

**The Three Marks of Mission:
A comparison of the Longer Ending of Mark with Charles Kraft's three dimensions
of Christianity**

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Abstract: The longer ending of Mark's gospel is useful for understanding how the early church viewed mission. The longer ending uses the three themes of power, proclamation of truth, and allegiance in each of its four sections. These themes are strangely synonymous with Charles Kraft's three dimensions of Christianity, though Kraft never cites the longer ending. This paper will explore the themes of power, truth, and allegiance in the LE in conversation with Kraft's modern understanding. This comparison should give us an idea of how one part of the early church understood mission and give us concepts to apply and critique current mission within the church.

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The rise of the modern mission movement has stimulated more books and articles and research on mission than ever before. In fact, it has stimulated the entire field of missiology. But mission has existed long before the days of Hudson Taylor and William Carey. While copious books might not have been written about the methods of mission, there was still method and theology underlying this important facet of Christianity. This paper argues that one of the earliest examples of a mission document is found in Mark 16:9-20 as it explores the themes of power, truth, and allegiance. By studying the longer ending (hereafter abbreviated as LE) through a missional hermeneutic and in conversation with Charles Kraft's model, we can critique our modern understanding of mission as well as apply missional concepts that are useful for today.

Why the Longer Ending of Mark?

The longer ending of Mark is a highly debated passage. Cadwallader calls it 'the most contested part of the New Testament text.'¹ Some scholars argue that Mark 16:9-20 was not a part of the original gospel; others argue that it was. The argument is based on both internal and external evidence. The internal evidence is predominately related to the abruptness of the original ending, differences in vocabulary, and some of the content. The external evidence is based on early manuscripts. The most reliable manuscripts (Siniaticus and Vaticanus) do not contain the LE, but there is a significant number of manuscripts that do include it.² Most of those who argue that the longer ending was not a part of the original believe that it was added some time in the 2nd century.³ While we cannot date the longer ending exactly, and even though there were questions about its validity early on, it was included in the manuscripts and quickly accepted as a part of Christian tradition, canon, and the gospel itself.⁴ Origen writes about the issue of variant texts which he often signified in his notes with obelising marks, but

¹ Alan H Cadwallader, "The Hermeneutical Potential of the Multiple Endings of Mark's Gospel," *Colloquium* 43, no. 2 (November 2011): 129.

² Alan Black et al., *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: 4 Views*. (Broadman & Holman: Nashville, TN, 2008), 14–16.

³ William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 2nd Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1995), 605; Larry W Hurtado, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011); D. E Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 450; Jeffrey T Riddle, "The Ending of Mark as a Canonical Crisis," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 10, no. 1 (January 2018): 33–41.

⁴ Hurtado, *Mark*, 288.

even he states that these passages should not be removed.⁵ Riddle notes in reference to the wide acceptance of the traditional ending that ‘The consensus apparently does not come through church councils or the influence of any single individual or group of individuals, but it appears to be the result of an organic and nearly universal phenomenon across Christian circles.’⁶ In fact, it has only been in the 19th century that the authenticity has come into question again.⁷ Therefore, the LE has a place in Christian tradition and must have something to offer towards our understanding of faith and mission.⁸

The LE is included in almost every translation of the Bible. However, because most modern scholars do not recognize it as valid, commentators tend to go no further than a brief summary of the text critical issue. Few modern commentaries explore the meaning of vs 9-20. But Riddle argues:

It is the task of the text critic not to eliminate invalid reading in [their] quest to determine the elusive and chimerical “original autograph” but to incorporate as many readings as possible either to reflect the diverse transmission history of the text or, in the digital age, even to allow the reader to create [their] own personal reading.⁹

Those that do venture into the strange world of the LE, tend to give it a cursory overview explaining that it was likely compiled from several places, including Acts, and that it was likely someone’s attempt to finish off the gospel of Mark in an acceptable way. But the LE of Mark has a lot more to add to our understanding of Mark, the early church, and especially mission. Beeby writes about a missionary and canonical hermeneutic of the Bible , ‘concentrating not so much on the introductory questions of source as the more theological questions of nature and function.’¹⁰ Cadwallader’s article resonates with this approach, arguing that the multiple endings of Mark ‘[confirm] that verse 8 is not, and was never intended to be the end of the Gospel even if it was intended to be the end of the text of the

⁵ Peter M Head, “Christology and Textual Transmission: Reverential Alterations in the Synoptic Gospels,” *Novum Testamentum* 35, no. 2 (April 1993): 127.

⁶ Riddle, “The Ending of Mark as a Canonical Crisis,” 46.

⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, U.S., 2007), 806.

⁸ There is the shorter ending of Mark and the Freer Logion that are also used as endings or part of the of the ending to Mark. However, the Freer Logion is dated later and shows up in one early manuscript and the shorter ending is also does not appear alone in any Greek manuscript so we will not be looking at either of these in this paper, Riddle 33-34.

⁹ Riddle, “The Ending of Mark as a Canonical Crisis,” 50–51.

¹⁰ H. D. Beeby, *Canon and Mission*, Christian Mission and Modern Culture (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1999), 102.

Gospel.’¹¹ Several scholars assert that the reason for the abrupt original ending in verse 8 was to compel the reader to action. ‘Mark’s open ending is the quintessential gap to be filled by each reader.’¹² If that is the purpose of the 16:8 ending of Mark, one might assume that the longer ending is precisely one (or a community’s) response to that invitation. It is their way of finishing the story, springing into action, discerning the missional purpose in Mark. Moloney states that ‘Mark 16:9-20 appears to be the only example of such an interpretative addition to any of the Gospels.’¹³ Cadwallader agrees that the various endings of Mark are just that:

These endings, with their variations from each other and variations in the history of their own transmission, are immensely valuable both as a textual record of various churches’ appropriations of resurrection in their own communal lives and as an authentication of the value of Mark’s Gospel as originally written.¹⁴

Therefore, the longer ending of Mark, when read missionally, can potentially show us how the early church understood or rather was figuring out mission.

Missional Hermeneutic

In order to explore the LE as a response to the rest of the gospel of Mark, we will be reading it through a missional hermeneutic.¹⁵ Goheen defines the three dimensions of a missional hermeneutic as ‘reading the whole of Scripture with mission as a central theme, reading Scripture to understand what mission really is, and reading Scripture to equip the church for its missional task.’¹⁶ A missional hermeneutic reads scripture through the lens of a mission metanarrative, what Beeby describes as ‘a holistic narrative that is supremely missionary.’¹⁷ Therefore, the LE will be read with the assumption that it says something about God’s overall mission. However, it will also be read with the latter two dimensions in mind. Moloney sees the author as being ‘constrained by his own situation in the second-century church

¹¹ Cadwallader, “The Hermeneutical Potential of the Multiple Endings of Mark’s Gospel,” 130.

¹² W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 2014, 263.

¹³ Francis J Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 356.

¹⁴ Cadwallader, “The Hermeneutical Potential of the Multiple Endings of Mark’s Gospel,” 143–44.

¹⁵ For my own translation see appendix

¹⁶ Michael W. Goheen, ed., *Reading the Bible Missionally*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 15.

¹⁷ Beeby, *Canon and Mission*, 113.

increasingly involved in the Gentile mission.’¹⁸ Therefore the LE is an encouragement to missionaries who will fail and who will meet both belief and unbelief in their mission. If this is the case, a missional hermeneutic is especially useful for the purposes of the LE. Finally, having read the LE with the overall theme of mission in the Bible in mind, understanding how the LE specifically defines mission in the early church, and how it was equipping the early church, we will apply it to the praxis of mission today. Bauckham states, “But a missionary hermeneutic would be a way of reading Scripture that sought to understand what the church’s mission really is in the world as Scripture depicts that mission, and thereby to inspire and inform the church’s missionary praxis.”¹⁹ Ultimately, our missional hermeneutic should guide the way that we do mission today.

Reading the LE with a missional perspective is not without its weaknesses. Wright warns:

The danger is that one comes to the Bible with a massive commitment to the task of mission already in place, with a hallowed history, with methods and models in the present, and with strategies and goals for the future. All this we have assumed to be biblically warranted. So in searching the Scriptures for a biblical foundation for mission, we are likely to find what we brought with us--our own conception of mission, now comfortingly festooned with biblical language luggage tags.²⁰

By reading the LE missionally, we are in danger of assuming things that might not have been true of the early church. I hope to avoid this by putting a modern missiologist, Charles Kraft, in conversation with the LE. This is not to say that Kraft is an expert on the LE, in fact, he never mentions it. Nor is it to say that the LE anticipated Kraft’s model or even that this is the only model and way of viewing mission. Instead, the hope is that by putting the LE and Kraft in conversation with each other, discovering where they agree and disagree, we will better understand the LE and Kraft’s model as well as be able to critique our understanding of modern mission. At this point it is also necessary to define ‘mission’. There are many definitions of mission, but I will hold to Wright’s definition of mission as ‘our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission

¹⁸ Francis J Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 358.

¹⁹ Richard Bauckham, “Mission as Hermeneutic for Scriptural Interpretation,” in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 28–29.

²⁰ Christopher J.H Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 37.

within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation.²¹ Mission has often been defined first and foremost as the mission of God, and *missions* as how people participate. This is certainly a valid understanding. However, the understanding of mission in the LE is about both Jesus and believers working together in mission; it does not separate the two. So I will use mission and missions interchangeably.

Structure of the LE

By reading the LE missionally, we pick up on three prominent themes: power, truth, and allegiance. A structural analysis reveals these themes in each section of the LE. The LE can be divided into 4 sections: Mary Magdalene's witness, the two disciples' witness, Jesus sends out the disciples, and the continued ministry of the ascended Jesus. In each of these sections, we see an instance of power or miracle, proclamation of the truth, and a call to allegiance to Jesus. In the first section, we meet Mary. The unique detail about this section, is the author's specification that it was Mary Magdalene 'whom he had cast out seven demons.' The author of Mark does not include this detail when she is mentioned in 16:1. Nor are any of the other characters in the LE described in any detail. We cannot know for certain why the author chose to specify this detail apart from that it is an instance of power. In addition to the mention of Jesus' past miracle of healing Mary, the fact that he is risen is also miraculous. Mary then goes and tells the disciples who refuse to believe. Mary proclaims the truth, showing her allegiance, but this results in a lack of allegiance on the disciples part. In the next section, we have the miracle of Jesus' appearance. While this account is not as detailed as that in Luke 24, the readers may remember the powerful circumstances of that narrative where Jesus hides his identity until he breaks bread with the two. They also go back and tell the others, proclaiming the truth of Jesus' resurrection. Like the previous section, the disciples refuse to believe. They are not converted by the account of the two disciples.

In the third section, everything is turned around. Jesus appears to the disciples. The truth is not only revealed by Jesus himself, but the job of proclamation is now passed on to the disciples. From this point on, it will be the disciples who are to proclaim the truth, and they will be doing the works of power. Here we also see how people will be called to allegiance, by believing and being baptised (vs 16) and the result of this allegiance is that they will be saved. In the final section we see the disciples working out their allegiance as

²¹ Ibid., 23.

they go and proclaim the good news. Jesus works with them and confirms the truth with signs. In each section there is an instance of power/miracle/signs, proclaiming the truth, and a decision about the truth- either to act in allegiance to Jesus or not. Structurally we can see this pattern emerge with its key themes, but we also see the climactic middle where everything goes from unbelief to belief and from disloyalty to Jesus to allegiance to the ascended king. These are clear themes in the LE and there is a clear trajectory.

The 3 Encounters

In the 1990's, Charles Kraft started to develop a theory of three dimensions that are crucial to the Christian experience.²² At first, these served a predominately missional purpose. He believed that there were three types of encounter needed in Christian witness in order to bring people to Christ and to help people deepen their relationship with Christ: power, truth, and allegiance. All three of these encounters are evidenced in Jesus' ministry and 'all three dimensions are present in every activity of God in the human sphere.'²³ His later work shows a shift from viewing these dimensions or encounters primarily as missional elements to important dimensions of the Christian walk. There is a strange resonance between Kraft's three dimensions and the three themes in the LE despite the fact that Kraft never seems to refer to the LE. Putting these two in conversation is one way to compare concepts of mission in the early church as represented by the LE and more contemporary concepts around missions. However, Hahn states, 'Notwithstanding certain constant elements, the earliest Christian view of mission is by no means homogeneous, and is not easy to grasp in its historical and practical differentiation. Thus, the interpretation of biblical missionary pronouncements is very varied.'²⁴ This is not only true for our New Testament study but also contemporary mission. None the less, one hopes this conversation will be a helpful way of looking at mission.

²² Charles H Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena, Calif: William Carey Library, 2005), 99.

²³ *Ibid.*, 108–10.

²⁴ Ferdinand Hahn and Frank CLARKE, *Das Verständnis Der Mission Im Neuen Testament.*] *Mission in the New Testament. (Translated by Frank Clarke.)*. (SCM Press: London, 1965), 15.

Power

The thing that has most captured people's attention about the LE is the emphasis on miracles, or what Kraft refers to as the power dimension. Mark 16:17-18 says 'But a sign will accompany those who believed; in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new languages, (and in the entanglements with the world), they will pick up snakes and if they will drink something deadly it will not injure them, they will place a hand upon the sick and they will be well.' Lists of miracles are not unique to Mark or the LE. We see a similar list in Matthew and in other early Christian writing.²⁵ Casting out demons and healing the sick is quite a common miracle in the gospels and Acts, and speaking in new languages coincides with Pentecost.²⁶ The LE then goes on to say in vs. 20 'But going out, they preached everywhere, working with the lord and the word is confirmed through the accompanying of signs.' While miracles are not the sole focus of the LE, they are a major theme. Kraft also focuses on the power dimension more so than any other dimension. This is in part because he believes that there has been too much emphasis on the dimension of knowledge and relationship, but the dimension of power in Christianity has been wholly ignored by most evangelicals.²⁷ The LE and Kraft share a belief that miracles should be done by all believers, an understanding from where power comes, and a context of missions. However, Kraft shows an emphasis on spiritual warfare that is not present in the LE.

Similarities

One of the unique contributions of the LE to our thinking about miracles is the fact that it expects miracles of every Christian rather than just the apostles. This is not the case anywhere else in the synoptic gospels and virtually without parallel in the New Testament (except for John 14:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:9-10).²⁸ Kelhoffer, who writes the most about miracles and the LE, explores the New Testament, apocryphal writings, and the early apologists. He found that in the New Testament and the apocryphal writings, it is the apostles who do miracles, not ordinary believers as mentioned in the LE.²⁹ However, when one explores the 2nd and 3rd century apologists, they start to talk about ordinary believers doing miracles.³⁰ This supports

²⁵ James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 199–244.

²⁶ D. A. Carson et al., eds., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press), 977.

²⁷ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 101–2.

²⁸ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 338.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

the dating of the LE to the 2nd century. More importantly for our study though, is the fact that the early church starts to see miracles as a dimension of Christianity. Fridrichsen argues that miracles were common in the early church and an accepted part of its mission.³¹ Due to the memory of Jesus' own ministry of power, the miracles of believers was simply considered a continuation of Jesus' own ministry and quickly became a part of mission.³² Hurtado argues that 'Although the accounts of the resurrection appearances in the other Gospels do not mention such things, the traditions of the early church certainly emphasize miraculous signs as a part of the preaching activity of the apostles and others.'³³ However, the correlation of mission and miracle and especially the belief that all believers should be doing miracles quickly dissolved. Fridrichsen argues that this was due to the misuse of miracles and accusations that Christians were doing magic.³⁴ McGee looks at the history of miracles in mission and emphasizes the sudden shift that took place from the 'apostolic era' to the 'post-apostolic era' which is partially defined by the presence of miracles.³⁵ The most obvious break away from miracles was with the reformers, who mostly believed that miracles had disappeared since the apostolic church and were happy to get rid of anything connected with Catholicism including the belief in saints who did miracles.³⁶ In the 18th and 19th centuries, miracles once again took some prominence under revivalism and later the Pentecostal movement.

While Kraft does not consider himself to be Pentecostal, he is a part of a movement called the 'Third Wave' which emphasizes charismatic gifts. Like the LE, Kraft argues that authority has been given to all believers, and he specifically advocates for modern Christians to use this power and for training institutions to teach ministers how to use them. He states, 'Jesus said we would do what He did (John 14:12); and we have become fairly good at doing part of what He did, the part about loving and caring for people in their misery. But we have not learned to work in Jesus' power to release them from that misery.'³⁷ Kraft never cites the LE as justification for miracles today. Instead, he argues that the Great Commission in Matthew commands the disciples to teach everything Jesus commanded. Since Jesus taught

³¹ Anton Fridrichsen, *The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1972).

³² *Ibid.*, 58.

³³ Hurtado, *Mark*, 287.

³⁴ Fridrichsen, *The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity*.

³⁵ Gary B McGee, "Miracles and Missions Revisited," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 4 (October 2001): 146.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 147–48.

³⁷ Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity: Evangelicals and the Missing Dimension* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Chosen Books, 2002), 8.

his disciples to do works of power, the disciples should have taught their followers and this flows down to us today.³⁸ Kraft uses John 14:12 repeatedly to emphasize the power of all believers and argues that ‘If Jesus was not afraid to risk the distortions and perversions of power ministry, neither should we be, especially since He made it clear that His followers were to do what He did.’³⁹

The other similarities between the LE and Kraft’s dimension of power is the emphasis on the source of that power. The LE has an interesting focus on the person of Jesus almost to the exclusion of the other parts of the Trinity. Kelhoffer concludes that ‘the absence in the LE of any mention of a member of the Godhead other than the risen Lord gives rise to the question of this author’s possible monistic or modalistic conception of the Godhead.’⁴⁰ It is unlikely that the early church believed that of the author or the LE would have likely been rejected and considered heretical.⁴¹ However, the focus on Jesus is certainly a theme of the LE especially in relation to miracles. It is in Jesus’ name that believers will do miracles (16:17) and vs. 20 emphasizes that the Lord continues to work with them after his ascension. Kraft also emphasizes that the authority Christians have comes from Jesus, and his method for power encounters focuses on using the name of Jesus. One of the key distinctions between Christian power and animism or magic for Kraft is the source of the power.⁴² Animistic practices heal and work otherwise they would not continue to be used. But whereas animism focuses on the power within objects and manipulating spirits, Christians are given the authority to use God’s power to deal with problems and the spiritual world.⁴³ Kraft marvels at the fact that Jesus took such a risk in entrusting his disciples and now us with his authority and power.⁴⁴ From the perspective of Mark 16, one can see this risk clearly. The disciples go from unbelieving to miracle workers. Kraft also emphasizes the use of the name of Jesus.⁴⁵ When performing ‘deep healing’ and confronting spirits, Kraft uses the name of Jesus repeatedly as it is on Jesus’ authority that he is acting. While the LE is not prescriptive in the same ways that Kraft is, there is certainly a foundational Christology that is underlying the passage which we also see in Kraft’s method.

³⁸ Ibid., 50.

³⁹ Ibid., 129.

⁴⁰ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 479.

⁴¹ Ibid., 268.

⁴² Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 20–24.

⁴³ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁴⁵ Wonsuk Ma, “A ‘First Waver’ Looks at the ‘Third Wave’: A Pentecostal Reflection on Charles Kraft’s Power Encounter Terminology,” *Pneuma* 19, no. 2 (1997): 195.

Finally, both Kraft and the LE set miracles within the context of missions. This is true of Kraft's early work especially, though more and more he argues for the use of power encounters and healing within the context discipleship. Both the LE and Kraft seem to indicate that miracles are a part of effective missions. Yarbrow Collins also argues that Paul associates effectiveness with miracles.⁴⁶ Kraft, Musk, and Love all argue for the importance of power in mission especially for those coming from non-Western worldviews that practise popular religions. 'We can't be either biblical or relevant to most of the peoples of the world without a solid approach to spiritual power.'⁴⁷ Musk states, 'Mission to Muslims is not necessarily so much a matter of trying to convey primarily intellectual information, against most of which the Muslim is already "inoculated". It is a question, rather of preaching the gospel with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction, as well as with words.'⁴⁸ Skinner takes a similar approach in arguing the miracles may have been a necessary method due to the fact that most people in the time of the early church would have been illiterate.⁴⁹ However, it is important to note that Matthew's Great Commission does not include miracles, and while Paul mentions doing miracles, he does not speak about them extensively. Kraft, despite his intense focus on the power dimension, reminds us that 'Spiritual power in scripture is never an end in and of itself. It must always be balanced by concern for our relationship with God and for God's truth.'⁵⁰ Power is an important part of mission, but it is not the only dimension.

Differences

Apart from issues of depth and detail in comparing the LE as a short part of a chapter and all of Kraft's books, the main difference between the LE and Kraft is Kraft's focus on spiritual warfare. Where the LE gives a short list and explains that these signs will be done in the name of Jesus and confirm the message, Kraft writes entire books on the importance of power and manuals on how to use the power of God. Kraft argues that people are captive to the work of Satan and as Christians and especially as Christian ministers we are called to set

⁴⁶ Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 811.

⁴⁷ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 362.

⁴⁸ Bill A. Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level*, Rev ed (London: Monarch Books, 2003), 227.

⁴⁹ Christopher W. Skinner, "Characterizing Jesus in Mark's Longer Ending: The Narrative Christological Trajectory of Mark 16:9-20," in *Let the Reader Understand: Essays in Honor of Elizabeth Struthers Malbon*, ed. Edwin Broadhead (London: Bloomsbury, T & T Clark, 2018), 90.

⁵⁰ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 363.

them free from this dominion.⁵¹ There may have been an underlying assumption in the early church that power was a confrontation of the spiritual world, after all, one of the primary miracles is that of casting out demons which is mentioned in the LE, but a mentality of spiritual warfare seems to be lacking. More research would need to be done to understand the differences in these perspectives. One may wonder if it is the lack of experience with war in the last century that causes Kraft to use the language of spiritual warfare which may have resonated less in the context of the early church where war was a very present reality. Does an acknowledgement of the power dynamic require an ideology of spiritual warfare or are we able to see works of power as one dimension of mission like the LE seems to portray? It may seem like a minor difference in the two perspectives, but Kraft's use of spiritual warfare imagery seems to take over his scholarship and his ideas about mission. He may argue for the balance of truth and relationship, but his writings do not point to this.

Implications for Modern Missions

There are two implications that can be drawn from this look at the dimension of power in the LE and Kraft's model. First, modern missiology needs to think about the purpose of miracles. In the LE, miracles accompany the believers and confirm their message. Aquinas agreeing with this purpose says that:

the word uttered needs to be confirmed in order that it be rendered credible. This is done by the working of miracles, according to Mk. 16:20...for it is natural to man to arrive at the intelligible truth through its sensible effects. Wherefore just as man led by his natural reason is able to arrive at some knowledge of God through His natural effects, so is he brought to a certain degree of supernatural knowledge of the objects of faith by certain supernatural effects which are called miracles.⁵²

Fridrichsen argues likewise that 'miracle serves to legitimate God's messenger and his preaching.'⁵³ However, there is grave danger in mistranslating and misunderstanding this purpose of miracles. The Greek does not support a translation of miracles legitimizing the messenger. The miracles, rather, legitimate the message of the person. It is a short jump from miracles being about the truth of God and miracles being about the miracle worker. Perhaps this is why Paul avoided speaking about the miracles he does. He attests to the use of power

⁵¹ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 180–245.

⁵² Thomas, *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica*, ll. 75112–75117.

⁵³ Fridrichsen, *The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity*, 60.

in 1 Corinthians 2:4 saying that he came ‘with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power (NRSV).’ However, the miracles are not to confirm Paul but rather ‘so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.’ Musk warns against this as well.

A significant fact in such power encounters, at least as they are documented in the Bible, is that the power for good belongs to a sovereign, holy God...To err here is to risk engaging in the idolatry that leads to triumphalism. The kingdom bespeaks a King. Let no ambassador or soldier usurp the glory that belongs only to Jesus Christ.⁵⁴

We must be careful to not associate miracles too closely with the messenger.

In addition, we must be careful to not assume that miracles are just about helping people. Fridrichsen argues that the key difference between magic and miracles is that Christian miracles were used to help people.⁵⁵ Aquinas shares a similar view in his definition of miracles as a grace of God, done through his power, for the benefit of man.⁵⁶ Kraft agrees that ‘Satan...entices people to use their status to hurt others while God gently prods His people to use their status and the authority and power that goes with it to assist the powerless.’⁵⁷ One can appreciate the sentiment behind these views, but this delineation is imprecise. Helping people is not a virtue that is limited to the church. Secular magic has healed people and helped people as well, otherwise it would not continue to be practised. It also begs the question of what we mean by help. It seems that miracles are just as often about healing as they are about belief throughout the Bible, which is certainly the emphasis given by the LE. Moses’ miracles before Pharaoh were not innately ‘helpful’ nor was Elijah’s offering competition with the prophets of Baal. Instead, those miracles point to who God is. In the New Testament, it is interesting to note that when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, there is no indication that the raising is for Lazarus’ sake (though one could perhaps argue that it is for the sisters’ sake). Instead, in John 11:15, before leaving to go, Jesus says to the disciples ‘For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.’(NRSV) and then he prays at the tomb in 11:42 ‘I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ The list of miracles in the LE portray this as well. Three of them can be seen as helping people: healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out demons. However, drinking poison and handling

⁵⁴ Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam*, 226.

⁵⁵ Fridrichsen, *The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity*, 92–93.

⁵⁶ Thomas, *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica*, 75135–36.

⁵⁷ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 369–70.

snakes can hardly meet this requirement. As argued above, the primary purpose of miracles in the LE and for Kraft is to bring people into relationship with God. This focus does not just change the purpose of miracles but also how we go about seeking acts of power.

Therefore, when thinking about the purpose of miracles and power for faith today, especially as related to the LE, we are best served by reverting back to the Greek. The LE uses the word σημεῖον, literally ‘signs’. The gospel of John is similar in the use of this word. In John, Jesus does signs in order to bring about faith.⁵⁸ Thompson defines signs as ‘a manifestation, through the person of Jesus, of God’s work in the world.’⁵⁹ For John, these signs are both a theological statement about the character of God as well as imparting life.⁶⁰ By doing this, it automatically calls for a response for the beneficiary and observers.⁶¹ Johns and Miller argue that signs serve as judicial witness to the person and work of Jesus.⁶² While both the LE and John use σημεῖον to talk about miracles, the gospel of John limits this to Jesus.⁶³ We have argued previously that in the LE signs are given to all believers. However, it is important to note that the LE says that signs will accompany all believers; it never specifies exactly who is doing them. The purpose for miracles according to the LE and supported by the gospel of John is to proclaim Jesus. The LE views these signs as an important part of mission method, but it is not the only important thing. ‘...it is necessary that people be introduced to the signs or other witnesses in order to believe, yet it is possible for them to see the signs without believing.’⁶⁴

Signs and symbols are something which recent liturgists have been exploring in more depth. ‘...our very use of symbols is itself a way of knowing, and that symbols give access to the reality they symbolize.’⁶⁵ Much like miracles, ‘the “sign” operates in a way which exceeds a reminder, an emblem or a token, and actualizes the very promises of God and open finite reality up to the transcendent in the present.’⁶⁶ Hovda reminds us of the power behind symbol:

⁵⁸ Marianne Meye Thompson, “Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991): 89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 94–95.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶² Loren L Johns and Douglas B Miller, “The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (July 1994): 519–35.

⁶³ Thompson, “Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel,” 95.

⁶⁴ Johns and Miller, “The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel,” 534.

⁶⁵ Christopher Irvine and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Great Britain), *The Use of Symbols in Worship* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 7.

⁶⁶ Christopher Irvine, *The Use of Symbols in Worship* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 7.

It is still powerful, even when we are unconscious of it. In traditional imagery, it affects the “heart” of the human being rather than merely the “head.” It involves not merely receiving information, getting an idea, but living something out- in the story, in the symbol, in the sacrament... Since the biblical covenant invites us to a way of life, and not just a series of propositions, the language of symbol is its favorite as well as its most adequate communication.⁶⁷

Hovda makes the point that faith is more than intellect and theology. Perhaps this is a non-charismatic way of dealing with miracles. There is also the danger in our churches and liturgy that we assume power behind a traditional sign that has long since lost its power and meaning. However, Mark 16 should point us to the general understanding that faith is more than knowledge. It is more than a simple encounter with truth. Whether our mission embraces that through Kraft’s methodology of power encounters and miracles or through Hovda’s understanding of liturgy, the principle remains and is a good challenge for the modern church.

The second implication of our study is to look at the presence of miracles today. We should allow Kraft and the LE to challenge our Western, post-enlightenment worldview. Kelhoffer concludes that while the LE’s list of miracles strike modern day believers and scholars as strange, they would not have had the same impact in the early church.⁶⁸ Kraft argues that our Western worldview has had a huge impact on the way we view the spiritual, invisible world.⁶⁹ ‘...our unfamiliarity with the spiritual realm makes us very insecure in our quest to accept and understand biblical spiritual reality.’⁷⁰ While miracles and spiritual power have sometimes been misused, Kraft encourages Christians to not allow this to be what keeps us from practicing spiritual power. While Kraft’s scriptural foundation is slightly lacking, and one could accuse him of overemphasizing the dimension of power, it is an important and useful challenge to the way we view the Bible. We must not dismiss the impact of the early church’s worldview in regards to the spirit world.

Kraft faces two rebuttals to his understanding of the spiritual dynamic from his critics: that he diverges from scriptural teaching and that his belief is not rational. Kraft does seem to use a limited number of scriptures in his argument. Instead, he supports his position by

⁶⁷ Robert W Hovda, “The Saving Evangelism of Our Symbol Language,” *Worship* 58, no. 6 (November 1984): 532.

⁶⁸ Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission*, 478.

⁶⁹ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

appealing to experience, which he admits is a contested source of truth among evangelicals.⁷¹ ‘Traditional evangelicals... frequently disparage an overemphasis on “experience” as a way of measuring our relationship with God. When such people speak of experience, however, they are really talking about feelings.’⁷² Instead we should recognize that ‘The fact that the Bible is bare-bones revelation plus the complexities of personal and cultural applications of scriptural principles suggest the possibility of discovering things that are new to us.’⁷³ Though Kraft thinks that experience offers great insight, he still argues that scripture has the ultimate authority:

The experiences recorded in Scripture are endorsed by God as conveying His truth and are to be regarded, therefore, as authoritative, though not exhaustive. But the understanding we derive from Scripture is subjective and pervasively affected by the perspectives we bring to the process of interpretation— perspectives strongly influenced by experience.⁷⁴

Kraft’s appeal to experience is similar, though not synonymous, with Collins’ scriptural cycle method.⁷⁵ Collins argues that all theological reflection must start with scripture but that there is also an important place for experience, or testimonies in her words. ‘Christian faith and theology is oriented around the encounter and participation with God’s own life and the witnessing to that through the telling of one’s story. Faith is therefore performative, embodied and affective, as well as being cognitive and rationalized.’⁷⁶ ‘Testimonies are personal stories of encountering God, and through those encounters locating oneself as participant in God’s story.’⁷⁷ Kraft falls short of Collins’ asymmetrical relationship between scripture and experience in that he uses a very limited range of scriptures and tends towards a hermeneutic that permits anything that is not explicitly condemned by scripture.⁷⁸ However, both Kraft’s and Collins’ perspective on experience may offer some insight into the concept of signs, miracles, and works of power today.

Collins states, ‘God continues to make Christ known to us through our encounters with his present ministry, and we testify to those encounters so that others might hear the

⁷¹ Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷⁵ Helen Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflections: Starting with Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 2020).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, loc 1934.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, loc 1947.

⁷⁸ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 102.

Holy Spirit's invitation also to encounter the risen and present Christ.'⁷⁹ If the purpose of signs in the gospels and in the LE is to point to Christ, then experience does that. Those experiences may be ones of spiritual freedom where demons are cast out and people are healed, but they also may be encounters with God's power in numerous other ways, supernatural or natural. Mission, in the LE, must include a power encounter with God. For Kraft that focuses on spiritual warfare, but perhaps that is too limited of an understanding of the power of God at work in creation.

Truth

The purpose of power encounters and the power dynamic according to the LE is to confirm the message of truth. The LE finishes in vs. 20 with Jesus working with them and confirming their message with signs. Some translations read that Jesus is doing the signs to confirm the message whereas others argue that the signs are done by all believers as we have seen previously.⁸⁰ While this logic reflects the earlier mention of doing signs using his name and other passages such as Matthew's commission where Jesus grants authority (though he does not mention signs there), the author of the LE leaves the miracle worker vague. A more literal translation reads 'the message is confirmed through the accompanying signs. As stated previously, the purpose of signs is to help proclaim the gospel, our second essential dynamic of mission. The LE and Kraft agree that the proclamation of the gospel, the truth, is a central aspect of mission and faith; they leave the content of that truth slightly vague; and they agree that it is not just about head knowledge. However, the degree to which they hold the dynamic of truth is quite different and affects the way they view the dynamic of allegiance which we will look at later.

Similarities

First, both the LE and Kraft ascribe importance to the proclamation of the truth. In the LE, we see proclamation and belief come up in every section. According to Kraft, 'Jesus spent a high proportion of His time and energy in the teaching of truth. He wanted people to understand as much as possible about His Father, Himself and all that the relationships between God and

⁷⁹ Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflections*, 1961.

⁸⁰ NRSV, ESV, NIV, KJV say Jesus does the miracles.

humans and between humans and other humans should involve'⁸¹ Proclamation is a key theme for the LE, but it is also a key theme for mission and a key theme in the rest of the gospel of Mark. The church has often cited the Great Commission as it is found in Matthew 28:16-20. Here is the LE's version 'And he said to them, 'Having been sent into the all the world, preach the good news to all creation.' It has similarities to Matthew's Great Commission in that the disciples are to go into all the world. Previously, they have been to the Israelites, but now they are sent out to both the Jews and the Gentiles.⁸² However, the LE does not use an imperative here (nor does Matthew for that matter). It uses Πορευθέντες which is a passive and aorist participle. This may best be translated as 'having been sent'. While not central to our understanding of mission here, this is something that is often preached inaccurately, and therefore worthy of comment. There's a sense of continuity that the participle lends to the idea. Jesus is not ordering something new but rather a continuance of the ministry he has already been doing. In fact, Hunsberger puts forth that 'In the reporting of Jesus' final word in the gospels and Acts we should see not a command for the early churches to obey but an affirmation of what they found themselves doing.'⁸³ Next, the LE includes both the world and creation in its commission. This could be similar to Matthew's use of all nations, or it could be an even wider view of salvation and mission. But most importantly to our dynamic of truth is the fact that the command is to proclaim the gospel- κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. Κηρύξατε is an imperative, or shall we say *the* imperative of the Great Commission. It means to make an official announcement or a public declaration.⁸⁴ But this is not a new concept to Mark. BDAG cites 11 other places where Mark uses the term. Six of these are in the first chapter of Mark, and the vast majority are instances of people other than Jesus proclaiming. The LE is picking up on the importance that is already within the rest of that gospel.

So what is it that is to be proclaimed? Both Kraft and the LE, while emphasizing the importance of proclamation, leave the message of proclamation quite vague. At no point does Kraft give a definition of the gospel. This stands in stark contrast to the usual evangelical

⁸¹ Charles H Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 106.

⁸² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Genesis to Revelation*, ed. Leslie F Church (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1960), 205.

⁸³ George R. Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?," in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, ed. Paul Wesley Chilcote and Lacey C Warner (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 1106.

⁸⁴ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaptation of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schriften Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, 2d ed., rev.augmented (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

message about the gospel which sets out precise points to be made in evangelism. Similarly, the LE ending uses the word εὐαγγέλιον which is most simply translated as the good news or the gospel. In the early church, this was understood as the story of Jesus, his life, and ministry.⁸⁵ David Wenham emphasizes this dynamic of Mark in his book regarding oral tradition. He notes that ‘Mark includes the least amount of Jesus’ teaching...[but] goes out of his way to emphasize Jesus’ teaching and his authority as a teacher.’⁸⁶ Despite Mark’s lack of definition, Wenham argues that the gospel, which we have in written form but would have originally been oral, is essentially the story and teaching of Jesus. ‘In their distinctive ways, the different accounts [referring to the gospels] see the story and sayings of Jesus as the heart of the Christian good news and present the disciples of Jesus as having the particular role of passing his good news on to others.’⁸⁷ It may be that the LE, similar to the rest of the gospel, lacks detail about what is to be proclaimed because there was already an understanding in the 2nd century church of what the gospel entailed. From the LE, what we can deduce is that the good news was Jesus. Mary and the disciples walking in the country were to tell that they had seen Jesus; Jesus was risen. The signs that were to accompany believers would be in the name of Jesus and point to Jesus. Chilcote affirms this understanding saying that there are three elements to the gospel: the life of Jesus, his work, and the reality of God.⁸⁸ So while Kraft and the LE are not detailed in their explanation of the gospel, the understanding that the truth is all about Jesus is in agreement with the larger church both historic and present.

Both also recognize that knowledge is both experiential as well as intellectual. In the LE this is more implicit from the historical context. Modern readers must remember that the original audience of the LE would not have had access to all the gospels with the same ease that we do today. The creeds of the church that elucidate Christian doctrine did not come till much later in church history. Nineham argues that the LE ‘reflect[s] the condition of the post-apostolic Church, especially the need for unhesitating faith in the gospel of the risen Christ on the basis of the reports of the original witness.’⁸⁹ Mary and the disciples are not reporting and proclaiming what Jesus taught nor are they proclaiming doctrine. They are reporting that they have seen Jesus themselves. Similarly, and as reflected above, Kraft focuses a lot on

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ David Wenham, *From Good News to Gospels: What Did the First Christians Say about Jesus?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 13.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁸ Orlando E. Costas, “Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation,” in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, ed. Paul Wesley Chilcote and Lacey C Warner (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 737–49.

⁸⁹ D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 450.

experience, not just in his justification of power encounters but in his understanding of truth. He puts forth that when the Bible talks about knowledge that it is referring to experience rather than intellectual facts.⁹⁰ John 8:32 talks about knowing the truth using the verb γινώσκω. According to Kraft, a better translation of the Greek would be ‘experience’ rather than ‘know.’⁹¹ There is a range of meanings for γινώσκω. It can mean ‘to arrive at knowledge...to acquire information...to grasp the significance or meaning of something...to have sexual intercourse...to have to come to the knowledge...to indicate that one does know.’⁹² However, none of these are explicitly related to experience (except for the sex one, but we will not go there now). While Kraft makes this comment about the Greek every time he talks about the knowledge dimension, he never supports that argument well. His only source (which he cites once and mentions the author another time) is Kittel’s entry in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.⁹³ Kraft does not explain what Kittel’s argument is. Kittel states that γινώσκω requires an objective genitive which therefore suggests the action of knowing rather than knowledge and that it often encompasses all the senses, especially something one has seen. This is similar to an idea of experience, but it is not as explicit as Kraft makes it seem. So while the LE and Kraft may be similar in understanding truth beyond a list of facts that one can intellectually recite, there is little strength behind that argument, and it adds little to our understanding of the truth dynamic.

Differences

Kraft does not spend much time on the dynamic of truth. While he sees it as essential in his model, he devotes very little space to the exploration of this dynamic because he feels that there has been an overemphasis on the knowledge-truth dimension in Western evangelicalism.⁹⁴ Therefore, Kraft’s sections on truth comprise of a recognition that truth is essential, that Jesus’ teaching was important, and that mission has focused too much on teaching and neglected the element of experience within knowledge. This is challenging because Kraft’s overemphasis on the dimension of power as opposed to truth and allegiance (when writing about the three dimensions) contradicts his argument for balance between the

⁹⁰ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 107; Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 122.

⁹¹ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 16.

⁹² Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

⁹³ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985).

⁹⁴ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 132–33; Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 103.

dimensions.⁹⁵ In fairness to Kraft, it should be noted that he has done a fair amount of scholarly work in the missiological field of contextualization. So, he clearly thinks that a clear proclamation of the gospel is important. It just does not come out when he is speaking about the three dimensions of Christianity.

If anything, where the LE seems to subordinate power and allegiance to the truth, Kraft subordinates truth. Truth plays the support role. He states:

Jesus spent His time and energy in the teaching of truth...He punctuated His teaching with regular power encounters and appeals for allegiance. He regularly demonstrated not just talked about, both the allegiance-relational and the power-freedom dimensions as a part of His teaching of truth.⁹⁶

For Kraft, it is more important that people are freed from demonic oppression. This is partly because Kraft believes that people are unable to hear and understand the gospel until they are freed to do so.⁹⁷ While Kraft makes some good points in our tendency to overemphasize knowledge and doctrine, his subordination of truth is not supported by our reading of the LE.

The other key difference between Kraft and the LE is the interaction between revelation and truth. In the LE, the truth is shared with Jesus' followers but they do not believe until Jesus appears Himself. In addition, the message is confirmed by signs. While not explicitly talking about revelation, the dynamic of Jesus revealing Himself and the fact that Jesus continues to work alongside believers gives a sense of the concept of revelation, that proclamation and truth do not come solely from the efforts of people. In the final verse of the LE, it is interesting to note a change in verb tense in the final verse. The disciples went out (aorist/past tense) and proclaimed (aorist/past tense), but the Lord works (present, active) with them and the word is (present, active) confirmed. It may be that the author is using the historic present in order to make the account more vivid.⁹⁸ But even that could argue to emphasize the point that Jesus is working with them. It could also be interpreted that the mission of the disciples and the early church is not something that is just historic but a work of Jesus in the present as well. The job of the church is proclamation but this cannot be separated from revelation.⁹⁹ The concept of revelation as discussed by Barth adds a lot to both Kraft and the LE's understanding of truth because it merges the concepts of intellectual

⁹⁵ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 102–4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹⁸ Jeremy Duff and John William Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78.

⁹⁹ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, trans. George Thomas Thomson (London: SCM Press, 2001), 11.

truth and experience as well as the roles of God and humans in mission. Barth argues ‘In the Word which the Church has to proclaim the truth is involved, not in a provisional, secondary sense, but in the primary sense of the Word itself – the Logos is involved, and is demonstrated and revealed in the human reason...that is, as meaning, as truth to be learned.’¹⁰⁰ But it is also experience facilitated by God:

Knowledge of God takes place where there is actual experience that God speaks, that He so represents Himself to man that he cannot fail to see and hear Him, where, in a situation which he has not brought about, in which he becomes incomprehensible to himself, man sees himself faced with the fact that he lives with God and God with him, because so it has pleased God. Knowledge of God takes place where divine revelation takes place, illumination of man by God, transmission of human knowledge, instruction of man by this incomparable Teacher.¹⁰¹

Kraft limits truth primarily to experience. The LE has a bit more complexity to its understanding. Both understandings would be strengthened with a theology of revelation.

Implications

The biggest implication for our understanding of mission in regards to the encounter of truth is the necessity for proclamation. Lee talks about the debate in mission between social action and proclamation and the tendency of organisations to favour one or the other.¹⁰² The five marks of mission that are emphasized by the Church of England try to hold both of these equally. Proclamation and teaching are only two of the five marks and are not exalted above the others. But the LE would support an understanding of mission as being about proclamation, and helping others and the transformation of society would be signs that confirm the proclamation. Kraft would agree with this purpose of signs and states that bringing people to a knowledge of Jesus is the most important, which he frames in the allegiance dynamic.¹⁰³ But our study of Kraft also shows how easy it is to get the balance wrong in practice if not theory. While Kraft states the importance of allegiance and a balance of all the dynamics, he tends to subordinate the truth dynamic in favour of power encounters.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 23–24.

¹⁰² Martin Lee, “The Five Marks of Mission,” *Evangel* 26, no. 3 (September 2008): 65–65.

¹⁰³ Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 123.

On the surface, proclaiming the gospel looks simple. We have seen how the LE and Kraft do not give much detail as to the content of the gospel but focuses the gospel on the life and ministry of Jesus. However, proclamation is not simply telling people about Jesus; proclamation is about communicating to specific people in a specific culture a message that does not change and mediating how much is necessary to share at any one time. The gospel needs to be made clear to every person and every culture. This is where Kraft's work in contextualization comes in. Contextualization is the process by which the gospel is made applicable to a specific culture or person in a way that guards the meaning of scripture, but makes the concepts of scripture understandable. Kraft uses the word 'appropriate.' '...we all seek... a Christian expression that is appropriate both to a given social context and to the Scriptures.'¹⁰⁴ It's a process of translation and interpretation. Without contextualization, our proclamation will have little effect. Evangelism cannot only be testifying to this truth but interpreting it for today. At the same time, the truth dynamic is different because though we contextualize it to communicate clearly, it does not change. Power encounters and allegiance change from culture to culture and generation to generation. The way we understand power and the signs that confirm the gospel look different today than they did in the early church, which is why we struggle so much with these lists of miracles. Allegiance, while still participating in the ritual of baptism, actually looks quite different as well. Baptism does not have the same impact that it did in the early church. Our allegiance in reality is acted out in a different way. But the truth stays the same. Yes, the way we proclaim the truth needs to vary from culture to culture, even from person to person, but the content of that proclamation, who Jesus is and what he did- that is timeless. Finally, the content of the gospel, or lack thereof is important for our understanding of mission today. What pushes Kraft away from exploring the truth dynamic is an overemphasis on knowledge and facts. While he probably takes this too far, there is something valuable in remembering that the gospel is the simple revelation of who Jesus is and what he did. Those who become Christians do not need a detailed statement and understanding of all the doctrines of the church, at least not initially. They need to encounter the truth of Jesus, which is simple and yet marvelously complex.

¹⁰⁴ Charles H Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena, Calif: William Carey Library, 2005), 4.

Allegiance

Our final dynamic from Kraft's model and the LE is that of allegiance or relationship. Kraft states, 'God calls people to commit themselves to him as their primary allegiance. The Christian message involves an invitation to this initial commitment, followed by a continuing series of invitations to greater and greater commitment to God.'¹⁰⁵ Kraft contends that this is the most important dimension of Christianity because the requirement for salvation is a relationship with Christ.¹⁰⁶ 'The allegiance-relationship dimension is quite distinct from the other two dimensions. For example, no one becomes a Christian simply through knowledge or power.'¹⁰⁷ This dimension is also different because it encompasses conversion as a decision in time but also the continued growth of Christians. 'The dynamic of this dimension is growth, a process that involves change in the direction of Christlikeness on the part of the convert and movement into closer and closer relationships with Christ and His people.'¹⁰⁸ While we do not see the discipleship aspect in the LE as much, we do see a theme of allegiance primarily from the perspective of the theme of belief and unbelief. While both the LE and Kraft emphasize the truth as a dynamic of mission, the emphasis of belief is much stronger in the LE. The theme of belief and unbelief (though phrased in a variety of ways) is picked up by most commentators as one of the key themes in the LE.¹⁰⁹ This pattern is seen from the very beginning of the LE with the interaction between the disciples and Mary. Mary says that she saw Jesus, but they did not believe her. In vs. 12-13, we see the same pattern. Jesus appears to two people as they were walking. Again, they go back and tell the rest, but they do not believe. In the Luke account, as the 2 Emmaus travelers are telling the disciples, Jesus appears. It is almost as if they do not have time to not believe, but the LE separates the two events creating the pattern and emphasis on unbelief. In verse 14, it is only 'later' that Jesus appears to the eleven and rebukes them for their 'lack of faith and stubbornness'. This seems like especially harsh language to the common reader, especially given the knowledge of what the disciples had experienced up to this point. However, Moloney puts forth that 'The author sees the disciples' attitude as typifying that of many in his own day; for that reason he describes it- and Jesus' upbraiding of it- in severer terms than any that St Mark

¹⁰⁵ Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1996), 453.

¹⁰⁶ Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 123.

¹⁰⁷ Charles H Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 105.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁰⁹ Collins, *Mark*; Evans et al., *Mark 8:27 - 16:20*; Lane, *The Gospel of Mark.*

uses with reference to the disciples.¹¹⁰ Moloney argues that the LE was written for missionaries, and so the LE's emphasis on belief and unbelief and the implications of that are for the encouragement of workers who will see some believe and some not.¹¹¹ 'In the literary context, the saying functions to reassure the disciples that their proclamation will be effective, bringing salvation to those who respond favorably and judgment to those who reject their message.'¹¹² We do not just see a call to proclaim the truth but we also see the reality that some people will accept it and others will not.

From this passage, Lane argues that the LE sets up a doctrine of repentance, confession, and conversion.¹¹³ This is a bit of a stretch. There is certainly a theme around belief and conversion, but we do not really see the remorse of the disciples, their repentance or even necessarily their conversion. Instead, we see their actions at the end which are a result of these things and the foretelling of others' conversions through mission. Like the other dimensions, there are similarities and differences between Kraft and the LE's understandings of allegiance.

Similarities

The first similarity between Kraft's understanding of allegiance and the LE is the close tie between allegiance and truth. Kraft states that 'Truth encounters are about understanding. Prior to making a commitment to Christ, we need a certain level of understanding of the truth.'¹¹⁴ One cannot truly give allegiance to Jesus without first understanding the truth of who Jesus is. Smith, in discussing conversion, also ties the two together. 'The whole of our Christian experience is the working out of the full meaning and implication of our conversion. To live in truth is to act in the world in a manner consistent with or at least reflecting our conversion.'¹¹⁵ In the LE, we see this connection within the response of the disciples to truth, initially not believing nor showing allegiance to what Jesus taught, and then the connection in verse 16 of belief and baptism in order to be saved. In addition, proclamation of the truth seems to be a response to the disciples renewed allegiance to Jesus. Bates offers an interesting perspective on allegiance by including belief in the truth as one

¹¹⁰ Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 451.

¹¹¹ Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark*, 362.

¹¹² Collins, *Mark*, 810.

¹¹³ Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 593–600.

¹¹⁴ Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 453.

¹¹⁵ Gordon T Smith, *Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Pub. Group, 2010), 1.

part of allegiance. ‘...the first dimension of allegiance is intellectual agreement with the truthfulness of the foundational Jesus story, but it also requires more. The second necessary component is confession of loyalty to Jesus as king.’¹¹⁶ For Bates and Kraft, allegiance is the response to the truth. Bates would be very careful though to make sure that these two things are distinct. Our response to the gospel should not be mistaken as part of the gospel.¹¹⁷ While all the dimensions are interrelated, truth and allegiance seem to be more strongly tied together than power. Allegiance and truth run throughout the LE with the concept of power confirming the truth and testifies to the allegiance shown. Kraft does not go into a lot of detail about allegiance, but acknowledges that allegiance is a product of truth.

The other similarity in regards to allegiance is the combination of action with allegiance. In the LE, allegiance to Jesus culminates in mission. Kraft shows a similar thought in relation to belief and action, but he speaks about it in relation to the truth dynamic. This is likely because of his lack of development of the truth and allegiance dynamics in favour of focusing on power. However, when Kraft talks about the necessity of living out the truth, it aligns closely with an understanding of allegiance both in the LE and in Bates’ work on allegiance. Bates argues that the word πιστεύω, which is often translated as ‘believe’, would be better translated as allegiance because ‘true pistis is not an irrational launching into the void but a reasonable, action-oriented response...’¹¹⁸ He refers to allegiance as the ‘fundamental framework into which works must fit as part of our salvation.’¹¹⁹ Essentially, Bates is contending that belief is related to both truth and action and that the church has recently focused too much on the belief and not enough on the call to allegiance, which is Kraft’s argument as well. Smith argues along the same lines:

When we use the language of wisdom, we stress that it is not merely cerebral; it is knowledge that is lived, truth that is obeyed; it is light to the mind and to the feet so that we walk in the truth as we walk in the light. It must be both. The test of authentic faith is not knowledge, but obedience. We call for the renewal of the mind, a renewal that is not just cerebral but also experiential.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Matthew W Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King*, 2017, 96.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹²⁰ Smith, *Transforming Conversion*, 98.

This combination of truth, allegiance, and action is precisely what is being worked out in the LE. Allegiance did not come easy to the disciples, but when it did, it led to proclaiming the good news ‘everywhere’. It was not enough for new believers to just believe, but they also needed to be baptized. Ingrained in the concept of allegiance is action, which is arguably what sets it apart from the truth dimension.

Differences

Though Kraft and the LE agree on the strong ties of allegiance with action and truth, they differ significantly in how they view allegiance being worked out. First, Kraft sees a major dynamic of allegiance being relationship with other Christians. Kraft argues that Christian relationships are a major factor in bringing people to Christ. ‘...though many are able to establish a relationship on their own once they have heard the message, as a general principle it takes a relationship to bring about a relationship.’¹²¹ Kraft is not alone in this understanding. Smith argues that a key part of conversion is that it is inclusion into the body of Christ and a new community.¹²² ‘As often as not, conversion will be a conversion both to the church and to Christ, and the conversion to Christ will be cultivated and nurtured within a church community.’¹²³ Research shows that relationships and pastoral care have a greater impact on someone converting than intellectual facts and understanding.¹²⁴ But we do not see this in the LE. Not only is there a lack of mention of relationships at the end of the LE, apart from a relationship with Jesus as he continues to work with believers, but relationships in the LE do not bring about any results either. The LE starts out with Mary Magdalene going to the disciples and telling them that Jesus was alive, but they did not believe. Then the two people walking in the country come and say the same thing, but they did not believe. We do not know who the two people in the country were or what their relationship to the other disciples was, so at best we might say that they did not really know each other well, so the disciples did not believe these two. This seems unlikely, but it could address the issues of relationship and lack of belief. But the same cannot be said for Mary Magdalene. She has been in the story for a while and is intimately connected with the group of disciples. Did they not believe her because she is a woman? Perhaps. But both of these stories and the later content of the LE

¹²¹ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 105.

¹²² Smith, *Transforming Conversion*, 37–40.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹²⁴ Alan Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations: The Origins of Mission in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1998), 119.

does not support an understanding of mission and allegiance that sees human relationships as central to mission.

Of course, there are other arguments in favour of relationship in mission in the LE. First, no one is arguing that a relationship with a Christian automatically means people will believe. Perhaps that is what the LE has picked up on. While the LE certainly emphasizes the fact that some will believe and some will not, it seems peculiar to use these two stories and then not mention relationships at all if relationships are actually central to mission. Secondly, one might argue that relationships, the church, and community were so central that it is not necessary to mention it. This may be the case as well, but it is largely an argument from silence, and therefore not strong enough for our argument here. Finally and oppositely, someone might argue that this is early mission, and therefore the structures of church and church community and catechesis do not yet exist or are in the process of forming. This would be a decent argument if the LE was dated earlier. However, if we accept that the LE was written in the 2nd century, there is a lot of church structure and understanding already in place which we can see from Paul's letters. From a sociological view and more recent history, one can argue that relationships are important to mission, but it is a tenuous assumption at best that the early church understood mission in terms of relationship.

Another key difference between Kraft and the LE is their understanding of baptism. Kraft is largely silent on the issue of baptism when it comes to the dynamic of allegiance. He does speak about it in regards to contextualization and radically suggests that the rite of baptism may be something that should change from culture to culture so that initiation rituals would be culturally appropriate and significant.¹²⁵ To be fair, the LE and the gospel of Mark does not say much about baptism either.¹²⁶ However, in verse 16 baptism is placed right alongside belief in order to be saved. It is a central component. In addition, when we read baptism, we must understand the radical thing that it was rather than associating it with our nice, family ceremonies of today. Baptism in the early church was about allegiance.

Baptism itself is a political act as much as it is a moral act. Through baptism we declare our ultimate allegiance is not to family of origin, tribe, or nation, but to Christ; baptism is an act of defiance against any human authority—family or culture or nation—that would in any way, shape, or form, compete with or undermine our loyalty to Christ.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity*, 112.

¹²⁶ Collins, *Mark*, 810.

¹²⁷ Smith, *Transforming Conversion*, 153.

Baptism was not a small commitment; it was a life changing decision that changed your status and possibly your community. ‘...the cost of conversion for such people remained enormously high. In many situations, transfer of allegiance to another religion was viewed by the family or the local community as a form of treason- a betrayal of the ancestral gods.’¹²⁸ The LE may not say a lot about baptism, but its mention shows us the importance of allegiance as a factor in how people will be saved.

Implications

The key implication that we can take from Kraft’s and the LE’s dynamic of allegiance is the central role it plays in mission. Calling people to allegiance to Jesus is important.

To bring good news of salvation is to call for a commitment to Jesus Christ. An analysis of the evangelistic practice of the early church as described in the New Testament reveals that for the latter evangelism was not only a testimony to Christ’s saving action and an interpretation of the meaning of salvation in the light of man’s historical struggles, but a call to a life of commitment to the Lord.¹²⁹

Bates puts it pointedly, ‘This point should be regarded as absolutely nonnegotiable: a true gospel invitation must summon the hearer toward a confession of allegiance to Jesus as king.’¹³⁰ This issue is most dominant in the world of missiology within the discussion of contextualization and insider movements. Insider movements ‘lovingly encourage secret believers to go forward in the Christian life without publicly professing themselves as Christians in the sense of separation from the fellowship of their own people.’¹³¹ There is a lot more detail to the missiology behind this concept which we do not have space for here. Insider movement practitioners rightly question what Christian allegiance is meant to be towards. Too often Christian missions have called people to allegiance to the Western church and Western culture rather than to allegiance to Jesus. This is an important critique, but it should not negate the importance of calling people to allegiance to Jesus in mission. The LE says that it is through belief *and baptism* that people are saved. The disciples showed their

¹²⁸ Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations*, xix.

¹²⁹ Orlando E. Costas, “Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation,” pt. 800.

¹³⁰ Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*, 199.

¹³¹ L. D. Waterman, “Insider Movements: Current Issues in Discussion,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 37, no. 4 (October 2013): 293.

allegiance by going out and proclaiming the gospel. This is not to say that insider movements are the only ones that need to consider the theology and importance of allegiance. Those doing mission in the first world need to consider the allegiances that we fail to call out. Allegiances to capitalism, materialism, politics, and racism also oppose a sole allegiance to Jesus.

Overall Implications

In this paper we have explored the longer ending of Mark through a missional hermeneutic, especially comparing and contrasting it with Charles Kraft's three dimensions of Christianity. We have looked at the implications of each dimension separately, so now we turn to the overall implications for our understanding of mission. First, we must be careful not to draw meanings that were not intended from the text. The LE was not written as a manual for mission in the 2nd century. The purpose of the LE is debated between simply offering a better conclusion to the gospel of Mark to being an encouragement to the early church's missionaries and Christians. However, no commentators believe that it was written to give guidance on how mission should take place. Rather, the LE, perhaps unintentionally, offers us a view of how the early church might have understood mission. In looking at Kraft, it is interesting to observe in his research how his dimensions/encounters develop from encounters that are needed for people to come to Christ into dimensions of the Christian faith. The results of our conversation with Kraft and the LE are a hermeneutic for reading mission in the Bible, a framework for evaluating mission today, an understanding of our identity as Christians, and a reminder of Jesus' ministry alongside us.

First, they give us a new hermeneutic for reading the Bible missionally. Further research into the early church and what the church fathers said about mission would confirm whether the LE's understanding of mission was held by the wider church or just by this subgroup; though the canonization of the LE certainly leads us to believe that it is in line with the church's understanding. In addition, we can use this framework as set out by Kraft and the LE to explore the rest of scripture. I hypothesize, and more research would definitely be needed to confirm, that the themes of power, truth, and allegiance can be found throughout the Bible. Where do we see power, truth, and allegiance in the story of Abraham, Moses, or the people of Israel? We recognize the issues of allegiance in the story of Ruth, but is there also truth and power encounters? When the prophets reprimand Israel, is the issue allegiance

or lack of power encounters with the one true God? There is not space in this paper to explore that, but it is a framework worth considering in our hermeneutical practice.

Additionally, this study has given us a framework to evaluate mission. Our missional reading of the LE in conversation with Kraft's three dimensions should remind us of the balance necessary in mission and discipleship. This is ironic because so often the LE is presented in an imbalanced way- focusing primarily on the issue of miracles. But we have noted that the three dimensions are all present in the LE and interconnected. Kraft argues for this balance as well. 'The object of three-dimensional Christianity is balanced, well-rounded, scriptural growth toward maturity in Christ—as opposed to an unbalanced and partial growth mainly in one dimension.'¹³² Jesus' ministry exemplified all three dimensions. Jesus spent a lot of time teaching, but teaching specifically about our relationship to God and one another. While we are reminded that balance is key, our study of Kraft also warns us against an overfocus on one dimension. The majority of his writing around the dimensions focuses on the power dimension. Understandably, we all need to focus on specific areas and go deeper in one area than another at times, but it is a good reminder of our human tendency to focus on what we are most passionate about to the exclusion of other things. Kraft's scholarship needs to be held alongside scholars that are writing about truth and allegiance. When we look at current mission and current projects of the church, we need to ask where we see power encounters, where the truth is being proclaimed, and where and how are we calling people to allegiance. If we only proclaim the gospel, then faith becomes about head knowledge. If there is only power encounters then mission is limited to magic and acts of kindness. We cannot call people to allegiance, if we have not told them about the Jesus to whom they should submit or helped them to experience his power. This framework could change the way we evaluate mission and potentially the effectiveness of mission today.

Another possible implication of a missional reading of the LE as we have seen here, is the integrated understanding of mission and identity. Many people like to compare the LE with the great commission in Matthew and Luke, which makes sense given that Mark 16 contains its own commandment toward mission. There are similarities between these: Luke and Mark talk about sending a helper and the power they will receive, Matthew and Mark talk about baptism. But they are not uniform commandments. What is distinctive in Mark is that it is opened up to all believers and the passage seems to focus more on the disciple than the method of mission. Underneath this exploration of the ending of the gospel and how the

¹³² Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, 132.

gospel is applied within the 2nd century church is also an exploration of the identity of the Christian. The Christian is one who believes, is baptized, and shows the power of God. To put it in Kraft's language, a Christian is one who has accepted the truth, given their allegiance to God, and therefore, is able to access the power of God. Henderson argues 'Mark 16:9-20 moves the resurrection story beyond fearful, silent women towards a complex portrait of Jesus' followers that carries forward- and develops- Mark's own claims.'¹³³

Finally, another focus of the LE that should be applied to modern mission is the focus on the presence of Jesus with the disciples even after the ascension. Henderson, like Cadwallader and Moloney, argues that the LE gives us an early church interpretation of the gospel of Mark and that it specifically sheds light on the topic of discipleship.¹³⁴ 'To view the LE exclusively as discontinuous corrective, then, is to ignore its rendering of the gospel's own portrait of Jesus' followers as perpetually dependent on and engaged with the living Lord.'¹³⁵ '...the opening chapters of Mark's gospel establish discipleship as a matter of both being with Jesus and engaging in his kingdom mission.'¹³⁶ It is interesting to note that when Jesus originally calls the disciples in Mark 3, he calls them ἵνα ᾤσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ, and in the LE, from the beginning Mary goes to τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ, those who were with him and it ends with a similar idea of συνεργοῦντος, working with them.¹³⁷ In Mark, discipleship begins in the presence of Jesus and mission continues in the presence of Jesus.¹³⁸ When the LE says that Jesus continues to work with the believers, it is after the enthronement verses. One would have assumed a reference to the Holy Spirit working with them and empowering them, but the LE focuses on Jesus. Perhaps this focus is a good balance in missiology to the focus on Missio Dei- the mission of God, and charismatic gifts through the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The longer ending of Mark is an oft overlooked but valuable piece of scripture that through a missional reading allows us to see how the early church may have understood mission. It strangely echoes the themes of Charles Kraft's three dimensions of Christianity: power, truth,

¹³³ Suzanne Watts Henderson, "DISCIPLESHIP AFTER THE RESURRECTION: SCRIBAL HERMENEUTICS IN THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 63, no. 1 (2012): 108.

¹³⁴ Henderson, "DISCIPLESHIP AFTER THE RESURRECTION."

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹³⁷ Collins, *Mark*, 808.

¹³⁸ Henderson, "DISCIPLESHIP AFTER THE RESURRECTION," 111–13.

and allegiance. These three themes can be seen in every section of the longer ending and exploration of them through conversation with Kraft's model has allowed us to see their importance in mission and how they might be worked out. They are a critique that the church would do well to consider when we pursue new methods and understandings of mission.

Appendix A
Translation of Mark 16:9-20

9 Ἀναστὰς δὲ πρωτὶ πρώτη σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρῶτον Μαρία τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, παρ' ἧς ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια. 10 ἐκείνη πορευθεῖσα ἀπήγγειλεν τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ γενομένοις πενθοῦσιν καὶ κλαίουσιν· 11 κάκεῖνοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἠπίστησαν. 12 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δυσὶν ἐξ αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερῶθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ πορευομένοις εἰς ἀγρόν· 13 κάκεῖνοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς· οὐδὲ ἐκείνοις ἐπίστευσαν. 14 Ὑστερον [δὲ] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐφανερῶθη καὶ ὠνειδίσεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγγεγερμένον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν. 15 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει. 16 ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται. 17 σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύσασιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καιναῖς, 18 [καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν] ὄφεις ἀροῦσιν κἂν θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάβῃ, ἐπὶ ἄρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσιν καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν. 19 Ὁ μὲν οὖν κύριος Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τὸ λαλῆσαι αὐτοῖς ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ. 20 ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ, τοῦ κυρίου συνεργοῦντος καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιοῦντος διὰ τῶν ἐπακολουθούντων σημείων.¹³⁹

Having risen in the early morning first (thing) on the Sabbath, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene from whom he cast out 7 demons. As she was going, she reported this to those who were with him; they were mourning and weeping. They, having heard that he lives and that he was seen by her, they refused to believe. But after this there were two of them walking around in the countryside, he appeared in another form going to them. As they were going away, they report to the rest; no one believed.

But afterwards, while they were reclining, he appeared to the eleven and he reproached the unbelief of them and stubbornness that they did not believe those seeing him arose. And he said to them, 'Having been sent into the all the world, preach the good news to all creation. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved, but the unbelieving will be condemned. But a sign will accompany those who believed; in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new languages, (and in the entanglements with the world) (footnote), they will pick up snakes and if the will drink something deadly it will not injure them, they will place a hand upon the sick and they will be well. So, therefore, after the Lord Jesus spoke to them, he

¹³⁹ Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece 28 - Na28. (Hendrickson Pub, 2017).

was taken up into the heavens and placed on the right hand of God. But going out, they preached everywhere, working with the lord and the word is confirmed through the accompanying of signs.

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