

The Church and Its Mission in the New Testament and Early Christianity

Edited by
DAVID E. AUNE and
REIDAR HVALVIK

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Essays in Memory of Hans Kvalbein

Edited by
David E. Aune and Reidar Hvalvik

Mohr Siebeck

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations, of the names of biblical books and other ancient sources as well as modern periodicals, reference works and serials, follow the rules recommended by the Society of Biblical Literature, as found in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999). This is the style followed with regard to all formalities.



Hans Kvalbein in 2007

Introduction

David E. Aune

Hans Kvalbein's academic career centered in the Norwegian School of Theology (Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet) in Oslo, beginning as a student who graduated in 1966 and then as a member of the faculty, first as an assistant professor (1976) and then as a professor of New Testament from 1985 until his retirement in 2011. While Hans had many academic and theological interests over the years, one of his central concerns was the mission of the church both in the New Testament and in the modern world. When Reidar Hvalvik and I began discussing the possibility of assembling a collection of essays in memory of Hans about two years ago (in 2015), it seemed eminently appropriate to focus on the subject which became the title of this volume: "The Church and Its Mission in the New Testament and Early Christianity."

The present volume consists of fifteen essays by colleagues and friends of Hans Kvalbein focusing on various aspects of the theme of the church and mission in the New Testament and early Christianity as well as a survey of Hans Kvalbein's academic career and scholarship and a bibliography of his books and articles. The organization of the volume follows the main theme through the Gospels, Acts, Paul, Later New Testament Writings and Early Christianity. Many of the contributors interact with Kvalbein's views on aspects of the mission of the early church. In the remainder of this introductory essay, I will provide succinct summaries of the various contributions organized under each of the five main headings of the volume.

The Gospels

Jostein Ådna has contributed an essay on "The Mission to Israel and the Nations: The Understanding of Mission in the Gospel of Matthew Reconsidered." This essay is based on issues discussed in a volume edited by Ådna and Kvalbein that was published in 2000: *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*. The author argues that despite the apparent tension in the Gospel of Matthew between the mission to Israel (Matt 10:6; 15:24) and mission to the Gentiles (Matt 28:18–20), the author has not abandoned the mission to Israel, but rather juxtaposes the two missions. For Ådna, the most radical solution to the tension between Matt 10:5–6 and 28:18–20 is to read Matthew as a narrative in which Israel rejects the message of Jesus, leading to their rejection and abandonment, while the universal mission to the Gentiles replaces the failed mission to Israel. The author then turns to an article by Hans Kvalbein entitled "Has Matthew

Abandoned the Jews?” which focuses on the significance of Matt 27:24–25 in which Pilate is presented as washing his hands and declaring himself innocent of the death of Jesus: “[T]hen the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’” Kvalbein rejected the widespread interpretation that this passage constituted a self-imposed curse, implying the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. He goes on to argue that Pilate’s handwashing in no way affects Pilate’s responsibility for the death of Jesus. The Jewish people in Pilate’s courtyard are no more or less guilty for the death of Jesus than are the Romans. Ådna then refers to an article by Ulrich Luz entitled “Has Matthew Abandoned the Jews? A Response to Hans Kvalbein and Peter Stuhlmacher concerning Matt 28:16–20,”¹ in which Luz expresses his discomfort at being portrayed as representing an anti-Jewish interpretation of Matthew. Luz now supports an inclusive interpretation of Matt 28:19, where the expression “all the nations” should be interpreted as including both Jews and Gentiles.

The author then turns to the recent monograph of Matthias Konradt (*Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*, 2014), who emphasizes the tension between Matt 10:16 and 28:19, asking how the initial focus of Jesus on Israel can be reconciled with the eventual emphasis on the universal mission of the church. Konradt sees a correlation between the missions to Israel and the nations and the Christology of Matthew. Jesus’ messianic mission to Israel is reflected in the Christological title Son of David. While the people generally react positively to Jesus, the religious leaders are presented as hostile to Jesus. However, the crowds in Jerusalem react negatively to Jesus. Parallel to Jesus’ exclusive ministry to Israel is a universal emphasis reflected in the titles “son of Abraham” and “Son of God.” Ådna maintains that Konradt does not fully appreciate the function of the episode narrating the encounter of the risen Christ with the eleven disciples in Galilee (Matt 28:16–20). This episode functions as the central symbolic event in Matthew involving the eschatological reconstitution of Israel, the renewal of fellowship between Jesus and the disciples who had forsaken him and a renewed commission to the disciples with the expanded goal of the mission to the Gentiles.

Ernst Baasland asks whether the important early Christian theme of love of enemy plays any role in the early Christian mission in “Mission and Love of Enemy: Matthew 5:43–44 and Luke 6:27–28, 35 (2 *Clem.* 13.3; *Diogn.* 5) in Its Graeco-Roman Context.” Baasland asks how a message that made fixed boundaries chaotic could be considered a strategy, since the Christian emphasis on love of enemy both challenged and threatened the basic concepts of empire and nation widely held in the ancient world. In recent studies on identity-making

¹ In *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (WUNT 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 63–68.

and identity-markers there is always an awareness of the fact that all religions and all cultures confront influences or events that threaten their identity. After the Jewish revolt in 66–70 CE, much of Israel was forced to live outside of their homeland, emphasized “the holy land” and were aware of being an elect people, cherishing the promise of taking possession of the land promised by God. The Christian emphasis on love of enemy challenged the Jewish conception of identity, just as it challenged the concepts of empire and nation, both of which presupposed a contrast between aliens and enemies. Does the universal mission reflected in Matt 28:19–20 extend or invalidate the role and identity of Israel? The emphasis on love of enemy in early Christianity broke through fixed boundaries and disrupted otherwise stable social relationships. Baasland discusses the key role that the theme of love of enemy plays in Jesus’ inaugural speech in Matthew and Luke (i. e., the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain), focusing on Matt 5:43–44 and Luke 6:27–28, 35 in which Jesus commands his disciples to love their enemies. The author explores how this theme is treated within Matthew and Luke and how it is developed in various ways in the rest of the New Testament and in early Christian literature, such as in the *Didache* and Justin Martyr. Baasland explores the variety of ways in which the theme of love of enemy is expressed, including some of the more important synonyms and antonyms of “love” found in Christian contexts. One important synonym of “love” is “pray,” found in Luke 6:27–28 (“Love your enemies . . . pray for those who abuse you”), often expressed in exhortations to pray for rulers and for enemies (e. g., Justin 1 *Apol.* 14–15). Another important synonym for “love” is “bless,” as in Luke 6:28: “Bless those who curse you.” The author then surveys a number of Greco-Roman texts which encourage the replacement of hatred with love. Though Matt 5:44 and Luke 6:27 (“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”) are not quoted in the rest of the New Testament, the basic pattern of thought is found in such passages and Rom 12: 9–21, interpreting the command in creative ways that do not restrict its meaning. The emphasis on living at peace with all people is probably the most sophisticated interpretation of “love of enemy” (cf. Rom 12:18). Another parallel emphasis is treating your enemy like a brother. Apart from the New Testament, many Greco-Roman texts emphasize the replacement of hatred with love, as much as possible. The emphasis on love of enemy reflected a world view which implied a new notion of territory and nation and provided an indispensable framework for Christian mission. In response to persecution, the Christian response was not one of hostility, but rather love of enemy, or in the case of Jews, love of neighbour or brotherly love. Love of enemies was thus a factor in early mission.

In “Peter on the Way to His Universal Mission in the Gospel of John,” Johannes Beutler, SJ, argues that the mission of the disciples in the Gospel of John is rooted in the mission of Jesus, who has been sent by the Father (John 20:21). Among the disciples given a mission by Jesus, Peter plays a prominent

role, particularly in the last chapter (John 21:1–14, 15–19). Peter as a missionary is a developing character in John and it is only in John 21, a late first century addition to John that Peter's calling by Jesus and the significance of his new name "stone" or "rock," i. e., the foundation of the early church (John 1:40–42) is fully justified. Apart from the confession of Peter in John 6:68–69 (a later addition along with John 21), Peter does not appear until the account of the Passion, Death and Resurrection. After Jesus washes the disciples' feet (13:6–11), a symbolic act by Jesus that Peter does not understand, Peter appears beside the Beloved Disciple, who lies on the breast of Jesus (13:23) and (representing the rest of the disciples) asks the Beloved Disciple who it is that will betray Jesus (13:24). In several additional scenes, Jesus predicts, despite Peter's protestations that he will deny him three times (13:36–38) and at the arrest of Jesus Peter cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest, betraying his lack of understanding (18:10–11). During the trial of Jesus before the Jewish high priest (18:11–27), Peter is presented as explicitly opposed to Jesus and denies him three times, after which he goes off stage until John 20. There, Peter and the Beloved Disciple run to the tomb of Jesus to verify the story of the empty tomb told them by Mary Magdalene, Peter representing the disciples and the Beloved Disciple exhibiting deep insight into the person of Jesus. To this point in John, there is little reason to see Peter as a coming missionary. It is only in John 21 (which Beutler regards as the product of a "rereading" of John) where the mission of Peter is emphasized. Here the most important section is John 21:15–17, where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him (an allusion to Peter's threefold denial of Jesus), to which Jesus replies either "feed my lambs" or "tend my sheep." This threefold affirmation of Peter's love for Jesus constitutes the restoration of Peter putting himself alongside the Good Shepherd (John 10) who preceded him. Finally Jesus foretells Peter's violent death (21:18–19), making Peter a witness to Jesus by his death rather than by his words.

Reinhold Feldmeier's essay "*Ecclesia peregrinans: Luke's Concept of a Missionary Church*," focuses on how the motif of "the Way" and the notion of traveling is centrally important for Luke's portrait of Jesus as an itinerant preacher as well as for the conception of a missionary church. The tradition of the traveling master accompanied by his disciples goes back to Jesus and is reflected in all three Synoptic Gospels. One of the distinctive features of the Gospel of Luke is the travel narrative, which occupies half of the narrative based on the memory of Jesus' life as itinerant preacher and healer. Luke both adapts and amplifies Jesus' life of homelessness and wandering, connected with the motif of being an outsider, beginning with Jesus' birth in a stable (Luke 2:7). John the Baptist also exemplified life as an outsider and Luke emphasizes the parallel features of the lifestyle of Jesus and John. The historical Jesus did not restrict his message of the dawning Kingdom of God to a few disciples, but rather traveled to where people lived inviting them to change their minds in view of the imminent arrival

of the Kingdom. A parallel phenomenon is the wandering of Cynic sages, who modeled a life of abstinence and self-denial. Jesus' command to "follow me" invited people to accompany him in his wandering ministry. Luke's Travel Narrative (9:51–19:44) is a literary device created by the evangelist to amplify the motifs homelessness and wandering. The goal of Jesus' wandering is Jerusalem, where the final events of his life play out. Historically, the presentation of continuous travel to Jerusalem is not very convincing, a fact that indicates that the Travel Narrative is a literary motif developed by the evangelist. One of Luke's favorite words is "the Way" in both the Gospel and Acts, which characterizes the lifestyle of the followers of Jesus. Potential followers of Jesus are urged to leave their families and friends and to follow the new lifestyle of homeless wandering. The final goal of Jesus' travels is not only Jerusalem, but his being "taken up" and enthroned at the right hand of God. The motif of traveling is not restricted in Luke to the lifetime of Jesus, but is also continued after his resurrection when he meets with two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). The Ascension of Jesus, a motif unique to Luke-Acts, is followed by the formation of the church and its empowerment by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The resultant mission of the church is always understood as an itinerant act. The exaltation of Jesus is the prerequisite for his new constant presence among his itinerant apostles. In Acts, Paul is given the same profile as Jesus and is portrayed as an itinerant preacher who is victorious by enduring resistance and persecution until death. The centrality of the motif of traveling in Luke-Acts is emphasized by calling the church "the Way." Therefore, "the *ecclesia peregrinans* corresponds to its wandering master who sends out his disciples at the beginning of the Travel Narrative to testify the propinquity of God's Kingdom in every town and place (Luke 10:1–12)."

The Acts of the Apostles

Volker Gäckle discusses "The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Acts." The author reminds us that the Kingdom of God, the primary theme of the teaching of Jesus, was a subject of central emphasis in Hans Kvalbein's research. Against the more widespread understanding of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as "reign of God," first proposed by Gustaf Dalman, Kvalbein (following his teacher Sverre Aalen) understood the phrase to mean "place, time or gift of salvation." While Kvalbein discussed the occurrence of the phrase the Kingdom of God in Paul, John and the Gospel of Thomas, he did not treat its meaning in Acts, and it is that task which Gäckle undertakes in this essay. While the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ occurs 131 times in the Synoptic Gospels and 35 times in Luke, it occurs just 8 times in Acts, but at very important points in the narrative. Since the phrase occurs twice in the opening (Acts 1:1–14 [vv. 3, 6]) and twice in the clos-

ing sections of Acts (28:17–31 [vv. 23, 31]), it functions as an *inclusio* framing the Book of Acts. In three further passages, Acts 8:12, 19:8 and 20:5, the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is used in an important milestone in Acts.

Each of the six remaining uses of the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts (1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31) occur in the context of an extended act of communication. In Acts 1:3 Luke refers to the repeated appearances of Jesus to his disciples during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, when he speaks to them “the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God,” emphasizing the continuity between the pre-Easter of Jesus and the post-Easter message of his apostles. The forty-day period indicates a time of preparation for the apostles. Therefore τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ represents the whole content of the truth revealed in Christ. The Christological dimension of βασιλεία-communication is particularly evident in Acts 8:12 and 28:23–31, where the proclamation of the Kingdom is further defined by “the name of Jesus Christ” (8:12) and “the things about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:23, 31), explicitly emphasizing continuity with the preaching of Jesus. The history of salvation dimension is also emphasized in Acts 20:25 (cf. vv. 24, 27) and 28:23, i. e., Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises. In Acts, the hidden connection between Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom and his own identity and ministry is made explicit. In the Gospel of Luke, the proclamation of the Kingdom is never related to the messianic claim of Jesus, while in Acts the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is a general formulation for the whole salvific plan of God. In Acts, Luke brings together what remains separated in the Gospel of Luke, the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and Christology are combined in the concept “salvation in Christ.” The βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts is a general term for the Christian message of salvation in Jesus Christ, including the present sense of the gift of eternal life and the future sense of the coming Kingdom as the place and time of salvation.

In “Frustrated Plans and Unexpected Outcome: Acts 16:6–8 Re-considered,” Klaus Haacker reconsiders the issues in the debate on Paul’s route through Asia Minor and whether Paul’s letter to the Galatians was addressed to congregations founded by Paul and Barnabas in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia (Acts 13–14) or to churches founded during the journey recorded in Acts 16, the northern part of Galatia. Paul’s second missionary journey is often regarded as the decisive event in the spread of the gospel from the Middle East to Europe. One major issue is whether the term “Galatia” in Gal 1:2 (cf. 3:1) has an ethnic or political meaning. As a young man, Paul exhibited a fanatical zeal in persecuting members of the Jesus movement, which he regarded as a threat to traditional Judaism. After his transformation through a revelatory experience of the living Jesus, Paul channeled his zeal and energy in the propagation of his newfound faith. According to the commission Paul received in Acts 22:17–21, he began a lifelong mission to proclaim the gospel to other na-

tionalties, eventually focusing on gentiles who were sympathetic to Judaism. He began to travel throughout Asia Minor proclaiming the gospel to Jews as well as to gentile sympathizers with Judaism. After having founded churches in the southern part of Galatia during his first missionary journey, Paul intended to continue his campaign into the Roman province of Asia, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to do so (Acts 16:6). He then decided to visit the province of Bithynia on the northern coast of Asia Minor but was again divinely forbidden to continue (Acts 16:7). Paul and his companions then received a vision inviting them to visit Macedonia (Acts 16:9–10), where he founded the congregation at Philippi. It is likely that when Paul crossed the sea to Macedonia he began to entertain the notion of visiting Rome, an intention that apparently was frequently frustrated (Rom 1:9–10, 13). This was a decisive step in spreading the gospel from the more oriental regions of Asia Minor to Europe. Paul somehow conceived of the idea to proclaim the gospel in Rome, but was often frustrated by his inability to travel there (Rom 1:13). After Philippi, Paul followed the Via Egnatia to Thessalonica where he founded a congregation, but ended up in conflict with both the people and authorities there, which probably frustrated his plans to continue west to Rome. Paul's success at Ephesus (Acts 19:8–10) provided another reason to delay going to Rome, though that project remained in his mind (Acts 19:21). Though the story of Paul as told by Luke ends in Rome, it was Paul's intention to push as far as the Iberian Peninsula (Rom 15:24). While we know that Paul did reach Rome, it is also likely that he reached Spain as well (*1 Clem.* 5:1–7). Paul's concern to proclaim the gospel in new areas did not diminish his desire to care to the needs of the congregations he had already founded, though visiting them often proved problematic (e. g., 1 Thess 2:18). Paul's intention for his second missionary journey was primarily based on his desire to strengthen existing congregations (Acts 15:41; 16:4–5). The author concludes with a reconsideration of Acts 16:6–8 and argues that the North Galatian theory should be dismissed and the biblical maps that include Mysia and Bithynia should be redrawn.

Rainer Riesner has contributed an essay on “The Gentile Mission of the Hellenists (Acts 11:19–21) and the Jesus Tradition.” Riesner refers to the tradition that Greek-speaking Jewish believers (Acts 6:1) were driven from Jerusalem just one or two years after the death and resurrection of Jesus and made their way to Antioch where they proclaimed the gospel to Greek-speaking Gentiles (Acts 11:19–21). Unfortunately, Luke does not tell us what motivated some Greek-speaking Jewish believers to take the extraordinary step of expanding the Messianic mission to Gentiles as well as Jews. In this essay, Riesner proposes some possible reasons why this extraordinary step was taken. Even though Acts 11:20 might suggest that Gentiles became part of the Messianic mission for the first time in Antioch, the conversion and baptism of two god-fearers, the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius (Acts 8 and 10) suggest that the inclusion of the Gentiles

was a graduate process, though the mission to the Gentiles was carried out on a larger scale in Antioch. The preaching of the Hellenists in Antioch that appealed to Jewish proselytes and god-fearers, was so effective that the authorities designated the new religious group of Jews and Gentiles as Χριστιανοί. Assuming that the martyrdom and speech of Stephen was widely known among the Hellenists, Stephen's vision of Jesus as the exalted Son of Man had profound consequences for the Gentiles (Dan 7:13–14). The Old Testament expectation of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God in the *eschaton* is a key presupposition of the Gentile mission, though this expectation could be construed as a pilgrimage of Gentiles to Jerusalem only at the end of time. Riesner asks whether there are any sayings of Jesus which could have been cherished by the Antiochene Hellenists and which would have justified an active mission to the Gentiles. The Jerusalem Hellenists may have been responsible for translated many of the sayings of Jesus into Greek and the Q document, which contains many positive statements about Gentiles, may have originated as a book of instruction for Gentile converts; the same may be said about Jesus tradition common to Mark and Matthew. Some Jesus traditions in Q might have been used to legitimate a mission to the Gentiles such as the woes pronounced by Jesus on Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matt 11:21–23 // Luke 10:13–15; cf. Matt 8:11–12 // Luke 13:28–29; Matt 12:41–42 // Luke 11:31–32). Yet another important text is the story of the healing of the servant of the pagan centurion (Matt 8:5–13 // Luke 7:1–10). When the proclamation of Jesus the Messiah spread beyond Galilee, it would have touched Gentiles areas such as Tyre and Sidon and several cities of the Decapolis. Among pre-Matthean traditions, a prime example of a focus on Gentiles is the healing of the daughter of a Gentile woman in the border region between Galilee and the Hellenistic city of Tyre (Matt 15:21–28 // Mark 7:24–30). Matthew 28:16–20, which focuses on a mission to the Gentiles probably contains pre-Matthean features. While the interpretation of the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of Israel was found in Old Testament prophecy and played an important role in defending the Gentile mission, the Jesus tradition also play a similar role.

In “Migration and Mission in the Book of Acts,” Christoph Stenschke argues that the theme of migration and dislocation were of central importance to the early Christian mission. Acts contains many examples of both voluntary and forced migration and the author focuses on the opportunities that both played in the early Christian mission. Many examples of migration occur in Acts 1–6, including the miracle of Pentecost, a text which lists Jews who came to Jerusalem from fifteen ethnic groups (Acts 2:9–11). The conflicts narrated in Acts 4–5 are not only a response to the miracles and proclamation of the gospel but also because these Galilean apostles challenged the Jewish leadership on their own turf. Acts 6 mentions a group of Hellenistic Diaspora Jews who were present in Jerusalem for religious reasons. Thus Acts 1–6 indicates that

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