

## **MARK GOSPEL OF ACTION – personal and community responses**

Ed: JJV SPCK: 2006

Committed Scholars and Practitioners.

Actualising the text: Mark is not written to impart information but to call hearers to action. So understanding the text comes in form of living out the text. Not so much how we use gospel - it's the way Mark's Gospel uses us. Emphasis on silence, imagination and contemplation rather than too much analysis. 'bibliolaters and the textual analysts.. do not allow themselves to be in that passive mode, to allow the Bible to rouse the faculties to act.'

Christine Joynes: Reception history. – investigating impact of past interpretations

JJV challenge to formulate a new methodology – '**Practice Interpretation**' – finding operational expression of the meaning. 1. what is our context, 2. what was the purpose of the writer, 3. what is our purpose now, 4. what did people actually do then 5. what might we actually do now, faced with this witness?

**Myers:** NT has been appropriated by the Scribes but it's the people's book. Bonhoeffer said text must be read over against ourselves not just for ourselves. Jesus & Lawyer: man gave correct theory/answer twice! Jesus asks twice: What about doing it? (Lk10:37) Exegete the text with our lives.

The Essays then follow (5ff)

## **2. MARK IN DISCIPLESHIP AND VOCATION**

**Andrew Parker:**

Jesus uses parables reactively – but want our hero to initiate – be a boss! Join Jesus on road to **margins where he can expose what's really going on!** But solidarity with outcasts won't earn anyone fame.

### **David Blatherwick:**

Pharisees are good people. So don't judge success of a church by its warm welcome, lively worship or attendances, but on creative impact on the community around it. But Pharisees criticise Jesus while he concentrates on what world might look like if it were less cruel and what it takes to change it.  
First disciples incompetent

### **John Fenton:**

One para of Mark refers to fasting (2:18-20) his disciples don't do it.  
No successful disciples in Mark, neither female nor male.  
"First half [of gospel] is the offer of healing, the second is the cost of it."  
Deny self rigorously since *via negativa*.

### **John Vincent**

Not know thyself, or save yourself, but lose yourself. Journey downward.  
Every statement about discipleship is a statement about Christology. Learn the theology of unilateralism – Jesus has to act even alone.

### **Mary Cotes**

#### Models of Servanthood:

Simon's Mother-in-law (1:29-31) *Diakonos* used of Jesus and here!

[Known only in relation to a man! No public figure]

#### Example of Faith:

Flow of blood (5:25-34) She initiates break of taboo.

[permanently unclean, barren, unmarriageable]

#### Visionary Theologian:

Syro-Phoenician (7:24-30) She senses God does care outside boundary and calls *Js Kyrie* for Gentile world. He congratulates her for her 'word'.

[Closer to Jm the harsher the challenge of the guardians]

#### Foreshadower of Christ:

Treasury Widow (12:41-44) gives her whole living, but as a victim of injustice.

[contrast to those who cannot give – eye of camel. 40 pieces of silver is given!]

#### Prophet of crucified King:

Anointing women (14:3-9) Anoints for burial but kingship rite! Truth re Jesus.

[Bethany outside Jm, house of leper, King of Jews!]

Faithful Servants:

Women at Cross (15:40-41) Do not vie for positions of power but follow humiliated leader.

Witness to Resurrection:

Empty Tomb (16:1-8) Witness death, burial, empty tomb – told to proclaim gospel.

Women are given message to give to disciples – leave the power centre – Jerusalem! Back to margins of Galilee. But they remain silent!! (woman stereotype fulfilled but therefore fail in their vocation)

**Leslie Francis**

Jung: the Dominant function of personality type needs to be exegesis channel.  
SIFT: Sense, Intuition, Feeling, Thinking.

**John Riches & Susan Miller**

Project of different groups looking at Mark.

**PART 3. MARK IN COMMUNITY AND POLITICS**

**Geoffrey Harris**

Mark sees mission as 1.Liberation, 2. Reconciliation and community life.

**Christine Joynes**

Reception history reminds us of our own limitations

**Susan Miller**

Earthquakes & famines – human beings persecute and betray one another.  
Struggle between God and Satan – beginning of birth pangs (13:8)

## **Ched Myers**

### Mark 13: A theology for times of war fever

‘Looking for guidance in the fog of war’ White House def of terrorism in National Security Strategy Sept 2003: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents’. ‘Who would Jesus bomb?’

Four Horsemen: Imperial conquest, sword of militarism, profiteering, death (Rev.6:1-8)

### Mark 13 is exposure: apocalyptic (Aeschylus: in war, truth is the first casualty)

66-70 Jewish War. Outbreak of war, Inbreak of Kingdom (only one is Kairos)  
66: Ceased Temple sacrifices to emperor; Cestus Gallus marched on Jm but defeated.; Three years of revolutionary government; in 69 – Vespasian drives down through Galilee but recalled to Rome; 70 economic sanctions General Titus sacks Jm and burns Temple to ground. Roman forces root out sympathisers (Josephus); Rebel recruiters invoke Maccabees & David;

Deceptions of War are deconstructed:

1. Holy Leader/Evil leader: ‘I am the one’ ‘Look here is the messiah’
2. War to End Wars: ‘this is only the beginnings of the labour pains’
3. Their great evil allows suspension of usual morality: ‘desolation of abomination – refuse call to arms!’

Instead look for signs of true Kingdom.

Jesus invokes Daniel tradition – not Maccabean insurgency but Wisdom.

Attack pathology at its roots (Temple cleansing)

## **Chris Burdon**

The new Community.

Leader leaves them, but subversive words do not pass away. Catechesis will not impart wisdom – listening. *Diakonos* as facilitator in the circle.

Royal homage only paid him in mockery. Strictly egalitarian.

Who may sit at my right hand? – two bandits!

Exorcism restores people, land and community.

Jn Baptist immerses in change of mind. Final immersion is in Death.

Liturgy of Altar: no *topos* but now eucharistic community.

Liturgy of World: mission. All this makes for new type of community.

### **Ian Wallis**

Soaps allow living by proxy – kicks without consequences. The ‘system’ offers loss of responsibility and therefore standards. Passive in our own lives.

Miracle can seem that we are controlled by alien/benevolent forces. I will make you fishers of men! He is not afraid to die (flirt with death) things worth dying for! Jesus’ take on being human as open to all. So we try to act out our lives accordingly – so no resurrection pages in Mark, just a promise that he will be there in the re-enactment.