

2016

# Did Saint Paul Take Up the Great Commission?: Discipleship Transposed into a Pauline Key (Chapter 7 of Ethics and Ecclesia)

Nijay Gupta

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfes>

 Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

---

# DID SAINT PAUL TAKE UP THE GREAT COMMISSION?: DISCIPLESHIP TRANSPOSED INTO A PAULINE KEY

Nijay Gupta

## *Introduction*

The term 'discipleship' is pervasive in church language, and for good reason since Jesus had disciples and called them to go out and make more disciples. What is particularly interesting about the ecclesial use of the language of discipleship is how it is used by believers to refer to a kind of general Christian category that would align with what academics call 'ethics'. For many churches, denominations, seminaries, and biblical scholars, discipleship is equivalent to Christian obedience to God.<sup>1</sup> A cursory look at denominational vision statements will bear this out. The United Methodist Church, for example, claims, 'The church calls our response to God Christian discipleship.'<sup>2</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America places the following conviction under the heading of 'discipleship': 'To live our lives in and for Christ in both church and society'.<sup>3</sup>

None of this should be that unsettling since discipleship is central to Jesus' own theological programme, and the Gospels certainly inspire their readers to take up the cross and follow Jesus wholeheartedly (Mt. 16.24//Mk 8.34//Lk. 9.23). However, the central question I want to raise, particularly in view of the Church (*ecclesia*) and 'ethics', as the focus of this collection of essays, is this: even though a strong case can be made that the term 'discipleship' should be a central concept for Christian obedience, are we missing something if it becomes the *only* way we

1. See N. T. Wright, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); W. Brueggemann, *The Word that Redescribes the World: Bible and Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); J. Lunde, *Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

2. 'Becoming Disciples', *The People of the United Methodist Church*, available online: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/becoming-disciples> (accessed 15 July 2015).

3. 'Discipleship', *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, available online: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship.aspx> (accessed 23 May 2013).

think about Christian obedience? Again, I am not suggesting it is improper to think of Christian obedience in terms of 'discipleship'; however, it maintains a kind of exclusive status as *the* language of Christian obedience.<sup>4</sup>

One might wonder – *who cares? Why not allow it to hold this paramount status vis-à-vis ethics?* There are, I believe, a number of reasons why this is an important question for the church to address, but I would like to organize the discussion around two historical issues and conclude with a theological one. At the outset here, though, I will simply say that the Christian language of obedience should reflect the language and emphases of *Scripture*, all of Scripture, and, thus, we would do well to pay attention to how all parts of the Bible talk about ethics and obedience.

### *Historical Perspectives*

Let us begin with the historical perspective. While 'discipleship' language is 'biblical' (in the sense that the word 'disciple' appears in Scripture), it is easily demonstrable that it comes from the four Gospels and Acts alone. That means that, as a conceptually distinctive category, the language of discipleship (particularly *mathētēs* and *mathēteuō*) is absent from twenty-two books of the New Testament (NT). Put another way, while Matthew, Mark, Luke and John refer to disciples and discipleship; the term 'disciple' (*mathētēs*) is not used even once by Paul, James, Jude, Peter and the author of Hebrews. It is one thing for them not to encourage their readers to 'make disciples', as it were, but they seem to go out of their way to refrain from using the language at all.

Thus, a central question, if we focus on one important NT writer in particular, is, *Did St. Paul take up the great commission* (Mt. 28.18-20)? Given what appears to be Paul's avoidance of the term 'disciple', it is difficult to answer this unequivocally as 'yes.' Famously, French theologian Alfred Loisy once said, 'Jesus called for the kingdom and the church showed up.'<sup>5</sup> Well, he might put the matter under discussion today like this: 'Jesus called for disciples, and Paul ended up converting sinners into saints!' All joking aside, if Jesus did call for his own disciples to be *disciple-makers* as of first priority, why does this language appear to evaporate in the epistles and Revelation? And, of course, what can this observation contribute to the moral life of the church today?

To ask why Paul did not ostensibly take up the Great Commission is to engage

4. This may, perhaps, be evidenced by the growing popularity of the expression 'discipleship-ethics'; see G. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 160; C. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 31; D. E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 5; N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teachings of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 156.

5. A. Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église* (Paris: Fishbacher, 1902), 153.

in a very old debate about Jesus and Paul.<sup>6</sup> Much could be said regarding this debate about whether Paul is a true follower of Jesus or one who distorts Jesus' message, but I will say that most topics related to that debate swirl around soteriology and the divinity of Jesus himself. While these are important topics, the ones that we have set on the table of discussion on this occasion are rarely considered: ethics, formation, and mission. Again, *did St. Paul take up the Great Commission?* Interestingly, in 1 Corinthians 1.17, Paul explicitly says 'Christ did not send me to baptize ...' – a statement that seems to set Paul apart from the work of the twelve disciples as recipients of the Great Commission. How is it possible that Paul was *not* sent to baptize, but the Matthean disciples were explicitly told *to* baptize?

In order to work through such perplexities, we will need to address these historical questions: First, what does the term 'disciple' mean when related to Jesus and the disciples he called? Second, what did Jesus have in mind when he issued the 'Great Commission' that called the Twelve (minus one) to 'go and make disciples?' Third, what could explain the early Christian movement away from the terminology of 'disciples' as demonstrated in its absence from Paul's letters and the rest of the epistles?

To begin with the first question, what did it mean to be a 'disciple' of Jesus during his earthly life? The Greek word *mathētēs* literally means 'learner', but in the first century Greco-Roman world it tended to be used with regard to a student who attached himself to an authoritative teacher.<sup>7</sup> This is the broader context in which Jesus used the word, but it is quite apparent that he shaped it in his own way.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, there is a kind of pattern of use, a technical employment of the term that emerges from close study of the Gospels. Those men that could be considered *bona fide* 'disciples' were people who: (1) were called by Jesus himself; (2) submitted to the authority of Jesus; (3) accepted serious cost (as comes with abandonment of family and livelihood); (4) set out on Jesus' own mission; and (5) established a community around him. Disciples were, thus, 'followers' insofar as

6. See A. J. M. Wedderburn (ed.), *Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989); Wrede ranks with the most negative conclusions, infamously labelling Paul the 'second founder of Christianity', (see W. Wrede, *Paul* [Halle, Gebauer-Schwetschke, 1904; ET Boston: Beacon, 1908], 180); for a more positive assessment, see D. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); T. D. Still (ed.), *Jesus and Paul Reconnected: Fresh Pathways into the Old Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); D. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

7. The first three chapters of Michael Wilkins' 1988 monograph offer a helpful background to the NT use of *mathētēs*, both in view of the Hellenistic as well as Jewish worlds; see *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel* (NovTSup 59; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 1–125.

8. See H. C. Kee, *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 399; C. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 203.

they heeded Jesus' call and trusted him as a true teacher.<sup>9</sup> These characteristics I have mentioned are apparently true of the twelve disciples that were close to Jesus. It appears that occasionally the evangelists could slip into using the word *disciple* for a wider group, but this is somewhat rare.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, we can see that the word *mathētēs*, 'disciple', was used as something of a 'technical term' in the Gospels, referring to the special set of followers who were called to be with Jesus, to learn his teachings and ways, and to carry out a mission in his name.<sup>11</sup> That brings us to the second matter – the Great Commission of Matthew 28.18-20. Mark, of course, records a brief word of commission from Jesus at the end of his Gospel (16.15), but Matthew's statement is considerably more robust by comparison. What did the Matthean Jesus mean here by 'make disciples'? According to the pattern of use of the language of 'disciple' in the Gospels as mentioned above, only *Jesus* could 'make disciples', insofar as he is the only one who could call them, be with them, train them, and empower them. Obviously, the Matthean Jesus extends, post-Resurrection, the opportunity to be a 'disciple' beyond previously restrictive criteria in view of a long-term, worldwide mission – what Richard de Ridder calls a 'disciple fellowship'.<sup>12</sup> As John Nolland puts it, 'Matthew indicates that the discipleship of the Twelve, though unique and unrepeatable, embodies patterns of discipleship which are of a more general relevance'.<sup>13</sup>

So, then, how are these worldwide disciples made? What qualifies them as disciples? Jesus goes on to mention baptism and the learning and obeying of Jesus' teachings. There is a presumption, with these explications, that 'disciples-at-large' are those who bear allegiance to Jesus as ultimate authority.<sup>14</sup> That brings us to our third question. If Jesus called the Twelve (minus Judas) to go out and 'make disciples', and if *disciple* could now be a term for a broader group of those

9. See D. R. Bauer, 'The Major Characters of Matthew's Story: Their Function and Significance', *Int* 46 (4) (1992): 357–67; G. Theissen, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 213–16; J. P. Meier, 'The Disciples of Christ: Who Were They?', *Mid-Stream* 1–2 (1999): 129–35.

10. See Jn 6.60.

11. See P. Nepper-Christensen, 'μαθητής', in *EDNT*, 2: 373–4.

12. See R. R. de Ridder, *Discipling the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971).

13. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1265; similarly see B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought* (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980): 'In this passage no distinction is made between the close circle of the eleven disciples and all the disciples of the future. Just as Jesus made disciples, so the disciples themselves are to make disciples' (p. 109).

14. R. T. France uses the language of 'allegiance' (*Matthew* [TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 414); L. Morris talks about 'commitment' (*The Gospel According to Matthew* [PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 746); see also D. E. Garland, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 273. Hagner interprets this especially in view of the language of obedience to Jesus' teaching and Matthew's overall concern for righteousness; see *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33B; Waco: Word, 1995), 886.

committed to Jesus, why is this word (*mathētēs*) entirely absent from the Christian vocabulary after Jesus' ministry (aside from Acts, which we will address below)? Why do we not read, 'Paul, to the disciples in Thessalonica' or 'James, the disciple of Jesus, to the disciples in the Diaspora?' Or why did John not write to the *disciples* in the seven cities in the book of Revelation?

One reasonable proposal is that the early church shied away from the word 'disciple' out of recognition and respect for the Twelve. Perhaps many Christians, after Jesus' resurrection, did not feel it natural to ascribe to themselves the key term used for the initial followers of Jesus that were called by the Master.<sup>15</sup> If that is the case, the early church chose to retain that technical sense of 'disciple' the word appears to have in most of its occurrences in the Gospels, even in spite of the 'Great Commission'. A second reason may be that the word 'disciple' had a teacher-student association that was quite appropriate for the period of the earthly ministry of Jesus the teacher, but which was somehow no longer appropriate in view of his resurrection and ascension. For the Twelve, Jesus taught them in person, with human words, and they listened and learned as *mathētai*. Yet, Christians after the ascension knew Jesus in a completely different way, not primarily as Teacher, but as saviour, Lord, and messiah.<sup>16</sup> For example, Victor Furnish observes that Paul never refers to Jesus as a teacher. Even in 1 Corinthians 7.10-11, when Paul is responding to issues related to divorce in the Corinthian community, he mentions instructions from Jesus, but does not describe them as 'teachings', nor does he call Jesus 'teacher', where it might be natural to do so. Furnish writes, 'It is ... significant that he has not employed the name "Jesus," but one of the church's titles for Jesus. Neither here nor elsewhere does the apostle refer to Jesus as a "teacher," or use a phrase like the "teaching of Jesus." ... Here it is Jesus "the Lord" not Jesus the teacher whose authority is invoked.'<sup>17</sup>

So, what do we make of this? Historically, while the language of discipleship was central to Jesus' earthly programme of ministry, not long after his death, resurrection, and ascension, the earliest Christians moved away from this terminology in view of *other* themes, terms, metaphors, and ideas related to Christian

15. The most thorough discussion of this matter appears in Paul Trebilco's essay on the disciples in his monograph *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Regarding the restrictive use of the word *mathētēs*, Trebilco writes, 'I have suggested that Jesus transformed and radicalized the meaning of *mathētai*, so that it was particularly associated with his call to follow him, which involved literal itinerancy and breaking ties with family and livelihood, as well as danger, hostility, and cross-bearing' (229–30); See also J. G. Samra, 'A Biblical View of Discipleship', *Bib Sac* 160 (2003): 219–34 (223); cf. H. Weder, 'Disciple, Discipleship', in *ABD* 2: 20710.

16. See Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 229–31: 'Paul did not see himself, or other Christians, simply as adherents of Jesus; other terms expressed their relationship to the risen Jesus much more adequately' (p. 230).

17. V. P. Furnish, *Jesus According to Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 42.

obedience, formation, and mission. So, in light of this historical shift, does this mean that it is a mistake for modern churches and Christian organizations to cling so exclusively to this language of discipleship?

### *The Literary-Hermeneutical Question*

This brings us to an important hermeneutical question: What role should the Gospels play in the discernment and construction of Christian formation and mission? It might seem *apropos* to view the Gospels as information important for *converting* to Christianity, while the rest of the NT is meant to teach doctrine and ethics to young and growing Christians. This perspective has some *prima facie* logic – the Gospels convey the Gospel while Paul teaches orthodoxy and proper Christian practice. However, there are a number of considerations that point entirely towards a different understanding of the Gospels and of Paul. When one looks at the ostensible *purposes* of the Gospels, as well as the entire picture of how discipleship language is actually *used*, it becomes clear that the fourfold Gospel witness is just as important for Christian formation as it is for initial belief.

Let us start with the genre of the Gospels. Into what kind of literary category do these documents fit? What kind of ‘book’ is Mark, for example? Obviously, they are called ‘Gospels’, and we treat them today as a literary category in and of themselves, but it is all-but-certain that Mark was the first of this type of genre and, thus, we can still ask what Mark thought *he* was doing.<sup>18</sup> To put the matter another way: if the Gospel of Mark showed up in the mail at the library in ancient Alexandria, on what shelf would a librarian put this volume?

The prevailing perspective in NT scholarship accepts that the Gospels fit broadly into the category of ancient biography (*bios*).<sup>19</sup> Now, to best understand why this information is important, we must recognize how ancient Greco-Roman biographies differed from what we expect of modern biographies. Today, we presume that biographies offer neutral, objective reports of the life of an important figure. Whenever we get the impression that the biographer is biased, we immediately write the work off as skewed and corrupted by self-interest and rhetorical ‘spin’. In the ancient world, though, it was expected that the biographer cared about the figure for good or for ill, and that he had some kind of ‘axe to grind’. Also, his intention went beyond merely maintaining a historic record of a

18. See the excellent discussion of genre in L. Alexander, ‘What Is a Gospel?’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (ed. S. C. Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13–33; more recently J. D. G. Dunn, ‘The Birth of a New Genre: Mark and the Synoptic Gospels’, in *Jesus, Paul, and the Gospels*, 45–79.

19. See R. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 78; note the important qualifications to this discussion that are made by J. T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 18–35.

public figure. The biographical exercise was intended to teach something about life and wisdom in the modern world, no matter how distant the central figure was in the past. David Aune explains this about such works:

Ancient Hellenistic biographers and historians ... wrote on two levels, combining ideas from their own time with events from the past ... Most historians and biographers of the Hellenistic period regarded the past as normative for present conduct, i.e., it provided moral guidance for the present and future. History and biography focused on the past as a source of lessons for the future. Hellenistic history and biography, no less than the Gospels, tended to *merge* the past with the present ... Past and present merge in Gospel narratives because the Evangelists regarded the story of Jesus as an example for Christian faith.<sup>20</sup>

As Aune points out, if such is true about ancient biographies, at least the same is true for the Gospels. Donald Senior expresses this aptly: 'the very manner in which Matthew portrays Jesus was surely meant to be exemplary for Christian existence. All of Jesus' teaching was intended to be instructive ... And all of Jesus' actions – his prayer, his compassion, his sense of justice, his response to suffering – were models for authentic discipleship.'<sup>21</sup>

More than the example of Jesus alone, the Gospels narrate the lives of the disciples, those followers whose characterization facilitates the readers' opportunity to step into the orbit of this Jesus-way. In that sense, the Gospels fuse two horizons, the horizon of the earthly Jesus story with his early first-century disciples, and the horizon of the risen Christ with his disciples of every age, especially those disciples facing crises of faith and obedience at the close of the first century. In terms of plot, then, the Gospels are focused on Christ, but the evangelists do not merely shine a spotlight on him as sacrificial victim or saviour of the condemned; rather, Christ is a point of focus insofar as the evangelists construct a world around him, a social reality that is meant to form its readers

20. D. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 63. Also S. Byrskog: 'In short, the ancient discussions concerning the proper interplay between what we may call oral history and oral story created among the Gospel writers an ambition to avoid – somewhat like Plato's Socrates – the polarization between speaking truthfully and speaking persuasively. This ambition found its expression in the form of a historicizing biographic genre which synchronized narratively the pastness of oral history and the encomiastic praise of its main character' ('Performing the Past: Gospel Genre and Identity Formation in the Context of Ancient History Writing', in *History and Exegesis: New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80th Birthday* [ed. S. A. Son; London: T&T Clark, 2006], 28–44 [43]).

21. D. Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 63. A wider argument is made by Richard Burridge along these lines, especially in imitation of the actions of Jesus, in his book *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).



who are seeking to establish a stable identity in an unstable world.<sup>22</sup> Eugene Boring describes it this way:

[I]n Mark Jesus would not be the Christ in any significant way, in any way that mattered, without his relationships to people, principally his relationship to his disciples – and thus how could he be called the Christ at all without his disciples? To be truly the Christ, the Christ must have a people... Christology and discipleship are thus not two topics in Mark, but a single topic, just as the 'humanity' of Jesus and the 'divinity' of Jesus are not two topics, but can only be talked about together. The question of whether 'Christology' or 'discipleship' is the principle theme of Mark is thus misplaced, since Mark does not present either in such a way that it can be discussed apart from the other, nor does he permit the reader of his narrative to do so.<sup>23</sup>

We must, then, be careful not to put at too far a distance from each other 'salvation' and 'ethics'. If the Christ narrated in the Gospels is relational in the way Boring suggests, encountering him is not only 'redeeming', but also transformative. He calls his followers not only to rescue them from demise, but also to commission them to walk on the way to the cross with him.<sup>24</sup>

What we see, then, is that the evangelists treat the original disciples as the prototypes for believers of a later time.<sup>25</sup> And this observation leads us back to the question about terminology. *If the disciples were meant to be models for Jesus-followers of later times, why restrict the term mathētēs and reserve it for the official disciples only?* Well, actually, it is not entirely true that this term is restricted in

22. This formative dimension is underscored by James Thompson aptly: 'The achievement of the gospel writers was that the story that they told continued to provide their audience with a coherent vision that would remind them of who they were. The writers recognized the constant temptation for the church to hear other stories and to adapt their ministries to other models. Through the medium of the narrative, the gospel writers confronted the church with its own obligations and destiny. The stories of Jesus and his disciples functioned as paradigms for the later community' (J. W. Thompson, 'Ministry in the New Testament', *Restoration Quarterly* 27 (3) [1984], 143–56 [149])

23. M. E. Boring, 'The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology', *Semeia* 30 (1984): 125–51 (143–4).

24. See A. Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 182. Ernest Best is, perhaps, one who has worked this perspective out most completely in his work. For example, he writes, 'The role of the disciples in the gospels is then to be examples to the community. Not examples by which their own worth or failure is shown, but examples through whom teaching is given to the community and the love and power of God made known'; E. Best, *Disciples and Discipleship* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 182.

25. See James Thompson: 'The fact that [the evangelists] wrote Gospels indicates that the prototypes for the Christian ministry were Jesus and his disciples. The original story was a paradigm for the church at a later period' ('Ministry in the New Testament', 147).

its NT use to the official disciples only. While the word *mathētēs* is found exclusively in the Gospels and Acts, and the overwhelming majority of occurrences of the word refer to Jesus' own circle of disciples that he called, there are some remaining outliers in terms of the word usage. These uses are particularly obvious in Acts.

Beginning in Chapter 6, Luke seems to use the word *mathētēs* rather freely in reference to any and all believers. This application of *mathētēs* is so distinctive and different from its restrictive use in the Gospels that it caused Gerhard Lohfink to wonder: '[W]hat was the true relationship of the disciples to the people of God? Was all Israel meant to become a nation of disciples? Was the circle of disciples the model for the eschatological community of salvation, so that it represented, in anticipation, what the whole people of God was to become, namely a *discipleship*?'<sup>26</sup>

Looking at the matter historically, Paul Trebilco reasons that, given the absence of the term in the NT epistles, it is unlikely that the early Christians *actually* called themselves 'disciples', as the book of Acts may lead us to think. Rather, Luke appears to be consciously overlaying or superimposing this language back onto the early believers.<sup>27</sup> Why would Luke do this? Trebilco suggests that, 'By using the same term of "followers of Jesus after the resurrection" [as before], he is able to create a strong link between the time of Jesus and the time of the church and thus to emphasise continuity.'<sup>28</sup>

To sum up and conclude this literary-hermeneutical section, I wish to underscore the following two points:

1. The early church probably did *not* use the language of 'disciples' for everyday Christians in the first few centuries after Pentecost, perhaps out of respect for the Twelve, or sensing it ill-fitted for the new relationship with Jesus beyond teacher.
2. The Evangelists, finalizing their texts at the end (or in the second half) of the first century, wrote their stories in such a way as to blur the lines between *the* disciples and all Christians in order to underscore the vitality and relevance of their kerygmatic narratives for the lives of their readers. This is further

26. See G. Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church?: Toward a Theology of the People of God* (trans. L. Maloney; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 164.

27. See Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 226. Note J. Meier, 'The Disciples of Christ', 160.

28. Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 227. John Meier comes to a very similar conclusion: 'Luke uses the word "disciples" in a way that is never found elsewhere in the NT. In Acts, "disciples" becomes a generic designation of any and all Christians in the post-Easter church of the first century. Luke introduces this new meaning precisely to create a historical and theological link between the time of Jesus and the time of the church' ('The Disciples of Christ', 160). Michael Wilkins argues, alternatively, that Luke's language should be taken more plainly as the true terminology used of the early Christians. See M. Wilkins, 'Disciples', in *DJG*, 176–82 (181).

demonstrated in Acts where Christians are referred to as 'disciples' while historically this was probably *not* a self-designation at the time.<sup>29</sup>

If that is the case, we are left with the remaining theological question – *what do we do with Paul?* If the evangelists intended to broaden the language of discipleship, to make it a fixed concept regarding formation and obedience under the teaching head of Christ, why does Paul fail to use this language and what does he promote instead? My hope is that this will lead to fresh and balanced ways that the Church can reflect on its mission and maturity.

### *The Theological Question*

I think it is safe to affirm, first, the kind of canonical coherence that Trebilco suggests: 'What we ... see happening is that the *concept* of discipleship is taken up by Paul, and is deepened and modified by being expressed in other language.'<sup>30</sup> However, we intend to go beyond this to argue that Paul preferred a different centralizing term or concept of Christian ethics.

#### *Christians as Slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ: Paul's Doulos-ethic*

There was, probably, a kind of natural historical association with the Twelve that Paul attributed to *mathētēs*, but there is surely more to the story of the term's seemingly intentional absence. The best place to begin is, indeed, with Paul's own encounter with the risen Christ. On the road to Damascus, he is not beckoned by Jesus to be a disciple. He is stopped in his tracks and confronted by the Lord Jesus. He is blinded by the celestial light and led by hand to a place where he would be given instructions. Thus, he does not enter into a teacher-disciple relationship, but what he surely considered a *master-slave* relationship.<sup>31</sup> So, J. C. Beker posits that Paul avoided 'disciple' language both because 'his apostolic call was not based on a prior discipleship' and 'because the quality of his illumination was different. No disciple could claim the radical reversal which he experienced from zealous persecutor to zealous witness for Christ.'<sup>32</sup> Paul, as standard, refers to Jesus as *kyrios* ('lord' or 'master') and never *didaskalos* ('teacher'). So, correspondingly, to be 'in relationship' with Christ is to become his *slave*. This may not be as clear of a point when we read certain English Bible translations of Paul's letters because

29. I would like to throw in a third brief additional point that the Apostolic Fathers did not shy away from calling Christians 'disciples' which may prove that the Evangelists were successful in re-introducing this language to the common Christian vocabulary.

30. See Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 232; see also R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

31. See Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 232.

32. J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 6.

the noun *doulos* is regularly translated 'servant'. Many scholars, including myself, are convinced that *doulos* is best translated as 'slave', and this is coming out more clearly in newer translations such as the Common English Bible.

Using the language of 'slavery' may seem awkward and inappropriate, but I do not doubt that this is precisely the kind of relationship Paul had in mind. Murray Harris is quite right, then, that 1 Thessalonians 1.9, for example, should be translated, 'You turned to God from idols to be slaves of the living and true God.' Harris goes on to comment, 'At their conversion, slavery to idols was replaced by slavery to God.'<sup>33</sup>

Paul loves to think and speak in terms of dualities: idolatry and true worship, darkness and light, flesh and spirit, 'formerly' and 'now'. To best understand Paul, you must take into consideration what Anthony Thiselton calls the 'immense cut' – the slice through time generated by the death and resurrection of Christ that Paul understood to have separated the old age dominated by sin and death, and the time of new creation, guided by the Lord Jesus and filled with the presence and power of the Spirit. Making the transition from one age to the next is a binary leap with no room for other options. You are either under the lordship of Christ or the master of sin. Paul can transpose the formative idea of discipleship, then, into the language of social indentureship. In the Roman world, a slave had one purpose only: to do the bidding of the master. Lest you think Paul too cruel in his employment of this imagery, it should be noted that, while slaves could be, and often were, treated with disdain and disregard, there were cases where slaves could enjoy their work, come to love and honour their master, receive rewards, and even be freed and married to the master.

Again, the focus on Paul's slavery imagery is that the Christian is compelled to obey the master, to serve and honour the rightful Lord. It is not an option, but a reality in light of a natural relationship. They are called to *love* Christ, but they must not substitute a love-based, 'friend-like' relationship for that of a slave. If the Great Commission is about *obedience*, this appears to be Paul's dominant model for Christian life – the *obedience* of a slave to a master. Now, when other scholars have looked deeply into Pauline ethics, they have emerged with key themes such as participation in Christ, sanctification or holiness, new creation, or cruciformity. We should note, though, that Paul's slavery imagery would not compete with these. Rather it serves as the umbrella under which the others are subsumed. Slavery to Christ is a concept found in almost every Pauline letter, and it happens to be a main self-designation used by Paul in Romans, Galatians, and Philippians. When it comes to underscoring the importance of Paul's *doulos*-ethic, much could be said, but we will restrict our time and attention to four key points: (1) slave symbolism is pervasive and prominent in Paul's letters; (2) it naturally corresponds to his *Kyrios*-Christology; (3) it is rooted in Scriptural themes; and (4) it reflects his dualistic and apocalyptic vigilance.<sup>34</sup> After sketching out these

33. M. J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999), 83.

34. See P. Sampley, *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 32.

points, I will attempt to reflect on how a particular 'ethic' is developed by Paul's *doulos* language.

As to my first point, any attempt to distil Paul's ethics must make its case in representative texts. It is easy to do so in this case because Paul uses slavery metaphors at or near the beginning of three key letters (Rom. 1.1, Gal. 1.10, and Phil. 1.1), and it appears at least once in 1 Corinthians (7.22), 1 Thessalonians (1.9-10), Colossians (3.24) and Ephesians (6.5-6; let alone 2 Tim. 2.24 and Tit. 1.1). More important than frequency is the extended discussion in Romans 6.15-18 (cf. 12.11; 16.18) and the model of Christ as *doulos* in the Philippian Christ hymn (2.5-11, at v. 7).

Second, it is prudent to begin a study of Paul's ethics with the nature of his Christology. While most scholars identify Paul's key self-descriptor as 'apostle' (*apostolos*), he rarely refers to God the Father or Jesus the Son as 'Sender'. Rather, his preferred term for Jesus, apart from 'Christ (*Christos*)' is 'Lord (*Kyrios*)'. Murray Harris underscores this point: 'the two words "Lord" and "slave", *Kyrios* and *doulos*, are correlatives. That is, they form a matching pair ... they belong together.'<sup>35</sup> This is not a casual doctrinal note, but a truth that should be all consuming. Harris goes on: 'When believers sing or recite the confession "Jesus is Lord", we are affirming his absolute supremacy, not only over the physical and moral universe, and not only over human history, not only over human beings, whether living or dead, not only over the church, but also over our own lives as his willing slaves.'<sup>36</sup> So, for Paul, Christology and ecclesial ethics are linked – insofar as we understand and recognize the true identity of Christ, we properly order ourselves under his rule and obey his sovereign will unswervingly.<sup>37</sup> If he becomes anything but Lord in our minds, so correspondingly our true commitment as true slaves will erode.

Third, Paul's slave metaphors can be given special pride of place due to their rootedness in Jewish Scripture, especially Exodus imagery. John Byron has written an excellent monograph that makes this case, so I will only make brief mention here.<sup>38</sup> In the Jewish tradition, the concepts of slavery and worship towards God were almost indistinguishable, as translators of the Old Testament

35. Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 90.

36. Ibid.

37. See V. P. Furnish, 'The total claim which Christ's lordship lays upon the believer is a basic and pervasive element of Pauline thought and is implied in almost every paragraph he writes' (*Theology and Ethics in Paul* [NTL; Louisville: WJK, 2009], 169).

38. J. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Tradition-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT 2/162; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003). See also R. Horsley, 'Paul and Slavery: A Critical Alternative to Recent Readings', *Semeia* 84 (1998): 153–200 (173–6); C. Barth, *God with Us: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 60; E. Käsemann stated, 'Christian freedom is first of all and always liberation from the yoke of slavery under the powers and forces. Israel's exodus from Egypt is the model of discipleship that the Master rescues from the chains of fallenness, to set it in his service' (*On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene* [ed. R. Landau; trans. R. A. Harrisville; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 56).

will tell you. When Yahweh called Israel out of Egypt, it was not a liberation unto independence. Rather, it was freedom to serve Yahweh as sole master. Paul seems to be working from this Jewish tradition; especially evident in his paradoxical claim in 1 Corinthians 7.22 that slaves are free in Christ and the free are slaves (cf. Gal. 5.13).

Fourth, Paul's *doulos* imagery is reflective of a kind of apocalyptic perspective that portrays the cosmos as at war and fraught with conflict. Believers cannot merely 'exist'; they must take sides in this battle. To side with King Jesus means stepping into line and obeying the Sovereign without hesitation. For Paul, too much is at stake, the world is too dangerous, for Christians to merely 'worship' Jesus on Sundays and crack open the Bible a few times a week. In any case, Paul would not recognize someone casually 'choosing' Christ as if the would-be believer were taking religious bids. Humans, east of Eden, are not 'free agents'. As Sampley explains, 'Paul surveys the world around him, and he sees that people have tended to enslave themselves to an improper dependence, whether it be to sin, to the law, or to the elemental spirits. God's grace in Jesus Christ offers release from such improper slavery and the possibility of another Lord.'<sup>39</sup> In other words, Paul urges – 'if one must be a slave, it is best to be enslaved to the proper master'.

So, if Paul's central ethic, corresponding to the Gospel's discipleship-ethic, is a *doulos*-ethic, how is this instructive for Christian behaviour? Unfortunately, Paul does not make this explicit, and there is room for misunderstanding given the tendency for 'masters' in the Roman world to mistreat and abuse their slaves. Merely looking for models of proper slavery in the culture at large would be futile, as the master-slave relation tended to be fraught with sins of abuse and discrimination on the master's side, and resentment and rebellion on the other. However, we are permitted a brief, but instructive glimpse into the reality of how Paul counsels actual slaves in the Colossian and Ephesian household codes.<sup>40</sup>

While the instructions to slaves in the Colossian and Ephesian household codes are brief (Col. 3.18–4.1; Eph. 5.21–6.9), they develop a basic profile of how slaves should behave. I propose four brief expectations.

39. Sampley, *Walking Between the Times*, 33.

40. On a side note, some may be reluctant to turn to these letters to inform Paul's ethics due to their dubious authorship. On this matter, I want to mention three mitigating points. First, the authorship of Colossians is not very strongly disputed by scholars today, and the ethical tenor of the Ephesian household code is not significantly different. Second, scholars are more willing, even if they see Ephesians and Colossians as non-Pauline, not to take offence at the household code, and even see them as slyly subversive. Third, no matter who wrote it, we can still learn much about a *doulos*-ethic from the Church's Scripture. Personally, though, I have no qualms with viewing Colossians and Ephesians as Pauline, and I have extensive discussions of authorship issues both in my commentary on Colossians for Smyth & Helwys, as well as a recent article in *Currents in Biblical Research*. See N. K. Gupta, 'What is in a Name?: The Hermeneutics of Authorship Analysis Concerning Colossians', *CBR* 11 (2013): 196–217; *Colossians* (SHBC; Macon: S&H, 2013).

1. Deference – By this I mean that a slave *defers* to the master. He or she has no value or identity apart from the master. The sole objective is to serve and respect him. Deference means always putting the master first. More than that, it means having concern *only* for the concerns of the master.<sup>41</sup>
2. Alignment – the ideal slave aligns him or herself with the goals of the master. He wants to contribute to the master's advancement, success, and accomplishments (see Col. 3.22-23; Eph. 6.5-6). This is, perhaps, where we might 'slot' imitation language, but it is imitation of Christ in proper view of one's place as slave.<sup>42</sup>
3. Obedience – the slave understands his or her place in the wider system. In an abusive system this is manipulative, but in the kingdom of God invading a hostile and crooked world, the slave must trust that the master knows best (Eph. 6.7). This is not unlike a military subordinate following the orders from the commander without reservation.
4. Judgement – finally, the slave works fastidiously, with good will and sincerity, knowing that the master has the authority to judge the slave's work. They may expect reward for loyalty, hard work, and success, but they can expect punishment for insubordination, rebellion, and failure (Col. 3.24; Eph. 6.8).

It is undoubtedly difficult for modern Western citizens of democratic nations to imagine unquestionable service to superiors. But in Paul's world, everyone knew that there were authorities, and there were subjects, and hope was set on finding the right ruler to lead the people with righteousness, benevolence, and wisdom. For Christians today, Jesus is not advisor, counsellor, or neighbourly mentor. He is not even instructor or professor. He is king and master. We are subjects and slaves.

41. This attitude is more implicit within the household code. No doubt slaves felt that tasks given to them by the master were often menial, degrading, or without purpose. It was not their place normally to counsel or direct, but to defer. They must accept the agenda of the master merely because he is master, not necessarily because he is successful or intelligent.

42. See the comment made by E. Best, 'Mark leaves us in no doubt that the Christian disciples cannot imitate Christ. At every stage where it seems that the disciple goes after Jesus and does what he does, Mark clearly distinguishes between the disciples and Jesus. It is not just that Jesus was the first to walk along the way of humble service to the cross and that men must follow, for Jesus is set in a much more unique position. This comes out in the final programmatic statement with its distinction: all minister to others, only Jesus gives his life a ransom for many, and the many include the disciple who is moved to follow and minister ... The example of Jesus is the pattern for the disciple and yet the disciple cannot really be like Jesus; there is a dimension into which he is unable to enter. The disciple of the rabbi in due time becomes a rabbi; the apprentice philosopher becomes a philosopher; but the disciple of Christ never becomes a Christ' (*Disciples and Discipleship*, 13).

## Conclusion

We are now in a place to reflect on what the above discussion might mean for the church's ethical language and models. As discussed in the introduction, it is hardly questionable that the Church has latched onto the language and imagery of 'discipleship' as its primary ethical focal lens.<sup>43</sup> This tends to bend ethics towards the Gospels and Acts where such terminology appears frequently and exclusively. The absence of discipleship language in the epistles and Revelation raises the question – *did St. Paul see himself as a disciple-maker, fulfilling the Great Commission? If not, why not?* He probably did not see himself at odds with the Great Commission, if he heard it himself, but neither does he seem to follow it as his guiding mission. Rather, if we hear Paul, alongside the Gospels, we have a complementary ethical paradigm – that of the slave towards the Master Jesus. At the end of the day, the cruciform disciple looks an awful lot like the slave of Christ, but having this additional image in mind may help the modern church to avoid attributing to Jesus, what Stephen Prothero refers to, as a 'gumby-like' quality that is prevalent in American Christianity. We must resist bumper sticker theology that says 'Jesus is my co-pilot', 'Jesus is my homeboy', or even 'Jesus is my best friend'. The Christological testimony of Paul directs our attention to a cosmic Lord. According to Paul, our bumper stickers should say, 'Jesus is Master'.

Gerald Hawthorne has argued that 'discipleship' entails such an exclusive and specific kind of concept related to teacher-and-pupil that it bears little relevance to Christian life today. He reasons that since Paul and the other epistle authors forsook the term, it should be abandoned and replaced.<sup>44</sup> I think that might take the issue too far. Again, the evangelists seem to have intentionally reintroduced discipleship back into the Christian vocabulary, blurring the lines between the official 'disciples', and disciples of all generations. Rather, I want to propose that we pay attention to Paul's *doulos*-ethic as a helpful companion to our discipleship language, dual lenses for the church's moral vision. This kind of addition to the ecclesial ethical imagination can strengthen our desire to ensure holistic and even radical commitment to the Gospel that declares the sovereign rule of Jesus. What recapturing Paul's *doulos*-ethic could mean for the church is well-represented by the attitude expressed by Ronald Marshall's final words in his article on the offence of the cross in the Fourth Gospel: 'It is just this tough-minded message that the church needs today to overcome the good feelings and "easy-to-digest spirituality" that is dragging it down. It is just this message that will heal the church by helping it become "half as large and twice as strong"'.<sup>45</sup>

43. See R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).

44. See G. Hawthorne, 'The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians', in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (McMaster New Testament Studies; ed. R. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 163–79 (165).

45. R. F. Marshall, 'Our Serpent of Salvation: The Offense of Jesus in John's Gospel', *Word & World* 21 (2011): 385–93 (393). The quote within is from R. Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 240–1.



## Bibliography

- Alexander, L., 'What Is a Gospel?', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (ed. S. C. Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13–33.
- Aune, D., *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987).
- Barth, C., *God with Us: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
- Bauer, D. R., 'The Major Characters of Matthew's Story: Their Function and Significance', *Interpretation* 46 (4) (1992): 357–67.
- Beker, J. C., *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).
- Best, E., *Disciples and Discipleship* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986).
- Boring, M. E., 'The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology', *Semeia* 30 (1984): 125–51.
- Brueggemann, W., *The Word That Redescribes the World: Bible and Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).
- Burridge, R., *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- Burridge, R., *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
- Byron, J., *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Tradition-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT 2/162; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003).
- Byrskog, S., 'Performing the Past: Gospel Genre and Identity Formation in the Context of Ancient History Writing', in *History and Exegesis: New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80th Birthday* (ed. S. A. Son; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 28–44.
- Dunn, J. D. G., *Jesus, Paul, and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).
- France, R. T., *Matthew* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).
- Furnish, V. P., *Jesus According to Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- Furnish, V. P., *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (NTL; Louisville: WJK, 2009).
- Garland, D. E., *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2001).
- Garland, D. E., *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).
- Gupta, N. K., 'What is in a Name?: The Hermeneutics of Authorship Analysis Concerning Colossians', *Currents of Biblical Research* 11 (2013): 196–217.
- Gupta, N. K., *Colossians* (SHBC; Macon: S&H, 2013).
- Hagner, D., *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33B; Waco: Word, 1995).
- Hagner, D., *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).
- Harris, M. J., *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).
- Hawthorne, G., 'The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians', in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (McMaster New Testament Studies; ed. R. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 163–79.
- Hays, R. B., *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).
- Horsley, R., 'Paul and Slavery: A Critical Alternative to Recent Readings', *Semeia* 84 (1998): 153–200.
- Käsemann, E., *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene* (ed. R. Landau; trans. R. A. Harrisville; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

- Kee, H. C., *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).
- Keener, C., *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).
- Lohfink, G., *Does God Need the Church?: Toward a Theology of the People of God* (trans. L. Maloney; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999).
- Loisy, A., *L'Évangile et l'Église* (Paris: Fishbacher, 1902).
- Longenecker, R. N. (ed.), *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).
- Lunde, J., *Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship* (BTFL; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).
- Marshall, C., *Beyond Retribution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).
- Marshall, R. F., 'Our Serpent of Salvation: The Offense of Jesus in John's Gospel', *Word & World* 21 (2011): 385–93.
- Meier, J. P., 'The Disciples of Christ: Who Were They?', *Mid-Stream* 1–2 (1999): 129–35.
- Morris, L., *The Gospel According to Matthew* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).
- Nepper-Christensen, P., 'μαθητής', in *EDNT* 2: 373–4.
- Nolland, J., *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).
- Osborne, G., *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).
- Pennington, J. T., *Reading the Gospels Wisely* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).
- Perrin, N., *The Kingdom of God in the Teachings of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963).
- Przybylski, B., *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought* (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
- Ridder, R. R. de, *Discipling the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971).
- Sampley, P., *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).
- Samra, J. G., 'A Biblical View of Discipleship', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2003): 219–34.
- Senior, D., *The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).
- Still, T. D. (ed.), *Jesus and Paul Reconnected: Fresh Pathways into the Old Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
- Theissen, G., *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).
- Thompson, J. W., 'Ministry in the New Testament', *Restoration Quarterly* 27 (3) (1984): 143–56.
- Trebilco, P., *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Verhey, A., *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).
- Wedderburn, A. J. M. (ed.), *Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989).
- Weder, H., 'Disciple, Discipleship', in *ABD* 2: 207–10.
- Wenham, D., *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).
- Wilkins, M., *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel* (NovTSup 59; Leiden: Brill, 1988).
- Wilkins, M., 'Disciples', in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (eds. J. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall; Downer's Grove: IVP, 1992), 176–82.
- Wrede, W., *Paul* (Halle: Gebauer-Schwetschke, 1904; ET Boston: Beacon, 1908).
- Wright, N. T., *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).
- Wuthnow, Robert, *The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).