I might live the ethical life within the community of the church?"

The consequence of sin in the world has had repercussions that are much more personal than merely affecting the spheres of systems and communities. Sin's corrupting effects upon human institutions and structures must be dealt with, yet sin's personal affect upon my own heart is included within that ransoming work of Jesus upon the cross (Vanhoozer, 2005, 380-397).³ This emphasis upon Christian persons and the forgiveness of personal sin, then, helps to clarify a process whereby Christian communities can begin implementing Hays' constructive ethic. The integrated focus on the individual and the individual in community also provides guidance with regard to the specific question of developing a Christian ethic of power. Through a process of Jesus' cruciform paradigm analogically interacting with and shaping the Christian person's own moral imagination via the *extra nos* engagement of persons by God's grace applied through the Spirit, that person's own conceptions and expressions of power are shaped.

3 Here, Vanhoozer discusses the significance of the doctrine of the Atonement on the personal and forensic forgiveness of sins. In his presentation of the importance of this doctrine for the Christian individual and community, he proposes a new "post...propositionalist, conservative, and foundationalist" view of the role of Atonement theology, "The death of Jesus appears as it really is only in canonical-linguistic context, where it is the climax to a covenantal drama in which penal substitution and relational restoration are equally important and equally ultimate," (p387). Through this analysis, Vanhoozer affirms the traditional importance placed on the notion of "union with Christ," yet places this resultant identity from the Atonement within the dramatic flow of the redemptive "Theo-Drama" which all of Scripture narrates, and within which Christians find their present improvisatory roles.

And, ultimately these personal expressions of power in the world serve to shape Christian character and the character of Christian communities in addition to communal shaping of cultural systems.

Second, continually in view throughout *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* is the church—her reading of Scripture in a “faithful” and “disciplined” manner so that the community of the church might become a scripture shaped community (Hays, 1996, 3). This view on the ethical embodiment of the New Testament Scriptures may be one of the work’s strongest features since it consistently draws the reader to personal reflection on a fitting corporate application. However, Hays falls short in describing the process whereby the church is to appropriate and embody the gospel narrative. Where great attention to detail is placed in the methodology for the descriptive, synthetic, and hermeneutical tasks, the process for the pragmatic task is left ambiguous. This may be intentional to encourage diverse interpretation and wrestling with the gospel mandate by different groups, yet more clarification as to the *process* by which a community can enter this wrestling would be helpful.

Finally, while Hays’ method does well in focusing on the New Testament ethical task, his use of a cluster of images does not take into account the fact that the New Testament witness emerges from that of the Hebrew Scriptures. To be properly situated within the flow of Redemptive History, a method for ethical construction not only requires a cluster of focal images to account for New Testament themes, but a constellation of images that takes into account the continuity between the Hebrew and Christian, the Old and the New. I will address this issue subsequent to the exegetical analysis.

The field of performative theology, specifically the work of Samuel Wells (Wells, 2004),⁴ can be of help in rectifying the second need—the process by which Christian individuals and communities begin wrestling through the ethical outworking of the text in their own lives. According to Wells’ description, the Scriptural language of narrative will be interpreted and systematized into doctrine in order to provide necessary support for the church’s embodiment of its founding narrative. This is the process of narrative becoming drama (Wells, 2004, 46). Yet, the difficulty with drama as the representative metaphor for Christian ethics is that the Biblical script is completed. There is no allowance for further additions to the canon. Thus, improvisation becomes a key in the church embodying God’s redemptive narrative within her present circumstances, “When improvisers are

4 Although Wells prioritizes the normative role of the church above the normative role of Scripture itself, his work remains helpful in demonstrating how theology explicates the narrative of Scripture which guides the narrative and practice of the church as “God’s new language,” (p44).

trained to work in the theater, they are schooled in a tradition so thoroughly that they learn to act from character in ways appropriate to the circumstance. This is the goal of theological ethics,” (Wells, 2004, 65). Thus, the Christian’s primary efforts are devoted to the hard work of daily rehearsals within their redemptive-dramatic role. It is this “schooling in the tradition” that is of supreme importance in the shaping of the people of God in “gaining the right habits and instincts” of character, true to their identity as Christ’s church and role as God’s “new language” within the culture (Wells, 2004, 75).

Wells’ understanding of Christian formation is crucial in discerning the way in which the moral life often unfolds, particularly as it pertains to moments of decision as opposed to the status quo of daily life. He explains that Christian Ethics generally sees heightened moral efforts coming at times of crisis, where one has been thrown into disequilibrium due to intensified circumstances, whereas the daily pattern of life necessitates a lower voltage of moral output. Yet, Wells asserts, this ought to be the reverse. Extreme moral effort should be happening in the realm of the banality of day-to-day subsistence, so that when pivotal decisions do interrupt life, the Christian is ready to act out of moral instinct, an instinct that has been painstakingly shaped through the training in Christian habits such as worship (Wells, 2004, 75, 84). Exerting moral effort in the daily practices of Christian worship, devotion, service, and virtue, then, become the way in which the Christian begins implementing Hays’ pragmatic task. This task begins, not after Scriptural reflection and theological digestion have taken place, but in continuity with these practices in preparation for the possible moral predicaments that have yet to appear.

For Christians, this means that the critical momentary decisions of faithfulness to God come as a result of long and disciplined learning —soaking in the script of the Bible— within the culture of the church as she fulfills her role in blessing the nations. This disciplined learning-via-study in consort with learning-via-action, is intended for the individual within community as she participates in rehearsing, along with the cast of many, her role as a saint within this drama (Cf. Herdt, 2008, 14, 130), (Cf. Wright, 1992, 140-143).⁵ And, in order to read and live the narrative of the text faithfully, the community of the church must recognize the paradigms for ethical living provided in the New Testament, and allow the Holy Spirit to shape believers in conformity to them. One paradigm to guide the Christian’s relationship with power can be drawn from the Gospel of Mark.

5 Herdt points to the Jesuit tradition embracing theater as, “...a form of extended and embodied metaphor...” (130) to be used as, “...a school of virtue...” through offering, “...embodied interpretations of Christ as exemplar...” (14). N. T. Wright offers another helpful account of the notion of faithful improvisation, in the analogy of the unfinished 5-Act play.

The Descriptive Task: Power and Authority in Mark

The gospel of Mark is permeated with the theme of the power of Jesus. This concept of power is most closely related to one's ability to act upon and effect something else, and is often communicated in the New Testament through words such as *δυναμις*, *ἰσχυς*, and *κρατος* (Betz, 1986, 601-606), (Grundmann, 1964-1976, 285). Mark reports that Jesus exercises power in healing people and casting out demons (1:29-34; 1:39; 1:41; 2:11-12; 6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26), feeding the multitudes (6:30-44; 8:1-10), and calming nature (4:35-41; 6:45-52). Luke summarizes these acts of power in his gospel, "And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all," (6:19). When seen in light of the backdrop of anticipation created by Jesus' declaration of the arrival of the Kingdom of God in 1:15, each of Jesus' acts of power become draped in the hope of coronation fulfillment (Cf. Sankey, 1995, 17).⁶ This effectively weaves discrete actions of power together into one impulse for the enactment of God's reign (Wright, 1996, 186-196, 428-430, 440).

The gospel of Mark is also permeated with the theme of the authority of Jesus. While *δυναμις*, etc. is associated with external expressions of power and strength, *ἐξουσια* refers to the right or freedom one has to exercise power based on the particular position one holds (Betz, 1986, 607-611). In the case of Jesus, his use of power in authority comes through his divine commissioning as the Messiah of YHWH. Authority and power are linked together in Christ's proclamation of the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Foerster, 1964-1976, 568-569).

Jesus is not simply one of the many workers of miracles who roamed the ancient world performing spiritual actions of raw power. He is expressing power in authority. This is an authority that points to YHWH, the God of Israel, as its source (Cf. Wright 1996, 186-196, 428-430, 440).⁷ These authoritative actions

6 Mark 1:15 is the final prophecy in the introduction to the book, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand..." (v15). Yet, contrary to the pattern previously established in vv1-13 (i.e. prophecy—fulfillment; prophecy—fulfillment) this prophecy is left open-ended, there is no immediate fulfillment. Rather than being a detractor from the display of power, this uncompleted prophecy leaves the door open for its fulfillment throughout the remainder of the book. This serves to increase the sense of power apprehended by the reader through infusing all of Jesus' actions with a heightening expectancy for the arrival of this kingdom. Thus, at every turn of the plot, the coronation of the king seems to lie in wait just around the corner. The reader can feel the anticipation and ask, along with the people in the story, "When will it happen?" Sankey emphasizes Mark's "strategy of indirection" through this open-ended pattern of prophecy—fulfillment, which causes the reader to engage in the struggle to understand Jesus' identity.

7 Wright provides further descriptions of the regular phenomena of "works of power" in the Greco-Roman context.

include his, first, confrontation of the teachers of Israel: those who were purported as being YHWH's representatives to his people, as well as those holding religious, economic, and political power (2:8-11, 18-28; 3:22-30; 7:1-23; 11:15-19, 27-33; 12:1-44). Second, Jesus called his disciples to follow him and freely delegated his authority to them (1:17; 2:14; 3:13-19; 6:7-12). Third, Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God with authority. The fact that Jesus spoke with some manner of authority was recognized by the chief priests, scribes, and elders after Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (11:27-33), yet they persisted in their refusal to consider YHWH as the source. Fourth, Jesus expressed his power in the authority of God through work and words which implicitly declared his co-equality with YHWH, examples of this include personally forgiving the sins of the paralytic in 2:5 through a "performative utterance," (France, 2002, 125),⁸ and following this up in v10 with the authority validating healing (Wright, 1996, 268-275).⁹

Although the religious leaders of Israel acknowledged that Jesus indeed expressed some form of authority through his teaching, the source of this authority (which his works of power confirmed) remained enigmatic to them. As a result of their failure to see who it was that stood before them, they refused to concede Jesus' status as a prophet of God for fear of providing support for his program. In John's gospel account, these same religious leaders refused to affirm Jesus' act of raising Lazarus from the dead, for fear of "losing our place and the nation" to the Romans (Jn 11:48). Thus, the "authorities" of Israel who possessed political, economic, and religious power over that society were led to assert power violently in order to reinforce protective boundaries. As Caiaphas goes on to summarize to the Sanhedrin, "You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people, than to have the whole nation destroyed [by the Romans]...So, from that day on they planned to put him to death," (Jn 11:49-53).

A vital background aspect to the exercise of power by Israel's leaders is presented to us in the above passage from John. In emphasizing the ubiquitous presence of the Roman military, and the consequences if the people were to declare allegiance to a king other than Caesar, Caiaphas discloses a general insight re-

8 France argues for a "performative utterance" as opposed to the divine passive function of the verb ἀφέωνται.

9 Wright describes the eschatological significance of Jesus' actions of forgiving sins, identifying them as Jesus' offer of the return from exile and the renewed covenant indicating the inclusion of the sinner into the now arrived Kingdom of God outside of Israel's formal religious structures. Jesus makes use of the term "Son of Man" derived from Daniel 7:13-14, thus linking himself, his audacious action of forgiving sins, and the validating action of the healing, with the prophetic image of the Ancient of Days extending ἐξουσία over all the earth to ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

garding the notion of power. When a majority of power appears to be in the possession of one particular group within a closed system (the Romans in this case), groups' assertions of defensive controls to protect their claims on the remnants of social power becomes heightened between factionalized groups within that system. In the case of a totalitarian system, as in 1st Century Palestine, this can lead to results between the dominated factions that may represent anything between immobilization due to corporate self-diminution, to violent hostilities due to self-exaltation of one faction over another. In other words, when power is seen as something ontologically finite—a currency which cannot be renewed when spent—then competition for that non-renewable resource generally commences between disparate groups. And, if these groups are members of a broader culture which may be dominated by a greater authority, then the competition for the remnants of power heightens.

This assessment could apply to the heart of Caiaphas' assertion, since he viewed Jesus as the leader of a competing faction within the closed system of Roman Imperial rule. As a result of this grasping for power, Jesus and his movement had to be “destroyed,” for the sake of the “position” of Israel's leaders and for the survival of Israel as a nation. One of the ironies in this assessment of Caiaphas' motivation, is that Jesus never sought to compete with Caiaphas, or Rome, for this finite store of power. Instead, he seemed to assume that all power and authority already belonged to him, while Caiaphas and the Roman Empire operated within the sphere of the reign of God, vying with one another for their own remnants of power. Yet, in assuming all authority, and confronting the competing factions within Palestine, Jesus did not employ his power according to the pattern of a world in rebellion from God—clamoring for power and recognition in a game of one-upmanship. Rather, he introduced an entirely new paradigm for governance and positional authority. He accomplished this through consistently asserting himself in humble and non-defensive subversion of the present power structures. As Oliver O'Donovan observes:

“Jesus...unsettled the Two Kingdoms conception, which has, in one way or another, shaped Israel's understanding of its political position since the exile. He announced the coming of God's Kingdom to sweep away existing orders of government. Those orders were of a passing age; they could, from one point of view, be dismissed as ‘those who are said to rule the Gentiles’ (Mk 10:42). But since their displacement could not happen without conflict, their provisional existence still counted while the moment of confrontation lasted in which the two claimants stood poised over against each other,” (O'Donovan, 1996, 137).

This confrontation between Jesus and the provisional powers of the world visualizes the distinctions between the expression of power under the authority

of God's Kingdom and that of the Kingdom of Man. O'Donovan summarizes this well: "There is a conflict between the ways in which earthly and heavenly kingdoms operate: the one claims precedence, the other accepts subservience patiently," (O'Donovan, 1996, 138).

In conducting himself in such a way, Jesus' exercise of Kingdom power is done for the sake of advancing God's will; and, in the process, Roman and Jewish power and authority is relativized (O'Donovan, 1996, 138). Was Jesus seeking to accumulate power? Or, did his actions show his understanding that, "The gift of power was not a zero-sum operation. God could generate new power by doing new things in Israel's midst," (O'Donovan 1996, 95). This consideration directs us to see that Jesus was not being "subversive" for the sake of seizing power from the governmental powers—he was not trying to strip Rome or Israel of their power in order for the Kingdom of God to gain power. Rather, his exercises of power in authority were for the sake of announcing that the Kingdom of God had come, and thus had subsumed all worldly power beneath its rule.

The task in describing Mark's portrayal of the authority and power of Jesus leads to the following observations: he confronts the ruling authorities, he delegates authority to the disciples, he teaches of the Kingdom, he heals from sickness and demonic persecution, and he declares performative words of forgiveness for sins. Through this holistic ministry Jesus proclaims, to the people and worldly power structures, his relational and positional inclusion into the person of YHWH as his incarnate and authoritative representative. This does not occur through one discrete word or action. Claiming the term $\acute{\omicron}$ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου alone does not assert Jesus' self-identification with God, neither does the sole action of stating that the paralytic's sins are forgiven (2:5), nor do the discrete works of healing. It is through the combination of all of these, functioning in the aggregate, that proclaim Jesus' ultimate power and authority as God in the flesh.

Mark's gospel shows that although Jesus asserts his authority through works of power, he does so with subtlety and humility, which never completely clarifies, never quite connects all of the dots, leaving the perceptive observer with an apprehension of the true nature of his authority, yet never leading one to total comprehension of his identity. In past and present cultural contexts where the power and authority of position is generally asserted at every opportunity, this lack of clarifying enlightenment concerning Jesus' identity must lead the reader to reconsider the nature of power (Hays, 1996, 76). Instead of a concern to impose his ἐξουσία upon Israel through dominating "power over" force (an ability, a right and freedom that belonged to Jesus as the eternal Son of God incarnate), Jesus seems content with an inside-out approach: kneading the gospel of the Kingdom into the hearts of his hearers through patient attention upon the process of discipleship according to his own pattern.

Self-projecting or Self-protecting power?

The Jewish crowds and the disciples focused primarily on the displays of power, and in doing so they continued to know Jesus only as a messianic figure viewed through their lens of vengeful monarchical rule (Cf. Wright, 1992, 307-320).¹⁰ The Second Temple Jewish context regarded the Messiah as one who would fight the battles for Israel, expel the pagan oppressors, reestablish the Davidic monarchy, and reestablish proper worship in the temple. The image of ὁ Χριστός at this time encapsulated all of these preconceptions. This is summarized through the Messiah filling the role as Israel's warrior king. Yet, by continuing with this caricature of messianic hope, the crowds were prevented from knowing who Jesus really was and the supreme act of power that truly would restore the people of God. This supreme act of power was not in the works of power which Jesus had been performing, nor would it be in an attempt at violent revolutionary overthrow of the Roman overlords; instead, the secret of the Kingdom of God would come through the Messiah expressing his power through his "revolutionary subordination" by overthrowing the cosmic powers of evil in his crucifixion (Yoder, 1994, 162-192).¹¹ The humble and subservient power of God's Kingdom is introduced through the prototype of Jesus as one who exercises authority and wields power, yet does so in a way which repudiates the notion that rulership is accomplished by way of projecting the worldly ambitions and vengeful defensiveness of the self in lieu of attending to the needs of the other.

To the people and to his disciples, Jesus' self identification remained veiled, though Mark reports various responses to his displays of authority through works of power. The people are described as being "astonished," "amazed," they "marveled" at his works, Jesus gained celebrity status, he became famous (1:27; 1:28; 1:33, 37; 5:20; 6:2; 7:37). Matthew describes how the fame of Jesus' power even reached the ears of Herod (Matt 14:1). More and more people gathered wherever Jesus went: 5000 men followed him into a "desolate place," (6:32, 44), and another 4000 came to him by the Sea of Galilee (7:31; 8:9). John describes these crowds as wanting to make Jesus "king by force," (6:15). Through Jesus' displays of power, popular opinion seems to be swelling and the crowds appear prepared to follow their "messiah" in revolt. Seeing the power before them, their distorted messianic hopes escalate and become reinforced.

By reading Jesus' power through the lens of their preconceived notions of

10 Here Wright draws on Second Temple Jewish sources such as the Psalms of Solomon 17.21-32 to demonstrate the cultural context regarding ὁ Χριστός.

11 Here, Yoder has in mind the church's role as she seeks to follow Jesus in the pattern of sacrificial servitude for the sake of others.

what God's Messiah would do, the disciples also missed the true nature of Jesus, and the kingdom he was proclaiming. Throughout Mark's gospel the disciples are portrayed with poignant honesty. They are shown as fearful and not trusting (4:38-41), unbelieving and even haughty (5:40; 6:37; 8:4), not understanding and hard-hearted (6:52; 8:16-21). And, significantly, they are focused on power. Their focus is not on researching and contemplating the true nature of Jesus' authority, nor do they reflect on Jesus' examples of exercising power for the sake of others. Rather, the disciples' focus is on manipulating power for the sake of their own position, and glory (9:2-8; 9:34; 9:35-37; 10:35-41).

The disciples became so focused on their own identification with the authority of Jesus that in 9:38 they become protective of works of power done in Jesus' name, "...Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following *us*." This defensiveness regarding the exercise of power in the authority of Jesus was not for the sake of Jesus' character nor for his authority, this defensiveness was in self-protection of their own sense of derived authority—the use of the personal pronoun ἡμῶν emphasizes the fact that the disciples were jealous for their own sake, they were feeling encroached upon (France, 2002, 377).¹² While the disciples sought to erect walls of exclusion, Jesus' response shows his desire to extend inclusion to any who would be, "...ὑπερ ἡμῶν." In making this statement, which again emphasizes the personal pronoun, "us," Jesus not only includes the outsider, but reinforces the inclusion of his disciples into the realm of his authority even after their self-protective actions.

At this point in Mark's narrative there is a growing wave of momentum surrounding Jesus that has come through his displays of power and authority. The crowds were massing to Jesus, and his own disciples had declared their allegiance to him as ὁ Χριστός. Jesus' inner circle of Peter, John and James had witnessed an unveiled glimpse of Jesus' power and glory in the transfiguration (Mk 9—what better way to raise up faithful lieutenants to lead in a nation-cleansing holy war?). There appears to be great potential for a grass roots uprising against the Romans and against the Jewish ruling class of Jerusalem. If Jesus were the characteristic messianic figure of that era his position could not have been better.

Yet, paradoxically, Jesus acts counter to popular messianic expectations; he is not trying to foment violent rebellion. Mark gives the reader hints of this throughout his gospel. After ministry "success", instead of continuing on and inciting the

12 The "we" here should be considered as referring to the inner circle of the Twelve. France emphasizes John's intention of creating an exclusivity among those who have access to Jesus, thus requiring the mediation of the Twelve. This may well be the case and further assists in the perspective of the disciples' hunger for power.

crowds, Jesus is said to have withdrawn to lonely places (1:35; 3:7; 6:30-32) and to have “dismissed” the crowds (6:45; 8:9). Jesus teaches in parables, designed to evade and veil the nature of the kingdom of God, declining to seize the reins of control in order to assert his will through dominating revolution. Jesus pursues people who have been deemed unclean outcasts, thus technically becoming ritually unclean himself (5:1-20, demon possessed man; 5:21-34, woman with a discharge; 5:35-43, contact with a dead body; 7:24-30, relational contact with a Gentile woman). Instead of hoarding his authority, Jesus delegates it to his disciples (3:13-15; 6:7-13). The narrative also gives insight into Jesus’ motivation for his works of power. Rather than seeking acclaim, domination, or manipulation of the crowds, Jesus is motivated by compassion (1:41, pity; 3:5, grieved with hard hearts; 6:34, compassion on the crowds for they were like sheep without a shepherd; 10:13-16, indignant with the rejection of children, he embraces them; 10:21, Jesus loved the rich young man). Finally, instead of asserting his messianic position at all costs, thus risking untimely misinterpretation of the nature of his authority, Jesus firmly rebukes people and demons against speaking of his identity as the Christ (1:25, 34, 44; 3:12, 7:36). Mark’s gospel indeed reveals something quite different about the nature and expression of the power of Jesus.

A turning point in the ministry of Jesus occurs in 8:31. Mark’s narrative transitions from focusing on the power people *crave*, to describing a new kind of power; namely, that which people *need*. This is indicated through the opening phrase, “Καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς,” “And he began to teach them.” This phrase points to the layering in of a developing clarity in Jesus’ teaching program regarding his identity and mission as ὁ Χριστός (Stein, 2008, 401). After Peter’s misguided declaration of Jesus as ὁ Χριστός infused with the popular messianic misconceptions, Jesus begins the process of correcting the disciples’ notions of messianic power and authority; and, in doing so, he also begins to correct their assumptions about their own role as his disciples. After rebuking Peter in 8:31, Jesus clarifies his mission by teaching them, “...that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this *plainly*.” Through this last phrase, Mark emphasizes that Jesus is no longer speaking in parabolic form. He is speaking this word to them *παρησια* (Wallace, 1996, 161).¹³

In spite of his straight talk, Peter expresses the ultimate misunderstanding and rebukes Jesus (8:32). In response, Jesus corrects his misunderstanding of

13 This noun is functioning as a dative of manner, thus emphasizing the nature of Jesus’ speaking of this proleptic image. In pointing the disciples to the awaiting cross, he is no longer speaking “in parables” (4:2).

messianic power and authority and brings further clarity to his expectations of what the disciples' nature and expression of power ought to be. The Christ's disciples are to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Jesus in his suffering, this is the true expression of messianic power. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, yet whoever loses his life for Jesus and for the gospel will save it— this selfless attitude is the true nature of messianic power (8:34-35).

Jesus' correctives describe a new way of regarding power that is neither self-protecting nor self-projecting; rather, it is self-subordinating. The disciples had mistakenly thought that the prophetic arrival of the Kingdom of God from 1:15 had come upon them through the works of power and the escalating momentum toward revolutionary action. Yet, Jesus sweeps their preconceived notions away, transforming Israel's conception of YHWH's authority and power as he points to the humiliation of a Roman cross and the resurrection which lay beyond it, as the way in which the reign of God would be ushered in. This is reiterated in 9:1 where Jesus states, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God *after it has come in power*." This statement implies that the kingdom had *not yet* come in power, although to the disciples and to the crowds, all indications had been pointing to "yes". The prophetic pattern established in 1:15 (prophecy—fulfillment, prophecy—fulfillment, prophecy—...), counter-intuitively, still remained open-ended. The kingdom of God would come in power when Jesus' prediction (8:35) of his suffering, death, and resurrection came about.

The messiah who the disciples are to follow is not ὁ Χριστός of powerful works which "amaze" and "astound", nor the Christ of self-projecting power who incites crowds to take up arms in violent insurrection, nor is he the Christ of self-protecting power who resides in the background refusing to engage in any conflict or who seeks to defend his authority through erecting walls of exclusion. The Christ who the disciples are to follow is the self-subordinating servant Son of Man who wields power in humility, confronting the powers of evil through his suffering sacrifice (Cf. Breytenbach, 2006, 60).

Discipleship Paradigm of the Servant

The culmination of Jesus' teaching regarding the nature and expression of messianic power comes in 10:42-45. In this pericope, Jesus responds to the disciples' clamoring for their share in the acclaim which will come with the powerful reign of Jesus over a restored Israel. John and James had approached Jesus requesting the most privileged positions of authority and honor when he comes, "in glory" (10:37). Jesus corrects their mistaken assumption about the source of his authority, pointing to God the Father as the arbitrator of eschatological honor (France,

2002, 417).¹⁴ When the rest of the Twelve hear of this covert jockeying for power, they, “began to be indignant at James and John,” (v41). The disciples had failed again.¹⁵ Jesus had been speaking plainly of his coming betrayal, rejection, suffering, murder, and resurrection since 8:31, he had just concluded his description of this again in 10:33-34. Each accompanying teaching had included the call to obedience in following him into this true expression of the power of God, one which renounced external methods for asserting power (Hengel, 1977, 18-19). Yet, his disciples could think of nothing other than their own stake in the Christ’s authority. Jesus responds to their misunderstandings by saying to them in 10:42-45:

“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus begins his culminating corrective teaching regarding the nature of power by creating a parallelism featuring the two verbs κατακυριεύουσιν and κατεξουσιάζουσιν. “To lord over” something refers to the dominating control or possession a subject has over an object. “To exercise authority over” is an indication toward a coercive use of force for the purpose of compulsion or oppression that resides in all earthly power (Foerster, 1964-1976, 1098), (Foerster, 1964-1976, 575). Those rulers who are outside of the covenant community of Israel seek to assert their power in ways that would bring benefit for themselves at the expense of others. Although Jesus is pointing to the realm of Gentile political power and leadership as an example, his point does not rely on this particular leadership function of authority. Although the disciples’ future roles as Christian leaders is likely in Jesus’ view, he was more likely focused on, first, developing a paradigm for faithful and obedient discipleship, the first step of which requires the humble relinquishing of status and power in order to take up the call to serve (Hengel, 1977, 20). This passage was not to be read solely by leaders, those aspiring to leadership, or by those who had to hold leaders accountable; rather, this passage was intended to be read by any who were seeking to know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

For the disciple of Jesus, the craving for power and all that it promises must

14 He does this through use of the “divine passive” ἠτοίμασται, which indicates two things: 1) the action of God in dispensing ultimate rewards; 2) that the nature of Jesus’ authority is one in which he is submitted to God.

15 This culminating corrective teaching comes at the end of a sequence of passion prophecy→ disciple failure→ corrective teaching in 8:27-38; 9:30-37; 10:31-34.

not be the motivating orientation for one's life. Rather, the expectation for the disciple is to imitate Jesus in seeking to make oneself a servant, even a slave, for the good of others. The mimetic aspect of this passage is indicated through v43a, "But it shall not be so among you," as Jesus contrasts the self-projecting tendency of Gentile rulers with his own example of self-subordinating love.

In the transition from v43 to v44 there is an intensification as well as a verbal paradox created which pits antitheses against one another (Santos, 2000, 23-24). To be great, requires one to be a servant, and to be first requires one to become a slave. This is an apparent impossibility (Stein, 1994, 19), especially in light of the level of authority and power a slave in this context would actually hold. For a disciple to take this position requires him to assume a posture of servitude before others, which would have been repugnant for the disciples who had consistently shown the opposite tendency throughout the narrative. This also is in contradistinction to the *modus operandi* of the culture of the world which emphasizes the abuse of power and the enslavement of others for selfish benefit.

The climax of Jesus' teaching comes as he asserts himself and the coming passion as the paradigm for Christian discipleship. Jesus states his own mission in the form of a paradox: the Son of Man, one who, according to Daniel 7:14 deserves all dominion, glory, and a kingdom, who will have all peoples as servants to him, this Son of Man came for the express purpose of becoming a servant through the giving of his life for the ransom of many. Although there is an apparent impossibility in seeking greatness through acting as a slave, Jesus resolves this paradox and provides the means for its accomplishment through placing himself in the crux of the issue.

Followers of the messiah do indeed have power as delegated to them through the authority held by Jesus as the divine Son of Man. Yet, the nature of this power is to free the disciple from their own enslavement to the dominating powers of the external rule of sin and the internal allure to continue in its ways. The freedom that Jesus purchased through the giving of his life as a lutron, is a freedom which was intended to bring a purifying restoration to the disciple's life. Jesus' great action of humble service—the way he most fully expressed his power— was through becoming the ultimate servant, the ultimate slave, and thus gaining the ultimate exaltation to greatness and preeminence. This came through the giving up of himself to weakness for the sake of redeeming the lives of many from sin. This has been accomplished through his suffering, death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead (BAGD, 2000, 605-606; Procksch, 1964-1976, 329-335; Sklar, 2005).¹⁶

16 Cf. BAGD, 605-606; O. Procksch, "λυτρον," in *TDNT*, 329-335, There are significant connections made between the λυτρον word group of the NT and LXX with the word group of כֶּפֶר.

In making this statement Jesus is appropriating the imagery of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah 52:13-53, applying it to himself and his mission, and bringing this metaphor to bear on his disciples as a transforming and normative paradigm for their own lives and ministry (Witherington, 2001, 288-290). In exemplifying himself as the ultimate servant, Jesus is fulfilling the role of YHWH's עֶבֶד of Isaiah (Cf. BDB, 2001, 713.5).¹⁷

We must see Jesus' exercise of power and authority throughout the narrative of Mark through this lens of his identification with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. As YHWH's servant, he was not expressing his authority through works of power for his own sake, but as a method for announcing the coming restoration of peace that his goal would accomplish, δουναί την ψυχην αὐτου λυτρον ἄντι πολλῶν.

The remainder of the narrative flows from Jesus' assertion of his identity as the παῖς of the Lord and his purpose as revealed in Mark 10:45. From this point on in the gospel, Jesus embodies the paradigm of the Suffering Servant which he taught in v45. Immediately after his corrective teaching with his disciples, Jesus heals blind Bartimeus validating his role as the Servant of YHWH through his enactment of Isaiah 42:6-7, "I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon..." Jesus' further actions are embodied echoes of the process of humiliation, sacrifice and exaltation of YHWH's παῖς from Isaiah 53. Jesus enters Jerusalem, intentionally humbling himself, riding on a donkey. He confronts the religious leaders through his teachings, yet is despised and rejected by them. He is scorned by his own disciples who betray him and flee from him; they are included among those who reject him. Jesus stands trial, is tortured, mocked, publically shamed, and finally crucified; yet, "...like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth." Upon his death, his cry to God exemplifies his grief and the weight of bearing the guilt of others resulting in his crushed status before the Lord. His resurrection demonstrates the acceptance of his guilt offering, the

See Sklar's work for a thorough exegesis of relevant passages and discussion of the notion of כֶּפֶר and its cognate verb כָּפַר. In summary, these words are used to indicate the payment of a legally legitimate penalty for wrongdoing to the offended party. If accepted, this payment saves the life of the offender and restores peace to the relationship. Sklar demonstrates how this Hebrew word group is used to express the notion of purgation where both "ransom" and "purification" are in focus. As the ultimate ransom and purifying agent, blood sacrifice functions both as expiation and propitiation for the sinner.

17 Although the Greek text of Mark does not echo the LXX rendering of "servant" in Isaiah 53:13, "παῖς"; the Hebrew of the Isaiah text still functions similarly as the words δῆρακος and δοῦλος used by Jesus in the Markan context, "servant". Yet, in Isaiah, the concept of YHWH's servant also carries with it the concept of purpose— Israel, collectively, and specifically through her representative, was to be the Lord's servant in being God's chosen witness to the nations.

final arrival of the Kingdom of God in power, the inauguration of the restoration of peace for God's people, and the Servant's final exalted status.

And, it is here in Christ's passion event where the prophecy of Mark 1:15 is finally brought to completion and the prediction of 9:1 finds its fulfillment: the Kingdom of God does come in power through the voluntary subjugation of the Son of Man to the violence of the cross. Yet, it is in this apparent weakness of the cross where the powers of the world are paradoxically subverted, and the dominating powers of the world's authority structures are brought under the dominion of the peace of God. Mark writes of this as well. As Jesus hangs crucified, the embodiment of weakness, and cries out his final words, the sole person who recognizes the significance of the event is the one person among the onlookers who is the embodiment of worldly power—the Roman centurion. As he watches Jesus die, the centurion brings the awaiting clarity to Peter's distorted confession of 8:31 through his words, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" In this, Mark signifies a hope within the midst of the dark moment, that God's power has won the day, and will continue to bring the powers of the world under his rule as Christ's kingdom goes forth through the humble power of the cross.

The Synthetic Task & Beyond

As we read the gospel of Mark from the standpoint of our thesis: the power of the Christian is to be cruciform in nature and expression, we must consider the narrative form of our text as well as the prominent imagery provided by Mark. Although some authors prefer to distill leadership or discipleship principles from the narrative, it is more effective for the purposes of contemporary theological reflection to identify a group of overarching images that can serve as behavioral and motivational prototypes for the life of the disciple today. I propose that in order to construct a Christian ethic of power from the gospel of Mark, the most helpful grouping of images comes from the metaphor of Isaiah's Suffering Servant paradigmatically embodied by Jesus throughout the gospel narrative, and poignantly highlighted in 10:41-45. From the texts surveyed, the images of *Servant*, *Sacrifice*, and *Shalom* figure most prominently as a collection of metaphors that both summarizes the pattern of Jesus in the gospel of Mark, as well as a group that takes into account the continuity of the Hebrew Scriptures with the New Testament.

As the ultimate *Servant*, Jesus embodied the metaphor from Isaiah 53 and continually sought to express his power for the benefit of others. As the Servant of the Lord, Jesus is not without power. He is given power under the authority of YHWH for the express purpose of bringing restoration to God's people through his ministry on the cross. Thus, the image of the servant should assuage Christians from embodying the paradigm of the ghetto through the adoption of habits

of cultural avoidance and non-participation. Expressing Christian identity in a way such as this would not only lead to futility in the church's role as God's new language within the *missio Dei*, but Christian ghetto-ization itself actually takes on the form of cultural violence. This is so because, in attempts to withdraw and isolate themselves from the culture in which they live, Christians can contribute to a destructive "tribalism," one that can lead to further cultural fragmentation and the polarization of peoples (Volf, 1996, 20, 40ff).¹⁸ In polarizing themselves in such a way, Christians can both neglect the image of God imprinted in the life of the Other, as well as deny glory to God for the truth, beauty, and goodness he has generally revealed to the world, "...that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him," (Acts 17:27). This tribalism can only be compounded when Christians who have opportunities for social authority abdicate their role or renounce power in order to avoid cultural interaction, thus turning away from leadership in the culture on one hand, while profoundly influencing the culture of the church in her conception of power and authority on the Other.

The alternative vision provided for the churches, is the role of the servant: one who cooperates with God to be set apart from the world in order to enter into the world with a truly humble character out of desire to serve God and others with a vision for eschatological restoration as the fueling motivation. As Jesus' disciples, Christians are called to imitate him, thus communally and personally embodying the paradigm he established. Disciples enter into this habituation process through exercising the power they have been delegated in practices of Christian worship as well as in the performance of tangible actions of service to others —both those who are within God's new community as well as those on the outside.

In Jesus' role as servant he exemplified *Sacrifice* for the sake of others. Jesus alone can offer himself as sacrifice for the sins of others. His sacrifice was necessary and is effective for restoration of personal and communal relationship with God and acquittal from the guilt of sin. Through this sacrifice, Jesus allowed himself to be scorned by the world, to suffer humiliation and physical violence in order to supremely demonstrate the love of God.

Jesus' sacrificial exercise of power also establishes this practice as a normative prototype for the Christian life. This is not to say that all Christians at all times under every circumstance must mechanically adopt Jesus' particular practices with regard to power. Instead, what this does mean is that the Christian must use wisdom and discernment to know the right type of power to exercise in the right context that is unique to that individual Christian. Incorporating the cruci-

18 Here Volf explores the Christian tension between being in the world, but not of the world. In seeking resolution from this tension absent from the grace of God, Christians can be drawn to one or the other extremes.

form paradigm of power into one's life will necessarily lead the Christian to think of and exercise power counter-intuitively and counter-culturally. Christians will think of God and others before considering options for self-preservation or self-advancement, as in the case of Jesus. Instead of projecting our own wills upon someone else or seeking to protect our security through erecting walls of exclusion from others, disciples of Jesus have the freedom and the power to embrace personal sacrifice for the good of others. Sometimes this will require the Christian to absorb different forms of violence in order to embody the power of the gospel to a world that only knows abusive self-serving power. Yet, this may also lead the Christian to consider the use of violent power at times for the sake of submitting to God's vision for both his justice and love to be harmoniously applied in the world through the lives of his people. Though, as in absorbing another's violent assertion of power, this action too must be the fruit of prior moral effort and character-shaping through the Spirit's work.

The third image of *Shalom* comes from the Lord's vision for restoring peace to the world through his advancing kingdom as inaugurated by the ministry of his Suffering Servant, Jesus. Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Servant as "stricken", "smitten", "afflicted", "wounded", and "crushed"; the punishment that was the result of the sins of many was upon him. As Jesus takes the guilt of his people's sin upon himself, God's peace is placed upon them. The people's sin becomes the Servant's sin, God's peace becomes the people's peace, שלום. This notion of God's peace not only entails a world without violence and suffering, nor just a reference to restoration. The image of שלום also is infused with delight in the restoration of particular relationships (Wolterstorff, 1983, 69-73). God's peace restored through Jesus leads one to joyful exuberance at the renewed relationship with God, with other humans in community, with the natural environment, and the restored sense of intra-personal harmony as well—all of the areas that had been fractured by sin and evil have now been renewed by grace. This restorative purpose is inherent in the notion of God's power as expressed through the sacrificial act of the cross.

This vision for the שלום of God, is something that disciples of Jesus must adopt as they reflect on their role in God's kingdom as improvised within particular cultural contexts. The believing community allowing themselves to be shaped into servants who have a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others through corporate and individual embodiment of the imagery of the Suffering Servant, is a proper response to the normative word of God. Imitation of Christ in these ways is meant to be done for the purpose of joining in God's work to bring his kingdom in power to this world. As a result, a primary thrust of the motivation to pursue the Christian calling to follow Christ should flow from the desire to see God bring his shalom to the people and into the culture of this world. Thus,

an eschatological vision for the restoration of the Lord is to accompany a present impulse for faithful obedience.

Conclusion

In the narrative of Mark's gospel, Jesus embodies the metaphor of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah 53. He entered the world with all power and authority as the messianic King and the Danielic Son of Man, yet he exercised this power in humility through his self-subordination to the will of the Father (Mk 14:36). This paradigm, introduced by Jesus, becomes the central formational prototype for Christian discipleship; thus, guiding the Christian community in orthodoxy and orthopraxy with regard to our reflection on power, and its expression. Through Christians situating themselves in the symbolic world created by these Scriptural metaphors, believers invite the form and content of the text to challenge and reshape their perceptions. This re-shaping, according to the normative ethics of Scripture, makes its greatest impression upon Christian character through communal and personal embodiment of the vision of God's word as expressed through ongoing Christian improvisation. Through this creative mimetic process, the churches' relationships to power and power dynamics are articulated through the mode of humble servanthood on behalf of others.

Yet, as Christian disciples follow Jesus and are formed into his image through God's grace, the power they exercise does not so much belong to them, nor does this power find its origins or goals within them. Rather, the church, as the community of God's Kingdom, employs its power in submission to the goals and desires of its Master—the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, what we have described as “the power of the Christian,” invariably ought to be described as “the authority of the Christian” or of the church. This is so because any power held or exercised by churches has come as a result of delegation from God—“power from.” And, the delegation of power itself comes as a result of the Christian dependency on the One who is the ultimate source of creative and redemptive power. The church finds her identity in union with this triune God via her unity with the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This union of relationship and mission has been established through the ministry of Jesus Christ, is maintained and deepened through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, and is cultivated through the church's cooperation with God via the practices of prayer and worship.

These practices are the ways in which the church community acknowledges God's sovereign rule, expresses adoration of his person, and proclaims dependency on his power for Christians' continued inward transformation and faithful involvement in the manifestation of his Kingdom in the world. In bowing to God in such a way, the church invites God's power to be at work in her midst.

The church's role of submission to the will of God the Father, fulfilled through the faithfulness of the Son, empowered and continued by the ongoing work of the Spirit shapes the nature of Jesus' instructions for his disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," (Matt 6:10). By thus praying, Christians most fully embody their role as servants to God's redemptive mission within the world because it is only through God's own power that the benevolent rule of his Kingdom will be established.

This humble employment of power mirrors that of Jesus himself as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet, not what I will, but what you will," (Mk 14:36). The church's proper understanding and employment of power pivots upon her response to God's grace through recapitulating Jesus' own words—words that affirm his submission to the Father's will continuing its course through his life leading to the embrace of God's judgment and שלום in the cross. As the church improvises her role in light of this new era of the peace established through Christ, we must continually look to him as we participate with the triune God in our role as gospel peacemakers.

The character, indeed the virtue, of humble servanthood is the way in which Christians cooperate in the triune God's own mission, and enact gospel-inspired cultural restoration and Kingdom proclamation through the generation of creative and relational power. As disciples of Jesus Christ, Christians are called to imitate him, and although it is not possible to imitate him in his ultimate atoning love, Christians can imitate him through the living proclamation of his gospel of God's peace restored to the nations.

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Daniel Herron

Moć kršćanina: Razlučivanje improvizacijske etike moći iz Evanđelja po Marku

Sažetak

Prisutnost moći, koja u javnom životu funkcionira i na vidljive i na nevidljive načine, iziskuje razvoj kršćanske etike moći, koja će usmjeravati Crkvu i njezine članove u svim relacijskim diskursima, kako s onima unutar kršćanskih zajednica tako i s onima izvan. Ključno pitanje kojim se u ovoj studiji valja pozabaviti jest: kako kršćani trebaju nositi i koristiti moć?

Da bismo shvatili Isusovu koncepciju i uporabu moći, u studiji ćemo se fokusirati na narativnu analizu Evanđelja po Marku, s naglaskom na perikopi u recima 10, 42-45. Ondje nalazimo Isusovo djelo svjesne pokornosti i otkupljenja kao primarnu svetopisamsku sliku kršćaninova izričaja moći. Da bismo se pozabavili procesom formiranja normativne etike na temelju naše egzezeze, u istraživanju ćemo se koristiti kritičnom integracijom etičkih metodologija Richarda Haysa i Samuela Wellsa, služeći se slikama sluge, žrtve i šaloma iz samog narativa, kao biblijskoga formacijskog obrasca za formiranje kršćanske etike.